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Drawing on Deborah Brandt’s “literacy sponsorship,” this thesis examines ways English language learners (ELLs) in the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center (CMLC) act as literacy sponsors, sharing their expertise in language, textiles, and cooking, based on nine in-depth interviews with ELLs at the center. The findings of this thesis are presented in three middle chapters, each addressing a different facet of ELLs as sponsors of literacy at the CMLC, including: 1) how friendships enhance reciprocal literacy sponsorship, where two people are teaching each other; 2) how CMLC cooking classes function as literacy events, in which ELL teachers make arguments about culture and food; and 3) how the CMLC’s textile curator argues for the storytelling power of textiles and promotes cross-cultural dialogue through an annual textile exhibit. I argue that ELLs sponsor literacy in innovative ways, and that friendships formed at the CMLC make literacy sponsorship mutually enriching.
Chatting, Cooking, Curating: English Language Learners as Sponsors of Literacy in a Multicultural Literacy Center

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Natalie Saleh, Author
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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis project focuses on the literacy practices of the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center (CMLC), an organization, located in Corvallis, Oregon, on the edge of Oregon State University’s (OSU) campus, though technically not a part of OSU. Specifically, this project examines the ways English language learners (ELLs) at the CMLC enact teaching roles, drawing on nine in-depth interviews with participants at the center. The CMLC has an international focus, attracting people from a variety of countries with many different first languages. Often, though not always, members of the CMLC community are international students, scholars, or the families of international students and scholars at OSU.

I arrived at this area of research when I moved to Corvallis in 2015 to begin working on a master’s degree in English. As an undergraduate, I had had the opportunity to conduct ethnographic research in a literacy studies class. This class sparked my interest in literacy research, so I knew when I began my master’s degree that I wanted to do a project related to community literacy, where I would again get to explore how reading, writing, and other literacies impact people’s lives. After doing some research on literacy-related opportunities in Corvallis, I began volunteering at the CMLC in October of 2015, doing reception work and tutoring ELLs preparing for the U.S. citizenship test.

I was drawn to the CMLC for community literacy research because it diverges from conventional literacy centers in its mission and goals. While most traditional
literacy centers focus on teaching reading and writing, the CMLC focuses more on fostering cross-cultural understanding. In fact, when I initially mentioned to the center coordinator that I wanted to volunteer because I was interested in literacy research, she was quick to explain that the CMLC is not really about “literacy” but about “multicultural literacy,” which she says is essentially “building the understanding of cross-cultural interests and communication, especially communication.” This idea is further reflected by the CMLC’s motto: “Everyone is a teacher. Everyone is a learner.” Instead of having only traditional literacy programs, such as writing and reading classes, the CMLC hosts conversation circles and partners, knitting classes, cooking classes, international potlucks, sewing classes, and citizenship classes, among other activities. However, much more occurs at the center than the fixed monthly activities. The center is often used as a meeting place, for example, and anybody who participates in CMLC activities is encouraged to suggest new activities and programs for the center, whether one-time or recurring events.

Freeform activities and the feedback from those who spend time at the center are core components in the center’s operation. While there are set times for some activities at the center, new events are constantly added. The center coordinator encourages people to find opportunities to share their talents and knowledge. Even when I began volunteering, the center coordinator told me to let her know if I had any ideas for the center.
Along with these freeform and open-minded values is also an emphasis on comfort and hospitality, apparent on the website, which refers to the center as a “living room for learning, where all people can be teachers and learners, where sharing cultures and expanding literacies enables everyone to take part in community” (CMLC). At first, the phrase “living room” may appear to be metaphorical, but many of the CMLC’s activities literally do occur in the center’s “living room,” as the building itself is a yellow house on the edge of Oregon State’s campus.

The center can perhaps be best described as a mix between a home, a museum, and a library. There is a kitchen, where cooking classes are held, and a kids’ room, where there are books and plenty of toys for children to play with. This is also where the CMLC’s “Mamma and Baby” group meets. There is a textile room, with clothes from all over the world. In the back of the center is the library, where there are two computers and many books that people can borrow. Throughout the center are also signs that say “This is a learning center! Please explore, touch, ask questions!”

The center is a resource. Many cultural items at the center can be borrowed, not just the books. People are free to use the kitchen and cooking supplies, and there is always hot water and a large assortment of tea. The instruments in the music room are available for anybody to play or experiment with, and the craft room has sewing machines and crafting supplies for people to use. The children’s room is fully stocked with toys and children’s books, and people are free to bring their
children and just play, or to leave their children in the kids room while doing something else in the center. The CMLC even has “Culture Exploration Kits,” which are essentially boxes with cultural items and books all relating to a theme. The idea behind these kits is that they are “portable museums,” with items from a variety of cultures that can be used in educational settings to teach others about diversity (“Educator Resources”). They are available to educators to borrow and use for their classrooms. The center offers citizenship tutoring for free, and 31 people have successfully become citizens with help from the CMLC (“Events and Programs”).

**Corvallis, Oregon State University, and the CMLC**

Corvallis is a small town in central Oregon with a population of 57,000. It is 70 miles south of Portland and 45 miles east of the Pacific Ocean (“Setting”). Corvallis is a college town, where many people support the university and are there because of the university. Corvallis is a highly educated community, with the highest education rate per capita in the State of Oregon (“Geography & Demographics”). With 50 parks in and surrounding Corvallis, plenty of hiking trails, and the Willamette River running through the city, Corvallis is an outdoorsy, active town, with plenty of opportunities to enjoy nature (“Parks, Forestry & Natural Areas”). In addition, public transportation is reliable and free, making it easy to get around the city and be actively involved in the community.

Oregon State University is centrally located, only several blocks from downtown. The CMLC resides on the edge of OSU campus, also just down the street from the bus station and downtown, making it easy to find and get to for OSU
students and Corvallis residents not attending or working at OSU. Though the CMLC is not affiliated with OSU, OSU and the CMLC have significant influence on each other. The CMLC, which leases its space from OSU, opened in 2006 and has run continuously in the same location since its opening. Its location so near to Oregon State makes it especially convenient for OSU students to come to the center. Many international people who come to the CMLC to improve their English language skills and find community in Corvallis are in some way connected to OSU, having moved there specifically because of the university. Some are students or are married to students or professors at the university. According to OSU’s Office of International Services, Oregon State had a total of 3,397 international students in Fall 2016, with the largest group, 1,678 students, from China, and the second largest, 442 students, from Saudi Arabia (OSU, “International Student”). In Fall 2015, OSU reported employing 552 international scholars and faculty, with the highest number of scholars, 142, from China, followed by 48 from South Korea (OSU, “Scholars and Faculty”). The CMLC serves Oregon State, providing free English language services to students and their families and providing a place to make friends and find community, nurturing the emotional and mental health of OSU students, professors, and their families.

In addition to serving international students at Oregon State, many domestic students come to the center to learn about other cultures. As some OSU classes require community service hours, the CMLC is a common place for fulfill these service hours, as it is located on campus and is easily accessible to students (CMLC
Board, Staff, Participants). Since Oregon State is committed to promoting diversity and a global awareness, the CMLC provides a great resource for domestic students to experience and learn about diversity and other cultures (Oregon State, “Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity”).

**Overview of Thesis**

This study includes information gathered from nine interviews with CMLC participants from Korea, Taiwan, China, India, Iran, Japan, and Poland. The interview questions focused on literacy practices within and outside of the center, though the thesis addresses only the practices that occur in the center. Because of my previous experience volunteering at the CMLC and my interest in literacy studies research, I arrived at these research questions: What kinds of literacy and literacy practices occur at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center? In what ways do English language learners sponsor literacy at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center?

As I analyzed the interview data, a theme that emerged was how often ELLs sponsor literacy at the CMLC. In *Literacy in American Lives*, Deborah Brandt defines literacy sponsors 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). Sponsors can be schools, parents, books, government, institutions, and so on. Sponsors “set the terms for access to literacy and wield powerful incentives for compliance” (Brandt 19). Furthermore, sponsors teach or enable literacy for personal gain, complicating the relationship between sponsor and learner. Most research on literacy sponsorship depicts
sponsors in positions of power, and there is little to no research on how ELLs sponsor literacy.

Before beginning my research, most scholarship I had read about ELLs explored how composition instructors can make the classroom more conducive to ELL students’ learning. Literacy sponsorship research, on the other hand, usually positions sponsors as people or institutions in positions of power, much different than how we tend to think of ELLs. Because of this difference, I was intrigued by how often at the CMLC ELLs sponsor literacies, whether cultural, language, or crafting literacies.

Before moving further into the explanation of my research, it is important to provide a definition of “literacy,” as literacy is a contentious term with many meanings. Literacy, in this thesis, refers to any activity that centers on communicating with symbols. Symbols can include writing, embodied expressions, crafts, cooking, and more. Further explanation of what constitutes literacy in this thesis can be found in the literature review.

The thesis begins with a literature review, which highlights key scholarship in the New Literacy Studies movement, moving into a discussion of what constitutes “literacy.” With this definition of literacy in mind, there is a section on materiality and embodied literacies, as embodiment and craft are an essential part of the literacy practices that occur at the CMLC. This section also includes an overview of scholarly conversations on “funds of knowledge,” a pedagogy that focuses on ways students’ expertise in their home lives can be used in the classroom. The CMLC’s
programming shares a lot with the funds of knowledge approach to pedagogy, though little research is yet to be conducted on how funds of knowledge pedagogies are used in community literacy rather than school settings. As this thesis has a specific focus on literacy sponsorship and how ELLs act as literacy sponsors, I conclude the literature review by tracing the evolution of “literacy sponsor,” from Brandt’s concept in *Literacy in American Lives* through the many ways later scholars have understood and theorized literacy sponsorship after Brandt.

Following the literature review is “Chapter Three: Methods,” which details the methods of this project. In addition to a detailed explanation of recruitment, interviews, and analysis, this chapter includes a reflexive section, where I explain my perspective and position as a researcher and volunteer. My personal investment in the center as a volunteer clearly impacts the way I perceive the center. Furthermore, my privilege as a white woman born a U.S. citizen, who has never been in a place where it was necessary to communicate in a second language, limits my ability to understand the experience and process ELLs go through to learn and practice English.

The next three chapters include the results and discussion of this research, focusing on ELLs as sponsors of literacy at the CMLC. People at the CMLC are often in positions where they are sponsoring literacy, through teaching cooking classes, language lessons, or curating cultural items. Understanding the ways ELLs sponsor literacy is important, because ELLs are mostly discussed as being the sponsored rather than the sponsor in literacy research.
“Chapter Four: Factoring Friendship into Reciprocal Sponsorship,” builds on Kara Poe Alexander’s idea of reciprocal sponsorship, in which people sponsor each other’s literacy, where each person acts as both “sponsor” and “sponsored” at the same time. This chapter examines how the affective space of the center and the friendships formed there make the center a particularly conducive space to the formation of reciprocal sponsoring relationships. In this chapter, I identify two different types of reciprocal sponsorship: 1) sponsoring literacy through the exchange of different literacies and 2) collaborative self-sponsorship, where two people are working together to develop the same kind of literacy. I argue that friendship enhances these two types of reciprocal literacy sponsorship, because of the trust underlying friendship.

“Chapter Five: More than Mere Cookery” is about the cooking classes at the CMLC, and the variety of ways ELLs sponsor cooking literacies in the center. At the cooking classes, ELLs teach how to cook a dish from their culture, and in doing so employ rhetorical techniques throughout their classes. This chapter not only shows ways that ELLs make arguments through their teaching, but also examines strategies for preparing to teach, notetaking patterns, and the significance of the CMLC cookbook, which two volunteers at the center are in the process of compiling.

“Chapter Six: Reading Textiles, Fashioning Argument,” is a case study, focusing on one woman’s role at the CMLC. Jingyi, a woman from Taiwan, who moved to Corvallis eight years ago, started volunteering at the center as the textile curator, after graduating with her master’s degree in merchandising management.
from Oregon State. Drawing on material culture research, this chapter shows the intricate, collaborative research process that goes into curating and organizing the textiles at the CMLC. In addition to curating the textiles, Jingyi also organizes the CMLC’s annual textile exhibit and fashion show. These two events function as epideictic rhetoric and demonstrate how the canons of rhetoric play out in a material, multicultural setting.

The final chapter discusses the implications this research has for rhetoric and composition scholars and particularly those interested in community literacy. I outline some ideas for research and pedagogy we can take away from the CMLC, and explain the value of community literacy centers that encourage ELLs to sponsor literacy in a variety of ways. More specifically, this chapter also discusses the future of the CMLC and its relationship with Oregon State University.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Before beginning any research in literacy studies, it is important to establish a definition of “literacy,” a term which can be contentious and elusive. For the purpose of this study, literacy refers to any activity that centers on communicating with symbols. Symbols can refer to written language, dancing, hand gestures, crafts with cultural meaning, and more. This definition is intentionally broad, as this thesis project aims to examine literacies that often go unexamined and unacknowledged. Furthermore, this project focuses specifically on everyday literacies associated with making, like crafting and cooking literacies. In order to provide a broad understanding of the history of literacy studies and explain where this definition of “literacy” comes from, the rest of this chapter provides a history of the New Literacy Studies, along with a closer examination of material literacies and pedagogies that stem from the New Literacy Studies movement. The final section of this literature review outlines the history of Deborah Brandt’s “literacy sponsorship,” including the way that term has been extended in literacy research since Literacy in American Lives.

From “Literacy” to “Literacies”

This study is based on the idea that there is not one kind of “literacy,” or that one can simply be “literate” or “illiterate.” Instead, this thesis builds on the understanding that multiple kind of “literacies” exist and that these various literacies play important roles in our lives and communities. However, before the
1980s, literacy was discussed primarily as the skill of being able to read or write, a skill which somebody either does or does not possess. News sources then and now often describe the United States as being in a “literacy crisis,” though the exact meaning of this phrase is vague. “Literacy crisis” does not account for different levels of literacy nor for the possibility that there are multiple kinds of literacy, what many literacy scholars refer to as “literacies.” Instead, public discourse surrounding literacy tends to treat literacy the same way as “money or virtue,” asking “how much of it given people have or possess” (Gee 42). However, according to James Paul Gee, these conversations about the “literacy crisis” only “mask deeper social problems and fears” (31), rendering the American education system a scapegoat for these issues. Gee explains these masked problems further:

The most striking continuity in the history of literacy is the way in which literacy has been used, in age after age, to solidify the social hierarchy, empower elites and ensure that people lower on the hierarchy accept the values, norms and beliefs of the elites, even when it is not in their self-interest (or ‘class interest’) to do so. (Gee 40)

The public rhetoric surrounding this “literacy crisis” also perpetuates what Harvey Graff refers to as the “literacy myth,” by emphasizing the importance of traditional literacies, alphabetic reading and writing, as essential to social advancement and success.

Graff’s “literacy myth” goes hand in hand with Gee’s analysis of the “literacy crisis,” and Graff, as well as other literacy scholars during the time, challenged this crisis mindset, critiquing the escalation of the literacy crisis to an issue of health, morality, and citizenship. Graff defines the literacy myth as,
the belief, articulated in educational, civic, religious, and other settings, contemporary and historical, that the acquisition of literacy is a necessary precursor to and invariably results in economic development, democratic practice, cognitive enhancement, and upward social mobility. (35)

Graff points out that literacy is often equated with morality, providing an example of the publication of the National Endowment for the Arts’ (NEA) “Reading at Risk” in 2004 (Graff 20). Following this report, which indicated low literacy rates, messages that reinforced the literacy myth were rampant throughout news media. Andrew Solomon, a *New York Times* commentator, for example, equated a decline in reading literature with a “crisis in national health,” suggesting that illnesses like depression and Alzheimer’s disease would increase as the amount of time Americans spend reading decreased (Graff 20). Similarly, David Barton points to news headlines that use illness metaphors, such as the “epidemic of illiteracy” (11), equating literacy to a public health crisis. However, Barton sees this metaphor as inaccurate and misleading, and claims that literacy is extremely complex, rejecting the idea that literacy is a skill. He claims that those who treat literacy as a skill have created a metaphor that provides a shortcut to understanding one incomplete view of literacy (Barton 11). In other words, literacy is not literally a skill in the same way that illiteracy is not literally a disease. Graff also points out that literacy is often oversimplified and used to construct false binaries: literate and illiterate, oral and literate, etc. Graff points specifically to No Child Left Behind and President George Bush’s statement that, “More and more we are divided into two nations: one that reads and one that can’t, and therefore one that dreams and one that doesn’t” (Graff
24). What is wrong with statements like these is that they do not consider all the factors that contribute to a person’s literacy, nor do they acknowledge the complexity of literacy and the inability to accurately define and measure what constitutes literacy.

Contrary to the view of literacy as a skill one has more or less of, scholars have shifted toward a theory of multiple *literacies*, a theory that makes more sense in a multicultural context. Barton provides a helpful explanation of what scholars mean when they talk about “literacies.” He says that a single literacy is a “stable coherent, identifiable configuration of practices such as legal literacy or the literacy of specific workplaces” (Barton 38). With Barton’s definition in mind, some literacies at the CMLC include cooking literacy, crafting literacy, and sewing literacy. Additionally, he says that instead of using the phrase “levels of literacy,” teachers and scholars should instead focus on different categories of literacy that are side-by-side, rather than ranked as more or less literate. To make the concept of “literacies” clearer, Barton also explains that different literacies occur in different domains of life, “such as home, school, church and work” (39). Barton explains that a “domain” refers to “different places in life where people act differently and use language differently” (Barton 39).

This reorientation toward how educators and scholars understand literacy is significant, because it mitigates language that communicates lack, and instead acknowledges that people have valuable areas of expertise and methods of communicating that exist beyond their ability to read and write. Furthermore,
understanding that there is more than one kind of literacy is an important first step in understanding what occurs at the CMLC and how ELLs sponsor literacy.

Recognizing that there are “literacies” beyond reading and writing opens up the opportunity to research the various literacies ELLs engage in, as they are experts in areas beyond what was traditionally considered literacy before the New Literacy Studies movement.

**New Literacy Studies**

The shift toward acknowledging multiple types of literacy rather than a single literacy signals the beginning of the New Literacy Studies movement (NLS). According to Gee, New Literacy Studies is a discipline that combines linguistics, social psychology, anthropology, and education and, has its origins in the collapse of the old ‘oral culture-literate culture’ contrast. Out of the deconstruction of this contrast comes more contemporary approaches, not to literacy as a singular thing, but to *literacies* as a plural set of social practices. (Gee 49)

Furthermore, NLS emphasizes the sociocultural aspects of literacy rather than the traditional aspects of literacy. Though NLS is a large field of study, this section of the literature review will only cover the areas of NLS that are most relevant to my thesis: literacy events, vernacular literacies, and ecologies of literacy.

In holding a view of literacy as a sociocultural phenomenon, Gee provides a complex backdrop from which we can understand how literacy learning, or rather *literacies* learning, occurs depending on the setting, circumstance, and social situation. Gee explains this complexity further, saying, “You can no more cut the
literacy out of the overall social practice, or cut away the non-literacy parts from the literacy parts of the overall practice, than you can subtract the white squares from a chess board and still have a chess board” (43). Gee’s explanation of NLS shaped the way that following scholars research literacy, and in doing so challenged scholars to re-evaluate previously accepted theories of literacy.

Gee’s New Literacy Studies is built upon Shirley Brice Heath’s “literacy event,” which provided an influential framework for understanding how literacy occurs at a local, individual level. Heath defines literacy events as “occasions in which written language is integral to the nature of participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes and strategies” (Heath, “Bedtime Story” 50). An understanding of literacy events is essential to this thesis project, as chapters three, four, and five are organized around the various literacy events that occur in the CMLC and examine what these events reveal about literacy in the center. Heath’s larger work, *Ways with Words*, explores the literacy event further through an in-depth study of the literacy practices in Trackton, a black working-class community, and Roadville, a white working-class community in the 1960s and ’70s. Her research focused on the ways children learned to read, write, and speak in school, in their homes, and in their larger communities (neighborhoods, churches, etc.). Heath shared Gee’s belief that the social situation surrounding reading and writing is essential to understanding the significance of how texts function in a discourse community. Her book includes detailed accounts of how children first learn to talk from interacting with the older children in their neighborhoods and descriptions of
specific scenes where children engaged with reading or writing. Most notably, Heath collapses the dichotomy of orality and literacy, a dichotomy generated by Walter Ong’s *Orality and Literacy*, which literacy scholars refer to as the Great Divide. Ong and other scholars who theorize about the Great Divide overemphasize the “important differences in attitudes and behaviours” surrounding reading and writing (Heath, *Words* 230). Heath, however, critiques this tendency to downplay the value and uniqueness of a community’s oral tradition. Instead, she found that in both Trackton and Roadville orality and literacy are closely entwined, making it difficult to study one without studying the other. She explains this idea further:

What is written – whether it be obituary, recipe, or letter – calls up multiple specific cases, from which Roadville and Trackton members move to make generalizations and – sometimes – to decide on their own course of action. In each community, there are established patterns of language use around written word: types of questions to be asked, listening behaviors to be observed, and types of talk by individuals or groups about reading and writing. It is impossible to characterize Trackton and Roadville with existing descriptions of either the oral or literate tractions: they are neither and they are both. (Heath, *Words* 231)

Instead of viewing orality and literacy as entirely different processes, Heath argues instead that they are woven together. The interweaving of orality and literacy permeates the activities at the CMLC, as people navigate the complexity of communicating in a community with a wide range of different first languages. In a multilingual community, the oral is particularly valuable in understanding and using written texts. Whether those texts are written in Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, or English, texts spur conversations that shape how those texts are read and understood.
Like Heath, Barton and Hamilton’s research on vernacular literacies emphasizes the way one’s environment and social situation shape their literacy practices. In *Local Literacies* Barton and Hamilton study the role literacy plays in the everyday lives of people living in Lancaster, England in the 1990s. One of the conclusions they reach is about the influence of vernacular literacies, which, are essentially [literacies] which are not regulated by the formal rules and procedures of dominant social institutions and which have their origins in everyday life, much like the literacies that occur in the homes and neighborhoods of Heath’s *Ways with Words*. As we will see, vernacular literacies are in fact hybrid practices that draw on a range of practices from different domains. (247)

Vernacular literacies are “hybrid in origin” and break down the typical teacher/learner hierarchy, making it possible for anybody to be an expert in a certain type of literacy (Barton and Hamilton 252). The way that Barton and Hamilton describe breaking down the teacher/learner hierarchy and the hybridity of vernacular literacies reflects my findings of literacy at the CMLC, where literacy events are collaborative, creative, and unconventional, drawing on domains across the globe. In their research, Barton and Hamilton identify six main types of vernacular literacies: organizing life, personal communication, private leisure, documenting life, sense making, and online participation. However, Barton and Hamilton clarify that these six categories are loose, meaning that one literacy practice could fall into multiple categories, or that a vernacular literacy practice might not fit well into any of these categories. Barton and Hamilton contrast vernacular literacies with what they call “dominant literacies” meaning “those associated with formal organisations, such as those of education, law, religion and
the workplace” (252). Dominant literacies are formal and well-defined. They are given “high value culturally and legally,” unlike vernacular literacies, which often go unrecognized, like many of the literacies in the CMLC, though they are meaningful and influential literacies in the communities where they exist (252).

In his later work, *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*, Barton expands the idea of vernacular literacies by providing useful vocabulary to talk about vernacular literacies through his “ecological metaphor of literacy.” Barton explains how to use ecology as a framework for understanding literacy:

> Originating in biology, ecology is the study of the interrelationship of an organism and its environment. When applied to humans, it is the interrelationship of an area of human activity – literacy in this case – is part of the environment and at the same time influences and is influenced by the environment. An ecological approach takes as its starting point this interaction between individuals and their environments. (Barton 29)

Along with the ecological view of literacy comes a useful vocabulary that can describe the complex relationships that mediate literacy, including “ecological niches, ecosystems, ecological balance, diversity, and sustainability” (Barton 31).

The ecology framework that Barton presents can be useful in understanding how later NLS scholars talk about literacy. One example is Brandt’s concept of “accumulating literacies.” Like other literacy scholars, Brandt rejects the idea of literacy as a single type of skill that one obtains more of over time. She also points out that many believe the expected level of literacy is rapidly increasing over time. Contrary to this belief, Brandt says that the expected level of literacy is not
increasing, but rather, there is a “rapid proliferation and diversification of literacy” (Brandt, “Accumulating” 651). With new kinds of literacy being created, a person does not just need to be a better academic reader and writer, but needs to have a strong “capacity to amalgamate new reading and writing practices in response to social change” (“Accumulating” 651). She sees accumulating literacies as a constantly evolving process, requiring people to adapt to the changing expectations and types of literacy necessary to thrive in a community. This description fits well with Barton’s ecological metaphor for literacy. To accumulate literacies in the way Brandt describes, one must adapt to their environment, which is constantly evolving.

An individual’s ecology of literacy is even more complex when it includes literacies in more than one language, as Steven Alvarez explores in his work on “translanguaging” and “language brokering.” Building on Heath’s literacy event, Steven Alvarez provides the useful term “translanguaging events,” which he defines as “a multilingual collaborative practice shuttling between languages while responding to texts and situated in local contexts involving emergent bilinguals” (330). Specifically, Alvarez focuses on language brokering, when a bilingual child acts as translator for their parent, as one method of translanguaging. In Alvarez’s study of an after-school literacy program, the students he worked with engaged in very complex methods of language brokering. The students produced homework written in English, while also talking about this homework in English with a tutor, and explaining this homework in Spanish with parents. This idea of translanguaging
events provides an example of the complex ecology that makes up an individual's literate lives, particular when switching between multiple languages.

Though NLS is influential and the idea of “many literacies” guides contemporary literacy research, there are limits to what can be labeled “literacy,” and scholars frequently disagree on where that limit is. David Barton points out that many people use the word literacy to simply mean “understanding an area of knowledge,” though this definition is extremely broad (12). While Graff supports the idea of “many literacies,” he is hesitant to apply it in all circumstances, explaining that “overuse of the word ‘literacy’ and the concept empties it of value and useful meanings. As in other important ways: there are limits to literacy and to literacies; just as there are abuses as well as uses” (22). Though Graff cautions literacy scholars against overusing the word “literacy,” it is important to challenge what we typically think of as literacy, even if challenging contemporary understandings of literacy can be confusing or controversial. If we refuse to be open to the idea that literacies exist and function in unexpected and unconventional ways, then we risk undervaluing and downplaying the important communicative practices many people engage in on a daily basis. While some of the literacies this thesis explores are unconventional, like textile reading literacy and cooking literacy, the way participants described the communicative affordances of these activities made it clear that textiles can be read and that arguments can be formed through cooking, crafts, and body language.
Materiality, Crafting, and Embodiment

The study of material and embodied literacies is perhaps one of the areas of research that deviates most from the “traditional” understanding of literacy, as merely the ability to read and write. However, in the CMLC many literacies are material, concerning crafts, textiles, and food. In studies of embodiment, crafting, and materiality, literacy is sometimes viewed as a fluency in a certain medium of communication, even if that medium is not necessarily writing. That medium of communication can be art, cooking, knitting, and even dancing. While it could be argued something that like cooking cannot be considered a literacy, it seems that one must return to the sociocultural context, as Gee might suggest, in which the event takes place to determine whether or not something can be considered a literacy. In addition, one must also consider to what extent a material object can be rhetorical.

One learns to craft through watching YouTube videos, reading a manual, or being taught by others. In some instances a text is there, often a multimodal text, as crafts frequently necessitate. However, much can also be learned about crafting as literacy, by examining the absence of texts and asking when and why a text is not necessary. As Gee points out, the sociocultural context is essential in understanding literacy. Knitting, for example, is not the same in every context. A sweater knitted for a friend’s birthday has an entirely different meaning than a yarn bomb on a tree downtown.
The most common craft that rhetoric scholars have examined as rhetorical are quilts. Research on quilts is significant to this project, as the CMLC has an extensive textile collection, which the textile curator argues tell stories and can be read the way a text would be read. In particular, quilting is explored in its connection to the canon of memory (Rohan; Bost; Amelon). For example Liz Rohan describes quilt-making as a mnemonic process where a woman externalizes her memory through piecing together scraps of sentimental fabric in a quilt. In doing this, the woman not only externalizes her memory, but also arranges her memory, through selecting where each scrap goes within the landscape of the quilt, and in doing so blends the canons of memory and arrangement (Rohan 378). Quilts have also been described as performing a variety of rhetorical functions from epideictic rhetoric (Bost) to protest (Williams) to identity expression (Davis).

While crafted objects like quilts require a certain type of crafting literacy, scholars have also looked at the way people use objects and physical communication to enhance learning. For example, Lucía Durá et al. conducted a study about the La Escuelita After School program in El Paso, Texas, which used cooking and food-related activities to teach English, and drew on a “funds of knowledge” approach to teaching, which brings students’ expertise from their homes into the classroom. One of the findings of their study was that students were able to use objects to enhance their communication. When students did not have the vocabulary to say what they wanted to say, they “felt comfortable showing rather than telling” (Lucía Durá et al 30).
Similarly, Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou points out the embodied ways of communicating, not just through cooking, but through dance in her study of a high school drama classroom that was designed specifically for “adult English language learners completing their Ontario secondary school diplomas” (532). She claims that students in this class were able to express themselves more fully and satisfyingly through dance than through spoken language. Ntelioglou borrows Merleau-Ponty’s term, “body-knowing” to describe these students’ activities. When students were struggling and discouraged with their English language ability, they were satisfied with their ability to express ideas, emotions, and memories through dance.

Ntelioglou paraphrases one student, Kitty’s, experience with dance:

Kitty explained how much the physical language of ‘body-knowing’ and dance in her life made her feel capable and powerful... Kitty elaborated that through dance, she felt that for the first time she could express herself in a sophisticated way, in a language that everybody else could understand. She said whenever she opened her mouth in English, she felt she was judged. “When I speak in English, I can’t help others and I can’t even help myself.” She felt completely worthless as a human being when she spoke in English. But when she dances, she found that she could not only express herself and feel confident about this, but she could also help others through her dancing. (Ntelioglou 538-39)

Kitty’s experience provides insight into the value of embodied modes of expression and reinforces the potential of allowing English language learners to draw on their embodied knowledge in conjunction with their spoken language to more meaningfully convey their ideas.

While objects can be useful aids in communication, Kate Pahl and Jennifer Rowsell believe objects can also be understood as the “embodiment of lived
experience,” and sources of rich information about students and how they interact with the world. Drawing on Barton and Hamilton’s “domains” of literacy practices, Pahl and Rowsell explain how artifacts can link two different domains. They talk about a child writing about toy cars for an essay in school. In creating a text about a home object, the child is bringing together the domains of school and home. They refer to the reading of objects and the meaning that objects hold as “artefactual literacies.” Pahl and Rowsell argue that artefactual literacies are particularly valuable in the study of literacy in migrant families, because when families move they take with them meaningful artefacts from their homes. However, taking these objects from their original context to a new country shapes the meaning of these objects, and changes the way people interact with or read these artefacts (Pahl and Rowsell 8). Pahl and Rowsell use museums as an example of a site of rich artefactual literacy:

Museums can be important spaces in which to validate their [migrant families] identities and articulate new identities. For example, a museum in the United Kingdom, Cartwright Hall, created a new exhibition showcasing British Asian identities (Macdonald, 2003). By placing home objects in museums, new kinds of stories can be told and new identities recognized. (Pahl and Rowsell 8)

In this example the artefacts take on new meaning to meet the needs of new audiences. Pahl and Rowsell’s analysis of artefactual literacies is significant because their analysis not only examines how literacy relates to objects, but demonstrates how meanings surrounding a single object actually evolve over time as an object moves from place to place. This theory is helpful in understanding the CMLC, which is a learning center, not a museum, but is filled with objects from across the globe.
that are moved to a new context, where people are encouraged to hold, touch, use, and read these objects, endowing them with new meanings.

Similarly, material rhetoric scholars explore how proximity shapes the meaning of objects, though not in terms of literacy. These conversations are important in developing a fuller understanding of how objects within the center, such as the center’s extensive textile collection, communicate meaning and how these meanings change. In *Ambient Rhetoric*, for example, Thomas Rickert argues that “an object’s meanings and engagements emerge in encounters with other objects,” emphasizing the influence of other items that are in an object’s immediate vicinity (204). Thinking about objects in this way seems particularly important in considering the meaning of the cultural objects within the center, like the textiles, instruments, toys, and books. These objects have traveled far from their home countries to be displayed in a new context, and their proximity to each other changes their meaning.

Nicole Burisch provides a perspective on artistic displays that can inform how we might interpret the textiles in the CMLC. Burisch refers to art on display, like textiles, as “performance documentation.” Instead of looking at a textile as a static work of art, Burisch argues that “crafted objects function as records of all the actions that took place over a given time, with the ‘event’ or act of making physically inscribed upon them” (66). This view positions the act of creating as more important and meaningful than the finished product. This orientation, though not about writing, parallels how compositionists write about process pedagogy, de-
emphasizing the product in favor of the writing process. With this parallel in mind, it might be easier to think of the craftsperson as making rhetorical choices while creating and the ability to understand these objects as a literacy.

**Considering NLS and Vernacular Literacies in Pedagogy**

Though it might seem strange to include a discussion of classroom pedagogies in a community literacy project, there is a strong connection between community literacy centers and schools. Often, community literacy centers are run by educators who have taught within universities or local schools at some point, so community literacy pedagogies are strongly influenced by classroom pedagogies. Also, since more research exists on classroom pedagogies than community literacy, sometimes research on classroom pedagogies can be helpful in filling gaps in community literacy research. Much research on classroom pedagogies is difficult to put into practice, because of the limitations of a classroom setting. At the CMLC, which functions very differently than a classroom, variations of classroom pedagogies play out in interesting ways, even when the values and research underlying classroom and community approaches are similar. This section includes classroom pedagogies that are implemented in the CMLC, focusing on funds of knowledge, and the role of trust and relationships in education.

“Funds of knowledge” in literacy studies refers to a pedagogical method, which originated in anthropology. Anthropologist Eric R. Wolf, coined “funds of knowledge,” referring to the various kinds of knowledge and strategies people use in their homes to manage money and resources. Though his work did not include
pedagogical applications, it inspired a group of education and anthropology researchers at the University of Arizona, including Luis Moll, Norma Gonzalez, James Greenberg, and Carlos Velez-Ibanez, to explore how funds of knowledge can apply to classroom settings (Hogg 668). When applied to education, funds of knowledge is understood as a pedagogical method where teachers draw on the knowledge students already have from their home and encourage students to bring that knowledge into the classroom to make learning more personal and more effective. There are also immense benefits for the teachers involved in funds of knowledge pedagogies, as this approach facilitates empathy with students. At the CMLC, programming draws heavily on the knowledge people already have, and they are encouraged to share this knowledge, similar to how funds of knowledge pedagogy works in classrooms.

Part of what makes funds of knowledge an appealing pedagogy is that it positions the students and parents as experts, along with the teacher. For example, Jacqueline Messing writes about a project that encouraged teachers to try using funds of knowledge in their classrooms. One of the requirements of the program was that teachers did home visits to ask parents what ideas they had for the classroom. Parents were excited about these home visits, because home visits positioned the parents as experts and gave them more of a voice in their children’s education. One teacher in this project says this project was valuable for her, as she was put in the position of “learner” and “listener” rather than “talker,” which she sees as her usual position (Messing 186). It is also notable that this program “breaks
down the traditional hierarchical relationships” between students, teachers, and their families (Messing 192), something that also occurs at the CMLC, where the center coordinator says “everyone is a teacher, and everyone is a learner.”

Moll et al.’s research, similarly encourages more connection between students’ home lives and their learning in school, as these connections promote trust. Moll et al., in their study of the literacy practices in Mexican, working-class communities in Tucson, Arizona, explain that students learn a variety of skills from social relationships with family members and neighbors. Literacy learning happens organically in these relationship, because there is often reciprocity, based on the assumption of “confianza,” or mutual trust, which leads to long-term relationships (Moll et al. 74).

While Moll et al. emphasize the role of mutual trust in learning to read and write, Marcia Farr takes this idea further and examines the role of trust in the motivation to learn to write a second language. Her study is helpful in understanding literacy in the CMLC, because she focuses on the role of friendship in literacy, also an important factor of literacy learning at the center. In her study of Mexican immigrants in Chicago, many of the people she interviewed said they were motivated to learn English so they could write letters to their friends. Furthermore, friends taught them to write in English, and they emphasized the importance of having a personal relationship with their teacher and trusting them. From these interviews, Farr concludes that human trust and commitment are necessary to successfully teach a language. Farr explains how literacy was learned through a
personal network rather than formal schooling. She refers to informal learning outside of school as “lírico” or “lyrical” (40). Though the pedagogies in this section are applied to classrooms, they demonstrate how personal relationships enhance learning, something that frequently occurs in the CMLC.

**Variations on Sponsors of Literacy**

This thesis project draws heavily from Deborah Brandt’s "literacy sponsorship," as I argue that ELLs in the CMLC are sponsors of literacy. In *Literacy in American Lives*, Brandt writes about the changing social and economic nature of literacy based on 80 in-depth interviews. Brandt defines literacy sponsors 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” (Brandt, *American Lives* 19). Sponsors can be schools, parents, books, government, institutions, and so on. Sponsors “set the terms for access to literacy and wield powerful incentives for compliance” (Brandt, *American Lives* 19). Literacy sponsorship is a flexible term that has been applied in a variety of contexts and further theorized in the years following Brandt’s research. This section will focus on several variations of literacy sponsorship, in order to demonstrate that literacy sponsorship is pliable and to give background on the various ways literacy sponsorship has been theorized. Specifically, this section includes information on literacy stewards, bootleggers of literacy, literacy brokers, and reciprocal literacy sponsorship,
Though many researchers write about human literacy sponsors, literacy sponsors do not always have to be people. Sponsors can be other texts, like books and instruction manuals. However, as Ann M. Lawrence points out in her 2015 survey of literacy sponsorship research, scholars have mostly discussed literacy sponsors as people. In addition, many studies also identify government institutions and large organizations as literacy sponsors.

Studies of literacy sponsors also tend to focus on literacy sponsors as people or institutions in positions of power. Alanna Frost, for example, in her study of Dakelh people identifies the government and boarding schools in British Colombia as oppressive literacy sponsors, who attempt to erase the cultural values and languages of Native American groups. In her study of the Dakelh community, Frost offers a useful “companion term” to literacy sponsorship: “literacy stewardship.” Frost defines a literacy steward as,

any individual who demonstrates persistent dedication to the practice or promotion of a literacy considered traditionally important to his or her community. The traditional literacy that a steward engages in is notably alternative to those that are institutionally and economically dominant. (Frost 56)

Frost explains that literacy stewardship is valuable to literacy scholars in analyzing the relationship between the agency of marginalized groups and the conflicting agendas of sponsors.

Similar to Frost, Tracy Hamler Carrick calls for more research in community literacy sponsorship, as “community literacy programs factor into broader economies of literacy development,” in unique ways, often challenging dominant
literacy sponsors (Carrick 37). Carrick refers to the community literacy programs she analyzes as “bootleggers,” because they craft “their own locally grown brands of diversionary literacy sponsorship” (37). One example that Carrick uses to illustrate this idea is the work of the Highlander Education and Research Center, a community education center that emphasizes activism and grassroots organizing (Carrick 27). The workshops that Highlander provides serve people from many different communities who are currently involved in activist efforts. In these workshops, people construct plans for improving their communities, drawing on each other’s ideas and experiences (Carrick 28). This is a unique approach to teaching literacy as the aim is not to teach a specific set of literate skills, as most literacy sponsors do. Instead Highlander challenges students to repurpose the knowledge they already have to “accomplish new tasks, tasks that could ultimately challenge economic and political systems that typically ignore the needs of their communities” (Carrick 33).

Bootlegging literacy sponsorship and literacy stewardship both offer new frameworks for understanding ways that literacy sponsors are subverted. Like Frost’s literacy stewards, Carrick’s bootleggers of literacy undermine larger institutional sponsors that inhibit literacies. Bootleggers, however, do so for social change rather than for cultural preservation.

Literacy brokering is another concept literacy scholars have used to describe an intervention in sponsor-learner relationships. A literacy broker is an individual who acts as a low-stakes or informal mediator between the literacy learner and sponsor who, contrary to sponsors, have little gain in helping literacy learners
understand literacy practices (Mihut 58). Some examples of literacy brokers are translators, tutors, and editors. While scholars have discussed the role of literacy brokers in a variety of contexts, Ligia Ana Mihut’s analysis of the emotional work of literacy brokers provides particularly valuable insight into the often cold and impersonal nature of institutional literacy sponsorship. Mihut explains that, “Many writing contexts, particularly institutional sites—such as work places, governmental agencies, courtrooms, schools, and so on—aim to streamline communication, and in doing so remove the emotional fabric that often sustains or enhances literacy practices” (58). Mihut’s main argument, however, is that literacy brokers, aside from fostering the accumulation of literacies, actually reintroduce empathy into institutionalized literacy practices. Unlike stewards and bootleggers, literacy brokers do not undermine literacy sponsors. In fact, they often work for these sponsors. Instead, brokers make sponsored literacies more accessible by “humanizing” them (Mihut 65).

The most relevant variation of literacy sponsorship to this thesis project is Kara Poe Alexander’s reciprocal sponsorship. Alexander points out that although Brandt’s definition leaves room for reciprocity, most literacy sponsorship research does not address sponsorship as a dynamic interaction. Instead, there is usually a designated sponsor and learner, whose roles do not change. To show how the roles of sponsor and sponsored are more fluid, Alexander uses the example of her students’ work with community partners in a service-learning project. In these projects students had unique literacies they could sponsor for the community
partners, while their community partners sponsored different literacies for the students. In this class project, the sponsor and sponsored each had different expertise they exchanged.

While Alexander lays out the idea of reciprocal sponsorship, she also points out that a complication with understanding students as literacy sponsors is identifying what they have to gain from sponsorship (41). This is even more troubling at the CMLC where reciprocal sponsorship occurs between friends, as “gain” often has selfish connotations. Eli Goldblatt and David Jolliffe, however, provide insight into Brandt’s use of “gain,” which can inform its role in reciprocal sponsorship at the CMLC. Goldblatt and Jolliffe take issue with the use of “gain,” claiming that in *Literacy in American Lives*, the meaning of “gain” is “incomplete and overstated” (Goldblatt and Jolliffe 127). While sponsors have something to gain, in some cases they also lose something. Many institutions, like churches, libraries, and universities, have the power to provide literacy opportunities to communities that have underfunded public schools. While these alternative institutions might have the resources to expand literacy opportunities, this expansion can be financially risky. Based on an analysis of university-sponsored community literacy projects, Goldblatt and Jolliffe argue that “sponsors can be harmed, altered, or even transformed by the population and pedagogy they contract to teach” (127). Goldblatt and Jolliffe explain this risk further:

if institutions and their backers take the risk, both sponsors and learners might benefit, but sponsors may have to undergo transformations they neither expect nor welcome in the process of
engaging groups not originally included in their charters of mission (128)...In order to obtain the "gain" of literacy sponsorship in this environment, a university must lose at least some of its traditional power by sharing resources with a network of partners who offer their fraught and unpredictable learning landscape as an alternative to the seemingly safe but illusory vision of standardized classroom knowledge. (Goldblatt and Joliffe 131)

Though Goldblatt and Joliffe's depiction of the risk that precedes gain is quite different from the "gain" involved in reciprocal literacy sponsorship, their exploration of gain is helpful in understanding how "gain" might work in reciprocal sponsorship. In thinking about "gain" as a flexible term, that does not have to carry solely self-interested connotations, we can more easily understand the role "gain" plays in reciprocal sponsorship.

This thesis project adds to the conversation about literacy sponsorship by explaining how ELLs sponsor literacy. Building on Alexander’s reciprocal sponsorship, this project specifically explores how friendship enhances reciprocal literacy sponsorship. Furthermore, I describe two specific types of reciprocal sponsorship. The first is literacy sponsorship through exchange, where people exchange different types of literacy. The second is collaborative self-sponsorship, where, instead of exchanging two different literacies, people work together to learn the same type of literacy.

Conclusion

This research draws heavily on NLS and is based on the idea that there are multiple kinds of literacies that perform different functions depending on their sociocultural context. In particular Barton and Hamilton's vernacular literacies are
important in this study, as the everyday literacies that often go unrecognized are practiced throughout the CMLC. The results of this study are organized around the various literacy events that occur at the center, as Heath's literacy event provides a useful frame to examine the intricacies and complexities of individual, local literacies. Often these literacy events include materials, not just texts, and this project analyzes material, physical activities, like cooking and crafting as literacies that communicate cultural ideas and knowledge. Even though this is a community literacy project, it draws on classroom pedagogy research, as classroom pedagogies influence center activities, though these pedagogies play out in different ways than they would in a classroom. Lastly, this thesis is heavily influenced by Brandt's literacy sponsorship and the many ways that scholars have used literacy sponsorship since *Literacy in American Lives*. This project will provide its own variation on literacy sponsorship, examining the way sponsorship occurs in multicultural settings, where sponsors and learners are often friends and sponsor each other's literacy through a language they are still learning.
Chapter Three: Methods

Background

To learn about the literacy practices at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center and examine ways that English language learners act as literacy sponsors in the CMLC, I designed a research study relying heavily on participant interviews. Before beginning this research, the study was sent to Oregon State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received approval in August 2016. After receiving approval, I conducted nine semi-structured interviews and collected writing samples from participants. To analyze the data, I used a grounded theory approach, focusing on themes that arose from the interviews. After coding interviews for their themes, I narrowed down and refined the themes discussed in chapters four, five, and six.

Before beginning the research for this thesis, I conducted a pilot study in February 2016, as part of an “Ethnographic Methods” course that helped formulate my thesis research plan. For this course, I conducted a pilot study on literacy in the CMLC, in which I interviewed four people, the center coordinator and three people who were actively involved in center activities. Before beginning the research for the pilot study, I completed a CITI training course, “Social/Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel” about ethics in ethnographic research. Even though this project focused on human subjects, I was not required to send in an application to Oregon State’s Institutional Review Board because this research was for a class assignment. The rest of this chapter will discuss the methods for the
thesis project, not the pilot study.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this thesis project are: What kinds of literacy and literacy practices occur at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center? In what ways do English language learners sponsor literacy at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center?

**Recruitment and Interviews**

I began recruiting participants for this project in October 2016. Because I wanted to get as much information as possible about the role of ELLs at the CMLC, I had specific recruitment criteria. Most importantly, I wanted to interview people who were regularly involved in the center, whose involvement went beyond casually attending a conversation circle every once in a while. Thus, I found most participants through speaking with the center coordinator about who she believed would be willing to interview who was an active participant in multiple center activities. In addition to getting the center coordinator’s help, two participants, after being interviewed, contacted friends they thought would be interested in being interviewed. Two additional participants contacted me after hearing about this project from their friends. I also contacted the interview participants from the pilot study I had conducted in Spring 2016 and received consent to reuse two of the interviews from the pilot project for this thesis project. No participant was paid in this study.
I conducted a total of nine interviews, focusing on how ELLs learned English and how they sponsor literacy at the center. Specifically, the interview guide focused on reading, writing, and crafting practices that occurred at the center and what role ELLs played in these activities. The interviews varied in how much time was spent talking about their English language learning, their teaching experience, work experience, education in their home country, and what they do at the center. All interviews were conducted in-person except for one interview which was conducted over skype, because the participant had returned to Japan, her home country. Each interview lasted one to one and a half hours. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Background information on each participant is provided in table 3.1 below. This table should be helpful in understanding the various roles, languages, and cultures represented in this study, while also providing information that could be helpful to refer back to while reading chapters four, five, and six.
Table 3.1: Background Information on Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Home Country</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>CMLC Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shūfēn</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Taiwanese, Mandarin, Chinese, English, some Japanese</td>
<td>International potluck organizer, front desk volunteer, singer/contributor to CMLC CD, cooking class teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akari</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Japanese, English, some French</td>
<td>Japanese teacher, cooking class teacher, cooking class participant, front desk volunteer, Japanese calligraphy teacher, volunteer cashier at winter bazaar fundraiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulina</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Polish, English, German, Russian, some Spanish</td>
<td>Cookbook organizer, staff volunteer, Russian teacher, event photographer, conversation partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su-bin</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korean, English</td>
<td>conversation partner, conversation circle participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahar</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Persian, English</td>
<td>Conversation partner, conversation circle participant, cooking class participant, artist and contributor to bazaar, knitting class participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingyí</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Taiwanese, English, Mandarin, Chinese</td>
<td>Textile curator, organizer of the fashion show and textile exhibit, social media assistant, co-author of grant proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wei</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Mandarin, Chinese, English</td>
<td>Cooking teacher, knitting group participant, conversation partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1: Background Information on Study Participants (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hyun-joo</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Korean, English</td>
<td>Knitting group participant, conversation circle participant, international potluck participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahana</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Hindi, English</td>
<td>Front desk volunteer, conversation circle participant, bazaar volunteer, sewing class participant, cooking class teacher, cooking class participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While I interviewed and coded interviews with all nine participants listed in Table 3.1, I do not discuss every participant listed. However, even the participants I do not discuss in the following chapters shaped the themes I was drawn to and influenced my interpretation.

**Writing Samples**

In addition to interviewing participants, I requested writing samples from them. These writing samples could be anything they had written, formal or informal, related to the CMLC. For example, participants contributed notes, recipes, and instruction sets. There were two purposes in asking for writing samples: 1) learning more about the literacy practices that occur at the center through analyzing the documents and discussing them with the participants, and 2) triangulating my
research by being able to compare what participants told me about their literacy with samples of literate work they had done in the center.

The writing samples proved helpful in adding another layer to my data for analysis. Asking participants for writing samples also provided another avenue of conversation. In some cases participants explained to me the context of their writing sample and the background that went into writing that particular document. In most cases, the participant emailed me a copy of the writing sample after our interview.

While interview questions focused on ways ELLs write, read, and communicate at the CMLC, the writing samples provided examples of this writing, reading, or communication. In some cases these writing samples corroborated what interview participants told me about the literacy practices at the center and provided further depth into how the participant engaged in center activities. In some cases, this data complicated the interview results, providing data that did not coincide with what the participant said in interviews. In one case, the participant’s initial description of the document was very different from the document’s actual contents. The participant explained this discrepancy when she later texted me a photo of her writing sample. This situation is explained further in “Chapter Five: More than Mere Cookery.”

**Analysis**

I used a grounded theory method in analyzing interview data. Sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss define grounded theory as “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (2). Though
grounded theory originated in sociology, it is often used in literacy studies research. One of the most influential sources on the methods of this project is Barton and Hamilton’s *Local Literacies*, in which Barton and Hamilton employ grounded theory to study vernacular literacy practices in Lancaster, England. Building on Glaser and Strauss, Barton and Hamilton describe how they used grounded theory to examine vernacular literacies:

This is not a methodology in itself but a set of principles, an epistemological stance, where the discovery of theory comes from data systematically obtained and analyzed. It is based upon principles, such as the constant cycling back and forth between data and theory.

(Barton and Hamilton 68)

In grounded theory, codes are used to identify themes that can then inform theory. Some common codes in this project include: “ELLs as literacy sponsors,” “mutual teaching,” “relationships,” “fluid structure,” and “crafting/cooking.” These codes led to my analysis of reciprocal literacy sponsorship and friendship, cooking literacy, and textile literacy.

**Limitations**

Limitations come with doing a study including human subjects for a master’s thesis, particularly since there is a limited amount of time to spend gathering data. This section explains some of the limitations of this study. Despite the constraints of a master’s thesis, this study still provides credible ideas that can inspire future directions in literacy studies research and challenge how we understand literacy
sponsorship.

The sample of people from the CMLC is the largest limiting factor of my research. A majority of interview participants in this study are from Asian countries. At the CMLC, most members involved are from Asian countries, followed by people from Middle Eastern countries, reflecting OSU’s international population. I did not interview any Latino people, which might be surprising considering the large Latino population in Oregon. This is because I was not able to get in contact with the Latino person the center coordinator recommended I interview. Having a more diverse group of interview participants would have been ideal and provided a fuller understanding and exploration of literacy practices at the CMLC. However, since the largest population of people from the center are from Asian countries, it makes sense that they would be the largest group represented in this study.

Another limitation is that my interviews are only with women from the center, because women are more involved at the center than men. Men attend a lot of events, but often there are significantly fewer men. At the cooking classes I have attended, for example, there are usually zero to three men out of the typical fifteen to twenty attendees. More women have leadership roles at the center, and more women volunteer than men. It would have been helpful to interview men for the project to get a different perspective, as they are welcome at all events. However, because recruitment methods focused specifically on those heavily involved in multiple activities at the center, no men met this particular criterion.

As with any interview-based research, my position as a researcher is also a
limitation. The way participants interacted with me and answered my questions is impacted by their knowledge that I am using their answers for research and that their answers were being audio recorded. My involvement as a volunteer also shapes the way I understand the center, interpret the interviews, and write about both. I discuss my role as a researcher and the limitations that come with being a researcher in a community literacy center further in the next section of this chapter.

Though there are limitations to this project, the results of this study provide credible insights into how literacy occurs at the center. The sample of people I interviewed have a variety of involvements at the center, providing insight into a range of activities that occur there. Recurring center events are represented multiple times in the interviews, providing multiple perspectives into the center’s most popular programs, like conversation partners, the conversation circles, and the cooking classes. In addition, participants went to a variety of different one-time events at the center. Because of the range of activities represented in these interviews, I was able to gather plenty of data to present what the center does and how literacy happens within the center. Though a sample size of nine participants could be seen as a limitation, this thesis project values the individual experiences of those within the center. The findings of this research do not claim to be applicable to communities beyond the CMLC, though they could inform future research. Instead this thesis focuses on literacy within the center and how the insights of individuals within the center can shape our understanding of literacy.


**My Role as a Researcher and Volunteer**

I am both a volunteer and a researcher at the multicultural center, two identities that can conflict and are sometimes difficult to navigate. I began volunteering at the CMLC in October 2015 as a greeter and reception worker, also helping out with events. In February of 2016, I switched from staffing the center, to being a citizenship tutor, helping people prepare for the U.S. citizenship test and interview, something I am still doing at the CMLC.

In an ethnographic study, it is important to reflect on my role as a researcher and how that role impacts the community I study, my data, and the results of my study. Fieldwork is messy, full of ethical concerns, and the line between personal and academic is often unclear. As Nancy A. Naples explains in *Feminism and Method*, the method a researcher selects is “profoundly shaped by our epistemological stance” (3). As a researcher, I chose to do an interview-based study, because I value personal narrative as an authoritative and valuable source of information. However, analyzing these narratives can be murky. Not only is our chosen method shaped by our epistemological stance, but so are the relationships we form with informants. According to Naples:

> Of course, a researcher does not have complete autonomy in shaping relations with subjects of his or her research. Research subjects have the power to influence the direction of the research, resist researchers’ efforts and interpretations, and add their own interpretations and insights. (4)

As Naples points out, though the researcher is an authority over how they conduct and write up their research, the participants shape our interpretation of that data. I
most often experienced this as I asked participants questions, and they answered in ways I didn’t expect, or they disagreed with the assumptions underlying my questions. These tensions are an important part of my research, challenging me to reevaluate how I understand interview-based research and literacy. For example, when I asked participants about literacy in the center, they often focused on their friendships at the site of literacy sponsorship, a pattern I did not anticipate, but which has significantly shaped the way I now understand the connection between literacy and personal relationships. I see the openness of allowing participants to shape our research as important in conducting an ethical study. If participants disagree with how we interpret their narrative, then there is something wrong with our interpretations. However, while I tried to be as open as possible to what participants told me, it is difficult to separate my theoretical framework from the conversations I had with participants, a limitation of my role.

My involvement at the center also impacts the relationship I have with participants. Some people I interviewed I had never met before. However, most people I interviewed had either seen me at the center volunteering or participating in events, or I already had a relationship with them. Thus a certain level of trust was already established before the interview began. Even participants who did not know me knew I was a volunteer and may have trusted me because of our mutual involvement at the center. While this trust is at times helpful in making participants more comfortable with the interview process, it might also put pressure on participants. During some interviews, informants asked if their answers were
helpful enough or if the information they provided was useful for this project. This desire to please could potentially shape the way they answered questions, if they tried to say what they thought would be most helpful to this project.

My role as the researcher and in this case the writer of this work also limits the accuracy and credibility of my work, as ideally the people whose stories I present here would have more of a role in writing this thesis. While I view a higher level of collaboration between the researcher and the community members as the most ethical way to perform community literacy work, the time constraints of a master’s thesis prevented me from further exploring this option. It is important to me that readers are aware of this limitation and aware that while I am sharing the literacy stories of people within the CMLC, these stories are filtered through my own perspective as a privileged, white woman, born a citizen of the United States. With this in mind, I want readers to value the direct quotes from community members as the most authoritative words in this work. I have tried my best to present the stories as authentically as possible, even though community members were not directly involved in the writing process. I tried to include intact quotes whenever possible. However, I sometimes paraphrase and summarize parts of interviews to condense long explanations and also to explain quotes that without hearing the inflection of the speaker and seeing their expressions may be difficult to understand.

The next three chapters present the findings and discussion of these interviews. Every chapter focuses on different literacy events where ELLs sponsor literacy. “Chapter Four: Factoring Friendship into Reciprocal Sponsorship” examines
the ways friendships form at the center, and how these friendships allow people to sponsor each other’s literacies. “Chapter Five: More than Mere Cookery,” focuses on the cooking classes at the CMLC. In these classes, ELLs teach how to cook a dish from their home country, and in doing so, get to practice their English language, while also sponsoring cooking literacies and making an argument about understanding their culture through food and the traditions surrounding food. “Chapter Six: Reading Textiles, Fashioning Argument” focuses on Jingyí, a Taiwanese woman who curates the CMLC’s textile collection, and organizes the annual textile exhibit and fashion show.
Chapter 4: Factoring Friendship into Reciprocal Sponsorship

As a volunteer, I sometimes give tours of the center when new people visit. I start with the living room, with textiles on the walls, benches, couches and chairs all facing each other. This is where conversation circle happens. Then I show them the kitchen, where cooking classes take place, and the craft room, where the sewing class occurs. I show them the textile room, the music room, the kids’ room, and the library. Each room’s theme does not necessarily dictate the activity that occurs in the room, though the items on the walls and shelves do create a unique affect in each room. All throughout the center, as I guide the visitor, we see glimpses of people teaching each other, most often in the form of conversation partners sitting throughout the house casually talking.

This chapter focuses on these moments of mutual teaching and the role of friendship in making these moments possible. The teaching moments that occur in the center are what Kara Poe Alexander refers to as reciprocal literacy sponsorship, or instances where people fluidly move between being the “sponsor” and “sponsored.” Alexander’s work shows how sponsorship occurs when college composition students go outside the classroom and work in their communities, positioning students as sponsors of literacy. Like Alexander’s work, this thesis focuses on literacy outside of a traditional teacher-student relationship. However, I argue that reciprocal sponsorship occurs in different ways in a community literacy setting like the CMLC, and that the personal nature of the relationships formed in the CMLC makes it especially conducive to reciprocal sponsorship. Furthermore, the
friendships formed at the CMLC enhance reciprocal sponsorship by breaking down the hierarchies that are typically present in school-based learning. Goldblatt and Jolliffe’s interpretation of what constitutes “gain” in literacy sponsorship also influences my interpretation of reciprocal sponsorship at the center. Though Brandt says a literacy sponsor always has something to gain from sponsoring literacy, at the CMLC, rather than thinking about literacy sponsors as “gaining” something, we can instead thinking of them as “exchanging” literacies, since both sides “gain.” This language reflects reciprocity more fully than “gain.”

The rest of this chapter is divided into three sections. The first of these sections explains how the CMLC’s affect promotes friendships and makes it a conducive space for reciprocal sponsorship to occur. Following the section on affect are two sections that each focus on a different kind of reciprocal sponsorship. The first of these two sections examines how people in the center sponsors literacy through exchange, where two people have expertise in different literacies, and they exchange these different literacies. The next section looks at another type of reciprocal literacy sponsorship, collaborative self-sponsorship, where people work together to learn a literacy in which neither person has expertise.

The Center as an Affective Space Promoting Mutuality

Before explaining how reciprocal sponsorship occurs in the center, discussing the affective space of the center is important, because the CMLC’s space and infrastructure impact what occurs within the center and how relationships form. My first interview was with the center coordinator, Dawn, so I could get a
better understanding of how the center operates and the values underlying the various center programs. When I asked Dawn about her role at the center, her answer contained a helpful explanation of not only her role but how she envisions the CMLC’s functioning:

The center’s a pretty fluid place. Things happen here pretty organically...I always tell people the most important thing that happens at the center is that whoever walks in the door is welcomed and involved...I always think it’s more like improvisational theater or something. I never know from one day to the next often what’s exactly going to happen during that day. We know some things. We have certain kinds of activities that are scheduled — conversation groups or maybe a cultural thing or something like that. And a lot — because it’s a drop-in center to a large part — it depends on who walks in the door and what their needs are, what their interests are, how we can involve them too as well. So part of that is kind of being, just someone who is there kind of floating around the spaces, making sure things are kind of flowing, that things are going okay.

The organic “flow” of center operations is part of what makes the CMLC such an effective space of literacy learning. Mirroring Dawn’s explanation of “flow,” Paul Feigenbaum says enabling “flow” is an important function of community literacy programs. He calls this a “flow-cultivation milieu,” meaning a space in which it is easy to be “so resolutely focused on an activity that one loses sense of external time and space...flow enables people to realize higher levels of performance than they can achieve outside this mental state” (33). For a community to be “flow-friendly,” it should foster intrinsic motivation, wise mentorship, and listening (Feigenbaum 34). Underlying the factors Feigenbaum believes are necessary in a flow-friendly community is the importance of ensuring that everybody within a community feels valued, heard, and encouraged.
The CMLC seems to embody the “flow-cultivation milieu” Feigenbaum describes, as much of the programming is created by members and is loosely structured, so programs are extremely customizable. In fact, though the center itself pairs people up to be conversation partners and provides a space for them to meet, conversation partners have complete freedom to do what they want in their meetings. Partners do not even have to continue meeting in the center if they do not want to. In this way, the infrastructure of the center, or lack thereof, allows for the literacy, learning, and relationships to “flow” naturally, uninhibited by the artificiality of curriculum, rules, or designated space. The center’s flow fosters an affect that allows for authenticity and relationship-building, ultimately making reciprocal sponsorship possible. As Feigenman says in his explanation of “flow,” the initial goal of gaining literacy is often forgotten or taken for granted at the CMLC, as intrinsically fulfilling friendships form.

This fluidity contributes to an affect that makes reciprocal sponsorship possible. Affect’s role in the college writing classroom and how this affect is conducive or prohibitive to students’ attitudes toward writing is a common topic in rhetoric and composition research. Though the conversation partner program is different from a writing classroom, the writing classroom is still a site of literacy sponsorship, though a more traditional sponsorship. Thus these scholarly conversations can help frame the way affect applies to the CMLC. In “Mapping Literacies with Affect,” for example, David R. Cole draws on Deleuze to explain the dynamic power relationships that create a classroom affect, in particular how the
power relations between teacher and student can create a productive literate relationship or prevent a productive literate relationship from forming. Cole says, teachers should look for ways to empower students and “undermine scholarly authoritarianism” (47). The tension between formal, structured teaching and fluid, empathetic moments of literate relationship building is difficult to navigate. The CMLC, however, as a space where people are not being graded, assessed, or even instructed, positions it as uniquely conducive to “literate relationships” that are not hindered by the hierarchical power structures of a classroom.

The CMLC’s fluid structure is set up intentionally to allow for relationships where mutual learning occurs. Though the CMLC does not use the word “sponsor” when talking about literacy, their motto, which is found on their website and other documentation, is: “Everyone is a teacher, Everyone is a learner.” This is the guiding principle behind the CMLC’s programming. At the CMLC, there are no designated teachers or learners. Everybody has knowledge and skills to offer, and those involved at the center will learn from each other. The relationships at the center foster a mutual agency rarely found in college English classrooms or in literacy sponsorship. Though mutual teaching occurs in many ways at the CMLC, it is most obvious in the conversation partner program. Dawn explains this program and how mutual teaching occurs:

Many of the conversation partners which are one-on-one with somebody, with a native English speaker and then someone who wants to practice their English, is I hear that it, over and over, that even though it is for someone to practice their English, the person from the US is just like, ”I am learning so much. I had no idea,” or ”I knew nothing about this.” And I think that it’s one of the nicest things,
because it’s really a mutual education across each other too, and so
that’s also, you know, at the center we say “Everyone is a teacher,
everyone is a learner.” So the more we can equalize that educational
experience, that learning experience, I think the more that is gained
on both ends too.

This shift from a typical sponsor-learner relationship is similar to the transaction
model of pedagogy that compositionists have described as a liberatory alternative
approach, compared to the more typical transmission-based pedagogy. In fact, Dawn
actually references Paulo Freire as one of her influences in how she envisions
education at the center. Freire explains that often teachers employ the “banking
concept of education,” in which teachers merely deposit information into students,
who exist as “receptacles” for storing this information, a pedagogy that Freire says
oppresses students (53). On the contrary, Freire advocates for a dialogic pedagogy
where teachers and students create knowledge together.

Building on Brandt’s literacy sponsorship and Alexander’s reciprocal
sponsorship, the rest of this chapter provides examples of situations where
reciprocal sponsorship occurs at the CMLC and how friendship relates to these
sponsoring moments, focusing on two different kinds of reciprocal sponsorship. The
first kind includes an exchange of literacies, where each person in a partnership has
expertise in a literacy the other desires. At the CMLC, this most often occurs through
the exchange of different languages.

The second kind of reciprocal sponsorship is most easily understood as a
type of collaborative self-sponsorship, where people are teaching each other the
same kind of literacy. In this instance, neither person is an expert in the particular
literacy, but they work together to improve the same literacy. In *Generaciones’ Narratives*, John Scenters-Zapico explains that self-sponsorship is when learners teach themselves, something Scenters-Zapico says occurs often with electronic literacies (59). The phrase “self-sponsorship” implies a solitary act, whereas collaborative self-sponsorship is a social process, in which a group of non-experts in a particular literacy teach each other. Again, at the CMLC this most often occurs through cooperatively learning a non-native language.

**Sponsoring Literacy through Exchange**

At the CMLC, reciprocal sponsorship is most obvious in the conversation partner program. While the purpose of this program is for ELLs to improve their conversational English ability and for the native English speaker to learn about the ELL’s culture, there are no guidelines about what conversation partners do during their meetings. Most conversation partners just have casual conversation. When I asked about what participants learned from having a conversation partner, almost all of them emphasized the value of the friendships they formed with their conversation partner, often valuing this relationship even more than their improved English.

The freedom for each pair of conversation partners to decide what they do in their meeting allows people to conduct the meetings in whatever way they are most comfortable. At the beginning of a new program, it is common to feel nervous, but in the CMLC’s conversation partner program, friendship quickly replaces nervousness with comfort. Paulina, a woman from Poland, explains what her conversation
partner meetings are like: “It’s not like a lesson. It’s more like friendship, friends meeting. So either we go for some walk, or we just meet with some coffee, and we have some lunch or something like that. And just yeah, I try to talk.” While many conversation partners meet inside of the CMLC, some, like Paulina, choose to meet elsewhere, further removing the formality of this meeting. As Paulina says, it no longer feels like a lesson.

Wei, a Chinese woman, also described her conversation partner as a friend, focusing on the mutual learning from their meetings. According to the center coordinator the idea behind conversation partners is that ELLs get to practice English and native English speakers get to learn about another culture. In this way ELLs are sponsoring cultural literacy, while native speakers are sponsoring English language literacy. However, there is often reciprocal sponsorship of language literacy in addition to the exchange of cultural knowledge for English language learning. Wei, for example, teaches her conversation partner Chinese, describing her conversation partner meetings:

It's very informal... it's kind of, I don't know, just like when friends meet the first time, you know, and then we talk to each other. Introduce each other. And then most of the time we talk about our culture, differences, like what's the differences in the culture in American and in Chinese culture. And basically, yeah, that’s pretty much it. We don’t do any very formal like English learning thing or like—we just talk. Just talk, and then if he sees any wrong grammar in my mouth, and then he will correct me. Sometimes he doesn’t. He just doesn't want to frustrate me. And then, and then sometimes, I taught him Mandarin. Like the characters and the very basic sentence, and the characters, things like that.
When I asked Wei why she taught her conversation partner Mandarin, she said, “He was interested in learning, and he even has a dream to go to China and do business.” Like Paulina, Wei also mentions the informality of the conversation partner and flexibility for this partnership to serve whatever individual purposes the partners have in common, such as developing a new language in hopes of travelling abroad.

Friendship came up in every interview, not just Paulina’s and Wei’s, as an important function of the center. Interestingly, little research exists regarding the role of friendship in literacy studies, though the *Writing Lab Newsletter* sometimes includes reflections of how writing center tutors form friendships with clients. Trent Mikesell, for example, provides practical steps for implementing the “language of friendship” and “befriending strategies” in tutoring sessions (14, 15). Similarly, Edward P.J. Corbett argues that teachers should spend more time trying to understand students and learning from them, imitating the mutual empathy in friendship. However, in both of these examples, there is still a hierarchical barrier to making teaching a mutual activity. While a tutor can use the “language of friendship,” and a teacher can get to know their students through conferencing, they are not actually friends. However, it is significant that teachers and tutors see imitating friendship as a helpful way of enhancing their teaching ability and enacting liberatory pedagogies. This focus on emulating friendship lends credibility to viewing friends as sponsors of literacy and shows that relationships do impact the way people learn. At the CMLC, where friendship is often viewed equally as important as literacy, and where these relationships are encouraged, people are
able to learn in ways that are not possible within the confines of an academic institution.

Friendship, however, is a difficult term to define, and people may identify different qualities as most indicative of a friendship. For this reason, I am hesitant to provide a definition of friendship, a concept so subjective and deeply personal. However, in an attempt to grapple with the meaning of friendship, it is helpful to look to Aristotle’s discussion of friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics*, which relies on reciprocity and mutuality. At the most basic level, Aristotle says, “To be friends, then, they must be mutually recognized as bearing goodwill and wishing well to each other” (n.p.). After making this base claim about friendship, Aristotle explains three types of friendship, friendships of pleasure, utility, and perfect friendships, though for the sake of this project, I am most interested in “perfect” friendships. According to Aristotle:

> those who wish well to their friends for their sake are most truly friends; for they do this by reason of own nature and not incidentally; therefore their friendship lasts as long as they are good and goodness is an enduring thing. And each is good without qualification and to his friend, for the good are both good without qualification and useful to each other. (n.p.)

While this definition of friendship is problematic in its vague use of “goodness” and is perhaps too simplistic in not accounting for the complexities and difficulties of relationships, it is a useful starting point for understanding how friendship can be understood in relation to literacy. Most importantly, this definition demonstrates
the value of reciprocity. Mutual “goodwill” for the other’s sake above their own is needed in a friendship.

Along with a recognized goodwill for each other is trust, which is what makes literacy sponsorship between friends powerful. This foundation of trust facilitates learning that could not occur without friendship. Though Freire does not address friendship in discussing a dialogic pedagogy, he does identify values that are often described as central to friendship in his explanation of how an ideal teaching-learning relationship would exist. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire explains that knowledge-creating dialogue cannot exist without trust, saying:

> Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship in which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence. It would be a contradiction in terms of dialogue—loving, humble, and full of faith—did not produce this climate of mutual trust, which leads the dialoguers into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world. (Freire 72)

Mutual “love, humility, and faith,” can exist under the umbrella of Aristotle’s “goodwill,” and these three values are often characteristics of friendships. While these emotions might be difficult to cultivate in a classroom setting, these emotions exist naturally within the center and allow dialogic teaching and learning to occur among friends. Akari, a woman from Japan who tutored an American woman in Japanese, provided an honest explanation of how “love, humility, and faith” existed between her and her student, who, through their mutual teaching, became close friends.

In our interview, Akari talked about how she learned from her student how to speak about personal, intimate matters in English. Akari’s student, Jessica, was
very interested in Japanese culture. She had had Japanese exchange students stay in her home and had visited Japan several times. Jessica and Akari’s meetings came about, because Jessica had told the center coordinator she wanted to learn Japanese and wondered if there was someone at the center who could tutor her. The center coordinator then approached Akari with the idea of tutoring Jessica, which Akari was happy to do. They began their meetings at the CMLC, but Akari says Jessica, told me she wanted to learn Japanese at my house, because I, how do I say, once you enter, someone enter to my house, it’s Japanese world. I mean, it was Japanese magazines, Japanese TV, Japanese cookware of course. And so she asked me to teach Japanese at my house for her.

Jessica’s desire reflects the impact of affective space in literacy learning.

Akari says that the opportunity to teach somebody Japanese actually improved her English language ability. Because Jessica was at a beginning level in her Japanese knowledge, Akari conducted these sessions in English. In teaching Japanese with English, Akari sometimes ran into Japanese words or phrases that she could not express in English. Akari said that tutoring Jessica helped to “confirm my own English level.” When I asked what exactly Akari meant by this, she elaborated:

Teaching is, how do I say, the chance to teach is a wonderful chance to confirm my English level... I have a class, Japanese class now, and I want to teach this class and if I don’t know the word, don’t know the exact word, which come up in my mind in Japanese, but not in English. So that’s one, probably I can memorize it stronger than many other language, because that is the language I was not able to find out. And after the class or during the class, during the tutoring, I look up using dictionary and look up that word. Probably those kind of words give me a strong impression, because that’s the one I was not able to find out. So I tend to remember those kind of words better than others I think... My feeling is “oh, how, I know this word?” I mean, when I cannot find out something, how do I say, my emotion affects me a lot. Why I don’t know that word? So the words with my, how do I say,
negative emotion affects me a lot. And then that is a good chance to remember, recall that word longer than any other I think.

Akari’s description of learning English through teaching reveals an important aspect of her role as an ELL literacy sponsor. Teaching in English challenges her to navigate English in a new context. Though Akari is positioned as an expert in the role of Japanese tutor and is fully capable of tutoring, when her English language abilities hold her back, she is frustrated and uses this frustration as an opportunity to improve. Thus, through sponsoring her student’s Japanese language literacy, she is at the same time improving her own English language literacy through the unique opportunity to teach Japanese in English. Akari explains this relationship: “I taught her Japanese. But in reality we helped each other, teaching Japanese, teaching English, so we both win-win relationship.”

Akari’s student became her closest friend in Corvallis. During Akari’s last year in the United States, she went through a divorce, and during this time, Akari says it was Jessica who emotionally supported her the most. I asked Akari if she thought the closeness of this relationship impacted her ability to improve her English. Her response was:

If someone is close, very close to me, if she’s my friend, I can talk more private specific topic with them. [Jessica] is the one, she is very close to me. And I was able to speak for very private. And it is also that American people, especially people in west coast, is very familiar to anybody. But they all of a sudden, they put this shutter in front of them. You are okay before this line, but you cannot step in. You cannot step in front of this line...So, for some, I cannot talk very private, specific thing with ordinary people. But with [Jessica], I was able to speak those kind of topics. So the words we used for private topic, sometimes different from ordinary topic. It’s very helpful for me to express my emotions more effectively, more profoundly. So I really
appreciate that existence of [Jessica], and [the center coordinator] who introduced [her] to me.

While many of the participants I interviewed discussed the difference between the formal English they learned in textbooks and the more casual English that people speak in the United States, Akari was the only person to point out that there is a different vocabulary and pattern of expression that comes with discussing intimate topics, like a divorce. In cultivating a friendship, Akari was able to expand her English language literacy in a way that allowed her to not only communicate day-to-day, but express herself in a way that she felt conveyed the complexity of her emotions.

**Collaborative Self-Sponsorship**

In most sponsoring relationships, sponsors have some knowledge or expertise that the learner does not have. In the case of Akari and Jessica, Akari had Japanese language expertise, and Jessica had English language expertise. These languages were exchanged through reciprocal sponsorship. However, at the CMLC sometimes reciprocal sponsorship can occur while working together on the same literacy, instead of exchanging different literacies. This type of relationship functions as a collaboration rather than an exchange.

Collaborative self-sponsorship is most obvious in Paulina and Alise’s Russian meetings. When I interviewed Paulina, she told me she came to the CMLC to practice English and volunteer her time, because she is very interested in languages. Paulina’s first language is Polish, but she also speaks German, Russian, English, and
some Spanish. Besides Polish, Russian and English are Paulina’s most advanced languages. Paulina has a master’s degree in German and explained that many of her textbooks at the college she attended in Germany were written in English. Paulina has even taught English as a second language to third graders in Germany. While in Corvallis, Paulina wants to continue developing her additional languages beyond English, something she has found the opportunity to do at the CMLC. Because Paulina goes to many of the CMLC events, she has made a lot of friends. One of these friends, who I refer to as Alise, is Latvian and also knows some Russian.

Both Paulina and Alise are at roughly the same level in their Russian language ability and both want to improve, so they began meeting weekly to practice Russian together. Because neither Paulina nor Alise is an expert in Russian language, they found a book from the OSU library, which they used to guide their sessions. Paulina explains how they learned Russian together, teaching each other:

If we weren’t sure, we always had some dictionaries with us, mobile phones, and I of course, I used to have before Russian class with woman from Russia. So I have basics for language. And I think I already have learned like maybe 80% of the grammar, so it’s more about vocabulary and getting fluent in reading and speaking than learning grammar. But of course you always have some questions. You have some phrasal verbs, and you don’t know exactly what does it mean. And from context it is really hard to guess. Then of course, you would have question and especially meeting with your friend is really useful, because sometimes for this person it can be so easy. And she will tell you, “Oh, I know what, what does it mean.” And then you think, “Oh, that was really easy. Okay great.” But we just use everything, internet. Mostly the internet.

Paulina and Alise’s Russian meetings were unlike a typical conversation partner meeting, because they were both at roughly the same level in what they were
learning. One partner was not clearly more advanced than the other. However, because they are from different countries, they learned Russian in different ways and have different perspectives on the language. Because their backgrounds in Russian were different, they were able to teach each other where their backgrounds in Russian did not overlap.

Another unique aspect of these Russian sessions is that Paulina and Alise did not have the same first language. Paulina’s first language is Polish, and her partner’s first language is Latvian, so they used English, their common language, to teach each other Russian. Because of this, they more often had to consult other resources, like their phones, textbooks, and dictionaries. Another unique aspect of these meetings is that unlike the conversation partner program, where people are paired up and friendships result from this program, Paulina and Alise’s friendship preceded and led to their Russian meetings. This kind of teaching relationship complicates how we view literacy sponsorship. Paulina and Alise were teaching each other, and though they were each on the same level, they had unique experiences and knowledge that they brought to their Russian lessons. Thus a collaborative self-sponsorship occurred, where both Paulina and Alise worked together, building on their common knowledge and sharing their different insights into the Russian language.

Paulina and Alise are very advanced in their English language literacy and are both skilled at learning languages, making it easier for them to sponsor each other’s Russian literacy, while using English to conduct meetings. However, many of the people at the CMLC are not as advanced in their English language literacy and do
not have advanced degrees in language. Despite this barrier, collaborative self-sponsorship occurs among people who have various native languages, working together to improve their English. Though most events at the CMLC include a mix of native and non-native English speakers, Wei told me about her experience with the knitting group, where nobody was a native speaker of English, yet their common language was English, so they all used English to communicate. However, because language was a barrier, Wei says they often used body language to communicate, enhancing their ability to communicate when they could not find the English vocabulary to do so.

Wei says she got involved with the knitting group after one of her friends became pregnant, because she wanted to learn how to knit little shoes for the baby. Though Wei didn’t know how to knit, she had seen a group of women knitting at the center every week, so Wei asked them to teach her. Wei explained that while everybody in the knitting group spoke English as an additional language, they often communicated how to do something through “body language.” When I asked Wei about how they taught her to knit, she responded, “Because knitting is very much using hands, right? So you would just watch how they do it, and then learn.” In a tactile activity like knitting, it seems that spoken language is minimally necessary. In this activity, the other knitting group members sponsored Wei’s knitting literacy through a mix of spoken and physical instruction.

While English language learners at the CMLC sponsor each other’s crafting literacies, they simultaneously sponsor each other’s English language literacy. For
example, even though Wei says the knitting group relies heavily on body language, they also helped each other with their English speaking, since everyone was trying to improve their language fluency. Wei explains how she and the other knitters engaged in collaborative self-sponsorship at their meetings:

I go to the knitting class even though they don’t speak very fluent English and me neither. But during the process, we can use the words we used before. And then to like kind of enhance our knowledge around those words we already knew. And if, during the process, if we come across any words that we don’t know, later we can look it up.

Here Wei explains a literacy practice in which women engage in speaking English together, coming across vocabulary that they may not encounter outside of the group. Though none of the women involved in the knitting group are necessarily experts in speaking English, they are still able to teach each other and learn with each other. While knitting is at the center of the activity, it also provides a context in which people can work together to enhance their spoken English in a friendly, low-stakes setting.

**Conclusion**

Examining ways that literacy sponsorship can be reciprocal is important in changing how we understand sponsorship, allowing us to recognize when people inhabit sponsoring roles in surprising ways. While reciprocal sponsorship might occur in many places and in many ways, it seems that it happens naturally in friendships, as the trust and comfort of a friend makes teaching each other easy. Recognizing how these friendships form in community literacy centers, like the CMLC, and how these friendships make learning possible is important in affirming
the unique capabilities of community literacy centers and understanding the
important roles these centers play in the communities they serve. The following
chapters provide examples of several more literacy events at the center. Though the
next two chapters focus on cooking and textiles, friendships are formed and
strengthened through these events, making them even more effective sites of
literacy sponsorship.
Chapter Five: More than Mere Cookery

On any given afternoon, wonderful smells waft through the yellow house, whether from a cooking class, potluck, or bake sale. The kitchen always has a container of hot water and a variety of teas. The white cabinets are fully stocked, with photos of their contents on the doors. No one language is needed to know where to find exactly what you need. A few mugs sit in the sink below the window looking out on the Oregon rain. Flyers cover the refrigerator, held in place by colorful parrot magnets, encouraging visitors to “Explore the Cuisine of Yemen,” and contribute to “The World’s Table: A Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center Cookbook.” The flyers are sandwiched by photos of food and people cooking. Beside the refrigerator resides a selection of international cookbooks, for those interested in expanding their culinary repertoire. The table is the centerpiece, the hub of activity. Ingredients cover the table, as people gather for a Chinese cooking class.

The cooking classes are one of the most popular activities at the CMLC. Anybody can teach a class, and the center coordinator regularly encourages people involved at the center to teach. As people come into the center, there is a table in the living room with resources about the teacher’s home country and a donation basket to cover the cost of ingredients. Often, but not always, the instructor has a handout of the recipe, so people can follow along and make the recipe at home. People gather around the teacher(s) with the recipes in hand, also taking notes on the instructor’s additional tips.
The cooking classes provide one example of a literacy event at the center, in which multiple texts are created and used. This chapter explores how cooking class teachers prepare to teach and also analyzes the role of written recipes in the cooking class. Next is a discussion of the rhetorical situation of the cooking class, where teachers act as orators and make an argument about their culture, employing rhetorical devices throughout the class. Lastly, this chapter discusses the CMLC cookbook, which is currently in its early stages and not yet published.

**Cooking Class as a Literacy Event**

ELLs are the teachers of cooking classes, tasked with the challenge of teaching in a language they are still learning. However, the cooking class teachers, while still working on their English speaking skills, are experts in the dish they are cooking, and their audience is eager and enthusiastic. One cooking teacher, Wei, a graduate student at Oregon State from China who taught how to make Chinese dumplings, explained in our interview the innovative ways that she used recipes in preparation for her class. Wei began preparing for her class by “mapping out” everything she wanted to say in her head before teaching. As she thought through her presentation, she stopped whenever she reached a sentence or word she did not know and looked up the translation. Another way she realized she needed some new vocabulary was when she Googled recipes to print off for her audience. In reading through these recipes, she ran into unfamiliar words, which she would look up on Google Translate. She specifically needed to look up ingredient names. In preparing for her presentation Wei did not write at all. Even when translating words
from Chinese to English, she said that she did not need to write these words down to remember. Wei explains her experience of learning new words in preparation for the cooking class:

When I search for the recipe, and then I will find like there’s a, here’s an English word that I don’t, I’ve never used and have never seen before, like chive. You know, the ingredient, the chive, the vegetable. And then remember it. I will memorize it, and I don’t have to like say it a lot of times. Chive, chive, chive. Really, I can just see it and know how to pronounce it, and then I use it. And then it will become mine in the future.

Wei doesn’t use writing while preparing to teach or in practicing new vocabulary. Instead learning new words in preparation for the cooking class seems to provide a context into which new words can fit, making new vocabulary more memorable.

Furthermore, what is unique about Wei’s process of learning new words, like “chive,” is that this learning came about in preparation for sponsoring other people’s cooking and cultural literacies. In having the opportunity to sponsor cooking literacies, Wei also expands her own English language literacy in coming across new words related to cooking. Interestingly, recipes were also a new genre for Wei. She had never used a recipe before coming to the United States.

Wei is not the only cooking teacher who translated words ahead of time using recipes. Similarly, Akari, a woman from Japan, described using multiple recipes to prepare for teaching how to make sushi. Though Akari already knew how to make sushi, looking at recipes helped her learn the vocabulary necessary to talk about sushi in English. Rather than just looking at recipes to give to her audience, she intentionally used recipes to learn the vocabulary she needed to teach. This
method is alternative and significant, as it is used in place of or in addition to a
dictionary or Google Translate. Referring to actual recipes for the correct language,
Akari obtained a more accurate translation, one coming from its intended context.
However, though cooking teachers typically provide a print-out of the recipe, this
recipe is more important to the teacher in preparing for the cooking class than it is
for the audience, as the teacher’s knowledge has authority over the text.

Because of the necessary role of recipes and note-taking, the cooking class
may be considered a literacy event. Shirley Brice Heath defines literacy events as
“occasions in which written language is integral to the nature of participants’
interactions and their interpretative processes and strategies” (Heath, “Bedtime
Story” 50). While texts in the cooking class are necessary to cook the dish at home,
the textual recipes are not as authoritative as the teacher’s knowledge. Though
recipes are sometimes written by the cook, more often the cook picks a recipe she
finds online or in a book that she thinks is close enough or the same as her own
cooking. This is one of the reasons why participants take notes rather than rely on
the printed text itself; the teacher does and says things that aren’t in the recipe.
Some cooking teachers do not even provide a recipe, so everyone must take notes if
they wish to cook the dish later. Furthermore, the act of cooking is a performance,
and embodied learning is necessary, where one actually engages in the physical act
of cooking, to understand how to make the dishes. This kind of knowledge cannot
accurately be documented in writing. Thus many people participate in making the
dish and take pictures of what the teacher does.
Another aspect of the cooking class that makes it an intriguing literacy event, is the physical nature of the teacher's instructions. Wei says teaching the Chinese dumpling cooking class was challenging because of the physical performance aspect, even more than the language barrier. She said, “In China I used to teach, so that’s not problem for me to teach a class. But that’s a problem for me to teach this kind of class, like not just provide information for them but like teach them like, I don’t know how to say, hands-on.” Wei proceeded to explain that in China, she and her family members learned to cook by participating in cooking with somebody who was an expert. It is not something she learned through a cookbook or by watching somebody else. Instead cooking was something she actually engaged in alongside the person teaching her. Wei recognized that there is a physical knowledge necessary in learning to cook. While she possessed this knowledge, it was difficult for her to transfer this knowledge to her students in any way other than audience participation. However, there are too many people attending the cooking classes, making it difficult for everyone to have a hand in the cooking process, a limitation to the cooking class’s effectiveness. Learning in this case could not be accomplished simply by following the Chinese dumpling recipe later at home, but required that people learn how to shape the dough with their hands, something that is hard to clearly explain or understand in written instructions or through observation.

Notetaking and documentation can also be considered literacy practices, part of the larger literacy event of the cooking class. Note-taking at the cooking class is
often done in more than one language. Bahar, a woman from Iran, for example, took notes during a Thai cooking class she attended and sent me a photo of these notes:

Figure 5.1: Page one of Bahar's cooking class notes
Bahar sent me these pictures after our interview. In our interview, Bahar had told me that she took her notes mostly in English, with a few things in Farsi. However, the only English that appears on her notes are the names of the ingredients, while
the steps are written in Farsi. Bahar’s notes demonstrate the complexity of the cooking class as a literacy event. First, the teacher translates the words she doesn’t know in preparation for the class. Then she teaches the class in her second language, English, to an audience made up of both native English speakers and ELLs, many of whom have a different first language than the teacher. During the class, there is another level of translation in which a participant, in this case Bahar, translates the teacher’s instructions back into her home language. This text, unlike the printed recipes that are passed around, is more helpful and easier to understand than the printed recipe, because of its language. The English recipes, though helpful in practicing translation, are not written with a multilingual audience in mind. However, in writing her own recipe Bahar has created an easy-to-understand multilingual text, primarily in her own language, with ingredients in English, so they can easily be located in a grocery store. Furthermore, the note-taking that Bahar does is aided by watching the teacher cook. Even if she does not understand the teacher’s instructions, she can take notes on what she sees the instructor doing. In this case, taking photos of and describing the physical nature of cooking makes it more accessible to audience members who have difficulty with the language of the class. Bahar said that she has already made the dish again in her own home, demonstrating the effectiveness of her multilingual recipe

The Rhetorical Situation of Cooking

In *Gorgias*, Plato’s Socrates famously disparages “cookery” as “flattery disguised as medicine” (98). He goes on to say, “As cookery is to medicine, so is
rhetoric to justice" (Plato 98). In other words, though some people think “cookery” is a form of medicine and “rhetoric” is a form “justice,” neither cookery nor rhetoric are as noble, important pursuits as medicine or justice. They are merely disguised as such. However, the cooking classes at the CMLC demonstrate that cooking is not mere “flattery,” but can act as an agent of cross-cultural dialogue. At the CMLC, cooking plays an integral role in bringing people together, sharing literacies, and communicating cultural values. Despite what Plato might think, cooking plays a variety of important roles in communities like the CMLC; it is more than mere “cookery.”

Cooking class teachers demonstrate a thorough understanding of the cooking class as a rhetorical situation. Rhetoric scholar Jamie White-Farnham says cooking is a rhetorical act, similar to writing for an audience, particularly in instances when the cook is not relying on recipes. White-Farnham, who interviewed women from the Red Hat Society about their cooking practices, explains:

the women’s [cooking] practices are comprised of basic rhetorical principles: they must consider their audience (children? adults? how many?), purpose (to nourish? To impress?), genre (simple lunch? Sunday dinner? party?), and material conditions (various ingredients and tools, money, and time). (White-Farnham 26)

While White-Farnham bases these theories of rhetorical cooking on a group of Red Hat Society women, these rhetorical principles are more complex at the CMLC. Applying White-Farnham’s questions to the CMLC’s cooking class, we can assume
that the genre of cooking is class demonstration. The material conditions, however, are more complex, as teachers have to adapt their recipes to the limited ingredients they have access to in Corvallis. Wei, for example, mentioned leaving out certain ingredients that she did not think Americans would like because of their strong distinct flavor. The purpose of the cooking class is to teach people about their culture through food in hopes that they may later replicate the dish in their own homes. All of the cooking class teachers are expected to explain the cultural significance of their dish, and are allowed to share anything about their culture that they wish. This cultural knowledge is shared throughout the class, but especially in the introduction.

The introduction to the dish is the most explicitly persuasive part of the cooking class. Akari, for example, used the opportunity of cooking to discuss the gender inequalities in Japan. Before beginning to teach the dish, Akari provided the following information to her class:

It is still man’s world, so all those generation guys, men, I would not say 100%, but most of guys, all the people, don’t help their wives in fifties, forties [with cooking]. It’s changing I hope, but in 50s, 60s, 70s, they seldom help their wives. And so I also taught my classmates this kind of situation. And another reason is, I mean, the reason, one of the reasons men don’t help their wives in the kitchen is Japanese cooking style—a lot of chopping, a lot of preparation. When I was in America, I thought it so easier to prepare food for many people, because there’s a big oven, and if I buy a big turkey, for example, and I put it in the oven and just wait. I know it is still difficult, but still easier than Japanese food. So to cook Japanese cooking requires a lot of work in the kitchen, and I believe it’s one of the reasons men, Japanese men don’t help their wives in the kitchen. So that is one of the thing I taught to my classmates.
Akari begins by explaining the complexity of Japanese cooking, through the style of chopping, then connects this to a larger issue in Japan, that wives were expected to do all of the cooking for their husbands. Akari also makes this point by comparing Japanese cooking with American cooking. Cultural comparison was a theme that came up throughout other interviews. Cooking teachers often employ cultural comparison to ensure that participants in the class understand an ingredient or cooking method, as well as to establish commonalities with their audience that transcend cultural difference.

While the cooking class positions the ELL teacher as the performer, this is a low-stakes performance, with much interaction between the teacher and the students. This back-and-forth reduces the stress that comes with performance, a stress that can be particularly difficult when the teacher is speaking in a language she is still learning. Akari explains the emotions that go into teaching a cooking class and how the interaction with the audience impacts her emotion:

Of course, [I was] nervous. But once I recognize everybody were very curious, that they were enjoying it, then that makes me comfortable and at the end finally, I forgot about that feeling of nervous, being nervous. So at the first point of course nervous, but then in the end, happy... we know each other that our mother language is not English, so we help each other. Do you want to say this word? Or do you want to say this word? And we help each other. It’s so nice for me that some people are very good at speaking English and they, how do I say gave me, not directly, not in rude way, but they actually she gave me a hint to use more proper, more proper words or those kinds of things. So we in that way, we helped each other.

The role of the audience at the multicultural center creates a positive affect from which both the speaker and the audience collect agency. The relationship between
Akari and the audience can be more easily understood by applying Carolyn Miller’s theory of agency as “the kinetic energy of rhetorical performance” (“Automation” 147). According to Miller, the audience plays a critical role in agency. She explains that agency is “positioned exactly between the agent’s capacity and the effect of the audience...to produce kinetic energy, performance requires a relationship between two entities who will attribute agency to each other” (Miller, “Automation” 147, 149). If agency arises from the energy that exists between speaker and audience, then the close proximity, both physically and emotionally, of Akari and her audience impacts the agency that both receive from this event. Characterizing agency as kinetic energy seems particularly appropriate at the multicultural center as the speaker, though she prepares ahead of time, is open to questions throughout the class, changing the shape of the presentation as it progresses. Furthermore, the audience helps Akari when she has difficulty expressing an idea in English, giving her the agency to express herself more fully and accurately. This constant movement between Akari and her audience and Akari’s customization of the presentation to her audience produces a palpable kinetic energy, where the ELL is the expert, answering the questions thrown at her, and the audience’s curiosity (and hunger) are satiated through the teacher’s openness to any question. Though a more traditional understanding of the speaker would include a larger separation between the orator and the audience, the closeness of the cooking class participants and their teacher facilitates more effective communication, endowing both the teacher and the audience with more agency.
The cooking class is one example of a literacy event in which ELLs are sponsors of literacy. In this context they teach cooking literacies, through a mix of spoken and embodied instruction. Furthermore, in doing so, they also make an argument about their culture, employing rhetorical techniques and adapting the rhetorical situation of a class made up of people who have a different first languages, in a city where they cannot find all of the proper ingredients and where the people have little knowledge of their culture. The popularity of these classes demonstrates the effectiveness of the ELLs rhetorical understanding of their audience. In fact, the recipes and cultural knowledge that ELLs provide along with these recipes are so valued in the CMLC community, that two volunteers at the center have begun compiling a cookbook of CMLC recipes.

**Creating a Community Cookbook**

Paulina, a woman from Poland, who enjoys attending CMLC cooking classes though she has never taught one, had the idea to compile the recipes into a cookbook. She along with another volunteer, a native English speaker, are recruiting people to contribute their recipes, a photo, and a short bio for the cookbook. Paulina, who is also a staff volunteer and event photographer at the CMLC, recruits people she meets at the center to send in their recipes. Through organizing this cookbook project, Paulina is directly asking ELLs to author texts in English about their cooking, providing a space for ELLs to practice writing to a real audience about a topic in which they have expertise. Not only do ELLs assume the position of orator/speaker when they are cooking instructors, but through the cookbook
project they also have the opportunity to use their cultural and culinary expertise to be authors in English. The opportunity to have their work published validates their writing skills in hopes of selling these books to an audience of CMLC community members who will appreciate the written accents of these authors and the cultural knowledge they share through their writing.

In the role of recipe author, ELLs are again sponsors of literacy, sharing their written text, cultural knowledge, and cooking skills. Lisa Mastrangelo has previously identified community cookbook contributors as literacy sponsors, explaining that “cookbooks function as literate practices of a community sponsored by the community members who were themselves cooks, contributors, readers, organizers, and editors” (73). While Paulina as an organizer is obviously a literacy sponsor, Mastrangelo points out that there are a variety of other roles that community members have in the creation of a cookbook, and every one of these roles has a part in sponsoring literacy through the cookbook. Another of these sponsoring roles, as Mastrangelo points out, is the role of contributor.

Hyun-joo, a Korean woman who is active at the center, contributed her recipe to this cookbook, after seeing the flyers up at the CMLC. This is the email submission she sent which includes her bio and her recipe for beef vege rolls:

Dear Cookbook-maker?!

Hello, My name is Hyun-joo. And I’m from Seoul, Korea. It’s been about 6 months since I came to Corvallis. I'm here for supporting my husband Ph.D in Forestry after marriage. I usually like to do painting, organizing kitchen stuffs and watching my favorite movie named ‘Love Letter’.
My biggest goal at Corvallis was improving English skills, but now it’s enjoying relaxed and having fun with new friends.

I would like to introduce "Beef vege rolls".
Ingredients: 1 pack of Thin-cut beef, 5 Green onions, 2 Red bell peppers, 2 Yellow bell peppers, 2 Cucumbers
Sauce: 2 tsp Soy Sauce, 3 tsp Horseradish, 2 tsp Honey, 1 tsp Apple vinegar
1. Prepare Thin-cut beefs first, and make them its width as 3~4 cm.
2. Cut other vegetables into thin strips to make its length as 5 cm.
3. Put each vegetables on beefs and roll it from the bottom tightly.
4. If all beefs are prepared as roll-shaped, it’s time to cook.
5. Here are 2 ways to cook. I recommend first one that can enjoy rich beef flavor.
   5-1) Stir fry Beef vege rolls until beef is brown. (You might be need toothpicks to hold them.)
   5-2) Preheat oven to 400 degrees, cook for 25 mins.
6. Mix all sauce ingredients well.
7. Enjoy your Beef vege rolls with delicious sauce!
   * If you are vegetarian, you can use tortillas, cabbages anything you can roll instead of beefs.

I attached some pictures including my pic.

Thank you for joining cookbook!
Hyun-joo

Like the cooking class teachers, Hyun-joo demonstrates an understanding of her rhetorical audience, by providing options at several points throughout her recipe. As Hyun-joo mentions at the beginning of her email, she attached three pictures. The first picture is of the vege rolls uncooked. The second picture shows the vege rolls after being cooked in the oven and the third shows them another after being stir fried. Providing photos of the beef vege rolls cooked using both methods can help readers decide which cooking method they would prefer. Additionally, Hyun-joo adds her own recommendation to this recipe. While she provides two options, she indicates which she enjoys most in case the reader needs help deciding, and she also
warns readers that “you might need a toothpick to hold them.” At the end of the recipe, Hyun-joo provides yet another option for how this dish can be modified for a vegetarian audience, as she knows there are many vegetarian people in Corvallis and at the center.

Though not as common an area of research in literacy studies, some rhetoric scholars have analyzed community cookbooks, as they provide insight into female communities whose voices are not often heard and who otherwise might not have had the opportunity to publish their writing. Community cookbooks are a rich site of research, because they contain insight into the values of a community, including the ideological and political beliefs of the community, according to Kennan Ferguson. The ideology and politics of cookbooks help form community identity, which rhetoric scholars have identified as one of the primary rhetorical functions of community cookbooks (Ferguson; Eves; Mastrangelo). Thinking about identity formation and the ideology that might go into the creation of the CMLC cookbook, however is interesting in light of the multicultural aspect of the book. While Ferguson notes that local and regional cuisine are often emphasized in cookbooks to reinforce regional identity, the CMLC breaks this convention. Identity is instead reinforced through diversity, and that the contributors all find themselves locally in Corvallis, yet have come to Corvallis from various places across the globe, as have their recipes.
Conclusion

At the CMLC, ELLs sponsor cooking literacy through teaching classes and distributing recipes. In preparing to teach the cooking class, ELLs also have the opportunity to expand their English vocabulary and perform in a low-stakes setting, where audience members are often friends. Throughout their cooking class, ELL teachers skillfully employ rhetorical devices to persuade their audience to remake their dish at home and to learn about the culture their dish is from.

These cooking classes are one of the most popular events at the CMLC. Every time I’ve gone to a cooking class, the kitchen is crowded with barely enough room for everyone to fit. The cookbook also reflects the success of these classes, that members enjoy these classes so much, they want to compile the recipes into one place. Through contributing to the forthcoming cookbook, ELLs also get to be authors at the CMLC, sharing their cultural and culinary knowledge beyond their classes. These findings are significant, because in rhetoric and composition research, ELLs are rarely portrayed as authors or orators when writing or speaking in English. At the CMLC, however, ELLs are not only writing and speaking, but doing so effectively and persuasively.
Chapter Six: Reading Textiles, Fashioning Arguments

In the spring, the center’s living room is full of textiles. The 2016 textile exhibit is titled “Wearing the World 2016: Global Traditions, Local Connections.” The textiles are arranged by region. Upon entering the living room, the Asian textiles are immediately to the left. A display cabinet, which typically holds books, is now filled with hats, bags, and shoes. The focal point of the Asian region are three mannequins wearing ornate robes in front of a blue floral tapestry. Behind the living room table is the South America wall, with shirts, tapestries, a red vest, and a hat. Each textile has a label attached to it, with the name of the textile, its origin, textile method, and material. In front of the south window are three Iraqi Hajab Scarfs. The label reads: “Origin country: Iraq, Textile technique: Jacquard, Material: wool.” As one walks through the CMLC’s rooms, there are textiles in the hallway and the textile room. As always, visitors are encouraged to touch the materials throughout the center.
Figure 6.1: The CMLC living room during the 2016 textile exhibit taken from the CMLC Facebook page (CMLC, “2016.4.21”)
The textile exhibit is an annual show at the center, coordinated by the textile curator, Jingyí. Coordinating the annual textile exhibit, however, is only a small facet of what Jingyí does as the textile curator. While the exhibit is a way of showcasing the textiles once a year, Jingyí comes into the center every week to catalogue and organize the CMLC’s extensive textile collection.

Before moving to Corvallis in 2008, Jingyí lived in Taiwan. She worked at a filament factory, after earning a degree in textile and apparel design. Jingyí was a textile specialist for the factory and often went to trade shows with her company in big cities in the United States. In this role, she became comfortable talking about textiles in English, but did not feel comfortable “chatting” or discussing non-
business related topics. In 2008, Jingyí moved to Oregon to get a master’s in Merchandising Management at Oregon State. After graduating with her master’s degree in 2010, Jingyí did not feel ready to get a job because she had recently had a child. However, she still wanted to volunteer in a place that allowed her to use her knowledge of textiles and business. After getting involved at the CMLC, Jingyí noticed how many textiles were at the center and that there was no system of organizing them. Thus Jingyí proposed to the center coordinator that she organize the textiles, creating a role at the center that did not exist before.

Jingyí’s role at the center includes writing a variety of texts, educating others, researching the background of textiles, inviting others to write, and reading the textiles themselves. Unlike the previous two chapters, which draw on multiple perspectives within the center to point out a recurring literacy theme, this chapter functions more as a case study of what Jingyí does at the CMLC as a sponsor of literacy. This chapter focuses specifically on the literacy practices that Jingyí engages in while working with textiles, by first examining the research process for learning the background of each textile. Next, I examine how the textiles are used in the textile exhibit and fashion show to teach others how to read textiles as texts. Lastly, this chapter contains an explanation of how Jingyí employs the rhetorical canons to make an argument about the value of multiculturalism and the storytelling power of textiles.
Curating, Researching, Storytelling

In her role as the volunteer textile curator, Jingyí was given complete freedom. She created a sophisticated system of cataloging the textiles and keeping inventory. Jingyí explains her process:

I'm just thinking like, just like a system, like a book system, like a library. So we need to have divide by different category. Hat or like a table ware, table cloth. And then just decorations. Because we not really have a system for all the textiles. We also have different usage like accessory. And accessory also include like the hat ware and bag or something...So I just created a system by how people will like to see, if they want to borrow it for some like cultural events, and how will they look through those collections.

After Jingyí created this cataloging system, the coordinator of the center was surprised, because she had not realized how many textiles they had. While the center had these resources available for people to use, Jingyí’s role was vital in creating a system that made these resources more useful and accessible to visitors. Jingyí’s ability to read the textiles and determine their origin and cultural significance can be considered a literacy. However this is a material literacy that requires a unique process of decoding through touch, examination of pattern, material, and shape.

When Jingyí started volunteering as the textile curator, there was a lack of information on the origin and cultural significance of the textiles. Though people donate textiles to the center, they do not always know the significance of these pieces. Before Jingyí, nobody at the center had expertise in reading and analyzing textiles, making it difficult to educate people with the textiles. Because of Jingyí’s
extensive knowledge and experience, however, she was able to devise a research plan to find the origin and significance of the donated, but uncategorized, textiles.

Curating the textiles requires a lot of research, though Jingyi’s process is alternative to how academic communities typically approach research, relying heavily on collaboration. Essentially, in determining the cultural significance of each piece, Jingyi is performing a rhetorical analysis of the clothing, reading them like a text, looking for clues as to what the design could mean about the cultural context in which these items were created and worn. In the center’s textile room, there are shelves of books about textiles from across the world. Jingyi searches these books and looks online for answers about the origin of textiles. However, Jingyi explains that while she spends a lot of her time conducting research alone, her knowledge and ability to find information is limited. Thus she takes pictures and posts them to a website of volunteers, where people from a variety of cultures have access. Then they share any insight or information they have about a particular textile, collaborating electronically in the research process. Of course, Jingyi has to fact check this information, as a lot of it is incorrect, and she also debates the origin and cultural significance of these pieces with staff members and volunteers at the center.

One textile that Jingyi found particularly challenging to research was an official Chinese jacket. Jingyi explains how she learned about the significance of the jacket despite her initial confusion:

Actually all the information, we just got it, you know, from a volunteer. Because, you know, we watch a lot of movies, and the people wearing it—I feel like it is for the men. So we actually, before we find the information, we have some small debate between me, [staff member],
and [staff member]. Because I feel like it’s only for the men. Because, you know, back then, 200 years ago, woman then not allowed to wear, they not allowed to work. So this not make sense for them to wear the official jackets outside. And then we find out actually this is for the women, because you see the style and the shape? You know how they tailor it, it’s the female style. But the occasion they wear it is the officer’s spouse. So they not actually wear it to work. They wear it for the, just like some ceremony, like the important ceremony, when they need to accompany their husband.

In this explanation, Jingyi explains a complex system of collaborative research. Based on movies Jingyi has watched, she knows that the article of clothing is meant for official work in China. However, she faced a particular challenge because the shape of the piece appeared to be tailored for a woman. Women did not have the kinds of jobs requiring this type of outfit in the time period the outfit was from. Thus this article of clothing did not quite fit into the historical knowledge that Jingyi and the two staff members had. However, by having a system in place where volunteers can contribute their knowledge, Jingyi was able to acquire an additional perspective and piece together a more cohesive understanding of who would wear this jacket and where they would wear it. This example of the official Chinese coat demonstrates the value of the work Jingyi does. Jingyi’s research process values the personal stories and knowledge of individuals from the cultures in which a textile is from. Furthermore, by examining this particular textile and searching for its significance, she learned about and was able to educate others about a professional role that women played in China that many people may not be aware of.

The way Jingyi goes about understanding and piecing together the origin and cultural significance of the textiles can be understood as a process of reading the
textile in the same way that somebody might read a text. As Carol Mattingly explains in *Appropriate[ing] Dress*, clothing is rhetorical. Though Mattingly's book focuses on American women's dress in the nineteenth century, Jingyi analyzes a lot of the same rhetorical devices that Mattingly describes to discern the significance of textiles.

Mattingly explains how nineteenth century women's dress was rhetorical:

> the cut and detail of the dress, often accompanied by the specific style of her hair signified her proper temporal location—the ballroom gown, lawn party dress, riding habit, walking dress, or morning wrapper—as well as social or class position. (Mattingly 7)

These characteristics reflect Jingyi's process of reading textiles. For the Chinese cloak, she was able to determine by the cut of the dress that it belonged to a woman. The style of the dress, however, was that of an official, typically a style only worn by a man. Finally, by identifying the location in which the outfit would be worn Jingyi was able to figure out who would wear this dress, why they wore it, and where they wore it.

The idea of reading a textile like a written text is not new. Scholars who study textiles and material culture have addressed textiles as objects full of meaning and ever-changing cultural significance. In “Textile Semantic: Considering a Communication-Based Reading of Textiles” Sonja Andrew provides an overview of the many ways scholars have read textiles. In Andrew's review, she says,

> Jeffries particularly perceived fabric as ‘text,’ not in the typographic sense, but as a carrier of information from the ‘author’ (artist/designer) to the ‘reader’ (viewer/consumer), in much the same way as a book or film can be ‘read’ and meaning derived from it. (Andrew 45)
Such an understanding of fabric as text mirrors the approach to textiles Jingyí enacts and advocates for at the CMLC. Through the textile exhibit and fashion show, Jingyí argues for the many ways that textiles can be read and understood.

Textile Exhibit and Fashion Show

The CMLC started its annual textile exhibit and fashion show in 2015, stemming from Jingyí’s enthusiasm and curation skills. The textile exhibit includes textiles displayed throughout the center, hung on the walls, on mannequins, and on shelves. This display is exhibited for a month, while the center continues operating as usual, though Jingyí markets the textile exhibit to bring in new visitors. What Jingyí does at the CMLC can be understood as an art-form. As curator of the textile collection, she organizes, researches, and displays the textiles, bringing them new meaning through her display, meanings that do not exist when the textiles are isolated from one another or haphazardly arranged. Kevin Melchione explains the idea of collection as art further:

To collect is to create a class or genre whose meaning resides in the way the pieces in the collection call attention to one another. By understanding the dialogue between members of a collection, we discover the aesthetic attitude of the collector, what the collector wants to show us about aesthetic perception and the world. (Melchione 153).

When Jingyí designs the textile exhibit and fashion show every year, she shapes the way viewers understand these textiles by how she chooses to display and share these pieces. The textiles in the shows are no longer standalone pieces, but become
part of a larger work of Jingyi’s creation, or, as Melchionne might say, part of a new “genre.”

In addition to the textile exhibit, the fashion show occurs once every two years and is scheduled during the textile exhibit and has the same theme as the exhibit. This fashion show is one of the CMLC’s biggest fundraisers, where all proceeds benefit the center. People pay to attend the event and once inside there is a silent auction, with most auction items donated from local businesses. Since the 2015 fashion show was so popular, the CMLC hosted the 2016 fashion show in a nearby arts center, which had a stage and more room for a large audience. Jingyi is currently planning the 2017 textile exhibit, but the CMLC will not be having another fashion show until 2018, because so much work goes into both events. Through creating and organizing these events, Jingyi sponsors a variety of literacies, including cultural literacies and textile literacies, while also celebrating these literacies’ value.

The argument made through the textile exhibit and fashion show can be clearly laid out through applying the canons of rhetoric, and in doing so, reveals some ways the canons can be understood in a contemporary multicultural context. Aristotle’s topics, the places one goes to come up with ideas, are one of the most well-known methods of invention. According to Carolyn Miller, the topics are effective because they foster connections to new ideas. She explains:

*topos* located the borderland between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the known and the unknown...an aid to pattern recognition, specifically as a region that permits or invites the connection between
the abstract and the concrete, between a pattern and the material in which it is instantiated. (Miller, “Topos” 142)

At the CMLC, material objects, seem to function similarly to Aristotle’s topics. The objects throughout the center are the “borderland between the familiar and the unfamiliar,” as Miller says of the topics; for Jingyi, the textiles are this borderland, the place that she got her ideas for the fashion show and exhibit. As someone with a professional background working with textiles, the fabrics and methods of creation are all familiar to Jingyi, yet the unfamiliar cultural context provide places of exploration, sites of invention.

The next canon, arrangement, is most obvious in the way Jingyi organizes the exhibit and fashion show. It was important to Jingyi that this show would provide people new perspectives on textiles and the cultural stories and information housed in textiles every year, so audience members would understand that textiles communicate stories and cultural values. Thus each year the show focuses on a different theme, and in doing so expands the audience’s textile-reading literacy. Jingyi explains, “the first year, we divided by technique… like the embroidery and those other things,” meaning the method of creation. The second year was organized by “geography.” In 2017, Jingyi says, she is planning to organize the exhibit by “five minute stories,” about the textiles. Jingyi’s dedication to focusing on a new theme every year also demonstrates the complexity of her work and of the multiple meanings housed in these textiles.

Not only does arranging these textiles by region or method demonstrate the multiple ways of reading the textiles, but mixing textiles from multiple cultures is
also a rhetorical choice that argues the value of multiculturalism. In *Ambient Rhetoric*, Thomas Rickert argues that “an object’s meanings and engagements emerge in encounters with other objects,” emphasizing the value of other items that are in an object’s immediate vicinity (204). Thinking about textiles in this way seems particularly important in considering the meaning of the textiles within the center, because the textiles have traveled far from their home countries to be displayed in proximity with other textiles from all over the world, rather than within the culture and context the designers intended. With this in mind, arrangement is perhaps one of the most persuasive and effective tools regarding art displays.

Though they do not use the rhetorical term “arrangement,” Nolan and Mitchell address the significance of material proximity in their analysis of the Textile Art Biennial in Kaunas, Lithuania, which, like the CMLC’s textile exhibit and fashion show, includes textiles from a variety of cultures in the same space. According to Nolan and Mitchell, “Translating from frame to stage, the art work becomes mapped in relation to other elements at play within the situating of the work, including other artworks and the site itself” (213). In this new space, Nolan and Mitchell argue, the curators of the show make an argument about culture through their arrangement. By having these textiles with diverse backgrounds inhabit one space, Nolan and Mitchell interpreted this event as “an agent of social and political reconciliation” (204). Similarly, the textile exhibit and fashion show can be seen as agents of cross-cultural understanding and celebration. Jingyí invites volunteers from a variety of cultures to participate in the show, including all
volunteers, providing an opportunity for those involved to learn about textiles through the unique experience of wearing something from another culture.

Arranging the textiles in one space also functions as epideictic rhetoric, essentially a celebration of many cultures and the art and daily life from those cultures.

Epideictic rhetoric has often been undervalued and seen as less persuasive and important to civic life than deliberative and forensic rhetoric because it is ceremonial, but epideictic actually serves a valuable function in preserving and promoting community values. Cynthia Miecznikowski Sheard explores the often unacknowledged value of epideictic rhetoric, pointing out that although we tend to think of epideictic as occurring in “private” or “spiritual” settings, it actually performs important “civic” and “social” functions (768). According to Sheard, epideictic rhetoric is often idealistic, and this idealism serves as:

- a vehicle through which communities can imagine and bring about change...by bringing together images of both the real—what is or at least appears to be—and the fictive or imaginary—what might be—epideictic discourse allows speaker and audience to envision possible, new, or at least different worlds. (Sheard 770)

Sheard’s explanation of epideictic seems particularly applicable to the CMLC fashion show and textile exhibit. Jingyí displays textiles from a variety of cultures on the walls of the CMLC together and has models from a variety of cultures wearing these textiles in the fashion show. In doing this, Jingyí depicts an idealized image of multicultural dialogue, understanding, and appreciation. While those who attend the fashion show and textile exhibit already hold these values, these shows reinforce the
audience’s aspiration and dedication to promoting multicultural dialogue. The CMLC’s intentional spirit of celebration is also obvious in the style of the show.

Examining how Jingyí promoted the fashion show through Facebook is a useful way to analyze the show’s style. In addition to recruiting, managing the models, and organizing the textiles, Jingyí promoted the events through managing the CMLC’s Facebook page and designing event posters. As Jingyí has a master’s degree in merchandising management, she is skilled and experienced at promoting events, and, as one of the admins of the CMLC Facebook page, she regularly promotes all kinds of events at the CMLC. On the fashion show’s Facebook Event page, Jingyí provided the following description:

Join us for a fun and educational fashion show featuring pieces from our extensive textile collection! Models will wear beautiful and conversation sparking pieces from many countries and cultures around the world.
Free food and wine. Silent auction. Live music. Admission is $15 ($17.50 at the door). (CMLC, “Textile Exhibit”)

The way Jingyí describes the show on Facebook reveals how she intends the audience to respond. The show and the textiles themselves should spark cross-cultural dialogue. While the fashion show is educational, the education and learning from the fashion show is meant to be inventionai, a catalyst for further multicultural conversations. Though the announcer at the show provides some background about the pieces, this information is limited. The audience is left to speculate further on the role these pieces played in their native cultures and the labor that went into crafting these pieces. To further understand the rhetorical affordances and
constraints of the fashion show, it is enlightening to compare the marketing of the fashion show on Facebook with the textile exhibit:

2nd Annual International Textile Exhibit

Wearing the World, Local Traditions, Global Connections. Featuring textiles from countries and cultures around the world. Beautiful pieces from India, Mexico, Cambodia, Thailand and much more! (CMLC, “Fashion Show”)

Interestingly, the description of the International Textile Exhibit focuses more on the origin of the textiles than on the experience of attending the event, and it does not mention conversation. While at first this difference might seem arbitrary, these descriptions reveal different expectations of how the audience should interact with each event. The fashion show is a one-time event. The entire audience is at the fashion show on the same day, at the same time. They stay after the event, enjoy the food, wine, and bid on auction items. This set-up encourages the large audience to stay for a while after the show is over and have the conversations that Jingyi believes the show will spark. In contrast, the Textile Exhibit is not performed. It does not happen at one designated time. It is set up at the center and runs for over a month. People come and go at different times, alone or with a group, creating a more solitary experience. This is not to say that people cannot or will not have conversation about the textiles they see at the exhibit. However, the exhibit exists more as a contemplative than social experience. At the fashion show, which took place at The Arts Center, the only resources for further knowledge about the textiles and their culture are other people. However, the center is full of books about
culture, available for check-out. While conversation can and likely will occur within the exhibit, they are not assumed or needed in the same way they are at the fashion show.

Furthermore, without the time constraints of performance, people can spend as much time as they want examining textiles in the exhibit. They can get closer to these textiles without the stage as a barrier. People can touch the textiles, see them up-close, speculate on the intricacy and labor that went into each textile’s creation. The arrangement of textiles on walls, hung as if paintings in an art museum, argues for contemplation about the makers of these cultures, allows for close examination of the types of weaving, sewing, and embroidery that went into the creation of each item. Wearing these items in the fashion show, however, encourages viewers to focus on the wearers rather than the makers. The audience is prompted to ask questions like: "Who wore this? Where did they wear this? Why did they wear this?" instead of "Who made this? What materials did they use? How did they make this? How long did it take?" Again, the different arrangement of these events allows for different ideas and questions.

The style of the shows mixes the old and traditional with the new and modern. Each textile has its own style, reflecting its own designer’s culture, and Jingyi respects the style by highlighting the cultural significance of each piece through the announcer’s descriptions of each show and the descriptive labels throughout the exhibit. She also gives these textiles new meaning by taking these styles out of their original context, having them worn by people not a part of the
textile’s original culture and wearing them in a fashion show rather than their cultural contexts. This traditional-modern style is visually displayed in the posters Jingyí designed to promote the show.

Figure 6.3: Textile exhibit flyer and fashion show flyer (CMLC, “Textile Exhibit”; “Fashion Show”)

In addition to textiles, Jingyí is passionate about photography and graphic design. Jingyí took all of the pictures used in these posters of textiles from the CMLC’s collection. The creation of these posters is in itself a literacy event, where Jingyí is both writing and designing. The poster for the fashion show clearly portrays Jingyí’s style and vision for the show, and in this poster she describes the show as “a collection mixed from traditional elements and modern spirits.” The
woman pictured embodies this idea. She is not standing still but moving, and wearing the textiles, providing a sense of energy. Her hair and shoes are modern and fashionable, yet she wears an outfit collaged with traditional textiles from many cultures. While each textile within the woman’s outfit is traditional, patching them together in this way is meant to be modern and communicates something entirely different than what the designer originally meant to communicate through creating these textiles. To better understand the hybrid style of the fashion show, we can apply Vicki Tolar Collins’ (Burton) theory or rhetorical accretion. Tolar Collins defines rhetorical accretion as:

>a process of layering additional texts over and around the original text...with each accretion to a text, the speaker of the core text is respoken. Respeaking can be a way for the production authority to modify the ethos of the original speaker or call into question something in her text. (Tolar Collins 547-48)

Since we are viewing textiles as texts, we can apply rhetorical accretion to interpret the fashion show. Rhetorical accretion complicates the agency of the original text’s creator. While there are traces of the intended purpose of each textile in the show, the arrangement and presentation of these textiles provides a limited understanding of each piece as an individual cultural artifact. Instead Jingyí, through the arrangement of these textiles, “respeaks” the meanings of these texts. In doing this, she “modifies the ethos” of the textiles, as Tolar Collins says occurs during accretion. If we tried to identify ethos in the textiles it could be in their age and their authenticity, though without the context Jingyí provides there is little knowledge surrounding these artifacts, and they hold little suasive power. In researching the
background of these textiles and then describing this background in the announcers’ script for each textile, Jingyi adds an accretion to them. In part, this reconstructs/restores some of the ethos that is lost or misunderstood in a new culture. Yet, this reconstruction is not truly representative of the culture, as it is filtered through Jingyi’s interpretation and is refashioned in a modern multicultural context. Instead Jingyi creates an ethos of progression and energy, as reflected in her poster design.

For this event, Jingyi also asked CMLC volunteers to participate as models. She did not pick or dress people based on their culture. More often, people were chosen to wear certain outfits based on their size rather than their culture. For example Jingyi asked me to be a model in the fashion show one day when I was volunteering at the center. Of course, I said yes, and Jingyi brought me upstairs to try on outfits for the show. She decided I would wear a Vietnamese dress, Romanian shirt/skirt, and a Guatemalan shirt. Interestingly most of the models in the show were not from the culture that their clothing was from. This style disrupts audience expectations, and furthers the argument of multicultural understanding and cross-cultural expression.

Rhetorical delivery and memory work in conjunction at the fashion show. When the fashion show began, an announcer introduced each region, and the models in each group came onto the stage after his announcement. Then he would explain each model’s outfit individually. The model stepped forward when his or her outfit was described, and then left the stage, pausing for a picture on the way out.
Memory plays an integral role in the fashion show, as each event brings up images from a variety of cultures. Of course, the rhetorical canon of memory traditionally refers to memorizing a speech to perform. While this canon is often neglected in contemporary research, as we do not value this kind of memorization the same way anymore, a contemporary explanation of “public memory” can help us understand what happens at the fashion show. In *Places of Public Memory*, Blair et al. explore the construction of “public memory,” which asserts that “beliefs about the past are shared among members of a group, whether a local community or the citizens of a nation-state” (Blair et al. 6). Blair et al provide a helpful list of general assumptions that contemporary memory scholars agree apply to public memory:

1. Memory is activated by present concerns, issues, or anxieties;
2. Memory narrates shared identities, constructing senses of communal belonging;
3. Memory is animated by affect;
4. Memory is partial, partisan, and thus often contested;
5. Memory relies on material and/or symbolic supports;
6. Memory has a history (Blair et al. 7).

This understanding of rhetoric can be helpful in viewing how memory is constructed at the CMLC, through models wearing the clothing and through the announcer’s description of each outfit. Jingyí clearly tried to create an affect more conducive to creating memories at the fashion show. Along with the announcer, was a man drumming throughout the show. The people wearing the outfits, walking and moving in them, give the clothes character, making it easier for the people watching to imagine the wearer of these textiles. Of course, as Blair et al point out, this fabricated memory is partial. The character that the model lends to the clothing is
not based on cultural knowledge. The models were given no instructions about how to act during the show other than where to stand and walk. Models thus gave their own performances. Some were subdued, some smiled, some were serious. Some twirled and put their hands and their hips. Others were less animated. The various ways the models wear the outfits inevitably shapes the audience’s constructed memories.

The delivery of these items, the announcer framing each model’s performance, invites the audience to think to the past when these items were created and worn in their home countries. Thus the audience, in doing this, fabricates individual memories of people in other cultures. After the fashion show, Jingyí posted photos from the fashion show and captioned them with text of the script the announcer used:

Java, Indonesia is famous for batik, a wax-resist dye process. This vintage kain (a flat piece of cotton cloth that is wrapped as a skirt) was hand-waxed and dyed in Suakarta. Every line in this batik was drawn by hand using an applicator filled with hot wax. Patchwork design is called "tambal" - each triangle has a different design. The quality of batik is determined by the fineness of the cotton and the excellence of the design work. This piece is exceptional. (CMLC, “More CMLC”)

The next piece in the fashion show was another Batik, and the announcer elaborated:

Batiks from the Peka-longan region of Java, Indonesia reflect the influence of Chinese traders that settled there. This vintage tubular sarong shows birds and flowers, typical motifs. The designs are all hand-done with a hot wax applicator. Such fine work often strained the eyes of the women who do the work. This sarong is signed by the artist. (CMLC, “More CMLC”)
These examples invite the audience to imagine and remember the creation of these items in another place. Thus the fashion creates a “public memory” that the audience shares to some extent, though of course this memory is perceived and understood differently by everybody.

While it may be easy with these descriptions to see Jingyí as the primary agent shaping these fabricated memories of these textiles’ creation, Jingyí does not perceive her role this way. On the Facebook album where the script and photos are published, Jingyí writes this description:

Textiles are story tellers. They speak of culture, of geography, of symbolism, of status. Many textiles in this show were made by hand, using traditional techniques. Although not modeled as complete outfits, each textile here is a work of art from a distinct culture. Enjoy the show! (CMLC, “More CMLC”)

Here Jingyí, personifies the textiles, attributing them the agency to speak for themselves and tell their own stories. With this understanding, Jingyí’s descriptions can be understood as supplementary to the primary actants, the textiles themselves. Nolan and Mitchell hold a similar understanding of textiles, explaining that textiles have the ability to “transport” the viewer “into a narrative in which the language of stitch became a voice of emotion traveling through time and across cultures” (215-216). It is the textiles themselves that can do this, not their curators. Nolan and Mitchell explain narrative properties of textiles further:

The traditional and ubiquitous textile object contains traces of the body, as in the labor invested in stitch and weave as intricate embroidery pattern or coarse strands woven on a loom, or through the marks left on clothing from wear, such as shirts creased at the elbows or the worn knees of jeans. (Nolan and Mitchell 24)
While the distance between the audience and the models on the stage might prevent viewers from seeing the traces of body on the textiles, Jingyí’s script encourages this reading. By telling the audience about how the women who created batiks “strained their eyes,” the announcer persuades the audience to visualize this labor. The mention of the particular artist’s signature itself also emphasizes that these textiles are not just items of clothing but works of art that contain a story, a history, and an individual’s touch.

**Conclusion**

Jingyí’s work at the CMLC was the most complex instance of an ELL sponsoring literacy at the multicultural center from my interviews. In sponsoring textile reading literacies, Jingyí argues for the power of textiles as storytellers. By advocating that textiles speak for themselves, Jingyí positions the textiles as prompts, where she provides background information on the textiles and hopes the textiles will spark further conversation. It is up to the audience to “read” and interpret these textiles and have the cross-cultural dialogues the textiles inspire. By positioning textiles as storytellers that can be read, Jingyí advocates for an under-recognized literacy, one that is material and more accessible to a multilingual audience with various first languages.

Furthermore, this chapter shows ways that the classical canons of rhetoric function in material spaces, where the primary suasive forces are objects, rather than spoken or written words. Reframing the canons to focus on how they function at the multicultural fashion show and exhibit demonstrates the canons’ flexibility,
and shows that the canons remain relevant in a contemporary context, even if they are employed in new ways.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Whether through conversation partners, cooking classes, sewing classes, or cultural exhibits, English language learners at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center are literacy sponsors. Though little research has focused on ELLs in teaching roles, ELLs have a wealth of knowledge and skills they teach in their communities. They are not just on the receiving end of education, but actively create knowledge and share language, cultural, and crafting expertise.

Literacy sponsorship, as illustrated in this thesis, is fluid and emerges in unconventional ways at the CMLC. Often sponsorship is collaborative and occurs among friends. The impact friendships have on literacy sponsorship is most obvious in moments of “reciprocal sponsorship” (Alexander), where partners in a learning relationship fluidly move between the roles of sponsor and sponsored. When sponsorship is reciprocal and occurs between friends, it becomes more about exchange and collaboration than gain. Recognizing literacies and literacy sponsorship in unexpected places is an important step in gaining a fuller understanding of what constitutes literacy and how literacies are shared through relationships.

Friendship runs throughout this project and came up in every interview. This finding is significant, as little research exists exploring the relationship between friendship and literacy learning. In addition to friendship, a strong sense of domesticity and hospitality contribute to making the center a space where people feel comfortable teaching and learning. The classes and meetings take on a familiar
and domestic nature that rarely occurs in public spaces, particularly educational spaces. Underlying sponsoring relationships in the CMLC are trust and friendship. Dawn trusts those who enter the center with planning major events, like the fashion show, and those within the center support each other’s projects. Audiences are made up of friends and those who, even if they do not know the teacher, are there because they want to learn more about the teacher’s culture. There is an assumed level of trust that comes with being a visitor to the center that makes performance and teaching less daunting than it would be in a more formal space that does not so explicitly celebrate multiculturalism. The CMLC is both empowering and comfortable. Here, teaching happens around the kitchen table, between friends sitting on a couch with fresh apple cider in the fall, and in the rocking chairs of the children’s room interrupted by a young daughter’s cry for attention. The CMLC is not just a center for literacy learning, but a home, where people share their lives and through sharing, teach one another.

**Ideas for Future Research and Pedagogies**

While this thesis focuses specifically on how ELLs sponsor literacy at the CMLC, participants also discussed other communities throughout Corvallis where they teach. For example, a Korean woman taught Korean language with K-Pop to OSU students, responding to an interest she and her friends saw in Korean culture. Another woman I interviewed taught Taiwanese and Chinese to children in order to preserve these languages, as these children grow up in Corvallis rather than Taiwan. These are only a few examples of situations where ELLs sponsor literacy in their
communities, though participants in this study discussed being literacy sponsors in many areas of their lives. The varied teaching experiences participants described beyond the CMLC indicate there is a demand for their expertise, suggesting potential sites for future research into how ELLs sponsor literacy in their various communities.

More research into the complex practices of ELLs as sponsors of literacy is worthwhile and beneficial because this research can help us more fully understand and value the work ELLs do in our communities. In particular, further research into reciprocal literacy sponsorship will be helpful in understanding and also complicating how we understand literacy sponsorship. Future research could also further explore the role of affect and friendship in literacy learning, whether in community centers or classrooms.

In addition to furthering research into ways ELLs are sponsors of literacy, this thesis suggests there should be more spaces where ELLs are encouraged to teach. The experience of being a teacher or sponsor is valuable, not just because the ELL shares their knowledge, but because they also get to practice and improve their literacy through teaching. Participants in this study valued their teaching experiences, and even talked about ways their English language literacy improved through having the opportunity to use English in the role of teacher. Since many compositionists are dedicated to finding ways to more effectively teach writing to ELL students, perhaps one way to do this would be to look for ways that ELLs can inhabit teaching roles within classrooms. Of course, this is an approach some
compositionist already employ. However, there are limitations to what can be learned within a classroom setting, which is why literacy centers, like the CMLC, are so important.

The freeform structure of the CMLC and the openness for all members to contribute and enact new programs should be fostered in more spaces. In community literacy settings, which are not bound by the same rules as a school, having this fluid structure is a way to create new learning spaces, attitudes, and ideas. Unfortunately, current local circumstances suggest the significance of the CMLC in the OSU and Corvallis communities may be undervalued by those not involved at the center.

**The Future of the CMLC**

While it is valuable for researchers to theorize and develop visions of multicultural literacy, community centers like the CMLC face physical exigencies that put them in danger of ceasing to exist. The CMLC resides on the edge of an otherwise empty lot, on which OSU plans to build new student housing and a parking lot after the CMLC’s lease ends in March 2018. In the meantime, the CMLC has nowhere to move. They are raising funds, but need an affordable, centrally located place in Corvallis where they can meet. Even if they find a place to move, it is unlikely that the cozy comfort of the yellow house could be replicated somewhere else, which is an important part of what makes the CMLC so welcoming.

The CMLC’s future is in danger, a danger that OSU can prevent by allowing the renewal of the CMLC’s lease, instead of replacing the center with student
housing and a parking lot. If OSU saved the CMLC, it would not be just for the CMLC’s sake, but in their own self-interest. Saving the center would benefit Oregon State and the international students and scholars, as well as the domestic students who volunteer, intern, and participate in center events. Every year, the CLMC serves over 6,500 participants and visitors, many of whom are part of the OSU community (CMLC Board, Staff, Participants). Of those involved in the conversation partner program, ninety percent of participants seeking help with their English are OSU students, INTO-OSU students, faculty, scholars, and their spouses (CMLC Board, Staff, Participants). Students from seventeen OSU colleges, departments, and programs have earned course credit through volunteering at the center, and four OSU colleges have sent students to the CMLC to complete internships (CMLC Board, Staff, Participants). These are several among many examples of mutually enriching partnerships between the CMLC and OSU.

For 11 years, the CMLC has been a vibrant part of the Corvallis and OSU communities. While parking is a perpetual university issue, fostering and nurturing diversity should take priority over parking, particularly given Oregon State’s focus on diversity and inclusion. In 2011, President Ed Ray called for a self-study to assess the state of equity, inclusion, and diversity at OSU, resulting in the following vision statement:

Oregon State University aspires to be a collaborative, inclusive and caring community that strives for equity and equal opportunity in everything we do; that creates a welcoming environment and enables success for people from all walks of life; and that shares common, fundamental values grounded in justice, civility and respect while
looking to our diversity as a source of enrichment and strength. (Oregon State, “Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity”)

While OSU already has five cultural centers across campus that perform important work—Asian & Pacific Cultural Center, Centro Cultural Cesar Chavez, Ettihad Cultural Center, Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center, and Native American Long House—the CMLC offers something different, in that it has a specifically multicultural focus. Furthermore, it is not designed specifically for student use, like the on-campus cultural centers. Instead the CMLC serves the families of OSU students and faculty and the wider Corvallis community in addition to students. The CMLC’s fluid structure also allows for different kinds of activities and learning to occur, outside of an academic setting.

Instead of forcing the CMLC away from OSU, OSU should instead be strengthening its ties to the CMLC, so even more students, faculty, and their families can benefit from the center. As stated in OSU’s diversity vision statement, OSU should see helping the CMLC as an opportunity to extend “collaboration,” between the university and the Corvallis community to enhance multicultural education. In making the CMLC relocate, OSU is endangering the center’s continuation, which contradicts the values in OSU’s diversity vision statement. Prioritizing student housing and parking over the CMLC’s continued operation, does not seem to be “welcoming” nor supportive of all people’s “success” in the OSU and Corvallis communities.

As researchers, we must remember that the communities we study and are a part of may be at risk. Community literacy centers like the CMLC often inhabit
borrowed or rented space, and the continued availability of this space is not guaranteed. Thus, it is important for community literacy researchers to look for ways that our research can increase the visibility of these centers and support their continued operation.

As this thesis concludes, there is one last literacy event, I’d like to share with readers. Because the center is losing its lease on the yellow house, the CMLC is having a letter writing workshop in May 2017, where immigrants, refugees, international students, and their families will gather to write letters to Oregon State administrators, urging them to reconsider their decision to evict the CMLC. Together, in the center’s living room, they will write. They will write their stories of moving to Corvallis, of finding the center, of learning, of teaching, and of making friends. Some are hesitant to write in a language they are still learning, but know the importance of using their English literacy to save the center. They know their voice and their writing matters. They gather in the house they are writing to save, helping one another craft stories that are hard to put into words. In the face of adversity, they employ their literacies as hopeful, dedicated resistance.
Works Cited


Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center Board, Staff, and Participants. Letter. 30 June 2016.


Appendix A: Interview Guide
Interview Guide: English Language Learners

This interview guide is for people who are involved in programs at the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center and speak English as their second language. This interview is expected to take between 30 minutes to an hour.

- Where are you from?
- How long have you been in Corvallis?
- What languages do you speak?
- While you have been learning English, who has supported you in the past, and who supports you now?
- How did you learn about the CMLC?
- What kinds of things have you learned at the CMLC?
- What kinds of reading and writing have you done at the center?
- Have you helped others learn English at the center?
- What do you do at the center (activities, volunteering, etc.)?
- Can you tell me about [whatever activity they mention being involved in]?
- What about the programs you are involved in do you find helpful?
- Do you ever borrow books or other materials from the center? If so, what have you borrowed?
- If you teach a class or have led an event, how do you prepare for that event?
  - If you haven’t led any classes or groups at the CMLC, have you ever had to instruct people or lead a group of people in a language other than your first language? If so, can you describe that experience and how you prepared for it?
- Do you teach a cooking class?
  - If you do teach a cooking class, can you explain how you prepare for it?
  - Can you talk about the interaction between you and the people who participate in the class?
  - Is there a lot of back and forth between you and the people who attend your class? If there is, can you describe this?
  - Are there ever any words or phrases you don’t know how to say when you are teaching? If so, how do you handle this?
  - Do the people who attend your class ever help you with your English speaking? If so, how do they help?
  - What do you find most challenging about teaching a class?
  - What do you like most about teaching a class?
- Have you attended a cooking class?
  - Can you explain how the teacher taught the cooking class?
  - Did going to the cooking class contribute to your learning English?
Have you tried to cook the dish from the cooking class on your own?
  • If so, were you able to follow the directions you had from the cooking class? What challenges did you have?
  • In the cooking class, did the class help the instructor with explaining the steps in English?

Do you have a conversation partner?
  • If so, what do you do with your conversation partner?
  • What do you talk about with your conversation partner?

Have you ever received handouts at events?
  • If so, how do you use these handouts?
  • Do you find them helpful?
  • Do you write on handouts?
  • Do you keep them and refer to them later?

How often do you speak English at the center? How often do you speak your first language at the center?

What kind of writing do you do at the center?
  • In specific programs that you are in?
  • Does anybody help you with your writing? If so, who helps you and how?

Have you ever taken notes at an event at the center?
  • If so, what language do you take notes in?
  • What kinds of things do you take notes on?

What kinds of reading do you do at the center?

What books have you read at the center that you have found to be interesting or helpful?

How do you think being at the center and participating in the center activities, has aided in learning more about English language (whether speaking, hearing, reading, or writing)?

Have you learned about languages other than English and your home language at the center?

If time is left in the interview, I will ask the following questions to learn more about the participant’s literacy background. I include these as optional questions and as the last questions, because the CMLC is the focus of my study. I do not want talking about literacy practices in their own language to take up too much time in the interview, though it could provide valuable insight:

• Can you tell me about your experience as a reader and writer growing up?
• How were you taught to write in your own country?
• When you were learning to read and write who supported you?
• What sort of reading do you enjoy now?
Appendix B: Pilot Study Interview Guide
Pre-Existing Data: Interview Guide

This is the interview guide the student researcher used for the interviews she conducted as a part of her class project for ANTH 591: Ethnographic Methods during the Winter 2016 term at OSU.

- Where are you from?
- How long have you been in Corvallis?
- What languages do you speak?
- How did you learn about the CMLC?
- What kinds of things have you learned at the CMLC?
- What do you do at the center (activities, volunteering, etc.)?
- Can you tell me about [whatever activity they mention being involved in]?
- How often do you speak English? How often do you speak your first language at the center?
- What kind of writing do you do at the center?
  - In specific programs that you are in?
- What kinds of reading do you do at the center?
- If English is your second language, how do you think being at the center and participating in the center activities, has aided in learning more about English language (whether speaking, hearing, reading, or writing)?
- Have you learned about languages other than English and your home language at the center?