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## From the Editors

Michele Eodice

Kerri Jordan

Steve Price

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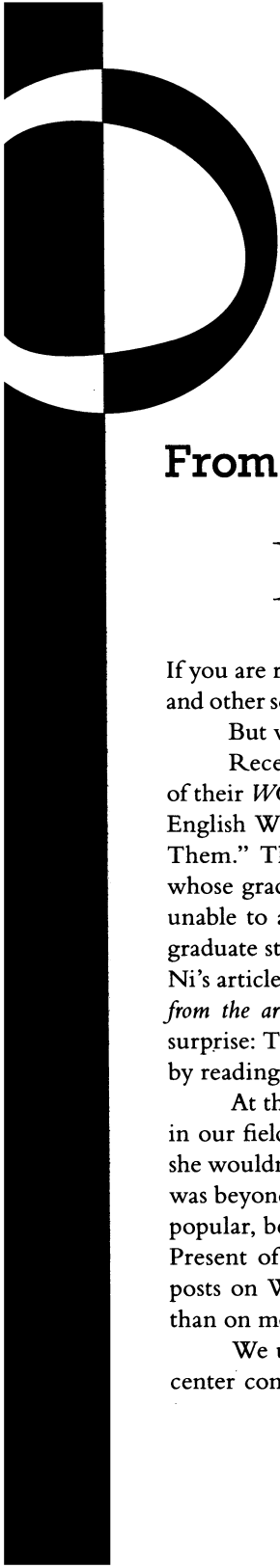
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## From the Editors

# READ THIS!

If you are reading this, and if you always read *The Writing Center Journal* and other scholarship in our field and beyond, then we congratulate you.

But we wonder who's not reading *WCJ*.

Recently, Carol Severino & Shih-Ni Prim facilitated an encore of their *WCJ Live* session on “Word Choice Errors in Chinese Students’ English Writing and How Online Writing Center Tutors Respond to Them.” They did so at the request of director Katherine Bridgman, whose graduate students at Texas A&M University–San Antonio were unable to attend the first virtual meeting. At the online meeting, the graduate students gathered around. Each *had* a copy of Carol and Shih-Ni’s article with them; they asked questions *about the article*; they quoted *from the article*. Afterwards, we three editors talked about the happy surprise: The participants had obviously prepared for deeper interaction by reading beforehand.

At the same time, we have evidence suggesting that not everyone in our field *is* reading: the director at a recent conference who told us she wouldn’t ask her tutors to read *WCJ* because she thought the journal was beyond them; the lack of more recent scholarship, beyond the most popular, being cited in our work (see Neal Lerner’s “The Unpromising Present of Writing Center Studies,” *WCJ* 34.1); the abundant, daily posts on WCenter offering advice based on personal anecdotes rather than on more established, analyzed scholarship; and so on.

We understand why reading doesn’t always happen. Our writing center community is quick to point out that we’re busy, too much is

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expected of us, that we face pressures from faculty and students and administrators. We embrace the ethos of being stretched thin. While we don't deny the significant workloads of our colleagues, we're skeptical that the material conditions of our jobs make us too busy to read. We argue instead that we're *choosing* not to read. We *do* set our own personal priorities. We should be reading. We need to be reading. The cost of *not* engaging our scholarship is simply too high.

Rather than affirming our burdensome workloads at the expense of inquiry and learning, we suggest that our field look elsewhere for productive answers. The fast-paced, find-answers-now, high-tech world exists for the geographers, too, but we endorse the productive approach advocated by members of the Great Lakes Feminist Geography Collective (GLFGC). "Given this context," the authors write in their forthcoming article, "For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University," "we find a need amid the chaos to slow – things – down." Slow ... things ... down. We agree.

Partly, the authors are referring to time, to taking time and making time and even to thinking about time in new ways. Anne Ellen Geller comes to mind for us, urging us in 2005 to think not about clock time but about epochal time: "Epochal time is measured by events, the 'time is in the events; the events do not occur in time'" (p. 31). But by invoking and "cultivat[ing] an explicitly feminist and collective model of slow scholarship," the GLFGC authors also urge us to reconsider how we think and what we do:

the 'slow' in slow scholarship is not just about time, but about structures of power and inequality. This means that slow scholarship cannot just be about making individual lives better, but must also be about re-making the university. Our call for slow scholarship is therefore about cultivating caring academic cultures and processes.

Scholarship, they tell us, is about relationships and respect. It's about valuing someone else's time and work enough to pay attention to it, to read it, to consider the ideas. Slow scholarship is also about ourselves, taking the time to nurture our own growth. Writing center work can be what the authors call "Care work," which is not trivial but rather "radical and necessary." Through care work, we build ourselves—and we support and mentor and collaborate with others.

What if we reclaim our time? What if we escape from the clock and from the bureaucratic tasks we believe prevent us from reading? What would our weeks look like if we unplugged more often, or left our offices and found a café or a cozy corner of the library? Or joined

a reading and research group, encouraging others around us to do the same? Two writing center directors we know have been thinking about reading. What if, as Ira Allen suggests, we think about our own and our students' futures as knowledge-makers and "create a space, both in the classroom and the writing center, for reading as true conversation" (2012, p. 116)? What if, as Travis Adams suggests, we begin "reconceptualizing writing centers as reading centered" (2015, p. 87)? These are all doable, realistic actions—if we choose to prioritize this way.

Unless we slow down, unless we reclaim time and use it for the collective good of our local and global communities, we risk ironically becoming that which we claim to abhor. We become a checkbox office on a bureaucratic campus: put up signs, check; finished report, check; wrote email and solved problem, check. Our work and our own professional identities become trivialized when we don't take the time to respect ourselves, our intellectual growth, and the inquiry of others in our field. Without reading, and the relationships that reading fosters, we only masquerade as a community. Let's be a community of engaged, respectful readers, instead. Let's . . . slow . . . things . . . down.

Michele Eodice	Kerri Jordan	Steve Price
Norman, Oklahoma	Clinton, Mississippi	Clinton, Mississippi

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