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## From the Editors

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## From the Editors

*Albert C. DeCiccio and Joan Mullin*

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Nothing has impressed upon us the difference in academic written English than has working with the international authors in this volume. At times, we needed a direct translation (*What does “one-off” mean?*) or an edit (*We really don’t use “whilst.”*), but other times we worked together to shape the organizing and explaining so that it would meet the expectations of an American audience. Had one of us not recently experienced the reverse (writing for a European publication), we may have wondered about our colleagues’ abilities—not unlike how faculty and writing center professionals might wonder about the inability of international students to understand organization, citation, explanation, coming to the point, plagiarism. It is with great pleasure that we end our tenure as co-editors of this journal by focusing on international issues, issues that we hope will begin a collaborative inquiry and a dialogue of exchange.

With so much conference action and publication in the United States, it is easy to position ourselves as “owners” of composition, writing centers, and WAC programs. The publications in this issue suggest that we have much to gain by listening to our colleagues in other countries who are beginning to use our theories in order to support or develop strategies specific to their contexts. International colleagues have a wealth of experience and research that not only add to our growing body of knowledge—but expand it. Bojana Petric’s study of student attitudes towards writing exemplifies a methodology for inquiring into the attitudinal effects of writing center work, as they relate to writing proficiency. She also draws on a number of theorists new to American scholars, and worth our attention. Tracy Santa’s study of the disjunct between writing center theory and tutors’ experiences in Bulgaria hints at the unreflectivity lodged in hegemonic western practices. Listening closely to his tutors, he argues convincingly that “we need to consider a dialogic approach which not only invites writing center tutors and their disparate cultures into the professional conversation on local levels, but authorizes their voices, globally.”

The focus on voice also rings through Orr’s and Blythman’s study of design students tutored through “student support” (translation: writing center). Many of our centers work within schools of art and design, and many of us tutor students in schools with such departments—or we run WAC programs that serve the arts. Capitalizing on the visual understanding of their student writers, these authors suggest ways in which bridges can be made to writing—and further hint that other students caught in our visual culture may benefit from similar connections.

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Finally, Nancy Barron and Nancy Grimm look at international cultures from another perspective: from within the United States. Barron and Grimm track our assumptions, questioning, as do Santa and Petric, those very claims upon which we rest our efficacy and practice. They conclude: “With more practice with diversity, more practice remembering it’s not easy, more practice asking what all might be happening that I can’t see, maybe, just maybe, we’ll arrive at more humane confusion and recognize our dependence on each other.”

Dependence upon constructions of our educational system is challenged by Barron and Grimm; in the first of this issue’s reviews—of a text that may not be familiar to American writing center scholars—another picture of writing theory is at work. Ganobcsik-Williams reviews a book that offers insight into the social practices involved in one-on-one conversations; readers of the review might also be interested in the parallels between UK and US institutions that are creating problems whose solutions would benefit from collaborative conversations among us all. Attached to this review, we have appended a few works by authors who are repeatedly referred to in recent conference presentations by European counterparts. We hope that our colleagues will find them provocative and informing.

Our second review, though, strictly speaking, not on the theme we have developed in this issue, discusses a new book that we knew we had to review before taking our leave of the journal. Beth Boquet’s *Noise from the Writing Center*, according to Michele Eodice, considers the implications of specific scholarly contributions to writing center literature, such as Grimm’s *Good Intentions*, and the works of Carino, Harris, Welch, and Lerner. Eodice also points out how Boquet takes on familiar topics of the field, including assessment, efficiency, hope, and promotes new ways to consider “what we long ago internalized as necessary and unchangeable.” Boquet’s book also casts student peer tutors as agents of both learning from us and teaching us, a rare acknowledgement in print. Like Eodice, we believe the book, while not a how-to manual for training tutors, may represent for writing center scholarship “a kind of hybrid musing and theorizing about the day-to-day sparking off of ideas.”

Finally, as out-going *WCJ* editors, we want to thank the writing center community that has made our tenure with the journal such a pleasure. We leave the journal financially healthy and in good editorial hands, having gained a great deal and given a little, quite relieved and a bit sad. As Neal Lerner and Beth Boquet, incoming editors, will find, there is far more work than one can imagine. They will also discover the delight in reading new ideas, encouraging deeper explorations, and the satisfaction in notifying a colleague of a manuscript acceptance. We thank those writers who have submitted manuscripts, been patient with our review process and

schedules, and worked hard to practice what we preach: revision. We also want to thank our Review Board; the quality represented in these pages is as much a reflection of their careful reading, advice, and feedback—to the writers and to us. And, finally, we want to thank the readers, the final piece of our writing center community to which we have been proud to contribute and blessed to belong.