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From the Editors

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From the Editors

On a blustery November morning, the two of us sat together in Neal's office on the MIT campus—back issues, manuscripts, announcements, subscriber lists, and budget sheets strewn about—editing our first issue. Up until now, our meetings have consisted of frequent phone calls and even more frequent email messages (most of which with attachments). Thus, we feel grateful to be able to do this work face-to-face, and we feel grateful to the *WCJ* editors, all 10 of them (3 pairs, a trio, and our one beloved lone wolf, Dave Healy), who have shaped the *Journal* over the past 22 years. We are especially thankful, of course, to Joan Mullin and Al DeCiccio, not only for their inspired vision of the directions writing centers might be taking—two of our favorite issues in this regard being the “Where are We Going? Where Have We Been?” issue (20.2, Spring/Summer 2000) and the international issue (22.2, Spring/Summer 2002)—but also for their advice and assistance during this transition period.

If you've been receiving *WCJ* for awhile, one of the first things you'll see about our inaugural issue is a new look. In its 22-year history, *WCJ* has undergone three different design changes. We wanted to introduce a fourth, updating the look of the journal to reflect its seriousness as an academic publication but also to increase its accessibility and attractiveness. We have Lynn Horsky of Process and Tom Pixton of MIT's Publishing Services Bureau to thank for their inspiration, as well as for their expertise in this area.

We are as excited about the articles in this edition as we are about the new look. We start this issue with Twila Yates Papay's article “Collaborating with a Difference,” a description of a South African Writing Center, continuing the international thread begun in the previous issue by Joan and Al. The article will challenge readers to consider models of collaboration within the context of larger social, political, and economic realities. These realities are explored in a more localized context by Susan Blau and John Hall in their article “Guilt-Free Tutoring.” Blau and Hall take issue with the orthodoxy of non-directive tutoring of ESL students, presenting their research on successful tutoring strategies with non-native English speakers. Finally, a different take on research is presented by Beth Rapp Young and Barbara Fritzsche in their contribution “Writer Center Users Procrastinate Less.” They

provide empirical confirmation of a long-held belief that writing centers contribute to student success in writing. Their research provides a model for writing center staff seeking to respond to the increasing pressure to demonstrate "outcomes."

Also included in this issue is the Graduate Student Position Statement, recently endorsed by the IWCA as a guide for programs employing graduate student administrators in their writing centers. Following this position statement are three reviews of recent publications relevant to writing centers: two edited collections, *Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation* and *The Politics of Writing Centers*, and one staff education text, *Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences*. Lastly, Theresa Lillis contributes a response to a *WCJ* review of her recent book.

One final change that will perhaps be less obvious to readers but has been incredibly helpful to us is the expansion of the pool of *WCJ* reviewers. A bit of history on this topic: From 1980 until 1993 the NWCA Executive Board constituted the *WCJ* Review Board. In the Spring 1993 issue, editors Diana George, Ed Lotto, and Nancy Grimm separated these two entities. The editors discuss the changes in their "From the Editors" piece from Spring 1993, acknowledging that "while [the NWCA Executive] board served well, it had its disadvantages since many experienced and active voices in the field of writing center theory, pedagogy, and administration ended their influence on the journal as quickly as their terms of office on the executive board concluded. We wanted to continue to draw upon those voices even as we assembled a group of newer readers who could help determine the direction of *WCJ* in the years to come"⁽¹⁾. We continue this trend by widening the pool of *WCJ* reviewers even further to reflect the broad range of topics, methodologies, and interests that *WCJ* authors demonstrate in their contributions. With this editorial decision, we will now follow the practice of other composition journals by listing the active reviewer pool in each issue.

When Lil Brannon and Stephen North wrote the first "From the Editors" section in Volume I, Issue I of *WCJ*, they admitted that they were in the process of "testing the waters, waiting to see the sorts of things writing center people are writing" (2). At the same time, Brannon and North had identified scholarly needs, which they divided into accounts of writing center theory, practice and experience. Twenty-two years later, that still pretty much covers it; and we, as the new co-editors of *WCJ*, applaud Brannon and North for articulating a workable model for the *Journal*, a model that has been flexible enough for 10 editors to follow in order to account for the wide variety of research and scholarship taking place in and around writing centers.

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We've quickly learned that the best part of the job of editors is the opportunity to see that scholarship first hand and to work with authors and reviewers in order to shape those articles for eventual publication. For this reason, we urge you to take the advice we offer our students and our tutors (and ourselves): to write, to share that writing, and to shape your ideas through collaboration and revision. It's how we grow individually as writers and as people; it's how we grow collectively as a field. We look forward to seeing your contributions to *WCJ* over our tenure as editors.

Neal Lerner

Elizabeth Boquet

WORKS CITED

Brannon, Lil, and Stephen North. "From the Editors." *The Writing Center Journal* 1.1 (Fall/Winter 1980): 1-3.

George, Diana, Nancy Grimm, and Edward Lotto. "From the Editors." *The Writing Center Journal* 13.2 (Spring 1993): 1-2.