

Learning to Talk Back to Texts

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Opening Teaser Text: Becoming a savvy reader has never been more important. Teaching
students to talk back to texts can help prepare them to deal effectively with the challenges
of “fake news” and “alternative facts” in what has been called a “post-truth” culture.

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Many educators feel they are living in difficult times. It seems like the ground beneath their feet is moving and the ideas they have considered central to their mission are shifting in unpredictable ways. For example, on November 16, 2016, an article in *The Washington Post* announced, “Oxford Dictionaries has selected ‘post-truth’ as 2016’s international word of the year” (Wang, 2016). The dictionary defines “post-truth” as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”

This post-truth reality theme is also evident in the growing number of references to “alternative facts” and “fake news.” These topics have received significant attention during events like the 2011 riots in the U.K., the bombing at the Boston Marathon in the U.S., the Ukrainian crisis, the Brexit referendum, and presidential elections in the U.S. and France (Himma-Kadakas, 2017, p. 26). Accusations of spreading fake news have increased as the political landscape has become more polarized. The mainstream news media accuse politicians of creating fake news and alternative facts while politicians accuse journalists of the same thing. Regardless of the source, it’s important to remember that once misinformation (fake news) has been accepted as a plausible explanation, it is very hard to correct—even after it has been debunked since many people do not “update their beliefs when presented with corrective information that runs counter to their predispositions” (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010, p. 304). This underscores the importance of preparing students to evaluate information critically before accepting its validity.

The issue is further complicated by curriculum initiatives that focus on specific standards. As Shannon (2017) notes, progressive teachers worry that “the standards will develop submissive dispositions among readers” since they “teach learners to defer to the

information in text” (p. 117). The question becomes urgent: How can forward-thinking literacy educators prepare the future citizens for this new “post-truth” and “fake news” world? Our response is that we don’t want students to defer to texts. We want them to see texts as the products of authors who have views and biases they might not want to accept. We want to prepare them to talk back to the authors of texts they see as problematic.

In this article we describe our experience teaching adolescents to read critically and argue for a new perspective that encourages them to talk back. In the following sections we provide a brief review of the literature supporting this topic and describe our project in terms of context, instructional activities, methods, and findings. We conclude with what we learned from the project and implications for teachers.

Talking Back

The idea of encouraging middle level students to talk back will lead to some raised eyebrows. After all, talking back has traditionally had a negative connotation; many adolescents and adults consider it rude or disrespectful. There are, however, valid reasons to rethink this perspective. Regardless of the cultural discourse that positions talking back as something to avoid, we want to reclaim the idea in the sense of taking a skeptical approach to information presented as fact. Our goal is to teach students to present their differing views and arguments articulately and in ways that encourage others to take them seriously. We are not advocating the use of rude language, but we also recognize that notions of politeness are socially constructed and open to interpretation. As Janks (2014) suggests, social rules for polite and impolite forms of speech are “a good indication of power relations” (p. 3). If we see providing young people with tools to become savvy text and media consumers as part of our responsibility as language arts

teachers, then it behooves us to help them develop a critical perspective and practice using it, despite our apprehensions.

The idea of talking back has its roots in critical literacy and reflects principles of democracy and justice, of questioning and analysis, of resistance and action (Edelsky, 2004). These are all uncommon in traditional pedagogies that define teachers as transmitters of knowledge and students as receivers (Author, 2015). Even though democratic principles are mentioned frequently in textbooks and political discourse, they are not often seen in classroom routines (Giroux, 1994). Rare examples of instructional contexts that encourage students to talk back can be found in Bill Bigelow's (1989) description of how he challenged students to "argue with, not just read" (p. 635) the textbook account of the arrival of Columbus in the so-called new world and in James Loewen's (2007) book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your America History Textbook Got Wrong*. Loewen critiques commonly used history textbooks and urges readers to question whether their goals of avoiding controversy and maintaining a patriotic stance ultimately compromise their historical value.

Encouraging students to talk back enacts democratic principles because it gives people voice. In *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, bell hooks (2014) provides a compelling rationale to see talking back as a positive action. Reflecting on her childhood, hooks reports that in the southern black community where she grew up, "'back talk' and 'talking back' meant speaking as an equal to an authority figure. It meant daring to disagree" which was unacceptable since at that time, "children were meant to be seen and not heard" (p. 5). To challenge what she calls an "old school" model, hooks relies on feminist theory:

In much feminist writing, silence is evoked as a signifier, a marker of exploitation, oppression, dehumanization. Silence is the condition of one who has been dominated...talk is the mark of freeing.” (p. 129)

In this case, hooks positions talking back as giving voice, which ends silence and leads to freedom from oppression.

Critical literacy approaches are driven by the understanding that all texts present particular ways of seeing the world and attempt to position readers so they will support those views (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000, p. 407). This means that every piece of literature, news story, website, and nonfiction text should be viewed with some degree of skepticism. If we are reading a news story, we can ask whether the people involved in the event in question might see it differently. We can ask: Why was the piece written this way? Who benefits from the way it was written and who loses? Janks (2014) argues that we can understand power when we “read texts critically to see how they have been constructed, whose interests are served, and how they work to produce our identities” (p. 355).

A critical perspective also calls attention to how “the selection of specific grammatical structures and word choices attempts to manipulate the reader” (Luke, 2012, p. 8). For example, how should we read news stories written after a disaster that talk about people of color “looting” food from partially destroyed supermarkets while characterizing white people as “finding” food in similar places (Jones, 2005)? Although they are doing essentially the same thing, the word “looting” portrays one group as thieves while the word “finding” portrays the other group as smart and able to take care of themselves. Unless the reader is able to talk back to the unequal treatment of the

groups, the biases and alternative facts of the presenters may not be identified.

With the explosion of data shared electronically via the Internet and social media, the need to question and challenge texts will only continue to grow. During their lifetimes, our students will be bombarded with information that is presented as fact but is not necessarily true. As Damico and Panos (2016) argue, “we are inundated with streams of information, much of it unvetted, and we know that these streams are imbued with the agendas, purposes, and values of authors, agencies, or sponsors” (p. 275). We want to ensure that our students are aware of this as well.

While some misinformation might be deliberate (i.e. alternative facts), some will also be the result of changes in knowledge. Whether we like it or not, facts change; they are not permanent truths. For example, people once saw “the earth is flat” as a fact, but that was eventually replaced a belief that the earth is spherical. Perhaps this fact needs to be further challenged since scientists now suggest that the earth is pear-shaped.

Context

This study took place in an eighth grade language arts classroom in a Midwestern city over a six-month period. Students were grouped inclusively with mixed abilities and a co-teaching model with the special education teacher. Students’ ability levels ranged from high to far below grade level. The public school housing the classroom is a progressive magnet program with an inquiry theme. Inquiry-based education is built on the assumption that learning happens through a continuing spiral of knowing (Short & Harste, with Burke, 1996). The school featured a literature-based approach to reading instruction and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes.

The research team included Kate, the classroom teacher; Sara, a doctoral candidate; and two faculty members, Chris and Anne, from a local university. All of us are interested in studying how critical literacy instruction is enacted in classrooms. Kate took classes with Chris and Anne during her teacher education program and has continued to work with them in exploring critical literacy practices in her classroom over the past fifteen years. Sara is a former elementary teacher and is focusing her doctoral study on implementing critical literacy in urban schools.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Students engaged in six activities during the course of the study but not all of them were pre-planned. One was added to respond to difficulties students encountered with the initial request for them to read “against” a text (Janks, 2012; Damico, 2012) and another was added at the end in response to the unexpected actions of a school administrator. Three activities were similar in that they followed the same sequence but used different books. Figure 1 shows an overview of the entire project.

---PLACE FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE---

We planned that Kate would read aloud a different *sophisticated picture book* (see Table 1) on three occasions several weeks apart and would invite her students to work in small groups to respond to the books. *Sophisticated picture books* are different from traditional illustrated texts as their messages cannot be inferred by the written text alone (Exley, 2006). The books used in this study contained thought-provoking illustrations that supported the readers’ comprehension of the text. Further, we use the term *sophisticated* to make the point that these books featured edgy topics such as death and adolescent rebellion, which are not usually found in materials for younger children.

---PLACE TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE---

After reading aloud, Kate asked students to use words and pictures to generate two different responses. First, she asked them to think consciously about reading “with” the text. For this part, they might consider what the author was saying and wanted them to believe. Then she asked them to change focus and read “against” the text. This required them to identify anything they did not agree with and say why it bothered them.

Talking back to picture books: After reviewing responses for the first book, we modified the directions and asked students to “talk back” to the remaining two books instead of reading “against” them. We hoped that the directive to talk back would provide more clarity. Kate introduced this change by leading the class in a discussion of what talking back means and why people do it. Students formed small groups and used art and words to generate responses to the questions “What is talking back?” and “Why do people talk back?”

The research team reviewed student products for this activity and decided that a follow-up discussion about talking back was needed. Kate implemented this by asking students to consider whether rudeness is ever acceptable and whether it is possible to talk back while also maintaining a peaceful demeanor. Drama was used as a vehicle to “try out” scenarios for talking back in a way that gave students power while also observing standards of courtesy.

Talking back to commonplace wisdom: After analyzing the responses to the three picture books, Kate wanted to give her students more practice in talking back. She designed an online engagement that required them to find a common saying they didn’t agree with and use words or art to talk back to it. They were also asked to reflect on the

process of doing this and to rewrite the saying in a way that made it more acceptable. The final products were posters that were shared with the whole class.

Talking back to censorship: The opportunity for another data source arose unexpectedly from an encounter with an administrator who censored some material created by students as part of an unrelated language arts activity. That assignment invited them to make posters showing “My View of the World.” Students were asked to use symbolism to show their personal view of the world, including positive and negative aspects. Many portrayed anti-gun, anti-ISIS, and anti-terrorism symbolism in their posters.

The posters were displayed on lockers in the middle school hallway, a common way for students to share their views. Kate observed that many of them were visibly shocked when they arrived one Monday morning to find that some of the posters had vanished. They later learned that an administrator took down some posters showing guns, blood, and mentions of ISIS and terrorism because he thought that younger children might see them in the hallway. He also left posters in place that had very similar imagery. This act of selective censorship angered students and led to protests, including a community decision to remove all of the posters and write letters to administrators expressing their views. Eventually administrators held a meeting with the class to defend their actions and a few weeks later, Kate asked students to write a reflection about what had transpired. She consciously did not use the words “talk back” for this assignment, but the intent was to see how students responded and whether any of their comments could be seen as talking back.

METHOD

The research team used grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to analyze the data. At least three of us were present for each engagement to observe the lesson. We met as a group after each instructional activity to examine student artifacts and identify emerging patterns. The data were inductively read and reread to develop more complex understandings of major themes. Visual Discourse Analysis or VDA (Albers, 2014) was used as a lens for examining the students' art. VDA provides a method for "studying visual language that identifies how certain social activities and social identities get played out" (Albers, 2014, p. 87).

Findings

Student responses to each of the three sophisticated picture books varied based on the topic of the text. We observed that students had no trouble reading "with" the text for the first book, *I Am Thomas* (Gleeson & Greder, 2011). For example, students noted that the author wanted them to be themselves and not worry about fitting in with other people's expectations. However, when asked to read "against" this text, the ideas they generated featured summaries of the book more than points of disagreement. For example, several groups noted that Thomas did not agree with the adults in his life. While this was factually accurate, it did not provide evidence that they disagreed with any ideas presented in this book.

The second book Kate read aloud was *Death, Duck, and the Tulip* (Erbruch, 2011). When reading "with" the text, students generated statements such as:

- Death is part of the cycle of life—when something dies, something replaces it.

- Death is always with you. Once you come to terms with death, you can enjoy life.
- Death looks quite friendly, almost like he's smiling.

The third point about Death looking friendly included a drawing (Figure 2) that was very similar to an illustration in the book.

--- FIGURE 2 HERE---

While students struggled with reading “against” the text for the first book, this time they demonstrated enthusiasm for “talking back” to the text. Responses include the following:

- Death is not natural when people die in wars, are murdered, die from cancer, or die very young.
- We didn't like how the author made Death a “he” and Duck a “she.”
- We thought the author was saying death isn't so bad. So we pushed back by drawing a really scary grim reaper style of death. (Figure 3.)

As these examples suggest, students successfully talked back to this text.

--- FIGURE 3 HERE---

Students were equally successful in talking back to the last book used in the inquiry, *Grandad's Gifts* (Jennings, 1997). This book tells the story of an adolescent who disobeys his father in an attempt to atone for his grandfather's killing of a fox many years earlier. The story has supernatural overtones as the boy brings the fur hanging in the closet back to life. One group talked back by saying, “This book is weird, disturbing and confusing.”

Analysis of data from the lesson about talking back provided further insights about students' beliefs. This activity asked them to use art or words to express their views regarding what talking back means and why people do it. Sample responses are provided in Tables 2 and 3.

--- TABLE 2 HERE---

--- TABLE 3 HERE---

In addition, Figure 4 shows how one student, Jake, responded through words and pictures to the question, "What is talking back?" Jake's characterization of talking back as responding "rudely" suggests that he sees it as something he should not do. His point about "refusing authority" supports the view of many adults who don't like having their authority questioned. Jake's illustration also makes a point about power. His drawing of an adult with a very large mouth reflects his perception of the lopsided relationship that allows the adult voice to drown out the adolescent, leaving him little recourse other than to deny that he is talking back. It's easy to conclude that Jake sees talking back through the same negative cultural lens as the adult in his picture. He understands that adults have all the power and talking back will likely get him into trouble.

--- FIGURE 4 HERE---

The activity that invited students to talk back to commonplace wisdom yielded many insightful responses as well. One group of students talked back to the maxim: "Look for something positive in each day, even if some days you have to look a little harder." Their response argued against the idea of always looking for something positive:

We believe that some days are not going to be positive. It is OK to have a bad day and a bad attitude. Instead of looking harder for the positive, you should accept that you can learn from negative experiences.

In their reflection on the process, group members noted, “talking back to the text...opens your perspective to different points of view.” They said they felt “empowered” to make their voices heard when they were “disagreeing with the text.” Their revised maxim: “Not every day is positive but we can learn from the negative experiences and feelings.”

Another group talked back to the saying: “If you believe in yourself, anything is possible.” The students challenged this idea as follows:

Quotes like this fill the Internet, spreading positivity and self-esteem, which is great! But this can create an incorrect perception on the way one achieves success. Confidence in oneself is essential to being successful in life, but self-confidence alone gets you where? Probably nowhere. To be successful, one needs to encompass self-confidence but also motivation and hard work.

Their revised saying talks back to unrealistic expectations and takes a more pragmatic tone: “If you believe in yourself along with hard work and motivation, you can change the world one step at a time.” These examples are representative of the entire set of responses submitted by students. We saw them as demonstrating the students’ ability to challenge commonplace knowledge in thoughtful ways.

Students’ reflections regarding censorship of their locker posters were the final data sources for this inquiry. This issue was personally important to them and many of their responses were lengthy. Representative examples include:

Student A: “My poster was taken down because there was a gun on it. It didn’t make much sense to me...because nowadays, basically all we talk about is guns.”

Student B: “I was aggravated at first. Not because my poster was taken down, but because I was scared for the rest of my curriculum. Middle school for me was exponentially more enjoyable... The units we did were more controversial and I learned so much more.”

Student C: “My personal emotions became political as I reflected on other issues in the world where human beings were denied their freedom of speech. Our school’s issues may be smaller, but that doesn’t mean they are less significant as to violating our freedom of speech.”

Student D: “I hope that they’re not completely censoring the younger kids from violence. The world isn’t really a happy place. There’s a ton of hunger and violence and hate.”

Some used art to express their views on what they called “The Locker Fiasco.” Figure 5 shows one artist’s interpretation of the poster they were expected to make being compared to the poster many of them actually made. The one on the left features sunshine, flowers, and the caption “The World is a Beautiful Place” while the one on the right shows a gun covering the globe and the caption “THIS IS MY WORLD.”

--- FIGURE 5 HERE---

Figure 6 shows how one girl felt about being censored. While her feelings are easy to interpret, the picture does not go further than showing sadness. Figure 7 goes further in terms of talking back to the forces that exerted power over the adolescents and

effectively silenced them. This picture shows people with no eyes or mouths and the caption “WE WANT ANSWERS” in capital letters. We saw the missing eyes and mouths as signifying students’ frustration with not being allowed to focus on things going on in their worlds-- even though the assignment was called “My View of the World.”

--- FIGURE 6 HERE---

--- FIGURE 7 HERE---

Discussion

Our analysis of students’ written and artistic products throughout the project identified themes of student identity and resistance. In hindsight, we realized that one reason why they might have had difficulty talking back to the first book (*I am Thomas*) might have been that they agreed with Thomas’s reluctance to take orders from the adults around him as he asserted his own identity and refused to conform to their expectations. Similarly, they voiced resistance to the idea that the male character (Death) appeared to have more power than the female character (Duck) in *Death, Duck, and the Tulip* and they talked back to the suggestion that supernatural forces could bring a fox back to life in *Grandad’s Gifts*. In this case, the use of sophisticated picture books allowed the students authentic opportunities to engage critically with texts.

The team further noted several examples of students’ artwork that showed them pushing back against constraints placed on them by adults. For example, the large mouth of the adult in Jake’s picture (Figure 4) can be juxtaposed with the missing faces in Figure 7 to make the point that the balance of power is inequitable. The caption “WE WANT ANSWERS” in capital letters suggests that the students’ request for more intellectual freedom is being made in the strongest way possible. The two contrasting

pictures in Figure 5 can also serve as a form of talking back through art since students portrayed how starkly different the administrator's ideas were from their own.

We learned from this classroom inquiry that while eighth graders were comfortable reading “with” texts, they needed some help to read “against” them. Flipping the script by asking them to “talk back” seemed to make it easier for them to see different ways to respond. While it is tempting to presume that young people's penchant for argument means that they already know how to talk back, we must remember that many of them perceive it as something they should not do. Challenging a dominant discourse is always difficult; it may require multiple experiences to instill a change in attitude that positions talking back as a crucial piece in adolescents' development as knowledgeable citizens.

In this case, encouraging students to use the idea of talking back as a way to make their voices heard made it possible for them to position themselves differently. At the end of the inquiry, we observed their willingness to talk back to the cultural model of children being seen and not heard in their demand for answers and in their refusal to arbitrarily substitute someone else's view of the world for their own. As a result of what happened during the “locker fiasco,” they saw themselves as members of an oppressed community in bell hooks' (2014) sense and concluded that silence was unacceptable.

Making Disconnections: Middle level students typically get lots of practice reading “with” texts and making connections between books and their own lives. They get less experience reading “against” texts (or talking back to them) in terms of identifying what makes them problematic. Jones and Clarke (2007) critically examined

the common practice of asking students to make connections and concluded that making “disconnections” is a better goal.

When we ask our students to make connections, we may be inadvertently positioning them to believe in the authority of texts...we are not teaching our students to be consciously aware that someone has written this text to make the reader believe something. (p. 100)

Making connections positions students to be passive consumers of text rather than readers who take a critical perspective. In light of the current climate of alternative facts and fake news, this common instructional strategy is problematic. Making disconnections is a way of talking back since students are encouraged to identify the differences between texts and what goes on in their world. In this case, Kate’s students made a clear disconnection between what they saw as their reality (guns) and what the administrator saw as their reality (sunshine and flowers).

Conclusion

Our cultural reluctance to see talking back as a crucially important literacy skill is unfortunate since there is much to be gained from weighing evidence, questioning the author’s purposes, and considering multiple perspectives. We know that powerful learners don’t simply go along with everything they read, see, or hear. They are able to identify the messages embedded in texts before deciding whether they agree with them, disagree with them, or need more information to make a decision (Luke & Freebody, 1997). Kyleene Beers (2013) refers to it as “close reading” and suggests an additional benefit: “If close reading can mean giving students the tools so that they know, on their own, how to question a text, then we will have encouraged independent reading” (p. 267).

As was the case with “talking back,” the idea of being “critical” also has a negative connotation for some. It brings up images of individuals who are hard to please and generally unpleasant. Our students have told us that being called a critic is not a compliment, and they don’t want to be seen as critical. Given the cultural model of equating critical with demanding and unreasonable, it is easy to understand why they feel this way.

One conclusion we drew from this study was that educators can teach students to see talking back through a new, more positive lens. It doesn’t have to mean acting rudely or being immature, as some of our student examples at the beginning of the study suggested. It also doesn’t have to be behavior that adults disparage because they associate it with rudeness. The stakes are too high to continue hiding behind the “old school” model described by bell hooks (2014). Silence is not an option.

We think Fairclough (1989) had it right when he said, “there is a sense in which we can say that the teacher and the pupil *are what they do*” (p. 38, ital. in original). If we want our students to be critical thinkers, then we must do critical analysis with them. The ability to talk back to different kinds of texts and cultural models is an essential skill to develop, no matter how uncomfortable the idea makes us. Over time, the ability to see themselves as critics will help students become stronger, more thoughtful readers and citizens. This is desperately needed for survival in a “post-truth” world filled with “fake news” and “alternative facts.”

Take Action!

1. Invite students to define talking back. Provide provocative picture books and

- practice talking back with words or pictures. What do authors want readers to believe?
2. Use current news articles to identify author perspectives. What do these articles want readers to believe? Why? Look for articles that mention alternative facts or fake news.
 3. Invite students to analyze political cartoons and determine what the cartoonist is speaking for or against. Who benefits or is marginalized by the underlying message of a particular cartoon? Encourage students to create their own political cartoons to highlight what they see as important messages.
 4. Challenge students to deconstruct popular advertisements. Identify the techniques that companies use to entice their target audience. What does someone have to believe to buy into a particular ad?
 5. Bring in your junk mail and demonstrate how to interrogate ads for specific holidays. How do ads try to position both the consumers and the gift recipients? For example, how are mothers portrayed in store flyers that come out before Mother's Day? Do all mothers want to receive perfume or cosmetics?

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More to Explore:

Online Resources

- Turner, C. (December 22, 2016). The classroom where fake news fails. Heard on NPR: *All Things Considered*.
<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/12/22/505432340/the-classroom-where-fake-news-fails>.
- Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework
The Teaching Tolerance anti-bias curriculum has a framework of topics (Identity, Justice, Action, Diversity) that can help adolescents develop questions to consider as they begin to take a stance and talk back to a text.

http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20anti%20bias%20framework%20pamphlet_final.pdf

- *Five Ways to Spot and Stop Fake News: Don't Get Taken in.*

<http://guides.library.harvard.edu/fake>.

Readwritethink.org Lesson Plans

- A lesson by Laurie A. Henry helps students develop an awareness of the messages that are portrayed through the media: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/critical-media-literacy-programs-96.html>
- A lesson by Sharon Roth involves students in exploring matching texts—novels and the movies adapted from them—to develop their analytical strategies: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/cover-cover-comparing-books-1098.html>

Table 1: Sophisticated Picture Books Used in This Inquiry

Summaries and Reasons for Selection
<p><i>I Am Thomas</i> (Gleeson, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling with the pressures of adolescence, Thomas is barraged by demands of the people around him to act like them. But Thomas is not like them. • This text was chosen to begin the study because it focuses on resisting authority and actively working to create one's own identity.
<p><i>Death, Duck, and the Tulip</i> (Erbruch, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duck is startled to discover that Death is “creeping along” behind her, following wherever she goes. Although she is frightened at first, she decides to

enjoy life with her new friend.

- This text was chosen because it focuses on an edgy topic that is rarely explored with students. The depiction of death as a friendly character invites readers to view death from an unconventional perspective.

Grandad's Gifts (Jennings, 1997)

- Shane disobeys his parents and discovers the remains of a fox that his grandfather killed years earlier. In an attempt to atone for this act of violence, Shane feeds the fox lemons from the tree growing over his grandfather's grave and is surprised to find the remains coming back to life.
- This weird story was difficult for students to understand. The interwoven themes of disobedience to authority, mystical reincarnation, and atonement sparked strong reactions and a great deal of "talking back".

Table 2: What is Talking Back?

What is Talking Back? (Student Responses)
Questioning power and authority
Stating your opinion with an attitude and most likely getting told not to
Like when your parents say you can't do something and you try to come up with a reason you can.
Refusing to do something/rudeness

Table 3: Why Talk Back?

Why Talk Back? (Student Responses)
To persuade or get what you want—like when the American colonies talked back to the King and started the Revolutionary War.
To challenge injustice.
When you think you're right and want to correct something that's wrong.
You want the last word—an immature response.

Figure 1: Project Overview

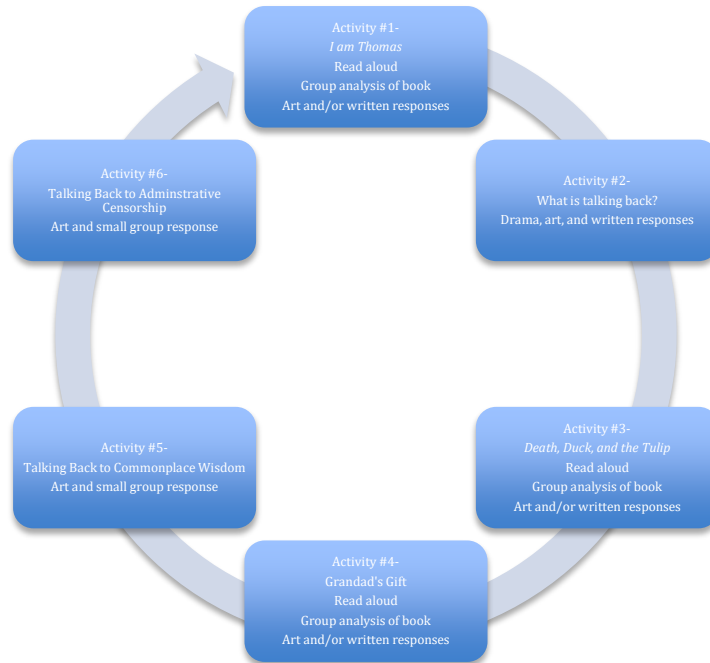


Figure 2: Death Looks Friendly.



Figure 3: Death as the Grim Reaper



Figure 4: Jake's Response

What is talking back?

I think talking back is when someone tells/says something to you and you respond rudely putting down their say, coming back with a rebuttle, question, refusing authority, voicing your opinion to someone who doesn't want to hear it.



Figure 5: Two Posters

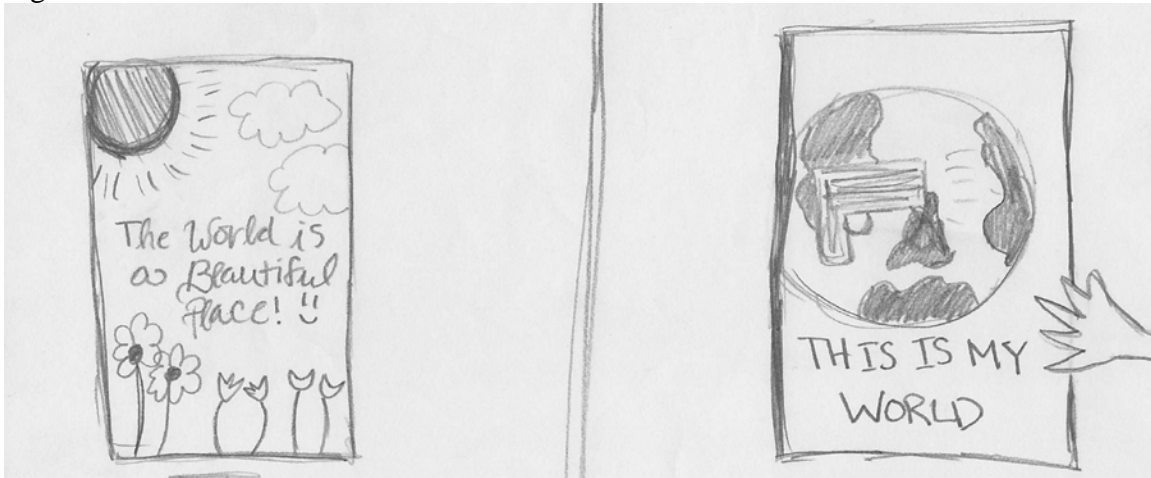


Figure 6: How Censorship Affects Me



Figure 7: Talking Back to Censorship

