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A JOURNAL OF WRITING CENTER SCHOLARSHIP

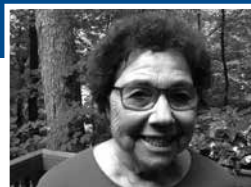# Table of Contents

From the Editor

Muriel Harris

This *WLN* issue is, in a way, an extension of the previous one where the spotlight was on the work of the writing center director. Now, in this November/December issue, the essays offer ways for writing center directors to more productively interact with their tutors.

The value of asking tutors to reflect on their practice is discussed in the first article by Renata Fitzpatrick, Julia Kroll, and Zach Levonian. Two tutors, Kroll and Levonian, find that by selecting and then analyzing troublesome moments in their tutorials, they gain a deeper understanding of their practice and are able to find fresh solutions. Next, Megan Swihart Jewell and Joseph Cheatle detail their work in developing training materials for professional tutors—a group who are not the target audience for most tutor training manuals. Jewell and Cheatle's preparation for their in-house training manual (that will be available in published form) lays out a process to identify what content is needed in such a manual. Given that tutors naturally rotate in and out of writing center staffs, Bonnie Devet reports the results of her survey on various ways to retain tutors. The variety of approaches directors employ to keep tutors from moving on to other challenges may enlarge your repertoire.

As you and your tutors read Alyssa Quinn's Tutors' Column, you may cringe a bit—as I did when recognizing a similar tendency in my own tutoring—because she identifies an all-too-familiar problematic situation. In the rush to help writers find a way forward before the tutorial ends, tutors may be tempted to encourage writers to quickly settle on a topic so that the writer leaves with a plan. Quinn prompts us to remember that a tutor's job is to help writers keep probing until they find a focus that rings true to them, and that means tutors should not seize on and promote a topic or viewpoint too quickly.

A Reflection on Reflective Writing Center Work

Renata Fitzpatrick, Julia Kroll, and Zach Levonian

Carleton College
Northfield, Minnesota

INTRODUCTION

We—undergraduates, Julia and Zach, and staff member Renata—work in the Writing Center at Carleton, a small liberal arts college. Over the past two years, we've been exploring the use of reflective practice. Christopher Johns describes the basic idea of this strategy: "Simply, yet profoundly, reflective practice is concerned with learning through everyday experiences towards realizing desirable practice. Insights are gained through reflection that can be acted on in subsequent experiences" (3). In 1909 and 1933, John Dewey discussed the role of reflection in education, and Donald Schön, in the 1980s, expanded on Dewey's work, as reflection became an integral part of teacher education. Writing consultants are not teachers-in-training, but as we work collaboratively with students to facilitate their development as writers, our task is, like teaching, full of moments about which reflection can be useful. Karen Noordhoff and Judith Kleinfeld say that "teachers must be prepared both cognitively and emotionally to understand and deal with complex and ambiguous educational situations" (165). On any given day in the writing center, so must we.

In our Program for Multilingual Writers we are using reflection as one form of professional development for a group of writing consultants who hold recurring sessions with writers for whom English is a second or other language (ESOL). In a 1991 article (reprinted in 2010), Gail Okawa and co-authors point out that to facilitate positive relationships in multi-cultural environments, "tutors must engage in various forms of critical reflection or inquiry that may include an exploration of their own assumptions, values, and world views" (43). While we are not linking the value of reflection exclusively to working with ESOL writers, cultural and

linguistic differences add a layer of complexity to consulting work that makes reflection especially valuable. We see the potential for reflective practice to benefit both consultants and the writers we serve. In this article we describe, from the perspectives of our various roles as coordinator and new and experienced consultants, the process, challenges, and rewards of reflection in writing center work.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN OUR PARTICULAR CONTEXT
Renata, Coordinator
I'd long been interested in the relevance of reflective practice for writing center work and was excited to realize its potential for the program I currently coordinate. Our program offers students with English as a second or other language the option of more individualized and sustained support than is typically possible through writing center visits alone. Each term, between ten and twenty of our consultants are paired with ESOL writers to meet at mutually agreed times outside our Writing Center for an hour or two each week; the pairs meet throughout the term, although sometimes a consultant/writer pair works together for several terms. Knowing they will have multiple appointments with the same student helps facilitate consultants' reflection on the ongoing work. Besides the idea that reflection could enhance practice, I was motivated by a secondary factor: when I first began to coordinate the program, I had only limited opportunities to interact with individual writing consultants face-to-face, and I believed that reading and responding to their reflections would both allow me some insight into how their work was going and help me serve as a more effective mentor for them.

Reflective practice is more complex than it may sound. According to Judith Harford and Gerry MacRuairc, Dewey's writings on reflection in education emphasize the "importance of active and deliberate engagement with problematic situations, underpinned by an awareness of one's own ideas and attitudes . . . open-mindedness, a sense of responsibility and wholeheartedness or dedication" (1885). In other words, Dewey seems to be talking about attitude and moral approach, as well as a thinking process. Schön, the other scholar whose works are most often cited in relation to reflective practice, describes the practice quite differently, elaborating on reflection-in-action (a sort of thinking on one's feet) versus reflection after the experience. Carol Rodgers and Thomas Farrell (along with many other education scholars) say that reflection is difficult both to discuss and to teach because its definitions are so numerous and vague. Joelle Jay and Kerri

Johnson offer a typology with three dimensions of reflective practice. First, they cite what Schön refers to as problem setting, in which the reflecters identify a situation or a moment from their real-world practice and describe it in some detail. Reflecters then use a comparative and critical approach, reframing the issue "in light of alternative views, others' perspectives, research, etc.," so that they can establish a "renewed perspective" (77).

Jay and Johnson's typology of reflection is similar to the guidelines I used in eliciting reflections from writing consultants in our program. I offered open-ended prompts such as "Think about any awkward times or light-bulb moments you have had in your conferences so far. What have you learned from these? What would you do differently next time? What would you like to carry forward?" When they first began writing reflections, some consultants responded by simply describing an event or a consultation. After reading some sample reflections in which writers explored their own attitudes toward the event they described, or asked probing questions about its implications, consultants began to produce richer responses.

PROCESS AND REWARDS OF REFLECTION: TWO WRITING CONSULTANTS AND A COORDINATOR SHARE THEIR VIEWS

Julia, New Consultant

When I began my first reflection on working with Yanhan[1], the ESOL writer I'd been assigned to meet with regularly throughout my first term as a consultant, I struggled to decide on a topic. I had only read the two examples of reflective writing provided by Renata. As a novice consultant and reflecter, I didn't fully understand the purpose of reflections or the process of writing one. My inexperience as a consultant paralleled Yanhan's inexperience with writing in English. Her Chinese-language high school had offered her few opportunities for her to write in English, and she was extremely aware of and dissatisfied with her English syntax. I thought about the inner conflict I felt about offering her options for rephrasing sentences. Yanhan was always excited to see how the same sentence could be arranged in many ways. However, as a new consultant, I worried that I was being too directive and appropriative by offering her sentences I knew she could not write without my assistance. Beyond the issue of syntax, I constantly worried that I was helping too much or overstepping my consultant role. I had been unconsciously feeling this concern for a while, but I was not directly acknowledging or confronting it. As I wrote my first reflection about my consulting experience with Yanhan, I had the growing sense that I was

addressing an important issue. Through writing my reflection, I identified for myself the assistance I felt comfortable offering, and I differentiated between merely editing Yanhan's work and actually helping her learn more complex syntax. I did not edit her work by replacing her sentences with my own; rather, I offered her several rewordings to illustrate syntactic possibilities. She could then use her original sentence or choose one of my suggestions. Even more powerfully, she could identify phrases within my sentences that captured her ideas, and then work those fragments into her writing with my assistance. Reflecting on our process helped me recognize behaviors to avoid, like attempting to edit or take control, as well as the benefits of offering example sentences. By noticing my successful techniques, I could actively choose to continue using them, helping Yanhan clarify her current essay while also broadening her knowledge of English syntax for future writing.

Now that I have become more accustomed to the process of reflecting on my consulting work, I realize that writing reflections is the main opportunity I have to carefully consider how I approach my job. Since consultations engage my whole attention as I intently listen, read, and respond, I don't have time during a session to think more abstractly about my approach. Reflections give me the ability to return to past challenges and contemplate how I handled them, which I could not do while I was actively consulting. Reflections also allow me to consider how I might want to adjust my approach when a similar situation arises in a future consultation.

Zach, Experienced Consultant
When I want to start writing a reflection, I think about a moment in a conference that has been bothering me and try to locate the source of my discomfort. Exploring my discomfort forces me to examine the moment from a variety of angles. When I am satisfied with my analysis of what originally troubled me in a conference, I find myself trying to generate solutions to address the problem I've identified. I could not have engaged in such brainstorming for solutions without first choosing an appropriate organizational framework to conceptualize and analyze the original troubling moment. The potential solutions I generate give me concrete actions to try in my next consultation with an ESOL writer. More often than not, the process of identifying solutions for one problem reveals additional insight gaps and further areas for my improvement.

As I have become more comfortable working with students and thinking reflectively, I have found reflections increasingly useful. The process not only helps me make concrete adjustments to my writing conferences but also develops my abilities to empathize with the ESOL writers I work with and to examine critically the power dynamics at play in my relationships with them. I have been amazed at how much reflection reveals about my conferences and my understanding of the pedagogical practices I employ. Reflection keeps the writers, rather than the texts they bring to our conferences, foremost in my mind and enables me to focus on collaborating.

Renata, Coordinator

I respond to consultants' reflections by email, addressing whatever seems most significant with advice, reassurance, affirmation, or an invitation to talk in person. After collecting all the reflections, I assemble and reread the entire set to track common or interesting themes for further discussion. Themes brought forward by reflection have included the various roles consultants play when meeting a writer on a regular basis, building student confidence, power dynamics that may surface, negotiating cultural differences, supporting better word choice and syntax, balancing answering questions and being overly directive, and many more. At two or three meetings each term, our group of 10-16 consultants discusses issues raised by their reflections, which indicates how our reflective practice has facilitated effective sharing of challenges and strategies. Farrell claims that reflective practice requires open-mindedness or the "desire to listen to more than one side of the issue and to give attention to alternative views" (15), and our group conversations reflect this attitude as they enhance the value of individual reflections. As an unanticipated benefit, I have used some of the themes generated by written reflections to develop activities for our whole Writing Center staff.

Consultants were sometimes slow to submit reflections in a timely way, and I wanted to find out why. I was also interested in discovering whether or not they perceived writing reflections as beneficial. On an anonymous survey, I asked questions about our reflections such as "How clear is the purpose?" and "How could we improve the process?" The survey revealed that for approximately 50% of consultants, time constraints were a barrier to reflective writing. One response suggested that slowness to complete the task does not necessarily indicate lack of interest: "Even when I do not actually write a reflection, I find being

prompted to reflect is helpful for tutoring. I like taking time to reflect [even though] the actual writing feels like an obligation/busy work." In answer to a survey question concerning to what extent consultants felt reflection writing enhanced their work, seven out of twelve responses were positive, five were neutral, and none were negative. Jim Bell pointed out in his 2001 empirical study that tutors in his writing center responded positively to reflective practice, but there was little evidence that they changed their tutoring behaviors. In the absence of empirical research on consultations, we at Carleton cannot claim to have evidence of changed practice either, but we are encouraged that more than half of our tutors perceive that reflection enhances their practice. Responses to the survey suggest that reflection has—at the very least—been effective in prompting consultants to think about their own assumptions and methods in their work with ESOL students.

Since the use of reflective writing has been somewhat experimental for our center, and the reasons for requiring it have evolved and shifted over time, it is not surprising that even consultants who were open to the idea were unsure about the purpose of our reflection activities. Referring to her early experience writing reflections, Julia recalled, "I thought of it more as a report or check-up for other people to read about my work, rather than something I was writing to benefit myself." She was partly right; as mentioned earlier, I was hoping to learn more from reflections about how the consultants' work was going, although not in the spirit of "checking up" on them. Julia's words were a good reminder that I needed to state the purpose(s) for reflection clearly and to restate them intermittently, offering ample opportunities for consultants to ask questions.

I also learned that explaining what reflective thinking and writing involve is indeed a challenge. As discussed earlier, and as Rodgers points out, "it is unclear how systematic reflection is different from other types of thought" (843). A typology such as Jay and Johnson offer is helpful in providing guidance, and I also found it useful to discuss with consultants sample reflective writing attempts by their peers. Like writing center work itself, for many of us reflection is best learned through the direct experience of simply doing it. And, like tutoring or consulting, reflection is not always an easy task. Producing a meaningful reflection can involve trial and error and needs to be supported. Support might include staff mentors sharing our own reflections and difficulties, more frequent group discussion of prompts and models, as well as the issues that arise

from reflecting. Initially, I imagined reflection only as a solitary activity, but our experiences over the past two years indicate that reflective work is much enhanced by discussion because we can help each other develop new perspectives.

OUR HOPES AS WE MOVE FORWARD

We would like to find more ways of using reflection to strengthen our work. One interesting possibility would be to practice reflection about recorded sessions. Writing about teacher education, Harford and MacRuairc point out that video can be a useful tool in meaningful reflective practice because peers can watch and analyze recorded sessions together, which allows them to "view a wider spectrum of practice" (1884). These authors see reflective dialogue about sessions captured on film as a way to scaffold and promote reflectivity, which they acknowledge can be challenging to elicit.

For us at Carleton, our online "Forum," has the potential to play a larger role in how we share reflections with each other. Besides posting excerpts from reflections as the basis for discussion at our face-to-face meetings, we could also use the Forum to engage in more online discussion of the problems, ideas, and triumphs consultants encounter. In this way, reflections would encourage consultants to share best practices with each other even more than they currently do. We also hope to make more direct and functional use of our individual reflections. For example, taking the time to revisit written reflections after discussion and to develop plans for change might facilitate more action-oriented application. Although reflection requires time and focus, we have found it helpful as a form of consultant development. As Julia observed, "No matter how my reflection ends, I come away with more knowledge about my tutoring approach and a sense of heightened awareness of the choices I make in consulting sessions."

NOTES

1. Not the student's real name.

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Toward a Professional Consultant's Handbook: Researching Support and Training Methods

Megan Swihart Jewell
Case Western Reserve University | Cleveland, Ohio

Joseph Cheatle
Michigan State University | East Lansing, Michigan

INTRODUCTION

Many writing centers employ professional consultants in addition to peer undergraduate or graduate students. We use the umbrella term "professional" to refer to both those consultants who are faculty members working in the writing center and to staff who are not enrolled as undergraduate or graduate students. In other words, we use the term to describe a specific group of non-peer consultants. Professional consultants, if they are faculty members, may work in the writing center as part of their teaching assignments or voluntarily, while other higher education professionals with degrees beyond the bachelor's might be hired specifically to staff writing centers on a full- or part-time basis. While professional consultants are a distinct presence in writing centers, most major training manuals are geared toward undergraduate peer tutoring rather than to the consulting dynamics encountered by this population of professional writing instructors.

There are several reasons for this gap in the training literature, including the reality that when many faculty and professionals work in the writing center, they do so because they are experienced writing instructors; therefore, it is often assumed that professional consultants need less training in working one-to-one with students. Further, most writing center training manuals, despite being rhetorically cast toward peer tutors, offer instruction and advice about consultation strategies easily translatable to the non-peer-to-peer dynamic. Yet, despite the usefulness of these manuals to professional consultants, most of them do not address the particular dynamics of non-peer-to-peer consulting. The emphasis on peer-tutoring in training manuals, including the challenges they face and the reciprocal benefits they receive, has served to elide the presence of a distinctly different instructional dynamic encountered by faculty and professional consultants.

Faculty or professional consultants make up more than half of our writing center's staff at Case Western Reserve University, which usually numbers around forty each year. We therefore encounter daily non-peer consulting relationships and have identified a clear need for additional resources on the topic. Non-peer dynamics arise in our work with undergraduates and in our work with graduate students and faculty. We have not only identified that such dynamics exist, but also have begun to recognize the challenges and benefits of non-peer consulting—and to locate within the non-peer session important opportunities for effective instruction. Our staff training has been re-customized to address the specific non-peer consulting scenarios that we see professional consultants encountering in the majority of their sessions. We have discovered that contrary to popular assumption—and aside from their many hours working one-to-one with students from their classes—some of our experienced faculty consultants do not have prior experience with writing centers or with one-to-one consulting. Therefore, we have located a salient need for a training manual for this unique population.

We have entered the beginning stages of compiling such a manual for our own writing center, with an eye toward its use as a resource in other writing centers. We determined the issues to be covered in our handbook by conducting a professional consultant focus group and survey. As more writing instructors find themselves staffing writing centers, some while in pursuit of full-time employment opportunities, our handbook both calls attention to—and helps writing center professionals be cognizant of—the role of the writing center as a distinct instructional entity in higher education. This article documents the process of selecting the major issues to be covered in our handbook, which will be ready for both internal consultant training at our university and wider publication for use in other centers within the next year.

It is also important to note our handbook's potential for a more global contribution to evolving the perception of writing centers. In thinking about composing our handbook, we became acutely aware that the aforementioned lack in training materials for professionals not only assumes that classroom leaders do not need writing center training, but also tacitly reiterates the age-old idea that classroom teaching is more important than one-to-one instruction. Put simply, professional consultants are seen to have more instructional authority, which seems to imply they do not need training. Yet, as we have seen, even though faculty members might have years of instructional experience or even might have worked in a writing center as undergraduate peer tutors, the

non-peer dynamics they encounter as a professional consultant not only entail challenges, but can also be used in savvy ways to maximize instruction. Our motivation in creating a handbook is not only to support professional consultants, but also to continue to validate the important collaborative form of instruction that writing centers provide.

COLLECTION METHODS

The information collected for our handbook derives from the experiences of the professional consultants who staff the writing center at Case Western Reserve University, a mid-sized research university composed of around 12,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional school students. Our center serves the entire campus population, including faculty and post-doctorate researchers. Our professional consultant staff is composed of faculty members with doctorate degrees who were hired primarily to teach in the general education writing program. Through focus groups and a questionnaire, these consultants provided over the course of two semesters the director (Megan Jewell) and another professional consultant (Joseph Cheatle) with information about their roles. The results of this research are divided into two sections: we first discuss what we have determined are the most conceptually significant issues encountered by professional consultants in individual consultations. Next, we speak to additional types of training issues found most useful for professional consultants. These issues are in addition to those most commonly addressed, such as working with ESL writers, disciplinary consultations, working with difficult students, and others that might also be covered in peer training manuals.

COLLABORATORS VERSUS TEACHERS

Professional consultants face unique instructional and interpersonal dynamics with undergraduate and graduate students. They occupy a different space than peer tutors or graduate tutors, and there is a tension between tutoring and teaching that, while already present in writing centers, surfaces more acutely for professional consultants who are further removed by education and institutional position from most writers they encounter. Professional consultants may find it difficult to switch from a position of authority, often as a teacher, into that of a collaborator.

Consultants agree that having a degree changes how they interact with, and are viewed by, undergraduate students. One consultant says, "I don't know if my degree changes my behavior toward the students, but it often changes their behavior toward me." We often find that undergraduate students expect the role of the consultant during sessions to be that of the teacher rather than the

collaborator, and they prefer more directive approaches during the session. Another consultant notes, "the most challenging sessions are with students who simply want to be told what to do and/or simply want to have their grammar corrected." The consultant adds that "students are resistant to taking responsibility for their own writing, and they want me to tell them what to do."

Because of the different dynamics that govern a professional consultant's sessions with students, it is important to move away from the teacher role and embrace that of collaborator. This move can be accomplished by reinforcing the collaborative nature of the session at the beginning of the meeting and educating students as to what services the writing center provides. Also, professional consultants can employ non-directive (minimalist tutoring) methods of engaging with students. Therefore, our handbook would entail much training in "minimalist tutoring," as outlined by Jeff Brooks. Such techniques that have been particularly effective in our writing center are "hav[ing] the student read the paper aloud to you"; "get[ting] the student to talk"; and "If you have the time during your session, giv[ing] the student a discrete writing task" (3-4). While Brooks's essay might be critiqued for its "defensive minimalism," we still advocate its basic techniques for fostering collaboration. Drawing, albeit cautiously, on some tactics suggested by Brooks is a necessary first step in faculty consultant training.

WORKING WITH CURRENT AND FORMER STUDENTS

At our writing center, professional consultants will likely have sessions with either current or former students. We've found it useful for our handbook to address both potential pitfalls and advantages of this situation. Tutoring one's students always carries with it the authority of the teacher and reinforces the teacher-student relationship. According to Jennifer Jefferson, "[n]o matter the level of comfort and amiability that students and instructors might share, instructor authority exists in a way that it doesn't with any other tutors, peer or professional" (10). Elizabeth Chilbert raises many of the same issues, recounting the difficulties of "flipping identities" from tutor to teacher during consultations.

There are, however, benefits to working with current or former students. We found through talking with professional consultants that there is a familiarity with both the student's writing and knowledge of the assignment. For example, one consultant who met with their own students regularly for writing center sessions said, "[m]ost importantly, I know the content of assignments and so jump right into the session without any introductory remarks (in most cases). I also *never* have the 'grammar garage' issues with my own students, since they are happy to get my feedback on the

content of their drafts" (emphasis original). As both consultants note, there is a benefit in not having to focus on grammar and spelling issues, knowledge of the assignment, and the ability to provide specific feedback to improve that assignment.

MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH FACULTY

When discussing tutor-faculty relationships, prominent manuals on writing center and peer tutoring, such as *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* and *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, can help peer tutors understand professional boundaries with faculty. These topics are useful for our professional consultants to understand; yet, the professional consultant might also need advice navigating a facet of tutor-faculty relationships that might not apply to peer consultants. That is, what does one do when noticing that a faculty member's comments, guidelines, or writing prompt is incompatible with one's own teaching practices? While noting problems in an instructor's commenting methods or prompts is not unique to peer consultants, our professional consultants have expressed the need for additional guidance on this issue.

Most of our consultants, as mentioned, have experience writing, implementing, and assessing assignments and are assigned to assist other faculty members with curriculum development and instruction. When students bring prompts to the center that are poorly crafted, vague, or otherwise problematic, consultants tend to experience a more acute conflict between their dual roles as writing center consultant and writing faculty. Indeed, during our focus group, professional consultants expressed frustration with the idea that they had to remain uncritical of the way other instructors are teaching writing or their assignments.

Therefore, we decided that our handbook would borrow Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli's advice in the *Bedford Guide* for peer consultants to remain as professional as possible, to "never . . . comment negatively to students about a teacher's methods, assignments, personality, or grading practices" (3). As they remind tutors, "[r]ecognize that you cannot know everything that goes on in a classroom" (3). We also plan to expand on these authors' advice to remind consultants that the writing center is a distinct instructional entity meant to provide classroom support, drawing their attention not only to articles on the history of writing centers, but also reminding consultants to consider the institutional history and current position of their writing center. Additional content will be added to assist in supporting professional faculty in their relationships with other faculty, including consulting with the writing center director for advice. Most importantly, we will acknowledge the specific difficulties of this issue for our

professionals. The latter is important in validating what is often professional consultants' tremendous writing expertise (i.e., they may feel less valuable than or somewhat powerless regarding the instructor whose poor assignment they need to abide), but also in helping them understand the role of collaborator in an instructional environment dedicated to an individual student's writing development.

WORKING WITH GRADUATE STUDENTS

Professional consultants may work with graduate students on a variety of documents such as course papers, theses and dissertations, and articles for publication. We have found in our center that a potential problem with graduate students—often more than undergraduates—is that they view professional tutors as editors. Further, graduate students may only want editorial advice because they have been admitted to a graduate program requiring advanced expertise; therefore, the assumption, even one that is made by their professors, is that they are fully competent in expressing content (higher order ideas) and only need to visit the writing center for form (lower order concerns). As we have found, such issues are magnified when working with ESL graduate students who have a strong focus on grammar. As Talinn Phillips writes, professionalization into a field is important for all graduate students, but for those who are multilingual, "the ongoing development of their language abilities may mean that they are even further from achieving their professional goals and that it is precisely the remaining issues of language acquisition that will prevent them from attaining those goals." Therefore, we've found it helpful to remind consultants of the pressure such students are under so that they might better equip ESL and other graduate students with discipline-specific resources, such as vocabulary and other discourse models directly associated with their fields.

Professional consultants can draw upon their specific expertise to effectively assist graduate student writers. According to one consultant, "I think having a Ph.D. provides me more legitimacy in the eyes of the student and also helps me to understand certain processes—journal submission, graduate admissions, dissertation writing, etc. in ways that I would not have understood as a student." Furthermore, having a master's degree or doctorate can establish credibility with graduate students. As one tutor explains, "I do invoke my experience with having performed graduate level work, in particular a dissertation, to establish credibility and empathy." Another consultant also finds graduate student consultations productive because the consultant holds a Ph.D.: "I think having a Ph.D is very helpful for consulting with graduate students. They give me a whole other level of respect because of it."

While consultants should not just rely on their degree to establish ethos, it is helpful in a training handbook to remind consultants how they might establish authority and credibility during sessions with graduate writers.

WORKING WITH FACULTY

For many professional consultants, the peer encountered in the writing center is most likely a faculty member. This is especially the case for professional consultants with doctorates who may be working on books or journal articles for career advancement. Indeed, faculty members are more likely to utilize our center as a resource because we have professional consultants. Consultants generally report satisfying sessions with faculty members: "I have found the faculty who come to [our writing center] are people who want to listen and learn." Other consultants report good experiences with faculty members because there is less of a focus on spelling and grammar, and a greater focus on publication requirements. Consultants noted that the atmosphere in a session with faculty is more relaxed and entails colleague-to-colleague conversation. For professional consultants, working with faculty members presents a unique opportunity for peer tutoring and a chance to work collaboratively with colleagues. Yet, faculty users number less than one percent of the writers we see each year in our writing center, and, those we do see often "crave writing community," as Geller and Eodice note (3). Therefore, it is our hope to educate our own faculty consultants on the assumptions that faculty writers must always work and produce on their own and, when appropriate, to cultivate with faculty more community through the establishment of writing groups and other programs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Nearly all of the twelve professional consultants we talked to indicated a desire for professional development in writing center work, either to publish in the field or obtain an administrative position in a writing center. Therefore, our handbook will provide examples of professional development opportunities, IRB certification methods, additional quantitative and qualitative research methods, and an extensive bibliography of foundational writing center works.

CONCLUSION

Use of professional consultants spans higher education. There is a growing need to understand what dynamics they bring to writing centers, the training they may need, and unique issues they find arising their sessions. Because most training manuals are directed toward undergraduate and graduate students, our professional consultants' handbook can fill what we believe to be an import-

ant need in writing center training literature. The major issues that we identified for inclusion in our faculty-specific handbook all speak to the importance of transitioning from a more author-itarian instructional mode to an individual, collaborative one and to the importance of recognizing the context and position of the writer. Therefore, when we unveil our handbook for internal con-sultant training and prepare it for publication for a wider group of writing center professionals, we will underscore the importance of collaborating with the writer-as-individual in order to best con-textualize the day-to-day issues professional consultants face, and the resulting instructional practices in which we engage.

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Retaining Writing Center Consultants: A Taxonomy of Approaches

Bonnie Devet

College of Charleston
Charleston, South Carolina

At the end of the fall or spring term—it often happens. Consultants depart, usually because of graduation, but also because of student teaching, studying abroad, or internships. Directors plan for such staffing changes. However, it is also true that some consultants may slip into directors' offices, with hang-dog looks, confessing they will not be returning to the center, or in the last week of the term, they shoot their directors an email: "I won't be working next term. Thanks for the experience. It's been fun." And with such a message, the consultants are gone. Of course, students—as part of their growth and development—will leave the writing center to explore other options. But, as a center director, I wanted to discover strategies in order to foster as satisfying a work environment as possible so I can minimize such attrition and its impact on staffing.

To discover what other directors do to retain staff, I emailed members of my state writing center organization—the South Carolina [affectionately nicknamed Palmetto State] Writing Center Association. Then, using these directors' suggestions for retention, I also sent out an anonymous survey to the WCenter listserv to determine what methods directors employ to limit attrition of staff. While only 29 directors responded to the WCenter survey, those respondents represent a wide range of institutions, with 58.6% from public institutions (four-year school, four-year master, four-year masters/Ph.D.) and 41.4% from private ones (four-year school, four-year master, four-year masters/Ph.D.), and they use various models for staffing: undergraduates (89.2%), graduate students (56.7%), and/or professional tutors (44.8%).[1] The emails to directors in my state and the WCenter survey responses indicate that directors' approaches to maintaining a stable number of workers fall into three categories: philosophical inducements, proactive retention, and tangible awards. Knowing about these strategies for minimizing attrition helps directors

evaluate their efforts to retain consultants and to manage their centers.

PHILOSOPHICAL INDUCEMENTS

Overwhelmingly, the email and survey responses indicate that to keep consultants, directors often use philosophical inducements, such as helping their consultants comprehend the centers' long-term goals and discussing with consultants how they fit within these ideals. The survey shows 79.3% of the responding directors provide consultants with their center's conceptual framework or its "big picture" so that consultants understand the culture of which they are a part. On the survey directors report they depict their centers as "a warm and comfortable place for those who love writing" (anonymous director) or as a place that assists students: "I think many [consultants] come back [to work in the center] because they appreciate helping others; they want to continue in that role" (anonymous director). In addition to their centers' goals, directors using a philosophical approach to consultant attrition also spend a great deal of time helping consultants understand the most important attributes they expect their staff to possess in order to conduct successful sessions (79%). Emily Harbin, at Converse College, explains, "My attitude is that if tutors see their work as meaningful and fulfilling, they will want to keep doing it, even without incentives. I want the person who would do this job for free because I cannot offer them anything other than minimum wage."

Another philosophical inducement for minimizing staff turnover is showing consultants they are part of something larger than themselves: a long tradition of consultants (69%). Allan Nail, Columbia College, states his method of achieving this goal: "[W]e work very hard to make the Writing Lab a community to be a part of, and create/maintain certain traditions that give tutors a sense of 'ownership' of the success of the center beyond just being employed." Directors' stressing the value of community helps consultants see their centers as places that are "collegial and collaborative," where consultants can "chat and hang out" (anonymous director). According to the survey, directors also make sure that they present the philosophy of the center during the very first training sessions (79%) before jumping into the do's and don't's of conducting consultations. As one anonymous director states, "The emphasis [is] on learning and growth not just a job." Such strategies help consultants comprehend a center's culture.

Another option for helping consultants see their work in a larger context occurs when directors engage consultants in a "social justice agenda" (Lori Salem 38), such as fostering literacy in the community by volunteering to work with students in primary or secondary schools. As an anonymous director explains, "I help [consultants] find ways to contribute their knowledge and skills in the WC beyond their consulting/tutoring." For those centers that pursue this philosophy, 17% of the respondents report that outreach is, indeed, a major retention tool for them. Feeling that the center is assisting others beyond the ivied walls of the college or university may, possibly, lead to retention of staff.

Also, to establish the center's culture, directors are stressing the job's exclusivity: they emphasize that not all students are qualified or even suitable to work in the center. As an anonymous survey responder states, "For undergrads, the position has a certain prestige because it is competitive (difficult to get hired) and because they get to work with faculty in a way that emphasizes the [consultants'] own writing abilities," while another director describes how being consultants was "kind of like belonging to a club or an honor society." An important retention strategy, then, is appealing to consultants' growing sense of working on a team to accomplish important goals.

Another vital philosophical method for minimizing attrition is to empower consultants: like all workers, consultants should experience a "real sense of control" (Aldag and Kuzahara 467) so they feel they are contributing to their centers. Different techniques help achieve this form of retention, such as asking consultants to create handouts (or other materials such as on-line PowerPoints) (86.2%), to conduct workshops for fellow consultants (75.9%), to make presentations at conferences (65.5%), and to train new consultants (65.5%). Other empowering methods, as revealed by the survey, include having consultants work as mini-administrators by observing and evaluating fellow consultants in action (55.2%) so that "they share in the governance of the center" (anonymous director). As one director indicates, these techniques help them view consultants "as fellow professionals and intellectuals. I assume their intellectual engagement and recognize the knowledge and resources each of them brings to the table." The WCenter survey also shows that the least used method for empowerment is to have consultants interview and hire new consultants, chosen by only 37.9% of the directors. Overall, though, directors are engaged in "particip[ant] management" (Aldag and Kuzuhara 468), where consultants

are part of the center's structure and operation. As a result, the "writing center is something consultants like being a part of" (anonymous director).

Along with empowering their consultants, directors can also lessen attrition by encouraging self-efficacy; that is, by helping employees believe they can achieve a task on their own (Ramon Aldag and Loren Kuzuhara 468). If a marathon runner thinks she can win her race, she trains harder. Directors are certainly enacting this approach. Leigh Ryan, co-author of *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, says, "I'm ALWAYS seeking out [tutors] to praise their tutoring (especially newer tutors) and any other things of note that they do. Everyone likes to hear good comments, and tutors are more apt to try harder and to stay when they are noticed and appreciated." When consultants handle a difficult consultation well, survey responses show that directors quickly praise the worker (96.9%), thereby fostering self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy—a valuable retention tool—is also achieved when consultants receive concrete evidence as to how they are developing as workers. One method for demonstrating such growth, especially when time and funds are limited, is the awarding of Digital Badges for completing certain requirements like facilitating an ESL workshop, leading staff meetings, or publishing an article (Conard-Salvo and Bomkamp). These badges, displayed in different media, such as LinkedIn, Mozilla, and Backpack, or on electronic résumés and curriculum vitae, let consultants describe how they achieved their badges, making their accomplishments more visible than a line on their résumés can be (Conard-Salvo and Bomkamp 9). Besides Digital Badges, directors can show consultants are developing by encouraging them to achieve certification through organizations such as the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), the National Peer Tutoring Association (NPTA), or the Association for the Tutoring Profession (ATP). For example, as consultants move up through CRLA's regular, advanced, and master levels of certification, they can experience proof of their growth. The website for the CRLA Tutor Program Certification suggests that linking certification to wages would be a powerful means to eliminate attrition: "[T]his [level of certification] also helps with *retention* of tutors" (emphasis added, "CRLA,"). However, on the survey, only 4% of the directors chose certification as means of retention. It appears, then, directors prefer to enact self-efficacy with immediate praise rather than with a pursuit of certification levels, especially since certification entails consultants' undergoing a sustained period of

training before receiving validation and reassurance about their work.

Finally, another form of self-efficacy occurs when workers undergo a "vicarious experience" (Aldag and Kuzuhara 468). Seeing others succeeding on the job is a major incentive to do well (Aldag and Kuzuhara 468). When consultants observe experienced consultants successfully handling an apathetic client, for example, they feel they too can deal with such clients. The survey shows that 82.8% of directors use this technique of having inexperienced consultants watch those who are dealing with difficult sessions (e.g. apathetic clients). Experienced consultants acting as role models is a powerful inducement for observers to better understand how to do well at one's job; of course, once the consultants move from the observer role to experience success themselves, they feel encouraged to stick around the center.

PROACTIVE RETENTION

After examining the responses to my survey, I concluded that directors rely on more than presenting a big picture and empowering their consultants when encouraging retention. Directors report they are also being proactive, taking specific, concrete steps so that there is as little attrition as possible. Being proactive begins when directors interview for new consultants. Directors describe how they try to weed out students by asking prospective consultants to commit to a minimum number of hours per week (67.9%) and for a minimum number of terms (25%). In addition, directors often widen the cast of their nets. While first year students sometimes lack the maturity to work in centers, Harbin suggests that centers should still consider hiring them in their second term, if the skills are there, because freshmen are the seed-corn who often become the long-time consultants so vital to a center's success. More than half of the survey respondents say they are using this option (57.1%) as a way to ensure consultants have long-term employment in the center and time to develop their consulting skills and abilities.

Directors are proactive in another way; they determine whether or not consultants are satisfied in their jobs so that changes can be carried out, if possible, to increase retention. Directors can tap into consultants' perceptions of their work experience by asking departing consultants to complete the oft-used exit interview. Human Resource expert Susan M. Heathfield describes the benefits: "Exit interviews are key to organization improvement since rarely will you receive such frank feedback from current employees." Departing employees are often much more open,

"more forthcoming, constructive and objective than staff still in their jobs" (Chapman). Though the questions should not be numerous, they can focus on issues like "What is your main reason for leaving?"; "What specific suggestions would you have for how the organization [center] could manage this situation/these issues better in the future?"; "What extra responsibility would you have welcomed that you were not given?"; and "What training would you have liked or needed that you did not get, and what effect would this have had?" (Chapman). Completed anonymously, exit surveys reveal problems that could lead to staff turnover. Curiously, though, the WCenter survey shows directors do not readily use such exit interviews. To the question, "As a director, I try to determine consultants' satisfaction with their work in the center ('job satisfaction') by asking departing consultants to fill out an exit interview, anonymously," only 7% said "yes," while 42.9% selected "no," 21.4% "sometimes," and 10.7% never use an exit interview.

Although formal exit surveys are not being widely distributed, directors are applying other techniques to secure consultants' feedback. According to the WCenter survey, directors encourage consultants to describe their problems at monthly or weekly staff meetings so that directors and consultants can discuss the difficulties. As a director states, "My tutors are not shy about sharing dissatisfaction." Another oft-cited means for determining job satisfaction is by having consultants keep a journal (electronic or paper) where, as one director notes:

> Tutors are asked to give an overview of the month, present the most challenging session and the most rewarding session, ask questions about anything WC related, note personal strengths and struggles that month, etc. This journal has become a direct line of conversation between each tutor and me.

One director even conducts "a learning and development review every other term" so consultants understand how their writing center work relates to them "as students and professionals" and so "students [can] reflect on and evaluate their experience/performance and set goals for the future" (anonymous director). Job satisfaction is also measured when, "at the end of each semester, tutors write out which activities (tutoring, training meetings, processes) went well and which did not. I make changes by reflecting on their [the consultants'] anonymous feedback" (anonymous director). Informal face-to-face contact is

also valuable: "I try to chat with tutors as often as possible by dropping in to see them, and I also hold one-to-one meetings to catch up with what's happening with them in life and in the WC" (anonymous director). Thus, instead of waiting until consultants are already leaving the center, directors are conducting "exit" interviews through methods that are effective for generating immediate improvements to a center.

OUT-AND-OUT TANGIBLE AWARDS

Besides fostering a philosophical, empowering, proactive culture, directors—based on the survey and the emails—are using incentives that can be characterized by the label Bravo Zulu (Aldag and Kuzuhara 469). Taken from the U.S. Navy's custom of raising the two flags Bravo ("well") and Zulu ("done") to signal approval of other ships' activities, the Bravo Zulu approach encourages directors to provide tangible rewards so that they "create an environment in which employees feel valued and believe they can make a difference" (Aldag and Kuzuhara 469).

For centers, the practice of Bravo Zulu—or what might be called out-and-out bribes—is nothing new. According to the survey, the most used incentive is the salary (79%), along with the promise of annual raises (24.1%), if directors have some control over salaries. Other frequently used Bravo Zulu methods are "an emphasis on the network of connections the consultants form among themselves" (69%) and a promise from directors to write a letter of recommendation (62.1%). For the consultants' other future needs, directors show them that working with multi-media writing projects adds technical skills to their resumes (20.7%). Appealing to both the consultants' pocketbooks and their futures appears, then, to be key retention techniques. Another effective bribe is a promise to help consultants manage their time. Directors tell consultants they will receive their preferred writing center schedules and can even apply for graduate assistantships, if they return for a new term (55.7% and 13.8%, respectively). Directors did report other means to retain staff, like appealing to the consultants' hunger by having the workplace well stocked with food and soda (34.5%), holding end-of-term award ceremonies, and giving out free t-shirts "to advertise their association with the center" (anonymous director). These activities show directors are trying to make their centers "a friendly and rewarding place to work, yet also a demanding one" (anonymous director).

CONCLUSION

For all directors, retention of trained consultants is a goal, a desire, an ideal. In fact, the survey reveals that directors are

fairly successful at keeping their consultants: "We have little difficulty with retaining tutors—most are unhappy to leave when they graduate" (anonymous director). Unfortunately, though, it is difficult to know if any one technique is responsible for minimizing attrition. After all, consultants will leave the center, eventually. Meanwhile, directors—based on the emails and the WCenter survey—show that they are acutely aware of attrition and are using the strategies of philosophical inducements, proactive retention, and, even bribes, so that they may—just may—minimize the loss of trained consultants in order to build stronger, more sustained centers.

NOTES

1. Multiple answers were allowed. IRB approval was received for the survey.

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Tutors' Column: "Students' Writing as Sacred Texts: Personal Narratives in the Writing Center"

Alyssa Quinn

Utah State University
Logan, Utah

She sits next to me at the desk, chewing on her bottom lip, as I explain. "You kept a diary for six years, so obviously you like to write. Just because you don't like grammar doesn't mean you don't like writing. Writing is about storytelling; it isn't about grammar and mechanics."

She shifts in her chair. The assignment we are working on is the literacy narrative for her first-year composition class, in which she is required to reflect on an experience that shaped her attitude toward reading or writing. She's already admitted her feelings of inadequacy; her family is full of strong writers and she never quite measured up.

"So you can write about that," I continue excitedly. "About how you learned to love writing, despite your struggles with mechanics and spelling." Suddenly her eyes flood with tears. "But I *don't*!" she sobs. "I *don't like writing*!"

This story happened during my first week of tutoring in the writing center, and it left a lasting impression on me. I tried to push a specific interpretation on this student's experience, although it was clearly not the interpretation that rang true to her. As tutors, we are in a position to strongly influence students' writing, and never is that a more risky position to be in than when dealing with personal narratives. While all academic writing impacts writers, a critical essay is likely to affect only their attitude toward the issue at hand; a personal narrative, however, can affect writers' entire concepts of themselves. We become the stories we tell ourselves, and once written down, these stories gain even more power through concreteness. Due to the stories' likelihood to impact their sense of self, much is at stake when writing these papers. Yet the ethics of personal narrative tutoring receive little attention in writing center scholarship. With many first- and second-year composition courses, as well as numerous health, education, and

social science courses, including at least one personal narrative assignment, it is imperative that tutors understand how to help students make meaning of their lives, without encountering the pitfall I did and assigning the meaning themselves.

A good personal narrative is not just a description of events; it is "an individual's thoughtful, unhurried reflection on certain experiences that seem to have an interesting significance" (Harris 939). When approached properly, personal narratives can help students develop a self-understanding that is "more important than . . . any set of procedural competencies" (Brooke 5). It is important for us as tutors to help students uncover what the "interesting significance" of their experience is, because only then will they truly benefit from the assignment and gain new self-understanding. But if tutors push their own interpretations, the narratives are less likely to be authentic, which nullifies the potential for increased self-awareness and personal empowerment. This danger is compounded by the tutor-student relationship, in which students often view tutors as the authorities and are more likely to take tutors at their word. To avoid this danger, we must reevaluate the way we approach personal narratives.

Equality-based discussion, discussion between two peers searching for answers together, rather than between an instructor doling out answers to a student, is one of the best ways we can encourage and validate students' own interpretations. Much of writing center pedagogy emphasizes shifting from a dialogue of instruction to a dialogue of conversation, and nowhere is this more important than with personal narratives. Jennifer Sinor, a creative non-fiction professor at my university, told me that when she helps students write personal narratives, she spends 90 percent of the time on conversation, exploring the topic verbally, and only 10 percent on actually outlining a structure. "We talk our way to our writing, and we write our way to our thinking," she said. Whether a student is in the brainstorming phase or has written a draft and is revising, equality-based discussion is key to reaching deeper levels of meaning in personal narratives. As tutors, our job is to ask questions and to actively listen to student responses, all the while letting the students talk more than we do.

Our role should be to help students figure out what they are trying to say—not what we think they *should* say—and to offer suggestions in a spirit of conversation. Sometimes we get so excited about a possible interpretation that we get carried away with it and forget to listen, as I did in the personal narrative

session described earlier. One way to avoid this tendency is to list (together with the student) as many different interpretations as possible, thereby demonstrating that there are always multiple ways of looking at a story, and allowing students to focus on whichever reading feels more true to them. While we draft these lists, it is important for tutors to respect the students; only with respect will we be able to hear what they are saying and hone in on the meaning behind the words. We may be the authorities on writing, but they are the authorities on their lives—this is the time to pass the baton to them.

The time limits of a typical tutoring session restrict the tutor's ability to engage in a conversation. With 20- , 25- , or even 60-minute sessions, we feel enormous (often self-imposed) pressure to achieve results and to have students walk out the door having made visible, tangible progress. We want to feel that we are doing our job, and nothing gives us that satisfaction more than linear advancement from point A to point B, preferably in the form of a written outline or the draft of an introduction. This efficiency-driven mindset, however, can be crippling to personal narratives, which require "long thinking,…. reflection, the courage to dive below the surface, the willingness to live with a topic for a long period of time, turn it over and over in your mind, and decide for yourself what questions to ask about it" (Spandel 5). Allowing students a few minutes to freewrite is a good way to encourage such slowed, reflective thinking. Also, letting go of conventional attitudes towards efficiency is crucial. It is okay to spend the entire session in discussion so that the student leaves with two or three possible interpretations in mind. The longer they live with the topic, the more likely they will reach some significant insight regarding it. Of course, due dates for assignments sometimes make such leisurely reflection impossible, but when the pace of the session can be slowed down, it should be.

Even after sessions are slowed down, "significant insights" can sometimes be hard to come by. When asked about the significance behind a personal experience, students will often fall back on surface-level interpretation, and because of the time limits we face as tutors, it can be tempting to accept this from them. However, we should try to push them further, past the easy answer. For example, I once tutored a student who was writing a personal narrative about his experiences as a member of a local hiking club. When I asked what he had taken from his experiences, he replied tentatively, "Uh, that the journey is more important than the destination?" He easily could have drafted

an essay focused on this idea, but instead, I encouraged him to think more critically about the subject. Together, we identified several possible areas of focus and discussed which one felt most authentic to him and which would be most enjoyable to write about. This strategy required that I stay focused on asking questions rather than giving answers, and that I listened honestly to the student's replies. In other words, I had to resist the urge to distort his answers to fit my vision for the essay. We ended up discussing his complex relationship with nature, and he left the center with (I hope) something meaningful to think about. If a student seems fixated on the-moral-of-the-story thinking, try explaining that the meaning of the paper doesn't have to be neat and tidy. It can be complex, nuanced, and elusive. It just has to be sincere.

Ultimately, there is no failsafe method, no "Top Ten Tips for Tutoring Personal Narrative Writers." Rather, we need to cultivate an awareness of the issue and develop a "sincere interest in students' lives and their opinions" (Spandel 21). As Sinor put it, we should treat students' writing as "sacred texts." It is a privilege to be admitted into students' lives. By keeping that in mind, we can help them gain valuable insights into their pasts and develop skills of analysis and self-expression that will serve them well into their futures.

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Announcements

COLORADO AND WYOMING WRITING TUTORS CONFERENCE
April 21-22, 2017
Greeley, CO (at University of Northern Colorado)
"Writing Centers of Resilience"

This conference is open to all writing centers and regions. For information about the concept of resilience and for proposals, please see the conference website: <www.cwwtc.org>. Contact Crystal Brothe: (970-351-2637); <Crystal.Brothe@unco.edu>. Proposal deadline: January 1, 2017.

NORTHEAST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION
April 1-2, 2017
Pleasantville, NY (at Pace University—Westchester Campus)
"Writing in the Margins: Language, Labor, and Class"
Keynote speaker: Frankie Condon

This year's NEWCA conference calls for writing center tutors, administrators, and practitioners to consider how writing centers, individually and collectively, address the practical and theoretical categories of class and labor, along with the language we use to define and confront them.

For information about the conference, contact <northeastwca.org>. For information about the CFP, consult the conference website: <northeastwca.org/2017-conference>. Deadline for proposals: Dec. 31, 2016.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN WRITING TUTOR CONFERENCE
February 24-25, 2017
Bozeman, MT (at Montana State University)
"GET LOST (in tutoring)"
Keynote speaker: Michelle Eodice

We invite you to explore tutoring practices that help open our worlds and our writers' worlds to new ways of thinking about writing, new knowledge, and new experiences. The conference website (www.montana.edu/rmwcatc/) offers questions that proposals might address, plus types of formats for sessions. For other information, contact Michelle Miley: <michelle.miley@montana.edu>. Deadline for proposals: Nov. 11, 2016, at 11:59 MST.

GET INVOLVED WITH *WLN*

Interested in serving as a reviewer? Contact Kim Ballard <kim.ballard@wmich.edu> and Lee Ann Glowzenski <laglowzenski@gmail.com>.

Interested in contributing news, announcements, or accounts of work in your writing to the Blog (photos welcomed)? Contact Josh Ambrose <jambrose@mcdaniel.edu>.

Interested in guest editing a special issue on a topic of your choice? Contact Muriel Harris <harrism@purdue.edu>.

Interested in adding to or working on our digitial resource database, WcORD? Contact Lee Ann Glowzenski <laglowzenski@gmail.com>.

Interested in writing an article or Tutors' Column to submit to *WLN*? Check the guidelines on the *WLN* website: <wlnjournal.org/submit.php>.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Pamela Bromley, Kara Northway, and Eliana Schonberg, authors of the article, "Student Perceptions of Intellectual Engagement in the Writing Center: Cognitive Challenge, Tutor Involvement, and Productive Sessions," that appeared in the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, vol. 39, no. 7-8 (2015), pp. 1-6. Their article was chosen by 21 reading groups (comprised of faculty and graduate students) to be included in the next volume of *The Best of the Independent Journals in Rhetoric and Composition, forthcoming from Parlor Press*.

Conference Calendar

November 4-6, 2016: National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, in Tacoma, WA
Contact: Julie Christoph: <ncptw2016@pugetsound.edu>; conference website: <www.pugetsound.edu/ncptw2016>.

November 11, 2016: Capital Area Peer Tutoring Association, in Arlington, VA
Conference email: <capta.connects@gmail.com>; conference website: <captawritingcenters.org>.

February 24-25, 2017: Rocky Mountain Writing Tutor Conference, in Bozeman, MT
Contact: Michelle Miley: <michelle.miley@montana.edu>; conference website: <www.montana.edu/rmwcatc/>.

March 23-25, 2017: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Dowagiac, MI
Contact: Louis Noakes <lnoakes@swmich.edu>.

March 31-April 1, 2017: Mid-Atlantic Writing Center Association, in Reading, PA
Contact: Holly Ryan: <holly.ryan@psu.edu>; Conference website: <www.mawca.org/event-2299008>.

April 1-2, 2017: Northeast Writing Center Association, in Pleasantville, NY
Contact: <northeastwca.org>; conference website: <www.northeastwca.org/2017-conference>.

April 21-22, 2017: Colorado and Wyoming Writing Tutors Conference, in Greeley, CO
Contact: Crystal Brothe: <Crystal.Brothe@unco.edu>; conference website: <www.cwwtc.org>.

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