

“Drowning a Little Bit All the Time”: The Intersections of Labor Constraints and Professional Development in Hybrid Contingent Faculty Experiences

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Abstract

Faculty teaching during COVID-19 have been asked to adapt to a wide range of instructional modalities that have often increased the labor they experience without commensurate compensation. Hybrid courses, which were already popular pre-pandemic, have become even more common as schools and universities have rushed to adapt instruction to students' needs. This article reports on interviews with faculty teaching hybrid courses to investigate their perceptions of the labor involved in teaching in this instructional modality, drawing connections to the labor many faculty are experiencing as they adapt to hybrid or other, similar instructional modalities. It then argues that targeted professional development activities are needed to support faculty teaching hybrid courses in particular, but that offering such opportunities are complicated by the amount of labor faculty teaching hybrid courses often already perform.

“Because there's always somebody emailing, or I need to send something out, or there's a discussion on Blackboard that I need to- so I feel like I'm always giving feedback.” - Participant 6

“The biggest difference [between hybrids and other modalities] is that every face-to-face class in the hybrid classroom is exhaustingly engaging.” - Participant 7

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down in-person classes and forced K-12 schools and higher education institutions to rethink instructional modalities, the focus was often on how schools could pivot the types of instruction offered to students. While there has been some discussion about the impacts of switching to a variety of new modalities on teachers and faculty, especially those faculty already at risk (Flaherty; Kramer; Schlemmer), this aspect has often been elided as higher education institutions in particular faced budget crises that did not allow faculty to be compensated for the additional labor of teaching in new modalities but sometimes threatened their jobs. Schools and institutions developed an array of instructional models—online asynchronous, online synchronous, hybrid with an online synchronous component, and so on—and policies that guided decisions about instruction. Often, they did so without much teacher input and

consideration of increases to teacher workloads, or the dangers teachers were sometimes forced to choose between (for example, between retaining a job by teaching face-to-face or leaving a job). As a result, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) announced in September 2020 that they were launching an investigation into eight institutions' potential violations of faculty governance during the pandemic. Without retaining or gaining a voice in faculty governance, higher education faculty, particularly non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) by the tenuous nature of their positions, have found that the labor they do is often lost in conversations and decision-making about how their institutions should handle the pandemic.

Before the pandemic began, a hybrid task force in the general education writing program¹ at our institution—an R1 in the mid-Atlantic that serves almost 40,000 students—had already begun analyzing how NTTF in particular (full-time and part-time NTTF and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs)) experience the transition to teaching hybrid courses, which in our program means classes that are evenly divided each week between a face-to-face or synchronous online meeting (referred to collectively as “synchronous” throughout the rest of the article) and an asynchronous meeting. Serving over 9,000 students per year, almost all of our composition courses are taught by NTTF (48% full time, 23% part-time, and 28% GTAs). This means that many aspects of the program relate to, revolve around, or take account of faculty labor conditions and how to work within or around workload issues. Prior to the pandemic, classes were offered in three instructional modes: fully face-to-face, fully asynchronous online, and hybrid with one synchronous meeting per week and the remaining instruction occurring asynchronously online.

The hybrid task force, beginning in Fall 2019, consisted of seven faculty in our program (six full-time NTTF and one Ph.D. TA). We wanted to learn more about the professional support systems NTTF had in teaching this under-researched mode of instruction and how our program could better support them. Despite the low percentage of classes offered in a hybrid format before the pandemic (10%), we anticipated that we would be increasingly asked to teach hybrid courses given classroom space constraints that were exacerbated by increasing enrollments without commensurate increases in classroom spaces, including ongoing major construction projects that placed many classrooms offline. We also anticipated that more faculty might want to teach hybrid courses because they offer faculty more scheduling flexibility, which is particularly important for faculty with long commutes (which are very common in our area) and for part-time NTTF teaching at multiple institutions (which is also quite common in our area), while also retaining close ties to their institutional, professional communities.² In order to address the increase in hybrid course offerings and to investigate the experiences of the faculty who teach them, our program convened a hybrid task force to study the experiences of these faculty and offer them better support. However, as

our group interviewed faculty teaching hybrid courses in Spring and Summer 2020, the pandemic altered the nature of work on our campus and, as a result, informed our study. During the pandemic, our program began offering synchronous online courses, both fully synchronous and hybrid courses with instruction offered both synchronously and asynchronously in addition to previous instructional modalities. These additional modalities were added mainly due to our institution's imperative, like many others, to offer students various types of online instruction to serve their different learning needs while following COVID-19 guidelines. Faculty in Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021 were able to choose what instructional modality they preferred, and as a result very few of our courses were taught face-to-face in those semesters. Our program's ability to offer classes in these modalities depended, in large part, on the faculty expertise developed quickly in Spring and Summer 2020 to teach in these modalities effectively, pedagogical skills that were often developed without compensation.

Focusing in part on NTTF in transition during a pandemic, this article explains the types of labor that faculty in hybrid courses experienced, particularly during this time of upheaval, and how our program has tried to address labor concerns that have not been adequately confronted and dealt with at the institutional or national levels. This is particularly fertile ground because hybrid courses are labor-intensive—or are perceived by faculty to be labor-intensive—in ways that have not been previously researched, and even more so right now as a result of faculty being asked to teach in hybrid or other types of hy-flex instructional modalities during the pandemic. We then explore what programs and institutions can do to support hybrid faculty through professional development, particularly given labor conditions that constrain the types of instructional innovations and pedagogical changes faculty can make and the professional development opportunities that are offered.

Increasing Workloads Without Compensation

Writing studies' attention to NTTF labor conditions and the types of labor often required in online writing instruction (OWI) makes it an apt field to examine when focusing on hybrid faculty labor conditions. Both within the field and in higher education more broadly, teacher-scholars have made calls for the professionalization of NTTF positions (Hassel and Giordano; Kezar, DePaola, and Scott; Lynch-Binieck; Doe et al.; Melonçon, Mechenbier, and Wilson). Lynch-Binieck, for example, claims that exclusion from institutional, departmental, or programmatic communities can lead some NTTF to feel that their professional identities are not valued or supported; as a result, they may feel more constricted in how they act as professionals (in terms of academic freedom in particular). One particular constraint on professionalization that Doe et al. found was tension between “plans for professional development and for building a

better professional future with advancement and recognition” and the time it took to teach, especially grading and providing feedback (435). In the case of online or hybrid writing courses, this tension can be exacerbated by the additional workload it takes to teach these courses and NTTF perceptions of this workload.

Faculty teaching in online environments, whether in completely online or hybrid courses, typically experience higher labor loads than faculty teaching face-to-face courses. Higher education researchers have found that faculty teaching online see increases in development, administration, and instruction time compared to teaching face-to-face (Bender et al.; Cavanaugh; Spector; Delgaty). Although these sources do not differentiate between the time and labor required of online and hybrid courses, faculty teaching hybrid courses experience similar increases in preparing courses and communicating with and supporting students. In writing studies specifically, research in the field has found that OWI requires more faculty time due to increased literacy loads, communication with students, feedback on written work, technology support for students, etc. (CCCC “A Position Statement”; Griffin and Minter; Borgman and McClure). This work tends to collapse online and hybrid courses together to focus on OWI broadly; for example, the CCCC Position Statement on OWI explains that the document focuses on “effective strategies ... for use with various online media and pedagogies primarily for teaching writing in fully online (i.e., having no onsite components) and hybrid (i.e., classes meeting in distance-based and/or computer-mediated settings and in traditional onsite classrooms) writing courses.” However, faculty teaching hybrid courses, in addition to the labor concerns that accompany online courses, also have additional labor problems to contend with such as helping students understand the hybrid course format, building bridges between synchronous instruction and asynchronous online instruction, and so on as we discuss below. While attention to this increased labor burden in online courses broadly construed has led to arguments that faculty teaching fully online and hybrid courses need to be additionally compensated (CCCC “A Position Statement”; Beck; Mechenbier), few institutions have taken up these recommendations. In fact, during the pandemic many schools increased the numbers of fully online and hybrid courses offered without providing additional faculty compensation, which made this problem all the more visible as it has affected larger numbers of faculty across the country who have been vocal in voicing their objections to being asked to do additional labor without additional pay.³

Although asking faculty, particularly NTTF, who are teaching in online modalities to do professional development can seem like an additional burden, it became clear during the pandemic that faculty in our program needed pedagogical support as they transitioned to new instructional modalities. Writing studies scholars have already formed some professional development models for online writing instructors (CCCC “A Position Statement”; Borgman and McCardle; Melonçon;

Melonçon and Arduser; Jaramillo-Santoy and Cano-Monreal; Mechenbier). While much less studied, there is some research explicitly focused on the professional development that should be offered to faculty teaching hybrid writing courses, especially since, as Lyra Hilliard comments, teaching courses that are typically small and discussion-based in a hybrid format differs substantially from teaching larger, lecture-oriented courses. These professional development initiatives focus on training faculty before they teach hybrid courses as well as more informal, ongoing support systems such as brown bag discussions, regular informal meetings to share ideas, etc. (Paull and Snart; Hilliard). Hilliard in particular supports a Community of Practice (CoP) model that fosters collaboration and community, pinpointing several areas in which faculty need professional development in order to become effective hybrid instructors: integrating the synchronous and asynchronous components of the course, resisting overloading students with work in a hybrid course, and taking advantage of the many learning modalities available in a hybrid course (213). While we did not have a formal hybrid training program or workshop before faculty began teaching hybrid courses, we thought that faculty teaching hybrid courses were already engaged in community-building practices and had formed supportive connections with each other and our program's administrative team (comprised of a Director, three Associate Directors, two Assistant Directors, and a graduate Assistant Director) around their teaching. We found in our study, though, that while faculty did build relationships with members of the administrative team, they did not form a peer network with each other as we assumed they had. The pandemic's disruption and subsequent movement of more faculty into online/hybrid courses made professional development support for faculty teaching these courses, such as encouraging the formation of peer networks, even more imperative.

The sticking point in our program for offering or even requiring faculty to engage in professional development at any time is that the program is often unable to provide compensation for this labor. While many have advocated that compensation should be provided for faculty engaged in professional development (Hilliard; Mechenbier; Nagelhout; Doe et al.), our program has struggled to advocate for compensation for this work, particularly for full-time NTTF whom our institution seems to view as not needing compensation since professional development is seen as part of their regular workloads. Problems with professional development funding also include the slow nature of any internal and external grant funding that is not guaranteed and that can take a lot of time to receive and use, a problem particularly in the case of the rapid uptake of online and hybrid instruction during the pandemic, and the many institutions where budgets have been cut and/or frozen. The pandemic has further exacerbated the lack of compensation for professional development due to faculty's substantial workload increases and pressures on other areas of their lives without commensurate increases in

compensation. As a writing program, this has led us into more scrutiny of the types of professional development we offer faculty, what modalities we offer professional development in, and how we invite faculty into them. In the next few sections, we briefly describe the methodology for the research component of our project. Using interview data, we explain how faculty teaching hybrid courses perceived their labor as they taught in this modality, and we show how our program has provided professional development that speaks to their immediate pedagogical needs while trying to balance that needed support against our often being unable to offer stipends or course releases for this work. We advocate for changes at the institutional and national levels around faculty involvement in pedagogical decisions and compensation for workload increases, changes that are needed not just to address labor concerns during the pandemic but also after a return to more “normalcy.”

Methodology

During Fall 2019, the hybrid task force designed a survey and interview protocol to gather data, which was approved by our institution’s Institutional Review Board.⁴ In January 2020, we emailed a Qualtrics survey to seventeen faculty in our program with experience teaching hybrid courses. The survey asked basic questions about faculty experience teaching hybrid courses, including *when* these faculty taught hybrid courses, *where* they taught these courses, and for *how long*. Fourteen faculty responded to the survey and all agreed to be interviewed.⁵ Of the fourteen participants, thirteen had taught mostly composition courses; one had never taught composition but had taught hybrid technical communication courses. The faculty included two part-time NTTF, one GTA who was formerly a part-time NTTF, and eleven full-time NTTF. Although our interview participants reflected a larger percentage of full-time NTTF than are part of our overall program, our interviewees described different types of labor conditions experienced by all NTTF who teach in our program. Two participants had taught hybrid courses at different institutions, and one had developed training for faculty about how to teach hybrid courses at a former institution. There was a mix of experience from faculty who had taught mostly online, mostly face-to-face, or both.

Our interview protocol used focused questions regarding instructor lessons learned, professional development resources, and practices in feedback and student engagement in an effort to explore the ways in which faculty prepare and transition to teaching hybrid courses. While the interview protocol was designed prior to the pandemic, by the time faculty were interviewed in Spring and Summer 2020 all of our institution’s courses had moved online, and faculty frequently referred to synchronous and asynchronous online learning modalities. These semi-structured interviews lasted 30-90 minutes and were conducted and recorded using Zoom. Due to its utility in analyzing qualitative data

(Lindlof and Taylor), we elected to leverage grounded theory as our coding approach. Therefore, all interview transcripts were interrogated using no prescribed constraints (e.g., open-coded). Because we were a relatively large team, we coded in pairs. The pairs met to normalize codes and sampling methods; after our initial round of coding and comparison, the entire team met to discuss our main observations and emerging themes, eliminating redundant terms and agreeing on common terms. This resulted in over 75 codes that we collapsed into 15 categories, including categories related to feedback, students, course design, and mentoring. These categories encompassed more granular codes; for example, the category of professional development housed several codes, including collaboration with colleagues, learning from past mistakes, and mentorship, to name a few. We analyzed each major category and corresponding codes to trace recurring and emerging themes across categories and codes. For this article, looking specifically at the categories of professional development, adaptation, and use of technology gave us rich insight into labor conditions and how faculty manage hybrid course design.

In the following sections, we describe how faculty perceived the labor required when teaching hybrid courses. These line up in some ways with scholarship about the labor involved in teaching writing online, but faculty describe hybrids as creating other, specific challenges that, at the time of the interviews, remained under-addressed in our programmatic professional development. As the pandemic changed how faculty taught, these challenges became more urgent and the ongoing imperative to specifically support faculty teaching hybrid courses became more visible.

Results: Data Analysis

Throughout the interviews, faculty noted several areas where hybrid courses present labor challenges that impact their workload and how the program plans professional development for faculty teaching hybrid courses:

- Hybrid courses require extra planning transitions between synchronous and asynchronous components;
- Faculty perceive hybrid courses as having a different rhythm that requires adjustment;
- Hybrid courses require additional time spent supporting students who struggle to navigate the hybrid course structure.

The pandemic also necessitated specific adjustments that created more work for faculty in the short term and increased the sense that hybrid teaching requires different strategies that are time-consuming and labor-intensive to design and implement. All these challenges demonstrate the workloads faculty teaching hybrid courses experience, particularly those making a transition to teaching hybrid courses for the first time and during

the pandemic. Finally, these challenges, which have been accelerated by the pandemic but will likely persist, need to be addressed at the institutional and programmatic levels and should reflect the way faculty engage in hybrid course design and shape professional development initiatives.

Hybrids Require Additional Planning

Because hybrid courses require transitions between synchronous and asynchronous components, the result is that faculty spend more time sequencing the course. However, the interwebbing of this sequencing also makes it more difficult to make adjustments based on student need, interruptions such as the pandemic, and so on. Even for experienced faculty, the hybrid modality requires different considerations that contribute to the labor spent on hybrid courses. As Participant 2, a part-time NTTF who teaches graduate editing courses and runs a professional writing consultancy, states:

It's kind of like teaching two different classes. I think that's the biggest challenge. It has to be extraordinarily organized. I know online teaching also has to be extraordinarily organized, but I think it being half in-person complicates it more because even though the in-person classes gave me the opportunity to do that little bit of pivoting that I could do...I had to bring printouts every week for the handouts for them and I had to take advantage of the fact that it was in person to adjust my lectures every week based on how the online week went.

This participant's attention to the work needed to bridge between the face-to-face and online components of the hybrid course is echoed by Paull and Snart: "when developing a hybrid course, it is vital to make sure students are moving as seamlessly as possible from the online environment to the classroom environment. We need to make sure that students understand that in taking a hybrid course they are indeed taking one, single class, rather than feeling like they are involved in two, barely related enterprises" (127). One of the other members of our task force, Kerry Folan, described the work that goes into sequencing synchronous and asynchronous work in a hybrid course as "braiding." She uses this term to point out how faculty teaching hybrid courses must consider how synchronous components feed into asynchronous components of the course and vice versa. This creates extra labor for faculty because they have to more carefully scaffold and organize work than they do in a completely synchronous or completely asynchronous course; otherwise, the course design can fail to adequately support students and their learning.

The delicate balance faculty teaching hybrid courses have to strike can also easily be disrupted if something arises, whether as large as the pandemic-interrupted instruction in Spring 2020 or as small as a faculty

member being sick for a week. Participant 2 goes on to say, “I mean, I had everything planned, just orchestrated so carefully that if I got sick during an in-person week or if we had like an earthquake or a massive pandemic, I would have had to do some massive retooling of the course that would have, A, been really painful for me, and B, definitely would have lost some of the quality of the course for the students.” The braiding hybrid faculty create between the components of their courses means that any disruption can unravel some of the intricate work they have done on the course, disrupting student learning and creating even more labor for them in trying to re-construct the course. Participant 2 ultimately decided to teach fully asynchronously during the Fall 2020 semester rather than teach a virtual hybrid course in part due to these constraints.

Hybrids Require Additional Adjustment Periods

Because faculty in our program synchronously meet once per week with students, they feel pressured to use this class session productively to meet all student needs and engage students in the course, which makes the class session feel more intense. As Participant 7 says, “the biggest difference [between hybrids and other modalities] is that every face-to-face class in the hybrid classroom is exhaustingly engaging.” This intensity is ramped up for those faculty who teach one part of the course synchronously online via web conferencing rather than in a face-to-face classroom. As Hilliard explains: “teaching via video conferencing is not easy! It requires an entirely different approach to teaching and learning than those we’ve developed for face-to-face or asynchronous online teaching..It’s resource-intensive. It’s exhausting. It’s intimidating. For many instructors, it’s downright terrifying” (215). Although we had not offered hybrid courses with a synchronous online component instead of a face-to-face component prior to the pandemic, we anticipate this type of hybrid course will continue to be an option at our institution and elsewhere because of the additional flexibility it offers faculty and students (and the classroom space it frees up on campuses).

Some of the intensity of teaching class sessions, whether online synchronously or face-to-face, lessens as faculty develop a rhythm between the synchronous and asynchronous components of the hybrid courses, but this process is time-consuming and takes faculty several semesters to figure out. Paull and Snart identify this rhythm as central to a successful hybrid course: “To have a successful hybrid course, instructors must be able to make it clear what will go in each environment and how both pieces support each other. Students should never get the impression that either environment is more important than the other but rather they feed into one another, working on a learning arc from start to finish” (130). Participant 6 describes their experience teaching hybrids and struggling to decide what activities would be taught synchronously and asynchronously:

So, I felt compressed in the hybrid, but I tried to make up for that with Blackboard, and after I kind of got in the rhythm of it, I was able to do that. The first time or two, I think I felt more awkward than perhaps the students did because I was trying to figure out what pieces do I take online. But after I got the hang of it, I realized what I could do and that actually was sometimes better on Blackboard because other students could see what other students were posting. And so they could see that, “Oh, I guess everybody's struggling with this, and everybody's concerned about that.”

Once this participant was able to set up a rhythm for the course, they were able to minimize some of their labor and recognize the benefits of the hybrid modality. However, this was only after a semester or two of additional labor spent trying to figure out how to establish a rhythm for hybrid modalities overall.

Because hybrid courses require more planning, more troubleshooting, and because the courses might require changes that are more challenging to implement given the rhythm of the course, other logistical issues such as faculty access to technological tools and ability to use those tools become more salient. In the survey, we asked how important the use of technology is in a hybrid classroom; 64.2% said “very important” and 35.7% said “important.” Faculty recognize, then, that their management and use of technology is a key part of their success in teaching hybrid courses. They can become frustrated, however, when some technological tools or features of tools that they can use when teaching face-to-face or online courses do not work as well when teaching hybrid courses. One interview participant commented on being unable to combine hybrid courses into a master course in a learning management system (LMS) to minimize some of the redundancies when teaching multiple course sections, which added to their workload: “and here's the other thing about hybrid that really changes it from online [asynchronous], in my opinion, from the work perspective is that you can't—what is that called?—marry your courses.” For hybrid courses, it is difficult to create master courses in an LMS because students are not all meeting at the same time for the synchronous session, which means faculty teaching these classes also have to establish different rhythms of when asynchronous and synchronous work occurs. As Participant 9 describes:

In a face-to-face class, you can [use a master course] because you're not doing usually online groups or anything like that. In an online [asynchronous] class, you can because who cares? It's all the same pool anyway. But in a hybrid class, you have to keep them all separate so that you can continue to have groups, which means I have to recreate the course three times. And any adjustment to the calendar is recreated three times, and the groups

have to be made three times...I mean, besides just the time that takes, it's also so easy to make mistakes that way when you're—it's almost impossible not to make mistakes.

Although handling the LMS may seem like an inconsequential problem, for NTTF with high course loads (whether at one institution or across multiple institutions), any additional interactions with an LMS can incrementally add up to a lot of total time spent managing hybrid courses.

Managing hybrid courses becomes even more challenging and labor-intensive when faculty teach multiple courses a semester using different learning modalities. Because hybrid courses have a synchronous component, teaching fully synchronous or asynchronous courses alongside these complicates a faculty member's ongoing weekly schedule. For Participant 9, arranging time for grading and providing feedback presents a challenge:

But with hybrid, it's two days a week where you have stuff due online. And if you're teaching four classes, you're teaching those other days. And so somehow it's more work than even fully online is by a lot because there's just not the empty, flexible time where you could be responding to students online. You still have to do that, but you also have to be in the classroom, and you have to get to campus, and you have to do the sort of other stuff. ... So, I would say the logistics of structuring the sequencing with what days things are due and to keep things streamlined; to be really conscious about what both you and students can accomplish online.

As Borgman and McClure among other scholars note about online and hybrid courses, heavier workloads can occur in part due to the increased amount of reading and commenting that occurs on discussion boards, emails, and written texts students produce in these courses (A4). Balancing this workload while still teaching face-to-face classes can create labor challenges for NTTF teaching multiple sections of classes. For faculty teaching hybrid courses, things that can seem less difficult when teaching in other course modalities such as engaging students in synchronous classes, dealing with an LMS, or juggling a course schedule take up a lot of time and energy. NTTF teaching hybrid courses can particularly struggle to perform this labor because of the overall high teaching loads they have and the potential number of hybrid courses they might teach in a given semester.

Hybrids Require Providing Additional and/or Different Student Support

Once a course begins, faculty experience an increased logistical burden and describe hybrid courses as challenge of adjustment and adaptation. Faculty develop various tactics to manage the course, but those tactics are

often labor-intensive, requiring unanticipated time and effort. In the interviews, we found that beyond the usual labor of teaching online courses, faculty in hybrid courses also experienced shifts in the types and number of assignments they incorporated into the class and the amount of guidance they had to provide students navigating the modality. These contributed to additional labor that faculty identified with interacting with students through and about hybrid courses.

One way faculty found themselves supporting students was through changes to the low stakes work they felt they had to assign and the ways they approached giving feedback or grades on this work. Paull and Snart note that it is important for faculty to carefully attend to the way they assign grades to the face-to-face and online components of a hybrid course so that students do not privilege doing work in one modality over another (127). These types of considerations, while not framed necessarily in terms of time and effort, feel like a big shift in approach for faculty that is time-consuming and requires planning. Faculty mentioned changing grade books, changing their assessment approach to completion grades, and adapting assignments to give students “bridges” between online and face-to-face class sessions (as seen above in the discussion of the “braiding” required between synchronous and asynchronous class components). As Participant 4 describes, some of the assignments used in the hybrid course are designed to provide guidance rather than evaluation: “doing smaller assignments to kind of bridge between face-to-face and the online portions. Those kinds of things are less focused on evaluation, more on guidance.” While these types of assignments support student learning in hybrid courses, designing and providing feedback or grades on these assignments creates additional faculty labor. Participants 4 further explains:

So, I find myself doing more little turn-in assignments with the hybrid than I normally would with a face-to-face. But it's trying to find that balance—I don't want to be grading all the time because that's not good for me or my students to always be commenting on small stakes assignments and not have the energy or whatever to focus on other things, office hours, conferences, big assignments, stuff like that.

Faculty in this position do develop strategies to provide feedback on these assignments without overloading themselves; for example, Participant 4 said they look at several activities her students have done over a couple weeks and provide an “overall comment about how their writing is progressing.” However, figuring out how to approach low stakes work in this way, as related to the time it takes faculty new to teaching hybrid courses to develop a rhythm mentioned above, requires additional faculty labor.

Another way faculty supported students was through the time they took to try to help students adapt to the hybrid course design. Part of this is helping students acclimate to the use of technology in these classes. When faculty were asked on the survey if they take time to orient students on how to use technology in the classroom, 57.14% said always or often, 28.57% said sometimes, and 14.29% said never. It can be tricky for faculty to determine how much technological support students need as a whole and whether they should take up valuable class time helping students orient to the technology (as opposed to sending them to IT or other resources). Beyond technological orientation, Participant 7 connected the asynchronous portions of the hybrid course with part of the reason some students need additional support in hybrid courses:

I have had students who are really great in person because they have someone to talk to, and then when they work online by themselves, they struggle with working through things because they can't ask questions immediately. And so, with those students, I'll find myself meeting with them in my office hours every week or every other week or recording audio messages where I kind of walk them through what my thinking process was behind what they were doing and helping them to understand that for the online portion.

Students' struggles to adapt to the asynchronous part of the course in particular increases labor for faculty, who then spend more time supporting these student transitions. Although setting student expectations for the course can help mitigate some of this time (McGee and Reis 16), some students still need additional support in adapting to the hybrid course modality. Beyond meeting with students in office hours or recording audio messages for students, Participant 7 also identifies an increased number of student meetings needed to help students with those transitions: "So for those students, I meet with them a lot. And I find myself talking to them a lot before class or after class, kind of guiding them through things and showing them on the screen, 'Here's what you need to do, and here's why you want to do these.'" While faculty did not resent having to help students adapt to the hybrid course design, they did identify this as a way that their labor increased when teaching hybrid courses. These issues are even more salient for NTTF teaching multiple sections of hybrid courses, which increases the number of students who need this type of support. During the pandemic, faculty have had to move quickly towards scaffolding additional support for students, generally with no additional compensation and without reductions in course caps.

Discussion: Faculty Labor Constraints and Hybrid Faculty Professional Development

As the literature has noted (Bender et al.; Cavanaugh; Bolliger and Wasilik; Delgaty), faculty across different disciplines describe spending more time preparing to teach online or hybrid courses than to teach face-to-face courses. Creation of videos and new materials, increases in written feedback, and troubleshooting technology are all issues faculty teaching online or hybrid courses routinely face. However, it can be easy for faculty to underestimate the amount of labor that will be required until they begin to design and teach these courses. Participant 4 describes underestimating the additional time and effort that teaching a hybrid course would require: “The first time I taught online, you learn really fast, even though you think you know that it's totally different from face-to-face and you know that you can't just take a face-to-face lesson and throw it online. You don't learn how deep that really is until you get into the teaching online.” The issue, as this participant puts it, is not an expectation that teaching hybrid courses will be the same as putting materials from a face-to-face class online; they were well aware that they would need to change their pedagogical approach. Nevertheless, the actual labor involved in making changes when transitioning from a face-to-face to hybrid modality is not visible until a faculty member actually begins doing this work.

Faculty also can find themselves reacting without the benefit of professional development that specifically supports hybrid pedagogies, whether because this is not offered or because they cannot take advantage of it. When faculty were asked on the survey if they had been offered training or professional development in teaching hybrid courses, 64.29% said yes and 35.71% said no. Of survey participants, 57.14% had actually participated in training or professional development for hybrid courses while 42.86% had not.⁶ However, five answered a follow-up question about this training to indicate that they had participated in training that generally supported faculty teaching online and not specifically hybrid courses. This shows that training or professional development opportunities specifically shaped for faculty teaching hybrid courses was less available than for faculty teaching fully online. As Participant 7 says:

I received no professional development or training before teaching a hybrid class. I think having some training would have helped me to realize that I couldn't translate my face-to-face into a hybrid—that I really needed to build it from scratch...I think that would have been the most useful thing because I was already comfortable with Blackboard, with the technology tools. None of that was a problem for me. It was really just the foundational understanding of how to develop a hybrid course for the first time.

Melonçon also found that some faculty received little or no training to support their teaching online or hybrid courses, with one interviewee

reporting that he “just hacked [his] way through it” (261). In the context of NTTF labor conditions, the additional labor needed to design and implement a hybrid course specifically creates additional constraints for how and when faculty get access to professional development opportunities that might ease this transition in the first place. At our institution, professional development had been offered for faculty teaching face-to-face courses and online courses, but not hybrid courses specifically. This underscored an assumption that professional development for other modalities would easily transfer to the hybrid modality, which was not true. Faculty teaching hybrid courses for the first time thus found themselves piecemealing together their knowledge about teaching in other modalities to try to transition to teaching hybrid courses. They also looked to experienced colleagues who could help them make this transition. Participant 4 notes:

Familiarize yourself with lots of technologies because if one doesn't work, you can roll to another. Talk to your colleagues. There's no better resource than the people that are suffering through or struggling through the same stuff that you are. And you're going to get a new idea for a lesson plan from them—how they're handling all the grading that comes with a hybrid class. That's your resource. Your mentors, your colleagues.

Because of a lack of professional development geared exclusively at supporting faculty transitioning into teaching hybrid courses, this interviewee explained that colleagues had to become a central resource in figuring out how to navigate the labor of teaching a hybrid course, particularly as a NTTF member. These colleagues often were members of the administrative team who interviewees saw as a main source of advice and information; faculty named the same administrator repeatedly as essential to the transition to hybrids, while at the same time lamenting the lack of access to peer networks and training resources.

While our institution's center for teaching and learning offers an online course design workshop, most of the faculty we interviewed who had taken it thought the workshop did not address the uniqueness of the hybrid format adequately: “I think we give [resources] to teachers when they're going into distance learning. We have things like [the Online Course Development Institute] and the curricular designers. And I don't know that we necessarily give hybrid the same treatment” (Participant 4). One faculty member who felt comfortable with the transition had previous curriculum and course design work experience, but for the most part, faculty, regardless of experience level, expressed gratitude for the support from one administrator but pointed out the lack of resources and limited faculty interactions around hybrid courses. The geographic dispersal of faculty across the region, varying schedules, and high teaching loads meant that faculty did not as often form supportive peer networks; this was

only exacerbated by the pandemic's physical distancing of faculty from each other. However, they wanted to have regular access to models, templates, and peers who could provide tips and advice. Study participants also noted the lack of program-level professional development and support for hybrid courses specifically, and they described solving problems mostly on their own. In short, our institution and program did not provide adequate support for faculty teaching in hybrid formats, which are particularly difficult for faculty to navigate on their own.

Since faculty teaching in online modalities have reported higher levels of depersonalization with lower feelings of personal accomplishment (Borgman and McClure; Golden; Hogan and McKnight; Schieffer), this lack of professional development and contact can lead to faculty feeling isolated and overwhelmed. Participant 5 explains:

I thought I was figuring it out as I was doing it....They just said, "Here, you're going to teach this online." And so there was absolutely no faculty development, no resources, nothing for that. So, I never had a comp pedagogy course in graduate school. Everybody has always just thrown me into the deep end and said, "Okay. You figure it out, and try not to drown." But in the end, you do drown a little bit all the time.

Given the weakness in the support systems faculty in our program teaching hybrid courses experienced, our program has made efforts to strengthen these support systems. However, perhaps the largest constraint on what we do hinges around faculty labor conditions. The program has sought to provide opportunities for hybrid faculty to talk with each other, gain support from the program, and so on while keeping in mind that we cannot (and will not) require faculty to participate without compensation. Since we have generally not had compensation to offer, this means we have tried to be particularly attuned to what types of professional development we offer.

Facing a similar set of circumstances, Ed Nagelhout's "Faculty Development as Working Condition" claims that professional development must either be "built into the expected workload" or "designed to save teachers time" (A15). If professional development does this, Nagelhout argues, then it can be "about making our *lives* better" (A16) and positively contribute to faculty professionalization. Similarly, Hilliard's approach to hybrid professional development was to try to build a Community of Practice (CoP) that included, along with a required workshop for faculty before teaching hybrid courses, optional day-long pedagogy days and regular meetings driven by faculty needs. Like us, Hilliard struggled to argue that her faculty should be compensated for this professional development work, and she argues for transparency when such requests are denied (217). Taking up some of these practices, our

program has had to be very strategic in offering professional development if and when faculty compensation is not provided.

Before our study took place, our program had already established several professional development opportunities that, as we discovered, were not adequately supporting faculty teaching hybrid courses. Our center for teaching and learning offered stipends to faculty who took an Online Course Development Institute (OCDI). Faculty in our program had started and facilitated faculty-led monthly pedagogy meetings called Teachers Need Teachers (TNT), some of which were led by faculty teaching hybrid courses (these were open to faculty teaching in any modality). Finally, our program's administrative team reviewed hybrid courses faculty developed before they began teaching to provide feedback and mentoring support to those faculty. As can be seen, however, the program did not have many professional development opportunities available for hybrid faculty in particular, partially because this was a smaller number of faculty before the pandemic and partially due to the labor conditions faculty experience and our attempts to be cautious about adding to their already-high workloads.

As a result of our study specifically focused on hybrid faculty, however, our program recognized the need to better support these faculty's unique challenges more specifically and to offer a broader variety of support for hybrid faculty that would meet a wider variety of their needs while giving them flexibility in opting into those opportunities that made sense for them individually. We focused on building hybrid teaching skills and community throughout the professional development offered. However, we continue to make arguments that the institution should compensate NTTF who participate in professional development work, as is in keeping with CCCC's "A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)" and other work in the field (see previous sections). Building voluntary professional development that meets faculty needs—both in terms of content and community building—is necessary, but it does not make up for a lack of compensation that would actually acknowledge faculty labor conditions.

The professional development we have offered in Fall 2020 and continued into Spring 2021 has included short, one-time workshops; help desk sessions; and more structured opportunities for faculty to share their own ideas. These have been offered in a variety of modalities, including synchronous video sessions, taped sessions, and online sharing of materials generated during sessions. Through funding from our college, we have been able to compensate faculty who have facilitated workshops and to compensate some faculty participants. By drawing upon faculty expertise within our program, we have also been able to build more of a CoP that views expertise as distributed rather than concentrated in the program's administrative team. In thinking ahead, we also know that we want to work on further opportunities such as more decentralized and

informal opportunities for faculty to meet up; mentoring opportunities for faculty new to teaching hybrid courses to work with experienced hybrid faculty; and hybrid program materials that more deliberately help faculty manage workload issues. We know that hybrid faculty need professional development opportunities targeted specifically to their needs, and we hope to continue building on these.

Finally, while our faculty have shown a willingness to adapt, experiment, and do the labor-intensive work of continuing to learn new ways of teaching hybrid courses, they recognize systemic barriers in our institution's evaluation systems that particularly stifle innovation. Participant 9 explains:

One huge issue I've had is the way that we're being evaluated teaching these [hybrid] courses. I think it is so unfair—people who are trying to teach hybrid or online are being asked by the university to try something new that nobody's figured out and then are being punished for it in some ways. And that, I think, is wildly unfair and unproductive. I think it discourages people from innovating.

They particularly identified the use of low student evaluations of teaching to penalize faculty who are teaching hybrid courses, sometimes for the first time or in a new way, as a “bummer for morale.” Further, they took issue with evaluations that failed to take the context of a course into account, especially if a faculty member is trying something for the first time, and that were applied to all faculty in the same way, regardless of the instructional modality they were teaching. Whether through (structural) reconceptualization of the university's hybrid designation or revision of the ways in which faculty are evaluated in these new modalities, participants express a need for greater administrative and institutional support to advance their hybrid instruction. Participant 9 also highlights how questions of labor and precarity inform the ways faculty view the innovative work they are trying to do. At our institution, this problem remains unresolved; while student evaluations were suspended during the Spring 2020 semester, as most courses suddenly moved online due to the pandemic, student evaluations have remained in subsequent semesters, even as faculty have continued to teach new modalities and variations of online and hybrid modalities for the first time.

Conclusion

One of our hopes in writing this article is to create a space at the pedagogical table for further research and institutional and programmatic attention to hybrid courses as creating unique labor issues that need to be addressed separately from fully face-to-face and asynchronous online courses. To this point, there is a lack of research in writing studies and higher education more broadly about approaches to teaching hybrid

courses, and at our own institution like many others, hybrid courses have been largely invisible and, as a result, this has contributed to the invisibility of the labor NTTF perform to teach these courses. As more faculty have experienced teaching in different modalities and as hybrid courses have become even more commonplace and will continue to be an important part of the educational landscape, scholarship about these courses and institutional support for the faculty teaching them can construct a fuller portrait of the labor involved when NTTF, in particular, are asked to take up this approach.

As the epigraphs to this article point out, NTTF teaching hybrids are often constrained by the labor conditions they experience that limit the time they have to learn new things and to adequately switch instructional modalities as so many have been asked to do in such a short amount of time in the last year. As Participant 9 noted above, faculty evaluation systems do not always encourage or reward innovation, often treating any decreased student evaluations of teaching (SET) scores or challenges in teaching as signs of failure rather than as chances a faculty member took to try something new, even if that new thing did not work perfectly the first time. Even innovations to the hybrid format itself can be impossible or risky for NTTF without job security. Participant 4 states: “I would like to see a much more flexible vision of what constitutes hybrid, because I think that there are certain portions of the course...that could maybe not have to adhere so strictly to one [modality] or the other, bouncing back and forth each week. I would really like to be able to explore that.” This participant identifies other possible types of hybrid course design that have occurred in other institutions and other parts of our institution that could better support student learning (such as longer stretches of the semester spent in synchronous sessions mixed with time working asynchronously). However, the size of our program means that individual faculty who are almost entirely NTTF cannot choose how they want to balance synchronous and asynchronous work in hybrid courses (all hybrid courses in our program must meet once per week synchronously and assign other work asynchronously). As reflected in faculty concerns during the pandemic (and prior to it), due to the fact that faculty evaluations are tied so explicitly to often-erroneous benchmarks of “success” it is imperative that school and university systems determine how to encourage and reward innovation and chance-taking in teaching, particularly for those faculty who already feel vulnerable in their positions and particularly during times of crisis such as a pandemic when teachers/faculty are forced to innovate quickly, without as much support as needed and without compensation for this work.

In recognizing the labor conditions NTTF in our program and, as seen in scholarship in and out of the field, teachers and faculty in other schools/institutions continue to face, we keep working on the types of professional development opportunities that will support our faculty. These lead to questions institutions/programs should ask as they consider

the types of professional development support to offer to faculty teaching in various instructional modalities:

- What kinds of professional development can and/or should our institution/program offer, especially if we don't have compensation to provide to attendees?
- What expectations can we have for teachers/faculty new to teaching instructional modalities such as hybrid or hy-flex courses given an institution/program's labor constraints and evaluation practices?
- What ongoing professional development expectations can or should we have for teachers/faculty who teach hybrid, hy-flex, or other instructional modalities given an institution/program's labor and compensation constraints?

Importantly, and in contrast to assumptions sometimes made about faculty, our study did not find that faculty are resistant to learning new instructional modalities or innovating in their courses. In fact, several commented on things they have learned, an openness to evolving skills, and their desire to try new things. Participant 4 explained, "if one good thing comes from it [the pandemic], I think maybe it's learning that a lot of this stuff does work really well synchronously. . . It can mean we have opportunities to do lots of different things." Similarly, Participant 6 said, "this pandemic has shown us that we have to be able to teach in a lot of different formats" and that they have used this as an opportunity to emphasize with students that everyone is learning new things in this environment. Both participants explicitly note how the pandemic had pushed them and their students to learn new things, something they embraced. Participant 7 also noted that their use of screen-capture videos as a new skill they had developed and found "validating" because it "was helpful to my [first-year writing] students." These participants demonstrate an openness to learning new things and envisioning their students' learning as evolving with their teaching, identifying these as ways to better support their students in an ongoing way. The reality of labor conditions, however, means that NTTF's continued employment is dependent on positive student evaluations and evaluation by department supervisors. Innovating course design is not only labor-intensive but represents a risk for NTTF facing precarious labor conditions where NTTF may not be rehired or where high student course caps limit what a NTTF may be able to do during a semester.

Beyond individual departments or programs trying to serve faculty teaching in different instructional modalities, schools and institutions need to understand the web of labor constraints on their teachers and faculty and how these have an enormous impact on the teaching and professional development work faculty can do or should be required or asked to do. As has been made apparent during the last year,

schools and institutions need to include faculty in decisions about instructional modalities since it is their labor upon which these models are built. Finally, organizations such as AAUP need to continue to advocate for faculty compensation that relates to actual faculty workloads and workload increases during times such as the pandemic. This may involve continued advocacy for increased federal and state funding for education that ultimately could lead to more support for what Melonçon, Mechenbier, and Wilson call “the re-professionalization of teaching” that provides “professional development and job security” for all faculty (133), whether faculty teaching hybrid courses during a pandemic or teaching face-to-face courses in a new, post-pandemic “normal.”

Notes

¹The program offers several options for students to fulfill a first-year general education writing requirement: one three-credit-hour course, one four-credit-hour course for multilingual writers, or in partnership with an international pathways program on campus either two stretch courses or one four-credit-hour course co-taught by composition faculty and EAP faculty. Students also take a junior-level general education writing requirement that introduces them to research and writing in their disciplines through our program, a writing intensive course taught by faculty in their field, and a capstone or synthesis course taught by faculty in their field with a strong written and oral communication focus.

²See Stickney et al. for a study of online faculty satisfaction in relation to flexibility in balancing their professional and personal lives and the professional development offered to them.

³See “CWPA and CCCC Joint Statement in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic” for recommendations specific to the pandemic about types of compensation needed to support faculty making the transition to alternative instructional models.

⁴IRB No. 1514418

⁵Members of the task force were also part of the faculty who were interviewed.

⁶These are similar to Melonçon’s findings that 62% of the NTTF she surveyed who taught technical and professional communication classes had taken a course about online teaching, although she does not report whether this included any attention specifically to hybrid courses (260).

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