Student Taskscapes: Understanding CUNY Undergraduates’ Lived Experiences

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ACERT Lunchtime Seminars
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Pencils ready?

1. Take 2 minutes to sketch a map of your learning spaces
   – It’s what “learning spaces” means to you.
   – Don’t worry about the quality of the drawing!

2. Label the features on your map
Pair and Share with your Neighbor

• What do you notice in your drawing?

• Where do you do your best work?

• What spaces aren’t a good fit for you?

• What kinds of tools do you use for your work?
If you’d like to share, tell us about your map.

• What do you notice in your drawing?

• Where do you do your best work?

• What spaces aren’t a good fit for you?

• What kinds of tools do you use for your work?
Taskscapes

“as the landscape is an array of related features, so, by analogy, the taskscape is an array of related activities”

“the temporality of the landscape”

“the taskscape exists not just as activity but as interactivity”
Our Research

2009-2011: photo surveys, mapping diaries, retrospective research process interviews, faculty interviews

2015-2016: mapping diaries, tech-specific interviews, student/faculty questionnaire on hybrid/online courses
0:05 AM
Home
MTA
Bus
MTA Union Sq.
36 ST
Train
GBST
Hunter College
11:10 AM
Chinese Literature class
(HV1224)
12:15 PM
Visit friend
@ Library
2:00 PM
Visit friend
2:25 PM
Cafeteria (5th fl)
12:25 PM
Labor Economics class
(TH518)
Cafeteria (2nd fl)
6:30 PM
School Bookstore (1st fl)
4:20 PM
Bench 2nd fl
8:05 PM
Statistics class
(HH416)
2:25 PM
Visit friend
@ Library
2:20 PM
Eat & Return to Cafeteria
3:00 PM
6:20 PM
Train home
What have we learned about

• where students do their academic work,

• the technology they use to do their work, and

• their process for doing research?

(that is, their taskscapes)
AT HOME
6:28-10:00
Home

Second floor

Computer

Books

Child

Psychology

Book

Pasta

Table with map, pizza, and books.
IN THE LIBRARY
Intentionality

“When I go home, I get distracted easily. Here, it's very quiet, you know, you can't be loud, you can't talk. So I like being under those rules here. I can concentrate a lot better, and I'm actually doing a lot better now in school than last semester.”
SMARTPHONES
“My smartphone. I am able to access my grades, type up a paper, review a power point, etc. in the palm of my hand.”
“I personally don't use a smartphone or tablet for schoolwork but have been present numerous times while my friends’ work was deleted or would not upload from one of these devices.”
AT THE COMPUTER LAB
“My first year, I didn’t have the Microsoft Word application so I couldn’t type essays. So I would spend HOURS on hours sitting here and trying to focus while people are chewing gum and talking on the phone and arguing and hitting each other. It says it’s a ‘Learning Resource Center’ but in actuality it’s a ‘Hang Out With Your Friends and Look at Your Cousin’s Wedding Pictures Center’ . . . ‘on Facebook.’”
Student Resource Center
“We are Here to Serve You Better!”

TH 202

Absolutely no food or drink in the lab!

No Cell Phones!

The SRC will be closed on Wed, April 27, 2011. We will reopen on Thu, April 28, 2011.

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No Printing

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Lab 1
- Computers
- Internet
- Printing
- Copying

Lab 2
- Computers
- Internet
- Printing
- Copying

SRO Free Printing

Student Resource Center

Lounges
- Microwaves
- Games
- TV
- Video Games
SYSTEMS AND WIFI
“I would make sure that the website being used never has to be ‘under construction’ and I would make sure it is always running as quickly and efficiently as possible.”
“The most frustrating thing is our schools wifi. When in on campus trying to watch our videos it doesn't load properly, it will pause frequently.”
Technology is critical

“Enhance everything so that it’s always fast and never crashes”
STUDENT RESEARCH PROCESS
Bus Ride

Reading

Thinking + Writing

Library → Book Search

Reading

Forming a Thesis

Finally start
Day 1

- Coming up with idea
- Brainstorming
- Relaxation

Day 2 - Day 20

- Lazy Period

Day 21

- Brainstorming

Day 23 - 28

- Refractive Period

Day 29

- Lack of sleep

Day 30

- Relief
“Once I got the idea of what I wanted to write about, let's see, that was quick.”
“No, I waited a little bit, you know. Because I wanted to make sure I had a nice grasp of what we were doing.”
“The next part was trying to navigate the CUNY website which did run me into about two or three hours worth of a headache, followed by another fifteen minutes on Google, where immediately it was the first link.”
“[The librarians have] helped me searching, like, what's the better way to search for a term which is kind of interesting 'cause I didn't think that would really help my research but it does.”
“This sort of forced me to do each little step and report back constantly to the teacher. The orchestratedness of it allowed me to not procrastinate.”
“[In class workshopping] was interesting ‘cause I, like, reading other people’s work, and especially when we’re in the same class, you know? I don’t . . . I mean, we didn’t wanna be too critical and mark up our classmate’s papers . . . And the feedback was good, like, what they thought of it.”
“[Writing tutors] explain it more easily than the professors.”
What can we do?

• ask our students!

• be flexible wherever possible

• advocate for access and support

• connect and collaborate across campus
Thank you!

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