



Introduction. And Three Makes a Trilogy...or a Par 3!

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Here we go again! What started out as a funny observation from one of our academic friends—“Hey, you guys should do another edited collection and call it *PARS in Charge!*”—ended up a reality. So, yes, here we go again, offering you more resources and strategies centered on our PARS (personal, accessible, responsive, strategic) framework for online writing instruction. For readers who may not know, our PARS framework is inspired by the game of golf. We see a lot of similarities between the game of golf (a sport you play and practice for life) and online writing instruction/administration (a career you do and get better at). In golf, the term “par” stands for the number of strokes a golfer is expected to take on a given hole. Shooting a par is a goal for both inexperienced and experienced golfers, which is why we thought “PARS” was a great term for our holistic approach for online writing instruction. As instructors and administrators of online writing courses, we want you to be “par for the course,” and we encourage you to continually hone your “game” as you progress in your career.

We have always included administration as part of the discussion, for example, in our discussion of the PARS layers (design, instruction, and administration). Additionally, our focus on leadership was expanded in 2020 when we were asked by the Council of Writing Program Administrators to host a series of workshops

to help struggling leaders across the country as they faced a shift in moving their programs and courses online due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We've outlined our previous work on PARS and administration in the chapter following this introduction. In this section, we explore how PARS applies to administration of online writing programs and courses and how you can utilize a PARS framework to your advantage when creating/running your online writing program.

The more we thought about it, the more we realized we (as a writing studies field) really did need a book on administration of online writing courses and programs, which is something that doesn't exist. There are several articles on administration in the current and past online writing instruction (OWI) scholarship, but we aim to bring you an entire collection here to help you with your own writing programs. In the spring of 2022, we sent out a call for chapters, and we were overwhelmed by the response. There were so many great ideas that spanned leadership styles, issues, and university demographics.

When putting together our call, we wanted to acknowledge that there are a multitude of types of leaders in writing programs across the country. Leadership itself comes in many forms, and sometimes leadership is done by a small team. We also wanted to recognize the reality that not all leaders are writing program administrators, that many leaders hold contingent positions, and some leaders are graduate students acting as assistant director to the first-year writing or program director (Calhoun-Dillahunt, 2011; Hollinger & Borgman, 2020; Leverenz, 2008; Malenczyk, 2016). In short, we wanted to bring readers a book that was diverse, a book that leaders across the world in all types of leadership positions could use.

Based on our own personal experience being leaders and working for leaders, we know that there is so much work being done behind the scenes as it were. That is, leaders do a lot of other work beyond their job descriptions. We wanted to acknowledge this as well with our collection, and we feel that the chapters within the collection really point to this "invisible work," the work that is untitled and uncompensated, that so many leaders take on and deal with daily (Kynard, 2019; McLeod, 2007; Penrose, 2012; Perryman-Clark & Craig, 2019; Rodrigo & Romberger, 2017). So, while the chapters in this collection give readers an idea of what an online writing program administrator, or OWPA, is, they also illustrate that the term OWPA is hard to fully capture (Borgman, 2016). To make things more complex, we are in the midst of experiencing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and because this impact will continue to manifest, many in leadership will continue to face challenges they've never dealt with before. We also know that because of the challenges of the past few years, many leaders in all types of roles might have some great insights to share with others.

Collection Overview

For this collection, we decided not to group the chapters into sections like we did in our 2021 edited collection. Instead, we decided to offer the chapters openly

in an effort to give you a chance to read them based on topics and themes. Each chapter is its own narrative that guides you through the authors' processes and experiences. You will see repeating themes as you read through the collection (pre-designed courses, instructor preparation and training, reactions to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, program identity and movement, and many others). These themes align with a lot of what was found in *The 2021 State of the Art of OWI Report*—areas of OWI that still need attention and work from universities, administrators, instructors, and scholars. As we've done in past books, we've incorporated a golf theme, and each chapter represents a hole on a traditional 18-hole golf course. We've also identified some of the themes and chapters below to aid you in understanding our organizational structure.

Being an OWPA/Building and Running a Writing Program

- Rodrigo
- Stewart & Mitchell
- Hollinger
- Selber et al.
- Yerace
- Fernandez et al.

Faculty Training & Support

- Mannon
- Groner & Islam
- Holland & Trainor
- Egger

Course Design & Pre-Designed Courses

- Bartolotta et al.
- Anders et al.
- Mitchum
- Retzinger & Sharp-Hoskins
- Tseptsura

Inclusion/Student Preparation & Support

- Watts
- Reid
- Giordano & Phillips
- Skurat Harris & Thomas

Below, we've also included an overview of PARS for administration, where we go through each element (personal, accessible, responsive, strategic) of our PARS approach and set up the various ways administrators can use PARS in their work as they direct writing programs, or any program really. This PARS for administration overview also will aid you in understanding how authors in the collection

applied our PARS framework, from administration style (Be personal, be a human!) to outlining how one will respond (Make a plan!) to faculty, staff, and students in their leadership role. This overview of PARS for administration will also illustrate that as administrators, you are crafting user experiences for your faculty and students, so the more that you can keep these individuals in mind as you create your program and courses, the better.

As with our 2021 collection, we asked authors to use a conversational academic tone and speak to the audience in their chapters. We want the chapters in this collection and all of our work to be accessible. We also encouraged authors to include visuals and key takeaways so that readers could apply the chapter concepts in their own programs/university situations. Like our first two books, our focus with this collection is application. We hope that you read these chapters and are inspired to refine your practice, try something new, or adopt a new approach to managing your program and courses. As we noted previously, we tend to use golf as a metaphor to talk about online writing course design, instruction, and administration. You will notice that some of the authors in this collection extended our golf metaphor in their chapters; therefore, we have provided a short glossary of some common golf terms at the end of this introduction.

Key Takeaways

Brené Brown (2018) defines a leader as “anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential” (p. 4). We hope that you will read these chapters and utilize PARS as a way to develop and support the potential of your faculty, staff, and students. We hope that you will also understand the complexity and challenges of leading writing programs and the processes associated that can help, or hinder, potential for change. And we hope that you will gain a better understanding of the diverse leadership roles people hold throughout the field of writing studies. In addition to these hopes, we also envision these key takeaways for you as our readers:

- Leading others is challenging work! It’s work that takes a lot of time and effort, and while rewarding, it is also, at times, defeating.
- Leadership comes in various forms, and often, the most effective leadership is team leadership, or having a leader that listens to their team.
- Leadership is listening to and working with faculty and students to support the mission of a program.
- Leadership is advocacy. Leaders advocate for the values and goals of their program, which always comes first because it is made up of students and faculty who care about the work.

We are excited to bring you this collection that illustrates the various ways that the PARS approach can be applied to leading entirely online writing programs or hybrid programs with both face-to-face and online courses.

As we close our introduction, we want to acknowledge all the leaders who have inspired and led us along the way in our lives and careers. Leadership is a challenging but rewarding position, and acknowledgment and thank you(s) can sometimes get missed. Beronda Montgomery (2021) notes, “If we want more equitable outcomes, we would do well to recognize that everyone benefits when we cultivate people’s diverse talents and promote synergies and collaborations among them” (p. 144). We are grateful to all of those who have mentored us and given us the courage to explore synergies and collaborations across the discipline, in our classrooms, and in our scholarship. Without you, we wouldn’t be where we are. It is now our responsibility to support others who move toward equitable outcomes and to cultivate diverse talents and promote synergies and collaborations with new and exciting voices, many of whom we think you will find in this collection. So, dear readers, as you make your way through these chapters, we encourage you to reflect on your own experiences with the leaders in your lives and to reflect on your experiences of being mentored and mentoring. We encourage you to explore and be empowered by these chapters and hopefully find support for the challenges you have faced, and continue to face, as a leader.

We hope that this collection inspires you to use the PARS approach in your own leadership position. As we’ve said before, the PARS framework “offers a holistic approach to online instruction that acknowledges the complexity of course design and its facilitation in digital spaces” (Borgman & McArdle, 2021, p. 4). We also assert here that the PARS approach to online program/course administration offers a holistic way to approach the everyday realities of leading a group of faculty and staff in educating the students at your university effectively.

If you have not already done so, we invite you to please join our community!

Website: www.owicommunity.org

Facebook Group: www.facebook.com/groups/owicommunity

Twitter: @theowicommunity

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