

Writing Center Journal

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Front Matter

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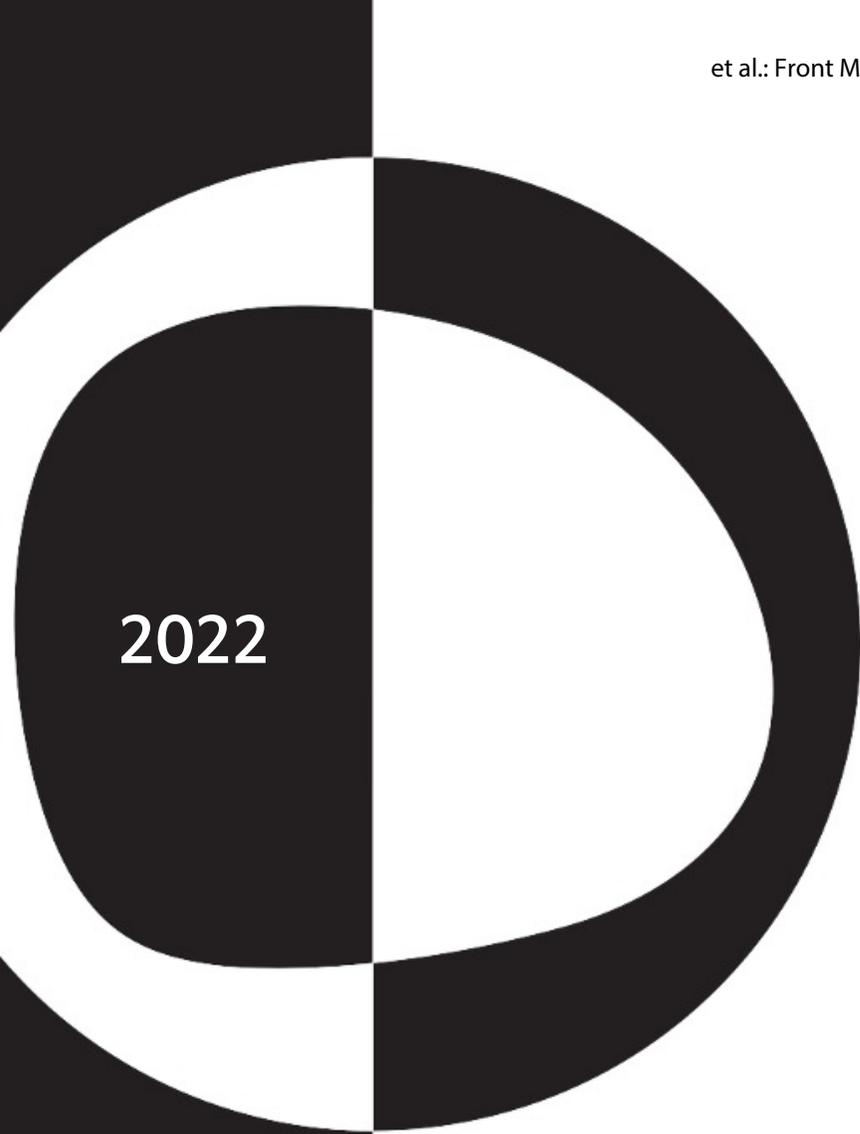
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2022

THE
Writing Center Journal

International Writing Centers Association
An NCTE Assembly

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History of *The Writing Center Journal*

The Writing Center Journal was launched in 1980 by Lil Brannon & Stephen North and remains the primary research journal in the field of writing centers. *WCJ* is an official journal of the International Writing Centers Association, an Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English. Previous editors of the journal are listed below.

Lil Brannon & Stephen North 1980–1984	Neal Lerner & Elizabeth Boquet 2002–2008
Jeanette Harris & Joyce Kinkead 1985–1990	Lauren Fitzgerald & Melissa lanetta 2009–2013
Diana George, Nancy Grimm, & Edward Lotto 1991–1994	Michele Eodice, Kerri Jordan, & Steve Price 2013–2017
Dave Healy 1994–1997	Pam Bromley, Eliana Schonberg, & Kara Northway 2017–2022
Albert C. DeCiccio & Joan Mullin 1997–2002	

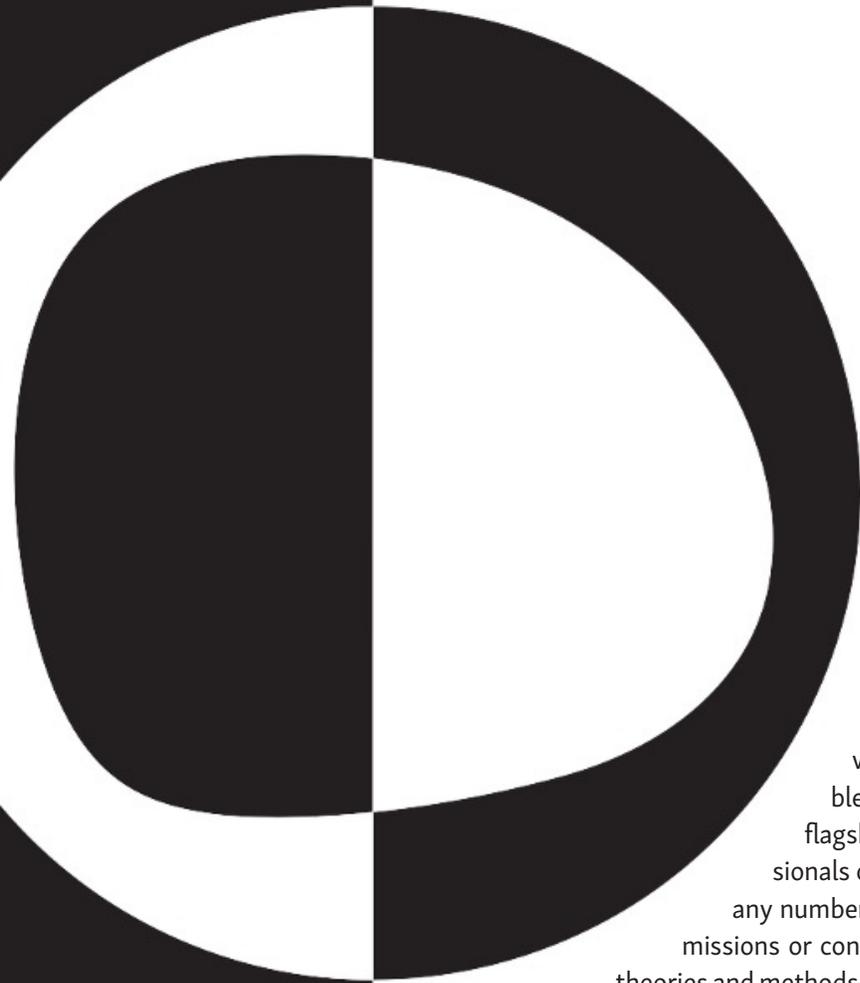
Guidelines for Submission

The current editors invite article submissions of theoretical scholarship and original empirical research on topics of interest to the writing center community. We are also interested in book reviews and review essays; please query via e-mail before submitting reviews. *The Writing Center Journal* aims to reflect diverse contexts and encourages submissions related to a wide variety of institution types and writing centers. Article manuscripts should be submitted via the online portal at submissions.writingcenterjournal.org. Articles are typically between 6,000 and 10,000 words and should follow NCTE's Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language. Please visit writingcenterjournal.org for the *WCJ* style guide.

WCJ Reviewers

All submissions are reviewed anonymously by at least two external readers; those listed below are members of the active reader pool. We thank them for their contributions to writing center scholarship.

- Arlene Archer, *University of Cape Town*
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 Valerie Balester, *Texas A&M University*
 Bethany Bibb, *Southern Utah University*
 Rebecca Block, *Springboard Collaborative*
 Candis Bond, *Augusta University*
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 Lauren Fitzgerald, *Yeshiva University*
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 Clint Gardner, *Salt Lake Community College*
 Anne Ellen Geller, *St. John's University*
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 Shareen Grogan, *University of Montana*
 Mark Hall, *University of Central Florida*
 Susanne Hall, *California Institute of Technology*
 Susanmarie Harrington, *The University of Vermont*
 Karen Head, *Georgia Institute of Technology*
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 Kelsey Hixson-Bowles, *Utah Valley University*
 Amy Hodges, *University of Texas at Arlington*
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Editors' Introduction

Starting any new enterprise is always a bit daunting, all the more so under the cloud of continued racial injustices and of the coronavirus pandemic under which we've all lived since March 2020. We three are humbled and a little afraid to begin our tenure leading our field's flagship journal in such turbulent times. Writing center professionals of all backgrounds have had to contend with viral threats on any number of fronts: graduate pipelines at many schools freezing admissions or consolidating programs, political challenges to our intellectual theories and methods, units being reconfigured or repositioned within institutions, navigating complicated budget environments where funding is either slipping away or unstable, consultants/tutors/coaches mentoring writers through different, often nonoptimal media, and researchers carving time to write, revise, and edit, when so many everyday logistical challenges compete for their time. Vague state laws are being created and passed specifically to prevent academics and professionals from doing Antiracist work, with the deliberate confusion of critical race theory and what it is, and equity and inclusion work more broadly, and this is having an impact on writing centers. This exhaustion is carrying over into the editorial and publication process, with scholars too tired to write, with travel restrictions making it near impossible to do research, with the unpaid labor we ask of reviewers becoming an unreasonable addition to their already overloaded plate, further delaying the already long publishing process for authors, and delaying issues coming out for our academic communities. We know the task that is being asked of us as editors and take seriously the impact scholarship has on our work, and we appreciate the support, patience, and guidance many of those in the field have provided. We ask to continue this reciprocal relationship as we continue to navigate new terrains the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created.

As we turn the page to our editorship, we are committed to returning to a regular publication schedule and to making all of our editorial vision and protocol transparent, and with this issue, inaugurating an era of open access for the *Writing Center Journal*. We recognize the privilege that our institutional and academic rank provides us for these shifts: Each of the editors holds faculty rank at a research-extensive university, so our positions build in time and additional personnel resources to support publication of the journal. We recognize that not every editor of the *Writing Center Journal* will always be at colleges or universities with our status, so we intend to build a publication infrastructure that is sustainable and enables future leaders of this journal to come from a greater variety of institutions. In other words, being an accountant, serials manager, or web

designer or coder should not be a prerequisite to being an effective editor. Instead, we hope to create a process that allows future editors to step in as *editors* who recognize the unique perspectives and diversity of academic projects and who are prepared to mentor writers for the journal in meaningful ways that lead to continued editorial excellence. Just as critical, we are mindful of bringing new voices into the journal who offer different perspectives on the critical literacy education writing and the wider teaching, learning, and research that happens at the wide range of writing centers not just in the United States, not just in its “leading” research institutions, and not just produced by its “senior” scholars. In fact, we know that change needs to happen in our editorial practices, and we enthusiastically respond to Kelley Blewett, Christina M. LaVecchia, Laura R. Micchiche, and Janine Morriss and their call for inclusion activism in their *College English* article, “Editing as Inclusion Activism” (2019): “Inclusion activism is an intentional effort to ensure participation and access as well as leadership opportunities to people of all backgrounds, at all career stages” (p. 275).

We are committed to innovation as well as theoretical and methodological diversity. Part of that drive is to also be more mindful about who contributes to the journal. It is our aim to intentionally recruit new voices at our academic conferences, and to offer more frequent special issue opportunities to guest editors. We are looking for guest editors from all different types of institutions and specifically interested in pushing the boundaries of our scholarship both in topic and form. We also imagine annual fourth issues that focus on undergraduate researchers and their work, as well as offering more opportunities to peer tutors to share some of the innovative work they are doing in their centers. We stand by a commitment to ethical citation practices and Anti-racist review practices, and ask all readers and members of the WC community and beyond to read and adhere to the collaboratively authored “[Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices: A Heuristic for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors](#),” before submitting and reviewing for editorial journals. We, too, commit to engaging equitable Anti-racist review practices as editors. We also stand by our commitment to mentorship, and we are eager to offer both informal and formal support for all scholars, especially those more new to academic publishing, and to listen intentionally for calls for transformation within our own practices as we hope to be in dialogue with the community; we encourage readers to once again review our vision statement.

With this issue and our new editorship, *Writing Center Journal* joins a movement toward open access academic publications. While *WCJ* has a history of being relatively inexpensive in comparison to other peer-reviewed journals in academe, it still represents a cost that not everyone is in a position to bear. Purdue is providing institutional support to help academic journals to transition to open access via the Digital Commons platform. Purdue University, as part of the larger Big Ten Academic Alliance, provides considerable support as part of a larger movement to drive down publication costs for itself and its peer institutions.

On to Our First Issue: Bridging Eras of Editorial Leadership

This first issue in the journal’s 40th volume represents material that was already in the pipeline from the previous team of editors and new scholarship we have had the privilege to select and mentor. Reflecting on that period of transition, we noticed a connective thread that “little things” matter in the moment but also in the grand scheme for the teaching and learning that happens in our spaces. We are also proud that this first issue represents a cross section of scholars from a variety of institutional, national, and linguistic experiences. We made a conscious decision to revisit manuscripts being considered under the previous team, reviewed them as a team, and made decisions on how to proceed based on the peer review system. We are eager for these pieces to represent a variety of conversations happening in writing centers across the world, not just in writing centers that look like our own. We hope this journal continues to be a forum that asks tough questions, garners complex answers, and challenges our field to pursue a diversity of scholarship

that also attends to equity and inclusion. We think we are off to a good start, but we depend on our readership to challenge us to do better, and also to share research and encourage others to produce scholarship, read this journal when it regularly publishes, and serve as reviewers of that material.

Despite what some might look back on with a sense of melancholy, academic conference experiences are fraught on so many fronts. People have anxiety about traveling distances to meet with colleagues from other institutions, and they may even fret about odd encounters with “frenemies” or experience hostile questions and terse interactions with peers. Like any other social and cultural space, our conferences present material and felt moments of joy and discomfort as well as searing manifestations of institutional and systemic oppression around race. Rachel Azima, Kelsey Hixson-Bowles, and Neil Simpkins explore how race affects people’s experiences at writing center professional gatherings. They share results that indicate significant experiential differences between white participants and BIPOC peers at conferences. As we all begin to inch back into public spaces and away from virtual conferences, we all need to think deeply about the authors’ recommendations about renewing our commitment to diversity, for non-BIPOC folk to internalize and act on a need, as the writers say, “to notice racism and understand their emotional responses when witnessing racist acts, learning about racism and redressing their own racist actions.” Azima, Hixson-Bowles, and Simpkins invite conference participants and readers to question the costs of comfort and emotional location and one’s own positionality and to intervene in microaggressions as they happen. For professional organizations, particularly for regional association meetings or local events, the authors recommend that they make space and time available for BIPOC people to network for personal and professional connections. Groups should also commit to ongoing assessment of racial climate as well as encourage race and racism research across the field.

González and María del Carmen González Videgaray’s article, “Disciplinary Faculty Needs and Qualified Tutors in an EFL University Writing Center,” situates the limited knowledge U.S. writing center communities possess of scientific communities and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts as exigence for an investigation. In a study of 24 participants of the chemistry community, Arizmendi Gonzalez and Videgaray pinpoint the needs of the hard science communities, offers commentary on tutor qualifications, and provides suggestions for how writing centers can best prepare for working with scientific communities.

Ashley Squires, in “Decisions Squared: A Deeper Look at Student Characteristics, Performance, and Writing Center Usage in a Multilingual Liberal Arts Program in Russia,” writes on a writing center in Russia, and complicates the findings of Lori Salem’s article, “Decisions, Decisions, Who Chooses to Use a Writing Center,” in 2016. In this study, Squires uses a sample of 107 economics students from a bilingual liberal arts program in Russia to explore who uses the writing center. The findings from her study suggest that writing centers need to make more intentional outreach efforts to students who are at the highest risk of dropping out. This article provides an understanding of writing center work in international contexts while complicating the findings from a significant study in our field, and suggests ways forward for access and equity work for students who do not succeed in academia.

David Stock and Shannon Tuttle Liechty’s article, “Tutors for Transfer? Reconsidering the Role of Transfer in Writing Tutor Education,” asks writing center professionals to conduct more empirical research on transfer-focused writing tutor education. This article asks too for WCPs to listen to their staff when it comes to writing center curriculum. Their findings indicate that tutors had negative responses to explicit transfer talk, as they wanted to maintain their peerness in their interactions. This study points those interested in transfer studies, beyond just in the writing center context, to ways to further investigate the impact transfer has on students and how they feel about writing or themselves as writers if we are to listen to student voices in our research.

Offering the latest in a series of collaboratively and individually written studies exploring the functions and dynamics of talk in writing center consultations, Jo Mackiewicz coauthors with Colin Payton a study of how consultants use the conversational marker “so.” This compelling empirical study shares transcripts of sessions to illustrate a typology of pedagogical uses consultants make

of the marker. As Kitty Kallen croons, “Little things mean a lot.” Similarly, Mackiewicz and Payton show that “so” is used differently in sessions where consultants are paired with monolingual English writers versus multilingual writers. Beyond that, the authors map how consultants use “so” to prompt clients in conversation toward insights but also to manage the flow and structure of interaction. This article will provide staff education curriculum with compelling fodder to question the strategies coaches use to direct or more passively coax clients through sessions.

Samira Grayson, in her review of Rebecca Jackson and Jackie Grutsch McKinney’s edited collection *Self+Culture+Writing: Autoethnography for/as Writing Studies*, offers a look at the exciting work and possibility of autoethnography for writing centers and those who dwell in those spaces. Grayson highlights key chapters and offers how different chapters may be more or less relevant to different audiences, especially distinguishing between those who are new to autoethnography as a method and methodology and those who may be more experienced. She also balances describing the strengths of the work with what it may not provide to certain audiences, namely a compact definition of autoethnography in favor of a more complex understanding. For a field that does not often deploy autoethnography, Grayson’s review offers a compelling case for why a work like *Self+Culture+Writing: Autoethnography for/as Writing Studies* could be invaluable. We invite readers to consider this genre of review writing and to submit a draft; we are especially interested in hearing from students or those who are new to professional conversation. We also welcome suggestions of books, collections of research, or other media for people to take up. For more information, follow this link: <http://www.writingcenterjournal.org/submissions>.

Enjoy our first issue, and we look forward to your feedback.

Anna, Romeo, Eric, and Harry