ADAPTING WRITING TRANSFER FOR ONLINE WRITING COURSES: INSTRUCTOR PRACTICES AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Neil Baird, Advisor

With almost no exceptions, scholarship on writing transfer has been situated in face-to-face writing courses; any unique affordances and challenges OWI has for writing transfer are largely unknown. This study addressed that unknown territory through a convergent mixed methods research design involving students and instructors of online first-year writing courses at BGSU. The student-focused portion of the study, examining how students' perceptions of writing and themselves as writers developed during the course, involved a survey, given at the bookends of the Spring 2020 semester, and follow-up interviews with four of the survey participants. The faculty-focused portion involved a series of interviews supplemented with artifact collection in order to learn about how writing faculty practiced transfer-oriented pedagogy in online courses.

The student portion of the study revealed a complex response to OWI, certainly complicated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that had quickly dominated life in the Spring 2020 semester. While data suggested some changes to students' perceptions about writing and writing transfer, the largest shifts occurred in response to questions about their perceptions of themselves as writers and their dispositions toward writing, with both negative and positive results. The faculty portion of the study revealed that faculty, though varied in their approaches toward adapting pedagogy for online courses, included dispositional development within their teaching goals and philosophies and responded, in their varied pedagogies, to the lack of immediacy that characterizes online learning.

The alignment of dispositional goals named by faculty and the attitudes toward writing

and learning reported by students suggests that OWI may offer positive development of certain learning dispositions toward writing transfer. This research suggests that writing instructors and program administrators should consider intentional alignment of dispositions with course goals and structures through the creation of dispositional statements. Furthermore, the benefit of asynchronicity suggests potential consideration for hybrid formats for face-to-face courses. Finally, this study identifies further research opportunities toward continuing to understand writing transfer in the context of OWI, including long-term effects on writing transfer and the role of dispositions in writing beyond college and in course and curriculum development.

For teachers and students everywhere (especially Ashley)

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I've looked forward to writing this section for a long time. Now the time is here, and I'm at a loss. How can I acknowledge and thank every person, institution, and circumstance that influenced this document to be what it is—a complete, bona fide dissertation? I will certainly leave some deserving folk out. I apologize in advance.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When I first thought of the project described in this dissertation and began to imagine what the study would look like, what it might imply, and what this very document might look like, I expected to begin this chapter by noting the importance for writing instructors to prepare for a more digital postsecondary educational environment, given the evidence of persistent and steadily rising rates of online course enrollment. Then COVID-19 pushed a significant portion of the world indoors, and work-from-home became the sudden reality for many—including teachers and students, who then had to adjust to teaching and learning online in a matter of days. Virtually every postsecondary student in the United States was going online for not just one or two of their courses—if they were enrolled online at all—but all of them. Online courses were no longer delivered by a small portion of faculty for a portion of their course loads; they were now delivered by all faculty for their entire course loads. The resulting panic and the intensity of the fast-tracked growing pains nearly wrote this introduction for me.

The shift from face-to-face (F2F) to online courses was not without complications and resistance. While many students and teachers had decent or even positive experiences in their suddenly-online courses, it didn't take much to hear story after story of teachers and students alike struggling with the shift. While various perspectives critical of online courses were reported in various media outlets (for example, Binkley, 2020; Herman, 2020; Quintana, 2020), an unrefereed survey by OneClass (2020) aimed to answer in simple terms whether the online shift was working for students. The results indicated that 75% of the 1,287 student respondents, representing 45 institutions, were not satisfied with the quality of their now-online courses. Such numbers do not bode well for how people perceive and perform online learning.

Meanwhile, other voices responded to these criticisms by pointing out that "emergency"

online courses and fully planned online learning are vastly different (Hodges et al., 2020; Skallerup Bessette et al., 2020; Tobin, 2020) and that, like it or not, a stronger emphasis on online courses is here to stay (Darby, 2020; Taparia, 2020). The conflicting voices shed light on an interesting matter of concern regarding the place of online learning in the future of postsecondary education. It may be true that the sudden shift of teaching and learning from F2F courses to online courses in a matter of days did not properly represent what an ideal—or even typical—online learning experience could achieve. However, the actual experiences of countless teachers and students whose opinions of online learning were soured by the pandemic-induced shift cannot be dismissed. Nor should the views be dismissed of those who had disappointing experiences with online courses before the pandemic turned the world upside down.

Among those who noted challenges, disappointments, concerns, and frustrations with the emergency online education experiences were teachers. While some instructors certainly fared well enough and even grew as educators, they also pointed out the sudden loss of physicality that allows for "on the fly" adjustments to teaching (e.g., Whitaker, 2020). Others worried about access, equity, lack of training and experience, and the extra labor they were now expected to perform (e.g., Ralph, 2020), including additional invisible labor such as the "therapy-like consultations" students often seek of their professors (Popescu, 2020). Instructor experiences in the crisis, it seems, highlighted some of the hurdles that online education may need to address if it is to be more broadly implemented.

In a piece for *Inside Higher E*, Peter C. Herman (2020) points to an important voice—that of students—in order to persuade readers that postsecondary institutions should not continue to move more and more courses online once the pandemic ends. His argument focuses on what students actually say about their experiences with online courses, rather than discussing the

financial or pedagogical benefits of online learning. While Herman's piece is based on the input of a small population of students (his) under the questionable assumption that their experiences in the shift, by having the same classes as both F2F and online courses in the same semester, reliably offers a true comparison between the two modalities, the argument is meaningful because it centers on the very people for whom education is designed and performed: students. Instructors like Herman, who ask students what they think about their educational experiences, highlight an important element for considering the upward trend of online course offerings and enrollments. That is, they point to how students perceive the courses they take, which has an impact on how students experience and ultimately value those courses.

The question of student perception has taken a central position in this dissertation, which originated in the observation that not only were online course enrollments on the rise—by 2016 nearly a third of students in postsecondary institutions were enrolled in at least one online course, a proportion that had been reached through a rather steady rate of increase over several years (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018, p. 3)—but also that concerns about writing transfer are ever present. *Writing transfer*, which I discuss more fully later but for now define simply as the drawing upon or remaking of writing knowledge acquired in the past for use in future situations, is of concern to institutions of higher education and the people who teach and learn in them, as administrators, teachers, and students alike hope for the learning experiences to be meaningful and useful beyond the classroom. As Randall Bass (2017) declares in the "Coda" of *Understanding Writing Transfer*, "The idea of transfer is at the heart of the problem of learning; and the problem of learning is at the heart of the future of higher education" (p. 144). As the future of higher education continues to shift—sometimes quite dramatically—that future brings concerns about how learning is accomplished, retained, and used beyond its initial setting.

With these shifts in education, including the spread and saturation of technology within it, and with concerns about the benefit of writing instruction that seem to be ever present, online writing instruction (OWI) and writing transfer are two important topics in writing studies. College courses, including writing courses, are increasingly going online while the merit of online learning is yet disputed. Likewise, the value of writing courses for situations beyond the course itself—that is, essentially, the issue of writing transfer—has almost always been in question by one group or another. The contention is especially strong regarding first-year writing (FYW) courses. Therefore, having a strong understanding of the principles of writing transfer while also being prepared for teaching online will likely be an important combination for writing educators, in FYW as well as other writing courses, in the coming years.

Scholarship in the two areas—OWI and writing transfer—are continuing to gain traction, but they don't often share the same space. Scholars frequently study writing transfer in F2F courses, which is still considered the default instructional setting. Very few studies on writing transfer highlight such instruction in online courses, and while OWI scholarship is frequently pragmatic and concerned with effective instruction, attention to writing transfer as an element or sign of that effective instruction is not often explicit. The Bedford Bibliography of Online Writing Instruction (Harris, Mechenbier, Oswal, & Stillman-Webb, 2019), a nearly comprehensive compilation of annotated OWI citations, features only about four works that discuss writing transfer, often tangentially. A search for "transfer" in the complete listing yields only 17 results, with most uses of the word in the annotations referring to something other than students' application and adaptation of prior knowledge across writing contexts. Only one of the works in the entire list, "Teaching for Transfer Online: Insights From an Adapted Curricular Model" by Liane Robertson (2018), contains "transfer" as a keyword. Its entry in the

bibliography contains six of the 17 instances of "transfer" in the entire document. The annotations for three other works include relevant uses of the term "transfer" without warranting the word's inclusion as a keyword. In short, almost no studies so far have considered how a lens of transfer affects course creation and experience for OWI.

I therefore saw a need for researchers and educators to explore the connections and disconnections between OWI and writing transfer. Several questions and highlighting gaps between writing transfer and OWI arose for me when considering what connections do, don't, or should exist between the two, touching on

- similarities and differences of transfer processes and outcomes between students of online and F2F writing courses
- the affordances and limitations of online writing courses for writing transfer
- instructors' adaptations of transfer principles and practices for online writing courses
- student perceptions of learning and transfer as informed by online writing course experiences
- and so on.

Questions for some of these concepts could not be answered with a one-year dissertation study. (For example, a longitudinal study would be more appropriate for investigating the processes and especially outcomes of writing transfer for online students.) I set out, therefore, to conduct a dissertation study that does not aim, or even claim to aim, at completing any gap-eliminating bridges. Instead, I aimed for this dissertation to contribute by beginning to design such a bridge. This is a study that is intentionally limited to mapping current perceptions and practices—calling back to Jessie Moore's (2012) "Mapping the Questions: The State of Writing-Related Transfer Research" and Donna Qualley's (2017) "Building a Conceptual Topography of

the Transfer Terrain"—in order to understand the terrain a bridge of further studies may be constructed over.

Understanding this terrain fully would require examining several elements: distinctions between online and F2F writing instruction, the nature of writing transfer, the pedagogical practices of writing instructors, and the interaction with those pedagogical practices by students. As mentioned above, a longitudinal study examining how students interact with those practices long-term—that is, how they engage with and ultimately transfer their learning as they progress in their degree programs or into their careers—would be exciting but not feasible for this dissertation. More importantly, considering my hope that the dissertation would prove useful for understanding and adapting to a rapidly shifting educational environment—a hope that existed before COVID-19 proved how rapidly educational environments can shift—it was crucial that I design a study that could gather a "quick take" on this topic. Therefore, I elected to include two main foci to broadly capture such a quick take: 1) for instructors, how they interact with OWI and writing transfer through current practices, and 2) for students, on the perceptions they have about writing and themselves as writers.

Looking at the interaction of writing faculty with OWI and writing transfer through pedagogical practices can potentially reveal the current state of writing transfer within OWI. A study that examines instructor practices in OWI may provide an initial survey of the land and terrain for writing transfer in OWI, regarding unique affordances or challenges to transfer that might exist for OWI; special considerations that writing instructors might make toward course design, migration, or delivery when teaching online writing courses; and even faculty perceptions and attitudes about teaching for writing transfer and teaching writing online. Such a survey of the terrain, focusing on what happens in the OWI course, could then provide some

insight into how student perceptions might change in an online writing course, which is the second focus of this study. As I mentioned above, how students actually feel about and respond to current practices in online courses—and their educational experiences overall—is important to consider for understanding, mapping, and eventually building on the terrain with pedagogical development. I will discuss the relevance of student perceptions to writing transfer in more detail in the upcoming literature review, but even on their own, perceptions can reveal where things stand from a baseline level—the level of the terrain.

A look at instructor practices and the affordances and challenges of OWI may further clarify how that terrain came to be and how it shapes student experiences.

Research Questions

Combining all of the above factors and considerations led to the following research question: How do transfer-focused pedagogical practices of online first-year writing instructors affect student perceptions of writing? This question is actually the combination of two questions that my study sought to address:

- How do students perceive writing—and themselves as writers—after taking an online first-year writing course?
- How do first-year writing instructors adapt principles of transfer-focused writing instruction for online courses?

In the remainder of this document, I will refer to these questions as the *student research question* and the *faculty research question*. Collectively they are the *secondary research questions*. Together they make up the *primary research question*.

Literature Review

While, as established above, the topics of OWI and writing transfer don't yet often meet

within the same scholarship, the foundations for exploring intersections between the two exist in the growing wealth of scholarship for each. This literature review, in four parts, therefore explores the two areas separately before examining the few works that attend to their intersection. The first two parts of the review consider scholarship on writing transfer, with emphasis on the two areas of focus for this study: 1) the practices and pedagogies that writing researchers and instructors have identified as promoting successful writing transfer (which complements the faculty research question), and 2) the importance of perceptions for learning and transfer (which complements the student research question). Part three highlights scholarship in OWI, with attention to the affordances and challenges of OWI that characterize it as different from F2F writing instruction. Part four, the shortest part, identifies the handful of scholarly works that have also begun to map the terrain of the valley between Mount Writing Transfer and Mount OWI. That is, in the fourth part I present a few studies that explicitly attend to the question of writing transfer in online writing course contexts. Because the number of such studies is currently so few, and to offer a more complete context for this study, I also review in this section some studies that *implicitly* attend to the intersection of writing transfer and OWI.

Note that I have combined usage of "first-year composition" (FYC) with "first-year writing" (FYW) and will use the latter in the remainder of this document. This leads to the occasional use of "FYW" in summaries of works by scholars who used "FYC," but this study makes no distinction between the two terms. Using one term keeps this document limited for the sake of simplicity.

Writing Transfer: Perceptions and Pedagogies

Transfer is a complicated concept that takes many shapes and goes by many names (e.g., Baird & Dilger, 2017; Beach, 2003; Brent, 2012; Nowacek, 2011; Roozen, 2010), some perhaps

more appropriate than others or more useful in certain contexts (Baird & Dilger, 2017; Donahue, 2012; Driscoll, 2011; Driscoll & Powell, 2016; Moore, 2012; Wardle, 2007). Neil Baird and Bradley Dilger (2017) define transfer as the context-crossing *movement* of knowledge, experience, and skills. Brent (2012) posits that *learning transfer* would be better approached as *learning transformation*, citing Graham Smart and Nicole Brown's (2002) modification of *learning transfer* into *transforming learning*. Other associated terms include (but are not limited to) *repurposing* (Roozen, 2010), *generalization* (Beach, 2003), and *integration* (Nowacek, 2011).

Writing studies scholars have borrowed concepts from other disciplines—definitions of transfer, terminology, and understandings of how transfer works across disciplines—to understand learning transfer. They have also extended research in transfer to better understand transfer especially for writing knowledge. While some transfer scholarship may highlight the context of the classroom over the actions and dispositions of the individual (for example, Downs & Wardle, 2007; Wardle, 2009; Willow & Shaw, 2017; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak, 2014), and vice versa (for example, Blythe, 2017; Cleary, 2013; Driscoll & Powell, 2016; Reid, 2017), Dana Lynn Driscoll and Jennifer Wells (2012) argue that an integration of both context and individual is "essential" for transfer studies. The transfer-focused portion of the following review of literature, then, includes attention to both the influences of perceptions and the role of pedagogies in the promotion of transfer.

Perceptions and Dispositions. The topic of writing transfer is complex and poses many questions, but one prominent question near the center of the topic is, "Is first-year writing effective?" In "Disciplinarity and Transfer: Students' Perceptions and Learning to Write," Linda Bergmann and Janet Zepernick (2007) respond to the common view that English classes, including FYW, teach "fluff" that isn't useful outside the English Department. Their research

suggests that students commonly view FYW as a course that teaches personal writing while ignoring the academic and professional writing necessary for work and other classes. The idea that the kinds of writing taught in FYW contrast so sharply with other kinds of writing brings into question the value of FYW. Elizabeth Wardle (2007) also examines the issue of FYW's worth, conducting a longitudinal study to understand what students think of what they have learned from their FYW courses compared with what other writing contexts have demanded. In this study, Wardle, like Bergmann & Zepernick, points to troublesome influence of perceptions on writing transfer, noting that students who did not perceive a need for their FYW content to transfer did not transfer their writing knowledge to new contexts, even though they did indeed learn in their FYW courses and were capable of transfer.

The above studies concern themselves greatly with questions about how students perceive FYW courses and their learning. While it may be easy to assume that what knowledge students transfer shouldn't be affected by what they think of their courses because perception and reality easily differ, transfer scholars note a considerable link between student perceptions and the effectiveness of writing transfer (Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Cozart, Wirenfeldt Jensen, Wichmann-Hansen, Kupatadze, & Chiu, 2017; Driscoll, 2011; Driscoll & Powell, 2016; Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Rosinski, 2017; Wardle, 2007). Student perception can act as a form of gatekeeping, helping to determine whether, how much, and what learning passes through to the category of transferred or transferable knowledge. Bergmann and Zepernick (2007) declare that when students think of English class writing as personal, creative, and without "disciplinary legitimacy" (p. 141), they do not recognize FYW content as transferable. Wardle (2007) notes that students often don't generalize (transform or abstract knowledge for applicability or adaptability to different contexts) from FYW because they do not "*perceive a need* to adopt or

adapt" (p. 76, emphasis Wardle's) the skills and behaviors learned in FYW. This suggests that even if students adequately understand the content of a course, they will experience barriers to transfer if they do not recognize their learning as necessary.

Driscoll (2011) addresses some of these same perceptions, about whether transfer is possible or necessary. Her study examining the relationships between students' attitudes about writing and their transfer of writing knowledge reveals that students with limited perceptions of the learning that FYW offers engage in limited transfer of that learning. In fact, perception of transferability tends to decline over the course of a semester. This trend and the strong connection between perceptions and transfer lead Driscoll to recommend including explicit instruction on the topic and expectation of transfer in writing courses, as well as including instruction and practice in metacognitive reflection, considering possible connections to future writing contexts, looking at prior writing knowledge as connected to present and future contexts, and explicitly discussing the scaffolding and extension of learning.

The perceptions of transferability and need are not the only perceptions that influence writing transfer and its study. Paula Rosinski's (2017) study on whether students perceive strong connections between their self-sponsored digital writing and their college writing demonstrates a tendency for writers to not transfer knowledge from one domain of life to another. Rosinski advises working with students to bridge connections between their digital writing, with which they often demonstrate strong rhetorical awareness, and their academic writing, with which they often don't demonstrate rhetorical awareness without explicit instruction and practice in making those connections. These studies reveal that connections (or lack thereof) between students' perceptions of college writing and their identities—marked by self-sponsored writing or intended career pathways, for example—are crucial to understanding and promoting writing transfer.

In addition to and underlying perceptions are dispositions, which Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick (2014) define as "tendencies toward particular patterns of intellectual behavior" (p. 19). Costa and Kallick point out that strong dispositions can help learners with a multitude of tasks, course content, and curricula, and that effectively developed dispositions can lead people "to become lifelong learners, effective problem solvers and decision makers, able to communicate with a diverse population and to understand how to live successfully in a rapidly changing, high-tech world" (16). It is this seemingly universal applicability of dispositional leverage, and especially in regard to a "rapidly changing, high-tech world" that may be crucial to understand for transfer and learning perceptions in online courses.

Driscoll and Wells (2012) argue that dispositions can influence perceptions and should feature more prominently in research. With their ability to both influence perception and determine how students apply knowledge, skills, and traits, dispositions and attitudes contribute to the foundations of transfer. Dispositions that Driscoll and Wells recognize as crucial include how writers value knowledge or tasks (value), to what extent they view themselves as capable (self-efficacy), to what they attribute success or failure (attribution), and how well they self-regulate (self-regulation). They note that dispositions can be generative or disruptive, and Neil Baird and Bradley Dilger (2017) present two cases of dispositional effects on transfer—one case generative and the other disruptive—that suggest two more dispositions may be added to the four transfer-affecting dispositions that Driscoll and Wells define: those of ease (or how writers respond to difficulty) and ownership (or how writers approach investment in and control of their work). Wardle (2012) also recognizes similar dispositions as critical for understanding writing transfer: "problem-exploring" and "answer-getting" dispositions, which relate to Baird and Dilger's disposition of ease but also include a layer of attention to whether students view

learning as inquiry-based or transactional.

Pedagogies. The increasingly visible concerns regarding writing transfer have prompted the development of a handful of innovative approaches to teaching writing that take as a primary goal the transfer of writing knowledge. From their study mentioned above, Bergmann and Zepernick (2007) suggest that teaching students to write may not be as useful as teaching students to *learn* to write. Similarly, preliminary results from Wardle's (2007) study demonstrate that one of FYW's primary strengths may be in teaching "meta-awareness about writing, language, and rhetorical strategies" (p. 82).

Writing studies scholars recognizing the merit of these concepts have offered various pedagogical frameworks for making transfer a central aim of FYW and other writing instruction. As Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak (2014) point out, such constructed, interventional pedagogies focused on transfer fall in the middle of a continuum that, on one end, sees transfer as so complex as to be effectively impossible to aim for and, on the other end, as an almost intrinsic, natural occurrence in learning. Transfer-oriented pedagogies, then, are 1) optimistic, claiming that writing transfer is possible, and 2) active, often explicitly attending to concerns of transfer.

Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle (2007), in "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re)Envisioning 'First-Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies,'" respond to a long-held assumption that FYW courses teach universally applicable generalized writing skills that transfer to any context by sharing results of a "writing-about-writing" (WAW) approach to FYW. This approach involves considering the FYW course not as a skills-based course that promises to fully prepare students to write for other college courses but instead as an introduction to writing studies course, in which the content of the course is focused

on the very subjects of reading and writing: course readings include some writing studies scholarship, students consider conceptions and misconceptions of writing in class discussions, and writing projects explicitly consider topics related to reading and writing.

Downs and Wardle declare that in such a course, where the misconception of universally-applicable writing skills is addressed, students "learn that within each new disciplinary course they will need to pay close attention to what counts as appropriate for that discipline" (p. 559). This demonstrates that a WAW course does aim to prepare students for future courses and contexts, but not as traditionally considered: rather than learning writing skills, students learn what kinds of contextual writing knowledge they will need to understand for their disciplines and other writing situations.

Another transfer-oriented pedagogical approach is the "agents of integration" approach described by Rebecca S. Nowacek (2011). In this approach, multiple courses are linked concurrently, offering students an explicitly interdisciplinary educational experience. Although the attention to transfer isn't as direct as in other approaches, this curricular arrangement nonetheless encourages students to make connections among the linked courses and perform concurrent transfer. Students are encouraged to integrate knowledge from and across multiple contexts and to do so by their own volition, thus making them "agents of integration." In this model, then, successful transfer seems to occur when knowledge is integrated appropriately across contexts, building upon and enriching a student's knowledge and awareness, and under their own direction.

One more transfer-oriented curriculum reveals its aim in its very name: teaching for transfer (TFT). In this approach, pioneered by Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak (2014), attention to transfer is conducted similarly to the WAW model, in which the course content is focused on

the very subject of writing. However, some additional considerations distinguish the two approaches. In the TFT curricular model, the writing-related course content is further specified to include rhetorical terminology that provides students with the language to understand, think about, and transform writing knowledge. Additionally, reflection as both a concept and a practice is included in the course, leading to the development by each student of a "theory of writing" that aids students in framing and understanding future writing situations.

Finally, although not necessarily a curriculum in itself, the work of Eodice et al. (2016) demonstrates that writing projects can promote "expansive framing" when they are designed to be meaningful to students by promoting student agency and engagement and by inviting students to connect with the assignments personally, including through connections to work students expect to do in the future. The idea of the "meaningful writing project," then, is also one for strong consideration in the perceptions of writing and learning.

OWI: Affordances & Challenges

Perhaps owing in part to the need to quickly respond to a "rapidly changing, high-tech" educational world, much scholarship in OWI lends attention to understanding how OWI agrees with and differs from F2F writing instruction (for example, Bourelle, Bourelle, Knutson, & Spong, 2016; Carbone, 2018; Hewett, 2015; Lapadat, 2002) as well as issues of instructional practices and strategies (for example, Borgman & McArdle, 2019; Girardi, 2016; Marshall, 2016; Meloncon & Harris, 2015; Warnock, 2009; Warnock, 2015). In "Grounding Principles of OWI," Beth L. Hewett (2015) runs through 15 foundational principles established by the CCCC Committee for Effective Practices in OWI, explaining the principle in terms of OWI's similarities with F2F writing instruction (for example, in course purposes, marked by principles insisting that writing instructors migrate appropriate F2F content and practices to online writing

courses—OWCs—and that instructors teach writing more than technology) and its differences (for example, in noting the often text-heavy nature of an OWC that helps inform a principle declaring that writing instruction should be developed specifically for the online format and its unique qualities).

To study what factors of an online learning environment might affect writing transfer in OWI, studies that consider the affordances, limitations, challenges, and opportunities of OWI are especially interesting. Bourelle et al (2016) respond to and join scholarship that questions the comparative effectiveness of online and F2F writing instruction. They reveal that students in online courses may more fully grasp multimodal concepts, not "just doing the work" but also "learning from doing the work" (p. 63) because of an integration of technologies for writing with technologies for education and because of the nonlinear nature of an online course.

The text-heavy nature of OWI provides its own challenges in the high literacy load demanded of instructors and students alike (Blair & Monske, 2003; Hewett, 2015; Marshall, 2016; McGrath, 2003; Minter, 2015), but scholars also view the "default" communication method of writing as a benefit for computer-mediated composition (Ellis, 2018; Hawisher, 1992; Lapadat, 2002; Warnock, 2009; Warnock, 2015). Gail E. Hawisher (1992) notes that two benefits of the text-centric nature of electronic conferences are students are "immersed in writing" (p. 84) and that a transcript is available for reflection and use as a source or instructional guide. In *Teaching Writing Online: How and Why* (2009) and "Teaching the OWI Course" (2015), works that discuss guidelines for instructors in navigating the instruction of an OWC, Scott Warnock similarly presents the benefits of writing as both course subject and the medium of learning and instruction, including practice in writing and the availability of student writing as course texts. H. Mark Ellis (2018) points out how the emphasis on written interaction affords

students time to think (and to even slow down thinking) while also providing opportunities for shy students to interact with their peers. Finally, the higher number of participants who write in the course provides students with more perspectives and ideas to consider for thinking (and writing) through complex issues. Judith Lapadat (2002) argues that an online course's higher presence of written interaction allows for heightened social and cognitive construction of meaning because writing involves higher order cognitive processes. She argues that asynchronous conferences and instruction especially promote such construction of meaning because of the reduction of constraints imposed by time and linearity of conversation.

The modes of synchronicity and asynchronicity also contribute to the affordances and limitations of computer-mediated composition and to how instructors approach their OWCs (for example, Carbone, 2018; Ellis, 2018; Hawisher, 1992; Hilliard & Stewart, 2019; Lapadat, 2002; Mick & Middlebrook, 2015; Warnock, 2015). While Lapadat (2002) argues that asynchronous conferences open up possibilities by removing the synchronous mode's constraints, Connie Snyder Mick and Geoffrey Middlebrook (2015), in outlining the benefits and drawbacks of both modes, argue that one mode should not be chosen without attention to the needs of students, instructors, and institutions. The asynchronous mode may be convenient in many cases, but a synchronous interaction may prove more beneficial at times, such as when a student needs a real-time chat or phone call to discuss and clarify a troublesome course concept or instruction.

The expanded options for synchronous and asynchronous learning in OWI may also afford more of the student-centered learning that many instructors applaud. Nick Carbone (2018), in "Past to the Future: Computers and Community in the First-Year Writing Classroom," argues that the online environment can help establish a classroom as a community of learners, especially because of the online discussion format that allows more students to respond to each

other than in a typical classroom. Jackson & Weaver (2018) also declare that online learning environments provide greater opportunities to "de-center" classrooms.

OWI & Transfer

Writing studies has significant places in its scholarship and practice for online writing instruction and writing transfer, but what about the intersection of these two sectors of the field? Unfortunately, I have yet to find very many studies related to writing transfer that have been situated in online writing courses. Although not a foolproof method, a search for "transfer" on among annotations of the Bedford Bibliography of Online Writing Instruction shows few results, with some instances of it devoted to transfer credit or tangential commentary on transfer for what I call "OWI-adjacent" topics such as multimodal composition and digital writing—which are certainly relevant to OWI but by no means exclusive to it. (For examples of this adjacency-overlap, see Ball, Bowen, & Fenn, 2013; DePalma, 2015; Khost, 2015.) Put simply, there's a need to create more explicit overlap between OWI and writing transfer.

A bit of scholarship does directly address the combination of writing transfer and OWI, though not with the considerations I add through this dissertation. Heather Brook Adams and Patricia Jenkins (2015) present a heuristic and course design for exploring genre theory and activity systems in an online professional writing course, with some discussion on the usefulness of the course design for promoting transfer. The strongest connection, however, is found in the work of Liane Robertson (2018). In "Teaching for Transfer Online: Insights from an Adapted Curricular Model," the one piece of scholarship listed in the Bedford Bibliography of Research in Online Writing Instruction that contains "transfer" as a keyword, Robertson presents a study on the use of the TFT curricular model, which includes explicitly addressing transfer in a writing course and aiding students in evaluating prior writing knowledge, in an online technical writing

course. Robertson declares that an online course can "accelerate [the] exploration" of writing knowledge frameworks and approaches to writing situations because students are "in a state of perpetual performance" and must use writing for that performance (p. 202). Here, the benefits of learning and communicating through writing in a writing course that Ellis, Lapadat, Warnock, and others have espoused are augmented to include attention to transfer. Robertson claims that an online learning environment also promotes agency, which is another contributing factor toward a successful implementation of the TFT curricular model. Although Robertson's study accomplishes a lot of the work to sketch the terrain between writing transfer and OWI, more research is needed to continue the terrain-mapping work. Robertson's study focuses on a handful of students in one upper-division writing course that employed the TFT model. Further study is needed to expand insights from courses at different levels (including FYW courses, which yet remain suspect to many and are most often associated with the generalized, universal writing skills that transfer-oriented pedagogies push against) and with different pedagogies in place, such as a WAW or integrated model. Finally, student practices and perspectives need to be supplemented with those of their instructors.

Elsewhere, connections between writing transfer and OWI are not as explicit. Some scholarship attends to or at least acknowledges questions of student perceptions and expectations of learning (for example, Bourelle et al, 2016; Boyd, 2008; Hilliard & Stewart, 2019; Litterio, 2018; Meloncon & Harris, 2015). Patricia Webb Boyd (2008), in considering student perceptions of their learning in online and hybrid writing courses, finds that students do indeed perceive differences between F2F and online writing courses. She argues for increased transparency about the purpose of course design and the student interactions involved, which fits with the advocacy by transfer scholars of explicitly addressing transfer as a curricular goal. Lisa M. Litterio (2018),

in studying students' perceptions of their learning, finds that students positively perceive achievement of the learning outcomes of their OWC. Students furthermore attribute the online learning environment as aiding this success, citing similar benefits other scholars assign to OWI: the textual basis of communication, the affordance of relative anonymity, and the aid of additional time for thinking and writing given by the asynchronous "default" of OWI. Lyra Hilliard and Mary K. Stewart (2019), studying student perceptions of teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence in medium- and high-blend hybrid writing courses, find that more online interaction in hybrid writing courses contributes to higher student perception of "Resolution" in a Community of Inquiry survey. As Resolution involves applying constructed knowledge, this finding may suggest stronger perceptions of transferability due to higher online interaction. While these studies shed important light on student perceptions in relation to online courses, further work with perceptions coupled with dispositions could benefit our understanding of the interdependent roles of both for transfer in online course settings.

The more I read scholarship in both writing transfer and OWI, the more I saw evidence that the unique qualities of OWI may contribute to different student perceptions of writing transfer, whether positive or negative. As the scholarship in these two areas don't frequently overlap, there exists a need for investigating this potential further, especially regarding how current OWI practices shape student perceptions and ultimately transfer of learning. This dissertation represents one avenue for such an investigation.

Outline of Chapters

The remainder of this chapter provides a summary of subsequent chapters in this dissertation, exploring in preview the aim and trajectory of the study. In Chapter 2, I outline the research design, its rationale, and its limitations. The account of the design includes the methods

as planned and, because this study was met with some complications and opportunities, as realized. It also includes significant moments in the process of collecting and analyzing data that affected the processes of the research. The initial design included two major portions of the study, one interview-based portion focused on online writing instructors and one survey-based portion focused on students. The student portion of the study expanded to also include a handful of interviews.

The faculty portion sought to address the faculty research question ("How do first-year writing instructors adapt principles of transfer-focused writing instruction for online courses?") to find out what current practices online writing instructors perform in their courses, how they conceive of writing transfer, and how their online course practices compare and contrast with their F2F courses. The student portion sought to address the student research question ("How do students perceive writing—and themselves as writers—after taking an online first-year writing course?") to find out how much students valued their online writing courses, to what extent they perceived that what they learned in the course would be useful in various scenarios, and what attitudes toward learning they had that may have affected the aforementioned perceptions—or even how those attitudes may have changed over the course of the semester.

The results of the study appear in two chapters of this dissertation. Chapter 3 includes the results of the surveys distributed to students who took an online writing course, as well as the results of the interviews conducted with a handful of the survey participants. These results include students' perceptions of themselves as writers and learners—especially in regard to some of the learning dispositions that Baird and Dilger (2017), Costa and Kallick (2014), Driscoll and Powell (2016), Driscoll and Wells (2012), and other scholars recognize as important—their perceptions of their writing course, and their perceptions of the quality of the course due to its

online status. A significant feature of this chapter is addressing of changes in these perceptions from the start to the end of the course. Chapter 4 includes the results of the series of interviews conducted with each faculty participant, including instructors' pedagogical alignment with teaching for transfer and writing about writing, their teaching practices in online courses, and their understandings of how online course environments influence their teaching in regards with writing transfer.

Finally, Chapter 5 offers discussion of how the results of each research portion, presented in the previous two chapters, inform and complicate one another. That is, the fifth chapter juxtaposes the results of each portion of the study in order to address the primary research question ("How do transfer-focused pedagogical practices of online first-year writing instructors affect student perceptions of writing?"). This chapter therefore highlights the most significant findings of the study: that OWI may afford transfer-supporting dispositional benefits that can be further supported by the value that faculty implicitly or explicitly give to such dispositions.

I end the dissertation with several implications, including some that offer potential activity by writing instructors and program administrators regarding the extent to which dispositional education is integrated into writing courses and curricula. Other implications examine faculty concepts of transfer and the canon of writing dispositions named by various scholars and organizations. Other implications look toward bridging gaps between online and F2F writing instruction, demonstrating how both modes of teaching and learning may continue to benefit from each other's strengths and insights. Finally, as I envisioned this study as not a gap-bridging study but a terrain-surveying study, I offer implications for further writing studies research that may continue working toward bridging this gap.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

In this chapter, I detail the research processes used to perform this study. The chapter begins with context about the institution and program where the study was located, followed by a reminder of the research questions addressed by this study, and then the outline of methods used for data collection and analysis. Justification for the study, including the study's affordances, imitations, and responses to those limitations, is integrated throughout the outline of the study's methods.

Institutional and Programmatic Context

The setting of this study was online first-year writing courses (OFYWCs) in the University Writing Program (UWP) of Bowling Green State University (BGSU) during the Spring 2020 semester. The program offers two main courses: WRIT 1110 (Seminar in Academic Writing) and WRIT 1120 (Seminar in Research Writing). Both courses are FYW courses and are offered in F2F and online sections. A third course, WRIT 1010 (Academic Writing Workshop), exists as a co-requisite course. It is attached to select sections of WRIT 1110, intended for students who may benefit from additional guidance, but this course is not currently offered online. UWP courses, both F2F and online sections, are capped at 25 students per section, with the exception of sections of WRIT 1110 co-requisitely tied to sections of WRIT 1010, which are capped at 20 students each.

Most students take WRIT 1110 in their first semester at BGSU and WRIT 1120 in the following term. Because of this typical sequence of UWP courses, the UWP fills more sections of WRIT 1110 in fall semesters and of WRIT 1120 in spring semesters. In the Spring 2020 semester, the program offered two sections of WRIT 1110 and ten sections of WRIT 1120 (including two 7-week courses). With caps of 25 students, these 12 sections of OFYWCs offered

in the spring term had a potential maximum enrollment of 300 students and an actual enrollment of 290 students. Because not all first-year college students are 18 years of age or older, and because some students in UWP courses are taking courses for dual credit while in high school, the total student participant pool for this study was a number under 290.

The UWP is a program that until relatively recently had been aligned with a more generalized curriculum (and was, in fact, known as the General Studies Writing Program). Over the past few years and officially starting with the Fall 2019 semester, the program has undergone a revision that included not only the change of program name but also a shift in program objectives and practices. Updated course objectives, now called learning goals, take guidance from the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (Council of Writing Program Administrators et al, 2011), especially by including some of the habits of mind the *Framework* identifies as crucial for success in postsecondary writing. (Three habits of mind—curiosity, openness, and creativity—are explicitly named in the objectives.) In order to encourage more in-depth attention to fostering habits of mind and promoting writing process practice (especially revision), the program curriculum reduced the number of writing projects in each course from five to four, one of which also serves as the reflective introduction to each course's ePortfolio. The revision also aligns the program with transfer-oriented pedagogy, especially by shifting course content to rhetorical concepts and writing studies (adopting elements of the WAW model) and by including explicit attention to reflection toward developing a theory of writing or similar project (adopting elements of the TFT model). A presentation on WAW by Elizabeth Wardle during a visit to the program a few years ago stirred up some enthusiasm for more transfer-oriented curricula. The response of the program to Wardle's visit and presentation was a major contributing factor in the transfer focus of the curriculum revision.

As the curriculum revision was quite new at the time of this study (being in its second term of official implementation), faculty were still transitioning their practices of instruction toward the new curriculum principles. Therefore, while the program as a whole has aligned with transfer-oriented pedagogical principles, some faculty members by Spring 2020 may not yet have adopted all elements of the new curriculum. Additionally, the various faculty, of course, have adopted and will continue to adopt the new curriculum in diverse ways. Some faculty, for example, were—and perhaps still are—rather attached to certain course themes and were either hesitant to abandon their themes for a WAW emphasis, or expressed a need for guidance in adapting their existing themes to include WAW elements. The variety of approaches that faculty of any program bring to their instruction certainly played a role in this research study, especially considering the recentness of the curriculum revision and the extent to which faculty implemented WAW-based writing instruction.

Study Overview: Research Questions and Classification of the Research Design

Research Questions

The set of research questions that guided this study included one primary question ("How do transfer-focused pedagogical practices of online first-year writing instructors affect student perceptions of writing?") and two secondary research questions that made up the primary question:

- How do students perceive writing—and themselves as writers—after taking an online first-year writing course?
- How do first-year writing instructors adapt principles of transfer-focused writing instruction for online courses?

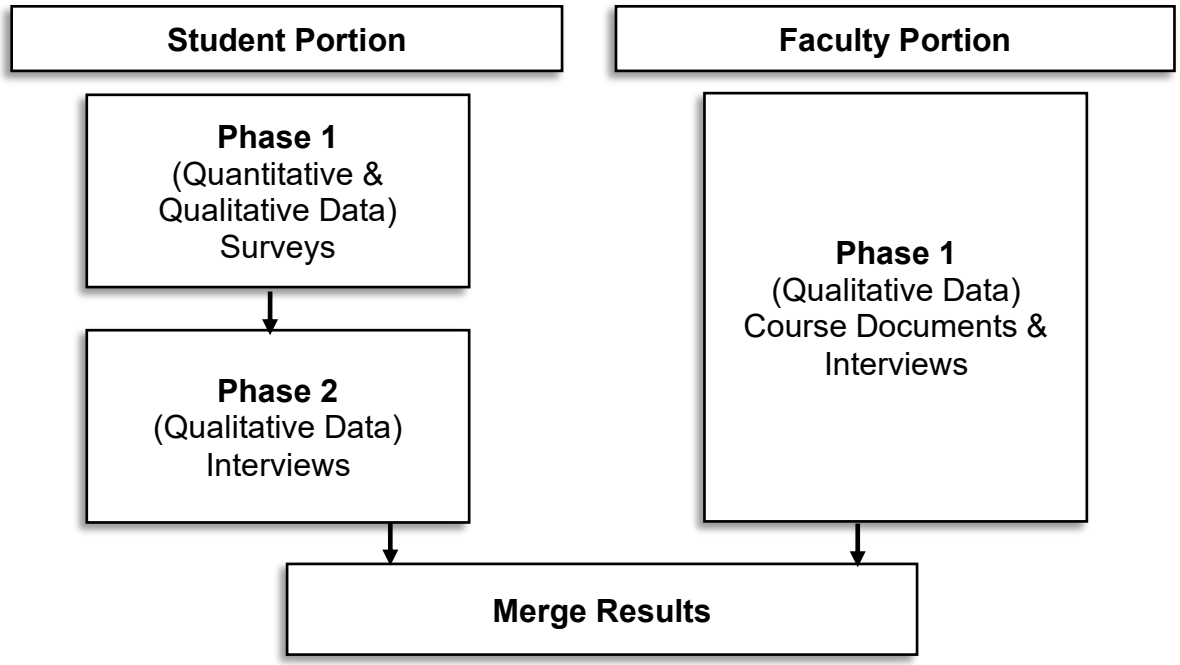
Research Design Classification

The study designed to address the primary question included two portions, each of which correlated to one of the secondary research questions: one portion addressing the faculty research question regarding instructor practices, and one portion, in two phases, addressing the student research question on student perceptions. Figure 1 depicts the basic structure of this research design and its classification: a *convergent mixed methods design with an explanatory sequential modification*. The subjects and foci of each question were different, which required different methods for addressing the separate questions and their subject populations, hence the two columns in Figure 1.

The study's initial design included two one-phase portions, one for each question, and generally followed what John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell (2018) call a *convergent mixed methods* study, in which both qualitative and quantitative data are collected in a single phase and

Figure 1

Convergent Mixed Methods Design With Explanatory Sequential Modification



analyzed separately, followed by comparison of the analyses (p. 217). However, refinement of the design in order to address limitations and opportunities in the data collection resulted in a study that included a modified *explanatory sequential mixed methods* element—in which the collection and analysis of quantitative data is followed by the collection of qualitative data that further explains the quantitative data (p. 221-222)—as the portion of the study for the student research question. That is, the student portion quickly evolved to include two phases:

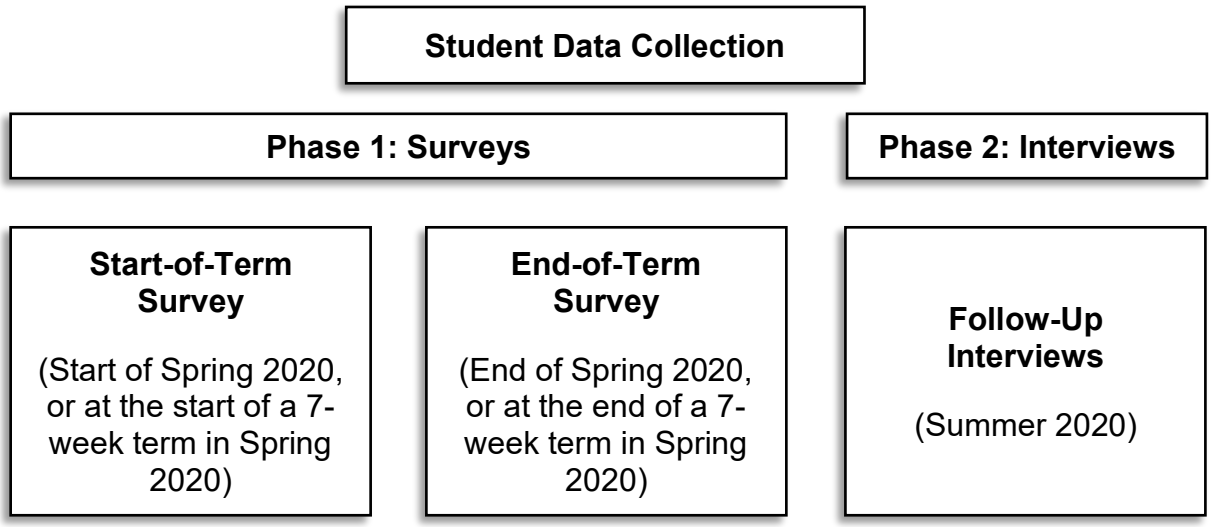
1. a survey-based first phase in two stages
2. an interview-based second phase to provide further explanation for the survey data

The portion of the study for the faculty research question gathered solely qualitative data through course document collection and a series of interviews. The student portion of the study involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in a two-stage survey phase followed by an explanatory second phase of qualitative data collection through interviews with a handful of the survey participants. The two-stage survey phase included one survey distributed to students near the beginning of their course term and a second survey distributed near the end of the same term. Results from the student portion and the faculty portion converged in order to address the primary research question.

While longitudinal studies are and will continue to be necessary for transfer studies, the convergence of these two investigations into one study afforded an arguably more robust perspective of the issue by capturing what Nowacek (2011) calls a "thick synchronous slice of student life" (p. 3). Such a "thick synchronous slice" of data allows a researcher to analyze moments of transfer that may not be captured in longitudinal studies, which must limit the depth of their views (p. 10). It was therefore possible to conduct a study addressing the primary and secondary research questions with only a single semester as the focal point, temporally speaking,

Figure 2

Student Data Collection in Two Phases



of the investigation.

In the next sections of this chapter, I will present more in-depth descriptions of and justification for each portion of the study—the student portion first, followed by the faculty portion.

Student Survey and Interview Portion

The portion of the study addressing the student research question focused on quantitative and qualitative data, primarily through a series of surveys and a handful of interviews (see Figure 2). The target population for this study was made of the 290 students who were taking one of the 12 *originally* online sections of WRIT 1110 or WRIT 1120 in the Spring 2020 semester (minus those students who were not 18 years or older at the time of the study).

First Phase: Surveys

The survey phase of the student portion of the study consisted entirely of two nearly-identical surveys that were conducted at the starts and ends of the online WRIT 1110 and WRIT 1120 courses. For the majority of the potential student participants, the start of the course was in

late January, the start of the Spring 2020 semester, and the end of the course was in early May, the end of the same semester. Some of the online UWP courses offered, however, were 7-week sections that were offered during the first and second halves of the semester, so I also delivered end-of-term and start-of-term surveys to students around midterm in March. I obtained the email addresses of students taking WRIT 1110 or WRIT 1120 in the Spring 2020 semester and invited them, one week before the start of their course, to participate in the study, providing a link to a Qualtrics survey that was open for two weeks (from one week before until one week after the start date of the course term). I also recorded a video invitation and invited online course faculty to share the survey link and video with the students in their courses.

The start-of-term survey asked students to answer questions about their reasons for taking the writing course online, how they defined writing, how they perceived writing and themselves as writers (with an emphasis on learning dispositions), what they expected to "gain" from the writing course they were about to take, and what they expected taking an online writing course would be like. (For the full start-of-term student survey, see Appendix A.) A week before the end of a term, I emailed students in that course term with an invitation to participate in the end-of-term survey, which contained many of the same questions featured in the start-of-term survey. A handful of questions had verbs changed to the past tense, and a few more questions that asked for direct reflection on some aspect of the course were added (such as asking students what they learned in the course, whether or how they believed the online nature of the course affected their learning, or what challenges they faced by taking the course online). By essentially repeating the start-of-term questions in the end-of-term survey, I was able to measure overall shifts in survey responses, which helped to reveal the effects of the course on student perceptions over the duration of the course. I collected in the surveys student names and email addresses for the sole

purpose of matching start-of-term responses to end-of-term responses to track not only overall change among the population but also shifts in perceptions among individuals. This personal information was, of course, kept confidential. (For the full end-of-term student survey, see Appendix B.)

Many of the questions in these surveys were essentially quantitative and closed-ended. A significant number of the questions used a Likert scale for student responses, with data that could be represented and analyzed visually or numerically. The following are some examples of the Likert scale statements, with notes in parentheses:

- "Writing is an especially challenging activity." (This statement asked participants to provide their perspectives on the difficulty of writing.)
- "Writing is a skill you can learn, master, and then apply to all future writing needs." (This statement sought to reveal what student participants thought of the transferability of writing. Did they think of writing as something to be fixed with an "inoculation" that could universally apply to any rhetorical situation, as Wardle & Downs [2013] critiqued?)
- "I can easily motivate myself to complete my writing tasks." (This and similar statements asked participants to report their learning dispositions and attitudes regarding writing—motivation, confidence, self-regulation, sense of ownership, and metacognition, as applied to writing. Such statements encountered the biases of self-reporting, but as this study sought to address student *perceptions*, that was exactly what I needed to know.)
- "I expect my WRIT course will prepare me for other college writing." (This statement, grouped with similar statements addressing writing in the major and writing beyond college, asked students to share their perspectives on how useful they expected the WRIT

course to be. This was another element in the survey that addressed perceptions of transfer. Did students expect to be able to apply, integrate, transform, or otherwise use their WRIT 1110 and WRIT 1120 experiences and learning for situations beyond Spring 2020? Note that in the second survey, these questions were modified to be in the past tense, asking for student experiences rather than expectations.)

- "Taking a class immersed in an online, digital environment will help me better use what I learn in the future." (This statement addressed the boundary zone of this study: How did or did not the online format of the course affect student perceptions regarding their learning?)
- "I am glad I took this course online." (This statement, which appeared only in the second survey, asked students to share their perceptions of the quality or experience of the course being online, regardless of any perceived differences about future usefulness.)

Some questions in the surveys, however, were qualitative in nature. Some of the Likert scale statements had follow-up questions (such as "Why do you think so?" after the statements about the usefulness of the WRIT course for future writing situations and the statement about the differences expected and experienced because of taking the course online). The surveys also included a few open-ended questions, such as the following:

- "How do you define 'writing'?"
- "What do you expect to learn in your WRIT course?" (In the second survey, this question was "What are three things you learned in your WRIT course?")
- "What challenges did you face because you were enrolled in an *online* section of WRIT?" (This question appeared only in the second survey. It was paired with a similar question about the advantages experienced by being enrolled in an online section.)

The surveys also asked students to provide their instructor's name. This allowed me cross-reference student data with faculty data. In the case of surveys in which student participants named participating faculty as their WRIT course instructors, I could try to examine any trends or interesting markers that existed among a faculty participant and their participating students.

In addition to collecting student names and email addresses in order to match start-of-term and end-of-term surveys together, I also collected this information in order to offer an incentive for this phase of the study. I offered this incentive because online student survey participation rates are commonly quite low without some kind of incentive, and the small number of potential student participants (a maximum of 290, minus students who, as minors, were ineligible) meant that without an incentive I risked extremely low numbers of responses for the surveys. With the help of a Global Society of Online Literacy Educators (GSOLE) Research Grant, I was able to offer the following incentive for survey participants: Students who completed both surveys had their names entered into a drawing for a $50 Amazon gift card, with three randomly selected winners.

Second Phase: Follow-up Interviews

A second phase, focused on follow-up interviews with a small portion of the student participant population, offered additional qualitative data for the study. I added this phase to the study with an Institutional Review Board amendment in mid-March, after reviewing data from the first surveys and recognizing that I needed more qualitative data to explain the quantitative data than the brief survey questions could afford, to reach closer to Nowacek's (2011) "thick synchronous slice of student life" (p. 3). While I wanted to conduct interviews with carefully-selected participants—choosing participants to cover a range of demographics, colleges, and

perceptions, as well as students whose two surveys indicated interesting shifts from one survey to the next—only four student participants expressed interest in the interviews. Therefore, the selection criteria for choosing interview participants was simplified simply to "Who said yes?"

Being follow-up interviews, I asked different questions of each student participant, focusing on interesting points and trends within their own survey responses—especially in changes that occurred from the first survey to the second. However, the interviews typically asked students about the two following points as well:

- Their experiences taking the WRIT course, in terms of whether they had taken an online writing course in the past, a non-writing online course, or if the Spring 2020 semester was their first term taking an online course. Such questions asked participants to compare and contrast these experiences to reveal how online writing courses may be different from both face-to-face online courses and other online courses.
- Their responses to the survey question about whether they were glad to have taken the course online. Questions about this provided more space for students to talk about their appreciations and frustrations with taking a writing course online.

These interviews were conducted remotely during the summer and lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. Brief profiles of the interview participants are included below.

Interview Participants

Out of 42 students who participated in the survey phase of the study, four students consented to participate in the second phase: Freida Miles, Victor Rivera, Travis Poole, and Maggie Rodriguez. All names are, of course, pseudonyms. Two of the interview participants were "traditional" students taking their WRIT courses as 18-to-24-year-olds in their first or second year of postsecondary education. The other two were "non-traditional" students taking

their courses as seniors in later adulthood.

Freida Miles. Freida Miles was a sophomore in the College of Health and Human Services at the time of the study. Her survey responses indicated that she had previous online course experience but not for a writing course. Freida was enrolled in a 15-week section of WRIT 1120 taught by Bug Frau, a participating faculty member introduced later in this chapter.

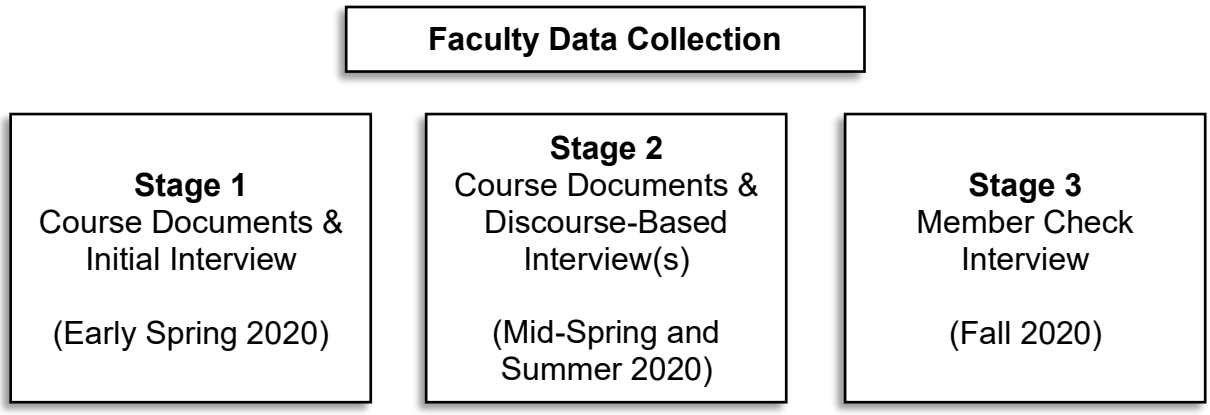
Victor Rivera. Victor Rivera was a freshman in the College of Education and Human Development at the time of the study. Like Freida, he indicated that he had prior online course experience that did not include a writing course. He also named Bug as his instructor for a 15-week section of WRIT 1120 in the Spring 2020 semester.

Travis Poole. Travis Poole was a senior in the College of Arts & Sciences at the time of the study, and he indicated his age in the 35–44 range. He had no online course experience prior to the Spring 2020 semester, and he named a non-participating faculty member for the 7-week section of WRIT 1120 in which he was enrolled.

Maggie Rodriguez. Maggie Rodriguez was a senior in the College of Technology, Architecture and Applied Engineering at the time of the study. She was one of only four student participants to name WRIT 1110 as the course in which they were enrolled in the Spring 2020 semester. She named a non-participating faculty member as the instructor of her 15-week course. Like Freida and Victor, Maggie indicated having had online course experience outside of writing instruction prior to the time of the study. Maggie was the only interview participant who did not complete both surveys. She completed only the second survey, which prevented analysis of her *changes* in perceptions, but her perspectives *after* having taken the course were nonetheless insightful for the study, as I explain in more detail in the student results chapter.

Figure 3

Faculty Data Collection in Three Stages



Faculty Interview Portion

The portion of the study addressing the faculty research question, somewhat more complex than the student portion, focused on qualitative data, primarily through a series of interviews and collection of course documents produced by faculty (see Figure 3). The target population for this study included faculty who taught one or more online sections—whether 15- or 7-week—of WRIT 1110 or WRIT 1120 in BGSU's UWP in the Spring 2020 semester. That is, faculty participants were instructors of record for the UWP courses in which student participants were enrolled. Out of six faculty who taught one of these courses in the Spring 2020 semester, three faculty agreed to participate in this study. The purpose of this faculty portion of the study was to learn about how faculty explicitly and implicitly considered writing transfer when they teach writing courses online. Interviews with open-ended questions therefore were prioritized toward understanding the processes, strategies, assumptions, and goals that instructors brought to their online writing courses in Spring 2020.

Initiation and Document Collection

I began this portion of the study by contacting faculty who were scheduled to teach

online sections of WRIT 1110 and WRIT 1120 in Spring 2020. I met with those who expressed initial interest in the study to further explain the study and answer their questions. After faculty consented to participate in the study, I arranged initial interviews with each of them early in the spring semester and set up a course document collection system using the Microsoft OneDrive service provided for members of the University. I individually shared folders within my OneDrive space with each of the faculty participants, who could add course documents to this folder for me to review. Participants had full choice in what to share and could add to the folder at any time, although I also sent formal reminders every two weeks to invite faculty to add any newly created documents to their folders.

The texts that faculty added to these folders included any documents that the instructors created for or about their courses, including the syllabus, course calendar, project and assignment descriptions, emails and announcements written for the entire class, discussion board topics, and informal writing assignments. One faculty member, Lucy, provided a copy of her course shell exported from Canvas, the learning management system (LMS) used by BGSU. I was able then to import this shell copy into my own Canvas space to see not only what texts she had created for her course but also how the documents contributed to the whole of the course shell. Lucy shared this course export file as a special case in order to facilitate discussion about her course design, a topic she wanted to address in the interviews. It is important to note that I did not ask faculty participants to provide access to their Canvas spaces in order to protect student privacy, especially considering the high probability that they would have students under the age of 18 in their courses.

Interviews

While the course document collection offered an important understanding of the overall

approach to teaching that each faculty participant took in teaching their courses, the primary method of data collection for the faculty portion of the study was a series of three types of interviews: initial interviews, discourse-based interviews (DBIs), and member check interviews. The DBIs were repeatable, with participant agreement, up to three times. Participants completed from three to five separate interviews for this study.

Initial Interviews. The first of these three interview types, the initial interview, was designed to establish context for the remainder of the faculty portion of the study. The initial interviews lasted an hour and a half for each faculty participant and asked questions about each instructor's history of teaching, their understanding of the concept of writing transfer, their perspectives on writing transfer and on teaching writing online, their goals for teaching, and what they explicitly consider to be their strategies for teaching online. These interviews represented the first stage of the faculty portion of the study and took place entirely during the Spring 2020 semester. See Appendix C for the questions included in this interview.

Discourse-Based Interviews. The second type of interview, which represented the second stage of the faculty study, was inspired by the discourse-based interview pioneered by Lee Odell, Dixie Goswami, and Anne Herrington (1983), although it was modified to also include text-based interview elements. Despite the complications given to this type of interview for this study, I referred to these interviews as discourse-based interviews. In these DBIs, I asked faculty participants about the choices they made in writing particular documents. Each interview focused on just one document or aspect of the course, selected by the participants as representing a significant moment or concept in their teaching, especially regarding transfer. Some of these interview questions offered alternative approaches to meeting the document's goals. These questions represented the "discourse-based" aspect of the interviews, as a distinguishing

characteristic of the DBI as originated by Odell, Goswami, and Herrington (1983) is the presentation, by the interviewer and to the participant, of alternative choices for portions of the text in question. The aim of such presentations is to invite the participants to share their expertises and perspectives on why they made the rhetorical choices they did, which aims in turn to help the researcher uncover the "tacit knowledge" of the participants: Regardless of what the participants explicitly gave attention to, how were they adapting (or not) their courses for online instruction, especially in terms of writing transfer? In the case of this study, I wanted the implicit understandings of the DBIs to complement the explicit understandings of transfer-related pedagogical strategies provided in the initial interviews. However, complicating this goal was the nature of this research study: Because I did not know what I would find or even what type of data would constitute the results for a "terrain-surveying" study, I had to modify the DBI to create more explicit connections to the participants' expertise and perspectives shared in the initial interviews.

Therefore, I focused questions in the DBIs to refer back to the participants' initial interviews. In a way, this allowed for the DBIs to be considered follow-up interviews to the initial interviews. It also made the first part of each DBI a text-based interview rather than a fully-fledged discourse-based interview. The beginnings of these interviews included questions such as "What were your goals for this document?" and "How did you create this document?" In the latter portion of the DBIs, I asked questions determine how participants' choices did or did not highlight the presence or adaptation of writing transfer for the online environment of their courses. For example, in the first DBI I conducted with one participant, I highlighted a passage and asked, "Would it be appropriate to include here a signal [that points] to concepts from your teaching philosophy and ultimate goals? For example, by replacing 'equity' with 'confidence' or

'independence'?" This question referred directly back to a significant theme in my initial interview with the participant, which was her focus on encouraging her students to build confidence and independence in their writing. I wanted to ask for her thoughts on such an attention to reminding students, explicitly, of course goals. In this case, the dispositional nature of their goals also weighed in on this path of investigation. That is, did the participant, as both a course instructor and a subject of the study, perceive such explicit attention to writing transfer as beneficial for writing transfer, and why or why wouldn't she include it in her online writing course?

Each of these DBIs lasted up to one hour, except in one case in which the participant volunteered to spend an extra fifteen minutes to complete the interview. At the discretion of each faculty participant, this interview type was conducted up to three times per faculty, each time on a different document or aspect of the course. Pandemic complications extended the timeline of this stage of the study: instead of beginning in the Spring 2020 semester and ending in the Summer 2020 semester, the duration of this stage was extended into the Fall 2020 semester. For reasons that I explain more in the next section, Appendix D contains the guidelines for constructing DBI questions but not the specific questions for each interview in this stage.

Member Check Interviews. The third and final stage of the faculty portion of the study included member check interviews (Alsup, 2010). The primary purpose of these interviews was for faculty participants and I to mutually negotiate participant representation in the study. The limited number of participants and the nature of researching teacher practices (which may sometimes reveal something negative) influenced this decision to conduct member check interviews so that participants could be comfortable with the way they were represented in the study. I also included these interviews because my dissertation chair, Dr. Neil Baird, was also

their supervisor as the director of the University Writing Program. Before he could see any of their data or any writing based on analysis of that, I wanted to provide faculty participants the chance to, at the very least, be informed of their representation in my study, and ideally even contribute to a fuller, more accurate representation. (As Janet Alsup suggests, conducting member checks simply to say that they were conducted, often after all analysis has been complete, removes the opportunity for participants to have "real influence" on the study and to receive the reciprocal benefits of "heightened self-awareness" [p. 98].) The likelihood that Dr. Baird (or any other person closely affiliated with the UWP or Department of English at BGSU) would be able to identify even pseudonymed participants was high enough to warrant such a careful consideration of how my study represented the participants.

In order to accomplish the purpose of negotiating representation and respecting my participants, I provided each participant an interview protocol document that highlighted significant quotations from their interviews, along with talking points related to my understandings of what each participant had said in their interviews and what their course documents had suggested to me as a researcher. I also included a brief summary of the results of the student portion of the study, with brief, anonymized summaries of the student participants who had named the participant as their course instructor. The protocol document included *guiding questions* that essentially asked participants to highlight areas where

- I misrepresented their statements or intentions
- I included quotations or summaries of their interview answers that they feel required context that I have not provided
- they want to clarify any quotation or idea included in the document, or
- they have any other comment to make about what I have included in the document.

At the start of each member check interview, and occasionally throughout the interview as a reminder, I asked the participant to consider the guiding questions. Because interviews were conducted via webconferencing software, I then could highlight categorized portions of the protocol document (while sharing my screen or working on a collaborative version of the document that was also open on the participant's computer) and invite the participant to consider the guiding questions and offer alternative interpretations, missing context, clarification, or other commentary on the points contained in that portion. I repeated this until we had covered the entire document.

Two final sections of the member checks included *concluding questions* and the brief review of student data. The concluding questions essentially asked the participants to weigh in on the research question—I recognized in the midst of conducting the DBIs that not only could the implicit understandings and "tacit knowledge" of the participants contribute to a study on practices but also their explicit understandings of said practices. The concluding questions would also offer participants the opportunity to provide perspectives that could focus the remaining analysis. That is, the inclusion of such questions was appropriate in the member checks as offering more guidance on participant representation. Therefore, I asked questions such as "How do you adapt principles of transfer-focused writing instruction for online courses?" and "How would you respond to the following statement: 'Writing transfer is about concepts that can be taught in many ways, so an online writing course and a face-to-face writing course are equally suited for teaching it'?"

The review of student data included brief, anonymized summaries of student participants who named the participants as their instructors. The student data would inherently influence the representation of the faculty participants, so the faculty participants had this chance to comment

on places where student results both supported and complicated the declared intentions and practices of the faculty participants.

Because of the pandemic-extended duration of the DBI stage of the study, the member checks occurred toward the end of the Fall 2020 semester instead of near the beginning of the term, as originally planned. This delay, however, brought a significant benefit to the interviews. Having continued teaching writing online for the Summer and Fall 2020 semesters, the faculty participants had had more time to reflect on their teaching from the Spring 2020 semester, including direct explanations of how their perspectives and practices had changed. Although this study's focus was limited to the Spring 2020 semester, the post-term opinions of the faculty participants provided an evaluative perspective not imposed by the researcher but offered organically by the participants. Their reports of the continuation, deletion, and modification of practices into the Fall 2020 semester provided another lens through with to view the acts of teaching writing online.

The member checks were planned for up to 30 minutes, but all participants agreed to extend the duration up to an hour in order to complete the interview process and ensure that representation would be as accurate as possible. While the individual protocols cannot be included because of the mixture of approved, contested, and augmented information contained with them, Appendix E contains guidelines for the overall design of the protocols, including the guiding questions and closing questions for the interview.

Faculty Participants

Three of the six UWP faculty who taught one or more sections of an online writing course in Spring 2020 agreed to participate in this study. Although some sections of WRIT 1110 (Seminar in Academic Writing) were offered in the Spring 2020 semester, most courses offered

by the UWP were WRIT 1120 (Seminar in Research Writing). Additionally, a few sections of 7-week versions of the courses were offered in the first and second half of the semester. However, all participating faculty taught only WRIT 1120 in sections that spanned the full semester. The three faculty members who participated in this study either selected their own pseudonym or requested that I assign one to them using a random name generator. Brief profiles of each participant—consisting of their online teaching experience and teaching philosophies—appear below.

Summer Reid. Summer was the first faculty member to join the study. Summer has taught a handful of online writing courses since in the past several years and described her teaching philosophy as "TILTed," referring to the Transparency in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education project (TILT Higher Ed). Summer adopted this term to define her philosophy because of its focus on explaining the purpose of class assignments and activities for "how it connects to bigger things." Summer also defined her philosophy as "student-centered," which was heavily inspired by interactions she had with students while working in a writing center.

Lucy Sharpe. Lucy was the second faculty member to join the study. As of the Spring 2020 semester, Lucy had taught several sections of online writing courses for the UWP in recent years. Lucy defined her teaching philosophy as "student-centered," "focus[ed] on empathy," and "feminist in nature." These attributes, according to Lucy, have prompted her to place an emphasis on student agency in shaping the course, including policies. She declared that her own experiences as a student influenced her to adopt these qualities into her teaching philosophy.

Bug Frau. Bug was the third faculty member to join the study. Bug has taught several sections of OFYWCs in the past few years and defined her teaching philosophy, to be examined in more detail in Chapter 4, by outlining her primary pedagogical goals for how students should

benefit from the course. In this, she named independence, critical thought, and a transferable set of skills for writing as these primary goals.

Data Analysis

Because I intentionally situated this study as preliminary and exploratory of the gap between writing transfer and OWI, I considered that the most appropriate methods of analysis would be both as open and direct as possible—open in terms of bringing in as few preconceptions as possible, direct in terms of seeing what the data said at face value. I consider this approach ground-theory-*inspired*, for, as Johnny Saldaña (2016) points out, proponents of grounded theory encourage quite a high number of interviews in order to "construct the core category and its properties and dimensions" (p. 55) that enables a researcher to build a theory grounded in the data. With the limited size of my data collection, I do not claim to have built a theory, nor did I intend to with this study, which has simply aimed to search the terrain as a preliminary exploration for determining further steps and research. Such research would likely have a more defined scope for data analysis.

Additionally, I discovered that study participants—both faculty and students—provided fairly direct responses in surveys and interviews. Coding processes revealed that the direct words of the participants, at face value, would be of the greatest significant to this study. Finally, as a researcher inspired by feminist research methodologies, grounded theory, and my awareness of the elusive distinction between objectivity and subjectivity, I wanted to prioritize participant voices. Therefore, I chose coding processes that kept participant voices intact, such as in vivo coding, which Saldaña notes is useful for "attuning yourself to participant perspectives and actions" (p. 73). I present in the next subsections the approaches I took to analyzing data in each portion of the study.

Analysis of the Student Portion

To analyze the student portion of the study, I created three spreadsheet workbooks containing the data for the surveys. Matching names and email addresses from the first and second survey responses, I found those student participants who had completed both surveys and copied their data, with one sheet per participant, to one workbook. The other two workbooks contained, on one sheet each, the full data sets from the first and second survey, each in their own workbook. This allowed me to look at data in various combinations: start-of-term perceptions alone, end-of-term perceptions alone, and changes in perceptions from the first to second survey. As I discuss later in the student results chapter, I focused primarily on that last framing of the data, looking to see how student perceptions changed from the first to the second survey. This focus helped to address the implied "change" in the student research question: "How do students perceive writing—and themselves as writers—*after* taking an online first-year writing course?" I added emphasis on "after" here to highlight the implied element of time and change that did or did not occur over that time.

With both quantitative and qualitative data, I had to analyze student responses to the survey in many ways. One question in particular was of special interest: "How do you define 'writing'?" which most directly addressed the first part of the research question—"How do students perceive writing?" This question I coded with something akin to descriptive coding, also known as "topic coding" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 102), in order to determine what topics students were addressing in their writing definitions by categorizing their responses into topics. Other qualitative questions in the survey largely served to guide the creation of questions in follow-up interviews.

For the quantitative data, I created in the workbooks formulas to compare and contrast

data and isolate certain features. For example, I created line graphs to represent, for each participant who had completed both surveys, how their initial responses to quantitative questions compared with their later responses in the second survey. As a means of estimating the validity of the population who had completed both surveys, I also created a line graph to represent how the total survey population had shifted in their responses. I looked for, among the total population of participants who had taken both surveys as well as the individual participants, the largest and smallest changes, as well as the changes that stood out as unexpected or otherwise interesting. I looked also at perceptions as they were reported at the start and end of the term—to see what conceptions students were bringing to the course and what they left with at the end, regardless of changes. (Changes, of course, were the priority, but the isolated perceptions helped to better understand the changes.)

Though just as labor-intensive, analysis of the student interview data was relatively straightforward. As I mentioned above, participants provided responses to questions in helpful ways, almost as if they were directly responding to the research questions. The follow-up nature of the interview, based on features and trends within survey responses, also allowed me to directly juxtapose the two sets of data and essentially quote student participants to explain what the survey data suggested. This approach allowed me to not only highlight participant voices but also to treat my research subjects as trustworthy—they were the experts on what they perceived of the course, themselves, their learning. My task was then to ask the right questions that would allow them to share that expertise in ways that could illuminate my research question.

Analysis of the Faculty Portion

I analyzed two sets of data for the faculty portion of the study: the shared course documents and the interviews. The interviews received the bulk of the analysis, while the course

documents supplemented analysis. I reviewed the course documents in order to observe overall approaches, noting what kinds of documents faculty created, what concepts faculty were addressing, and whether anything in the documents suggested anything significant regarding writing transfer in the online writing courses.

I spent more time with the interviews. I created brief analytic memos from the initial interviews in order to identify questions to ask in the DBIs—especially by taking note of faculty participants' teaching philosophies, definitions of transfer, and pedagogical goals, which I saw as foundational to their work and therefore the documents under discussion in each DBI. For the DBIs themselves, I noted reflecting on the interviews that the nature of participants' responses to questions afforded a more direct approach—as discussed above regarding the importance and validity of student participant voices—than "digging" or "combing" for meaning. That is to say that I could treat these interviews as straightforward responses to the study's aims and questions. I considered what Saldaña (2016) says about the necessity of coding—that "*there are times when coding the data is absolutely necessary, and times when it is most inappropriate for the study at hand*" (p.2, emphasis in original)—and wondered, with such direct response to the research questions and no apparent need to quantify qualitative responses or determine hidden patterns in language, if I needed to code interviews at all.

However, I opted to perform at least a round of in vivo coding on the DBIs to see if I might find further support for what considerations, motives, and assumptions seemed most to be on facultys' minds as they discussed their course creation, migration, adaptation, and/or delivery. Following Saldaña's advice to "[trust my] instincts" (p.107), marking places in the interview transcripts as a code if it "appear[ed] to stand out" (p. 108). For in vivo coding, this process entailed marking as codes words and phrases that stood out as significant for any reason. (The

emphasis in vivo coding places on actual participant voice and not concepts thrust upon the data by the researcher was another reason for choosing this method.) Once I had coded the transcripts, I reviewed the codes to see what stood out within the codes and what codes appeared frequently. I included the results and a brief memo about them within the member check interview documents I created for each faculty. This process turned out to be helpful for shedding additional, often confirmatory, light on the approaches and aims of the faculty participants.

Finally, all reading and reviewing of faculty participant materials—documents and interview transcripts—ultimately was conducted toward creating the member check interview documents described earlier in this chapter. In turn, the member check interviews themselves, by their very nature, afforded extra analytical power for the faculty data. While such "analytical power" may be considered biased because it comes from participant commentary on how they have been represented, I considered it beneficial and trustworthy: the negotiation process employed in the interviews meant that the results of the interview were constructed, in a way, by two people instead of one. Additionally, my stance on trusting participants—especially fellow experts in the field—prompted me to favor their input over my solo, unchecked summary and interpretation of their expressed ideas.

Juxtaposing the Data

The limited number of participants—both faculty and student—prevented extensive convergence of results. One area of data merging that I would have liked to explore more was in matching student results to the data pertaining to the faculty participant named as their instructor. Only a small handful of student participants who had completed both surveys, however, named participating faculty as their instructors. Nonetheless, I compared the trends in student results with those of their named instructors where possible and included preliminary observations

within the member check interviews. I invited faculty to comment on instances and patterns in which students had produced outcomes or commentary that aligned—or complicated—the claims and practices of the faculty participants.

This allowed for a limited venture into the convergence of the two datasets. For meaningful integration of the student portion and the faculty portion of the study beyond this direct merging, I put the results from both portions in conversation with each other. After examining each portion on its own, I reexamined them together, asking questions such as the following:

- How did student results support or complicate faculty claims?
- How did faculty results support or complicate student claims?
- Where did students and faculty seem to share concepts and ideas about how the online format of the WRIT courses provided advantages, disadvantages, and differences for learning and writing transfer?

The results of that juxtaposition are featured in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Role of Research Assistants

I received assistance in this study not only in the form of guidance from my advisor—Dr. Neil Baird—and the rest of my committee—Dr. Dan Bommarito, Dr. Scott Warnock, and Dr. Neal Jesse—and others who were named in the Acknowledgments, but I also received assistance from Emma Guthrie and Rachel Flynn, who were, at the time of the study, PhD students at earlier stages of the Rhetoric & Writing Studies program at BGSU: Guthrie was finishing her second year, and Flynn was finishing her first year of the program. (As of the time of this writing, Guthrie has obtained PhD candidacy in the program.)

I invited Guthrie and Flynn to participate in my study as research assistants for a few

reasons. The major benefit to the research was in supporting the interviewing processes. Either one of them joined me for the initial interviews and DBIs and shared in the work of processing transcripts for these interviews. They took notes while I interviewed the participants, freeing my attention to in turn accomplish multiple purposes. One of these purposes was to maintain awareness of and follow the interview protocol. Another, more important, purpose regarded my respect for the interview participants. My approach to research methods and ethics, informed in part by feminist research methodologies, demanded respecting the voices of the participants, as I have mentioned above. This meant centering the interviewees and putting an emphasis on truly listening to them. In this manner, I attempted to perform what Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin (2011) call "responsive interviewing," with follow-up questions appropriately and respectfully continuing the interview protocol while staying relevant to the experiences and thoughts shared by the interviewee.

This arrangement also allowed for more insights, from more perspectives, to be revealed by my colleagues' participation in the interviews. Guthrie and Flynn were invited to generate and offer their own follow-up questions—an invitation both of them accepted by asking questions both supportive of my dissertation and pursuant to their own research interests. This not only performed perspective-strengthening functions within the interviews but also supported my personal-professional interest in mentorship. Guthrie and Flynn thus added to their research experience in ways more meaningful to themselves. Another benefit they received was a small stipend for their work. Earlier I mentioned a GSOLE grant that allowed me to offer incentives to student participants. It also allowed me to provide the stipends to Guthrie and Flynn, so I am doubly thankful to the organization.

Limitations

In this final section of the chapter, I highlight the limitations of the study so that the results and discussion of the study presented in the following chapter are appropriately scaled. The scope and reach of nearly any research will place various limitations on the study. In this study, the scope has been limited within writing studies to only OFYWCs, and the reach has been limited to first-year writing courses offered at BGSU. The focus on FYW courses restricts insight into the larger field of writing studies but responds appropriately to the critique about FYW often faced within and without writing studies. A larger study across multiple institutions would have afforded greater generalizability from a larger data set spanning more than one geographic and programmatic context, but without a larger team of researcher and/or a much longer window of time, such a study would not have afforded any degree of thick description or close attention to participant voices.

The focus within one course sector within one institution could have been enhanced with direct observation of the courses, offering some of the benefits of institutional ethnography and a clearer sense of what happens in OFYWCs, but I opted not to design this study in that way not only because of the massive additional burden that would have placed on the data collection and analysis of the study but also because of the need, in such a case, to gain consent and/or assent from all students. With the high population of UWP students under the age of 18, such an endeavor would have been particularly difficult. Instead, I chose to gather materials from faculty and allow them to explain the course structure, which afforded a similar amount of attention to detail regarding faculty practices and the intentions that helped shaped those practices.

The interviews and surveys of this study assumed a certain level of trustworthiness on the part of the subjects toward accurate self-representation. Student participants self-reported their

learning dispositions, for example, instead of taking an external test to report a more objective measure of their survey responses. This may have allowed for some bias—conscious or otherwise—to be present in the survey responses. However, as the study addressed perceptions, especially perceptions of writing and about the students themselves as writers, the self-reported nature of the surveys was appropriate for this study.

Likewise, as I have addressed above, faculty participants had the opportunity to comment on the data gathered, potentially opening a way for instructors to—consciously or otherwise—inaccurately influence the results. As I've mentioned above, the risk this brought to the study was countered by the benefits it provided in multiple perspectives, respect given to subjects, and refinement of results through an extra layer of "analytic power."

As I have also mentioned previously, the duration of the study—with only one semester in question and extending a few months beyond it for the post-semester interviews—prevented long-term observation of the courses' effects on writing transfer as experienced and performed by students in later moments of their college and/or professional careers. A large contribution toward this limitation was the requirement that a dissertation be potentially feasible within a one-year span of time. Certainly, such a longitudinal version of this study would be desirable.

Finally, one unanticipated and unmitigated limitation for the study appeared as the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed in almost every way the collective experience of higher education (and more) halfway through this study. Even though this study focused on courses that started out online and did not have to migrate to online spaces in a frantic manner, as did most other postsecondary courses, the pandemic permeated all lives thoroughly. Its effects were seen also in this study, with some fairly apparent instances showing up in a few specific points in the data, which I discuss in the following chapters. It is possible that it had subtler effects elsewhere

as well. To this, I have no answer other than to say that I have attempted wherever possible to point out how this unexpected event may have altered outcomes.

CHAPTER 3: STUDENT PARTICIPANT RESULTS

This chapter seeks to answer the question, "How do students perceive writing—and themselves as writers—after taking an online first-year writing course?" While the results, as expected, indicate the variety of student characteristics and experiences one would expect from a survey targeting a general education course, a few trends emerge. Because of the phrase "after taking [a]…course," the focal question of this chapter privileges changes in perception, making the most meaningful trends for this question ones in regard to how students answered questions differently in the second survey from how they answered them in the first.

The largest shifts, whether positive or negative, from the start-of-term survey responses to the end-of-term survey responses lie in the questions about post-writing reflection, writing confidence, self-motivation, expectations and experiences about meaningful writing in the writing course, and whether learning writing online offers special preparation for thoughtfully considering other writing. These shifts suggest that habits/actions (such as reflecting on writing), self-perceptions/dispositions (such as writing confidence and self-motivation), and expectations (such as about the presence of meaningful activities in a course and the affordances of the learning environment on student success) are similarly likely to be affected by the instruction of the courses.

Although writing confidence shifted positively, the students who reported increases in confidence were just as often students of the faculty who hadn't named confidence as a major pedagogical goal as they were of the faculty who did. With the small population of students reporting on both surveys (n=13) and the portion of them that named non-participating faculty as their instructors (n=4, or nearly 31%), it's likely that to some extent we can declare the program's curriculum, regardless of instructor, had some involvement in the boost in writing

confidence.

While student perceptions of the unique benefits of learning writing in online courses presents a mixed bag, some promising results emerged. First, students largely reported high satisfaction with their choice to take their writing course online. Students who took only the second survey as well as students who took both surveys reported an average response solidly between "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree" to the prompt "I am glad I took this course online." If anything, this confirms that, despite all of the complaints raised about online learning at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students do appreciate learning writing online.

Additionally, some potential exists for online writing instruction to promote disposition generation that can be harnessed for more effective writing transfer. While many students reported that the course concepts were similar to what they experienced in F2F writing courses (or what they expected they would have experienced), some of them also explained that taking the writing course online boosted their confidence or encouraged them to confront their issues of self-regulation and motivation that had compelled them to procrastinate. Educators may hope that such positive improvements occur as an almost natural result of the process of learning, but we should not ignore these generative dispositional shifts or the beneficial augmentation online writing instruction might bring to them. Similar meta-learning benefits also show up in Liane Robertson's (2018) argument that OWI offers more opportunity for student agency, which in turn promotes transfer of writing knowledge.

Although these results may be tempered by the presence of similar benefits in F2F writing instruction, further investigation would be useful on the degree to which OWI presents these advantages to potential students.

Survey Participants

During the Spring 2020 semester, 290 students took an online writing course from BGSU's University Writing Program. An unknown number of these students, because of age, were ineligible to take the surveys for this research project. Of the 290 online writing students, 42 of them (14.5%) took one or both of the surveys. The 42 students completed a total of 55 surveys: 32 start-of-term and 23 end-of-term surveys.

In line with the university's suggestion that students complete UWP courses early in their college careers, the majority of the student participants were freshman (25, or 59.5%). The remaining 17 survey participants were six sophomores (14.2%), five juniors (11.9%), four seniors (9.5%), and two (4.8%) who identified their class standing as "other." Following this, most participants (36, or 85.7%) identified themselves in the "traditionally-aged student" range of 18 to 24 years old. The remaining six participants identified their ages as 25 to 34, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54 (two students in each range). BGSU has a high majority of white students, so it's not too surprising that all but three students identified as white. Two of the three identified as Hispanic or Latino, and one student identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. However, significantly more female students took the surveys than male students (33 to 9, or 78.6% to 21.4%). No participants identified as another gender.

Four of the participating students indicated that they were taking WRIT 1110 at the time of the survey, with the other 38 students indicating WRIT 1120. Most BGSU students take WRIT 1110 in the fall and WRIT 1120 in the spring, so this heavy majority on WRIT 1120 was expected for a survey conducted in a spring semester. About half (22, or 52.4%) of the students reported previously taking an online course before Spring 2020, with 8 (19%) reporting that they had taken an online version of WRIT 1110 or another previous online writing course prior to the

semester of the survey. Caveat: Two of the students who took both surveys provided conflicting answers for the question on previous online writing courses. One answered "Yes" in the initial survey and "No" in the follow-up, and one answered in the reverse pattern. Finally, 29 (69%) of the students provided the names of participating faculty members as their course instructor.

Only 13 students (31% of the student participants and 4.5% of the total population of online writing course students) completed both surveys. One of these 13 participants was taking WRIT 1110 at the time of the survey. The remaining 12 were enrolled in WRIT 1120. Eight of the students (all of them among the 12 enrolled in WRIT 1120) reported taking an online course prior to the current semester, with two or three students indicating that their previous online course experience included WRIT 1110 or another writing course taken online. (The case mentioned above regarding conflicting answers affected this question, as two of the participants who took both surveys changed their answers in the second survey.) Of these 13 students, nine of them (again, all within the 12 who were enrolled in WRIT 1120) named participating faculty members as their course instructors: four in Bug's sections, three in Lucy's sections, and two in Summer's sections.

In the remainder of this chapter, I present results from the student participants, beginning with a broad overview of the survey data but quickly turning primary attention to the students who completed both surveys. Continuing the map/terrain metaphors of Moore's (2012) and Qualley's (2017) work, I explore the forest and its land, but this dissertation is designed with the knowledge that the forest cannot all be mapped at once. After a brief glimpse at the overall survey results, I move quickly from viewing the forest to viewing the trees to focus on the students who took both surveys. Such students were the survey participants who were most directly relevant to the research question, which asks how students perceive writing and

themselves as writers *after* taking an online writing course. The forest view is useful for validating the representativeness of the handful of trees I observe, but for comparative purposes the research question is primarily concerned with the students whose pre- and post-semester perceptions are known. Finally, I turn attention at the end of this chapter to the four students who agreed to participate in a 30-to-60-minute interview, three of whom had completed both surveys. Their interview responses confirm, complicate, and shed light on the observations I make about the 13 trees of this forest.

Explanation of the Research Question and the Figures in This Chapter

The research question for this part of the study is a loaded question. It asks, "How do students perceive writing—and themselves as writers—after taking an online first-year writing course?" Though that sentence seems to have just two objects of concern—perceptions of writing and perceptions of students themselves as writers—the "objects" contain many ideas. For writing, the study asks about students' definitions of writing in addition their perceptions of its usefulness, difficulty, enjoyability, and masterability. For perceptions of themselves as writers, the study asks about their knowledge, dispositions, and other personal factors that directly or indirectly support their acts of writing and learning. The study also asks about perceptions of the writing course itself and the online mode of learning.

The next two sections provide necessary background information on many of the figures included in this chapter: an explanation of the survey key and a few words on the nature of the questions toward complicating any quick readings of the provided figures.

Survey Key

For the sake of space and readability, the axis labels on each figure's line chart have been truncated to short phrases representative of the full statements from the Likert scale questions on

the surveys. The full statements are below. The first 17 statements (from *writing useful* to *seek challenges*) were identical in both surveys (to indicate the participants' present-tense perceptions at the time of the surveys), while three of the last five questions (from *meaningful writing* to *online prepares*) appeared in slightly altered forms. In the first survey, these statements anticipated the value of the writing course experiences with "I expect" or "[this class] will"; in the second survey, these statements evaluated the students' experiences in the writing course in the past tense. The final two statements (*WRIT preps beyond* and *online prepares*) were nearly identical in both surveys to indicate that "beyond college" is still in the future, as are many experiences students may have related to the online world. The list below also contains the short phrases next to the full statements, with the last five list items including both the start-of-term survey's statements and the end-of-term survey's statements:

- *Writing useful*: "Writing is useful or necessary in most aspects of life."
- *Writing challenging*: "Writing is an especially challenging activity."
- *Writing masterable*: "Writing is a skill you can learn, master, and then apply to all future writing needs."
- *Enjoy writing*: "I enjoy writing."
- *Writing confidence*: "I approach writing situations with confidence."
- *Writing strategies*: "I know and employ useful strategies for writing."
- *Similar past tasks*: "When I write, I often think about similar writing tasks I completed in the past."
- *Dissimilar past tasks*: "When I write, I often think about dissimilar writing tasks I completed in the past."
- *Motivate self*: "I can easily motivate myself to complete my writing tasks."

- *Put if off/Give up*: "When a writing assignment is especially difficult, I tend to put it off for later or give up."
- *Eliminate distractions*: "If I myself or something else distracts me during a writing task, I quickly get rid of the distraction to continue writing."
- *Readily accept changes*: "When a teacher or classmate suggests changes for my writing, I readily accept those changes."
- *Critically consider changes*: "When a teacher or classmate suggests changes for my writing, I critically consider whether I want to accept those changes."
- *Reflect before*: "I reflect on my thoughts and my writing before I begin putting words to a page."
- *Reflect during*: "I reflect on my thoughts and my writing while I write."
- *Reflect after*: "I reflect on my thoughts and my writing after I have finished writing."
- *Seek challenges*: "I seek challenges in writing."
- *Meaningful writing*: "I expect some or all of the writing I do in my WRIT course will be personally meaningful to me" (in the first survey) and "Some or all of the writing I did in my WRIT course was personally meaningful to me" (in the second survey).
- *WRIT preps college*: "I expect my WRIT course will prepare me for other college writing" (in the first survey) and "My WRIT course has helped prepare me for other college writing" (in the second survey).
- *WRIT preps major*: "I expect my current WRIT course will prepare me to write in my major" (in the first survey) and "My WRIT course has helped prepare me to write in my major" (in the second survey).
- *WRIT preps beyond*: "I expect course content and concepts from my current WRIT

course will help me with writing beyond college," with the word "current" removed from the statement in the second survey.

- *Online prepares*: "Taking a class immersed in an online, digital environment will help me better use what I learn in the future" (in the first survey) and "Taking this class immersed in an online, digital environment will help me better use what I learned in the future" (in the second survey).

One more Likert statement, *glad online* ("I am glad I took this course online"), appears only in the second survey and is not included in the figures depicting before-and-after perceptions.

Positive, Negative, and Indeterminate Results

Most statements in the survey questions are positive, with high agreement indicating likelihood of generative dispositions and habits as well as positive perceptions. However, a few statements indicate likelihood of disruptive habits and alignment with writing misconceptions. Therefore, a high score on some statements is not necessarily desired. The following statements are either negative or indeterminant:

- *Writing challenging*: A high score on this question is neither desirable nor undesirable. A high score could indicate that a student is aware of the complexities and difficulties of writing *or* that a student is overwhelmed by the challenges of writing, among other possibilities. A low score could indicate that a student is unaware of the complexities and difficulties of writing *or* that a student has gained confidence in meeting the challenges of writing. A primary purpose of this question was simply to observe how the response changed by the end of the course.
- *Writing masterable*: A high score on this question indicates alignment with a misconception of writing, namely that writing can be learned once and applied wholesale

to other situations. A lower score is arguably preferred for this question, especially after taking the WRIT course and (one hopes) learning more and more about the highly contextualized nature of writing situations.

- *Similar past tasks* and *dissimilar past tasks*: These questions, inspired by the concepts of near and far transfer and meant to investigate use of prior knowledge, don't necessarily indicate positive or negative perceptions or habits, especially considering that a student's definition of "similar" or "dissimilar" could change after taking a writing course. A primary purpose for including these questions in the surveys was to observe changes.
- *Put it off/Give up*: This question indicates a decidedly negative perception of self and habits. A high agreement with the statement indicates task avoidance, suggesting a high level of procrastination and/or a low level of self-regulation.
- *Readily accept changes*: While *critically consider changes* is arguably positive in nearly all situations (suggesting critical thinking and a high sense of ownership for one's writing), *readily accept changes* presents some *potential* complications. This question could indicate, positively, a student's willingness to act on feedback or, negatively, a student's inclination to relinquish control of their writing to others.

It is more accurate, then, to consider the data that follows in this chapter shows not positive and negative perceptions but rather high and low agreement with the statements. Changes in perception show increased and decreased agreement with the statements, and each statement individually may be considered positive, negative, or neutral/indeterminant.

Overall Results of All Participants

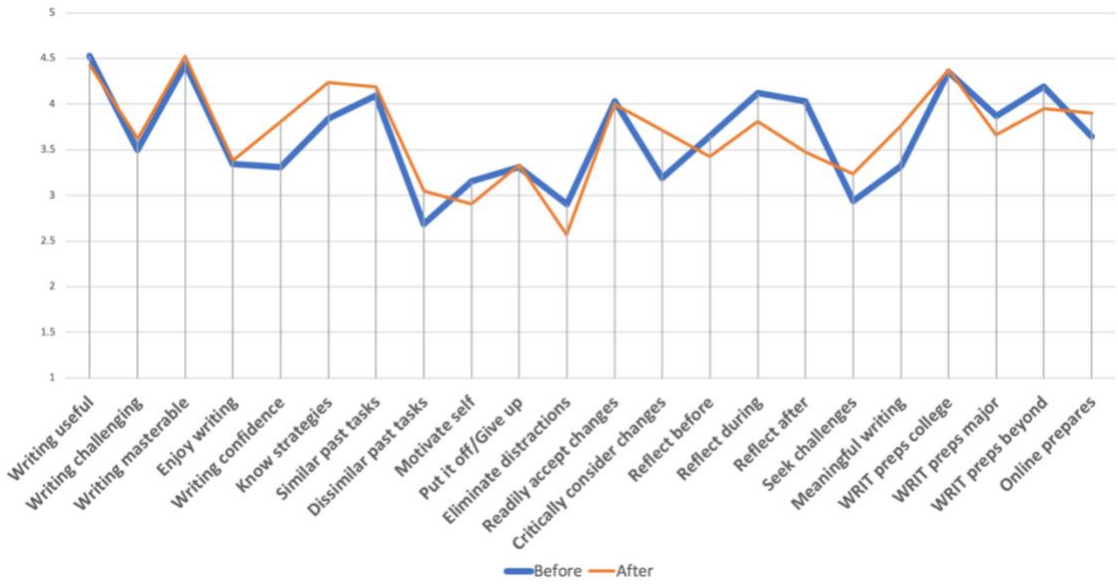
The first question of the survey, after demographics and other background questions, asked students to define writing. Among the 32 start-of-term survey responses, 30 included

answers to this question. Using an amalgamation of descriptive and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016), I coded these definitions for the words and topics respondents seemed to focus on in their responses, generating new codes as definitions required. While the answers varied, similar features appeared in many responses. By far the most prevalent code in the definitions was "[external] audience implied," a code attributed to the 24 definitions (80% of responses) that directly or indirectly indicated writing is done with others in mind. Often these definitions included the words "communicate," "readers," "get across," "explains," and so on. Occasionally a definition's only connection to an audience was the quality implied, such as when words needed to be "coherent." The close second code was "audience required," which did not allow for such implied qualities or the possibility that writing is only for the self (such as when participants defined writing as self-expression). Eighteen (60%) of the definitions fit this category. Other common features included the use of the word "words" (n=12, or 40%); reference to the materiality of writing, such as using paper or a computer (n=11, or 36%); and attention to thoughts and ideas (n=10, or 33%). Eight of the definitions directly included a form of the word "communicate."

Only 20 of the 23 end-of-term survey responses included a definition of writing. Sixteen of the definitions (again, 80%) matched the "audience implied" code, and ten (50%) matched "audience required." The proportions for these codes in the second survey corresponded rather well to the first survey, but some changes did occur. Notably, only six (30%) of the second survey definitions relied on the use of "words," and the materiality of writing in the second survey definitions dropped to 20% (n=4). Overall, students' definitions of writing remained focused on the purpose of writing as a form of communication for others, but the definitions were broader and less limited in scope.

Figure 4

Averaged Responses Among All Participants



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly Disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly Agree."

Most of the survey questions, following the question asking for a definition of writing, were the five-point (strongly disagree to strongly agree) Likert scale questions. Converting the alphabetic responses into numeric responses (e.g., "strongly disagree" into 1 and "strongly agree" into 5) allowed for the creation of line chart visualizations to demonstrate whether and how much responses for each question shifted among individuals and the collective participants. Figure 4 displays the averaged responses for the Likert scale questions among all survey participants. The chart, showing both the start-of-term and end-of-term responses, indicates not only which statements received higher overall agreement than others but also which statements received more change in agreement. Larger gaps between the blue "before" and orange "after" lines indicate greater shifts in the average perception among participants over the course of the semester. Where the lines remain close indicate less change in the responses. The highest

agreement among the Likert statements at the end of the semester include *writing useful, writing masterable*, *know strategies*, *similar past tasks*, and *WRIT preps college*. These statements all received an average end-of-semester agreement score above 4.0. With the exception of *know strategies*, these statements did not shift much from the level of agreement indicated at the start of the semester.

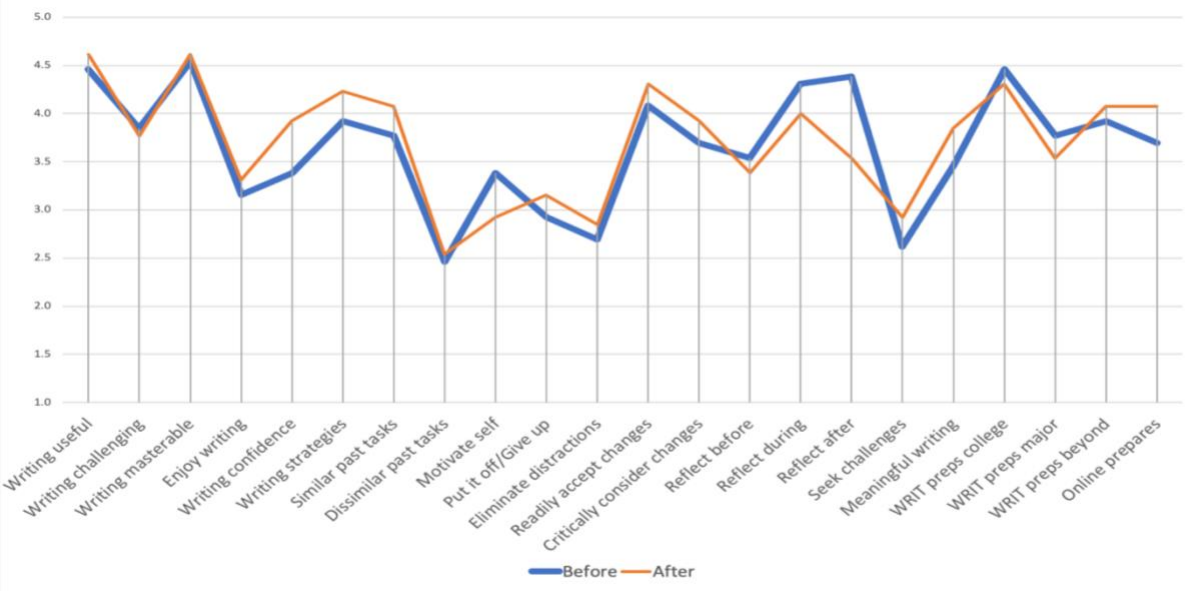
While the positive shift in agreement for the *know strategies* statement is promising for indicating the growth of student knowledge after taking a writing course, the line chart in Figure 4 has a limited reliability. Because the students who responded in the first and second surveys were not all the same, the shifts in perception do not necessarily match how each student, on average, shifted their perception. However, the chart shows averaged responses among all students at two distinct times in the semester, so each individual line ("before" and "after") shows a reasonably accurate representation of the agreement for each statement across the population of online writing course students. The primary utility of this chart, then, is not in demonstrating the change in perceptions but in demonstrating whether the small population of students who completed both surveys (n=13) is representative of this larger population. If the overall shape of this line chart follows the pattern of a chart created using only data from the 13 participants who took both surveys, then the 13 "double-survey" students may be considered fairly representative of the larger population. I turn my attention now to those students.

Overall Results of the Double-Survey Participants

The line chart in Figure 5, showing only the averaged responses for the 13 students who took both the start-of-semester survey, demonstrates more reliably than Figure 4 how much students' perceptions changed over the course of the semester because the populations used to create both lines are identical. That is, the larger data set in Figure 4 can show the overall

Figure 5

Averaged Responses Among Double-Survey Participants



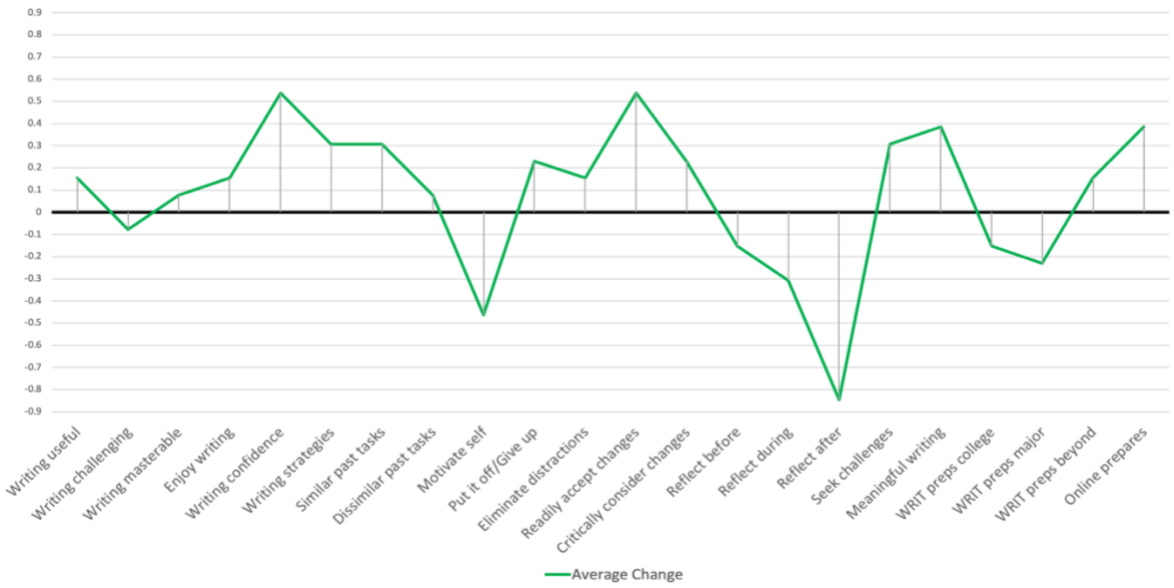
Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

perceptions across the population, and the identical populations in Figure 5 can allow for valid comparison between start-of-term and end-of-term responses. The rises and falls of the lines in Figure 5 align fairly well with the rises and falls in Figure 4, which lends confidence to the validity of these 13 students as representative of the larger population of students who took online writing courses at BGSU in Spring 2020.

The thicker blue line in Figure 5 shows the average start-of-term rating for each perception, and the thinner orange line shows the end-of-term rating. Where the orange line rises above the blue line shows where students increased their agreement with a statement, and their agreement decreased where the orange line dips below the blue line. The larger gaps between lines indicate larger shifts in the level of agreement. Similar charts for each of the13 double-survey participants are provided in Appendix F. Table 1 provides the values for the statements

Figure 6

Average Change in Perceptions



Note. A 1-point difference would represent an average change of one full step on the Likert scale (e.g., from "Neither agree nor disagree" to "Somewhat agree").

with the highest and lowest levels of agreement, averaged among the 13 double-survey participants, at the start and end of the semester.

Figure 6 further clarifies the shifts shown in Figure 5 by displaying the differences as one line, with increased agreement represented by points on the line above zero and decreased agreement represented by line points below zero. The highest peaks and lowest valleys in Figure 6 point to the statements that received the most change among the participants over the course of the semester. Table 2 provides the change in value for the statements with the most increased level of agreement, the most decreased level of agreement, and the most changed level of agreement regardless of direction. Finally, Table 3 shows the averaged start-of-term score, averaged end-of-term score, and change in score for each of the 22 Likert scale statements, plus the end-of-term score for the one statement that appeared only on the second survey (*"I am glad*

Table 1

Highest and Lowest Agreements for Likert Statements

Rank	Highest Agreement (Start-of-Term)	Lowest Agreement (Start-of-Term)	Highest Agreement (End-of-Term)	Lowest Agreement (End-of-Term)
1	Writing masterable (4.54)	Dissimilar past tasks (2.46)	Writing masterable (4.62)	Dissimilar past tasks (2.54)
2	Writing useful (4.46)	Seek challenges (2.62)	*Writing useful (4.62)	Eliminate distractions (2.85)
3	*WRIT preps college (4.46)	Eliminate distractions (2.69)	WRIT preps college (4.31)	Motivate self (2.92)
4	Reflect after (4.38)	Put it off/Give up (2.92)	*Readily accept changes (4.31)	*Seek challenges (2.92)
5	Reflect during (4.31)	Enjoy writing (3.15)	Writing strategies (4.23)	Put it off/Give up (3.15)

Note. Items marked with an asterisk (*) indicate items with values that match the value of the item above it. The rank of these items should be considered equivalent to the rank of the item above it.

I took this course online").

Changes in Perceptions

Many of the perceptions of writing students expressed in the first survey follow what one might expect of FYW students new to college-level writing. In the start-of-term survey (see Table 1), students expressed knowing writing is useful (agreement score of 4.46) but don't enjoy it as much (agreement score of 3.15). They agreed that FYW classes such as WRIT 1110 and 1120 prepare students for college (agreement score of 4.46) and believed writing to be a masterable, easily transferable skill (agreement score of 4.54). Students at the start of the term did not see the need to abstract similarities between tasks that aren't similar to each other (agreement score of 2.46). They did not tend to seek challenges with writing (agreement score of 2.62) or eliminate distractions in order to work on writing tasks (agreement score of 2.69). They also felt only moderate levels of confidence in their writing skills and knowledge (agreement

Table 2

Most Changed Agreements for Likert Statements

Rank	Most Increased	Most Decreased	Most Changed (Regardless of Direction)
1	Writing confidence (+0.54)	Reflect after (-0.85)	Reflect after (-0.85)
2	Meaningful writing (+0.39)	Motivate self (-0.46)	Writing confidence (+0.54)
3	*Online prepares (+0.39)	Reflect during (-0.31)	Motivate self (-0.46)
4	Seek challenges (+0.31)	WRIT preps major (-0.23)	Meaningful writing (+0.39)
5	*Writing strategies & similar past tasks (+0.31)	WRIT preps college & Reflect before (-0.15)	*Online prepares (+0.39)

Note. Items marked with an asterisk (*) indicate items with values that match the value of the item above it. The rank of these items should be considered equivalent to the rank of the item above it.

score of 3.9; see Table 3).

By the end the semester, however, some of these perceptions shifted, in ways both encouraging and potentially troubling (Table 2). The statement with the highest upward shift was *writing confidence* (+0.54), suggesting that students perceived themselves to have gained more confidence in their writing knowledge and skills after taking the course. Considering confidence was named by multiple faculty participants as a primary goal they had in mind for their writing students, the high level of increased agreement for this statement is encouraging. Two statements received the second highest level of upward shift: *meaningful writing* and *online prepares* (+0.36 for both). These changes suggest students found the writing tasks assigned in their WRIT courses to be meaningful—personally, presently, and/or in anticipation of future work—and saw benefits to learning writing in an online learning environment. Finally, three statements tied for third: *seek challenges*, *similar past tasks*, and *writing strategies* (+0.31 each). These increased levels of

Table 3

Average Agreements for Likert Statements

Statement Abbreviation	Start-of-Term Agreement Score	End-of-Term Agreement Score	Change in Agreement Score
Writing useful	4.46	4.62	+0.15
Writing challenging	3.85	3.77	-0.07
Writing masterable	4.54	4.62	+0.07
Enjoy writing	3.15	3.31	+0.15
Writing confidence	3.38	3.92	+0.54
Writing strategies	3.92	4.23	+0.31
Similar past tasks	3.77	4.08	+0.31
Dissimilar past tasks	2.46	2.54	+0.07
Motivate self	3.38	2.92	-0.46
Put it off/Give up	2.92	3.15	+0.23
Eliminate distractions	2.69	2.85	+0.15
Readily accept changes	4.08	4.31	+0.22
Critically consider changes	3.69	3.92	+0.23
Reflect before	3.54	3.38	-0.15
Reflect during	4.31	4.00	-0.31
Reflect after	4.38	3.53	-0.85
Seek challenges	2.62	2.92	+0.31
Meaningful writing	3.46	3.85	+0.39
WRIT preps college	4.46	4.31	-0.15
WRIT preps major	3.77	3.54	-0.23
WRIT preps beyond	3.92	4.08	+0.15
Online prepares	3.69	4.08	+0.39
Glad online	–	4.46	–

Note. While all numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundredths value, the change in agreement scores were calculated before the agreement scores were rounded.

agreement all fall squarely into the realm of positive change, as these changes suggest students grew in their willingness to perform difficult writing tasks, drew upon more prior knowledge for current writing tasks (or even created stronger bridges so that more prior experiences seemed currently relatable), and assessed their preparedness for writing tasks as having grown.

The statements with agreement levels that decreased by the most, however, suggest somewhat concerning developments. The most decreased level of agreement for a statement was for *reflect after* (-0.85), which also received, by far, the highest change *regardless of direction*. In a course with a curriculum oriented definitively toward writing transfer, the practice of less post-writing reflection—a common metacognitive-supporting move for writing transfer—is troubling. The other statements with the most decreased agreement levels were *motivate self* (-0.46), *reflect during* (-0.31), *WRIT preps major* (-0.23), *WRIT preps college* (-0.15), and *reflect before* (-0.15). All stages of reflection, then, took a hit by the end of the course, as well as the perceived value of the course for success in college, whether for courses in the major or in general education courses.

The causes behind the downward shifts for these perceptions and habits may be various, but the second item on that list of the most decreased agreement levels may hold a clue to one factor that may have had a large impact on the student participants' reported perceptions. After *reflect after*, students reported the furthest drops in their ability to *motivate self*. While it is possible that any number of reasons could have contributed to this decline, including simply the mental exhaustion students may have felt at the end of the term, I cannot ignore the potential influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the emotional states and dispositions of the students who participated in this study, even though their writing courses started out as online courses even before the hint of a need for the social lockdowns that started in mid-March 2020. Such a

hit to motivation would also explain the declining agreements for all three reflection-related statements. Reflection, though highly valued in transfer-oriented learning and instruction, may easily be seen by students as icing on the cake and not an integral ingredient. In uncertain times or under unexpected pressures, such "extra" work may have been the first to be jettisoned. The pandemic hit to motivation could also explain the slightly increased agreement (+0.23) students gave to the *put it off/give up* statement (see Table 3).

If the pandemic bore any significant portion of the responsibility for the negatively shifted perceptions recorded in the student participants' second survey responses, we have cause for viewing these results with a more optimistic lens. The number of statements with negatively shifted agreements is smaller than the number of statements with positively shifted agreements, and the most decreased agreements generally were marked by somewhat smaller shifts than the most increased agreements. This suggests that the gains of the course may have been, on the whole, more plentiful than the losses. If we assume that the losses would have been even less without a pandemic—an assumption I am hesitant to make, yet one that seems reasonable—then the results of this study may have been even more positive.

Alas. Spring 2020 was not without a pandemic, and the data I collected is the data I collected. In that spirit, I now turn briefly to a few of the remaining statements—those that saw little change—before turning to the four student interview participants to determine how their more in-depth responses may be able to illuminate more of these shifts in perception.

Statements that didn't receive much shift included *writing useful* (+0.15) and *writing masterable* (+0.07). It is encouraging for students to perceive a very high value for the usefulness and importance of writing, especially after taking a writing course, but the upward shift for *writing masterable* bears some potential concerns. If a key concept in teaching for writing

transfer is that rhetorically situated writing cannot be provided through "writing inoculation" (Wardle & Downs, 2013), it may be somewhat troubling for students to *increase*, however slightly, their agreement that "Writing is a skill you can learn, master, and then apply to all future writing needs." However, I cannot ignore the possibility that increased confidence allowed students to perceive writing as masterable because they felt, after taking the course, better prepared for "future writing needs."

Other minimal increases included *enjoy writing* (+0.15), *eliminate distractions* (+0.15), *WRIT preps beyond* (+0.15), and *dissimilar past tasks* (+0.07). These positive and encouraging shifts are joined by the one remaining decreasing shift to be discussed: *writing challenging*, which saw a slight decrease (-0.07). Such a decrease can be considered positive because it suggests that students possibly, because of their increased confidence and perception of writing knowledge, see writing less as an impending, amplified challenge because they are more prepared to meet the challenge that it represents to them.

Now that I have established both the representative validity of the 13 student participants for the larger population and some of the primary trends and points of interest in the results of those 13 students, I turn my attention in the following section to the four students who agreed to participate in interviews. Because the interviews focused on students' individual perspectives and qualitatively followed up on the quantitative survey questions, hearing from these students may shed more light on the data features for which I have thus far only offered conjecture.

Interview Participants

Four of the survey participants agreed to a 30-to-60-minute interview, three of whom had completed both surveys. The fourth student who agreed to an interview took only the second survey. The first two interview participants named faculty participant Bug Frau as their

instructor, while the other two, unfortunately, named non-participating faculty as their instructors. Their interview responses won't be very useful in the closing chapter's discussion of the intersection of faculty practices with the student survey and interview responses, but their responses nonetheless can help elucidate the trends highlighted in this chapter: regardless of instructor practices, how do student perceptions of writing—and themselves as writers—change after taking an online writing course?

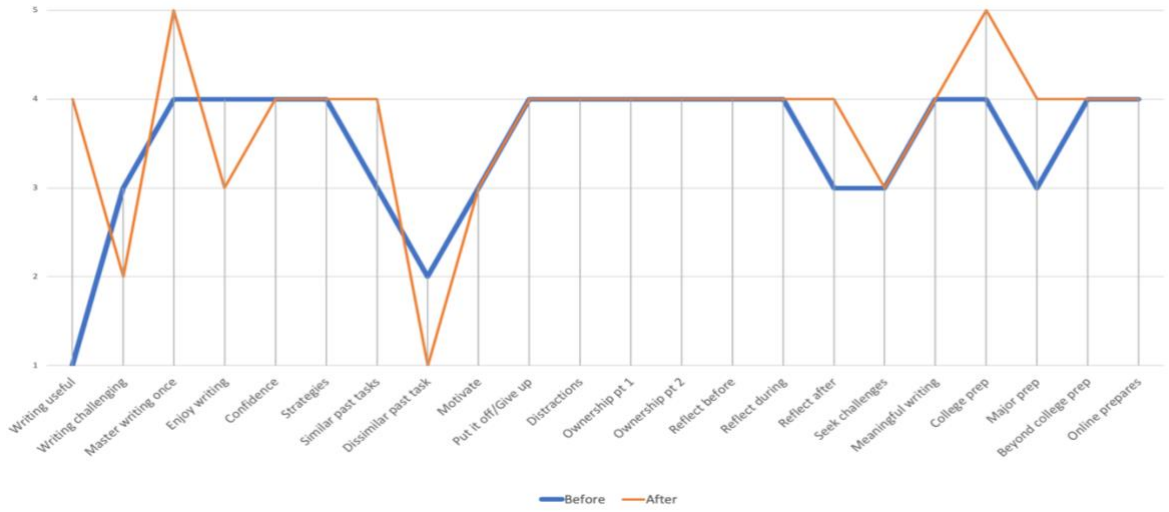
Interview Participant 1: Freida Miles

Freida Miles, a sophomore in the College of Health and Human Services at the time of the study, named Bug Frau as her instructor for WRIT 1120. Her survey responses indicated that she had previous online course experience but not for a writing course. (In fact, not one of the four interview participants took an online writing course before the semester of the study.) Figure 7 shows the line chart of her start-of-term and end-of-term responses to the Likert scale statements. The interview document for Freida appears as Appendix G.

Freida's responses changed very little from one survey to the next. Her definition of writing for the first survey was, "Writing is when you put your thoughts into words, often in an organized manner," and in the second survey, it became, "Putting ideas, thoughts, or information into words in an organized manner." Both of her explanatory responses for the questions about meaningful writing included a focus on whether students could choose topics: She anticipated at the start of the semester that there would be some freedom of choice for topics that would help her to perceive the writing as meaningful, and she reported at the end of the semester that that was indeed what happened. Finally, most of her responses to the Likert statements stayed the same or shifted by just one point. While Freida's instructor, Bug Frau, named confidence and independence as goals for her teaching, Freida's rating of the *writing confidence* statement

Figure 7

Before and After Responses: Freida Miles



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

remained the same ("somewhat agree") in both surveys. The one outlier to Freida's pattern of little or no change—a three-point increase from "strongly disagree" (1) to "somewhat agree" (4) for her perception of the usefulness of writing—was made suspect by Freida's explanation of the shift during the interview:

> I don't know why I put "strongly disagree." I feel like I would have—I don't know. I don't remember putting that. I don't know; maybe I did change. I guess it just depends on like, writing is important in most aspects of your life, but I feel like certain career paths it's not as important, I guess. So maybe that's why I originally disagreed. But then there's just writing in almost everything that you have to do, like no matter what you're doing. So I'm guessing that's why I first put "strongly disagree," thinking that you didn't have to do writing for everything. But you definitely need those skills for whatever you're doing, even just communicating. If it's talking or writing emails and stuff like that, just

> basics. . . . I do agree that it's useful. I'm still just surprised—I cannot remember putting "strongly disagree."

Freida's most drastic change, then, possibly wasn't much of a change at all. She expressed intense surprise at her initial disagreement and only offered conjecture regarding the source of that disagreement.

However, her surprise may have been a result of a truly changed perception, a development not unlike a phenomenon noted in studies of threshold concepts (Meyer & Land, 2003), in which crossing a threshold to understand a new concept effectively erases the memory of not understanding the concept. Freida did not remember believing writing to be unimportant because, possibly, her concept of it became firmly settled through an acquisition not unlike that of crossing a concept threshold.

Although Freida's responses remained the same or changed only a little, the shifts were not insignificant. On a five-point scale for a course in just one semester, a shift of one point is somewhat significant, and Freida's follow-up explanations to even the slight shifts revealed points of interest. In the surveys, Freida's responses for *WRIT preps major* shifted from "neither agree nor disagree" to "somewhat agree." To the qualitative follow-up question ("Why do you think so?") she answered, "I think in general this class has helped with my writing skills which can translate to my major but the writing I will have to do in my major is different than the writing we did in this class." In the interview, Freida explained the seeming contradiction between her agreement and her qualitative response's implied irrelevancy of WRIT 1120 to the writing she would complete for her major:

> I think I was thinking more like specific major, again, just because the kinds of writing that I would probably need to do for my major weren't really covered. But that would—

> since it's a general course, I guess it wouldn't really need to be major-specific because I know each major would need a different kind of writing. . . . So it's just like the more specific kinds would probably be why I was thinking wasn't covered.

To Freida then, the WRIT 1120 course was beneficial for preparing to write in her major to an extent, but the need to learn specific genres for specific purposes and audiences in a major almost inherently meant that the score for *WRIT preps major* couldn't reach that last bit for "strongly agree."

Other slight shifts of some significance included the two statements dealing with use of prior knowledge: *similar past tasks* and *dissimilar past tasks*. Freida's responses to these statements increased and decreased by one point respectively (from "neither agree nor disagree" to "somewhat agree" for *similar past tasks* and from "somewhat disagree" to "strongly disagree" for *dissimilar past tasks*). Because these statements have no definite polarity, I asked Freida about these changes. She responded:

> I just think about how things connect and, like, previously to what I've done now, just relating those experiences rather than thinking about "Oh, this is different, but"—I don't know. I guess I just think about the similarities more.

With this response, Freida possibly suggested that her perception shifted, even if a bit, to highlight similarities between tasks rather than to see differences that might hinder drawing upon prior knowledge and experience.

Freida's perceptions of the significance of online learning for her writing course and future followed similar trends of minimal changes, but one element among her responses stood out. While her response to *online prepares* was "somewhat agree" in both surveys, Freida responded to *glad online* with "strongly agree," indicating the highest satisfaction rating in the

survey for taking the writing course online. Freida explained that she didn't recognize any benefits to the content of the course as a result of having taken it online, but she did attribute other learning benefits to the online mode for the writing course. In her follow-up response ("Why do you think so?") to the end-of-term *online prepares* statement in the survey, she declared, "I don't think there was a huge difference of the information I learned online verses [*sic*] what I would have learned in person." However, to explain her high agreement with the *glad online* statement, Freida wrote, "It allowed for flexibility in my schedule while still helping me to complete my writing course and become a better writer." In the interview she further explained this sentiment:

> Personally, I was never someone that liked writing, so I would always put it off. So—and I really didn't this semester with the online course, which I was proud of. But it just gave me the flexibility to write when I wanted, which made me feel more confident in what I was writing. So I think that helped me become a better writer.

She later added:

> As I mentioned earlier, I'm usually not a person that enjoys writing. It made me be responsible because I had to take the initiative to start my writing and set a schedule for myself and not procrastinate it. Which I really didn't, which I was surprised just because usually I put off writing.

Following this, Freida declared herself a "responsible procrastinator" and remarked that this heightened sense of responsibility would "transfer" (her word, not one I introduced into the conversation) to later courses.

Freida's declaration of increased confidence is at odds with the static responses to the *writing confidence* statement, but Freida nonetheless attributed a dispositional benefit to taking

the writing course online. While any course with an element of self-pacing could potentially offer such a benefit, Freida's lack of enjoyment for writing—a common sentiment among many—emphasizes the role that online writing courses could play in such dispositional benefits as increased confidence, responsibility, motivation, and enjoyment.

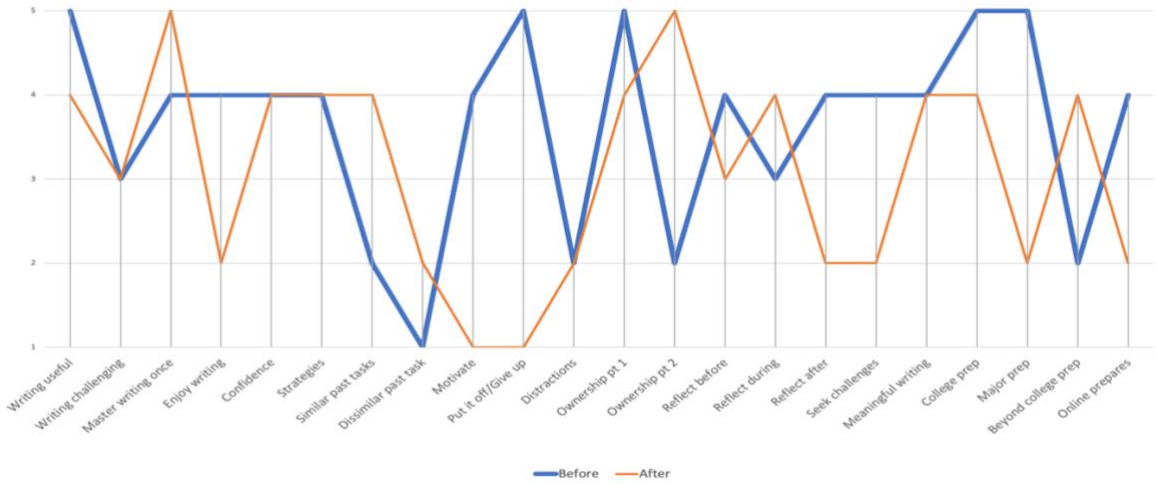
Interview Participant 2: Victor Rivera

Victor Rivera, a freshman in the College of Education and Human Development at the time of the study, also named Bug as his instructor for WRIT 1120 and indicated that he had previous online course experience—but again, no interview participants had prior experience with writing courses online. Victor's responses to the surveys and interviews stood out as significant because he expressed more dramatic experiences than most other participants. In fact, among the 13 double-survey participants, Victor's average absolute value change (or the measure of how much Victor's responses changed regardless of increase or decrease) between start-of-term statement agreements and end-of-term statement agreements was 1.23, while the average absolute value change among all students was 0.68. Figure 8 shows the line chart of Victor's start-of-term and end-of-term responses to the Likert scale statements. The interview document for Victor appears as Appendix H.

Victor's dramatic shifts from the start-of-term survey to the end-of-term survey stood out in contrast to Freida's responses, which were marked by an average absolute value change of 0.42. Some of the most intense shifts in Victor's responses (absolute value changes of three or four) were for the statements on *motivate self* ("somewhat agree" to "strongly disagree"), *put it off/give up* ("strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"), *critically consider changes* ("somewhat disagree" to "strongly agree"), and *WRIT preps major* ("strongly agree" to "somewhat disagree"). Two of these large shifts relate primarily to Victor's educational disposition and

Figure 8

Before and After Responses: Victor Rivera



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

habits (*motivate self* and *put it off/give up*), while the others focus on writing activity and ownership (*critically consider changes*) and expectations of transfer through future usefulness (*WRIT preps major*).

The first two statements mentioned above featured downward shifts from the first to the second survey, which stood out because agreement with *motivate self* is typically positive while agreement with *put it off/give up* is typically negative, and the two can be considered highly related. In short, Victor's motivation decreased, but so did his tendency to procrastinate on or quit writing tasks. Victor noted in the interview that his responses, on the surface, contradicted each other, but he explained, "I believe they are actually somewhat different because this [the *put if off/give up* statement] doesn't talk about motivation. It talks about task avoidance. They can be different." Victor then noted that in his first semester at BGSU, it was "very easy to put off tasks because all my best friends . . . were right next door to me, across the hall from me." After

describing some of the various interactions that could draw Victor's attention away from academic tasks ("I can put this off, it's not due for a little bit, yeah, let's do it"), he continued by pinpointing the difference that emerged in the Spring 2020 semester to cause his *put it off/give up* statement to shift so dramatically:

> Versus "I am at home in quarantine. I have nothing else to do. Well, my writing assignments are right here." So that I think is the big change for that. So it's okay. I will say if that if none of this happened, if we were in BG that whole second semester, I don't think this question would have changed that much. . . But I think due to the nature of everything, with the madness that ended up happening with spring semester 2020, that kind of made me less likely to avoid tasks because there was really nothing that—there's really so many video games—and only so many video games and only so many naps you can take before it's just like, "Alright, I'm tired of losing, and I'm tired of sleeping. So I want to do something actually productive and hey, this is here. We're gonna do this. So I think that's really why that answer changed a lot."

With this explanation, Victor pointed to a difference between the productivity of motivation and the anti-productivity of task avoidance while also noting the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on his level of agreement with the statement. Although this study targeted a population and a setting that may have seemed pandemic-proof, the realities of the pandemic and of the interaction of personal and academic lives, as Victor demonstrated, meant that no such protection was ever guaranteed.

Like Freida, Victor strongly agreed that he was glad to have taken WRIT 1120 online. Although he somewhat disagreed in the survey that the online learning environment was particularly useful for learning writing, he actually chose to change his response during the

course of the interview. I asked, “You indicated that online writing courses don't prepare you to use your learning in the future because it's harder to learn online. What makes it more difficult to learn online?” Victor responded with hesitation, first attempting to answer in relation to his degree program and most common learning styles but eventually declaring, “This does not reflect how I feel right now.” He then said:

> I could update [my answer], then. I think the online writing courses actually do prepare me to learn more learning in the future. If I'm going to go ahead, I would probably change that to a somewhat agree, then, from a somewhat disagree.

During this exchange, Victor also noted his perception that OWI was indeed distinct from other types of online learning: “Online learning is more difficult just because, at least for me, because of my learning style, it makes it a little bit more harder to learn. But online writing, learning how to write online, it still is pretty good.”

Meanwhile, Victor explained his decreased agreement for *motivate self* by pointing to the lack of in-person interaction. He said, “I do think in person, going every day, seeing my professor, seeing classmates, I do think that helped my motivation first semester.” However, he said that in the online course, there was no “accountability” other than due dates, and the lack of frequent interaction with the course instructor hindered his motivation to keep up with writing.

Despite Victor’s revised agreement to *online prepares* and his strong agreement to the *glad online* statement, he, like Freida, noted that the benefits of the course weren’t attributed much to any unique affordances the online format gave to the course content. Instead Victor remarked that the flexible schedule of taking the course online was the biggest advantage of learning writing in an online environment, simply noting in the second survey that a “flexible class schedule” was an advantage of taking WRIT 1120 online. While Freida noted the course

flexibility as productive for motivation, Victor did not experience that benefit and, as noted above, actually perceived his motivation to drop significantly.

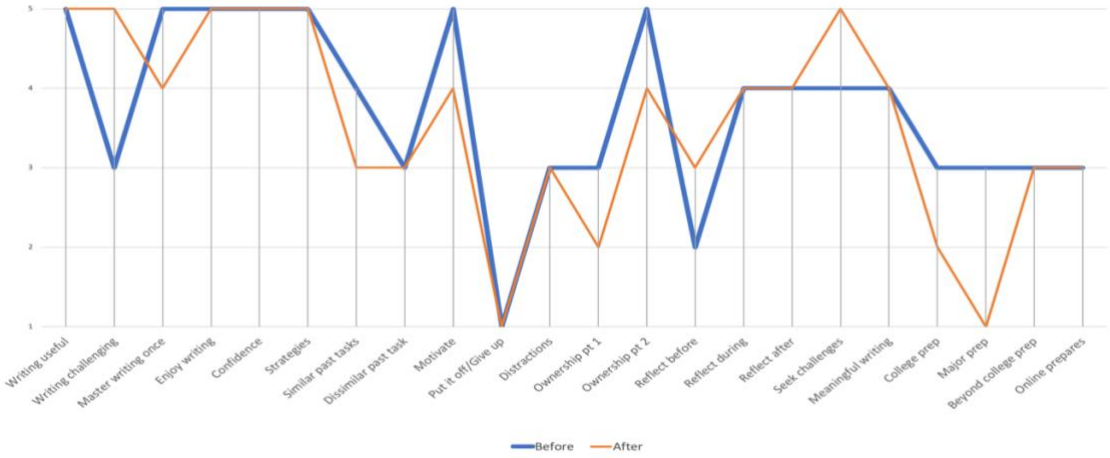
Interview Participant 3: Travis Poole

Travis Poole, a senior in the College of Arts & Sciences, named a non-participating faculty member as his WRIT 1120 instructor. He was the only interview participant to indicate on the surveys that he had had no online course experience prior to the Spring 2020 semester. His age at the time of the study was in the 35–44 range, and he explained, in response to survey questions about his expectation of WRIT 1120's value for his future, that he had already gained experience of more than ten years in "a writing-centric profession." Figure 9 shows the line chart of Travis's start-of-term and end-of-term responses to the Likert scale statements. His averaged absolute value change was 0.46, or just slightly higher than Freida's. The interview document for Travis appears as Appendix I.

As one would expect for someone who has made a living from writing, Travis's

Figure 9

Before and After Responses: Travis Poole



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

responses to the questions about the value of WRIT for his future were rather low. To his credit, he answered all three (*WRIT preps college*, *WRIT preps major*, and *WRIT preps beyond*) with "neither agree nor disagree" at the start of the term, showing he expected some possibility existed of learning something new. By the end of the term, however, his rating for two of these questions dropped—*WRIT preps college* to "somewhat disagree" and *WRIT preps major* to "strongly disagree." Answering the "Why do you think so?" question for *WRIT preps college* statement in the first survey, Travis said:

> Being a non-traditional student with a decade-plus of experience in a writing-centric profession, much of the content covered by this course is review of already well-developed strengths I already have. The possible exception being the exposure to APA citations formatting.

He simply wrote "See previous answer" or "See above" for the other *WRIT preps* statements' "Why do you think so?" questions. In the second survey, Travis explained his answers in a similar fashion, adding, "While I understand [WRIT 1120] is a requirement for incoming students to get them acquainted with college writing, I believe non-traditional/transfer students should be able to test out/have work experience make them exempt."

In his interview (which he elected to participate in by answering the provided questions through email due to scheduling conflicts), Travis revealed more of his thoughts about the value of the WRIT course for an experienced writer. He began by explaining that he is "just good at writing" and knows early on what he wants to write. He continued:

> Any rough draft I've ever done is easily 90 percent identical to the final paper. To me, writing is like putting together a puzzle. I collect the pieces and dump them in front of me then I put them in groups that look like they belong together and then I piece them

> together. So, when WRIT 1120 wanted to more or less hold my hand on the way to a 10-page paper, I just rolled my eyes.

Travis tried to balance this open contempt for the WRIT curriculum by noting that the course would be beneficial to typical college students who have recently finished high school and not for "someone who made a living in writing, a professional, multiple-award-winning journalist." He pointed to the various process assignments (such as the annotated bibliography that prepares student writers for a researched essay) as potentially useful for others but unnecessary for him. Nonetheless, he critiqued the course throughout the rest of his answers to the interview, including a remark that, for an experienced writer like him, the course requirements were "a waste of time." Travis's experiences point to the validity of common perceptions about the value of FYW, including the ability for such a course to prepare students for future writing tasks, whether by directly addressing future situations or by preparing writers through awareness of transferable strategies such as rhetorical and genre awareness.

Regarding the online mode of his course, Travis neither agreed nor disagreed that he was glad to have taken WRIT 1120 online, and he provided the same answer to the *online prepares* statements for both surveys. In the interview, he emphasized his perception of the neutrality of the online learning environment for WRIT 1120:

> This class, WRIT 1120, is a class to teach young students how to write a proper research paper. If you already know how to do this, such as in my case, I don't see a substantial difference between doing it online or in-person. If you don't have a good grasp on this task, then I believe this course, whether taken online or in-person, could be of substantial value, as long as you avail yourself to the resources at hand, in the form of the expertise of the professor, the writing center, fellow students, the examples of students' work from

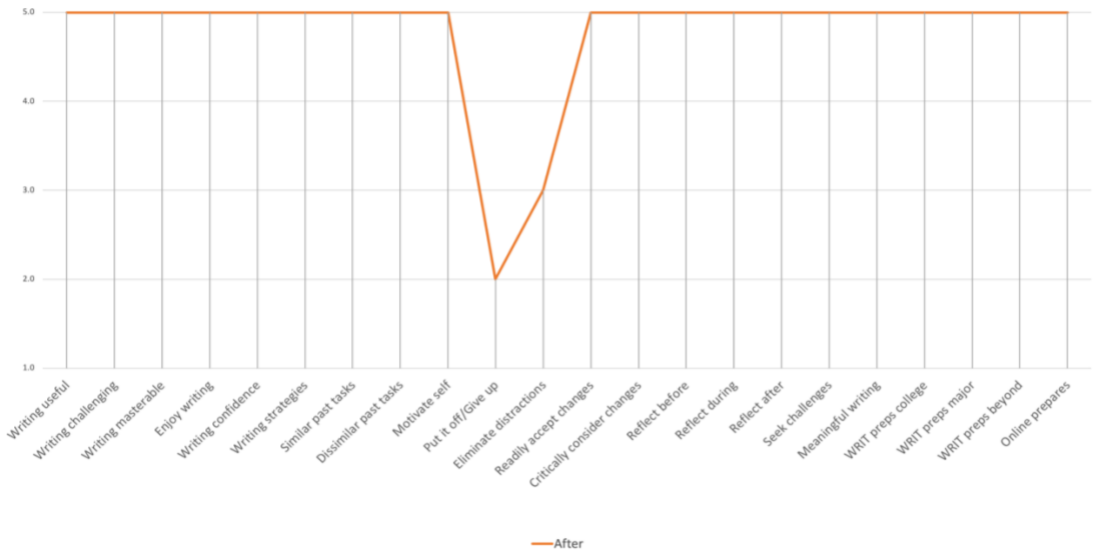
previous semesters. If you don't know how to write a research paper, this class, in-person or online, can make that process easier for you if take advantage of it. And if a student doesn't put forth that effort, in-person or online, they'll be in trouble either way.

Interview Participant 4: Maggie Rodriguez

While Maggie did not complete the first survey, she provided an important and unique perspective for this study. At the time of the study, Maggie was a senior in the College of Technology, Architecture and Applied Engineering, one of the two student participants to identify as Hispanic or Latino, and one of the two students whose age was in the 45–54 range. Additionally, she was one of the four participants who were taking WRIT 1110. Like Freida and Victor, Maggie had prior experience with online courses but not for writing courses. The lack of a first survey means that Figure 10 only displays one line, showing Maggie's end-of-semester Likert statement agreements. The line shows one way that Maggie's responses to the survey

Figure 10

After Responses: Maggie Rodriguez



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

stood out: her answer to nearly all questions was "strongly agree." She deviated from this response twice: for *put it off/give up* ("somewhat disagree") and *eliminate distractions* ("neither agree nor disagree"). She also strongly agreed to the statement that only appeared in the second survey: *glad online*. The interview document for Maggie appears as Appendix J.

Because I can't examine the way Maggie's perceptions *changed* over the course the semester, I cannot discuss her responses in ways similar to how I have discussed Freida's, Victor's, and Travis's responses. Maggie did, however, make a few fascinating remarks that deserve attention.

Prompted by the high volume of strong agreements Maggie made to the survey statements, I asked her what caused her to have such strong opinions and whether these answers reflected more of who she was or something about the course. She summed up her response by saying that it was "a combination of the instructor, the professor, the flexibility, and the content of that particular course that [made] it very positive" for her. Like Freida and Victor, Maggie pointed to the greater flexibility of the online course as a benefit for learning writing. For Maggie, however, her positive experience in the course was thanks to the combined effects and benefits of many factors, including not only the flexibility of taking the course online but also the efforts of the instructor (whom Maggie repeatedly praised, as did Victor regarding Bug) and the course content. No one element contributed to her perceptions, but the combination of all elements working together helped her to respond with such high agreement.

To explain her meaning of the course content as a contributor to her high agreement to the survey statements, Maggie clarified that all of the material was "specific and straightforward." She continued:

It's not a lecture or material that you use, and you start reading it and you go like,

> "Really? I need to read this?" No, it was—all the material that she used for the class was very interesting. Sometimes she can give you only one page of lecture, and sometimes she can give you a 40-pages essay, right? But this material was relevant. And that is key. Is relevant for the class, is relevant for the student, is relevant for the transfer, for the knowledge transfer, is relevant to the continuance of the classroom to you. And so it was the perfect material, the exact material, very well put together—either the material that she put together as a video or the material that you gives in hard copy. It was all linked. It was all with the intention of driving the student to achieve what was the intent, right, or the purpose of the class is at the end. So that's why I was so positive and all you know amazed about this class.

In that response, Maggie mentioned a term I had not brought up: knowledge transfer. I asked her where she acquired that term and why she included it in her response, and she declared that she first encountered the term in readings assigned in WRIT 1110. She then went on, at great length, to discuss her thoughts on the importance of knowledge transfer. She began by saying:

> Personally, knowledge transfer is the core of any course or any training or any workshop or anything that you want to learn. If you are going into a class in where, after you come out of that class, you go like, “Okay, what I have learned? Nothing?” To me, that's a waste of time.

Maggie continued by discussing her work and how she has differently understood her work because of learning about knowledge transfer and rhetorical analysis. To say she was enthusiastic about the implications would be an understatement. It seems, then, that students (or at least Maggie) can confirm that scholars who advocate for FYW to be designed as an “Introduction to Writing Studies” course (such as Downs & Wardle 2007) have promoted a beneficial course

structure.

Conclusion

On their own, each of these students highlighted different elements about the course, the online format, their own dispositions and habits, and their instructors that contributed to their experiences and perceptions of writing and their WRIT courses. While such variety was to be expected—and Maggie was correct to identify the role of collective efforts in educational efficacy—the function of schedule flexibility in promoting various dispositional shifts in students (sometimes disruptive but often generative) seems significant. While such a course feature is present in almost any online course (and many face-to-face courses), student responses suggest that writing instruction may especially benefit.

In the next chapter, I present results from the faculty portion of the study, which examined how instructors perceive of online and in-person writing courses as different and how that affects what they do in their online writing courses, especially in terms of adapting pedagogical principles and practices to the online writing course.

CHAPTER 4: FACULTY PARTICIPANT RESULTS

This chapter seeks to address the question, "How do first-year writing instructors adapt principles of transfer-focused writing instruction for online courses?" In the process of analyzing and reviewing the data from interviews with faculty and their course documents, I observed that the faculty participants and their data had provided numerous points of interest, far more than could fit in this chapter. I think any reader who has completed a dissertation or two will recognize this with great familiarity. I also noticed, however, that each faculty participant operated under certain assumptions and principles, sometimes implied but just as often directly stated, for how they approached teaching writing in online spaces.

What follows in this chapter, then, are portraits of each participant's principles and assumptions of adaptation. Each participant's portrait begins with a context-setting overview of their teaching philosophy, primary pedagogical goals, and personal definition of writing transfer. Two sections follow that overview: first, an explanation of the participant's principles of adaptations and the practices that demonstrate those principles; second, a review of how the participant perceived the teaching of writing to be different, especially in regards with transfer, in F2F and online spaces. This second section is intended both to further explain the principles and practices of the first section and to present some of the miscellaneous practices and perspective of the faculty, toward providing a more rounded, complete portrait—though a fully complete portrait, as I have mentioned, would be impossible. After the three portraits, I conclude the chapter by noting similarities and differences in the participants' practices toward both finding themes and highlighting the individualized nature of participant practices and voices.

Note that I have elected in favor of preserving participant voices except in the case of faculty who have expressly requested that I clean up false starts, filler words, and so on. In

addition to using pseudonyms for the participants, I have also made a few inconsequential fictionalizations in order to protect faculty confidentiality.

Faculty Participant 1: Summer Reid

Summer Reid, who had by the start of this study taught writing online a handful of times in the previous seven years, summed up her teaching philosophy by saying, "I'm TILTed," referencing the Transparency in Learning and Teaching project (otherwise known as TILT Higher Ed), a national project she recognized as representing her own teaching principles. A primary principle of the project is, of course, transparency, which Summer claimed includes explaining the purpose of class assignments and activities for "how it connects to bigger things"—which, for Summer, extended far enough to include the concept of becoming "a better person." Summer also framed her teaching philosophy as a student-centered one that was heavily inspired by one-on-one interactions with student writers while working in a writing center. Following her philosophy, Summer named as her primary pedagogical goals helping students to understand interactions as having layers, to understand all facets of an argument, and to use rhetorical awareness to become better people.

Summer's definition and perspective of writing transfer brought in a bit of complication for her self-assessment of her teaching and this study. Summer defined writing transfer as "using previous knowledge…when anyone's approaching a new writing task, being able to pull from their previous knowledge to figure out how to do this new writing task." Summer was reluctant to declare her teaching fully aligned with a transfer-oriented approach, stating, "I don't know if I'm absolutely parallel [with transfer-oriented teaching], but I'm definitely hovering in the parallel universe." She also expressed, by looking back on her Spring 2020 online course (WRIT 1120) in the member check interview (which took place in Fall 2020), reservations about how

well her online writing course attended to matters of writing transfer in comparison with her F2F writing courses. However, Summer also claimed to have made considerable improvements to the course for the Summer and Fall 2020 terms.

Regarding Summer's actual OWI practices and how those practices differed from her F2F teaching, one principle stood out—both to Summer as instructor and to me as researcher, individually—as encompassing most other ideas. The primary driver of adaptation from F2F writing instruction to OWI for Summer was the need to "test" ideas out first in the F2F setting. This meant that few practices would originate purely in the online course setting, and Summer would consider F2F practices and/or alternatives in terms of some other considerations: How much time did Summer and her students have for the activities? How fun would an assignment be that was translated to the online course—or how fun could an alternative activity be? How well could Summer relate the translated activity to her "TILTed" philosophy? The remainder of Summer's section in this chapter will explore in more detail how some of these considerations guided Summer in creating—and revising—her online writing course. It will also highlight some of the differences Summer perceived between OWI and F2F writing instruction—especially in terms of her own teaching.

Summer's Online Teaching Practices

Summer noted that her online teaching involves a much more "hands-off" approach than she uses in her F2F courses. Readers should note that while Summer used the term "hands-off" to describe her online teaching style, I would disagree with this term, which may imply less care or effort on Summer's part. Summer's explanation of this term demonstrated that "hands-off" was likely a simple case of choosing the first word that came to mind, spoken in the moment and not reflecting an accurate portrayal of Summer's teaching style.

Primarily driving this term—and also defining it—was the sense that F2F courses require a level of behavioral management that teachers often expect to face in lower-level courses such as FYW courses. Summer noted that students who read and send text messages during class often seemed to need additional clarification about course content, whereas students taking a course online can check their texts whenever they want to, pausing their interaction with the course materials and resuming when they are ready. To Summer, this meant that promoting responsible behavior is to some degree more important in F2F writing courses than it is in online writing courses. The pauseable nature of online courses also meant that when online students did ask for clarification, it was more often "about something…like a link isn't working at that time, or, you know, 'Can you just clarify maybe why I got a grade on this assignment a little bit more?' or something like that." Considering how Summer defined her "hands-off" approach, I would posit that a more accurate way to describe the difference between Summer's F2F and online teaching would be to say simply that Summer doesn't manage classroom behavior in online courses, and instead, as I discuss shortly, she emphasized students' own agency, which is in line with her student-centered teaching philosophy. "Hands-off" was, however, the term Summer used, and I have elected to respect participant voices in this study. I suggest that readers keep this in mind for subsequent appearances of the term "hands-off approach."

Behavioral issues of classroom management were not all that Summer discussed regarding the hands-off approach she took with her online courses, however. She observed that students in F2F courses looked—both physically and figuratively—to her as the leader of all class activities, including student-centered discussions, no matter how much Summer attempted to decenter herself:

I don't want to guide their conversations one way or the other. And I tried to do that in

> face-to-face to—not try to—because they all look at, you know, in the classroom, they all look at you. And it's like, "No, you're talking to John over there. Look at John." So it's like all their comments have to get filtered through the teacher, you know, in order to spark something.

Discussions in the online course, on the other hand, were not "filtered through the teacher" in this manner, allowing Summer to step back and promote more student agency:

> So I like that aspect of online, that they kind of, you know, talk and it's not—they're not looking at—they don't see me. They're not looking at me. They're literally just talking with each other. I think that's kind of nice.

This hands-off approach also led one of Summer's adaptations of her F2F instruction strategies for the online course format. The first two projects Summer included in her WRIT 1120 courses were a "Common Ground" assignment (in which students wrote about moments of agreement between articles from two opposing viewpoints) and a "Literature Review" assignment. While students in the online version of the course were provided with a list of articles from which they could select their objects of study, students in the F2F version of the course were given "free reign" to find whatever articles they deemed appropriate for the projects. Summer stated that Spring 2020 was the first semester she had opened up these projects to such "free reign," so in line with the test-first-in-F2F principle mentioned above, she only instituted the free reign allowance in the in-person courses for Spring 2020. Summer cited the ability to be more hands-on in F2F courses as a reason for trying the strategy first in such courses. To Summer, interacting with students in person allowed for more direct gauging of students' understanding, allowing her to course correct if students selected articles that wouldn't lend themselves well to the assignments. Online students, then, were simply given a list of choices to

ensure that the articles chosen would meet that need.

The test-first-in-F2F principle appeared elsewhere in Summer's teaching, namely in the use of peer review, a reflective journal, and labor-based contract grading. Regarding peer review, Summer discussed that the practice has been difficult to adapt into the online learning format largely due to time:

> I think everybody's on these different schedules when they're online students. And so I—that's where something changes. In my face-to-face class I do not collect drafts anymore and give feedback. They rely more on their peer review. And online I do. I do take their drafts and provide feedback.

Summer, then, had shifted some of the work of critical awareness to peer review in her F2F courses but hadn't figured out how to accomplish it to her satisfaction in her online courses as of the spring semester of 2020. Summer wanted to first figure out how to adapt the experience of a live peer review for the online setting before migrating that practice.

In the member check interview, Summer did declare that she had made improvements to the course in order to adapt peer review for the online format, which provided the added benefit of shifting some of the work of feedback from herself to students, who learned to provide feedback as peers. She had the time in the summer semester to figure it out, try it then, and then go into the Fall 2020 semester with assurance that it worked.

The reflective journal that Summer discussed was inspired by ideas presented in the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council for the Teaching of English, and National Writing Project (2011), including eight "habits of mind" that promote development of writing and writers: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and

metacognition. The journal involved having students "document their writing process and then, every once in a while, reflect on what habits they're using." Summer did not include this activity in the online version of her course because it was new to the Spring 2020 semester, but she posited that the assignment "would really help us transfer, too, so like, 'Here are habits of writing that you can transfer over to all new situations.'" However, in line with her goal of preparing online adaptations before making any migrations, she also said that she hoped the journal assignment proved successful in her F2F course and that she can "figure out a way to put it online." In the member check interview, she admitted that the assignment still hadn't been adapted to her online course for the Fall 2020 semester. The fact that she taught mostly WRIT 1110 in the Fall 2020 semester, while the reflective journal assignment was created specifically for WRIT 1120, may have contributed to this, although she did have one online section of WRIT 1120 in the fall. She also did leave open the possibility of adding the assignment to the course in the Spring 2021 semester.

Finally, Summer pointed to her use of labor-based contract grading in the F2F version of her course in the Spring 2020 semester as a difference between her online and F2F practices, again one motivated by a need to test or hone a practice first in F2F before refining or revising it for the online course format. The spring semester of 2020 was her first time using the grading system, so she only used it in her F2F courses.

Online vs Face-to-Face, According to Summer

Summer's test-first-in-F2F approach has meant that the above section was more about what Summer did not do, or has not done yet, in her online course compared with her F2F course, rather than about what she practices she implemented. In this section, I share some of Summer's perspectives about the differences she has perceived between online and F2F writing

instruction that have informed her approaches, as well as a brief overview of the practices she did use for the Spring 2020 semester.

For Summer, key differences between online and F2F writing instruction that shaped her approaches to migrating her courses online included the challenges of assessment, accessibility, and time, as well as the advantage of flexibility. While these were terms that she offered to answer some of my questions about the differences, her explanations revealed a not-unexpected foundation to them all: the lack of real-time, in-person interaction. Summer declared that assessment is more challenging online than in person because of the distanced—in terms of both time and location—nature of online instruction:

> In the classroom I can assess, and online, it's not always as simple if I'm not doing a live lecture to, you know, assess how well they're understanding. So it's like creating some additional sort of response sort of assignments online, to assess how well they understood content, since I can't ask on the spot.

Indeed, Summer's course documents included several "Reading Reflection" assignments that asked students to assess the text, identify its purpose and impact, develop ideas about it, and make connections to how it interacted with previous knowledge and experiences. While many of these points helped Summer to assess student understanding, the last two points especially seemed to have been useful in encouraging students to transfer in some of their prior learning, integrating and potentially transforming knowledge. Summer included in the "Developing Ideas" section questions about what students knew about the topic previously. In the "Making Connections" section, Summer asked students to identify how the text "reinforce[d]" and "challenge[d]" their "existing ideas and assumptions." Thus these written responses not only helped Summer to assess student understanding in the absence of live discussions, but they also

aided students in integrating knowledge across time.

The challenge of accessibility exists in any course format, but Summer pointed out that it is more of a pressing concern online. Again, the lack of in-person interaction was an issue here. Without such interaction, Summer wanted to include more video content to supplement written communication, especially in order to meet the needs of her "TILTed" teaching philosophy. However, seeking compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, such as captioning videos, gave Summer a tough choice: to record her own videos and then go through the laborious process of captioning them, or to find videos by other instructors that were already ADA compliant?

> And so it's like, "Does this other video—that's not me—does this teach the material in a way that I would do that makes sense to me?" If you know, if that makes sense. Like I would have a very specific way in the class, like I have a very specific PowerPoint, a very specific way that I want to teach this concept, and then trying to find someone else who does it in a way that meets how I would do it in the classroom is a really big challenge for me.

One challenging aspect of that was, of course, time—time captioning or time finding appropriate materials—and that showed up in Summer's approaches as well. For her, though, the time burdens on students were her concern. She said that she doesn't translate every activity from her F2F course to the online version, with one consideration being that an online class is often populated with "a lot of students that work full time jobs and you know, so many other reasons for being online that I don't do as many of those individual activities." This consideration for time was likely another factor for Summer in her test-first-in-F2F approach. With online learning often demanding more time of both instructors and students, any activity Summer

migrated online before being certain of its benefit meant a potentially high risk toward students' cognitive overload.

Despite these challenges, Summer did briefly identify one advantage for OWI: flexibility. The flexibility of online courses (at least asynchronous courses) better accommodated Summer's "introverted personality," and it allowed for students to work at their own pace. While students in Summer's F2F courses often had "to the end of the week to finish everything," while assignments for F2F students were "due more frequently than that." Summer noted that this potentially allowed for students to procrastinate, but she likewise noted that this also potentially encouraged the development of responsibility.

Faculty Participant 2: Lucy Sharpe

Lucy Sharpe, who had much experience in teaching online by the start of this study, summed up her teaching philosophy by claiming it as student-centered, empathy-focused, and feminist—which, to Lucy, included "giving [students] the opportunity to have a voice in shaping the course, not just in terms of turning in assignments, but also course policies and how we literally deal with being in class." Lucy credited experiences as a student as a driving force in the shape of her philosophy. Following her philosophy, she named as her primary pedagogical goal building confidence and independence in her students.

Lucy's definition and perspective of writing transfer helped to reveal a primary concern Lucy has with the purposes of education. Lucy defined writing transfer at length:

> It's like two ends of a spectrum or it's two sides of a coin. It's being able to bring in past experiences to address new writing situations. So whether that's writing experiences or life experiences, I think, bringing in knowledge that you already have, or skills you already have, to address a problem or a task that you're currently dealing with. And then

> being able to kind of distill down what you learned through that writing task and cash it, to be able to apply to future problems, tasks, situations.

Lucy's concept of writing transfer, then, considered both the influence of the past on the present as well as the present on the future. She further claimed a strong alignment with transfer-oriented pedagogy, saying that such educational aims were always a part of her teaching—even if the terms and concepts were relatively new to her—because otherwise she wondered why teachers attempted to teach anything to students. She claimed that learning that wasn't focused on transfer was like learning "Pythagoras' theorem for the sake of learning Pythagoras' theorem," rather than learning it for use in future situations. One term she used to further convey this concept was the idea of giving students "skill backpacks" that would contain the writing strategies they've built and acquired, which are then taken to other situations.

Lucy's actual practices for teaching online writing courses revealed many of the same concerns that Summer expressed—including the additional burden of labor for both students and faculty, as well as the challenges of meeting accessibility needs—while operating from a nearly opposite vantage point. While Summer's approaches to adapting writing instruction for the online environment involved careful consideration of the practices as performed first in F2F settings, Lucy went so far as to say, "I don't know that I adapt. . . . I don't do a lot of adaptation." Lucy's responses in interviews and her course design strategies demonstrated that Lucy's strategy was based more on the online setting as the starting place. That is, Lucy built her online courses as online courses, not as in-persons courses to adapt for online use. She did often remark that many of the strategies and designs she ended up with would also work with and benefit F2F writing instruction, but the origin of the practices was in teaching online to start with, not in finding ways to translate F2F activities. The remainder of Lucy's section in this chapter will

explore these strategies—which heavily feature concerns about the design of the course for how it influences student interaction with the course and its content.

Lucy's Online Teaching Practices

Lucy's online teaching practices and her discussion of them revealed a sense that Lucy constructed her online WRIT 1120 course—again, from the ground up rather than adapted from an in-person section of WRIT 1120—with student experience as the guiding principle. Lucy demonstrated this especially through her frequent attention to the design of the course. The design of the course, for Lucy, was intended to promote not only positive accessibility and multiple paths of access to course materials but also to make the design, in a sense, invisible so that "it falls to the background" and "allows students the time to engage with their writing." She further commented on the need to design invisibly, saying,

> I want them to struggle with their writing in some ways, right? I want them to be troubled by that stuff. I don't want them to ever be troubled by "How do I find the things she's telling me to do?"

To Lucy, fruitful learning required a certain amount of cognitive challenge, but, with her empathy-focused teaching philosophy, she wanted to be sure not to induce cognitive overload. She therefore put significant effort into creating a course space on Canvas that would be easy for students to use and allow them to navigate in multiple ways. With not just one path to finding information, Lucy meant for students to have fewer barriers to success so that they could focus mental effort on "struggling" with the course concepts rather than with the course navigation or structure. Implicit in Lucy's understanding of effective learning, then, seemed to include unrestricted access to information so that the work of learning could be spent on interacting with content and activity. "I don't want students to be spending that much time with the design. I want

them to be spending that much time with the content."

Careful use of links especially contributed to Lucy's efforts toward an invisible, easily-navigable design. Course design was so central to Lucy's strategies for teaching online, in fact, that it became the subject of one of the discourse-based interviews she completed for this study. In that interview as well as the initial interview, Lucy shared how important links, both within and beyond the course Canvas site itself, were to effective design. Part of that benefit was, to Lucy, in being able to provide course content and information in interlinked ways so that things are "available in multiple ways but not hopefully being overwhelming in a way that I think syllabus documents often are." Lucy's Canvas site, then, was "much more a reflection of what I wish the syllabus could be."

Beyond creating a more interactive alternative or supplement for the course syllabus, Lucy pointed to careful, strategic use of links as providing a benefit unavailable to a F2F class session:

> [An LMS] doesn't allow for certain things that you can do in a classroom. I mean, it just doesn't. But there's also things that in a classroom, you can't do that you can do online, like the interlinking. Like the having things available in multiple ways. I can only say things so many times in a classroom. They can be presented in multiple ways in an online space.

While teacher intention or student attention, then, can typically be only focused on one object at a time, presenting problems when a class session's time limit puts a cap on repetition and recursive elaboration of a concept for learners with multiple needs, the online course format allows for students to access information as often as they need and in the sequence they need to access it in. Instructors additionally can include multiple examples of a material to present a

concept in, as Lucy said, multiple ways.

Finally, Lucy considered a streamlined design crucial for transfer in OWI. An invisible course design's benefit of shifting students' cognitive burdens to course content was not only in line with Lucy's empathy-focused teaching philosophy but also, according to Lucy, profitable for promoting independence—one of her primary pedagogical goals—by giving "students all the tools that they need to complete the course" in an easily accessible way where "materials flow into one another" and by allowing the students themselves to choose "to be the person to go click on the resources page to see those things, or you're the person that needs to go click on the link to the Writing Center and make an appointment." She further declared, "I'm not going to tell you, 'Do that thing.'"

Lucy made multiple references to her inability to ensure that students learn, that they gain confidence and independence from her course: "You can't care *for* them" (emphasis Lucy's), where "for" is synonymous with "on behalf of." She also said that she wanted, through an intention of not making decisions for her students, to encourage thinking about course concepts in meaningful, transferable ways:

> I'm not the instructor anymore that forces students to try to take something away. There's always going to be students that don't—or that claim to not—care about the course, for whatever reason, and maybe five years down the line, they realize that it was important. But I'm not as concerned with forcing those students to learn as I am reaching the ones that want to and giving them—those students—the chances to reflect and the chances to think about their own writing, to be metacognitive, and be thinking ahead to how what we're doing in this class can be useful to them."

Through these points, Lucy pointed out that students had to develop their own attitudes and

approaches to learning and writing. She also remarked that students had provided her with evidence that they were indeed building these attitudes for use beyond her course:

> They're going out and seeking those areas of support for themselves. And then hopefully—and as they've told me, at various times—carrying that through to other experiences. So things like, if we're pulling out the Writing Center as an example, or the Learning Commons, they have to go out and seek that out themselves in my course. But then they often say, "I'm now going to take every paper I have to write to the Writing Center," or, "I'm going to go see them way more often," or whatever it is.

While attending Writing Center consultations would be possible also for in-person students, I would consider it probable that the independence-building that Lucy promoted in her courses helped to shape students' attitudes toward such consultations and ultimately to owning their learning. That is to say, Lucy's refusal to "care *for* students" may have allowed them to experience their learning as more of their own and thus making it more likely that they would integrate the experiences into future learning. In fact, Lucy claimed to be "almost better at promoting independence online" than in F2F courses and also said, "I think that because students already have to be so independent to be successful online, I think it's almost easier in some ways to ensure that they're getting independence." These two ideas suggest that, at the least, the online format opens up the possibility for instructors to take advantage of the tendency for online courses to require students to take a Spider-Man-esque "greater responsibility" for their learning—and thus in some small way promoting more development of writing-transfer-enriching dispositions—and, at the most generous level, the online format inherently provides such possibilities for writing transfer emphasis through dispositional development. A more accurate reality probably exists between those two points, with OWI offering some level of

disposition-encouraging atmosphere that could benefit student efforts to transfer writing knowledge and skills through adaptation, integration, and transformation.

Online vs Face-to-Face, According to Lucy

Considering Lucy's approach to building an online course was not to actually take a face-to-face course and then migrate it, wholesale or in pieces, to an online environment, but instead to simply create a course with its original setting as an online course, Lucy's perspectives on the online format contrasted with the "traditional" F2F setting for writing courses didn't directly answer the research question at face value. Simply put, Lucy was not "adapting" F2F writing instruction for her online courses. She did, however, provide valuable insight on the limitations of that question. Before I turn attention to the study's final faculty participant, Bug Frau, I outline a few of the differences between OWI and F2F writing instruction that Lucy pointed to as significant in her instruction, culminating in one of Lucy's most insightful claims for this study: effective pedagogy, including transfer-oriented pedagogy, that is built for online spaces can frequently be adapted also for F2F writing instruction.

Differences Lucy pointed to as relevant for the differences she has enacted between her online and F2F writing instruction included one almost universally recognized by writing instructors: the implications of the lack of physical presence. Just as Summer noted the lack of in-person interaction as limiting assessment of students' understanding, Lucy said that a challenge for OWI is presented by not being able to quickly adapt to student concerns that would normally be expressed or overheard in a physical classroom. While Summer named flexibility as a strength of OWI, Lucy pointed to flexibility as somewhat lacking in it, saying that instructors can't make on-the-fly adjustments in the same way that they can in F2F spaces. However, Summer's "flexibility" referred to schedule and routine flexibility, whereas Lucy referred to the

flexibility of a class session's content or direction. On the other hand, I find it fascinating that this term—which also appears as a "habit of mind" or disposition useful for building and transferring writing knowledge and skills—was so specifically named by Summer and Lucy toward opposing ends.

Like Summer, Lucy also pointed to the time-consuming task of captioning and creating custom videos as a challenge for OWI that is not typically present in F2F writing instruction. She pointed instead to an advantage that the online settings provide to writing instruction: authentic writing spaces. She explained authentic writing spaces as those where students could create numerous types of writing, such as podcasts, photo essays, and videos "in environments that are built for doing that thing," whereas in the physical classroom, "we so often are tethered to this like, 'You're going to write here and you're going to write a paper that is in this space and do this thing." The implication, to Lucy, was that these authentic spaces allow students to more readily transfer their learning beyond the classroom because the writing they produce is already situated closer to contexts beyond the classroom. Barring this, Lucy added, instructors could at least "create those opportunities more online."

One more significant difference between OWI and F2F writing instruction existed for Lucy. Summer, who was careful to avoid giving her students cognitive overload by migrating F2F activities to the online space on a case-by-case basis, declared that not all activities necessarily required translation. This was a sentiment shared by Lucy, who declared, "I don't think everything needs to be adapted online. It doesn't all have to be translated to the online space." She was speaking about the lack of a direct equivalent for student writing conferences in her online classes, but Lucy's online-original approach has demonstrated this sentiment potentially applied to the rest of her course. In fact, Lucy often pointed out that the benefits of

OWI could be adapted to F2F courses, revealing a directional bias and limitation in my research question, which asked only about adaptation *to* online course spaces.

Speaking on the matter of her assignment submission spaces, which were each designed as a "one-stop shop for stuff that's available everywhere, but students can get to in all one place," Lucy said, "I think now, if I were to teach face to face now, after teaching this online, I'm pretty sure I would use the exact same assignment submission space." Lucy extended this sentiment to much of her course, including the overall design and approach, to the point that, when asked about what she would change about her course design if adapting her online course for F2F writing instruction, Lucy declared she likely wouldn't change a thing:

> And the beauty of it then is that if I was doing a face-to-face section, it can become a much more flipped classroom in that way. It could become much more a seminar, right? Where—which it's supposed to be, ideally, this course—where we sit down and then do the work of our writing in the classroom, in the physical time that we have together. That synchronous time could be spent on the writing less than, "Here's what this assignment is about."

To Lucy, then, the qualities of OWI that could be leveraged for effective instruction and potentially for transfer, especially because even F2F courses almost universally include spaces on Canvas and other LMSs, can also be provided for in-person courses. Likely such an adaption could not be universal or accomplished wholesale because of the balance of online and in-person labor performed by students and instructors in F2F writing courses, among other factors, but Lucy's thoughts raised a good question: What does OWI offer to in-person instruction?

Faculty Participant 3: Bug Frau

Bug Frau, who had taught several online sections of writing in the past few years by the

start of this study, resisted a simple definition of her teaching philosophy, choosing instead to highlight the pedagogical goals and approaches she tries most to emphasize in her teaching. These goals included fostering independence and critical thought in students, working with themes likely familiar and universally relatable to all students, and giving students a "set of skills that they can take with them and transfer to other courses and also just transfer to other settings in general." In later explanations, the term "confidence" also entered the discussion.

Just as Lucy's and Summer's teaching philosophies and primary pedagogical goals were evident in their approaches to teaching online and adapting their F2F writing instruction for online settings, Bug's practices, philosophy, and concept of writing transfer showed a strong correlation. In addition to defining her philosophy through her primary pedagogical goals, she also used her pedagogical goals to define writing transfer and her degree of alignment to it—for example, stating,

> I want them to leave with a set of skills that they can take with them. I want them to have some kind of foundation that they're comfortable with. So I try to encourage more organic approaches to writing, more flexible approaches to writing.

Bug's concept of transfer, then, seemed to focus on skills to apply but also on a "foundation that [students are] comfortable with" that allows for "flexible approaches to writing," possibly indicating further development and adaptation. She continued later by adding, "I just I want them to move forward, feeling like they're confident and independent, a little bit more so than maybe they were when they first started out." This resistance to a simple answer to the questions—both regarding her teaching philosophy and her definition of and alignment with transfer-oriented pedagogy—suggested to me that Bug possibly viewed her definitions and practices as essentially synonymous. When asked in the member check if this was a fair assessment, Bug affirmed it,

even adding, “I also strive to make them feel comfortable coming to me, and thus by extension other instructors and individuals, with questions and concerns,” highlighting in her approaches a goal of making “transfer” not only about content knowledge applied to or possibly transformed for other contexts, but also about the processes of learning that students would find necessary in future educational contexts.

To further explain this, Bug discussed an emphasis she placed on teaching the writing process with a focus on the “in-between” steps so that they would be better prepared for future situations (in terms of feeling “comfortable and proficient—and less stressed”). She noted that this emphasis is picked up by students, who report in their self-reflection narratives that they could “continue to apply the same process or some variation of it (and what that would look like when writing for one of their major-oriented courses).” This strongly suggests to me that Bug worked, however intentionally, to promote the dispositional developments that support the transfer of learning, and she did this through attention to an adaptable writing process.

Additionally, Bug hinted at what I might call a “transfer of learning processes” when discussing what she wants students to take away and apply for future situations: “I also strive to make them feel comfortable coming to me, and thus by extension other instructors and individuals, with questions and concerns.” This desire, consistent with her pedagogical goal of giving student a set of skills to transfer to other courses as well as their personal lives, could possibly help students not only with “learning to learn to write” but also with “learning to learn.”

Bug’s actual practices for teaching online writing courses revealed two guiding factors that encompass nearly all of her work and commentary on that work: thoroughness and humanness. Online adaptation strategies such as providing more written feedback on writing, annotating samples more heavily, and writing very detailed assignment and activity descriptions

demonstrated Bug's commitment to being thorough for students in an environment where "questions aren't asked and answered immediately." The missing immediacy of F2F instruction also weighed in on Bug's intention to display frequent "humanness" through personal touches, humor, and attention to students and herself as "people/humans first." One principle that, in a way, tied both of these principles (humanness and thoroughness) together was of student feedback over the years. Although Bug expressed some concerns about her "Northwest Ohio flat" Canvas site, she attributed many of her practices—including ones she chose not to implement for online sections, such as the use of discussion boards and peer review activities—to student feedback and expressed needs, declaring that even when assignment descriptions were extremely lengthy and overwhelming at first, students consistently expressed appreciation for their thoroughness.

Bug's Online Teaching Practices

As I mentioned above, most of Bug's approaches to teaching OWI that depart from her F2F approaches involved emphasizing thoroughness of communication and sharing a heightened sense of "humanness." Like Summer and Lucy, Bug discussed the differences that have to be addressed in online writing courses because of the lack of in-person interactions typical of F2F writing courses. A feature common to Bug's work for her online courses, both in terms of the course documents she developed and the feedback she provided to students' writing, was a heavy use of written communication. One of Bug's major project assignment descriptions took up more than seven full pages. Project 3, the researched essay, included the shortest description—by far—with fewer than 700 hundred words, and it was probably only so "short" because the first two projects were meant, as a matter of the UWP curriculum design, to prepare students for their researched essays.

Bug said such lengthy descriptions were necessary to anticipate student questions, which was "especially important in an online setting, where questions aren't asked and answered immediately, like they would be in a f2f setting." The sense of "immediacy" was something Bug acknowledged as present in F2F course settings, declaring that "the lack of immediacy is something that can be problematic" for online writing courses. Therefore, Bug emphasized thoroughness in her work. In fact, when I asked Bug if she knew of any differences in how she performed "teaching for transfer" between F2F and online writing courses—acknowledging that my participants might not have had an answer to what was essentially my research question—Bug noted this need as one that stood out for that purpose:

> I try to be more thorough in the online setting…which involves…anticipating student questions, concerns, needs, etc. and working them into course materials, and various communications (such as feedback on papers, emails, responses to student questions, etc.) in such a way that they can be currently utilized but adapted for future scenarios.

Not only were Bug's assignment descriptions quite detailed, but they also included several parentheticals and other insertions and follow-up sentences that offered clarification or alternative possibilities regarding a matter, to help students see a fuller range of possibility and more accurately understand the assignment. In addition to the lengthy assignment descriptions, Bug pointed to feedback on student writing and writing samples as places where she invested more writing—and time—for her online courses than her F2F writing courses, again to be thorough toward anticipating student questions and concerns.

Regarding additional time and writing invested for writing samples in her online courses, Bug said that the lack of immediacy meant that the student samples she provided in her online courses needed to be "very heavily annotated" in order to show students "what a passing paper

looks like [and] annotations explaining what the writer did as well as how, why, and where." While Bug could discuss these matters verbally in her F2F courses, she had to adapt such rhetorical awareness development for the online setting by employing more written communication, in this case through heavy annotation of some course documents, such as sample essays.

Regarding student feedback, Bug said,

> I can't have spontaneous interactions and conversations with them. I can't hold them after class and say, "Hey, let's talk about this," or, "You seem to be struggling." I feel like I work harder to offer feedback on their essays and their smaller assignments to show them that I am present—I am really reading what they're writing and turning in and responding to their thoughts.

In addition to being thorough, Bug wanted to provide that extra feedback to ensure students would recognize her as present—a key concern for online writing instructors and students alike—and caring. She additionally claimed that the feedback she provided was "carefully-cultivated, of course, in order to appear encouraging vs. discouraging, to get them thinking about ways in which they might expand existing info, etc." This caring intention seems to have also had the aim of, in however slight or great a manner, promoting some degree of dispositional development. The focus on encouragement, tied to motivation, and "thinking about ways in which they might expand existing info," tied quite directly to future-oriented reflection and writing transfer, revealed a one-two punch for a goal of supporting positive experiences and attitudes for writing and reflection.

This caring intention also connected with the sense of "humanness" that Bug emphasized for her online courses. The "humanness" aimed for in Bug's teaching was, to her, connected with

her lengthy assignment descriptions, attention to thorough feedback, and other interactions with students in her online writing courses. This goal actually contributed to, and attempted to soften the burdens of, the lengthy assignment descriptions for the main course projects. In the asynchronous DBI about one of her main project descriptions, Bug said,

> Typically, if I see a good opportunity to add a little something extra, even just a word that I could imagine students thinking/saying as a response to what they're reading, I'll do it. It makes them smile, shows them that I too am human, and that I have a pretty good "read" on them as students/understand what they're thinking, how they're feeling, etc.

Such additions naturally added a bit of length to the documents themselves, such as a section in her second project's assignment description which had a heading on page 3 that read, "When on Earth Are You Going to Get to the Point? What Do I Have to Do???" This section came after two and a half pages of an "introduction" to the assignment description. Bug expressed some affinity for the idea of cutting those two and a half pages and beginning with the section that directly informed students of the project expectations and instructions "because it shortens the document," but she added that she would nonetheless keep the description's "introduction" because "context is important" and "it's important to set [students] up with some background info that helps them make appropriate choices in order for them to reap the most satisfaction, learning, and enjoyment from the project." She further said, "The tech writer in me likes brevity, but also understands the importance of detail, and so I'm often at war with myself here, especially when trying to also incorporate a bit of basic human-ness into various documents."

One more strategy that Bug employed in order to more effectively reach students in online courses and promote the human connection in the distanced format was to send weekly emails to her students to "touch base," remind them of upcoming due dates, and provide a "little

bit of a sense of structure." Bug noted that students frequently expressed gratitude for these emails in course evaluations and other communicated feedback. Additionally, while Bug considered student feedback to be continuous in F2F environments, such immediate feedback was not present in her online courses. She therefore offered students opportunities around mid-term to share their feedback about the course.

Online vs. Face-to-Face, According to Bug

On the differences between OWI and F2F writing instruction included, Bug attributed, of course, the need for thoroughness—a concept she brought up frequently—as a significant difference, naming it as a factor that contributed to what Bug saw as both a challenge and an advantage to OWI: accountability. While Bug noted this as affecting both students and teachers in terms of having to adapt to a more weekly structure rather than the day-to-day routine promoted by in-person courses, she focused on accountability especially as a benefit to her teaching, declaring it to be one of her

> favorite things…because you have to really be on your toes in that regard. And because you don't see them in person, you do have to make sure that you're as thorough as you can possibly be, and that you are giving them access to everything. . . . And I like that because it makes me more thorough, I think. And when I'm more thorough, I feel like I'm alleviating that sense of "Am I giving them everything that I need to be giving them?" So it's kind of a learning process for me as well.

The thoroughness that the heightened need of accountability for online courses prompted Bug to perform also showed her, like Lucy, that the affordances and challenges of OWI could be adapted not only from F2F writing courses but also to them. Bug reported that although she originally created the more detailed, more thorough versions of her course documents for online

students, she has started to also use them in F2F courses:

> I've also found myself developing new handouts for the online sections to cover things I cover in-person in the other classes (citation formatting, for example). And then I go on to still teach those things face-to-face, but there also end up being "back-up" handouts (what I've created for the online students) for them to refer to after the fact (which comes in handy for students who were absent on a given lecture day, those who learn best by taking their time with a document vs. trying to follow along with a lecture while taking notes, etc.). This gives them the same info a couple different ways...which is an example of how online teaching has actually helped face to face teaching.

Although for online students the more thorough documents, representing one of the primary interactions between Bug and her students, were essential documents for their learning, Bug included such documents as supplemental materials for her face-to-face courses, noting that they were useful for several secondary purposes, such as assisting students who had missed a class session and, significantly, providing multiple avenues to knowledge and experience for students, accommodating the various needs that students have regarding how they interact with course content.

A few more of Bug's practices and perspectives bear some interest. Like Lucy, Bug did not see a need to adapt all writing course staples from her F2F courses to her online writing courses. Her online course for the Spring 2020 semester did not include peer review—much like Summer's Spring 2020 course, although Summer did add peer review in the following semesters. Here a difference in purpose emerged. While Summer hadn't, by the Spring 2020 semester, found a way to meaningfully adapt peer review activities for the online course mode, Bug elected not to include peer review in the online course because of her understanding of the differences in

student populations that frequently occurred between online and in-person courses as a result, partially, of the various reasons students choose to take courses online (a notable exception occurring during the 2020-21 academic year, of course, when student choice carried less weight on how their courses were delivered). This choice to focus instruction and learning in her courses on activities other than peer review was also inspired by direct feedback from her students. Bug said that students seemed more interested in teacher feedback than on being "responsible for other people's thoughts." She added,

> I've had one – one – student tell me she wished we did peer review. Most are happy to take advantage of the opportunity to turn in a rough draft to me and work from that. Several have said that they chose the online format/platform *because* they wanted to work entirely asynchronously and only with the instructor. Sometimes this has been because they're more introverted or shy; other time it's been because they don't have a lot of free time.

Bug had also remarked, as did the other faculty participants, that she invested more time into designing and delivering her online courses, including providing thorough feedback, which took the place of such peer review activities. Bug's choice not to include peer review in her courses was the result of attentiveness to the needs of her students.

On the matter of not including discussion board activities in her course, Bug said,

> [A] lot of times [students] felt like they weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing. Because you would just have people chiming and going, "I agree with so and so." "So and So makes a really good point," but not adding anything to it beyond that.

Here, Bug seems to have been influenced to cut discussion board tasks from her course because of a common issue that students and teachers alike have faced—discussion participation that

lacks depth—but she also cited student perceptions for this decision in saying that her students "felt like they weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing." The reliance on student feedback that Bug exhibited in not including peer review and discussion boards also appeared in practices that Bug did include, such as her use of lengthy assignment descriptions. Students told her that while they initially felt overwhelmed at the length of the documents, they later felt grateful for how helpful the thorough descriptions turned out to be.

Just as Summer pointed to her "introverted personality" as fitting well with OWI, Bug also noted that her personality contributed to how she distinguishes F2F and online teaching. Because of her introversion, she said,

> I open up a lot more there than I probably do in person. And part of that is because I get to be behind the screen. But another part of that, too, is because there's something about that that also kind of propels me to reach out more and engage more, because that's the only way in which I ever interact with them. So I want to make sure that those interactions are consistent and good. And positive and encouraging and personable as well as helpful.

Bug's motivation here echoed her—and the other faculty participants'—motivations elsewhere, regarding how to "engage" with and "reach" students without the immediacy and physical presence of F2F courses. Yet she has also hinted at the importance of the modes of learning for personality. Bug declared that the screen-mediated interaction suited her introverted personality, so she was able to maximize on this combination of personality and medium to make sure class "interactions are consistent and good" and "positive and encouraging and personable." The connection between introversion and online learning is common and easy to make, but Bug's focus on it as contributing to creating a positive environment with encouraging interactions

demonstrates how Bug took the challenges of the online writing course space—distance, the lack of immediacy, and so on—and responded to them with her own strengths.

Conclusion

Several trends became apparent in this study. All three faculty participants displayed, as no surprise, strong correlations between their teaching philosophies, pedagogical goals, and practices as they considered the online learning spaces for transfer-oriented writing instruction. Summer's so-called "hands-off" approach represented one way that Summer encouraged student agency in her online writing courses, centering student voices in discussions. Lucy's student-centered and empathy-focused philosophy was supported by her recognition that she couldn't care on behalf of her students and the way she designed her course to prevent discouraging students. Bug's merged concepts of her teaching philosophy, her primary pedagogical goals, and her concept of writing transfer, together with her work to encourage both thoroughness and humanness, also demonstrated this pattern.

Also of no surprise, all the participants pointed to the lack of immediacy, especially in not being able to assess learning and respond to questions and situations continuously, as bearing some significance on the approaches they took to adapting their courses for online delivery. The various ways they did this, however, highlighted the multiple possibilities for achieving pedagogical success in OWI situations. Summer responded with a focus on assessment, providing more direction within a few assignments and adding others toward the purpose of being more aware of student progress and understanding. Lucy noted the hit to "flexibility" that resulted from the lack of in-person interaction in online courses. Bug responded to the lack of immediacy by writing extra-lengthy assignment descriptions and including mid-term feedback tasks in her online courses.

Some of the participant's philosophies and goals, too, overlapped, especially for attention to student-centered pedagogy that aimed to develop student confidence and independence. Although the ways each participant worked toward those aims differed, some similarities appeared. Summer and Lucy, for example, both expressed concerns with accessibility and the ease of navigating their course sites. All three of them, during the Spring 2020 semester at least, pointed out that not all activities needed to be migrated, diverting attention to activities such as peer review and discussion boards toward other efforts—though participants carried this out for differing purposes. Summer didn't include peer review because she wanted to do it well, Lucy avoided including mandatory writing conferences to allow her course to be truly asynchronous, and Bug replaced peer review and discussion boards with more teacher-student interaction and feedback.

To some degree, all the faculty participants noticed the affordances of OWI to encourage the development of generative dispositions and attitudes toward writing, with special emphasis by Bug and Lucy who extended such observations to how the online course context provided inspiration for reversing the F2F-to-online adaptation for online-to-F2F benefit. Summer's "hands-off" approach emphasized student agency and responsibility, characteristics beneficial for writing transfer. Lucy noted that encouraging independence may be easier online than in F2F writing courses while also declaring that the needs of online students for well-designed course sites could provide useful considerations for on-campus courses as well. Bug, meanwhile, noted that materials she developed to address the needs of online students, who did not have immediate and in-person access to Bug's guidance and feedback, could be used as supplementary or backup materials for students in F2F writing courses. Furthermore, she attended to writing transfer not only through promotion of dispositions with a focus on writing—by aiming to help students

become comfortable with the daunting "in-between" steps of writing—but also through encouraging students to build those dispositions beyond writing, to feel comfortable with taking the steps necessary, but often intimidating, for propelling their learning forward, namely asking questions and seeking other guidance for their writing.

In the next and final chapter, I revisit the above considerations in light of the results of the student portion of the study provided in the previous chapter, juxtaposing the expectations and intentions of faculty with the experiences of students in order to consider the implications of this study and determine future research avenues.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The previous two chapters sought to address the two secondary research questions of this study. Chapter 3 focused on the student portion of the study and its question, "How do students perceive writing—and themselves as writers—after taking an online first-year writing course?" Chapter 4 focused on the faculty portion of the study and its question, "How do first-year writing instructors adapt principles of transfer-focused writing instruction for online courses?" The study's primary research question, "How do transfer-focused pedagogical practices of online first-year writing instructors affect student perceptions of writing?" is the focus of this chapter.

I admit I somewhat worried, as I began this research, that this study might reveal something much akin to a sentiment expressed by one of the student participants, Travis, who said, "I don't see a substantial difference between [taking the writing course] online or in-person." That is to say, I considered the possibility that the concepts and practices that define and support writing transfer might not care in which medium they were shared and performed. Such a result, of course, would still be good news: students could take writing courses in whichever mode they preferred because the results would add further support to the idea that there is "no significant difference" between face-to-face and online literacy instruction. Yet another common premise, the importance of context, would suggest something might be different about writing transfer when taught online or in F2F courses. In such a case, determining what and why would be important for maximizing on the potentials of both modes for writing transfer.

The results of this study suggest the truth resides in the latter possibility, that writing transfer is performed, challenged, and afforded differently in online learning contexts than it is in F2F settings. While keeping in mind the limitations of this study as outlined in Chapter 2, I argue in this chapter about the significant differences for writing instruction and learning when

performed in online spaces. In this chapter I address the primary research question by juxtaposing the results of Chapters 3 and 4, exploring how the student perceptions and faculty practices combined toward an understanding of transfer-informed OWI. I close the chapter with implications from this discussion. Because the context of higher education has been undergoing dramatic shifts (with or without COVID-19) that continually need to be addressed, and because of the "preliminary" nature of this research, I set out to offer implications in multiple domains, including what this research might mean for OWI, for program administration, for further research, and even for F2F writing instruction.

I have one more comment to make before the discussion proper begins. I want to remind readers that the student and faculty participants in this study were teaching and learning under odd and stressful circumstances. Adding to the weight of COVID-19's impact on, well, everything, the faculty who participated in this study, like most of the workforce for the UWP, were all non-tenure-track faculty. They had large workloads with no time allotted to research to keep up with scholarship and best practices. They were also experiencing initiative fatigue from teaching in an institution with a high regard for service and a writing program with a newly revised curriculum and that had seen five changes in the administration team in the span of two years. If a reader has any reason to criticize any of this study's participants, they may consider the pressures of the above factors. If any criticism remains, it must be the fault of the researcher in indelicately representing the words of his participants.

With that in mind, I now begin the juxtaposition of the faculty and student portions of this study.

Discussion

The work of combining the student and faculty data for this discussion will require

keeping in context the foundational perspectives of the participants. I therefore begin this discussion with a review of the ways each faculty participant conceived of writing transfer. I begin here because of what Randall Bass (2017) said about transfer, which I quoted in the first chapter of this dissertation and feel is appropriate to bring up once more: "The idea of transfer is at the heart of the problem of learning" (p. 144). Learning brings about transformation—to one degree or another—and without transformation, one can justifiably question whether learning has actually occurred. As I outlined in that first chapter, the purpose of this dissertation was to review two terrains—OWI and writing transfer—to begin to plan some way to bridge them or to survey where the terrain overlaps. Yet ultimately, I begin with transfer as the heart, as the ground upon which any terrain or biome is built—including OWI, which I have recognized as one vehicle for transfer. Therefore, I say that perhaps a more appropriate metaphor may be that OWI is one way of getting around and surveying the landscape, of experiencing it.

So I begin with a review of the faculty perspectives of transfer. I frame this brief review as did Baird and Dilger (2017), who recognized the metaphors and other conceptions and practices of transfer as defined and performed by faculty as, broadly, falling into two categories: simple (including wholesale application of concepts to similar tasks and crude assemblage of slightly new concepts onto an existing one) and adaptive (including the abandonment of prior knowledge through negative transfer, the significant integration of new knowledge through remixing, and the significant transformation of prior knowledge for new contexts in recontextualization). I do not use this frame as a means of evaluation of the faculty's perspectives and performances of or toward writing transfer but as a means of distinguishing the ways concepts have been variously enacted upon, including how the concepts have or have not affected faculty practices and student experiences. That is, the frame's purpose in this chapter is

limited to a simple expansion of context. Taken together, this expansion of context further demonstrates the variety of experiences—both student and faculty—that occurred in the OFYWCs considered in this study, highlighting the importance of viewing the results of this study as a *starting place* for further research and pedagogy.

Summer's definition of writing transfer was "using previous knowledge…when anyone's approaching a new writing task, being able to pull from their previous knowledge to figure out how to do this new writing task." Given that Summer was hesitant to claim her pedagogy to be in full alignment with writing transfer—which itself may or may not have been simple caution or humility, upon which I'll make no further comment—and that she acknowledged the benefit of prior knowledge for "figure[ing] out" new tasks, it seems that Summer's concept of transfer sat between the "simple" and "adaptive" categories. Although Summer's definition included no transformative work, she did not dissuade the use of prior writing knowledge (demonstrated by her attention to it in the reading reflection assignments) and the act of "figure[ing] out" possibly promotes adaptation.

Lucy defined transfer by first saying that it was "like two ends of a spectrum, or it's two sides of a coin," further defining it as this:

> It's being able to bring in past experiences to address new writing situations. So whether that's writing experiences or life experiences, I think, bringing in knowledge that you already have, or skills you already have, to address a problem or a task that you're currently dealing with.

Taken with Lucy's claim that she doesn't "adapt" her F2F courses for online and the focus on "skills," it may seem that Lucy's concept of transfer was focused on simple application. Yet Lucy viewed herself as very intent on transfer, and she recognized that the prior knowledge did

not have to necessarily be writing knowledge, just as the future experiences addressed through writing knowledge and skills did not necessarily have to be writing experiences but could be "life experiences." Such far-reaching concepts of where prior writing knowledge could come from and where current knowledge could lead to may suggest that, like Summer, Lucy's concept of transfer was entering the adaptive territory.

Bug defined transfer by stating her teaching philosophy and primary goals for teaching, then confirmed that the declaration served all three. She defined transfer by saying:

> I want them to leave with a set of skills that they can take with them. I want them to have some kind of foundation that they're comfortable with. So I try to encourage more organic approaches to writing, more flexible approaches to writing.

Bug's integrated approach to defining transfer demonstrated a sort of sophisticated view of it. While she, like Lucy, focused on skills, her view of learning as a "foundation" to be built upon and writing as requiring "organic" and "flexible" approaches suggested that, also like Lucy, Bug was working toward if not with an adaptive concept of writing transfer.

Although student participants, for the most part, did not discuss the term "transfer" (with two notable exceptions), their survey responses indicated some of their perceptions about writing and learning that bears weight on the question of transfer. As commentary on the lowest or simplest level of transfer—attending to whether something is perceived as useable for other situations—students' reports of their post-term perceptions of the value of their WRIT course for college (for other courses overall and especially for courses in their major specifically) showed that they left their course experiences with a somewhat diminished view of the "transferability" of their learning for other writing contexts. The dips in their levels of agreement that what they learned in their writing course would be useful elsewhere in college (a -0.15 change in

agreement) and in their majors (a -0.23 change in agreement) seemed to be "bad news," confirming common perceptions that first-year writing courses haven't been doing their job and Johnny still can't write.

Some "good news" came through, though. Despite the lowered perception of transferability for college and especially major courses, students' perceptions of the same issue but with regards to contexts beyond college increased (a +0.15 change in agreement). What led to this distinction? I should point out that the responses for these three questions alone—perception of WRIT's value for college, the major, and contexts beyond college—did not take into account the students' experience in FYW courses that were specifically taken online. The difference might become apparent with consideration of other student responses, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Before I explore that topic, however, I should discuss the exceptions to my earlier claim that students did not, for the most part, make direct reference to "transfer." Two instances of this term appeared in interviews with student participants. First, Freida briefly declared a certainty that the sense and practice of responsibility she developed in her online WRIT 1120 course would "transfer" to future courses. Second, Maggie praised, at great length, having learned in her online WRIT 1110 course about "knowledge transfer," demonstrating that she had begun to transform how she viewed and performed not only the writing for WRIT 1110 and her other courses but also her career. While Maggie's rave review of the effects of learning about transfer were exciting and supported the idea that learning *about* transfer promotes that very transfer, Maggie's discussion of it was based on the simple topic of transfer as presented through course readings, which means it would likely have been the same had Maggie taken WRIT 1110 in person. It did not clear that obstacle I had anticipated and explained in the introduction to this

chapter, asking if and to what extent writing transfer could be attributed to the mode of learning rather than students' engagement, in whatever form, with the concept itself—and how, even if it was a legitimate factor, that I could possibly determine it, much less measure it.

However, Freida's brief mention of "transfer" alluded to patterns seen in both the faculty data and the student data for this study. Freida's claim to have acquired a higher level of responsibility for completing her work—according to a schedule she set for herself and that contrasted with her previous self-definition as a "responsible procrastinator"—supported the idea that dispositions (also known as habits of mind, attitudes of/toward learning, mindsets, and so on) represent one of the keys of learning, including both the simple and the complex transfer of writing skills and knowledge.

Assuming as true the importance of dispositions toward transfer, as explored in the first chapter of this dissertation, the perspectives and experiences of students and faculty both were encouraging toward some quality of OWI as promoting writing transfer. With regard to the student data, students reported that their writing confidence increased over the course of the semester, representing the largest positive shift in the study (a +0.54 change in agreement). Healthy confidence and self-efficacy should better enable students to face the challenges presented to them in their writing courses and in the writing tasks offered elsewhere. The focus on confidence-building among the goals and philosophies of the faculty participants suggests that faculty were somewhat successful in accomplishing this goal. Yet the roughly equivalent increase in confidence among students who did not name faculty participants as their instructor—or participating faculty who did not make direct reference to writing confidence in their interviews or course materials—suggests that the benefit may be attributed, additionally or alternatively, to the UWP curriculum and/or the online course mode.

The students' increase in perceived knowledge of strategies for successful writing likely also contributed to their reported increase in confidence. It naturally seems to follow that students who feel equipped for writing tasks because of knowing and practicing more approaches to writing in various situations would feel confident in their abilities to meet the demands of diverse writing situations. That is, the perception of knowledge should aid in a generative development of self-efficacy. In terms of transfer, faculty participants made explicit reference to this connection as a goal they had in mind for promoting long-term learning, noting that they wanted to provide students with, or help them construct, "skill backpacks" (Lucy) and "foundations" on which to build "flexible [writing] approaches" (Bug). Here, then, the transfer-focused intents and aims of the faculty were to some degree fulfilled by and for their students, at least in terms of what students perceived as having developed through their participation in the courses.

While instructors themselves had competing concepts about some ideas, such as the positive concept Summer had of the "flexibility" afforded by learning online and the comparative lack of "flexibility" Lucy perceived for online learning, students also pointed to the benefit of flexibility, which was named by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council for the Teaching of English, and National Writing Project (2011) as one of the "habits of mind" necessary for postsecondary writing success. Summer in fact named flexibility as a key advantage of online learning for writing instruction that helped to balance out some of the challenges of OWI. Just as Summer had expected that this flexibility was a benefit because it could allow for more procrastination but also the opportunities to move beyond procrastination and develop responsibility, students such as Freida pointed to this very interaction as a prominent benefit to having taken a writing course online. Freida declared herself a "responsible

procrastinator" and expressed surprised at how much more "initiative" she'd taken in order to avoid stressful levels of procrastination. She further declared the flexibility as aiding in her increase in confidence because she could "write when [she] wanted."

As responsibility is another of the "habits of mind" or dispositions toward learning identified in the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, it seems that the dispositional advantages of taking the course online—and asynchronously—worked together as an integrative dispositional benefit for students' generative development of dispositions in response to the somewhat open-endedness of course schedules in an asynchronous online writing course. Faculty approaches to adapting—or building as new—their teaching strategies for online course delivery also seemed to aid this integrative dispositional benefit. In light of students' perceived boost in responsibility, as a disposition, Lucy's refusal to care in students' place may have not only allowed them to "experience their learning as more of their own" but also to recognize the need for strengthening their sense of responsibility. Summer's "hands-off" approach not only meant that Summer claimed little to no responsibility over students' behavior in course—as a matter of fact—but also that she recognized the opportunity in online writing courses to step back from the centered position in class discussions. Students had more opportunity and agency—and therefore more responsibility—in these student-centered discussions. While many writing teachers, whether online or F2F, favor student-centered discussions, Summer pointed out that online course spaces afforded better opportunities to put it into practice. Where Summer did not ask for great responsibility from her online students—namely, in their responsibility to chose topics and source material for the first project to be used throughout the semester, and in conducting peer review—the decision was made because of the test-first-in-F2F approach, and those practices found their way into Summer's online courses in the summer and fall semesters. Finally, Bug

pointed to the benefit of accountability, for both students and teachers, that appears when students have to adapt to a different course structure and teachers have to be more thorough to account for the lack of immediacy.

Yet complicating this interaction between faculty practices and student perceptions regarding increased responsibility for some students were a mixture of survey responses that could possibly indicate both growth and setbacks in responsibility. While Freida pointed to responsibility as a benefit of taking her writing course online, survey respondents overall noted an increase in procrastination and giving up (+0.23 for *put it off/give up*) and a loss of motivation (-0.46 for *motivate self*). On the other hand, responsible practices such as *eliminate distractions* and *seek challenges* increased (+0.15 and +0.31, respectively).

This contradictory complication was also seen in the tension between how students perceived their confidence and motivation. While the high increase in *writing confidence* (+0.54, the highest rate of increase among all Likert statements) would seem to naturally have a positive correlating effect on motivation, it didn't: *motivate self* decreased by 0.46, the second largest decrease among the Likert statements. Regarding confidence, both Lucy and Bug named supporting this quality as a primary goal of their work, with Lucy declaring that acknowledging she can't "care *for*" [on behalf of] students worked toward that goal of developing writing confidence—as well as independence. Bug's primary teaching goals—which she integrated with her teaching philosophy and extended definition of writing transfer—included students' development of confidence and independence, achieved through helping students to feel comfortable in approaching her for their learning needs—which was in turn supported by her thoroughness and intentional "humanness" in the online space—and in emphasizing the "in-between" steps of writing processes. Taken together, these results suggest that the way the online

writing instructors responded to the limitations of OWI—especially the lack of immediacy and the challenges to presence and social connection—helped to promote some degree of increase in generative dispositions among their students. The connection is somewhat complicated primarily by two factors: 1) the contradictory results among dispositions and students, and 2) the strong blow to *motivate self* scores. I express a degree of confidence that these factors are mitigated by, respectively, 1) the variability of people in terms of how they respond differently to the same stimuli and processes, and 2) the COVID-19 pandemic, which was just emerging at the time of the study: unexpected, new, and critically disruptive of many human endeavors.

To what degree can these benefits, though complicated, be attributed to or correlated with online *writing* instruction specifically—rather than online learning overall? How much of the benefit was from the UWP's curriculum itself, and how much of it was from the individual instructors' efforts at adapting the curriculum for online spaces? While unraveling all of the contributing factors would be near impossible, a few key considerations emerged in the data. To begin with, students responded well to the *online prepares* statement, which demonstrated the second highest increase from the first to the second survey (tied with *meaningful writing* at +0.39). The full statement from the second survey was, "Taking this class immersed in an online, digital environment will help me better use what I learned in the future," and one student responded to this question with an explanation about the growth of digital communication. (However, many answers did address the benefits of online learning in general.) Most encouraging, however, was Victor's view that to some degree learning *writing* online presented different learning opportunities than learning other subjects online. Victor did not go into detail about why he perceived that difference, but some plausible explanations lie in easy reach, including Warnock's (2009) idea that OWI benefits from having its subject match its medium.

What else may set OWI apart from some or many other types of online learning may be the increased ability for writing faculty who are teaching 25 or fewer students per section to be attentive to individual students—thus somewhat bridging the social presence gap often perceived in online courses—in a way that isn't as easily possible in courses with several dozen or even a few hundred students. Assuming that other students perceived a similar difference between *writing* and *most other subjects*, these reasons may offer some guidance toward clarification.

Yet the difference may have been something else. The UWP's curricular focus on transfer-oriented writing instruction, with its focus on explicit interaction with concepts of transfer, may have influenced Victor, and any students with similar perceptions, to recognize this difference. Alternatively, the emphasis may have been with the practices of the instructors. This re-emphasizes the primary research question: "How do transfer-focused pedagogical practices of online first-year writing instructors affect student perceptions of writing?" While the influential factors were certainly many that affected student perceptions of writing, themselves as writers, and the effects of online learning for writing courses, the work of the faculty certainly played a role in the evolution of these perceptions.

Permit me a brief detour. There's a landmark to map over here, a traveler to pick up. Very early in this study, while still forming the research questions, I thought much about the influence of expectation on transfer, Wardle's (2007) piece about transfer in FYW courses, and especially the Bermann & Zepernick (2007) piece about student perceptions and transfer. Those thoughts remained with me even as the research question and research design evolved. I therefore expected that the most significant results from this study would be largely based on the questions in the survey that dealt with students' definitions of writing, matter of reflection, and especially the survey questions that asked for their perceptions and expectations about how

valuable they expected their WRIT courses would be for their major, other college writing, and writing beyond college—with dispositions included as support and to make a more comprehensive study. I thought also that faculty might have focused to some extent on such questions: student conceptions of writing, the value of the course, the effectiveness of their teaching, the importance of reflection for transfer.

I do not mean to say that the students did not demonstrate some interesting points along those lines or that the faculty did not attend to those questions in their teaching. They certainly did, and some of those points are included in the previous chapters (such as the shock that reflection scores were among the biggest decreases in the survey responses) and in data that may appear in other writing. What both the student participants and the faculty participants seemed to share, however, were ideas about the dispositional benefits—and challenges, which can often be considered benefits when the subject is learning or any other matter of growth or development—of online learning for writing instruction. Students pointed to a greater willingness to seek challenges in writing, an improved ability to productively deal with distractions when completing writing tasks, an increase in writing confidence, and a positive effect on their responsibility—the last two of which were goals that the faculty explicitly supported. It seems that, at least in the case of the teachers and some students in this study, the major considerations regarded foundational concepts—the very attitudes of thinking and dispositions toward learning that support learning.

Implications

I began this with study with some assumptions. I assumed that the questions about attitudes and dispositions included in the survey would merely provide support for other trends or observations about how OWI might or might not differ from F2F writing instruction in terms

of challenges and affordances to writing transfer and student conceptions of writing. Instead, they turned out to be a primary concern and theme in the results. The implications that follow, then, focus largely on the matter of dispositions for online writing instruction. I divide this section into two main sections: first, current implications and opportunities, which concern practices and ideas that may be considered now, and then "future implications and opportunities," which concern implications of and for research toward further developing the current implications as well as new ideas.

Current Implications and Opportunities: Teaching and Administration

If OWI offers generative dispositional development as a benefit toward writing transfer, a number of opportunities arise for writing faculty and program administrators. These opportunities bring with them further questions to be considered toward accepting or implementing any practices based on these implications. To begin with, it seems prudent to return briefly to the question, "Why dispositions?"

Early in this dissertation I drew attention to the importance of student perceptions for writing transfer. What students perceive about writing, writing courses, and themselves can affect whether, how, and how much they actively transfer writing. Because dispositions, or habits of mind, promote learning habits and also support certain perceptions about oneself (such as in the effects of increased self-efficacy), generative disposition development can support a foundational level of learning that contributes to the application, adaptation, and transformation of prior knowledge of writing to other contexts. Some, such as Costa & Kallick (2014), place a tremendous value on the importance of dispositions for education. Their work may be appropriate for the foundation-developing stages of education encountered in elementary and secondary education, but postsecondary writing courses cannot, of course, deal only with

dispositions in the hopes that students will acquire, analyze, and transform knowledge of and about writing. To transform the state of postsecondary online writing instruction—which may become increasingly synonymous with postsecondary writing instruction—we should continue to design robust curricula that attend to writing transfer while also leveraging the strengths of dispositional education that provide further support for transfer.

We can do both. Dispositional development must afford some level of inherent support for transfer because of the mental habits generated and refined through such development, but simply expecting students to engage in such development, as if they could learn it on autopilot, is unlikely to be fruitful. Instead, I turn to the example set by the faculty participants in this study. The faculty participants, when asked about their course goals and educational philosophies, included unprompted mentions of dispositions and habits of mind that they hoped to help students develop. While they gave just as much attention to matters of course content and concepts—understanding rhetorical situations, navigating the facets of an argument, having awareness of possible writing strategies for a situation, and so on—they discussed at length the goals they had for students that would in their minds carry students forward beyond their WRIT 1120 courses.

The high integration of goals for teaching content as well as encouraging shifts in how students approach learning and writing, represented by the faculty, suggests that the positive developments students reported may be to some degree attributed to the intentions of faculty to promote such shifts. Lucy's focus on fostering independence, for example, was realized in practices resulting from her expression that she could not care on her students' behalf, that they had to accept and perform their own responsibility. Bug wanted her students to develop confidence, including toward feeling comfortable enough to approach others for guidance when

needed, so she worked to create "carefully-cultivated" pedagogy that encouraged students. Summer's "hands-off" approach also took advantage of the physically and chronologically distanced nature of online writing courses, which likely supported the independence and responsibility of her students. In short, then, faculty were aware of some need to support not only students' learning of course concepts but also their attitudes toward writing and themselves as writers. Some degree of this awareness and practice may have also been attributable to program culture or the curriculum itself. As mentioned in Chapter 3, students were similarly likely to increase their confidence regardless of instructor, which opens the possibility that the curricular shift to transfer-focused pedagogy or the culture of the program faculty also played a part in promoting the development of this disposition.

My practical recommendations, then, center around active promotion of dispositions as a supporting part of solid, transfer-oriented writing pedagogy—whether explicitly named or given room for student inference. As Costa and Kallick (2014) point out in making ultimate recommendations for integrating dispositions into education, "Trying to change [others' thoughts and actions]…will generate discomfort….[T]he capacity for higher thought is decreased." (p. 147-148). Instead they encourage educators, "Start with yourself" (p. 148) and ultimately conclude with a call to heed Mahatma Gandhi's famous "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Any writing instructor who wishes to support writing transfer in online courses, then, may consider focusing on dispositions they can foster through example, supplementing with personal growth where possible.

Such an implication may seem fluffy rather than substantial, but students will resist dispositional education from any teacher who does not demonstrate it in themselves; we easily recognize the importance, in making the argument to our students that combining conceptual

education with dispositional education is worthwhile, of not simply presenting credibility but of being credible.

Possibilities exist beyond this, however. While the hesitation Costa and Kallick present about changing others—and questions on how much professional circumstances may infringe on personal lives—may bring a similar hesitation to writing program administrators about instituting required professional development on faculty dispositions, optional professional development may lend itself well to this matter. Book and reading clubs with books and other texts that discuss the importance of dispositions for writing transfer specifically and education generally might represent an especially attractive possibility—especially if the program funds the purchase of the books. (The contingency of most writing faculty must not be forgotten.)

An alternative approach—or better yet, a second step, assuming program faculty express alignment with a focus on integrating dispositions for writing transfer—would be to involve faculty in the creation of dispositional statements for the program. Using Bob Broad's (2003) dynamic criteria mapping as a guide, program administrators and faculty may co-create guides for the program on which dispositions a program or course might actively promote—perhaps even represented within student learning outcomes—and how the course projects and the online course structures can best support those goals. These "dispositional statements" might be something akin to mission statements—published on the program's website and discussed in faculty meetings as guiding goals, recognized as attitudes of learning that should be encouraged because they support certain curricular outcomes, but not given to students as mandates to conform to—or they might be integrated in supporting roles for some of the program's learning outcomes. That is to say that the disposition would not be the outcome itself; it would be mentioned in an outcome where such a disposition would support the learning and experience of

the course concept. As Kristine Johnson (2013) warns, habits of mind (or dispositions) can be learned, but to teach them invites "ideological and political exclusion" (p. 536). The intangibility of dispositions discourages their measurement in outcomes, but their foundational nature lends them well to considering as pillars of support. Considering ways of designing course experiences that allow students to learn and practice dispositions through writing—and writing through the engagement of their attitudes of learning—may promote transfer through a cyclical pattern of repeated development.

Although programs and faculty can select dispositions to best suit their own programmatic contexts and individual strengths—from the eight habits of mind provided in the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* by the CWPA, NCTE, and NWP (2011) or from other of several lists of educational dispositions that exist—a few that stand out as "readily available" for the online setting of online writing courses include flexibility and responsibility, which were the most prominent among dispositional benefits students reported in this study. The socially distanced and chronologically separated nature of many online writing courses almost inherently seemed to provide some degree of these benefits, but faculty had various ways of supplementing these benefits. (Again, I think of the "hands-off" approach of Summer, Lucy's encouragement of students to care on their own behalf, and Bug's approach of being extra thorough with course information and deliberate about her "humanness.") To some degree, then, dispositional benefits for writing transfer will require faculty members' individual strengths—bringing us back to Costa and Kallick's reminder that it must "start with [us]."

Of note in this study is also the potentially frustrating sprawl of terms. Dispositions also go by the names habits of mind, attitudes of learning, mindsets, and so on. Depending on the discipline, different dispositions are given prominence. Within writing studies and writing

instruction, the habits of mind given attention branch out in multiple directions. Since the CWPA, NCTE, and NWP (2011) immortalized eight habits of mind in the *Framework for Succeess in Postsecondary Writing* about a decade ago, rhetoric and writing studies scholars such as Baird and Dilger (2017), Driscoll and Powell (2016), Driscoll and Wells (2012), and Wardle (2012) have discussed the importance of these and other dispositions. Of especial interest to me is the lack of independence and confidence—or as Driscoll and Wells (2012) call it, self-efficacy—in the *Framework for Success*, yet its strong presence in the minds of teachers and students in OFYWCs. Therefore, critical scrutiny of dispositions, especially regarding their selection, should be practiced if a program elects to give attention to their inclusion in student course experiences.

I hoped, at the beginning of this study, that it would be relevant not only to OWI but also to F2F writing instruction. Indeed, the above recommendations about considering ways of promoting dispositions with various course experiences and outcomes can apply to designing outcomes, courses, and curricula for writing courses delivered online, F2F, and in hybrid, although the course format seems to present certain challenges and benefits in this regard. While some students did report frustration with learning online—indeed, it may likely never be for everyone—a common factor in the benefits students reported for online writing courses was the asynchronicity of the courses. Especially because writing is an "anywhere, anytime" and in fact an "everywhere, all the time" activity, asynchronicity for writing courses may offer challenges that serve to strengthen students' perceptions of themselves as responsible writers. It may be of some value for writing programs with only F2F sections for considering online sections—especially asynchronous sections—to remain after the pandemic. Furthermore, programs with only fully-online and F2F sections of their writing courses could consider adding some hybrid

sections, which would provide much of the in-person comfort and stability of F2F sections while encouraging some degree of the flexibility-and-responsibility development potential of asynchronous online sections of writing courses.

Dispositions don't represent all that this study may imply, however. I do want to draw some attention briefly to a couple of other points arising from this research, one regarding faculty concepts of transfer and one regarding approaches to instruction in online writing courses. The concepts of transfer expressed by the faculty in this study demonstrated a diversity of perspective yet worked toward, if not in, adaptive concepts. Although this study did not aim to assess how well faculty actually performed transfer-oriented pedagogy, it may be reasonable to correlate the conscious intentions of faculty toward fostering confidence, independence, and other dispositional goals with their concepts of writing transfer as more than "mere" application. That is, I expect that sophisticated concepts of writing transfer and dispositional awareness are mutually supportive.

Any writing program that elects to focus on transfer-oriented writing pedagogy should offer faculty time and space to develop robust concepts of writing transfer, possibly engaging in small group discussions with some consideration given to potential connections with dispositions. If dispositions concern attitudes toward learning and the habits that support it, while transfer concerns the continual engagement with knowledge and activity, a fruitful practice would be periodic attention to the breadth of both of these concepts as complimentary and foundational for writing development.

Finally, the faculty in this study implicitly highlighted a limitation in my research question. I had only included the verb "adapt," as if all of their instruction began first in F2F courses. The test-first-in-F2F approach by Summer suggested that this was partially the case for

her, but such adaptations were not automatic. Lucy's approach of *beginning* with OWI as the location of design further complicated this matter. While Bug did not seem to expressly declare one approach or another in this regard, her work on adding humanness and thoroughness suggests somewhat of a middle ground in adaptation and "original" creation. The range of approaches here reinforces the third and fourth principles of OWI (as recounted in Hewett, 2015), namely that online writing pedagogy should be both created for the online environment (Principle 3) and, wherever appropriate, adapted from the F2F experience (Principle 4). To be more accurate, both of these principles were updated to be included as part of Principle 3 of the newer *Online Literacy Instruction Principles and Tenets* by the Global Society of Online Literacy Educators (2020): "Instructors and tutors should commit to regular, iterative processes of course and instructional material design, development, assessment, and revision to ensure that online literacy instruction and student support reflect current effective practices." This third principle includes five tenets, the fourth of which conveys a similar recommendation as given in OWI Principle 4.

Future Implications and Opportunities: Research

In Chapter 1, I presented some potential research possibilities for exploring the OWI-transfer terrain, noting that some of them were not suitable candidates for this dissertation project. Here I briefly revisit those possibilities for future research, adding to them the avenues that appear to have opened up after the exploration represented in this study.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, a more thorough examination of writing transfer as challenged and afforded by OWI may be necessary through longitudinal studies. Such studies could examine outcomes for students at the ends of each semester over a period of time, tracking progress and processes of transfer across multiple situations. Larger studies, both longitudinal

and short-term, could afford more resources for comparing student perceptions as reported by students in online, F2F, and hybrid sections of the same program's writing courses.

The results of this study, highlighting dispositional qualities of education for writing transfer, might offer longitudinal studies other variables for further exploration. How do dispositions, given direct focus on online writing courses, affect writing transfer as performed by students throughout the rest of their time in postsecondary education? How do they affect transfer beyond college and into the workplace?

Other questions arise from the surprises and unexpected situations in this study. Student motivation took a large hit in this study's results, presumably because of the COVID-19 pandemic. What would the results of a study similar to this one—at least in terms of measuring student perceptions and dispositions—look like in a "normal" semester, that is, once the pandemic has essentially ended and lost its grip on the atmosphere of postsecondary education? Would OWI in such circumstances challenge or afford motivation, self-efficacy, and regulation? The post-COVID world of writing studies and education will demand we ask more questions and likely re-ask old ones. What can we learn from this pandemic experience for strengthening our writing instruction, not only to be prepared for potential future obstacles but also to continue our best practices into more "ideal" times?

The potential implication about the correlation of faculty concepts of transfer and dispositional intentions brings another question: How much does a writing instructor's perception of writing transfer affect how they integrate a focus—explicit or implicit—on dispositions in their writing courses? How much does the curriculum contribute to these matters?

Finally, one surprise of this study was the decrease in reflection scores in the student surveys for all three "moments" of reflection: pre-writing reflection, reflection performed during

a writing task or project, and post-writing reflection. This drop may be explained, somehow, by the pandemic, which would be demonstrated if other studies reveal a positive effect on reflection among students in online courses. Students may have neglected the "additional" work of reflecting on their writing processes, activities, and knowledge. The drop may also be explained, however, as a result of students changing not only their perceptions of themselves and their practices but also of what a "typical" practice would be. That is, it's possible students might have reported a decreased rate of reflection because they had re-evaluated their own practices after having learned of the importance of reflection. For this and similar reasons, a study that measures student responses and analyzes their writing—beyond self-reported data, that is—may be beneficial for a more thorough understanding of how students experience online writing courses, both in terms of challenges and benefits.

I wondered at the start of this study what I would discover. I even gave thought to the idea that "no significant difference," the phrase used to compare the quality of education possible in F2F and online writing courses, would extend to the ways that teaching and learning for writing transfer were experienced in online courses. I am encouraged by the results of this study, which suggest that is not the truth. This study has opened up further possibilities for exploring writing transfer and online writing courses—two critically important subjects as we move into a post-COVID era, one in which, even more, the value goods and services such as postsecondary education may be up for increased scrutiny.

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APPENDIX A: STUDENT START-OF-TERM SURVEY

[Informed consent document is featured as the first page of the Qualtrics copy of this survey. The questions below begin on page 2.]

Please select the gender with which you identify:

- Female
- Male
- Nonbinary/Genderfluid
- Transgender
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Please select the race(s)/ethnicit(ies) with which you identify:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Please select your class standing:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Other

Major: _____

Age

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-65
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

Are you enrolled in any other online courses this semester?

- Yes, all of them.
- Yes, but not all of them.
- No, all of my other courses are on campus.

No, this is the only course I'm taking.

Why did you enroll in an online section of your WRIT course? (Check all that apply.)
I don't live near BGSU. All of my courses are online.
I couldn't fit an on-campus section in my schedule.
I wanted more flexibility in my schedule.
I thought an online section would be easier.
I thought an online section would be more challenging.
Other reason(s): _____

Have you taken an online course before this term?
Yes No

Which writing course are you currently enrolled in?
WRIT 1110 WRIT 1120

Are you enrolled in a 7-week course or a 15-week course?
7-week
15-week

Please provide your instructor's name: _____
(Note: Your instructor's name is necessary only to correlate student responses with instructor practices and is not meant for student surveillance.)

[Question to appear if student indicated "Yes" they took an online course previously *and* that they are enrolled in WRIT 1120.] (If you took an online course and are enrolled in WRIT 1120) Did you also take WRIT 1110 online? (Answer "Yes" if you took an equivalent course at another institution and credit for that course transferred to BGSU.)
Yes No

The following questions ask for your opinion or level of agreement/disagreement with a statement about writing.

How do you define "writing"?

_____

_____

Writing is useful or necessary in most aspects of life.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Writing is an especially challenging activity.
Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Writing is a skill you can learn, master, and then apply to all future writing needs.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I enjoy writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I approach writing situations with confidence.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I know and employ useful strategies for writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

When I write, I often think about similar writing tasks I completed in the past.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

When I write, I often think about dissimilar writing tasks I completed in the past.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I can easily motivate myself to complete my writing tasks.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

When a writing assignment is especially difficult, I tend to put it off for later or give up.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

If I myself or something else distracts me during a writing task, I quickly get rid of the distraction to continue writing.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

When a teacher or classmate suggests changes for my writing, I readily accept those changes.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

When a teacher or classmate suggests changes for my writing, I critically consider whether I want to accept those changes.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

I reflect on my thoughts and my writing before I begin putting words to a page.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

I reflect on my thoughts and my writing while I write.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I reflect on my thoughts and my writing after I have finished writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I seek challenges in writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

The following questions ask for your opinion or level of agreement/disagreement with a statement about your WRIT course for this term.

I expect some or all of the writing I do in my WRIT course will be personally meaningful to me.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?
_____
_____

I expect my WRIT course will prepare me for other college writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?
_____
_____

I expect my current WRIT course will prepare me to write in my major.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____
_____

I expect course content and concepts from my current WRIT course will help me with writing beyond college.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____
_____

Taking a class immersed in an online, digital environment will help me better use what I learn in the future.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____
_____

What do you expect will be different for you as a student of an online section of WRIT, compared to if you had been enrolled in a face-to-face section?

_____
_____

What do you expect to learn in your WRIT course?

_____
_____

What do you think the primary purpose of your WRIT course is?

_____
_____

You have reached the end of the survey. Please provide your name and BGSU email address, which will be used only for 1) comparing participant responses between the start and end of the term, and 2) entering your name into a drawing for one of three $50 gift cards. In order to be eligible for the drawing, you will need to complete the follow-up survey near the end of the term and provide the same email address on that survey.

Your instructor will not be given your name or email address. Your name and email address will not be attached to any of your responses when survey data is shared publicly.

Name: _____
BGSU email: _____

APPENDIX B: STUDENT END-OF-TERM SURVEY

[Informed consent document as first page on Qualtrics copy of this survey. The questions below begin on page 2.]

Please select the gender with which you identify:

- Female
- Male
- Nonbinary/Genderfluid
- Transgender
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Please select the race(s)/ethnicit(ies) with which you identify:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Please select your class standing:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Other

Major: _____

Age

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-65
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

Are you enrolled in any other online courses this semester?

- Yes, all of them.
- Yes, but not all of them.
- No, all of my other courses are on campus.

No, this is the only course I'm taking.

Why did you enroll in an online section of your WRIT course? (Check all that apply.)
I don't live near BGSU. All of my courses are online.
I couldn't fit an on-campus section in my schedule.
I wanted more flexibility in my schedule.
I thought an online section would be easier.
I thought an online section would be more challenging.
Other reason(s): _____

Have you taken an online course before this term?
Yes No

Which writing course are you enrolled in for Spring 2020?
WRIT 1110 WRIT 1120

Are you enrolled in a 7-week course or a 15-week course?
7-week 15-week

Please provide your instructor's name: _____
(Note: Your instructor's name is necessary only to correlate student responses with instructor practices and is not meant for student surveillance.)

[Question to appear if student indicated "Yes" they took an online course previously *and* that they are enrolled in WRIT 1120.] Did you also take WRIT 1110 online? (Answer "Yes" if you took an equivalent course at another institution and credit for that course transferred to BGSU.)
Yes No

The following questions ask for your opinion or level of agreement/disagreement with a statement about writing.

How do you define "writing"?

_____

_____

Writing is useful or necessary in most aspects of life.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Writing is an especially challenging activity.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Writing is a skill you can learn, master, and then apply to all future writing needs.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I enjoy writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I approach writing situations with confidence.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I know and employ useful strategies for writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

When I write, I often think about similar writing tasks I completed in the past.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

When I write, I often think about dissimilar writing tasks I completed in the past.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I can easily motivate myself to complete my writing tasks.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

When a writing assignment is especially difficult, I tend to put it off for later or give up.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

If I myself or something else distracts me during a writing task, I quickly get rid of the distraction to continue writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

When a teacher or classmate suggests changes for my writing, I readily accept those changes.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

When a teacher or classmate suggests changes for my writing, I critically consider whether I want to accept those changes.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I reflect on my thoughts and my writing before I begin putting words to a page.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I reflect on my thoughts and my writing while I write.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I reflect on my thoughts and my writing after I have finished writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

I seek challenges in writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

The following questions ask for your opinion or level of agreement/disagreement with a statement about your WRIT course for this term.

Some or all of the writing I did in my WRIT course was personally meaningful to me.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

My WRIT course has helped prepare me for other college writing.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____

_____

My WRIT course has helped prepare me to write in my major.
Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____

_____

I expect course content and concepts from my WRIT course will help me with writing beyond college.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____

_____

What are three things you learned in your WRIT course?

_____

_____

What do you think the primary purpose of your WRIT course was?

_____

_____

What was the best writing you did for this course? Why was it your best?

_____

_____

I am glad I took this WRIT course online.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why is that?

_____

_____

Taking this class immersed in an online, digital environment will help me better use what I learned in the future.

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____

_____

What challenges did you face because you were enrolled in an *online* section of WRIT?

_____

_____

What advantages did you have because you were enrolled in an *online* section of WRIT?

_____

_____

You have reached the end of the survey. Please provide your name and BGSU email address, which will be used only to 1) compare participant responses between the start and end of the term, and 2) to enter your name into a drawing for one of three $50 Amazon gift cards. In order to be eligible for the drawing, you will need to have also completed the initial survey near the start of the term, providing the same email address on that survey.

Your instructor will not be given your name or email address, and your name and email address will not be attached to any of your responses when survey data is shared publicly.

Name: _____
BGSU email: _____

End-of-survey message: Thank you for participating in this survey. If you completed both surveys and provided your name and email address, your name will be entered into a drawing. I will randomly select three winners to each receive a $50 Amazon gift card, to be delivered digitally, by mail, or in person, according to each winner's preference. I will contact winners no later than June 5, 2020.

APPENDIX C: FACULTY INITIAL INTERVIEW

Questions to be sent to participants at least 1 week before their scheduled interview, dependent on researcher and participant schedules. I will begin interviews by asking participants if they consent to having the interview recorded. Interview questions may be adjusted in response to the answers provided by the interviewee, but the following represents a sketch of likely questions and sequence.

1) How would you describe your teaching philosophy?
2) How would you define *writing transfer?*
3) What do you hope students learn/experience/gain in your courses this semester, especially that will follow them beyond the end of the semester?
4) How many courses have you taught online in the past?
    a) Which courses were they?
    b) Are you teaching any online courses outside of UWP this term?
5) What led you to teach those courses online this term?
    a) [If the answer suggests the instructor had some say in the matter] What attracted you to teaching online?
    b) [If the answer suggests the instructor did not have any say in the matter] How do you feel about teaching online?
6) What changes for you when you teach online?
    a) What challenges does a fully-online course give to you as an instructor?
        i) What about in terms of teaching for transfer?
    b) What advantages does a fully-online course give to you as an instructor?
        i) What about in terms of teaching for transfer?
7) Describe your online course space.
    a) What assignments and activities do students do in your course?
    b) How do students do and experience the work in your course?
        i) In terms of media, tools, etc.?
        ii) In terms of collaboration?
        iii) In terms of asynchronous and synchronous learning?
        iv) In terms of how your course shell is arranged?
    c) How do these activities promote transfer?
8) How do you think your students experience their learning online? What changes for them?
    a) What about in terms of learning for transfer?
9) How do you ensure that students taking your courses are gaining the knowledge and experiences you mentioned earlier, such as [reference the answer from Question 3]?
    a) How does this answer change for your online courses?
    b) In comparison with your face-to-face courses, how well do your online courses afford students the opportunities for [Question 3 references again]?

APPENDIX D: FACULTY DISCOURSE-BASED INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview is based on analysis of a course document that the instructor has selected as representing or resulting from a significant pedagogical moment or idea in their course, especially in regard to writing transfer. I will collect that document, along with others, throughout the term. I will also provide participating instructors with the following outline of what to expect in the interview at least 1 week before the scheduled date of the interview. I will begin interviews by asking participants if they consent to having the interview recorded. With participant consent, this interview may be repeated twice, for a total of three times, each time about a separate document.

1) Walk me through this document.
    a) What is happening here?
        i) Follow-up questions based on response.
    b) What were your goals for this document?
        i) Follow-up questions based on response.
    c) How did you write this document?
        i) Follow-up questions based on response.
2) I'm going to ask you several questions about choices you made in writing this document. Sometimes I will present you with alternative wordings or features and ask whether you would consider that variation for your work. Please know that I intend for no assumption of preference or superiority with these variations. The purpose of such questions is to simply uncover further detail on the reasoning that underlies your rhetorical choices.
    a) (Questions based on features of the participant's course document. I will ask participants to explain choices made in the creation of the document, including reasons for not choosing other methods of achieving the aims of the document.) Example questions are below:
        i) You wrote X in this class announcement. I have read other class announcements of yours for this course where you wrote Y. I'm curious about the reasons you wrote X here instead of Y. Would you be willing to use Y in this document? Why or why not?
        ii) You included a section in this project assignment sheet about X. What led you to include that in your assignment sheet? Would you include X also in a class announcement? How about a discussion board topic starter? How about a peer review guide?
3) How did teaching this course online affect how you chose, designed, and/or delivered this document to your students?
    a) What remains the same as in your face-to-face courses?
    b) What innovations, differences, or new developments have you made for the online learning environment?
    c) Follow-up questions based on responses.
4) How effective do you think this document was for promoting the learning goals you had in mind?
    a) Follow-up questions based on responses.

APPENDIX E: FACULTY MEMBER CHECK INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview is based on an initial, rough draft account of the data analysis of the study, which I will share with participants at least 1 week in advance of their scheduled interview. I will begin interviews by asking participants if they consent to having the interview recorded.
The questions asked in this interview are dependent on participant data and responses. However, the general theme of the interview is mutual negotiation of participant representation. Generic representative questions include the following:

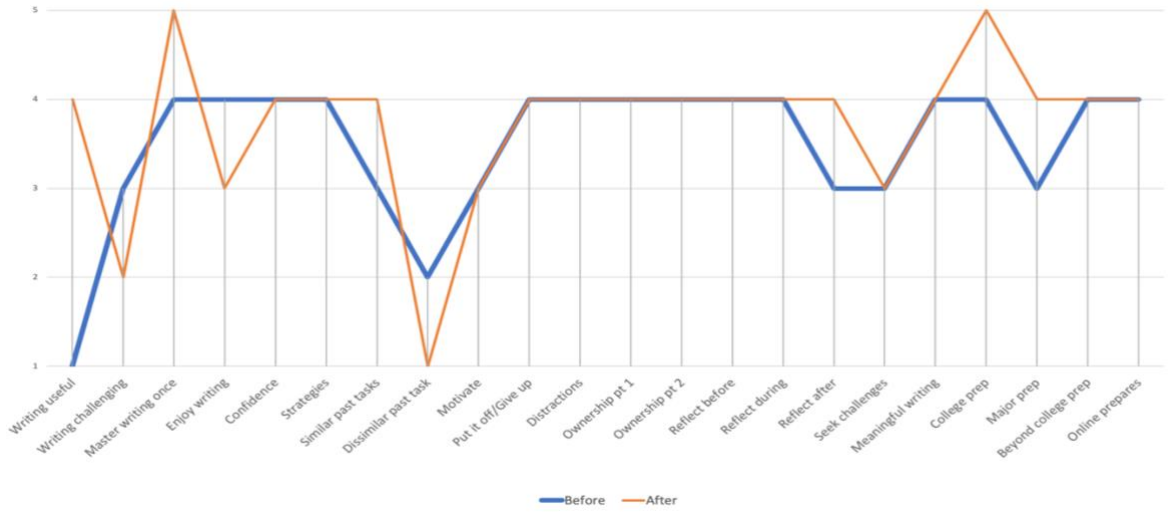
- How well does this representation of you and your work ring true to you?
- Where do you perceive that I have made a misinterpretation of data that has led to a misrepresentation of you or your work?
- I wrote on page X that you were likely trying to accomplish Y by doing Z. Is this a reasonable analysis?
- What insights can you provide that would better inform the analysis and thus how I represent you?
- Do you have any requests for modifying representational issues that I have not addressed?

APPENDIX F: DOUBLE-SURVEY PARTICIPANT LINE GRAPHS

The line graphs for the 13 students who took both surveys are featured below. Note that Maggie Rodriguez was numbered Student 4. Because she did not take both surveys, her chart, Figure 10, only appears in Chapter 3.

Figure 7

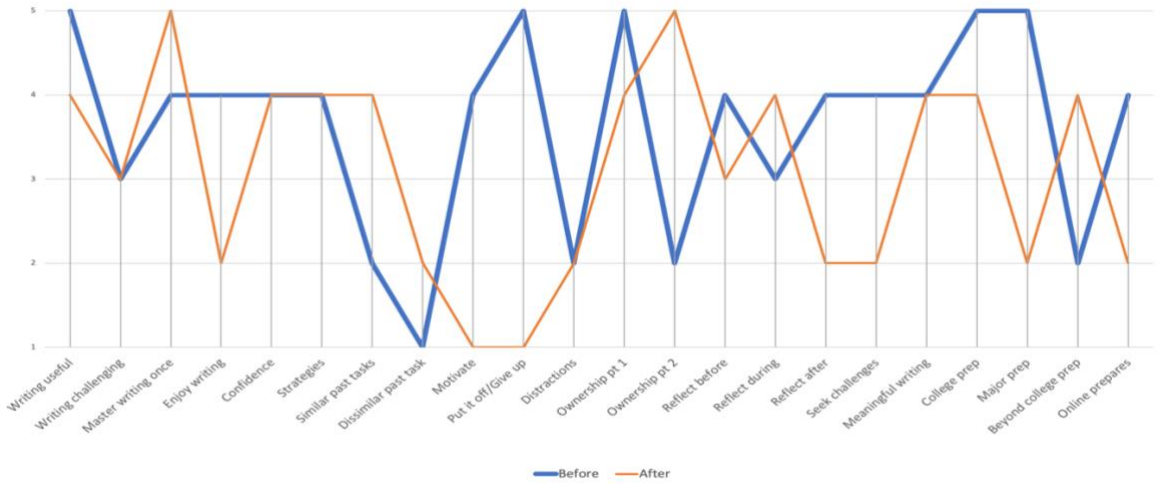
Before and After Responses: Freida Miles



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 8

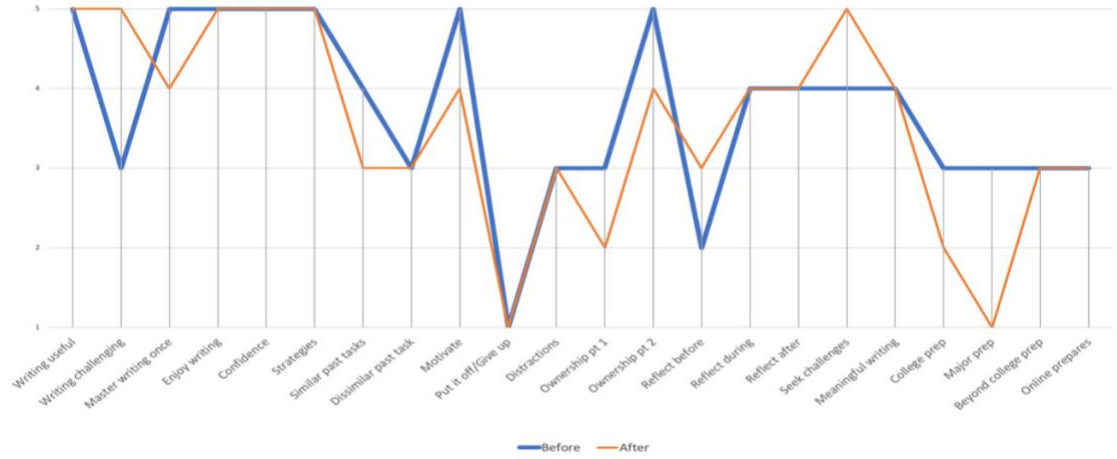
Before and After Responses: Victor Rivera



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 9

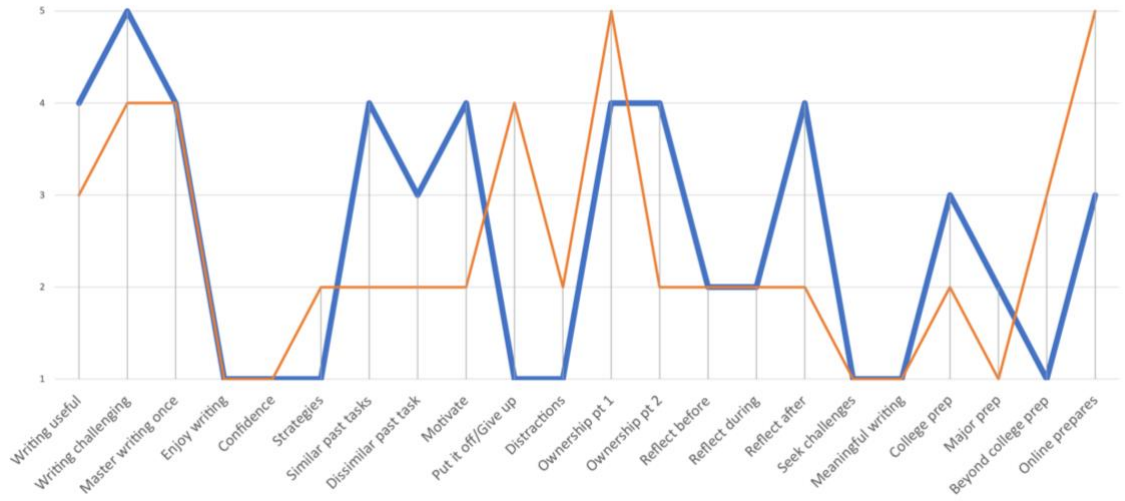
Before and After Responses: Travis Poole



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 11

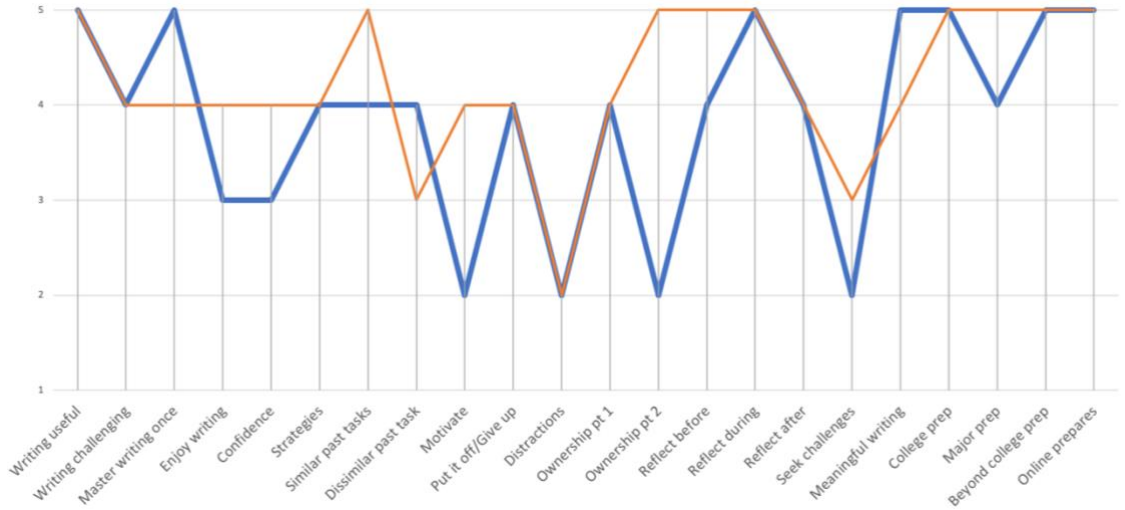
Before and After Responses: Student 5



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 12

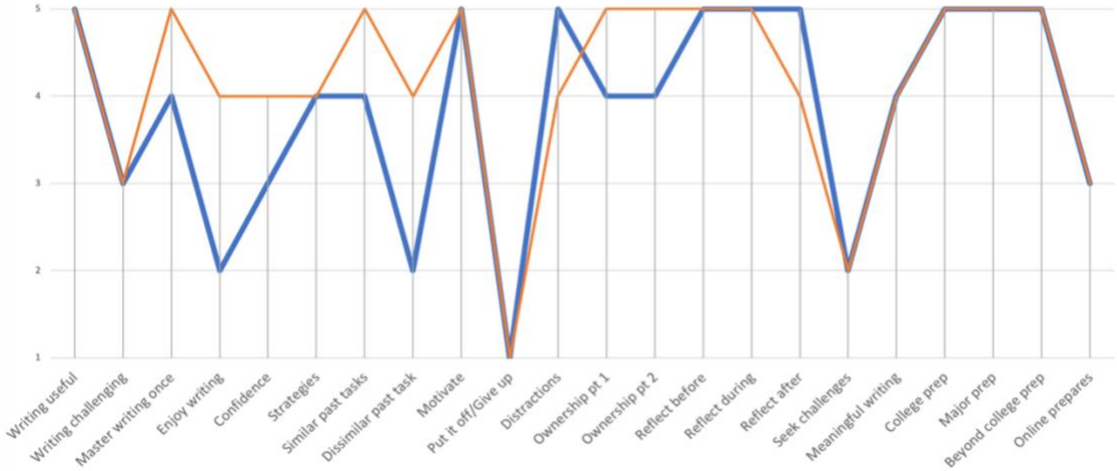
Before and After Responses: Student 6



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 13

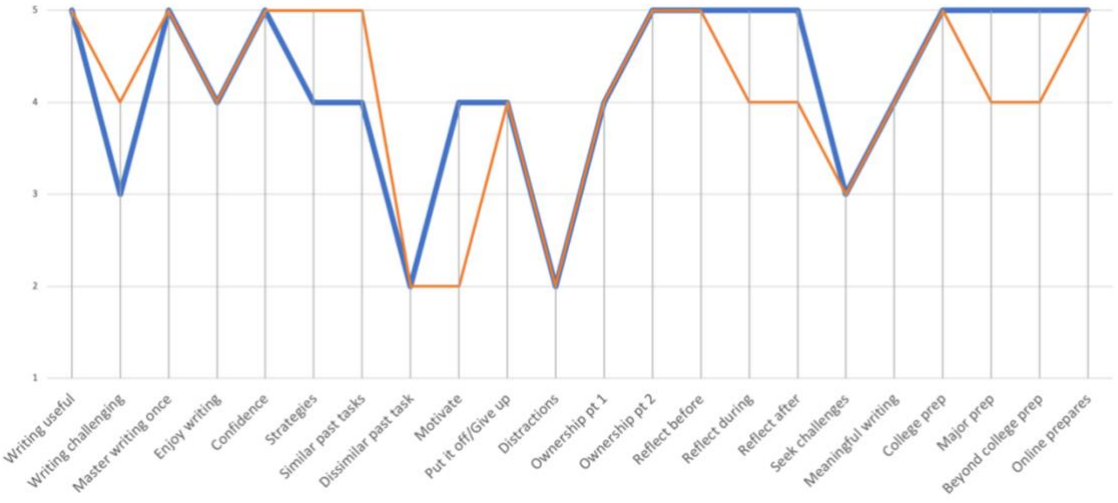
Before and After Responses: Student 7



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 14

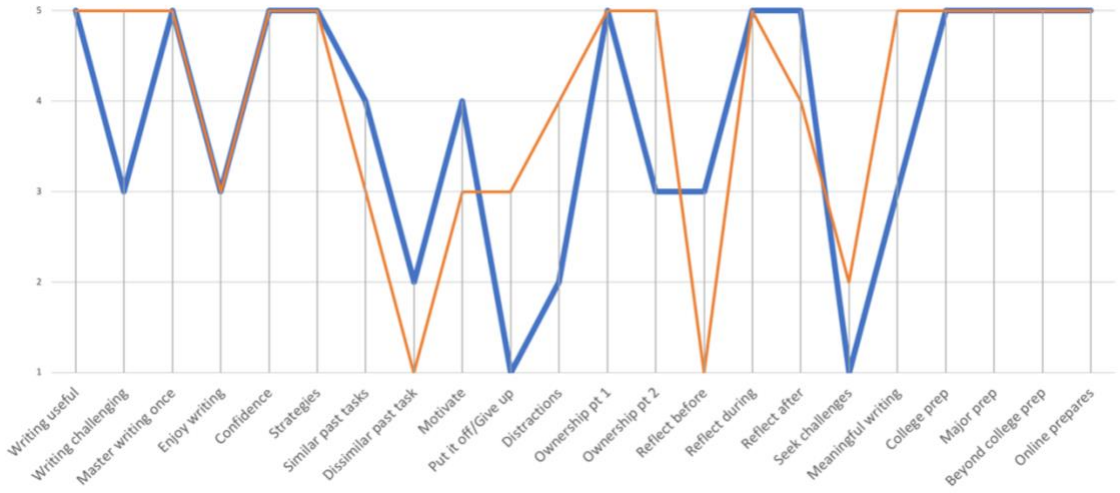
Before and After Responses: Student 8



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 15

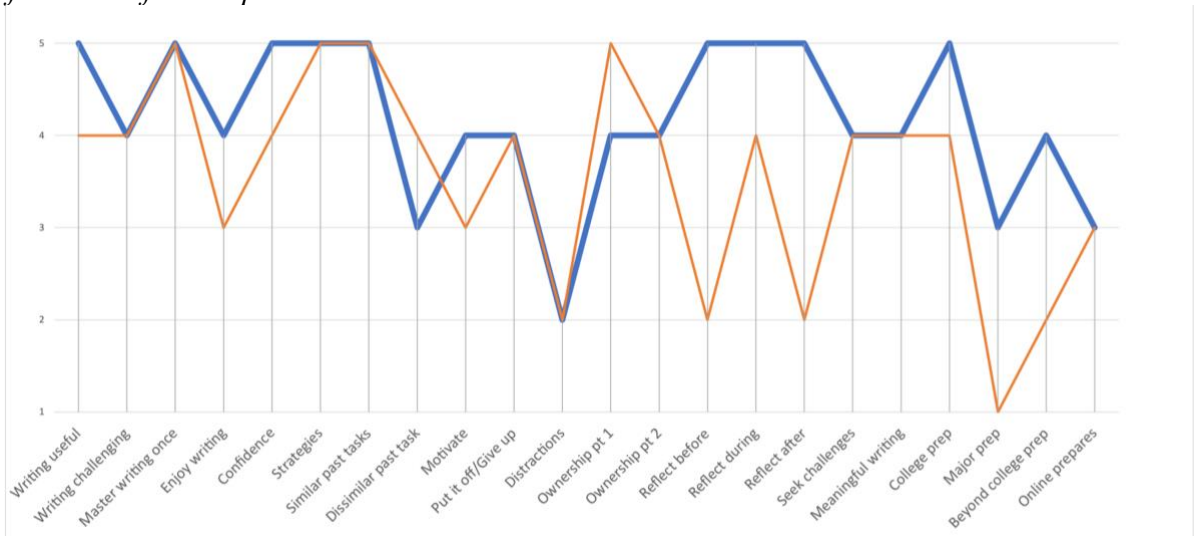
Before and After Responses: Student 9



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 16

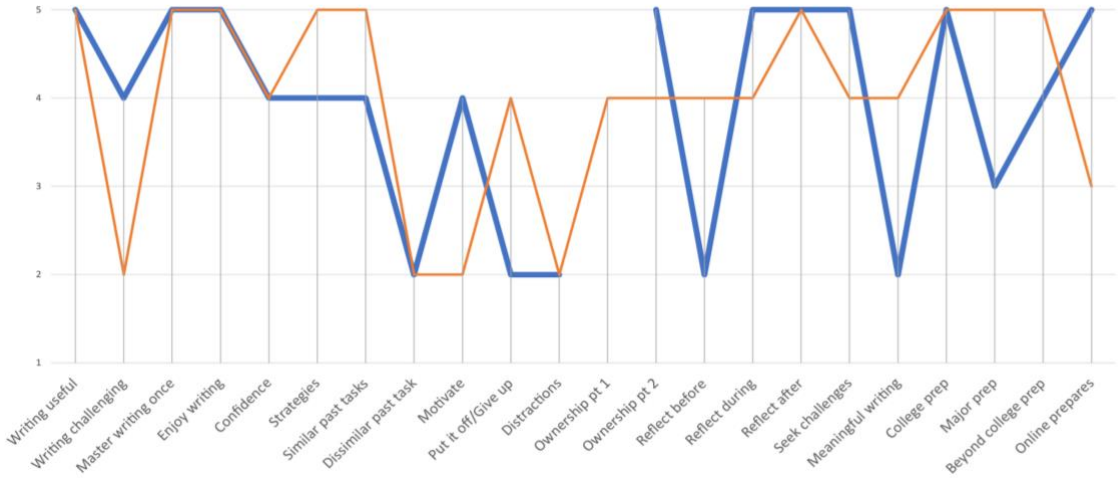
Before and After Responses: Student 10



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 17

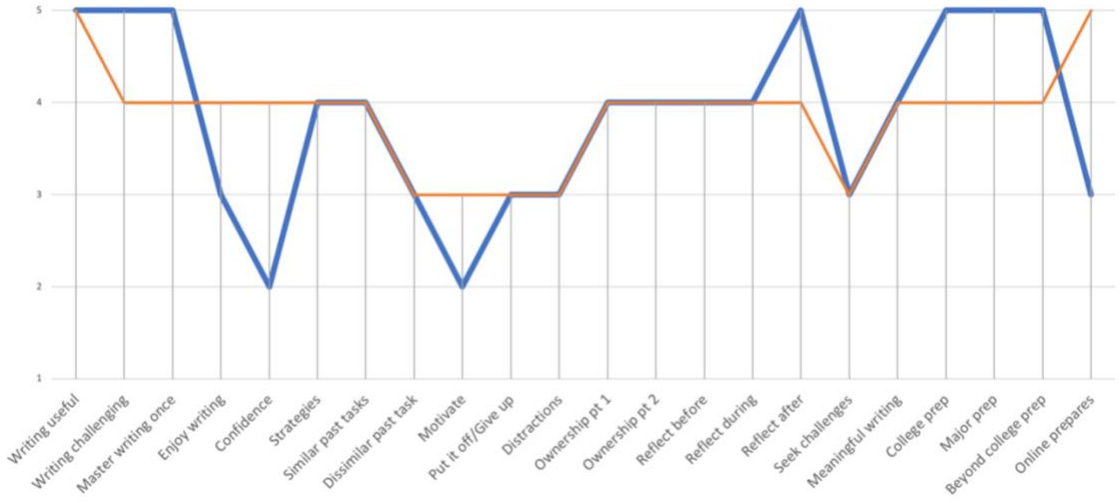
Before and After Responses: Student 11



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree." Student 11 did not answer "Ownership pt 1" in the first survey.

Figure 18

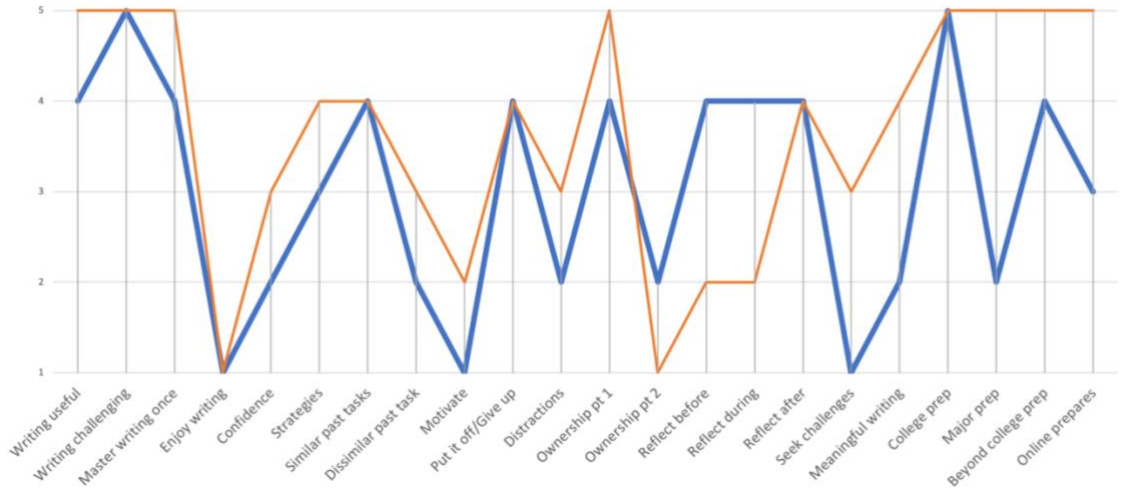
Before and After Responses: Student 12



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 19

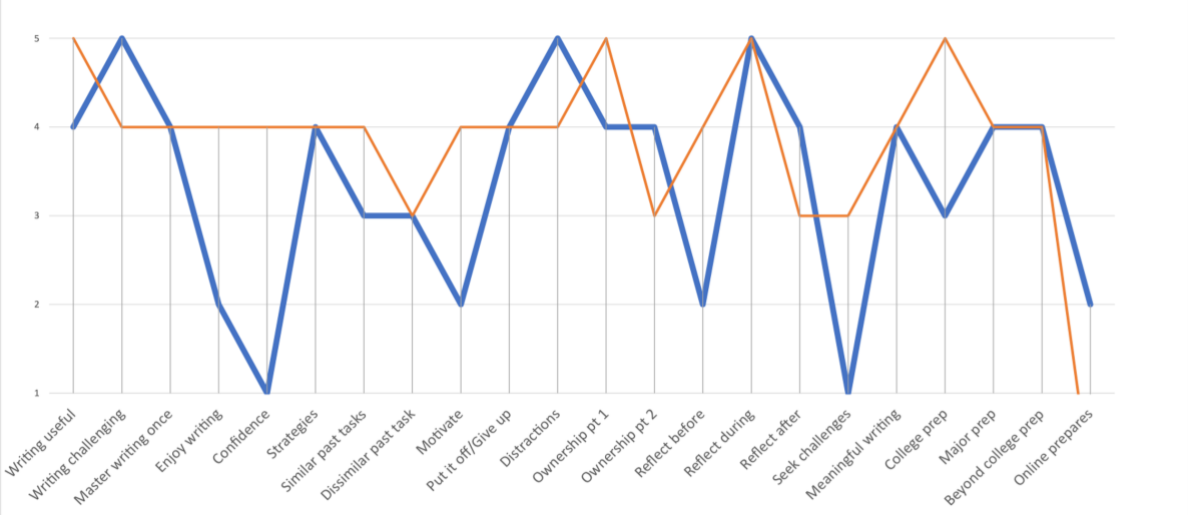
Before and After Responses: Student 13



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

Figure 20

Before and After Responses: Student 14



Note. The Y-axis includes a range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing an average response of "Strongly disagree" and 5 representinng an average response of "Strongly agree."

APPENDIX G: FREIDA MILES FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

1. You indicated in your survey responses that WRIT 1120 was your first writing course taken online, which suggests you had taken a face-to-face version of WRIT 1110 or an equivalent course.
    a. Is this an accurate assumption? If so, was your previous writing course WRIT 1110 or another course?
    b. Would you share some of the differences you experienced in taking both of those courses?
    c. You also indicated taking other online courses in the past that weren't writing courses. How do the other online courses you've taken compare with the online *writing* course?
2. Which writing course do you think challenged you more, the online or face-to-face course? Why?
3. You strongly agreed in the end-of-term survey that you are glad you took WRIT 1120 online because of the schedule flexibility that still allowed you to become a better writer.
    a. Could you say more on this? For example, why that schedule flexibility helped you or why you value it?
    b. How were deadlines scheduled in the course?
    c. Did the schedule flexibility, in your opinion, have a direct involvement in your becoming a better writer?
    d. You also indicated in the first survey that, before taking the course, you expected the online format of the course would help you become more responsible. After completing the course, do you think your prediction was accurate?
4. For a majority of the questions, your answers were quite consistent from the first to second survey. There were a few interesting exceptions, however, that I'd like to ask about.
    a. By far the biggest change from the first to second survey was your response about how useful you think writing is. At first, you strongly disagreed that it was useful. By the end of the term, you somewhat agreed that it is. How did you come about this change?
    b. Your second survey responses suggest you think about similar prior writing experiences more and dissimilar experiences less after taking the course. Could you say any more about that?
    c. Your agreement increased regarding how useful you thought WRIT 1120 would be in your major and college overall. You also suggested that there were some kinds of writing that weren't covered by the course. What kinds of writing, if any, should be considered for WRIT 1120?
5. At the end of the term you said that there was not a "huge difference" in what you learned from the course being online, based on what you expected an in-class section would have included. Regardless of the size of the differences, do you think there were any?
6. Is there anything else about your experience in WRIT 1120—whether as a writing course or an online course—that you think would be good for my study to know about?

APPENDIX H: VICTOR RIVERA FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

1. You indicated in your survey responses that WRIT 1120 was your first writing course taken online, which suggests you had taken a face-to-face version of WRIT 1110 or an equivalent writing course.
    a. Is this an accurate assumption? If so, was your previous writing course WRIT 1110 or another course?
    b. Would you share some of the differences you experienced in taking both of those courses?
    c. You also indicated taking other online courses that weren't writing courses. How do the other online courses compare with the online writing course in particular?
2. Which course do you think challenged you more, the online or face-to-face course? Why?
3. You indicated in your end-of-term survey response that you are glad you took WRIT 1120 online because it was not too hard and you loved your professor.
    a. How much did the course being online contribute toward this response (if at all)?
    b. Regardless of the difficulty level and your appreciation of the instructor, how do you feel about having taken the course online?
4. In your first survey response, you indicated that you expected the course to be very valuable for college overall and your major in particular (strongly agree on both) but not so much for beyond college (somewhat disagree). In the post-term survey, your responses were almost the opposite: while you still agreed that the course was beneficial for college preparation, you said it was not useful for your major (somewhat disagree) but that it would be useful beyond college (somewhat agree).
    a. How did your views on these matters change?
    b. What would you consider to be of more importance *for your WRIT 1120 course*: that it contribute to college or major prep, or that it prepare you for work beyond college?
5. You indicated on the post-term survey that online writing courses don't prepare you to use your learning in the future (somewhat disagree) because it's harder to learn online.
    a. Could you say more about this? What makes online learning more difficult?
    b. Does this have any impact on learning *writing* online (in particular)? If so, how?
6. Your responses to "I enjoy writing" and "I can easily motivate myself to complete writing tasks" went from "somewhat agree" to, respectively, "somewhat disagree" and "strongly disagree."
    a. How did your views on these statements change from the first to second survey?
    b. Did the course itself (concepts, lessons, etc.) contribute to these changes?
    c. Did the course being *online* contribute to these changes?
7. On the other hand, your response to the question about task avoidance went from a strong agreement (that you tend to put off or give up on difficult writing tasks) to a strong disagreement, indicating that you avoid tasks far less often now.
    a. What changed for you?
    b. Did the course itself (concepts, lessons, etc.) contribute to this change?
    c. Did the course being online contribute to this change?
8. Is there anything else about your experience in WRIT 1120—whether as a writing course, an online course, or both—that you think would be good for me to know about?

APPENDIX I: TRAVIS POOLE FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

1. You indicated in your survey responses that Spring 2020 was the first semester you had taken an online course, with WRIT 1120 as one of those courses. I assume then that you took a face-to-face section of WRIT 1110 or an equivalent course.
    a. Is this an accurate assumption? If so, was your previous writing course WRIT 1110 or another course?
    b. Would you share some of the differences you experienced in taking both of those courses?
    c. You also indicated taking other online courses in the spring term that weren't writing courses. How do the other online courses compare with the online writing course in particular?
2. Which writing course do you think challenged you more, the online or face-to-face course? Why?
3. In both of your survey responses, you brought up some good points about the value of the course to professionals, noting that the concepts in the course were not new to you and were in fact already "well-developed strengths."
    a. Would you mind sharing some of the practices in your work that use the strengths you've developed?
    b. If you don't mind, I'd be interested to hear what went through your mind on a typical day upon recognizing that the latest activity or goal in the course was something you'd already ingrained (including an example or two, if possible).
4. Your responses from the first to the second survey were fairly consistent and in line with your comments on being a professional and writing with lots of experience. There were a few changes and surprises, though, that I'd like to ask about.
    a. You started out with a neutral answer for all three questions about whether you expected the course to prepare you for future writing situations (college overall, courses and writing in the major, and beyond college). It lined up with your comments on your experience and what you already knew. In the second survey, some of these answers shifted to disagreement with the statement that the course prepared you for other college writing or writing in the major (especially the major-focused question, to which you answered "strongly disagree").
        i. Is this downward shift simply a more certain answer after experiencing the course, or does it represent a belief that the course was actually detrimental for preparation purposes?
        ii. The only response that didn't shift downward was the response to preparation beyond college, which remained neutral. What would you say affected how major and overall college prep went down while beyond college prep remained unchanged?
    b. For the statement "Writing is an especially challenging activity," you answered "neither agree nor disagree" at the start of the term. By the end of the term, your answer changed to "strongly agree." What do you think contributed to this change?
5. You left a few questions blank, which isn't a problem. If you were short on time or couldn't think of any answers at the time, I completely understand. I wonder, though, if

you would be willing to spend a few moments responding to a few of those questions. If so:

   a. What were some challenges and/or advantages of taking the course online?
   b. Were these challenges or advantages any different in the other online courses you took?
   c. You answered "neither agree nor disagree" for the question about whether online courses add any special advantage for preparing you for future writing. In the first survey you explained that you didn't see how it would have an effect either way. In the second survey you left this part blank. If you were to answer it now, would your answer be the same? If not, how would you respond to that question?

6. Is there anything else about your experience in WRIT 1120—whether as a writing course or an online course—that you think would be good for my study to know about?

APPENDIX J: MAGGIE RODRIGUEZ FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

1. You answered that this past semester you took WRIT 1110, but I don't want to assume anything. Was this your first writing course for college?
    a. [Skip these questions if the answer above is yes.] Did you take that course online or in-person?
    b. How did it differ from WRIT 1110?
2. You indicated in your survey responses that you took online courses before the Spring 2020 semester, and all the courses you took in the Spring 2020 semester were online.
    a. Were all of your college courses online, or did you also take some face-to-face courses before this semester?
    b. [Skip this question if all courses were online] Would you share some of the differences you have experienced between your in-person and online courses?
    c. Would you share some of the differences you experienced with WRIT 1110 because it was a *writing* course? That is, were there differences between taking WRIT 1110 online and the other online courses you have taken?
3. Your survey responses were overall very positive. You strongly agreed with many questions about your attitudes toward writing, your study habits, and how much you valued the writing course you took.
    a. Could you talk a bit about why you think you answered the questions so positively?
    b. How much would you say that the subject matter (writing, rhetorical analysis, multimodal writing, video essays, etc.) helped you give those high rankings?
    c. How much would you say that the course schedule and activities helped you give high rankings in your answers?
    d. How much would you say that you yourself affected the high rankings you gave to those questions? (That is, your personality, study habits, and feelings about writing even before you took the course.)
    e. How different do you think your answers would have been if you had been asked those questions at the beginning of the course?
4. You said that advantages to taking a writing course online were flexibility and format. Could you say anything more about that?
    a. What made the course "flexible"?
    b. What was the format, and how was it helpful?
5. You said that the disadvantages to taking a writing course online were not being able to chat with the instructor and having to understand the material "to the letter." Could you say anything more about that?
    a. You said these are common to all online courses. Did your instructor try to solve these problems in any way?
    b. Are these problems different (bigger, smaller, easier, harder) in the online writing class compared to other online courses?
6. Although you were a senior taking the course, you indicated that the course would be helpful for future college courses and your major. Could you say a bit more about that?
7. You indicated that the course would be useful for work and that in fact it already has been for you.
    a. Could you share more about that?

    b. You mentioned your rhetorical analysis project was your best for WRIT 1110. Did that project have any of that impact on your job? If so, how?
8. You said you were glad you took the course online because it gave you "the honor of being [INSTRUCTOR NAME] student" and that [INSTRUCTOR PRONOUN] "makes the difference."
    a. Was there anything about teaching *online* that she does to "make the difference"?
    b. Excluding Dr. Jordan, was there anything else about taking the course *online* that you appreciated—or not?
9. Is there anything else about your experience in WRIT 1110—whether as a writing course, an online course, or both—that you think would be good for me to know about?

Note: In this copy of the protocol included with the dissertation, an instructor's name and pronoun have been hidden to protect the identity of a non-participating instructor. The copy of the protocol given to the student included the redacted information.

APPENDIX K: STUDENT SURVEY CONSENT LETTER

Adapting Writing Transfer for Online Writing Courses: Instructor Practices and Student Perceptions

Bowling Green State University

Informed Consent Form for Students

Summary of Key Information

The purpose of this study is to learn how you perceive writing and learning in online courses. If you choose to participate, you will complete two 15-minute surveys: one at the start of term and one at the end of term. The risks of participating in this study are no greater than that experienced in daily life. Information you share will be kept confidential by being stored on the principal investigator's password protected BGSU OneDrive account. Access to relevant documents will be shared only with key personnel. Your information will be de-identified when shared publicly.

You must be 18 years or older to participate.

Purpose of the Research

My name is Brian Urias. I'm a student in BGSU's Rhetoric and Writing Doctoral Program. I seek your consent to participate in a study about how students perceive writing and learning in online writing courses. The growing number of online courses makes this an important study. Your perspective as a student in an online section of WRIT 1110 or WRIT 1120 would be greatly valuable to this study.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, I will ask you to complete two surveys:

1. Start-of-term survey. It should take about 15 minutes. Questions focus on your perceptions of writing, learning, and yourself as a writer.
2. End-of-term survey. It should also take about 15 minutes. Questions focus on your perceptions of writing, learning, and yourself as a writer.

Instructors also participate in this study. Through a series of interviews, they will describe their teaching practices for online courses.

Taking an Electronic Survey

If you agree to take the survey, please remember three things. (1) You may want to complete your survey on a personal computer. Some employers may use tracking software. (2) Do not leave survey open if using a public computer or a computer that others may have access to. (3) Clear your browser cache and page history after completing the survey.

Risks

The risks of participating in this study are no greater than that experienced in daily life.

Your Rights to Participate or Withdraw

You must be 18 years or older to participate. Participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions. You may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with BGSU.

Your Privacy and Identity

Your participation is confidential. Information you share will be stored on my password protected BGSU OneDrive account. Access to relevant documents will be shared only with key personnel. To compare data from the two surveys, you will be asked to provide your name and BGSU email address on both surveys. I will de-identify your information when sharing data publicly. Names and email addresses will not be shared publicly.

Costs and Compensation for Participating in the Study

Participating in this study will require about 30 minutes of your time: about 15 minutes per survey. Participation in this study may offer you new insights about yourself as a writer.

Your name and BGSU email address will be used to enter you into a drawing. Three randomly selected participants will each win a $50 Amazon gift card. Chances of winning are estimated at 1 in 100. You must complete both surveys to be eligible. Names and email addresses will not be shared publicly.

Contact Information

If you have concerns or questions about this study, you can contact me at 269-362-4215 or uriasb@bgsu.edu. You may also contact my Advisor, Dr. Neil Baird, at neilb@bgsu.edu or 419-372-7549.

You may contact the Chair of BGSU Institutional Review Board if you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant. You may contact them at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu.

Documentation of Informed Consent

By clicking “Next” below, you indicate you have been informed about this research study, are at least 18 years of age, and are volunteering to participate.

BGSU®

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

University Writing Program

APPENDIX L: STUDENT INTERVIEW CONSENT LETTER

Adapting Writing Transfer for Online Writing Courses: Instructor Practices and Student Perceptions

Informed Consent Form for Students

Summary of Key Information

The purpose of this study is to learn how you perceive writing and learning in online courses. If you choose to participate, you will participate in one interview. The interview follows up on your responses to two surveys you completed for this research project in the Spring 2020 semester. The interview is expected to last 30 to 60 minutes and is not to exceed 60 minutes. The interview will be conducted remotely through a medium of your choosing, such as Google Hangouts, Zoom, WebEx, or phone call. The risks of participating in this study are no greater than that experienced in daily life. Information you share will be kept confidential by being stored on the principal investigator's password protected BGSU OneDrive account. Access to relevant documents will be shared only with key personnel. You may choose a pseudonym or have one assigned to you for public representation of the study.

You must be 18 years or older to participate.

Purpose of the Research

My name is Brian Urias. I'm a student in BGSU's Rhetoric and Writing Doctoral Program. I seek your consent to participate in a study about how students perceive writing and learning in online writing courses. The growing number of online courses makes this an important study. Your perspective as a student in an online section of WRIT 1110 or WRIT 1120 would be greatly valuable to this study.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, we will arrange a meeting time and space. Possible interview spaces include, but are not limited to, Google Hangouts, Zoom, WebEx, or a phone call. Because of the COVID-19 virus, the interview will be conducted remotely. I will share a list of questions I intend to ask in the interview one week in advance of our meeting. (I may also ask follow-up questions based on your responses.) At the start of our interview meeting, I will ask for your consent for the interview to be recorded, and then we will conduct the interview, which will last between 30 and 60 minutes. At the end of the interview, your participation in the study will be concluded.

Risks

The risks of participating in this study are no greater than that experienced in everyday life. Because of the COVID-19 virus, the interview will be conducted remotely. I will also be conducting interviews with faculty around this time. No personal student information, but only data in aggregate, will be shared with faculty during these interviews.

Your Rights to Participate or Withdraw

You must be 18 years or older to participate. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with BGSU.

Your Privacy and Identity

Your data will be kept confidential. Information you share will be stored on my password protected BGSU OneDrive account. Access to relevant documents will be shared only with key personnel. You will be given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym to be used when data from this study is shared publicly, or one will be assigned to you.

Costs and Compensation for Participating in the Study

Participating in this research project will require approximately 30 to 60 minutes of your time. Participation in this study may offer you new insights about yourself as a writer.

Contact Information

If you have concerns or questions about this study, you can contact me at 269-362-4215 or uriasb@bgsu.edu. You may also contact my Advisor, Dr. Neil Baird, at neilb@bgsu.edu or 419-372-7549.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of BGSU Institutional Review Board at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu.

Documentation of Informed Consent

By providing your electronic signature below, you indicate that you have been informed about and consent to participate in the above study. Please type your full name and today's date, then send this document to uriasb@bgsu.edu.

Name:

Date:

APPENDIX M: FACULTY CONSENT LETTER

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

University Writing Program

Adapting Writing Transfer for Online Writing Courses: Instructor Practices and Student Perceptions

Informed Consent Form for Faculty

Summary of Key Information

The purpose of this study is to learn how instructors consider the goal of knowledge transfer when designing and teaching online writing courses, along with how students perceive writing and learning in those courses. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to share documents you have created for writing courses you teach online for the Spring 2020 semester and participate in three to five interviews. Interview times average about an hour and do not exceed 90 minutes. The risks of participating in this study are no greater than that experienced in daily life. Information you share will be kept confidential by being stored on the principal investigator's password protected BGSU OneDrive account, with access to relevant documents shared only with key personnel. You may choose a pseudonym or have one assigned to you for public representation of the study. Compensation for participation includes a merit-oriented letter, written by my advisor, that recognizes the time and effort spent in contributing to the project.

Purpose of the Research

My name is Brian Urias, and I'm a student in BGSU's Rhetoric and Writing Doctoral Program. I seek your consent for participation in a dissertation study about how online writing instructors teach for transfer—that is, to promote the use and adaptation of writing knowledge for contexts beyond the course—and how students perceive writing, learning, and themselves as writers after completing a writing course online. This study would help to fill a gap in rhetoric and writing studies research, which rarely locates studies of writing transfer within online writing course contexts. The growth of online learning enrollments and the continual need to prepare student writers for new writing situations makes this an important study, and your perspective as an instructor of one or more sections of an online first-year writing course (WRIT 1110 or WRIT 1120) for Spring 2020 would be valuable to the study.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, I will make biweekly requests for copies of documents you create for or about your course that you are willing to share. Documents may include, but are not limited to, the course syllabus, project assignment sheets, class announcements or emails (not including any messages sent to individual students), discussion board questions, lesson plans, teaching reflections, etc.

As a faculty participant, you will also complete at least three and no more than five interviews, with an estimated average time of 60 minutes each. The following are the types of interviews used for this study:

1. An initial interview lasting 60-90 minutes and taking place in January or early February. Interview questions focus on your history and perspectives on teaching, online learning, and writing transfer.

2. One to three discourse-based interviews, lasting 60 minutes each and taking place throughout the semester. Interview questions focus on choices made in a document of your choosing (selected from among the documents you have shared with me) and influences of the online course environment on that document. The document should be one that indicates a critical moment or concept in your pedagogy or approach to teaching for transfer. Depending on your availability, interest, and consent, this interview type may be conducted up to three times, each time on a separate document.

3. A member check interview, lasting 30-60 minutes and taking place after preliminary drafting of data analysis. Interview questions will focus on your response to the analysis and will offer you the opportunity to provide feedback on how you are represented in the study. I will provide a rough draft of the analysis at least one week in advance of the interview for your review.

Interviews will be conducted via online videoconference or face-to-face. When scheduling each interview, I will ask for your preference of meeting online or face-to-face.

Concurrent with your participation, students of online sections of WRIT 1110 and WRIT 1120 will be asked to complete two surveys—one at the start of the term and one at the end of the term—to compare pre-term and post-term student perceptions of writing and correlate those perceptions to instructors' practices. I will also invite you to encourage your students to participate by providing links to the surveys in emails and/or in your Canvas course shell(s). Additionally, you may link to or embed a brief recruitment video that I will provide.

Risks

The risks of participating in this study are no greater than that experienced in everyday life.

Your Rights to Participate or Withdraw

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with BGSU.

Your Privacy and Identity

Your data will be kept confidential. Information you share will be stored on my password protected BGSU OneDrive account. Access to relevant documents will be shared only with key personnel. You will be given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym to be used when data from this study is shared

publicly, or one will be assigned to you. Other information about your identity may also be changed to protect your confidentiality and the confidentiality of other faculty participants.

There is always a possibility that participation in an educational study may reveal something negative. However, the member-check interview is intended in part for you to exercise agency in how you are represented in the study. We will engage in joint decision-making to ensure you are comfortable with the way you are represented in this study.

Costs and Compensation for Participating in the Study

Participating in this research project will require approximately four to seven hours of your time. Depending on the number of discourse-based interviews you complete, total time in interviews may range from three to five-and-a-half hours. I am also accounting for some time spent periodically sending me course materials and the time spent reviewing the analysis draft in preparation for the member check interview. For your contribution of time and effort toward this project, my advisor, Dr. Neil Baird, will write you a letter recognizing your efforts and time spent in interviews and sharing documents. You may consider this letter documentation to provide for merit review.

Contact Information

If you have concerns or questions about this study, you can contact me at 269-362-4215 or uriasb@bgsu.edu. You may also contact my Advisor, Dr. Neil Baird, at neilb@bgsu.edu or 419-372-7549.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of BGSU Institutional Review Board at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu.

Documentation of Informed Consent

By signing below, you indicate that you have been informed about and consent to participate in the above study.

Name_____

Signature_____

Date_____