

THEORIZING LITERACY IN THE SERVICE
INDUSTRY: A STARBUCKS CASE STUDY

By

TAYLOR LIBBY

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Sterling College

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INDUSTRY: A STARBUCKS CASE STUDY

Thesis Approved:

Dr. Ron Brooks

Thesis Adviser

Dr. Rebecca Damron

Dr. Lynn Lewis

Name: TAYLOR LIBBY

Date of Degree: MAY 2014

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Abstract: This study relocates literacy, uprooting it from the classroom and placing it in the service industry, specifically Starbucks, in an attempt to examine the intersection of literacy and food service work. The first chapter frames the project by establishing a new metaphor for thinking about literacy within the food service industry that reflects literacy studies' call for theories about literacy specific to the context: literacy as performance. In this metaphor, literacy is physically incarnated-- exhibited and evaluated via the words and actions of employees as they engage in the daily activities demanded by their service industry job. A close examination of the literacy practices Starbucks workers employ as they take orders, interact with customers, vie for raises and promotions, and generally perform their daily tasks highlights the high level of language and literacy competence required of such jobs and challenges current conceptions of what literacy looks like outside the classroom. Though Starbucks is used a case study, the level of specialized language use, critical thinking, and interpretation that happens each day at Starbucks mirrors that of other food and beverage oriented workplaces across the country. Literacy as performance acts as a lens to examine the demands and expectations of food service work by providing new insight into how literacy manifests itself in this setting and challenging conventional views of what constitutes literacy. The examination of literacy practices at Starbucks is not simply an academic endeavor, but rather has practical implications for the company and others like it. Ultimately, the goal of examining literacy practices at Starbucks is to arrive at an understanding of the mental work involved in food service and to develop training practices that promote quick and effective acquisition of the literacy system. Altering training in the food service industry to reflect best practices from educational psychology and language acquisition studies can improve the learning situation in a way that encourages self-regulation and produces more efficient and proficient employees.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2010 there were approximately 4,110,400 available jobs in “Food and Beverage Serving and Related Work.” The Department of Labor projects that over the next decade, from 2010-2020, this number will increase by 12%; it also acknowledges the high turnover rate in food service work and predicts an employment change of almost 500,000. Simply put, a large number of Americans receive a paycheck from a business that is centered on the production of food and beverages. Work in the food service industry is difficult: long hours; early mornings, weekends, and holidays; physically taxing; and, most importantly, largely undervalued by society. Assumptions about the intelligence of food service workers permeate American culture, devaluing such positions and casting them as low-skill, low-intelligence, and low-importance. In his book *The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker*, Mike Rose writes, “judgments about intelligence carry great weight in our culture, and one of the ways we judge each other’s intelligence is through the work we do” (xxi). Glynda Hull posits that the most pervasive belief about literacy in the workplace, particular among blue-collar employees, “is simply that workers do not possess the important literacy skills needed in current and future jobs” (5). However, Rose and Hull both argue, as I intend to do here as well, that social perceptions of service work and manual labor disregard the high level of critical thinking, problem-solving, and literacy skills required by these workers. Building on the work of Rose and Hull along with that of Deborah Brandt, Sylvia Scribner, Tony Mirabelli, and scholars from second language acquisition and cognitive

psychology, this study examines the literacy practices of food service employees in a specific context, Starbucks, in an attempt to understand how skills such as reading, writing, critical thinking, and problem solving are developed and valued in the service industry.

Traditionally ideas about *work* and *literacy* have been confined to their respective arenas. However, increases in the role of technology in the workplace alongside expectations for higher educations have changed the relationship between work and learning (Boud and Garrick). Now, educators and managers both have a vested interest in preparing students for the demands of the workplace and using educational practices to improve workplace training. In *Understanding Learning at Work*, David Boud and John Garrick identify two purposes for situating the workplace as a site of learning: the development of the individual through learning opportunities and the improvement of the company (workplace, enterprise) through effectiveness, production, and innovation (6). The class theory-practice split is well represented in the history of work and learning, yet Boud and Garrick argue that the contemporary workplace demands both be taken into consideration when approaching learning at work. This project attempts to address both issues, theory and practice, in the hopes of developing a theory for thinking about literacy in the food service industry that leads to better training practices within this specific work environment. The first chapter brings literacy theory into the workplace and forwards a new metaphor for thinking about literacy's manifestation in food service work: literacy as performance. This metaphor captures the essence of literacy in the workplace by focusing on the physical incarnation of the literacy system¹ present in the food service industry. The language of literacy theory juxtaposed with the food service industry bridges the academic/workplace gap in order to open up a conversation about the nature of literacy outside of the classroom.

¹ Here, I use "literacy system" to refer to the collection of "literacy practices" present in the food service industry. The larger system is comprised of the individual practices.

The second chapter moves literacy into the workplace and uses the lens of literacy as performance to analyze the work of Starbucks partners. A close examination of the literacy practices² Starbucks workers employ as they take orders, interact with customers, vie for raises and promotions, and generally perform their daily tasks highlights the high level of language and literacy competence required of such jobs and challenges current conceptions of what literacy looks like outside the classroom. At Starbucks, the ability to listen to and interpret orders, translate those orders into the written symbol system used to communicate between different points of beverage production, read the symbol system and create a handcrafted beverage, and then call the order to the customer shows a high level of literacy acquisition that is marked by performance. Though Starbucks is used as a case study, the level of specialized language use, critical thinking, and interpretation that happens each day at Starbucks mirrors that of other food and beverage oriented workplaces across the country. Literacy as performance acts as a lens to examine the demands and expectations of food service work by providing new insight into how literacy manifests itself in this setting and challenging conventional views of what constitutes literacy.

Finally, the third and final chapter takes a practical turn and draws on theories from second language acquisition and cognitive psychology to examine current training practices. Using self-regulation in language acquisition as a model for workplace training opens up a conversation about crafting an environment conducive to learning while providing necessary opportunities for meaningful engagement with the information presented. Studies on memory from cognitive psychology build on the second language research to offer strategies for developing training programs that meet learning needs across a range of learning styles. Ultimately, the goal of this chapter is to challenge Starbucks and the food service industry at large

² “Literacy practices” are the individual skills such as order-taking, review writing, and cup-marking comprise the literacy system at Starbucks.

to re-evaluate how new employees are trained into the specific literacy system at play in the establishment in order to best align practice with theory.

The Methodology and the Participants

In his 2012 CCCC Exemplar Award speech Mike Rose encouraged Composition scholars to allow their work outside of academics to influence their work inside the academy in order to enhance the experience of both (“2012 CCCC”). My original interest in examining literacy practices in the service industry was born from my dual role as barista and graduate student; as I was learning to navigate my chosen academic field, I also found myself immersed in a literacy system situated in the food service industry that took a much different form than that of the classroom. As a research method, ethnography privileges participant observation and lived experience within the specific context under study and has a long history as the research method employed by individuals seeking to examine workplace culture or to report on their own experience in a particular field of work (Platt et al.). My understanding of literacy in this specific context has been shaped by my own experience learning to be a Starbucks barista as well as literacy studies and language acquisition theories. In “The Ethnography of Literacy,” John Szwed names ethnography as the research method uniquely suited to literacy studies because of its ability “to keep literacy within the logic of everyday lives” (427). The intersections between my academic interests and my minimum wage employment proved a rich area of research and as I set out to more closely examine the literacy practices at Starbucks I was equally influenced by scholarship and lived experiences.

An ethnographic approach allowed me to capitalize on the lived experiences of working at Starbucks by giving me insider status to the situation being studied. Hammersley and Atkinson characterize ethnography as a “researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking

questions through informal and formal interviews... to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of the inquiry” (3). My immersion in the literacy system of Starbucks began before my scholarly interests and continued while I applied scholarly work to my experiences. Therefore, my project is not a true ethnography because the lived experiences alone did not give way to the “focus of inquiry”. Still, the purpose of this study aligns with Hammersley and Atkinson’s view of ethnography in that it goes beyond simply detailing the literacy system at Starbucks through participant observation to also include “interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider, contexts” (3).

While ethnography is rooted predominately in participant observation, the use of interviews can aid in the detailed description of the specific context under study (Forsey 567). According to Martin Forsey, if the purpose of ethnography is “understanding and explaining the cultural context of lived experience”, then interviews provide an opportunity for “engaged listening” that allows researchers to “locate the biography of the individual, and groups of persons, in the broader cultural domains in which they live” (569). Along with field observations of the literacy system, this study also includes what Szwed calls “reading [and] writing autobiographies”—personal statements from individuals within the literacy system detailing the use and meaning of specific literacy activities (Szwed 429). In an attempt to fully describe the literacy system at Starbucks, interviews from five current Starbucks employees are used to supplement the participant observation and scholarly research in this study. The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, and serve as ethnographic data collected in order to better corroborate my own experiences. My role as insider opened up a privileged view of the daily tasks required of employees and gave me access to the wide range of data Hammersley and Atkinson align with ethnographic research. I have personally worked alongside each of the participants in the study, experiencing the same struggles and engaging in the same literacy

practices, critical thinking, and problem solving skills they must draw on during each shift.

Through the stories, recollections, and reflections of the participants, the various kinds of literacy required and privileged by Starbucks emerges, providing insight into the intellectual work of making coffee and serving customers.

The five participants represent various levels of experience at Starbucks. The interviews took place over the course of a calendar year, and during that time the roles and positions held by many of the participants changed. Elizabeth is the current store manager at the Starbucks in Middleville and has been with working in this capacity since July 2011. As the store manager, Elizabeth said her responsibilities are two fold: first, she is responsible for daily manager on duty operations such as customer service and employee satisfaction; second, she is responsible for the business side of store operations such as profit and loss statements, cash management, inventory, hiring and firing, and employee reviews and raises. At the time of her initial interview, Lily was serving as the assistant store manager at the Starbucks in Middleville, but in the middle of this project she was promoted to store manager at a Starbucks in another remote location approximately 60 miles from Middleville³. The assistant store manager position is first and foremost a training position. While Lily performed some of the same duties as Elizabeth, inventory, cash management, scheduling, etc., she did so as a means of practice before becoming a store manager. Angela works as a shift supervisor at the Middleville store and has been with Starbucks a little more than three years. As a shift supervisor, Angela's primary responsibilities lie in the daily operations of the store: cash handling, employee deployment (which role each barista is assigned), accomplishing daily cleaning tasks, and providing general direction and support to other employees during the shift. Shortly after her initial interview, Angela was promoted to the ASM position and has since been promoted to store manager at another Starbucks store. Edward is currently employed as a shift supervisor at the Middleville store,

³ Due to health concerns, Lily resigned her position as store manager and returned as a barista to the Middleville store during this project.

though when he transferred to Middleville in the fall of 2012 he was a barista. Edward was hired and trained at another Starbucks store, but has developed and promoted to a management position at the Middleville store. Finally, Wayne is the only barista who contributes his voice to this project. Hired in the summer of 2013, Wayne was trained in the Middleville store predominately by the current management team that includes Edward, Elizabeth, and myself. Obviously my position⁴ at the Middleville Starbucks provides access to the words and actions of multiple other baristas as they navigate the literacy system, but these five participants were asked specifically to share their journey to acquire the literacy of Starbucks because they each provide insight that is both unique to their own experience with the company and representative of the collective experiences of others.

⁴ At the beginning of the study I was a barista, but by the conclusion of the project I had been promoted to assistant store manager.

CHAPTER II

REVISITING THE METAPHORS: LITERACY AS PERFORMANCE IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

Traditionally, literacy has revolved around the ability to read and write. According to James Paul Gee, reading and writing, or “traditional literacy,” presents itself in two forms: a low grade that leads to low paying jobs with no benefits, like those in the service industry, and a higher grade associated with better pay and requires the mastery of “academic language” (Gee 418). Though Gee himself recognizes what he calls a new literacy rooted in the digital age, he nevertheless associates the reading and writing acquired via substantial formal education with “traditional literacy”. Spelling tests, reading comprehension, handwriting, and grammar dominate discussions about literacy, particularly in education, despite several movements in literacy studies over the past several decades that challenge such a limited view of what it means to be literate. The status of “schooled literacy” or “traditional literacy” as superior and necessary for success (read wealth) is inescapable; this privileging of academic literacy overlooks the valuable forms of literacy that are present in non-classroom settings, forms of literacy that when examined prove to be just as valuable for individual success and upward mobility. Revisiting past explanations of literacy serves as a starting place for interrogating the type of literacy that presents itself in the food service literacy and establishing a new perspective on the value literacy outside the classroom.

In her 1984 essay “Literacy in Three Metaphors”, Sylvia Scribner works to establish a definition of literacy that represents the multi-faceted nature of the concept. She writes that countless organizations “crusade for a national effort to make literacy a reality without establishing what that reality it” (72). In answer to the need for a definition, or definitions, of literacy, Scribner presents her three foundational metaphors that continue to shape the present understanding of literacy: literacy as adaptation, literacy as power, and literacy as state of grace. Literacy as adaptation represents the “survival or pragmatic value” of literacy; often termed “functional literacy”, this type of literacy is the basic level needed to perform a range of functions proficiently (73). For adults, functional literacy is measured predominately through numbers-- usually reading comprehension scores used to show low literacy rates (see Kirsch et al. for a description of adult literacy skills). The second metaphor, literacy as power, “emphasizes a relationship between literacy and group or community advancement” (75). Literacy as state of grace, the final of Scribner’s three metaphors, casts literacy as special virtue an individual has been endowed with (77). Scribner provides these three metaphors as a means of defining literacy at large, yet she is clear that literacy must always be grounded in the social context in which it takes place, whether that is the classroom, nation state at large, or a more specific setting like Starbucks and the service industry.

Drawing on Scribner’s three metaphors, Sara Webb-Sunderhaus examines the boundaries and limitations of literacy in an institutional context. In “Living with Literacy’s Contradiction: Appalachian Students in a First-Year Writing Course”, Webb-Sunderhaus follows several Appalachian students through their first-year writing course at a state university and examines the boundaries separating the different metaphors for literacy that emerge. Webb-Sunderhaus identifies a new metaphor, literacy as consumption, which combines Scribner’s literacy as adaptation and literacy as power metaphors to arrive at a view of literacy as “functional power in terms of increased economic capital” (208). This particular metaphor was deliberately promoted

and reinforced by the university in an attempt to sell literacy as a neatly packaged thing (a college degree) that would allow students to escape the high level of poverty in Appalachia. However, through her fieldwork, Webb-Sunderhaus found that literacy as consumption did not adequately represent the literacy individual students engaged in as they balanced their educational goals with their Appalachian identity. Thus, Webb-Sunderhaus identifies another metaphor for literacy that situates the individual students as “micro-sponsors” of literacy: literacy as communion. Here “literacy is a communal resource, one to be shared among friends and neighbors... so that all can advance from the unemployment office to the corner office” (221). While Webb-Sunderhaus is focused on literacy’s manifestation in an institutional context, her work affords a model for using Scribner’s metaphors to examine the literacy practices in a specific setting.

Moving away from the classroom, this study situates literacy within the food service industry and thus demands a different understanding of literacy to examine the role it plays in this environment. Unlike school-based literacy that focuses on the development of reading, writing, and critical thinking skills privileged by the university, literacy in the workplace values different skills and manifests in different forms. William Diehl and Larry Mikulecky argue that most research that has been done concerning literacy outside of formal schooling has relied on contrived situations that bear little resemblance to the real-life settings they are meant to depict. Thus, Diehl and Mikulecky assert that in order to gain an accurate understanding of the nature of literacy in non-academic settings “it is necessary to research the pragmatic demands within the context of the actual situation” (372). Responding to Diehl and Mikulecky’s challenge, I propose a new metaphor for literacy that points directly to its manifestation in the service workplace: literacy as performance. In this metaphor, literacy is physically incarnated-- exhibited and evaluated via the words and actions of employees as they engage in the daily activities demanded by their service industry job.

Performance itself is not a new concept in terms of literacy, particularly in connection to the performance of written work in educational settings. However, it is important to contrast the manifestation of literacy in the workplace verse that of the classroom. Jenn Fishman and Andrea Lunsford's article "Performing Writing, Performing Literacy," argues for the re-implementation of performance into college composition courses. According to the authors, recitation, declamation, and speech making were common requirements in college writing courses up until the nineteenth century, and a renewal of these performative acts could transform contemporary composition courses (Fishman and Lunsford 231). The performance of writing in the classroom is meant to aid in the writing process. Fishman and Lunsford point to several different ways performance is already incorporated in the composition classroom: "we read aloud, and we ask students to read aloud; we stage formal debates, we invite students to dramatize texts; and some of us even attempt to enact elements of complex arguments in order to call visual and physical attention to different aspects of rhetoric and writing" (246). Even situations outside of school where the performance of written work is necessary, the purpose mirrors that of an educational setting. Through her exploration of local writing groups alongside historical writing clubs, Anne Ruggles Gere uncovers a theme of performance where membership in such circles depends upon individual writers' performance of their written work. She states, "thinking of writing as performance reminds us that it occupies an uncertain space between the concrete and the symbolic" (89). Performance acts as a way for writers in the group to share their work, and as opportunity for group critique of the writing. Again, performance is directly linked to the written work; the goal is to use the performance of what is written to discover new ways to improve and develop writing skills.

Yet, in every one of these performances, the text is at the center providing a script of sorts for the performance. On the other hand, literacy as performance in the workplace is purely action-based: the literacy system is physically embodied because there is no written form to rely

on. In the service industry, the main text is the menu; yet the menu is neither a stable nor a complete representation of the available options in any food establishment. From this perspective, the performance of the literacy system is informed by the text but is not dependent on it, which is the reverse relationship between text and performance highlighted in the classroom where performance influences text. At first glance it seems both arrive at the same conclusion, literacy must be performed, yet the purpose of performance is different in the classroom and workplace setting. In the classroom performance is secondary to the text being performed; ultimately the text will be evaluated and the goal of performance is to improve the end result. The opposite is true in the service industry: the performance of literacy is the focus because it is only through performance literacy can be evaluated. The menu functions as a tool to aid in performance but memorizing the menu alone does not constitute literacy in the service industry. Just as performance in the classroom serves to bring other writers into the literacy of the writer, the menu is a connection point for non-literate members (customers) to access the literacy of the service industry.

CHAPTER III

SITUATING THE WORK: LITERACY PRACTICES AT STARBUCKS

New literacy studies have shifted from traditional examinations of reading and writing as literacy to an “ideological model” that studies the social practices of literacy rather than the literacy-in-itself (Street). In her essay “Women’s Words, Women’s Work: Rural Literacy and Labor”, Jane Greer chronicles the variety of literacy resources Appalachian women had to employ in order to meet the needs of their families and communities in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Through the close reading of an autobiography penned by a woman who lived in West Virginia for the majority of the twentieth century, Greer draws attention to the author’s “descriptions of juggling both household and barnyard tasks [that] reveal the cognitive skills and mental flexibility involved in such labor” (97). Like Greer in her study of rural labor and literacy, the purpose of re-evaluating how literacy presents itself in the service industry is to better understand the critical thinking skills needed to succeed as a food service worker. Common misconceptions about the intelligence of food service workers have cast this work as easy, requiring little or no intelligence, yet the complexity of the literacy system that runs through individual establishments is worthy of closer examination. Using literacy as performance as a lens, this chapter details the literacy system present at Starbucks in an attempt to highlight the different literacy practices of employees while critically engaging with the role of performance in evaluating literacy acquisition.

Starbucks as Literacy Sponsor

Before diving into the examination of literacy practices, it is necessary to consider the role the larger corporation of Starbucks plays in the acquisition and development of literacy in the workplace. Ranked number 94 on Forbes list of the 100 best companies to work for, Starbucks employs almost 150,000 partners worldwide. At Starbucks, individual employees are not hired for specific jobs such as cook, waitress, or dishwasher like they would be in other restaurants and fast-food chains. At any given time during a shift a barista might be responsible for taking orders in the drive-thru, ringing orders into the register, preparing drinks, or completing a myriad of other tasks related to food preparation and customer service. Many of these duties are universal to food and beverage related work, and though it might not be obvious upon first observation, there is an intricate language and literacy system that runs throughout the service industry. In fact, Starbucks as a company can be viewed as a “sponsor of literacy” to borrow Deborah Brandt’s term. Brandt defines sponsors of literacy as “any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way” (19). The acquisition and use of a highly specialized language by individual employees is imperative to the continued economic success of the business at large, therefore Starbucks actively recruits new employees to whom they teach and model the various literacy practices necessary to successfully perform daily work tasks. As Brandt writes, “sponsors nevertheless set the terms for access to literacy and wield powerful incentives for compliance and loyalty” (19). Through the following analysis of the literacy practices present in this workplace, it becomes clear that Starbucks actively works to construct a work environment that requires the use of a specialized literacy system. From standardized cup-marking systems and order taking routines to employee reviews and evaluations, Starbucks creates a literacy system that must be accessed by employees in order for individuals to succeed professionally and for the company to succeed financially.

Welcome to Starbucks, what can I get started for you?: Order Taking as Literacy

Perhaps the best place to start when examining the literacy practices in the service industry is at the heart of the business: customer service. Regardless of an employee's position in the store, at Starbucks the number one goal is to provide "world-class customer service" at all times; this means constantly responding to and meeting the needs of those paying for the products. Starbucks uses four pillars of customer service as a model for approaching customer interaction: anticipate, connect, personalize, own. These words guide partners as they work with customers to find the right beverage, food item, or other product while responding to the individual needs of each customer. Within these four pillars, Starbucks has found that customers value three other aspects of their Starbucks experience: taste, speed, and friendliness. Every aspect of store operations is rooted in customer service, and ultimately these become the guiding principles in evaluating the performance of the literacy system at Starbucks.

Because customer service is the focus, it seems logical to begin the examination of the literacy system by looking to one of the foundational literacy practices: the order taking process at Starbucks. Order taking is not a matter of simply memorizing the menu and learning what buttons on the register correspond to the items available for purchase. According to Tony Mirabelli, author of "Learning to Serve: The Language and Literacy of Food Service Workers", being literate in the menu at any restaurant requires "more than just factual, or literal interpretation of the words on the page, it requires knowledge of specific practices—such as methods of food preparation—that take place in a particular restaurant" (150). At any given time what is on the menu only represents a fraction of what can be produced, revealing both an understanding of what is listed as available on the menu and what substitutions and deviations are allowed by the food production process as necessary for complete literacy in the menu. Adding to this, at Starbucks baristas must not only familiarize themselves with the menu and the method of beverage production, there is an additional set of vocabulary terms that must be learned. In her

interview, Elizabeth stated that baristas must know historical Starbucks drinks that are no longer offered (seasonal offerings from years past) and general coffee terms such as “red eye” that are not actually on the menu, as well as standard Starbucks drinks. The constant process of listening, interpreting, and translating customers’ orders to is central to the everyday work of Starbucks employees and represents the use of a highly contextualized form of literacy, and the only way to evaluate competence is to look at the barista’s performance of the literacy practices. Mirabelli points to the complex nature of such interactions in his analysis of order taking in a local diner. He argues, “how the waitress or waiter understands and uses texts such as the menu and how he or she ‘reads’ and verbally interacts with the customer reflect carefully constructed uses of language and literacy” (Mirabelli 145). This is particularly relevant when thinking through the menu at Starbucks, which in no way reflects the multitude of additions, subtractions, and modifications that can be made to any of the standard drinks. In short, the menu is the text that is interpreted and re-interpreted by customers and baristas as they engage in the order taking process.

Aside from the standard menu and beverage recipes established and promoted by Starbucks, baristas must also contend with customer misunderstanding and “specialty” items that are not directly endorsed by the company. Elizabeth points to customers’ misuse of certain coffee terms as a common situation that must be negotiated by the barista. She specifically cites the difference between a cappuccino and a latte as a frequent instance of customer confusion. At Starbucks and other coffee shops, a cappuccino is made with espresso and an equal amount of steamed milk and milk foam, creating a drink that is lighter than a latte, which contains only about an inch of milk foam at the top. Elizabeth said part of providing “world-class customer service” lies in baristas’ ability to translate what the customer is trying to order into the right words, both general coffee terms and Starbucks specific terms. As experts in the literacy system, baristas must act as translators for non-Starbucks speakers. Especially in a remote area like

Middleville where there is not a strong coffee culture, a customer who comes into the store and asks for a French vanilla cappuccino is probably referring the type of drink dispensed from a machine in a convenience store; thus, the barista must recognize the misunderstanding, explain the difference between a latte and a cappuccino in a way the customer understands, and direct the customer to the right term to order the desired drink. “If you are a literate person you should be able to hear something that makes no sense and turn it into something that does make sense,” Angela said in reference to the skills a barista needs to perform basic order taking at Starbucks.

Beyond customer misunderstanding, the explosion of the Starbucks “secret menu” on the Internet presents challenges to baristas who are attempting to negotiate the order taking process with customers. Simply entering “Starbucks secret menu” into a Google search overwhelms customers with a plethora of ideas about how to get creative with their ordering at Starbucks in order to access special flavors not advertised by the company. Baristas are literate in the menu of Starbucks, which privileges consistency and standards, but the secret menu disrupts the literacy practices by allowing those outside the literacy system (customers) to alter the text. In contrast to standardized drink recipes established and disseminated by the company, the secret menu is developed predominately by customers with little or no understanding of the beverage production system at Starbucks. The lack of beverage production knowledge coupled with the lack of Starbucks language skills creates situations where customers attempt to order beverages from the secret menu using only the name provided by one of the numerous sites (i.e. “Willy Wonka Frappuccino”, “Cookie Dough Frappuccino”, “Cotton Candy Frappuccino”, etc.) without noting the ingredients. The secret menu is not endorsed by the company, does not adhere to company recipe standards, and is subject to change due to the variety of contributors to the secret menu itself. There are several variations of the same drink on the secret menu that includes different ingredients based on different websites or regions in the country; in fact, some secret menu recipes call for test items that are not available in all Starbucks stores. All of this leads to

customer orders from the secret menu that baristas are unable to craft due to lack of information. In order for a secret menu drink to be made the way a customer wants, the customer must be able to adopt the language of Starbucks to relay the ingredients of the drink to the barista. This role reversal creates confusion and tension, complicating the order-taking process and reducing opportunities to provide world-class customer service.

If the menu is the text in the food service industry, then intricate knowledge of the production system alongside complex knowledge of what is and is not represented by the menu is needed for individuals to perform the literacy of the food service industry. A unique aspect of the literacy system at Starbucks is the use of a standardized system of abbreviations to “mark cups”. Handwriting drinks and names is one of the most identifiable literacy practices of the company, and serves as the method of communicating what drink needs to be made to the person responsible for preparation (see Table 1). These symbols are used by Starbucks across the nation and must be learned by each new barista when he or she is hired. The written symbol system also represents the orality inherent in food service literacy, which naturally demands performance. Walter Ong reminds readers that writing is “complete and irremediably artificial... [and] depends on consciously contrived rules” (Ong 2). Writing evolved out of an oral culture and the coded marks only have meaning when they are voiced within a specific context and point to real things and ideas. The symbols themselves have no meaning outside of Starbucks, and the symbols only have meaning insofar as they point back to the menu and the underlying beverage production system.

What is perhaps most peculiar about the beverage marking system is that there are often multiple ways to arrive at the same drink, and the ability to recognize how different markings correspond to larger patterns in drink production is an important step in acquiring the literacy. For example, “skinny”, a term Starbucks uses to refer to drinks that can be made with nonfat milk, no whipped cream, and sugar free syrup, is often misapplied by customers and new baristas. The

drink marking for “latte” is “L” in the drink box; the marking for a “skinny latte” is “SKL” with a sugar free syrup marked in the syrup box on the cup. Because “skinny” implies the use of a sugar free syrup (where a latte is unflavored unless specifically requested) it is common for partners to include the syrup marking in the drink box: “SKVL” for skinny vanilla latte or “SKCDL” for a skinny cinnamon dolce latte. Theoretically, a cup could be marked as a latte with nonfat milk and sugar free syrup, which is the definition of a skinny latte, without using the “SK” abbreviations, but using the standard “SK” saves time (see Table 2). Other drinks that can be made skinny simply add “SK” to the beginning of the drink code: “M” represents a caffè mocha, so “SKM” represents a skinny mocha. A common misunderstanding occurs when skinny is applied to drinks that do not meet all the requirements. The white chocolate mocha cannot be made skinny because a sugar free white mocha sauce does not exist; yet when customers order this drink skinny the barista must negotiate alternatives, usually a drink made with nonfat milk and no whipped cream. The link between order taking and beverage production knowledge become most apparent here because a barista that only understands “skinny” as nonfat is likely to assume all beverages can be made this way and fail to properly interact with the menu, the food production capabilities, and the customer in order to arrive at the correct drink.

While there is not room to detail similar complexities in the Starbucks beverage marking system, knowledge of the menu in combination of the beverage production system affects the understanding of light verses skinny in Frappuccinos, how to properly ring different amounts of milk in various drinks, and how to explain the ingredients of drink recipes to customers. Recently I observed Wayne taking an order in the drive thru with a customer who lacked beverage production knowledge, and Wayne himself struggled to accurately interpret and ring the order. The customer asked for a Café Vanilla Frappuccino with sugar-free vanilla and no whipped cream. Wayne rang the order as said by the customer, sent it through the register to the bar and moved onto the next order. However, the Café Vanilla Frappuccino is made with vanilla bean powder,

which inherently includes sugar, instead of vanilla syrup that could be substituted for the sugar-free version. When I asked Wayne why he rang the order the way he did, assuming he has a firm understanding of how this particular drink is made, he replied “that’s how they ordered it.” This interaction revealed Wayne’s own lack of beverage production knowledge and hindered his ability to effectively translate the customer’s order into the parameters of the Starbucks menu. Though this is a seemingly insignificant example of a barista’s mistake, the literacy system at Starbucks is rooted in the menu as text plus beverage production knowledge: the performance of the literacy system is a direct measure of a baristas’ literacy level.

Like Tony Mirabelli found in his study of restaurant servers, both an understanding of the menu and the process of drink production are necessary to become literate at Starbucks, but the addition of a written system of communication adds yet another literacy practice that must be learned and implemented by employees. In terms of the symbol system used to mark cups, an argument could be made that Scribner’s “literacy as adaptation” metaphor could be applied to explain this form of literacy in the service industry. However, simply memorizing the drink abbreviations is not enough; according to Angela it’s “ a certain code you pick up.” In fact, listening, interpreting, and translating a customer’s order is only part of the order taking process; once a barista marks the cup and hands it to the person on “bar” (the beverage production area) he or she must read the cup in reverse. The symbols must be translated into the words they stand for; those words must be connected to the drinks they represent; the drinks point to recipes, and any modifications to the standard recipe must be noted; and finally, the barista in charge of drink production must perform the task of making the drink indicated by the markings on the cup. In completion of the process, the barista responsible for making the drink must “call the cup”, or read the cup in order to identify the drink and alert the customer it is ready to pick-up. Elizabeth said she felt this was the most difficult part of order taking and beverage production, and found many new baristas struggled to learn the proper way to call drinks.

As with the cup marking system, Starbucks has a standardized order in which the details of the drink must be read, and, as Elizabeth said, “re-translating the cup markings into speech in the Starbucks way is not as indicative as things like ‘v’ for vanilla.” Baristas must reverse the order taking process when calling cups, going from the symbol to the word while drawing on knowledge of beverage production and drink recipes to inform their reading of the cup all while verbalizing these concepts. It is here that literacy as performance becomes most visible because the performance acts as a check on the entire literacy system, highlighting the “metric” nature of performance because it put the literacy on display for other to evaluate (Claycomb). Cup-calling is a key opportunity for managers to check the knowledge of individual baristas because it highlights gaps in production knowledge; the ability to correctly convert the written symbol system back into the beverage verbally ordered by the customer complete the literacy cycle. If a barista cannot call the cup then chances are other areas of literacy are also under developed. The entire order taking process is entrenched in the literacy system at Starbucks; cup-calling is a physical embodiment of the symbols, words, concepts, and actions that are ever present in the order taking process. Elizabeth says a certain level of experience is required for baristas to become “fluent” in Starbucks language. This fluency is a mark of inclusion in the literacy system at Starbucks, and only through performance can baristas’ literacy acquisition be evaluated. The ability to easily listen and interpret orders, translate those orders into the written symbol system, read the cup and create a handcrafted beverage, and then call the cup shows a high level of literacy acquisition. Order-taking, cup marking, and cup calling are all literacy practices that when performed equal the literacy system at Starbucks. The performance equals literacy and literacy is evaluated via performance.

Storing the Information: The Role of Memory in Literacy Learning

Memory’s role in the food service industry has been briefly studied in cognitive psychology, but most of the work on memory and order taking is rooted in observation. Chase and Ericsson

(1981) used the term “skilled memory” to refer to a memory system developed through repeated practice where retrieval processes are considerably faster due to easy retrieval of familiar information and material (Stevens 206). A subsequent study of a waiter and a cocktail waitress by Ericsson and Polson found food servers use a variety of strategies to remember orders such as associating them the customer or the customer’s location in the establishment (Stevens 207). In his own qualitative research into the role of memory in the food service industry, Mike Rose points to four commonalities that emerge between the small body of cognitive research and the reflections of experienced waitresses. Rose identifies the waiter or waitress’ knowledge of food and beverage production, the development of visual, spatial, and linguistic techniques to aid in memory, the routines and physical layout of the restaurant, and the goal-directed nature of the work as key to overriding normal limits on short-term memory (10). The presence of these four factors create an environment where the food service worker is an expert in the literacy system at play and thus is able to quickly retain and recall information that is collected via customer interaction or observation of the environment.

With the concept of skill memory in mind, it is important to note that such memory is built through performance; the constant engagement with the visual, spatial, and linguistic demands of the specific work environment allow workers improve their performance based on interaction. Borrowing the word “mindfulness” from cognitive psychologist David LaBerge, Rose asserts the attention to various details and situations a waitress must contend with on each shift “implies intelligence, a mind knowledgeable and alert” (Rose 15). The routines in place at Starbucks serve to organize all aspects of work from the order in which beverages are prepared, to how and when coffee is brewed, and even to who takes out the trash. These routines establish a standard for the work that needs to get done during each part of the day, yet the unpredictable nature of food service work forces employees to embrace flexibility. Skilled memory allows employees to make adjustments and respond to immediate needs while continuing to work in routine (Rose 198).

Thus highly successful performance of the literacy system is contingent upon an individual's ability to push past normal limits of short term memory and retain beverage recipes, location of material storage, placement of physical objects, and other work related routines in order to perform the literacy practices.

When it Must be Written Down: Reviews and Evaluations

The above analysis of the order taking process at Starbucks reveals a highly intricate and complex literacy system that baristas engage with and perform on a daily basis, yet the idea of literacy as performance does not stop at beverage production. Like in many workplaces, written accounts of employees' performance carry enormous weight at Starbucks, and the evaluations and reviews directly reflect an individual barista's "performance" of the literacy system underlying daily tasks. In their essay "Writing in a Non-Academic Setting", Lee Odell and Dixie Goswami argue that workplace-related writing is significantly different than school-related writing primarily because of the immediate economic consequences of such writing. They write, "One's evaluation as a worker and, consequently one's raises, promotions, even continued employment may be influenced by the supervisor's approval or disapproval" (Odell 202). Though this particular study focused on rhetorical choices made by employees writing in a government agency, Odell and Goswami's assessment of the value of writing in the workplace resonates through the service industry as well. At Starbucks, formal written evaluations directly correlate with raises and promotions, and written documentation of poor and unsatisfactory performance can lead to termination.

Writing a review is in itself another literacy practice present in the Starbucks literacy system, albeit one that describes employees' performance of other literacy practices. The review form used at Starbucks asks managers to rate baristas performance in several different areas of work using a one to four scale where each number corresponds to a development level: must

improve, meets expectations, above expectations, and consistently exceeds expectations. As store managers, both Elizabeth and Lily are responsible for conducting reviews with each of their baristas every six months. To Elizabeth these reviews are a way to build a relationship with each of her employees, a means of assessing their performance and providing constructive feedback; yet, she also recognizes the reviews serve a larger function in the corporate structure. As Elizabeth put it, “the real business purpose is to give the barista an idea of how their performance has been over the last 6 months and coincide with a pay increase or not based on performance.” In other words, when writing is required in the service industry workplace, it is a written account of performance rather than a performance of what is written. As a sponsor of literacy, Starbucks must continue to assess to level of literacy employees have acquired with the company’s system, and the only way to evaluate this type of literacy is through performance. Employee reviews and evaluations constitute a highly consequential form of writing in the workplace because, as Odell and Goswami assert, they have a direct economic impact on individuals. Considering the consequences of the review for employees, it is not surprising that Lily identified the review process as an accountability tool used to establish checks and balances on managers and ensure fairness where raises and promotions are concerned.

Aside from routine evaluations that can lead to a pay raise, written documentation of individual’s workplace behavior reinforces the “habit of surveillance”. Kristie Fleckenstein labels the “habit of surveillance” as one of three dominate ways of seeing literacy prominent in contemporary culture. Drawing on Foucault’s argument about surveillance, Fleckenstein writes that individuals must internalize the habits of the social group to which they are trying to gain acceptance; these habits are in turn molded and shaped through interaction and surveillance. Fleckenstein pushes Foucault’s tenets of surveillance into the classroom where literacy practices must be made visible in order to be viewed by other members of the literacy community. According to Fleckenstein, the habit of surveillance requires literacy to be performed on a public

stage for others to see (58). Fleckenstein ultimately argues the requirement to perform literacy in the academy is something students in the writing classroom struggle to overcome as they embody their literate identities. However, the performative nature of literacy in the service industry makes the habit of surveillance even more inherent, and unavoidable, in this particular context. For example, while a physical review form is filled out by the store manager and kept in the employee's file, the conversation that happens between the store manager and the barista is the most important part of the process because it is a critique of the barista's performance of the literacy practices. Fleckenstein argues, "it is the reactions of others to our literate performances that determine whether in fact we are literate" (58). At Starbucks, literacy acquisition is so intertwined with performance that the only way to receive feedback on literacy is through feedback on performance. The conversations surrounding the written review are a means of evaluating the barista's performance, which has been captured in writing, with the goal of drawing attention to areas where literacy is underdeveloped in order to improve the performance.

From the menu as the key text interpreted and re-interpreted through order taking to reviews that underlie the habitat of surveillance in the food service industry, it is easy to see how literacy as performance best captures the literacy at play in this particular situation. At Starbucks, literacy is inherently performative and viewing literacy as performance in the context of the food service industry allows for a more accurate representation of the literacy practices required of employees. C.H. Knoblauch writes "definitions of literacy are also rationalizations of its importance". While defining literacy through performance does not describe the literacy practices in the classroom setting, this definition does rationalize the importance of the literacy work that happens in the food service industry. Examining the literacy practices of the food service industry through the lens of literacy as performance pushes the boundaries of common definitions of literacy by placing it into a working environment that is often cast as lacking in the literacy privileged by the academy.

CHAPTER IV

IMPROVING THE ACQUISITION: DEVELOPING TRAINING PRACTICES THAT REFLECT THE LITERACY CONTEXT

The in-depth examination of literacy practices at Starbucks is not simply an academic endeavor, but rather has practical implications for the company and others like it. Understanding how literacy functions in the context of the food service industry should directly inform how new employees are developed into literate members of the community. Gee and Lankshear's examination of "fast capitalist texts" points to a continuous focus on the need for workers to be adaptable to a work environment that demands employees frequently learn new skills. The "new work order" requires employees to successfully function in the midst of a constantly changing workplace and the concept of "self-directed learning" permeates current discussions of workplace training (Lankshear 94). Yet, as Gee and Lankshear point out, the learning that happens in the workplace is rarely "self-directed" in that employees do not get to choose what they learn, and failure to comply with employer set training packages results in loss of employment. Workers are expected to acquire knowledge or skills either through the available training program or on their own, and failure to do so in the corporate timing results in loss of employment. According to Gee and Lankshear, fast capitalists want "workers to experience in meaningful ways a sense of autonomous decision making, choice and self-directedness... [but] for the organizational goals to be met it is necessary that workers make the 'right decisions/choices' and take 'the right direction' so far as their workplace learning is concerned" (Lankshear 95).

Corporations need workers to take ownership of their on the job learning in order to make a profit just as workers must have access to the right tools and training in order to make sense of job requirements. Ultimately, performance is the means by which workplace learning is measured, and a closer look at the training practices at Starbucks reveals opportunities to address issues surrounding on the job training programs.

Currently, training at Starbucks is organized into three learning blocks that are supposed to be spread out over two weeks of training and supplemented by “shadow shifts” on the floor where new partners work alongside their trainers to gain first-hand experience. The first training block covers customer service basics, espresso bar basics, coffee brewing, and food safety. The second training block focuses on cup marking and cup calling, cold beverage preparation, coffee growing and processing, and point of sale operations. The final block completes training on each position with beverage sequencing, drive thru observation and practice, and coffee roasting and packaging. The training of new employees is carried out by “barista trainers”, often high performing baristas looking to promote to a supervisor position, or by current shift supervisors and managers in the store. As a company, Starbucks intentionally works to standardized practices in order to ensure a consistent customer experience. This means everything from drink recipes to the training sequence has been streamlined and packaged so that, theoretically, individual stores all work from the same set of rules, guidelines, and procedures. Several “routines” exist to standardize customer service interactions and beverage production; for example, there is a routine for steaming milk, making espresso based beverages and blended beverages, for ringing transactions at the register, for taking orders in the drive thru, and even for washing dishes. These routines provide structure to the work carried out by employees and teaching these routines is at the heart of the training program.

Trainers are provided with a training guide that can be read directly to new baristas and other training materials that often provide visual representations of the standard routines that must

be learned. However, the various documents and cards used during the training process only represent a small portion of the knowledge needed to integrate into the literacy system at Starbucks. Glynda Hull writes that ideas about the literacy requirements of the workplace should inform larger understandings about the workplace as a whole. This becomes particularly important when considering how new employees acquire the literacy system at play in the workplace. Hull argues “it would be needlessly naïve to assume... that in order to design a workplace program, one need only collect representative texts used at work and then teach to those documents...” (24). Though Hull is referring primarily to workplace based literacy programs, her words apply to training materials used to initiate new employees into context specific literacy practices. At best, according to Hull, simply providing the documents (or training materials) and teaching only those provides a variant of a “functional context approach” and is inadequate. In their examination of training practices at a food processing plant, Mary Ellen Belfiore and Sue Folinsbee discuss their discomfort with the tendency for trainers and supervisors to use a “transmission model” of presenting new information (Belfiore 196). Here training sessions largely included the trainer reading aloud from overhead slides and other documents while the employees listened passively which creates a learning environment where “knowledge is seen like a package passing from one person to the next, out of context and transferable to a range of settings” (Belfiore 202).

In contemporary pedagogy, Starbucks’ use of pre-packaged training guides and materials that can be read aloud verbatim reflects the “presentation mode” of teaching George Hillocks argues is ineffective because it removes practice from the learning environment. Though Hillocks is referring specifically to teaching writing, his assertion that simply presenting learners with information on the forms, rules, and standards of a particular concept does not provide them with the support needed to achieve mastery is relevant outside of the traditional classroom. The training material that is presented to new Starbucks employees contain a high level of context

specific language that new baristas are coming into contact with for the first time, and often new baristas are expected to perform the concepts with mastery immediately after the information has been presented. Both the transmission model Belfiore and Folinsbee witness in the food processing plant and the presentation mode Hillocks casts as problematic in the classroom appear in the Starbucks training program, ultimately making putting it in sharp contrast with best practices in teaching.

Further, the literacy requirements of the food service industry include skills that cannot be captured by a text. At Starbucks, asking new baristas to memorize drink recipe cards corresponding to the menu does not necessarily lead to complete understanding of the beverage production process; thus a barista might know what goes in a drink yet is unable to perform the beverage making process or negotiate the order taking interaction with the customer, both of which are essential practices within the literacy system. Similarly, new baristas often learn how to ring transactions on the register before fully understanding the complexities of the menu because order roles require less literacy than production or support roles. This puts new employees in predominately customer-facing positions where their primary purpose is to tender transactions, but their ability to answer questions about product or negotiate more complicated payment methods is limited by their low level of literacy. In fact, customer service is largely a skill that must be learned through practice and interaction, and the “world class customer service” promised by Starbucks is hard for new partners to deliver when they are still learning the language. According to corporate standards, the neatly packaged training program should represent all of the information necessary to take a newly hired employee to a fully literate barista in two weeks, yet the transmission model approach to learning combined with the highly situated literacy practices renders the current training program ineffective on several levels. Reconfiguring how Starbucks trains new partners could improve the acquisition of the literacy system and create

more effective and efficient workers in less time while circumventing some the negative effects of the current system.

Identifying the Opportunities

The culture of Starbucks emphasizes the idea of constant room for improvement. Instead of referring to the problems or flaws with a person or situation, Starbucks prefers to view such areas of weakness as opportunities for development and in examining the current state of the training program it is important to adopt this same mentality. Learning is never linear and trying to create a general training program that can be used across thousands of stores is never going to be perfect. However, there are several areas where training can be improved, and before there can be development the opportunities need to be identified.

First, customer service always supersedes training. Despite the inclusion of “shadow shifts” in the training sequence, two weeks is rarely enough time for new baristas to fully acquire all literacy practices and be able to perform them with the level of speed and accuracy required at Starbucks. While training is the means to developing literate employees who can meet customer needs, the food service industry is driven by sales and at Starbucks those sales are inextricably linked to time and quality. Wayne, a barista who was hired at the Middleville store in April 2013 said his first few weeks in particular were wrought with discomfort, confusion, and a feeling of constantly being in the way of other employees who were trying to serve customers. He recounted being “thrown in” on a register and expected to correctly ring customer orders after only a few training sessions, an experience that was overwhelming and stressful. “It was uncomfortable because you feel a lot of pressure from the customers and from the trainer and from the workers, and it might not be intentional pressure but you are placed in their world.” Starbucks recognizes three pillars of customer service that they developed based on customer response: friendliness, accuracy, and speed. A new barista with limited knowledge about the menu and the products

available might be very friendly, but their inability to correctly respond to customer needs combined with a slower pace of production will ultimately result in either an unhappy customer or a new partner that is relegated to the sidelines.

Second, material is presented at a rapid pace that does not acknowledge individual processing time. Individual partners work differently, yet the script provided by the corporate office leaves little deviation for trainers when faced with a new barista who has a learning process that does not align with the Starbucks teaching model. Despite the high level of vocabulary and recipe memorization required to build a foundation for more advanced literacy, partners are not allowed to take training materials home to work at their own speed in their own way. Starbucks' "time paid for time worked" standard protects employees from exploitation and promises payment for any work, but it demands training take place at a specific time in a specific place that might not create the most effective learning environment. In their research on deliberate practice and expert performance of musicians, Ericsson et al. found that solitary practice, not other music-related activities, directly correlated with the attained level of proficiency; similar correlations between level of performance and solitary practice were found in master chess players and dart throwing (Ericsson and Moxely 124). This is not to say Starbucks should require new employees to spend un-paid hours memorizing the menu, but it does suggest opportunities during training to engage in solitary practice should be offered in order to maximize performance.

The high amount of information presented in such a short time prevents new partners from internalizing one idea before being forced to move on to a new concept. Within the learning blocks, Starbucks uses a four-part teaching model designed to present new information: prepare, where prior knowledge is assessed and the material is introduced; present, the demonstration of the skill alongside the major steps to the routine; practice, where the new barista practices the skill three times while reading the different steps of the routine out loud during performance; and follow-up, which provides a chance for questions and feedback. In his book *Teaching Writing as*

Reflective Practice, George Hillocks argues that teaching is most effective when declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge are situated side-by-side. While Hillocks is referring specifically to teaching in the writing classroom, his ideas are relevant to conversations about effective teaching practices in a variety of contexts. Hillocks writes “if the explanation is clear and specific and concurrent or nearly concurrent with the learner’s attempts to do it, then the explanation will be helpful” (122). The teaching model at Starbucks reflects Hillocks’ style of teaching in that the first two steps provide a detailed explanation and the last two steps allow the learner an opportunity to put procedure into use. However, the expectation is that new baristas acquire the new information in one cycle of the teaching model instead of recognizing the importance of extended practice with various levels of support. An examination of the three training blocks reveals that skills related to the same position are spread across the training sequence in a way that does not allow baristas to make logical connections that build on the material previously presented. For example, beverage production is both the first and last skill taught to new baristas: milk steaming is taught in block one, drink recipes in block two, and the sequencing routine in block three. This means a key skill baristas learned on their first day of training (milk steaming) is not revisited or put into context of the larger beverage production sequence until several training sessions later. The espresso basics section of the first training block focuses on the milk steaming routine and how to make a basic latte, cappuccino, and Americano; yet, at this point in the training new employees have had little to no contact with the menu, the text around which the literacy system revolves. New baristas learn how to steam milk before they have been exposed to the menu, the standard drink recipes, and the system for cup marking, all of which directly inform beverage production.

Although there is room in the teaching model for new baristas to practice the skill until they demonstrate proficiency, this still happens within one training sessions and often several training shifts where new information is presented pass before baristas have a chance to return to

previously learned skills. Wayne said he would have preferred to have training spread over multiple weeks where each week was devoted to mastering a specific position on the floor. “A lot of my struggle at first was that someone would tell me something and then I would work a different place the next day,” Wayne said. “I was constantly feeling like I had to switch to a different position or set of rules.” For Wayne, the lack of consistency in training made it difficult for him to retain the information presented during each session and created a learning environment where he felt he was expected to remember information after hearing it once and master a skill after practicing it twice.

Fostering Development

In order to address these opportunities for improvement, Starbucks needs to change the way training material is presented to better reflect contemporary understanding of information processing and skilled memory theories found in second language acquisition and cognitive psychology. This would also open up a conversation about modifying training practices based on individual needs and provide flexibility in the training model for individuals to customize the learning process. Even though the language of Starbucks is not a language in the traditional sense, it does require new employees to memorize, adopt, and then implement a certain set of terms, skills, and actions in order to reach proficiency in their performance of the entire literacy system.

The main area where improvement in literacy acquisition is needed is in the training practices themselves. As has already been discussed, the training program at Starbucks does not address key learning needs and at times even puts new baristas in situations that are counter-intuitive to learning. To begin creating a training program that fosters literacy growth and acquisition, it is time to take advantage of current technology and create a computerized training program that simulates ordering and ringing on the register. Starbucks currently uses a series of informational books and visual training cards to conduct the majority of new partner training, and the lack of

alternative forms of information presentation is detrimental to learning. James Paul Gee points to several differences between learning from books and learning from computer games that would make a balance between the two ideal in service industry training. Video games are not focused on problem solving, not content, and ask the user to make choices that can affect the outcome of the game (Gee 420). Simulation based computer games have been used in second language acquisition (Peterson), junior high and high school science classrooms (Eckhardt et. al), and even in university level business classes (Seethamraju). According to Elizabeth, Starbucks has utilized computer based training programs in the past, but the software fell out of use because the company at large felt it detracted from the hands-on experience new baristas needed to learn the various routines, processes, and customer service standards. Obviously a computer alone cannot teach all of the literacy practices at Starbucks, but that doesn't mean this type of technology should be completely rejected. Video game scholar Ian Bogost says drill exercises in games have traditionally focused on the "digitization of skill" and are prominent in educational games such as *Math Blaster* and *Reader Rabbit* (145). These types of video games do not necessarily require multiple levels of difficulty because, as Bogost points out, often the skill in practice is not overly complex; yet, the time spent practicing helps familiarize the player with the concepts. Bogost has applied the formats from educational drill and skill games to the creation of corporate training video game programs that provide a space for employees to practice new skills. Though the literacy system at Starbucks requires more complex knowledge than that provided by a simple video game, the benefits to capitalizing on current technology and developing a computer training program specific to the Starbucks register system are two-fold: it provides a low-stakes situation where new employees are scaffolded from object to other regulation without fear of failure, and it decreases the cost of training by removing the need for a dedicated barista trainer.

First, and most importantly, such a program would provide a low-stakes situation for new baristas to practice basic register skills without interfering with customer service. This would

reduce the anxiety that is often felt by new baristas who are faced with a long line of customers and increase confidence in their abilities when they are placed on a real register. Drawing on second language acquisition studies, communicative confidence directly correlates with speakers' willingness to communicate; or in other words, whether or not individuals will actively seek communicative interaction in the second language can be predicted in part on their anxiety and self-perceived competence (Ortega 2003). While baristas are not expected to learn a new language, the highly situated vocabulary in combination with unfamiliar beverage production practices and negotiation of the menu with customers is remarkably similar to the process of acquiring a new language. Thus it stands to reason that anxiety and perceived communicative competence would also factor into a new barista's willingness to step into a customer-facing role. Mistakes and confusion cause frustration and embarrassment, which ultimately hamper the learning process. According to Bogost, one of the prominent features of the video game is that it acts as a portal to an alternate reality where the demands of real-life do not exist; yet Bogost also points out that for the skills practiced on the computer to have any bearing on behavior, the player must leave the game and return to the real world (Bogost 117). "In addition, the player must develop a conscious understanding of the purpose, effect, and implications of his or her actions so that they bear meaning as cultural conditions, not just instrumental contrivances" (Bogost 124). Using a computerized game to aid in new partner training at Starbucks would provide the escape from real world demands (at Starbucks namely the focus on customer service and beverage quality) and open up a space for drill and skill practice. Other aspects of the training program, particularly shadow shifts, bring the new employee out of the fictionalized game world and force them to place skills practiced through "instrumental contrivances" into the "cultural conditions" of Starbucks.

Beyond anxiety and willingness to communicate, concepts developed following the social turn in second language acquisition also add to the conversation about the order in which

new information is processed and retained. Rooted in Vygotskian theory, the self-regulation model in language acquisition theory points to the gradual development of cognition and consciousness that results in self-regulation, or the ability to independently carry out an activity (Ortega 218). Self-regulation is the goal of any learning endeavor, be it a new language or literacy practices at Starbucks, and the progression from object to other to self-regulation is an important part of the acquisition process. Paraphrasing James Lantoff and Gabriela Appel, Ortega writes that consciousness allows humans to regulate problem solving and achieve goals in relation to their motives and operations, and there are three main types of regulation: object, other, and self (Ortega 220). At Starbucks, object regulation occurs with the use of training aids such as visual representations of the routines and drink recipe cards. The register could also be considered an object used to regulate both menu-related interactions with customers and the cup-marking codes because it provides a visual guide to customizing beverages. A computer-training program would act as a bridge between object and other regulation by providing a simulated register system for the new barista to manipulate while receiving feedback from the program itself on performance. This would essentially act as a means of “scaffolding”, to borrow Vygotsky’s term, new partners from object regulation into other regulation by more adequately preparing them for other regulated shadow shifts and increasing their perceived confidence in their ability to self regulate when working unsupervised.

Second, such a program would essentially pay for itself in terms of money spent on training hours. As high performing baristas, shift supervisors, or managers, those put in charge of the training of new baristas are often on a higher pay scale than other partners in the store. If the shift supervisor on duty can get the barista-in-training started on a designated computerized training module then there is no need to pay an additional barista trainer for those hours. Ericsson and Moxley’s examination of deliberate performance of domain experts reveals that a few hours of practice or training will substantially improve an individual’s performance on a task that has

never been encountered (113). Even supplementing the current training model with ten hours of computerized simulation would save stores money on training and dramatically increase new employees' confidence and competence on the register system. Considering Starbucks is an expanding corporate-owned chain that prides itself on consistency in experience from location to location, one computer program would serve thousands of stores. The financial benefit would more than compensate for the cost of developing such a program.

While creating a computer-based program that would supplement the hands-on training model currently in place, it is not enough to ensure new baristas are able to translate their knowledge into the necessary performance that marks literacy in the food service industry. Thus, the structure of practice shifts needs to be reconsidered in order to provide the most beneficial and least stressful learning environment. Thinking along the lines of the willingness to communicate model, it is important store managers are intentional in their scheduling of training time. Peak hours in the morning are not ideal for training new baristas because the focus is on speed, accuracy and friendliness (the pillars of Starbucks customer service). Asking new partners to work during peak hours is essentially putting them in a situation where perceived competence is bound to decrease as anxiety about meeting the demands of a literacy system they are still learning increases. Edward, a shift supervisor who transferred to the Middleville store, explained that the store manager who hired and trained him took a different approach to training new baristas. According to Edward, new baristas were not allowed to work during peak morning hours until they had demonstrated their literacy acquisition through performance. "If you were good and did well on bar, then you could go to mornings," Edward said. "You had to earn mornings." Training took place at night and the last thing new partners were taught was drink production. Edward said new partners were allowed to make drinks in 10-minute intervals under the supervision of an experienced barista and were then rotated to a different position. The intentional short interval of time prevents new baristas from becoming overwhelmed and creates a positive

environment for learning that decreases the potential of stress and anxiety. Deliberately building confidence while shielding new employees from stressful situations that can be damaging to the learning process creates a protected space for new employees to learn and make mistakes without risk of failure.

The training approach Edward's previous store manager took deviates from the plan provided by Starbucks corporate offices, but it is probably a more effective approach because it mirrors Fitts and Posner's model for the acquisition of everyday skills (Ericsson and Moxley 116). The three stages of this model represent the progression from beginner to expert: cognitive, where behavior is slow and full of error which is gradually corrected and improved through practice; associative, where individuals have reached an acceptable level of performance and can execute sequences of actions; and autonomous, where individuals no longer need to monitor their performance because it has become automated (Ericsson and Moxley 116). Just as the computer training program would push new baristas from object to other regulation in preparation to perform the order taking routine unassisted, training shifts that focus on performance of the literacy practices would take new partners from the cognitive to the associative stage of Fitt and Posner's model by focusing on one routine at a time.

As Wayne reported earlier, the constant shifting between positions during his training distracted him from retaining any of the information presented. Spending an entire week focused on taking customer orders and tendering transactions on the register would ensure new baristas were able to observe their own errors in order to improve through feedback and repeated practice (cognitive stage) until they were able to perform actions associated with order-taking at a sufficient level (associative stage). Ericsson and Moxley argue it takes approximately 50 hours of experience to reach an acceptable level of performance on most general activities (117). While 50 hours is not a realistic amount of time to devote to training on one literacy practice at Starbucks, the literacy system is interwoven in such a way that knowledge in one area aids in the

performance of another. Echoing Mike Rose's assertion that the menu is the key text negotiated and interpreted in the food service industry, Wayne pointed out that understanding the menu at Starbucks is key to success because it dictates what beverages can be made and how each beverage is crafted. If the menu is the text that is performed at each level of the literacy system, then ensuring new partners have a clear understanding of the menu by the end of training is key to promoting future success in other areas of work. If performance of the literacy system is marked by the ability to read a cup, perform the beverage production sequence, and then call the cup correctly, a training sequence that began with in-depth exploration of the menu, moved to cup marking and point-of-sale system, and then landed on beverage production would allow new baristas to become fluent in the literacy practices that are necessary to facilitate performance of the entire literacy system.

Training Beyond Starbucks

The goal of examining literacy practices at Starbucks is to ultimately arrive at an understanding of the mental work involved in food service and to develop training practices that promote quick and effective acquisition of the language system. While Starbucks has been used as a case study, it is representative of other food service establishments that have a similar literacy system as well as workers that must be trained and acculturated into this system. Training methods and requirements will inevitably vary between different restaurants, but the opportunities for development at Starbucks point to larger learning concepts that should be integrated into food service training programs at large. From educational and cognitive psychology to second language acquisition, the problem with examining the learning process in any context is that it cannot be reduced only to observable behaviors because it involves inner mental operations that are not visible (Tseng 80). In their research on strategic learning Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt argue the focus on learners should shift away from outcomes and toward a “conceptual approach [that] highlights the importance of the learners’ innate self-regulatory capacity that fuels their

efforts to search for and then apply personalized strategic learning” (79). The tool developed by Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt to measure individual self-regulatory capacity focused on a system of five strategic learning strategies that learners’ evoked as they moved toward self-regulation: commitment control, metacognitive control, satiation control, emotion control, and environmental control (85). The idea here is that learners’ ability to address each of these facets of learning made them more likely to engage in strategic learning and arrive at self-regulation more quickly. The researchers concluded that the key to successful learning is not the specific set of strategies each learner employs, rather that they choose to exert their own creative efforts onto their learning (Tseng 95). “The essential part of empowering learners is to set into motion the self-regulatory process rather than to offer instruction of a set of strategies” (Tseng 96). Understanding the five facets of strategic learning allows instructors to attend to individual learner differences by providing learning opportunities that address each of these concepts.

Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt assert the theoretical basis for these five facets of strategic learning can be applied to any learning situation, making it an ideal guide for evaluating the training model at Starbucks and in the food service industry at large. The areas of opportunity at Starbucks addressed above show places where adequate attention was not paid to one or more of these strategies and the solutions proposed would allow for better strategic learning; examining the proposed changes to the training model through the lens of these five criteria provides a broad scale view of how other establishments can alter training practices to align with the five main areas of strategic learning that lead to self-regulation. Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt define commitment control as learners’ ability to maintain the original goal and keep in mind both the positive rewards and negative consequences to achieving or failing to achieve the desired outcome (85). As Mike Rose argues, the food service industry is inherently goal-oriented in nature because the focus is always on generating more revenue, and for individual workers, meeting customer needs to improve monetary gain. The very nature of food service work

emphasizes the need to maintain commitment and is further aided by the use of performance reviews linked to pay raises at Starbucks. Metacognitive control refers to the controlling of mental processes such as concentration in order to prevent distraction and procrastination. Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt refer specifically to “focusing on the first steps to take when getting down to an activity” as part of metacognitive control, which reflects the order of information presentation and the creation of routines. Altering the order of information presented during training helps build metacognitive control of the routines in place at Starbucks. New baristas who learn the menu and the recipes, then the cup-marking and order-taking system, and finally drink production continuously add layers of knowledge to existing routines, which in turn allows them to exert metacognitive control over their performance of the literacy practices because they have a strong foundation of understanding on the smaller pieces of the whole.

Satiation, emotion, and environment control all point to the internal feelings that accompany learning. Satiation control refers to the elimination of boredom in repetitive tasks. The current state of training at Starbucks consists predominately of one-on-one training sessions with a barista trainer where information is presented verbally from a guide or a reference card; essentially, new employees sit for hours upon end and listen to someone explain new concepts with only occasional opportunities for hands-on practice or interaction. The inclusion of a computer-based training program that supplemented one-on-one training with games and activities designed to simulated order-taking and register use at Starbucks helps eliminate boredom and put control in the hands of the learner. Along this same line, rotating new partners between beverage production and order-taking roles provides variety in task while decreasing anxiety and improving the learning environment by addressing emotion control. Emotion control “concerns the management of disruptive emotional states or moods, and the generation of emotions that will be conducive to implementing one’s intentions” (Tseng 86). While individual learners must develop methods of relaxation and positive encouragement, it is important

managers and trainers alleviate causes of disruptive emotional states by being sensitive to anxiety and perceived competence. Both of these aspects of self-regulation point to the learning environment, and environment control is focused primarily on removing negative factors and “making the environment an ally in the pursuit of a difficult goal” (Tseng 86). Though not traditionally considered a site of learning, the food service industry does require new employees to acquire a very specific set of language and literacy skills. Melanie Wallendorf suggests training manuals that contain pictures to explain job related tasks along with cash registers that scan items and count change are the result of limited literacy skills among in fast food service workers; yet such a stance situates literacy as reading and writing while ignoring the literacy context all new service industry employees must be trained into. Altering training practices to reflect best practices from educational psychology and language acquisition studies can improve the learning situation in a way that encourages self-regulation and produces more efficient and proficient employees.

CHAPTER V

CONNECTING LITERACIES: LINKING THE ACADEMY AND THE WORKPLACE

In his book *The Mind at Work*, Mike Rose sought to examine the everyday activities of blue-collar workers through a new lens “to aid us in seeing the commonplace with greater precision” (xxxiv). This study narrowed in on the literacy practices food and beverage service workers employ as they take orders, interact with customers, vie for raises and promotions, and generally perform their daily tasks in an effort to highlight the high level of language and literacy competence required of such jobs. Ultimately, literacy as performance allows for a more complete understanding of what it means to be literate in the service industry. Though Starbucks was used a case study, the literacy practices that run through the service industry at large are similar to those present in this specific context; the level of specialized language use, critical thinking, and interpretation that happens each day at Starbucks mirrors that of other food and beverage oriented workplaces across the country. Moreover, examining the literacy practices of the food service industry through the lens of literacy as performance opens up a conversation about training practices in the workplace. The theoretical approach to literacy combined with the practical application of these ideas to actual workers learning and development creates opportunities for food service establishments to improve the literacy of their workers and the profitability of their businesses.

Returning to Sylvia Scribner’s three foundational metaphors for literacy reveals aspects of each metaphor appear in the literacy system at Starbucks. According to Scribner, the literacy as

adaptation metaphor “has a strong commonsense appeal” and the order taking and beverage production process at Starbucks basic understanding of routines, symbols, and recipes coupled with commonsense could be interpreted as “functional literacy” (73). Elizabeth acknowledges that a mixture of “commonsense and memorization” is needed for new baristas to learn the basic drink names, recipes, and cup-markings. However, after looking at the literacy practices that construct the literacy system at Starbucks, simply acquiring basic literacy skills such as memorizing cup-markings and drink names is not enough to be a truly literate Starbucks employee. Elizabeth says, “reading drive thru labels which have interesting abbreviations and reading cup markings is the first step to knowing what needs to be done”, but this is only the beginning. Intricate knowledge of both the spoken vocabulary and the written symbol system combined with an understanding of the food production all inform a barista’s interactions with customers, and performance of these skills determines their success or failure as a barista.

Scribner’s literacy as power and Sara Webb-Sunderhaus’ literacy as communion are both effective metaphors for thinking about individual and corporate success in the service industry, but they do not provide a means of evaluating literacy acquisition and use. On an individual level, literacy as power can be seen in the desire for upward mobility within Starbucks. Employees looking to promote to a higher level will need to acquire a higher level of Starbucks literacy, which means integrating Starbucks vernacular into daily language use and demonstrating increasing competence in their performance of the literacy practices. If, as Scribner writes, “expansion of literacy skills is often viewed as a means for poor and politically powerless groups to claim their place in the world”, then there is the underlying idea that service industry workers are an oppressed group that can be rescued from poverty by increasing context specific literacy. The examination reveals that this indeed is true; high Starbucks literacy directly leads to promotions and pay raises. Yet, unlike in the school setting, traditional means of evaluating literacy acquisition fall short in the service industry. Without any papers to write, presentations to

give, or tests to take, the only way for literacy in the workplace to be evaluated is through the physically embodiment of the literacy system; thus literacy becomes inextricably linked to performance, and only when literacy is performed can it wield any power.

Beyond establishing a new metaphor for examining literacy practices in the food service industry and proposing new training practices, examining the literacy system at Starbucks challenges social perceptions about the intelligence of food service workers and the value of the work they do. Considering Rose's stance on social perceptions of food service work in tandem with Glynda Hull's argument that popular discourses about workplace literacy stress the failure of a large number of people to competently perform simple, everyday tasks, it is unsurprising that food service work is socially devalued and adds to the stigmatization of the disproportionate number of marginalized people who work in these positions (Hull 13). Close examination of the literacy practices at Starbucks adds value to the literacy required of these workers, pushing against common discourses about such work. Hopefully literacy as performance will provide a means for continuous examination of how literacy manifests itself in everyday situations, particularly situations that are considered of lower social and intellectual value.

Stepping away from the practical applications literacy studies can have for the food service industry, it is important to remember that all learning, whether it happens within the walls of a classroom or behind the counter at a restaurant, is intrinsically worthy of investigation. The parallels between learning in the traditional classroom and learning in the work place are striking. The writing classroom is a place where students are asked to adopt the specialized discourse of the academy, and of their chosen field of study, and then use it a meaningful way that demonstrates their comfort and ease with a previously foreign type of language (Bartholomae 624). At Starbucks, and in the food service industry at large, new employees are expected to acquire the literacy system and then perform as experts after a few weeks of training. In reference to the composition course, Bartholomae writes the student "must learn to speak our language...

[because] speaking and writing will most certainly be required long before the skill is ‘learned’” (624). In both situations individuals are asked to quickly process information and then show proficiency in the material, demonstrate an ability to continuously add to existing knowledge, and ultimately do so in a rather short amount of time with clear consequences for failure (unemployment, a poor grade).

The constant struggle in the university between “education and commercial utility” has pitted literacy for economic gain and literacy for the sake of literacy against one another (Parascondola). As a graduate student in a Composition and Rhetoric program I was initially inclined to think literacy belonged in the classroom, and such a naïve view of literacy led me to believe classroom literacy was indeed superior. The purpose of this study is not to suggest the literacy of the food service industry should be taught by the university: replicating the intricate and highly situated would at best be imitative and at worst reductive. Steve Parks notes that “there is “no expectation that writing programs should engage in systematic work concerning economic questions,” even though there is a clear connection between the work done in writing classrooms and the economic situations of both students and faculty (Parks 122). Unlike Parks, I am not arguing for a writing curriculum that asks students to engage directly with the labor market and their economic positioning. However, as a field, Composition needs to move out of the classroom and into the workplace to examine how the same skills and concepts privileged in the writing classroom manifest themselves on the job. The goal of such inquires is to see the wide ranging manifestations of literacy and interrogate how classroom teaching and on the job training practices can be improved through a more complex and complete understanding of what it means to be literate.

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APPENDICES

Table 1- Cup Marking Modifications

Decaf	The only function of this box is to capture caffeine level. All decaf is represented with an "X", partial decaffeination is represented in fractions.
Shots	The numbers in this box represent the number of <i>shots</i> a customer wants in the drink. Special markings such as "R" for ristretto or "AFF" for affagto alter how the shots are prepared or placed into the drink.
Syrup	Each syrup has its own letter marking; sugar free syrups are indicated with "SF" in front of the letter marking. Numbers preceding syrup markings indicate the number of <i>pumps</i> of syrup a customer requested.
Milk	Default milk for espresso beverages is 2%, and for Frappucinos it is whole milk. A common confusion occurs with using "N" to represent skim (nonfat) milk instead of an "S" (which stands for soy).
Custom	While there are standard markings for custom modifications, this box is for changes to beverages that do not fall into the above categories. Common markings include "X" for extra, a slash through "F" for no foam, "WC" for no whipped cream, or "H2O" for no water, and any sugar or sugar substitute inclusions.
Drink	Many drink markings are easily identified: "L" for latte, "C" for cappuccino, and "A" for Americano. Signature drinks such as the White Chocolate Mocha ("WM") or Cinnamon Dolce Latte ("CDL") as well as holiday and promotional beverages (Pumpkins Spice Latte "PSL", Caramel Brule Latte "CBL") have more specific markings even if they are a latte at the root. Frappucino drink markings generally end in "F", and other beverages such as teas, tea lemonades, refreshers, and kids' drinks have individual markings that require memorization.

The left hand column represents the cup marking boxes on each of the Starbucks cups. The right hand column has a description of what modifications are placed in this box along with examples. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the modifications possible at Starbucks. In fact, the training material provided to new baristas rarely captures the extensive markings that could be used to alter a standard drink recipe; also, the company sets standard drink markings but many individual stores have markings or styles that are specific to the location.

Table 2- Latte and Skinny Latte Marking Variations

Café Latte	Non-Fat Latte	Skinny Vanilla Latte		
Deacf	Deacf	Deacf	Deacf	Deacf
Shots	Shots	Shots	Shots	Shots
Syrup	Syrup	Syrup	Syrup	Syrup
Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk
Custom	Custom	Custom	Custom	Custom
Drink	Drink	Drink	Drink	Drink
L	L	L	SKL	SKVL

This table shows the progression of cup markings from latte to skinny vanilla latte, and the various ways a skinny vanilla latte could be marked. It's important to note that the second column is a non-fat latte, not a skinny latte, because it does not include a sugar-free syrup. The register system at Starbucks automatically includes the charge for syrup in the button for skinny latte; if a barista incorrectly rings a non-fat latte as a skinny latte without a sugar-free syrup then he/she charges the customer for a beverage inclusion that wasn't ordered. The fourth column is the corporate standard for marking skinny lattes.

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, October 24, 2012
IRB Application No AS12127
Proposal Title: Writing Development in the Service Industry

Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 10/23/2013

Principal
Investigator(s):

Taylor Libby	Lynn Lewis
205 Morrill Hall	205 Morrill
Stillwater, OK 74078	Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

**Participant Information
Oklahoma State University**

Title: Writing Development in the Service Industry

Investigator: Taylor Libby, Oklahoma State University

Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to examine the writing development of individuals in the service industry. Particular attention will be paid to the context of literacy development and the social, economic, and cultural factors influencing literacy acquisition.

What to Expect: Participants will be asked to commit to one 2-3 hour semi-structured interview, and two 30 minute follow-up debriefing and fact-checking sessions. Participants will be asked to recount specific stories and details related to their literacy learning, as well as encouraged to describe their current uses of literacy skills in the workplace. The interviews will be recorded and the tapes will be transcribed and then destroyed. Transcripts of the recordings will be stored on the researcher's personal computer to ensure confidentiality.

Risks: The principle risks associated with this survey are those associated with a breach in confidentiality. To minimize these risks data collected from individual participants will be stored separately and all identifying information including name and geographic location will be concealed in any publication. Only the primary research will have access to tapes, transcripts, and notes from the interviews, and all materials associated with data collection will be destroyed after one calendar year.

Benefits: The main benefit of this research study is the development of greater insight into how individuals develop literacy skills, particularly in the context of the service industry. Examination of literacy practices in the workplace allow for better understanding of value of literacy outside of the University.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Your Rights: Your participation in this study is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation at any time.

Confidentiality: Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Recordings will be heard and transcribed by the researcher, and the tapes will be stored in Morrill 406 until transcription is complete, then they will be destroyed. Transcripts and other research data will be stored on the researcher's personal computer for one year before being destroyed. Pseudonyms will be used for each participant, and any other identifying information will be changed.

Contacts: You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses should you desire to discuss your participation in this research study or request information/results:

Taylor Libby
205 Morrill
taylor.libby@okstate.edu

Lynn Lewis
205 Morrill
lynn.lewsi@okstate.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact:

Dr. Shelia Kennison
IRB Chair
219 Cordell North
Stillwater, OK 74078
405-744-3377
irb@okstate.edu

Okla. State Univ. IRB Approved <u>10/24/12</u> Expires <u>10/23/13</u> IRB # <u>12-12/127</u>

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:

I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved: 01/24/12
Expires: 12/23/13
IRB # AB-2127

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date Thursday, September 19, 2013 Protocol Expires: 9/18/2016

IRB Application No: AS12127

Proposal Title: Writing Development in the Service Industry

Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as: Continuation

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): **Approved**

Principal
Investigator(s) :

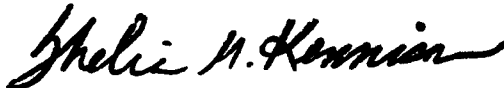
Taylor Libby
205 Morrill Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

Ronald Brooks
205 Morrill
Stillwater, OK 74078

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office **MUST** be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

Signature :



Shelia Kennison, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Thursday, September 19, 2013
Date

**Participant Information
Oklahoma State University**

Title: Writing Development in the Service Industry

Investigator: Taylor Libby, Oklahoma State University

Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to examine the writing development of individuals in the service industry. Particular attention will be paid to the context of literacy development and the social, economic, and cultural factors influencing literacy acquisition.

What to Expect: Participants will be asked to commit to one 2-3 hour semi-structured interview, and two 30 minute follow-up debriefing and fact-checking sessions. Participants will be asked to recount specific stories and details related to their literacy learning, as well as encouraged to describe their current uses of literacy skills in the workplace. The interviews will be recorded and the tapes will be transcribed and then destroyed. Transcripts of the recordings will be stored on the researcher's personal computer to ensure confidentiality.

Risks: The principle risks associated with this survey are those associated with a breach in confidentiality. To minimize these risks data collected from individual participants will be stored separately and all identifying information including name and geographic location will be concealed in any publication. Only the primary research will have access to tapes, transcripts, and notes from the interviews, and all materials associated with data collection will be destroyed after one calendar year.

Benefits: The main benefit of this research study is the development of greater insight into how individuals develop literacy skills, particularly in the context of the service industry. Examination of literacy practices in the workplace allow for better understanding of value of literacy outside of the University.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Your Rights: Your participation in this study is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation at any time.

Confidentiality: Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Recordings will be heard and transcribed by the researcher, and the tapes will be stored in Morrill 406 until transcription is complete, then they will be destroyed. Transcripts and other research data will be stored on the researcher's personal computer for one year before being destroyed. Pseudonyms will be used for each participant, and any other identifying information will be changed.

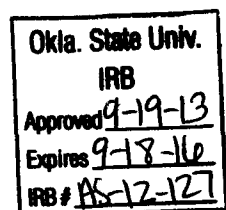
Contacts: You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses should you desire to discuss your participation in this research study or request information/results:

Taylor Libby
205 Morrill
taylor.libby@okstate.edu

Ron Brooks
205 Morrill
ron.brooks@okstate.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact:

Dr. Shelia Kennison
IRB Chair
219 Cordell North
Stillwater, OK 74078
405-744-3377
irb@okstate.edu



CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:

I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved 9-19-13
Expires 9-18-16
IRB # AS-12127

VITA

Taylor Dawn Libby

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: THEORIZING LITERACY IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY: A STARBUCKS
CASE STUDY

Major Field: English- Composition and Rhetoric

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Composition and Rhetoric at
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 2014.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in English at Sterling College,
Sterling, Kansas in May 2011.

Publications:

“How to Train Your Teaching Assistants: A Review of Jessica Restaino’s *First
Semester*”. *Enculturation* 17, 2014.

Conference Presentations:

“Theorizing Literacy in the Service Industry: A Starbucks Case Study”. Rhetoric
Society of America Conference, Presenter. San Antonio, May 2014.

“Social Construction of Authorship in the Collaborative Writing Center”. The
Oklahoma State University Humanities Conference, Presenter, March 2012.

“Exploring the 19th Century Closet: Homosexuality in Spring’s Awakening”. The
National Undergraduate Literature Conference, Presenter. Weber State University,
March 2010.

Work Experience:

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Oklahoma State University.
August 2011-December 2013.

Starbucks, Assistant Store Manager.
April 2012-Present.