The major thing that may be criticized in *True Notebooks* is the large amount of curse words and vulgarity in the language used by the juveniles in the story. Because of the setting and context that the book is written in, this type of language is only appropriate and a realistic reflection of the type of discourse community that the book is centered on.

There is one important thing to take into consideration while reading this book: although many of the character use “bad words,” it does not give readers the right to make judgments and say that “oh, well, these kids are cursing because they’re bad people, dumb, or it’s because they were all involved with gangs.” The use of language is simply a product of their culture, inside and outside of jail. Because of this, the use of profanity within the novel is essential in order to convey an accurate representation of each character; the book itself is called *True Notebooks* for a reason, not *True Stories that I am Going to Sensor in Order to not Offend Readers*. The language used in this book may be vulgar, but we should not be prejudice against this discourse community just because we are not exposed to it every day.

When exposing this book to a classroom, teachers should definitely send a form of consent home to parent; however, teaching this book with censorship is a blasphemy to the book itself. The characters in the book would not be accurately represented if they were to not use profanities. Censoring books is disrespectful to the author, text, and the over-all purpose that the book serves. Language is language. Defining the language in this book as “inappropriate” disrespects the culture included in it, as well as the intelligence of the author, reader, and characters represented.

Many parents may find controversy with the book but if the book is read at the appropriate grade level, such as high school seniors, parents need to realize that the words in the book are probably only half of the profanities that have been heard and said by children in high school. The first shock of the word “fuck” wears off after the first time of seeing it once students adapt to the type of social discourse used in the book; and once again, we must keep in mind how the word is being used: a curse word. There are other derogatory words within the text besides the big “f-bomb,” but these words should be addressed and students should understand their function in the context of the story, rather than choosing NOT to explain the context in order to avoid and uncomfortable situation; sometimes an uncomfortable situation is necessary.

As readers, we expect to not like the character in *True Notebook* because they are criminals. On the surface, characters such as Fransico, for example, take on the persona of being a criminal through their language and of course the crime they committed. However, I have found that the majority of readers actually find themselves *liking* the juveniles in the book, despite the repetitive use of profanity. Readers begin to overlook the language and the criminal history and look past the characters as guilty and begin to see them as people with feelings and ideas; this is represented by how they treat Mark, as well as the things that they write about. The language is then used as a tool to, in a way, show readers that they were wrong about the characters: their personalities go beyond people that just curse regularly and have committed crimes. They are individuals who have thoughts and feelings, and that even though they are guilty, they are still likeable. This could not be done efficiently without the language used in the text.