

FROM THE EDITORS: WELL-BEING IN THE WRITING CENTER

Tristin Hooker
University of Texas at Austin
praxisuwc@gmail.com

Fiza Mairaj
University of Texas at Austin
praxisuwc@gmail.com

We here at *Praxis* are proud to present our summer 2020 issue. For us, as for many of you, this spring and summer have been a time of immense changes, re-evaluations of our work and our working conditions, and re-imagining what we need to be and how we need to work going forward. The issue we present this summer includes pieces that address the ways we take care of our staffs, our tutors, our colleagues, and ourselves during this time. Some pieces were written during the global pandemic, some were revised in light of it, and some present concerns that have become all the more pressing as broader conversations about labor, wellness, and justice have taken center stage in public discourse. All of these cultural conversations come to life in the daily work we of the writing center. *Praxis* has always hoped to be part of and to facilitate such conversations, and we hope to do so in these strange—and now even more digital, for many of us—times.

In honor of our continued work during this time, we begin with Genie Giaimo's column, "Laboring in a Time of Crisis: The Entanglement of Wellness and Work in Writing Centers." Written near the beginning of the pandemic lockdowns in April, 2019 and updated after several months of experience with the pandemic, Giaimo offers reflections on the way our work has changed, and suggestions for establishing and maintaining a culture of wellness in our shared working conditions.

In "Emotions in the Center: Supporting Positive Emotional Development in Writers through Tutorials," Dana Lynn Driscoll and Jennifer Wells also consider well-being, but from a student perspective. Driscoll and Wells consider the power and effectiveness of dealing with students emotions in the writing center, as well as the connection between work with emotion and the established idea that writing centers tutor "the whole person." As with Giaimo's column, the authors have updated their study with special consideration for the effects of the global pandemic on students and writing centers working in a time of crisis.

Our look at maintaining students' well-being, particularly in terms of creating a diverse and inclusive atmosphere, continues with Aaron Colton's "Who (According to Students) Uses the Writing Center?:"

Acknowledging Impressions and Misimpressions of Writing Center Services and User Demographics." Colton examines how professionals may consider students' impressions of writing centers—and those who use the centers—in advertising and outreach. Through a quantitative study of undergraduate students at Georgia Tech, Colton demonstrates how introducing anti-racist pedagogies and philosophies may not be a sufficient strategy that writing centers employ towards becoming more inclusive. Indeed, writing centers should also consider their outreach strategies to cater to the marginalized and underrepresented groups on campus.

Justin Hopkins continues to investigate writing center policy with an eye to inclusion with "By Any Other Name: The Value of Using Correct Personal Pronouns." This mixed methods study examines the effects of the writing center's policy of asking for students preferred personal pronouns. By combining practical assessment and RAD research, Hopkins' study aims to help centers improve their policies regarding personal pronouns. Overall, the study shows that students visiting the writing center appreciate being asked for preferred pronouns.

In "Replication of a Tutor-Training Method for Improving Interaction Between Writing Tutors and STEM Students," Laura Hazelton Jones et al. turn our attention to the importance of training tutors for genre awareness, particularly for tutors working with STEM students. Ultimately, they find, such training can boost tutor confidence and student engagement.

Maureen McBride and Molly Rentscher then draw our attention the ways writing center workers are professionalized, examining the history, overview and importance of mentoring for writing center professionals in "The Importance of Intention: A Review of Mentoring for Writing Center Professionals." They document the benefits of professional mentoring in other disciplines and show that there exists a significant gap in research on mentoring for writing center professionals. They argue that the complex and sometimes isolating nature of writing center labor requires an organized effort to support writing center professionals by developing a formal mentoring program.

Our issue closes with two book reviews. First, Cat Williams-Monrades reviews the collection *Negotiating Disability: Disclosure and Higher Education*, edited by Stephanie Kerschbaum, Laura Eisenman, and James M. Jones, finding it to be a valuable resource for writing center professionals hoping to develop spaces, practices, and ethics of inclusion. We then end with Debbie Goss's review of *Radical Writing Center Praxis: A Paradigm for Ethical Political Engagement*, by Laura Greenfield. *Praxis* did, in fact, run a review of this book in our previous issue. However, we chose to run a second review not only because Goss's perspective on the text differs so greatly, but because the events of summer 2020, in the wake of protests and conversations born of the Black Lives Matter movement, the police violence that prompted it, and the ongoing problems and tensions resulting from the global pandemic and its associated economic, labor, and educational crises.

Finally, we here at *Praxis* want to moment to thank our readers and our most brilliant and diligent review board for their continued support, especially in these uncertain times. On a more personal note, I (Tristin) must also take a moment to say goodbye. I have been serving as a *Praxis* editor since 2017, and, with this issue, am reaching the end of my term. I have been so proud and grateful to be with the *Praxis* team, and to be part of all of the wonderful conversations we've had here, on our website, and in person. I certainly hope to continue those conversations, even as I step down from editing this journal, itself. In the fall, my wonderful co-editor, Fiza, will continue, and our incoming editor will introduce themselves to you to begin the next phase of *Praxis*. We're all so grateful to be here with the writing center community, and we thank you all for being part of it, too.