

From the Editors

As we have begun to work together, it is becoming more and more clear that the running of this journal is truly a collaborative enterprise. Readers should understand that the three co-editors are all reading all submissions; we meet regularly by telephone conference call to discuss the pieces submitted to us and to touch base on work that is in the review process. Because we three work at very different institutions in terms of size, type and location, we bring different perspectives to our reading and we are all learning a great deal from our conversations about submissions. Our assistant editors are working closely with us on the reading of submissions, on copyediting and various aspects of production. We are also relying on the skills and services of our editorial board, eighteen WPA professionals from a wide array of colleges and universities around the country whose work and expertise represents the varied areas of intellectual work of writing program administration. Every article is getting careful review by the editorial team and if warranted, in our judgment, by members of the board; writers whose work is read by our readers receive detailed feedback and commentary. This highly collaborative process that we have established has produced the issue now in your hands.

THE ARTICLES

In “Exploring Options for Students at the Boundaries of the ‘At-Risk’ Designation,” Stuart Blythe and his associates report on a study which investigates differences in first-year composition matriculation rates between at-risk students who take an extra writing course before first-year composition and at-risk students who take a course designed to improve students’ time management, understanding of the culture of higher education, and self-efficacy before FYC. Their findings show that there was very little difference in matriculation rates for students taking these different courses. The results have potential implications for remedial writing programs at many universities.

In “What Do WPAs Need to Know about Writing Assessment: An Immodest Proposal,” Chris W. Gallagher challenges WPAs to become “assessment leaders.” Drawing on recent position statements from our profes-

sional organizations and the substantial scholarship on writing assessment, Gallagher offers eleven “propositions” about what WPAs should know and be able to do in their leadership roles. We think readers will find this article to be timely and provocative, inviting WPAs to “claim the expertise we already have and acquire the expertise we need.”

Susan Jarratt and her colleagues explore the matter of transfer from the new perspective of what they call “pedagogical memory” as they report a large interview study with upper-level undergraduates reflecting on their experiences learning to write. This article presents important insights about the way students see their writing instruction, and also shows just how useful interviews can be as a source of data and insights for WPAs.

Marie Paretti, Lisa McNair, Kelly Belanger, and Diana George worked collaboratively at Virginia Tech under the auspices of a WPA grant and with additional support from the National Science Foundation to explore partnerships in writing instruction across a campus. Their report shows that such interdisciplinary work has key benefits for both students and faculty.

Jonikka Charlton and Shirley K Rose share their data and insights from a 2007 replication and extension of Linda Peterson’s 1986 survey of CWPA members. Their study, “Twenty Years of Progress,” encompasses WPA education and training, job configurations and responsibilities, and WPAs’ working conditions and tenure and promotion status.

NEW FEATURES

We are introducing here three new features. First, book review editor Ed White has commissioned the first of many book review essays that consider several books on the same topic or on closely related issues. Susan Meyers, herself a newly employed untenured WPA (or jWPA) takes up two recent books on the situation of junior faculty in WPA positions. Greg Glau reviews Kelly Ritter’s book on the history of basic writing at two of the most highly regarded institutions in the country. In addition, we offer as a second new feature a Symposium, an exchange between two scholars in an area of inquiry we feel needs attention from our readers: diversity in WPA work. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Matsuda ask us to reconsider the commonplaces, frameworks and tropes of our administrative work on diversity as WPAs administering local programs, as scholars and as editors of WPA. Finally, busy WPAs will note that each article now begins with a brief abstract that should help you decide which articles to read in depth. Naturally, we believe you will find all the articles worthy of detailed reading. You will surely learn a great deal from this issue.