



Foreword. Keep Playing, Friends

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Years ago, when I was first entering the world of online teaching, I attended the Computers and Writing Conference alone. I didn't know many people and was nervous, like it was the first day of school, and I was the new kid. As I walked into lunch the first day, I wondered if I would have to take my tray (literally, as the lunch was cafeteria-style) and sit by myself. To my relief, a group of friendly faces called me over to sit with them. I sat down and chatted easily with many of them and left with business cards and new scholarship to read. This simple twist of fate would change my research and teaching trajectory in ways I hadn't imagined. I had found my people: the online writing instruction (OWI) community.

I paint this introductory picture for my readers because this is what it means to be part of the OWI community. Its members are accepting, loving, warm, and helpful—all the traits you want in friends and colleagues. The editors of this collection, Jessie Borgman and Casey McArdle, as members and leaders of this community, are no exception. And here's the thing: The OWI community isn't exclusive. As evidenced by my first encounter with the OWI community at Computers and Writing, it is a community that welcomes and embraces everyone who is eager to learn more about the world of online instruction, including new and veteran instructors, teaching assistants, lecturers, adjuncts, and professors. This edited collection embodies that spirit. Born out of the need to further guide online instructors, this collection picks up where the first two PARS collections left off, adding much-needed advice about leading/administering online writing programs and ensuring student success, accessibility, and inclusion. Many of

the chapters provide personal accounts—the first tenet of PARs—letting readers know what skills an online administrator needs or providing “how-to” recommendations based on the authors’ experiences.

Although this is not a book about teaching in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the seismic shift to education caused by the transition to emergency remote instruction during the pandemic makes this collection an important contribution for those teaching writing online and leading online programs. Back in 2015, in their final chapter of *Foundational Practices of Online Education*, Beth Hewett and Scott Warnock (2015) argued that all instruction was online in some capacity. Dear readers, if you didn’t believe it then, certainly you do now as we continue to navigate an educational world with new teaching environments such as fully online, fully remote, spatio-hybrid, and chrono-hybrid. Where in spatio-hybrid classrooms students spend part of their time in the onsite classroom and part of their time online, chrono-hybrid may replace the onsite time with video conferencing (Warnock, 2020). These new hybrids differ from traditional onsite classes, fully online classes that are mostly asynchronous, and fully remote classes which are offered via video-conferencing software in an effort to mimic onsite learning. Whew! It’s enough to make anyone’s head spin. While the 2021 *PARS in Practice: More Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors* collection addressed pandemic challenges to teaching online, this newest collection offers pedagogical and administrative strategies as we continue to make our way through the myriad of teaching environments.

Instructors and administrators alike recognize that students were struggling during the pandemic, with lockdowns and social distancing making it harder for students to physically go to campus. And while emergency remote instruction was in response to the pandemic and is arguably not the same as teaching fully online courses in a “normal” semester, we know that students struggled because instructional quality wasn’t at its best. This was not anyone’s fault; it was a byproduct of the sudden switch to online education for all students (hence the name *emergency* remote instruction). Many instructors and students alike were simply unprepared for online education. Instructors who had no experience teaching online—and, in some cases, no desire to teach online—were thrust into a new teaching environment with little to no training. Administrators scrambled to get their instructors up to speed in a short timeframe. In addition, the pandemic exacerbated pre-pandemic challenges of online education, with many students unable to access course materials. Arguably, the pandemic simply illustrated problems that were already there—only this time, they are now at the forefront for everyone to see. *These challenges will remain if we don’t address them.* Again, this is what I like about this newest PARS collection; it offers real, practical solutions for addressing challenges both now and in the future.

What these challenges reiterate is the continued need to train instructors to teach online. Previous scholarship has clearly outlined this need and ways

to address it; however, as Jessie and Casey mention in the introduction to this collection, there is little scholarship regarding the overall administration of online writing programs that encompasses much more than just training. There are those like me who administer an online program as an arm of a larger writing program, and there are even more who administer large writing programs and oversee online classes or programs as part of their charge. All of us need this collection to guide us as we tread unfamiliar territory or to reassess what we did previously to better understand what is working and what is not.

We can use the tips in this collection to reconsider or revise current practices, including assessment as a big aspect to tackle as an administrator or even as an instructor doing a small-scale assessment of individual classes. Many institutions have expanded their online writing course offerings, and administrators can use this collection to better understand how to offer consistent, quality education that runs through all of their courses. Online education will only continue to grow, as administrators, instructors, and students are now enjoying the freedom, flexibility, and overall learning experience that online education affords. Indeed, there are lessons offered in this collection that will help readers deal with this growth and expansion of online classes.

I have long been friends with Jessie and Casey, keeping up regular communication with them despite our busy lives, and they both know that I experienced extreme burnout during the pandemic. I'm not alone in feeling this way. As a group of instructors and administrators, I think it's safe to say that we are all exhausted from the last few years (as much of society is as well). In addition to offering solid theoretical and practical advice, this collection offers hope. It offers a real sense of how to effectively do the job of administration while still maintaining our sanity and not sacrificing student or instructor success. With many tips, such as creating pre-designed template courses or offering training sessions and faculty support, this collection can guide us in a post-pandemic world. As Jessie and Casey note in their introduction, much of what this collection offers is in response to *The 2021 State of the Art of OWI Report*, a direct response to what instructors and administrators have suggested they want and need.

I am honored to write the foreword to this collection, as I feel like I am in the same situation as its readers—I may be a seasoned administrator, but I am also a lifelong learner who wants to continually shape my practices based on my colleagues' tried-and-true advice. In her book *Make It Happen: A Healthy, Competitive Approach to Achieving Personal Success*, Lorii Myers (2012) suggests that golfers need to understand the value of routine in order to trust their swing. This quote applies to online writing instruction and administration: we just have to keep at it. We have to rethink what we do and try new things, constantly improving our practice. By doing so, we can trust that we are providing sound mentorship to instructors and quality education for our students. I can think of no better group than the OWI scholars in this book to guide us in those endeavors.

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