Space and Place
Creating Space For Diverse Students In Research Through Reflective Writing

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Space and Place

• How are you claiming space right here, right now?
• What does this space communicate?
• What could make this space feel more inclusive and comfortable?
Agenda

• Theoretical Framework
  • Space and Place

• Research
  • Methods
  • Programmatic Interventions
  • Findings

• Implications for Practice

Overview

• Space and Place through the experience of students engaging in undergraduate research
  • From a small, public, Minority Serving Institution
  • Going from more inclusive to more exclusive places
  • Entering exclusive fields of research
  • Engaging in reflective writing
    • Belonging or feeling out-of-place
    • Claiming space
      • Public and personal writing
Space and Place

- **Place**: a physical location
  - Research lab
  - University library
  - The boat used for sample collection
- **Space**: symbolic representation of belonging
  - Participation in or ownership of a place
  - Creating a place for oneself in a group or profession

Theoretical Framework

- Writing as social action
  - Role of reflective writing in meaning making and identity development
- Campus Climate and Critical Geography
  - *Inclusive* and *Exclusive* Spaces
## Research Questions

- How do students from diverse institutions create space for themselves through public and personal writing in exclusive academic places?

- How are visual representations of the research experience used to claim space?

## Research Methods

- **Student population**
  - Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC)
    - Trains, supports, and engages students in undergraduate research
    - Approximately 50% of students from an underrepresented minority
    - 60% First-generation
    - Junior - senior in college
- **Sample (summer, 2014)**
  - Reflective essays (58 essays)
    - 31 mid-summer
    - 27 end-of-summer
  - Blogs (26 students)
    - 8-10 weeks of blogging
    - Most students posted once a week in response to a prompt
Writing in Research

- Written reflections
  - Personal writing
  - Essay format
    - Mid-summer
    - End of summer
- Weekly blog posts
  - Prescribed prompts
  - Public writing
    - Weekly
    - Wordpress

Analysis

- Qualitative Analysis
  - Reflection essays
  - Blog reflections
    - *A priori* coding was used to analyze blog posts for visual rhetoric and sense of belonging.
    - The AAC&U Integrative Learning rubric informed our coding process and the rubric will be used as an evaluative tool to further the discussion of fostering integrative learning principles into the undergraduate research experience.
    - Inductive coding based on identity development theory was also used in blog post analyses.
Coding Structure

Take a Picture

- Take a picture as if you were going to write a blog post or post a picture about this session on social media.
- #SpaceandPlace #AAC&U
  - What does it look like?
  - Who is in the picture?
  - What is your role in the space?

- Fun fact: What percentage of student reflections had a selfie in the research space?
  A. 25%
  B. 50%
  C. 75% ★
  D. 100%
Claiming Space through the Selfie

### Claiming Space through Visual Representations: Research Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No self in picture</th>
<th>Representing non-research or professional space</th>
<th>Respersening research or professional space</th>
<th>Selfie</th>
<th>Selfie with others</th>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Claiming space</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *46 cases in first-summer and 41 cases in multiple research experiences*
Claiming Space through Visual Representations: **Location**

- Visual Rhetoric
  - Research Local: 36
  - Research Non-local: 88
- Claiming space
  - Research Local: 18
  - Research Non-local: 40
- No self in picture
  - Research Local: 21
  - Research Non-local: 52
- Representing non-research or professional space
  - Research Local: 14
  - Research Non-local: 43
- Respresenting research or professional space
  - Research Local: 19
  - Research Non-local: 43
- Selfie
  - Research Local: 17
  - Research Non-local: 37
- Selfie with others
  - Research Local: 1
  - Research Non-local: 14

*40 Research locally and 48 research away

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**Modalities of Reflection**

- Integrative Learning AAC&U Rubric
  - How have you been successful in facilitating meaningful reflection and integrative learning?
- Student needs for deeper reflective writing
  - Instruction
  - Modality
Reflective Writing

• Write a short reflection on your experiences with spaces of inclusion and exclusion.

• Write a short reflection to post on the UROC Facebook page/blog/website.

• How were these experiences of writing similar or different?
• What did you notice?

Public Writing

“The blog is helping me accomplish my goal of creating my own writing style and boosting my writing creativity….One of my biggest achievements is writing the abstract for the SACNAS conference. Also, identifying and discovering these parasites has been one of my biggest achievements this summer (which may not seem like much but it is for parasitology).”
Public Writing

“To improve my writing, I identified my struggles with writing, wrote a weekly blog, and started a journal. I have grown to dislike my writing and put off writing projects as long as possible. This procrastination creates a stressful writing environment and limits the time I have available to edit my work. The struggle I have with editing my work can thus be attributed to the lack of time I have to actually review…I wrote a weekly blog that was published online. Knowing that my writing was accessible to anyone made me work harder to produce a better product. I did not post anything without reviewing it twice myself and then having a writing partner review it. This revision process was simpler than I expected and I will continue to use this method in the future. I also kept a personal journal this summer that I tried to write in daily. I did this to become more comfortable with my writing and replace the negative association I have with writing with a positive one. By increasing my ability to critically think and write I am better prepared for the scholarly work I will need for graduate school."

The Cost and Benefit of Public Writing

- Self-censoring and self-editing
  - Take writing and editing more seriously
  - Think more critically about what they are putting out there
  - Censors out problems or issues with other people
Putting it Into Practice

- Implementation of blogs
  - Preparation
  - Tech
  - Prompts
  - Responding to each other
- Supporting students in making space for themselves
  - Writing as a means of creating space
  - Creating inclusive spaces
  - Building identity development and resiliency

Future Directions in Research

- Code for levels of inclusion and exclusion
- Interviews with students
- Mixed methods exploration of claiming space
- Integrative Learning
  - In experience and reflection
  - In coding
Claiming Space

- Claiming space and claiming an identity through
  - Writing
    - **Public**: Editing and presenting self as a researcher
    - **Personal**: Able to process insecurities and problems
  - Visual representations of space
    - **Claiming of space** with representations of yourself inhabiting the space or showing your place in that space