INTRODUCTION

# A RESEARCH HISTORY OF THE CCCC OWI COMMITTEE

**Beth L. Hewett**
CCCC Committee for Effective Practices in OWI
Defend & Publish, LLC

**Kevin Eric DePew**
Old Dominion University

This introduction defines OWI and summarizes the research history behind the CCCC Committee for Effective Practices in OWI's *The State of the Art of OWI* (2011) and *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (2013). To support these practices, this introduction briefly presents the CCCC OWI Committee's process for producing these findings is described and the key issues (i.e., the role of student inclusivity, OWLs, administrative concerns, and faculty and student preparation) that are discussed in detail throughout this collection.

The CCCC Committee for Effective Practices in Online Writing Instruction (OWI) was first constituted by the CCCC Executive Committee (EC) in March 2007. The members are a diverse group of OWI educators and scholars: those who work for traditional and for-profit four-year and two-year postsecondary institutions; part- and full-time composition educators; administrators and other stakeholders; specialists in multilingual writers,[1] disabilities-based OWI, and other learning needs/preferences; and online tutors and administrators.

The CCCC OWI Committee's original charges were to:

1. Identify and examine best strategies for online writing instruction in hybrid and distance-based composition classrooms.
2. Identify best practices for using various online media and pedagogies (e.g., networked classrooms, email and Internet-based conferences,

peer-reviewed papers) for the teaching of writing with both synchronous and asynchronous modalities while taking into consideration currently popular learning management environments.

3. Identify best practices for using online writing instruction for English language learners and students with disabilities.[2]
4. Identify best practices for training and professional development of OWI teachers.

When the CCCC OWI Committee was reconstituted and recharged in 2010, its responsibilities were updated to:

1. Identify and examine best strategies for online writing instruction using various online media and pedagogies primarily used for the teaching of writing in blended, hybrid, and distance-based writing classrooms, specifically composition classrooms, but including other college writing courses.
2. Identify best practices for using online instruction specifically for English language learners and individuals with disabilities in coordination with related CCCC committees.
3. Create a Position Statement on the Principles and Standards for OWI Preparation and Instruction. In consultation with the Assessment Committee and the Task Force on Position Statements, review and update the 2004 Position Statement "Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments."
4. Share best practices in OWI with the CCCC membership in a variety of formats.

As of 2013, the CCCC OWI Committee's charges have evolved to:

1. Continue to identify, examine, and research online writing instruction (OWI) principles and effective strategies in online writing centers and in blended, hybrid, and distance-based writing classrooms, specifically composition classrooms but also including other college-writing or writing-intensive disciplinary courses.
2. Continue to identify, examine, and research effective practices for using OWI specifically for English language learners, individuals with physical and/or learning disabilities, and students with socioeconomic challenges in coordination with related CCCC committees.
3. Maintain and update the Position Statement on the OWI principles and effective practices.
4. In consultation with the Assessment Committee and other relevant groups, review and update the 2004 Position Statement "Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments."

5. Identify and/or create instructional and professional development materials and strategies to be posted on the Committee's Web-based OWI Open Resource Web page.
6. Provide the writing instructional community with access to information about OWI-specific faculty and program development that can assist with legitimizing online teaching for professional development, remuneration, and advancement purposes.
7. Share effective practices in OWI with the CCCC membership in various formats, including instructional workshops at CCCC conferences and events as well as other professional venues.

In order to meet these charges, which always have been broad, deep, and challenging, the CCCC OWI Committee has undertaken extensive qualitative and quantitative research on student, instructional, and administrative OWI concerns and issues; compiled and analyzed the results; and composed a position statement outlining foundational principles that can lead to what we believe are potentially effective OWI practices. Currently, the CCCC OWI Committee is producing the *OWI Open Resource*, a Web-based source for OWI administrators, teachers, and tutors to submit their own effective practices grounded in the OWI principles for publication.

The primary results of all of these projects are the fifteen principles enumerated in *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013) (an official educational statement approved by the CCCC Executive Committee) as well as in Chapter 1 of this book and considered in the rest of this book's chapters. *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction* particularly responds to the CCCC OWI Committee's current seventh charge to share its knowledge by summarizing and explaining these principles and practices, and this book illustrates applications of these practices for administrators and instructors with varying degrees of OWI experience.

*Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction,* written by current and former CCCC OWI Committee members and acknowledged OWI experts and stakeholders, actually may pose more questions than it answers because so much remains unknown about OWI. Although the authors have tried to address their subjects with straightforward information and thoughtful guidance regarding the OWI principles enumerated in Chapter 1, they acknowledge that they remain curious and uncertain about many issues relative to OWI. This, we think, is a good thing. We anticipate that our audience will leave this collection with as many questions as they have answers. Some of these questions reflect the current state of OWI and the fact that there is still a lot more to learn about its practice (see Chapters 17 & 18). Other questions provide heuristics for administrators and instructors in local settings. Rather than approaching a local situation

knowing exactly what practice to adopt, we want our audience of administrators and instructors to pose questions to themselves as they design their effective practices based on the grounded principles presented in this book. *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction* has been developed to engage the nuances and complexities of OWI at a time when higher education is struggling with its historical bearings, contemporary reputation, financial challenges, and future goals. There is no question that OWI will be a part of higher education's future, but as Chapter 18 states, the future is *now*. When OWI is addressed in a principled manner, administrators and instructors will have reasonable guidance in sometimes murky waters—all to the benefit of writing students, who are flocking to online courses in unprecedented numbers and often with unrealistic expectations.

Take the issue of multimodality and its connections to online *writing* instruction (addressed in Chapter 15), for example. When thinking about multimodality as a subject for OWI, we must ask such questions as:

- What is writing as text, as discourse, as image, as audio, as video?
- Where alphabetic literacy has been primary—and, quite likely will remain primary—to our society's communication habits, how does OWI approach the teaching of multimodality? Or, should it leave such teaching to courses specializing in digital writing?
- Are these discourse approaches part and parcel of the same communicative need in the digital, twenty-first century?
- How does teaching multimodality in an OWI setting function versus teaching it in a traditional onsite setting?
- How do the complexities of having well-prepared teachers of multimodal OWI and sufficiently financed programs affect students from multilingual and socioeconomically challenged backgrounds, as well as for students with various physical or learning differences?

When thinking about multimodality as a means for improving inclusion and access of OWI students with different learning needs and for OWI instructors with particular teaching strengths, we must ask such questions as:

- How do OWI and multimodality work together (and against each other) when multimodality is one venue used to provide access for students and teachers?
- How do issues of access differ when multimodality is the subject of the writing course as well as one means for reaching students with different learning needs?

These kinds of questions complicate an already complex learning environment that is fraught with multiple levels of teaching and learning considerations.

Similar questions can be asked about the primary topics of each of *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction's* chapters. Although we hope we have addressed readers' most pressing questions about OWI, we recognize that asking new questions may be even more important than articulating answers at this point in OWI's history—particularly given that no one answer will work in every institutional setting.

This Introduction outlines some of the questions and processes that have led to a clearer understanding of grounding principles for OWI and what we have chosen to call *effective practices* in keeping with the Sloan Consortium's Janet Moore (2011), who used this term to acknowledge the "rapid" changes occurring in online instruction overall (p. 93). The CCCC OWI Committee believes that such changes are ongoing, which suggests that effective practices for differing settings, institutions, administrators, faculty, and students will evolve continually.

## WHAT IS OWI?

Online writing instruction, or OWI, can be defined as:

> writing instruction that occurs—at least partially if not fully—in a computer-based, Internet, or intranet instructional setting. It uses online/digital media to provide instruction; to talk about writing; or to distribute, share, and/or collect writing-related materials. OWI can occur in either the synchronous or asynchronous modality using a variety of electronic media, platforms, and technologies. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 2)

For some educators and scholars, OWI is a deficit model in comparison with the traditional, face-to-face (onsite) writing instruction undertaken from the time of Aristotle until about thirty years ago. As numerous articles attest, people worry that the loss of body/face/voice occurring in asynchronous settings particularly lead to a less humanly affective setting for courses that have come to be understood as social spaces for writing and sharing writing (DePew & Lettner-Rust, 2009; Gouge, 2009; Powers, 2010). Despite the potential for such misgivings, the CCCC OWI Committee (2011) determined in its *The State of the Art of OWI* that it recognized:

> a difference in a (currently) primarily text-based online instructional environment from one that traditionally occurs face-to-face. The Committee takes no position on the oft-asked question of whether OWI *should be* used and prac-

> ticed in postsecondary settings because it accepts the reality that currently OWI *is* used and practiced in such settings. The Committee therefore believes that OWI needs its own study, theories, and practices. The Committee fundamentally believes that OWI has the potential to be an efficacious activity for postsecondary students and faculty. It recognizes, however, that some students and faculty will be better suited to the online educational environment than others. Further, it seems that there are certain conditions under which OWI can be implemented more effectively than others. Discerning and describing such conditions are part of this committee's charges. (p. 2)

Theories of OWI have been scarce, yet a few educators and scholars have posited new ideas, as shown in Chapter 17 of this book.

## BEGINNING OF THE CCCC OWI COMMITTEE'S WORK

The CCCC OWI Committee's charges provided an exigency that prompted careful research into OWI. In our first face-to-face meeting, which occurred at the annual CCCC convention in 2007, CCCC OWI Committee members looked to one another and considered where to begin. None of us had any "best" practices ready to offer—particularly for so many different settings in any modality. Hence, we knew that in-depth research into the problems was needed. We began the research, as most people do, with a series of questions adapted at first from Sloan Consortium (2005) materials.

The Sloan Consortium identified the criteria of effective, or best, practices in online education, which we considered to be related to OWI and interdependent with it in that "practices in one area affect quality in another":

- *Innovation—the practice is inventive or original.* Of this particular criterion, we knew that innovation is important to working in the online setting; however, we wondered whether innovation is necessary for all of OWI. Although certainly innovative practices needed to be developed, we believed that at least some non-original practices in composition instruction could be adapted to OWI and would seem to be warranted by the context. This notion would later be folded into OWI Principle 4 (p. 17).
- *Replicability—the practice can be implemented in a variety of learning environments.* OWI is used in fully online (i.e., completely asynchronous and electronically synchronous) settings as well as with hybrid ones. It is used

for writing students in traditional and for-profit two-year and four-year institutions, as well as for learning support in the form of tutoring and other question/answer or advice settings. It is used with widely varied student populations in terms of ages, educational and economic backgrounds, learning needs and preferences, physical abilities, and linguistic contexts. While every OWI practice may not apply in all settings, many do transfer and can be adapted from a general practice to one that works in a specific institution or for a particular teacher's course.

- *Potential impact—the practice would advance the field if many adopted it.* We immediately saw a need for practices that would help the majority of instructors and students in OWI settings. At this point in our process, we had not realized that grounding principles might work better than a series of so-called best practices, but we did see that many educators and administrators in the field had been left to develop their own practices in isolation and, in effect, to reinvent the proverbial wheel. A more centralized or focused document would be helpful to move the field forward.

- *Supporting documentation—the practice is supported with evidence of effectiveness.* Although not every potentially effective practice has been researched empirically, many educators can point to evidence—anecdotal at a minimum—to argue for the effectiveness of their practices. We believed we could uncover some of these practices and find in the literature and in actual practice reasons for why they work. The need for supporting documentation framed the OWI research we outlined and conducted for our first six years.

- *Scope—the practice explains its relationship with other quality elements.* This notion of scope seems related to the idea that a practice grounded in principles holds in multiple settings and connects with other practices to create an effective OWI environment. We realized early that there needed to be connective tissue for the desired best practices document and later discovered that tissue in a series of OWI principles.

The Sloan Consortium also identified the elements of "quality pillars" in online learning as:

- *Learning Effectiveness: The provider demonstrates that the quality of learning online is comparable to the quality of its traditional programs.* OWI research into effectiveness was and is relatively slender given the challenges of conducting any replicable, aggregable, and data-supported (RAD) research in composition studies (Haswell, 2005). Yet, learning effectiveness is one significant measure of whether OWI is being developed in ways that help students learn to write sufficiently for their college settings.

- *Cost Effectiveness and Institutional Commitment: Institutions continuously improve services while reducing cost.* The CCCC OWI Committee remained aware of the need for cost effectiveness for institutions, but it was more conscious of actions that institutions might need to undertake to support their learners and teachers in OWI. Cost reduction is especially emphasized for contemporary education, but OWI is not necessarily the place to achieve it (DePew, Fishman, Ruetenik, & Romberger, 2006) and certainly not at the literal expense of teaching and learning.

- *Access: All learners who wish to learn online have the opportunity and can achieve success.* Although it was not within the CCCC OWI Committee's first set of charges, we learned that both access and the intention to provide it are crucial for any online communication—let alone OWI—to work. Even a PDF file that is not formatted for accessibility can be impossible for a blind individual's screen reader, and either text-heavy or image-heavy presentations can disinclude many students from learning. Likewise, institutions need to develop methods for making their online writing courses (OWCs) and online writing labs (OWLs)[3] available to students whose socioeconomic status limits their access to the technologies that mediate these opportunities. Moreover, administrators and instructors must not systemically limit the opportunities of students who produce different or non-standard varieties of English. It took us awhile, indeed far too long, but we came to realize that access is a first-degree concern, which eventually made it our overarching OWI principle (p. 7).

- *Faculty Satisfaction: Faculty achieve success with teaching online, citing appreciation and happiness.* Faculty need to feel comfortable in the online educational setting, and that means they need to experience their work as supported through training and professional development. OWI faculty often express a sense of feeling alone and overworked. We understood immediately that faculty satisfaction is critical to potentially effective OWI, and we set out to learn what could foster that sense of satisfaction in this newer teaching environment.

- *Student Satisfaction: Students are successful in learning online and are pleased with their experience.* Students, too, need to feel comfortable in the online educational environment. With annually increasing numbers of students entering the online educational arena—many born into the digital age—it might seem that they easily would find themselves experiencing success in OWI. However, the anecdotal evidence for failure and lack of persistence is high, possibly because students—while Internet and computer savvy—lack focused experience with educational uses of technology or, as Hewett (2015a) suggested, experience a literacy-cognition

gap when learning to write in online settings.

Using these criteria and elements of effective online practice as initial guides, the CCCC OWI Committee formulated the following initial questions for its research:

Research questions based on elements of effective practices

*Learning effectiveness:*
- What are the principles that ground effective student learning in an OWI environment?
- What conditions foster such learning?

*Cost effectiveness and institutional commitment*
- What are quality benchmarks for OWI?
- Costs:
    ◦ What are the financial costs of OWI?
    ◦ What are the hidden costs of OWI?
    ◦ How are these costs comparable to traditional writing instruction?
    ◦ How should institutions/administrators address these costs?
- What are the features of institutional support for an effective/successful OWI program?

*Access*
- What conditions foster student access to OWI?
- In what ways do administrators and faculty have similar and different responsibilities for fostering such access?
- Along these lines, what conditions foster faculty access to OWI?

*Student satisfaction*
- What are characteristics of student satisfaction in an OWI environment?
- What conditions foster student satisfaction?

*Faculty satisfaction*
- What are the characteristics of faculty satisfaction with OWI?
- What conditions foster faculty satisfaction with OWI?
- How should online instructors be evaluated, especially in comparison to existing evaluation structures used in tenure and promotion?

Research questions based on specific elements of OWI

*Modality-specific questions*
- What are the characteristics of synchronous technologies in an OWI program?
- What conditions foster successful synchronous OWI?
- What are the characteristics of asynchronous technologies in an OWI program?

- What conditions foster successful asynchronous OWI?
- How should faculty choose between these modalities when using these technologies to achieve writing course objectives?

*Environment-specific questions*
- What are the characteristics of hybrid learning environments for OWI?
- What conditions foster successful hybrid OWI?
- What are the characteristics of distance learning environments for OWI?
- What conditions foster successful distance OWI?
- How can content (learning) management systems be leveraged for OWI?
  - What are the differences in using large-scale, standardized content management systems (Blackboard, WebCT, etc.) vs. smaller, open-source systems (Moodle, etc.) for the delivery of OWI?
- How can collaborative environments like Wikis be leveraged for OWI?
- How can gaming simulations and other non-text-based environments be leveraged for OWI?

*Pedagogy-specific questions*
- What traditional learning strategies (e.g., collaborative learning and co-teaching), if any, are appropriate for OWI?
- How can we apply those strategies, if any, to an OWI environment?
- What learning strategies are distinctive to an OWI environment?
- How do we encourage and improve collaboration among students in OWI in distance-based classrooms?
- How do faculties stimulate student participation in OWI?
- What conditions foster student motivation in OWI environments?
- What are appropriate uses of new technologies in OWI? What conditions foster the funding and employment of such technologies?

*Population-specific questions*
- To what extent and in what ways can OWI accommodate certain learner groups other than native English speakers?
  - English language learners
  - Students with physical challenges
  - Students with learning challenges

*Professional development-specific questions*
- To what extent and in what ways should administrators (and, subsequently, faculty trainers) encourage new instructors to elect an OWI environment?
- How can instructors new to content management systems be supported to use those systems for OWI?
- What professional qualities and skills need to be emphasized in new

instructor training and on-going professional development relative to OWI?

- To what extent and in what ways do course material ownership issues discourage professors from developing online courses? How are these ownership issues best addressed?

Future Research

- What areas of OWI need to be addressed in future research?
- What are necessary "next steps" for CCCC's continued approach to OWI and its investigation?

These research questions became the CCCC OWI Committee's guide from which we constructed an annual research and action plan and began the process of learning more about OWI in order to determine potentially effective practices.

The CCCC OWI Committee has met face-to-face at the annual meeting of the CCCC and through regular teleconferences from 2007 to date. We made a commitment to each other that we would propose a panel and special interest group (SIG) for presentation at the annual conferences to share our findings and to listen to the needs of our colleagues interested in OWI.

## RESEARCH INTO THE NATURE OF OWI

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The first research project that the CCCC OWI Committee (CCCC OWI Committee, 2008) undertook was a review of the OWI literature deemed most likely to outline or address effective practices. We reasoned that scholarship already might have delineated some ideal practices for OWI that would serve our mission. The original nine committee members apportioned the literature from the 1980s through 2008 and began reading. We decided to write an annotated bibliography and publish it to the CCCC OWI Committee's CCCC Web page, using this intensive research to teach ourselves more about OWI and to make our efforts more broadly useful. Edited by Keith Gibson and Hewett, the bibliography's selected subject areas included OWI Pedagogy, OWI Technology, E-learning, and Online Writing Centers.

### SITE VISITS AND OBSERVATIONS

While the annotated bibliography enabled an understanding of previous research, the CCCC OWI Committee quickly agreed that action-oriented and empirical research was needed. The CCCC OWI Committee's earliest solid data

in 2008 emerged from three site visits[4] to closely located, postsecondary institutions using OWI. There, Connie Mick and Hewett saw an interesting range of availability, pedagogy, and support for and comfort level with OWI—all in a very small geographical region. Because our hosts scheduled the time primarily for faculty meetings and observations, the CCCC OWI Committee's visitors were not able to meet with students in any of these institutions.

At Ball State University, which at that time styled itself as the "most wired/wireless campus," Mick and Hewett met with faculty and graduate students who used technology regularly in their writing classes in a hybrid setting. The hybrid course meant that students and instructors met all of their hours in the computer lab and blended the technology and traditional teaching methods. Ball State teachers indicated that they were helping undergraduate students to navigate the rhetorical issues relative to technology and writing that they would face in their future working lives. Graduate students had many opportunities for professionalization regarding technology and writing instruction, and there were numerous English-dedicated computer classrooms.

At Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), a school where instructors indicated they were in "competition" with Ball State for students, Mick and Hewett met with faculty that expressed a sense of being relatively untrained for using technology in writing courses. They stated a future intention to hire more teachers who were interested in and comfortable with OWI. They had two dedicated computer classrooms and encouraged the use of OnCourse, their learning management system (LMS) in a hybrid manner. For them, *hybrid* meetings comprised one day in computer classroom and one day in the traditional classroom, which the CCCC OWI Committee at first distinguished as a term from the more *blended* nature of the Ball State OWCs.

At Purdue University, Mick and Hewett met with faculty and graduate students who also were given technological opportunities that were supposed to make them "marketable." At that time, relatively little technology-based teaching was being done for first-year writing students. Instructors taught in a hybrid setting using their computer classrooms; for Purdue, *hybrid* meant meeting one day in the computer lab and two days in a traditional, onsite classroom. The Purdue OWL, which had become famous for its numerous handouts available online, was in the process of revamping its platform based on empirical usability research; the new iteration was to be aimed at meeting the needs of a global readership that might use the OWL to fill teacher/textbook gaps. The OWL also was in the process of field-testing a home-grown asynchronous tutoring application, a practice the famed OWL previously had rejected.

Two additional site visits rounded out this stage of the research.

Hewett visited with administrators and faculty members of the Universi-

ty of Maryland University College (UMUC), who shared impressions of their program. About 70% of courses were taught in a fully online setting; attempts at hybrid instruction had only just begun there. Twelve writing courses at all student levels were taught online regularly. With well over 250 faculty members distributed across the United States and globally, a primary goal of administrators was to train faculty well; they accomplished this through a comprehensive two-week, financially uncompensated unit on online teaching; any attention to teaching *writing* online was accomplished in also uncompensated, asynchronous writing faculty meetings using a discussion board that teachers were expected to check and review regularly. Using a home-developed asynchronous LMS called WebTycho, instructors were provided teaching content through static modules; they taught actively through group discussions (called "conferences") and essay instruction. Site-visit participants stated that for students to be successful, they needed to be self-motivated, disciplined, and willing and able to read the modules and instruction.

Finally, Hewett visited Montgomery College, a prominent multi-campus, community college in Maryland. There, she met with administrators and faculty members, as well as students, who provided highlights of their OWI program. Fully online courses taught by both full-time and part-time instructors included their two-level first-year composition courses and business courses. These same courses were offered as hybrid models (which they called *blended*) and in onsite, networked computer classrooms. All OWCs were capped at 20 students while other writing courses had higher caps of 25 students (except for developmental writing, which was capped at 22 students). Students received a "mandatory" orientation to their OWCs in a face-to-face setting although not all students attended; however, the college was piloting online orientations for OWI. Students shared that they liked the ease of typing over handwriting (a sentiment echoed by one left-handed writer), the course structure, and a sense of the online course mirroring the business world. They expressed that they disliked the need to check online for instructor response and feedback and technology problems like computer crashes.

These site visits informed the CCCC OWI Committee on a number of issues. For example, faculty made clear that the CCCC should urge institutional support (i.e., financial compensation and course release) for training and acculturating existing faculty in OWI pedagogical processes (i.e., moving beyond familiarizing with the technology itself).

## National Surveys

The next research project that the CCCC OWI Committee undertook was

to develop a trial survey to pilot at a special interest group (SIG) meeting at the CCCC 2009 convention. Its purpose was to query NCTE members about various OWI-focused concerns (i.e., administrative concerns, pedagogy, needed research, teaching issues, and student needs) and to provide the data needed for a final CCCC OWI Committee report. Questions for the pilot survey emerged from the original research questions developed by the CCCC OWI Committee and the previous two research steps of reviewing and annotating the published literature and questioning and observing administrators, faculty, and students during the site visits. The pilot revealed gaps in the survey and language issues that needed to be corrected.

The resulting survey was extensive, and NCTE's Executive Director Kent Williamson personally helped the CCCC OWI Committee to revise it. Revision led to the survey being separated into two different questionnaires, one addressing fully online OWI and the other addressing hybrid OWI. Because of the scope of the CCCC OWI Committee's charges and because we did not want to overtax our disciplinary colleagues by asking them to complete multiple surveys over a period of months, the surveys remained comprehensive with an estimated time of 45-60 minutes required to complete. They were fielded on the NCTE website using Zoomerang in March, 2010 with 139 respondents for the hybrid survey (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011b) and 158 for the fully online one (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011a). The resulting analysis of these surveys comprised a report the CCCC OWI Committee called the *State of the Art of OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c) because we realized that the survey was not yielding anything that could be called "best" or "effective" practices. Instead, it was providing the then-baseline understanding of OWI. While the Executive Summary and the entire report can be read online, the following excerpt of emergent themes summarizes its results:

1. *Pedagogy:* Teachers and administrators, to include those in writing centers, typically are simply migrating traditional face-to-face writing pedagogies to the online setting—both fully online and hybrid. Theory and practice specific to OWI has yet to be fully developed and engaged in postsecondary online settings across the United States.
2. *Training:* Training is needed in pedagogy-specific theory and practice in both fully online and hybrid settings, but particularly in fully online settings because of its unique complete mediation by computers. In most cases, it appears that "writing" and how to achieve strong writing and identifiable student results are left out of online writing instructional training.
3. *Supplemental Support:* Online writing centers are not developed by enough institutions to handle the needs of students in both fully online

and hybrid online settings. To that end, training is insufficiently developed to the unique setting as it is, re: above, migrated primarily from the face-to-face setting.

4.  *English Language (EL2) Users:* The needs of EL2 learners and users are vastly unknown and insufficiently addressed in the online setting—both fully online and hybrid.

5.  *Students with Disabilities:* The needs of students with various kinds of disabilities have not received sufficient and appropriate consideration in light of writing courses in online settings, although the hybrid setting indicates somewhat of a beginning. Teachers and administrators do not know what they are responsible to do or how to do it for any particular variation of learning or physical disabilities relative to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or to a particular student's specified needs.

6.  *Satisfaction:* Instructors are dissatisfied with the levels of support they receive regarding technology, course caps, training, pay, and professional development/interactions relative to OWI in both the fully online and hybrid settings. Such dissatisfaction can lead to poor teaching, low expectations for students and for an online course, and insufficient retention of experienced instructors at a time when OWI continues to grow. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c, p. 7)

In sum, among other early findings, we learned that educators have a wide range—from minimal to extensive—of preparation and training for their online instruction. It appeared that much of the training had an extremely tactical focus on how instructors can engage the technology used in a course. There appeared to be less of an emphasis on the pedagogy of teaching with technology. Along those lines, the issue of actually teaching *writing* as the disciplinary subject appeared to be treated somewhat inconsistently at representative institutions. Some of the respondents expressed a lack of ability to speak to a theory and pedagogy of OWI. Their responses suggested that discerning effective practices in areas other than the superstructure and infrastructure of OWI courses might be the biggest challenge this CCCC OWI Committee would face. These themes and considerations set the stage for another necessary action research project.

## Seeking Guidance from Expert Practitioners and Stakeholders

A final stage of the action research involved developing a panel of as many OWI expert practitioners and stakeholders as possible. The CCCC OWI Committee needed their guidance to cull potential strong or effective practices from *The State of the Art of OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011c) and other research. We reasoned that by learning the successful practices of expert practitioners and

stakeholders, we could compare them with the needs revealed through previous research and develop a Position Statement that best reflected our more thorough understanding of OWI.

The CCCC OWI Committee recruited members for this expert/stakeholders panel using professional contacts and requests via listserv and private email. After receiving nominations, we conducted email conversations with nominated individuals to gather their academic resumes and gather statements of interest. Then each applicant was individually interviewed by phone and follow-up email; more than 30 total interviews occurred in August and September 2011. Twenty-five people were selected, and two left the panel due to schedule conflicts. Panelists included educators and administrators from a variety of academic settings (i.e., traditional university, four-year, and two-year colleges, as well as for-profit colleges and writing center settings). Skills, interests, and areas of expertise included:

1.  first-year courses through graduate instruction;
2.  genres like first-year writing through business/tech writing;
3.  community college through the research university settings;
4.  public, private, and for-profit institutions;
5.  writing addressed both in courses and writing centers;
6.  fully online and hybrid OWC experience;
7.  accessibility issues regarding disabilities[5] and EL2 learners; and
8.  expressed preferences for either asynchronous or synchronous modalities.

Using synchronous, Web-conferencing software, we met three times with the expert and stakeholder panel during the 2011-2012 academic year. Each meeting included a scripted series of questions intended to determine the effective practices and recommendations of these individuals. We continued these conversations asynchronously through online discussion media throughout the same time period.

In the first meeting, participants discussed OWI pedagogy. They outlined their most effective instructional strategies for the OWI classroom/environment. This conversation revealed a number of pedagogies, many of which drew from extensive knowledge of onsite composition instruction. Expert practitioners and stakeholders expressed that they needed, for example, to provide ground rules and clear interaction guidance for students, to address the importance of group work and participation (in opposition to online courses that required individual activities alone), to develop and achieve realistic expectations of the course, and to explain procedures for teacher feedback allowing flexibility for student learning needs. An example comment was:

One of the things that I am realizing that is the most effective strategy for me is to make teaching more of an active verb for myself whether it is completely online or the online portion of the hybrid class. So that the discussion to this point [is] to try to get students involved in laying ground rules for example or talking about expectations. I just love that idea of having them buy into what is happening. To try to represent myself in the online environment as actively teaching the course, rather than what I think a lot of students feel like it is there waiting for them laid out front to back. As sort of static or one long document that happens to be broken up into a lot of different units or sections. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011d)

We learned more from a question asking how participants knew these were the most effective instructional strategies for their particular students. One participant indicated that retention numbers were the "proof of the pudding" and that they would count increasingly in the near future. Another emphasized that her active presence in the course led to comparable presence from students. One teacher similarly explained that his own enthusiasm was the key to strong online teaching and that he received from his students what he gave to them:

In listening to everyone, one thing that comes across that is really needed in any online course is the enthusiasm of the instructor/faculty member. When that enthusiasm is not there, then no matter how much effort we put into the class, in terms of what we load the class with, no matter how much software, no matter how many pieces of material, the students are not going to be involved. What I get to see from my students in whether or not something is working for me is a combination of what I do in terms of a strategy and the enthusiasm I try to inject in it—I get this back from my students. My enthusiasm and my involvement in the course in trying to give them the materials above and beyond perhaps the course's mission is loaded with comes back to me with my students emails, more engaged, wanting to be more involved, wanting to ask more questions, which is exciting to me and exciting to the students as well. It shows up in the discussion; it shows up in the students wanting to learn more in why something is right or not right in writing. (CCCC OWI Committee, 2011d)

The other primary focus of the first meeting regarded training. We asked OWI experts and stakeholders about the training they received (if, indeed, they received any) when they initially prepared for OWI, what elements they had to teach themselves, what effective training methods for OWI are, and how they would advise people developing a training program for beginning OWI teachers. One teacher mentioned the quality of the UMUC online teaching training program (outlined above) and another mentioned Sloan Consortium training. Other responses ranged from the institution providing no training for online instruction (which, admittedly seemed to be rare) to no training for OWI particularly (which seemed common) to creative training methods like online play rooms. The "trial and error" method of training—or self-teaching—was fairly frequently mentioned.

The primary topics of the second teleconference were student and instructor experiences of OWI. We asked expert practitioners and stakeholders about their most effective instructional strategies for their particular students, the relative benefits and disadvantages of OWI for students, and what types of students benefit most and least from OWI contexts. Regarding instructors, we were concerned with the conditions under which they teach most and least effectively in OWI contexts, the benefits and disadvantages of OWI for instructors, and the types of instructors that benefit most and least from OWI contexts.

In the third meeting, we discussed such administrative issues as reasonable and appropriate OWI course loads and class sizes, course preparation and weekly grading time, and instructor pay. We also asked for participants' thinking about what CCCC as an organization could do to help them with OWI. Their overwhelming response involved publishing a position statement and having free resources like a website with examples of strong instructional strategies and professional development through workshops and Webinars.

When all the research was completed, we had a better understanding of what a set of OWI effective practices might look like.[6] The advice and insight of these experts/stakeholders was instrumental in helping the CCCC OWI Committee create *A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for OWI* (CCCC OWI Committee, 2013).

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

*Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction* is an admittedly lengthy book written to approach the OWI principles and practices comprehensively. Because of this intention, we are pleased to be publishing in the *Perspectives on Writing* series with the WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press. Their hybrid model of providing texts either in free digital form or at-cost printed copy enables read-

ers to access the book as a whole or piecemeal in digital or print forms as suited to their unique needs. To assist readers who download or purchase the book as a whole, we offer a commonly used abbreviations list, chart of OWI principles addressed in each chapter, and an index for easy search. To assist readers who prefer to download or use only those chapters of interest to them, we offer each chapter as a self-contained discussion that provides its own abstract, keywords, and references list. To assist readers who are interested in reading about particular ways to use the OWI principles, Table Intro.1 provides a cross-referenced chart of chapters to OWI principles discussed in those chapters. Finally, despite the number of authors involved in the project whose unique voices we strived to honor, we have cross-referenced each chapter and sought to develop a consistent OWI-focused voice.

**Table Intro.1. Chapter and OWI principles reference**

| Chapter | OWI Principle | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 1 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 2 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | | |
| 3 | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | | | ● | | ● | | ● |
| 4 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | | ● | | | ● | ● | |
| 6 | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | |
| 7 | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | |
| 8 | ● | | | | | | | | ● | | | | | | ● |
| 9 | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● |
| 10 | ● | ● | | | | | | | | ● | | | ● | | |
| 11 | ● | | ● | ● | | | ● | | | | | | | ● | |
| 12 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 13 | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● |
| 14 | ● | ● | | | | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | | | |
| 15 | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| 17 | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | | | | ● |
| 18 | ● | | | | | | ● | | ● | | | | ● | | |

Divided into five sections, *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction* is guided by the primary principles of OWI. It demonstrates above all the CCCC OWI Committee's belief that inclusivity and accessibility must be con-

sidered at the inception of any program's online writing instructional venture. To that end, the book includes issues of inclusivity, access, and accessibility in every chapter while addressing different OWI concerns through the lens of the OWI principles.

Part 1, "An OWI Primer," guides writing program administrators (WPAs) and instructors through the OWI principles and the choices they have regarding course infrastructure and environment. Every WPA and OWI teacher's first step should be to determine the course outcomes when developing or revising an OWI program or designing a course; such outcomes should be decided respective of the course's primary modality and delivery media. Hewett, in the first chapter "Grounding Principles of OWI," explains the key principles that the CCCC OWI Committee believes undergird OWI, why they are foundational, and how they position OWI similar to and different from traditional composition. She emphasizes how accessibility issues are central to all principles for OWI given the need for inclusivity in a sometimes faceless environment and given the CCCC OWI Committee's view that an OWI program needs to address inclusivity and access proactively. Hewett provides some examples of effective practices or strategies for these principles. The next two chapters discuss OWI infrastructure in terms of the hybrid versus fully online environments and the asynchronous versus synchronous modalities. Jason Snart's Chapter 2, "Hybrid and Fully Online OWI," examines the OWI principles and effective practice strategies for hybrid and fully online OWI. Snart describes such issues as how these environments differ for teachers and for students—especially regarding seat time, the kinds of strategies that appear best to foster student learning (to include sharing of writing), and what it means to work in a hybrid setting versus that of a completely distributed one. Similarly, in Chapter 3, "Asynchronous and Synchronous Modalities," Connie Mick and Geoffrey Middlebrook examine the OWI principles and effective practice strategies in light of determining whether synchronous or asynchronous modalities—or a combination—will work in a particular course, class, level, and institution. Mick and Middlebrook consider the strengths and weaknesses of these modalities from an effective practices perspective.

Part 2, "OWI Pedagogy and Administrative Decisions," is developed to assist readers with the design of OWI in both OWCs and OWLs. In Chapter 4 "Teaching the OWI Course," Scott Warnock explores some of the foundational principles that ground instructional presence, conversational strategies, response to student writing, class management and organization, course assessment, and classroom technologies. Because of rapidly changing technologies, Warnock particularly considers understanding new technologies from their foundations before introducing them to the OWC. In Chapter 5, Diane Martinez and Leslie

Olsen's "Online Writing Labs" provides similar guidance about OWLs, emphasizing that online writing support is an integral component of the OWI infrastructure that should be informed by similar principles and effective practices. Martinez and Olsen examine how OWL practices and fundamentals are similar to and different from traditional, face-to-face ones. Other logistical decisions that they address are how to select and train OWL tutors and what to consider when thinking about modalities of synchronous and asynchronous settings. Part 2 concludes with two chapters about programmatic decisions that WPAs have to make about OWI. In "Administrative Decisions for OWI," the sixth chapter, Deborah Minter surveys the OWI principles and effective practice strategies for determining optimal class sizes, reading/writing literacy load on teachers and students, and methods for increasing retention. Minter also addresses strategies for assessing OWI programs and courses that adhere to the OWI principles outlined in this book. Building upon this discussion in Chapter 7's "Contingent Faculty and OWI," Mahli Mechenbier acknowledges that many OWCs are taught by contingent and adjunct faculty who typically have little institutional power. After establishing the institutional realities of such instructors, Mechenbier describes the issues that contingent faculty often face when asked to or volunteer to teach OWCs; she provides recommendations about how WPAs can protect these faculty and ensure that their students receive the best quality of instruction. Likewise, she suggests how contingent faculty can protect and advance themselves professionally in the OWI context.

As with the traditional, onsite classroom, OWCs enroll many nonmainstream students, such as student populations with various learning and physical disabilities, those from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and those who have limited access to appropriate online connectivity. Additionally, there are multilingual student populations who communicate in varieties of English outside of the academic standard but for whom OWI presents the most realistic venue for continuing education. Part 3, "Practicing Inclusivity in OWI," includes three chapters supporting the argument that if an educational institution is going to admit these students, then it must develop strategies for incorporating them in all aspects of the academic experience, including appropriate access to OWI. Sushil Oswal, in Chapter 8's "Physical and Learning Disabilities in OWI," examines the unique concerns that students with physical disabilities and learning challenges have when taking OWI courses; he offers suggestions for addressing these challenges. Oswal positions OWI Principle 1 (p. 17) in legal and ethical ramifications for such students. Susan Miller-Cochran raises concerns about inclusion and access based on linguistic production in Chapter 9, "Multilingual Writers and OWI." Charting nearly unknown territory, Miller-Cochran uses OWI Principle 1 to support practical suggestions for addressing

these challenges. Likewise, Michael Gos' Chapter 10, "Nontraditional Student Access to OWI," considers the challenges that nontraditional (e.g., adult, remotely rural, urban, military, and incarcerated) students may experience when taking an OWC or trying to access an OWL. Gos provides practical suggestions for addressing these challenges within the rationale of OWI Principle 1.

While OWI inevitably will have its complications, institutions can design methods to prepare and professionalize the faculty and orient the students that anticipate problems and help stakeholders navigate them. In Part 4, "Faculty and Student Preparation for OWI," the authors challenge the trope that instructors and students simply are migrating the writing course to online technologies; on the contrary, OWI requires extensive and specialized preparation on both participants' behalf. Faculty not only must learn how to teach using effective and appropriate methods for OWI contexts, they also need to professionalize while immersed in the practice of this instruction. In Chapter 11, "Faculty Preparation for OWI," Lee-Ann Kastner Breuch examines how the training for an OWC differs from general distance learning training and why this difference is important for writing instructors nationwide. To this end, Breuch outlines five primary focal points for designing training that moves beyond merely familiarizing educators with technology. Rich Rice's Chapter 12, "Faculty Professionalization for OWI," addresses professionalization as it is tied to labor and compensation. He uses the metaphor of software design to consider course ownership, adaptable course shells, and pay for course preparation time. To consider students as important stakeholders in the OWC, Lisa Meloncon and Heidi Harris' Chapter 13, "Preparing Students for OWI," examines how administrators and instructors can assess students' readiness for hybrid and fully online settings. It also explicates OWI principles and effective practices for adequately preparing students for technology-based courses and for learning to write in such settings. To the end of empowering students to succeed, Meloncon and Harris provide strategies for student self-assessment and decision making in OWCs. In Chapter 14, "Preparing for the Rhetoricity of OWI," Kevin Eric DePew argues that OWI Principle 2 (p. 11) opens up an opportunity for both faculty and student preparation; he addresses OWI as a digital rhetoric with all of the political and ideological dimensions of a rhetoric. This aspect of OWI preparation is not simply about learning the nuts and bolts of the technology and composition pedagogies, but it also is about how to read them rhetorically. DePew considers the rhetorical features of which OWI instructors should be aware and how they reasonably can impart this awareness to their students.

Part 5, "New Directions in OWI," brings this book to a conclusion by examining more leading-edged OWI-focused composition instruction and technologies. In Chapter 15's "Teaching Multimodal Assignments in OWI Contexts,"

Kristine Blair provides effective practices for instructors who want or need to move beyond alphabetic, linguistic-based assignments into teaching multimodal discourse forms. Blair provides examples of multimodal technologies and writing assignments and explains how they can be taught in OWI contexts. Examining another new trend in Chapter 16, Shelley Rodrigo's "OWI on the Go" acknowledges that some students' access to online connectivity comes through such mobile devices as cellphones or tablets. These technologies, which offer both unique affordances and challenges for students and teachers, complicate the OWI principles and enrich effective practices. Finally, because *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction* contributes to a much broader, ongoing conversation, the book concludes with two chapters that guide both OWI and writing studies in general toward new iterations. First, in Chapter 17's "OWI Research Considerations," Christa Ehmann and Hewett consider the complications of and critical need to study distance education in the OWI context. They explain how to engage in consistent and useful investigation of one's program, factors to consider, and how to measure and assess one's program. Then, in Chapter 18, "The Future of OWI," Hewett & Warnock express their belief that the future already is here, suggesting that OWI is emblematic of increasingly digital composition and, as such, has much to offer writing studies scholars and educators who teach writing in any venue.

The contexts of writing instruction inevitably will change with the evolution of online writing and digital communication technologies as well as new ways of imagining writing instruction. To this end, we hope that the guidance provided in the final two chapters, the questions that the previous sixteen chapters raise, and the desire to apply foundational practices for OWI in one's own context will encourage readers to join this conversation by designing practices, contributing to the data about OWI, and reshaping its theory.

## NOTES

1. *Multilingual* is a term currently used by scholars in fields that study writers who speak, read, and write in multiple languages and who may be continuing to learn the mechanics and expectations of writing in English. Although we use the term *multilingual* in common in this book, at times these writers are referred to as *English language learners* to reflect language actually used by the CCCC OWI Committee during a historical time.

2. Addressing students with disabilities was added to the charges after the first two years of the OWI Committee's work together.

3. An online writing lab, or OWL, also is called an online writing center, or OWC, in many institutions. In this book, we use *OWL* to designate a writing tutoring

service and *OWC* to designate an online writing course.

4. This research was funded by the CCCC Executive Committee.

5. As evidence of the critical need to address access issues, only one respondent indicated interest or expertise with this area.

6. It is important to acknowledge, however, that students were the OWI stakeholders we researched the least thoroughly. We believe that the needs of the learner are paramount, and that students need to be more actively included as a voice in future investigation, as indicated in Chapter 17.

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