

1-1-1997

## From the Editors

Albert C. DeCiccio

Joan Mullin

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### Recommended Citation

DeCiccio, Albert C. and Mullin, Joan (1997) "From the Editors," *Writing Center Journal*: Vol. 18 : Iss. 1, Article 2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2832-9414.1376>

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## From the Editors

*Albert C. DeCiccio and Joan Mullin*

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We have taken on the editorship of *WCJ* with great eagerness; we are now awed by the fact that for the last three years Dave Healy edited the journal by himself. Despite the smooth handover of materials from Dave, we were not prepared for the vast number of details, computer glitches, mail back-ups, and the overall time drain this task demands: we apologize for the lateness of this issue. However, we hope it will be worth it to you.

*WCJ* has consistently supported writing centers by publishing key articles that encourage and challenge the ways in which we think and act as writers, tutors, directors, theorists, and reflectors on our past and present. We hope to continue this tradition in order to meet twenty-first century challenges. We all know these include budget, legislatures, technology, and other outside forces which—irrespective of what we know about teaching, learning, and human beings—greatly affect what we can do and how we can do it. We hope that the research and writing we present—especially in this issue—can begin to bridge the gap between what others think we should do and what we know to be sound, ethical, educational practice.

This issue presents a number of challenges to our community, posing questions central to all our activities: Given the constraints of budget, how can we justify one-on-one tutoring? Given the demands of proficiency testing, standards, accreditation criteria, how can we insist on developing individual voices? Given the quick delivery of services and information via technology, why develop face-to-face practices, if we can even be sure of what is meant by “face-to-face”?

Patricia Stock’s lead article in this issue gives us the beginning of arguments we need to develop further in our research and practice; she links writing center work to current calls from legislatures and educational leaders, calls for practices that we have been developing for over twenty years. Sara Kimball follows this with a warning that successful technology use depends on an examination of our assumptions about how language functions—and how our tutorial practices reflect those assumptions. Balin Song and Eva Richter answer the complaints of those who claim we

*The Writing Center Journal*, Volume 18, Number 1, Fall/Winter 1997



have no real proof that what we do affects student proficiency and learning.

In addition, the review articles by Eric H. Hobson and Byron Stay provide useful information to us about sources that address our ongoing efforts to investigate how writing center work interacts with and feeds into educational practices. Hobson reviews *Writing Centers: An Annotated Bibliography*—a research tool that benefits our future scholarly endeavors and opens our world to scholars in other areas. Stay reviews *A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned*, pointing out to us how Jane Tompkins' reflections about her academic career support our current practices and provide lessons for making writing center work even more fruitful.

We hope these articles will model ways in which others can conduct and reflect on studies within their own contexts, which in turn can support all of us. We hope that reading about the many ways in which writing centers can support current educational trends will encourage others in our profession to offer their expertise to their surrounding communities. We hope that encouraging directors, tutors, and students to engage in quantitative, as well as qualitative, research will help us all create a bank of evidence that convinces those who do not think like us, who are not in our centers seeing what we see every day, that we are already practicing what many community leaders only hope educators can some day accomplish.

We encourage you, our readers and colleagues, to respond to these articles for our next issue: send us your letters, write up your practices, counter with your theories. From having attended our last national conference, we know that our centers are rich in reflective theory and practice: unless we want to assign ourselves to the margins, we need to communicate these to each other and to the communities around us.