

Letter from the Editors

This is the second to last issue of *WPA: Writing Program Administration* that David and I will put together for you. As you probably know, we are in the process of handing over the editorship to a highly qualified team of editors, mostly from Arizona State University. (For more information please see the announcement in this issue.) The final two issues obviously feel special to us, but we are not in a position, emotionally or otherwise, to determine just how special they are. We do know we have assembled the work of some fine people in our field. Here is a quick look at what you will find in this issue.

Rebecca Howard returns to the question of how to change outside perceptions of what we do in our writing programs and argues that we now have a new tool, “multimedia rhetoric,” to aid us in our efforts. Stopping short of branding WPAs as logocentric, Howard reminds us that persuasion has an irreducible emotional component—something we tend to forget when preparing arguments in support of our programs. She argues that the visual component of multimedia introduces an emotional edge that can be quite effective when addressing, in her case, boards, deans, associate deans, and she not only makes a compelling case for using multimedia on such occasions but she offers sound advice regarding how to put multimedia presentations together.

Katherine Latterell broaches the vexed question of using graduate students in administrative roles, not in order to answer that question, but to encourage us to think about how our ways of working with graduate student WPAs reflect—or don’t—our administrative philosophies. She first schematizes three ways graduate students operate as WPAs, as “liaison,” “assistant,” and “co-policy maker,” again, not in order to argue for one over the other, but to make these relations more visible and to encourage us to treat these relations in “more dynamic and responsive” ways.

Mary Juzwik examines the ways two different teachers operated within a prescribed curriculum and argues the what happened was less a matter of “implementation” than of “negotiation.” Using de Certeau for guidance, Juzwik shows us that what WPAs tend to see as resistance to their programmatic strategies might be seen more productively as creative, tactical appro-

priations. Her main concern is to reveal the process of appropriation in all its complexity, as a step on the way to rethinking the relationship between instructors and the programs they work in. The details of the two case-studies provide a glimpse into a process we sometimes oversimplify in passing, and WPAs will find the implications she draws for teacher training and program design highly useful.

Jackie Grutsch McKinney and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater used a broad range of material gathered from a teaching seminar for graduate students in order to test again the value of the teaching journal as part of GTA professional development. Theirs as they tell us is a cautionary tale, of sorts, because they learned that the journals by themselves do not tell the whole story and thus can be misleading taken out of context. What they discovered—and what WPAs may find particularly useful—is a schema of “five narrative strands” that illustrate different aspects of composing “a teacherly identity.” It is commonplace to note that new teachers must find their style, but McKinney and Chiseri-Strater delve deeper into the complex stories teachers use to explain themselves to themselves as they develop professionally.

Martha Patton returns to the question of how effective faculty who teach writing intensive courses are with their responses to student writing (and, by implication, how effective the WAC program at the University of Missouri-Columbia is in this regard). Based on her survey of WI faculty, Patton discovered a number of trends—for instance, that senior faculty are more likely to assign fewer but longer papers than are assistant professors—that WPAs can use when planning workshops and offering other kinds of WAC support. She also confirms the general belief that even though there are many different ways of commenting effectively on papers, WPAs need to continue to push WI faculty to use more “context- and audience-specific criteria” in their responses to student work.

We again wish you happy and productive reading.

—Dennis Lynch

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