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Valuing Voice:

Critical Literacy Practices in an Urban Debate Community

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Valuing Voice:

Critical Literacy Practices in an Urban Debate Community

By

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B.A., Rhodes College, 2001
M.A.T., Johns Hopkins University, 2003

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Valuing Voice:
Critical Literacy Practices in an Urban Debate Community
By Susan Cridland-Hughes

This study seeks to examine the intersections of oral, aural, written, and performative literate practices in policy debate. Policy debate offers a unique space for literacy research, as students merge written and oral communication while preparing policy suggestions on a national topic and defending those arguments in formal oral presentations. Debate focuses student attention simultaneously on the cultivation of individual voice and the process of political decision-making. As such, debate offers a unique space for exploring how participating youth develop and refine critical literacy beliefs.

Using an ethnographic case study methodology, this study explored the community, pedagogy, and critical literacy practices of City Debate (CD), an afterschool program dedicated to providing debate instruction to students in a major Southeastern city. The following research questions guided this study:

1. Why do members, both youths and adults, participate in City Debate and how do they view their participation?
2. In what ways do oral, aural, written and performative literate communicative activities converge and diverge in the City Debate program?
3. How are literacy and critical literacy defined and redefined in the context of City Debate and what are the pedagogical practices for teaching critical literacy skills embedded in the City Debate curriculum?

Findings indicate that City Debate emphasized the development of debate skills and community, creating a space where youth felt they could speak and be heard. Observations and interviews revealed a multigenerational community of debaters using debate as an access point to support youth in developing critical thinking skills. As a learning environment, City Debate reflected a decentralized curriculum, a focus on civic awareness, and deep knowledge of the yearly debate topic. Critical literacy emerged in the conversations youth had surrounding debate topics as well as in structured events and opportunities offered to the community.

City Debate moves closer to the concept of "argumentative agency" advocated by Mitchell (1998). Individual participants report using debate-related concepts and ideas to make decisions about how to live their lives. However, there is less information about how the community scaffolds civic activism into its pedagogy and curriculum.

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This dissertation represents the culmination of six years of study, thought, discussion, and careful reflection on the community of City Debate. It also represents missed family gatherings, weekend writing marathons, and the consumption of gallons of coffee. I want to dedicate this work to my family, specifically my mother, Jan Hughes, and my sister, Laura Elgin, both of whom gave sound advice through this lengthy process. I especially want to thank my husband, Jed Cridland-Hughes, for his unfailing emotional support (and the occasional use of his librarian research skills), and my daughter, Harper Cridland-Hughes, for reminding me to laugh. Without all of you, this work would not have been possible, and I look forward to spending the rest of my life trying to reciprocate the love you have shown me.

I would also like to thank the youths and adults of City Debate who agreed to participate in this project. You allowed me to be a part of a special community of youth voices and it is your hard work and courage that inspired this work. I believe that what is happening in your community is valuable for the larger spaces of education, and I hope that our collaboration helps others see new potential in schools.

I thank my advisor, Dr. Maisha Winn, for her enthusiastic mentoring. It was truly an honor working with someone who sees so much potential in nontraditional learning spaces. I also thank my committee members, Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker and Dr. Carole Hahn, for their wisdom and deep consideration of my scholarship. Finally, I want to thank the members of my cohort: Jillian, Saundra, Tirza, Nafees, Vera, and Kelly- it has been an honor to learn with and from you all.

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INTRODUCTION

> I arrive at City Debate at 4:45 p.m. on a Wednesday afternoon, and I am not the first. The afterschool program does not begin until 5:00 p.m., yet some students have been there since 4:00 p.m., waiting over 45 minutes for others to arrive. I enter a busy space full of youth debaters I do not know who are passionately discussing the year's debate topic, with which I am not familiar. I am a 30-year old White woman with little debate experience and they are predominantly African-American girls and boys skilled in the art of competitive argumentation. I am an outsider. They are debaters.

Each year, youth debaters participate in a structured activity where they research a policy and dialogue with other youth about their ideas. They build on previous years of knowledge, pulling old ideas into new policies and challenging others with information stored in mental archives. Debaters speak, write, perform and listen as they practice language and communication. Debate work is literacy work.

On the Wednesday above, I entered a space where literacy participation flourishes among traditionally described "youth at risk"- African American teenagers in urban settings. Something in this literacy space speaks to these youth as they discuss current events in the United States and the world. How do these youth participate in literacy in their everyday lives? In what ways do these adolescents connect literacy and power as they navigate oral and written communication? As youth make decisions about reading, writing, and speaking, they demonstrate a nuanced understanding of literacy as an empowering experience. However, the question endures as to how empowered youth develop a belief in literacy as a form of activism.

The perspective of adolescents as empowered users of literacy is by no means a universal belief. Research indicates that 51% of high school students understand "complex" texts that require generalizations, inferences and other literacy skills at the

level needed to succeed in college (ACT, 2006). Although this statistic indicates that half of high school students can use texts at a college level, it also shows that 49% of students struggle to achieve a level of literacy that will allow them to move beyond basic deciphering of words and texts and consider ideas transmitted through writing. Additionally, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) reports that "3,000 students with limited literacy skills drop out of high school every day" (NCTE, 2006). These statistics and their underlying messages are grim; many adolescents in the United States are failing to acquire baseline literacy skills for graduation from high school and success in college.

Standardized test scores describe the literacy shortcomings of young people as defined by traditional schooling. However, test scores offer an incomplete picture of how students themselves use and perceive literacy. Recent research continues to document the ways adolescents seek out and use literacy as critical components of their lives outside of school (Blackburn, 2003; Fisher, 2005a, 2007; Jocson, 2005, 2006; Morrell, 2002). This research describes active participation by adolescents in spoken word venues, teen clubs, poetry programs, and other activities that occur outside of school time or outside of traditional schooling. In addition, scholars have explored how youth use literacy to push back against perceived injustice, writing plays while incarcerated and using literacy to make sense of gentrification (Fisher, 2008, 2009; Kinloch, 2009).

Nontraditional contexts illustrate literacy sites where participation demands the use of literacy skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening to make their voices heard in profound ways. The so-called divide raises a profound question: can students

struggle with school literacy and simultaneously seek literacy in other settings with full participation?

Resolving the contradiction between the two views of the literacy performance of adolescents requires a discussion of what constitutes literacy. One perspective involves an understanding of literacy as "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (Livingston, 2006, p.10). This "autonomous" or competency-based definition of literacy emphasizes the acquisition of the skills and tools of literacy (Street, 1995). A second "ideological" perspective sees literacy as linked inextricably to both context and issues of power—it asks who has literacy, who chooses literacy, when is literacy an appropriate choice for communication? Coupling the concepts of literacy and power fuels current research in the field, and discussions of literacy are now framed in the social and historical context of the community (Gee, 1999; Street, 1995). Research now focuses on examining literacy for how it functions in communities rather than measuring literacy skills or the lack thereof.

McCarty (2005) argues that positioning literacy within existing power dynamics becomes especially important for understanding the literacy practices of communities previously considered marginalized. She argues for a perspective that includes "language, literacy and schooling as interrelated axes of power in struggles over access to key intellectual, social, economic and political resources and rights" (p.xviii). She emphasizes that the divide between those with literacy and those without literacy historically had and continues to have material consequences in the world. The connection of literacy

acquisition and practice with power reflects the complexity of community understandings of literacy.

The examination of City Debate and the formal and informal literacy interactions of one empowering literacy community offers the opportunity to understand not only the act of choosing literacy through choosing spaces of interaction, but also the act of choosing literacy within specific communicative activities. Moll underscores that "human beings and their social and cultural worlds are inseparable; they are embedded in each other" (2000, p.265). The use of literacy skills does not exist in a vacuum and cannot be contained by the act of writing words and sentences on a page. Instead, context, community, and purpose shape the choices made by literacy users—when to speak, when to write, the forms and norms of communication. Community members choose from a vast array of communicative activities to shape interactions both with other members of the community and outside of the chosen space. In this interstice governed by the interactions between oral, aural, literate, and performative literacy, communities reflect their beliefs about the connections between literacy and power.

CHAPTER I
Statement of the Problem

Scholarship situating literacy within the practicing community emphasizes the importance of exploring literacy use as inherently active and contextualized. It also articulates the relationship between a community and its understanding of appropriate practices of literacy and the power ascribed to literacy in that particular space (Scribner & Cole, 1981). Research demonstrates that modes of literacy interaction in communities operate alongside contextual issues of power. The relative dynamics of both internal and external forces become inextricably tied to the work they do. Exploring how one youth-centered literacy community cultivates literacy practices as a means of developing the voices of participants offers the opportunity to examine how one community understands the connection between literacy, power, and empowerment.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study examines an urban debate program established to provide exposure to debate pedagogy and opportunities for debate participation for youth in urban public schools. In order to maintain confidentiality, I have assigned the program the pseudonym City Debate (CD) and the overarching organization the pseudonym League of City Debaters (LCD). The participants and practices of City Debate comprise a "chosen" literacy community—that is, a literacy-centered community outside of school and work in which participants exercise agency over literacy content and process (Fisher, 2002). CD is a voluntary endeavor for both youth and debate instructors and offers the opportunity for varying levels of participation, from simple attendance to rigorous participation in debate competition. This study examines why members choose this

literacy community and how members describe and cultivate literacy practices. In the process, this study helps us understand how youth are taught critical literacy skills in out-of-school contexts. This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Why do members, both youths and adults, participate in City Debate and how do they view their participation?
2. In what ways do oral, aural, written, and performative literate communicative activities converge and diverge in the City Debate program?
3. How are literacy and critical literacy defined and redefined in the context of City Debate and what are the pedagogical practices for teaching critical literacy skills embedded in the City Debate curriculum?

City Debate offers a unique setting in which to observe the interaction between critical literacy and power. Historically, the program has served predominantly African American and working class youth. Although there is more diversity in the current iteration of the program, the program focuses on helping youth marginalized by race, class, or gender trust their individual and collective voices. The study expands current understanding of the connection between literacy and power by documenting and analyzing the contemporary literacy practices of a youth- oriented literacy community where students learn to use language deliberately and with purpose, with an understanding of the power of communication.

This study contributes to the existing scholarship by examining urban debate as a literacy community, with the related literacy and performance skills explicitly understood to "empower" students politically (Warner & Bruscke, 2001). The use of the term

empower reflects the belief that debate offers a unique space for youth to practice informed dialogue and to formulate critical perspectives.

Significance of the Study

A targeted study of City Debate illuminates the intersections between literacy and power in one urban youth-oriented literacy community. The significance of this study emerges from the opportunity to examine how one community transmits critical literacy beliefs between youth and adult participants. Critical literacy as practiced in City Debate offers an avenue for engaging urban youth in civic discourse around current controversial issues. In this way, youth in communities with histories of violence and silenced voices learn to "replace weapons with words"(J.R., 2/28/08).

First, an examination of the City Debate program allows for the description of a critical literacy program framed around the shaping and development of student voice. As Morrell (2008) argues, critical literacy offers a means of not only "[understanding] the role of language and texts in the construction of the self and the social" but also a way to "speak back and act back against these constructions with counter-languages and counter-texts" (p.5). Research into City Debate concentrates on the examination of a literacy community geared towards adolescents and framed around critical thinking, writing, and speaking.

In addition, this study offers an example of a program that connects orality and literacy, relating the spoken and the written to the empowerment of students while also extending current research on community- based literacy spaces. Examining all of the available spaces and types of literacy use allows for a discovery of the "multiplicity of values, uses, and consequences which characterize writing as a social practice" (Heath,

1982, 1997; Scribner & Cole, 1981). A study of literacy as what happens beyond the actual acts of reading and writing expands the definition of literacy to include multiple literacy communities' conceptions of literacy. Observing these groups and their literate practices allows for greater understanding of the navigation of communicative activities.

Although curriculum standards across the country include speech and drama as an important part of the English/Language Arts classroom, the oral aspect of literacy is rarely discussed. The politics and power associated with literacy are similarly ignored. This examination of City Debate documents the practices of a literacy community in which communication takes both oral and literate forms, and in which communication is seen as a political act.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

Literacy as defined in the context of this study draws on the conception of a "literacy event." Heath defines a literacy event as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" but also including "speech events [that] may describe, repeat, reinforce, expand, frame, or contradict written materials, and participants must learn whether the oral or written mode takes precedence" (Heath, 1982). Heath emphasizes that literacy events are not limited to writing and reading, but include speaking and performing around text as well. In the context of this study, literacy is a social practice (Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1984). Much of the meaning surrounding literacy use occurs as participants engage both each other and text in a social context.

Communicative activity as defined in this study describes the continuum of communication choices available to a community. These forms of communication can range from nonverbal responses or oral interactions to literacy events. The concept of communicative activity reflects the belief that all forms of communication, literacy included, demonstrate an inclination toward making meaning in the world (Freire, 1987).

Literacy community as defined in this study describes a community framed around literacy and literacy-building activities. These activities can extend from reading and writing to making music, performing spoken word, and creating visual representations (Cowan, 2005; Fisher, 2003; Weinstein, 2002). Wenger defines community as a "way of talking about the social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth participating and our participation is recognizable as competence" (1998, p.5). Communities are not static, and membership and roles exist in a constant state of negotiation. In their real practice, communities are fluid, and acknowledging this fluidity allows for an awareness of how static community descriptions run the danger of essentializing participants (Gutierrez & Arzubiaga, in press). Using Wenger's conception of community and the previous definition of literacy, a literacy community involves members who participate in literacy activities collaboratively and communally. A literacy community is a social group in which existence of the group revolves around text and communication in various forms, including reading and writing as well as speaking and performing.

Out-of-school settings are learning spaces outside of the traditional classroom or traditional schooling. These settings include "homes, after-school programs, and community-based organizations" to name only a few of the possible spaces of literacy

participation (Hull & Schultz, 2002, p.2). Out-of-school settings also include, however, nontraditional ways of teaching and using literacy, such as the inclusion of a community-based writing group within an English classroom. Although these literacy spaces may occur within a school or classroom, the designation of being an out-of-school setting indicates a reliance on sources of knowledge beyond the standard curriculum.

Policy debate refers to a specific format for debate participation. This form of debate operates as a structured conversation between two opposing teams of two participants each. The conversation revolves around a topic, called the resolution, chosen prior to the start of the academic year and remaining the same throughout the year. Over the past 20 years, resolutions debated in City Debate have ranged from ratification of international treaties to increasing funding for mental health treatment. Participants prepare research-driven arguments related to the resolution, and speak for specific lengths of time as they work through a series of ten speeches. In some cases, the speeches are prepared in advance, while other speeches, called rebuttals, reference comments made within the debate round. As participants present arguments, each team and the judge creates a written record of the arguments in the debate round, a record called "the flow."

Within the structure of policy debate, space exists for both oral and literate communication, and fluid movement between the two becomes necessary for successful participation in a debate round. More specifically, the context of the speech within the debate round determines the choice of communication. In order to prepare for the debate round, youth read information ranging from newspaper reports to academic articles, choosing carefully the short passages that will support their argument. They then use that information to present an oral case, responding to questions from the other team and the

evidence provided in the debate round itself. Although the basis of the conversation is the written text, the speaking of that text into the record, or "the flow," directs the conversation.

A Conceptual Framework

This investigation examines access to literacy communities and utilization of literacy practices rather than documenting precise levels of literacy in high school students. My analysis of City Debate is best understood using the framework of New Literacy Studies (NLS). The NLS framework offers a lens for examining the relationship between literacy and power.

NLS emerged from the question of the relationship between oral and written cultures. Although literacy and orality operate as two fundamental forms of communication, understandings of the relationship between the two have shifted over time. Initial research in literacy examined a perceived divide between oral and the literate cultures, privileging the process of writing within an "autonomous model of literacy" (Street, 1995), a technological concept of literacy that reinforced power stratifications (1993). Literacy research situated within the autonomous model conceptualized literacy as a technology and an evolutionary step that allowed oral communities to move forward in the evolution of communication (Ong, 1986).

Central to the autonomous model was the idea of literacy as a progression beyond orality. In this perspective, then, oral language was a stage in communicative activity. Writing functioned as the means through which information was disseminated across generations and the presence of written literacy offered evidence of a more advanced society, one that could build on earlier ideas. Implicit in this understanding of literacy

was the assumption that there was one way of being literate, and that involved utilization of the technology of writing. Writing and literacy became mediums for the transmission of culture and knowledge, as well as for the continuation of societies.

Historical perspectives on literacy, then, focused on literacy as possession of a technology that indicated progress. However, the definition of literacy as the process of writing and reading resulted in concerns associated with ranking societies based on outsiders' perspectives of how literacy functioned (Besnier, 2000). Instead, examinations of the contextual use of literacy described a very different scene. The introduction of New Literacy Studies (NLS) and sociocultural studies of literacy demonstrated a significant departure from the autonomous model of literacy, part of " a larger 'social turn' away from a focus on individuals and their private minds and towards interaction and social practice" (Gee, 1999).

This turn towards literacy in context offered a conceptual alternative to the autonomous perspective of literacy—the "ideological model." The ideological model places context at the center of literacy practice in a community, arguing that community norms and expectations rather than the level of communicative evolution govern the use of literacy in a particular space at a particular time. Literacy research as practiced prior to NLS primarily concerned itself with the physical operations of literacy on an individual basis—the acts of writing and reading. With the emergence of these newly culturally sensitive theories, however, the perception of literacy evolved to include the "the everyday meanings and uses of literacy in specific cultural contexts and link directly to how we understand the work of literacy in educational contexts" (Street, 2005, p.417).

Placing literacy within cultural norms demonstrates an understanding that the relationship between literacy and culture alternately supports and hinders written communication.

This turn towards the ideological model changed the dynamics regarding the interaction between oral and literate forms of communication. In some research, oral communication has been seen as the source of all written discourse, whereas in other cases the oral is seen as the imperfect form of the written that comes later (Dyson, 2005; Rumsey, 2000). Most recently, the discussion of choices regarding communicative acts are again situated within the community, and "the spoken and written word are dialectically related in literacy interactions (Cook-Gumperz & Keller-Cohen, 1993, p.283). The relationship between orality and literacy becomes central to any discussion of debate, an activity in which oral and written forms of communication operate within the same space at the same time. Fluency in both, then, becomes necessary for successful participation in the debate community.

NLS offers a space to examine literacy alongside greater dynamics of power and resistance. The "ideological model" explores literacy as a social process and offers a theoretical framework for "the central role of power relations in literacy practices" (1993). Street emphasizes that literacy's value derives from its situated context; it does not and cannot exist as "neutral technology" (1993), nor can it be seen as "general or self-contained" (Gee, 2000). As an evolution in literary theory, then, NLS contains an understanding of the power dynamic of literate and illiterate in a society. In the long term, NLS also challenges the separation between orality and literacy as an exclusionary framework incapable of and unwilling to support the idea of literacy as multiple. Literacy does not reduce to the acts of reading and writing; understanding literacy

includes examining the oral communication, gestures, and choices made between multiple communication options.

Exploring intersections of literacy and power also includes examining literacy as "identity work" (Gee, 2000). For Gee, the definition of literacy included the construction of "social languages," language used to "enact, recognize, and negotiate different socially situated identities and to carry out different socially situated activities" (2000). He goes on to make the argument that the language must be supported by ways of thinking and acting that make sense in that specific social situation. It is not enough to simply employ language to create these identities—it is the use of language as an expression of the identity already created.

NLS gives a common name to a body of research within literacy that links social processes with communication practices. It is important to note that, although all researchers doing context-based literacy studies do not do so under the auspices of New Literacy Studies, the organizing tenets of the ideological model also apply to cultural-historical theory, actor-network theory, and other research concerned with the impact of culture on literacy as a means of knowledge acquisition and dissemination. The focus on culture allows researchers to understand the why of literacy practices instead of focusing on the mechanics of reading and writing, offering an understanding of literacy across classes and cultures.

NLS focuses on the process of acquisition and utilization of literacy as well as what the process reflects about the power dynamics of a certain society. In many cases, neither the physical act of writing nor the steps of learning to write illuminate the value of literacy in a society. Examining the access to knowledge, the validation of various uses

of that knowledge, and the determination of when and where to use that knowledge allows for a description of the role literacy plays in reinforcing or reinventing power dynamics within various groups.

Summary

City Debate participants articulate a connection between critical thinking, debate pedagogy, and empowerment for youth. Guided by the framework of New Literacy Studies, I explore how conceptual understandings of literacy and power manifest in a community that makes explicit connections between the teaching of debate skills and the cultivation of activist voice in youth. In the next chapter, I examine previous literature exploring orality and literacy, out-of-school literacy, and debate in order to frame City Debate within related discourse.

CHAPTER II
Review of the Literature

I situate my study of debate and literacy in three areas: orality and literacy, literacy in out-of-school settings, and high school debate. The first section focuses on empirical studies that examine the often tenuous relationship between orality and literacy. In the second section, I examine empirical studies related to literacy in out-of-school settings. Finally, I include debate literature to focus on empirical studies related specifically to policy debate.

Literature for this review was collected in three stages. The first stage included database searches. For both AnthroSource and ERIC, I ran an initial search using "literacy" as the search term. I combined this with the search terms "cultural," "orality" and "secondary" to gather relevant studies. For the research on high school debate, I ran initial searches in EUCLID with the keyword "debates and debating," in ERIC with "debates and debating," and in AnthroSource with "debates," "debating," and "literacy." The second stage of the literature review involved using the same search terms with Google Scholar. Again, I looked for studies dealing with secondary school age populations. In the third stage, I reviewed bibliographies to identify studies of interest that were not captured in the initial literature searches. These bibliographies included both books and articles and allowed me to identify additional works relevant to my research topic.

Orality and Literacy

In this section, I review empirical studies that directly examine the interrelationship between literate and oral forms of communication. As currently

understood, choices about when to practice orality and literacy are seen as culturally situated (Street, 1984). The relative importance attached to literacy and orality is reflected in these choices and demonstrates the diverse needs and expectations of specific communities for both communicative process and product (Scribner & Cole, 1981). Research conducted on orality and literacy ranges from the process of choosing literacy to the hybridization of literacy and orality in poetic performance.

Heath (1997) explored the ways in which families engaged oral and written texts. Working in the ethnography of communication tradition and employing ethnographic methods such as observation and interviews, Heath documented the practices of literacy in Roadville and Trackton, a white working class community and African- American working class community respectively, in the Piedmont Carolinas. She compared the literacy behaviors of these two communities against the practice of literacy by townspeople in the town where all students attended school. Heath found that students in each of the communities experienced and demonstrated different relationships between oral and literate communication. For example, Trackton children were socialized toward more oral and storytelling practices, and literacy operated communally instead of individually. Conversely, Roadville's children were socialized to a basic use of literacy with some storytelling, although the stories differed structurally from those told in Trackton. Her discussion of contextualized literacy offered insight into how home literacy practices socialized children to use and practice literacy in school and other settings. At the same time, she demonstrated that literacy and orality operated as choices situated in the practices of each individual community and that schooling could reflect the practices of the diverse communities in which students were socialized. Heath's

comparative analysis documents how specific literacy practices were valued over others. These practices in the schools reinforced the centrality of power to literacy—those who practiced literacy at home in a way similar to that practiced in the school experienced success, whereas those with different literacy practices did not.

The question of how literacy and orality are connected to power and grounded in community practices leads to additional questions about the tensions that can arise when communities have different practices and different power levels. Cushman (1998) challenged conceptions of literacy and power in her discussion of how African- American residents of an inner city community used oral and literate communication strategies to navigate access to necessary resources. Using participant observation, activist methodology, and document analysis, Cushman examined the way both literate and oral communication activities used by members of the government bureaucracy limited access to resources. Additionally, she documented the corresponding oral and literate strategies used by the participants to gain access to resources, including the strategy of code-switching, both within speech and between speech and literacy. Participants demonstrated the ability to determine which oral language to use when interacting with different groups, as well as when written communication would be more effective for accomplishing goals. A central critique of Cushman's work questions her use of activist methodology, a choice that raises complicated questions about community access and her role in the research process. Cushman transparently acknowledges the insertion of herself into her research community, but the use of her research requires a deep and thoughtful consideration of how her positionality affects the validity of her findings. Regardless, Cushman describes a literacy space where all available options, including

multiple literacies and oralities, are considered before an approach is chosen. In Cushman's study, the choice of how to approach a communication situation was determined by the community in which the interaction occurred, and orality played as central a role in a community as its literacy practices.

Although Heath and Cushman discussed the process of choosing between oral and written communication, other scholars describe situations where both orality and literacy are central to the creation of a final communicative product. This communicative interdependence emerges in recent research on spoken word poetry communities, in which researchers describe a space where writing poetry and the subsequent oral performance of that poetry are inextricably connected. Fisher (2003, 2004, 2006) examined the "blurred boundaries between the spoken and written word," using ethnographic methods to answer questions about the organization, participation, and cultural practices of what she referred to as "participatory learning communities" (PLCs) (p. 366). In her study, Fisher identified instances of multiple literacy practices that included everything from the act of reading to the use of instruments in a performance of communication. Communicative choice was embedded within the context of communication, as evidenced through the use of process in the writing of the poetry piece and performance in the subsequent public presentation. Sutton (2004) also studied adult spoken word poets in California using ethnographic methods. In Sutton's study, the oral performance allowed for "a crucial connection with their audience which is far more powerful than the written text alone could ever achieve" (Sutton, 2004, p.237). The connection between the written text and the oral performance, then, was integral to the importance of spoken word in the poets' lives.

Both Fisher and Sutton describe individual spaces where literacy and orality connect; however, these are small spaces and each individually does not offer the opportunity for replication on a larger scale. When both studies are considered in terms of the larger spoken word movement, they document a trend different from that described by Heath. Instead of oral communication limiting success in a given space, orality deepens connections with audience members and makes the art of writing more personal and accessible than it would otherwise be.

Literacy connects to performance in multiple ways, not only through the physical act of performance but also through the imagining of the author persona and the audience. Using interviews, questionnaires, and submitted texts to recreate student experiences of writing, Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor, and Otuteye (2005) describe "students' live enactment of their own writing"(226). Otuteye, as both study participant and author, reflects on how "communication through writing is not only what you say but also how you say it" (238). His description of the performance of writing again focuses on the physical production of a written text, and the decisions made in that performance reflect an awareness of audience. McGregor, also serving as both study participant and author, reported the creation of an alternative voice for her writing. In this alternative voice, McGregor assumes a character that allows her to perform writing with an "authoritative voice" (236). The student voices in this co-authored article demonstrate how text involves performance in both creation and presentation.

Although early articles on spoken word poetry focused on the literacy practices of adult poets, recent work has shifted to using spoken word genres as a bridge between out-of-school literacy practices and those offered within schools. Fisher (2005a, 2005b,

2007) examined the teaching of spoken word poetry in two extracurricular writing programs, the "Power Writers" and the "Runaway Slaves of the 21st Century." In her article, Fisher describes the connections between hip hop culture and the pedagogical practices employed by each community. These pedagogical practices included being taught by "readers and writers beyond the school walls" (p.128). Fisher's research focuses on the importance of teachers seeing themselves as active writers in order to teach writing to their students, identifying pedagogical practices necessary for creating an invested community of writers. Jocson (2006, 2008) also examines culturally based literacy practices, focusing her research on what spoken word poetry means for urban youth in their personal use of literacy. Jocson uses ethnographic methods to document the literacy practices of one urban high school student and his connection to spoken word poetry. In her conclusion, she focuses on the importance of bringing cultural practices into the classroom, emphasizing the inclusion of spoken word poetry and slam poetry competitions as a means of activating student literacy practices within school.

Although Jocson and Fisher explore the possibility of a connection between out-of-school and in-school literacy practices, their respective research does not offer specific processes through which to integrate the investment of students in these individual programs into schooling as a larger concept. In fact, the question still remains as to whether these programs could be "scaled up" into larger school reforms or whether their power for student engagement relies on the more intimate level of interaction.

Research into connections between orality and literacy describe how members of communities use oral and written forms of communication in an attempt to connect with other community members. Scholars overwhelmingly document a relationship between

orality and literacy focused on seeing both orality and literacy as context- specific. The choice of literacy or orality, then, connects directly to the practice of communication by members of specific communities. However, there are still areas left to explore in the discussion of oral and literate practices.

Most importantly, this research needs to be expanded to include groups not currently reflected in the literature. Much of the research has focused on homogenous communities. Cushman explicitly looks solely at African-American men, women, and children, Fisher's research explores literacy communities connected with the African Diaspora, and Sutton titles his piece "Performance poetry in the Black community." Although Heath examines groups that differ in race as well as class, she looks at each community in isolation, because there is little interaction between the groups observed. My study of City Debate places the intersection of oral and literate communication in a diverse context, with members of different ethnic, gender, and class groups involved at the same time in the same community. City Debate draws from a school system that is 87% African American with 71% of students receiving free or reduced lunch (Atlanta Public Schools, 2007), but the debate community as a whole is predominantly white and affluent. This study examines oral and literate communication for multiple classes and ethnicities in a shared community.

Literacy in Out- of- School Settings

Literacy in out-of-school settings examines how members of literacy groups use literacy in their everyday lives and community. Literate activities in these spaces include commonly accepted practices such as poetry and nonfiction writing as well as the more radical communication of graffiti art. The expansion of spaces in which literate activities

occur to include those areas outside of school allows for an expansive understanding of what constitutes literate activities and a nuanced discussion of literacy as a choice.

In an edited volume, Mahiri (2004) examined various forms of literacy teaching and learning in spaces outside of school. Arguing that literacy occurs in many forms and spaces, Mahiri's compilation of research places the exploration of what literacy actually is in a central role. Examples of literacy use range from how gender roles and norms are reflected in books (Godley, 2004) to a discussion of how homeschooled teenagers used online journaling to form a discourse community (Samuelson, 2004). In this collection, literacy is defined as communication, and authors offer evidence that literacy is much more than writing and reading. They explore how various forms of literacy operate to facilitate communication.

In some spaces, literacy communities offer generative spaces for ideas that lead to social action. Through participant observation, document analysis, and interviews, Heller (1997) described the literacy practices of adult women, most of whom were homeless or working poor and all of whom actively participated in the Tenderloin Women Writers' Workshop. Heller specifically examined how the culture of the workshop, as well as the literacy skills crafted therein, helped create a space for activism. The activism Heller witnessed occurred on the personal level, as women addressed their physical struggles with cancer, other diseases, and addictions, as well as on the social level, as members used the collective knowledge of the women attending to identify the community resources for problems faced by its members. In this learning space, outside of traditional schooling, members shared personal writing in the forms of plays, journal entries, and poetry. The themes that emerged in individual writing led to increased action

in the community at large. Heller's work again focuses, however, on her space in an adult community, and the question of how youth see their participation in literacy and why they choose independent spaces remains incompletely understood.

Other authors have specifically examined the divide between literacy outside of school and that practiced within the classroom. Luttrell and Parker (2001) examined "school-based" and "personal-based" literacies in four high schools, asking students to document their literacy activities during the school day and those outside of school. Their study describes the specific literacy practices of one student, "Alice," who failed English but reported relying on poetry and reading at home in constructing and making sense of her identity as she adapted to a new home environment. Luttrell and Parker document a divide between Alice's performance in her regular academic courses and her creative use of personal literacy. Weinstein (2002) also chronicled the writing activities of ten high school students in south Chicago, using participant observation, interviews, and document analysis to identify the different literate activities used by students outside of the classroom. In her article, she described the literacy skills used by a student active in the graffiti community, analyzing the process as a form of social "Discourse" (Gee, 1999). In each of these studies, there is a separation between the personal use of literacy and success in traditional school literacy pedagogy.

Although some studies describe personal uses of literacy as divorced from those practiced in school, other studies describe literacy practices outside of school that augment the knowledge available in schools. Dyson (1997, 1999, 2003) documented the connections between popular culture and the literacy practices of elementary school students in a public school. Using participant observation, fieldnotes, interviews, and

popular culture resources, Dyson examined the connection between the popular culture exposures of the children and their literacy choices. She describes how the students used popular culture to forge relationships and to generate ideas for in-class writing, connecting their out-of-school activities with their in-school literacy learning.

Hull and Schultz (2002) also document the intersection of schooled and unschooled literacy practices, examining how literacy in out-of-school spaces intersects with literacy in traditional schooling. In this edited volume, authors examine the myriad different iterations of the relationship between in-school and out-of-school learning, from service learning courses that connect college students with area youth (Cushman & Emmons, 2002) to research examining the use of computer communication to expand student writing (McNamee & Sivright, 2002). In many cases, these studies describe an out-of-school learning space as a chosen space that speaks to interests that are not being tapped by the in-school curriculum. Research into how out-of-school activities influence schooling presents a compelling argument for the need to support students in their schooled literacy by valuing their out-of-school literacy practices.

In other studies, literacy in out-of-school settings is seen as supplementary to the knowledge gained in traditional schooling. Fisher (2006) observed literacy activities contained within two black bookstores in northern California to examine how these bookstores supported literacy activities of their participants and provided "alternative and supplementary knowledge spaces" (83). Through interviews and observations, Fisher documents how participants saw the space as offering the opportunity to access "ways of being and valuing found in black contexts" that were not available in the institutionalized

curriculum (97). In this instance, the value of a literacy community outside of school was access to information that could not otherwise be acquired.

Jocson (2005) examines the Poetry for the People program (P4P) and its operation as a "collaborative intervention" in the teaching of poetry at one high school (p.137). Although the program occurred within the physical space of the school, P4P acted as an out- of- school literacy space through its operation as a mostly autonomous group dedicated to teaching writing in partnership with university- trained student-teacher-poets (STPs), who served as small group mentors in writing workshops. P4P created within a traditional school a nontraditional learning space, and the accompanying curricular and pedagogical choices offered students new ways of learning and growing as writers. Jocson describes her research as collaborative, but she only briefly discusses the role of teachers. This challenges the notion of teacher integration, an important point for considering whether these programs can be meshed with schooling with a sense of mutuality.

In a recent themed issue of *English Education*, Lunsford (2009) argues that "students perform their literacies across a range of modes, genres, media, and spaces. Their stories are not about literacy in the service of school: they are about literacy for life" (397). Lunsford's reflection reminds us that literacy is always something to be used. Empirical explorations of literacy in the same issue include students participating in a youth playmaking group (Fisher, 2009), a student inscribing tattoos as a form of communication (Kirkland, 2009), youth participation in the Alternative to Incarceration program (Vasudevan, 2009), and Kinloch's (2009) exploration of connections between schools, communities, and literacy as one student engages in "placemaking." For this

issue, literacy participation reflects layers of participation and "placemaking," whether it be youth rewriting the scripts of experiences in their lives or youth expressing the fear of being written out of the history of a community.

Research into literacy in out-of-school settings describes venues for interaction and literate participation in society. In these spaces, ways of learning and knowing move away from tradition, creating areas of great tension but also great potential for growth. These spaces include physical spaces such as poetry and spoken word venues and mental spaces where movies seen on the weekend inspire students in their in-school literacy activities. In addition, these spaces reflect multiple venues of literacy participation for individuals. Regardless of how these chosen spaces are organized or conceptualized, participants access knowledge that is not being transmitted in traditional schooling spaces.

Although these studies touch on the importance of literacy to the specific groups, there is more to be said about the use of literacy communities to empower youth. A study of debate participation through an examination of the AUDL offers the opportunity to look at literacy in out-of-school settings in the context of a community dedicated to empowering diverse youth who come together in the same space. Literacy becomes both the point of convergence and a means to a greater goal of academic and social growth for the involved youth.

Debate Research

Debate research examines both the use of debate in formal and informal education, as well as the resulting culture of debate for involved students. Few empirical studies exist specifically related to urban debate leagues such as City Debate. With this

in mind, literature reviewed for this study also includes conceptual articles as well as empirical studies conducted on the use of debate in high school settings.

There have been several conceptual articles discussing the potential of debate as outreach in urban public schools. Many of these are autobiographical reflections of the authors. Huber and Plantageonette (1993) recount their interactions with youth learning debate in urban settings. Huber and Plantageonette make a case for supporting the expansion of debate in urban cities not for competitive purposes but for the potential of individual and community transformation. The authors argue, "The debaters I've met care about more than just winning, that they carry questions of 'should' beyond debate rounds, into homes and hearts, and back to people who once believed they could make a difference in the world"(p.35). Edward Lee (1998) also published a memoir examining the expansion of debate access in urban public schools. In his brief article detailing his experiences in one urban debate league, Lee reflected on the importance of debate for developing his voice and a sense of his own power. Both of the first- person narratives reflect a belief that debate can empower individuals not only in the realm of debate but also in life.

Mitchell (1998) qualifies the idea that debate pedagogy always empowers. For Mitchell, the importance of debate as a pedagogical tool centers on the concept of argumentative agency, or "the capacity to contextualize and employ the skills and strategies of argumentative discourse in fields of social action…[linking] decontextualized argumentation skills such as research, listening, analysis, refutation, and presentation to the broader political *telos* of democratic empowerment" (p.45). Although Mitchell connects the skills gained through debate preparation and pedagogy with student

empowerment, he cautions that one of the dangers of debate is the "undercultivation of student agency" (p.44). Debate pedagogy, then, contains both the promise of empowerment and the danger of the intellectualization of real world problems and situations, seeing these problems and situations only as keys to winning an argument. Mitchell's argument reflects the belief that debate pedagogy by itself is neutral—it does not inherently create empowered students. Instead, empowerment comes through the responsible cultivation of civic engagement within the preparation for debate participation. He further offers specific spaces in which argumentative agency can be achieved, including an emphasis on primary research conducted by debaters, public debates, and debate outreach to populations not currently represented. Importantly, although Mitchell offers a reasoned theoretical basis for how to responsibly train debaters, he has no empirical data from programs dedicated to providing empowering debate pedagogy for adolescents.

Fine's study *Gifted Tongues* (2001) offers a comprehensive examination of debate as a community in which the worlds of education, adolescence, and talk intersect (p 4-7). Using ethnographic methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing, Fine followed two national level high school debate teams in Minnesota for the 1989-1990 academic year as they prepared for and attended tournaments. Fine described a world in which students from elite backgrounds, predominantly white and affluent, prepared to participate in a game with specific rules and structures. Student participants learned argumentation skills, presentation skills, and "the ability to understand multiple perspectives" (p.226). Fine diligently documents the experiences of elite high school debaters, but he limits his examination to teams comprised of traditional debate

participants and only briefly acknowledges the existence of inner-city debate programs such as City Debate. To be fair, his analysis occurred during the early years of City Debate when inner city debate programs were isolated and not linked by a larger network. Ultimately, Fine's examination of debate and adolescent culture lacks an analysis of policy debate participation by the population of this study.

In one of the few studies specifically examining the practices of the urban debate community, Wolf (2008) analyzed a middle school urban debate program as a community of practice. Participants came from lower income backgrounds and the students involved were predominantly African American, although the volunteers reflected demographic diversity. Wolf's research enhances Fine's findings in that it explores the debate participation of African American students, a group largely ignored by Fine. In Wolf's research, he found that students and program volunteers communicated through three languages: the language of popular culture, the language of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and the language of debate. For participants, many of whom were experiencing debate for the first time, the participation in competitive debate occupied a secondary role to their membership in a unified, supportive community. Wolf describes urban debate as an access point rather than as a means for students to be competitively successful in the larger debate community. This directly contrasts with the competition-oriented debate community described by Fine. Although Wolf expands the idea of who participates in a debate community and how they participate, the question remains as to how this community-oriented debate model translates to high school urban debate programs.

More recently, Mezuk (2009) explored the connection between participation in an urban debate community and high school educational outcomes for African American males. Mezuk analyzed ten years of data for African American male students participating in the Chicago Debate League, examining performance on three markers of educational outcomes: cumulative GPA in 8th and 12th grade, ACT scores, and high school completion. Her findings indicate that participation in debate was uniquely supportive of the development of academic literacy and higher rates of graduation for African American males. Although Mezuk's work offers compelling evidence that participation in debate supports literacy development as measured by scores on the English and Reading section of the ACT, she leaves open the question of why youth participate and how they understand their participation in this literacy community. Answering these questions is central to understanding why this particular space and community help youth cultivate literacy skills.

Publications about debate primarily reflect the experiences of individuals and theoretical conceptions of responsible debate pedagogy. Personal narratives offer anecdotal evidence as to the transformative nature of debate participation but lack rigorous scientific evidence reinforcing the beliefs of the authors. Additionally, theoretical conceptions about debate such as those espoused by Mitchell emphasize the structural spaces in which debate offers the greatest potential for supporting critical thinking in youth.

Recently, researchers have begun to describe the actions and activities of youth within debate programs. Although the available empirical evidence supports the idea of debate as a powerful tool for supporting youth development of voice, the scope of

research into debate remains limited. Although Wolf specifically links critical literacy and debate programs like City Debate, he focuses on a program in two middle schools. Mezuk uses statistics to analyze academic outcomes for African American males in one high school urban debate program, but does not connect the numbers with why students participate. I found no studies connecting critical literacy and debate in larger and more prevalent high school debate communities. The study of the pedagogy and practice of critical literacy within City Debate examines a space where Mitchell's powerful ideas about argumentative agency operate as action.

The Preliminary Study

In order to establish the trajectory of the development of the League of City Debate (LCD) and the target program for study, City Debate, I conducted an ethnohistory of the participants and activities in the years from 1985 to 2004. The research questions for this study were:

1. Who were the major actors, both participants and organizers, in the program?
2. What were the events that shaped the goals, actors, and activities of the program?
3. What were the major oral and literate activities used in the program?
4. What were the explicit and implicit critical literacy goals of the program from 1985 to 2004?

Using these questions to guide my inquiry, I examined documents and conducted interviews with program participants from August 2007 to January 2008. Documents consisted of those contemporary to the time frame of the establishment of the program. These documents included newspaper articles as well as internal documents created and

disseminated by the program. Interviews focused on conversations with seven key informants involved with LCD between 1985 and 2004. These interviews provided insight into the experiences of organizers, coaches, and past student members.

Findings. Although the LCD began as a group providing debate resources and support to public school debate programs, it later shifted its focus to creating an "intellectual community" for youth framed around critical reading, writing, and speaking. It is important to note that the majority of youth served through the program were African- American students in a large urban school system—although there is a larger and longer tradition of debate participation in the African American community, the schools experienced a rupture in that tradition. Throughout its history, the LCD supported participants in the development of critical knowledge and the questioning of larger social structures. Debate activity provided a means of supporting the development of student voice through the examination of current political conflicts. The findings from the ethnohistory most relevant to the current study describe the oral and literate activities practiced by participants and examples of critical literacy beliefs and actions by members of the League of City Debaters.

Oral and literate activities. Oral and literate activities in the LCD operated jointly for all participants. Complete participation in the community required both the ability to digest print text in the form of research and the ability to present that information within the larger context of the debate round. Specifically, students involved in the LCD were expected to participate in policy debate competitions in which two teams of two students each presented previously researched material on a specific policy. As debate programs emerged across the city, novice participants including students and

coaches learned the community literacy specific to participation in policy debate, a highly structured conversation requiring the use of evidence to support claims.

According to student members and teacher coaches, the literacy skills used in debate differed from those taught in literature classes. Instead of being a solitary activity, reading offered a competitive advantage within the debate round. It is important to note that the practice of reading for debate also led to additional reading in other spaces. Additional reading and discussion with a partner or with a debate team offered the incentive of being more prepared than an opponent. Knowledge gained through individual reading helped teams craft an argument to be presented within the debate round. Individual knowledge evolved into communal knowledge as students orally discussed information, and the joining of oral and literate activities gave reading relevance within the production of a conversation.

The development of critical literacies. As participants prepared for participation in debate, they connected oral and literate communication skills. The interaction between spoken and written word during the actual practice of debate helped participants conceptualize text as a written conversation. However, the development of critical literacy reflected an additional push towards seeing both oral and written literacy as connected with action. This perspective of literacy as active rather than passive reiterated a common theme in the literature of African American community-based literacy.

The belief in literacy as action emerged strongly when students, organizers, and coaches were asked to define literacy. When defining literacy, community members described a literacy of use and a literacy that led to expanded access and voice. Participants expressed the belief that involvement in policy debate as an activity

produced thoughtful, informed, and activist youth, characteristics cultivated as students engaged in the process of preparing for success in a debate round. Exposure to literature and research for debate participation informed later life decisions.

One of the first forms of action described by students was the development of individual voice. In many cases, LCD's encouragement of the cultivation of voice in debate participation reflected a departure from a perceived silencing of students in their schools. For one participant, debate offered "one of the few places where I was given a license to speak my mind." This empowerment becomes especially compelling for a discussion of critical literacy when considered with Freire's argument that participant voices should be elevated and privileged (Freire, 1997).

Finding voice in the debate round, although profound, was only a first level of student empowerment. As organizer James Roland explained, students were also expected to take the voice developed in debate and extend it to the outside world, "to become advocates for social change in their communities and be able to articulate it in a way that causes people to listen" (2/28/2008). Coaches and members of the programs recounted many instances where advocacy occurred both for individual benefit and for the benefit of the greater community, including one student's efforts to challenge a professor who accused him of plagiarism. The student defended himself in front of the honor court and then went on to become involved in student government to challenge what he perceived to be an unjust system.

Overall, the pilot study reflected an historic literacy community committed to the development of communicative ability in a previously marginalized group. All of the members of the program reflected a belief that the skills learned within the LCD offered

the potential to transform not only the individual lives of participants but also the communities in which they interacted. While developing oral, literate, and performative communicative skills and cultivating individual voice, youth also received a charge to actively and critically use literacy to challenge injustice and advocate for change.

Chapter III
Methodology

This study described the participants and pedagogy of the current program City Debate, focusing on the following questions:

1. Why do members, both youths and adults, participate in City Debate and how do they view their participation?
2. In what ways do oral, aural, written, and performative literate communicative activities converge and diverge in the City Debate program?
3. How is literacy and critical literacy defined in the context of City Debate and what are the pedagogical practices for teaching critical literacy skills embedded in the City Debate curriculum?

In order to examine the ways in which City Debate engages participants in critical literacy, I used ethnographic methodology, including participant observation and fieldnotes, ethnographic video, document analysis, and in-depth interviews.

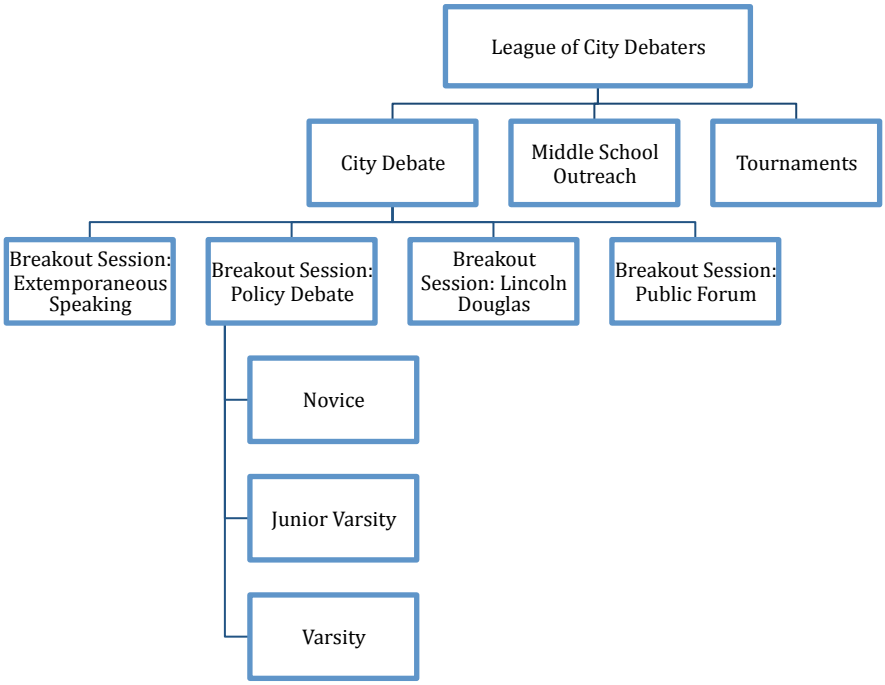
Setting and Participants

City Debate operates in multiple nested settings. The physical setting of City Debate is that of an afterschool program housed at a large metropolitan university in a major Southeastern City. However, the City Debate program is a smaller component of the League of City Debaters, a debate outreach network that includes cities across the country. Within City Debate, the program further separates into lab sessions based on field of participation, including novice, junior varsity, and varsity policy debate sessions

as well as extemporaneous speaking and Lincoln Douglas debate. This study focuses on participants involved in the varsity policy debate lab of City Debate.

Figure 1

Organization of City Debate and League of City Debaters



The choice to follow the varsity policy debate lab reflects an understanding of the complicated organization of the City Debate program and an awareness of the research already completed in the field of debate. Because City Debate operates as an afterschool activity based at an area university rather than a public or private secondary school, the number of students fluctuates drastically from week to week. Students in the varsity policy debate lab attended the program more consistently than did students in the other labs. This consistency provided the opportunity to form strong relationships with participants and observe students and volunteers who have formed a community of

practice. In addition, this group was most similar to participants in previous research studies on debate, high school students competing in policy debate tournaments.

For purposes of this study, I interviewed participants active in both City Debate and in the Varsity Policy Debate Breakout Session (VPDSB). Eleven members of the varsity policy debate breakout session agreed to participate in this study (Appendix E). Of the eleven, four were female and seven were male. Six participants identified as African American, one participant identified as Asian American, and four identified as White. I include myself in the table as the only white female in the setting. Over the three years of observation, there were five core student members of the group and six staff members. Approximately ten other youth members and two volunteers attended one to three times during data collection.

Participants included both high school debaters and volunteers at City Debate. In some instances, community members had participated in both groups. That experience was noted in the schooling experience section of the table with an asterisk beside the participant's name. I assigned pseudonyms to all participants and schools to protect participant anonymity. It is important to note that although all breakout session drew from the same pool of volunteers, the youth participating in the varsity policy debate breakout session differed from most other debaters in the City Debate community. In most cases, VPDBS debaters had participated in debate for a longer period of time than other participants and had experienced more success at the activity.

Table 1

High school participants, varsity policy debate breakout session

Participant	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Schooling Experience
Leigh	17	African American	Female	Green High School
Lexy	18	African American	Female	Green High School
Robb	17	African American	Female	Williams High School
Sean	17	White	Male	Green High School
Tran	17	Asian American	Male	Green High School

Table 2

City Debate volunteers

Participant	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Schooling Experience
Ben	60s	White	Male	Pemberton University
Cole *	Early 20s	African American	Male	Southeast University, Green High School
Jamal	30s	African American	Male	Southeast University
Jay	20	African American	Male	Pemberton University
Jim	19	White	Male	Southeast University
Susan	30	White	Female	Pemberton University

Youth participants in the study were all members of the varsity policy debate breakout session. However, there was a wide range in their debate backgrounds and level of school-based debate support. Students at Green High School benefited from a strong

tradition of debate and a large population of debate participants. Robb, as the only participant from Williams High School, attended City Debate for two years without a consistent debate partner or regular opportunities to debate. On occasion, Robb debated with Lexy from Green High School, and the Green High School debate team listed Robb as one of their debaters to give her the opportunity to compete.

Adult participants in the study came from a wide range of backgrounds and occupied varied roles in the program. Ben and Jamal organized the Wednesday night program. Although both men co-facilitated the program, Jamal appeared to operate as the face and emotional heart of the program, while Ben assumed the majority of the responsibility for transporting supplies and materials.

Lab leaders at City Debate such as Jay, Jim, and Cole all had multiple years of competitive debate experience. Jay worked with students as a lab leader for younger debaters but organized community- building activities for the larger group that included the VPDBS. As lab leaders in the advanced lab, Jim and Cole brought multiple years of nationally competitive debate experience to the community. Jim's participation in the VPDBS was primarily that of an older, more experienced debater. He did not appear to develop the same type of relationship with youth participants that Cole and Jay cultivated. This may have been because of his short one- year tenure with the program. Cole bridged the worlds of the youth and adult participants. In high school, he attended City Debate as a youth participant from Green High School. The students from that school were aware of the shared connection and referenced common acquaintances and friends in their communications with Cole. In most instances, I was seen as an observer with less debate knowledge than either youth or adult participants. However, as time

went on, Cole and Jim solicited advice from me regarding effective ways of explaining certain larger concepts and arguments. As an additional adult in the room, I often became a support resource when Cole or Jim felt their explanations were unclear.

Data Sources and Collection

Three sources, participant observation, documents, and interviews, provided the foundation for this work. These sources allow for comparison across data sources of both the articulated philosophy as well as the practices of City Debate.

Participant observation. Participant observation comprised the core of data collection for this study. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) stress the importance of acknowledging the level of participation for researchers engaging with a community. They suggest that although many different levels of participation may be appropriate based on the research site and questions, the researcher must be transparent about his or her role within the community in notes and writings. While observing in City Debate from 2007 to 2009, my role ranged from engaged observation to complete participation. This range was an intentional choice on my part. City Debate relied on volunteers from area colleges to staff the breakout sessions and all volunteers were expected to participate fully. In addition, the act of supporting the community became a means of reciprocating for the access granted by the community. Helping students craft arguments and supporting the main lab leader became ways of demonstrating my appreciation and respect for the openness of the community.

Observations occurred once weekly during the varsity policy debate breakout session for a total of 20 observations. Of these 20 observations, ten were audio-taped and six videotaped. I videotaped with the awareness that the inclusion of video added layers

to the negotiation of meaning in the space (Pink 2001). Videotaping sessions was crucial to understanding how youth used literacy in this context due to the performative nature of policy debate participation. Students in the varsity policy debate lab session already saw their presentations as a performance before judges, and part of the pedagogy in the lab focused on how they as debate participants controlled the perceptions by others in the debate round.

Documents. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) discuss the need for categorizing documents to describe an audience and context for the creation of each document and act as an initial descriptor. I collected all documents disseminated at City Debate meetings and identified an audience and a use in the community. I then used these documents to identify pedagogical practices and develop a sense of curriculum. Documents included current news articles, evidence packets, requests for newsletter submissions, and applications for City Debate summer workshops (See Appendix A for full list). When using documents to expand and deepen knowledge of themes, I first determined whether those documents were used in the primary space in which I observed. If they were not used in the VPDBS, as was the case with many of the supplementary curricular documents, I did not explore them as an example of curriculum for that component of the City Debate community.

Interviews. Ethnographic interviews offered access to parts of the story incompletely understood through observation. The negotiation of meaning necessarily involves the reflections of community members and the interviews conducted with participants allowed for a purposeful conversation about specific questions. For purposes of this study, I conducted interviews within the perspective of responsive interviewing

(Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Rubin and Rubin argue that interviewing reflects communication between "conversational partners" in a negotiation of "learning what is important to those being studied" (p.15). Responsive interviewing allows for an equalization of researcher and participant as both try to think critically about the community in question.

Guided by this philosophy, I recorded interviews with five volunteers and four youth participants affiliated with the varsity policy debate lab at City Debate. One youth participant stopped attending in the middle of the study and I was unable to complete her interview. In-depth interviews complemented data gathered through participant observation in this ethnographic study. During the initial interview, I used a semi-structured interview format to ask questions directly related to participation in City Debate (Appendix B). I conducted a second round of interviews to answer questions that emerged during the initial interview cycle and the initial ethnographic video data analysis. The second set of interviews focused on expanding understanding of phenomena and actions within City Debate.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The following section details the process for analysis and interpretation of document, observation, and interview data. I used observations as the primary source of information for the pedagogy of critical literacy and the interaction of forms of communication, and I supplemented with documents and interviews to support and challenge information gained during the observations. I noted and discussed conflicting data between observations, documents, and interviews. I relied on interview data as the

primary source of information for why members chose to participate and how they perceived the experience.

Coding across data sources. I coded data resulting from document collection, observation and the transcription of interviews and analyzed for themes. Merriam (1998) describes coding as occurring "at two levels—identifying information about the data and interpretive constructs related to analysis" (p.164). Following this designation, I assigned each data source first level codes (Appendix C). I assigned first level codes on the sentence level and included more than one code per sentence where appropriate. In total, first level codes numbered 100 separate markers.

After I assigned all data first level codes, I identified collapsed codes. These second level codes focused on the interpretation of commonalities across the data and identified connections across different sources of data in an attempt to generate larger themes. Second level codes reflected the following broad categories: contextual factors, debate-related pedagogy and practices, literacy and critical literacy-related pedagogy and practices, building community, care, and broadening perspectives (Appendix D). Although these are presented as seven separate themes, critical literacy, care, broadening perspectives and building community surfaced across multiple research questions. I first organized the findings by question and then explored commonalities across contexts and data sources.

Reliability. Merriam (1998) describes reliability as answering the question of "whether the results are consistent with the data collected" (p. 206). The question of whether a study possesses reliability is ultimately a question of whether the findings reflect results that would be expected from the data analysis and collection. I

systematically collected and analyzed data such that the research presents a transparent process. Data collected in this study form a "chain of evidence" such that other researchers can replicate the process (Yin, 2002).

Full transcription of observation data posed an unanticipated challenge in this study. In many cases, crosstalk between five to seven participants made accurate transcription of all classroom conversation difficult. In instances where crosstalk interfered with my ability to identify words accurately, I left a space for the word and picked up when I could distinguish the words again. Transcription of observation data focused on the words of participants as well as actions in instances where video was available. Video was not available for all observed sessions due to early negotiation of access and my varying role in the community, a role that changed week by week.

Validity. Merriam (1998) identifies six strategies for improving the internal validity of a study: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, collaborative research, and identifying researcher biases. Each of these methods describes a different way to confirm that the findings reflect what is actually occurring in the research environment. For the purposes of this study, I focused on long-term observation, triangulation, member checks, peer examination, and identifying researcher bias as means of supporting internal validity.

Long-term observation allows participant observers to check findings across time and cultivate access to the community. I observed in City Debate from 2006 to 2009, with data collection occurring between 2007 and 2009. I collected approximately 15 hours of audio and nine hours of video during data collection. In that three years, I established relationships with adolescent participants, volunteers, and organizers, and

City Debate members allowed me to ask questions and observe as they interacted in this literacy community.

Although I believe my lengthy interaction reflects an honest, open and bidirectional relationship with the community, I relied on additional validity checks to support my findings. I cross-analyzed data obtained from documents, observations, and interviews. Using more than one source of data allowed for comparisons across data sources to confirm findings.

City Debate staff wanted this research as a means of identifying effective practices within their community. One of the key aspects of this collaboration was conducting member checks to discuss tentative findings with participants. When possible, I shared tentative findings with participants on an individual basis in order to confirm or challenge emergent themes. In addition, I asked for support from colleagues who are graduate students in my department to perform coding checks. Coding checks served as peer reviews. Although I value the perspectives of both members of the community and peer reviewers, I assume sole responsibility for the findings represented in this study.

My perception of the literacy pedagogy and individual perspectives of participants in City Debate is informed by my individual researcher perspective as a member of the larger League of City Debaters (LCD). Prior to beginning this study, I coached debate for two years in a City Debate program in a different city. I had no experience with debate prior to working with my high school students, and there was a significant growth curve as I learned the terminology, structure, and rigid framework of policy debate. At the same time, I observed a community dedicated to nurturing students

and celebrating success wherever it was found. My work prepared me to expect positive outcomes from the program. In choosing a second city as the setting of my study, however, I entered a new community separate and distinct from my previous experience in both framework and practices. Although I brought perspectives on the value of LCDs, I forged new relationships in an attempt to understand a community that, although affiliated with a national organizational umbrella, cultivated its own individual identity as a literacy community geared towards social action. Prior to beginning the proposed study, I established relationships with students, volunteers, and organizers that could both aid and hinder my role in this study. I kept a researcher journal of personal reflections on my role in City Debate and how that changed over time.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study is limited to the pedagogical practices of one varsity policy debate breakout session in one City Debate program in one major Southeastern city. As such, it is a unique case and I make no arguments about its generalizability to the context of other debate leagues in other cities. However, this study offers potential for drawing connections across research sites to build a greater understanding of why members choose to participate in critical literacy communities outside of school settings. In addition, it offers the opportunity to compare the findings in City Debate with traditional understandings of the demographics of policy debate participants as described by Fine (2001). Case studies such as this one can be useful for generating hypotheses for future studies in diverse settings.

Chapter IV
Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine how youth develop and use critical literacy skills as they participate in City Debate, an afterschool debate community that provided debate resources to urban youth in a large Southeastern city. Specifically, I examine the pedagogy and literacy practices of the community and how pedagogy and practice supported participating youth in developing critical literacy. In addition, I explored how City Debate influenced awareness of current events and youth participation in their communities.

Findings are arranged in five sections. First, I discuss the context of the community to introduce both the structure and the participants in City Debate. I then examine how notions of community and respect form a foundation for interaction in City Debate. Next, I describe the various types of communication in the VPDBS and how oral, aural, written, and performative communication interact. I then explore the pedagogy of the community and finish by analyzing the definitions of literacy and critical literacy in the community.

The Context of City Debate

Jamal towers over most of the youth in the program, but his size is not the first thing I notice. Talking with staff and students, laughing and making jokes, he conveys a sense of purpose and the belief that right now, at City Debate on a Wednesday night, he is exactly where he is supposed to be. In his capacity as City Debate director, Jamal starts the program off tonight with general announcements. The students are restless and Jamal does not have their full attention. He waits for silence—" I am in no rush. And I love you

that much." Youth in the audience in this large lecture room settle and let him continue with the announcements. He finishes by saying, "I am glad, like I said, to see each and every one of you. Hopefully all of you, ALL OF YOU, are keeping up with what's going on in the world, becoming the young critical scholars that we think that all of you are capable of [being]" (2/20/2008).

Jamal operated as one of the only constant figures in City Debate, a program that in many ways appeared to "always [rely] on the kindness of strangers" (Williams, 1951). In my three years of observation, the meeting location changed three times, and each new semester seemed to bring with it concurrent concerns about funding and whether buses had been secured from the local school system to ferry youth to and from the program. College student volunteers staffed the various breakout sessions, and availability depended greatly on weekly academic workloads as well as each volunteer's own individual debate schedule. Although the logistics of the community could best be described as being in a permanent state of flux, Jamal explained that the real beauty of the community was its resiliency (2/28/2008):

> But I think- I think what has been real remarkable about that in regards to the location, our students and staff have still been committed to you know, learn about debate regardless of those obstacles and challenges…

Jamal described an internal drive for both youth participants and staff that allowed City Debate to overcome the challenge of having an inconsistent physical space. However, he also acknowledged that the lack of a permanent home affected the type of community that he wanted to create for the students. Jamal referred to the members of City Debate as "intellectual nomads" and reflected that "every year it seems the university has had to

put us in a different permanent space. And so we're still extremely grateful …but that's obviously been a challenge in terms of trying to kind of personalize… in terms of hanging up pictures and doing that kind of little stuff that we wanted to do to kind of give the students a sense of home" (2/28/08). City Debate benefited from the support of the local university; however, they struggled to carve a permanent space and a visible identity. Each week, local college students and volunteers carted in materials and set up the snack station. At the end of the session, participants neatened the space, packed up curriculum materials, and returned them to the trunk of Ben's four-door sedan. By the end of the evening, the only indicator of City Debate's existence was a single sign on the door of whatever space was allocated for that particular evening.

Every week, the "intellectual nomads" of City Debate descended on the space they did have. Wednesday afternoons at five o'clock, Jamal called City Debate to order with a brief opening assembly. In this opening assembly, he reminded youth participants how much the staff appreciated their attendance and made announcements relevant to the whole community. These announcements varied from week to week. In one session, the announcements included the date of the next debate tournament, a request for information forms to be returned, a list of opportunities for which students could volunteer, and information about the end of year banquet (2/20/2008). In another session, Jamal announced a public event featuring scholar and former Black Panther Angela Davis as well as scholarship opportunities and college preparation activities (3/18/2009). The opening assembly served as an opportunity to disseminate information considered relevant to the community and transition participants into the skill-building work that occurred in the breakout sessions.

After the opening assembly, Jamal separated participants into breakout sessions based on level of experience and type of debate practiced. City Debate provided instruction in novice, junior varsity, and varsity policy debate, extemporaneous speaking, Lincoln Douglas debate, and public forum. For purposes of this study, I followed participants in the varsity policy debate breakout session. Although I occasionally observed in other breakout sessions, I limit my findings to what I observed in the opening assembly and the varsity policy debate breakout session.

There were some general trends of participation across the community. First, most varsity policy debate participants at City Debate attended Green High School. In my historical study of City Debate, I found that Green High School was one of only a few urban high schools in this large Southeastern city to have an active policy debate program when the League of City Debaters was established (Cridland-Hughes, 2008) so the presence of many competitive debaters from one school was unsurprising. Only one student in the varsity policy debate breakout session, Robb, attended a different high school, Williams High School. In addition, almost all participants had competitive debate experience. I was the only member of the community who had never participated in an interscholastic debate at either the secondary or tertiary level. In addition, all youth participants had debated in national level tournaments and participated in summer debate camps. All other staff members interacted in college level debate circles, some as debaters and others as university-level coaches and judges.

Jamal attempted to keep staff consistent for each breakout session group. Although that was not always possible, the VPDBS had two main lab leaders over my three years of observation. Cole served as the lab leader for the first two years of

observation, then Jim facilitated for the third year. Both Cole and Jim debated competitively in high school as well as for the university that they both attended and on whose campus City Debate was housed.

These descriptive statistics demonstrate the diversity of race, gender, and educational institutions for both students and lab leaders in the community. The one commonality among all participants excluding myself was a presence in national level debate competition.

Building a Community of Scholars and Intellectuals

> We are welcoming to everyone that comes, just as long as you have some very basic understanding that we're going to respect one another, that we're going to listen to one another, and that we're going to share and learn from our differences. And having those basic foundations of understanding has I think really helped create a community that's open, that's built upon tolerance of ideas and understanding and one that promotes discourse over physical violence.
>
> -Jamal, 2/27/2008

When discussing the context of City Debate, I identified the purpose of the opening assembly as centering youth intellectually in a debate and literacy community. However, for City Debate, community extended beyond a collection of like-minded individuals meeting together to practice debate. In this space, building community meant navigating the differences created by bringing together people from different institutions and ages, simultaneously teaching all involved both debate skills and the concept of reciprocity. The community of City Debate helped youth develop as "scholars and intellectuals" as well as learners and teachers.

Community as practiced in City Debate reflects an understanding of community as constant negotiation and change. Wenger (1998) discusses the roles of the individual

for the community and the community for the individual, arguing that "for individuals…learning is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities" and that "for communities… learning is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members" (p.7). Wenger's understanding of the relationship between the larger group and the individual reflects the interdependence of both in the success and sustenance of the whole. City Debate participants learn a similar notion of community, focusing on the importance of active participation in a common sphere rather than individual similarities and differences.

Building a community of difference. City Debate participants all shared an interest in the debate activity, but in some cases it seemed as though that was the only thing they did share. Debaters came from both middle and high schools, from different neighborhoods across the metropolitan area, from different universities, and from different backgrounds and perspectives on the world. Although their differences superficially challenged their ability to connect, those divergences were seen as integral to developing a broader sense of community for each individual. As Jamal said earlier, the goal of the community was to "share and learn from our differences" (2-28-08). In this space, difference was the norm. I describe the differences to emphasize the complex nuances of participation in the community.

One key area of difference emerged when examining the people who participated in City Debate. Although youth participants in the larger community of City Debate are predominantly African American high school students, this sentence does not capture other layers of difference in the group. The community was evenly split between women and men and at its peak included seven different public high schools in the metropolitan

area. Towards the end of my observation period, a middle school also began participating in City Debate as well, adding yet another layer of age diversity to the community. Participants crossed socioeconomic classes and scholastic success levels as well. The larger City Debate community contained youth from underserved and affluent communities as well as students with both high and low school performance. Staff members in the City Debate community demonstrated greater racial, ethnic and age diversity than students in the community. Staff members were male and female, and included different ethnicities and races. Most staff members are undergraduates attending one of two affiliated universities, one public and one private. Notable exceptions to this rule included myself and my husband, both former high school debate coaches. Across both staff and student groups, participant ages ranged from late teens to early sixties.

In addition to the demographic differences, community members also reported different reasons for participation. City Debate relied completely on volunteer participation, both from staff members and from youth participants. Although all members were volunteers, it did not necessarily follow that all volunteered for the same reasons. For some collegiate volunteers, participation in City Debate was a phenomenon jokingly referred to as "forced volunteerism" (MW, 10/2/2007). National level college debaters at the private university understood that their opportunities for intercollegiate competition linked directly with their participation in the League of City Debaters. In the student expectations document disseminated at one training, one area coach wrote that "without the debate team the community programming efforts would be significantly impaired through the loss of high quality instructors… without the community programs

the debate team would have fewer coaches and about half the travel budget" (BF Student Expectations Document, 9/11/2009). The symbiotic relationship between City Debate and competitive debate relied on participation by area college debaters, and was explicitly connected with available funding for competitions and coaching.

Competitive considerations, however, described only one reason staff chose to participate. For some, participation in City Debate offered a way of supporting students with whom they identified as both "urban youth" and debaters in the larger network of urban debate leagues. Jay, a former LCD debater from a large northeastern city, described his participation in City Debate from the context of his own background, saying that " a lot of the things I see contributing to my slower-paced development I can see in a lot of our kids…we try to meet them where they are and bring them from that point because we've been there ourselves" (03/20/2009). Jay's participation in City Debate operated as a way for him to give back to youth with whom he felt a shared experience both within debate and in a larger urban cultural context.

All staff did not articulate a sense of shared cultural experiences. For others, their involvement in City Debate reflected their own past experiences with youth and an enthusiasm for teaching. Jim, one of the primary lab leaders for the varsity policy lab, described overhearing his debate coach and a former debater discussing the program, saying " I guess my passion for teaching got me interested in wanting to teach kids and it's about debate and debate's honestly like my- where it centers around my life." Jim's love for the activity and his desire to teach others to be successful spurred his participation. Although he did not cite an experiential connection to the students, his enthusiasm for debate offered a shared experience upon which to build a relationship.

Participants also described shared relationships as a reason for participation. For Robb, her relationship with Jamal, the director of the program, served as a central reason for continuing to attend City Debate. She elaborated that "[he] was always there. He always had a smile on his face, he always had a quote, he was always ready, and he always embraced everybody…he's not afraid to give what he has" (R.A., 2/28/09). In City Debate, Robb was able to create a mutual intellectual and nurturing relationship with an adult figure that she admired and respected. Noddings (2005) argued that these shared relationships between youth and adults are missing in many schools, even though "if the school has one main goal, it should be to promote the growth of students as healthy, competent, moral people" (p.10). Although Robb, a national level debater, also received quality debate education at City Debate, her own reason for participating was the connection she formed with Jamal. Robb's description of her relationship with Jamal also reflects Duncan- Andrade's explanation of cariño as "the foundation of relationships among the poor and working classes—often the only thing left to give, in families raising children on substandard wages" (2008, p. 451). Jamal gave freely of his time and resources to the community and children of City Debate, and his dedication inspired the same in youth participants.

Building a City Debate "family". In many instances, Jamal introduced volunteers and staff members as " brothers and sisters in debate" even before giving the relevant credentials regarding debate participation and knowledge. Family at City Debate reflected a reciprocal relationship, with students also demonstrating care for their lab leaders and community directors. In one instance, a staff member experienced a death in the family, and students were asked to sign a sympathy card. In another instance, one

student who had been participating in the program for four years referred to one of the community directors as "Mom." The youth and adult members of the community conceptualized their relationships in familial terms, referring to each other as brothers and sisters and to older members of the community as mothers and fathers. Although these relationships can be seen as superficial ways of understanding power dynamics, I argue that the relationships and the rhetoric used to describe those interpersonal connections allowed all members to develop deeper identifications and a greater sense of responsibility to both individual participants and the community as a whole.

Building a community of reciprocity. One of the traits unique to City Debate was the constantly evolving role for members. Unlike most community groups in high school, youth did not "age out" of the community. Instead, as they reached milestones such as middle and high school graduation, they occupied new roles in the community. These new roles reflected both an awareness of the evolution of the individual as well as the needs of the community. In general, longer terms of participation in the community equated to more expectations for giving back to the program.

Members at all stages were expected to reciprocate for their opportunities as a means of giving back to the community. Jamal explained that high school students such as Robb, Sean, and Tran were asked to judge at middle school tournaments and volunteer with their old teams. College members such as Cole and Jay also judged at high school tournaments and participated in City Debate on a weekly basis. The community itself contained multiple examples of members who had initially participated as middle and high school debaters, then sought out opportunities to continue working with area high school debaters.

Reciprocity for the community of City Debate ensured that participants occupied positions of increasing responsibility for the continuation of the community. The norm of continued participation allowed for a long-term investment in the health of the community and for the preparation of new cycles of leadership to succeed the old.

Developing community, respect, and voice. City Debate operates outside of schools and outside of neighborhoods, bringing both youth and volunteers together in a new space where new interactions must be negotiated. The process of supporting participants together in a shared location with shared norms and ideals, however, allows youth to reimagine themselves in an active and activist role.

For student participants, City Debate offered a once weekly opportunity to interact with both college debaters and other debaters from across the metropolitan area. Specific to the varsity policy debate breakout session, students that themselves represented the best of their schools' debaters saw City Debate as a place where they could hone arguments against other students of the same caliber. Sean explained that "since we are at the top of Green's policy team, we don't really have anyone to make us get better… it just adds another sort of person to help us think about what we should be doing" (04/29/09). City Debate offered an opportunity for varsity debaters from area schools to improve their technique and prepare rigorously for national- level competition.

Pedagogical Philosophy and Tools of City Debate

Pedagogy operates as the backbone of a learning space, a scaffold for the framing of the philosophies and tools of the community. Decisions about the central concepts of a discipline and how to teach those ideas reveal significant and important clues about the community. In some cases, pedagogy reveals a strong grounding in traditional education

and a continuation of the status quo. In other spaces, pedagogy reflects a desire to teach in a way that challenges past injustices. When teaching with a social justice lens, pedagogy can operate as a "tool of revolutionary change" (Morrell 2008, xii).

In the context of City Debate, the pedagogy of the community reflects the belief that debate offers the tools for written and oral analysis as well as critical and informed interaction in the world. This perspective emerges as community members talk about the facilitation of youth skill development as well as in the resources made available to youth participants and lab leaders. On a fundamental level, City Debate participants articulate the belief that debate pedagogy allows for the cultivation of skills that support the development of youth participants as "citizen activists."

It is with this conception of the role of pedagogy that I begin to explore teaching and learning in City Debate. My conception of pedagogy includes not only the program's curricular philosophy but also the curriculum and teaching strategies I observed. I first discuss the underlying curricular philosophy of City Debate, then the curricular resources of the program. Next, I describe specific pedagogical tools of the program and end by exploring how the philosophy of critical and reflective pedagogy is disseminated to participating volunteers and youth members.

The curricular philosophy of City Debate. I arrived at the first session of City Debate for the semester and for the year and participated in an on-site training session for new volunteers. On-site training sessions were luxuries; most days there were more students than volunteers and the need for lab leaders superseded the cultivation of thoughtful teaching. On this day, however, transportation had not yet been negotiated with the school system and Jamal referred to the session as "the pre-grand opening."

"What's going on in education is kind of like warfare." Jamal described the City Debate approach to curriculum as a triad approach to curriculum, consisting of critical reading, critical writing, and oral communication. When Jamal introduced this triad approach to curriculum in the training session, he began by talking about the United States military and the triad approach to nuclear weapons of air, land, and sea. He commented, "What's going on in education is kind of like warfare" (Training session, 9/12/2007).

Jamal linked the U.S. military's approach to nuclear weapons and the curricular philosophy of City Debate deliberately. Jamal's connection of debate education and military strategy described how City Debate approached debate education from all possible communicative fronts. He connected the fronts of land, air, and sea for the military with City Debate's focus on reading, writing, and speaking. This philosophy of integrated communication reflected the structure of policy debate and the complex interactions between reading, writing, speaking, and listening that occur within a policy debate round. Specifically, students in the round read to prepare cases, write and organize set arguments, listen to the arguments offered on the opposing side, and then verbally respond to those arguments. Students who hope to fully interact in the debate round, then, cannot rely solely on competency within one form of communication. Instead, they must have the capacity to switch forms of communication based on the particular speech in the round.

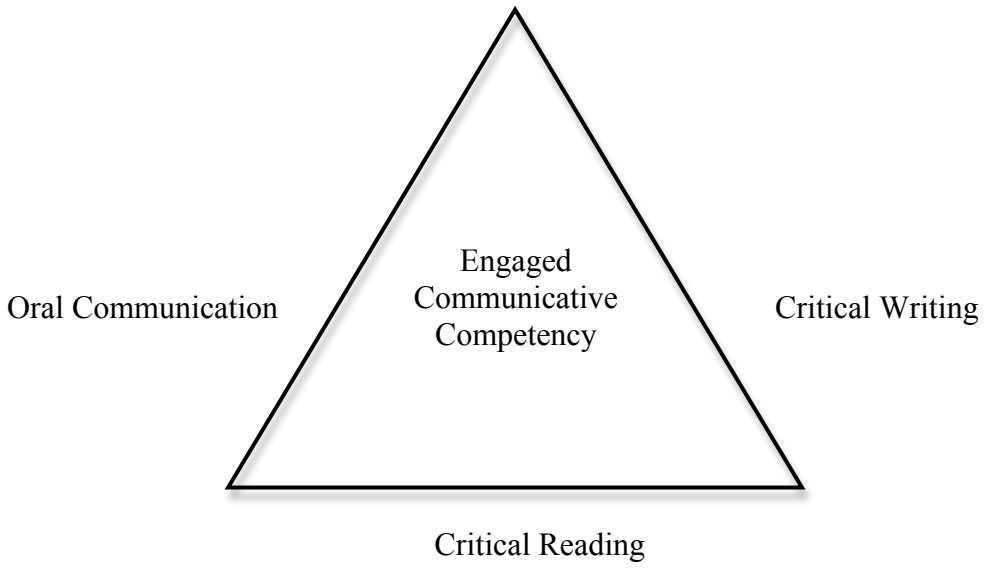
Explored in more depth, however, Jamal used the military metaphor to convey a sense of urgency regarding the importance of teaching students to think critically about their debate resources and their larger context. Invoking the image of warfare regarding

education forced the volunteers to take their teaching role seriously. For Jamal, teaching youth in City Debate was an opportunity to "[equip] them with the ability to become advocates for social change in their communities and be able to articulate it in a way that causes people to have to listen." Lab leaders and volunteers in City Debate understood and internalized this sense of urgency. Jay, a lab leader and former participant in City Debate, commented "most people see this as an extracurricular activity…as a fun little mind game. But for the inner city youth it's more of a lifeline." Debate pedagogy grounded the activities of the program, but the goal was not debate success but rather success in life.

The triad approach to curriculum emphasized oral communication, critical writing, and critical reading as the three components necessary to developing communicative competency. In this curricular model, all three elements occupied equal roles in the larger goal of developing engaged communication skills.

Figure 2

Engaged communicative competency



In the triad approach to curriculum, the word "critical" preceded both reading and writing. The goal of communication and the curricular philosophy of City Debate reflected the fundamental belief that communication must be reflective, thoughtful, and active. For City Debate, reading, writing, and speaking could only be effective modes of communication if youth participants were also critical consumers and users of knowledge.

"We don't wanna strait-jacket you": Curricular flexibility. Although there are specific resources available for the lab leaders and volunteers in City Debate, the community emphasizes creativity and individualized instruction. In previous studies into urban debate leagues, student debaters described a program that gave the debaters freedom over curricular choices (Cridland-Hughes, 2008). This belief in the importance of freedom surfaced again when discussing curriculum with the City Debate volunteers. Jamal explained, "We don't wanna strait-jacket you" (Training Session, 9/12/07). Instead of being provided previously developed resources and a strictly regimented curriculum, lab leaders were expected to link to the debate topic in a way that was relevant, thoughtful, and aware of the participation and skill level of the youth participants.

Although staff emphasized curricular flexibility as a central tenet of City Debate, it is worth noting that this flexibility operated within the rigid structure of policy debate. The policy debate format could not be changed to allow students more time, support from staff or peers, or a different order of speeches. The debate itself and interaction in the debate followed the same sequence, the same times, and the same argument structure. Initially, this appears to be antithetical to the flexibility espoused by the community.

Looking more closely, however, curricular flexibility appears in the diversity of topics addressed under the umbrella of one resolution. For example, in 2003, students participating in high school debate were charged with crafting a policy substantially increasing protection of marine resources. Affirmative plans crafted by students ranged from limiting the dumping of ballast water in foreign seas to more stringently regulating the waste produced by cruise ships. In 2008, the resolution required that the affirmative policy through the United States Federal Government provide substantial assistance for sub-Saharan Africa. Robb's case for providing assistance, for example, focused on providing water as a means of assistance. Other debaters emphasized the development of community health liaisons and still other teams advocated distributing condoms as a means of controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS. In many ways, the limits of policy debate as a structure inspired youth to find more freedom in the curriculum. More specific to City Debate as a program, the day-to-day operations of the varsity policy debate session reflected the immediate debate-related activities of the community, and instruction was tailored to the performative and analytical needs of the participating youth.

Implementing the triad approach to curriculum in City Debate. The enactment of the triad approach to curriculum depended heavily on the specific time and space of the community interaction. City Debate operated in two linked but distinct spheres. In the opening assembly, students gathered in a large group to listen as Jamal welcomed them and made announcements specific to the day. Students then broke into individual sessions based on level and form of debate participation. Although lab leaders in each session were responsible for the curriculum of their individual sessions, they had access to multiple different supplemental resources to support their teaching. Resources

came from Jamal, from summer debate camps, from lab leaders' own experiences, and from the youth in the program.

P-D.I.D.D.I, 2PAC, and Who ARE you? Jamal and City Debate members provided materials specific to the development of debate skills and the evaluation of student competencies, as well as more general information about current events and issues of relevance to youth participants. Developed materials incorporated knowledge of current events and popular culture considered relevant to the urban students attending City Debate. Acronyms for central components of the program drew on students' prior knowledge of popular hip hop figures like Sean "Pdiddy" Combs, Tupac Shakur, and T.I., who grew up in a working class neighborhood in the same city as City Debate. Arguing for the inclusion of popular culture into learning activities, Morrell (2004) argues that hip hop music "represents a resistant voice of today's youth through its articulation of problems that the young people...face on a daily basis" (p.59). He goes on to describe hip hop as a resistant voice and popular music as performative and activist. One of the goals of City Debate is to help youth cultivate their ability to think and speak critically about issues of social justice. By incorporating recognizable names in the curriculum of City Debate, Jamal and City Debate staff members create a canonical listing of activist role models for the community.

In the training session, Jamal introduced staff to foundational skills for debate participation by exploring the P-D.I.D.D.I. sheet, the Personal Debater Inventory for Directional Development and Illumination (Appendix F). This document operated as the central written curriculum for City Debate. Staff were expected to complete the inventory for each student as they progressed through the program.

The P-D.I.D.D.I sheet itself was subdivided into eight categories: basic concepts, the affirmative case, the negative case, the disadvantage, flowing and listening, debate etiquette (community and respect), reading comprehension and articulation, and nonverbal communication.

Basic concepts. Concepts considered central to argumentation and fundamental to participation in debate comprised the first category. This section of the P-D.I.D.D.I sheet reflected the basic information necessary to begin participation in debate. The first category on the inventory is labeled 2PAC and focuses on presentation and content. The next category was titled "Who ARE you?" For this second skill, the focus was on argumentation and the parts of an argument, including assertion, reasoning, and evidence. The next acronym, D.R.M.O., addressed the refutation of arguments using denial, reversal, minimization and outweighing. The final acronym was M.R.T.—M stood for magnitude of the problem, R stood for risk that it would actually occur, and T stood for the time frame in which it would come to pass. Other concepts included in the Basic Concepts category included information about the actual structure of the debate round, the parts of a debate, speeches, and associated time limits.

The affirmative, the negative, and the disadvantage. In these three categories, the curriculum focused on in-depth knowledge of the two sides participating in the debate round. These sections required that youth participants be aware of debate vocabulary and the structure of a debate in order to understand their role in the debate round. In addition, skills covered in these three categories included deliberate discussion about the construction of arguments, writing and crafting cases, and effective debate research.

Flowing and listening. This category focused on skills necessary to be an active listener in the debate round. Concepts covered in this section of the curriculum included practice in flowing oral communication in progressively more difficult settings. Flowing involved creating a written record of the arguments in the debate round and required a solid understanding of how to make short notes that allowed participants to respond to the oral arguments presented by the other team.

Debate etiquette (community and respect). The P-D.I.D.D.I. curriculum intentionally included a section on behavior before, within, and after the debate round. Debate participation required constant challenging of ideas, and City Debate explicitly focused on teaching students skills to manage the anxiety produced in that intellectual conflict.

Reading comprehension and articulation. Debate as an activity required interaction with and interpretation of textual evidence. Youth participants were monitored for their ability to read and explain text. In addition, they were given structured opportunities for participation and engagement with text.

Nonverbal communication. Youth participants were coached to be aware of body language and their nonverbal cues. Although this was taught in the context of the debate round, youth also practiced ways of controlling the messages presented through their body language.

The P-D.I.D.D.I. sheet operated as the primary written curriculum of City Debate. Each acronym reflected a set of debate skills that students were expected to learn and offered lab leaders a means of structuring their teaching for the semester. Although the written curriculum for the program never explicitly referenced the three philosophical

underpinnings of the program, the skills central to the inventory reflected an awareness of the goal of critical reading, critical writing, and oral communication. The curriculum does not explicitly include any reflection or discussion on how these skills will develop thoughtful students. However, Jamal called the M.R.T. acronym "the goal of an undergraduate education—the ability to make good, sound decisions…" (09/12/2007). In this quote, Jamal focused on what he saw as the importance of debate pedagogy, the ability to apply analysis to life decisions. Jamal went beyond the intended goal of the P-D.I.D.D.I. sheet of inventorying individual debate skills to reflecting on how students could then use those skills to situations outside of debate participation. This became a part of the education and support of new volunteers, and served as a foundation of the role of the new volunteer.

Supplementary resources in VPDBS. Although City Debate provided a skeleton curriculum for students just beginning to participate in policy debate, the students in the varsity policy debate breakout session had moved beyond the minimal inventory offered by the P.D.I.D.D.I. sheet. These students relied on supplemental resources to push their thinking and practice. For these students, City Debate offered access to key resources for competitive success.

In order to be competitive at the highest levels of debate, many students in the VPDBS attended intensive summer research sessions held at colleges and universities across the country. These summer debate camps, ranging from one to six weeks in duration, resulted in the development of highly edited volumes that provided a range of resources for students to use in the cultivation and refinement of individual cases. One such volume used in City Debate was the 2008 Topic Research Guide, an 88-page

introduction to the topic for the 2008-2009 school year (see sample in Appendix G). I include this appendix as an example of the types of resources lab leaders and students accessed to help craft and refine arguments.

Students in the varsity policy debate group also regularly relied on lab leaders as a resource for developing as debaters. Lab leaders for this group were college debaters with multiple years of nationally competitive debate experience. The experience of the lab leaders set City Debate in general and the varsity policy debate breakout session specifically apart from the school-based debate programs. At both Green and Williams High School, teachers facilitating the team had little to no competitive debate experience. In contrast, all of the lab leaders at City Debate had or were currently actively debating in college programs. Knowledge accumulated from years of debating could not be replicated with any resource other than the members of the community.

In addition to the actual debate experience, lab leaders came with files of knowledge on standard debate arguments. In the case of the varsity policy debate breakout session, lab leaders Cole and Jim were active high school and collegiate debaters with six to eight years of electronic and hard copies of standard debate files created for use in national level competition. These files operated as additional resources as students in the VPDBS regularly requested access to and instruction in common debate arguments. These arguments included debate kritiks, sophisticated critical arguments that incorporated questions about the underlying philosophy of whatever course of action was advocated in the debate round. Students referenced the arguments of Foucault, Agamben, and assorted other philosophers to challenge the positions of other debaters, exploring the nuances of philosophies at a level usually reserved for intensive college

courses. In one such discussion, participants explored the idea that exclusion in debate topic choice leads to the extermination of dissenting voices (04/02/08):

Cole: Their interpretation is exclusive. It tells us we can't debate the way we want and forces us to fit within this little box, and that's an example of what Agamben calls sovereignty. They just redraw the lines of the topic and try to exclude us. And the impact—what's the impact? Can you tell me? Lots of acts exclude people. Just give me any reason why. There's not a correct answer to this question. There's not a final one answer. Like if you wanted to debate and then someone was like, "no you can't debate because you're black." How would that make you feel?

Robb: Mad.

Cole: Yes. Okay, now how is that any different from the other team being like, "You can't talk about what you want because we have this traditional topic and you don't fit. Go home."

Robb: You kind of – how can I explain this? It's not really relating- I'm not really relating to kind of like a gang-

Cole: Okay.

Robb: Like, I don't know. And you don't really get to choose what gang and they can exclude you but in terms of a debate-

Cole: Are you answering right now or are you-

Robb: I'm answering.

Cole: No no no. I'm asking how it impacted yourself.

Robb: Impact? Why is it bad to exclude?

Cole: Why is it bad to exclude? Let's bring this just to a conversation.

(*new students arrive in session)*

Hey, what's up? Let's pretend this is just a conversation we were having.

Okay, you can't even talk about something and Sean was like, "No, I don't want to talk to you."

Robb: (*comment unintelligible)*

Cole: Sure, it increases education, but it's also_____ exclude people. Because that's the basis for what? Think about it this way. Excluding people leads to other exclusion, which leads to what in the end? I mean there's not a correct answer. Like think about-

Robb: Extermination then?

Cole: Sure. Something real bad, right? Because it's the basis for extermination. Okay, that's what Agamben says, right? Every genocide and stuff that's always happened has been based on line-drawing.

In this example, Cole and Robb explore the reasons behind exclusion in a small debate interaction and look at the larger philosophical problem of exclusionary behavior. Youth participants understood the complexities of the Agamben kritik and other philosophical arguments and applied these nuances to building strong responses to other debate arguments.

However, intellectual interaction with philosophical arguments was not limited to debate rounds or debate strategy. VPDBS members internalized these arguments and discussed them with other members of the City Debate community in noncompetitive

arenas. Jamal described Robb explaining Foucault to other students as he was taking them home after City Debate ended for the night (02/27/2008):

> And so the students were changing because their knowledge and what they understood was changing. So now, you have them having- engaged in political discussions or philosophical discussion. You know, I'll never forget, I was taking some students home and Robb got in this big discussion with the students about Foucault. You know, and I was sitting there just kind of like what the heck? You know, because it wasn't like superfi- it wasn't shallow in the sense that you know, obviously she hadn't read all of Foucault's books, but she definitely had a much more intimate understanding I would say than the average person. The fact that she even knew who it was probably puts her in a different ballpark than most students. But the fact that she understood enough to engage in a discussion with her peers and to explain it to them in a way that was not talking down to them but was trying to explain her perspective on a particular idea, I thought was amazing, because she had done- not only just learned a fairly complex set of ideas, but was communicating them in a way that she could empower and educate her peers about it. And I think the same thing goes on with the students when we, you know, that I've seen at CAD, elementary kids- I mean the middle school kids. They will go off about the topic- you know, we're talking about Africa this year, you know, and I'm even remembering the topic we had about genocide in Sudan a couple years ago. They still have this very intimate and wide range of knowledge about the topic that was a part of them- that became a part of them some kind of way.

As Jamal explained, debate-related arguments were not solely to be used in competition but rather were ideas to be engaged, both internally and with other critical thinkers. Personal experience, debate files, and other resources considered supplemental in other settings comprised the entirety of the curriculum of the VPDBS. At each meeting, students received individualized instruction designed to meet their competitive debate needs. These resources ranged from information about debate strategy and debate experience to philosophical conversations about the nature of existence and deep explanations of political systems. Students in the VPDBS engaged with text as a means of exploring different viewpoints, a way to try on critical lenses with which to view the world.

Pedagogical activities in City Debate. Students in City Debate participated in pedagogical activities that deepened thinking about debate as well as critical reflection on current events in society. These activities challenged students to articulate their beliefs and support those beliefs with research and evidence. Students discussed current events, read supporting evidence, constructed arguments reflecting points of view, and learned to articulate those arguments through performance.

Pedagogy in the opening assembly. The opening assembly of City Debate operated as a specific space of communicative instruction. Although the overarching theme of this 15- minute interaction was one of unification and community, Jamal incorporated pedagogical activities designed to support the development of thoughtful and engaged youth. Pedagogical activities in the opening assembly emphasized the cultivation of general communication activities rather than instruction specific to debate. Interactions in the opening assembly helped students become comfortable with

developing opinions and sharing those opinions with peers. The opening session offered a space to practice speaking in front of others and articulating opinions and to celebrate student achievements. During this time, Jamal introduced a topic for a Thinkwrite, a question asked at the beginning of City Debate usually related to current events. In a Thinkwrite, Jamal provided students with an oral prompt, gave them time to respond, then asked for students to share out. Students and staff wrote individual responses, and then participants volunteered to read their responses. Topics for Thinkwrites ranged from student and staff definitions of love and the best superpower to questions of how participants would spend the economic stimulus package authorized by Congress.

In one opening assembly, Jamal asked students to complete a Thinkwrite creating their own special holidays (03/18/09):

> Jamal: The reality is this- is that I was looking up this month, and I came to the conclusion after a little research that people name every day [in the] year it seems is something special. Like I found out this month is like Johnny Appleseed day. I found out this month is like Harriet Tubman day, I found out this month that they even like two or three days ago they did amazing incredible kid day. I know all of you all were, you know, maybe not kids, but some of you all would have definitely been in the running if they did know about amazing incredible kid day. But the point I came to is that there's people always inventing a day or a holiday for their own benefit or for their own purpose or cause. So the Thinkwrite for today is this: this is the question. Give you just a few minutes here. Here's what it is. If you could create any holiday, if you could create your own holiday,

what would it be, and why? Okay? You've got five minutes. Create your own holiday, okay? On the count of three—one, two, three…

(*students start mumbling as they prepare to write*)

Jamal: I'm gonna call on staff, too, so be prepared. Hey! Hey hey hey—you don't need to talk to write.

(*students quiet down and write for three minutes*)

Jamal: Okay, that's time. Who's gonna volunteer or do I need to call on somebody? Okay, beautiful. Y'all give the brother some love.

(*students clap and shout)*

(*Student shares his response for a day where everything would be free*)

Jamal: I'm loving it.

(*students start to clap*)

(*Students share ideas for get money day, Give me money day, and "me" day*).

Jamal: Whew. Okay, let's have some staff answers. Let me have Jay.

Jay: All right, uh…mine would be—it would be a specific day, because I believe that this specific day is the best day of any month, the 27th. And I believe the 27th should be an international day of service, all right? Because I believe that everyone should give back to your community because you can't complain about your community if you don't take strides to fix your community. So the 27th of this month- every month, will be International Day of Service.

(*student asks if you do that already on Earth Day)*

Jay: You can do that too, but this is a new day.

Jamal: Okay. Y'all by far failed in creativity.

(*students start shouting*).

I'll tell you some of the ones in the past and even some this week.

We did this activity with some middle school students—they came up with days like Sleep Day, they came up with days like, you know, Car Day, came up with days like, you know, Big Orange day, they represented a color, a day that had to do with certain colors, so they got a little bit more nuance than- and they definitely were all about helping people on this day.

Those who volunteered stood up, announced themselves, and were told to "be loud, articulate, commanding" (Jamal, 03/18/09). After the speaker finished, Jamal held a brief conversation with the volunteer, then asked both staff and students to "give them some love" (03/18/09). Regardless of the difficulties faced by the speaker or concerns about the relevance of the speech, student voice was respected, valued and supported in the realm of the Thinkwrite.

Although not directly connected to competitive debate competency, Thinkwrites acted as an important aspect of communication pedagogy. Students responded in writing to the prompt, allowing them to formulate ideas before participating orally. As students shared their ideas, Jamal prompted them to speak up, be proud of their opinion and their voice, and make sure that others could hear them. In a safe space, students received caring advice for how to support their own voice and explore their own beliefs. In addition, Jamal requested that staff participate in the Thinkwrite, saying "I'll be calling

on staff, too, so be prepared" (Opening Assembly, 03/18/09). The inclusion of staff created an equal forum in which the students and the staff could share opinions as intellectual peers. Staff were expected to be "practitioners of the craft" of debate, comfortable presenting beliefs and perspectives to be engaged by other members of the community (Fisher, 2007). Students gained knowledge from the staff opinions but were not made to feel as if those ideas were "right" in a fundamental way. Instead, public sharing operated as a structured conversation where all ideas were engaged seriously, examined for flaws and connected with bigger ideas.

Students in the VPDBS did not participate in Thinkwrites during the opening assembly. Instead, the Thinkwrite operated as a means of encouraging students with less debate experience and less competitive success than those in the varsity level breakout session. In some cases, lab leaders working with the VPDBS left for the breakout session as soon as all students had arrived, before the opening assembly. The VPDBS appeared to value competition over the development of the larger City Debate community.

Pedagogy in the VPDBS. In direct contrast to the general communicative practice in the opening assembly, pedagogical practices in the VPDBS focused heavily on the development of competitive debate competency. Students came with specific questions and requests that shaped the curriculum of the program. City Debate was the central space in which they developed as national level debaters.

Three specific pedagogical practices provided the foundation for most of the activities of the VPDBS: argument explanations, practice debates, and strategy sessions. These three foci reflected the important aspects of competitive debate success. Students used their participation in the varsity policy debate breakout session to develop strong

arguments, refine the presentation of those arguments, and tailor debate strategies to take advantage of the weaknesses of opponents' cases. For each year, generic common arguments included political discussions of "cap and trade" policies, U.S. soft power, government spending, and the implications of U.S. hegemony, as well as theory-based arguments regarding utilitarianism, securitization, and exclusionary philosophies. These were generic arguments that could be applied across specific cases if debaters could establish links between the case and the critical argument.

Argument explanations usually began as a response to a request from youth participants to either explain an argument they had encountered at a debate tournament or to introduce a new argument that could strengthen the specific case of a team. It is important to note that if there were two teams present in the breakout session, it did not follow that both teams would need the same arguments for their cases. Both teams participated, however, because it was possible that they would face these arguments in debate rounds. Argument explanations began with a reading of the argument and then the lab leader would present a general overview of the argument. After the general overview, both lab leaders and youth posed questions that deepened understanding of the argument. In this example discussion of utilitarianism, Cole emphasizes the dual challenges of determining the value of human life and choosing between competing moral claims. He uses real-life examples such as the bombing of Japan in World War II and the Holocaust to demonstrate how utilitarianism could lead to atrocities. Argument explanations helped youth develop a sense of the nuances of an argument, deepening understanding of how that argument connected with the plan put forth by the other team (Breakout session, 02/27/08):

Cole: Okay, well, [the card] should be somewhere. It's like- it's like- it's talking about how like predictions of international politics fail and it says like you know that these people are no more accurate than like monkeys throwing darts at a dart board because like international politics is too complicated to like predict and forecast. Uh, and so after that card you can use the example of Japan where like people were like if you do this then we can save this number of lives so like-

Sean: It also cites like fifty billion studies.

Cole: Yeah yeah yeah. People like- so generally- if predictions generally fail then Util[itarianism] cannot work. If you cannot accurately predict how conflicts will work out then it definitely can't work for you to be like the greatest number- greatest number of people. It can predict in some instances the fact that util[itarianism] like a lot of times gets it wrong combined with the fact that they can't resolve their questions like what is the value of life etcetera means that Util[itarianism] is kind of a bad framework. Um, and the last argument is kind of like- I don't necessarily know if this argument holds water but it's like you're not a policy maker per se, you're like kind of an individual so even if it is inevitable that states act in certain ways, like states make utilitarian at all times, you are not a state and so you don't have to do that. You don't have to be personally implicated in the attitudes that you know- for you to make a decision supports I think will be your moral- being immoral is bad, there is an impact to immorality. Whatever the [first affirmative speech] is the

impact that uh you don't have to be implicated in that. Whereas all their disad[vantage]s are kind of like not working. I don't necessarily think their argument is like great but.

[Cole goes back to first argument.] This is like your big offensive argument. So this is you know this is the internal link to this argument. Like util[itarianism] can't assume a value to life because any policy maker can use util[itarianism] to justify any policy that they want. And that that's bad. And so this is not your- your aff[irmative]- this is an impact. And in the links util[itarianism] is bad.

Robb: Okay.

Cole: Uh, then you know this predictions fail which is like a defensive argument, it also helps this. So if you win predictions fail it makes it easier for you to win why, you know, this leads to the Holocaust. And then this ethics first _____. You might, I mean, that seems real simple but like it's hard. First of all, it's like a – it's really really difficult. Uh the way for you to win this is kind of like, you have to make Util[itarianism] seem just as ridiculous as more of the ontologic- the ontology. So for instance the big problem with the ontology is how you decide between two competing moral claims.

Robb: Right.

Cole: Right. That is really hard. I don't really know the answer to that question. It's- I guess- I mean, I don't know. Uh, you have to decide what your answer to that is based on_____-

Robb: But like what if-

Cole: I know that Util[itarianism] is not going to be better, right? Because util[itarianism] will make it seem as though the ontology is like really hard for you to determine. How do you decide between two moral claims? Well, how do you decide between you know invading Japan and not invading Japan using atomic bombs? Like we need to use_____ In cross-[examination], when they are asking you questions like that where it's like really simple you need to like pull counterquestions to them that are really really complicated. Right, since Util[itarianism] is like all this mathematical formula the more complicated the situation the harder it is for you to make a decision. Right. Util's not better- is not a better framework to use for a national _____

Robb: What if you don't have like a moral obligation? We don't pretend that the United States has a moral obligation.

Sean: But isn't the United States the only person who can do-

Cole: Well I don't understand why this argument is valid. They say- they say util- if they're saying that their impact outweighs yours, then-

Robb: Well our impact is dehumanization.

Cole: Are you joking?

Robb: No.

Cole: Well that's not a good situation.

Robb: It's not?

Cole: Because dehumanization might be bad but you don't solve all dehumanization you solve an instance of dehumanization.

Youth did not regularly use the language of these philosophical frameworks outside of the argument explanations, but they applied the ideas to their critiques of national policies. Explaining how she felt about the United States after reading for a military topic, Robb described how she "learned about Guantanamo Bay and all the stuff they do there. And I guess that's interesting cause before that I thought the United States—all they did was just do nice things and I learned that wasn't the case" (02/28/09). Robb applied her knowledge of utilitarianism to a critique of the United States as a nation acting in its best interests. In doing so, she demonstrated the application of knowledge outside of the boundaries of the debate round.

Practice debates focused on areas of performance and argumentation that youth participants or lab leaders identified as areas of weakness. In some cases, youth requested additional practice with an argument they did not fully understand, such as hegemony or the idea that securitization rhetoric can result in less security. In other instances, debaters used the practice debates to revisit arguments they lost in previous debate rounds. In this example, Tran performed the securitization speech from a debate round he and his partner lost. First, Cole evaluates the performance of the speech, then he asks pointed questions to identify the areas where Tran does not have a clear understanding of the argument. He finally offers specific language for Tran to use to respond to questions about securitization:

Cole: Great good. Um, that was actually real good. Um, things- first, what did you mean by your aff[irmative] advocating a counterplan?

Tran: That's what I didn't know how to answer in the cross- ex[amination]. Because I thought it was just like a way to present a policy that would like to prove that we don't reject policy. We're not-

Cole: If you don't advocate policy then you're not- like, for instance when they read a card saying that security discourse is bad because it doesn't advocate a policy, when you say we don't advocate this policy but this is an example of a policy that runs counter to those arguments. So you are advocating a counterplan, you're just doing it for a different reason, right? I mean, in a future debate you wouldn't like- like for instance, if this was the counterplan we read against Johnson, you would say absolutely we advocate a counterplan. But we don't advocate it as a way to decrease stability in Africa- like instability in Africa. Or a way to, you know, preserve U.S. hegemony. You can make a choice the first argument is to uh adopt and lie and you know the counterplan is an example of that and it's in your Sheet evidence there where it talks about how like the securitization can lead to _____ policies and their policies. Does that make sense?

Tran: Yeah.

Cole: Like that Sheets evidence says that like securitization if it's internalized by policymakers it can lead to them making better policies that don't exacerbate security problems.

Tran: What does that mean?

Cole: Like essentially that they can create policies that don't fall under the kritik and solve the affirmative.

Tran: So if I'm like- so we should not run a counterplan and just on the line by line say that we don't straight up advocate policy-

Cole: Yes, in this debate you should not run a counterplan. You can just like, "extend our Sheets evidence we can kind of" or you should be like "look, there's nothing about giving water to Africans that's necessarily and inherently securitizing. You know- that was their choice. Then read a piece of evidence that says that's a personal choice and we don't have to advocate that so we can give water to Africa we just don't do it with the means that you do. Read a couple cards about why they have to defend the political choice and the security issue.

Practice debates were a key strategy for individualizing curriculum—students presented individual speeches and lab leaders then evaluated those speeches for content, organization, and presentation. During this session, Tran read the speech as organized for a previous debate round. Cole critiqued the presentation initially, but then asked questions regarding the challenges Tran faced when attempting to defend the speech. Ultimately, Cole suggested a different way of thinking about the argument organization and the oral responses to questions in cross-examination that helped Tran refine his language and understanding of the concept of securitization discourse.

Strategy sessions most directly connected pedagogy in the VPDBS to competitive success. For each debate tournament, participants disclosed cases and key arguments one to two weeks in advance of the tournament. In the VPDBS, the week prior to the

tournament was spent reviewing those arguments and creating strategies for competing. These strategy sessions reflected a key role of the lab leaders at City Debate—although there were coaches in the individual schools, most coaches were not experienced debaters. Lab leaders brought both the experience of their own competition as well as their experience as debate judges. By participating in the strategy sessions at the VPDBS, youth debaters gained access to knowledge gained through years of competitive success at both the high school and college level.

In the VPDBS strategy sessions, participants focused on isolating winning arguments in a debate round. At one meeting, Sean asked Cole to look over a list of policy cases he might face at the next debate tournament. Under the overarching resolution about increasing aid to sub-Saharan Africa, teams advocated the provision of naval assistance for sub-Saharan Africa or the training of a medical doctor corps similar to the Peace Corps. The VPDBS offered a space for discussing the strategies for responding to each team's central argument (04/02/08):

Cole*:* What did you like?

Sean: Any of them. Like one of them was the United States Government should-

Cole: Well, hold on. Let's do it this way. You already have some strategies in some of these acts. Let's talk about the acts that you don't have strategies for. Can you think of one that you don't?

Sean: One was Naval assistance to the heart of Africa.

Cole: And what was the advantage?

Sean: Disease and –

Tran: Heg[emony]?

Sean: I don't think it was heg[emony].

Cole: Naval assistance to the heart of Africa?

Sean: Yes. What type of –

Cole: Do you know about _____?

[Crosstalk]

Sean: Topical is the first part… Also, this is a case that I don't understand. It's just this case about – it's Med Flags. It's contained in China, but there's no like – war with China is inevitable type stuff, and how China is going to overtake the US.

Cole: _____ that now?

Sean: Yeah. And for advantages, they got like three impacts. First is radiation. Nuclear testing is another rule if we don't play China.

Cole: Hold on. So, they're like provoking China? Like we send boats over there to provoke China into fighting us?

Sean: No, this is Med Flags. Like we get medical doctors or something.

The goal of the strategy session was to create a plan for winning a competitive debate. This included outlining the arguments the affirmative team would make and identifying a strategy for responding to each on the negative side.

Winning a debate did not always mean making arguments with which debaters agreed. Although certain arguments were compelling in the debate round, debaters later acknowledged that a winning argument could also be an argument that lacked truth in the real world. As Sean explained (04/29/09):

> Debate has taught me that there is no objective truth about the world. Like nothing in any newspaper is always the whole story. It's not always true which definitely helps with the whole idea of changing the way we act about the world and the way we perceive the world. It means we view everything with a skeptic eye.

Youth participants in the VPDBS shifted between the arguments needed for competitive success and those that felt "true" as they interacted in their lives. Interestingly, those arguments that felt "true" were not the same for each debater—each participant took something different from the activity and the intellectual engagement with different perspectives. Even as participants learned to value different perspectives, they still sorted arguments outside of the competitive value, relying instead on the nuances of individual truth. This ability to separate arguments of personal value from arguments of competitive value indicates that participants developed habits of critical thought that they employed in real life situations.

The VPDBS incorporated content knowledge, concrete practice of skills, and expert strategic advice in its pedagogical content. Students practiced performance, oral communication, reading and organization of arguments. This section does not explore all of the activities of the breakout session. Those activities external to debate will be explored in a subsequent section.

City Debate implemented critical pedagogy on three separate levels: philosophical conceptualization, curriculum choices, and pedagogical activities. The philosophical foundation of the program reflected the belief that debate pedagogy could support the development of enlightened "scholars and intellectuals" at whatever level of

participation. Training sessions explicitly taught lab leaders to see their role as developing basic debate skills in youth and helping participants cultivate the ability to use those debate skills in making thoughtful life decisions. Curriculum choices also reflected a sense of critical pedagogy. Youth participants received access to a broad range of resources and were encouraged to find their own. Pedagogical activities reflected the desire to support student voice and student belief development regarding large-scale policy development. Youth participants regularly learned arguments for competitive benefit, but students like Robb also took those arguments and continued the conversation with peers. Debate pedagogy in City Debate provided a space for youth to hear their own voice, to engage their own beliefs.

The complex conversations in which students engaged in the VPDBS, however, were divorced from daily and local issues in their immediate contexts of school, family, and neighborhood. There is evidence that youth began to develop their own beliefs regarding large-scale policy issues, but little evidence that youth began to develop a voice for challenging immediate issues in their lives. Although the rhetoric of City Debate emphasized using knowledge for action, I did not observe youth applying their new knowledge to personal situations.

Oral, Aural, Literate and Performative Communication in City Debate

Although couched within the literature on literacy communities, the activities at City Debate represented an expansive perspective on literacy that included multiple forms of communication. Youth spoke, listened, wrote, and performed texts in meaningful and integrated ways. In doing so, they refined reading, writing, speaking, listening and performing as they developed a holistic communication toolbox. This

integration of communication was especially true in the Varsity Policy Debate Breakout Session, where preparing for tournaments included oral discussion of arguments, close reading of textual evidence, the creation of speech blocks, and the flowing of other speeches in practice debate rounds.

Reading and writing into the community. Literacy activities in City Debate reflected the foundational aspect of reading and writing to participation in the community. Some activities reflect the norms of policy debate as a larger community, whereas others demonstrate the goals of City Debate and its dedication to youth empowerment. At the beginning of each season, students participating in policy debate received a packet of excerpts from academic articles, books, and the popular media. This packet offered an initial exposure to reading in the community, providing a foundation for interaction with the topic for the year. For the past year, the packet of evidence included information on alternative energy. Participants in debate rigorously prepared the material to highlight the salient points contained in each source (Appendix G). Preparation of materials according to the norms of debate involved varying font sizes, underlining, bolding, and highlighting the material. Although City Debate as an organization provided students with prepared evidence, students also used the established norms to prepare new and updated evidence for their cases.

Writing in City Debate centered on creating clear lines of argument. Youth experienced great freedom in determining their specific case under the larger resolution. However, each separate piece of the argument required a citation and quote from a source to reinforce the argument made. Creating these arguments supported students in later classroom writing, as well. Robb explained, “You write some of your own arguments

and since you read a lot of stuff you can model the way they write on the way you write" (02/28/09). For Robb, her experience in debate exposed her to writers with varying styles and helped her develop a style of her own.

Listening and speaking as "scholars and intellectuals." Oral communication occurred throughout the various settings of City Debate. Oral communication included not only the oral presentation of ideas but also listening and responding to those ideas. Through the two hours and separate spaces of City Debate, youth explored concepts, thought deeply about posed questions, and listened to the ideas of others. This practice supported the development of youth voices and informed opinions.

Within the varsity policy breakout session, students and lab leaders focused on the performance of debate as they discussed the presentation of arguments. One of the key conversations surrounding the presentation of arguments was a conversation about judge adaptation. Cole explained to students that they should tailor their speeches to the judges who could range from highly practiced college debaters to the "bus driver" (04/11/07):

Cole: There are levels of judge adaptation and we're going to go over what those levels are now, okay? There's what we call the teacher-

Leigh: The teacher judge?

Cole: Okay, now- listen…Okay, now- this level of judge adaptation is where- you don't have to necessarily change the arguments you make you just go a little bit slower. Not like snail's pace- snail's speed-But you go a little bit slower and try and-It's how- you don't change the arguments you make- it's about sound-

You focus on sounding better as in- you know- emphasizing really important words. Going slower…The next scenario below that is…point-point B. Which is make less arguments. So we'll just make- make less arguments. So like let's say for your spending 2AC [speech] we just wrote down like what are the areas that you have on there?

Robb: Bush spending money now, so Democrats are not- it's non-unique-

Cole: Okay. Okay you wanna make commonsensical arguments and less arguments.

So this argument about where… the money comes from. The plan or the budget- That's too complicated, okay? You wanna make- Bush spending money now cause that's gonna be like 'Oh yeah, it's obvious we're spending money now' *(mimicking a judge in the round)*

Robb: So in my block I need to put like red little marks?

Cole: Yes, yes. Um. Just arguments- like arguments that are comparing- comparing your impact to theirs that are kind of easy to get so- Kind of like- if hegemony collapses the economy collapses. You can explain it's not too complicated it doesn't require too many pieces of evidence. Arguments like that. So you might not even need to read the card. You might just wanna make the warrants of the card. Uh- kind of empirically deny- you know- we spent money before and the economy hasn't collapsed…The plan saves money. Umm like but read less cards? You can try to plan but…it's something you need to feel out each…

Robb: Just pretend that I'm in middle school. Like you know how-

Cole: Well, I don't really think so, Robb. But it's like- but it's not slow. It's prioritizing.

Cole's focus on judge adaptation reflected the regular shortage of judges at debate tournaments, a reality that resulted in the use of anyone available and willing to judge. Conversations about adapting an argument to the audience were salient to the varsity policy debate students, who typically spoke quickly, used specific debate jargon, and relied on shorthand explanations of arguments both within the debate round and in the strategy sessions at City Debate. Although Cole describes the types of arguments necessary for different types of judges, he also reminds Robb that modifying arguments reflected more complex decision-making than simply slowing down. Although students prepared written arguments and translated those to oral speeches, they were also taught performance skills that allowed them to adapt to a wide range of audiences. These conversations emphasized the importance of the larger goal of communication, reminding participants that the speed and jargon that comprised the norms of competitive debate could hinder communication with those outside of the world of policy debate.

Students also spent time in the varsity policy debate breakout session practicing the speech itself. These practice sessions allowed students to practice judge adaptation, refine the spoken complexities of an argument and get feedback on their delivery of arguments. At this session, Robb was preparing for a national urban debate league tournament and Cole told her he wanted to "see how you sound"(04/02/08):

Robb (begins speech): Our interpretation of the resolution is that you have to defend the government's action and there is a couple reasons why. The first is –

Cole: Okay, try it again. A little bit slower.

Robb: All right.

Cole: A little bit slower. It's hard to understand. When you started talking about – I didn't really understand what you were saying.

Robb: So, you're telling me basically slow down, emphasize on words that matter, or pretend –

Cole: Well, think about it this way, though. The person that's judging you has not been a policy debater for a really long time. So, to them, debate means something very different. So, when the other team gets up, and they're like, "Well, we don't think that our response to the resolution should be _____ do something," that argument might make a little bit of sense to them. Okay, so, you're really trying to convince them that that's not a good way to debate. Okay?

Robb: So, I'm like teaching?

Cole: Yes, yes. Exactly.

Robb: I'm a teacher?

Cole: Yes, exactly. Not patronizing, but teaching. So, try it again.

Cole's focus in this initial assessment of Robb's speech was her clarity and speed for a specific audience. He explained to her that part of the reason for requesting that she slow down was so that she tailored her speech to the audience for whom she was presenting. Although Cole previously discussed adaptation in a general sense, Robb's practice of the speech allowed him to give directed advice to help her communicate with a particular audience.

Translating the written arguments to timed oral speeches forced youth participants to concentrate on presenting complex and nuanced arguments succinctly and effectively. Cole regularly pushed the high school debaters in the VPDBS to consider word choice and how to make their points most efficiently.

Students received advice on multiple forms of communication, including oral, written, aural, and performative. The ultimate goal of these critiques was presenting information with thoughtfulness, clarity, and poise. Performance was critical to full participation in the varsity policy debate breakout session and competitive success. Although students participated in specific reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities, no one communicative strategy operated separately from others. This offers further support for the fallacy of the "great divide" concept between orality and literacy. Youth chose communication strategies based on the norms and expectations of the community in which they were participating. In City Debate, both orality and literacy were integral for full community participation. In the next section, I explore how youth used the developed skills in holistic communication to respond to current events and perceived injustice.

Critical Literacy at City Debate

Organizers and volunteers in City Debate regularly asked students how they would put their new knowledge into action as they lived their lives. After returning from the inauguration of Barack Obama as President, Jamal shared his experience with the students, saying "yesterday was a beautiful day"(01/21/09). He then went on to ask, "what are you going to do?" Jamal's words reflected the idea that the students attending City Debate represented a cadre of youth with knowledge that could lead to action. Jamal

described City Debate as "an intellectual safe space for [debaters] to be able to grow, nurture their minds and hopefully kind of cultivate themselves to be critical thinkers and activists and engaged scholars" (02/27/08) Their participation in the space as urban debaters connected with the organization's historical definition of literacy as a space of action and activism (Cridland-Hughes, 2008). Literacy as practiced in the community focused on the critical acquisition of knowledge as a precursor to thoughtful action.

Defining literacy and critical literacy. In order to examine how participants synthesized the connection between debate, literacy, and critical literacy, I asked a series of questions. First, I asked participants to define literacy in their own words. I then gave them Shor's (1992) definition of critical literacy as "habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning… to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology and personal consequences of any action" and asked if they saw any of that occurring at City Debate.

In most cases, initial definitions of literacy expanded conceptions of literacy beyond the acts of reading and writing. Youth participants focused on the importance of comprehension for literacy. Robb described literacy as "knowing how to comprehend and write well" (2/28/09). For Sean, literacy was "probably just like the ability to- well, first, obviously the ability to read is the first… the second is I guess the ability to take that information and…comprehend that information… and probably conveying your ideas to others" (4/29/09). Lab leaders offered definitions that described literacy in a broader communicative sense. Jim explained that literacy " is the ability to comprehend something that is being given to you… whether it be something at a visual outlook…or whether it be something your teacher is telling you" (4/29/09). Jay focused on literacy

as what he termed "internalization" or the ability to "take in arguments and… different comments and opinions… and learn how to interpret them and formulate your own opinions" (3/20/09). In each of these definitions, participants describe literacy as active. City Debate community members defined literacy as going beyond simply the ability to read or decode words to being able to understand and in some instances incorporate material as each individual builds a set of norms and values by which to live.

This broad perspective of literacy reflects the intentions of community organizers, as well. After defining literacy as "having competency in a particular field of study or activity or behavior," Jamal reflected on that definition (2/27/08):

> That is probably definitely a much more broad interpretation of literacy but I think it's important because that interpretation of literacy…allows us to access the students from the place of some level of intellectual exchange that's productive for both sides... That has been an important rhetorical move because we haven't just come in and labeled the students as being intellectually inferior just because they have some reading issues. But the reality is that a lot of them come out of strong oral communication communities… which has given us the potential to highlight that and use that as an access point to build up their deficiencies.

For Jamal, expanding notions of literacy allowed youth participants to access and feel success within a literacy community. In the traditional debate community, limited reading and writing skills can act as a barrier to participation in competitive debate. In City Debate, however, participants are valued for their individual competencies.

Although reading and writing competencies did not preclude participation in City Debate, it did serve to separate the youth in the VPDBS from most other groups in the

community. Varsity level debaters demonstrated a sophisticated integration of reading, writing, speaking, and performing that was not always evident in other breakout sessions. During my observation of youth in the VPDBS, it appeared that all students read at or above grade level and had been debating between three and six years. Other groups reflected more diversity in reading levels and experience in debate than did the VPDBS group. These traits of VPDBS members may explain their nuanced definitions of literacy.

After eliciting definitions of literacy, I asked participants to connect the given definition of critical literacy with experiences at City Debate. This was more difficult for them and they struggled to separate out what they do in the competitive debate round from what they do at City Debate as a larger community. Students in the VPDBS were expected to engage in competitive debate activities, and their practice demonstrated a debate intensity that was separate and distinct from the community focus of the opening assembly.

Critical literacy in debate required that participants interact with the text. Interaction with the text occurred in multiple ways. First, youth read individually to understand arguments. Individual understanding then became co-constructed knowledge as debate teams constructed plan texts and lines of argument. Co-constructed knowledge then became public knowledge as youth "published" their work through speech-making. This was especially true in debate rounds and practice debates at City Debate, where youth participants presented work to be evaluated through both cross-examination by peers and lab leaders. Sean described critical literacy in debate as developing a nuanced understanding of arguments for use in future debate rounds:

> Understanding the meaning below the surface is definitely what happens in debate. Because you have to take that one line that some smart person said and turning it into a coherent argument. Also sort of like the speaking being able to present your ideas to others and coherently offer analysis on those ideas and I guess ultimately being able to defend those ideas… Specifically at City Debate, how that happens is when we're split up into groups and we do the debate work and the debate assignments, those sort of like those small groups force us to comprehend ideas and force us to help explain those ideas to others. Because not everyone may understand that idea but someone in the group is bound to get it and have a better way of explaining it than the college students that are split up into groups.

Sean's definition of critical literacy focused on critical reading and engaging with the text in small groups. All of these activities fall under the greater goal of succeeding in the debate round. Jim expressed much the same sentiment, explaining that "we read through the pieces of evidence, we try to figure out what arguments X author is making at the time, and what other arguments Y authors are making in response to the X authors and try to utilize how you can use that in a debate round" (4/29/09). Both Sean and Jim perceived debate as a way to understand the meaning of texts and arguments in depth. For Robb, however, debate did not necessarily allow for the development of deep understanding (02/29/09):

> Sometimes as debaters we don't take account of like the personal consequences of what we are saying. Like remember that time we was in the debate room and you asked us do you really believe that?... Because sometimes debaters get the

> opportunity to say an argument that you don't personally agree with or take consequences for.

Robb describes debate rounds as spaces for intellectual exploration without concerns about the consequences of those actions.

An initial reading of participant explanations of debate and critical literacy reveals some areas for concern. These three responses indicate that, much like Mitchell (1998) argued, debate participation does not guarantee more reflective citizens than would be the case without debate. Interaction with ideas only supported success in the specific debate sphere and did not require that students consider thoughtfully the broader implications of their arguments.

However, follow up questions revealed that participants also experienced critical literacy in debate as both reflective and active. Critical literacy in debate required that participants reflect on their knowledge and their experiences in a quest for future growth, what Sean termed the debater's "skeptic eye" (4/29/09). Sean acknowledged that the act of preparing for debate changes how he reads and interacts in the world.

Critical literacy as experienced in debate also asked participants to actively use what they learned. Ben, an older member of the community, reflected on how his experiences in debate as a high school student helped him make sense of segregation and integration (09/17/09):

> I mean, when I got into high school, I had come from a fairly segregated community and moved into an integrated community, and that experience was both unexpected and not understood as a 15- year old kid. And debate was a way for me to…understand what was happening, become a part of what was

> happening, create friendships that crossed the segregated divides that existed and a way to help solve some of the problems I guess that segregation by itself has created.

Ben's experiences in high school helped him see debate as a means of acting for social change. Robb articulated a similar belief about how debate helped her think about social change (02/28/09):

> Oh I always wanted to change the world no doubt. That's why I had the petition [to fire a teacher] in middle school, that's why I was vocal, but I never knew how to change the world… so I think one thing debate has taught me is that you can change the world but you have to know how to change the world. No one can jump up and change it. It's a process."

For Robb and Ben, debate became a path for learning how to become active in the world. The critical literacy practiced in debate helped them consider their place in the world and their knowledge of the world and challenge what they considered injustice.

However, the belief in debate as a precursor to activism was not universal. When asked about whether debate had caused him to demonstrate civic activism, Sean explained that he "hadn't really done anything in terms of civic activism. I wasn't 18 before the election so I couldn't have voted or I wasn't able to vote in the election." When I asked about whether he considered changes in the way he thought or acted as an individual as forms of civic activism, his response was that "individual choices… I really don't think of those as activism. Activism would be trying to convince someone else to do the same thing instead of just making my own choice" (4/29/09). Sean felt that action and activism were collective experiences rather than individual choices.

Participants in City Debate demonstrated nuanced understandings of literacy and debate. In this community, beliefs about literacy led to critique of texts and thoughtful analysis of arguments. Participants interacted with texts and arguments, reflected on the implications of those concepts and ideas, and acted based on what they believed to be right. Critical literacy permeated their conversations about debate and living a thoughtful life.

Critical literacy in the opening assembly. Methods of supporting critical literacy at City Debate varied depending on the space in which students interacted. Within the opening assembly of City Debate, critical literacy cultivation centered on supporting student voice and making students aware of various spaces for action and opportunities for gaining knowledge. During the first 15 to 20 minutes of each session, students gathered as a whole group and received information about current events, opportunities for action, and college information sessions.

Organizers at City Debate and in the larger League of City Debaters facilitated both internal and external opportunities for students to use their voices. Although debate tournaments formed the majority of scheduled and announced activities, youth debaters also participated in conversations outside of the debate round with adults in positions of power. At one session, students received information about the National Issues Forum, a joint activity with a representative of the American Bar Association to discuss ways of ensuring a fair judiciary. Jamal described it as "an opportunity to make your voice be heard" (02/25/09). City Debate facilitated the program, provided transportation to and from the forum, and provided students with a brief oral discussion of the topic as well as additional written information should they wish to research more about not only the

fairness of the judiciary but also the prison system in general. In this instance, City Debate provided additional support for students to participate with informed opinions and criticism. After the National Issues Forum, the students returned to City Debate, summarized the ideas and concerns presented in the Forum and talked about how their ideas would then be presented to the National Bar Association.

In many cases, available opportunities reflected the relationship between City Debate and the area colleges and universities. In one example, Jamal announced a speech by noted civil rights participant Angela Davis to the group, emphasizing that she is "a powerful figure in our history" (02/25/09). Although this information was available to the public, Jamal's privileged status as an active member of the university community offered him access to flyers that he subsequently passed on to the City Debate participants. In addition, he emphasized that "a contingency of us will be there and we want you to meet us there." Students received both information about the event and the assurance that Jamal and others would be present. City Debate emphasized relationships between youth, volunteers, and organizers, and Jamal's assurance reflected the presence of the City Debate community instead of individuals.

Although the opening assembly was a short component of the overall program, it operated to unify the community. Students and staff shared ideas and perspectives, and all were held to the same standards of participation and respect. This centering allowed the second segment of the program, the breakout sessions, to focus on honing youth critical speaking and thinking.

Critical literacy in the VPDBS. The varsity policy debate breakout session operated as a unique space in City Debate— students in this space regularly participated

in national level tournaments and attended top-tier summer debate camps for a significant portion of the summer. Because these students were nationally competitive, a significant portion of the session revolved around discussions of debate strategy and competitive rhetoric.

At first observation, critical literacy beliefs seemed to be subsumed by the desire for competitive success. Varsity policy debate breakout sessions focused intensely on competitive strategies and preparation for the national level debate tournaments in which students engaged. One example of this occurred as students practiced fast speech, using a high-pitched auction-style voice to deliver as much evidence as quickly as possible with the time constraints of the speech. Students also conversed using debate shorthand, using last names of authors and specific buzzwords to discuss arguments and strategies. In many ways, conversations operated to exclude less advanced debaters and those unfamiliar with the current argument trends.

Critical literacy in the varsity policy debate session emerged in the philosophical conversations surrounding case preparation and in the interactions between the high school debaters and their college- age lab leaders. Students in the varsity policy breakout session encountered complex debate arguments known as kritiks, critical arguments about ontology, representation, the value of life, and the ways in which rhetoric reflects beliefs about the world. One of the lab leaders of the varsity policy debate breakout session, Cole, described his exposure to kritiks through debate as something that "totally changed my outlook on the world" (02/28/08). For Robb, debate helped her cultivate the ability to be critical of military policies (02/28/09):

> The reason why the military topic was very interesting to me was because I didn't know like all those things existed in the military. Like, we talked about "don't ask, don't tell" and the policy Bill Clinton implemented about being gay—don't tell and we don't want to ask you. And I didn't know that actually existed. And extradition where they take people out of other countries and take them to countries like Syria where torture is legal. And they like torture them for like military intelligence. I learned about Guantanamo Bay and all the stuff they do there. And I guess that's interesting cause before that I thought the United States was just like can't do anything- all they did was just do nice things and I learned that wasn't the case.

Robb describes debate as a learning experience that allowed her to not only gain information but also critique policy choices of the government. With exposure to complex ideas regarding how people view, approach, and live life, youth developed more nuanced understandings of the implications of specific governmental policies. In addition, they internalized philosophical arguments that then shaped broader perspectives on their individual space within a larger society.

Even as students rigorously prepared for their upcoming competitions, however, this space also operated as an area in which they accessed information about college. Students attended City Debate on a college campus, an intentional decision that Jamal described as "a part of our being intentional about wanting to demystify the college experience. We felt if students got used to coming to a college campus and seeing the dynamics and culture of a college campus that they would start to envision themselves here" (02/27/08). In addition, all volunteers and staff in the varsity policy debate

breakout session had either received a college degree or were currently students at an area university, and participants regularly asked lab leaders about their majors, their experiences at college, and what it was like to debate in college. The opportunity to have frequent conversations about college allowed students to mentally imagine themselves as college students as they physically became a part of the college space.

Critical literacy, race, and diversity. Youth in the varsity policy debate breakout session researched various debate topics and theoretical kritiks for participation in debate competitions (Appendix H). Information gathered led to frank discussions of controversial subjects including the complexities of race and diversity. The conversations served to expand understanding and broaden perspectives about issues of difference. Participants demonstrated critical literacy through both the rigorous and critical engagement with ideas and the capacity to grow from expanded knowledge.

Much of the focus on race and difference in City Debate grew from the observation that competitive policy debate was predominantly a White, middle class, male experience. This assumption created a divide between the expectations of debate communication and the communication of minority youth participants. An early diversity training program (1995) recounted one story of African-American students at a forensics tournament being " penalized (some with harsh comments from judges) for their lack of skill in the use of standard English" and Hispanic students at the same tournament "suffer[ing] from difficulty with pronunciation structures that exist in English and not in other languages"(p. 8). This paper articulated clearly the barriers that existed for minority participation in competitive policy debate that City Debate was designed to

overcome. From its inception, then, City Debate operated from a framework of valuing diversity in competitive policy debate.

Youth currently participating in City Debate still connected diversity and race with the purpose of the community, but they describe a more nuanced diversity than just inclusion of other groups. Robb described the purpose of City Debate as "to get minority students to debate because if it wasn't for the urban debate league then it'd just be white suburban kids debating" (2/28/09). Interestingly, however, Robb went beyond phenotypical explorations of diversity to discuss what she called a "diversity of ideas," explaining that "sometimes you get people that all look different but they all have the same ideas, but debate- most of them are different physically and mentally"(2/28/09). I argue that Robb's exposure to critical literacy and the interrogation of ideas through debate helped her move beyond traditional conceptions of race and difference to develop sophisticated reflections on the ideas of individuals. This is not to argue that race ceases to matter, but Robb filters multiple layers of difference to determine diversity.

Participants in City Debate took many different paths to come together every Wednesday night at seven. For each, teaching and learning in the community fulfilled a different goal. Some used it as a means to a competitive end while others hoped to help students with whom they connected on a fundamental level. Still others were drawn by the activity itself and a love for critical inquiry and competition.

As each person became involved with the City Debate community, however, the program began to function as a family. In this family, the divergent paths to the community united to push for activism and critical growth in the participating youth. Staff members challenged students to think about current events and issues facing youth

today. The community discussed means of pushing for change, and community members described their individual efforts to combat injustice. City Debate functioned as a place where mutual caring undergirded the development of debate skills and critical thought and action.

CHAPTER V
Discussion

In the community of City Debate, literacy magic happens. From a policy resolution of 30 words emerges a full year of ideas, questions, conversations, and relationships. Pages of arguments, tubs of evidence, and countless hours of discussion refine into a policy recommendation for a current issue of importance on the national and international stage. At the same time, writing, reading, speaking, and listening flow seamlessly together as debaters consider, contemplate, disagree, and challenge their opponents. Occasionally and profoundly, writing and speaking are transcended by social action.

Once weekly, a cross-section of debaters, scholars and activists congregate at City Debate to challenge each other to think hard, to consider broad implications, and to push themselves to apply those ideas to better their lives and the communities in which they interact. In this space with twin emphases on discourse and action, I describe the potential of critical literacy as an educational philosophy.

Characteristics of City Debate as a Learning Environment

City Debate and the varsity policy debate breakout session exhibit several characteristics unique for a literacy community. Decentralization of curriculum, a focus on civic awareness, and emphasis on deep knowledge all combine to create a space for the cultivation of critical scholarship. In addition, the diversity of the community creates a space particularly suited to the development of a laboratory for the expansion of ideas.

First, City Debate as a community ceded curricular control to the students. Decisions about the content of each session reflected knowledge of the needs of

participants and upcoming tournaments. This focus on curricular flexibility initially seems antithetical to policy debate as an activity, with its rigid norms and standards for participation. The stringent expectations for participation, however, hide the freedom and creativity involved in creating a policy. Although all debaters must address the national topic, they can do so in whatever way they see fit. The larger policy goal stayed the same and the arguments followed the same structure, but each debate team chose a segment of the problem to focus on with which they identified. In one session at City Debate, the lab leaders could have as many as three different affirmatives to address. Each week, lab leaders targeted their instruction and curricular activities to meeting the needs of each youth participant.

Additionally, youth in the varsity policy debate breakout session demonstrated heightened levels of civic awareness. Debaters emphasized the importance of staying current on national and international politics, important topics for debate over U.S. leadership in each plan. Youth regularly discussed "cap and trade" policies, recent bills passed by Congress, government spending and the implications of U.S. hegemony. In doing so, they demonstrated thoughtful understanding of both international and domestic relations.

However, civic awareness did not always translate into civic action. When youth were asked about how they enacted their civic knowledge, the resulting responses reflected a range of engagement. Although City Debate regularly emphasized the importance of using knowledge for informed action, only two youth participants reported that debate had increased their civic action. Older participants, however, were much more likely to credit debate with causing a change in the way they lived their life and

seemed to assume that knowledge would lead to later action. Sean's explanation of why he could not be more socially active concentrated on not being old enough to vote. He was unable to conceive of other ways of demonstrating his action and felt limited because of his age. The program did not explicitly teach students how they could take action by contacting officials, writing letters to the editor, joining interest groups or nongovernmental organizations that addressed issues, or contributing money or ideas to social causes. Youth were still individually responsible for finding ways to become civically engaged and socially active.

In addition to being a space where youth exert curricular control, City Debate is a space defined by courage. At City Debate, youth engage in a discussion of their ideas. Their logic creates curriculum, their voices generate and sustain the discussion. They listen to others critique their reasoning, and they do so with what can only be termed as bravery. Although they are asked to let others challenge their ideas on a weekly basis, youth in the program seem to experience a level of comfort with both their peers and their lab leaders that allows them to try arguments and fail. They demonstrate a resilience borne of courage, continuing to articulate and refine those same ideas until they succeed.

City Debate and Critical Debate Pedagogy

City Debate operates as a space for critical debate pedagogy, where debate-based literacy practices intersect with deep thought and the goal of youth action. The concept I am terming "critical debate pedagogy" builds on dual foundations of critical literacy and community. Critical literacy asks youth to be intentionally thoughtful about their interactions with all forms of communication, while a strong and supportive community allows them to struggle with ideas in a safe environment (Palmer, 1998). The importance

of both individual and community connection to continued intellectual growth is not a new one. Vygotsky (1978) argued for both individual contemplation and social interaction in the development of deep thinking. In City Debate, individual thoughtfulness and community responsibility mesh to sustain critical debate pedagogy. Youth broaden their own conceptions of community as they carefully consider their own spheres of interaction as youth, U.S. and international citizens.

Critical literacy as practiced in this community reflects both deep intellectual thought and a focus on how that thought can be enacted. The connection between thought and action is a central tenet of critical literacy—what people read, speak, hear, and write manifests in the structures and systems upon which larger society exists. City Debate functioned first as a philosophical example of critical literacy. Volunteers, founders, and participants perceived debate education as a "lifeline" and reading, writing, and oral communication as fronts in a war for communication. This level of conviction helps the teaching and learning of debate skills transcend the debate round. In addition, City Debate functioned as an active example of critical literacy. Both the Angela Davis speech and the National Issues Forum reinforced the importance of engagement outside of the debate round. Youth were asked to learn critical thinking then given opportunities to engage in critical thought outside of the City Debate community. It is important to note that only one youth participant from the varsity policy debate breakout session attended the National Issues Forum. Although the data are not conclusive, there is evidence that because the focus and priority was on developing debate skills, there was no deliberate instruction aimed at action—no scaffolding of how one could take action. Stated and

enacted goals of the community reinforce the idea of literacy as active and activist, but the community saturation of those goals is still unclear.

Critical literacy in City Debate depended upon a corresponding focus on community. Although participants met once weekly in borrowed space, City Debate succeeded in creating a caring community for critically literate youth. The support of the community allowed youth to push themselves harder in academic activities.

One of the ways in which community supported intellectual and social growth was by providing intergenerational relationships that apprenticed youth into deeper involvement. Anderson (1990) describes the "old heads" of an urban community, stating that these older members of urban communities who act as a moral compass are disappearing, replaced by younger role models "indifferent…to traditional values" (p.3). City Debate, however, actively encouraged intergenerational relationships. The presence of older volunteers, college debaters, high school participants and in some cases middle school youth offered models for participation through college and beyond. Youth "aged in" instead of "aging out"—as they gained experience, the community reshaped their role. As of the writing of this paper, Robb, Tran, and Sean are now college freshmen and continue to volunteer with the League of Urban Debaters.

Participants in the community perceived debate as a curricular structure that stressed the cultivation of critical habits of mind and reflective thought. Constantly referenced as critical thinkers, scholars, and activists, the youth of City Debate were charged with growing as individuals and improving the world in which they live. This community uses critical literacy and critical debate pedagogy as vehicles through which to explore notions of ethical living and to expand perspectives on activism and action.

Although we cannot discount the self-selection of a voluntary community, it is worth noting that the expectations of respect, openness, courage, curricular control, and civic engagement can be replicated in any knowledge space.

Implications for Practice

This study offers implications for the practice of funders, teachers, and administrators about the types of education that we should strive to provide in schools. First, funding and implementation of programs that support student-centered learning offer a strong opportunity for cultivating youth agency and voice. The current emphasis on testing and accountability limits the creativity and freedom of both teachers and students. In City Debate, Jamal explicitly discusses curricular freedom both for students and teachers. City Debate in particular and debate in general offer spaces where participants control their own learning and create individual curricula, and in which they are introduced to knowledge in a way that they can make their own. Education fundamentally involves helping youth cultivate habits of thought such that they can weigh conflicting information in order to make the decision that is best for them. The best way to ensure they develop this skill is to implement an education where they choose their own paths.

Limitations

This study and the preceding pilot history offer a comprehensive understanding of what is occurring in one component of one after school urban debate program. I spent three years observing and reflecting on the words and practices of the youth in the varsity policy debate breakout session. I make the specific arguments that the youth I observed developed critical literacy skills and that the program has the potential to develop civic

awareness and activism with scaffolded experiences like those for literacy. However, my study participants are not representative of the larger community of urban debate. In deciding to follow the group most consistent with previous debate research, I captured a small slice of what happens at City Debate. The reality is that students in the larger community of City Debate and the urban debate leagues in general are less diverse than those in the VPDBS that I studied; most urban debate league participants are African American, come from backgrounds of lower socioeconomic status, and never participate in a national level tournament. Their stories are equally important for exploring how this particular curricular philosophy contributes to the development of critical literacy.

Areas for Further Research

Many of the limitations discussed above offer fertile areas for further research. Although this study describes the development of a youth literacy community focused on expanding access to debate education in one city, little is known about the participation of youth in speech and forensics across other contexts. The little information that is known challenges the stereotypes of debaters as white, affluent males and complicates the perspective of debate as an elitist activity that reinforces the status quo. Research into urban debate leagues across the country offers the opportunity to build a complex narrative about the activity and generate comprehensive understandings about how and why youth participate.

One of the intriguing threads that emerged in this study was a concept of activist care in out-of-school learning. Although care is a small piece of this study into critical literacy at City Debate, participants regularly reiterated the desire to meet student needs, to create a family atmosphere, and to support interpersonal relationships in this chosen

space. It would be interesting to explore conceptions of care for this community and how those perspectives align with studies on teacher care within schools. These conceptions of care appear to be connected with the process of helping students be heard and the value placed on student voice.

The research questions in this study necessitated the elevation of the mechanics of debate as a pedagogical activity. Although I discuss the affective domain, future research emphasizing connections between the observed interpersonal relationships and African-American models of teaching would enhance the research. In much the same way, there is a great tradition of debate in the African American community. Siddle Walker (1996) mentions organized debate activities in segregated schools and *The Great Debaters* (2007) tells the story of one HBCU and its success in interscholastic debate competition against white competitors. Although I contextualize City Debate in its own history, there is a larger story to tell about debate and the African American community both before and after desegregation. I anticipate that the larger history of debate in the African American community and the models of teaching found in City Debate could enhance my understanding of instances of care observed in the community.

This study did not follow youth into school classrooms to observe how they used their debate skills. Although I have anecdotal reports from participants that indicate skills made the transition, future research could expand observations to include observations in English/Language arts classrooms for youth participants in the study. This would allow for more direct observation of the components of debate education most likely to transfer into more traditional contexts of education.

This present study offers the opportunity for replication across diverse urban contexts. City Debate is one of a large national and international network of affiliated afterschool debate programs. Analysis of the City Debate community can be completed on both a local and a national level, offering the opportunity for greater generalizability regarding the findings about critical literacy and debate pedagogy. There are urban debate communities that explicitly teach for civic action, and research into how those communities scaffold critical debate pedagogy offers the opportunity for comparison across contexts under the same umbrella network.

Conclusion

Although City Debate uses debate pedagogy as the vehicle for developing critical habits of mind, debate is not the only means of cultivating individual engagement in society. Participants exhibit complex and nuanced understandings of critical issues and current events, including race and diversity. However, one of the most enduring character traits that participants may develop is an underlying thread of courage. Through a combination of critical thought and frank discussion, youth demonstrate the intellectual courage to embrace multiple perspectives and find what is true for them as individuals. How do we develop this courage in all youth? At the heart of this question is the belief that educators hold responsibility for preparing youth to question, challenge, theorize, and engage media representations of truth as well as express individual opinions. A focus on right answers and "correct" interpretations closes down powerful avenues for developing critical thinking.

The overarching theme of this study is the role of debate education in developing critical literacy in youth debate participants. Through participation in debate, youth

cultivate a voice considered compelling to teachers, parents, and policymakers alike. Public education has the potential to teach students from all backgrounds that they can be critical and reflective about their society as a whole and their respective communities. Debate education can help youth develop both the ability to speak and the belief that they not only have a right but an obligation to challenge injustice.

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Appendix A:
Document List

Date	Documents	Audience	Use
6/2/07	1. Email- AUDI 2007	Staff- AUDI	Communication
	2. AUDI Info Packet	Students	opportunities
	3. Global Health Services Affirmative	Staff/students	Curriculum
9/12/07	1. P.D.I.D.D.I. Sheet	Director/Staff	Curriculum
	2. Reaction, Evaluation and Feedback Sheets	Director	Reflection
	3. Activity Explanation and Evaluation Form	Director/Staff	Curriculum
	4. Student Information Form	Students	Reflection
1/30/08	1. History of the State of the Union Article	Students	Curriculum
2/13/08	1.AUDL Calendar of Events	Staff/students	Communication
	2. Mitchell High School Shooting Articles	Students	Curriculum
	3. Topics for City Tournament (Youth- focused)	Staff/students	Communication
	4. Chase UDL National Championships	Students	opportunities
3/5/08	1. SAT words	Students	Curriculum
	2. SAT Prep Overview	Students	Curriculum
	3. Sample SAT questions	Students	Curriculum
5/7/08	1. Summer in the Life of the Motivated Debater	Students	Communication
	2. AUDI Info Packet "Developing Critical Thinkers"	Students	opportunities
	3. School Board Role Play	Students	Curriculum
	4. Student Feedback Sheet 2008	Students	Reflection
1/11/09	1. Email- UDL Spring 2009	Staff	Communication
	2. Expectations for staff	Staff	Communication
	3. Tentative Teaching Schedule	Staff	Communication
1/14/09	1. Alternative Fuels Info	Staff/students	Curriculum
	2. Thinking "Write"	Students	Curriculum
	3. Alternative Fuels Overview	Staff/students	Curriculum
2/25/09	1. Under Pressure: How to keep the courts fair	Students	opportunities
	2. Sentencing project: Criminal Justice Primer	Students	curriculum
	3. Angela Davis Flyer	Staff/students	opportunities
2/28/09	1. UDL Forum: Under Pressure Pamphlet	Students	curriculum
3/18/09	1. Exxon Summer Science Camp	Students	opportunities

	Announcement		
	2. White House Internships	Students	opportunities
	3. Angela Davis Flyer	Staff/students	opportunities
	4. Info about free college prep series	Students	opportunities
4/1/09	1. AUDI Info Packet 2009	Students	opportunities
	2. Youth Job Fair Info Sheet	Students	opportunities
	3. College Bridge Inventory Sheet	Students	reflection
	4. Education and the Economy Info	Staff/students	curriculum
	5. End of Year Debate Topic Packet	Staff/students	curriculum
4/33/09	1. Essay Contest- What about the Children?	students	opportunities
	2. Team USA- World Schl Debating Champ.	students	opportunities
Other	1. Argument Sheet: AIDS Drugs	Students	curriculum

Appendix B:
Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Researcher information:

Pseudonym _____ Code:_____

Interview Information:

Date:_____ _____Time:_____ Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Part 1:

___ Explain purpose of interview.
___ Obtain written consent with signature on Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent form.

Participant's Background Information

- **Name**
- **Current affiliation with debate in Atlanta**
- **Years involved with debate**
- **All positions held related to debate in Atlanta**

Part II:
Literacy Perspectives and Practices

1. When did you first become involved with debate in Atlanta?
2. Why did you choose to be involved in City Debate?
3. What skills have you learned since becoming involved with City Debate?
4. What skills related to literacy have you learned since becoming involved with the debate center?
5. How do you define literacy?
6. Shor(1992) defines critical literacy as "habits of thought, reading, writing and speaking which go beneath surface meaning… to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action (p. 129)" Do you see any of this occurring at City Debate?
7. Why do you continue to participate in the activities of City Debate?
8. What are your future goals?

Part III:

1. Is there anything I did not ask that you feel is information relevant to this study?
2. Is there anything you would like to explain more fully that we have already discussed?
3. Can you recommend any other people for me to contact who were involved with debate in Atlanta during your participation?

Part IV:

___ Thank the participant for their information and participation in study.
___ Remind interviewee of the confidentiality agreement.

1. If I have further questions after reviewing our interview transcript, would you be willing to do a follow-up interview? What is the best way to contact you?(phone, email, other)

Appendix C:
First level codes

Question 1:	**Oral, aural, written and performative literate communicative activities**
2PAC	2 ways to communicate, presentation, audience, content
PRES	intellectual increases connected to presentation
O	Oral communication: public speaking
WC	writing and oral communication
READ	reading skills/levels
SA	speaking activities
CRIT	Critiques
FLOW	written record of debate round
PERF	Performance in debate: clarity, enunciation,
PREP	preparing in advance
LBL	Line by line argument response
NEW	Newsletter
HIGH	highlighting "cards"
ORG	organization of arguments: roadmaps, oral overviews, physical organization
HUM	Humor
DRES	debate research
SS	strategy session
COM	Communication
Question 2:	**Adult and Youth Participation**
DCH	Debate Center-Heart
SI	Staff Introductions
DCS	Debate Center Staff
YP	Youth participation: debating, judging, newsletter, coaching, teaching
TDP	traits for debate participation
TD	Types of debate
BAR	barriers to participation
STD	"something to do"
SSL	supplement to school learning
COMP	Competition
LOVE	things referred to as "love"
RESE	research on debate center
FUN	financial support for participating
MEN	mentoring relationships
SP	staff participation
Question 3:	**Definition of Literacy and Critical Literacy and Pedagogical Practices**
DE	debate experience
5P	Positive, proactive, prepared, persistent, punctual
IR	intellectual respect
COMM	community- all instances where community is connected to DC
RES	respect-all instances where respect is connected to DC
ACA	academic increases

ACC	debate as access
CONT	contradiction in debate
ST	staff training
DAC	debate across curriculum
EXP	expectations for community interaction
PT	philosophy of teaching
CARE	caring about community and world in which you live
TA	types of arguments
TNA	Teaching new arguments: socratic questioning
CURR	debate curriculum; PDIDDI, 2PAC, DRMO, who ARE you?,MRT
CT	Critical thinking skills- students
TRIAD	critical reading, critical writing, and oral communication
PD	practice debates
REF	Reflection by community on practices
CL	critical literacy skills in curriculum
VOC	Vocabulary
LANG	language of the debate center
ACT	activities for the Debate Center
ARG	Argumentation skills
CA	College access: college bridge, conversations about college
RS	research skills
TW	Thinkwrites
CRE	conversations relevant to experience
EVE	current events and discussion
FREE	curricular freedom
LITS	literacy skills
V	references to "voice"
CTA	call to action; what will students do?
I	Internalization
TLBE	teaching and learning by example
E	empowerment, debate participation as activism
FAM	family--all instances where family is connected to DC
CEL	celebration of student success
SM	staff meetings
IC	Intellectual community
LEC	Lecture
SUPP	supplemental resources for curriculum
CLD	critical literacy in debate
DSL	debate skills used in life
HOPE	"an infusion of hope"
DISC	discussion of arguments
DCR	Debate and conflict resolution
TSR	teacher student ratio
DLIT	definition of literacy
BP	broadening perspectives
TA	targeted activities to individual needs
Context:	
CHR	College and high school relationship
LO	Location

PS	Physical Space
DCAPS	Debate center APS relationship
PRIV	Education as privilege, staff as privileged
SUP	Support for students, including money, food, rides home
MEL	information about Melissa
PAR	Partnerships
INT	intensity of VPDBS (different from rest of debate center)
RACE	discussions about how race affects life, need for diversity
UDL	UDL as movement
IACT	Individual activisim
DCC	debate center as central resource
COMMIT	Commitment
NET	networking though UDL

Appendix D:
Second level codes

Second Level Codes

Research Question Codes

Context	Context of City Debate
Debate Pedagogy and Practices	Learning Activities of City Debate
Critical Literacy	Pedagogy, Philosophy and practice

Emergent Themes Across Research Questions

Care	Connections between individual participants
Community and Respect	Intentional building of relationships
Broadening Perspectives	Multiple different ways of seeing

Appendix E:
Participants in Varsity Policy Debate Breakout Session

Participant	**Age**	**Race/ethnicity**	**Gender**	**Schooling experience**
Jamal	30s	African American	Male	Pemberton University
Jay	20	African American	Male	Southeast University
Ben	60 ?	White	Male	Pemberton University
Cole	Early 20s	African American	Male	Southeast University, Green High School
Susan	30	White	Female	Pemberton University
Robb	17	African American	Female	Williams High School
Leigh	17	African American	Female	Green High School
Jim	19	White	Male	Southeast University
Minh	17	Asian American	Male	Green High School
Lexy	18	African American	Female	Green High School
Sean	17	White	Male	Green High School

Appendix F:
P-DIDDI Sheet

P- D.I.D.D.I. SHEET
PERSONAL DEBATER INVENTORY for DIRECTIONAL DEVELOPMENT and ILLUMINATION SHEET

Directions: Please use this as a GUIDE for what the student you are working with needs to learn or improve upon. Whenever Please print your name off to the side of each curriculum item you cover. Use the "other and note sections" to write helpful comments to future instructors. ***Please put the name of the student at the top. THIS IS FOR INSTRUCTORS USE ONLY!*** Have fun and teach well☺!!!

Basic Concepts								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2nd attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
2PAC								
A.R.E.								
DRMO								
MRT								
What to expect - (make this brief)								
AFF								
NEG								
Speech orders								
Time Limits								
4 Step Refutation								
Logical Fallacies								
Other								

The Affirmative								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2nd attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
Overview of the 1AC								
Key terms of the 1AC								
Read and Write 1AC								
Cross ex questions to anticipate								
Purpose of the 2AC								
2AC blocks – what they look like and how to write them								
2AC blocks – write some for each								

a good one								
How to give a good rebuttal (don't forget MRT)								
Other skills:								

The Negative								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2^{nd} attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
Overview of the 1NC – goal and purpose								
Key terms often used in the 1NC (can skip down to disad discussion, etc. if needed)								
Read and Write 1NC shells								
Cross ex questions to anticipate								
Purpose of the 2NC								
2NC blocks – what they look like and how to write them								
2NC blocks – write some for each disad and major case arguments								
1NR – how to give a good one								
How to give a good rebuttal (don't forget MRT)								
Other skills:								

The Disad								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2^{nd} attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
Parts of disad								
Read and write shells								
Disad overviews								
How to								

extend a disad (make sure you have talked about flowing first)								
How to answer a disad (emphasis the need to make several arguments)								
Other skills:								

Flowing and Listening								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2nd attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
Definition								
Purpose and need for flowing								
How to flow (use of shorthand, spacing, role modeling)								
Practice flowing (3-5 exercises)								
Practice flowing in debates								
Have had follow-up discussion about challenges they had flowing								
Other skills:								

Debate Etiquette (Community and Respect)								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2nd attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
How to behave at tournaments								
How to treat and communicate with your partner								
How to have an effective cross –ex as questioner								

How to have an effective cross- ex as an examiner								
How to behave after the debate round has ended								
Other Skills:								

Reading Comprehension and Articulation								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2nd attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
Thinkwrites								
Read and Writes								
Read-a-louds (role model when appropriate)								
Articles to read								
M&M's								
Other Skills:								

Non-Verbal Communication								
Concept	Rating				Signature	Date	Sign (2nd attempt)	Date
	REDO	Good	Very Good	Excellent				
Talk about the importance of good body language								
Practice on having good body language (3-5 exercises)								
Talk about specific things they can do improve in this area								
Other Skills:								

OTHER NOTES/COMMENTS:

Appendix G:
Sample Debate Preparation

Sample Disadvantage

High Oil Prices Good – Russian Economy

A. Uniqueness: Higher oil prices are inevitable

Baltimore Sun, 5-25-08, "Oil's Challenge,"
http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bal-ed.oil25may25,0,6455021.story

Government can hasten our adjustment by quickly setting tougher fuel-efficiency standards for cars and trucks, eliminating unnecessary tax breaks for oil and gas companies, imposing a tax on oil products that would be used to fund development of alternative energy resources and requiring significant conservation steps in heating, air conditioning and lighting. Regardless of the conservation steps taken, the United States will be forced to rely on imported oil to some extent for decades to come. It's possible that the current price run-up is a bubble that will burst if hoarded oil supplies are released and producers increase their output. But any drop in oil prices is likely to be followed by more record highs as global demand continues to grow. If we lack the courage to significantly reduce our oil dependence, the social and economic costs will be formidable.

B. Link: Oil Prices will remain High Unless US reduces demand

Associated Press, 5-28-08, http://www.pr-inside.com/a-look-at-some-of-the-r612240.htm

Oil prices have surpassed high after high in recent weeks, reaching an all-time peak of US$135.09 a barrel last week. Experts differ about why and what if anything can be done about it.
THE PRODUCERS: Oil cartel OPEC says the world is well supplied with oil and that the higher prices are driven by financial speculation. The organization says it's not planning to increase production. And many fear the U.S. economy will slow and reduce demand for oil

High oil prices are key to the russian economy

Griffiths, 2004 [Emma, Lateline, ABC, 12/10,
http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2004/s1218647.htm]

Well, the surge in oil prices shows no signs of slowing, with light crude hitting new highs of more than US$54 a barrel, while that's cause for concern in many countries. In Russia, black gold is driving a resurgence in the economy and in the country's international standing. But even as Russia's oil is rebuilding the nation's superpower status, there are concerns the boom may create problems of its own. Moscow correspondent Emma Griffiths reports. EMMA GRIFFITHS: Moscow is the centre of Russia's political power, but a new power base has emerged downtown from the Kremlin. Big money is running Russia like never before. Moscow is home to more billionaires than any other city, 36 of the world's richest live here and

many of them owe their fortunes to Russia's huge reserves of oil. Russia now rivals Saudi Arabia as the largest oil producer in the world. In July, output hit a post-Soviet high of 9.3 million barrels a day and the Federal budget is now swollen with petrodollars. But underneath the boom, Russian oil is looking far from stable. The country's largest oil producer, Yukos, is facing a multibillion-dollar tax bill which company chiefs warn could force it into bankruptcy. Investors are worried and the company's woes have contributed to record global oil prices. The case is seen as Kremlin payback, to crush the political ambitions of Yukos founder Mikhail Khordovsky. Still Russia's richest man, he's on trial for tax evasion and fraud and faces 10 years in jail if found guilty. Vladimir Milov was Deputy Energy Minister until two years ago and now runs an energy think-tank. He says the moves against Yukos are putting Russia at significant risk. VLADIMIR MILOV, INSTITUTE OF ENERGY POLICY: The Government does not show any clear signs of wanting to find a solution to Yukos case, which is, of course, damaging the whole industry. EMMA GRIFFITHS: According to analysts, the company's narrowing options include bankruptcy, break-up or re-nationalisation. None look promising to the World Bank. CHRIS RUHL, WORLD BANK: Actually, a lot is at stake. And it's not only about the short-term instability and the lack of investment which comes. It is about people's concern about property rights. You cannot build a market economy without having defensible property rights in place. EMMA GRIFFITHS: The World Bank has broader economic concerns too. It's warned that Russia is too reliant on its oil riches, but what is the source of its renewed strength could also be a weakness, especially if oil prices go down - a concern Russia's Finance Minister says he's working to prevent. ALEXEI JUDRIN, RUSSIAN FINANCE MINISTER: (Speaks in Russian) TRANSLATION: We think the country shouldn't be dependent on high profits from oil. This is why our economy is more tuned to work in the non-natural resources sector. EMMA GRIFFITHS: But the Russian government is making the most of the boom while it lasts, raising oil taxes to add billions to the Government's take.

C. Impact: Russian economic decline will trigger civil war and nuclear attacks against the US

David 99 – Professor of Political Science at John Hopkins University [Steven R., "Saving America from the Coming Civil Wars," Foreign Affairs, Jan/Feb, LN]

If internal war does strike Russia, economic deterioration will be a prime cause. From 1989 to the present, the GDP has fallen by 50 percent. In a society where, ten years ago, unemployment scarcely existed, it reached 9.5 percent in 1997 with many economists declaring the true figure to be much higher. Twenty-two percent of Russians live below the official poverty line (earning less than $ 70 a month). Modern Russia can neither collect taxes (it gathers only half the revenue it is due) nor significantly cut spending. Reformers tout privatization as the country's cure-all, but in a land without well-defined property rights or contract law and where subsidies remain a way of life, the prospects for transition to an American-style capitalist economy look remote at best. As the massive devaluation of the ruble and the current political crisis show, Russia's condition is even worse than most analysts feared. If conditions get worse, even the stoic Russian people will soon run out of patience. A future conflict would quickly draw in Russia's military. In the Soviet days civilian rule kept the powerful armed forces in check. But with the Communist Party out of office, what little civilian control remains relies on an exceedingly fragile foundation -- personal friendships between government leaders and military commanders. Meanwhile, the morale of Russian soldiers has fallen to a dangerous low. Drastic cuts in spending mean inadequate pay, housing, and medical care. A new emphasis on domestic missions has created an ideological split between the old and new guard in the military leadership, increasing the risk that disgruntled generals may enter the political fray and feeding the resentment of soldiers who dislike being used as a national police force. Newly enhanced ties between military units and local authorities pose another danger. Soldiers grow ever more dependent on local governments for housing, food, and wages. Draftees serve closer to home, and new laws have increased local control over the armed forces. Were a conflict to emerge between a regional power and Moscow, it is not at all clear which side the military would support. Divining the military's allegiance is crucial, however, since the structure of the Russian Federation makes it virtually certain that regional conflicts will continue to erupt. Russia's 89 republics, krais, and oblasts grow ever more independent in a system that does little to keep them together. As the central government finds itself unable to force its will beyond Moscow (if even that far), power devolves to the periphery. With the economy collapsing, republics feel less and less incentive to pay taxes to Moscow when they receive so little in return. Three-quarters of them already have their own constitutions, nearly all of which make some claim to sovereignty. Strong ethnic bonds promoted by shortsighted Soviet policies may motivate non- Russians to secede from the Federation. Chechnya's successful revolt against Russian control inspired similar movements for autonomy and independence throughout the country. If these rebellions spread and Moscow responds with force, civil war is likely. Should Russia succumb to internal war, the consequences for the United States and Europe will be severe. A major power like Russia -- even though in decline -- does not suffer civil war quietly or alone. An embattled Russian Federation might provoke opportunistic attacks from enemies such as China. Massive flows of refugees would pour into central and western Europe. Armed struggles in Russia could easily spill into its neighbors. Damage from the fighting, particularly attacks on nuclear plants, would poison the environment of much of Europe and Asia. Within Russia, the consequences would be even worse. Just as the sheer brutality of the last Russian civil war laid the basis for the privations of Soviet communism, a second civil war might produce another horrific regime. Most alarming is the real possibility that the violent disintegration of Russia could lead to loss of control over its nuclear arsenal. No nuclear state has ever fallen victim to civil war, but even without a clear precedent the grim consequences can be foreseen. Russia retains some 20,000 nuclear weapons and the raw material for tens of thousands more, in scores of sites

scattered throughout the country. So far, the government has managed to prevent the loss of any weapons or much material. If war erupts, however, Moscow's already weak grip on nuclear sites will slacken, making weapons and supplies available to a wide range of anti-American groups and states. Such dispersal of nuclear weapons represents the greatest physical threat America now faces. And it is hard to think of anything that would increase this threat more than the chaos that would follow a Russian civil war. Lack of attention to the threat of civil wars by U.S. policymakers and academics has meant a lack of response and policy options. This does not mean, however, that Washington can or should do nothing at all. As a first measure, American policymakers should work with governments of threatened states to prevent domestic conflict from erupting. Though the inadvertent side effects of internal conflicts cannot be deterred, the outbreak of civil war itself may be discouraged. Doing so may require unambiguous and generous American support for a regime that finds itself under assault. Or it may require Washington to ease out unsustainable leaders (the Philippines' Marcos or Indonesia's Suharto) once their time has clearly passed. Either way, the difficulties of preventing internal war pale in comparison to the problems of coping with its effects. The United States should take action now to prepare itself for civil war in key states. To respond to conflict in Mexico, Washington will need feasible evacuation plans for hundreds of thousands of Americans in that country. Contingency plans for closing the Mexican-American border should be considered. And the possibility of a Mexican civil war raises the issue of American intervention. How and where the United States would enter the fray would of course be determined by circumstances, but it is not premature to give serious thought to the prospect. To guard against a conflict in Saudi Arabia, the United States should lead the effort to reduce Western dependence on Saudi oil. This will require a mixed strategy, including the expansion of U.S. strategic oil reserves (which could be done now, while Saudi oil is cheap and available), locating new suppliers (such as the Central Asian republics), and reviving moribund efforts to find oil alternatives. None of this will be easy, especially in an era of dollar-a-gallon gasoline, but it makes more sense than continuing to rely on an energy source so vulnerable to the ravages of civil war. For Russia, America must reduce the chances that civil conflict there will unleash nuclear weapons against the United States. First, Washington must do more to reduce the amount of nuclear weapons and fissionable material that could be lost, stolen, or used in the chaos of civil war. The Nunn-Lugar program, under which the United States buys Russian nuclear material to use and store in America, is a good start, but it must be accelerated. America should not worry about making a profit on the plutonium and enriched uranium it buys, but just get the goods out of Russia as fast as possible. Second, arms control initiatives that may have been unpalatable during the Cold War should now be reconsidered, given the risk of accidental or unauthorized launchings. American policymakers should contemplate agreements to reduce the total number of Russian (and American) nuclear weapons, to deprive the Russians of the ability to quickly launch a nuclear strike (for example, by contracting to store warheads away from missiles), and should intensify efforts to develop an effective defense against missile attacks.

Appendix H:
List of High School Policy Debate Topics, 1985- 2010

Year	Resolution
1984-85	Resolved: That the federal government should provide employment for all employable United States citizens living in poverty.
1985-86	Resolved: That the federal government should establish a comprehensive national policy to protect the quality of water in the United States.
1986-87	Resolved: That the federal government should implement a comprehensive longterm agricultural policy in the United States.
1987-88	Resolved: That the United States government should adopt a policy to increase political stability in Latin America.
1988-89	Resolved: That the federal government should implement a comprehensive program to guarantee retirement security for United States citizens over age 65.
1989-90	Resolved: That the federal government should adopt a nationwide policy to decrease overcrowding in prisons and jails in the United States.
1990-91	Resolved: That the United States government should significantly increase space exploration beyond the Earth's mesosphere.
1991-92	Resolved: That the federal government should significantly increase social services to homeless individuals in the United States.
1992-93	Resolved: That the United States government should reduce worldwide pollution through its trade and/or aid policies.
1993-94	Resolved: That the federal government should guarantee comprehensive national health insurance to all United States citizens.
1994-95	Resolved: That the United States government should substantially strengthen regulation of immigration to the United States.
1995-96	Resolved: That the United States government should substantially change its foreign policy toward the People’s Republic of China.
1996-97	Resolved: That the federal government should establish a program to substantially reduce juvenile crime in the United States.
1997-98	Resolved: That the federal government should establish a policy to substantially increase renewable energy use in the United States.
1998-99	Resolved: That the United States should substantially change its foreign policy toward Russia.
1999-00	Resolved: That the federal government should establish an education policy to significantly increase academic achievement in secondary schools in the United States.
2000-01	Resolved: That the United States federal government should significantly increase protection of privacy in the United States in one or more of the following areas: employment, medical records, consumer information, search and seizure.
2001-02	Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy significantly limiting the use of weapons of mass destruction.

2002-03	Resolved: That the United States federal government should substantially increase public health services for mental health care in the United States.
2003-04	Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish an ocean policy substantially increasing protection of marine natural resources.
2004-05	Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations peacekeeping operations.
2005-06	Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially decrease its authority either to detain without charge or to search without probable cause.
2007-08	Resolved: The United States federal government should establish a policy substantially increasing the number of persons serving in one or more of the following national service programs: AmeriCorps, Citizen Corps, Senior Corps, Peace Corps, Learn and Serve America, and/or the Armed Forces.
2008-09	Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its public health assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa.
2009-10	Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase social services for persons living in poverty in the United States.