

Guest Editors' Note

Noreen Lape and John Katunich

In their essay for this special guest-edited issue, Kara Wittman et al. describe the COVID-19 pandemic as a “moment of fracture.” The essays here examine these fractures: those that opened opportunities for innovations and those that disrupted our communities and practices in ways from which we may never fully recover. One fracture the entire writing center community experienced was the separation from our physical spaces for at least some period of time. The essays in this special edition consider the problems and possibilities that arise when a writing center loses its physical *space* while sustaining the writing center as a *place* built on shared identities and community.

Wittman et al.'s narrative details how the pandemic dovetailed with their center's re-opening as the Center for Speaking, Writing, and the Image. While considering how the loss of physical space affected the integration of writing, speaking, and visual rhetoric, the essay meditates on how Wittman and her staff redefined the work and identity of their center in terms of wellness, compassion, and care.

Megan Kelly et al.'s essay testifies to how the pandemic and the inevitable shift to synchronous online tutoring unexpectedly transformed the way their center conducted tutor observations. Forced to negotiate their spacelessness and the inability to observe tutoring sessions, they innovated a sustainable solution involving Zoom, video clips, and dialogic reflection.

In Julia Lane et al.'s autoethnography, we hear multiple and sometimes conflicting voices exploring what the loss of a physical space has meant: new opportunities for what Lane refers to as “kitchen table conversations” were now suddenly a part of writing center work. Yet they also acknowledge the risk that in these virtual spaces, we feel *for*, rather than feel *with* writers, and call for writing centers to emerge from the pandemic as places “that empower stu-



dents to feel, write, learn, and care *with us* as strategies for survival.”

Finally, in Sarah Rice’s Tutor Column, she explores what the “new normal” looks like for a tutor who had entered this work in an on-line or largely online writing center. Rice suggests that talking openly and honestly in writing center sessions about individual challenges of the pandemic years may be potentially discomforting, but ultimately necessary for the writers and tutors who continue to reckon with the impact of the pandemic on their academic careers and writing lives.

MIDWEST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

March 9-11, 2023 | St. Charles, MO, Lindenwood University

“Gateways Reimagined: Transforming Perspectives in the Writing Center”

Keynote: Heather Brown-Hudson

Submit your proposal and register for the conference at <https://www.mwcamembers.org/>. For questions, contact Elizabeth Busekrus Blackmon: ebusekrus1@stlcc.edu.

SOUTH CENTRAL WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

March 2-4, 2023 | Lubbock, TX, Texas Tech University

“Inventions and Intentions: (Re)discovering the Unique in the Familiar”

Keynote will be chosen from proposals submitted. Proposal deadline:

Jan. 5, 2023. For questions, contact Kristin Messuri: (Kristin.messuri@ttu.edu) or Jennifer Marciniak: (Jennifer.marciniak@ttu.edu).

For information about proposals, see <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MpnrFBNxq12RpQmyOY9MxhTuUclrckQr/edit>

GET INVOLVED WITH WLN

Interested in serving as a reviewer? Contact Karen Gabrielle Johnson (KGJohnson@ship.edu).

Interested in contributing news, announcements, or accounts of work in your writing center to the blog (photos welcomed)? Contact Anna Sophia Habib (ahabib@gmu.edu).

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

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