In working to put rhetorical theory into practice in communities outside the ivory tower, many rhetoric and composition scholars find their well-intended efforts hindered by a combination of factors, including disparate views held by those representing the university and community, complications due to unequal distribution of power, the tendency for participants to fall into the old roles of expert/novice, service provider/client, problem solver/problem, and oversight on the part of academics regarding community history and social conditions. In Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement, Linda Flower describes how she and her partners in inquiry at Pittsburgh's Community Literacy Center (CLC) welcome and work through these complications, redefining them as opportunities for intercultural dialogue and discovery.

Strongly influenced by the tenets of American Pragmatism, specifically Cornel West's prophetic pragmatism, as well as by public sphere theory, local literacy research in the vein of Shirley Brice Heath, Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, Gloria Anzaldua's mestiza consciousness, and her own work in social cognitive theory, Flower's innovative model of community literacy is "a working hypothesis about how we might construct a community that supports dialogue across difference" (21). In chapters divided into three parts Flower shows how inviting and working through conflict empowers privileged and underprivileged participants alike to exercise rhetorical agency in the public sphere. Flower defines her Community Literacy project in part one, grounds it in a theoretical framework drawn from an ongoing academic conversation about public engagement and composition studies in part two, and acknowledges successes and
setbacks of the project in part three. The theories Flower discusses are illustrated in practice throughout all three sections, which are punctuated with experiential accounts of strategic attempts on the part of community leaders, urban teens, and student mentors and faculty from Carnegie Mellon University to engage in deliberative dialogue in reference to pressing problems.

In the two chapters that make up the first section, Flower discusses the value in intercultural inquiry of articulating and continually revisiting and revising one's purpose, positions, and assumptions. Throughout the first section she follows her own advice, defining important terms like "community," "public," and "counterpublic," and situating her community literacy project among similar service-learning endeavors. The Community Literacy Center functions as a counterpublic, she explains, because it challenges dominant metanarratives and engages alternative, often suppressed discourses and situated literacies. Quoting Thomas Deans, Flower explains that the university/community collaboration that characterizes community literacy sets it apart from other kinds of service learning. While in most cases students write about or for their community partners, in community literacy projects like Flower's, students write, deliberate, and solve problems with members of the community.

Shirley Lyle, age thirteen, joined her older peers, mostly seniors in high school, as well as other community and university partners in a CLC think tank on urban teen stress because she was introduced to it by her cousin. Though the shy teenager didn't talk much on her first day, her story of she and her friends being hassled by cops in a park while the white kids on the other side of the park drank beer and smoked pot freely became the focus of intercultural inquiry and literate action throughout the seven-week project. In focusing on Shirley's story, the diverse group employed three flexible strategies to engage dialogue, foreground teen expertise, and promote understanding. The first strategy, seeking the story-behind-the-story counters
stereotypes by employing narratives that reveal teens' situated knowledge and the significance of certain events, such as altercations with the police. The second, seeking rival hypotheses, asks multiple participants to share differing opinions, presenting the opportunity to consider the complexity of a given issue and to challenge assumptions. The third, examining options and outcomes, allows participants to translate rival hypotheses into suggested plans for action. These three strategies are presented as the organizing principles of community literacy, and Flower shows them playing out in the case of young Andre addressing a packed community forum regarding a proposed curfew law, in the case of young Raymond, who wrote and directed a play on teen drug use, and others.

What is particularly striking about this book is the extent to which it embodies Flower's model of community literacy. Throughout the chapters she continually emphasizes the importance of intentionally stepping out of old roles and giving equal weight the situated knowledge of professors and urban teens alike. Flower practices what she preaches in her writing, citing Aristotle, Cornel West, and local teens from the CLC indiscriminately, sometimes in the same sentence. Similarly, she tells the story behind the story of some of her student mentors in order to illustrate the significance of their experience. She also considers options and outcomes and examines rival hypotheses regarding the work of the CLC. In one particularly resonant example she considers a high school teacher's complaint that their work which, on one hand gives teens rhetorical agency by honoring alternative literacies and validating street language as a form of expression, on the other hand makes them less motivated to learn to write and speak in the kind of standard English which will help them succeed professionally.

While the book paints a very clear picture of teen, mentor, and community engagement in the project, I found that I experienced Flower as a distant observer, objectively recording and
analyzing the proceedings of CLC projects. This critical distance on the part of the scholar is exactly what Flower's model of community literacy tries to avoid. While I don't assume this was really her role in the projects, as a graduate teacher-researcher interested in embarking on similar projects, I would have found it helpful to have seen just how the scholar in the group positions herself in these conversations. Does she offer strategies for engagement and then sit quietly or does she offer her own rival hypothesis regarding teens and drugs? As this kind of project is likely to be new territory for many of Flower's readers, such information would have been helpful. This omission aside, *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement* proves quite useful to scholars interested in community partnerships. In addition to the many examples of Flower's model in action, the book provides a usable "guide" to intercultural inquiry in the final chapter. Most importantly though, with this book Flower provides evidence that strategic application of rhetorical principles *can* make a difference in the world outside the walls of the academy and inspires other rhetoric and composition scholars to test the choppy waters of intercultural inquiry in their own communities.