

Guest Editors' Note

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Writing Center administrators and workers struggle with issues of wellness—be they affective, situational, or systemic—and the effects of stress on these populations have not been deeply studied in the field. This special issue on wellness and self-care in writing centers responds to this exigency with a set of methodologically diverse articles. In “Tutoring Begins with Breath,” Nicole Emmelhainz analyzes two semesters’ worth of written reflections from students engaged in guided meditation in a tutor training course. Kelly Concannon, Janine Morris, Nicole Chavannes, and Veronica Diaz provide an autoethnographic account of writing center administrators’ engagement with mindfulness practices that replicates and extend past research. Erik Simmons, Laura K. Miller, Caroline Prendergast, and Christiana McGuigan conducted the first published biometric writing center assessment, collecting saliva samples from tutors to measure how stress levels are impacted by tutoring. While the authors engage with wellness interventions differently, they find common ground in their focus on writing center workers.



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Because the focus in writing center research tends to be on the experiences and emotions of writers (Simmons et al.), this issue focuses on the affective experiences of tutors. Katelyn Parsons’ Tutors’ Column about tutors’ feelings of guilt provides a much-needed critical lens into how tutors are impacted by unclear boundaries in their work. Parsons concludes that saying no is an important part of one’s tutor practice. In Emmelhainz’s article, tutor anxiety is addressed by implementing mindfulness training interventions in a tutor training course. However, wellness interventions might not be welcomed or understood, and, as Concannon et al. suggest, are further complicated by administrators ignoring tutors’ bodily and emotional needs, even as they mentor and support others.

As we consider if wellness and self-care interventions are “enough,” we must consider the material conditions under which we labor, the ways in which we support marginalized workers, and the ways we ethically incorporate wellness and self-care into writing centers. A future Digital Edited Collection on wellness in writing centers will extend the work of this special issue.