

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E W T T E R

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Promoting the exchange of voices and ideas in one-to-one teaching of writing

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— FROM THE EDITOR —

This first issue of Volume 36 of *WLN* includes a hearty “welcome back.” Despite the temptation to relax in an overheated summer, some of us have managed to complete some impressive preparations for the coming year, as evident in all the announcements and calls for proposals for conferences that are crowding this issue. And thanks to the extensive work of the authors of articles, editors, and reviewers we also have an excellent collection of articles waiting to appear this year.

To start off this issue, Tabettha Adkins shares her efforts to change the campus perception of the work of their writing center; in particular, she details their workshop services. Jo Koster reviews David Sheridan and James Inman’s *Multiliteracy Centers: Writing Center Work, New Media, and Multimodal Rhetoric*, an exploration of the implications of multimodal composing for writing centers.

While we can look forward to the future of multimodal writing, Ellen Carillo asks us to consider the importance of style as we tutor students. She offers pedagogical strategies for tutors to use when working with writers on style. And for our tutor’s voice in this issue, Alexandria Janney reflects on her use of body language to influence the success of the tutorial.

Also, please note that we have posted a list of this year’s reviewers on our website, and as *WLN* expands its reach, we invite applicants for a new position of Development Editor (see p.7).

◆ Muriel Harris, editor

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THE (UN)IMPORTANCE OF A PREPOSITION: HOW WE DEFINE AND DEFEND WRITING CENTER WORK

◆ Tabettha Adkins

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Last fall I became the new director of the Writing Center at Texas A&M University—Commerce. My first real experience as the director occurred at new faculty orientation in August during a discussion of resources available for students on campus when an experienced faculty member commented: “The Writing Center is available for students, but they don’t help them with grammar.” Ready for my official introduction to my new position, I stood up and said, “Hi everybody, I’m Tabettha Adkins, the new director of the Writing Center, and I’d just like to say that we help students with all elements of writing: planning, brainstorming, outlining, drafting, organization, thesis statements, transitions, proof-reading, and grammar. We do not believe that grammar is the most important element of writing or the marker of good or bad writing, but we do believe that it is one element of writing, and we will help students learn to identify and correct grammatical errors in their papers.”

The room suddenly came alive with the sounds of shuffling paper, plundering through bags to find pens, and hushed questioning amongst individuals. The words “will help students with grammar” seemed to send the room into frenzy. I rattled off the location and hours of operation for my new colleagues and sat down. On my way out that evening,

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