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Thesis of
Autumn Bishard

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

Nova Southeastern University
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

March 2023

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EMBRACING A PEDAGOGY OF INTENTIONALITY: REASSESSING ONLINE WRITING INSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES THROUGH A POST-2020 LENS

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

Autumn Bishard
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Communication, Media, and the Arts
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May 2023

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic upended every system, routine, set of practices and policies that stood as status quo when the pandemic was declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020. At that time, many writing instructors across America had to quickly become online writing instructors without any specialized training. Taking stock of what was learned during the pandemic, this thesis examines the Conference of College Composition and Communication's (CCCC) Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI) and makes recommendations that enhance inclusivity and accessibility. CCCC OWI Principles 1, 2, and 11 are examined by utilizing scholarship in composition and rhetoric, and OWI, that speak to the importance of student-centered design, multimodality in OWI, and accessibility and inclusivity. Along with pedagogical recommendations that align with the principles and speak to lessons learned during the pandemic, this thesis argues for the embracing of a pedagogy of intentionality that requires instructors to take a critical approach to their practices in an effort to improve student experiences in online writing courses (OWCs).

Keywords: online writing instruction, CCCC, pandemic, intentionality

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INTRODUCTION

It is no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic upended every system, routine, set of practices, and policies that stood as status quo when the pandemic was declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020. The higher education industry was no exception to this upheaval. When universities, schools, and businesses shut down, many educators had only a short period of time to work out how operations were going to proceed. This turbulent upheaval forced every instructor to become an online instructor, including writing professors.

Although teaching online was a new experience for many instructors at the beginning of the pandemic, the field of OWI has been around for decades and already had best practices and policies in place. For instance, The Conference on College Composition & Communication developed a committee designed to establish principles and best practices for OWI (Hewett & DePew, 2015). The CCCC's (2013) *A position statement of principles and example effective practices for online writing instruction* contained fifteen principles and recommendations to help guide instructors teaching writing online. Although these principles had undergone revisions at the time of their writing, major updates to the principles have yet to take place—particularly ones that take into account the shifts to instruction that the pandemic necessitated.

The most recent picture of OWI comes from the CCCC OWI Standing Group's 2021 report titled, "State of the art of OWI" (OWI Standing Group, 2021), which considers changes to online teaching since 2011, including during the pandemic. The 2021 report spoke to the importance of not leaving behind the lessons afforded to the field of OWI as a result of the pandemic. The authors write, "A return to pre-COVID-19 pandemic thinking would undermine the knowledge gained over the past decade and significantly limit future OWI research" (p. 49). What the OWI Standing Group is alluding to here is the motivating factor that inspired this project to bring the CCCC (2013) OWI principles into a post-2020 context.

In particular, this project explored principle 1 ("Online writing instruction should be universally inclusive and accessible"), principle 2 ("An online writing course should focus on writing and not on technology orientation or teaching students how to use learning and other technologies"), and principle 11 ("Online writing teachers and their institutions should develop personalized and interpersonal online communities to foster student success"). These principles were selected for this project because they all speak to foundational issues related to student learning that were impacted by the pandemic, including access and inclusion, technology's role in OWI, and the importance of developing community in OWCs. Aside from essential workers, the majority of people learned how to study, teach, work, and fully operate within the four walls of their home environment. Sheppard (2021) explains the hurried nature of this pedagogical shift as, ". . . not the careful, deliberative work normally required to design online teaching and learning" (p. 60). This thesis serves to address Sheppard's concern by outlining a deliberate, critical approach to current OWI principles and practices.

While the initial two-week period that instructors had to redesign their courses was effective in the sense that it helped students and teachers move forward, what needs to occur now is a deeper conversation regarding what can be taken away from pandemic experiences and used to inform practices moving forward. Historically, many scholars' arguments gained even more traction in light of the experiences and events of 2020 and 2021. For example, Banks (2008) and Selfe (1999) speak to the issues of lack of access to technology experienced by marginalized populations, an issue that was greatly exacerbated by the pandemic. By combining pre- and post-pandemic OWI scholarship, this project ensures that lessons learned during this period were not in vain and can be utilized to enhance the student experience in OWI.

Most specifically, throughout this project, I call for instructors to be intentional. Sheppard (2021) argues that: online writing instructors ". . .need to develop intentional, manageable approaches that attend to both student learning and instructor well-being" (p. 64). What Sheppard (2021) is suggesting is that there is a direct connection between being intentional about classroom management strategies and other instructional choices, being student-centered, and focusing on instructor well-being.

I argue for developing a pedagogy of intentionality. Pengilly (2021) uses "intentional pedagogy" (p. 153), as a way to describe how instructors can connect issues of accessibility and equity into their instructional practices. Pengilly argues for this intentional pedagogy to prioritize human-centered elements of learning like usability and accessibility in order to improve student learning (p. 153). When I refer to a pedagogy of intentionality, I am referring to an ideological shift in the teaching and designing of instruction that accounts for the diverse needs and experiences of traditional and non-traditional students, and is informed with a critical approach to practices with a deliberate objective to provide a student-centered learning experience.

An ideological shift calls for instructors and administrators to change their viewpoint and perspective to be more critical of current practices with a lens that prioritizes equity and accessibility. A universal learning experience is one in which more students are able to interact with and learn from course material without additional accommodation. Universal learning experiences can be achieved through the designing of course materials that supports multiple learning preferences or materials that are presented in multiple modes. Principles 1, 2, and 11 speak to different facets of the student experience within an online writing environment. Moving these principles into a post-2020 context requires there to be a conversation of what is working, what isn't working, and what can be done to provide remedies for these issues in the student experience of OWI.

Bringing principles 1, 2, and 11 into a post-2020 context also calls for a shift in ideology away from an ideology of normalcy to an ideology of inclusion (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017).

What this means is having a critical approach to the way that things have been done traditionally and reevaluating those practices for ways that they can be made more inclusive to a more diverse student population than ever seen before. Shifting the ideology also calls for a rejection of a model of teaching to accommodation and teaching with a more universal approach (Brown et al., 2023). Students have never been a one-size-fits-all and this project calls for teaching practices in OWI to be informed by that concept being honored. The final piece of the pedagogy of intentionality is that all materials, activities, and assignments should have a purpose that is directly and clearly communicated to the student in a way that showcases how it enhances their learning experience. Especially when technology is so heavily integrated into the course design, as it often is with OWI, students must have a purposeful understanding of everything they are completing for the course so that the tasks become more meaningful to them and their experience in the course and beyond.

I argue that when student and instructor wellbeing is intentionally placed at the forefront of online course design, measures can be taken to help implement a more deliberate sense of connection and community. Palloff and Pratt (2007) warned almost thirteen years prior to the onset of the pandemic that, “Online there is a greater possibility for a sense of loss. . . loss of contact, loss of connection, and a resultant sense of isolation. Consequently, attention should be paid to the intentional development of presence” (p. 31). As a student before, after, and throughout the pandemic, I have experienced firsthand how the pandemic has shifted the experience of OWI. Speaking from my own experiences in response to Palloff and Pratt’s (2007)’s work, it is crucial for instructors to be deliberate in their production of their teaching presence, particularly with online courses due to the lack of connection that online students face, making them more vulnerable when taking online courses. As I develop, intentionality is the common thread that connects the implications for practices moving forward.

Project Breakdown

This project is divided into three chapters, one focusing on each of the aforementioned principles, followed by a set of recommendations and an activity for each principle. The recommendations apply lessons learned during the pandemic and call for certain changes to instructional practices. The activities illustrate applications for the recommendations. The recommendations and activities illustrate what a pedagogy of intentionality might look like for online writing instructors.

Chapter one focuses on the first CCCC (2013) OWI principle that states the need for accessibility and inclusivity in OWI. For the scholarship that was analyzed, I looked first at historical works such as Selfe (1999) and Banks (2008) that spoke about issues of access to technology and socio-cultural phenomena like The Digital Divide, providing a historical context to issues of access in education. From there, I analyze works from Hewett et al. (2022), Brown et al. (2023), and others, who speak to the exacerbation of these issues post pandemic and how access and inclusivity need to be examined and improved. For the recommendations for the first principle, I speak on the importance of instructors defining access and inclusion for themselves as a way to make these practices more personal to them and their classes. In addition, I advocate for instructors meeting students where they are at in their learning experiences and ability and skill levels. Finally I call for utilizing an engagement-based grading model to assess and evaluate student work more inclusively. The activity proposed for the first principle is designed to allow students to reflect and communicate their ideas in a journal-like deliverable in a variety of modes (ie: alphabetic, visual, auditory), so that the assignment suits student learning preferences and needs.

Chapter two speaks about the second OWI principle that states that online writing should focus on writing and not technology orientation. I argue that technology orientation is necessary for creating inclusive and equitable online classes. For the scholarship that was analyzed, I looked at some of the existing contradictions that exist between the second and tenth OWI principles when it comes to preparing students adequately for the various components of OWI. I then looked at more recent works that spoke to the importance of topics such as connecting technology and pedagogy (Drinkwater, 2021), LMS orientation for online students (Pengilly, 2021; Crawley, 2021), and the importance of multimodal assignments in OWI and strengthening students as communicators in a digital world (Lutkewitte, 2014-a). In terms of recommendations for the second OWI principle, I suggested the importance of tasks such as LMS introductory assignments, assigning at least one multimodal project in OWCs, and including a base-level of technology understanding in learning objectives for OWCs. For the activity, I proposed a LMS scavenger hunt to orient students to the technologies used in their course at the start of the semester.

Chapter three speaks about the eleventh OWI principle that emphasizes the importance of community-building in OWI. For the scholarship that I analyzed, I highlighted the works of Stewart (2021), Wut and Xu (2021), and others who spoke to the importance of developing a community for online students to learn in and the role of the instructor in designing that type of environment for students. I also applied Garrison's (2016) community of inquiry framework to the community-building in online courses, particularly after the isolating times of the pandemic. For the recommendations for principle eleven, I suggested that group work and collaboration should be key elements of OWCs as a way to build community. I also suggested that instructors utilize messaging platforms and discussion boards as a way for students to communicate with one another (Warnock, 2009), and that instructors should check in with students consistently so that they feel connected to the learning experience and processes within their online courses. When designing the activity, I developed a Jeopardy-style game that students can play asynchronously or synchronously on teams with their peers, as a way to strengthen the learning community throughout the semester.

The final section of this project includes intentionality implications that speaks to both instructors and administrators of writing programs. These implications were designed to highlight the need for intentionality moving forward, as a way to carry on the lessons learned from the pandemic and the years that follow. The implications align with the three OWI principles examined in this project, speaking respectively to intentionality with regards to accessible and inclusive instruction, intentionality with LMS usage and orientation, and intentionality with the development of community within OWCs. All three of these implications in conjunction with the recommendations for each of the OWI principles are designed to work together and inform instructors and administrators about how they can embrace a pedagogy of intentionality within each of their own institutional contexts.

Chapter 1

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

The first OWI principle speaks to the fact that the delivery and the student experience of OWI should be inclusive and accessible to all students. *Inclusive* and *accessible* are terms that are crucial to the student learning experience because without them, students would not be able to interact with course materials at all. This section provides background information and context of the first OWI principle, defines *inclusive* and *accessible* as they pertain to this project, and provides a historical and current analysis of where these two concepts stand today in the field of OWI.

Summary of Principle 1

When providing the rationale in support of the first principle, Hewett (2015) expresses the following:

> . . . the CCCC OWI Committee believes that the needs of learners with physical disabilities, learning disability, multilingual backgrounds, and learning challenges related to socioeconomic issues (i.e., often called the digital divide where access is the primary issue) must be addressed in an OWI environment to the maximum degree possible. . . given that OWI typically is a text-intensive medium. . . addressing the accessibility needs of the least confident readers increases the potential to reach all types of learners. (p. 65)

Online writing instructors have many choices when designing courses, one of them being able to address the challenges that come with OWI being a "text-intensive medium" (Hewett, 2015, p. 65). Due to the fact that the majority of OWI course materials and assignments are very text-heavy, there are extra measures that can be taken when designing a course that supports learners with different learning styles. Things like assigning multimodal projects and giving students options of deliverables that accommodate a variety of learning styles can help make classes more accessible to all students.

For the first principle, twelve best practices have been outlined (CCCC, 2013) that increase access and inclusivity in online writing classes, both asynchronous and synchronous. Of those practices, the most significant here include:

> (1) teachers should determine the modality of the course based on both of their own pedagogical choices as well as student strengths and levels of access; [. . .] (3) teachers should confirm student level of access to technology at the beginning of the course; [. . .] (5) teachers should develop their websites on the basis of the necessity and priority of accessibility and inclusivity; [. . .] (8) a university's office of disability services should contact or be made present to all students so that they are aware of the office's services that are available to them; [. . .] (10) all course materials should be available to students in more than one medium.

The best practices highlighted above include deliberate pedagogical and design choices that instructors, administrators, and other support staff make that occur with the effort to make the course more accessible and inclusive to students. Especially following the pandemic, it is crucial that instructors take the lessons they have learned in regards to accessible and inclusive practices moving forward with an intentional desire to provide a positive learning experience to all students.

Definitions of Access and Inclusion

The key terms that stand out as the most important to understanding Principle 1 are *accessible* and *inclusive*. Access is the ability to gain entry to course materials and content and the ability to interact with course materials on an intellectual level. This means that the course materials must be universally approachable by students with various learning styles and provide students with the opportunity to connect with the materials through multiple means of expression and interaction (Brown et al., 2023).

Any definition of accessibility must allow for the understanding that the term itself has multiple angles. Most profoundly, accessibility is no longer an optional feature of a student's education based on need for accommodation. Prior definitions of accessibility are limiting, particularly because they tend to fit the accommodations model, which requires students to disclose a diagnosis in order to receive accessible instruction (Brown et al., 2023). If intentionality of accessible and inclusive practices is not a priority, administrators and instructors are doing students a disservice. By making the choice to be more inclusive, Hewett et al. (2022) write that "Including everyone means clearing the access route such that everyone can enter the building at the same time" (p. 74). In their analogy, Hewett et al. (2022) claim that clearing obstacles from a ramp before a staircase leading to a building entryway, everyone has equal access to the building. They argue, ". . . it is not about providing two routes if one will do. If two routes are necessary, though, they must be accessible in equal ways" (p. 74). When applied to online classes, this analogy speaks to the importance of ensuring that classroom activities and assignments are accessible to the greatest number of students possible.

Inclusivity, simply put, is the intentionality with which instructors, administrators, and other support personnel operate, in order to ensure that the learning experiences provided to students are universally designed with the goal in mind to meet the needs of a diverse population of learners. While accessibility is a feature or facet of instruction, inclusivity is something that involves deliberate practices and ideologies to be put in place that welcomes students of all backgrounds, learning experiences, and abilities. Hewett et al. (2022) stress inclusivity's importance as being "ethically right, practically appropriate, and legally necessary" (p. 74). Likewise, Borgman and McArdle (2019) write that accessible instruction ". . . is about more than setting expectations and making you and your course materials accessible to your students, it's also about creating a community of inclusion in your course and inviting students with all levels of ability to interact with you in a way that works for them" (p. 40). A community of inclusion means an environment that fosters acceptance and embracement of students regardless of background, skill level, and prior experiences. Creating communities of inclusion requires instructors to be an intentional about fostering an environment where student preferences and unique abilities are prioritized.

Creating inclusive and intentional classrooms requires critically approaching current practices and reevaluating them for how they can be made more inclusive (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017). Many times, practices and policies can actually be exclusionary to many students (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017). For example, Yale's Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning (2021) explains that an inclusive classroom environment is a concept that ". . . refers to an environment where all students feel supported intellectually and academically, and are extended a sense of belonging in the classroom regardless of identity, learning preferences, or education." In inclusive classrooms, students are supported and feel a sense of belonging. With the mindset that puts inclusive practices at the forefront, instructors can replace practices that may not be seen as exclusionary at first glance. Whether that looks like interviewing and/or surveying students on how they understand course requirements and what would make them more accessible, or by having conversations with students about how course materials can be designed or presented to them in a way that best suits their learning needs, there are many steps that instructors can take to implement a pedagogy of intentionality when it comes to inclusive practices.

Access to Technologies

A key component of Principle 1 and this project's definition of access is students' ability to gain entry to a course by using digital technologies that aid in their success. Although access is highlighted as a foundational element of both the CCCC (2013) OWI principles and the Global Society of Online Literacy Educators' (2019) *Online literacy instruction principles and tenets*, concerns about students' ability to access digital technologies have circulated since the advent of computers and composition. For example, Cynthia L. Selfe (1999) wrote about the divide that technology deepens between student populations and how educators should be aware of that. Selfe focuses on a literacy agenda that she argues is exclusionary to a large portion of the student population when she writes, ". . . I try to identify the effects of this new literacy agenda, focusing specifically on the serious and shameful inequities it continues to generate within our culture and the public education system" (p. xx). As Selfe highlights, technology, and its connection to literacy, can foster a learning environment characterized by exclusion, especially for marginalized student populations. In regards to technology and how it is integrated into courses, Selfe writes, "When we fail to do so, we share in the responsibility for sustaining and reproducing an unfair system that. . . enacts social violence and ensures continuing illiteracy under the aegis of education" (p. xiv). Selfe raises the concern about continuing the presence of racism in American education by ignoring or not acknowledging the role that technology plays in that issue.

Selfe's (1999) work puts into context the historical concern and importance of understanding the harms in assuming access to technology is directly linked to literacy and literacy education, especially to marginalized populations. By having a more critical perspective when looking at technological literacy as a concept, Selfe encourages and empowers educators in the field to do the most that they can in order to implement what she coins as "productive social change" (p. xxiii). This social change encouraged by Selfe can be achieved by further analyzing the relationship between technology and literacy in an effective way that is accessible and inclusive in meeting the needs of students. The pandemic and the experiences of students that followed parallels this concern of access that Selfe was raising twenty years prior because many students did not have the ability to access the technology required in order to participate in OWI (Hewett et al., 2022).

The Digital Divide

The Digital Divide is a term that was introduced in the late 1990s by the Department of Commerce as ". . . a concept to acknowledge the systematic differences in technology access that African Americans, other racial minorities and those in rural areas experienced and attempted policy initiatives that members of the Clinton administration thought would help to erase those gaps" (Banks, 2008, p. 11). The fact that the Digital Divide was coined in the 1990's speaks to the argument that issues of access to technology are not new and are issues that experts in both education and government have been grappling with for many years. Bank's work speaks to the issues of access to technology that marginalized student populations have experienced over a decade prior to the pandemic. Banks uses the Digital Divide ". . .as a metonym for America's larger racial divide in an attempt to figure out what meaningful access to technologies and the larger American society can or should mean" (p. 14). Although technology use has since become more ubiquitous, the pandemic only highlighted ways that access to technology continues to be a barrier to equitable and inclusive educational practices.

Banks (2008) acknowledges that access to technology is a privilege and uses the term "transformative access" (p. 2) to outline the need to ". . . develop and articulate models of the specific kinds of practices that can provide excluded members of society access to systems of power and grounds on which those systems can be challenged and ultimately changed in meaningful ways" (p. 2). Transformative access looks like providing entry opportunities for technology use to marginalized populations, which ultimately expands their potential to create positive change in society. Similarly to Selfe (1999), the point that Banks is making is that a lack of acknowledgement and dedicated effort to address the role that technology plays in creating inequalities will only work to further perpetuate inequities that students of marginalized populations are experiencing.

The first OWI principle states the need for OWI to be accessible and inclusive to all students and Banks (2008)'s work shows that issues of access to technology have been an obstacle to marginalized student populations for many years. In order for OWI to be accessible to students, access to the technology itself that students use to interact and engage with online courses must be addressed in order for effective OWI to take place. There has been a lot of scholarship speaking to issues of access and inclusion in higher education since the publishing of Bank's work in 2008 (Hewett et al., 2022; Carillo, 2021; Hitt, 2021). However, despite the more recent conversations, throughout the pandemic, marginalized student populations were still the most affected by the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Hewett et al., 2022).

The acknowledgement of ever-present issues of access and inclusion necessitates a more critical approach to how we address technology use and understand its role in perpetuating social inequities is still affecting students today. Hewett et al. (2022) write, "Such need for access was made more obvious by the experience of COVID-19 home sheltering, where it quickly became apparent which students already had at-home computer and Internet access and which ones required these tools" (p. 75). The pandemic forced many students to remain in their home environments while attending courses and many students did not have access to the technology they needed. In addition to having trouble gaining entry to their classes, because students' home environments had to transform into their learning environments in March 2020, problems arose regarding student access to both university support services and an effective learning environment with minimal distraction. Whether it was because there was only one computer available to a family with multiple college students under one roof, or maybe students struggled to find a quiet place to attend class meetings and study, the shift of home environment to becoming a learning environment was one that raised many logistical and efficacy concerns for student learning.

Hewett et al. (2022)'s work exemplifies how far the field has come in acknowledging the inequalities of access to technology. While Hewett et al. are not necessarily referring to the same issues of race and inequality in access to education that Selfe (1999) and Banks (2008) are, they make an important point about what access and inclusion in education should really look like. It goes much further than simply providing multiple options for students to choose from. Being accessible and inclusive also ensures that the options that are made available to students are ones *any* student can choose (Hewett et al., 2022). Ensuring that students are able to gain entry to course materials and interact with each other in meaningful ways is crucial in the process of providing students with a positive learning experience that honors and values the unique skills and ideas that they each bring to their courses.

Rejection of Accommodation Model and Embracing a Universal Design for Learning

In the past, addressing issues of access and inclusion have happened as a way to "accommodate" students who've needed additional resources or support (Brown et al., 2023). The accommodation model refers to providing accessible teaching to students who require and are granted accessibility accommodations. With this model, accessibility is something instructors *accommodate*—not something built into the foundation of a class. Throughout their presentation, Brown et al. (2023) highlight some major concerns that the accommodation model creates. The first concern is that this model puts the pressure on a student to disclose a diagnosis in order to receive accessibility accommodations (Kleinfeld, 2018). As a disabled student myself, I have become so accustomed to just being upfront with my diagnosis so that I don't have to go through the embarrassment of explaining or pleading the case for my need for an accommodation. The second concern is that the accommodation model makes students feel as if they are "others" in comparison to their classmates because they have different needs than them (Daniels et al., 2015). I can attest to feeling like an "other" throughout my entire academic career, not because of the way people have treated me, but because of the way that the system has historically been operating with a need for diagnoses to be exposed. The third and final concern, and especially most relevant to this project, is that the accommodation model places a critique on the student and their needs rather than the system that they are expected to operate within (Daniels et al., 2015). As a disabled individual, no matter how many times people have told me otherwise, I have seen my disability as a burden to everyone who interacts with me because of the "work" that I felt they had to do in order to accommodate me.

Instead of endorsing the accommodation model, I align with Brown et al. (2023) in calling for a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to online instruction. A UDL approach aligns with a pedagogy of intentionality because it asks instructors to rethink their practices for everyone—not only as a reaction to students' disclosing the need for accommodations. Brown et al. (2023) define UDL as "a framework that helps educators design learning experiences while recognizing that students learn differently from each other" (Brown et al., 2023, Slide No. 4). A UDL framework also provides multiple means of "engagement, representation, action, and expression" (Brown et al., 2023, Slide No. 5). Instead of an accommodations model, a UDL framework creates a more inclusive learning environment because it provides students with multiple means to interact with, apply, and express their understanding of the course material.

The UDL framework originally contained four elements: engagement, representation, action, and expression (CAST 2018). Within the UDL framework, "Engagement" refers to giving students autonomy in their learning by being transparent about the learning process and giving them multiple options for engaging with course materials. “Representation” involves instructors “provid[ing] options for perception” (CAST, 2018). Accessible “Representation” includes offering students multiple ways to engage with the course content (audio, visual, textual, etc.) (CAST, 2018). “Action” and “Expression” provide students with “options for physical action” (CAST, 2018). “Action” and “Expression” provides students with options to demonstrate their understanding and application of the course content in assignments and assessments (CAST, 2018). By adopting a UDL framework (CAST 2018), instructors are intentionally creating courses that address learning styles and methods of instruction that benefit all students. Likewise, Brown et al.’s (2023) rejection of the accommodation model mirrors the same ideological shift proposed by Oswal and Melonçon (2017) because both require a critical revision to standard practices in order to improve student experiences when it comes to accessibility and inclusivity.

A UDL framework parallels my definition of accessible teaching because it makes these different means a given rather than an option. By not being inclusive in the way in which students are taught, the result ends up being an exclusionary experience, especially for students who don’t share a diagnosis with administrators. This universal approach takes the pressure off of students to make themselves vulnerable to “othering” themselves, which is something that can only work to improve the system that students of all learning needs are operating within.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Instructors should define accessible and inclusive practices for themselves and be intentional about applying those definitions into their courses

In order to implement access and inclusion into online courses, instructors must first inform themselves and define these terms by explicitly laying out what access and inclusion mean to them and what those practices look like in online classes. By having a clear definition and understanding of these terms, one that is informed by scholars and practitioners in the field, instructors will have a stronger determination when it comes to ensuring that these practices are intentionally and carefully played out in a classroom environment. By urging instructors to develop their own all-encompassing understandings of accessibility and inclusion that goes beyond the accommodations model, the hope is that instructors will be inclined to create classes that are more universally designed (Brown et al., 2023).

A UDL framework (CAST, 2018) can be achieved by combining instructors' understandings of accessibility and inclusion, giving students options when accessing course materials and completing assignments, and being open to student feedback and student input when designing/revising courses and course materials.

This project also speaks to the understanding of adjunct faculty who may not have the time to dedicate to educating themselves fully on the issues of access and inclusion. To help accommodate this, I argue for the importance of administrators and leaders of writing programs to provide workshops, seminars, and/or other resources for adjunct faculty to utilize so that they can still benefit from conversations occurring in the field regarding accessible and inclusive practices.

Justification. By developing their own understanding of inclusion, instructors can implement practices in their teaching that helps to foster a community of inclusion (Borgman & McArdle, 2019) in a way that is personal to both them and their students. Likewise, Oswal and Melonçon (2017)'s ideological shift from normalcy to inclusion requires instructors to look within themselves and evaluate their own practices and beliefs for ways that they could improve in order to better student learning experiences. This reflective work can be very personal, which is why it is important for instructors to define what inclusive and accessible practices look like to themselves and consider how they can implement them in their teaching.

A pedagogy of intentionality necessitates the deliberate reflective and critical work that ensures accessible and inclusive experiences for online writing students (Borgman & McArdle, 2019; Oswal & Melonçon, 2017; CAST, 2018; Brown et al., 2023). Instructors need to evaluate their own beliefs and current practices surrounding accessibility and inclusion with an adamant objective to improve student learning. When instructors have an understanding of what being accessible and inclusive means to them, the hope is that it makes the dedication to the cause that much more personal.

Recommendation #2: Instructors should make an intentional effort to meet students where they are.

Meeting students where they are is a key element to a pedagogy of intentionality. To meet students where they are means recognizing the experiences students bring with them to their courses. I argue that recognizing students' prior experiences became particularly important especially as a result of the pandemic because of how many students were now entering college with upended experiences of high school (Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Dougherty et al., 2022) curriculum that could limit their abilities in a college writing course. In my role as a consultant and leader in a university writing center, it was very evident that students who were in high school at the time of the pandemic, experienced limitations and obstacles to their learning, as a result of the changes to their standard high school experience caused by the pandemic. A way to learn about student experiences could be to create a 'getting to know you' survey that assesses student knowledge and expectations prior to entering an online writing course (see Mitchum et al., 2021 for an example of such a survey).

Not only is a survey itself an intentional practice that works towards meeting students where they are when starting a course, but a survey can help an instructor get acquainted with the needs, prior experiences with writing, and access to technology that each student has (Mitchum et al., 2021). With the awareness that an instructor gains from a survey, they can make decisions and design choices that reflect what their students will be able to accomplish in the course based on the skills and experiences they are bringing to the course. Being intentional about pedagogical choices by being informed on student needs speaks to the deliberate effort that instructors make to ensure that the learning experience that they are providing to students is universally approachable. Intentionality includes getting to know what experiences students had prior to the course because it helps to better inform the course design so that it is accessible to students and the knowledge base that they have.

Justification. Aligning with recommendations from Mitchum et al. (2021, p. 323), this project recommends that OWC instructors implement writing assignments or other creative expressions that align with students and their specific skills and experiences. Meeting students where they are doesn’t refer only to the kinds of technology the class uses. Meeting students where they are also means providing them with different options to complete projects in class and giving them many opportunities to practice their writing. In practice, re-conceptualizing things like discussion posts, which students sometimes fail to complete, could be one way to help meet students where they are (Warnock, 2009). Instead of relying solely on discussion posts as low stakes writing, I recommend bringing in other low-stakes assignments for students to complete. A freewriting journal of sorts would allow the students to flex their composition muscles and grow as writers without the fear of judgment that many students experience when posting to a discussion board (Kurniasih et al., 2023). While reflective and low-stakes writing are by no means new in writing classes (Cunningham, 2019), by implementing more freewriting and journaling into an online writing course, students have a more personal experience. I argue that providing students with a personal experience showcases that a student's language varieties can not only be accepted, but valued, within the writing classroom setting (Metz, 2021). Furthermore, by allowing the students more opportunities to write more freely without fear of correctness, the students are breaking the stigma that they may feel when it comes to their language variety being more 'inferior' than another (Beaudrie et al., 2021).

In addition to giving students options with assignments, meeting students where they are also recognizes the rich and diverse ways our students use language. There is a longstanding history of judgements against various dialects and use of English language by minority populations, in both writing and speaking (Banks, 2008; Miller-Cochran, 2015; Davila et al., 2017). By allowing language varieties to have a space to thrive and be valued within the writing classroom, instructors are taking that intentional step toward breaking down the stigma surrounding differences among language uses (Banks, 2008; Miller-Cochran, 2015; Davila et al., 2017).

Ultimately, meeting students where they are requires instructors to do more than check off boxes on a checklist. Oswal and Melonçon (2017) highlight that different ideologies need to be approached and implemented with a critical perspective, rather than simply just implemented at face value. Being intentional when meeting students where they are necessitates an understanding of inclusivity and awareness of the variety and diversity that students bring to the classroom, which enriches the learning experience for them and their peers. By celebrating the diversity and variety that students bring to the classroom whether it be language variety, experience, or skill level, it helps to promote an accessible and inclusive learning environment where all students in the classroom learn to celebrate the differences that exist between them rather than diminish those differences.

Recommendation #3: Instructors should embrace an engagement-based grading model

Another way that instructors can ensure access and inclusion to their students is through the assessment and feedback process. Historical grading practices have created significant inequities for students of color, students with disabilities, and students with intersectional identities (Carillo, 2021). Carillo (2021) writes, “My concern with the student at the center of labor-based grading contracts. . . is that this student is somewhat of a fiction; an idealized, able-bodied, neurotypical student” (p. 55). While grading is sometimes based on the correctness of the writing (Inoue, 2019, p. 138), some scholars would argue that there is a more effective and inclusive way to go about the assessment procedure, particularly when it comes to writing assignments (Carillo, 2021). For example, Carillo supports the use of engagement-based grading contracts. She explains how these contracts work: “Instead of being given a series of assignments. . . students choose their forms of engagement and are assessed on those. Forms of engagement might include discussion board posts, oral participation in discussions. . . and a choice between alphabetic and multimodal responses to assignments” (p. 55-56). The idea of giving students a choice as far as to what kind of response they will provide for assignments is more accessible and inclusive because it accounts for their learning styles and meeting them where they are. Another benefit of giving students options for how they complete assignments is that the choice makes the learning experience more accessible for students because they can have the agency to decide how they are going to express their understanding and applications of course materials and content.

Justification. Engagement-based grading contracts works as a model that is stepping away from traditional assessment practices or an “ideology of normalcy” (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017) and shifting towards one of inclusion. By intentionally choosing to prioritize student engagement over the correctness of writing when grading assignments, instructors are working to develop more accessible and inclusive experiences for students that acknowledges their diverse needs and experiences as writers. Allison Harper Hitt (2021) explains an inclusive kind of shift in practice by arguing for “moving away from a diagnostic model of deficit and individual accommodations, and instead creating multiple access points for student engagement and emphasizing that diverse forms of meaning-making are assets” (p. 86). The idea of shifting away from a model of deficit and accommodations brings back into conversation the argument made by scholars past and present regarding the inequity that grading can cause in writing because it tends to favor one variety of the English language over others, seeing other language varieties as a deficit (Banks, 2008; Miller-Cochran, 2015; Davila et al., 2017). By shifting the focus to student engagement, the hope is that those stigmas surrounding various language varieties start to dissipate.

Engagement-based grading contracts make classes more inclusive to students. Carillo (2021) specifically highlights how engagement-based grading contracts are more inclusive to students with disabilities, students with mental health issues, students of intersectional identities, and students whose needs and circumstances were not being taken into account by other grading and assessment practices (p. 3-6). Disability studies scholar Tara Wood (2017) argues that we compositionists can no longer allow “normative assumptions to go unchecked” in our teaching (p. 261). The normative assumptions mentioned by Wood (2017) correlate to the assumptions mentioned earlier by Carillo (2021) that students are “idealized, able-bodied, neurotypical” (p. 55).

A pedagogy of intentionality calls for instructors to acknowledge and take into consideration the parts of the students’ lives that have the most significant impacts on their educational experiences. When it comes to assessment, oftentimes, instructors only see the final product. They don’t see the student not sleeping, staying up late to write the paper because they were working sixty hours that week to provide for their family (Son et al., 2020). They don't see the student struggling with anxiety and depression (Liu et al., 2020; Copeland et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021) trying to convince themselves that an 'A' in a class plays a role in their worth as a person. And as the pandemic showed us, they don't see the student stressing about the health of their loved ones (Son et al., 2020) or grieving the loss of their parent who was on life support throughout the semester trying to finish their final project the night after having to bury a loved one. Call it drastic, but the truth is that the pandemic opened our eyes to real life and how it affects each of us inside and outside of the classroom. Engagement-based grading contracts almost acts as a mutual acknowledgement where the instructor is saying to the student that they recognize that life happens and it doesn't stop even when an assignment is due. The effort that students put into assignments should be recognized because it shows the learning process as a journey rather than just judging the final project. It shows that even if the project wasn't perfect, the student may have come across challenges personally or academically during completion and worked to overcome them in order to provide a final product.

Activity 1: Semester-Long Journal

The goal of Activity 1 is for students to complete low-stakes reflective writing using modalities of their choice (see Appendix A for screen shot examples of a prompt students might encounter when completing Activity 1). The description below and presentation screenshots from Appendix A provide an example of how instructors might present the activity to their students. As such, instructors could adapt this activity to any reading they may assign their students. Meeting students where they are includes allowing them to participate and engage in course materials in a way that showcases their individualized meaning-making processes. Just as defining inclusivity and accessibility for instructors is personal to them, Activity 1 provides students with the agency to engage with the prompts in ways that are more personal to them and their learning styles. Activity 1 necessitates instructor intentionality because it provides students spaces where they can express themselves freely, while also sharpening their skills as a writer. Not only are they able to freely express experiences that they may have had, but they are also able to interact with scholarly material that allows them to practice composing without the limitations they may feel from a traditional academic writing piece.

An underlying theme in recent conversations pertaining to inclusivity and accessibility is that providing students opportunities to reflect and speak freely about their personal experiences can also help them grow as writers (Carillo, 2021; Mitchum et al., 2021; Borgman & McArdle, 2019). The idea of being able to express themselves and their experiences in a mode that makes sense to them is achieving both accessibility and inclusivity because it is giving students autonomy when completing assignments.

Activity 1 Assignment Prompt (student-facing)

One of the books that you will be reading throughout the semester is *Atlas of the Heart* by Brené Brown. This book discusses the emotions that we experience throughout our lifetime in a way that is understandable and aids in the ability and process of expressing our thoughts and ideas more clearly. This assignment is a semester-long journal where you have the option to write your responses, create a video diary, or create a visual journal. The goal of this assignment is to not only help you articulate your thoughts and ideas, but also practice communicating using multiple modes in a way that you prefer.

For each chapter of the book, I will provide you with a number of prompts and you are only required to complete one per chapter. However, you are more than welcome to complete as many as you would like. Each week, I will present important information from the chapter in a presentation and outline the prompts before you are required to complete the journal entries. Please be sure to reach out to me if you have any questions and do not hesitate to reach out with other ideas that you may have in terms of creating the journal. I want you to flex those creative muscles, so the world is your oyster!

Students will be assessed on their level of reflection and application of the reading to their own personal experiences. I am not grading you on your experiences, but rather how you are able to reflect on the reading and how you can connect the reading to your own experiences and engage with the reading on a personal level. I want to see you dig deep and connect with the chapter that is assigned for that particular week and share what you have learned and what you can apply from the reading to your own personal experiences. Each week, there will be a submission page for your journal prompts that only I will be able to see as the instructor. The journal entries will be due at the end of each week, Sundays at 11:59 PM.

Activity 1 Justification. Activity 1's main goal is to allow students to utilize their agency to create a journal in a way that is comfortable and effective to them. By providing them the options for creating the journal entries (i.e., alphabetic text, multimodal expression, audio/visual, etc), Activity 1 is meant to be accessible and inclusive to all students, regardless of their preferred learning style. Ensuring that learning styles are represented is especially important for creating an accessible and inclusive environment (Borgman & McArdle, 2019, p. 47).

A pedagogy of intentionality calls for instructors to acknowledge that students all learn differently. More importantly, they also are called to provide a space for students to express and interact in a medium that resonates with them most personally. Without the restriction to simply alphabetic texts, this assignment is designed to be more inclusive to the learning styles and preferences of a diverse student population. Students who are not as comfortable with writing are able to utilize this assignment as a way to express emotions and ideas in a way that is effective and supportive of their own personal preferences.

Chapter 2

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

The second OWI principle articulates that online writing instructors should not be the ones to get students acquainted or oriented to the technologies that online courses utilize. While language orientation may not have been seen as an instructors' responsibility in 2013 when the CCCC principles were last revised, this is no longer the case in 2023, surrounded by hybrid and online learning environments on a regular basis. COVID-19 accelerated the rate at which technology was implemented into students' learning experiences. However, technologies that were utilized and relied upon during the pandemic are not going anywhere (OWI Standing Group, 2021). This section will speak to both the scholarship that contradicted this principle at the time of its writing as well as provide a background as to why technology orientation *should* be a part of an online course, especially OWCs where multimodal projects and concepts are regularly a part of the course design.

Summary of Principle 2

According to the rationale behind Principle 2, "Students should use the provided technology to support their writing and not the other way around. It must be clear that OWI teachers and students alike do not need to be technology experts, computer programmers, or Web designers to accomplish the instructional purposes of an OWC" (CCCC, 2013). This rationale suggests that it is not necessary for students or instructors to have an advanced understanding of technology. However, this rationale also undermines the importance of technology understanding in the teaching and learning of effective OWI.

Principle 2 includes four best practices, which are summarized as follows:

> (1) The requirement for the institution's initial technology orientation should be handled by the institution's IT unit and not the OWI teacher of any OWC; (2) An OWI teacher should not be considered a technology point person to be held responsible for technical assistance or technology repair; (3) Web-based or Web-focused assignments should be about the rhetorical nature of writing for the Web and not about html coding or Web development; (4) To maintain the appropriate focus on writing, OWI teachers should be provided professional development in the institution's technologies sufficiently in advance of a scheduled online course (CCCC, 2013).

Taken together, these best practices undermine the importance of technology understanding in the teaching and learning of effective OWI. In order for effective OWI to take place, both the students and instructors need to understand how to navigate the technologies that they will be utilizing throughout the course, whether it be the LMS software, or other technologies used to complete assignments.

Contradictions Within Principle 2

One of the most notable contradictions to the second principle stems from the other principles themselves. As stated previously, the Principle 2 discounts the importance of technology understanding and the role technology instruction plays in effective OWI. The contradiction exists is between Principle 2 and Principle 10. The tenth OWI principle reads as follows: "Students should be prepared by the institution and their teachers for the unique technological and pedagogical components of OWI" (CCCC, 2013). Instead of undermining technology instruction, Principle 10 emphasizes the need for students to be prepared by the institution *and their instructor*s for the specific technological and pedagogical aspects of OWI. Therefore, in order for students to be prepared for technological and pedagogical aspects of OWI, they must be introduced and oriented to the technology required to participate in the course. While the Principle 2 does not necessarily exclude teaching students the technological components of a course, it could be interpreted as such.

Connecting Technology & Pedagogy (CTAP) Model & Overall Learning Effectiveness

Of the three principles examined in this project, Principle 2 is in the most need of revision in order to better reflect the importance of technological understanding for student success in OWI—particularly in light of the pandemic. The pandemic created an obvious and necessary reliance on technology, increasing instructor and student usage of various learning technologies, such as learning management systems (LMS), video conferencing software (Zoom, Google Meet, etc), and more. A revision of the second principle could read something like, "Students should use the provided technology to support their writing and not the other way around. Although teachers and students alike do not need to be technology experts, computer programmers, or Web designers to accomplish the instructional purposes of an OWC, *it is necessary that students have a complete understanding of how to use technologies and software within the context of their course."* By emphasizing the importance of understanding OWI technologies, the revision would call on instructors to be more aware of how they're using technology in their courses and what they expect of students.

Because of the reliance on LMS technologies in OWI, I argue that instructors must play an active role in orienting students to how they use the interfaces in their course. In order to support instructors with their technology orientation, I argue that WPAs and universities need to provide adequate training and support to both full time faculty and contingent faculty on how to utilize these technologies so that they can support their students.

The argument for integrating technology training into faculty professional development can best be supported by Drinkwater's (2021) Connecting Technology and Pedagogy (CTAP) Model. This model operates under the framework that ". . . posits that the creation of high quality engaged virtual learning environments must involve a continual *dialectic and relationship* between technology and pedagogy" (p. 205). Drinkwater argues that technology use and pedagogical choices must be interconnected. This argument is especially relevant post-pandemic because there has been an increase in the integration of technology in pedagogy simply due to necessity (Turnbull et al., 2021).

The CTAP model involves blending the following components with technology to enhance student learning: context, teaching philosophy, access and inclusion, learning styles and needs, communicating understanding, collaboration, reflection and engagement, assessment, synchronous; asynchronous, instructional approaches, and systems and devices (Drinkwater, 2021, p. 205). Many of these components became increasingly relevant because of the pandemic and are key components of this project including access and inclusion (Borgman & McArdle, 2019), learning styles and needs of students, assessment, student engagement (Carillo, 2021), and more. More specifically, Drinkwater's points about how technology has become increasingly prevalent to higher education highlights the importance of technology orientation in OWI.

As a component of the CTAP model, learning outcomes should drive the design of assessment and other classroom approaches, rather than the other way around (Drinkwater, 2021, p. 206). When teaching an online class, I argue that instructors should examine their outlined learning objectives and analyze ways that technology can be implemented so that it will aid students in achieving those learning objectives. By examining learning objectives, I argue that instructors ensure that the technology can be used as an enhancement to student learning experiences (Greer & Harris, 2018; Warnock, 2009; Salisbury, 2018). Having a user-centered focus (Greer & Harris, 2018); understanding the role of the LMS in a course and how it facilitates or inhibits meeting learning outcomes (Salisbury, 2018); and being intentional when designing learning outcomes (Warnock, 2009), are all ways that technology can be utilized to enhance the student learning experience.

Course Design and an Intentionality of Accessibility and Inclusivity within an LMS

One of the most common ways that students interact with technology in OWI is through a LMS. Simplifying navigation, and redesigning and testing assignments in online learning environments are key to making online classes accessible (Greer & Harris, 2018). No matter how the LMS gets used—whether it's as an assignment dropbox, or a place to host online discussions, or the place where students complete all of their course requirements—it is important that the LMS is easy to navigate, which provides a greater level of accessibility to students enrolled in a course (Greer & Harris, 2017; Hutchison, 2019).

When working with an LMS or designing an online course, there are many decisions and choices instructors are faced with. Pengilly (2021) hones in on distinct and specific accessibility choices that online writing instructors can make when it comes to both course structure and course content. Pengilly also suggests that instructors can make specific decisions in the ways they present information for students, including how they structure headings, use closed captioning, or present content using multiple modes of delivery. Specifically, Pengilly offers an "intentional pedagogy. . . and ties it explicitly to human-centered elements of accessibility, ableism, and equity" (p. 153). Human-centered elements such as accessibility, inclusivity, and equity mirror student-centered elements such as user-centered design and a student-centered approach to teaching. By acknowledging students' humanity, a pedagogy of intentionality works to honor students, their experiences, and every unique thing that they bring to the table.

Instructors should be intentional with the design choices that they are making for their courses as a way to counteract some of the already predetermined features set by the LMS that may create more barriers to overall inclusivity and accessibility (Pengilly, 2021; Salisbury, 2018). As Pengilly (2021) writes, “In short, accessibility is easier to achieve when it is strategically incorporated into the course at the initial design phase” (p. 156). For Pengilly, being mindful of accessible course design needs to happen before students even enroll in the course. Inaccessible LMS or course design can impede a student’s ability to succeed, especially if they are not familiar with how to navigate an LMS as a first-time online student (Salisbury, 2018). In order to be as intentional as possible with the design of an online course, Pengilly draws Borgman and McArdle (2019) who claim that course design should focus on student user experience (Greer & Harris, 2017; Greer & Harris, 2018).

The concern of inaccessible course design or LMS navigation became especially exacerbated by the pandemic because it simply was no longer an option for instructors to put student and user experience at the forefront of their course design process (Wieland & Kollias, 2020; Singh et al., 2021). Understandably, the turnaround for shifting to online instruction during the pandemic was very quick and left room for gaps or errors in course delivery. However, looking at those changes three years removed from the onset of the pandemic, the lesson that is most significant is that if accessibility is not a priority, we are doing a disservice to students.

Being mindful of accessible technology use and course design extends beyond how students engage with and interact with course components. In addition, being mindful of different learning styles and how technologies are used for completing assignments and discussions are other ways instructors can be more intentional throughout their courses. For instance, Pengilly (2021) states that there are ways to foster communication through methods that are not simply favoring text over other modalities. For example, the use of video or audio feedback could be a great way to help create an environment that celebrates and supports other literacies and other types of learners. The point that Pengilly seeks to make is that instructors run into the risk of unintentionally being exclusionary towards other learning styles and literacies that students may excel in when they privilege alphabetic text in online courses. In order to avoid this type of exclusionary experience for students, Pengilly instead recommends honoring various learning styles and being more aware and intentional of the choices that instructors are making when it comes to making use of the LMS and the assignments being completed with it.

Multimodal Assignments and Their Role in Online Writing Instruction

An important component of Principle 2 is its emphasis on OWCs teaching writing and not technology use. However, Bourelle et al. (2017) argue that in order to promote multiple literacies in OWCs that instructors need to include multimodal assignments. Part of effective communication in the 21st century is being able to communicate using many modalities and many compositionists would agree. Position statements like NCTE's (2005) *Position statement on multimodal literacies*, and texts like Lutkewitte's (2014) *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook,* have been foundational in establishing that multimodal composing is an important part of what it means to write.

Asking students to compose multimodally can serve different functions in composition courses. For instance, As the NCTE (2005) Position statement outlines, "The use of different modes of expression in student work should be integrated into the overall literacy goals. . . In personal, civic, and professional discourse, alphabetic, visual, and aural works are not luxuries but essential components of knowing".

As an "essential components of knowing" (NCTE, 2005), being able to successfully make use of multimodal literacies increases the likelihood of students developing various approaches to composing when they are assigned multimodal projects, particularly in a multimodal environment, like OWCs (Bourelle et al., 2017). OWCs serves as a unique venue to incorporate multimodal composition into the curriculum because as Bourelle and Hewett (2017) explain,

> the context of an online classroom—an inherently multimodal environment—has the potential to encourage multiliteracies, or the capacity for students to first learn to read and then produce print and multimedia texts, aiding them in acquiring skills and strategies necessary for successful communication in the workforce and in a technologically advanced society. (p. 349)

Bourelle and Hewett (2017) express the uniqueness of online classrooms in the context of teaching multimodal literacy by noting the skills that students gain when learning in an online environment, particularly when it comes to communicating with the use of technology. I argue that the environment of an online classroom is uniquely positioned to build multimodal literacies because of the digital environment where the course takes place. Students learn how to utilize digital technologies such as infographics, video, audio, and other formats to communicate that differ from standard alphabetic texts.

The second OWI principle implies that it is not the responsibility of online writing instructors to orient students to technologies used in OWCs. The works of scholars like Mills (2010), Bourelle et al. (2017), and Schnaider et al. (2020) showcase that in order for students to effectively complete and learn from multimodal composition projects, they must first have a basis of understanding on how to navigate the necessary composing technologies. Kristine Blair (2015) also discusses how multimodal assignments can be brought into OWCs. Blair (2015) writes, “By focusing on needs assessments, assignment options, tools selection, and assessment, [I] advocate a shift from migrating and adapting onsite writing instruction to instead transforming it through a broadened definition of writing as multimodal composing that enables students to produce content as twenty-first century learners and citizens" (p. 690). Blair’s “broadened definition of writing” refers to projects and compositions outside of the traditional alphabetic texts that students are used to. Blair’s hesitation of including multimodal composing in OWI involves the assumption that writing is still a text-based process, issues of access to digital technologies, ableist tendencies of multimodal softwares, and the lack of training in multimodal composition for faculty (p. 693). In response to the mentioned hesitations, Blair's interest is in ". . . helping instructors ground multimodal composing in rhetorical contexts and positively impacting the evolving identities that online students must develop as twenty-first century composers" (p. 694). Ultimately, Blair speaks to the importance of incorporating multimodal composing into OWI as a way to strengthen and diversify students' experiences as communicators in an increasingly digital world.

As instructors teaching in 2023, refusing to provide students technological training is doing them a disservice. Throughout the scholarship presented in this section (Mills, 2010; Schnaider et al., 2020; Bourelle et al., 2017), I argue that OWI is the perfect venue to help prepare students for the increasingly technologically advanced world that they are entering. Particularly through the assigning of multimodal projects, OWI can help expose students to technologies that will prepare them to effectively communicate in the workforce and beyond.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Design an introductory LMS assignment for the start of an online writing course

For students to be successful in online classes, they need to have a comprehensive understanding of their LMS (Pengilly, 2021; Borgman & McArdle, 2019; Witte, 2018). Because instructors often use the same LMS in different ways (Crawley, 2021, p. 19), it can be helpful to provide students direct instruction in LMS use to help avoid confusion early on in a course. Due to the more isolating nature of online courses, where communication, collaboration, and interaction between peers and faculty is crucial to success, a student's understanding of how to navigate various communicative tools and features of an LMS is a great way to ensure that they are successful (Busteed, 2022). Instructors can help students garner the LMS navigation skills necessary by requiring an introductory assignment of some sort that allows students time to explore, discover, and get more comfortable with course software. An introductory assignment that focuses on LMS features produces similar benefits for students as a syllabus quiz, including establishing comfort with course structure, course content, and overall course orientation (CCCC, 2013; Pengilly, 2021). Instructors are also encouraged to produce introductory activities for any other software that students may be required to use to complete assignments throughout the semester (ie: Canva, Blogger, etc.).

Justification. We are performing a disserve to students when we require them to use technologies without showing them how they work. By being more intentional about ensuring that students have knowledge of softwares and technologies required in the course, instructors are making their classes more accessible and inclusive. Particularly when using different technologies to complete multimodal projects, students can feel intimidated if they have not have had experience creating them in the past (Smith et al., 2022). By introducing students to software they can use throughout the semester to create multimodal assignments, instructors can help to mitigate those feelings of uneasiness or hesitation when it comes to trying something new (Greer & Harris, 2018).

Although Principle 2 speaks to the fact that technology orientation should not be a part of OWI, I argue that neglecting to instruct students on technology reinforces inequity. The inequities that neglecting to provide technology orientation to students particularly impacts marginalized student populations that may not have access to technology and software outside of a provided LMS. I would argue that neglecting to provide technology orientation to students also runs the danger of assuming that students already know how to use various technologies or that they *should* know how to use such tools. Referring back to the works of Banks (2008) and Selfe (1999), these assumptions can be particularly harmful because they contribute to perpetuating the systemic social inequities experienced by marginalized populations during the pandemic (Williamson et al., 2020; Dubois et al., 2021).

By being more aware of the possibility that students do not have the experience with technology required by the course, instructors can be more intentional with how technologies can support successful completion of the course. As Witte (2018) mentions, the role of the LMS must be made clear to students to ensure that they understand how the technologies are part of their successful completion of the course. By incorporating an activity into the coursework for students that orients them to LMS usage, instructors are utilizing the intentional approach that Witte and Pengilly (2021) encourage.

Recommendation 2: Assign at least one multimodal project in an online writing course

Because multimodal projects have increasingly become popular in writing courses in response to the ever-evolving digital world that students are entering into (Bourelle et al., 2017), I argue that at least one multimodal assignment should be incorporated in OWCs. By doing so, I believe that students can sharpen their communication skills, especially when it comes to digital communications (Bourelle et al., 2017). By assigning at least one multimodal project in an online writing course, it allows students to get exposure to different technologies while participating in OWI. Multimodal composing also provides multiple means of expression, perception, and overall understanding of course material, aiding in the goal of providing a more accessible and universal learning experience (CAST, 2018). In addition, this type of learning experience works best when pairing it with a reflective assignment that asks the students to take a step back and examine their process in greater detail (Crawley, 2021, p. 21).

Justification. Multimodal projects give students the opportunity to compose works other than alphabetic texts like essays. For multimodal projects to be completed effectively, students need to be oriented with the technologies and software necessary to complete these projects. According to Bourelle et al. (2017), there are several ways instructors could use technology to support completing multimodal projects in their courses, including: "(1) Incorporate multimodal assignments and appropriate scaffolding tools; (2) Use multimodal instructional tools to teach and model multimodal composition; (3) provide multimodal feedback to students' compositions; (4) 'teach' technology through the use of media labs; (5) encourage reflection as a significant part of students' learning process" (p. 81). These provide a range of approaches to incorporating multimodal assignments and using different tools in OWCs.

When composing multimodal projects, there is often a need to interact with a sort of technology or software that students may have not been familiar with prior to the course. As explained by NCTE (2005), multimodal composition helps prepare students to be effective communicators in different settings by calling on them to engage with new ways of thinking and composing. This new interaction poses the need for online writing instructors to help orient students with these technologies to assist them in strengthening their skills as composers and rhetoricians. I argue that in order to support faculty in providing technology orientation to their students, administrators and writing program departments need to provide professional development opportunities that speak to the use of multimodal composition in OWI.

Recommendation 3: Include a proficiency of technology understanding in the learning objectives for first year online writing courses

Learning objectives are the foundation on which all other aspects of course design stand including course readings, assignments and topics covered throughout the semester. Enhancing students' multimodal literacies is important to include in OWC learning objectives because multimodality and the technologies required help strengthen and diversify students' communicative abilities in a world where communication has become increasingly digital and multimodal.

A way to incorporate multimodal literacy into the learning objectives into the course is simply by providing students with opportunities to interact with technologies that best support their purpose and abilities (Bourelle et al., 2017). Bourelle et al. discuss the importance of this incorporation when it comes to students' multimodal composing processes by writing:

> . . . multimodality asks students to reconsider their own personal choices of medium, focusing instead on the best medium for communicating their intended message. One way to encourage them to select the appropriate medium is to teach them to use various technology, allowing them to become comfortable with numerous software programs that will dictate this decision. (p. 85)

Bourelle et al. (2017) connects rhetorical awareness to technological abilities by suggesting that instructors present students with a number of choices. If an understanding that students should have many choices is built into the learning objectives of the course, it's one way instructors can intentionally prioritze that rhetorical flexibility and awareness with their students.

Justification. Through the incorporation of technological proficiency in learning objectives, online writing instructors are demonstrating the value placed on multimodal composing at the heart of a course. This distinction of "teaching technology" versus teaching the *use* of technology is one of the nuances that can be accounted for when intentionally implementing the second OWI principle. My third recommendation argues for the teaching of the *use* of technology so that students understand how to utilize software and tools to best support their composing purposes and their abilities.

Lutkewitte (2014-b) best speaks to the benefits incorporating multimodal works in the overall learning objectives of course when stating,

> . . . multimodal composition offers us the opportunity to discover other ways of knowing and communicating ideas besides the way we know and communicate through traditional print-based writing. Likewise, the acknowledgement of multimodal composition in the classroom can help us reflect on the multimodal practices some of us and our students already participate in outside of academia" (p. 11).

Lutkewitte (2014-b)'s points about how multimodal composition provides opportunities of communication besides alphabetic texts speak again to the intentionality that is necessary for instructors to have when providing a base of technology orientation to students. By exposing students to various technological softwares and assigning multimodal projects, as stated in my definition of technological proficiency, students will be expanding their abilities as communicators. Multimodal composition, as explained by Lutkewitte, works at broadening their horizons as communicators and rhetoricians. By incorporating multimodal projects and technological profiency into learning objectives, it helps to ensure that students are learning in a way that is more meaningful to them as it connects to their life experiences. Particularly after the pandemic and the mandatory use of digital technology and multimodal composing that was required as a result, multimodal composition certainly will remain a part of OWI moving forward (OWI Standing Group, 2021; Johinke et al., 2023).

Activity 2: LMS Scavenger Hunt

Students must be acquainted and orientated with the technology and LMS interface that they will be interacting with while taking an OWC. The goal of Activity 2 is for students to interact with the LMS at the beginning of the semester so that they can get acclimated with its features and the design of the course (See Appendix B sample LMS tasks for students to complete). They will be asked to complete tasks such as turning in an assignment or participating in a discussion board so that they can get acquainted with the tasks they will be completing frequently in the course.

The getting to know the LMS activity will also serve as an opportunity for students to get to know one another because when they complete the activity in their orientation module, other classmates can link up with them that way and reach out if they are interested in completing it together through software like GroupMe, Whatsapp, or even LMS messaging features.

Instructors can also add a component to Activity 2 where students are randomly assigned to groups in order to make the connecting phase easier in the beginning of the course. If instructors choose that option, make sure to reiterate the importance of each student still completing each task individually in order to ensure that they know how to navigate the LMS on their own, as they will need to be able to throughout the semester. This activity also provides them the opportunity to ask questions or address concerns with the instructor that may impede on their ability to succeed in the course as the semester continues.

Activity 2 is designed to orient and acquaint students to navigating an LMS and getting comfortable with all of the features that may be implemented in the course design. Oftentimes first-year writing courses are students’ first experiences with online instruction, especially at the college level, so this is a great opportunity to get them comfortable with the user experience and the overall interface that they will be interacting with throughout the semester (Salisbury, 2018; Greer & Harris, 2018). By providing an open and comfortable environment for students to explore the LMS, Activity 2 showcases a pedagogy of intentionality and lets students know that their comfort level and understanding of the course is of utmost importance to the instructor.

Activity 2 Assignment Prompt (student-facing)

Welcome to our first year writing course! This activity has been designed to help you get acquainted with the course at the start of the semester, as well as the learning management system and the various resources that you have available to you throughout the semester. All of the tasks that you complete will be submitted at the end of the scavenger hunt and the assignment submission for those can be found in the “Welcome to our online writing class!” module. You are more than welcome to work through this scavenger hunt with your classmates. However, I ask that each of you submit your own tasks so that you all can learn how to navigate the features of our learning management system. Some of the tasks that you will be asked to complete include posting in a discussion forum, taking a quiz, and submitting an assignment. I look forward to seeing your tasks and I hope you have fun exploring our class page!

Activity 2 Justification. The goal of Activity 2 is to get students acquainted with both the course overall as well the LMS. Rather than simply having students complete a syllabus quiz, a scavenger hunt is a fun and creative way to help students explore the tools and technologies that we will be using throughout the semester. This activity could be adapted to any LMS or software students might use for multimodal projects as the semester progresses. This scavenger hunt speaks to the recommendations for Principle 2 as it requires students to get acquainted with technology, demonstrate understanding of the technologies needed for the course, and it stresses the importance of a student’s understanding of how to navigate various course technologies. A pedagogy of intentionality calls for instructors to acknowledge the lack of familiarity or experience that students may have with the technologies that they will be navigating throughout the course and this assignment provides a fun way for students to have an orientation to the LMS.

Chapter 3

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

The eleventh CCCC (2013) OWI principle speaks to the impact community-building has on student success in OWCs. As I discuss throughout this section, instructors need to intentionally think about how to develop community when designing OWCs (Stewart, 2021). Online, there are fewer opportunities for the genuine, naturally-occurring connections happens in a face-to-face classroom when students meet several times a week. Particularly after the pandemic in 2020, collaboration and community became increasingly important due to the isolation that many students felt as a result of the stay-at-home orders issued by federal and local governments (Stewart, 2021). Because of this lack of social interaction, it became even more of a priority to try and figure out ways for people to feel connected.

Summary of Principle 11

Hewett (2015) provides the following rationale for Principle 11:

> Students' motivation as learners often is improved by a sense of interpersonal connectedness to others within a course. Composition teachers long have practiced pedagogy of collaboration and individualization in which students are encouraged to see themselves as connected to their peers while being unique writers. It is believed generally that such writing courses inspire student success and satisfaction (p. 117).

When students feel personally and socially connected to a course, they are more likely to be motivated to engage with the course content and complete the course successfully, making effective learning more likely to take place.

In addition to the rationale for the eleventh principle, The CCCC Committee for Best Practices in Online Writing Instruction developed effective practices in an effort to ensure that the principle can be implemented properly (2013). Of those practices, having instructors incorporate "'icebreakers' and other activities that make use of the LMS and engage student writing" and seek out "regular, course-specific feedback on OWI course implementation and activities, instructional goals, and performance" helps students to feel more personally and socially connected to the course (CCCC, 2013). Along with delivering instructor feedback, the CCCC best practices include providing students with "forums, threads, and assessments in which students can have open discussions, either with or without teacher involvement, about course dynamics" (CCCC, 2013). The CCCC recommendation to use discussion forums allows students to have more organic interactions with their peers, aiding in community building in OWCs. For Principle 11, the active nature of these best practices reflects a pedagogy of intentionality because instructors need to be deliberate and purposeful with how they are fostering community in their courses (Sheppard, 2021).

Community of Inquiry

While scholars (Sheppard, 2021; Stewart, 2021) highlight the importance of fostering community in courses, one framework that can be utilized to create a community amongst students is the Communuty of Inquiry (CoI) framework. Stewart (2021) mentions the concept of social learning, which makes a connection between ". . . the *collaboration* that OWI values and the *social-cognitive presence* that a CoI aims to facilitate" (p. 12). Community of Inquiry (CoI), is a framework originally developed by Garrison et al. (2000). As explained by Garrison (2016), "Communities of inquiry provide intellectual challenges and the environment for individuals to stretch their depth and breadth of thinking and learning through collaboration" (p. 54). The CoI framework promotes community-building and collaboration by emphasizing the need for courses to operate with a cognitive, social, and teaching presence (Garrison, 2016).

Through the CoI framework, students learn from each other because of the ideas that their peers bring to the table. The three aspects of the CoI framework are cognitive, social, and teaching presence. Cognitive presence involves ". . .thinking and learning collaboratively" (Garrison, 2016, p. 77). Garrison explains cognitive presence as being ". . . grounded in John Dewey's extensive work on reflective thinking and practical inquiry" (p. 75). Reflection has been a long-time practice in OWI especially, as it asks students to think about their composing and designing choices for assignments on a more critical level. CoI certainly plays a key role in developing community in an OWC due to the social presence within the framework. Garrison (2016) defines social presence as ". . .being directed to establishing an environment for open communication (discourse) and establishing purposeful group cohesion essential for deep and meaningful learning and academic achievement" (p. 73). Social presence helps blend the individual student with the group of classmates because it fosters an environment where open discourse can take place, creating an environment where students feel comfortable to interact with one another. Social presence plays a crucial role in developing the community necessitated by Principle 11 because of the call for students to develop personal relationships with others in a class. The third and final aspect of the CoI framework is the teaching presence. Garrison writes, "Teaching presence provides the essential leadership dimension that keeps a learning community functioning effectively and efficiently. It consists of three progressive responsibilities—the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social presences" (p. 61). Teaching presence is essentially the necessary role of an instructor or leader that needs to exist in order for course operations to take place effectively.

Although Garrison's (2016) CoI framework covers cognitive, social, and teaching presence, Shea et al. (2012) introduce a new element to the framework: learning presence. Learning presence involves ". . . traits and activities that are under the control of successful online learners" (p. 90). Some of the traits and behaviors that Shea et al. found to be the most prevalent in successful online learners were: "forethought and planning; monitoring; and strategy usage" (p. 94). Students possess these skills that aid them in being successful learners in online courses, because of the independent nature of online learning. Online learning traits include setting goals, coordinating tasks within a group setting, checking for understanding amongst peers and self, and asking for and giving help to others (p. 94). Along with fostering these traits, learning presence includes practicing self-regulation and co-regulation (p. 90). Because of the independent nature of being an online student, the skills mentioned as part of learning presence speak to the self-sufficiency, self-accountability, and overall self-awareness that is required in order for students to be successful in online courses (Shea at al., 2012).

Principle 11 stresses the importance of building a community in OWCs. In online courses, students tend to feel isolated from their peers. The pandemic exacerbated this sense of isolation to new levels. The CoI framework is something that could be intentionally implemented into the design frameworks of OWCs as a way to help counteract the struggles of isolation that many online students, including myself, have felt. A CoI framework could be implemented in an online writing course by adapting the various presences that make up the framework to the LMS. A CoI framework also emphasizes the importance of collaborative practices in the learning process, which I argue is of great importance in OWCs.

Learning communities and collaboration have long played an important role in composition scholarship (Stewart, 2021). However, because of the pandemic, it has become increasingly evident that instructors need to think critically and intentionally about the time students are spending online for their courses and what it is that they are expected to do during that time. A pedagogy of intentionality gives the instructor an opportunity to foster an environment where community-building practices thrive because it speaks to the acknowledgement and the power of allowing students to learn from one another and their unique experiences (Stewart, 2021). A pedagogy of intentionality involves acknowledging that students each bring something unique to the table that can enhance theirs and others' learning experiences. A CoI is a perfect opportunity to have a 'meeting of the minds' so to speak, where students can learn from each other in ways that they wouldn't from the instructor alone.

Strategies for Checking in With Students

Particularly since the pandemic, there has been an increased need for instructors to develop a consistent rapport with students and their experiences inside and outside of the course environment (Glazier, 2021). One way that instructors can build rapport with students is by taking the time to check in with them. Spencer (2020), a K-12 teacher and education professor developed nine strategies that can assist instructors with checking in with students in online courses. The strategies that Spencer proposes are the following: "(1) social-emotional pulse check; (2) video updates; (3) video check-ins; (4) small group check-ins; (5) email check-ins; (6) small text check-ins; (7) surveys; (8) scheduled conferences; (9) phone calls" (Spencer, 2020). These strategies could be used individually or in conjunction with one another in order to develop a stronger connection between instructors and students. Spencer organizes these strategies on a spectrum that ranges from personal to academic check-ins with a breakdown of categories including social-emotional well-being, student experiences within the course, goal setting, and providing targeted help and tutoring (Spencer, 2020).

The way that Spencer (2020) has organized these check-in methods helps instructors to be more intentional with how they are communicating with students because it requires them to select a method that best suits the purpose for connecting. While Spencer's strategies were developed prior to the onset of the pandemic, they should continue post-pandemic as a way to educate the whole student, both emotionally and academically, to help provide the most positive learning experience possible. Checking in with students can help foster community in OWCs because it helps students feel that instructors care about their success as individuals, rather than seeing students as just another member of a class. Even more so, checking in with students can help build a rapport where students feel more comfortable reaching out to the instructor with questions or concerns, which is important because of the independent nature of online courses. Making sure that students feel that they can reach out to instructors is crucial for success and community-building in online courses, and checking in with students regularly is a way that instructors can be intentional with building that sense of community.

Particularly after the pandemic, community has become emphasized in OWI because of the lack of connection amongst students and instructors that was experienced (Stewart, 2021). I argue that because of the pandemic, there is definitely more awareness of loss and health and trauma that students are facing. Principle 11 speaks to the importance of building community in OWCs. When looking at the frameworks like CoI (Garrison, 2016) and other social processes present in OWI (Stewart, 2021), they offer important practices that foster community and help students stay engaged with their online courses.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Implement some form of group work, collaboration, and peer review in each assignment for online writing courses

Particularly with OWCs, the level of interaction between students is almost completely dependent upon the instructor's intentional planning of ways for peers to collaborate and work with one another (Pengilly, 2021; Stewart, 2021; Sheppard, 2021). This first recommendation argues for ensuring that some form of collaboration or peer-to-peer interaction should be present in the process of completing each of the course assignments. Through group brainstorming discussions, Zoom meetings, peer review activities, etc., instructors can ensure that the level of student-to-student interaction is still present in students' composing processes. These collaborations and group work activities can either be set up in predetermined groups or students can have the option of who they work with. The group interactions could even be low-stakes and not just for high-stakes assignments.

Justification. While writing is often viewed as a personal and solitary activity, writing and composing is also a social process, and the limitations of peer-to-peer interactions in OWCs should not be an obstacle that hinders the ability for the social aspect of the process to exist. For example, Warnock (2009) states, "Peer review is a standard FYW [first-year writing] practice that can operate in an enhanced way using the technologies of the OW course" (p. 109). Warnock argues that just because a course takes place online does not mean that student-to-student interactions need to suffer.

By being intentional about the use of peer review and peer review groups in an OWC, instructors are purposefully creating a community in the course, which is what Principle 11 is all about. Warnock (2009) also acknowledges the concern that OWI is the end of collaborative learning, due to the lack of face-to-face interaction amongst students, when actually, it is just the beginning (p. 147). Just like technologies available can help facilitate peer review, Warnock shares that the same can be said for facilitating group work in OWCs.

Recommendation 2: Establish methods of communication for students to interact with each other in OWCs

In order to provide students with opportunities to collaborate and engage with one another, they need to have the opportunity to build rapport with one another. Some ways that students can build rapport with one another is through creating group chats on softwares like GroupMe or Whatsapp, or even messaging one another in the message feature of an LMS.

Particularly, in order to foster genuine connections and relationships with one another, it is a good idea to try and suggest to students that they communicate with one another outside of the course as well (Warnock, 2009). From my own personal experience, I have found that the more I get to know someone outside of the classroom environment, the more likely I am to be able to effectively collaborate with them for course purposes. One way to go about suggesting communication outside of the course would be for the instructor to suggest for students to make a GroupMe or a WhatsApp for the section. Warnock talks specifically about the use of messaging boards within an LMS to facilitate student communication and how these messaging boards within in an LMS can be a powerful learning environment for students outside of the academic setting of an online writing course. It is important to note the distinction between messaging boards in LMSs and messaging platforms that because chatting services like GroupMe or WhatsApp are not monitored by the instructor, students may feel more comfortable and inclined to open up to new friendships and partnerships that can benefit their work in the course greatly.

Justification. In order to achieve Principle 11's goal for community-building, students need to have ways to communicate with their peers. I argue that having communication with their peers outside of the LMS or required course discussions encourages students to mingle on a social level rather than having solely an academic acquaintanceship with each other. Like any relationship, genuine connections cannot be made if every interaction is forced or prearranged. Recommendation 2 suggests that instructors give students the option to create a group chat or messaging group that they can use both for course-related questions and just to get to know each other better. When suggesting outside-of-class communication methods to students, make sure that they are aware that writing can sometimes be a personal thing to share with others and that you want them to be as comfortable with each other as possible. This way, the interactions that they have with each other are a result of their own accord and agency, rather than simply because their instructor is forcing them to work together.

OWI can actually provide great opportunities for students to connect socially with each other because of the messaging features that often exist within an LMS. Warnock (2009) explains, “The asynchronous technology of message boards can create a powerful and effective writing and learning environment for your students” (p. 71). Warnock’s optimistic perspective on how message boards can be utilized in OWCs speaks to the power of how non-course related discourse can positively impact a student’s writing. He continues by writing, “Message boards, by their very design, provide a complexity of audience: students are writing not just to the teacher but to each other. While negotiating the multiple audiences of a message board, students can practice invention skills, take risks, and develop their own authoritative voices” (p. 70). Just as students learn rhetorical fleixbility by creating multimodal assignments, they also gain criticla rhetorical skills by learning to successfully navigate the multiple audiences of discussion boards. By suggesting students communicate outside of the LMS, Recommendation 2 will help develop that genuine and authentic community-building that Principle 11 is urging online writing instructors to foster.

Recommendation 3: Establish a method of checking in with students on a regular and consistent basis

Find times throughout the semester where instructors can have scheduled check-ins with students to discuss both academic and personal progress. It might be helpful to have instructors check in with students at some point while completing each assignment. Through the practice of conducting regular and consistent check-ins, students may also feel more connected to their instructor (Hehir et al., 2021). I have come to realize as a student, when my instructor checks in with me, it minimizes the feeling of being just another number or name on a class roster. I have found that as a student, instructors building personal connections with students is a great way to make sure that the class experience is accessible and inclusive to them because they can inquire about any challenges and obstacles that they are having in the course and make improvements throughout the semester (Hehir et al., 2021).

Building rapport and checking in with students also benefits the instructor because they can learn early in a semester which course components work or don't work. Refering back to the recommendations related to accessbility and inclusivity, by requesting student feedback, insturctors provide themselves with opportunities to make adjustments while there is still time, rather than waiting until a semester ends. While the social presence amongst students is crucial to fostering an effective and positive writing class environment (Warnock, 2009; Garrison, 2016; Stewart, 2021), it is just as important for students to establish trust and respect with their instructors so that they feel comfortable in an often very personal learning space.

Justification. The work of Spencer (2020) clearly states the importance of checking in with students on a regular and consistent basis, especially as a way to empower students. Spencer writes,

> As teachers, we can empower students to own the learning process. However, this begins with building relationships and checking in on students. When students feel known and respected, they are more likely to engage in meaningful projects that build on voice and choice. These check-ins can help build student agency and a sense of belonging in the larger community.

When instructors check in with students, it helps make them feel that someone is genuinely dedicated to their success and they have someone they can reach out to with questions or concerns. Even more so, checking in with students provides them with a feeling of belonging in a community because they are connected to the instructor despite the geographic distances that exist within online learning.

With the acknowledgement that instructors may not be able to conduct regular one-on-one conferences with students, I argue there are other ways to check-in with students that are less time-intensive. By utilizing the announcement features on the LMS, instructors can ask students to email them or message them answering reflective questions that pertain to a particular assignment they may be completing. Instructors can create discussion boards that they then go back into and reply to students after they have posted. If there are synchronous virtual writing workshops taking place, or another form of peer review is occurring during a certain time in the semester, instructor could meet with students in groups or one-on-one on a rotation that allows them to speak with each student for a short amount of time. Instructors have many options to structure student check-ins in ways that work best for their time or course.

Activity 3: Jeopardy Game

Activity 3 involves students working collaboratively to play a synchronous or asynchronous game of Jeopardy where they’re given questions on topics that could be covered throughout the course (See Appendix C for sample questions). The higher level the question is, the more specific or advanced the material is that is being asked about in the question. One of the underlying themes addressed in this section is the necessity for students to learn in a way that is collaborative with their peers (Garrison, 2016). Creating a game that students can play with their classmates requires community-building and the need for a CoI (Garrison, 2016). Activity 3 can also be adapted to any reading material or course assignments that instructors are assigning to their students.

By introducing gamification as an alternative to traditional assessment or assignment measures, the hope is that students can enjoy the process, increasing their ability to understand the material, while instructors can still get an idea of how the students are interacting and learning from the course materials (Antonaci et al., 2019). By creating an enjoyable game that students can play as a way to review course materials, this activity enhances the social presence in the CoI framework (Garrison, 2016) and the overall importance of collaborative learning (Warnock, 2009). Instructors can either have this game be played synchronously via Zoom or asynchronously. Students can either be assigned groups, or they can choose groups themselves. In the case of asynchronous playing of this game, instructors could have student groups submit a document to the LMS that includes their answers for each question, that way other groups wouldn't be able to see the answers of others. The scores could then be tallied by the instructor upon submission. In the case of synchronous playing of the game, students could be separated into groups and then take turns selecting questions and answering them that way.

Activity 3 Assignment Prompt (student facing)

What is Jeopardy? That's right! When playing this game, you will be divided into teams where you will be participating in a Jeopardy game all about the topics that we have discussed so far in the semester. The goal of this game is to help you all get to know each other, collaborate, and learn from one another as you complete the game. What does the winning team receive? The winning team members of this Jeopardy Game will each get 5 bonus points added to their grade. Best of luck! [*Note to instructors:* here is where you would adapt the student-facing activity description to instruct students to either participate via Zoom or if you will be conducting this asynchronously and have their answers submitted to the LMS, based on your courses modality.]

Activity 3 Justification. This activity is meant to be fun for studnets as Principle 11 talks about the importance of building a community in OWI. The game would be played ahead of each assignment and could be played several times in a term. As students produce an assignment for each unit, instructors could alternate group members so that students would be able to work with a different set of peers each time. Since the course would be online, the game could be played via Zoom. This game can also be played asynchronously where the questions can be posted in an assignment on the LMS and teams can submit their answers privately there. In the case of asynchronous courses, in order to ensure that students actually did collaborate when developing the answers, instructors could require that students submit a meeting recording of them working together on the assignment (ie: Zoom recording).

Conclusions and Implications

Intentionality Implications

Throughout my examination of Principles 1, 2, and 11, I have argued that online writing instructors need to be more intentional with their design of courses and their general practices and pedagogical decisions. These following implications are a compilation of the most important components that have been developed and supported throughout this report. Once implemented, both students and instructors will feel a greater sense of purpose and direction when it comes to what they are learning and teaching in their OWCs. These implications also speak to writing program adminsitrators who oversee and support instructors teaching OWCs. Many instructors who teach first year writing and OWCs are adjunct and are not full-time faculty (Mandernach et al., 2015). Because some of the aforementioned recommendations add to the already strenuous workload that instructors take on, administrators can play a role in supporting faculty by providing professional development programs and resources that instructors can utilize while teaching OWCs.

Be intentional about making courses and course materials accessible and inclusive to all students

Throughout this project, accessibility and inclusivity has involved accounting for the needs and learning preferences of all students, rather than simply limiting accessibility and inclusivity to being provided to students on an accommodation or case-by-case basis. The pandemic opened the eyes of instructors and administrators to the realities of students' home environments that may impact their educational experience. By being intentional about designing and teaching OWCs, and shifting towards an ideology of inclusion (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017), students will feel more equipped and welcome to share their experiences in a space where their unique needs and voices are respected and heard. With ssues of access to technology being exacerbated by the pandemic, it is crucial that instructors and administrators continue aruging for the inclusion of accessibility and inclusivity in their courses and are intentional with the practices they implement to help provide an accessible and inclusive experience for students.

Be intentional with how the LMS is utilized in the course and how that LMS usage is presented to students

The LMS plays a crucial role in OWI because it acts as students' entire learning environment. It is vital that instructors are intentional with what they include in the LMS and how they utilize the available features. Beyond making sure that their use of LMS features is accessible for students, instructors must also be intentional as to how they present the course site to students. In order for students to reap the most benefits from the course, they must understand how to navigate the site to the greatest extent.

Administrators can support instructors this initiative of LMS orientation by professional development on the role that LMSs plays at their instutition and training on how to use an LMS for online courses in ways that best supports student learning. Being intentional about the LMS usage and showcasing that usage to students moving forward is crucial so that students understand the purposes behind the activities and assignments they are completing, but also so that students can reap the most benefits possible from their online writing course.

Be intentional with the development of community and how community is utilized in the design of OWCs

The final implication argues for the importance of building community and utilizing that community to its greatest potential within an OWC. Developing community is a crucial step in the design of an OWC because it reduces the level of isolation and loss of connection that students may feel as a result of taking courses online. Instructors must keep the subsequent isolation and loss of connection in mind when designing courses and be intentional about how they implement community-building practices within their course.

Community-building and peer-to-peer engagement and collaboration should be an intentional aspect of every activity, assignment, and experience that students have within a course (Stewart, 2021; Garrison, 2016). Administrators play a role in building this community by sharing with instructors the importance of collaboration and community-building, particularly in online courses. Especially after the pandemic and the isolation that was felt by students and instructors, community-building became a crucial element for success in OWCs. Helping students feel connected to each other, their instructor, and what they are learning increases their motivation and level of engagement in the course (Stewart, 2021), making community-building something that should not go away from OWCs.

Concluding Thoughts

Throughout this project, I have learned more than I could have ever imagined when it comes to sharpening my skills as a future instructor. Throughout my life, intentionality and purpose have always played a role in everything that I do and so it makes sense that I want to bring that into my practices as an instructor. Being able to showcase to students that their experiences and their skillsets are honored in my teaching methods and that everything I ask them to complete has a greater purpose designed to aid in their success, is what learning is all about. Moving beyond what we imagine a traditional student looking like and moving forward with the understanding that all students have different experiences that they bring to the table is something that should be honored in the teaching process.

Teaching with a pedagogy of intentionality also allows for there to be more reciprocal learning between the instructor and the student. When taking a critical approach to the standard practices that have been in place for many years, it opens up the door to a conversation and an opportunity for instructors to learn from their students in a way that is incredibly rewarding and can also have a great impact on the way that they teach for years to come. After reading this project, my hope is that future and current online writing instructors can learn the importance of being intentional with their design and teaching of their courses.

To the readers of this project, my hope is that my analysis and evaluation of three foundational principles of OWI brought to light the importance of continuing the conversations that were happening prior to the pandemic, and after, regarding how the student experience can be improved. My hope is that this project works to be a conversation starter among readers and their colleagues and that readers can implement these recommendations and implications in ways that make sense for the institutional contexts that they all work in.

More importantly, my hope is that the necessity of intentionality and its benefits to both students and instructors was made clear throughout this project. At the end of the day, my hope is that my experiences and the scholarly conversations of others can serve as inspiration and ignition to create a better learning experience for future generations. Despite the negative implications of the pandemic, if one thing is certain, it taught us that we can always do more when we come together for the betterment of our students, which was the foundational motivation for this project.

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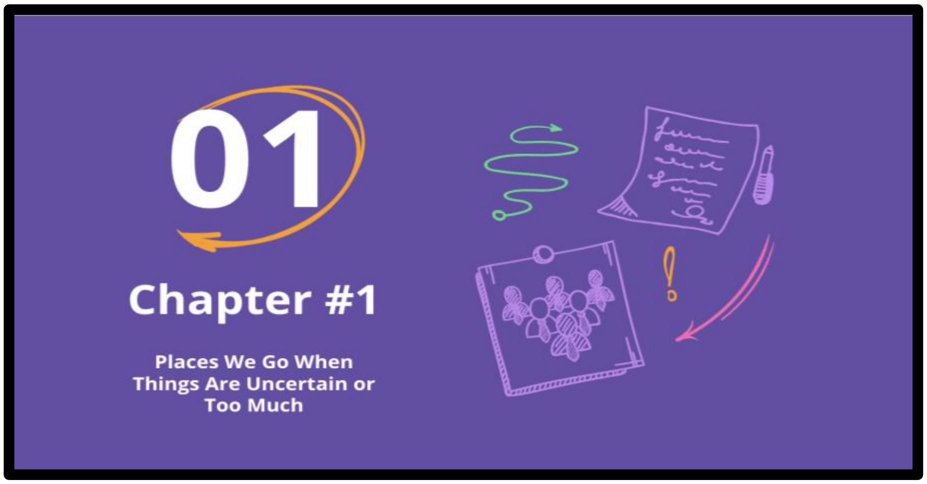
APPENDIX A

Activity 1: Semester-Long Journal Activity Sample Prompts

I developed this activity as a sample of how a course reading material could be developed into a reflection prompt for students. The book that I chose is just an example. However, instructors can utilize this sample as an example of how to transform course reading material into an inspiration for reflection journals. Students would be able to find the weekly chapter's material and journal prompts on the course site and submit their journal responses to the LMS.

Figure 1: Title slide of a chapter of Brown's (2021) *Atlas of the heart: Mapping meaningful connection and the language of human experience*

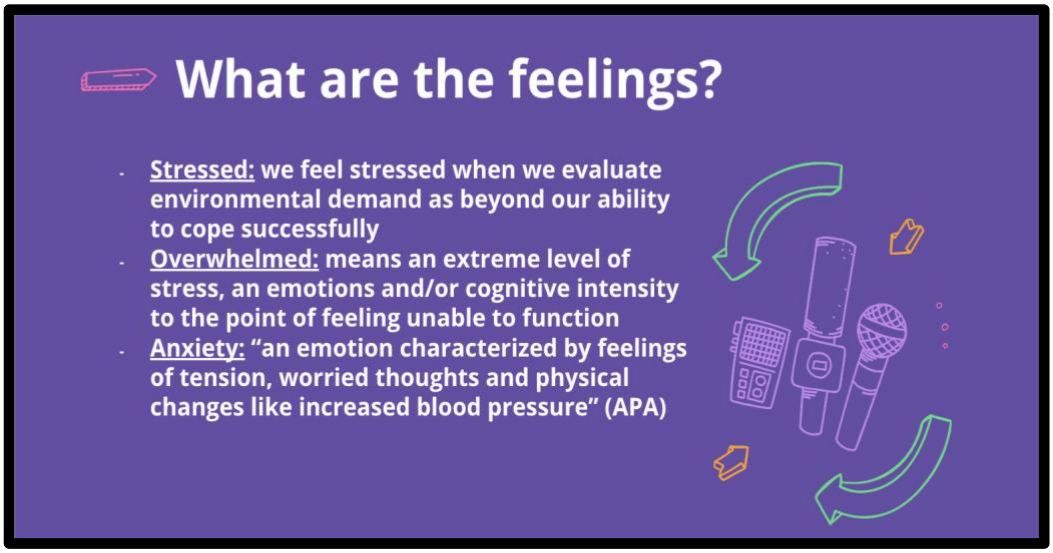


01

Chapter #1

Places We Go When
Things Are Uncertain or
Too Much

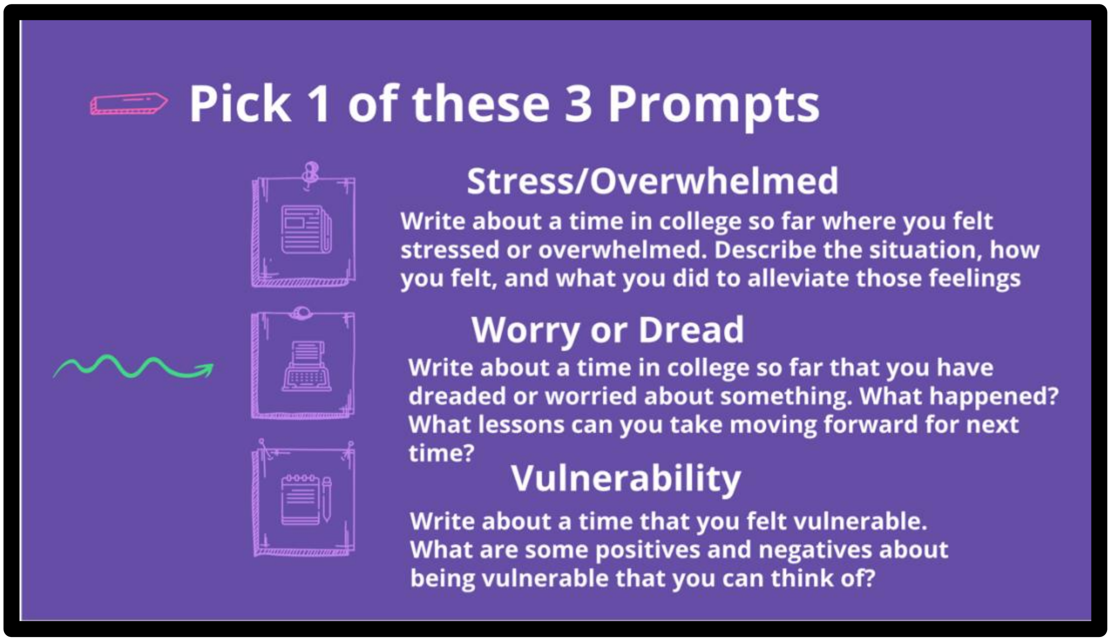
Figure 2: Example definitions cited from Brown (2021) to help students understand some of the feelings mentioned in this chapter and to contextualize the feelings for the journal prompts below.



What are the feelings?

- Stressed: we feel stressed when we evaluate environmental demand as beyond our ability to cope successfully
- Overwhelmed: means an extreme level of stress, an emotions and/or cognitive intensity to the point of feeling unable to function
- Anxiety: "an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure" (APA)

Figure 3: Sample journal prompts derived from the definitions of feelings discussed in the first chapter of Brown’s (2021) *Atlas of the heart*



Pick 1 of these 3 Prompts

Stress/Overwhelmed

Write about a time in college so far where you felt stressed or overwhelmed. Describe the situation, how you felt, and what you did to alleviate those feelings

Worry or Dread

Write about a time in college so far that you have dreaded or worried about something. What happened? What lessons can you take moving forward for next time?

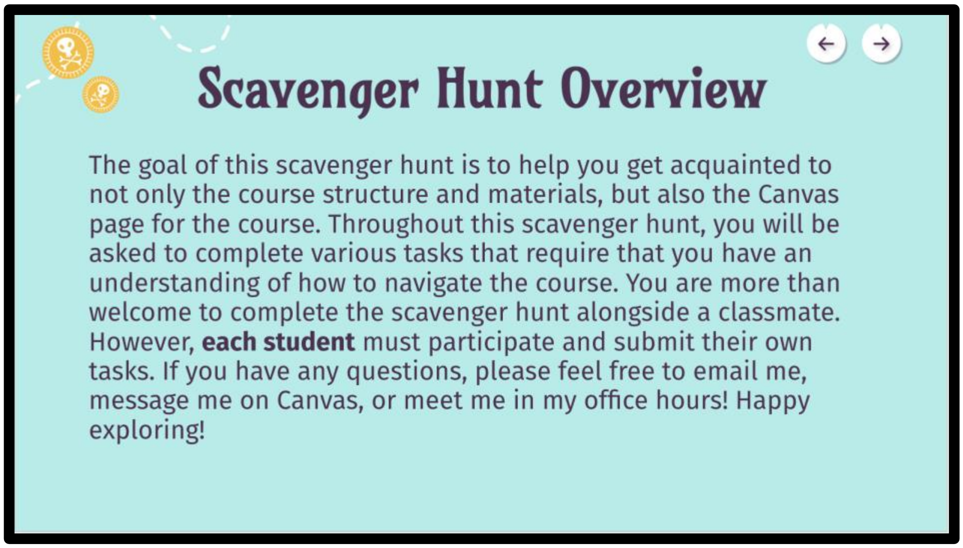
Vulnerability

Write about a time that you felt vulnerable. What are some positives and negatives about being vulnerable that you can think of?

APPENDIX B

Activity 2: LMS Scavenger Hunt Sample Tasks
Each of these slides are just an example of some of the activities that I developed. The sample here is focused on modules. However, there might be other activities as part of the scavenger hunt that focus on other aspects of the LMS such as discussion boards, assignments, etc.

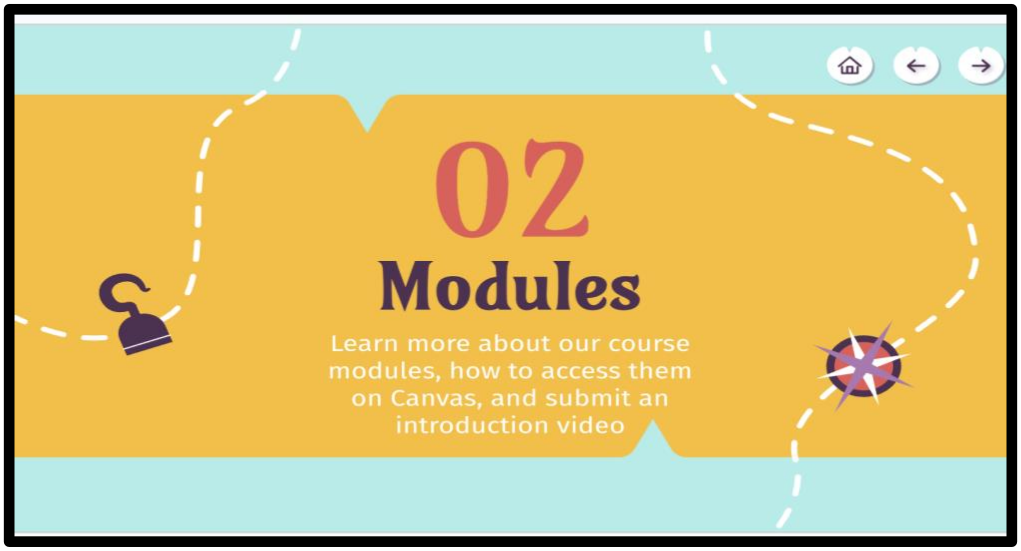
Figure 1: Slide explaining the overview of the scavenger hunt activity



Scavenger Hunt Overview

The goal of this scavenger hunt is to help you get acquainted to not only the course structure and materials, but also the Canvas page for the course. Throughout this scavenger hunt, you will be asked to complete various tasks that require that you have an understanding of how to navigate the course. You are more than welcome to complete the scavenger hunt alongside a classmate. However, **each student** must participate and submit their own tasks. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me, message me on Canvas, or meet me in my office hours! Happy exploring!

Figure 2: Slide explaining what students will learn in the module portion of the scavenger hunt

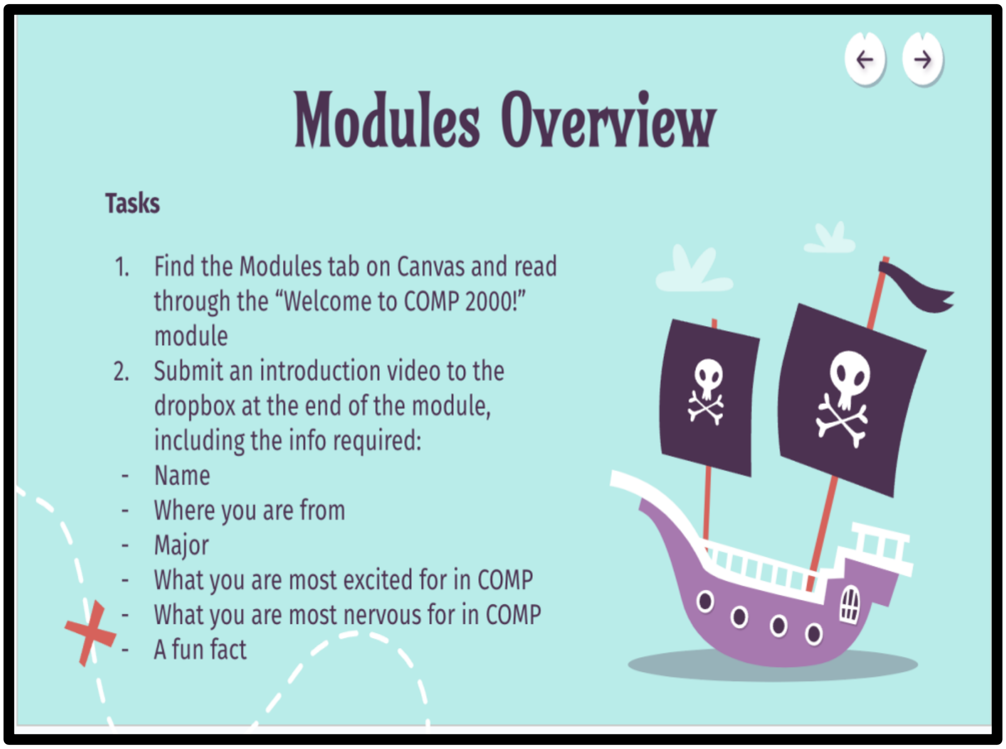


02

Modules

Learn more about our course modules, how to access them on Canvas, and submit an introduction video

Figure 3: Tasks that students are to complete in the module portion of the scavenger hunt



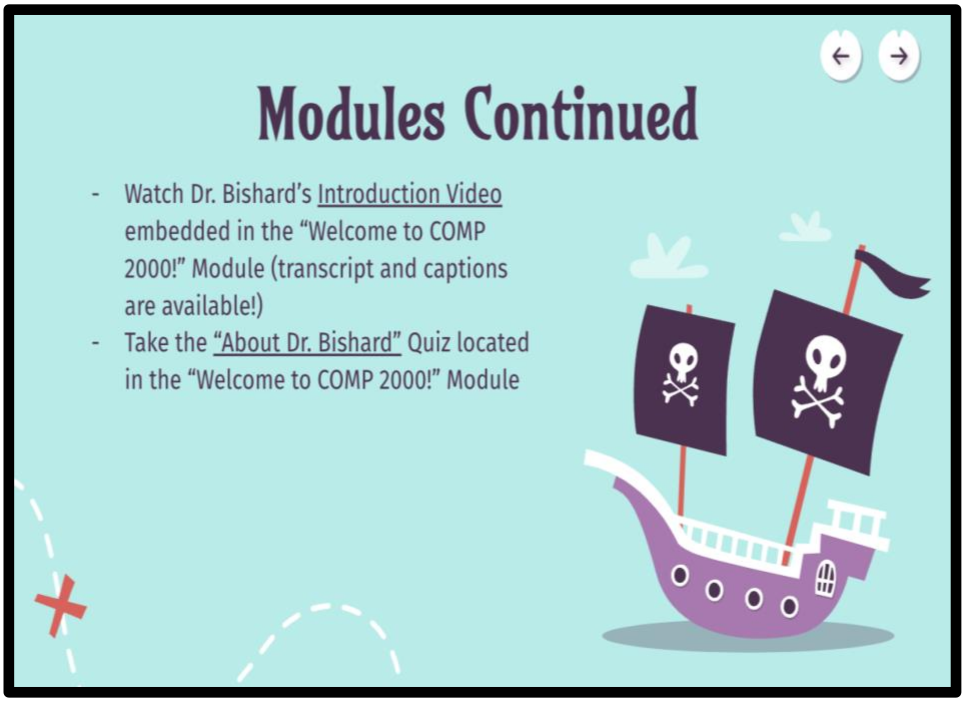
Modules Overview

Tasks

1. Find the Modules tab on Canvas and read through the "Welcome to COMP 2000!" module
2. Submit an introduction video to the dropbox at the end of the module, including the info required:

- Name
- Where you are from
- Major
- What you are most excited for in COMP
- What you are most nervous for in COMP
- A fun fact

Figure 4: Continuation of tasks that students are to complete in the module portion of the scavenger hunt



Modules Continued

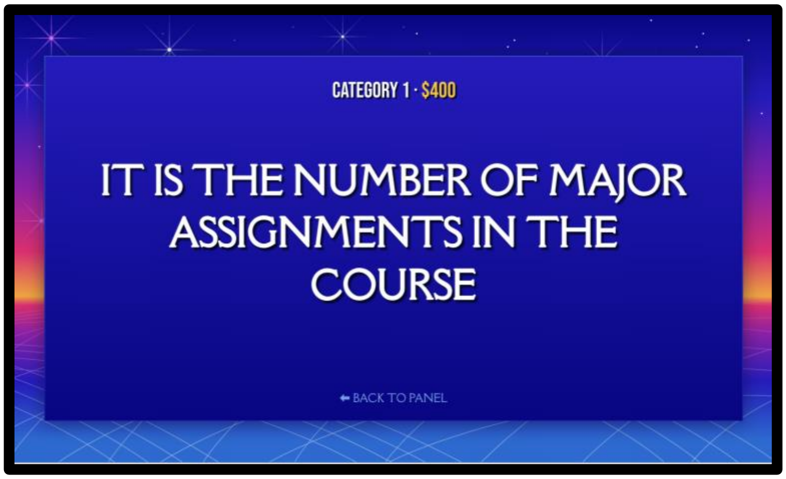
- Watch Dr. Bishard's Introduction Video embedded in the "Welcome to COMP 2000!" Module (transcript and captions are available!)
- Take the "About Dr. Bishard" Quiz located in the "Welcome to COMP 2000!" Module

Appendix C

Activity 3: Jeopardy Sample Questions

Below are a few sample questions for Jeopardy game in an online first-year writing course. These questions can either be part of a synchronous Zoom session presentation or they can be posted in a discussion forum for students to answer in groups asynchronously.

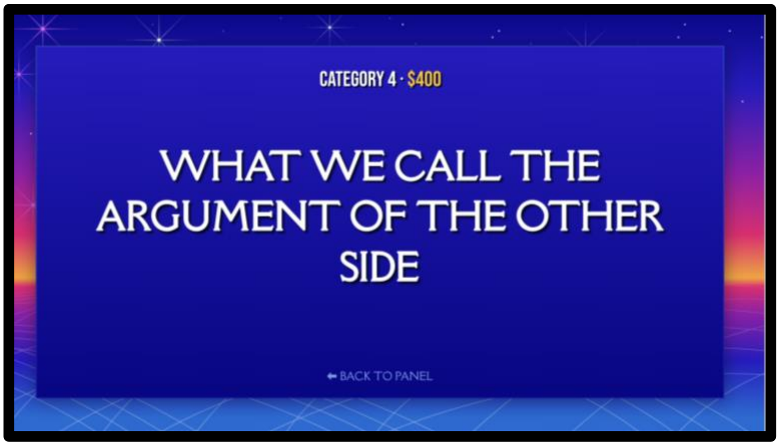
Figure 1: A sample lower-level question that asks students a course-related question.



CATEGORY 1 · $400

IT IS THE NUMBER OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS IN THE COURSE

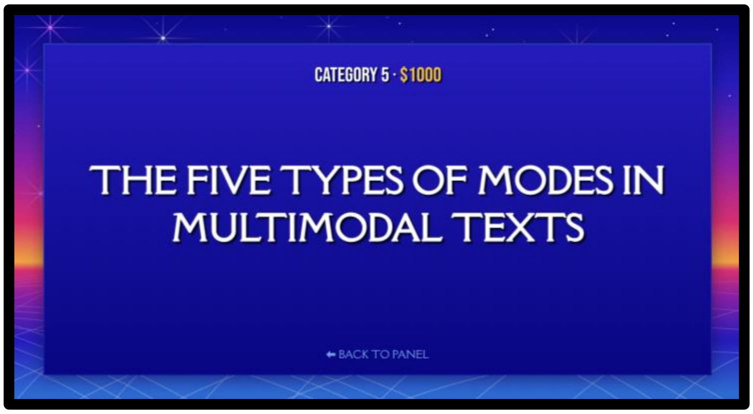
Figure 2: A sample lower-level question that asks students a course content-related question.



CATEGORY 4 · $400

WHAT WE CALL THE ARGUMENT OF THE OTHER SIDE

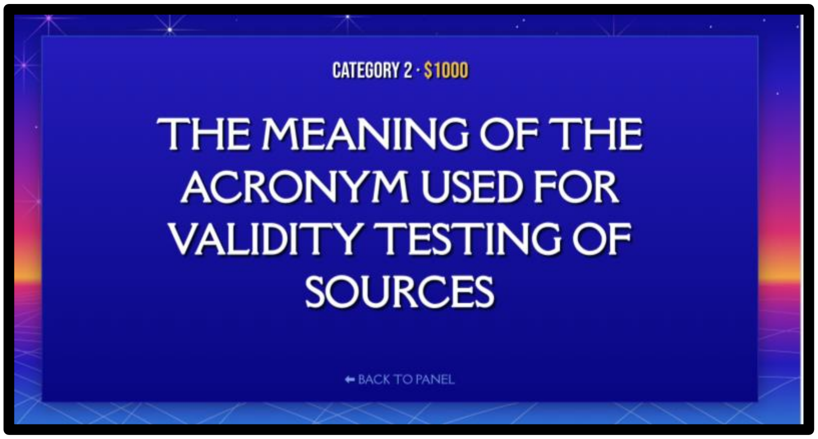
Figure 3: A sample higher-level question that asks students a course content-related question



CATEGORY 5 · $1000

THE FIVE TYPES OF MODES IN MULTIMODAL TEXTS

Figure 4: A sample higher-level question that asks students a course content-related question



CATEGORY 2 · $1000

THE MEANING OF THE ACRONYM USED FOR VALIDITY TESTING OF SOURCES