

Green Rhetoric: Ecocomposition and Professional Discourse

Ecocompositionists advocate that writers are dependent upon their environments for contextual understandings while those surroundings remain dynamic, complex, and evolving (Cooper, Owens, Dobrin and Weisser). Rightfully so, ecocompositions tend to focus on ecology and the environment; however, contemporary rhetoricians and scholars also need to examine writers' connections within their own environments. And teachers need to provide opportunities for students to recognize, participate, and analyze their own space within their writing environments.

A compelling aspect of ecocomposition is how it links with Freire's dialogic methodology in which students participate in conversations with both their environments and other members of their community or biosphere. Students examine their own connections *within* their own discourse communities and write *in* those systems rather than writing *about* other environments. Students see themselves as part of an ecological system. Students recognize the significance of their writing space and place.

Therefore, teachers need to relocate students' writing environments outside the academic classroom and place them in rhetorical situations that meet the needs of members of professional discourse ecosystems, helping students identify where they are and the shape of the space they wish to create.

This panel addresses the ecologies of placing students in discourse communities to strengthen their relationships, identities, and space within professional environments.

“Ecofeminism and Relations in Professional Writing Portfolios”

Professional writing portfolios serve a two-fold purpose. They demonstrate students' mastery of the student space, while simultaneously creating space for themselves in the professional world.

Strong portfolios demonstrate the connections that students have created for themselves in their student space, reflecting their learning and achievements in a connected rather than competitive sense, invoking Flynn's description of masculine and feminine writing. Artifacts aren't displayed alone, but rather have grounding descriptions of purpose and audience.

“Student Identity and Place in Internship Environments”

Students in internship environments are often faced with a contradictory sense of space. Are they students or professionals? Students unable to strongly articulate their expectations, abilities, and frustrations can struggle. Finding a space to create discussion can be difficult, especially if a student's mentor is unapproachable, whether in actuality or student perception. Providing, indeed requiring, journals, discussion boards, portfolios, and weekly written reports can help students see long-term growth and provide a space for students to begin shaping themselves and their work environment.

“Sustainable and Collaborative Space in Business Discourse”

Effective business discourse often promotes both sustainability and collaboration. Sustainability is the management of resources or human activity to increase current limits and to strengthen various environments. Through a business research and publishing capstone course, students collaborate to negotiate “my, your, and our space” as they conduct primary research.

Additionally, students may research a specific business's management structure, relationships, and environments; examine a business's history to analyze its states of flux and change; apply past lessons from a company to a new startup business; analyze the culture and subculture of a work environment; or generate recommendations for a responsible green work environment. Students then publish their reports within their academic and professional discourse ecosystems.