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Fostering Community in an Online Basic Writing Course: Best Practices for Teaching Online Basic Writing at a Four-Year Institution

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Nikki Chasteen

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Nova Southeastern University
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Fostering community in an online basic writing course: Best practices for teaching online

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A Thesis

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Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

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Abstract

Fostering community in online basic writing (OBW) classes can be difficult with a student population who often lacks confidence in their writing. By implementing collaborative activities in OBW courses, instructors can facilitate students making connections with each other resulting in increased confidence in their writing. This thesis provides four best practices—make meaningful connections early on in the course, listen to students, provide meaningful feedback, and provide opportunities for collaboration—for instructors teaching OBW, which help students feel connected to and supported by their writing community. The four best practices were informed by research on basic writing, online writing instruction, Community of Inquiry (CoI), and collaboration. In addition, interviews were conducted with five OBW faculty at a four-year institution to gain a sense of how they build community and collaboration among students in their courses. Using the four recommendations as a starting point, this thesis presents instructors with a full syllabus for an OBW course that supports collaboration and community to assist in mitigating the isolation and lack of confidence basic writers feel when entering college writing.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 2000s, the way students were taking college courses was rapidly changing from mostly face-to-face (f2f) formats to online. In 2011, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found the percentage of students enrolled in at least one online course jumped from 8% to 20% between 2000 and 2008 (NCES, 2011). In 2018, 33% of all enrolled undergraduate students were taking at least one online course (NCES, 2018). In an effort to accommodate the growth in students taking online courses and provide instructors with resources for teaching writing online, the Conference on College Composition and Communication Executive committee (CCCC) formed a committed tasked with identifying effective online pedagogies (CCCC, 2013). The committee created the Online Writing Instruction (OWI) Principles. These 15 OWI Principles "provide a broad, research-based distillation of the problems, strategies, and conditions of postsecondary writing instruction online" (CCCC Committee, 2013). Aligning with these best practices, the need for instructors to understand how to build community in an OBWC has become more prevalent since institutions have consistently moved to facilitating courses online. The need for online instruction resources became even more dire when institutions were forced to facilitate courses online during the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Instructors who had solely taught basic writing f2f were presented with new challenges in moving to the online space. Within Composition and Rhetoric, there is a lack of scholarship surrounding basic writing instruction at four-year institutions, and specifically teaching basic writing online.

Students in basic writing courses often have negative associations with writing from their previous experiences (Stine, 2010; Bird, 2013; Pacello, 2019). These negative experiences can lead students to have diminished confidence in their writing and struggle to share their writing with their peers. Since basic writing students already lack confidence in their writing, adding the online component to their trepidation can only further their insecurities, particularly because the majority of communication taking place in online courses happens through writing. Along with fears about their writing abilities, students who present with a lack of confidence will be hesitant to connect with their peers, thus impeding on their ability to organically foster a sense of community.

Basic writing scholarship often focuses on the importance of teaching students the process of writing, rather than spending valuable class time focusing on lower order concerns, like grammar and sentence structure (McComisky, 2000). Basic writing instructors have an opportunity to help students gain confidence in their overall writing ability by teaching them the importance of addressing higher order concerns, such as synthesizing and summarizing content. As a result of this newfound confidence, students feel more comfortable participating in class activities, and this engagement fosters a sense of community among their peers and with their instructor.

In an effort to answer the question, "How do instructors build student confidence and community in online basic writing classes," I examined basic writing scholarship (Stine, 2010; Hilliard & Stewart, 2019), online writing instruction scholarship (Warnock, 2009; Warnock & Gasiewski, 2019; Stewart, 2018), the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework (Garrison et al., 2000; Stewart, 2017), and collaboration (Bruffee, 1981, 1984, 1999). In addition to examining scholarship, I conducted interviews with five

composition faculty at a four-year institution to inform what I determined to be best practices for fostering a sense of community among students in online basic writing courses (OBWCs) and to helping them build confidence in their writing. The interviews confirmed what basic writing scholars suggest about students in basic writing courses lacking confidence in themselves as writers based on past experiences. In looking at the data collected during the interviews, themes emerged and led to the creation of the four best practices this thesis proposes. Taken together, I argue that it is important for instructors to foster a sense of community in an online basic writing (OBW) class to ensure students are successful in the course, which helps the institution's retention initiatives.

Along with determining the four best practices, I designed the syllabus for an OBWC that makes these practices foundational in student learning: (1) make meaningful connections early on in the course, (2) listen to students, (3) provide meaningful feedback, and (4) provide opportunities for collaboration." Throughout the project, I developed a 16-week course syllabus (Appendix B), which includes major assignments, activities, discussions, and journals (Appendix C) that aim to foster a sense of community among OBW students and encourages them to become more confident writers.

I begin this thesis by discussing theoretical backgrounds informing OBWC research in chapter 2, including Community of Inquiry (CoI), collaboration, online writing scholarship, and basic writing scholarship, and how each relates to fostering community among students. In chapter 3, I outline the interview methods and interview results with online basic writing faculty at my institution. Then, in chapter 4, I provide a justification of the proposed online basic writing class that fosters community and

confidence among OBW students. Finally, the appendices provide the interview

questions, a sample 16-week syllabus, and a sample 4-week unit for weekly journal and

discussion board prompts.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

To foster student confidence and establish a sense of community in OBWCs, I posit bridging basic writing scholarship with online writing instruction (OWI) scholarship and focusing on collaboration and Community of Inquiry (CoI)—including social, cognitive, and teaching presences—to help instructors best achieve student success in their course at a four-year institution. Since basic writers often come into their first composition course lacking confidence, the theories explained in this section will help instructors better serve their students in the OBW classroom by creating a community-based environment through course assignments and activities.

Basic writing has often been studied from the perspectives of instructors at two-year institutions. Conversely, online basic writing at four-year institutions has received little scholarly attention. The most notable example of scholars studying OBW at a four-year institution comes from Stewart (2018), who examined community-building in an online second-year writing course at a four-year institution. Along with Stewart's (2018) study, Warnock (2009)[1] has written extensively about online writing instruction at four-year institutions since 2009. The importance of teaching and studying basic writing at four-year institutions is often overlooked since basic writing is often offered at the community college level rather than four-year institutions because of four-year institution entrance requirements (Otte & Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 9). However, I argue that scholarly attention needs to be paid to basic writing at all institution types to allow students

[1] While Scott Warnock has focused on online writing instruction (Warnock, 2009), he does not specifically focus on basic writing.

pursuing a four-year who struggle with writing to get the benefits of basic writing courses.

When a student lacks confidence in their own writing, that fear can extend into a reluctance of sharing their writing with their peers. Students who are placed in basic writing often bring with them fears and negative associations about academic writing (Stine, 2010; Bird, 2013; Pacello, 2019). Students who have a fear of academic writing, often do not view the writing they do every day, such as social media and text messaging, as writing practice. Students can benefit from instructor support in an effort to combat their lack of confidence surrounding academic writing. Supporting students may seem like an obvious task to a basic writing instructor but understanding how that support transfers into an OBWC often proves to be more difficult than imagined.

Instructors who teach process and focus on higher order concerns, such as summary and synthesis, have a high probability of instilling confidence in their students. By allowing students to understand their own writing process, instructors are acknowledging that all students write differently. This acknowledgement shows students their process is acceptable, thus helping them gain confidence in academic writing (CCCC, 2014). Instructors of basic writing might consider starting off the course with a narrative, or some type of personal experience paper. The narrative assignment asks students to find personal meaning in their writing and extend that meaning to what's happenings in the world (Bird, 2013). Personal narrative assignments are a good way for students to share information about themselves with each other, which furthers their opportunity for fostering community in the course.

Establishing a sense of community encourages student confidence and also student success. According to Harris (1989), there was a lot of ambiguity surrounding the definition of community in writing studies. Nathan (2005) defined student community as a "shared affiliation, whether voluntary or not" (pp. 57-58). For the purpose of this paper, I define community as a group of students and their instructor working toward common knowledge and understanding of subject matter. I further suggest that community encompasses student connectedness to each other. Community as it relates to basic writing should lead to students having a shared confidence about writing. Students who feel confident in their writing have a better chance in succeeding and being retained in the course. Students who feel like they are part of a learning community[2]—basic writers—are more likely to be successful in the course (Otte & Mlynarczyk, 2019, p. 19). Furthermore, Otte and Mlynarczyk (2010) asked "how remediation—specifically basic writing—influences students' chances of graduation" (p. 25), a question that still needs to be answered. Instructors who implement activities and assignments that foster a sense of community are more likely to see students succeed, bettering their chances of graduating.

Online Instruction

Teaching online can be intimidating, so alleviating both the challenges within online instruction and the lack of confidence basic writers exhibit is a daunting task even for seasoned instructors. The College Conference on Composition and Communication (CCCC) created a committee and crafted a position statement to guide instructors in navigating teaching writing online—Committee for Effective Practices in Online Writing

[2] A learning community is described as having members which "include students, parents and community, and other stakeholders, such as instructors, who share common goals or are involved in the educational experience" (Poth, 2018, p. 116).

Instruction (CCCC Committee, 2013). The Committee for Best Practices in Online

Writing Instruction examined how they could best support online writing instructors and

their students. The best practices became a document titled "A position statement of

principles and example effective practices for online writing instruction (OWI)" (CCCC

Committee, 2013), which acted as a "blueprint for further investigation into OWI" (p. 5).

The effective practices drew on emerging literature from online writing scholars, such as

Scott Warnock (2009). In addition to the online writing instruction resources provided by

CCCCs, Global Society of Online Literacy Educators (GSOLE) is an organization

dedicated to the research and promotion of online learning and literacy. Both CCCCs and

GSOLE provide the framework for the best practices I propose help foster a sense of

community in OBWCs.

According to the CCCC's position statement, the OWI Principles "were designed

primarily for teachers and writing program administrators," which provides specific

guidelines and effective best practices for teaching First-Year Composition (FYC) in an

OWC (p. 5). To combat the lack of engagement and create safe spaces for students to feel

comfortable being vulnerable in sharing their writing with each other, I propose utilizing

Principles 1, 3, and 11 (see Table 1). OWI Principles 1, 3, and 11 are vital to

understanding the importance of implementing specific strategies for creating a sense of

community in an OBWC (CCCC Committee, 2013).

Table 1

*OWI principles from "*A position statement of principles and example effective practices

for online writing instruction (OWI)" (CCCC Committee, 2013)

Principle	1	3	11

Topic	"Online writing instruction should be universally inclusive and accessible" (p. 7).	"Appropriate composition teaching/learning strategies should be developed for the unique features of the online instructional environment" (p. 12).	"Online writing teachers and their institutions should develop personalized interpersonal online communities to foster student success" (p. 23).

In her explanation of Principle 1, Hewett (2015) laid forth the following aspects of accessibility and inclusivity as they relate to online writing instruction. Aspects of inclusivity to consider when designing a course include creating practices accessible for English Language Learners (ELL), universal design (i.e., course accessibility and usability for all students in the course), and technological equality, which means "technology should be financially accessible to all students and teachers in the course" (CCCC Committee, 2013, p. 8). This principle also includes all rules and regulations that pertain to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) compliance.[3] To this end, "access is about being inclusive at all levels of the educational pyramid" (Hewett, 2015, p. 45). Principle 1 provides WPAs with the verbiage to use when crafting policies to show higher administration why access and inclusion are of the utmost importance. Thus, the responsibility is on the institution to provide such necessities. In other words, Principle 1 provides considerations to instructors for designing a class with inclusivity and access for all students.

Principle 3 deals with composition pedagogy and the need for instructors to design online classes with the online course environment in mind (CCCC Committee,

[3] For more information on ADA guidelines, visit www.ada.gov.

2013, p. 12). To best help OBW students succeed in online learning environments, I use Community of Inquiry (CoI) to show how online learning theories can be applied successfully to OBW courses. Specific strategies must be implemented into the online course, such as developing and maintaining an online version of peer review. To effectively teach writing to online learners, it is important to ensure composition pedagogies transfer online. In other words, Principle 3 provides questions for instructors to consider when modifying f2f pedagogy to fit the OBWC.

Principle 11 speaks to OWI developing "personalized and interpersonal online communities to foster student success" (CCCC Committee, 2013, p. 23) to foster student success. Principle 11 was the guiding principle in creating a basic writing course that promoted a sense of community amongst student-student and student-instructor. Students who do not feel directly connected to their classmates and/or their instructor have a greater chance of not doing well in the course. Conversely, instructors who do create interpersonal relationships with their students help students gain confidence in the course. Hewett (2015) said, "online communities help to make the mediated interaction more human" (p. 75). It is not to say the online course will always directly mimic a f2f writing course, but with intentional choices to foster community, instructors can make students feel more comfortable online.

Instructors can increase the probability of fostering community in an OBWC, therefore increasing their students' confidence about writing, by implementing the three Principles set forth in this section. It is not a fool proof method, of course. Each student and class—as a whole—has its unique characteristics. The CCCC Committee for Best Practices in Online Writing Instruction's (2013) position statement should not act as a

rubric for instruction, but rather as a set of guidelines for strengthening OBWCs and should be adjusted as necessary based on the students' needs in the course. It is critical for instructors to know which types of students take basic writing, what students' needs are throughout the course, and how instructors can meet those needs to foster community and help students gain confidence in themselves as writers. OWI scholars must focus on continuing to improve existing instructor resources that add to the conversation of community in OBWCs.

Community of Practice and Community of Inquiry

Instructors can foster a sense of community in OBWCs, but not first without understanding the theories that guide online instruction. Community of Inquiry (CoI) theory is the basis of creating community in online classes. CoI cannot be discussed without understanding the theory from which it was derived. Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the term Community of Practice and defined it as the way "learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community" (p. 29). In other words, learners in a CoP framework are gaining their knowledge from an expert—Lave and Wenger (1991) call them masters. However, students who understand a specific skill gain confidence in having such knowledge, and therefore are more likely to fully participate in the class. Fundamentally, CoPs are defined as communities with master-apprentice relationships, meaning there is always someone with a higher skill set or knowledge base within the group (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). The master-apprentice relationship is problematic (Garrison et al., 2000), especially if the theory is being considered for an OBWC. The main problem associated

with the master-apprentice relationship is the power struggle the teacher-student relationship encounters. The power dynamic between students and their instructors is inherent in education. It is up to instructors to not only learn skills that make the power dynamic less intimidating, but also be able to implement them in online courses.

Wenger (1998) further examined the power dynamic between student and teacher by moving away from his previously theorized master-apprentice relationship of CoP and discussing community in the sense of "mutual engagement, shared repertoire and joint enterprise" (p. 73), which focused more on student-student relationships. Mutual engagement refers to the level at which the community (i.e., students) understands shared competencies (p. 76). In the context of basic writing, mutual engagement is the sense that students need to interact with each other's writing to better understand their own writing. Shared repertoire refers to how shared course knowledge is perceived by students. Furthermore, shared repertoire examines the relationships students have with each other and the instructor in areas of "discourse" and "artifacts" (p. 73). An instructor who implements shared repertoire constructs a course that "includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures . . . that the community—[OBWC]—has produced or adopted which have become part of its practice" (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). In other words, students begin to negotiate their own meaning of the course throughout the semester.

Students who have a shared repertoire begin to create a sense of community by learning what they have in common with each other as it relates to the course. For example, two students who both have negative experiences with previous writing courses may find comfort in speaking to each other about their past experiences and may even

enjoy working together during the course. In the case of basic writing, joint enterprise relates to students responding to each other's work and countering each other's points of view on the topic. The terms "mutual accountability" and "interpretations" are used to expound joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998). Students find and create meaning with each other throughout a course. Additionally, the relationship-building aspect of joint enterprise can be enhanced by peer review.

Community of Inquiry (CoI), a phrase coined by Garrison et al. (2000), expands CoP while combining collaboration theory (Bruffee, 1981, 1984). CoI was examined by Garrison et al. (2000), and subsequently challenged CoP's master-apprentice relationship structure in online courses, and instead theorized the creation of effective online learning communities (Garrison et al., 2000). Like Lave and Wenger (1991), Garrison et al. (2000) researched how to foster a sense of community among students in distance learning courses. In the 1990s and early 2000s, distance education courses often used asynchronous methods, such as discussion boards and email messages. Since their initial conception, online courses have enhanced technologies that allow for increase synchronous and asynchronous student engagement, including video conferencing, peer review, and course management systems (Tolu & Evans, 2013, p. 48-49). Yet, instructors still seek to answer the question of how to best foster a sense of community both among students, and between students and instructors.

Once the CoI framework was established, Akyol and Garrison (2010) examined Bruffee's (1999) work on collaboration to make the connection between the use of CoI and collaboration, which in turn they opined created meaningful online communities among students. While Akyol and Garrison (2010) do not rely heavily upon Bruffee's

(1999) work in this particular study, they acknowledge Bruffee's contribution to the CoI framework that has been so widely adopted in online learning studies. The three strategies that imbue CoI—social, cognitive, and teaching presences— combined with collaboration, provide a deeper understanding on how to better foster a sense of community in an OBWC.

Social, Cognitive, and Teaching Presences

Online basic writing instructors who implement the three tenets of CoI can further foster a sense of community in their online courses. CoI's social and teaching presences encourage instructors to create community among students and focus less on the implicit power dynamic in the online classroom. Just as Garrison et al. (2004) stressed the importance of all three presences in their own right, I implore instructors to understand and examine how each presence can be implemented, as well as how the CoI framework can be used in OBWC. Stavredes (2011) used CoI as a foundation in her book, *Effective Online Teaching: Foundations and Strategies for Student Success.* Similarly, Mary K. Stewart (2018) found "a strong teaching and social presence in support of student satisfaction" in "a fully online, asynchronous, second-year composition course." Despite studying in different fields, both Stewart (2018)—who examined basic writing—and Stavredes (2011)—who studied psychology courses—concluded that the CoI framework is the most complete structure for supporting student success and fostering a sense of community in online courses. To that end, not all online writing scholars utilizes all three presences, and not all online writing instruction scholars specifically address basic writers. However, having an understanding of what each presence entails and how each

can be implemented into an OBWC can facilitate the process of fostering a sense of community among students.

  Social presence is "the ability of the students to project their personal characteristics into the community of learners" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p. 159). Simply stated, social presence deals with "group cohesion" and the "open communication" aspect of creating community among student, and students and the instructor (p. 4). As Akyol and Garrison (2010) write, "Open communication and cohesion are based on identifying with the group and the interests of the course" (p. 5), which enhances the connection between students. The idea of social presence is for students to learn about themselves, especially in the first few weeks of the course. For example, social presence might involve students introducing themselves and responding to peers in the first week of discussion board posts. Typically, students are required to respond to their peers' posts for a grade. However, in my experience as a student, I was more likely to respond to a classmate's post if I felt a connection to that post. Additionally, social presence can be seen in the tone of students' posts and responses. Social presence can be applied to both student-student and instructor-student relationships. Sample activities of social presence could be an ice breaker during the first week of class or having students (and the instructor) create profiles for themselves on a blog or in the CMS. (e.g., the instructor might use photos to depict she is "a dog mom," loves to listen to true crime podcasts, and surfs) (Poth, 2018, p. 108). After initial discussion/blog posts, the instructor should regularly engage and communicate with her students.

From the student perspective, social presence examines how they interact with each other. Social presence encourages a deeper level of engagement4 and meaningful interactions on discussion boards and during peer review. Students seek out a sense of familiarity and community amongst their classmates to create a connection, especially if that connection is encouraged by the instructor. In other words, students would not post to a general forum and leave until the next discussion post is due. Instead, students who felt a sense of community with their peers would post content which allowed them to share a part of themselves with their peers and the instructor—creating deeper level engagement (Stewart, 2017). Deep level engagement can be exhibited when students have a back-and-forth conversation on a discussion board beyond what is initially required by the instructor's directions.

Cognitive presence "is the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p. 161). Cognitive presence deals with the ways in which students communicate with the instructor and their peers in an OBWC. Within cognitive presence, four parts make up how students come to terms with their cognition. "Dissonance" is the first part of students' construction of meaning which could be a feeling of an unease when starting an OBWC. One example is when it is the students' first semester and they most likely have negative associations with writing. The second aspect pertains to students' desire to "explore knowledge" and information that might lead them to feel more familiar—less uneasy—with writing. For example, providing students with a reading and instructing

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4 For the purposes of this paper, engagement refers to the definition used by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2018), which conceptualizes student engagement as, "…the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. . . ."

them on how to set follow essay guidelines will help ease their hesitation with constructing such a paper for the first time. The third aspect deals with students' ability to find meaning and connect coherent ideas. For example, successfully writing a first draft of the aforementioned assignment. It is the third stage where students finally begin to feel more at ease with their writing, thus making them more confident writers. In other words, students are taking the ideas and concepts they learn from the course and applying those ideas and concepts to their own writing. The fourth and final aspect of cognitive presence deals with "resolution." At the end of the semester, students have found solutions to their writing problems and have become more confident writers with the help of the instructor (Kanuka & Garrison, 2004, p. 26).

Furthermore, cognitive presence is how instructors create an environment to cultivate students' critical thinking skills. Students have an opportunity to provide each other with feedback and work through the feedback together. Grouping students in the class together for peer reviewing each other's personal assignments fosters a students' critical thinking skills. In particular, guided peer review serves as an example of how cognitive presence affects student engagement with their peers, in turn creating shared knowledge of potential beliefs, values, or norms found in their papers.

Students' reflection on peer review process is necessary for effective implementation of cognitive presence (Garrison et al., 2010). Reflection provides students with the opportunity to work through new concepts. Through the use of guided prompts, students can look back on what they did not know prior to completing an assignment and contextualize what they have learned since completing the task. To provide an example of reflection as it relates to cognitive presence, students would finish

the guided peer review by writing a reflection on their experience of the process. The reflection might pose thought-provoking questions, such as "What feedback did you take from your peer and incorporate into your next draft?" Asking students to answer open-ended questions allows them to reflect on their experiences and apply that knowledge to future situations (Stine, 2010, p. 37). If their reflections indicate they are connecting ideas and applying new concepts, then this provides instructors with the assurance that students are working through the stages of cognitive presence.

Teaching presence is "comprised of two functions: the design of the educational experience and facilitation of learning activities" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p. 163). An example of teaching presence would be how the instructor sets up each week's assignments and activities within the CMS. It is important to maintain the students' autonomy as they navigate the course, while maintaining a clear set of guidelines for each assignment and/or activity. More specifically, "Week 1" would include an icebreaker activity, introductory readings to familiarize students with what they might expect during the course, and a brief introductory video on how the class will be structured. By providing students with the introduction video, instructors are "facilitating discourse" by opening up to students in the same way they would like students to open up to them (Akyol & Garrison, 2010). Instructors should provide a clear message of who they are as an instructor both personally and academically. Icebreakers are often a standard practice to allow students to get to know their peers and help foster a sense of community from day one (Anson, 2014; Warnock, 2009). Using an icebreaker activity helps introduce the instructor to students and students to each other, in a way that can be fun and engaging. When students find connections early on, the sense of community may begin to form

more quickly. If instructors take teaching presence into consideration when designing an OBWC, the syllabus, activities, and assignments would ideally promote student engagement.

If the online course is designed in a manner that is hard to navigate, and assignment instructions are unclear, it will be detrimental to students' success in the course. Teaching presence encompasses facilitating discussion and encouraging engagement, so it is vital that the instructor is engaged in the conversations on the discussion board as well. There is a fine line between instructors not facilitating enough and engaging too much within the course (Warnock, 2009; Warnock & Gasiewski, 2019). Understanding students' needs is essential to knowing how much and how often instructors should engage with them on the discussion posts. Instructors should exhibit a "responsive" presence, not only in their introductions, but also on discussion posts throughout the semester (Borgman & McArdle, 2019, p. 52). Responsiveness can mean a number of things, such as "time management, boundary setting, and feedback" (Borgman & McArdle, 2019, p. 53). Carefully considering the level of instructor expectations and interactions is necessary to begin building trust and transparency amongst instructors and their students. When students receive clear and concise feedback, it is easier for them to make necessary adjustments to their writing. Time management and boundary setting are strategies by which students must abide to create a mutual respect between themselves and the instructor.

Taken together, the CoI presences serves to create a cohesive and meaningful experience when used in designing and implementing an OBWC. As found in Warnock and Gasiewski (2019), fostering a sense of community among students and students and

their instructor, starts with teacher and social presence. In Warnock & Gasiewski (2019)'s work, the professor (Warnock), provides his students with clear instructions and often reiterates his availability in an approachable manner. In his class, social presence provided a space for students to engage with their peers and create shared meaning through collaborative activities. Warnock asked students to work together on various stages of writing a research paper (Warnock & Gasiewski, 2019). Students were given time throughout the week to work collaboratively. In Warnock and Gasiewski (2019)'s example, cognitive presence allowed students to think critically about the choices they made in their writing, as well as how they responded to others' writing. Finally, teaching presence relies upon the instructor to create an OBWC that provides clear instructions for students to feel safe and open when engaging with each other, as well as provides students with the opportunity to get to know the instructor. Constructing and implementing each of these presences in an OBWC can be complicated since each presence is like a cogwheel—all working together simultaneously. If one presence suffers or is not executed successfully, the students may not engage for several reasons (e.g., the instructions of the assignment were not clearly defined for students to understand what is being asked of them).

Adding collaboration to the CoI framework, Akyol and Garrison (2010) address Bruffee's (1999) "function of collaborative groups in terms of a shared classroom" (p. 53-54), which the authors suggest allows students to be engaged with each other, and in turn, create shared meaning—akin to social and cognitive presences (Akyol & Garrison, 2010). Specifically, collaboration factors into social presence in the sense that group identities are formed by implementing social presence into the online classroom. Group

identities contribute to fostering a sense of community by increasing students' confidence once they have formed connections with each other. In terms of cognitive presence, collaboration can be seen as a foundation to the exchange of information among students throughout the course. Students who exchange information with each other are likely to be more engaged and therefore more likely to form connections with their peers. Teaching presence takes collaboration into account when specifically focusing on course design—how students will interact with the course, and each other. "Shaping constructive exchange," one aspect of teaching presence, suggests instructors intend to ask students to collaborate in various course activities (Akyol & Garrison, 2010, p. 4).

When implemented successfully in an OBWC, social, cognitive, and teaching presences allow instructors to foster relationships with and amongst their students, which helps foster a sense of community. While there is the assumption of master-apprentice relationships among students and the instructor manifesting in both f2f and online courses, becoming more student-centered and listening to each student's needs is the egalitarian relationship instructors should aim to achieve in their online classes. As Chase (2002), states, "education is about relationships" (p. 14). Students and instructors should maintain a symbiotic relationship that includes mutual respect. The master-apprentice relationship does not lend itself to fostering a sense of community amongst students in an OBWC. However, even when successfully implemented, the power dynamic between students and the instructor will always be present. The idea of CoI is to lessen the intensity of the power dynamic on students so that they feel more confident engaging with each other in the course and thus gain confidence in their writing.

Engagement

Online writing scholars have called for instructors to effectively incorporate engaging activities and assignments. Instructors are often bound by time restrictions— teaching multiple courses online and f2f, low wages, and varied degrees of student interest in a required course (Otte & Mlynarczyk, 2010). To achieve a sense of community in an OBWC, implementing engaging activities and assignments to cultivate student participation is instrumental their success and increased confidence in an OBWC. According to Hilliard and Stewart (2019), "Students are more likely to perceive their blended course—and their learning—more favorably when engaged with online activities that are interactive and collaborative" (p. 21; c.f., Castaño-Muñiz et al., 2014; Owston and York, 2018). Furthermore, Anson (2014) found "engaged learners are far more likely to persist, succeed, and extend their knowledge into new contexts" (p. 13) when engaging with their peers in a f2f class. If students are more likely to succeed based on high engagement in a f2f classroom, then teachers of online basic writing should incorporate highly engaging and interactive methods into their assignments and activities (Hilliard & Stewart, 2019). There are several ways in which instructors can measure student engagement in their course.

Active learning and collaboration are parallel strategies in the sense that when students collaborate, they are working toward a common goal. Active learning could be described more specifically as any type of learning that requires students to engage with each other and the instructor via peer review and discussions. Instructors who incorporate both collaborative activities and assignments and use active learning strategies have a higher chance of student engagement in the course, which in turn allows students to feel

connected to a community of their peers. Active learning, as Pilkington (2018) defined it, is "an approach that encourages learning through practical application of classroom-acquired skills" (p. 214), which can lead to fostering a sense of community and engagement in an OBWC. One example of a practical assignment Pilkington (2018) found to be effective was blogging. The blog assignment asked students to create and maintain a blog on Arthurian legends for five consecutive days. Pilkington's findings showed students enjoyed knowing others—friends, classmates, and family—could view and comment on their blog. The main benefit that came out of this assignment was that students gained an "understanding of the connection between writing and the real world" (Pilkington, 2018, p. 219). In other words, students recognized the importance of writing for a variety of audiences.

Students who participate in active learning may perceive a higher sense of community amongst an online class by receiving feedback from their peers. To ensure teaching presence, instructors should carefully model and introduce expectations for peer review. For instance, Pilkington (2018) suggests that instructors "guide the students in the appropriate direction" (p. 215) in order for active learning to be an effective tool in online courses. Guiding peer review by asking students thought-provoking questions assists students in knowing how they need to review their peers' writing. Peer review, as a collaborative activity, is a form of active learning because it allows students to practice their critical thinking skills while critiquing their classmates' writing. Once instructors have implemented active learning and collaborative activities and assignments, evaluation is necessary to assess how effectively students are engaging in the course.

Instructors can evaluate engagement in an online course by looking at how often students are logging into a course, how frequently and completely students are posting and responding to their peers' discussion board posts, and how often they communicate with the instructor, as well as the depth to the aforementioned interactions and communications within the learning community. In addition, instructors can foster student process in OBWC and encourage engagement by asking students to produce multiple drafts of their assignments (Bourelle et al., 2013). Students who are asked to submit multiple copies of an assignment are working toward a complete final draft of the best version of their writing.

Collaboration

Collaborative activities, like peer review, allow students to work together to achieve a common goal—learning about themselves, their writing, and how to respond to the writing of others. Collaborative activities include "peer review, team projects, student roles, and message board subgroups" (Warnock, 2009, pp. 147-150), which must be clearly explained by the instructor (teacher presence) prior to starting. Collaboration allows students to "test the quality and value of what they know by trying to make sense of it to other people like themselves—their peers" (Bruffee, 1981, p. 745). Students seek knowledge from each other to further explain their own understanding of a concept. Having students learn from other students is another way of acquiring knowledge outside of the instructor or the textbook. Bruffee (1981) calls the social aspect of collaboration a "personalization of knowledge" (p. 745), which encourages students' to gain a greater understanding of the importance of writing in and out of the classroom. For it to be successful, students must know why they are participating in peer review, how it is

important to their development as writers, and how it applies to the real world. If all of these factors are provided to students, they will have a greater chance of feeling like they are part of a community because students learn about each other through sharing their writing.

While peer review is a standard practice composition classes, implementing peer review in online courses can be a challenge. For example, a time zone restriction where an assignment due at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time would be difficult for a student in California (Pacific Standard Time) to work synchronously with peers near the deadline. Another example of a peer review challenge would be if one student uses Pages for Mac and the other student uses Microsoft Word on a PC. The two documents might not transfer across computers properly. Kopcha (2010) noted the barriers to adopting technology in an online classroom to be "time, beliefs, access, professional development, and culture" (p. 176). Within an OBWC, students may not be familiar with different types of technology being implemented, including, but not limited to, the CMS. For instance, students might also come into online classes thinking the course may be easier than a f2f course since they do not necessarily have to attend class two to three times per week. Access may be another constraint if students are working with low bandwidth or unexpectedly lose internet connection while performing a task in the course. Accessibility also means students may be sharing a device with family members. Part of teacher presence is being mindful of such barriers and how they may affect engagement, the sense of community among students.

Collaboration in an OBWC encourages students to continue practicing the skills they are learning throughout the course. Instructors who incorporate CoI's social,

cognitive, and teaching presences into their OBWCs, allow shared meaning to materialize organically among students by promoting activities that incorporate collaboration. Thinking back to the OWI Principles, instructors can consider Principle 11, "develop personalized and interpersonal online communities to foster student success" (CCCC, 2013, p. 23) when designing collaborative activities. OWI Principle 11, when carried out from the first day of the semester helps lay the groundwork for fostering a sense of community within the course moving forward. Principle 11 also shows that not only is collaboration important in fostering a sense of community, it also lends itself to student success. I argue that Principle 11 goes one step further and combines Garrison et al.'s (2000) CoI framework with collaboration and engagement, helping to create a personalized experience in an OBWC.

Students in an online class are often asked to interact, work collaboratively, and demonstrate active engagement in a course by posting responses to a reading/video, theory, or concept on a discussion board. Instructors have used collaborative assignments and activities to incite interaction and engagement from students in OBWCs, such as discussion boards or Google documents with lists of key terms from various readings (Warnock & Gasiewski, 2019; Stewart, 2018). One of the challenges of encouraging interaction in online classes is that unless an instructor specifies that students are to continue having conversations with their peers, the conversation oftentimes ends there. There is not an extended discussion beyond the initial post and required number of peer-to-peer responses. In the OBWC, one way to combat the challenge of minimal participation by students is to give discussion board posts and responses a high percentage of their grade. A collaborative activity example would be to group students

together and have them peer review specific paragraphs of each other's assignments. An individual assignment such as a narrative has the potential to be very personal and asking students to peer review these texts is an intimate form of collaboration that encourages students to be vulnerable and accepting of one another's work. The interaction may support fostering a sense of community. Another example of a collaborative activity is to have students work together on defining key terms throughout the semester and adding the terms and their corresponding definitions to the Google document. Students would add key terms to the document and then discuss those that were confusing or interesting on a discussion board, or class meeting.

Conclusion

Instructors can work with students individually in online classes to ensure each of their needs are met. This might mean allowing a student extra time to complete an assignment, so the student does not fail an assignment or activity and need to drop the course due to poor performance. Additionally, OBWC instructors should keep in mind the outside factors some students might be experiencing, such as family obligations or a demanding job. Instructors must take note of the types of students they have in each of their online courses to effectively engage them throughout the semester. A suggestion for instructors is to create and post different types of content, whether captioned videos, audio files of lectures, or text-based information allows students to use different modalities to access any information posted in the CMS.

Courses designed and integrated with a foundation in CoI and collaboration have a higher likelihood in fostering community in an OBWC. Furthermore, instructors who instill confidence in their students throughout the course have the potential to make

students feel more comfortable writing and sharing their writing with others. Another way to foster a sense of community in an OBWC is to consistently communicate with students, whether that be via email, through feedback on assignments, or audio/video conferencing. Letting students know their instructor is available and willing to help them with any questions or concerns is a vital part of teaching a successful course.

When starting off teaching OBWCs, instructors should consult the works of GSOLE's (n.d) "Online Literacy Instruction Principles and Tenets", CCCCs (2013) "A position statement of principles and example effective practices for online writing instruction (OWI)" , and Borgman and McArdle's (2019) book *Personal, Accessible, Responsive, and Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors* to gain a theoretical foundation for OWI scholarship. To this end, it would be ideal if WPAs provided the aforementioned websites and texts to instructors, especially instructors who have never taught OBWCs. Additional resources might include assignments, activities, and textbooks that have been used in previously taught OBWCs. The implementation of social, cognitive, and teaching presences allows students to feel as though they are a part of a community in their OBWC, as well as feel more connected to their peers and instructors.

Chapter 3

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Along with drawing on scholarship from basic writing, collaboration, and online writing instruction, the OBWC I designed was informed by interviews with existing online basic writing teachers. Because the focus of basic writing—online and f2f—research has traditionally focused on two-year institutions, research on online basic writing at four-year institutions is greatly needed. To learn more about what instructors at four-year institutions are doing in their OBWCs, I conducted interviews with five instructors and asked about what was working well in OBWCs currently, and what aspects of the course could be improved.

Interviews, as a research method, allow researchers to gather information in a narrative structure and afford them the opportunity to "compare the themes to personal experience and/or existing literature" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 63). I chose semi-structured interviews, which allow for the interpretation of meaning and for the researcher to deviate from a planned script, rather than being bound by the original planned questions (Kvale, 2007, p. 8). Semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions when and if it were necessary. To gain a better understanding of how instructors foster a sense of community among OBW students, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews of five faculty who teach COMP 1000 online at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). I chose this convenience sample of faculty I had close relationships with because I believed it provided a safe space for them to share their experiences with me. Beyond knowing the participants, my interviewees were selected based on having met the following criteria:

a. Had taught basic writing for at least one full academic year,

b. Had taught basic writing online for at least one full academic year, and

c. Had experience with Canvas course design.

It was important to me in my interviewee selection to ask instructors who have been teaching for at least one academic year so I could ensure they had the authority to speak about teaching basic writing and teaching in an OBWC, as well as be able to articulate what works well in their courses. One faculty member has expertise in Canvas course design, which was an additional skill that I sought to learn more about for designing my course.

In my interviews, I asked participants ten open-ended questions regarding their experiences with students in an OBWC (Appendix A). These questions dealt with how they developed their courses and identified trends that aligned or conflicted with basic writing and online writing scholarship. More specifically, the questions were in reference to instructor presence, collaborative assignments and activities, instruction methods, goals and values as an instructor, and feedback. I wanted to gain a sense of what a typical week might look like in these instructors' courses and how students participated and responded in the courses—from the faculty perspective. Each interview was conducted in person at NSU. The interviews lasted between 30- and 60-minutes minutes and were recorded using Apple Voice Memos during the 2019 Fall semester. After I completed the five interviews, I used Sonix.ai transcription software to transcribe each interview into a text document, which was then able to be played back and edited for accuracy.

I used meaning condensation to interpret the data found in the interviews. Meaning condensation is the process in which a researcher "analyze[s] extensive and

often complex interview texts by looking for natural meaning units and explicating their main themes" (Kvale, 2007, p. 106-108). In other words, meaning condensation allows the researcher to go beyond what is directly said to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in a text (Kvale, 2007, p. 106-108). I created themes based on what I inferred from the interviews and compared participant responses with basic writing and online writing instruction scholarship.

I then grouped the coded data into the following themes: support, collaboration, feedback, and other (which encompassed information that overlapped one or more categories). For each theme I interpreted the data by the interviewees' use of examples (e.g. activities, assignments, and instructor presence) that I could then qualify as falling into one or more themes. In addition to using examples, I also classified when the interviewees used explicit terms of "support, "collaboration," "feedback," and anything else. For example, when a participant discussed providing feedback to students through the use of audio or video methods, I categorized that as feedback. Through the interviews, I found strategies that instructors incorporated into their OBWCs to support students and foster a sense of community to help them succeed, which aligns with basic writing and online writing instruction scholarship.

All interviewees were given pseudonyms. Everleigh has taught at the institution since 2012. Her background includes holding an interim-WPA position for one semester, as well as having taught OBWC for several semesters. Beginning in 2018, Cosmo was a visiting assistant professor who taught OBW and was recommended by another faculty member as being an excellent online instructor. Lena and Stella were both hired in 2010

and have consistently taught OBW. Ryan has taught basic writing both f2f and online at the institution since 2008 and also specializes in Canvas course design for his department.

Results

After I coded and analyzed the interviews, I used the results (alongside basic and online writing scholarship) to determine the following four best practices for cultivating community in OBWCs. While the participants did not specifically state using the three presences—social, cognitive, and teaching—that make up CoI, I found that examples of each existed throughout the faculty's responses.

Make meaningful connections early on in the course

Meaningful connections are when instructors maintain a comfortable and approachable attitude during course-based communications. During my interviews, Cosmo, Stella, and Everleigh all mention meeting with students individually to check on their progress in the course throughout the semester and address any questions or concerns students might have up until the time of the meeting. Checking in with students is one way to connect with them on an individual level and ensure they are engaging with the course in ways that promote their success. Participants indicated the importance of becoming familiar with students early on and maintaining a connection with them throughout the semester. For instance, Lena and Cosmo meet with students at midterm and the end of the semester. Student conferences were an important part of their courses because they allowed instructors to show the students they genuinely cared about their success in the course. Although Lena did not mention student conferences in our interview, she puts conferences as a requirement on her course syllabus. Stella noted in her interview that she based the amount of contact she had with students during the

semester on students' needs. For example, she said "if a student wanted to meet using GoToMeeting, I arranged it." Likewise, "If a student was intimidated by technology," Stella would offer an alternative option for communication, such as a phone call.

Lena and Stella felt like a more hands-off approach was best for students to succeed and feel less stifled by instructor presence. Lena made students aware of her office hours and stated that they often took advantage of them. Conversely, Stella's students were aware of office hours but only met with her as necessary. Lena and Stella assess their students in the beginning of the semester and depending on their needs, adjust their presence as instructors in the course. For example, Stella becomes involved in discussion boards if she notices that's what her students need. However, if she inserts herself in a discussion board and the students withdraw, she will not continue to participate with them in that way. I interpreted Stella's response to mean that it is important for instructors to balance their presence in response to the needs of the specific community. Conversely, Cosmo often lets students know when they are not participating enough by posting announcements and reminding them that participation is part of their grade. In making the announcements about students' lack of participation, Cosmo attempts to connect with his students. By getting to know students early in the semester, providing them consistent access to you for feedback, checking in occasionally, and participating in class-based activities and discussions, participants illustrate different approaches to making meaningful connections with their students.

Listen to students

Listening to students is one of the best ways to get to know them during the semester and foster the connections that make them feel as though they are part of the

community. Listening involves paying attention to the students and noticing their engagement with the course (not necessarily speaking with them on the phone each week). Participants demonstrated listening by reading student posts in the discussion board, reviewing messages when they turn in assignments, and paying attention to responses in weekly journals. By listening to students, instructors can anticipate problems before they become bigger. This type of listening can alleviate any confusion the students might have about assignments and ensure that they remain active participants in the course, ultimately leading to their successful completion.

The participants all stressed the importance of taking time to listen to students' needs, which shows them their instructor cares about them, what they think, and how they feel. Cosmo, Stella, and Lena discussed using weekly journals and discussion boards as a way for students to reflect and provide feedback to one another and to instructors about their progress on assignments. Lena commented on her desire to allow students to come to their own conclusions, which she does by being involved less frequently on the discussion boards. Lena allows students to tell her about themselves through those posts and uses that as a way to connect with them. Cosmo discussed using a "Questions and Concerns" discussion forum to allow students a space to post questions about assignments or the course in general. Once problems arise in those forums, Cosmo said, "If I start to get several questions about an assignment or activity, I immediately set up a phone call or video conference with that student." By paying attention to students' needs through their weekly posts and discussion questions, Cosmo is able to hear and respond to the difficulties they have.

Listening also provides students with the agency to think for themselves, according to my interview with Lena. Lena allows students space during their one-on-one conferences to give them time to talk about their projects and work through ideas aloud, so they come to the conclusion themselves. For Lena, instructors can be almost like a sounding board for students to bounce around ideas about learning. By choosing to listen to students in a one-on-one setting, Lena's approach to listening helps strengthen her connection with her students. What was apparent from the participants' responses is that there is no one way to make an instant connection with students, but by listening and anticipating what might be of concern to students with their assignments, connections between instructors and students can form organically.

Provide meaningful feedback

Providing feedback to students is a way for instructors to indicate to students where they're successful and how they can improve their writing. Taking the time to carefully review student work and provide them feedback in different ways throughout a semester both addresses the needs of multiple learners and gives students access to different kinds of responses from their readers. For example, Lena discussed "giving feedback in multiple ways, whether that's in students' documents on Canvas or through email." According to Lena, students learn in a variety of ways, so providing feedback geared toward the students' learning style helps build their confidence.

Along with providing feedback from the instructor directly, Cosmo discussed the value of student-student feedback via peer review and how allowing students to give each other feedback is critical to their growth as writers. Allowing students to peer review each other's work can provide them access to responses and interpretations from other

readers. Often, this kind of feedback can be global—which might appeal to basic writers who feel they aren't capable of being writing authorities. As Cosmo noted, basic writing is not a course that should be meant to break down every spelling, grammar, or run-on sentence mistake a student makes in every writing activity or assignment. Giving global feedback is important to encourage students to focus on ideas (higher order concerns), rather than lower order concerns (grammar, spelling). In addition to students providing feedback for one another, Cosmo offers feedback throughout the peer review process. As he stated, "while [peer review] is happening, I'm reading through their drafts and giving them comments." In this instance, students are receiving feedback from one another as well as the instructor.

Instructors providing feedback to students can help them learn from the person who will ultimately be assessing their work. While some participants focused on individual feedback instructors provide their students, Lena provides students global feedback to the class as a whole. Lena explained that when giving back grades for a major assignment, she provides the class as a whole with comments and feedback on where they performed well on the assignment, and where they needed to improve.

Provide opportunities for collaboration

Within their courses, participants spoke about peer review as an important opportunity for students to collaborate with one another. All participants stressed the importance of students working together to practice writing and evaluating their writing. Peer review is a great way to hone the skills needed to become more confident writers. Lena, Cosmo, and Stella used collaboration in their courses by assigning peer review sessions during class. In addition to peer review, Ryan discussed having students work

within a community they are familiar with outside the classroom, which helps them connect with each other and collaborate both in and out of the online classroom space. Ryan further stated, "having students participate in discussions help students learn about each other and create connections to each other." Ryan's comment is an example of why it is so important to create meaningful classroom conversation because it might (and should) lead to connections forming between students.

Conclusions

Success in OBWCs can be achieved through a combination of methods (e.g. providing feedback or facilitating collaborative activities, such as peer review) and strategies that help students succeed, feel supported, and foster a sense of community. Not all instructors come from the same background and are not formally educated in exactly the same way. Many factors are taken into consideration when designing an OBWC. There are several areas I found for consideration for future research on OWBCs at four-year institutions: First, future scholarship might examine how students perceive and relate instructor communication with their satisfaction and success in an OBWC. A study on student perceptions provides instructors with an opportunity to learn what their students find to be supportive communication. Second, since peer review is a form of social presence that cultivates community and confidence building, future scholarship should focus on how peer review relates to social presence. Finally, future researchers might examine existing OBW assignments to determine how instructors use cognitive presence to instill student confidence in writing.

At the conclusion of this research, I identified two limitations. First, my interviews did not specifically focus on community in the classroom. However, when this project

began, the questions I posed during my interviews were meant to explore whether or not

instructors valued community in an online classroom, and whether or not their

interactions in online classes happened in a way that would promote community. Future

research might focus on defining community in OBWCs and asking instructors what

types of assignments and activities they use to promote community. Second, observation

of an OBWC would be helpful to track the course from beginning to end. Future research

options include, but are not limited to faculty training and education, examining adult

populations in OBWCs, and what I deem is most important, continuing to examine basic

writing courses at four-year institutions, where little research is being done on basic

writing.

Chapter 4

CURRICULUM JUSTIFICATION

This thesis contributes to existing conversations in basic writing and online writing instruction by focusing on a four-year, private institution. Studies about basic writing often come from programs at two-year colleges, rather than four-year colleges (Webb-Sunderhaus, 2010). Using data from faculty interviews, along with basic writing and online writing scholarship, the following course imbues CoI and collaboration to create an engaging experience for students that fosters community in an OBWC. Furthermore, this curriculum is built on best the four best practices I identified from faculty interviews:

1. Make meaningful connections early on in the course

2. Listen to students

3. Provide meaningful feedback

4. Provide opportunities for collaboration

Overall, the following OBWC is meant to build basic writers' confidence and increase community. The following rationale further elaborates on the choices made in the course design.

Textbook Selection

After reviewing several options for this course, I chose Graff, Birkenstein, and Durst's (2018) *They Say/I Say with Readings* (2018), which provides an easy-to-read, templated guide to writing and responding to others' writing, as well as a simplified way for students to structure their own writing. In addition to reading the specified chapters in *They Say/I Say*, supplemental readings were chosen based on the weekly topics. In the course, instructors will provide students with ample opportunities to practice their reading

and critical thinking by scaffolding the book chapters. The more reading students do throughout the semester, the more confidence they build in their ability to discuss what they learned.

I chose to use *They Say/I Say with Readings* (Graff et al., 2018) for two specific reasons. First, the instructor manual was structured in a way that explained to instructors how their students should be using the activities—to practice their writing—and how the activities moved them forward in their growth. Second, the templates in the textbook walk students through step-by-step instructions on how to format their writing. Additionally, the textbook provides students with activities and questions to practice skills like comparing, contrasting, and refuting an argument.

The template structure of *They Say/I Say* provides verbiage to students who might not have previously written for academia. The word choices in the templates are simple and assist students in seeing how their writing ought to be structured. It is worth noting this textbook does not come without its faults. As Nelson (2009) points out in her review of the *They Say/I Say* 2009 edition, the templates can be restrictive for students, meaning they may fill in exactly what the template says and become stuck in their thoughts and writing. One way to combat the issue of the templates being restrictive is for instructors to explain why it is important to not only fill in the blanks of the templates, but also use them as a guide for continuing their thoughts. In my OWBC, most of Graff et al.'s (2018) chapters were assigned for students to help them gain a better understanding of why writing (for different audiences) is important for their growth as writers. Finally, I used the questions at the end of each chapter as journal and discussion prompts to allow students to continue practicing writing.

Along with readings from *They Say, I Say*, I supplemented readings from *Successful Writing* (Hairston & Keene, 2003), that focused on revising, editing, and providing students an overview for setting up an academic paper (i.e., tone, clarity, and paragraph structure). Since *They Say/I Say* (2018) did not provide a chapter on setting up students' papers, finding another source for this topic was important. After having students read the two chapters, "Editing," and "Holding Your Reader," from *Successful Writing* (Hairston and Keene, 2003) on two consecutive weeks, students were asked to complete questions to reflect on what they read and consider for their next assignment.

Syllabus

The syllabus I designed serves as a course contract (Warnock and Gasiewski, 2009) that is meant to be inviting for students, making them feel valued in the course, and offering them assignments and activities that are engaging and help them improve as writers. Teaching presence is evident in the course syllabus (Garrison et al., 2000) by showing students who the instructor is due to how the course is structured and how they communicate their grading, plagiarism, and communication policies. Students in an OBWC are often not confident in their writing abilities and, like many students, are not always familiar with the online course format. It is important to ensure students feel welcomed into my course and understand that I am here to help them succeed. Because the syllabus is often the first communication instructors have with their student, there is a delicate line between coming off too harsh or too lax. These small distinctions can be the difference between fostering a sense of community with students, or not, from the beginning of the semester.

By creating a space where students feel comfortable with the instructor and in the online course, instructors can help foster the sense of community. Warnock and Gasiewski (2019) indicate that to maintain a positive and "here for you" tone to the sections "Late Work," "Participation," and "Communication" in a syllabus is a simple, yet effective way to begin showing students their instructor is supportive. Keeping a warm tone towards students creates a sense of welcome, to which students often respond well. Warnock and Gasiewski (2019) urge instructors to provide a welcoming tone because it assures students that you are there to help them, but not be a babysitter. My proposed syllabus included phrases such as, "I am here to help you," and "This may be your first experience in an online course"—phrases that Warnock and Gasiewski (2019) offer in Warnock's syllabus to OWC students. These phrases imply the instructor is willing to help students succeed.

The syllabus should clearly communicate to students that if they have questions about the course, they have different means and opportunities of asking the instructor. The communication policy explains to students how and when to contact the instructor. For example, instructors should provide students with their office hours and let them know times of the day when their instructor could be responses to discussion posts and emails. According to the interview with Cosmo, students in basic writing have often "had a bad experience with writing in high school." Providing students with what they can expect from their instructor in terms of support and accessibility—being transparent—further shows students that this experience with writing will be different from their previous experience and hopefully invites them to open up early on in the course.

One of the findings in the interview with Cosmo was evidence of a lack of communication between students and the instructor is detrimental to student success. If students do not feel like an instructor is communicative, the student may withdraw from the course (affecting retention) or begin to perform poorly from not having clear instructions on future assignments. Instructors that show students they are here to support them, provide contact information and times when they are available and can be expected to respond. Addressing the communication policies up front in the syllabus allows instructors to combat the communication difficulties that were mentioned by Stine (2010) and Cosmo and Stella in the interviews.

Student participation is a large part of the OWC environment and student expectations should be communicated explicitly in the syllabus. Instructors should be sure to outline the policies for student participation either in a section about discussion boards, or a separate participation section. In the proposed syllabus, an example of an appropriate and inappropriate discussion board response was given. Students benefit from having clear and concise instructions to steer them toward success. In the proposed syllabus, participation is denoted in the syllabus as follows:

This may be your first experience in an online course. You will find this course to be a different experience than that of an in-person course. We will work using a weekly course schedule. In an online course, you have some agency to complete work at your own pace, keeping in line with due dates (specified below). The course schedule is created to help you stay organized and on schedule. Part of your success in this course comes from completing all activities and assignments by the due date. You are expected to participate in various forms of communication,

including but not limited to: online discussions, complete weekly journals, attend

mandatory meetings with me via Zoom, phone or conferences (Canvas) (2 times

per semester), as well as participate in the peer review opportunities. How well you

do in this course depends on how much or how little you participate. This class is

an opportunity to learn from not just me, but your peers.

A statement like this in the syllabus indicates to students that there are expectations they

have to meet in order to be successful in the course. It also indicates how frequently

meetings with the instructor are while acknowledging areas that students may struggle. A

lack of communication between students would be detrimental to their success in the

course and could lead to instructors failing to foster a sense of community. Facilitating

collaborative discussion is essential to students learning from each other.

Plagiarism policies in the syllabus should echo institutional policies. Clearly

providing detailed plagiarism policies is a way to hold students accountable for their level

of success in the course. It is advised that instructors avoid using plagiarism detectors like

Turnitin, as those can cause unnecessary confusion for students. Warnock and Gasiewski

(2019) posit that instructors should know their students' writing by the first assignment

from reading journals and discussion posts, so any type of plagiarism would be easy to

spot.

Turning in late work directly relates to a student's participation level in the course

and it is thus important for syllabi to contain polices related to late work. In the OBWC I

developed, I decided that students should lose overall assignment points if they turn in

assignments late. The rationale for docking students five points per day was adapted from

participant input. Additionally, the syllabus contains language, so students realize that in

an online course technological issues are not a valid excuse is important. Students should prepare for and know that technological difficulties will happen at the eleventh hour. If students suspect an assignment may be late, or they have difficulty completing it, they have 24 hours advance notice to let instructors know, so a solution can be worked out. By giving students the policies in the syllabus, it shows students that there are boundaries within the course community.

Assignments

Major assignments are considered formal writing. This course incorporates revision and scaffolding to help students continuously reflect on their writing and how it can be improved. Additionally, students are given feedback at each stage of the writing process to allow them to see their strengths and weaknesses (Maxwell and Felczak, 2008). As part of the assignment prompt, instructions were provided on which font style and size the students should be using, as well as page count. Providing a page count rather than word count allows students flexibility.

The assignment sequence and activities were designed to promote social and cognitive presences (Garrison et al., 2000). The assignments are divided into four-week units and consist of two major writing assignments, a visual assignment, and a final reflection assignment. During the first week of the unit, students are introduced to the assignment and assigned readings to help them understand the importance of the concepts. Then, in weeks 2-4, students are assigned activities to help them hone the skills needed to produce writing that satisfies the learning objectives for each assignment. Social presence is indicated when students begin to write about themselves and share their personal story with their peers, allowing them to better understand who they are as

writers. Students' cognitive skills are at work throughout the assignments because they build on one another throughout the semester. Students are continuously seeking knowledge on the same topic throughout the semester. Students are provided instructions on how to complete the assignments based on instructor expectations, which lends itself to teaching presence—how students will be graded, and the type of feedback provided to them.

The syllabus also outlines weekly activities (i.e. discussion board posts, journals, and peer review) which are scaffolded to allow students time to practice the skills needed to be successful in their major assignments, which helps foster community and build students' confidence.

The assignment expectations were formulated to encourage students to think critically about their writing. Assignments were adapted from assignments participants found successful in their OWBCs. It was important this course to adapt an assignment that has already been used successfully in other courses. Based on the frameworks of CoI and collaboration, instructions were added to address the lack of confidence basic writers exhibit. The instructions for the assignments were also adapted to reflect the concepts being taught in *They Say/I Say* (Graff et al. 2018).

Assignment 1 is a personal response paper where students select a "hot" topic—pressing current issue of their choice—to use as they navigate the course activities and readings. To help students become more comfortable with writing, a first-person assignment allows students to tell a story about how they came to care about their topic and reflect on themselves. This assignment provides a foundation for Assignment 2 and Assignment 3.

Assignment 1 is meant for students to communicate to their audience why their issue/topic matters, why it is important to them personally, and how they were personally affected by the topic/issue. The students read Graff et al. (2018) chapter 4, "'Yes/No/Okay, But' Three Ways to Respond," which teaches students how to respond to views on their topic using "yes," "no," and "Okay, but." In additions, students were assigned Graff et al. (2018) chapter 5, "'And Yet' Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say," which teaches students to ensure their audience knows the difference between what the student is saying and what someone else might say.

Assignment 2 is a compare and contrast about the topic students chose for assignment 1. For Assignment 2, students are asked to find one popular source (e.g., *New York Times, Washington Post*) that address their topic from different perspectives. Students will be given instructions on how they can find these types of articles. This assignment draws on the Graff et al.'s (2018) format of writing about what you say (the student) and then writing about what they say (authors of the articles). Assignment 2 introduces students to summary, compare and contrast, and synthesis, allowing them to understand their ideas do not exist alone.

Assignment 3 asks students to create an infographic about their chosen topic. As it is important for students as 21_{st} century composers to keep up with technology, asking them to create multimodal assignments prepares them to meet the needs of multiple audiences and utilize creativity in their assignments (Selfe, 2009). Assignment 3 asks students to design an infographic using information from their first two assignments, which directly relates to the cognitive presence model: dissonance, exploration of knowledge, find meaning and connecting ideas, and resolution (Garrison & Arbaugh,

2007). Assignment 3 challenges students to engage in new skills, such as visual design (Selfe, 2009). At this point in the semester, students should have a better understanding of how they and others view their topic, and Assignment 3 asks them to focus on a specific audience and communicate to them in a different way. In the interview with Lena, she discussed how multimodal assignments are not easy to execute in an online course, but with detailed direction and weekly scaffolded activities—as evident in this course—students will feel supported and set up for success. Throughout the module, students will be provided examples of previous students' work and resources and tools for completing the assignment.

Assignment 4, the last major assignment, asks students to reflect on their experiences and growth in the course from the start to the end of the semester. Reflection is an important part of writing. Students should be familiar with the choices they made in their writing and be able to understand how those choices affect their writing. The intention of the assignment is to allow students to gain a sense of confidence in themselves as students and writers by looking back on where they started in the course and how they finished. In the interview with Stella, she stated that by asking students to reflect instructors are "building and creating space for students to be confident" in their writing. Stella asks students after each major assignment to reflect on a piece of their paper that they are proud of and why. Reflection is something instructors could use as a prompt in a weekly journal or discussion post. Using the discussion posts for consistent reflection on readings and concepts learned during the semester could assist in fostering a sense of community, especially if students praise their peers for their hard work on any given assignment. If one student praises another student in a discussion post, it could

create a domino effect, meaning other students might respond to their peers in a positive way.

Activities: Discussions, Journals, and Peer Review

Discussion board posts and responses are an integral part of the course design, allowing students to collaborate with their peers and consider others' ideas. Instructors should consider entering discussion boards to collaborate with the students when appropriate given the needs of the class community. Instructors can gauge the course and determine how much of their involvement should exist in the discussions. If the instructor joins the conversation and students retreat, they should be cautious of entering the conversation in the future. However, it is acceptable for instructors to enter the conversation and provide interesting information for students to further consider on the topic being discussed. Discussion board posts are an opportunity for students to practice writing, reflect on what they have read, and ensure they are in fact reading what was assigned. For example, in Week 3, students read Jenna Wortham's "How I Learned to Love Snapchat" (Graff et al., 2018, p. 474-479), and then answer the question, "In your own view, what are the benefits and limitations of Snapchat as a form of communication? More broadly, write a paragraph developing your own argument about the larger effects of digital media, citing your experiences as well as ideas from chapter 2" (p. 479). By asking students to answer this question on the discussion board, they are opening themselves up to other ideas. The students will then, most likely, enter into conversations with their classmates and need to defend their choices, instilling confidence in those choices and their articulation of ideas. Without even realizing it, students will begin

practicing compare and contrast skills needed for Assignment 2—another scaffolding activity.

In addition to the assignments meeting the learning outcomes and the instructions providing effective practices of social, cognitive, and teaching presences, student shave several opportunities for peer review. Throughout the term, students use the discussion board to peer review sections of their essays in assigned groups. Although the peer review sessions take place on the discussion board, they are different from the questions pertaining to the readings that students must answer and engage in conversation about with each other. With each peer review session, students are provided with prompts to consider while assessing and critiquing their peers' writing. The prompts students receive with each peer review exercise provide questions or comments for them to consider when reading their peers' papers. The peer review prompts Lena, Cosmo, and Stella discuss in their respective interviews were perceived by each instructor as used effectively by students. The prompts are not meant to be the only considerations students keep in mind, but they are meant to jump start the thinking process.

Peer review also helps create a sense of community by asking students to be vulnerable in sharing their writing. If students see other students struggling with certain parts of a writing assignment, they may not feel as isolated and it could help improve confidence in their own writing, as was mentioned in my interview with Stella. Guided peer review activity is an example of the importance of cognitive presence affecting a student's level of engagement with her peers to create shared meaning of any potential beliefs, values, or norms (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007).

In addition to discussion posts, students are asked to complete (almost) weekly journal entries. These journal entries require the students to gain low stakes experience with writing, reflecting, and understanding the material they are reading. In the interviews with Cosmo and Stella, both stated that in asking students to write journals, they are having them reflect on their writing process. Asking students to complete low-stakes journals is important for them to practice the skills they are learning through the weekly overviews and the readings that were assigned. An example of a journal entry would come after students read chapter 2, "'Her Point Is' The Art of Summarizing," in *They Say/I Say with Readings* (Graff et al., 2018). For their journal, students are asked to compose a mind map of two different topics they chose to write about for Assignment 1. Their mind map can be something hand drawn or made using software students are comfortable/familiar with using (e.g. Coggle and Milanote are online mind mapping tools). In this instance, the brainstorming journal activity is the beginning of the scaffolding for Assignment 1. Basic writers work well with assignments that have been designed to have one activity build upon the last (Borgman & McArdle, 2019). Thus, scaffolded assignments were implemented into the syllabus for this course and journals provide a space for students to be accountable in the scaffolding.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Teaching OBW can be a challenge for new and seasoned instructors. Designing a course that is founded on the insights of basic writing faculty, basic writing and online writing instruction scholarship can provide a new lease on teaching OBWCs. In an ever-changing technological climate, it can be difficult to keep in mind the structure of what makes getting online instruction right so important. As I am finishing up this project, I cannot help but take into consideration the current climate and how prevalent online teaching became the only way of teaching overnight. It makes this project that much more relevant and critical.

If instructors have a foundation for how to best teach basic writers in an online space, then they can learn the technology that is needed to facilitate OBWCs. The four best practices as laid out from interview and secondary research findings provide the essential basics needs of students in an OBWC. This paper sough to answer the questions, "How do instructors build community in the online classroom?" as well as "How can OBW instructors instill confidence in students enrolled in an OBWC?" and I believe this project answers those questions. The OWI Principles provide a baseline for teaching basic writing online. More research is needed to examine how Principles 1, 3, and 11 can be further implemented successfully in an OBWC. Ensuring students have access to any technology being used in an OBWC must be one of instructors' primary goals. Additionally, students benefit from having a strong instructor presence, as well as a feeling supported by their instructor. Furthermore, by incorporating a strong social, cognitive, and teaching presence as laid out in CoI's framework (Garrison et al., 2000),

instructors can gain continued insight into how students are responding to the strategies presented in the syllabus and curriculum justification. The interviews provided much needed practical information to show what was and was not working with in the examined institution's OBWCs.

Future research could include interviewing part-time faculty, as well as students. A long-term case study observing students in an OBWC would provide the perspective of students and how they perceive their writing confidence and how their confidence may or may not improve based on an instructor's implementation of the strategies from this paper. If 2020 was any indication of the future of online instruction, basic writing instructors have a lot of learning to do about teaching basic writing solely online.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Faculty

1. **I would like to start by having you tell me about yourself and your background here at NSU.**

   a. Tell me about your time at NSU as a Basic Writing instructor, how long you have been at NSU, and Basic Writing courses you have taught, both in-person and online.

2. **What are your goals as an instructor for teaching Basic Writing (BW).**

   a. Do these goals change depending on the type of BW course (i.e. in-person vs. online).

3. **What are your values as an instructor?**

   a. Are these values different for online and in-person courses? What influences your values?

4. **What are your instructional methods for teaching BW (online and in-person)?**

   a. What types of assignments do you find yourself using? Do these assignments work for both online and in-person? If not, how do you modify them for the appropriate medium?

5. **How does online learning change your role as an instructor? (Ask only if this applies)**

   a. What types of materials do you use in an online course? Multimodal? How do you account for inclusivity and accessibility?

6. **What types of assignments do you use in an online/in-person BW course?**

   a. How do you account for accessibility and inclusivity? Do the assignments build

on each other? What is the requirement, if any, for visiting the WCC?

7. **What tools/methods might best encourage students' self-reflection?**

   a. How do you work peer review into an online course?

8. **As an instructor, how do you engage with students online versus in-person?**

   a. Response to discussion posts? How often are you responding and how timely are your responses?

9. **How do you provide feedback to students online versus in-person?**

   a. Are meetings required for online courses? What other ways do you check in with students online and in-person?

10. **Do you have any final thoughts on COMP 1000 or questions for me based on what we've talked about?**

Appendix B

Online Basic Writing Syllabus

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE

COMP 1000 Basic Writing Online
Instructor Virtual Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
A writing workshop emphasizing recursive writing and reflection within a variety of contexts. This course provides instruction in writing rhetorically, researching and documenting sources, and composing in multiple media.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Practice writing as a recursive process that includes prewriting, drafting, revising, and proofreading.
2. Produce writing for various audiences using appropriate conventions.
3. Respond constructively to peer writing.
4. Produce critical reflections on individual writing processes and growth as a writer.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS
Graff, G., Birkenstein, C., and Durst, R. (2018). *They say/I say with readings: The moves that matter in academic writing* (4th ed). W.W. Norton & Co.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Participation
This may be your first experience in an online course. You will find this course to be a different experience than that of an in-person course. We will work using a weekly course schedule. In an online course, you have some agency to complete work at your own pace, keeping in line with due dates (specified below). The course schedule is created to help you stay organized and on schedule. Part of your success in this course comes from completing all activities and assignments by the due date.

You are expected to participate in various forms of communication, including but not limited to: online discussions, complete weekly journals, attend mandatory meetings with me via Zoom, phone or Canvas/Zoom conferences (2 times per semester), as well as participate in the peer review opportunities. How well you do in this course depends on how much or how little you participate. This class is an opportunity to learn from not just me, but your peers.

Communication
I will be communicating regularly with you through email and Canvas course messages. It is critical for you to check both places daily.

As you need to schedule time to participate in this course, so do I. I will spend time checking email and reading through the discussion board daily in the morning around 10 a.m. EST and in the evening around 7 p.m. EST. These times are not the same as my office hours.

If you need to get in touch with me outside of these hours, please schedule an appointment with me. We will find a time that works for both of us. I am here to help you.

Late Work
The learning in this course requires in-depth reading, reflection, writing, discussion, independent work, and group work. To do well in this course, your work must be completed in a timely manner. If you have issues submitting work, get in touch with me 24 hours before the due date. I am here to work with you. Technological issues will not be considered valid excuses. All late work will be penalized five (5) points per day (including weekends). Any assignment turned in beyond three days after the due date will receive zero credit.

If you do have a medical issue that prevents you from participating in this class, please contact the Student Disability Services office.

Plagiarism (as found in the Student Handbook)
Plagiarism is defined in the handbook as "the adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgment" (NSU Student Handbook, 2019).

"Students are expected to submit tests and assignments that they have completed without aid or assistance from other sources. Using sources to provide information without giving credit to the original source is dishonest. Students should avoid any impropriety or the appearance thereof in taking examinations or completing work in pursuance of their educational goals" (NSU Student Handbook, 2019).

If you have any questions regarding academic integrity. Please refer to the Student Handbook.

Ongoing Assignments

Online Discussions (10% of final grade)
Being an active participant is essential to doing well in this course. Please make sure you are participating on the discussion board each week as it will factor into your participation grade for this course. As a participant in the class, you should contribute in a way that is engaging to your classmates. Each discussion prompt on Canvas will have guidelines for you to follow. Make sure your responses are grammatically correct and add to the conversation. You do not always need to agree with your classmates, but make sure you are countering their claim/argument in a way that is respectful.

For all discussion board posts, you will need to appropriately respond (see example of appropriate response below) to 2 of your peers' posts. You will be provided prompts to guide your responses. Please be kind and provide useful and meaningful feedback to your peers that either answers the questions they have about their paper or allows them to see areas for improvement.

See below for do's and don't's for discussion posts and responses.

Peer Review
Over the course of the semester, you will be assigned opportunities to give feedback to your classmates on writing in progress. This is meant to be a collaborative activity, as well as help you learn how you can improve your own writing. Be kind and provide useful and meaningful feedback to your peers.

Each group will be provided prompts (found on Canvas) to help guide you through responding to your peers' papers and projects.

Use of student work: Unless requested in writing otherwise by students, work submitted in this class may be used anonymously as examples for future students.

> *Appropriate response:* "Hi Peer, I think your introduction is informative and I know exactly what you are going to discuss in the rest of your paper. I do think your transitions between paragraphs could have a better flow. I can help with that if you'd like."
>
> *Inappropriate response:* "Hey, your paper was funny. I hope you get a good grade."

Weekly Journals (10% of final grade)
Each week you will be given a prompt to address in that week's journal assignment that will ask you to reflect on readings, the discussion board, or another aspect of the course. These weekly journals are meant to provide you with the opportunity to better understand the readings and assignments. Weekly journals are due by 11:59 p.m. EST on Sundays.

Major Assignments

Writing Projects (4 major assignments)
For this class, we will use Canvas for submitting all of your assignments. Please adhere to the Canvas guidelines for how to properly submit your assignments. If you have trouble submitting, let me know as soon as possible so you do not lose points for lateness. All assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. EST on the date found on Canvas.

Writing Assignment 1: Current Event Narrative (20% of final grade)

For this assignment, think of a current issue that you are passionate about and what it means to you. This narrative should give insight as to why you are passionate about the topic. Were you affected by this topic in some way? Why is it important to you?

Writing Assignment 2: Compare/Contrast Paper (25% of your final grade)
For this assignment, you will find an article that has addressed the topic you are writing about in Writing Assignment 1 and compare and contrast your point of view with the point of view of someone with a different opinion. Why does the author disagree with you? Why is this counter-argument important to your topic? What did you talk about that the author did not and vice versa?

Writing Assignment 3 – Current Event Narrative Visual (20% of your final grade)
For this assignment, you will consider ways you could visualize information form Assignment 1 and 2 to a new audience using an infographic.

Once you create your infographic, you will then write a 1-2 page rationale explaining the choices you made and why those choices are important to the issue you are discussing. Your rationale should include a justification for the choices you made on your infographic. Did you consider other elements or texts? How did you choose font type, colors, images, etc.? What went wrong during your design process? How did you correct it? What was the hardest part about creating the visual?

Writing Assignment 4 – Final Reflection
I want to hear from you. I want to know how your writing has grown since the beginning of the semester and now, compared to how you wrote in Journal Week 1. What changed for you? How did you feel as a writer on the first day of the course and how do you feel now? What did you learn in the class? What did you learn about yourself as a student and writer? You can provide honest feedback to me about the course overall, the assignments, the textbook, the readings, the activities, and anything else you feel is important to note about the course, me as an instructor, and/or yourself.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPIC OUTLINE
Class schedule is subject to change, but not without prior notification (I will send an announcement noting any changes). You can find the updated schedule in the "Syllabus" tab on Canvas.

*All assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. EST on their given due date (found on Canvas).
*Weekly Journals are due at 11:59 p.m. EST on Sundays.

Week 1	**Reading Due:** Syllabus and course materials and Ch. 12 "I Take Your Point" (pp. 162-165) **Lecture to Review:** Course Introduction, Canvas Navigation, "How we read/How to engage with the readings."

	Journal Week 1: About you and how you read. (Guidelines on Canvas) **Discussion:** Dubsmash Introduction (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday. **Assignment Due:** Signed Syllabus (uploaded to Canvas)
Week 2	**Reading Due: "**Introduction" (pp. 1-18) Ch. 1 "They Say" (pp. 19-29) **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 2 – They Say **Journal Week 2:** What are you passionate about? **Discussion:** Read "Two Years Are Better Than Four" (pp. 365-368). Answer the four questions on p. 368 (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday**.**
Week 3	**Reading Due:** Ch. 2 "Her Point Is" (pp. 30-42), **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 3 – Introduce Writing Assignment (WA)1 and Brainstorming activities. **Journal Week 3:** Turn in a mind map of two different topics you might chose to write about. This can be something hand drawn. An example will be provided in the Lecture to Review Week 3. **Discussion:** Read "How I Learned to Love Snapchat (pp. 474-479). Answer question 5 on p. 479 (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday**.**
Week 4	**Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 4 – Using description in your writing. Visiting the WCC. **Journal Week 4:** Submit an outline of WA1 for feedback. **Discussion:** Read "Does Texting Affect Writing?" p. 462-473 and answer question 5 (p. 473) (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday**.**
Week 5	**Reading Due:** Sample narrative "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" (pp. 424-440) **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 5 – How to effectively peer review. **Journal Week 5:** Discuss your writing process for your narrative draft. Where are you with the assignment? How do you plan to finish? **Discussion:** Post a draft of your current event narrative with specific issues you'd like to have feedback on (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday.
Week 6	**Reading Due:** Hairston, M. and Keene, M. (2003). Editing. In *Successful writing*. (pp. 122-127). **PDF on Canvas** **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 6 – Finalizing your current event narrative. **Journal Week 6:** How do you feel about submitting your first piece of college writing? How do you plan to improve for future assignments? Reflect on your visit to the WCC. What did you work on with your consultant?

	Discussion: After reading "Editing," post a paragraph of WA1 and use one of the strategies you read about (due by Friday). Then you will discuss in assigned groups how this went for each of you (due Sunday). **Assignment Due:** Writing Assignment 1: Current Event Narrative due Sunday by 11:59 p.m. EST.
Week 7	**Reading Due:** Hairston, M. *and Keene, M. (2002). Holding your reader. In Successful* writing. (pp. 72-92) **PDF on Canvas** **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 7 – Evaluating writing **Journal Week 7:** Write a letter to me detailing how you feel about the class so far. How well do you think you are doing, why or why not? Have you connected with your classmates? If not, how could you better connect with them **Discussion:** Consider the reading for this week, then answer question 2 on p. 89 (due by Friday). In assigned groups, discuss why the titles work and why they might not work (post due Sunday).
Week 8 **Midterm Week**	One-on-one conferences via Zoom, Conferences in Canvas, or phone call. We will discuss looking forward and how you are performing in the class thus far. You should be looking at Week 9.
Week 9 Oct. 12-18	**Reading Due:** Ch. 4 "Yes/No/OK, but" (pp. 53-66) **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 9 – Introduction to WA 2 - Agreeing and Disagreeing in writing. How to find/evaluate articles **Journal Week 9:** On p. 66 answer question 1 using the reading "What You Eat Is Your Business" (pp. 651-655). **Discussion:** Post your topic from WA 1 and then give your peers 2 counterarguments to consider. Why are these important? What is the purpose for examining counterarguments? (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday.
Week 10	**Reading Due:** Ch. 5 "And Yet" (pp. 67-76). **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 10 – What are you saying? What are they saying? How to find differences. **Discussion:** Respond to question 2 on p. 76. Use your current event narrative as the piece of writing to evaluate (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday.
Week 11	**Reading Due:** "Howard University Commencement Speech" (pp. 296-314) **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 11 – Objecting in an argument. Why it matters. **Journal Week 11:** Respond to the following questions about the essay you read: Is the author's response to

	objections convincing? Why or why not? Are there any likely objections the author does not include? **Discussion:** Post a draft of your current event narrative with specific sections you'd like to have feedback on (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday.
Week 12	**Reading Due:** Ch. 9 "You Mean I Can Just Say It That Way?" (pp. 117-130). **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 12 – Writing what you want. Introduce Writing Assignment 3. **Journal Week 12:** Assess the feedback you received from your peers last week. Was it helpful? Did you take the feedback you were given? What other ideas did the feedback give you to consider? **Assignment Due:** Writing Assignment 2: Current Event Narrative Recast due Sunday by 11:59 p.m. EST.
Week 13	**Reading Due:** Example visual assignments **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 13 – Example tools for creating visuals **Discussion:** Post 3 options for presenting your current event issue visually (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday.
Week 14	**Reading Due:** Hairston, M. and Keene, M. (2003). Considering Design. In *Successful writing*. (pp. 128-155) **PDF on Canvas** **Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 14 – What are visuals and why are they important? Finalizing your visual assignment. **Journal Week 14:** Tell me what visual you plan to create and how you plan to execute the design. Do you anticipate any complications? **Discussion:** In groups you will discuss options for creating your visual assignment (due by Friday), Responses to 2 peers' post due Sunday.
Week 15 **Thanksgiving**	**Lecture to Review:** Introduction to Week 15 – Introduce Writing Assignment 4 **Assignment Due:** Writing Assignment 3 – Current Event Narrative Visual.
Week 16 **Finals Week**	One-on-one conferences via Zoom, Conferences in Canvas, or phone call. We will discuss the final Writing Assignment 4 and how you performed this semester. I look forward to hearing your feedback and experience. **Assignment Due:** Writing Assignment 4: Evaluation of course/your progress as a writer/feedback due Sunday by 11:59 p.m. EST.

Final Course Grade

WA1: Current Event Narrative	20%
WA2: Current Event Narrative Recast	25%
WA3: Current Event Narrative Visual	15%
WA4: Course Reflection	10%
Weekly Journals	15%
Discussion Board Posts (reading responses, peer responses), Participation, Conferences	15%
Total	**100%**

Appendix C

Unit One – Discussion and Journal Prompts

Journals Weeks 1-4

Journal Week 1: How do you read? What steps do you take when you're reading for school compared to other instances when you're reading (for pleasure, digital reading, texting, social media, etc)? When reading for school, do you summarize the chapter(s)? Do you take notes—annotate the margins? Do you handwrite the notes or use a note-taking software (e.g., OneNote, Evernote)? Describe your reading practices. What's worked well so far? What might you change?

Journal Week 2: Consider two topics/causes you are passionate about (e.g., saving the whales, breast cancer advocacy) Why are they important to you? What experience(s) do you have with your topics? What are your opinions on the topic? What do others say about the topic? Using the template on pages 23-24 (Graff et al., 2018), fill in the blanks with the information from one of your topics (if you want to talk about both topics briefly, you may).

Journal Week 3: Brainstorming/Mind mapping. Turn in a mind map of two different topics you might chose to write about. This can be something hand drawn or made using a software you are comfortable/familiar with using (e.g. Coggle, Milanote). An example will be provided in the Lecture to Review Week 3.

Journal Week 4: Submit an outline of Writing Assignment 1 for feedback from instructor.

Online Discussion Posts Weeks 1-4

All discussion posts are due by Friday, 11:59 p.m. EST
Responses to 2 peers' post due by Sunday, 11:59 p.m. EST

Example of how to respond in discussion posts.
- Did the author answer the prompt or not? Did the author make a compelling argument based on evidence/facts?
- Did the author provide a brief overview of the article?

Discussion Week 1: Dubsmash Introduction. Students will pick their favorite scene from their favorite movie and act it out using Dubsmash. The introduction must be a minimum of 10 seconds long. Record your scene and post to the discussion board.

Discussion Week 2: Read "Two Years Are Better Than Four" (pp. 365-368). Answer questions 1-4 on p. 368**.**

Discussion Week 3: Read "How I Learned to Love Snapchat" (pp. 474-479). Answer question 5 on p. 479.

Discussion Week 4: Read "Does Texting Affect Writing?" p. 462-473. Answer question 5.