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Constructed Spaces and Transitory Decor: Georhetorical Practices as Experiential Learning in Rhetoric and Composition

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When seen through the lens of geography, the writing classroom, often perceived by students as an intimidating, rules-driven environment, can become a place where students exert their own power as writers and learners. The classroom is emblematic of the interstitial place of the community college, which serves as an unstable location between the university and the workforce. Although community colleges are often ambiguous sites, there is a powerful incentive for active engagement, particularly when students view the learning institution as a larger argument that provides opportunities for their own intellectual interventions. Through experiential learning, students take ownership of their surroundings and they understand how rhetoric can make them more located and more connected to their intellectual and professional pursuits. Once students take control of their institutional spaces, they gain discursive power of that space, a power that can translate back to the writing classroom.

The application of georhetorical practices provides students with abundant opportunities to explore their rhetorical situation in the space where writing occurs. Through explorations of the habitual spaces and places that students reside, including the classroom, students gain a wider understanding of how their surroundings shape their identities and how their discursive authority forms both institutional spaces and their interactions within the larger culture. When students engage in georhetorical practices, they can locate themselves as community members, learners, and writers. Through an analysis of their habitats, they learn that they can exert their authority within the classroom through active participation with their peers. The rhetorical structure of the classroom can certainly be deconstructed and demolished, revealing the potential for experiential learning opportunities beyond the artificiality and temporality of the classroom.

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In this essay, I explore the importance of the space of the developmental writing classroom, specifically as it exists within the larger framework of the community college. I argue that the academically-situated site of composition must be taken into account as a potential for active, experiential learning. When beginning students take control over the physical space where writing traditionally occurs, students can then translate this control to the activity of composition, specifically within collaborative writing exercises, such as peer review. I use an example of georhetorical observations of the classroom to expose students to the constructed nature of authority in the classroom and urge students to embrace their power as emerging writers as they respond to peer work. When students exert control over their writing location, this sense of empowerment can help foster self-confidence in their writing.

I situate georhetorical interventions within my own experiences teaching developmental writing within composition and rhetoric. Currently, I teach Composition and Rhetoric at a community college in the state of Colorado. The college is a dynamic open-admissions institution that fosters a unique learning environment for over 20,000 students. The college exists within the diverse and ideologically conflicted environment of Colorado, an area that houses multiple military installations, including the United States Air Force Academy, while also supporting controversial and progressive legislative acts that legalize recreational marijuana and physician-assisted suicide. The community college consists of several satellite campuses and offers a variety of certificate programs as well as Associates degrees in fields such as Humanities, Nursing, and Emergency Medical Technology. The main campus is located near a military base, which draws many active and retired members. The college excels in its commitment to service men and women through support systems, initiatives, and increased retention rates. I will focus my pedagogical application within this specific site, exploring the complexities of students' self-perception in the composition and rhetoric classroom.

(In)Active Learning: The Peer Review Process

Peer Review is easily one of the most essential collaborative classroom activities for first-year composition students. Advocates for this form of collaborative writing, such as Kenneth A. Bruffee, Peter Elbow, and Donald Murray have famously emphasized the importance of peer review as an important way to decentralize authority in the classroom and promote the knowledge and skills of the student collective. However, as Charlotte Brammer and Mary Rees note, this decentralization of authority that was

cutting-edge over 20 years ago has become as commonplace and routine as the "chalk and talk" method of lecture-based teaching (71). Brammer and Rees argue that student complaints about peer review result from composition instructors' lack of preparation, and lack of clear instruction. Too often, instructors rely on insufficient preparation methods, such as handouts and lectures without first building a rapport and a shared sense of community. Students need to develop trust and confidence amongst themselves before peer review can become a successful and meaningful endeavor. In Brammar and Rees' study, 160 out of 328 student respondents expressed negative impressions of the peer review process, chiefly claiming that peer review days were often pointless due to a perceived lack of trust and confidence in both the ability to provide and receive feedback. When students view peer review as a waste of class time and do not trust each other's authority as critical writers, peer review will become a routine exercise in the composition classroom, devoid of genuine student interaction and learning.

As writing instructors, we encourage the collaborative effort of peer review as a hands-on way for students to learn from one another as emerging writers, scholars, and critical thinkers. Instead of active engagement, however, we often find that some students rush through one another's writing, with a superficial focus on grammar or MLA concerns, and then quickly pen brief encouraging remarks, preferring instead to wait passively for the instructor's feedback. Their engagement sometimes seems performative, a practiced ritual. As Brammer and Rees illustrate, some students are not actively engaged in this kind of assignment because they tend to lack confidence in their authority as readers and writers, feeling erroneously that they do not have critical feedback that is worthy of offering to their classmates. In order to build self-confidence, I argue that students can gain authority in the writing classroom through a focus on the space of the writing classroom itself. Through a mastery of the space where writing occurs, students can feel more emboldened and empowered, trusting their intellectual ability to provide effective feedback for their peers.

Gheorhetorical Methodologies: Locality

Students can become more actively engaged with a critical approach to experiential learning through georhetorical practices, a guiding pedagogy that focuses on the importance of space in identity formation. Considerations of space influence how and what students learn and how they apply such knowledge to their local environments. According to composition and rhetorical theorists Christopher J. Keller and Christian R. Weisser, the term "space" is ambiguous, open-ended, dependent upon context, and

enmeshed within the term "place" so that "places no doubt have histories and meanings, yet we instead contend that space is not prior to place, not a preexisting condition of it. Rather, space is the outcome or product of place" (4). Likewise, spatial theorists such as Sidney I. Dobrin extend the instability of space, claiming that its uncertainty lies within its potential, its endless possibilities as it awaits occupation, as it waits to be written and produced (17-18). Dobrin's definition of space as a material site of awaiting opportunities inscribed by the historical institution of place is critical to considerations of the space of the classroom. Emerging writers are often already "written" by their personal histories and experiences that they have in relation to the writing classroom. They often inscribe the classroom with their own negative past experiences with writing and their past failures. When they physically occupy the classroom, they do not always reflect critically on how the room itself shapes their expertise as writers.

Through critical, georhetorical examinations of the banal surroundings of the classroom, students gain an understanding of how space and materially-manufactured objects extend influence over how knowledge and discourse are constructed. Furthermore, civic engagement as an extension of the classroom and writing for a "real" audience should move beyond arbitrarily-assigned community service projects to fully embrace environments that students actively inhabit in complex and meaningful ways. When students understand how space, place, and the objects within that space influence their learning behaviors, they recognize their transformative place in the larger institution. Through such learning practices, students gain confidence as writers and rhetoricians as they situate themselves within the college. John Ackerman defines georhetorical methodologies as spatial practices of social geography, or literatures of place that can help students view themselves as members of a community with spatial authority. Ackerman argues that social geography is inherently rhetorical in nature and views it as a methodology of civic action and authority. Georhetorical examinations of a student's physical and ideological location that extend beyond disciplinary dispositions can promote reconsiderations of both language and lexicon. Specifically, Ackerman suggests that locality should be taught as a form of rhetorical agency that is situated within text and place and provides a bridge between the authority of the learning institution and the intimate authority that students possess in regards to the locations in which they reside:

> I propose that if rhetorical authority is to have a material, residential capacity, then we may as well begin with social geography in natural and design spaces, suggesting that body, space, and text fruitfully occur as learnable phenomena

> in that curricular order. […] It will be the return to body, space, and text that makes the practice of writing rhetorical. We are used to thinking that the rhetorical situation is comprised of audience, constraint, and exigence, which conspire in a logocentric universe, but with a georhetorical method and a sociogeographic motive the exigence may productively emerge from the synapse of an embodied, material, and historical location. (124)

Ackerman suggests that rhetorical authority should begin through an analysis of space. By exploring the design of locations, we can better understand concepts of audience, purpose, and constraint as they coincide with the history and embodied subjectivity of the individuals who reside within that area. This focus on space as a methodology of exploring argument can provide developmental writing students with a real-world example of how rhetoric functions within the writing classroom. Students can analyze how the traditional layout of the classroom supports the idea that the instructor is the sole source of authority in the classroom and that they are merely passive consumers of that power. Students can also apply their personal history to the layout of the classroom, perhaps recognizing how their past experiences in the writing classroom, which might have been unpleasant, are perpetuated. When students locate themselves physically within such spaces and places, they can analyze how their identity is intertwined with their personal histories. Students learn that a location is never stable or demarcated easily. For example, in *Back to School: Why Everyone Deserves a Second Chance at Education,* Mike Rose argues that a college's architecture is symbolic: "The design of buildings, the arrangement of offices and classrooms, the flow of traffic, the ease of access, the presence of common spaces—all these have a significant effect on what students do and how they feel about it. And all these features convey a host of messages about the identity and status of the campus and the nature of the educational experience it offers" (147). The symbolism of space is crucial when we consider the space of the classroom and its role in identity formation. This advocacy for the role of spatial practices as a necessary and essential component of writing instruction encourages students to view composition as an inherently social, cultural, and communal experience. They understand their identities both in terms of how they situate themselves as traditional classroom-centered learners, and as authoritative meaning makers with experience within the local spaces and places where they reside.

Community College Students as Outsiders

I suggest that attention to the space of the writing classroom can specifically help community college students who might consider themselves outsiders to the larger academic community. Ackerman suggests that georhetorical practices in composition and rhetoric classes should be targeted towards university students in particular as they struggle to locate themselves on campus, within a specific discipline, and the pragmaticism of the workforce (112). Although university students are admittedly in a financial, intellectual, and social transitional state, particularly first-year students, I argue that the students at community colleges, especially students who are placed in developmental writing classes, are a more apt audience for georhetorical practices because of their interstitial identities they straddle between the two-year college and the four-year institution.

The public's perception of the community college has long been denigrating. Marlene Griffith suggests that the public's misconception about community college students is based upon ignorance about the mission of the college. Citing Nancy LaPaglia's study of the perception of community college students as they are portrayed through contemporary literature, individuals who attend this type of institution are characterized as "mediocre," the choice to attend such a college a "swan dive into academic obscurity" (271). This perception of the student population exists largely because of the public's lack of knowledge about the inner workings of the community college and the life experiences of its students. Griffith argues that it is easy to belittle these students because they are largely invisible: "Our students are not visible as real people with complex lives. They are stock characters in our contemporary political and social morality play: losers and scapegoats" (271). This denigration of the community college student is often felt by that very same population, particularly when they are largely enrolled in developmental courses. According to a 2015 study, 68% of community college students are required to take at least one developmental course in order to meet graduation guidelines. Students who are enrolled in these classes often feel discouraged and disappointed, leading to a decrease in retention rates. This lack of self-confidence in terms of college readiness is so pervasive that some colleges are implementing programs to increase student self-confidence through initiatives such as service learning and peer mentoring programs, which foster student engagement and assuredness (Mangan).

In the first week of every semester, I facilitate an open dialogue amongst my students and encourage them to share their perceptions of community college. I am always astounded by the diverse range of responses that students share with the class

as they touch upon their apprehensions, hopes, and goals. Although most of my students are aware of the misconceptions surrounding community college, I find that student perceptions vary amongst demographics. For example, those students who typically are 25 or older tend to have a more positive view of community college, citing benefits and personal empowerment: "I really like that the college provides evening and weekend classes, since I work full-time," "I am saving *so* much money here," "I'm proud to be able to tell my children that I am working towards a college degree," and "This college has made it easier for me to transition out of the military." Conversely, I find that young adults are more likely to admit feelings of self-doubt about their status within the college, stating: "I'm here because I slacked off in high school. I guess I deserve to be here," "I heard that having a community college on your transcript looks bad," "My friends are all attending a university, but I'm not. I feel like I'm missing out," and "I heard that a lot of students drop out here." One student even commented on the physical environment of the two-year college, reflecting, "I thought that this place would be really ghetto." This statement reflects how location and aesthetic design elements can influence a student's expectations about their education. This particular student was referring to a specific satellite campus and its proximity to a large homeless population, which lead him to believe that the school was not attracting the "best kind of students from the area." Additionally, one rather creative student referred to the cinderblock design of the campus as "prison chic," reflecting her perception of the institutional nature of the campus design, with its focus on practicality and affordability, rather than style. Perhaps one of the most poignant statements from a developmental writing student stated, "I am not smart enough to get into a real college. I have to take remedial classes here and I am already struggling. This makes me feel even worse." Opening up this kind of dialogue with students is crucial because it reveals some of the inner turmoil that beginning community college students encounter as they compare themselves to their friends at universities or confront the stereotypes associated with community college. Through this kind of exchange, students realize that they are not alone in their doubts, fears, and even resentments. It is often the starting point for building rapport and connection. In addition, when younger students engage in the dialogues of non-traditional students who are returning from the workforce, they are also able to hear viewpoints that provide them with encouragement and support. When a 60-year old student told the younger students that they should not listen to "naysayers," that they should all feel privileged to have the ability to attend college, a shy 18-year-old student, fresh from high school, stated with absolute conviction, "Yeah. Let's prove the haters wrong."

Such a precarious position as outsiders tends to dislocate community college students, who feel academically and *physically* alienated from larger intellectual communities such as universities. They sometimes feel socially disconnected from their place of learning, since they do not often form coherent bonds with their classmates. Since students at two-year facilities sometimes transfer to other colleges before completing their associate's degree, this transition may influence the likelihood to seek long-term relationships with other students and within the college as a whole. Furthermore, students at universities have the opportunity to join a variety of social organizations such as fraternities and sororities and reside in campus housing, which strengthens relationships amongst beginning students. The diverse student population of two-year colleges can also create a barrier to social connections. Experience and age are often powerful factors in forming social bonds.

Although community colleges are identified in name and ideology as inclusive learning places open to the public, many such colleges are not placed within one specific locale, but are situated across satellite campuses. Individuals who attend these dispersed schools are *physically* isolated from their place of learning since they are not rooted within a stable site that connects them to all of the members of that particular learning institution. Georhetorical practices emphasize the creation of meaningful discourse communities within students' lived realities. Simultaneously, these practices also encourage students to view themselves within their localities, which can greatly benefit this population. Students who are traditionally isolated intellectually, socially, and physically from their larger communities can learn how not only to establish themselves amongst academic locales, but also the non-institutional places and spaces that shape them as learners outside of the classroom. Georhetorical practice, with its emphasis on active learning and community engagement, benefits the vibrant environment of the community college in particular by encouraging students to orient themselves geographically and academically, which adds authority to their position as writers and learners.

Experiential Learning as Rhetorical Practice

Experiential learning practices, such as a peer analysis of the space of the writing classroom, provides writing instructors with valuable methodologies to help them engage students in the community college and create stronger bonds amongst themselves. David A. Kolb's influential text, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, explores how "hands-on" learning can enhance traditional forms of education and promote critical inquiry and self-development amongst

individuals, arguing that this model "stresses the role of formal education in lifelong learning and the development of individuals to their full potential as citizens, family members, and human beings" (4). Kolb's introduction to the philosophy of experiential learning is crucial because it emphasizes the application of institutionalized learning procedures to practical scenarios in the personal, social, and cultural evolution of the individual citizen. Kolb's evaluation of actualized learning practices draws attention to the contemporary model of education within academia and corporations that privilege insular forms of knowledge that are only relevant to a narrowly defined occupation of place, space, and ideology. Colin Beard and John P. Wilson argue that learning should transgress the narrow confines of traditional spaces so that applied experience is valued:

> Experience, in its many guises, pervades all forms of learning; however, its value is frequently not recognized or is even disregarded. Active engagement is one of the basic tenets of experiential learning: experiential learning undoubtedly involves the 'whole person', through thoughts, feelings and physical activity. (5)

Beard and Wilson extend Kolb's doctrine of active learning by (indirectly) implicating institutions and their disavowal of educational practices outside of the immediate learning environment. The acquisition of academic or real-world skills must be put into practice and involves the integration of an individual's corporeality—through physical and emotional affectations. Through a georhetorical analysis of the classroom, students can transfer their sense of active engagement within the space of the classroom to their homes, workplaces, and larger society, recognizing their authority as active members in each of these areas.

Mapping the Classroom

At the beginning of the semester, I encourage students to explore the space of the writing classroom in order for them to become more comfortable in the space where they will be producing most of their writing. I begin by introducing them to contemporary modes of cartography, now termed "counter-maps," or "counter-hegemonic maps," which allow disenfranchised and underrepresented communities to reframe local history, culture, and environmental geographies in order to reclaim land and memory. These community projects emphasize the participatory power of groups whose cultural knowledge assert their authority over regional areas and shape

government policy. For example, at the 2011 Push International Performing Arts Festival, Jamie Hilder presented his experiences impersonating a Downtown Ambassador in Vancouver. Instead of providing tourists with rote history tours and removing transient individuals from sites of tourism, he provides alternate, competing histories of Vancouver's historical sites which conflict with the "official" political, social, and cultural history of the city. For example, Hilder offers tourists insight into the social and political conflicts in Vancouver's tourist industry, pointing out the city's efforts to banish the homeless. He also reasserts and validates the missing histories and struggles of indigenous populations in the area (Johnston 7). I use these examples of counter-maps to encourage students to apply their own histories and experiences to the writing classroom. By reinhabiting this space and taking control of it, they can resist the popular narrative that developmental writing students are less intelligent and do not possess good writing skills. By taking control of the space, we can offer traditionally disenfranchised students with the opportunity to rewrite these stories in their own voices.

After familiarizing students with counter-mapping, I encourage them to apply their knowledge of space and place by charting the spaces that they inhabit within their classroom, beyond its "transitory décor" (Knabb 49). Through a hands-on georhetorical analysis, students gain a greater understanding of how the institution exerts an ideological and physical force upon their learning and in turn, how they can demystify that force. To promote experiential learning that leads to an active application of rhetorical analysis, I ask pairs of students to explore the classroom space, making general observations about the room. They simply explore the space in the room, often encountering objects that they did not notice before, particularly because of their propensity to assign themselves their own seating arrangements, which limits their view of the classroom. I begin with an unstructured approach because I do not want to ask any leading questions that might make them focus on one particular aspect of the room; rather I prefer that students make their own initial analysis and conclusions.

After students take note of the classroom space, I then ask them in small groups to critically engage with their encounters. Through initial critique of the persuasive techniques of the classroom, students learn the constructive nature of their locale and the ideological and physical constraints that city planners exert over us. Through an analysis of the classroom, students see through the artificial nature of the learning site by actively collaborating and sharing insight. In this case, experiential learning is practiced as students physically explore their learning environment with one

another and attempt to deconstruct their shared community space, exerting their own control over the area.

I extend the small group discussion by providing students with writing prompts that ask them to consider the physical site of writing and learning in more detail. The questions that I pose are meant to encourage them to view the classroom as a physically and ideologically constructed space. Students explore the classroom's design elements and furniture, for example, calling attention to the rhetorical force of the space and its influence on learning. I ask them to consider the amount of space in the room, their mobility within the space, the location of the instructor's designated space, the arrangement of desks and tables, and the construction of such objects. Based on their observations, I then ask them to analyze critically these aspects of space and construct an analysis about the overall argument of the room: What are we being asked to believe? How are we supposed to behave? How are we supposed to learn? Who is in charge of disseminating knowledge?

Based upon this rhetorical analysis, students offer insightful commentary about the larger argument of the classroom, pointing out that the aligned desks face towards the instructor, implying that the sole authority of knowledge should come from her. They focus on the lack of windows, surmising that perhaps they are not meant to be distracted by the beauty of nature, that they should be entirely focused on lecture material. During a particular session of this assignment, a student pointed out that the hard plastic chairs were purposefully uncomfortable, reflecting his own discomfort upon entering the writing classroom, a space that he attributed to personal doubts, fears, and failure. By metaphorically breaking down the walls of the classroom, students gain authority and take back the institutional power of the classroom. They understand the constructed authority of space and exert their own control over the anxieties that they might harbor within the space of the writing classroom. They understand that learning is truly collaborative in nature and requires the participation of others. These constraints cannot hold them back because they are mere illusions, just funhouse mirrors. The space is theirs, the writing is theirs; they own it.

I encourage them to apply this new ownership to the peer review process, to exert their real sense of authority and feel more confident in their ability to provide critique of their peers' writing. They learn to value their feedback as credible and worth sharing. For example, before the first peer review, I provide students with discussion questions that they share with their writing partner: What is the purpose of this essay? What are the guidelines? These initial prompts encourage students to think of themselves as the experts. They are knowledgeable about the writing assignment, they have completed the first draft, and therefore they are capable of incorporating that expertise into their

feedback. Since students have reclaimed the space of writing, they can use this emerging confidence to provide effective feedback during peer review, a common composition practice that can initiate students' fears about their own intellectual competencies. Although asking students to share their understanding of the writing assignment might seem simplistic, I have discovered that developmental writing students tend to feel more comfortable about their ability to provide and receive meaningful feedback.

A georhetorical exploration of the writing classroom is an open embrace of experiential learning, fostering active student engagement that requires genuine collaboration amongst students in a way that offers complexity to standard forms of group participation within the writing classroom. Geoffrey Sirc, in *English Composition as a Happening,* laments the constructed, institutionally-defined methods of learning within the composition classroom and calls for a return to creativity, desire, spontaneity, and genuine collaborative action within the academic spaces where writing occurs. Drawing upon the work of the 1960s counterculture educational theorist and civil rights activist Jerry Farber, Sirc provides a historical narrative of students' alienation and distrust of the classroom, which ultimately leads to disaffection, stasis, and boredom. The material and spatial layout of the classroom is a covert form of persuasion that both teacher and student are inherently aware:

> Consider how most classrooms are set up. Everyone is turned toward the teacher and away from classmates. You can't see the faces of those in front of you. Frequently, seats are bolted to the floor or fastened together in rigid rows. This classroom, like the grading system, isolates students from one another and makes them passive receptacles. (Farber, as quoted in Sirc)

Sirc continues to cite Farber, whose association with the bleak layout of the contemporary classroom reminds students of prison, the industrial-military complex, and mortuaries. Beginning with such an analysis of the space of the classroom and its design that complicates and discourages student collaboration, learners explore both the ideological and material conditions of the classroom that isolate students from the teacher and each other, as well as, I argue, the kinds of learning that are available in such an environment. In emphasizing the argument for a return to the dynamic, spontaneous, and participatory models of learning promoted by avant-garde movements from the 1950s through the 60s, Sirc dismisses current models of classroom collaboration that are manufactured and transparently institutional in nature:

> Classroom collaborative work done according to Bruffee and Weiner, with its conventional task-orientation, is too safe, too already-done—snapshots from a package-tour vacation ("Are we having fun yet?") that's already been taken a hundred times before, now being offered one more time. It's more ritual than lived situation; it can only be acted out, with some students better rehearsed than others. (197,198)

Sirc's perception of group work, a common and repetitive learning method within the composition and rhetoric classroom, does not promote active, genuine participation, but simply becomes an expected routine that students easily learn to maneuver. Group work becomes a mechanical mode of learning. For example, during group work, I notice students tend to congregate within the same set of peers, pick out a spot in the same classroom space, and choose the same leader to speak for the group. The other group members have come to expect that the instructor will be pacified with the responses of the designated team leader, who will provide a representative model for the rest of the students. When instructors passively provide students with a discussion or writing prompt based on an assigned reading (usually from a rigidly-enforced and institutionally mandated reader), students quickly learn the role assigned to them, no different than a classroom reading or writing routine. Genuine collaboration may be stifled within the ideological and physical space of the classroom.

The composition and rhetoric classroom needs to take an experiential view of learning in which students are a real part of their communities as members of particular locales. Genuine community engagement does not directly take place within the artificial constraints of the classroom, in rigid seating arrangements, or prescribed learning methods and writing assignments. Individuals learn to negotiate meaning within their lived experience, within their neighborhoods and recreational hangouts. Active learning and interaction do not take place in a designated space and a single person does not preside over education. Community involvement, by which I mean meaning-making in lived spaces, does not necessarily mean social activism, but substantial involvement with family, friends, neighbors, culture, and environment. We do not learn through textbooks or teachers, behind desks or stuffed in uninspiring rooms designed by higher education. The first step to connecting our students to their larger community is through a material exploration of their school, through physically mapping the rhetoric of their locale.

Mapping the classroom is akin to mapping one's discursive ideology, prompting an evaluation of local authority over lived geography. Rhetorical investigations, particularly those that take place outside of educational institutions,

provides our writing students with a critical agency over their environment and therefore their cognitive learning. Sirc, in his analysis of the stasis of the writing classroom, asserts: "I prefer writing as a road map to strange, new places over writing that simply charts again the same, well-worn ground" (197). Sirc situates writing within the metaphor of roads, maps, places, charts, and ground to exemplify the geographical nature of writing as it traverses spaces and places in diverse, meaningful, and unexpected ways. Georhetorical practices can indeed promote such ideas about transformation in order to discover how discourse practices are negotiated in their physical environment.

The study of the space of the classroom is a crucial starting point for demystifying the negative associations of the writing space, since classrooms traditionally identify distinct spaces of meaning-making and authority. Through an investigation of the banal space of the writing classroom, students view their habitats in new ways and discover how planners designate how they traverse the landscape and even influence ideological constructions. Awareness of these limitations provides for fuller understandings of how rhetoric functions within lived spaces and raises learner's confidence in discursive authority, which they can then bring to the classroom.

Georhetorical interventions within the developmental writing classroom concentrate on the individual's ability to situate herself in her ideological, material, cultural, and spatial locale. Offering assignments that are geographically oriented and thus, I argue, experiential in nature, provide students the chance to explore their local residencies and gain confidence in their ability to establish themselves as authoritative discourse experts. Students learn to apply their experience as meaning-makers within academic discourse settings. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, students can utilize a practical, hands-on experience with rhetoric as it functions within the world around them, beginning with the very space of the classroom, the first institutional setting in which students are confronted. I do not propose that an exploration of the space of the classroom is a quick "fix" to the problem of self-confidence and authority within the developmental writing classroom, but it does offer the possibility for students to trust their own writing abilities by reclaiming the space where writing occurs.

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