

Chapter 12. Using PARS to Build a Community of Practice for Hybrid Writing Instructors

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Abstract: In this chapter, I apply the PARS (Personal, Accessible, Responsive, and Strategic) approach to the hybrid faculty cohort that I facilitate for my writing program. This program responds to and extends OWI Principle z: “Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) for OWI programs and their online writing teachers should receive appropriate OWI-focused training, professional development, and assessment for evaluation and promotion purposes” (CCCC OWI 2013). Below, I explain how my writing program started offering hybrid courses and how I started coordinating them. I follow this with four sections devoted to each component of the PARS approach. Each section concludes with recommendations for readers in similar positions in their own institutions.

Keywords: writing program administration, online writing instruction, training, support, hybrid

In 2011, my first-year writing program was selected to participate in the University of Maryland (UMD) Provost’s Blended Learning Initiative. This highly-publicized initiative was responding to a demand that the campus “pursue an aggressive strategy to promote and introduce blended learning or learning innovations through the use of technology” (University, 2011). UMD’s definition of blended courses was broad—“A blended (also referred to as a hybrid) course requires a combination of both face-to-face and online interactions, and involves a rich, collaborative environment embedded with a learning space containing a variety of information sources” (University of Maryland, 2011)—with the understanding that blended courses would replace a portion of in-person class time with online instruction.¹ To prepare for our hybrid redesign of English 101, we attended a two-day hybrid learning retreat with faculty from the other programs. We learned about active learning in large lecture classes. We learned about video lectures. We learned nothing about hybrid learning in small, discussion-based writing classes like ours.

For context, the University of Maryland’s Academic Writing Program

1. Because the field of OWI uses “hybrid” instead of “blended,” I use hybrid for the remainder of this chapter.

(AWP) serves approximately 3,800 students each academic year. We offer about 110, 19-seat sections of English 101 each semester that are taught by a mix of contract NTT faculty (about 65%) and graduate students (35%). Our pilot team was led by the AWP director, one of the assistant AWP directors, and three NTT faculty, including myself. Throughout the fall, we worked together to redesign English 101 for the hybrid format in which half of the “seat time” in TTH sections was moved online (we would soon add MWF sections in which one third of the seat time was moved online). While we did our best to design innovative, pedagogically-sound courses, we were hamstrung by a relative dearth in the literature at the time on hybrid writing classes. Our lack of experience in online teaching, either as practitioners or researchers, left us ill-prepared for many of the challenges we encountered in our subsequent pilot semester. As we “trialed and errored” (Borgman, 2016) our way through the following year, we soon faced more challenges: our WPA, who had led our pilot, was replaced by a WPA new to both our institution and to online and hybrid learning. The handful of us still teaching hybrid writing courses were largely working in isolation without opportunities to compare best practices; develop new resources, or mentor new instructors.

In order to sustain the hybrid initiative within our program, we needed someone to lead it. I was nominated to do so and said yes. My primary charges in that first year were to establish core tenets and effective practices of hybrid writing classes and strengthen the community of hybrid writing instructors within our program. Below, I will use the PARS (Personal, Accessible, Responsive, and Strategic) approach to describe how I work with faculty, how I’ve expanded the hybrid (and online) learning initiative within my writing program, and how you can implement elements of it for your institutional context.

Personal: Building the Community

Identity

I always say that my number one job as an educator is to build a classroom community in which students feel welcome, respected, and supported. The degree to which students are willing to be vulnerable—a necessary criterion to learning—is contingent on fostering a climate of trust (Gitterman, 2008; Neal, 2008). The same goes for instructors: we need a place where we can share what’s happening in our classes—including what isn’t working—without fear of retribution. So, one of the first things I did was institute more regular meetings for hybrid instructors so we could get together and exchange ideas with each other more frequently. While I didn’t have language for it at the time, what I was doing was establishing a community of practice (CoP), which is defined by Lisa Melonçon and Lora Arduser (2015) as a group of people “who share a concern for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 74).

The well-documented loneliness of online teaching (Borgman & McArdle, 2019; Bourelle, 2016; Hewett & Ehmann, 2004; Mechenbier, 2015), is felt in different ways by hybrid instructors. We're still on campus, as instructors are teaching in person once (for T/TH courses) or twice (for MWF courses) a week, so we still occasionally see our colleagues. Yet we do so in an environment that, while not necessarily hostile to online or hybrid writing instruction, isn't necessarily enthusiastic about it, either. The persistent lack of understanding about what hybrid and online writing instruction (H/OWI) is and how beneficial it is to student learning can make H/OWI instructors feel isolated pedagogically and vulnerable professionally (Mechenbier, 2015; Melonçon & Arduser, 2015). This is especially true for contingent faculty who often do not have the experience of being part of a small cohort or learning community that they likely had in graduate school (Borgman & McClure, 2019; Mechenbier, 2015; Penrose, 2012).

Developing a CoP gives instructors a chance to share their success and challenges and work together to solve shared teaching problems (Melonçon & Arduser, 2015; Teagarden, 2018). We're all there to help each other learn—myself included! Second, it gives instructors a sense of institutional belonging. As of the time of this writing, our English Department has 270 instructional faculty in its ranks. It's easy to feel invisible. Having a shared identity with a dozen colleagues dedicated to improving their teaching and who also get to know each other on a personal level goes a long way to helping instructors feel like valuable members of the department (Melonçon, 2017). Everyone needs to be seen—especially instructors whose efforts are otherwise only seen by their students, an audience who may or may not have the ability (or, to be fair, reason) to appreciate the time, effort, and care with which their instructors design and facilitate their learning.

Advocacy

One of the advantages of having an administrator like me who is dedicated to hybrid or online writing instruction (H/OWI) is that I am able to promote my colleagues' many strengths to those in power. I am intimately familiar with my hybrid colleagues' teaching methods because we discuss them in our meetings and also because I observe their classes. I am thus able to highlight their particular areas of expertise to others less familiar with their work. When my WPA mentions, for example, that she wants to plan some breakout sessions on digital writing or peer review at our next professional development day, I name colleagues who have developed particularly successful strategies for teaching their students how to design websites or peer review each other's work in Google Docs. In this way, I demonstrate that my fellow hybrid instructors have a direct hand in shaping and strengthening our writing courses and program (Borgman & McArdle, 2019; Hanson & de los Reyes, 2018; Melonçon, 2017; Melonçon & Arduser, 2015).

Agency

I trust that instructors know what is best for their students and their courses. Each of them, in the words of Melonçon and Arduser (2015), “carries implicit and explicit knowledge about creating courses, crafting assignments, managing the classroom, [and] facilitating classroom discussion and activities” (p. 87), all of which they have to contribute to our ongoing conversations about teaching in new (and familiar) contexts. Instructors in a CoP don’t simply receive knowledge about hybrid teaching; they co-construct it (Melonçon & Arduser, 2015).

Because of this, I do not create a standard syllabus or course shell for them to adopt, for I believe that would compromise instructors’ agency and impede their ability to cultivate their own hybrid pedagogy (Breuch, 2015; Paull & Snart, 2016; Teagarden, 2018). Instead, instructors in this CoP develop and share their own materials, such as syllabi, assignments, and lesson plans, by adding them to the LMS site I created for this CoP. Many of these materials are annotated to help other instructors adapt them for their own courses. Encouraging faculty to learn from each other and develop their own courses is part of what makes this a sustainable CoP.

This is not to say that I outright oppose course shells and standard syllabi; they work well in other programs and contexts, especially with instructors new to teaching online writing courses (Bourelle, 2016; Rodrigo & Ramírez, 2017) or in programs without dedicated, ongoing mentoring for H/OWI instructors (Borgman 2016). In my case, however, all instructors—including graduate instructors—teaching hybrid sections of our first-year writing course have taught the course face-to-face for at least a year, so they’ve already developed their own approach to teaching it.

Creating a standard syllabus or course shell would also undermine my approach to building this cohort-based CoP. While I provide formal training for new instructors, which I explain in the next section, my job isn’t to tell my colleagues what to do. Rather, my job is to introduce my colleagues to some theory and effective practices, show them how to create interactive learning environments in both online and face-to-face classes, be a friendly source of support, and, most importantly, create spaces for them to come together as a learning community, one in which we all learn with and from each other (Melonçon & Arduser, 2015; Teagarden, 2018).

Takeaways for Personal Administration

- Put people first. This is about your instructors, not you! Listen to them. Ask them what they need and want. Identify what they don’t want. Support them without smothering them. Just show up.
- Identify professional development opportunities for your instructors. If

you can't identify them, create them (more on this below). Provide opportunities for them without overburdening them. And then ask your instructors if they want to do whatever it is you've found, e.g., lead a workshop, create a video tutorial, etc. They may leap at the chance to do so; alternatively, they may not be able to take anything else on at this time. And that's okay.

- Trust your colleagues. Most instructors I know are dedicated to their students and passionate about their work. Trust that they'll figure it out. Give your colleagues room to experiment and flounder, for those stumbles nearly always precede a triumphant teaching breakthrough. And then provide them plenty of opportunities to share what they're up to so that you can learn from them, too.
- Be mindful of your positionality. Regardless of how much you design your faculty CoP to be egalitarian, if you have an administrative title, you enjoy a privilege that your colleagues do not. Accept this humbly. And then use your privilege to advocate for your instructors every chance you can.

Accessible: Designing the Training

I'll start this section by pointing out how the hybrid courses in my program are inaccessible to instructors: they can be taught only by those who have been trained to teach them. I was adamant that instructors needed mentoring before they started teaching hybrid, which meant that I needed to build a mentoring structure that went beyond regular meetings. I had to provide access to evidence-based H/OWI pedagogy to those who lacked the resources (e.g., time) to do so on their own. In other words: I needed a training program. It took me three years to design and build customized H/OWI teacher training for our writing program, and it took several iterations for me to become satisfied with all of the modules and activities. Yet even its initial runs were helpful to faculty who were new to hybrid writing instruction. Something is better than nothing, even if it isn't perfect!

And that's the point: despite the fact that we've been teaching writing online for over twenty years (Harrington et al., 2000), most instructors still haven't been a student in an online, let alone a hybrid, course. If an instructor hasn't been an online or hybrid student, how will they know what works—and why? For hybrid courses in particular, how will they figure out how to integrate the online and onsite environments? (Snart, 2015). How will they resist the “course and a half” temptation? (McGee & Reis, 2012). How will they reconcile the problematic binary that assigns social, active learning to F2F environments and independent, reflective learning to online environments, a recommendation that curiously neglects to consider the countless ways in which students can be and are quite social online? (Hilliard & Stewart, 2019).

To address these needs, I developed a three-part, six-week training program. Instructors work in all three learning environments available to them as hybrid instructors: asynchronous online, synchronous online, and face-to-face. This design responds to both what my colleagues specifically asked for and to the scholarship that has long called for OWI teacher training that focuses on pedagogy, not merely technology (Bourelle, 2016; CCCC OWI Position Statement, 2013; Cook 2007; Griffin & Minter, 2013; Hewett & Ehmann, 2004; Rodrigo & Ramírez, 2017; Snart, 2015).

Part I: Asynchronous Modules & Activities

Instructors are added as students to a course space in our LMS that I created for this training. There, they find the training modules and activities along with sample syllabi, assignments, and activities from current and former AWP instructors. Instructors proceed through the modules as a cohort, just like their students will in their own hybrid classes. Instructors interact with each other (and me) through asynchronous online discussion boards, Google Docs, Voicethread, hypothes.is, and other platforms so that they have experience working with these tools from a student's perspective (Cook, 2007; Hewett, 2015). Here's the overview in the LMS for the August 2018 cohort:

August 2018 Cohort Guide

Welcome to Blended 101!

This ELMS site is grand central for resources related to blended and online teaching, tutorials on some of the more commonly used technologies, and the required online development modules. These modules are designed to help you redesign your 101 course for the blended format. The modules don't cover everything one could possibly learn about blended teaching; rather, they are primarily focused on course redesign, organization, and integrating the online and face-to-face environments.

There are six modules of varying intensities. The first one involves one short page to read and a wiki entry to write. Others, like Modules 3 and 4, are more extensive. I recommend getting through Modules 1 and 2 quickly so that you can get to the more exciting (and time-consuming) ones.

Much of what I'm asking you to do is similar to what you likely do a few weeks prior to every semester: reevaluate your syllabus, revise what isn't working, incorporate new lessons/assignments/activities, etc. The difference, of course, is that a significant part of your teaching is now going to happen online, and you need

to figure out how to do that. That's what these modules are for.

Each module has an associated activity that you can complete as soon as you want to get started. Each activity has a due date so that I can provide feedback on your work. The WebEx and on-campus workshops will build on what you learn (and complete!) in these modules.

If at any time you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Training Modules	Related Due Dates
Module 1: Blended Training Modules Overview	F, 8/3
Module 2: Learner-centered Teaching	F, 8/3
Module 3: Course (re)Design	W, 8/8
Module 4: Course Structure and Modules-based Organization	F, 8/10
Module 5: Integrated Design for Blended Environments	F, 8/17
Module 5A: Synchronous Teaching	F, 8/17
Module 6: Learning Activities and Lesson Plans	F, 8/24

Figure 12.1. List of training modules and activity due dates.

Part 2: Synchronous Online Meetings

One of the most exciting (or intimidating) elements of our hybrid writing classes is that, for certain classes (those on a T/TH schedule), the online class day and time is locked into students' schedules just like their face-to-face classes. This means that instructors teaching T/TH hybrid writing classes can elect to hold their online classes synchronously via web conferencing should they choose to do so. I piloted this strategy of holding alternating synchronous and asynchronous online classes back in 2012 and have been doing it ever since. I deeply appreciate the ability to bring students online at the same time for certain lessons that include hands-on practice, e.g., learning how to use the library databases, or for activities that benefit from live student-student interaction, e.g., writing a text collaboratively in Google Docs.

As we are well aware, of course, teaching via video conferencing is not easy! It requires an entirely different approach to teaching and learning than those we've developed for face-to-face or asynchronous online teaching. Prior to March 2020, only a handful of my colleagues taught this way with any degree of regularity. It's resource-intensive. It's exhausting. It's intimidating. For many instructors, it's downright terrifying.

Therefore, I require all of my instructors to attend at least one live WebEx or Zoom workshop as part of the hybrid teacher training so that everyone can

experience what it’s like to interact with peers in an actual synchronous online class, as opposed to passively watching a live webinar (which is what many folks [used to] think of when they thought of synchronous online platforms). I hold 1:1 synchronous online meetings with new instructors to help them learn how to use the technology, and I then give all instructors the opportunity to teach for about 10–15 minutes with the rest of us as their students so that they can figure things out before going live in their own classes (Bourelle, 2016; Grover et al., 2017).

Part 3: Face-to-Face: Digital Pedagogy Day

During one of our early cohort meetings, one of my colleagues said that “we need a full day to talk about all of these ideas and experiment with different tools.” I agreed, and we’ve been doing it twice a year ever since. These “Digital Pedagogy Days” bring all new and experienced hybrid instructors together. New and experienced instructors form mentoring pairs or groups, and experienced instructors get the opportunity to share effective practices from their own classes. Here’s an example schedule:



Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
9:00	Icebreaker; Trust & Agency	Lyra
9:30	Maintaining Community	Ellena
10:10	Peer Review	Adam
10:50	Break	
11:00	Managing Small Assignments	Lyra
11:50	Lunch	

Time	Topic	Lead
12:25	Increasing Feedback not Workload	Amber
12:45	Working w/ UTAs	Lyra
12:55	Break	
1:05	Alternative Assignments	Sayema
1:30	Mentor Teams	Lyra
1:45	Semester Support/ Wrap-up	Lyra

Figure 12.2. Sample digital pedagogy day schedule.

Having colleagues lead some of the sessions and workshops helps me so that I’m not leading every moment of this five-hour day; more importantly, it helps underscore the fact that I’m not the only person to turn to for advice. I certainly don’t expect everyone to teach the way that I do! All of us teach differently, and all of us become better teachers when we have opportunities to teach and learn from each other (Borgman & McArdle, 2019; Bourelle, 2016; Teagarden, 2018).

Takeaways for Accessible Administration

- Put people first. Protect your instructors by reminding your administration how challenging hybrid and online teaching is. This does two things: 1) it protects and promotes your current H/OWI colleagues as

expert-practitioners who should be recognized and 2) it helps build the argument for mandatory H/OWI teacher training.

- Make H/OWI training a prerequisite to teaching H/OWI courses. Easier said than done, I know. But if there's even a 1% chance that you can make this happen within, say, five years, do it. Use the CCCC OWI Principles and Effective Practices of OWI (especially Principle #7) to make your case.
- Determine the core things H/OWI instructors need to know. Listen to your colleagues. Figure out what they fear the most about H/OWI teaching before they do it and what they struggle with the most while they do it. Then design your training accordingly.
- Identify existing resources. If you have a campus center for teaching excellence, they may not offer HOWI-specific workshops or support. But they may well have some workshops in backward course design planning and designing accessible LMS sites. You can also look to professional organizations like OLC and GSOLE for webinars and workshops. Figure out what's accessible to you and your instructors before designing everything from scratch.
- Make your teacher training feasible, applicable, and relevant
- Provide instructors with enough theory so that they know that your training is evidence-based without overburdening them by making them read a million articles.
- If you want instructors to produce deliverables, make them things that they can turn around and use in their upcoming courses (e.g., welcome videos, activity prompts).
- Revise the training sequence. And then update it every semester. Keep it fresh!
- Make an online resource hub for your program for instructors to share their syllabi, assignments, and lesson plans. Beg your colleagues to contribute their materials so that new instructors have plenty of examples to pore over.
- Do everything in your power to secure funding for instructors to take the training. And I mean everything. Write recommendation reports. Meet every semester with your Chair. Meet with campus leaders. Be the squeaky wheel. When after six years of making this argument you are told that your institution is philosophically opposed to funding professional development and that's final, tell your colleagues to their faces. And then work on a Plan B, such as formalizing your training into a H/OWI certificate program.

Responsive: Asking for—And Acting on!—Feedback

The H/OWI training and mentoring I provide works because I built the community first—the ongoing mentoring—and then moved backwards to create the

formal training for new hybrid instructors. And I did that only after years of listening to my colleagues, listening to our students, listening to my administration, and finding (!) and listening to established and emerging OWI scholars.

Listening to Faculty

Throughout all of its iterations, the hybrid faculty cohort has always functioned as a CoP. Some instructors are part of the cohort each semester and have been for years; others are new. Some instructors attend every meeting I plan; others only attend a few. And that's okay. While I would love to see everyone at every meeting, that's neither feasible nor fair to expect of anyone. This cohort-based model only works if participants find it valuable. And that's something I learned early on and learned how to accommodate over the years.

If you want your overworked and underpaid colleagues to come to meetings on a regular basis, give them a good reason to do so. Some instructors like coming to meetings to simply have the chance to talk with one another about teaching for an hour. I'm one of them. Well, let's be clear: I'm one of them once I'm in the room. Prior to walking (or logging) into the room, I can be as annoyed as anyone else about having *one more meeting* on my calendar! But once I'm in there, I'm happy to be there. I always get something out of it.

Some instructors are more inclined to attend meetings only if there's something new to discuss or concrete to do. At least one of our meetings each semester has this sort of exigence: the one towards the end, when we start planning the upcoming Digital Pedagogy Day. We've also experimented with grading norming sessions and discussions about an article I've shared. After doing a few of these, I got feedback that having to do any extra work on top of everything else people were juggling was simply too much. Yet about a year later, I got some requests for more topical meetings. I ended up combining the two functions into one (packed!) meeting, which worked for that particular cohort in that particular semester. I asked a few instructors to prepare 20-minute presentations on topics that we wanted to follow up on from the most recent Digital Pedagogy Day, like face-to-face Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) and activities in Google Docs, and then we used the remainder of the hour for an open discussion.

Listening to Students

I have been administering end-of-semester surveys to all hybrid students in our writing program for as long as I've held my position. That amounts to roughly 2,000 students who have weighed in on what is and isn't working for them in our hybrid classes. From the very beginning, the vast majority of students (85–90%) reported that if they were to do it all over again, they would register for a hybrid version of the course. That was good news. Students also gave us helpful insight into what wasn't working: chiefly, design and organization problems, especially

in the early semesters. Learning that gave me the opportunity to focus on these issues in our mentoring meetings over the next year, devote time to it on our bi-annual Digital Pedagogy Days, and, eventually, create two separate modules on it in the self-paced training sequence. Because I now have years of end-of-semester surveys to analyze, I have been able to track the effectiveness of these interventions and shift my attention to new issues as they've come up. For example, once we had a better handle on course design and organization, I was able to focus more closely on exactly what students were doing in their online classes, which led me to recommend more interactive online classwork for both synchronous and asynchronous online days (Hilliard & Stewart, 2019).

Takeaways for Responsive Administration

- Put people first. Your instructors' collective bandwidth for meetings will change from semester to semester, even when the group members stay largely the same. Check in with them often and adjust as necessary.
- Make it easy for your instructors to come to these meetings. Set your meeting schedule at the top of the semester so that everyone can add the meetings to their calendars well in advance. If you have more than about six instructors, be prepared to hold two meetings per month to accommodate everyone's schedules.
- Survey your students every semester. Design the survey in such a way that you're getting feedback on you and your program, not your instructors. Use the results to inform your programmatic goals over the upcoming year.
- Share survey results with your instructors. Your colleagues are every bit as invested in what students have to say about your hybrid classes, even in the aggregate, as you are. Discuss this feedback as a group to refine your short-term programmatic goals.

Strategic: Planning for the Long Term

When we created my online WPA, or "OWPA" (Borgman, 2016) role, I was asked to write a formal summary of needs and job description for the position. This proved to be one of the most powerful exercises I could have taken, for it allowed me to establish not only what we needed but to envision where we could go. In creating that document, I framed the success of our hybrid FYC classes in terms of student success and campus impact. I was bold, arguing that we had an opportunity to become a model for hybrid learning, both on campus and for writing programs in other universities.

Part of my job description included "research best practices for technology-mediated teaching" to ensure that our hybrid writing course design was

grounded in the literature on hybrid and online writing instruction. If I hadn't written that into my job description, I would not have been able to devote as much time as I have on my own research and professional development. I took countless Sloan-C (now OLC) workshops through my institution's membership, took two courses on distance learning through my institution's online sister school, and participated in several webinars on online teaching. I also took myself to conferences to meet OWI scholars before I started presenting at them.

This self-imposed mission to learn everything I could about hybrid and online teaching more broadly and H/OWI more specifically gave me the theoretical background I needed to build customized training for hybrid writing instruction (and, a couple of years later, a second sequence for online writing instruction). When I give feedback on instructors' activities in the modules, lead workshops, and give advice in mentoring meetings, I'm not just drawing from personal classroom experience, as valuable as that may be (Melonçon & Arduser, 2015). I am also drawing from the "highly specialized skillset" that Borgman (2016) argues is needed for anyone in charge of H/OWI courses, one with an "awareness of OWI theory and practice, training in OWI, experience teaching in OWI contexts, OWI course design experience, [and] an ability to create and maintain a support system for OWI faculty" (p. 205).

Perhaps most importantly, I continue to teach at least one course every semester so that I can continue to lead by example and ensure that I am able to apply the latest OWI research and recommended practices in my own classes before encouraging my colleagues to do the same (Borgman & McArdle, 2019; CCCC OWI, 2013, Principle 7 Rationale). My administrative duties have expanded over the past few years, but I have been adamant about retaining my faculty status instead of becoming a full-time administrator. I am a teacher, first and foremost. That's where my heart is.

Takeaways for Strategic Administration

- Put people first. Specifically, start with students first. Frame everything you want to do in terms of student learning and success. No one will argue with you on that fundamental mission.
- Dream big. If you had all the resources and time in the world, what would you want to build? What do instructors need? What do students need? What does your department need? Design that future so that you know what you're working towards at all times.
- Work smart. Break that vision into actionable steps for the short, mid, and long-term. Write it out every semester. Update it annually. This will keep you on track.
- Be collegial. Cultivate relationships with people in the department, across campus, and in professional networks (like the OWI Community!).

- Recognize your limitations. You're one person. You want to do all the things. You also want to do them well and stay sane while doing so. Accept that you'll never accomplish everything you wanted to at the beginning of the year. That's okay. Really. It is.
- Leverage your strengths. The above tip notwithstanding, as an experienced H/OWI instructor and administrator, you have a unique skill set that is invaluable to your institution. Seize every opportunity you can to advocate for your instructors, your students, and for the field—and community—of OWI.

Final Thoughts and Application

As I've outlined above, the PARS approach can help guide you as you create your own H/OWI community of practice, one that focuses on building community (Personal), designing training (Accessible), asking for—and acting on—feedback (Responsive), and planning for the long term (Strategic). While Strategic falls at the end of the acronym, it really comes first: it will remind you why your work matters. Looking back at my proposal for my OWPA job description, I realize that I was never simply making an argument for increased H/OWI support. I was making the case for dedicated English- and Writing Studies-specific pedagogical support. I was making the case for a culture of teaching excellence as a department, regardless of course type or delivery format. I was making the case for fostering a culture of critical digital pedagogy across the entire department (and beyond!), one that recognizes that the success of our students is inextricably linked with ongoing faculty mentoring and support.

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