

CHAPTER 1

GROUNDING PRINCIPLES OF OWI

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This chapter lists and explains the key principles that ground both hybrid and fully online OWI. It discusses why they are foundational and how they inform OWI similar to and different from traditional composition. The chapter emphasizes how accessibility issues are central to all principles for OWI given the need for inclusivity and access in a sometimes face-less environment and given the Committee's view that an OWI program should address them proactively.

Keywords: access, accessibility, ADA, asynchronous, committee charges, fully online, hybrid, inclusion, inclusivity, learning disability (style, challenge), multilingual, CCCC OWI Committee, OWI principle, persistence, physical disability, RAD, socioeconomic, synchronous

My 21-year old relative recently failed her fully online, first-year writing (FYW) course. This young woman is bright and motivated as evidenced by five years of employment with a prominent fast food company where she had worked her way up to full-time assistant manager. Her accomplishment stems from self-discipline, an ability to meet deadlines and schedules, and hard work. Quite frankly, most people simply cannot last long in that work environment. Although I confess that I have no idea how strong her writing is because she wanted to do the course without my tutorial, she expressed her failure as a semester where the teacher “didn’t care” and “didn’t communicate—it took two weeks to get a response email any time I emailed!” She complained that the teacher did not teach and she did not learn anything. She also expressed that the information for where to go for the monitored final exam did not get posted until too late to get a space at a testing center where she could schedule it to match her work and other test schedules. So she gave up, did not call each testing center, and did not take the exam.

Did everything happen exactly this way? The teacher has her own story that might indicate other or additional reasons for this failed OWI experience. Nonetheless, my young relative makes points that many students have expressed; fur-

thermore, many students fail their OWCs through lack of persistence, a sense of not learning, failure to post essays on time or in the right portal, dropping out without properly withdrawing, or giving up at the last minute. The problem of failed OWI students is the mirror image of the failures expressed by faculty and administrators. OWI is not an easy way to learn to write, yet it is absolutely a legitimate, do-able, and often a necessary option for taking a writing course or a writing-intensive disciplinary course.

As the Introduction indicates, the CCCC OWI Committee was tasked with understanding OWI from a variety of angles. Our first charge was, “Identify and examine best strategies for online writing instruction using various online media and pedagogies primarily used for the teaching of writing in blended, hybrid, and distance-based writing classrooms, specifically composition classrooms, but including other college writing courses.” In addition, we originally were charged to consider online tutoring and students with multilingual student experiences and, given what we learned from working with a disabled committee member, we also considered those with physical and learning disabilities. These broad charges led us to examine the published literature; observe practices at various institutions; survey the composition community’s perspectives; and tap the experiences of expert practitioners, administrators, and stakeholders to come to some notion of effective practices in OWI.

One of the biggest surprises in this process was discovering just how little information existed relative to OWI and practices that might possibly be called “effective,” let alone “best.” In fact, although the CCCC OWI Committee’s intensive, six-year research projects suggest that OWI is, indeed, receiving attention, scholars appear to be working so much from their local settings that a global teaching and learning perspective is difficult to achieve. This local focus has led to publication of some interesting practices that potentially are adaptable, but these practices do not transfer broadly to two-year and four-year college settings and with widely varied student populations. We needed to understand OWI from a more universal perspective, allowing scholarship to provide informed guidance from which educators can address their local concerns.

Furthermore, most OWI research tends not to be replicable, aggregable, and data-supported (RAD) (Haswell, 2005). As such, the literature provides great ideas to try out in individual course settings and some thoughts about strategies to avoid, but it fails to provide theory-based or theory-generating guidance that can be applied more broadly to OWI and writing studies’ needs. Thus, there remains too much practitioner lore surrounding OWI (North, 1987), and the writing studies field passes on much of that lore along in scholarship, conferences, and online chats. Anecdotally speaking, when I meet with faculty from different institutions, I see a lot of wheel reinvention because people do not

know how others have addressed similar concerns.

Additionally, in some places, although thankfully fewer than in the past, scholars still are arguing the relative value of using OWI over onsite teaching, sometimes viewing it as a deficit model for teaching a skill so intimately communicative as writing. Perhaps my young relative now would agree since she claims she will never again take an online course, but I do not believe the deficits are in the model itself or even in the students. The deficits, if any, are in our understanding of how to teach students to write through primarily written material—particularly in asynchronous settings but also in synchronous ones. Boiled down, that is the essential problem for which the CCCC OWI Committee was formed and charged. Yet, the CCCC OWI Committee also was formed and charged with understanding OWI from the faculty and administrative perspectives. One cannot provide excellent instruction to students in the online (or any) environment without also providing excellent support to those who teach and administer the program.

Once we completed research—knowing there was so much more to do—we found our first major writing challenges when we tried to draft a position statement of best practices. We quickly realized that (1) there can be no “best” in such a rapidly changing field, and (2) none of the practices that we had learned from our research would transfer to all the settings we were asked to address. For those reasons, we agreed to use the term “effective” practices as the Sloan Consortium did (Moore, 2011). Lacking sufficient theories of OWI particularly, we also realized we needed to rely on common educational principles that could be articulated and adapted in view of OWI’s particulars. Indeed, colleagues have told us repeatedly that they needed foundational guidelines for potentially successful OWI. After those decisions, writing became more natural and the research fell into place. For each of the OWI principles, example effective practices emerged from our research, and these seemed to be both general and specific enough that they could be adapted to various settings and teacher/student populations. Additionally, as much as possible, we refrained from naming, supporting, or promoting any particular technology or software, which inevitably will change. Although technology change is certain, there is relative stability in modality (e.g., asynchronous and synchronous) and media (e.g., text, images, audio, and audio/video) on which OWI teachers can count.

Some respondents to *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) have remarked that the principles and example effective practices are “nothing new” or “not surprising.” That is a good thing, we believe. It signals that OWI is, indeed, a familiar form of writing instruction to which common disciplinary knowledge and familiar educational philosophies about strong teaching, learning, and support strategies

apply. If *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* was overly shocking in content, it would indicate that educators have been doing things all wrong! On the contrary, the very familiarity of the OWI principles and example effective practices demonstrates that most WPAs and teachers are on the right track, which may reassure educators who experience OWI as a long, lonely trek through uncharted territory.

Some words about definition and language are important here.

First, merely using a word processing program to write does not constitute being online or working through computer mediation. OWI occurs by using computer technology to learn writing from a teacher, tutor, or other students and by using it to communicate about that writing, to share writing for learning purposes, and to present writing for course completion purposes. Being *online* can mean working at a geographic distance or even in an onsite computer lab using technology that enables the learning about and sharing of writing; in essence, the computer technology facilitates the communication about writing, often through an LMS. With this definition in mind, *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) and this book refer to *OWI* as including *both* the hybrid *and* the fully online settings unless otherwise stated. We consider the hybrid course setting, often called *blended* or *mixed mode*, to include any OWI that is not fully online. An OWC is hybrid if any of the course interactions occur in computer-mediated settings, whether distance-based or in Internet/intranet-enabled, traditional onsite classrooms or computer labs. Fully online courses occur entirely “online and at-a-distance through the Internet or intranet” and students respond from geographically distributed sites whether they meet from “short (i.e., campus-based) or long (i.e., across state/international borders) distance” (Hewett, 2013, p. 196). If face-to-face interactions among teachers and students are scheduled (and “scheduled” is a key part of the definition being advanced here) parts of the course, however, and the course includes computer-mediated interaction, then the OWC is hybrid.¹ Pedagogically, both hybrid and fully online OWCs make use of similar teaching and learning strategies; yet the hybrid OWC, as discussed in Chapter 2, has significantly different administrative conditions relative to seat- and face-time; in meeting those conditions, the timing and deployment of selected OWI-based pedagogies will differ in various ways. These considerations are important to remember when reading and using this book because the CCCC OWI Committee was tasked with addressing both hybrid and fully online settings, and we quickly realized that although each course setting has basic similarities, they differ vastly in how individual institutions will define, imagine, and organize the OWC.

Second, because we envisioned the principles as foundational to potentially

effective OWI, we decided that using the word *should* “indicates that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others; or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required (*should* equals *is recommended that*)” (IEEE, 2012, p. 9). This use of *should* can be contrasted with our decision not to employ the words *shall* (“equals *is required to*”) or *must* (used “to describe unavoidable situations”) (IEEE, 2012, p. 9). While we have received understandable criticism that *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) reads as a prescriptive set of rules, our goal was to develop more descriptive guidelines for all involved in OWI. We had to balance the desire to present these guidelines such that stakeholders could adapt them to their settings with the need to provide the kinds of language that educators and administrators have requested—language that would enable them to argue at their institutions for fairness, equity, and educationally sound conditions and teaching and learning expectations. In essence, the principles are an ideal, but certainly an attainable ideal that writing programs should work toward. We hope that readers of this book will appreciate the semantic challenges that these crossing purposes revealed, and that you will use these principles and effective practices as guidelines to support OWI in your particular settings.

This chapter tells the story of how the 15 OWI principles were determined by the CCCC OWI Committee, leading to effective practices that provide examples of the principles. It is a microhistory born of the exigency outlined above and of the research detailed in this book’s Introduction. It is, as well, a story that admits of uncertainty and a need for *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* to be organic; changing with research, scholarship, and experience; and one to which the practitioners in the field can contribute as well as from which they can benefit.² Finally, the discussions in this chapter—and the book as a whole—should not be read as presenting universal rules but as grounded guidance about sound OWI instructional practices regardless of the particular technologies. In the following sections, each OWI principle is reproduced with its rationale from *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* and is followed by an additional explanatory discussion.

OWI PRINCIPLE 1

As articulated in *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013), OWI Principle 1 is overarching, and the CCCC OWI Committee believes that those who use these principles should consider inclusivity and access at every step of planning and implementing OWI.

OWI Principle 1: Online writing instruction should be universally inclusive and accessible.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 1

The primary ideas driving the OWI principles outlined in this document are inclusivity and accessibility. Hence, OWI Principle 1 supersedes and connects to every principle in this document. In particular, the CCCC OWI Committee believes that the needs of learners with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, multilingual backgrounds, and learning challenges related to socioeconomic issues (i.e., often called the digital divide where access is the primary issue) must be addressed in an OWI environment to the maximum degree possible for the given institutional setting. Furthermore, given that OWI typically is a text-intensive medium where reading is a necessary skill, addressing the accessibility needs of the least confident readers increases the potential to reach all types of learners.

The CCCC published in 2006 and reaffirmed in 2011 its statement regarding disability issues for educators, staff, and students. This statement recognizes that fully inclusive environments are necessary for the equitable and appropriate teaching of writing at the postsecondary level. The CCCC statement regarding disability issues strongly indicates that a proactive approach to physical and pedagogical access is superior to one that includes “added on” or retrofitted alternatives. It further states that:

Making writing classrooms and curricula inclusive and accessible to those with disabilities means employing flexible and diverse approaches to the teaching of reading and writing to ensure pedagogical as well as physical access; using multiple teaching and learning formats; welcoming students with disabilities in course syllabi; and including disability issues or perspectives in course content and faculty development workshops.

Additionally, this statement specifically addresses electronic environments: “CCCC is committed to accessible online environments, including making the CCCC website accessible, as well as working to teach others about ways to make their program and course websites fully inclusive.”

Such inclusivity must be a fundamental part of any initiative that includes OWI, given its inherent connection to technology; patterns of exclusion have too often resulted from an uncritical adoption of digital technology and an indifference to how it could be used by persons with various disabilities and learn-

ing challenges. The CCCC OWI Committee therefore posits that no statement of OWI principles and practices can be appropriate if it does not fully recognize and accommodate educators and students with varying physical, learning, linguistic, and socioeconomic challenges.

We specifically include multilingual learners who may have a different working knowledge of academic English and/or different cultural backgrounds.³ The *CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers* (2009) advocates that all writing teachers should be prepared to address pedagogically the linguistic and cultural diversity of the multilingual students in their classes.

Thus, both the CCCC Committee for Second Language Writing and Writers (2009) and the CCCC Committee on Disability Issues in College Composition (2011) agree that such teachers' and writers' needs must be addressed at all levels of writing courses to include such concerns as content, teacher training, and administrative actions. To this end, the CCCC OWI Committee holds that—to the degree possible—all of its OWI principles and effective practices should adhere to the need for inclusivity and accessibility at all levels of pedagogy, student satisfaction, faculty satisfaction, and administrative concerns, including selection of the technological modality and software for OWI.

Some of the guidelines presented below are adapted from Burgstahler and Cory's (2008) principles of universal design while others are developed primarily for this document:

- *Equitable use:* The course and its digital designs should be usable by all students and teachers to include those with physical, visual, hearing, learning, attention, and communication differences (inclusive of multilingual students whose first language may or may not be English).
- *Technological equality:* The technology should be financially accessible to all students and teachers in the course.
- *Flexibility in use:* The course and its digital design should accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- *Simple and intuitive use:* Use of the course materials and the digital design should be comprehensible regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- *Perceptible information:* The course materials and the digital design should communicate necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- *Tolerance for technological error:* The course materials and the digital design in particular should minimize the potential for failure based on accidental or unintended actions such as a technological crash. They should, for example, provide automatic protection of data entered and simple means for recovering such data.

- *Tolerance for mechanical error in writing:* Teacher response and assessment of writing should reflect an awareness of the relatively low value to be placed on mechanical and usage errors in student writing particularly for multilingual and physically and learning-challenged writers. Although grammar, mechanics, and usage need to be taught, evaluation should focus primarily on how well ideas are communicated and secondarily on sentence-level errors.
- *Low physical effect:* The OWC's digital design should be usable efficiently, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.
- *Size and space for approach and use:* The physical design of the computer- or other classroom should be of the appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

We must note that adhering to the principles of universal design “reduces, but does not eliminate, the need for accommodations for students with disabilities” (Burgstahler & Cory, 2008, pp. 24-25). Therefore, there will be times when—regardless of how well prepared an OWI program is for faculty and students with different needs—some accommodations may need to be made (Burgstahler & Cory, 2008).

DISCUSSION

The CCCC OWI Committee decided that access and inclusivity should comprise the overarching principle for all of OWI in part because educators never really have thought that way. While this decision was critiqued by one CCCC EC reviewer as “political,” making a political statement was not our goal—although we can see how it has political ramifications. Our goal was to make a moral and ethical statement with respect to a significant legal issue upon which thoughtful educators could ground OWI. This decision was prompted by several considerations.

One consideration emerged from responses to questions about access in our hybrid and fully online surveys. What we discovered shocked us. Closed-ended responses regarding access, disabilities, and the ADA in the fully online survey were especially disheartening because in hybrid courses, presumably, teachers and students may have shared more information about disabilities:

In FO-Q51,⁴ 50% of respondents indicated that they had taught students with either disclosed or obvious disabilities in their fully online courses, while 23% said they had not taught such students and 28% did not know. The number of negative responses to earlier FO-Q 49, 50 and 51 also raises some

red flags about the lack of preparation for delivering accessible online writing instruction. Out of overall 158 respondents, eight did not respond to FO-Q49, seven did not provide an ADA-compliant course, and 39 did not know whether or not their courses were ADA compliant. Likewise, responses to FO-Q50 about the availability of ADA training at their institution indicates that out of 152 respondents, 43 did not even know whether or not their institution provided this training. In another 24 cases, the institution lacked arrangements for educating its instructors in ADA and disability issues. In FO-Q51, the ratio of instructors who did teach disabled students—85 as compared the 41 who did not know whether they did or did not—is worrisome. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 30)

In open-ended questions about what they wanted to know about access and OWI, respondents on the whole demonstrated a poor understanding of the ADA and of their responsibilities to students, as well as challenges in working with their administration and offices of disabilities. Some respondents, like the three cited below (see CCCC OWI Committee, 2011a, and 2011b), were oddly lackadaisical and expressed willingness to bar students needing accommodations from their OWCs:

- “How different disabilities react to online environments—are certain disabilities necessarily prohibitive to being successful online, or can any environment be adapted?”
- “What’s a reasonable accommodation in the online environment and when should you just refuse and declare that the student must take the class in the face-to-face setting? (I have a dyslexic student this term and have been required to post audio files of every single text file or website that is required reading in the course, as well as audio versions of the textbooks and essays.)”
- “If they have a disability it is good to know, but, really, legally I don’t think we are to make accommodations.”

I cite these statements here because I think many—*many*—educators have thought these very thoughts, especially in regard to OWI but also regarding composition education generally. The frustration expressed by the second-cited respondent may resonate with faculty who have not had successful dealings with the institution’s office of disability where students and teachers both can receive assistance and from whom online instructors especially should receive training. Without appropriate professional development around access and the ADA’s le-

gal rulings, it can feel impossibly overwhelming to have to account for inclusion and access when a student self-discloses a need or otherwise self-advocates. Indeed, I have seen educational institutions take a legalistic stance and deny those needs if the student has not been tested formally for a learning challenge. For example, testing for dyslexia or auditory processing disabilities after public high school graduation tends to be the student's responsibility, and it can be prohibitively expensive and possibly shaming in a culture where learning abilities still are measures of self-worth. Similarly, multilingual writers may not want to admit they have problems learning something—whether culturally or otherwise—given already considerable linguistic challenges, and those who have limiting socioeconomic backgrounds also may not want to admit additional difficulties.

To be sure, from a common retroactive perspective, once a course has been developed, it is disconcerting and strategically challenging to adjust it for students who self-disclose a need for special access or inclusive materials. In such cases, one must re-plan to address the problem and find ways to help the student, which may require additional and creative work to make online material accessible and more time on the teacher's part. Such situations are highlighted by such legal cases as the recent lawsuit against Harvard and MIT, where these institutions have provided online material freely to the public but have failed to make it accessible through closed captioning to the deaf, for example (Lewin, 2015). Scratching the surface likely would reveal other ADA problems in these courses that have been otherwise generously offered. This difficulty is one reason the CCCC OWI Committee strongly recommends taking the access and inclusivity "problem" and turning it into a proactive mindset that welcomes all enrolled students from the inception of the class to its ending. I like to call this a *spirit of generosity* toward all of our students. Traditionally, inclusion and access have been handled with retrofit, but if they become part and parcel of our thinking about teaching online, we will be able to accommodate more students with more varied challenges than we might imagine—without them even having to self-disclose their issues. Although hopefully students will recognize an inclusive environment and will be willing to share their abilities and disabilities to the goal of achieving success in their OWCs, educational research reveals that students' particular learning needs, while not necessarily disabilities, may be difficult for them to name let alone disclose (Hewett, 2015a).

Another consideration that prompted us to rethink issues around access and inclusivity regarded a series of the CCCC OWI Committee's communication failures with one committee member who is a professor of some note in his work with technical communication and digital accessibility. He also happens to be blind. Perhaps because he once was sighted, he understands and eloquently conveys the difficulties of a blind or otherwise physically challenged person. A

professor with a disability like blindness has daily challenges that sighted people cannot imagine. The time it takes me to draft and revise an article, for example, is exacerbated in a blind person's life because he has to read everything that has been produced with only able-bodied readers in mind. On the one hand, online instruction is a boon for blind faculty and students because it solves the eternal problem of arranging transportation to get from one point to another in an automobile-oriented culture. On the other hand, screen readers used by blind computer users can only process information that is designed following international standards for Web accessibility. When instructional designers and faculty ignore these standards or are ignorant of them, the average eight hours of a typical work day can be expanded to many more for people with serious disabilities like blindness, and we should remember that disabled individuals like my committee colleague still have the rest of their family lives to live in the given 24-hour day.

In purposeful ways, our blind colleague prodded the CCCC OWI Committee to become more aware of access issues, and that was useful. Just as important, however, the CCCC OWI Committee members have embarrassed ourselves repeatedly over the years as we have communicated via email with attached documents and through Wikis, file sharing software, and Internet-based synchronous meetings. More times than I can count, we unintentionally dis-included this colleague from the conversation by perfectly natural (read *learned*) actions like sending email in colors unreadable by his screen reader, using marginal comments in Microsoft Word that his screen reader could not access, choosing inaccessible Wiki or file-sharing software tools without consulting him, and setting up synchronous meetings without sending him meeting information sufficiently early to check out the accessibility of the connections to the screen reader. We are not mean people, but we are all a part of a thoughtless academic culture that considers access for the disabled as a retrofit, an afterthought, a proviso that should take place when the disabled faculty or student is knocking at our door. Our mutual embarrassment provided ample teachable moments and opportunities to challenge our natural-sounding, able-bodied thinking and to change our behaviors. If online technology access was such an issue in a CCCC committee where we were *charged* to consider access for OWI, surely it is a greater issue in the classroom.

In 2012, the CCCC OWI Committee gave a workshop at the CCCC convention. While it was not as successful as we would have liked, the 30 attendees who stayed for the entire workshop sent our committee an encouraging message by rating the final access-related component of the workshop as the best part of the experience. Interestingly, we had done what everyone else does about accessibility—we had placed it last on the agenda, and we had done that every single

year in our conference panel presentations, too. It suddenly dawned on me after this workshop that access is not just *something* that OWI needs to address; it is *the key concern* with which we should be engaged at every step. As a result, the CCCC OWI Committee drastically changed our thinking about inclusivity and access. In 2013, by giving our drafted OWI principles a green light, the CCCC EC, the top leaders of our profession, also recognized that it is time to place inclusivity and accessibility in the interface of our online pedagogy and not let it trail as an add-on or save-it-for-later application like a Band-Aid.

Additionally, we must acknowledge other populations needing inclusion and access. The CCCC OWI Committee has had specialists in multilingual learning and those who know socioeconomically challenged populations well. Multilingual students, for example, often are placed into separate classes for both onsite and online writing. Those who have taught such students realize that they may have writing markers signaling their first language, dialect, or spoken language other than English. Some students are not selected for such homogenous online courses because they enter OWCs under the radar or because only heterogeneous courses are offered. Additionally, some institutions do not separate multilingual and typical native English speakers in their writing courses. Given varied student language abilities, faculty need to be able to accommodate some of the primary writing differences multilingual students may exhibit—particularly in a setting where reading and writing are the primary teaching and interpersonal communicative means. In keeping with their institutions' administrative decisions about working with students who have language-learning concerns, *all* OWI teachers should be prepared to help multilingual students with their writing using potentially effective online technology and strategies.

Similarly, students from various socioeconomic backgrounds elect online courses in part because of family requirements, outside jobs, and the illusion that OWI will more easily address those concerns. Many of these students will not be familiar with online learning strategies—some may not even own the required technology (Hewett, 2015a) and others may use cellular phones as the sole technology for their OWI courses (see Chapter 16). Regardless of one's opinion about such technology uses for educational purposes, we must prepare for these students' specific needs. When an OWC is developed with inclusivity and access at the front instead of the backend, teachers are better prepared to help the socioeconomically challenged writing student to succeed.

The CCCC OWI Committee includes faculty and administrators with students as stakeholders in the legal need and ethical imperative for inclusivity and access. Faculty should consider how OWI Principle 1 can be used to improve the learning needs of a wide variety of students as opposed to, for example, one self-disclosing vision-impaired student. However, administrators have an equal

responsibility to set faculty up for success. Unquestionably, just as students have different learning styles, teachers have different learning and teaching styles for OWI that should be accommodated in an ethical workplace.

Finally, I want to acknowledge a growing cohort of writing scholar teachers who are involved in a new field of Rhetoric and Disability. They have advocated for, worked in, and led efforts at integrating accessibility in writing studies pedagogy and scholarship. Many of these colleagues either themselves have a disability or are related to someone with a disability. Despite their path-breaking work, however, accessibility is practiced and felt only in isolated pockets of writing studies. We could say that we have some individuals who practice accessibility, and then we have some other individuals and groups who support the cause of accessibility, but as a discipline we still see it as an exception, an add-on, or a problem to solve. In this book, the authors employ OWI Principle 1 to endorse and explore a more wide-ranging and complex understanding of inclusion, access, and accessibility that aims to change the status quo for students and teachers with disabilities, linguistic diversity, and place-boundedness in our writing programs, particularly in our online instruction, which always has been sold as a panacea for these groups.

Access is about being inclusive at all levels of the educational pyramid, and although providing access is not necessarily cost-effective, the onus is on higher educational institutions to serve out their missions of helping their entire student bodies to learn and their faculty to teach. This effort and its costs should be seen as an investment—and an ethical and moral imperative—not as a burden. A spirit of generosity goes a long way.

OWI PRINCIPLE 2

The second OWI principle is the first of five principles outlined regarding pedagogical practices. It addresses the primacy of writing instruction over technology.

OWI Principle 2: An online writing course should focus on writing and not on technology orientation or teaching students how to use learning and other technologies.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 2

Unlike a digital rhetoric course an OWC is not considered to be a place for stretching technological skills as much as for becoming stronger writers in various selected genres. To this end, it is important to recall the access and inclusivity issues found in OWI Principle 1. Students should use the provided technology to support their writing and not the other way around. It must be

clear that OWI teachers and students alike do not need to be technology experts, computer programmers, or Web designers to accomplish the instructional purposes of an OWC.

DISCUSSION

The CCCC OWI Committee acknowledges that, as with OWI Principle 1, OWI Principle 2 has controversial implications (see Chapter 14, for example). Scholarship in computers and writing (e.g., Journet, Ball, & Trauman, 2012; Prior et al., 2007; Selber, 2004; Selfe, 2009, 1999) frame the writing done with digital technologies as rhetorical acts; the CCCC OWI Committee endorses this framing. However, the responses from the CCCC OWI Committee research revealed that there is both an absence of experts in digital writing at many institutions and of administrators and instructors familiar with this scholarship (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011d, 2012a, & 2012b). Moreover, administrators and instructors at some of these institutions support efficient, correction-based writing instruction and see the digital technology merely as a tool for achieving these ends. These issues must be considered in light of the fact that many OWI instructors are underprepared instructors and under-supported contingent faculty (see Chapter 7), who are much more versed in writing instruction than they are in teaching with technology or theorizing the technology's role in their own teaching. While these conditions do not comply with the ideals of writing studies' scholarship, they are the reality at many institutions, and *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) has been articulated in its current form to acknowledge the contemporary realities while pushing institutions *toward* the ideal practices.

Unquestionably, contemporary students live in a digital age where the world seems to shrink with the speed of connectivity and constant communication. College graduates should leave their education with a broad understanding of various technologies, their functional effects, and rhetorical implications, as well as with experience in using technologies in settings that may assist them in workplace and home environments (Selber, 2004). However, such goals are not the *primary* function of OWCs and of most writing-intensive disciplinary courses.

This statement might seem to be obvious, but teachers and other stakeholders shared with the CCCC OWI Committee their concerns about their perceived need to constantly learn newer and different technologies and software in order to keep up with student uses of those technologies outside the classroom. We realized that the pull of increasingly new technologies could create the impression that newer is better or that what students use in their daily lives must be used in their educational lives. Certainly, cogent arguments have been made

for that kind of thinking (Alexander, 2006; Jukes, McCain & Crockett, 2010; Selfe & Hawisher, 2007; Small & Vorgon, 2008).

Nonetheless, a *writing* course should be primarily about *writing*—whether that writing is an alphabetic essay or a multimodal composition. When essay writing instruction is supported through technology, then only the selected technology is necessary for the course and students need to become functionally and rhetorically literate in it alone. When the writing instruction teaches a multimodal composition, again only the selected technology is necessary for the course and students need to become functionally and rhetorically literate in it alone. Practically speaking, if they are to use particular word processing software, students might be required to learn certain features of that software such as setting margins, using spell checkers, creating automatic tables of contents, and the like. In some classes, instructors may introduce students to different types of writing technologies (e.g., blogs, Wikis, slideware, and audiocasting) and give them the opportunity and choice—keeping issues of access in mind—to fulfill the assignment using the most appropriate writing technology for its purpose. But even in these cases, the assignment should focus on writing—composing, if you will—and not on *proficiency with the technology*. In the LMS, students might be required to learn how and where to post completed essays; how to reach their instructors privately or publicly; how to meet peer groups, if used, and so on.

Furthermore, teachers and students should not *need* to be particularly technologically astute to interact through the selected technologies for an OWC. For example, teachers should be trained and enabled to use the institution's LMS to build out the writing course components, but they should not need to learn how to create a separate Web page to teach the writing course.⁵ Despite the deficiencies of any one LMS (and every LMS has them, albeit some worse than others), teachers should be enabled to use it and only it for fulfilling their course outcomes and optimal pedagogical strategies. Similarly, students may be asked to use a Wiki in the LMS if that is a component of the writing course, but they should not have to learn how to design and create unique Wiki pages. The focus should be on the writing in the Wiki and not the HyperText Markup Language (HTML) or even “what you see is what you get” (WYSIWYG) construction of it unless the instructor or writing program can pedagogically justify learning these type of skills in light of the rhetorical focus of the writing course (e.g., technical writing course, FYW for engineers and computer science majors).

Interestingly, two members of the CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panel clarified this idea for the CCCC OWI Committee when they recommended the opposite approach—going outside the LMS for additional technology that would (1) connect students to the “real” world and (2) vary the technologies to keep student interest levels high. While these goals are laudable,

their focus on the technology over the writing itself seem more likely to risk the necessary emphasis on student writing rather than to enhance it. Especially when keeping inclusivity and accessibility in mind, the writing needs to drive the technology choices and not the other way around (Hewett, 2013).

In this way, the CCCC OWI Committee believed that OWI Principle 2 also addressed inclusion and access. Institutions typically provide an LMS of some sort that the institutional information technology (IT) department ideally will have chosen for a high degree of access. In a leveling of the playing field, all online writing students—and many onsite students—will need to navigate that LMS in some way; it is part of their common educational experience determined by institutional choice. Students with particular disabilities, such as sight or sound, should be enabled to use that LMS as part of the institution's responsibility to meet the ADA's legal requirements. However, when outside game, role play, or social networking software is added to the writing course, the playing field no longer is level. Even when access to these technologies is free of financial cost, there may be high costs in terms of students' time and efforts. Downloading software for entertainment is different from being required to do so for educational purposes. Writing instruction easily can become lost—for uncounted precious hours—to the potential confusions surrounding using such outside software in educational settings. If an instructor or WPA is going to adopt any of these programs—which we do not recommend—the resulting writing course should be taught by someone who can effectively and efficiently teach the software to potential new users of all learning styles and abilities in that course. More importantly, such instructors need to be able to pedagogically theorize and explain why these students would benefit from this pedagogical approach to writing and how to induce required learning outcomes for student writers using the respective technology. Courses that employ these programs should never be taught by casual users or instructors who merely know how to functionally use the program without being taught why they are using it and how to effectively use it to teach writing.

To these ends, the CCCC OWI Committee believes that technologies outside the LMS should be reserved for courses that specialize in them—such as digital writing or technology-focused, multimodal courses—and should not be required of teachers or students of such primary OWI courses as FYW, advanced composition, or writing-intensive disciplinary courses. Even then, we believe that inclusion and access should drive the technological choices. To be sure, this issue is complex, as Chapter 14 aptly discusses. There is a fine line to be walked when a course addresses the highly metacognitive issues involved in composing with technology. When students are asked to rhetorically assess the technologies with which they are asked to write and to deliver their compositions—both al-

phabetic and image-based texts—they also may need to learn and use different technologies. In such cases, the CCCC OWI Committee recommends thoughtful, balanced application of both OWI Principles 1 and 2 when developing the course and selecting digital technologies.

OWI PRINCIPLE 3

The CCCC OWI Committee’s research suggested that traditional writing instruction requires some changes of habits, thought, and even of theory to accommodate an online environment.

OWI Principle 3: Appropriate composition teaching/learning strategies should be developed for the unique features of the online instructional environment.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 3

Some changes in traditional composition pedagogy are necessary for teaching writing in the OWI setting, an environment that is by nature text-centric and reading-heavy and that requires intensive written communication. Educators who develop and teach OWCs should use pedagogical theories and strategies that account for the distinctive nature and opportunities provided by the online setting. New pedagogies should be explored and implemented to leverage the inherent benefits of the electronic environment in relation to composition instruction (e.g., discussion boards and blogs that allow students to exchange thoughtful claims and support in writing or private messaging that allows students to communicate with one’s teacher through writing).

OWI-specific pedagogies can address the diverse learning needs of students, who can benefit from the different ways writing can be taught online. Such approaches foster a culture of learning and knowledge creation—rooted in the multimodal online environment—that opens up new opportunities for student thought and expression and prepares students for the 21st-century skills and modalities that will help them thrive as citizens and workers.

DISCUSSION

As its first emergent theme in the Executive Summary of *The State of the Art of OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c), the CCCC OWI Committee found, “Teachers and administrators, to include those in writing centers, typically are simply migrating traditional face-to-face writing pedagogies to the online setting—both fully online and hybrid. Theory and practice specific to OWI has

yet to be fully developed and engaged in postsecondary online settings across the United States” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 7). In later research with the CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panel, panelists told us about such instructional strategies for OWI that included building clear online communication expectations, scaffolding assignments in specific ways, and providing repetition and redundancy of information. What neither the survey respondents nor the panelists addressed in any depth were theoretical explanations and unique strategies that consider OWI’s particular characteristics. We believe that reality stems from rather sparse OWI theory-making.

Some migration of contemporary theories and practices from onsite to online settings is necessary and appropriate as the discussion in OWI Principle 4 below should make clear. Writing instruction maintains certain goals in both settings. Good composition instruction is necessary for OWI, and the online setting is not alien to education. Indeed, one might consider OWI Principle 3 to be the yin to the yang of OWI Principle 4 in that most OWCs reflect traditional onsite writing pedagogy, but the medium in which instruction is set also changes the approach to writing instruction. More importantly, because the medium also may affect both student writing and student learning about writing, it makes sense to search for new composing theories for a digital instructional environment.

In previous publications, I have called for theories of OWI, stating that there is something different about OWI from onsite writing instruction that incorporates yet goes beyond the technology (Hewett, 2001, 2004–2005, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2015a, 2015b; Hewett & Ehmann, 2004). This request for theorizing OWI is not so much about providing new teaching strategies; strategizing is a natural part of educational expertise where we would link our pedagogies to available technologies that enable the instruction (Warnock, 2009, p. xiv). Instead, it is about providing fundamental explanations for the unique qualities and challenges of OWI, which then will lead naturally to new strategies. Two theories for OWI have emerged in my own research: (1) a need for semantic integrity⁶ in the teacher’s writing to the student (Hewett, 2010, 2015b) and (2) the complex needs for different of literacy strategies for students and teachers in text-rich settings (Hewett, 2015a).

In this light, research (see Chapter 17) helps educators to articulate what happens in the OWI setting. Theorizing helps to synthesize and explain what happens and it grounds appropriate instructional strategies as well as helps educators to discern the relative benefits of existing strategies that can be adapted to OWI settings. Current research offers tiny pieces of a much larger puzzle. Although general online instructional theory, which is relatively robust, can help, it is important to learn more about OWI specifically. The fact that writing is

both the subject under study and the textual venue for reading about and learning to write makes OWI significantly challenging. Questions that OWI theory should address include:

- If in any way at all, how does affect change among students and teachers when moving from onsite to online settings and the concomitant loss of real-time, non-mediated body/face/voice?
- If such change exists, how does it influence writing growth, development, and improvement if in any way at all?
- Given the media of text, audio, and audio/video, what are the effects of such mediation on writing instruction and learning if in any way at all?
- If in any way at all, how does the loss of body/face/voice affect:
 - Student cognition of what is being taught about writing?
 - Student reading of related fiction or nonfiction for the course, of instructional content, of response to writing, or of interpersonal communications?
 - Student writing interests, practice, growth, or maturity?
- How does the loss of body/face/voice affect teachers' instructional methods regarding writing about writing if in any way at all?
- How does the loss of body/face/voice affect instructional response to student writing whether the response is text-based or audio/video enhanced if in any way at all?
- How, if in any way at all, does the loss of body/face/voice affect the interactions between teachers and students with different learning styles, disabilities, multilingual histories, or challenged socioeconomic backgrounds?

Such theorizing would help OWI educators to move beyond old perceptions that online instruction is naturally inferior to onsite instruction, which can open the field to a better understanding of how people learn to read and write in a digital age and in technologically enhanced settings. This movement is crucial because hundreds of thousands of students are learning to write using digital technologies and in OWI settings, and educators can benefit them more with composition theories that match currently used modalities and media. Such theorizing would help to address the loss of body/face/voice connection in most OWI settings and explain the relative benefits of different ways to communicate online. Finally, it would help to address whether and how the heavily text-centric nature of both asynchronous and synchronous OWI affects learning and requires different or stronger reading skills, leading to practical ways of understanding student reading and writing challenges in contemporary digitally enhanced settings.

OWI PRINCIPLE 4

Through our research, the CCCC OWI Committee realized that many of the contemporary theories, pedagogies, and strategies of onsite composition courses apply to OWI, which is reflected in OWI Principle 4.

OWI Principle 4: Appropriate onsite composition theories, pedagogies, and strategies should be migrated and adapted to the online instructional environment.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 4

OWI Principle 3 explains that those teaching OWCs should think of ways to maximize the distinct opportunities of the electronic environment. However, one impediment to those moving their instruction online is the unfounded belief that *everything* about their teaching will have to change.

Composition studies has a rich research and teaching history, and the CCCC OWI Committee recognizes that many core pedagogies of onsite writing instruction can and should remain in OWI. Many pedagogical theories and strategies that have not been designed with OWI in mind can be adapted to the online setting. Indeed, various foundational rhetorical and writing theories and their connected onsite pedagogies and strategies can be migrated online successfully. Teachers should seek opportunities to use their established practices when moving online while seeking alternative ways of offering those practices within digital spaces and using electronic tools.

DISCUSSION

OWI Principle 4 presents the yang to OWI Principle 3's yin. Both the Fully Online and Hybrid OWI surveys (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011a & 2011b) strongly supported the belief that OWI is an extension venue for contemporary writing instruction. Although to differing degrees and with different emphases, both surveys indicated participant beliefs that writing is a process; writing should attend to audience, purpose, and occasion; writing is a social process; and/or writing and revising are generative and recursive acts (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, pp. 21-24, 48-52). Participants also included common instructional philosophies such as the necessity of peer feedback for writing improvement and that face-to-face interaction is important even in OWI, a belief expressed heavily in the hybrid participant group.

Our research taught the CCCC OWI Committee that such common composition theories as social construction, writing process, Aristotelian rhetoric, and expressivism all continue to fit the beliefs that OWI teachers have about

writing instruction in the online environment. The only contemporary belief that participants almost universally indicated would contraindicate OWI is that writing is not teachable and it can only receive reader response; only 7 of 297 total respondents indicated agreement with that statement. One survey respondent stated:

I do not agree entirely with the first clause; however, my experience has been that student needs vary to such a great extent that most writing instruction needs to be greatly individualized. I find the discussion forums allow students to work with other students' texts and to develop a sense of what their writing practices are and how their practices affect the response to and perceived quality of their work. (p. 52)

Scott Warnock (2009) also presented a strong case for migrating strategies stemming from contemporary composition theory into the online setting (pp. xiii-xv). Among those familiar strategies are transferring peer and teacher discussions online using asynchronous text-based conversation forums, assigning small peer groups in a similar forum for peer review of drafts and other tasks, requiring multiple drafts of essays, asking students to read books and modules about writing, assessing portfolios, and using teacher response—both text-based and audio-based—as part of the learning experience. Such strategies work in OWI because they speak to core composing theories that have proven value for writing instruction overall.

The key to migrating theory and strategies that originated in onsite composition instruction to OWI seems to be a willingness to adapt and to be creative. Adaptation requires that one consider the nature of an asynchronous discussion, for example, to be as legitimate a way to talk as in-class, face-to-face, oral talk. Creativity engages this modality as an educational bonus because it offers students additional opportunities to write for real audiences and to practice critical reading (often of imperfect text) for thinking and response purposes (Palmquist, 1993).

Inclusivity and access can be addressed in this migration of theories and strategies in highly practical ways. With text-based discussion, for example, the LMS should have been selected such that screen readers can read the discussion, enabling the sight impaired to respond. The asynchronous setting means that students with such challenges as writing disabilities, dyslexia, and physical differences can take more time to keyboard their responses. Students who cannot use the keyboard for whatever set of reasons or who need to take a break from physically writing can use speech-recognition software and still complete the assignment. Students with varied learning styles, skill levels, and personality types (e.g., slow readers, poor typists, and shy students) all can participate.

In terms of presenting instructional modules or texts for students to read, as would be done through textbooks and handouts in most onsite writing courses, the online setting invites the visual additions of photographs, drawings, charts, tables, brainstorming diagrams, and such audio/video media as YouTube movies. Such variety again can appeal to a wide variety of student learning styles. Access, however, should be addressed further by providing captions to images and transcripts of audio/video pieces.

OWI PRINCIPLE 5

Teacher satisfaction is important as described in OWI Principle 12, but so is student progress. This OWI principle speaks to conditions for instruction that should promote both goals.

OWI Principle 5: Online writing teachers should retain reasonable control over their own content and/or techniques for conveying, teaching, and assessing their students' writing in their OWCs.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 5

Particularly in FYW courses, a tension can exist between institutional/programmatic instructional requirements and outcomes and the flexibility that experienced educators need to teach effectively. Within the context of institutional/programmatic outcomes, online writing teachers should have the freedom to develop their OWCs with content, methods, and technologies that best suit their purposes, expertise, and teaching style. Because achieving advanced levels of fluency in writing requires the complex integration of different kinds of skills and knowledge (e.g., rhetorical awareness, linguistic competency, and genre literacy), highly qualified writing teachers not only are “content experts” in rhetorical, linguistic, and genre literacy but also are knowledgeable about composing and assessing learning situations in response to their specific students.

This principle speaks to the larger issue that faces many institutions with vast numbers of OWC writing sections. The pressures of these large programs lead to unified (and often restrictive) course templates and core syllabi and sometimes even more restrictive course shells. These features often are the result of programs that rely heavily on contingent faculty; it is well known that institutions turn to uniformity of method and materials in lieu of hiring, training, and retaining expert, full-time writing teachers.

Online writing teachers do their best work when they retain some control over their courses, and OWI effective practices should be accounted for in help-

ing to balance necessary institutional pedagogical goals with teacher flexibility. This recommendation (and every listed effective practice for this principle) strongly relies on teachers having received the training, professional development, and assessment described in OWI Principle 7.

DISCUSSION

One of the quality pillars in online learning is faculty satisfaction as indicated by a sense of being appreciated and of professional happiness (Sloan Consortium, 2005). When we asked field interviewees, CCCC panel audiences, SIG participants, survey participants, and the CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panelists about this issue, one concern emerged repeatedly: Teachers wanted the autonomy to develop their courses per their expertise and personal preferences. People expressed that they did not like being made to use pre-designed or shell-based courses, yet they also expressed worries about the amount of work that free-form course development requires in online settings.

For example, in the CCCC OWI Committee (2011a & 2011b) surveys, in response to open-ended questions, teachers claimed they had wanted “teacher autonomy”; the CCCC OWI Committee found it interesting that “those who tended to see their teaching as isolated (negative) also tended to see their academic freedom as more limited” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, pp. 36, 66). There seemed to be a correspondence between having little sense of an association with other OWI teachers and a sense of being able to develop their courses as they saw fit. Furthermore, the survey respondents saw “consistency/inconsistency among sections (this concern seems to contradict concerns about academic freedom, which tended to suggest a common syllabus and rigid course structure)” as a major issue (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, pp. 37, 67). In this case, the CCCC OWI Committee sensed that both WPAs and teachers were expressing that courses were not necessarily consistently robust or rigorous for students when they were not pre-designed. Indeed, Andrew Cavanaugh, Director of Writing at UMUC, confirmed that concern from a WPA’s perspective (personal communication, July 17, 2012).

In a survey-based open-ended statement, one professor working in a five-week FYW format stated, “I think student learning is very much affected by the compressed format coupled with online. Changing the course to incorporate new technology and pedagogical ideas is attractive and responsible but seriously daunting. And I’d have to undertake it pretty much alone” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 38). This statement seemed to suggest that having independence to redevelop portions of a writing course is desirable but challenging in potentially energy-sapping ways. In the second online meeting with the CCCC

OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panel, one professor raised the issue of using predesigned course shells several times: “Adjunct or not, I prefer a choice and opportunity for academic freedom, but the first time I’ve taught for any institution, I’ve preferred having a predesigned course, just to start” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013a, p. 42).

The CCCC OWI Committee understood the feedback we were receiving to represent a mixed concern of (1) desiring to be an autonomous teacher of writing, (2) understanding the occasional need for predesigned course formats, and (3) needing to balance the two to achieve a reasonable potential for positive student outcomes and professional satisfaction. To this end, OWI Principle 5 strives to recognize that experienced *and appropriately trained* teachers of OWI should have as much control as possible over their course content, instructional techniques, and assessment methods. This need for training, addressed in OWI Principle 7, takes into account the tension between consistency of courses and the autonomy to make one’s own professional choices.

However, OWI Principle 5 also recognizes that institutions have the responsibility of ensuring equally robust OWI courses regardless of the individual teachers’ pedagogical preferences. Sometimes course shells are necessary to develop that baseline equality for which the institution and/or writing program is responsible. To that end, we think that the first time newly trained OWI teachers instruct an OWI course or the first time experienced OWI teachers instruct for the institution, they should be provided a predesigned course; such a course enables them to both gain and demonstrate expertise and may provide needed breathing space to settle into the OWI and institutional environment. We recognize the complexity of seeing OWI Principle 5 as a guideline and not a rule, however; WPAs might adapt this recommendation wholesale or to individual teachers based on their unique backgrounds and strengths.

This issue concerns inclusion and accessibility, of course. Students (and their teachers) have a right to expect that their courses will fairly represent the outcomes dictated by the writing program. Yet, students also have a right to have their needs addressed individually so that they can learn writing using their strengths; such an inclusive attitude requires that teachers be free to bend elements of a predesigned course as they perceive necessary to meet all student needs and to support student learning optimally. At the same time, as we advocate for more agency for instructors, we also should acknowledge that these pre-designed shells offer an opportunity to OWI programs to develop accessible courses from bottom up without duplicating effort and with minimal investment in instructional design and curricular personnel.

This OWI principle, like most of them, reflects the recognition that there always is a balancing act among institutional, writing program, individual teacher,

and student needs. To the greatest degree possible, we believe that experienced and trained teachers do their best work when given appropriate amounts of autonomy within the strictures of a developed and functional OWI program.

OWI PRINCIPLE 6

This OWI principle shows the CCCC OWI Committee’s recognition that OWI takes more than the form of a writing course that has moved into online settings; indeed, it is an organic base for transitional and newly developing educational products and processes.

OWI Principle 6: Alternative, self-paced, or experimental OWI models should be subject to the same principles of pedagogical soundness, teacher/designer preparation, and oversight detailed in this document.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 6

As emergent forms of online teaching increasingly are offered by many colleges and universities, and as these fall outside traditional onsite education models, some credit-bearing, online-supported, composition entities will receive less professional oversight and may fail to offer students adequate preparation for later work. OWCs listed as “self-paced” or “independent learning” frequently have a fixed syllabus that students work through at their own pace, with varying amounts of oversight from an educator, depending on the institution and the individual teacher. These self-paced OWCs are a component of OWI in the sense that they use digital technology, occur in online settings, and typically are geographically distributed. Hence, they are subject to many of the strengths and limitations of online teaching generally; they should reflect the principled approaches of OWI as outlined in this document. Similarly, experimental models for OWI, such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), are emerging. These, too, should reflect the principled approaches of OWI as described in this document.

DISCUSSION

OWI Principle 6 speaks to the essence of who is responsible—and in what ways—for the online learning of writing students. Studying alternative, self-paced, and experimental models of OWI was not a part of our committee’s charges or major research given the need to address common FYW, advanced levels and genres of writing, and other writing-intensive disciplinary courses.

Instead, our interest in alternative, self-paced, and experimental OWI models emerged primarily from a “what about” series of questions regarding self-paced, credit-bearing writing courses that once were conducted through mail, then cassette tapes, then television, then email, and now the Internet. Who creates such courses? Who oversees their quality? Who are the teachers, and who prepares the teachers? How well do such courses prepare student writers? Any answers to our questions most likely vary by individual settings and participants. Sometimes the courses are certified by an academic institution and promoted by a corporate entity; other times, they are strictly in-house in the academic institution; and still other times, they are developed by a corporate entity and promoted as equal to that provided by a more traditional academic institution. Students may succeed, as they always seem to do, on a uniquely individual basis. Yet, such courses need a series of guiding principles, and the CCCC OWI Committee believes that *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) provides them.

Recently, in fact very close to the time for publishing *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI*, an increasingly deliberated experimental form of online learning—the MOOC—gained headline reportage in a variety of daily educational publications such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*, as well as scholarly journals (*College Composition and Communication*, 2013, pp. 688-703) and edited collection (Krause & Lowe, 2014). Most often, the deliberation about MOOCs involved a few humanities and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, but not OWI courses. For example, the three MOOC-participating scholars writing for *College Composition and Communication's* (2013) “Symposium on Massive Open Online Courses” were not taking writing classes *per se* although their music appreciation MOOC did include writing assignments to be commented upon and scored by peers. Some composition MOOCs were piloted and analyzed for potential benefits to student writers as of summer 2013 (i.e., Duke University, Georgia Tech University, Ohio State University, and Mt. San Jacinto College—all funded partially by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation⁷). Typically, however, the massive nature of a MOOC precludes teacher response to writing and, instead, promotes peer response as the primary feedback method both for content and writing process.

Of interest to the CCCC OWI Committee is a commitment to quality OWI and fairness to all stakeholders. While MOOCs are being touted theoretically for their ability to educate a great number of people, practically speaking they do not allow for individualized teacher instruction through response to writing (as opposed to individual peer response that is neither required nor moderated), which is a primary way of teaching writing online, as our research confirmed

(Head, 2013). In particular, CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panels indicated that written response to writing was a necessary and important part of their OWI work: “Yes ... part of it [amount of time spent in OWI] has to do with the amount of feedback we give students versus what we would give on physical assignments ... also, there is much discussion, versus nearly none in a face-2-face class” and “more attention to individual students with text feedback, etc. because one can’t do that with nods and eye-contact, etc.” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012b, p. 49; also see Hewett, 2010 & 2015b). For the purposes of the CCCC OWI Committee’s work, OWI primarily has been defined regarding credit-bearing writing courses of all levels and writing-intensive disciplinary courses. Therefore, we have been skeptical of how a MOOC can provide an adequate framework for OWI particularly given the inability of a teacher to connect with students individually. Much research needs to be done to determine whether peer response in the MOOC setting is sufficient to bring about writing development (Halasek et al., 2014). Chapter 17 offers key research questions about MOOCs to that end.

Just as important, the OWI principles were developed with inclusivity and accessibility as the overarching guiding theme. Alternative, self-paced, and experimental models may prove to be excellent ways to address the needs of particular students. For example, a student who cannot function intellectually or socially within the typical multi-student onsite or online course setting that requires collaborative work or discussions may excel in a self-paced OWI setting. Students who do not have the money to pay for the typical three-credit OWI refresher or developmental course may benefit from practicing rusty writing skills in a MOOC or an individualized course first. Nonetheless, we believe that even an experimental OWI model should be guided by a strong foundation in writing studies, specialized training in OWI (see OWI Principle 7), fair and equitable compensation for teacher’s work (see OWI Principle 8), a reasonable course load for instructors that enables instruction by essay response (see OWI Principle 9), and so on.

OWI PRINCIPLE 7

OWI Principle 7 is the first of three principles regarding teacher’s concerns. It encompasses a wide variety of professional needs that should help to develop strong, confident, and satisfied OWI faculty.

OWI Principle 7: Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) for OWI programs and their online writing teachers should receive appropriate OWI-focused training, professional development, and assessment for evaluation and promotion purposes.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 7

This principle establishes an environment in which WPAs and their on-line writing teachers can develop, thrive, and meet OWI students' needs. Prior to supervising OWI teachers, WPAs need to have training and experience in OWI. Regarding faculty, OWI-teacher candidates should be selected first from a pool of experienced and proven writing teachers. Teachers—especially novice teachers (e.g., graduate student teachers) and contingent faculty—should not be placed into OWCs until they have received appropriate training by their WPAs and institution. Although such a requirement places restrictions on the teaching pool, institutions should establish some way of training teachers and having them demonstrate their ability to teach writing online before they do so with an OWC.

WPAs and OWI teachers need proficiency in three specific areas. (1) They must be able to teach writing. (2) They must be able to teach writing specifically in a digital environment. (3) They must be able to teach writing in a course in which text is the primary communicative mode. Similarly, WPAs and OWI teachers need support through regular professional development opportunities and mentoring. As professional knowledge and theories change regarding OWI, active OWI teachers and WPAs who supervise them need to be educated and given opportunities to enact new ideas in their teaching and programs. Additionally, OWI programs and teaching should be assessed regularly and appropriately for the environment and in a manner comparable to traditional courses/writing program in the institution or unit.

DISCUSSION

The first requisite of this OWI principle is that teachers need training in OWI, not just in online technology or settings. To make such professional development fully useful, however, teachers first need WPAs who also have had adequate training and course experience in OWI. When teaching writing online is just an adjunct to a broader writing program and the WPA has little-to-no personal knowledge of it, then OWI teachers enter a situation where their work is not understood completely and may be underappreciated or—worse—not understood for its high-level skill requirements. Furthermore, WPAs with OWI training and experience more likely will understand the need for ongoing professional development opportunities for their OWI teachers. Perhaps most important, only WPAs with OWI training and experience are qualified to evaluate OWI teachers because the technology changes the pedagogy, as OWI Principles 3 and 4 point out; certainly, appropriate assessment is a cornerstone of a strong OWI program. Without training and course experience, WPA evaluators can-

not understand how best to judge such factors of OWI course teaching and management as discussion facilitation and writing response; indeed, they do not know how best to help the teachers develop more effective skills. Hence, training WPAs first and then preparing their teachers for OWI is crucial.

In the CCCC OWI Committee's national surveys, respondents indicated that while training relative to the LMS was mandatory and other training included peer mentoring and instructional design as part of campus outreach and summer institutes, "training is inadequately developed at the level of online writing pedagogy and somewhat unevenly applied" (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 34). Experts/stakeholders from the CCCC OWI Committee's panel, site visit interviewees, and survey respondents strongly agreed that not only should OWI teachers receive training relative to teaching writing online (as opposed to generic online instruction), but that they should be experienced teachers of writing from the outset. This concern stems from OWI teachers' almost universal need to understand student writing issues without body/face/voice connections. It means they should be able to read the writing, "listen" to students' written self-reflections, understand potential difficulties of an assignment, and decide how to help students using primarily written and asynchronous media. While some OWI courses are synchronous, anecdotal evidence suggests that many are fully online asynchronous courses. The ability to communicate *about writing using writing* is crucial (Hewett, 2010, 2015a, 2015b). This work cannot be done well by inexperienced writing teachers who do not have the fuller understanding of, or vocabulary for, describing writing. While it is not only fine but often incredibly helpful to pick up the telephone for a voice conversation or to use free audio/video software for connection, no teacher—regardless of experience—can manage the OWC load if every teaching interaction has to be accomplished as a scheduled voice conference. The CCCC OWI Committee offers this guidance with the full knowledge that following it may tie the hands of WPAs and graduate advisors seeking to flesh out their teaching pool or to educate their graduate students with OWI. However, a combination of experience with onsite writing teaching (environmentally familiar in some sense to all who have ever been in the onsite student seat) and training with mentoring or even co-teaching in hybrid and fully online settings is preferable to putting novice teachers in OWCs and expecting a strong outcome for the teachers or the students.

Professional development opportunities take time and energy, but OWI teachers have told the CCCC OWI Committee repeatedly that they crave them. In a written chat related to the second synchronous voice conference with experts/stakeholders, one respondent stated, "There is also an issue with the level of professional development with regard to elements of online instruction comes into play, too, right? [*sic*]" To this, another replied, "Institutions are all

over the board in terms of training, support, development, mentoring” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012b, p. 24). The “The State of the Art of OWI” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c) stated, “Instructors are dissatisfied with the levels of support they receive regarding technology, course caps, training, pay, and professional development/interactions relative to OWI in both the fully online and hybrid settings” (p. 7). The CCCC OWI Committee concluded, “Such dissatisfaction can lead to poor teaching, low expectations for students and for an online course, and insufficient retention of experienced instructors at a time when OWI continues to grow” (p. 7). Areas in which research revealed that professional development is needed include:

- Inclusion and accessibility, which means becoming educated about students with physical, learning, socioeconomic, and multilingual challenges in addition to being well-versed in writing studies (i.e., preparing the course, appropriate expectations for students with varying learning styles and needs, fair assessment and evaluation for OWI settings, communicating with students who have accessibility needs [including issues regarding those who have and have not self-disclosed such needs], ADA legal requirements, and educationally ethical requirements, among others.)
- Learning about and applying OWI theories and strategies that are unique to the digital environment.
- Migrating appropriate strategies from familiar onsite writing instructional settings to hybrid and fully online settings.
- Writing accessible and helpful essay response in time-saving ways.
- Communicating with students about writing in online settings.
- Encouraging critical reading of peer writing and discussions.
- Experiencing the OWI course from the student seat in order to learn the LMS, how long an assignment takes to complete, and the temptations of multitasking from the student view.

Professional development topics may be particular to an LMS or institutional setting, of course. For example, in an LMS that hosts what it calls a Wiki, OWI teachers benefit from technological familiarization with that Wiki feature from *both* the student *and* the instructor view; moreover, they benefit from training in how a Wiki may help (or hinder) certain types of writing development and how to match its benefits to their overall course goals. Undoubtedly, professional development is a key to strong OWI.

Finally, OWI teachers need fair and equitable assessment for evaluation and promotion purposes. Regular evaluation is crucial to an effective writing program in that it helps WPAs to match teachers to their courses and learn their program’s strengths and weaknesses. Without adequate evaluation, it is difficult

to guess at its success. Respondents at all levels shared with the CCCC OWI Committee a sense of feast or famine when it comes to OWI evaluation. Either they expressed a sense of being watched in a “big brotherly” fashion given the capability of a supervisor to log into their courses and read the interactions at any time or they received no feedback or formal evaluation—thereby receiving no help from a supervisor or mentor in improving their OWI teaching. To this end, the CCCC OWI Committee believes that assessment of OWI courses should occur at least as often as those for onsite teachers and no more often or rigorously. To view a teacher’s OWC more often than onsite courses is akin to multiple evaluations. While ongoing views might help particular teachers to teach better or even reveal an exemplary teacher’s strategies, it places onerous and unfair expectations on them versus their peers in onsite classrooms. However, if the WPA determines a need for more than one opportunity to review an OWI course *and* if an evaluative process is developed that is equitable with onsite writing courses and that keeps the OWI teacher informed, then different but equal evaluation may be effective. Furthermore, if OWI teachers are brought into their own assessment by, for example, allowing them to invite the evaluator to preview or review particular course components, the evaluative process may lose some of its high-stakes nature and engage a more collaborative spirit of cooperation and optimism for OWI improvement.

OWI PRINCIPLE 8

A second OWI faculty-level issue is the need for fair and equitable compensation.

OWI Principle 8: Online writing teachers should receive fair and equitable compensation for their work.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 8

The work involved with OWI is new to some institutions and, as such, requires additional effort on the part of WPAs and faculty. At a minimum, the efforts involved in developing and teaching new OWCs should be presumed to represent intellectual and pedagogical labor equivalent to (and no less than) developing a new onsite writing course. Thus, also at a minimum, the compensation currently in place for teachers concerning the development of a new onsite course also should apply when asking teachers to develop an online course.

Other issues arise in terms of how much time and effort go into OWI-based teaching. For example, new research indicates that there is a quantifiably heavier reading load for teachers particularly in asynchronous settings, as well as a heavi-

er reading and writing load for both teachers and students (Griffin & Minter, 2013). In the online writing setting, teachers need to build informational redundancy into a Web-based, LMS format. In other words, they often need to provide a syllabus in more than one form or in more than one online space. Assignments need to be written and distributed in more than one module or more than one format for ease of finding and retrieval. Furthermore, teachers need to provide content and instructional accessibility through redundant voice, visual, and text-based materials, in keeping with OWI Principle 1.

Altering course materials in these ways requires time and energy as well as thoughtful literacy approaches and knowledgeable language choices. Although some effective practice strategies can help to mitigate time load issues, they may add up for teachers. Therefore, the CCCC OWI Committee recommends additional compensation for first-time OWI teachers who are learning how to accommodate such necessary organizational and pedagogical strategies. Compensation in various forms (e.g., pay adjustments, course load modifications, and technology purchases) should be provided.

DISCUSSION

Educators told the CCCC OWI Committee that fair and equitable compensation is important to their continuing interest in and development of OWI. In terms of importance of factors contributing to willingness to teach fully online courses, 62% of survey participants rated “time/money compensation for development of course” as “significant” or “very significant.” Fifty-five percent similarly rated “time/money compensation for learning a sophisticated set of skills, theories, and technologies.” In contrast, “Flexibility in teaching schedule,” which some people consider to be a benefit of OWI, was rated highest in significance at 95% (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, pp. 37-38). For the same survey questions about hybrid courses, 57% of respondents rated “time/money compensation for development of course” as “significant” or “very significant” and 48% rated “time/money compensation for learning a sophisticated set of skills, theories, and technologies” similarly. (Presumably the difference is indicative of the hybrid course’s often tricky similarity to traditional onsite courses; see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion.) In response to open-ended questions, respondents also said:

- “Having time and/or compensation for course development would be another great plus, because it is very time consuming to develop an online or blended course, especially one that is as rigorous and pedagogically sound as a face-to-face course, and we don’t have that, and, to be honest, I don’t think our online courses are, in general, nearly as high of quality

as our face-to-face courses.” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 64)

- “Alert administrations to the need of adequate workload compensation for the difficulty of digitizing a course and a curriculum.” (p. 70).

As stated in OWI Principle 8’s rationale, equitable compensation for developing OWI courses and for new OWI teachers is important for a variety of reasons. Anecdotally, educators have shared how much time and energy they put into developing an OWC and how challenging it can be to teach OWI for the first time. For contingent faculty, as Chapter 7 discusses, compensation regarding time and money are incredibly important factors to achieving excellence in OWI courses.

While the CCCC OWI Committee takes the position that OWI is different from onsite composition instruction but not alien to it, OWI in a disciplinary sense is only about 30 years old, and relatively few teachers have had adequate training that would help them to develop sound new strategies and to migrate their most useful onsite strategies. The most experienced teachers have won their skills through trial and error. As newer writing teachers with different levels of involvement with digital tools engage students, they also will need to find the most effective ways to teach online despite their frequent uses of online media for social and even business settings (Hewett, 2015a). Educational uses of digital media in writing instruction are still relatively new and require much study (see Chapter 15). In addition to pay adjustments for newly developed courses, course load modifications, and technology purchases, other types of compensation may include stipends for training and professional development, financial assistance or grants for conferences, permission to work from home or alternative sites, official recognition of effort, and teaching assistants or co-teaching assignments to share the higher literacy load (Griffin & Minter, 2013; see also Chapters 11 & 12). Additionally, because not all teachers have the economic means to be technologically mobile in the anytime/anywhere nature of online instruction, they may be denied access to desired OWI courses. Finding creative ways to include such teachers can meet the needs of both OWI Principles 1 and 8. Finally, consideration of course “ownership,” an issue bigger than this chapter’s scope, also may lead to appropriate compensation venues.

OWI PRINCIPLE 9

This OWI principle considers how many students should be enrolled in an OWI course.

OWI Principle 9: OWCs should be capped responsibly at 20 students per course with 15 being a preferable number.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 9

The CCCC's Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing (1989), regarding the teaching conditions necessary for a quality education, stated that no more than 20 students (and preferably 15) should be in a college-level writing course. Further, it indicated that teachers should have no more than 60 students of writing in any one term. These guidelines were written in 1989 before the major onset of OWCs that continue to increase in number. Teaching writing through digital media is a text-intensive enterprise, even when voice and video are used. Text-heavy writing instruction leads to a high literacy load in terms of reading and writing for teachers and students, as noted in the rationale for OWI Principle 8. Because contemporary writing pedagogy encourages high-quality, individualized teacher-to-student interactions as well as peer reading and written discussion opportunities, the literacy load must be made manageable. Given these realities and the necessity to provide a robustly accessible teaching and learning environment (see OWI Principle 1) the maximum number of students in an OWC should adhere to these teaching conditions.

Coordinating the statement cited above with the principles of the CCCC *Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers* (2009) and with OWI Principle 1 of this document, any OWC solely comprised of physically-, learning-, linguistically-, or socioeconomically-challenged writing students (i.e., sometimes called “developmental” or “basic” writers) should have no more than 15 students. In such cases, teachers should be assigned a maximum of 45 such writing students per term. The added concerns of assisting students with basic reading and writing skills in a text-intensive online setting requires additional time and especially thoughtful writing on teachers' parts, as well as possible offline phone or in-person interventions. Fifteen students remains a reasonable number in these conditions.

DISCUSSION

A colleague recently described composition teaching in this way: teaching one course of 20 students is like teaching 20 courses of one student each. The simile describes the discipline's collective efforts to individualize writing instruction through conferences and written response to papers as well as personalized answers to students' individual questions. Personalization is an important skill when working with student writers, and it becomes still more important in hybrid and fully online courses where digital tools mediate the interactions. Loss of personalization can lead both to affect-based attrition (e.g., such as my young

relative at the beginning of this chapter) and to cognitive reading and writing difficulties, as I theorize (Hewett, 2015a). Many teachers have multiple OWI courses of 20 or more students in each. When too many students are in any of those courses, teachers burn out, courses are depersonalized, and students fail to persist.

A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI's (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) principle of capping OWI courses at 20 students with 15 as the optimal number might be considered by some to be a fantasy. Indeed, although the *CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers* (2009) has remained steady, the *CCCC's Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing* was updated after the publication of the OWI Principles to read simply “reasonable class sizes” (2013). The specific numbers have meaning to WPAs and teachers in writing studies, however, and the CCCC OWI Committee indicated as much in its November 2014 report to the CCCC EC. In December 2014, Howard Tinberg, then CCCC EC Chair indicated in an email to CCCC OWI Committee co-chairs that specific numbers likely would be reinstated in the near future through the CCCC position statement review process in response to requests by many CCCC members. Writing class size is a highly debated issue in the field because it is so critical; the realities of institutional contexts regarding financial decisions have to be weighed against varying factors, only some of which are whether teachers are fully prepared by their institutions to work with writers of varying skills—such as multilingual writers—and writers in online contexts. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many OWI courses are capped by their institutions in the low to high-twenties, yet some teachers of multiple courses describe as many as 100 OWI students in a semester. When asked about their institutions, CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panelists cited numbers that were:

- low (e.g., “Developmental: 10-15. First year: 15-18. Upper class: no more than 15”; “My tech comm UD class is capped at 15”; and “At my community college, it is 15 students for online or on ground”),
- high (e.g., “online writing classes have the same cap as our f2f classes: 24”; “26 students for composition”; and “it is 28 in the classroom, but it isn't unusual for half the class to drop”), and
- ideal (e.g., “15 to 20” and “Comp ideal 15-18”) (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013a, pp. 5-6).

Text-rich courses require text-heavy work. Although more research should be conducted regarding retention in OWI, survey participants anecdotally reported that given the “same grading and feedback demands” in OWI as in onsite classes, “increases in student numbers would decrease feedback and ultimately effective-

ness.” A typical participant open-ended response was, “Frankly, online teaching should be called online writing. The sheer volume of interactive discussion posts and emails makes for a more labor intensive class than a face-to-face class. In addition, you can’t simply speak to clarify a point. You must write and think even more carefully about how that writing will come across” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 44). On top of writing essay responses, respondents indicated that additional communications increased their workloads (e.g., commenting on discussion posts, crafting class announcements, responding to emails and questions)” (p. 44). One participant stated that while her institution’s “face-to-face attrition rate is 2-4% in writing courses,” the “State’s online attrition rate is 50% in writing courses” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 45).

Although OWI is sufficiently different from onsite writing instruction to warrant new theories and strategies, the CCCC OWI Committee sees it as equal to onsite writing instruction in terms of course content, potential for quality, and credit-bearing nature. The CCCC OWI Committee decided to adhere to the reasoning provided by previously established CCCC committees regarding course caps because it could not find research that contraindicated them for either onsite or OWCs. This decision presented an interesting conundrum when a recent WPA-L listserv discussion (April 17, 2013) considered OWC caps in light of *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013). Having cited deeper attrition rates for the online courses than for onsite ones, one writer questioned whether the CCCC OWI Committee would suggest higher caps for onsite courses in light of its recommendation of 15-20 students in online courses. As one of the interlocutors, I responded:

... it is true that we are not suggesting a lower cap for an online course than for an onsite one. Certainly, we are aware that most FY writing courses are capped too high to begin with, and we believe that many, many online courses are capped too high for the quality of instruction that needs to be conducted in an environment with a heavy literacy load. To be clear, we do not believe that a course cap of more than 20 student [*sic*] in an online FY writing course is advisable or effective.

Course caps also need to be developed with inclusion and access in mind. When students have special needs—be they learning, physical, multilingual, or socioeconomic—these needs should be addressed upfront with an inclusive course design. However, such needs also demand attention during the academic term as personalization and individualization requirements arise. Additionally, students who do not necessarily fit into the defined populations for accessibili-

ty may require attention when—for whatever reason they exist—literacy challenges arise in the online setting. OWI teachers who are teaching their courses actively will find themselves providing supplementary consideration to different students at various times with many of their interactions occurring through text. Unquestionably, lower course caps will assist OWI teachers with providing more accessible courses.

OWI PRINCIPLE 10

OWI Principle 10 is the first of five principles categorized as primarily a responsibility of the institution to WPAs, teachers, and students. This principle involves setting students up for success prior to taking an OWI course.

OWI Principle 10: Students should be prepared by the institution and their teachers for the unique technological and pedagogical components of OWI.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 10

Adequate preparation is another issue of access, enabling students to succeed in a different learning environment by assisting them with technological and cognitive challenges. Any individual online course should include some form of orientation for students. Sometimes such orientation is left to general technology or advising units and is not provided within each course. Having been appropriately oriented to the institution's LMS (in keeping with Effective Practice 2.1), for example, students still need to understand what the OWC will be like. For this understanding, they need formal preparation particular to learning writing online. For instance, unlike some online courses, an OWC is not a self-paced or individually managed course in that regular and frequent student-to-group and student-to-teacher interactions are necessary within a well-defined time frame.

To this end, a clear OWI-orientation program should be provided at the institutional or unit level such that students are made aware of the unique requirements and technological opportunities of the OWC. Whether an institutional or unit trainer prepares and delivers such orientation, teachers should be primed to support and/or repeat elements of that training in the OWC to assist with student success. Neither institutional/unit administrators nor teachers should assume that because many students are frequent technology users, they will be successful with OWI. Indeed, the kind of online communicating that tech-savvy students do in their personal lives often is fast, frequent, and informal, which typically is not the kind of communicating they will need to do regularly to be successful in OWCs.

DISCUSSION

In the CCCC OWI Committee's research, one of the most frequent comments that educators made about students and OWI regarded a general lack of preparedness for the online settings in which they were expected to learn. Such preparedness is necessary on two levels: (1) the institution's LMS and other prescribed technology and (2) using that technology for writing instruction. Preparing students for *using* technology in the course was mentioned more often than *learning writing with* technology. For example, in the nationwide surveys, the CCCC OWI Committee learned:

The most important issues that respondents indicated students needed to be adequately oriented for OWI courses were technology orientation, time management skills, and the "ability to be successful." Admitting to the importance of all of these issues for success in any online course, none of these indicate successful indicators for an online *writing* course. Indeed, the expectation that students need to be able to read or write well to succeed in these courses fell at or below 6% response in both surveys. The differences between online courses and online writing courses, between online training and online writing instruction training, and online teaching and online writing teaching blur throughout this report, indicating that traditional ideas and strategies simply have migrated to the online setting without sufficient consideration of what the specific media mean for learning in a particular disciplinary area like writing. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 10)

These themes were repeated when talking with interviewees at site visits, audiences at CCCC panel and SIG presentations, and CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panelists. The CCCC OWI Committee realized that students did, indeed, need technology orientation, yet they also needed preparation for using that technology in support of writing instruction. To this end, we wrote OWI Principle 10 to include both responsibilities and to indicate that the institution bears primary responsibility for the technology orientation as its absolutely minimal obligation.

The institution should develop basic orientation materials and strategies for helping students to learn the LMS. Site-visit interviewees suggested that such orientation might occur synchronously in an onsite computer lab with IT instructors or through an asynchronous, quiz-based delivery system. Such basic orientation is not a writing teacher's responsibility because the LMS is selected for students by the institution for multiple courses.

However, both the institution and the individual writing teacher might have responsibility for orienting writing students to the LMS for the purposes of writing instruction. The decision for responsibility should be made mutually among the institution, WPA, and IT department. All these stakeholders should understand that while an LMS can be used for delivering many courses, writing instruction is unique in the variety of LMS components students may be asked to use. Writing students typically are asked to:

- Post essays for teacher response, retrieving them when advised
- Post essays for peer response and respond to peers' essays
- Respond to discussion questions and to their peers' responses
- Work in small study groups, posting responses and document files
- Write private journals for teacher review and response
- Write publicly in Wikis or blogs for class review and response
- Write private IM-like chats to teachers and peers
- Write and respond to LMS-based emails
- Read instructional writing-focused modules and content
- Read announcements, class messages, and assignments from the teacher

These varied LMS uses differ from that of many disciplinary courses that limit LMS uses to posting completed assignments, reading modules and content, reading announcements and class messages, taking multiple choice or open-ended response quizzes, and using the LMS-based email. Writing courses, having been “flipped” for many years, are active work spaces, and students need to know how to use the LMS differently for this work. To this end, while the institution might have the best resources for developing and delivering an orientation to writing using the LMS at the overarching writing-course level, writing teachers also have some responsibility to help students succeed through early, carefully scaffolded orientation. One CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panelist expressed:

But also even scaffolding the learning of the technology
 You got to give all the students training wheels to get through all that material. I think a lot of people underestimate how important the first couple of weeks of getting started stuff are and hit the ground running. So bad practice is hitting the ground running without slowly, carefully articulated, carefully designed scaffolding assignments that hit both course design, course adaptation, technology, technology of how the course is delivered as well as the technologies they may be using within the course content. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, pp. 16-17)

Because students have differing levels of ability for using technology and especially using technology for educational purposes, it will not hurt them to receive *both* institutional-level, general LMS/technology orientation *and* writing-specific LMS/technology orientation. Indeed, doing so will increase their potential to succeed in their OWI course as the expectations for how and why to use various LMS components will better match their experiences (see Chapter 13). Such orientation is an important way to keep accessibility upfront rather than retrofitted because it will enable the institution, WPA, teacher, and student to learn early whether accommodations or other changes will help individual students to succeed.

For example, when students have had adequate and timely orientation, they can make better decisions about whether their family situations, work schedules, and learning preferences will work for them in OWI. I learned about this during my dissertation research (Hewett, 1998). Two students were in settings not suited to their unique needs; one student was in the hybrid and the other in the onsite setting. The student in the hybrid class had a documented reading and writing disability; he was challenged consistently by the high literacy expectations of a primarily asynchronous content delivery, peer reading and response, and the need to communicate primarily through writing. The student in the onsite class had a documented auditory processing disorder that caused her frequent face-to-face peer group meetings to give her headaches as she struggled to deal with incomprehensible, competing voices in a primarily voice/auditory setting. Each student might have fared better in the other setting had they (and I) but known from appropriate orientation how to judge learning style against the literacy and communication loads of an OWC.

Finally, it is important to note that the CCCC OWI Committee differentiates OWI Principle 10 from OWI Principle 2, where we clearly state that writing should be the focus of the writing course and not technology orientation or teaching students how to use learning and other technologies that may or may not be useful in work and outside life. The goal of OWI Principle 10 is to ensure helpful orientation by the right parties, at the right time, and for the right purpose. The goal of OWI Principle 2 is to ensure that writing remains the focus of a writing course and that technology introduction and orientation should be for the purposes of such writing instruction.

OWI PRINCIPLE 11

A sense of aloneness easily can accompany OWI, and this principle seeks to help individuals—teachers and students—feel more connected to their OWI-related interactions within courses and among educators.

OWI Principle 11: Online writing teachers and their institutions should develop personalized and interpersonal online communities to foster student success.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 11

Students' motivation as learners often is improved by a sense of interpersonal connectedness to others within a course. Composition teachers long have practiced pedagogy of collaboration and individualization in which students are encouraged to see themselves as connected to their peers while being unique writers. It is believed generally that such writing courses inspire student success and satisfaction.

To that end, student investment is thought to be fostered when OWCs create community among teachers and students. Developing community is driven both by the institution and faculty interaction with students. Institutions not only must be committed to students and the delivery of highest quality OWI, but such a commitment should be communicated clearly by institutional leadership. It also should be fostered by an instructional practice of ongoing, student-centered evaluation of course work and learning.

DISCUSSION

Although in retrospect it could be expressed more clearly, OWI Principle 11 is about building student success by addressing the needs both teachers and students have for a sense of association among their peers. Regarding community building for teachers, in the CCCC OWI Committee's research, teachers often expressed a need to be connected to a broader online community, "a group of peers/mentors to build a teaching community for online teachers" (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 34). More than 65% of surveyed teachers expressed this need (pp. 36, 65). One member of the CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panel expressed that she was grateful to have a "community" when she had a faculty development experience with other teachers but that the community could not help her when she got into the classroom and had to "figure things out on my own to a large degree" (CCCC OWI Committee 2012a, p. 20; see also CCCC OWI Committee, 2012b, p. 11). To be truly helpful, then, it appeared that a teaching community should have experience that one can call upon when faced with actual work challenges.

Regarding community building for students, "how to create a community of learners in an online environment" was a concern that CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panelists mentioned; particularly, community building was discussed regarding student retention and as an indicator for effective practices

(CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, pp. 32-33). One of the ways that educators stated they responded to student needs was to “build community” among the disparate students, encouraging retention and helping to avoid the ghost student who fails to communicate yet remains on the roles (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 10). One of the most popular of community-building activities that teachers indicated was “incorporating media that allow students to have some other encounters with each other (building personal Web pages so students can ‘see’ what classmates look like, for example).” Although no more than 26% of surveyed online writing teachers stated that they offered this option (pp. 28, 57), the idea was repeated in site-visit interviews, during CCCC panels and SIGs, and in expert/stakeholder meetings. The loss of body/face/voice seemed to inspire student and teacher biographies, postings of photos, and even the use of free conferencing technology outside the LMS to help people interact synchronously (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, p. 14). As one survey respondent stated, “Maybe I’m romanticizing online teaching a bit, but I don’t think so. As a reluctant online teacher, I have been immensely gratified by my involvement with a broader (students are from all over the nation and the world) learning community” (p. 39).

The notion of an online community for teachers and students is fraught with challenge because it is romanticized to a degree. Will teachers spend leisure time communicating with their online communities? Should they? In such cases as tightly formed listserv groups, perhaps some will. Are students genuinely interested in developing “community” in the sense that composition instructors may desire? According to anthropologist Rebekah Nathan (2005), students construct their primary networks among smallish, ego-based groups of “two to six friends who formed their core university community” (p. 56). These relationships appear to occur early in one’s school life and rarely include someone met in “an academic class or in an activity or club related to their major”; more frequently, the social networks develop “in some shared affiliation, whether voluntary or not, such as freshman dorm assignment, special freshman summer program, ROTC, ethnic club, or sorority and fraternity rush” (Nathan, 2005, pp. 57-58). Course-based “community” may need a different definition to make the work of OWI Principle 11 realistic. Indeed, such community may require concrete objectives on which all participants can agree (DePew, Spangler, & Spiegel, 2014).

In *Preparing Educators for Online Writing Instruction: Principles and Processes* (Hewett & Ehmann, 2004), the authors argued for a notion of community-building among educators that overtly recognizes the transactional versus social nature of academic groups. Their thesis was that teachers want to connect online because it can help them in their jobs by enabling them to share problems,

solutions, challenges, frustrations, and successes. Called an “association” (Buber, 1923) to differentiate transactional from social communities, such connection can foster teacher and tutor satisfaction. Similarly, in OWI courses, when viewed as an association, student connections and course-based group interactions can be fostered to increase student satisfaction.

Whatever educators choose to call it, providing the possibility of online association among teachers, between teacher and students, and among students seems necessary to help people in the OWI setting see others as individuals with genuine writing needs and concerns. Online communities help to make the mediated interaction more human. In light of *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWTs* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) example effective practices for this OWI principle, it seems helpful here to remember that people will have different preferred methods of computer-mediated interaction (e.g., IM chat, email, lengthy posts, texting, phone and other voice-based media). Given that variety, teachers would do well to set expectations for a particular LMS-based medium that easily is used by the entire class for building some level of connections while understanding that students (and teachers) naturally will choose a preferred medium for various kinds of communications. Allowing that not all group-building interactions may occur using the course’s preferred medium is one way of addressing inclusivity and accessibility for OWI Principle 11. Overall, the writing studies discipline still needs to consider how to overcome various access and inclusivity issues in order to enable the possibility of a sense of community.

Finally, a sense of being in the course together is fostered by teachers when they return student writing promptly, offer response to online discussions rather than asking students to conduct all conversations without them, request that students evaluate the course or module midstream (potentially leading to change during rather than after the term), and include students in decision making. Such affirmation of students as responsive people who can help to guide their OWC is an andragogical principle that may lead to a more bonded class (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012b, p. 10).

OWI PRINCIPLE 12

This OWI principle addresses the need for institutions to plan and engage support for OWI teachers.

OWI Principle 12: Institutions should foster teacher satisfaction in online writing courses as rigorously as they do for student and programmatic success.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 12

Teacher satisfaction in an OWI environment is critical. Many teachers learned their craft in traditional, onsite settings, so they may experience anxiety and/or dissatisfaction in this newer educational setting. Teacher satisfaction is dependent on a number of affective factors, including being personally suited to teaching online and being comfortable communicating with students using digital/electronic means.

Teachers should be helped to understand the relative advantages and disadvantages of teaching an OWC in their institution, which includes such pedagogical factors as understanding how communication in the OWC environment differs and learning the benefits and challenges of the asynchronous and the synchronous modalities. Developing that understanding includes clearly describing any employment conditions specific to teaching an OWC course in the institution such as onsite and/or online office requirements; whether teaching an online course is understood to be equal in time or weight to a traditional onsite course; and how teaching an OWC is assessed for job retention, promotion, and tenure.

Time is a particularly sensitive issue for teachers, onsite as well as online. However, a standing misconception is that teaching and learning in an online environment is less time-intensive than teaching on campus because the teaching and learning often can be accomplished asynchronously and at one's own convenience. Research consistently has indicated that teaching online can be more time-intensive (Allen & Seaman, 2010; Seaman, 2009; Worley & Tesdell, 2009) because most communications and interactions (e.g., instruction, assignments, questions, answers, and grades) in OWCs are fully online. Teaching writing online involves focused teacher responses that are crafted to specific student compositions. Unlike what people might imagine can be done in other disciplines, most of these communications cannot be automated; there is no "leveraging" or "scalability" of these essentially unique interactions (as compared to, for example, providing the same content video to hundreds, if not thousands, of students). To that end, concerns about time management can be an issue that contributes to teacher dissatisfaction.

With their individual habits, logistics, time management, and personal career issues, teachers who are more suited to online modalities can engage the students and invest them in their own learning online, all of which contribute to teacher satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

Students are not the only ones whose satisfaction is important in OWI. According to the Sloan Consortium (2005), faculty satisfaction leads to online

instructional success, and it is fostered by appreciation and happiness with their institutions and instructional settings. OWI Principle 12 was articulated to suggest ways to achieve such satisfaction, which we believe can lead to retaining strong OWI teachers and, ultimately, to student success.

In the CCCC OWI Committee's surveys of OWI teachers, we were dismayed but not surprised to learn that many participants were dissatisfied in their OWCs and online instructional opportunities. Among the problems leading to such unhappiness were "the levels of support they receive regarding technology, course caps, training, pay, and professional development/interactions relative to OWI in both the fully online and hybrid settings" (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 7). Survey analysis suggested that "such dissatisfaction can lead to poor teaching, low expectations for students and for an online course, and insufficient retention of experienced instructors at a time when OWI continues to grow" (p. 7). As a result of their general unhappiness, respondents expressed "ambiguity" about "recommend[ing] their online setting to other writing instructors[;] only 58% of the fully online respondents and 46% hybrid respondents said they would" (p. 13).

The respondents also indicated that they were more interested in logistical (e.g., technical support, increased training, off-campus office hours, and lower course caps) and intrinsic (e.g., mentoring and companionship while teaching online, expressed student appreciation, and student success through reading the online materials) rewards more than additional financial remuneration (pp. 37, 38, 66). These interests relate directly to OWI Principles 8 and 9. The CCCC OWI Committee determined that "concerns among respondents would seem to be connected directly to perceived lack of administrative and technical support, as well as desires for ongoing training in terms of both technology and course design" (p. 66).

OWI Principle 12 outlined some specific, reasonable strategies for helping teachers to find more satisfaction in OWI. Most of them revolve around respecting the teacher's need to learn about what constitutes effective OWI: a need to know about OWI practically and theoretically; a need to connect with other OWI teachers at the institution and across the nation; a need to have regular, compensated professional development; a need to be informed about institutional OWI-based outlook and the forecasted teacher pool; and so on. Once enumerated, these needs may seem self-evident, but teachers across the nation have informed us that they are not so evident to their WPAs or their institutions. Steady nationwide increases in OWI courses strongly suggest that more teachers will be needed, but without frank discussions for and among an institution's OWI teaching pool, those most involved in increasing *effective* OWI courses will not know what to expect.

Such an issue of respect also is one of inclusivity and access. Just as not every student will do well in OWI, not every teacher is well-suited to it. Teachers need to know whether their teaching preferences suit them to OWI, which is an issue of appropriate access to the OWI course. Teachers who prefer to teach online over onsite writing courses should be given fair opportunities to do so because they more likely will excel in their preferred setting. Frank discussions about preferred media for communicating, theories of writing instruction, and notions of student learning and success can help teachers to place themselves appropriately in online and onsite settings. Teachers who are not good candidates for OWI should not be made (or allowed) to teach such courses; inclusivity, in this case, does not mean that everyone should be teaching OWI equally often regardless of skill and ability. (However, as Warnock and I discuss in Chapter 18, given the future of OWI, we believe that all *new* teachers should be prepared for OWI in such ways as to help them find their strengths in the online teaching environment.) Finally, mentoring, appropriate hand-holding, regular assessment, and thoughtful communication also can foster teacher satisfaction. Without satisfied and competent OWI teachers, the program is dead in the water; student success levels will confirm that reality.

OWI PRINCIPLE 13

OWI Principle 13 addresses the need for institutions to provide online students with online support services.

OWI Principle 13: OWI students should be provided support components through online/digital media as a primary resource; they should have access to onsite support components as a secondary set of resources.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 13

Writing instruction that is conducted online requires online support systems. Such support should take the form of online writing labs (OWLs; also known as online writing centers) as well as online libraries, online accessible IT support, and distance-based student counseling. Such reinforcing programs provide student access to the same support components that students in traditional, onsite courses receive. This issue is one of access and inclusivity (see OWI Principle 1), but it also is one of enabling students to use the digital educational environment more fully (see OWI Principle 10). When students are in a “learn-anytime” environment, they should have broad access to support services.

OWLs, for example, support the process-oriented elements of writing as well

as its social nature. As do brick-and-mortar writing centers, OWLs foster one-to-one relationships between tutors and writers and provide tailored feedback and assistance to students as a complement to in-class, faculty-led instruction. Tailored, personalized feedback from peer or professional tutors can afford invaluable learning opportunities for student writers. With institutional and faculty support, students must be prepared to use OWLs as sites of interaction and dialogue and not as linear “drop-off” points to “fix” papers. OWLs can further benefit OWI students by strategically modeling asynchronous or synchronous interactions within the writing process.

DISCUSSION

The CCCC OWI Committee quickly learned through its research that online writing students need online support systems. That tenet might seem to be self-evident, but when OWI still carries some stigma of being a deficit model in comparison with traditional onsite writing instruction, it follows that support services also lag in valuing online components. OWI Principle 13 addressed the need for consistently available online library, IT assistance, and student counseling, but it focused primarily on the need for OWL support.

Even though useful literature exists that supports OWL development (see, for example, (Driscoll, Brizee, Salvo, & Sousa, 2008; Hewett, 2002, Inman & Sewell, 2000; Hobson, 1998; IWCA, 2002; Karper & Stolley, 2007; Wolfe & Griffin, 2013;), the writing center field has not yet embraced OWLs as equal to traditional writing centers. Chapter 5 addresses some of the underlying issues.

The CCCC OWI Committee’s nationwide surveys supported information gained through our field visit interviews; most students who took their writing courses in hybrid or fully online settings did not have access to OWL services:

The survey assumed that online tutoring would be available to students in both fully online and hybrid settings given that their instruction was occurring at least part time in an online setting. In the fully online setting, barely 50% of the respondents reported such availability; asynchronous tutoring was more often available to these students than synchronous. The vast majority of supplemental support was available through static online materials with a text-based nature. The results for the hybrid setting were remarkably similar with the exception that outsourced online tutoring was made available to 2-year community college students more often than for other fully online students. Quite a few respondents in both settings indicated either no access to online writing center assistance or a

need for students to come in to a traditional brick-and-mortar writing center *if* one was available. The possibility that some students, particularly those in fully online settings, could not access the campus-based writing center did not emerge in open-ended “other” responses. The lack of supplemental support for students in online settings is worrisome. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 9)

Students who did have online tutoring available typically did not receive instruction in how to access or use those services: “as many as 30% (fully online) and 47% (hybrid) reported that students did not receive any instruction for using those tutoring services” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 9). Most instruction that they received was text-based, which can be inaccessible to many students because of physical or learning challenges, difficulties with educational technology, or because they simply do not read instructional text well.

OWIs that did exist were primarily asynchronous (50.3% for fully online respondents and 51% for hybrid respondents), with fewer synchronous tutorials provided (25.8% for fully online respondents and 23% for hybrid respondents). Interestingly, 22% of fully online respondents indicated they had outsourced tutoring available and 8% of hybrid respondents indicated outsourced tutoring (pp. 24-25, 52). The higher number of outsourced tutoring in fully online settings had a clear connection to the inability to require students to use an onsite writing center; from a logistical standpoint, hybrid students who met at least some of their classes on campus could be required to use the onsite writing center instead of providing online support. Hence, writing tutorial services were overwhelmingly provided in traditional onsite centers with text-based, module-like resources available online.

Although most online tutorials were accomplished asynchronously according to the surveys, the CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panel indicated a preference for synchronous tutorials, which anecdotally are preferred most often by tutorial providers on the national writing center listserv (WCen-ter) as evidenced by posts. One panelist expressed the preference challenge as, “I think it is a big question, an important question and the idea of comparing versus just saying they are different, one is not better than the other. I think this a huge discussion that we can talk about for a long time” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, p. 25). This open-mindedness about modality was countered by a distinct preference for synchronicity in the discussion:

So, we don't have the young super tech savvy students necessarily. So what we find works the best for synchronous online tutoring is using Adobe Connect to share documents so we

can be looking at it together or chatting. But we don't always use the audio feature along with it; we use the telephone, because of bandwidth issues mainly. We also use the phone with email; if they email the paper we are both looking at the paper and talking on the phone. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, p. 13)

To date, the CCCC OWI Committee has not found evidence that synchronous online tutorials are superior to asynchronous ones although there are some studies suggesting student preference for audio and audio/video feedback (Moore & Filling, 2012; Sommers, 2012, 2013); more research certainly needs to be engaged. It does not seem reasonable, however, to develop tutoring based on the tutor's or OWL administrator's modality preference alone.

Indeed, contrary to a general sense among research participants that synchronous tutorials were superior to asynchronous ones given their likeness to traditional onsite tutorials, the CCCC OWI Committee realized that students needed to have access to tutoring that mirrored their course technology and its typical modality. To that end, we recommend providing high quality tutoring in the same modality and using the same media that students have available for class. If the course is provided asynchronously through the LMS, then it makes sense to use the LMS to address one-to-one tutoring; if the LMS is inappropriate to the task, then it makes sense to do so through similar software that would be familiar to students because of their educational uses of the LMS. If the course is provided synchronously, then it makes the most sense to provide synchronous tutorials. When it is possible to provide both modalities, then students can choose the modality based on their personal learning preferences, which engages the spirit of generosity to which I referred earlier in the chapter. Similarly for the medium: If the course uses text primarily, it is helpful to use text-based tutorials; when the course uses audio/visual response primarily, then such response makes sense for tutorials. Certainly, to address all learning styles, both modalities and media could be offered for student choice.

Finally, the CCCC OWI Committee learned that some educators were considering accessibility issues in developing their OWL services:

From a tutoring perspective, I mean tutor presence is also important but also what someone mentioned, about teaching really being adaptable to the student needs and using whatever technology works with the students, whether that is texts, email ... that we are prepared to go where the student is comfortable, technologically and with their learning styles. We really tried to do that in the writing center. So that we are

working with voice, over the phone or in Adobe Connect like this meeting is. Whatever we need to do to help the student focus on their writing [*sic*] and not so much on the environment that might be strange to them. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, p. 12)

Another panelist expressed, “Now in the writing center, we produce a lot of different resources including movies or tutorials; we have to make sure all of those are accessible, sometimes including a transcript or a PDF needs to be accessible” (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, pp. 27-28). This awareness of accessibility appeared to be higher among those involved directly in providing writing tutoring than among OWI teachers more generally; the heightened awareness possibly stemmed from the writing center field’s attention to students’ individual needs in their traditionally one-to-one setting.

When OWI Principle 1 is held as the overarching principle, then inclusivity and access are the most critical considerations for OWI Principle 13. Providing inclusion and access means selecting the tutoring modality and media with students’ course modality and media in mind—making the interaction as simple and familiar as possible. It also means providing OWL access despite an institution’s current capability (or lack thereof) to build and house an OWL; when an OWL cannot be developed in-house or when doing so may take months or years, then students should be provided interim tutorial support through connections with other educational institutions or by outsourcing to other providers. When inclusivity and accessibility are the first principle, the decision to have OWL-based tutoring support is automatic; how to provide high-quality tutoring is the only question left.

OWI PRINCIPLE 14

If OWLs are to be upheld as necessary sites for OWI-based tutoring support, then they require high-quality, environment-specific tutor selection, training, and professional development.

OWI Principle 14: Online writing lab administrators and tutors should undergo selection, training, and ongoing professional development activities that match the environment in which they will work.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 14

As it is with writing instructors, tutor (peer or professional) training and on-

going professional development are paramount. Such training and orientation must address the distinctive nature of online writing tutoring in asynchronous and synchronous venues.

The OWL coordinator should be well-versed in both traditional writing center and OWL pedagogy and theory. This individual should be experienced with the environments and modalities in which the tutoring occurs. To this end, the coordinator should select online tutors for their (1) writing tutoring potential and/or experience; (2) strengths in expressing writing instruction in writing; and (3) comfort level with online technologies, which can be developed further in training. For OWL tutors to model technology use for students, it is crucial that they be trained through and with the settings, modalities, media, and technologies in which they will tutor. Further, they should receive individualized mentoring as well as any group training. All tutors should be trained to interact with students using diverse media—print and electronic text, audio, and video—and they should be prepared to work with students with diverse abilities and learning styles, in line with OWI Principle 1.

The OWL's commitment to screening, training, and professional development will yield higher quality tutorial sessions that ultimately benefit all students. For peer and professional tutors alike, such commitment ultimately will refine and hone their practice and understanding of OWL tutoring.

DISCUSSION

Online tutors should be selected for their suitability and desire to teach online, need environment-specific training in OWI, and require on-going professional development for the same reasons that online writing teachers need these, as outlined and discussed under OWI Principles 7 and 12. The CCCC OWI Committee's research strongly indicated that contemporary online tutors are not yet receiving such assistance.

Our national surveys, for example, showed that the training provided typically is not occurring in the setting in which the tutoring is to occur, which is a foundational educational principle for teacher and tutor preparation (Hewett & Ehmann, 2004). When asked "to check all applicable responses to a question about how tutors were trained for online writing center work," "up to 47%" of fully online respondents "indicated that the tutors received the same training as face-to-face tutors, while 31% indicated that their tutors received non-credit bearing training dedicated to online tutoring" (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 25). Furthermore, "only 1% indicated that their tutors had some kind of credit-bearing online-specific tutor training, while 7% reported that tutors received credit-bearing training in non-online specific processes and 9% report-

ed that their tutors received credit-bearing training on technology and online pedagogies” (pp. 25-26). Of the hybrid-focused respondents:

Up to 60% indicated that the tutors received the same training as face-to-face tutors, while 25% indicated that their tutors received non-credit bearing training dedicated to online tutoring. Zero percent indicated that their tutors had some kind of credit-bearing online-specific tutor training, while 8% reported that tutors received credit-bearing training in non-online specific processes and 8% reported that their tutors received credit-bearing training on technology and online pedagogies. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 54)

In reviewing these numbers, the CCCC OWI Committee expressed concern that “the ‘same training’ as face-to-face tutors may account for some common tutoring principles, but not the particular strategies and/or principles necessary for a text-based tutoring asynchronous or synchronous (chat) setting, nor for the faceless telephone synchronous setting” (p. 54).⁸

Selecting suitable tutors for the online environment is important because they have to be able and willing to work primarily in text for asynchronous settings and without facial or body language for most synchronous settings. Many tutors and their writing center administrators train and conduct their work from traditional, onsite theories and practices that are not necessarily helpful in online settings. As a result, they express a sense of working in a less viable environment (Ehmann Powers, 2010). Moving a one-to-one writing tutorial to an online environment can be off-putting and can cause tutors to lose track of their goals. One respondent in the CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panel discussions stated:

And I actually did a research project on this a few years ago and what I found specifically was that these wonderful face to face tutors didn't have to be explicitly told who their student was. When they got online, all of a sudden they forgot their role and they started fixing papers instead of providing recommendations and suggestions, and so I had to go and create some new online strategies for this faculty. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2012a, p. 25)

This respondent saw the problem as a “disconnect between online strategies and face-to-face strategies” (p. 25). Unfortunately, the published literature often does not address the specific differences between online and onsite strategies for tutoring (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009; Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2010; see Hewett,

2015b, 2010, 2011 for research and strategies that do address these differences). Additional research can expand knowledge about how online tutoring shapes student understanding and writing perceptions (see Wolfe & Griffin, 2013, for example).

As indicated in the discussion regarding OWI Principle 13, inclusivity and accessibility demand that online writing students have online tutoring. That tutoring is most accessible in the online environment in which students are learning although it is reasonable and inclusive also to offer another online modality or medium or to welcome (but not force through lack of other options) online students to onsite settings. Nonetheless, online tutoring differs drastically from onsite tutoring; using asynchronous text to explain and intervene, for example, is quite different from orally talking a student through writing strengths and weaknesses or encouraging change while never touching the student's paper with a pen. These very differences place inadequately trained tutors in the position of going against what they believe to be tutoring best practices and can leave the online student with less than the best assistance and feedback. Genuinely accessible online tutoring will meet students at their points of need rather than allowing what the tutor is comfortable or familiar with to be the guiding factor. Appropriate tutor selection, online training, and ongoing professional development can mitigate these problems.

OWI PRINCIPLE 15

This final OWI principle is in a category of its own, which is research.

OWI Principle 15: OWI/OWL administrators and teachers/tutors should be committed to ongoing research into their programs and courses as well as the very principles in this document.

RATIONALE FOR OWI PRINCIPLE 15

Emerging from the CCCC OWI Committee's work is a repeatedly articulated need for professional development in the area of OWI and OWLs (see OWI Principle 12 and OWI Principle 14). To be sure, there is urgent need to educate the writing community on OWI and OWLs and to help direct the teaching and learning of our students with what is known about state of the art and effective practices. Advances in OWI and OWLs should be grounded in valid and reliable research findings and systematic information dissemination. OWI and OWLs are particularly well positioned as sites of ongoing research in that almost all interactions are saved and archived (e.g., via email, platform communication,

online group discussion, writing revisions), enabling empirical analysis.

Therefore, to bolster the theoretical and pedagogical frameworks for OWI and OWLs, OWI and OWL administrators and teachers/tutors alike should be committed to ongoing research of their courses, students, and programs. Such research should draw directly from these courses, students, and programs when appropriate. Such pedagogically driven research must be validated both by the scholarly community and administrators in composition studies. Empirical, repeatable, and longitudinal research that addresses questions regarding the phenomena of OWI and OWLs will drive a deeper understanding of OWI and OWLs, ultimately benefiting students and the teaching and learning of writing in online contexts. Both qualitative and quantitative methodological designs can be employed to address key questions surrounding OWI and OWL outcomes, processes, and participant perspectives.

DISCUSSION

We simply do not know enough about OWI, OWCs, OWLs, and all the ways that students learn and fail to learn to write through digital technologies. That is the point of OWI Principle 15, which is addressed in great depth in Chapter 17. The ongoing need for research also is addressed to some degree in the rest of the chapters in this book. The research conducted by the CCCC OWI Committee in support of developing these 15 OWI principles and their example effective practices offers a beginning. Without additional research, however, as education moves more firmly into the digital arena, our collective gut feelings, anecdotal experiences, and guesses will not be enough. The CCCC OWI Committee's annotated bibliography and the research gathered for various CompPile documents (see Warnock, 2013, for example) help us to learn and understand OWI more. Inclusivity and accessibility concerns are among the least well-understood of all OWI issues. Mainstream students are more often studied than those with physical, learning, multilingual, or socioeconomic challenges. Necessary research would examine student writers with such concerns to improve and advance our understanding of OWI teaching and learning overall, as well as to better enable OWI access to all students who want or need it.

Clearly, a new generation of research is necessary. OWI Principle 15 urges scholars and educators to address that need.

NOTES

1. There are differences between the pedagogical aspects and the institutional/administrative aspects of how writing courses are delivered. When is *homework* just

homework, and when does that work constitute a hybrid experience? Does *hybrid* always mean digital, out-of-class experiences? As we completed this book, we realized that the definitions and terminology inherent to our work likely will need to undergo some change to better depict what is happening in OWCs across various institutional contexts.

2. The OWI Committee expects to reconsider and revise as needed the particulars of *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* triennially.

3. Multilingual learners are not conflated here with students who have disabilities although some certainly may have such needs. On the contrary, their needs stem primarily from linguistic and cultural concerns that may inhibit their learning in online environments. Similarly, students from impoverished or “different” socio-economic backgrounds require an inclusive setting that recognizes their challenges in OWI.

4. “FO” is shorthand for “Fully Online” as opposed to “H” for “Hybrid” survey respondents. “Q” indicates “question.”

5. In the CCCC OWI survey of fully-online faculty and administrators, respondents rated their need for advanced Web design skills at 20% in comparison with, for example, the ability to respond to student needs in a timely manner at 100% (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 36). In the survey regarding hybrid OWI, they rated advanced Web design skills at 22% (p. 65). For both cases, these ratings were the lowest and revealed that instructors were less concerned with technological proficiency than with other aspects of composition instruction. These results also may reflect who institutions hire to teach writing, the limited scope some teachers bring to writing instruction, and the limited preparation they receive to teach writing.

6. Semantic Integrity theory indicates that the teacher’s message is written in a straightforward, linguistically direct manner and that it matches her intention and that the intention can be read and correctly interpreted by the average student.

7. English Composition 1: Achieving Expertise, developed by Denise Comer (Duke), 12 weeks, launched March 18, 2013; Writing 2: Rhetorical Composing, developed by Kay Halasek, Scott DeWitt, Susan Delagrange, Ben McCorkle & Cindy Selfe (Ohio State), 10 weeks, launched April 22, 2013; Crafting an Effective Writer: Tools of the Trade, developed by Larry Barkley, Ted Blake, & Lorrie Ross (Mt. San Jacinto), 5 weeks, launched May 13, 2013; First Year Composition 2.0, developed by Karen Head (Georgia Tech), 8 weeks, launched May 27, 2013.

8. From the CCCC OWI Committee Expert/Stakeholder Panel, although this topic was not fully aired, one educator indicated that an “entire training is an online training because we are dealing with virtual employees” when developing

a training scenario for a distributed workplace other than tutoring (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011d, p. 21).

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