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Literate Activity Report

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Literate Activity in Cycling Class

Introduction

The definition of literacy surpasses basic reading and writing skills because it encompasses multiple complex elements. The practice of literacy exists deeply within cultural and communal traditions which establish human social interactions. The research by Andrea Fishman about Eli shows how literacy appeared in religious texts and dairy magazines instead of schoolbooks because these materials held cultural value in his Amish community (Fishman 15). The acquisition of literacy skills depends on cultural values and social environments because these elements determine how literacy develops and what it represents. Madeline Halvey demonstrates how dance contains its own system of literacy through small yet crucial elements which participants need to understand during movement and instruction (Halvey 28). The authors demonstrate that literacy exists throughout all activities which need participants to understand signs and symbols and communal practices to reach common goals. The Recreation and Wellness Center (RWC) at the University of Central Florida demonstrates literacy as a cultural practice through its unexpected setting of group cycling classes. The class requires students to read verbal instructions and digital displays and musical patterns and social signals from their peers. The participants need to learn specific technical terms while they absorb the motivational language which unites the group members. I observed the 10:00 a.m. cycling class at the RWC for this Literate Activity Report. The cycling class at the RWC functions as a complex literate space which unites technical knowledge with emotional and social

competencies to create an organized framework that helps participants reach their personal fitness targets and experience group-based physical activity and mutual support.

Methods

The research method of participant observation served as my approach to study this literate activity according to Prior and Halvey (Halvey 29). I joined a 45-minute group cycling class on September 1 2025 by taking a stationary bike spot at the back of the room. The rear position enabled me to perform physical exercises while keeping a complete view of the class activities. I took notes by hand in a small notebook when the intensity of the workout decreased to observe how the instructor communicated and how participants reacted and how technology and music functioned in the class. The notes were first transcribed and then organized to make the analysis easier. The instructor served as the main author who used four communication channels to deliver the participants instructions through verbal commands, motivational speeches, visual demonstrations, digital interface and music control. The fifteen students in the class demonstrated their understanding of the situation through their body movements, facial reactions and occasional spoken responses. The cycling studio operated as the setting which featured dim lighting and displayed performance metrics on a front screen and delivered powerful sound through its system. The communication created an efficient workout experience through synchronized group movements with the instructor's exercise plan for the day. I studied the different literacy types during the observation by identifying technical terms, emotional appeals, digital signals, musical indicators and social rules for group behavior.

Results

The observation showed that the class operated with an advanced literacy system which served as its fundamental operational structure. The technical vocabulary functioned as the fundamental form of literacy. The instructor used the terms "resistance," "gear," "cadence" (or RPM) and "position one, two, and three" throughout the lesson. The participants added two resistance gears to their exercise while keeping their cadence speed at ninety right after receiving the command. This shared vocabulary functions as a specialized code; its best to understand these concepts before attending the class, much like Eli's need to understand the cultural codes of his Amish community to be considered literate (Fishman 11). Someone new to the class would most likely feel left out due to not understanding certain concepts about the class.

A second, powerful layer of literacy was the instructor's use of motivational rhetoric. The speeches functioned as practical texts which worked to change both emotional and physical responses of their listeners. Phrases like, "This burn is temporary, but the strength you gain is permanent," or "Remember why you walked in that door today," were delivered at moments of peak physical exertion. The students showed right away that they had changed their body position. Their pedaling became more powerful and their faces displayed determination. The person beside her showed support for the statement "I needed to hear that" which proved how this verbal approach could be effective in persuasion. The physical challenge gets transformed into a story of personal victory through this rhetoric which enables people to maintain both group spirit and personal determination.

The digital and musical texts delivered ongoing instructional content which supported learning activities from start to finish. The front of the room showed a big screen that displayed target cadence ranges together with the current song's beat per minute (BPM) which matched the ideal pedal speed. Participants frequently glanced at this screen to calibrate their performance. The music functioned as a non-verbal text which controlled both rhythm and pace through its powerful bass and strong beats. Halvey (30) demonstrates how basic cycling forms work through his explanation of how to synchronize pedal strokes with music rhythms which produces synchronized group movement.

The class showed communal participation literacy because they worked together as a single group. The instructor initiated countdowns through his voice which started with “Three, two, one, GO!” that culminated in a unified surge of effort from the riders. The students received a thirty-second instruction to clap in rhythm with the music which produced a strong feeling of synchronized unity between them. The collective involvement of community members turns individual activities into unified groups which Fishman describes as a communal practice of literacy (Fishman 17). The group members use shared chanting and clapping as literate activities which strengthen their collective identity and support each other.

Discussion

The observation shows that group cycling classes create a strong literate environment which allows different literacy practices to work together well. The technical vocabulary serves as a foundation, but motivational rhetoric adds emotional power while digital and musical elements manage the speed. Communal practices create shared identity for long-term collaborative work. This ecosystem of literacy is not just supportive of the workout, it is the main concept that allows the workout to be possible. This finding resonates strongly with the work of both Fishman and Halvey. Fishman demonstrates that community recognition serves as the basis for validating literacy because Eli found meaning in reading through his family farm work and religious activities (Fishman 15). The RWC uses literacy as a meaningful tool because it connects directly to the community values which emphasize health, discipline and mutual support. To be literate here is to be a successful participant in this culture. The cycling studio demonstrates Halvey's concept of "simple forms" of dance literacy which he defines on page 28. The fundamental elements of a beat and screen numbers and "add gear" commands serve as basic instructions which provide strong guidance in this particular context.

The group cycling class contains a large amount of literacy which functions as a constantly changing process. The concept expands traditional literacy definitions beyond academic skills because it shows how we use reading skills to understand our environment for social participation. Students in this environment track numbers displayed on screens while understanding the tone and rhythm and timing at the same time that creates a shared experience. The students also develop their ability to process multiple signals simultaneously through physical work and mental hardinesses. The cycling class serves as a physical test but it functions as a complete communicative event which creates meaning by uniting spoken words with numerical cues, musical elements and physical exercise. The group members must adjust their

understanding at the same time because the instructor keeps changing his speaking speed and word selection throughout the lesson and also uses special terminology for this classroom.

Works Cited

- Fishman, Andrea. "Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish." *UCF Writes A Handbook for Writing at the University of Central Florida*, edited by, Matthew Bryan, Nathan Holic, Lissa Mansfield, Adele Richardson, Nichole Stack, Jacob Stewart, and Kevin Roozen, Fountainhead Press, 2017, pp. 8-17.
- Halvey, Madeline. "Simple Forms of Dance and Movement Literacy." *The Journal of the First-Year Writing Program at the University of Central Florida*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2015, pp. 28-36.

Observation Notes

A. General Rhetorical Situation

The rhetorical situation in my observation had many kinds of communication. The text was the words of the instructor, the special cycling terms, the motivational speeches, the numbers on the screen, and also the music. The author or communicator was the cycling instructor who planned the workout and gave all the instructions. The audience was the fifteen students in the 10:00 a.m. cycling class. Each student came with their own fitness goals, but they all joined the group and followed the same direction. The communication achieved two essential goals through its dual purpose of teaching cycling methods and fostering student motivation and group through teamwork.

B. Specific Instances of Reading/Writing

The educational experience in this class involved more than the physical materials of paper and books. Students had to read the cadence numbers on the big screen and also follow the beat of the music. The instructor employed cycling terminology which included “gear” and “cadence” and “position one, two, three” and “resistance.” The words contained a particular language which students required to understand. The students immediately modified their bikes by adding two gears while maintaining a speed of ninety cadence after the instructor gave the command. The motivational sentences were also very important. The students continued their efforts because of motivational statements which included “Remember why you walked in that door today” and “This burn is temporary, but the strength you gain is permanent.” The countdown sequence follows a standard format which starts with “Three, two, one, GO!” The text function operated as a chat because all participants sent their responses at the same time. The reading experience

involved examining numbers as well as sounds and written words. The students demonstrated their learning through their body movements and their clapping and the notes I wrote in my notebook.

C. Was the Purpose of the Literate Activity Accomplished?

Yes, the purpose of the literate activity was accomplished. The students performed the workout according to the instructor's verbal commands and physical demonstrations. The performers modified their tempo while introducing obstacles which synchronized with the visual display and musical rhythm. The motivational talk achieved its purpose because one student explicitly mentioned "I needed to hear that." Students developed unity through their shared participation in group activities which involved clapping and shouting as a group. The exercise was successful in achieving its goals and the communication process worked well for both physical activity and community development. The fitness class evolved into a cultural tradition which people used reading skills to enhance their health outcomes and develop discipline and teamwork abilities.

Reflection

The main obstacle I faced while working on this project involved uniting my fundamental reading abilities with all the different communication methods I needed to handle. I started with the belief that reading and writing activities focused mainly on academic texts. The cycling class demanded that I learn lots of new skills. The dual role of participant and observer created difficulties because I had to maintain complete focus on notetaking during physical activities which initially produced short notes that needed lots of expansion during the transcription process. The most enjoyable part of this work was when I learned motivational speeches function as actual and effective written communication tools. The direct statements from the instructor led participants to change their work activities and output which ended up being highly effective. Fishman and Halvey used their example to show that literacy functions as a community-based operational power. The research reveals that literacy exists throughout all environments, yet each environment creates its own unique form of literacy. As an international student, I sometimes feel not on par regarding academic literary norms. The work on this project brought me a sense of empowerment. In the study it showed that people possess multiple literacies in their daily lives which include understanding gym instructions, following recipes and finding their way through unfamiliar cities. Reading and writing skills require mastering multiple learning environments that people need to develop throughout their existence.