



A Proposed Course Redesign to Identify the Relationships between Place-Based Writing and Student Success

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Research Interests: first-year writing, place-based writing, online writing instruction, multilingual writers, writing program administration



EXIGENCE

- Christa Ehmann and Beth L. Hewett called for theories of OWI, arguing that
 - “the writing studies discipline awaits viable theories of OWI as a philosophy of writing and as a series of strategies for teaching and learning to write in digital settings. To these ends, the CCCC OWI Committee has reasoned that ongoing research is crucial.... ongoing research into OWI might be developed by examining and highlighting the crucial need for a *deeper understanding* of OWI; [there is a need for] developing a rigorous framework of investigation when engaging in OWI” (2015, p. 517).
 - OWI refers to “using computer technology to learn writing from a teacher, tutor, or other students and by using it to communicate about that writing, to share writing for learning purposes, and to present writing for course completion purposes” (Hewett, 2015, p. 36).

OBJECTIVES

- theoretical relevance of project
- research question
- about the course (learning outcomes, design, and projects)
- scholarship of teaching and learning
- Q&A

THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

- paying attention to place in online writing instruction will allow scholars in rhetoric and composition to think not only about *what* we are doing, as encouraged by Cynthia Selfe (1999), but also about *where* and *how* we frame our pedagogical and theoretical practices.
- the metacognitive practice of studying place as the course theme will help students become more reflective about the *places* (virtual and material) about and through which they are learning and therefore more successful in navigating the requirements of both formats and achieving the learning outcomes.
- the theme of “place” will also invite students to feel a sense of belonging to the course and the university community by creating social integration and a sense of belonging, which scholars such as Marie Mitchum (2017) and Isabel Moallem (2013) believe increases student retention and leads to student success.
- enhancing student learning, life skills, deep learning and supporting that transfer of learning (CETL, 2019).

THEORETICAL RELEVANCE CONTINUED

- Weisser and Dobrin (2001) examine composition studies through an ecological framework to critically challenge how scholars engage the world. They contend that ecocomposition is about the relationship between written discourse and the environment [physical and constructed] that it encounters.
- Ulmer (2003) examines how the internet and technological tools challenge our thinking about writing. He argues that it is important that scholars in the field rethink our choices about technology so that we can engage in inclusive practices as we explore what it means for our students to write in electronic spaces. More specifically, Ulmer invites us to critically consider what it means to *inhabit* virtual places rather than to simply use them.
- Reynolds (2004) contends that our experiences in life ‘take place’ in some location, and we draw from our experiences of those locations to make sense of how to respond to being in other places (2004, p. 4). She adds that notions of place give us metaphorical and methodological tools to “change our ways of imagining writing” (p. 6).

RESEARCH QUESTION:

- What is the relationship between place-based writing and student success?
 - To respond to this question, I relied on scholarship on place-based writing to redesign and teach one section of WRT 1060. The theme of “place” in this course will allow me to create safe spaces for my students to draw from their experiences, values, and backgrounds to challenge and improve the ways in which they understand and practice rhetorical approaches to writing.

ABOUT THE COURSE

- WRT 1060 Composition II is one of three first-year writing courses at Oakland University.
- Required to fulfill OU's general education writing foundations requirement.
- 7 sections offered in the summer, 40 sections offered in the fall and 100 sections offered in the winter semester.
- WRT 1060 courses are listed as "partially online," where roughly 10% - 30% of the course is online or "online."
- Most WRT 1060 courses are capped at 20 - 22 students; however, junior faculty's sections are capped at 15.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- make connections with the broader community through activities related to civic and community engagement on and/or off campus (Unit 2 and Unit 3)
- demonstrate familiarity with basic rhetorical, ethical, and methodological conventions of academic disciplines (such as humanities, sciences, social sciences) to prepare them for further study in their chosen discipline (Unit 1)
- demonstrate the ability to locate and analyze scholarly sources critically and synthesize them to produce various academic genres which include print, visual, digital, or oral elements (Unit 2 and Unit 3).
- In addition to the standard WRT 1060 learning outcomes, in this redesigned course, students will achieve the following learning outcomes:
 - identify the relationship(s) between place [virtually and materially] and writing

DESIGN OF COURSE

Part 1	Types of Class	Units	Weeks
	Face – to - Face	Orientation to Course	1
	Face – to – Face	Unit 1: Inquiry to Self and Place	2 - 4
Part 2	Online and/or Face-to-Face	Unit 2: Inquiry to Text and Place	5 - 13 <input type="text"/>
Part 3	Face – to – Face	Unit 3: Tying it All Together and Reflection	14 - 15

SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

- I have received IRB approval to conduct this study.
- During the first week of classes, students responded to a writing prompt, where they shared their expectations of the course, their personal goals, and their understanding of the relationship between place and writing.
- During mid-semester (this week), students are completing an anonymous online survey, where they express whether they are meeting their goals thus far and what changes should be made in the remainder of the semester to better support them; these survey questions are all open ended.
- At the end of the semester, students will respond to a writing prompt, where they express whether they achieved their personal goals and how they intend to achieve those goals if they weren't met in the course. They will also discuss whether their understanding of the relationship between place and writing has changed, remained the same or become complicated. I also plan to conduct small focus group interviews with students, and I will rely on their formal evaluation of the course to gather further qualitative data on the impact of the course on student success.
- I received a CETL (Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) grant to re-design this course and conduct the study, so the results will be disseminated at a CETL workshop at my institution in winter 2020. I will also seek publication in *Computers and Composition*, an international journal that explores the use of computers in writing classes and research.

OU Instructional Fair

- organized by CETL and the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning
- poster presentation format
- best ideas on effective instructional strategy, active learning, learning resources, classroom activities that promote student success



Photo courtesy CETL (2019)

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