

## Changes in Action

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Welcome to *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 46.2! We are particularly pleased to share this issue because it includes manuscripts that were received after we assumed the editorship and thus reflects some of the changes we've made to the journal during our first year. It is also rewarding to see this issue published because it took quite a while to develop. Typically, a spring issue would appear several weeks before now, but, given the journal's 2021 pause in response to concerns about the CWPA's commitment to racial and linguistic justice, we have had to be patient for submissions to roll in again, and, when they did, it was clear to us that we needed to allow time and provide guidance for submitters and reviewers as we implemented new reviewer guidelines and a new submission category, "Everything is Praxis." We hope that the items included in this delayed issue reflect our efforts to promote anti-racist journal editorial practices and to expand the genres and voices of WPA scholarship.

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### *Everything is Praxis*

We created the "Everything Is Praxis" (EIP) submission category shortly after we assumed editorship of the journal in April 2022 because we wanted a place for shorter, practice-focused pieces that detail strategies WPAs and others have used to create and implement changes within their local contexts. We anticipate that EIP articles will identify, and briefly situate in the field, one or more challenges that are commonly encountered in writing program administration and then present case studies of up to five thousand words that emphasize the applicability of the ideas being discussed. Our intent is for the EIP section of the journal to enable sharing of professionally tested, theoretically sound strategies and tactics among a broad swath of WPAs across diverse institutional contexts, including institutions where teaching is valued as much as, if not more than, traditional research articles and monographs. At the same time, we fully recognize that no strategy or tactic can be copied wholesale from one context and implemented with equal effectiveness or identical results in different contexts, so we have

asked contributors to pay careful attention to describing the institutional climates and administrative structures of their schools; their positionality within their institutions; the characteristics of their student population; and anything else that a reader would need to know to evaluate the likelihood that the strategy or tactic would be productive for their local contexts and to envision how they might adjust that strategy or tactic to align it with the particulars of their institutional settings. We believe the first two EIP contributions in this issue accomplish these goals, and we hope they will inspire other readers to share their expertise and situated experiences through EIP submissions of their own.

In their contribution to “Everything is Praxis,” Zoe McDonald and Deborah Minter advocate for a “radical alliance-seeking perspective” (12) on WPA work by describing a course-redesign and professional development collaboration between the writing program and the library at their university. The collaboration focused on preparing writing instructors to help students develop critical information literacy and more effectively “navigate the overwhelming volume of online information” (13). Navigation, in this case, means not only that students can identify credible sources but also, McDonald and Minter demonstrate through the “full class annotated bibliography” assignment that is included in the article, that students can engage each other in “conversations about the interconnections among power, social location, and knowledge, a central starting place for students to equitably assess the credibility of sources in traditional and online media environments” (19). The writing program-library partnership, thus, promoted students’ abilities to recognize credible sources while also honing their abilities to situate sources within networks of power and to critically analyze inequities within those networks.

In “Recovering the Narrative of a Failed Media Studio,” K. Shannon Howard and Clayton A. Sims remind readers to notice the stories that come from failed infrastructure. Howard and Sims relay details of teaching in “the remote and seemingly abandoned Room 307” while also recounting the room’s legacy (30). The out-of-the-way room that seemed to have multiple purposes signifies what many writing instructors have experienced—that someone else designs the physical spaces we teach in, unknowingly dictating what choices we can make in our pedagogy. From the stained ceiling to the increasingly dirtier space, Room 307 is a reminder, Sims and Howard contend, that we, as WPAs, need to do a better job of observing and noticing our surroundings, allowing us to learn more about the histories of the spaces we teach in and helping us advocate for better spaces in the future.

*Essays*

Everything changes when the rubber hits the road. In “WPAing as a Postpedagogical Practice,” Jeremy Cushman grapples with what writing program administration means within a theoretical landscape that is post-process and postpedagogy. (As playful—or not—as WPAs might be about our own importance, there’s little likelihood that a post-administrative institution is on the horizon.) Cushman begins with the complexities of the classroom, the unpredictability of the day-to-day that demands improvisation with baked-in intentionality. Building from there, he suggests that WPAs adopt a similar (and similarly daunting) balancing act in our own work, thinking about it as “an intense practical involvement, or as a set of ongoing and relational practices” (46). To be or become a WPA, he posits, is not to take on a tactical role, but rather to abide in what is and what can be.

Sarah Faye, Erika I-Tremblay, Dan Melzer, DJ Quinn, and Lisa Sperber report on the adoption of grading contracts in the writing program at the University of California, Davis. As the writers explain, numerous factors contributed to the effective integration of contract grading, including the relative freedom that graduate teaching assistants—the primary instructors for composition at the university—have to experiment in their teaching; the availability of templates and other supporting materials to help GTAs implement contract grading; the visibility of the positive impact that contract grading had on different student populations (preprofessional students, academically struggling students, international students); and the freedom that instructors had to choose what type of contract—labor-based or hybrid—to implement based on their situations and preferences. In addition to benefits in terms of student success in contract-based composition courses, the authors discuss the increase in thoughtful attention to grading and assessment practices among both students and faculty and a concurrent increase in engagement with professional development activities around grading. They conclude with a heuristic for other programs to use in their efforts toward programmatic adoption of contract grading.

*Reviews*

In “What Do New Writing Teachers Need to Know?” Kathleen Lyons reviews Brian Jackson’s *Teaching Mindful Writers* (2020), sharing her perspective on how WPAs might use Jackson’s book for GTA education. Lyons highlights the various teaching methods for first-year writing that Jackson describes in the book, and she suggests specific uses for the text, including her recommendation to pair it with readings on antiracist pedagogies in the

GTA practicum to provide a more extensive and inclusive view of writing pedagogies for novice writing instructors.

Next, Michelle Tram Nguyen provides an overview of *Writing Across Difference* (2022) edited by James Rushing Daniel, Katie Malcolm, and Candice Rai. Nguyen's review introduces readers to the multiple ways the collection urges readers to account for difference in our teaching, research, and administration. Nguyen's review exemplifies the collection's argument that conversations across differences—including race, ethnicity, ability, gender, and more—belong in conversation together within the same text. Nguyen concludes her review by sharing how the book's various contributors provide recommendations WPA's might learn from and enact in writing programs.

Finally, Gabriella Wilson introduces *Standing at the Threshold* (2021), edited by William J. Macauley, Leslie R. Anglesey, Brady Edwards, Kathryn M. Lambrecht, and Phillip Lovas. Wilson's review highlights the collection's focus on graduate student positionalities as she relates to the text from her own experiences as a graduate student, GTA, and graduate WPA. Wilson concludes her review by calling on WPA's responsible for GTA education to listen and learn from the experiences described in *Standing at the Threshold* and, specifically, to make room for conversations about liminality in composition practica.

## CONCLUSION

We conclude our introduction by pointing to some changes happening beyond this issue. First, we are excited to announce that our fall issue will be a special issue edited by Jacob Babb and Jessie Blackburn, "Writing Program Administration in the Time of COVID." Keep your eyes peeled for this important contribution in October!

Second, we hope WPA readers will explore another initiative that got underway just a couple months ago: an online video series entitled "*WPA: Writing Program Administration* Conversation Starters." In late April 2023, we posted to our social media accounts a brief video interview—developed, filmed, and edited by our Assistant Editor, Amanda "Anie" Patterson Par-tin—with Dr. Nikki Caswell, Director of the University Writing Center at East Carolina University. The interview features Dr. Caswell sharing details about the ECU writing center's "Linguistic Justice Statement," which was researched and composed by writing consultants, and the incidents that led to the statement being removed from the center's website. Over the next year, we intend to develop and share additional videos about pressing issues in WPA work, with the larger goal of cultivating discussion both on social

media and within the pages of the journal. Be one the lookout for our next “Conversation Starter” on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter and consider adding your voice to the conversation! If you have a suggestion for a topic, or if you are interested in being featured in a future installment, please reach out to us at [wpaeditors@gmail.com](mailto:wpaeditors@gmail.com).

We hope that the pieces in this issue encourage and challenge you as they did us, and we invite you to share your insights, your expertise, and your submissions with us at [wpaeditors@gmail.com](mailto:wpaeditors@gmail.com). And, please follow us and interact with us on social media: [@wpa\\_journal](#) (Instagram), WPA: Writing Program Administration (Facebook), and [@WPA\\_Journal](#) (Twitter).