

# PARS in Practice: More Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors

In the fall of 2019, the WAC Clearinghouse released our book, *Personal, Accessible, Responsive, Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors*. In our text, we introduced the PARS approach to online writing instruction. With the PARS philosophy, we drew on some very basic, but fundamental best practices of writing instruction.

PARS stands for:

- Personal
- Accessible
- Responsive
- Strategic

In our book we argued for a user experience (UX) approach to online writing instruction through the application of the PARS (personal, accessible, responsive, strategic) approach. We offered practical and applicable tips and tricks throughout the book, but now we would like to offer readers more.

We feel that the sub-field of online writing instruction needs a book solely dedicated to the practical things that online writing instructors and administrators can do to better create, support, and facilitate their online writing courses.

Therefore, we invite chapters for our upcoming edited collection, with the WAC Clearinghouse. Our hope is that the chapters in this volume will be an extension of our co-authored text but will allow for more voices that highlight their application of the PARS approach to online writing instruction. We imagine these pieces to be extensions of the application-based vignettes from our book, “Drive for Show, Putt for Dough!” and “For the Hole in One!”.

These short and practical “how tos” offered readers quick and easy things that they could try in their online writing courses that would make a big impact on the student and faculty user experience. With this edited collection we want to offer more of these practical “how tos” that come from a myriad of voices (your voices) in the sub-field of online writing instruction.

Our hope is that these practical chapters mirror the types of segments from our first book, which are grounded in a long-standing exploration of online writing instruction and user experience. We would like authors to focus on how their potential chapter can be grounded in theory and tradition without allowing the theorizing to get in the way of understanding how the practices

## About the PARS Approach

The PARS philosophy to OWI was created out of our shared passions for teaching online and for the game of golf. We created an easy-to-remember acronym (because academics love acronyms!) that encompasses our strategy and approach to OWI.

In golf, the term “par” stands for the number of strokes a golfer is expected to take on a particular hole; it’s the score a scratch golfer with a zero handicap (i.e. a really good player, not like us!) would expect to make. Shooting a par score is a goal for many experienced and inexperienced golfers. Golf is a great game for novices to learn and play over time, people who play golf get good enough at the game that a “par” on a hole becomes a reality; with practice everyone gets better. The more pars, the better!

We feel the same can be said for online writing instruction, administration, and course design. When we play (teach, administer or design an OWI course) and get small “wins” we want to keep going and make ourselves better. We feel that no one needs to be an expert going into distance education, but everyone can improve their online teaching/administration/course design game with proper support and a great approach, like PARS.

might play out in an online course. We anticipate having two sections in this edited collection. A section dedicated to specific elements of PARS and a section dedicated to use of the entire PARS approach.

Therefore, we invite proposals for chapters of 3000-5000 words in length that focus on how you use PARS in your online writing course to create more effective user experiences. Potential topics include but are not limited to:

### **Individual Elements of PARS**

We invite chapters that consider the elements of PARS individually. These chapters could narrow in on one of the elements of PARS and discuss ways to utilize this element to the fullest to contribute to one specific aspect of the user experience for faculty and students in an online writing course.

- Personal OWI
- Accessible OWI
- Responsive OWI
- Strategic OWI

The pieces in this section could apply the discussion of individual PARS elements and illustrate to readers how to use one or more of these elements in their classrooms. For example, PARS element, S= strategic. Potential authors could submit chapter ideas discussing how they use strategy in the design, instruction, or administration of their online writing courses and offer readers new insights for their own courses.

### **User Experience, PARS, and OWI**

We invite chapters that look at user experience and PARS as an encompassing approach to online writing instruction. These chapters could consider how all of the elements of PARS work together to create a stronger user experience for both faculty and students.

- How PARS informs a UX approach in your online writing class
- How a user experience focus and application of PARS aids in creating better online writing courses
- Application of PARS as an encompassing OWI approach
- Research and assessment on the use of PARS as an approach to OWI (Have you tested PARS in your online writing course? What were the results?)
- PARS and the technical communication online writing class
- PARS as an administrative approach to an OWI course or program

Pieces in this section could pick up where we left off in the final chapter of our book, “The 19th Hole,” and discuss how essential user experience is to OWI. Potential pieces for this section could also focus on recent literature in OWI and related fields that discusses practical application of user experience in online writing courses.

- 2018’s Computers and Composition special issue, *User-Centered Design and Usability in the Composition Classroom*.
- Warnock and Gasiewski’s 2018 text, *Writing Together: Ten Weeks Teaching and Studenting in an Online Writing Course*.
- Martinez, et al.’s 2018, *A report on U.S.-based national survey of students in online writing courses. Research in Online Literacy Education*.

The pieces in this section could pick up where these texts left off and provide more “how to apply these concepts” advice to readers. Other areas of interest in this section could include how rubrics, assessment, and the efficacy of course design intersect with UX and PARS.

### Proposal Requirements

- 500 to 750 words (not including references)
- clear take-aways and/or applications for reading audience
- clear connection to collection’s anticipated audience
- Suggested research (include a minimum of 5 possible sources in APA format)
- Golf language, play on terms/words, and/or puns appreciated, but not required

### Rough Timeline for Submission and Publication

Proposals Due	April 10th 2020
Proposal decisions	May 1st 2020
Draft of chapters Due	June 12th 2020
Feedback on drafts	August 1st 2020
Revised manuscripts Due	August 28th 2020
Submission to WAC Editors	August 31st 2020
Feedback on drafts from WAC Editors	October 2nd 2020
Revised manuscripts Due	October 16th 2020
Submission of manuscript to WAC Editors for final edits/revisions/publication	October 19th 2020
Online publication	December 2020
Print publication	Spring 2021

Prior to submitting a proposed chapter, we encourage submitters to review our accompanying website, The Online Writing Instruction Community ([www.owicommunity.org](http://www.owicommunity.org)) and our book, *Personal, Accessible, Responsive, Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors* (<https://wac.colostate.edu/books/practice/pars/>) and specifically review the “Drive for Show, Putt for Dough!” and “For the Hole in One!” segments in each chapter as these reflect the practical application format of chapters we’re seeking for this collection.

Twitter: @theowicommunity

Facebook: facebook.com/groups/owicommunity

We also encourage submitters to communicate with us, [jessieborgman@gmail.com](mailto:jessieborgman@gmail.com) and [cremcardle@gmail.com](mailto:cremcardle@gmail.com) throughout the submission process as we are more than happy to brainstorm and refine chapter ideas with you prior to proposal submission.

We're really excited about this collection and hope you are too! We look forward to reading your proposals and getting started on this project.

**This book is under contract with the WAC Clearinghouse:** <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/>. The final version of the book will appear in digital and print format.

**Please send proposals to:** [theowicommunity@gmail.com](mailto:theowicommunity@gmail.com) **no later than April 10th 2020.**

Jessie Borgman  
Arizona State University  
Texas Tech University  
[jessieborgman@gmail.com](mailto:jessieborgman@gmail.com)

Casey McArdle  
Michigan State University  
[cremcardle@gmail.com](mailto:cremcardle@gmail.com)