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## From the Editors

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## From the Editors

Lauren Fitzgerald and Melissa lanetta

Reading over this month's issue, we thought: you've got to know your audience. Sometimes, this audience is administrative. For instance, Melissa's dean has faithfully kept to his vow to read one article from each issue of *WCJ* (Thanks, George!), and she knows which one she will recommend to him this time: "What They Take with Them: Findings from the Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project" by Bradley Hughes, Paula Gillespie, and Harvey Kail. Lauren, too, will be sharing this essay with her administration as the previously elusive proof of the many, often unacknowledged, educational benefits that emanate from the writing center for the tutors employed there. We hope many of our readers will do the same, for here we find evidence that the experience of working in the writing center offers students even more than we hoped for. Hughes, Gillespie, and Kail demonstrate that peer tutoring is the kind of transformative experience that changes students' lives—and that administrators like to point to when describing what makes their campuses special.

Sometimes this audience seems to be simultaneously made up of all of our constituencies, from administrators to writers to faculty and the larger public outside the university. Muriel Harris exhorts us to recognize the differences among them and therefore become more savvy rhetoricians in "Making Our Institutional Discourse Sticky: Suggestions for Effective Rhetoric." Rather than rehearsing what we *don't* do, for instance, (we don't proofread, don't correct, don't write)—which might well leave our audiences with the impression that we *do* do these things—we should employ "sticky" language that "is positive, appeals appropriately to our audiences, is highly

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memorable, and is concrete and specific” in the descriptions of our services. (Hmmm. . . . maybe we should review Mickey’s essay before writing those notes to our deans!)

This attention to audience urged by Harris is explored by Robert Brown in one specific forum. That is, in “Representing Audiences in Writing Center Consultation: A Discourse Analysis,” Brown looks at the role of audience representation in the tutoring of writing. Brown applies qualitative discourse analysis to tutorials in order “to identify the forms in which tutors represent audiences to their clients . . . [and] to describe the communicative functions that these representations serve in context.” In so doing, Brown argues “that representing audiences is not only characteristic of tutor talk; it is instrumental to achieving its aims.” We found Brown’s data impressive and his arguments compelling and anticipate reading his article with our tutors – with great pleasure and to great effect.

In the latest installment in the *WCJ* Theory In/To Practice feature, we move to the tutors themselves as an audience. Sarah Nakamaru’s “A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers: A Case-Study Approach to Tutor Education” addresses our ever-present need for new and more effective ways to facilitate the learning of non-native speakers in our writing centers. We find Nakamaru’s piece immediately helpful in our attempts to improve our own writing centers and, less immediately, we find it useful as a stellar example of the theory-practice connection and the importance of practitioner inquiry. We know that our readers will find it similarly illuminating as both a description of pedagogical practices and a model of research.

Finally, we conclude this issue of *WCJ* with Peter Carino’s review of Neal Lerner’s *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory* and Linda Bergmann’s review of Linda Adler-Kassner’s *The Activist WPA: Changing Stories about Writers and Writing*. These reviews, we think, round out this issue well. On the one hand, by situating the emergence of writing centers in the broad educational history of the “laboratory,” Lerner’s study, winner of the most recent International Writing Centers Association Outstanding Scholarship Award, reconstitutes our received pasts and future possibilities – and resituates the writing center community as the audience of these pasts and futures. On the other, Adler-Kassner’s volume, the recent winner of the Council of

Writing Program Administrator's Outstanding Book Award, helps writing center leaders find new words and new ways of reaching public audiences with our very important work. Both books allow us to reimagine the research of our words, across our campuses, into the public and into a historical audience we have yet to imagine.

And so, finally, we conclude our introduction thinking of our audience, the readers of *Writing Center Journal*: thanks for reading along with us, all of you, and enjoy the latest feast!