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From the Editors

Diana George

Nancy Grimm

Ed Lotto

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From the Editors

Jeanette and Joyce must have understood, when they asked us to guest edit this issue of *The Writing Center Journal*, that only through actually editing an issue would we understand the commitment we had made when we so happily took on the job of co-editing the journal for the next three years. It has been through this experience of the last few months that we have come to understand and even more fully appreciate the extraordinary service that Joyce Kinkead and Jeanette Harris have provided the National Writing Centers Association for the past six years. We thank them for all of that work and for the help they have given us in getting started as new editors of *The Writing Center Journal*. The journal has, in main, been the work of these two fine people, but even they have not acted alone. Past and current members of the NWCA Executive Board have worked hard and continue to work hard serving as blind reviewers of all submissions. We thank them, as well. Their shared responsibility in editorial decisions provides continuity and underscores the collaborative nature of writing center work and of the work of this journal's editorial past and present. Finally, the three of us would like to thank, in particular, our editorial assistants: Tim Fountaine, who has served as managing editor of this issue, Associate Editor Susan Guitar, Betsy Aller, and Kate Latterell. Without their help, this issue could not have come together as it has.

As the three of us settle in to the job ahead of us, we look forward to hearing from the readers of the journal, both in their submissions and their letters to us, and we look forward to continuing the ever-widening conversation about writing centers. Our part of this conversation will open with our editorial statement in the fall 1991 issue, and, like our predecessors, we will mark the transition in editorship with a new cover design.

To give our readers some hint of the things that are going on in this conversation, we can turn to the contents of this issue. Theoretically and practically, what is most striking about these articles is the strength with which they probe the edges and margins of writing center instruction, development, and administration. Instead of conceiving of a writing center as an hierarchical structure governed strictly from above, these articles look to the people and the contexts that actually drive the work of centers. In doing so, they demonstrate the important connection between practice and the sort of theory that increasingly calls into question the function and value of what is sometimes called a logocentric discourse.

This connection between theory and practice can most easily be seen in Alice Gillam's article which opens this issue of *The Writing Center Journal*. In it, Gillam uses the work of Mikhail Bakhtin to help us understand what goes on in a writing center. In particular, she finds the idea of heteroglossia, or the play

of multiple languages within any given context, valuable in helping students who come to her center for help. In the article which follows, William Yahner and William Murdick look to the historical forces that have driven the development of writing centers as a force especially in higher education. Yahner and Murdick suggest that we might understand our writing centers today by examining the historical, cultural, political, and economic forces that have shaped them. In an article that takes writing center staff into a very different kind of training field, Sylvia Gamboa and Angela Williams remind us that our tutors work best when they learn their own strengths and understand how to pull together to help each other. We follow Gamboa and Williams with three articles that examine the relationship between prominent theories in psychology and writing center instruction and administration. In the first, David Healy examines the tutor's position in terms of role conflict theory. The second, by Michael Marx, applies counseling's termination process to writing center instruction, and in the third, Louise Smith applies family systems theory to writing center instruction. Louise Smith's article, our regular readers will notice, is reprinted from the spring 1990 issue in which there appeared several serious and unfortunate printer's errors. We are pleased to be able to reprint this fine article in its corrected form. Finally, we end this, our first issue of the journal, with a piece by Lea Masiello and Malcolm Hayward which describes the uses of a faculty survey to understand the interrelationship between writing centers and their home departments.

Although we have especially enjoyed the articles presented here, we also have found much of value in the many articles submitted that we could not print. People are thinking and writing about writing centers with an intensity that augers well for the future health of our field. We will have more to say on the nature of that work in the next issue, the one that will be wholly ours, or as much wholly ours as anything in this heteroglossic world can be.