Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition

Series Editor, Charles Bazerman

REFERENCE GUIDES TO RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION Series Editor, Charles Bazerman

The Series provides compact, comprehensive and convenient surveys of what has been learned through research and practice as composition has emerged as an academic discipline over the last half century. Each volume is devoted to a single topic that has been of interest in rhetoric and composition in recent years, to synthesize and make available the sum and parts of what has been learned on that topic. These reference guides are designed to help deepen classroom practice by making available the collective wisdom of the field and will provide the basis for new research. The Series is intended to be of use to teachers at all levels of education, researchers and scholars of writing, graduate students learning about the field, and all who have interest in or responsibility for writing programs and the teaching of writing.

Parlor Press and The WAC Clearinghouse are collaborating so that these books will be widely available through low-cost print editions and free digital distribution. The publishers and the Series editor are teachers and researchers of writing, committed to the principle that knowledge should freely circulate. We see the opportunities that new technologies have for further democratizing knowledge. And we see that to share the power of writing is to share the means for all to articulate their needs, interest, and learning into the great experiment of literacy.

EXISTING BOOKS IN THE SERIES

Invention in Rhetoric and Composition (2004, Lauer)
Reference Guide to Writing across the Curriculum (2005, Bazerman, Little, Bethel, Chavkin, Fouquette, and Garufis)
Revision: History, Theory, and Practice (2006, Horning and Becker)
Writing Program Administration (2007, McLeod)
Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics (2008, Long)

Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics

Elenore Long

Parlor Press West Lafayette, Indiana www.parlorpress.com

The WAC Clearinghouse http://wac.colostate.edu/

Parlor Press LLC, West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

© 2008 by Parlor Press and The WAC Clearinghouse All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

S A N: 2 5 4 - 8 8 7 9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Long, Elenore.

Community literacy and the rhetoric of local publics / Elenore Long. p. cm. -- (Reference guides to rhetoric and composition) Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-60235-056-4 (pbk. : alk. paper) -- ISBN 978-1-60235-057-1 (hardcover : alk. paper) -- ISBN 978-1-60235-058-8 (adobe ebook) 1. Literacy--Social aspects--United States. 2. Communication in social action--United States. 3. Rhetoric--Political aspects--United States. I. Title.

LC151.L66 2008 302.2'244--dc22

2008009334

Series logo designed by Karl Stolley. This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Parlor Press, LLC is an independent publisher of scholarly and trade titles in print and multimedia formats. This book is available in paperback, cloth, and Adobe eBook formats from Parlor Press on the World Wide Web at http://www.parlorpress.com. For submission information or to find out about Parlor Press publications, write to Parlor Press, 816 Robinson St., West Lafayette, Indiana, 47906, or e-mail editor@parlorpress.com.

The WAC Clearinghouse supports teachers of writing across the disciplines. Hosted by Colorado State University's Composition Program, it brings together four journals, three book series, and resources for teachers who use writing in their courses. This book will also be available free on the Internet at The WAC Clearinghouse (http://wac.colostate.edu/). To Kristen Beth

"I would like to imagine that we could approach the social world the way Aristotle did the natural world, believing that the delights of the senses bear witness to our desire to know, and that our desire to know consists in the pleasure of bringing differences to light."

—Janet Atwill

Contents

Tables xi Preface xiii Acknowledgments xv Common Abbreviations xvii Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics 1 ¹ Introduction and Overview 3 What This Book Doesn't Do 11 ² Definitions and Distinctions 14 The Local Public Framework 16 16 Guiding Metaphor Context 18 Tenor of the Discourse 20 Literacies 21 Rhetorical Invention 22 ³ Locating Community Literacy Studies 25 **Two Prior Accounts** 26 Situating the Study of Literacy in the Public Realm 28 Documenting and Theorizing Local Public Discourse 35 Features of Situated-Public Literacies 39 Situating the Study of Participatory Democracy 41 Ideas about Actually Existing Democracy 42 Rhetorical Interventions to Support Democratic Engagement 43 ⁴ An Impromptu Theater: A Local Public That Turns Its Back on Formal Institutions 55 Distinctive Features: Dramatic and Spontaneous 55 The Impromptu Theater in Context: Location, Power, and the Integrity of Community Life 56 Tenor of the Discourse: Edgy and

Competitive, Curbed by Play 58 Performative Literacies 59 Rhetorical Invention: Practice, Modeling, and Feedback 60 Implications 61 5 The Cultural Womb and the Garden: Local Publics That Depend on Institutions to Sponsor Them 64 A Cultural Womb: The Local Public in Brandt's Literacy in American Lives 64 Distinctive Features: Nurtures and Prepares 65 The Cultural Womb in Context: Location and Cultural Agency 66 Tenor of the Discourse: Resourceful 68 Interpretative Literacies 69 Rhetorical Invention: Inspiration, Instruction, and Transformation 70 Implications 71 A Garden: The Local Public in Heller's Until We Are Strong Together 74 Distinctive Features: Nurtures and Prepares 74 The Garden in Context: Location, Agency, and Maturation 75 Tenor of the Discourse: Literary Uplift 78 **Belletristic Literacies** 78 Rhetorical Invention: Precision at the Point of Utterance 79 Implications 81 6 The Link and Gate: Local Publics That Intersect with Public Institutions 85 A Link: The Local Public Sphere in Barton and Hamilton's Local Literacies 85 Distinctive Features: Linking Networks Across Domains 85 The Link in Context: Location, Bottom-Up Initiative, and Agency 87 Tenor of the Discourse: Hybrid—a Mix of the Formal and the Everyday 89 Mobilizing Literacies 90 Rhetorical Invention: Adapting and Retooling 92 Implications 93 A Gate along a Fenceline: The Local Public in Cushman's The Struggle and the Tools 96 Distinctive Features: Access, Space, and Conflict 96 The Gate in Context: Location and Linguistic Agency 98

Contents

Tenor of the Discourse: Dueling Dualities 100 Institutional Literacies 100 Rhetorical Invention: Evaluating Acquired Literacies 101 Transferred to New Contexts 101 Implications 103 7 The Community-Organizing Effort and the Community Think Tank: Local Publics Forged in Partnership with Formal Institutions 106 A Community-Organizing Effort: The Local Public in Goldblatt's "Alinsky's Reveille: A Community-Organizing Model for Neighborhood-Based Literacy Projects" 107 Distinctive Features: Complexity and Pleasure 107 The Community-Organizing Effort in Context: Location and Legacy 108 Tenor of the Discourse: Bite Tempered by Sweetness 109 Consensus-Building Literacies 110 Rhetorical Invention: Transforming Problems into Issues for Action 112 Implications 114 The Community Think Tank: The Local Public Sphere in Flower's "Intercultural Knowledge Building: The Literate Action of a Community Think Tank" 118 Distinctive Features: Diversity, Conflict, and Tools 118 The Community Think Tank in Context: Location and Legacy 120 Tenor of the Discourse: Prophetic-Principled and Inventive 124 Design and Inquiry-Driven Literacies 124 Rhetorical Invention: The Construction of Negotiated Meaning 128 Implications 129 ⁸ The Shadow System: A Local Public that Defies Formal Institutions 137 Distinctive Features: Mimics and Shelters Difference 137 The Shadow System in Context: Location and Cultural Imaginary 138 Tenor the Discourse: Threatening and Hyperbolic 140 Tactical Literacies 140

ix

Rhetorical Invention: Cultural Appropriation141Implications142

9 Pedagogical Practices 154 Overview 157 Interpretative Pedagogies 158 Institutional Pedagogies 163 **Tactical Pedagogies** 170 Inquiry-Driven Pedagogies 175 Materialist Rhetoric: Realizing Practical Outcomes through Consensus 176 Intercultural Inquiry: Restructuring Deliberative Dialogues around Difference 178 Performative Pedagogies 189 Conclusion 198 10 Glossary 200 11 Annotated Bibliography 214 Notes 252 Works Cited 264

About the Author 281

Index 283

Tables

Table 1. Prominent relationships between local	
publics and formal institutions. 7	
Table 2. The local public framework.16	
Table 3. Prominent images of local public life:	
A comparative analysis. 23	
Table 4. The text-resource-strategy matrix for the	
Allotment Association. 90	
Table 5. Activities used to acquire, transfer, and	
evaluate institutional literacies. 101	
Table 6. A comparison of three defiant local publics. 144	
Table 7. How students use prominent literacies to go public.	155
Table 8. A comparison of materialist rhetoric and	
intercultural inquiry. 177	