

CHAPTER SAMPLER

Thug Life

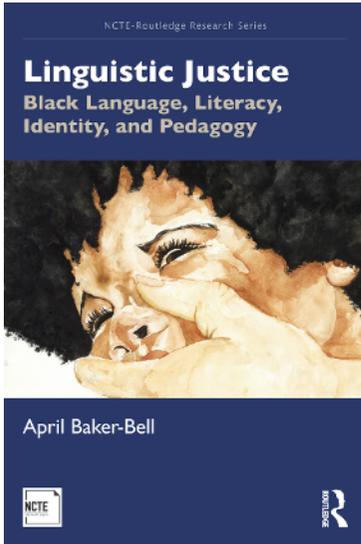
from *Linguistic Justice*



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Contents



1. Thug Life

By April Baker-Bell

from *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*



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“THUG LIFE”

Bonus Chapter: Five Years After Leadership Academy

The following is a passage from Angie Thomas’ award-winning young adult novel *The Hate U Give* (2017).

That means flipping the switch in my brain so I’m Williamson Starr. Williamson Starr doesn’t use slang—if a rapper would say it, she doesn’t say it, even if her white friends do. Slang makes them cool. Slang makes her “hood.” Williamson Starr holds her tongue when people piss her off so nobody will think she’s the “angry black girl.” Williamson Starr is approachable. No stank-eyes, none of that. Williamson Starr is non-confrontational. Basically, Williamson Starr doesn’t give anyone a reason to call her ghetto. I can’t stand myself for doing but I do it anyway.

—Starr, from the novel *The Hate U Give*

In the passage, the protagonist Starr, a Black teenager who attends a predominantly white high school (Williamson) but lives in a predominantly Black community (Garden Heights), is describing how she navigates and negotiates her Black identity in a white space that expects her to perform whiteness, especially through her language use. Albeit fictional, Thomas’ depiction of Starr accurately captures the cultural conflict, labor, and exhaustion that many Black Language-speakers endure when code-switching; that is, many Black Language-speakers are continuously monitoring and policing their linguistic expressions and working through the linguistic double consciousness they experience as a result of having to alienate their cultural ways of being and knowing, their community, and their blackness in favor of a white middle class identity. African American young adult literature like *The Hate U*

Give provides Black youth with an opportunity to see their racial and linguistic realities reflected in literature.

Since my work with the students at Leadership Academy in 2013, I have been thinking a lot about the power of African American young adult literature within an Antiracist Black Language Pedagogical Framework. Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2014) posit that "by examining literature, students gain an appreciation for the rich diversity of language, and they are exposed to a medium through which authors and readers can grapple with critical social issues" (p. 73). Yet, whenever I ask my preservice students how Black Language structures were addressed when they read African American literature like Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Fences* by August Wilson, many of them reveal that they did not discuss language at all. This is unsettling as literature "often tells the stories of regular people, living their lives, and speaking in their varied tongues" (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014, p. 73), and it provides a rich opportunity for students in English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms to examine how language and race inform identity and experience. Indeed, there is no venue more capable of discussing, critiquing, and dismantling linguistic and racial injustice than literary studies and the ELA classroom (Borsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014; Sealey-Ruiz, 2016). Over the last few years, there has been a surplus in young adult African American novels that work to dismantle Anti-Black Linguistic Racism and provide an outlet to conscientize students to the historical, cultural, political, linguistic, and racial underpinnings of Black Language. In addition to *The Hate U Give*, novels like *I Am Alphonso Jones* by Tony Medina and *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone provide a rich foundation for literacy educators to put our current racial and linguistic realities in conversation with the critical analytical tools we offer in ELA classrooms.

In this bonus chapter, I offer Black Language Artifacts that are inspired by work I did with my preservice English education students¹ in a course that I designed and named *Linguistic (IN)Justice: A Black Counterstory of the English Language*. I began using *The Hate U Give* (hereafter *THUG*) as my primary young adult literature text in the course for a few reasons: (1) it provides my students with a rich foundation to explore how identity is conceived through language expression, (2) it engages students in a language study that goes beyond White Mainstream English, (3) it is contemporary representation of how Black Language reflects Black people's ways of knowing, interpreting, surviving, and being in the world, and (4) the book shows how it is nearly impossible to separate a person's language from their racial positioning in society (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Additionally, the novel provided important opportunities to explore the intersections of language, race, racial violence, Anti-Black Linguistic Racism, and power. In the second half of this chapter, I

highlight a series of teacher-scholar-activist events, aptly named *THUG* Event Series, that I organized and involved my students in based on *THUG*. I close out this chapter by including an interview from one of my students about her experience participating in my course and in the *THUG* Event Series.

Linguistic Justice As a Framework in English Teacher Education Courses

In the section that follows, I offer seven Black Language Artifacts that demonstrate how I am using the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy as a framework to prepare preservice English Education students to use literature to work against Anti-Black Linguistic Racism. Each Black Language Pedagogy artifact listed below contains three sections that lay out important information about each artifact in relation to *THUG*: (1) a *description* that explains the theme, (2) a list of potential *activities* that can be used to engage the students in the theme, and (3) *supplemental resources* that can be read or viewed to provide students with foundational information about the theme. The artifacts build off of one another but do not necessarily have to be followed in any particular. The Black Language Artifacts that follow are not intended to be a prescriptive approach to an Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy; instead, these are ideas that can be implemented, altered, or used for inspiration to help teachers think through how to use literature in the pursuit of linguistic and racial justice.

Black Language Artifact 1: Black Language and Identity

Description

For this artifact, students examine the intersection of language, culture, and identity within the Black community.

Activities

- Have students explore the linguistic identity of the characters in *THUG* by performing a linguistic analysis. Have the students examine how, when, and where Starr uses language.
- Have the students examine how Black Language reflected the character's ways of knowing, interpreting, and surviving in the world.
- Have the students examine the relationship between Black Language and Black culture in the novel.
- Have the students examine the tension Starr experienced with language and race throughout the novel.
- Have the students write a linguistic memoir that examines their racial and linguistic identities. For example, students might consider writing about how

language is used within their families and communities; their experiences with linguistic racism; etc.

Supplementary Resources

- Have the students read or view the following texts that represent language, culture, and identity within the Black community.
 - *From Ghetto Lady to Critical Linguist* by Geneva Smitherman (1990).
 - *Reclaiming My Language: The (Mis)education of Wonderful* by Wonderful Faison (2014).
 - *Three ways to speak English* by Jamila Lyiscott (2014).

Black Language Artifact 2: Language, History, and Culture

Description

For this artifact, students participate in a language study that examines the historical, cultural, and political underpinnings of Black Language.

Activities

- Have students examine the difference between a pidgin and a creole.
- Have students examine dialectologists and creolists’ perspectives on the history and development of Black Language.
- Have students explore the influence of language planning during enslavement.
- Have students learn about the history and translate coded spirituals.
- Have students explore the ways in which enslaved Africans and their descendants were denied access to literacy by law.
- Have students explore the history of Black Language in relation to the issues related to language and power that surfaces in *THUG*.

Supplementary Resources

- Have the students read or view the following texts that provide windows into the historical, cultural, and political underpinnings of Black Language:
 - A PBS clip about the underground railroad and coded spirituals.²
 - A short clip from “Do You Speak American” about linguistic profiling, the origin of Black Language and Gullah.³
 - The article “Use and misuse speech diagnostics for African American students” by John Baugh (2015).

Black Language Artifact 3: The Study of Black Language

Description

For this artifact, students participate in a language study that examines the structural and discourse features of Black Language.

Activities

- Have students examine sociolinguists' perspectives about the standard language ideology.
- Have students explore Black grammatical structures (syntax, semantics, phonology, etc.) represented in *THUG*.
- Have students explore Black discourse/rhetorical features represented in *THUG* (signifyin', semantic inversion, call & response, etc.).
- Have students conduct a rhetorical analysis to investigate Angie Thomas's choices for using Black Language at various moments and with various characters throughout the novel.
- Have students do a mini-ethnographic study of how language is used within their own linguistic communities.

Supplementary Resources

- Have the students read the excerpts from the following texts that examine the structural and discourse features of Black Language:
 - *The Standard Language Myth*, a chapter from the book *English with an Accent* by Lippi-Green (2012).
 - *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English* by Rickford & Rickford (2000).
 - *Signifying, narrativizing, and repetition: Radical approaches to theorizing African American Language* by Williams-Farrier (2016).
 - *Change the Game*, a chapter from the book *Articulate While Black* by Alim & Smitherman (2012).

Black Language Artifact 4: Language & Power

Description

For this artifact, students examine the intersection of language and power.

Activities

- Have students examine who decides whose language gets to be considered academic language, standard, official, normal, appropriate, etc.

- Have students examine systems that perpetuate linguistic oppression (linguistic hegemony, standard language ideology, etc.)
- Have students examine the relationship between language and power in *THUG*.
- Have students interrogate the concept of code-switching through Starr's experiences in *THUG*. Have the students unpack the tension Starr experiences when code-switching at Williamson.
- Have students investigate how language has been used to profile and discriminate against Black Language-speakers.

Black Language Artifact 5: Language & Racial Positioning

Description

For this artifact, students examine the intersections between language and race. They also have opportunities to investigate the relationship between language and anti-blackness as one way of understanding Anti-Black Linguistic Racism.

Activities

- Have students examine the presence of white linguistic hegemony in *THUG* and how Starr navigated and negotiated it.
- Have students examine the definition of Anti-Black Linguistic Racism and investigate how its presence was reflected in *THUG*.
- Have students examine how Anti-Black Linguistic Racism is perpetuated through systems of power (schools, housing, law, etc.).
- Have students examine their own experiences with Anti-Black Linguistic Racism and white linguistic hegemony.
- Have students examine how Black Language is culturally appropriated, co-opted, and commodified by white mainstream culture.

Supplemental Resources

- Have the students do the following to examine the relationship between language and racism:
 - Read *I Can Switch my Language, but I Can't Switch My Skin: What Teachers Must Understand About Linguistic Racism* by Baker-Bell (2017).
 - Watch a clip about linguistic profiling an ABC News.⁴
 - Explore Anti-Black Linguistic Racism within our court systems by examining how Rachel Jeantel's, witness in the George Zimmerman trial, testimony was treated for her use of Black Language.⁵

Black Language Artifact 6: Language, Agency, and Action

Description

For this artifact, students develop agency, take a critical stance, and make political choices that support them in employing Black Language for the purposes of various sorts of freedom, including dismantling Anti-Black Linguistic Racism.

Activities

- Have students perform a rhetorical analysis of how Black writers and speakers have used BL powerfully for various sorts of freedom (creative writers/speakers, academic writers/speakers, activists, etc.).
- Have students explore and practice using Black Language powerfully and rhetorically.
- Have students organize teach-ins, create PSAs, write books, etc., that promote critical consciousness of BL and Anti-Black Linguistic Racism.
- Have students create language policies that protect and preserve Black Language and Black Language-speakers within their communities, schools, and the world.

Supplementary Resources

- Have the students read the following texts to aid them in developing linguistic agency, taking critical stances, and making political choices that will support them in employing Black Language for the purposes of various sorts of freedom, including dismantling Anti-Black Linguistic Racism:
 - StayWoke: *The language and literacies of #BlackLivesMatter movement* by Richardson and Ragland (2018).
 - Conference on College Composition and Communication (1974) *Students' Right to Their Own Language* resolution.

Black Language Artifact 7: Black Language & Music & Memes

Description

I created the following activity to have students perform a critical linguistic analysis on lyrics and /or memes. I describe the activity in two steps below.

Activity

Step 1: Using the lyrics/ memes you were given, answer the following:

- Interpret the meaning embedded in this piece (break down the hidden meanings represented).
- What is largely being signified in and through this piece?
- How does Black Language play a role in this piece?
 - a What features of Black Rhetoric are reflected in and through this example?
- How does this example “disturb the peace” (Smitherman, 1997)?
 - a How does it resist dominant culture?
 - b How does it push back against Black oppression/ White Supremacy?

Step 2: Present findings to the class.

- Provide a summary/ interpretation of the piece based on your findings.
- Provide specific examples of how Black Language was represented in this piece.

I’ve used this activity to deconstruct the lyrics to *Black Effect* by the Carters,⁶ *Changes* by Tupac Shakur,⁷ and *Don’t Touch My Hair* by Solange.⁸ I have also used the video version of *This is America* by Childish Gambino.⁹

Black Language Artifact 8: Developing a Language of Solidarity

Description

For this Black Language Artifact, students develop a critical linguistic awareness and interrogate how other linguistically and racially diverse communities experience racial and linguistic violence and are impacted and are affected by linguistic racism.

Activities

- Read linguistic narratives by non-Black writers who are impacted by linguistic racism.
- Learn how historically communities of colors have experienced division and opposition that have negatively impacted communities of color as a whole.
- Develop an understanding of linguistic and cultural sharing.

Supplementary Resources

- Have the students read the following texts to help them develop a broader understanding of linguistic racism, linguistic violence, and how white linguistic and cultural hegemony negatively impacts communities of color.

- a "Imagining a language of solidarity for Black and Latinx youth in ELA classrooms" by Danny Martinez (2017).
- b "'They're in my culture, they speak the same way': African American language in multiethnic high schools" by Django Paris (2009).
- c "Mother tongue" by Amy Tan (1990).
- d "How to tame a wild tongue" by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987).
- e "Words that matter: Black and Indigenous solidarity and the right to language" by Kyle T. Mays (2019).

Linguistic Justice as Community and Teacher-Scholar-Activism

I organized the *THUG* Event Series, from November 2018 to January 2019. The event series was designed around both the book and film adaptation of *THUG*, and it provided my English Education students and our surrounding communities with an opportunity to engage in topics around anti-blackness, racial violence, police brutality, and linguistic racism. The series included four events:

- *THUG Film Viewing*: I organized a trip for students in my English Education course to view the film adaptation of *The Hate U Give*.
- *THUG Dialogue*: The *THUG* dialogue was a campus-wide discussion about the film adaptation of the book and its relationship to our current racial realities. The dialogue also provided participants with a rich opportunity to complicate film adaptations of books.
- *THUG Collaborative*: For this event, I organized a collaborative between students in our English Education courses and a high school ELA class in Detroit, Michigan to support the implementation and facilitation of *The Hate U Give*, and provide MSU English Ed students with authentic experiences teaching and learning alongside linguistically and racially diverse students.
- *THUG Teach-In*: The teach-in/work-in was a professional development event for educators interested in receiving support and resources for teaching about race and racism in the literacy classroom using the book, *The Hate U Give*. The teach-in included a variety of teaching demonstrations, presentations, and discussions facilitated by MSU English Ed faculty and secondary ELA teachers from various schools throughout Michigan.

I include Black Language Artifacts from some of the events in the section below.

THUG Film Viewing & THUG Dialogue

My English education students were required to read *THUG* before our trip to see the film. Two weeks after the film, I organized a dialogue and live Twitter chat at MSU. The following questions and topics (also represented in Appendix D) guided our dialogue.

1. Before getting into our critical questions, let's DISCUSS what the book and film captured well. What do the book and film allow us to accomplish?
2. *On Character Omissions ...*
 - DeVante and Starr's grandmother were dynamic characters who had important roles in the book, yet they were left out of the film. How did these omissions impact the film?
3. *On Chris ...*
 - In the film, Chris, Starr's white boyfriend, tells her he does not see color. This scene is not reflected in the book. What might have been the purpose of including this scene in the film? Why are comments like "I don't see color" problematic?
 - In the book, Chris joins Starr, Seven, and DeVante at the protest. This scene is left out of the film. What are your thoughts about this?
 - Some reviewers have deemed the section of the book where Starr tells Chris he will not understand her situation because he is white an example of reverse racism. Reverse racism doesn't exist; however, this comment creates space for us to have a discussion about why it doesn't.
 - What does Chris' character suggest for white people in general, and white allies in particular?
4. *On Colorism ...*
 - The cover of *The Hate U Give* book featured Starr as dark skinned and many have suggested that she was described as dark skinned in the book. Yet, Amandla Stenberg, a biracial actress, plays Starr in the film. Some reviewers have suggested that this mismatch sheds light on the media's bias views regarding light skinned or mixed women, who they consider to be more presentable, more attractive, or more accepted. Indeed, the inclusion of dark skinned actors in Hollywood movies has been very minimal and fickle. What are your thoughts?
5. *On Different Messages...*
 - Some have suggested that the book and the film offer two separate critiques. For example, the book ends with Starr connecting Khalil's death, at the hands of a white police officer (#115), to the murders of actual Black people who were killed by police and vigilantes. Starr specifically states on page 443:

It would be easy to quit if it was just about me, Khalil, that night, and the cop. It's about way more than that though, It's about Seven. Sekani. Kenya. Devante. It's also about Oscar. Aiyana.

Trayvon. Rekia. Michael. Eric. Tamir. John. Ezell. Sandra. Freddie. Alton. Philando. It's even about that little boy in 1955 who nobody recognized at first—Emmett."

Some viewers have suggested that this represented how the book challenges a policing system that kills Black people. On the other hand, the film ends with a shocking twist, in which Starr's younger brother, Sekani, pulls out a gun on King, the neighborhood drug dealer. This scene coupled with Starr's message that "we have the power to break this cycle" have some viewers feeling as if the film makes Black people primarily responsible for their own oppression by not asking its audience to challenge the police system, but instead, focus on "Black-on-Black crime." What are your thoughts?

6. *On white screenwriters...*

- The screenwriter of *The Hate U Give*, Audrey Wells, was a white woman. What role might this have played in the way in which the film was presented and the way the story was told? What gets lost when white screenwriters write screenplays that are based on Black experiences?

7. *On THUG and BlackLivesMatter ...*

- Some have touted *The Hate U Give* film as the first Black Lives Matter movie. However, many, including #BlackLivesMatter co-founder, Patrisse Cullors, have stated that *THUG* film is not a #BLM film; it is the antithesis. What are your thoughts about this statement in relation to BLM's mission?

8. *On THUG & Tupac's theory of THUG LIFE ...*

- Tupac's theory of THUG LIFE, which was an acronym for **The Hate U Give Little Infants Fucks Everyone**, was "a critique of a White-supremacist-capitalist system that treats Black and poor children with contempt, depriving them of resources, and ultimately causing the whole society to suffer the consequences." Angie Thomas stated that Tupac's theory influenced *The Hate U Give*. Was Tupac's critique adequately captured in the book? What about the film?
- Do you agree with Angie Thomas that the scene with Sekani pulling the gun on King was a visual of Tupac's Thug Life?

9. *On THUG & Black Language ...*

Smitherman (2006) describes Black Language as

a style of speaking English words with Black Flava—with Africanized semantic, grammatical, pronunciation, and rhetorical patterns. [Black Language] comes out of the experience of U.S. slave descendants. This shared experience has resulted in common language practices in the Black community. The roots of African American speech lie in the counter language, the resistance discourse, that was

created as a communication system unintelligible to speakers of the dominant master class.

(*Smitherman, 2006, p. 3*)

- How did *The Hate U Give* book and film help us make sense of how Black Language reflects Black people's ways of knowing, interpreting, surviving, being, and resisting in the world?
- How does Starr problematize the notion of code-switching?

THUG Collaborative

For this project, I organized a collaborative between my pre-service English Education students and a Detroit high school teacher and her students. The purpose of the collaborative was to support the classroom teacher in the implementation and facilitation of THUG, and provide my students with authentic experiences teaching and learning alongside high school students. The collaborative involved my students developing curricular materials focused on using THUG to work toward linguistic justice and presenting those materials in the form of a teaching demonstration to the high school students and their teacher. The students and their teacher in turn provided my preservice students with feedback about how they experienced the curricular materials, and they offered feedback and ideas for how the preservice teachers could continue this work in their future classrooms.

To facilitate the collaborative, I secured funds from MSU and to purchase the teacher and her students a classroom set of books, movie passes, and transportation to see the film, and funds to host a field trip for the students and their teacher to visit at MSU and participate in the teaching demonstration. One of my former high school students paid the expenses for the students' transportation to and from campus as a way of paying it forward. To prepare for the collaboration, the teacher and her students read the book and saw the film separately from my students and me. However, the classroom teacher asked me to create a mini-workshop that connected Tupac's theory of THUG LIFE with the themes represented in the novel, which provided me an opportunity to interact with the high school students before they met with my preservice students.

THUG Teach-in

As noted above, the THUG teach-in was a professional development event that I organized for educators interested in receiving support and resources for teaching about race and racism in the literacy classroom using literature. The teach-in brought together teachers from all across the state of Michigan. I intentionally selected two English teachers from Flint, Michigan; one English teacher from Detroit, two graduate students from Michigan State University, and a poet from New York (originally from

Detroit) to facilitate sessions for the teach-in. The facilitators shared teaching demonstrations that illustrated how English teachers can use *THUG* in the pursuit of racial justice. During this session, the facilitators engaged participants in a concentrated and serious dialogue that illuminated how *THUG* can be a resource that supports teachers to: (1) work toward racial and intersectional justice in their classrooms and communities, (2) learn about activities they can engage in with lessons that make visible the set of curricular and pedagogical implications *THUG* has for classroom praxis, and (3) explore critical and creative approaches and activist tools that teachers can implement in their classrooms when teaching *THUG*. Below, I provide a brief, but more detailed description of the facilitators' teaching demonstrations.

- *Demonstration 1:* The facilitator¹⁰ illustrated how educators can use the "Jam Session" technique to have small, intimate discussions within their classroom to develop an environment where teachers and students can share their feelings on the complex themes found in *THUG*. This activity can be used at the beginning of a unit and allows students to discuss and be inspired by Angie Thomas's musical inspiration, Tupac Shakur, with the examination of his song *Changes*.
- *Demonstration 2:* The facilitator¹¹ demonstrated how teachers can use *THUG* to inspire student research, make writing culturally relevant for an authentic audience, and create a succinct culminating project that all readers can benefit from. In particular, this facilitator shared some of the work her students engaged in while reading *THUG*, including a research based lesson and student projects that were displayed during National Black Lives Matter in Schools week.
- *Demonstration 3:* The facilitator¹² used the main character, Starr, in *THUG* to explore politics of respectability in the age of Cardi B and Tiffany Haddish as it impacts young Black girls. Participants in this session learned about how to introduce these topics in their own classrooms by participating in a mini close reading and a literature circle. The facilitator provided the participants with resources that will help them use *THUG* to address race, racism, gender, and sexuality in their classrooms.

How Black Language and Black Literature Can Inspire Activism: Concluding Thoughts from a Future English Educator¹³

A few months after the course ended, my student, Tiffany Whittington, was interviewed and featured on our university's website regarding her experiences in my course and her involvement with the *THUG* events. With Tiffany's permission, I include the interview, *How a Book Can Inspire Activism*, in the section below.

Tiffany's interview

Tiffany Whittington is a junior pursuing a degree in English and a minor in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) in the College of Arts and Letters. She

plans to use her education, literature, and language to influence and change the lives of others, while finding ways to be an activist and give back to her community.

Activism has grown to be important to me over the years ... especially when it directly relates to my community. When I was presented the chance to make even just the slightest difference, I jumped at it.

It was the beginning of the semester for me in Dr. April Baker-Bell’s English 302 course. I didn’t really know what to expect, but I knew that we would be reading Angie Thomas’s novel *The Hate U Give*, so I was thrilled to see what that was about.

Once I began the book, I realized that it focuses on very serious issues that happen in the Black community ranging from police brutality and oppression, to drugs and gang violence. It is an amazing book; once I started it, my eyes were glued to the pages.

One of the reasons I think the book is so good is because it did more than just tell the issues of a Black community. It was uplifting and even acted as a sense of empowerment. It showed how one individual could use her voice to stand up against the odds and fight towards a change in society.

The book was so outstanding, when Dr. Baker-Bell informed us that the English department would be hosting an event series based off of *The Hate U Give*, I knew that I wanted to participate as much as I could. The events consisted of a trip to see the book’s film, a dialogue and Twitter chat, a collaborative with Detroit Denby High School and, lastly, a teach-in for educators and prospective educators.

I attended every event. The movie wasn’t as great as the book, but the weakness in the film provoked interesting conversation during the dialogue and Twitter chat. I got to see many different perspectives of issues relating to the book, coming from students, professors and even members of the community.

The final two events—the collaborative and teach-in—were my favorite. I especially enjoyed becoming an activist as I considered how to approach the events presented in *THUG* through the eyes of an educator.

The collaborative with the high school consisted of my peers and I creating and teaching lesson plans to be used in conjunction with teaching the book *The Hate U Give*. Through this experience, I was able to use my voice and teach high school students things that I wish I would’ve known when I was their age.

The teach-in was a similar experience, as educators from various backgrounds presented their own unique lesson plans that they created to accompany the book. Both experiences challenged me to consider how I’ll teach sensitive topics like racism and police brutality when I am a future educator. However, after seeing others do it, I know that it is completely possible, and even more important in order to create an inclusive classroom environment and inspire future activists.

Notes

- 1 The racial makeup of the students who take my course each semester is representative of a majority-white teaching force. In the course that I describe throughout this chapter, my students included one Black woman, 11 white women, and two white men, a troubling demographic that is also reflective of the undergraduate English education program at MSU. When teaching this course to the majority of white

students, it is important for me to get them to “acknowledge their own racial identity, to name the ways that racism works, and to apply new understandings to the world around them” (Borsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019, p. 4) as part of the self-work they have to engage in and work through in order to embrace an Antiracist Black Language Pedagogical framework.

- 2 [Public Broadcasting Service] (2012, February 5). Coded Spirituals. [Video file]. Retrieved from: <https://www.pbs.org/video/underground-railroad-william-still-story-coded-spirituals/>
- 3 [Kmm0010] (2008, April 27). Linguistic profiling. African American English origin, Gullah. [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPGx1icFdLQ>
- 4 Linguistic Profiling/ Subordination: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwoLpS9dDhs>
- 5 <https://stateofopportunity.michiganradio.org/post/do-we-judge-people-way-they-speak>
- 6 *Black Effect*, The Carters: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HVqowAv_YQ#action=share
- 7 *Changes*, Tupac Shakur: <https://youtu.be/9G6ro-c0C5E>
- 8 *Don't Touch my Hair*, Solange: <https://youtu.be/YTtrnDbOQAU>
- 9 *This is America*, Childish Gambino: <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=VYOjWnS4cMY&feature=share>
- 10 The facilitator was Jessyca Matthews.
- 11 The facilitator was Carrie Mattern.
- 12 The facilitator was Silver Danielle.
- 13 Neither my Linguistic (In)Justice English Education course nor the *THUG* event series was intended to be a research project, so I do not have any transcribed responses from the high school students or the teacher about their experiences with the *THUG* collaborative. However, I was able to refer to my preservice teachers' comments on my teaching evaluations regarding how they experienced the course and the *THUG* collaborative. I include those below:

- I really loved Dr. Baker-Bell as a professor, and I feel I learned So MUCH in this course. I think that my favorite part was the teaching demonstration with the high school students because we got to apply what we learned.
- I think the course is incredibly effective in the way it makes not only more-informed teachers but human beings. Class was made all the more engaging by Dr. Baker-Bell, who was so passionate about the course content, it was hard not to feel the same way.
- I had no understanding of linguistic oppression before this course, but now that I know about it. I cannot imagine not addressing this in a classroom. I feel so much more prepared to talk about linguistic oppression and the ties between language and culture.
- I learned that Black Language is a language and will not assume people who speak it are uneducated.
- This course exposed me to different perspectives in a more in-depth way than ever before, drawing me further into an understanding of racial issues than I could have before experienced. It also drew me into a more profound appreciation of linguistics and the unique stories that language tells, which has greatly inspired both me and my writing.

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