

**Title:**

Did You Hear That?: Using Sound to Minimize Distance in Online Writing Courses

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**Overview:**

A problem that challenges many online writing instructors (OWIs) is establishing a connectedness with their online students (and vice versa). Partly to blame are the tools that online teachers use to communicate and teach within the online domain; for many, writing is the primary communication and instruction tool. Problematically, the very act of writing can enhance the distance the instructor is trying to overcome. Instead of trying to make writing work for all student learning styles, online teachers should consider emphasizing additional communication modalities, particularly the aural. Online composition courses are an ideal venue to utilize the power and unique affordances of sound. While there are many components that work together to create a successful online writing course (OWC), sound should be considered as one of the top elements to utilize. Because of the distanced nature of the OWC, sound can play a crucial role in minimizing the isolating effects of the online class by adding a human element to an otherwise lacking human interaction learning environment. As experienced online writing instructors, we know the value of using sound, and will argue that sound helps engage learners and supports different learning preferences.

Our review essay will focus on exploring specific chapters from *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction, A Position Statement Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)*, and excerpts from the OWI Open Resource. Within our essay, we'll explore how these texts stress the challenges of online learning, and that instructors needs to attempt alternate methods of instruction to connect with students and minimize that distance. Particularly, the use of sound, in addition to or instead of alphanumeric writing can help to span the distance, providing alternate opportunities for teacher and students to establish a connection, enhancing a student's likelihood for success within the OWC. We'd like our piece to be practical and helpful to current or future OWIs, and we'll stress the overall value of using sound as well as present research that supports its value, further demonstrating that the use of sound can help support persistence and learning because it enhances opportunities for student/teacher interactions.

**Suggested Works Cited**

CCCC Executive Committee on Best Practices for OWI. "A Position Statement Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)." Mar. 2013. Web. 02 Feb. 2016.

*OWI Open Resource Journal*. CCCC. <<http://www.ncte.org/cccc/owi-open-resource>> Web. 02 Feb. 2016.

*Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction*. Fort Collins, CO: WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press, 2015. Print.