Notes

Chapter 1

1 For a review of prominent research methods, see Jill Arola’s review essay, “Research Methodologies in Community Literacy.”

2 For instance, Cintron framed his study as “a project in the rhetorics of public culture or the rhetorics of everyday life”—phrasing that orients his inquiry in relation to French postmodernism (Angels’ Town x). Welch studied how “ordinary people have organized to claim living room” (470, emphasis added)—phrasing indicative of her interest in labor politics and class struggle.

3 The other founder, Joyce Baskins, figures prominently in Flower’s Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Engagement. Baskins also co-authored “STRUGGLE: A Literate Practice Supporting Life-Project Planning” with Long and Peck.

4 Here, I follow Grabill and Simmons’s definition of an institution as an “organization [or bureaucracy] with policy and decision making power” (417). As discursive entities, institutions also perpetuate “regular, shared ways of producing and distributing knowledge” that often restrict the access of ordinary people (417).

5 In response to my presentation of the local public framework at the Western States Conference on Rhetoric and Literacy in October of 2007, Branch nominated another relationship between local and formal public institutions: local publics that seek to transform public institutions. As an example, he cited the Highlander Folk School that continues to work to transform racist and other anti-democratic structures operating within the larger society. See chapter 4 of Branch’s “Eyes on the Ought to Be”: What We Teach When We Teach About Literacy.

Chapter 2

1 The irony in documenting ordinary acts of democracy in the current political milieu was not lost on Iris Young. She wrote Inclusion and Democracy “shortly after nineteen of the world’s leading liberal democracies have waged a ghastly war [the second war in Iraq] without any of them formally consulting with either their citizens or their elected representatives about whether to
do so” (5). Her purpose in addressing ordinary democracy was directly relevant to community-literacy studies and its effort to theorize how everyday people widen and deepen democracy through practices of inclusion.

2 For analyses of ordinary describing distinct aspects of people, see Waller 8; Warner 120; and West, *Keeping* 140–41.

3 As a category, “everyday literacies” does not necessarily address public-oriented literacies. Michele Knobel’s treatment of students’ out-of-school literacies does not. For a rich treatment of everyday literacy that does take this public turn, see Martin Nystrand and John Duffy’s *Toward a Rhetoric of Everyday Life*.

4 Flower has addressed the role of working theories in each of these discursive activities: the teaching of writing (“Teachers” 9), composing (Construction 260–62), deliberation (“Intercultural Knowledge” 272) and theory building (“Intercultural Knowledge” 6). The concept of a working theory is a central leitmotif in Flower’s *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Engagement*.


6 Higgins describes how collaborative, community-based problem analysis complicates Lloyd Bitzer’s notion of a rhetorical situation (Higgins, Long, and Flower 12–15).

Chapter 3

1 In “History of Writing in the Community,” Ursula Howard brings together empirical research, cultural theories, and primary sources to examine the rise of community writing as a social practice in the 19th century. Though her focus is primarily on the rise of community literacy in Britain, she documents its emergence here in the United States, as well.

2 Established in 1945 by the United Nations, UNESCO was established as “the flag-bearer of the brave new post-war, post-colonial world from which both economic and cultural poverty were to be eradicated along with illiteracy” (Le Page 4). One of UNESCO’s first points of business was to formalize an international position on vernacular literacy education. The resulting 1953 monograph established not just literacy, but vernacular literacy—the ability to read and write in the language of one’s home and community—to be a human right (Gardner-Chloros 217). The monograph embodied what Eric Hobsbawm refers to ironically as the Golden Age of the Twentieth Century. The tone of the 1953 monograph is optimistic and sincere—purposeful and hopeful—garnering much of its confidence from the ethnocentric assumptions buried beneath dominant cultures of the time (Fasold 246): that literacy and orality were entirely distinct communicative channels, and that literate cultures were more advanced than oral ones.
In the early 1950s, France, England, and Belgium were extricating themselves from (and, in several situations, were forced from) countries in Asia and Africa that they had previously colonized (Le Page 4). (For a look at the effects of U.S. colonial policies on literacy rates in Puerto Rico, see Zentella.) To rectify at least some of the deleterious effects of colonization, as well as to support previously colonized countries in their own development, many policy makers and linguists in Europe, as well as government officials and educationists in Africa and Asia, promoted the use of vernacular literacy in children’s early years of schooling—use, that is, of the mother tongue that children spoke at home. The reason for adopting such policies was two-fold. The first was psycholinguistic. When a vernacular language is spoken at home, it’s more efficient for a student from that home to learn and, therefore, for teachers to teach, a standard language once the child has learned to read and write in the language of his or her home discourse (Fasold 246). The second—and arguably more pressing—reason was that a literate population was considered the point of entry by which developing countries established their economic solvency (Le Page 9).

For reprints of key arguments in this discussion, see Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook, edited by Ellen Cushman, Eugene R. Kintgen, Barry Kroll, and Mike Rose.

Barton and Hamilton are members of the NLG; Barton was also part of the effort to re-evaluate the UNESCO’s vernacularization project.

Bruce Horner and John Trimbur argue that these same assumptions must infuse current public discussion if it is to challenge the commonly held misconception that mastery of standard discourse alone provides keys to immigrants’ ability to “make good” in the U.S. See also A. Suresh Canagarajah’s “World Englishes.”

Below is more detail about the circumstances in which IGLSVL documented people using literacy:

- Women in Dakar, Senegal, negotiated with the Dutch embassy to determine the parameters of their literacy project. Enlisting the help of notaries to serve as translators, the women had sought the support of several embassies. Only the Dutch granted their request—on the stipulation that the language of instruction be Wolof. The women agreed. What they really wanted to learn was enough mathematics to keep an eye on their husbands’ finances. The literacy project would be a means toward that end (Tabouret-Keller 324).
- Representing numerous vernacular languages, local peasant farmers in North Cameroon reorganized land-management practices for the rice produced in their region. The reform repositioned the peasants more centrally in the rice-production process and “resulted in a total change in the communication system between managers and peasants” (Gerbault 183). One of the farmers’ first points of business was
to decide among themselves “the ‘working language’ in which they
would be taught to read and write in order to be able to take on their
new role” (183).

- Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka devised a pidgin no one actually speaks
to reach an audience of readers that crosses linguistic borders, includ-
ing those in his own country, home to more than 400 vernacular
languages (Charpentier 244).

- Portuguese immigrants in France created and published a tri-lingual
literary journal, including a written version of a vernacular *immigrês*,
“intolerable to purists but understood by the nearly 800,000-strong
Portuguese immigrant population in France” (Gardner-Chloros
216).

- Using audiocassettes and tape recorders, members of string bands in
the South West Pacific recorded “oral cover letters” to accompany
the songs they submitted to Radio Vanuatu for distribution. On first
blush, it would seem that writing would have been the medium of
choice to compose their songs and letters. For one thing, putting the
lyrics in writing would have helped the band members remember
them. However, audio recordings had the additional benefit of pre-
serving the songs’ “melody and rhythm” (Charpentier 242). Given
this advantage, the bands decided against writing cover letters when
spoken versions could be included directly on the cassettes.

Such incidents are peppered throughout the IGLSVL’s research find-
ings, relayed most often as intriguing vignettes following more systematic
treatments of specific vernacularization initiatives. In the strictest sense,
such incidents fall outside UNESCO’s project, for they don’t involve people
learning to write a standard language on the basis of knowing how to write
in one’s “mother tongue.” Consequently, the IGLSVL theorized very little
about such incidents. For instance, the same sociolinguist warned that the
pidgin of novelist Soyinka shouldn’t be treated as evidence of some written
vernacular—for no one, let alone no group of people, speaks in the discourses
of his novels. The sociolinguist referred to the novels as “artificial texts,” not
examples of “pidgin literature, but research in style” (Charpentier 244)—a
claim that a rhetorician may well challenge by noting that it is precisely the
strength of the pidgin that gives the novels their reach, permitting them to
circulate to strangers and, consequently, to become public documents.

Demonstrating the tension between rights rhetoric and the discourse
of research (Bruch and Marback 663), none of the linguistics in *Vernacu-
lar Literacy: A Re-Evaluation* overtly rejected vernacular literacy as a human
right. But they also went to great lengths to articulate and to document the
complexities involved in instituting a policy protecting this right. For one
thing, there’s the sheer number of vernaculars spoken in a single country,
numbering several hundred in Cameroon and more than four hundred in
Nigeria, for example. Then there’s the expense, often charged to extremely poor countries, of creating scripts to represent these vernaculars and publishing written materials to use them. In addition, rival orthographies represent not only alternative systems for spelling but also competing political interests. For example, the standard script for Igbo offers twenty-eight consonants, but residents of the Northern Igbo area tend to prefer their own. First, it expresses twelve more consonants than the standard; in addition, it signifies autonomy while the standard exudes imposition and control (Fasold 269). Moreover, the vernacularization project often forced poor countries to make the difficult choice between printing public-health documents in a few dominant languages or reaching the larger population through other means. The dilemma often means that neither priority gets addressed very well, most often to the detriment of the country’s poorest populations. (Le Page addresses this dilemma in relation to AIDS-prevention campaigns.)

Furthermore, many children grow up speaking more than one mother tongue; likewise, some countries endorse multiple standard languages, for instance, one for political purposes, another for religious, and a third for commerce. So on what basis do policy makers choose “the vernacular” to use for classroom purposes and “the vector” language to teach as the norm? Migration and travel pose their own complications, with one generation of immigrants experiencing a different set of linguistic norms and needs than the next. In addition, vernacularization is usually the responsibility of the host country, an official body whose interests are not likely those of the immigrant population. Finally, one unintended consequence of writing down vernaculars has been to exaggerate distinctions among spoken languages, whereby destroying the “plurilingual inter-comprehension” that neighboring communities had previously enjoyed (Charpentier 231).

10 To consider similarities as well as differences between the UNESCO monograph and the SRTOL monograph, see Parks’s analysis of the complex set of competing interests that led to the SRTOL, including class politics, the civil rights movement, and efforts within higher education to defy oppressive social structures that reproduce class, race and gender inequalities (7).

11 The SRTOL was an early harbinger of an extended effort to revitalize rhetoric studies in general and writing instruction in particular by “connect[ing]” these endeavors to “broader rhetorical, social, and civic concerns” (Norgaard 255). Readers interested in this revitalization effort will find a couple of strains of research especially relevant. One strand calls for scholars to anchor contemporary rhetoric in the study of ancient Rome (Fleming “Progymnasmata”), ancient Greece (e.g., Halloran “Further Thoughts”) and Enlightenment-era Europe (Burton; Fitzgerald), where it was customary for citizens to speak wisely and publicly on issues of shared concern.

Even more relevant to community-literacy studies is a second strand of historical scholarship featuring prominent and less well-known figures who
in their time interjected under-represented cultures, discourses, and interests into public discussions and social affairs (Villanueva 658). For instance, Keith Gilyard has studied the protest rhetoric of such giants as Frederick Douglass and W. E. B. Du Bois, as well as the less well-known contributions of black abolitionist David Walker and anti-lynching spokesperson Ida B. Well-Barrett (“African” 626). Keith Miller, David Gold, David Holmes, and Malea Powell use similar approaches to study the rhetorics of Martin Luther King, Jr., Melvin B. Tolson, Frances Harper, and Standing Bear, respectively. Jacqueline Royster notes the play between ordinary and the extraordinary in this body of scholarship. The 19th century African American essayists in her study were at once “unique and exceptional” and “typical and representative” members of their communities, in that they understood both the power of language and the injustices inherent in the social contexts into which they were born (4–5; see also Logan). A related historical approach studies groups of writers who in their time gained hearings in mainstream circles or alternatively constructed public spaces of their own, as in the case of the nineteenth-century women in Anne Ruggles Gere’s study of writing groups. See also Patricia Yeager’s Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing, 1930–1990.

12 Fraser’s “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy” first appeared in Social Text in 1990—volume 25/26, pages 58–80. Since then, it has appeared in several anthologies. I’m working here from Craig Calhoun’s edited volume, Habermas and the Public Sphere, 1993.

13 See also Karen Springsteen’s and Heather L. H. Jordan’s reviews of ArtShow and ArtShow 2 Grow.

14 Begun in 1974 at the University of California at Berkeley, the NWP consists of a national network of sites through which teachers throughout the United States gain access to effective practices and research findings about the teaching of writing.


16 For further discussion, see Flower, Long, and Higgins 271–75; Higgins, Long, and Flower 24.


19 Readers may wish to compare Atwill’s description of techne in *Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition* (66-69) with Branch’s description of métis in “Eyes on the Ought to Be”: *What We Teach When We Teach About Literacy* (206-210). Following Atwill’s lead, I commend techne as tools for rhetorical discovery that are highly sensitive to contextual differences and, thus, not merely the “hard-and-fast rules” that Branch associates with the term (207). However, I concede that Horton’s reluctance to describe and to prescribe a specific methodology sets him apart from other public educators in this discussion who do name and describe the methodological approaches that guide their work. The larger question may be how we, as public rhetors and rhetoricians, find value in the promise of rhetoric—a promise of discovery that ancient scholars commended to readers through terms such as *techne* and *métis*—given the fluidity and Derridian *differance* that characterize local public life in postmodern times.

**Chapter 4**

1 These challenge-counterchallenge routines parallel what Thomas Kochman calls “capping” in which each speaker uses wit to overturn the opponent’s claim (78). To read more about the cultural dimensions of the literacies that Trackton’s children perform, see Elaine Richardson’s *African American Literacies* and Geneva Smitherman’s *Talkin and Testifyin*.

2 See also Prendergast’s *Literacy and Racial Justice* and Branch’s “Eyes on the Ought to Be”: *What We Teach When We Teach About Literacy*, 202-03.

3 Readers interested in the impact of racism on language and literacy may find instructive *Literacy in African American Communities*, edited by Joyce L. Harris, Alan G. Kamhi, and Karen E. Pollock. In the foreword to this collection of studies, Heath implores educators to interrogate classroom practices that perpetuate racism.

**Chapter 5**

1 This chapter focuses almost exclusively on chapter 4 of *Literacy in American Lives*, entitled “The Power of It: Sponsors of Literacy in African American Lives.”

2 The feminist nuances of hooks’s “homeplace” resonate with Richardson’s treatment of “mother-tongue literacy” and the power of black matriarchal epistemology (or mother wit) to critique racism, sexism, and classism and to foster effective public expression. Political implications of public homeplaces are further developed in Mary Field Belenky, Lynne A. Bond, and Jacqueline S. Weinstock’s *A Tradition That Has No Name*. 
Highlighting the political significance of nurturing, contemporary feminists reject the stereotypical image of the self-sacrificing mother whom Virginia Woolf depicted as the Angel in the House, sitting in the draught and relegating the chicken wing to her own plate. In contrast, the cultural womb is a site of preservation and a source from which oppressed people have gathered strength to resist domination. See hooks 42; I. Young, Body 146–50.

Readers may be interested in the shift here from classic feminism that associated nurturing with labor, the endless cycle of chores that ties a woman to her home while her male counterpart is out in the world making meaning through his world-building projects, or work (de Beauvoir 448). For contemporary feminists like I. Young, reclaiming nurturing has meant acknowledging the transcendent meaning making in much (though certainly not all) of the work that has traditionally been assigned to and taken up by women in their homes. As I. Young observed, “Not all homemaking is housework” (Body 138).

Cultural production theorist Lois Weis, for example, assigns agency to people in the statement: “People are not cultural dupes. [. . .] They do, indeed, exhibit agency, struggle, and imagination as they grapple with the structures wrapped around their located lives. However, they do this in a variety of sites [. . .]” (xii).

Moss develops a similar argument in A Community Text Arises: A Literate Text and Literacy Traditions in African-American Churches.

Because the congregations of their childhoods had been affiliated with the black church, parishioners held what Moss has called “shared knowledge” through which they exercised their membership (Community Text 89). Parishioners of Metro AME described having learned biblical exegesis as children, first by learning to read Sunday school cards “that had the text of the weekly lesson printed out on them” and then by reading Sunday school books as teenagers and adults (Brandt, American 115). They drew on these practices to learn to compose the talks that the pastor assigned.

See Grabill, Community 9.

See Flower’s “Literate Acts” and Mathieu’s Tactics of Hope.

Brandt is careful not to conflate the literacy that the church sponsored in the 19th century with that sponsored by later mass literacy, the black press, or even the civil rights movement itself. Instead, the broad historical framework she sketches identifies intersections among these interdependent systems.

See Gorzelsky’s The Language of Experience.

The workshop sessions were organized around several distinctive practices. Most of all, participants and facilitators offered “constructive criticism” (Heller 74) and “comprehensive editing suggestions” to avoid wordi-
ness (48). Heller records additional practices that organized the give-and-take of the workshop sessions:

- **Close reading:** Textual analysis was used to detect and to diagnose reader’s difficulties with specific passages of text (37, 60).
- **Commending, praising, and encouraging:** Motivational feedback ranged from laughter and applause to “confirmation that anxiety is often a necessary and positive ingredient that goes with reading one’s work to others” (35).
- **Extrapolating** from the workshop to a larger readership: “With the group acting as a first audience [. . .] a broader public was considered as a future audience as well” (60).
- **Reflecting on, selecting, and synthesizing afterwards:** Mary explained how this practice worked: “‘They’re my readers. I write down everything they say, and at some point in time, when it’s quieter and spiritually proper, when my mind and whole system are attuned to the writing, I go through it’” (26).
- **Rehearsing:** Writers practiced performing their work to one another in advance of public readings (35).
- **Responding:** “The group’s reactions always provided vital information for the writers to determine whether their texts were being understood” (60).

These ways of talking about texts endorsed a general process of “writing, reading and rewriting” by which the workshop “built [the women’s] skills as writers” (59), permitting the group to “mature to splendor” (28).


**Chapter 6**

1 For a discussion of networks and their explanatory power in community-literacy studies, see Comstock.

2 Dueling dualities was the tension in the air, for instance, when the primary representative of the housing office, Kathy Oaks, told Raejone that she would read to Raejone the Section 8 housing application “because some of the words are tricky” (Cushman, *Struggle* 157) to which Raejone commented to herself, “‘What? Cause I’m poor, I can’t read [. . .]?’” (158). Dueling dualities was the tension still in the air as Raejone read ahead (seeing that the fine print stated that providing information about race was optional) and then asked Oakes why she had completed the space for her without reading the fine print to her or asking if she wanted her ethnicity disclosed. Note here how the duel stayed beneath the surface of the encounter. Raejone was careful not to alienate herself from the gatekeeper entirely. “‘I could say, ‘yo’ what’s your problem? Gimme my benefits’” (158–59). But in Raejone’s estimation, such an approach would have only confirmed Oakes’s negative attitude about
her, letting her think, “Oh, another lazy nigger” (159). Raejone figured: “I ain't gonna give them that satisfaction” (159). For Raejone, dueling dualities was the political act of safeguarding her chance at Section 8 housing while simultaneously refusing to stand for the racist assumptions that structured the gatekeeping encounter.

Chapter 7

1 For discussions of these distinctions, see Deans 20; Freire 74–90; Weisser 38.

2 Although Alinsky maintained strong friendships throughout his life, the famous obstructionist was also downright hated. The left hated him for rejecting class analysis, a reactionary militia put a price on his head, and the Ku Klux Klan picketed his arrivals at airports. Alinsky reveled in the hatred he incited. The reaction meant people were paying attention: he and his community organizing tactics really were threats to business as usual (Goldblatt “Alinsky’s Reveille”). Studs Terkel provides a lively portrait of Alinsky and his legacy in Hope Dies Last. Similarly, Alec Baldwin has produced an engaging documentary entitled Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky and his Legacy (Media Process Educational Films & Chicago Video Project, 1999).

3 Goldblatt quotes from page 94 of Alinsky’s Reveille for Radicals.

4 For other scholarship documenting the rhetorical acumen of community leaders, see, for example, Coogan’s “Counterpublics” and the portrait of Alvin Lindsey in Grabill, Community 93–98.

5 Community-literacy research contributes significantly to public-spheres studies in its careful attention to both the limits and potential of down-on-the-ground democratic practice in the lives of everyday people.

6 Location also sets quality standards for the community think tank. Most think tanks strive “to explain the nature, causes, and likely remedies of problems” (Stone 7). What distinguishes Flower’s community think tank as a distinctive source of knowledge is its capacity to provide knowledge that the city of Pittsburgh needs in order to address “timely urban problems” but that isn’t otherwise readily available (Flower, “Intercultural Knowledge” 245).

7 See Flower “Partners”; Flower and Heath; Peck, Flower, and Higgins.

8 For more on the fit between Dewey’s experimental mode and the problem-solving orientation of the CLC, see Deans 114; Flower “Experimental.”

9 Flower quotes from page 29 of Yrjö Engeström’s “Activity Theory and Individual and Social Transformation.”

10 In West’s words, the “jazz freedom fighter [. . .] galvanize[s] and energize[s] world-weary people into forms of organization [. . .] that promote critical exchange and broad reflection” (Race 150).

11 For further discussion of these rhetorical capacities, see Higgins, Long, and Flower 19–28.
For more about community-based expertise, see Peck, Flower, and Higgins 205; Flower, “Intercultural Knowledge” 245.


For reviews of ArtShow and ArtShow 2 Grow, see Springsteen; Jordan.

For additional examples of entrepreneurial community-literacy projects, see the descriptions of TeenTalk in Urban Sanctuaries and Telling Our Stories, both also briefly described in chapter 9 of this volume.

Chapter 8

1 Cintron quotes from page 37 of Certeau’s The Practice of Everyday Life.

2 Judy Holiday uses embodied rhetoric—discussed at greater length toward the end of this chapter in relation to RavenLight’s performance in the Toxic Tour—to embrace the value of stepping as public performance. Holiday writes: “I wondered about the embodied effects upon the steppers, particularly the intersection between the public and private regarding rhetorical productivity. For one, as a traveling troupe, the members become publicly recognized and esteemed even while stepping itself becomes sanitized and decontextualized (legitimated)” (Judy Holiday, e-mail to the author, 2 Nov. 2007). I appreciate the qualifications that Holiday’s reading places on my own.

3 Readers interested in the logic of trust will want to read Mathieu’s Tactics of Hope: The Public Turn in English Composition.


Chapter 9

1 Take, for instance, City Comp: Identities, Spaces, Practices, edited by Bruce McComiskey and Cynthia Ryan. This chapter’s comparative framework would compare the interpretative pedagogy of Joliffe’s first-year composition course, Discover Chicago, with the institutional pedagogy that organize Grabill’s technical writing class and the performative pedagogy of Mathieu’s bus tour.
2 Cushman quotes from page 419 of Katrina M Powell and Pamela Takayoshi’s “Accepting the Roles Created for Us: The Ethics of Reciprocity.” *College Composition and Communication* 54.3 (2003): 394–422.

3 For an extended discussion of “relational patterns” as they relate to community literacy, see Gorzelsky’s “Shifting Figures” 92.

4 For a description of the rival reading technique, see Flower’s *Problem-Solving Strategies in College and Community*, 415–18.

5 For an extended discussion digital story telling and public discourse, see Comstock.

6 See Simmons and Grabill’s “Toward a Civic Rhetoric for Technologically and Scientifically Complex Places” for a community-based inquiry pedagogy that prioritizes information literacy, including the skills required to search and design rhetorically effective databases and to write persuasive public documents that incorporate multiple kinds of evidence.

7 Coogan cites page 70 of McGee’s “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture.”

8 The student, for instance, describes revising her initial conception of “writing as its own thing” and “performance as its own thing” based on a conversation with Andrea Lunsford (Fishman et al. 234). She explains: “My perspective on my own performance and writing was derailed when Andrea Lunsford asserted that all writing is performance. This idea gave me the lens I needed to examine my own writing and acting experience and to recognize some clear connections between them” (235).

9 Readers interested in students’ rhetorical awareness will find of interest Guerra’s discussion of “critical practice of transcultural repositioning” (18).


11 For analyses that consult classical rhetoric to address challenges of contemporary rhetorical education, see Janet Atwill’s *Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition* and Ekaterina V. Haskins’s *Logos and Power in Isocrates and Aristotle.*