

1-1-2017

From the Editors

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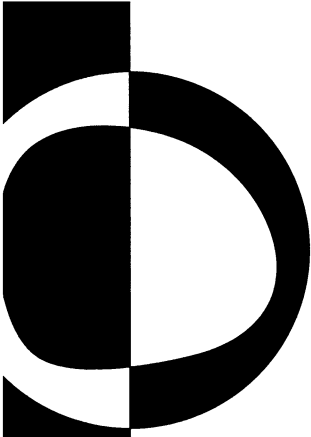
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Recommended Citation

Eodice, Michele; Jordan, Kerri; and Price, Steve (2017) "From the Editors," *Writing Center Journal*: Vol. 36 : Iss. 2, Article 2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2832-9414.1821>

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From the Editors

As we tie a bow around our final issue of *The Writing Center Journal*, we realize this thing is thick, over 300 pages. We feel confident that it's the longest issue since the journal's inception and that it contains the most articles *WCJ* has published in a single collection. We also know many of these pieces have been waiting in the wings for their turn at the printer for a long time now: As many of our readers will note, our submission pipeline was closed for over a year. *WCJ* recently re-opened with a new all-online submission portal, thanks to the hard work and vision of the incoming co-editors: Pam Bromley, Kara Northway, & Eliana Schonberg. We'll have more to say about them in a moment, but for now, we'll both lament and celebrate the fact that we *needed* to close submissions for a year. We lament because we know our community had good work ready, work that needed peer reviewers, a publication home, and readers. We celebrate because we know our community has good work ready, work that needs peer reviewers, a publication home, and readers. Simply put, over the course of our tenure, we received more and more manuscripts of better and better quality. Accordingly, *WCJ* 36.2 filled up—gosh did it fill up—long before our time ran out.

Reflecting on our time as editors, we discussed what we mean by “better and better quality.” Lots of readers might assume we're talking about RAD research. In many ways that's true. We entered as co-editors when researchers were pointing out how un-RAD writing center scholarship had been—and using RAD methods to do so, modeling RAD for us. We in writing centers had long been hearing calls to create more methodologically aware studies, and the community finally listened: The manuscripts began pouring in. We're glad for that; we continue to believe that RAD studies serve important purposes both in legitimizing

our field and in improving our practices. RAD research is tugging us, prodding us (sometimes kicking and screaming) out of the quagmire of our lore.

But we find other ways of knowing equally valuable. For example, from day one, we agreed that we valued “think pieces”—creative, generative essays that showcase experiential knowledge in ways that challenge and provoke us. We didn’t mean the “here’s-what-I-do-in-my-writing-center-and-so-should-you” pieces; there are other venues for such texts. Rather, we imagined submissions like Beth Boquet’s keynote speech from the 2014 IWCA/NCPTW Conference. Her work layers experiences, places, people—and provokes us to think, challenges us to change. And it’s beautifully written: Beth is a creative essayist down to her bones. Unfortunately, more submissions like this one evaded us. In 2018 we’ll see a similarly personal, provocative keynote published in *WCJ*, Neisha-Anne Green’s talk from the 2017 IWCA Conference. We hope potential *WCJ* contributors realize that you don’t have to be the keynote for the annual conference to have a narrative think piece published.

We also received few pieces that explored or attempted to construct theory relevant to writing centers. We valued John Nordlof’s 2014 *WCJ* 34.1 article “Vygotsky, Scaffolding, and the Role of Theory in Writing Center Work,” which received the 2015 IWCA Outstanding Article Award. In the article, he dismantles the directive/nondirective dichotomy and uses Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding theory—concepts from outside of writing centers—“to reconstruct an explanatory framework for tutoring practice” (p. 45) and to help us imagine how learning might actually occur in writing centers. Further, his work demonstrates how scholars can meaningfully question practice through theory, and vice versa. We wish we had received more pieces like this.

We also know that the personal, the theoretical, and the empirical don’t have to be mutually exclusive. Another of our favorite articles is Roberta Kjesrud’s 2015 *WCJ* 34.2 “Lessons from Data: Avoiding Lore Bias in Research Paradigms.” The author merges academic writing with strong personal voice that expresses identity and experiential knowledge. She uses personal insight to push back against her own RAD study, in which preexisting notions about the nature of questions in writing center sessions initially hindered her research team. Casting aside writing center lore, the author and her collaborators were able to hear and learn from the data itself. We hope our community will encounter more pieces like this one in the future.

In our second “From the Editors” column, *WCJ* 34.1, we set forth what we were looking for in submissions: intentionality, an ethos of questioning, and the making of knowledge. We believe that each of the authors we’ve worked with demonstrate these traits, and their articles move the writing center community forward. We thank others who helped bring these authors’ works to publication. Serving on our team have been Anna Sicari, Associate Editor, who has done most everything, from communicating with authors, reviewers, and subscribers to running the website to coordinating events—and who kept the whole thing running; Richard Sévère, Associate Editor, who interacted extensively with authors prepping manuscripts for publication; Donna Benge, who managed finances and spreadsheets; and Haley Fulco, who typeset and printed each issue. We’re also grateful to Taylor Bateman, who designed our logo and covers; to Jenelle Dembsey, who line-edited; and to University of Oklahoma graduate students Jordan Woodward, Evan Chambers, and Shannon Madden, for a variety of contributions.

We’re excited about the new editorial team of Pam Bromley, Kara Northway, & Eliana Schonberg and excited to see what direction their vision takes the journal and our field. They bring a fresh perspective and obvious investment in writing centers; they embody collaboration and value mentoring; and they’re accomplished scholars and insightful respondents to manuscripts and authors. *The Writing Center Journal* is in the best of hands with this ninth editorial team.

Finally, when we think about this whole enterprise—working with writing centers, investigating that work, and publishing what we find—we feel very privileged to be a part of this community. However, not all of our community members have the time, exigence, resources, or permission to take up research projects. Please consider what you have to offer other people in our field in order to strengthen our networks and provide more access and opportunity for others to develop their scholarly work. Your actions are important.



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P.S. We want to thank the canine companions who slept under our desks while we edited this journal: Ginger, Sarge, & Ethel.

Right below this cartoon drawing of Michael Spooner, we offer a space to honor the Utah State University Press acquisitions editor who effectively sustained the scholarship generated by writing center folks for the past 25 years.

Of the over 350 manuscripts he moved all the way to print, almost 150 are composition, rhetoric, or writing studies titles. Within that catalog, a little over 10% are books about writing centers.

Look at your book shelf later and you will see the impact of his commitment to supporting writing centers and to our way of working with writers.

Thanks go to Jackie Grutsch McKinney, Harry Denny, and Beth Boquet, for devising a way to show our appreciation, and thanks go to Stacy Kastner for talking with Michael Spooner and transcribing his lively thoughts.

Cheers to Michael—he really understood us.

Michele, Kerri, & Steve



Drawing by Bob Harvey, an artist who retired from NCTE (RCHarvey.com)