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From the Editors

Jeanette Harris

Joyce Kinkead

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From The Editors

Job Announcement: Writing Center Tutor

Qualifications and Description: A tutor works on a one-to-one basis with students seeking help in writing; applicants should enjoy writing and talking about writing; flexible hours; minimum wage.

This bare bones job description advertising for writing center tutors only suggests the complexities of the tutor's task. The job announcement does not have enough space to list all, or even part, of the characteristics of the good tutor: must be able to think on your feet, must be flexible, must be able to work with a lot of different types of students, must unblock writing blocks, must read a lot about tutoring, must keep the tutorial focused on writing, must avoid writing the student's essays, must have a sense of humor, must come up with ideas on a moment's notice, must develop tutoring materials, must handle paperwork.

Students who apply to become tutors often feel insecure with their own writing and, not surprisingly, are unsure of how they are to assist students with writing problems. They become more confident about their tutoring skills as they gain experience; at the same time, they have a frightening sense of how much is riding on them, how much their tutees depend on them—although they never have the luxury of knowing what problems are going to walk through the door. As our tutors often note though, they learn just as much—if not more—than the students with whom they collaborate. In that exchange between student tutor and student tutee, both profit, growing intellectually, emotionally, and morally; nevertheless, even experienced and confident tutors still have doubts about their own writing.

This issue of *The Writing Center Journal* focuses on that complex person and the complex relationship between tutor and tutee. The lead article reflects the perceptions of novice and black belt tutors; it is followed by John Trimbur's speculations on the conflicts inherent in the term *peer tutor*. Geoffrey Chase offers suggestions for problem solving and tutoring. And while Lynn Neil focuses on writing in the elementary school, the topic remains the tutorial conference and its effectiveness. The final article discusses the tutor and designing writing center workshops. In this issue's review, Lil Brannon introduces her discussion of *Texts and Contexts* with an anecdote about writing center tutors and guest speakers.

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We continue to try and define the tutor, remembering that the tutor is the heart of the writing center.

Job Announcement: Writing Center Tutor

Qualifications and Description: A tutor works on a one-to-one basis with students seeking help in writing (sometimes juggling as many as six students at one time, sometimes humoring hostile students, sometimes comforting crying students); applicants should enjoy writing (lots of comments on student essays, pages for tutor seminar papers) and enjoy talking about writing (for hours and hours and hours); flexible schedule (7:30 Monday morning to 9:00 Friday night). Only the brave need apply.