Personal, Accessible, Responsive, Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors, by Jessie Borgman and Casey McArdle. The WAC Clearinghouse/UP of Colorado, 2020. 110 pp.

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Online learning and instruction are far from new practices in the year 2021, but they have grown in significance and importance under the circumstances that the world has come to face. Many instructors and learners across the world have been forced to educate in the online realm due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to create uncertainties about the upcoming academic year. Jessie Borgman and Casey McArdle could not have published their book *Personal, Accessible, Responsive, Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors* at a more convenient time, as online instruction appears to remain a dominant mode of delivery for most educators. The book is written in a very personable style with references to golf, making it not only accessible but also feel as if the readers are having a conversation with their colleagues. The purpose of this book is to "provide a practical guidebook that includes a distinct approach to OWI [online writing instruction] for new and/or existing online writing instructors" (14). Borgman and McArdle also aim to provide resources and a space for an OWI community through the book, their website, and social media pages. The empirical PARS (personal, accessible, responsive, strategic) approach is intended to provide instructors with a distinct pedagogy based upon the user experience, that aims to make online writing instruction manageable for the instructor and student alike. Furthermore, when all four enactable elements are implemented simultaneously in the design, instruction, and administration of an online writing program, the process of online writing instruction and learning effectively becomes a cohesive experience for students, instructors, and writing department administrators.

As a secondary language arts educator, I found myself faced with the pitfalls of having to quickly move my congenial face-to-face instruction to the disconcerting online domain within a matter of days. Without any prior training or preparation, I, along with many other educators across the globe, had to learn how to implement online instruction while simultaneously delivering it. There have been approaches made available for implementing online instruction, including the CCCC's "A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)," *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction* by Beth L. Hewett and Kevin Eric DePew, and *Applied Pedagogies: Strategies for Online Writing Instruction* by Daniel Ruefman and Abigail G. Scheg. Borgman and McArdle draw inspiration from these

sources, but none are as direct or easily enactable as the PARS approach. Borgman and McArdle's book holds an abundance of knowledge for this strategy to be implemented in the design, instruction, and administration of a writing program, but this review will focus solely on the ideas presented for the former two, due to the urgency that many inexperienced online instructors are currently faced with in learning and implementing this new style of teaching.

The first chapter focuses on the "Personal" element of the PARS approach, and how it is important for instructors to devote the same effort to making classes personal and inviting in the online setting as they would in face-to-face classes. When students experience this effort, it creates a safe space for them to reach out to the instructor and interact with classmates. For the design aspect of this element, Borgman and McArdle suggest that instructors use personal approaches and elements to set the inviting tone for the length of the course, and to display personality at every possible opportunity. Setting a personable tone for the course is important because "students are more engaged in courses that have a social sense of community, that include sensory details and engaging material and that pay attention to the entire experience, not just the content to be learned" (20). It is because of this notion that it is also important to deliver culturally sensitive and adaptive content so that all possible students from all possible backgrounds feel respected and included. The "Personal Instruction" facet underscores the importance of creating connections and relationships with students, but also confirms the challenges associated with this. In an online setting, it is important for instructors to step away from an authoritarian role and embody that of a coach or guide of the learning process instead. The ways in which Borgman and McArdle dissect the "Personal" element of the PARS approach at every level of implementation provides readers with a realistic and enactable ideology of how to create an inviting space for learners.

"Accessibility" is the elemental focus of chapter two, with Borgman and McArdle diving right into the fact that course management systems (CMS) and/or learning management systems (LMS) are built for the use of instructors rather than students. With this in mind, it is important for instructors to review all materials for the course and make alterations as needed, with the user experience in mind. When it comes to designing a course through the lens of accessibility, it is important for instructors to implement the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and also be wary of the technical aspects. It is imperative for instructors to make assignments, lessons, instructions, and other important facets of the learning experience multimedia, in order to include multiple styles of learning that may not be of the "abled majority" (39). Accessible instruction means the instructor must plan and create points of contact for student-instructor interaction and student-student interaction. Students must be able to access the instructor, but they need clear and structured avenues for

doing so. It is important for instructors to develop rapport with students and be intentional about sustaining it through consistent individual and whole-group communication (41). Borgman and McArdle offer their experienced advice on ways to make an online class accessible, but not how to clearly identify the extent to which to do so. The empirical research presented on the importance of doing so is compelling, but it would be helpful for inexperienced online educators to see this fleshed out with specific examples or methods.

Chapter three concentrates on the "Responsiveness" element of the approach, and how being responsive is much different than simply responding to students. It is vital for the instructor to create a structure and boundaries for when and how they'll respond to students and to make this clear to students from the very beginning. Feedback is the most important characteristic of responsiveness and should be done often throughout the writing process. It is important for the instructor to establish themself as an audience and provide feedback from that lens rather than as the instructor, to help students successfully develop their skills and approach. Providing feedback can be done through text, audio, or video, but should always be done clearly and with encouragement. Designing this part of the strategy requires a lot of organization and time; one of the hardest things for new online instructors to adapt to is the workload. Borgman and McArdle suggest strategies to streamline this process; when students have questions, for example, it would be advantageous for the instructor to reply with an answer that is visible to all students and thereby avoid the possibility of repeating the response to multiple students with the same question. Creating a balance and schedule for how time will be spent in the course is also crucial for instruction and time management. Borgman and McArdle highlight that in an online setting it is easy for students and instructors to lose sight of a traditional class time structure for communication and may expect responses within minutes due to accessibility, but for the sake of sanity there must be a schedule and clear set of communication expectations set in place that are adhered to (59). The approach to responsiveness that Borgman and McArdle present is the strongest aspect of the PARS approach overall. Clear communication between instructors and students can make or break an online setting, and this strategy clarifies how to set boundaries and expectations that can be enacted as soon as possible.

The final element of the PARS approach is "Strategic." This element begins with planning and strategizing around the user experience by making a map of activities, assignments, timeframes, and learning objectives. Because "the instructor is responsible for architecting an experience for the student users in a very specific environment," it is important to solicit feedback on the design of the course and the course itself and to use that feedback to adapt to the learners (73). Creating a "strategic instruction" is one of the trickier parts of this element, due in part to the fact that instructor and student expecta-

tions are rarely the same. Learning who the students are and what motivates or distracts them is one of the best ways to design or adapt lessons for them. Not all students are going to be at the same starting line, so it is important to "strategize your content to meet them where they're at" (75). It is also imperative to understand where students will be learning from and whether or not any laws or access to specific platforms will impede their learning experience. Once again, Borgman and McArdle have offered a clear focus to an element of the PARS approach. Strategizing each facet of the learning experience from the perspective of the user may take more time but is undoubtedly one of the surest ways to create a successful course.

The PARS approach to online writing instruction proves to be a promising strategy for those who lack experience or direction in creating and navigating an online course. Although the PARS approach encompasses many facets of online learning, the book does little to address how to ensure that the cultural differences and needs of the students are met through an online pedagogy and learning platform. Culturally responsive teaching may not have been the focus of this book, but its addition would have strengthened the application of this approach to any online learning environment. However, Borgman and McArdle offer credible research to support each element of this approach along with their own empirical analysis, to show its reliability and that they do indeed practice what they preach. Their credibility within the specific field of online writing is furthered by their dedication in creating The Online Writing Instruction Community at www.owicommunity.org, which provides shareable resources for online writing instructors. The PARS approach offers suggestions and advice that can be used or adapted across all levels of online writing instruction, and it takes this form of education beyond theory by providing practical approaches and enactable ideas in the online setting. Although the near future of educational delivery remains uncertain, this practical approach to online teaching is invaluable for both novice online instructors and those looking to revamp their online pedagogy.

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Works Cited

CCCC Committee for Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction. "A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)." *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, 14 Aug. 2018, cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/owiprinciples.

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