

Contents

List of Illustrations vii

Introduction: Narratives of Marginalization and Activist Editing Practices

Elizabeth Kleinfeld, Sohui Lee, and Julie Prebel 3

Section One: Structural Marginalization

1. Of Budgets and Institutional Bumbling: New Writing Center Directors Reflect on Their First Year
Enrique Paz and Elise Dixon 33
2. A Tale of Two Writing Centers: Navigating Fraught Institutional Legacies
Joshua Botvin and Elisabeth H. Buck 49
3. Belonging in the Center
Wendy Rider 66
4. Hidden in Plain Sight: Professional Tutors in the Writing Center
Shareen Grogan, Pam Bromley, and Denise Stephenson 71
5. From Pieces to Whole: Professional Tutors and Instability in the College Writing Center
Aja Gorham 88

Response to Section One: Structural Marginalization

Kerri Rinaldi 103

Section Two: Globalization and Marginalization

6. Becoming a Writing Center Administrator: A Transnational Counterstory
Nancy Henaku 109

7. Harnessing the Periphery: A Community of Practice in México

Abigail Villagrán Mora 127

Response to Section Two: Globalization and Marginalization—Nuancing
Narratives of Marginalization in the Writing Center: Reflecting on Identity,
Language, and Literacy

Weijia Li and Esther R. Namubiru 144

Section Three: Embodied Marginalization

8. Tutors/Tutees Tango: Cross-Stepping [Dis]Abilities in Writing Centers

Myra Tatum Salcedo 149

9. Crippling Marginality: Disability and Directing a Writing Center

Karen Moroski-Rigney 154

10. Please! Stop Doing More with Less

Elena Garcia 172

11. Sign of the Cross: A Case Study of a First-Gen Latina's Experience
of Marginalization at an Evangelical Christian University

Deborah Escalante 177

12. Is the Writing Center Safe Yet? Narrative Vignettes of
Women's Bodily Security in Our "Cozy Homes"

Sarah Fischer 194

13. Womanist Way-Making in Writing Center Administration:
Reflections on Marginalization, Misogynoir, and Resistance

Zandra Jordan 199

Response to Section Three: Embodied Marginalization

Rachel Azima 215

Afterword: Imagining—and Enacting—Inclusive
Writing Center (Scholarly) Practices

Elizabeth Kleinfeld, Sohui Lee, and Julie Prebel 219

Index 227

About the Editors 237

INTRODUCTION

Narratives of Marginalization and Activist Editing Practices

ELIZABETH KLEINFELD, SOHUI LEE, AND JULIE PREBEL

Working and writing in a time of heightened social justice and advocacy movements that recognize and amplify unheard, silenced, and marginalized voices, writing center practitioners and scholars are compelled to reckon with the stories we tell that may, whether overtly or inadvertently, reify discourses of marginalization. Turning a lens on the narratives we disseminate in the articles and books we publish, the editors of this collection ask: What stories and voices are left out when we perpetuate the writing center grand narratives? In *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers*, Jackie Grutsch McKinney points to the tendency in writing center studies to subscribe to “grand narratives,” common (and often experience-based) stories that highlight our shared beliefs about the work we do (2013). While the problem of grand narratives—what some scholars call “orthodoxy” (Santa 2002) or “lore bias” (Kjesrud 2015)—has been examined before and through a variety of lenses including the way we collect data and relay information (Lerner 2014), Grutsch McKinney delves into why orthodox discourse may be so attractive, even though communities like writing centers can be vastly different in administrator’s status, organizational structure, services, and practices. Our professional community is drawn to grand narratives because these are simultaneously “beneficial and constraining”: writing center grand narratives create a sense of belonging

within an imagined, unified community of practice but can also be limiting in delineating theories and practices that conflict with the experiences of writing center practitioners in disparate institutions within and outside the US. Not surprisingly, writing center grand narratives carry assumptions about practices and theories that are, in fact, culturally based and situated in US higher education. The grand narratives of writing center work create a “collective tunnel vision” (2013, 5) that may overlook underrepresented labor and iron out the messy pluralities of experiences and realities in writing center work that do not fit neatly in our lore.

One main objective of this collection is to scrutinize and disrupt writing center grand narratives by giving center stage to voices that have been marginalized in our scholarly conversations. The authors in this collection shine the spotlight on often-overlooked writing center work experiences that are not often represented in our scholarship. However, as we explain later when describing our methodology, the process of finding and providing support for overlooked voices is as critical as the voices themselves. As we argue, the publishing of marginalized voices requires a radical shift in how we practice writing center scholarship so that it is intentionally more inclusive (Blewett et al. 2019; Kleinfeld, Lee, and Prebel 2021a; Webster 2021). Thus, with this collection, we both highlight perspectives and topics not explicitly or often enough addressed in writing center scholarship and, at the same time, disrupt our field’s scholarly pathways through an editorial process that creates the space for more diverse voices.

We are certainly not the first to be interested in amplifying marginalized voices. The work in this collection emerges from and alongside ongoing conversations in writing centers and composition studies focused on antiracist, anti-ableist, queer, and inclusive pedagogies. Anne Geller, Michele Eodice, Frankie Condon, Meg Carroll, and Elizabeth Boquet, for instance, push writing center practitioners to be more self-conscious in the shaping of writing centers by recognizing and actively dismantling racist pedagogical practices and structures embedded in academe (Condon 2007; Geller et al. 2007). Reminding us that writing centers are complicit in oppressive literacy practices, Vershawn Ashanti Young calls for a reconsideration of translingualism as an antiracist writing center responsibility (2010; Young and Martinez 2011). In *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change*, Laura Greenfield and Karen Rowan bring these and other scholars together in what has become a foundational collection examining white privilege and the “whiteness” (Inoue 2016) of writing center practices (Greenfield and Rowan

2011). In their literature review, Greenfield and Rowan note the “paucity of explicit and critical dialogue about race” in writing center scholarship (9) and call for more diverse voices to contribute to our field’s research and scholarship. Extending this previous work, scholarship has increasingly examined how racialized spaces of writing centers have reproduced systemic inequities (Faison 2018; Lee 2019; Lockett 2019). Wonderful Faison, for example, interrogates an element common in our grand narratives: the racialized connotations of writing centers as cozy or safe(r) spaces that purport to provide comfort for clients and staff. By focusing on the experiences of Black tutors who may be forced to perform aspects of their identities in their writing center work and whose voices are “historically marginalized,” Faison reveals how norms of whiteness inevitably shape our practices—and our scholarship (2018). Alexandria Lockett similarly highlights the “racial significance of [their] lived experience performing [the] conventions” of writing center work as a “black queer tutor” to interrogate the labor conditions in a graduate writing center and broaden our field’s racial perspectives (2019, 20). Lockett, like Faison and others, identifies an urgent need in our field to increase scholarship “that explicitly addresses race and racism” and to publish marginalized voices (28).

Just as these and other scholars have argued how writing centers are racialized spaces—and offered concrete ways for our centers and scholarship to become antiracist—Harry Denny writes of the heteronormative origins of writing centers and defines the queer writing center as a space that supports the diverse identities of student writers. In the landmark article “Queering the Writing Center,” Denny acknowledges that “writing centers are sites around which folklore circulates,” extending our field’s understanding of the importance and relevance of embodied experiences of identity in shaping the stories we tell (2010a, 95). Denny widens this focus on how the stories we tell highlight a tension between experiences of “margin” and “center” wherein it is not only the “absence of experiences and voices of Others” that are “conspicuous [and] jarring” but also the “complicity in silencing and failing to listen to” marginalized voices that are ubiquitous in our scholarship (*Facing the Center*: Denny 2010b, 5–6). Denny situates the embodied experiences of oppression and marginalization in writing center work within the cultural and historical contexts of identity social movements, laying a pathway for scholarship focused on the inextricable links between the work we do and the possibilities of social action. In a more recent collection, Denny and coeditors Robert Mundy, Liliana Naydan, Richard Sévère, and Anna Sicari build on this social activist work in writing center research by bringing together

a “diverse collection of voices” representing the intersecting experiences of identity of writing center practitioners (*Out in the Center*: Denny et al. 2019). Our collection extends this focus on the social and cultural politics that shape writing center work as we emphasize how the scholarly practices of our field have tended to reify inequities. We recognize that writing center scholarship has focused on concerns of equity and access for many years, and this work continues to be pertinent as shown in special issues of the *Dangling Modifier* (spring and fall 2020), which address underrepresentation in the professional and lived experiences of writing center consultants, and in the two-part special issue of *Praxis* (2019, 2020) focused on queer invisibility and marginalization in writing centers and writing center discourse.

As this scholarship in racial and gender marginalization makes clear, it is important that we continue to understand and talk about the interactions of our identities with our administrative labor. As Travis Webster notes, the stories of marginalized writing center practitioners are often drowned out by the dominant lore circulated in our professional conversations and scholarship (2021, 6). Webster’s recent International Writing Centers Association (IWCA)–award-winning book, *Queerly Centered: LGBTQA Writing Center Directors Navigate the Workplace*, which focuses on queer discomfort and invisibility in writing center work, is a timely contribution to research in our field that examines how the labor of a marginalized writing center administrator (WCA) might not fit easily into our commonly told practices. Webster’s book explores both the “discomfort and rewards” of queer labor in writing center work through an empirically driven study of queer writing center practitioners (5). Through this research, Webster provides a call to action for all writing center administrators and advances claims we find especially resonant with our collection. First, Webster concludes that examining writing center administration through a queer lens both “aligns and departs from current conversations in writing center administrative labor” (5). Webster resists the “lore and hearsay” (5) of writing center labor practices—what we refer to as the grand narratives—in order to situate intersectional experiences of laboring in our practices and our scholarship. Second, Webster turns the lens to focus on the “invisible labor” of the book’s participants, revealing stories and discussions of marginalization that amplify experiences and concerns that writing center scholarship has not “explicitly addressed” (11). This collection is aligned with Webster’s project, and we reach similar conclusions about how the administrative labor of writing center work is often rendered invisible. Whereas *Queerly Centered* makes visible the work writing center administration entails

through the narratives of queer practitioners, our collection emerges alongside Webster's and broadens the scope by including a range of experiences of marginalization.

We have cited only a fraction of the scholars whose work has shaped our own and that of the authors in this collection. This scholarship prompts us to look deeply at how we experience marginalization in our work and how we might perpetuate experiences of marginalization in our scholarly practices. We recognize too that marginality is not a new topic for writing centers. Marginality in and of writing centers in academe has been both bemoaned and embraced in writing center scholarship (Delli Carpini and Crimmins 2001; Macauley and Mauriello 2007; Shelly 2014; Denny et al. 2019; Mackiewicz and Babcock 2019). Rebecca Hallman Martini (2002), for example, discusses the challenges of opening or keeping open a writing center when administrative decisions point to a devaluing of our work and the people doing this work. Hallman Martini's solution (2002) to the effects of marginalization experienced by many writing centers and WCAs is to build strategic partnerships forged through shared commitments to the importance of writing in higher education. Hallman Martini (2002) reminds us too that the crisis moments that contribute to our experiences of marginalization may open up possibilities of change and help us envision ways to disrupt the status quo by responding innovatively and—we would add—agentively. As such, while not a new topic, marginalization continues to be relevant in the experiences of many WCAs and necessary for us to examine and respond to as a field.

Our focus—and the focus of the authors in this collection—on experiences of marginalization is also kairotic given the oppressive and violent discourse and actions (cultural, political, legislative) that continue to perpetuate discrimination, inequalities, and injustices directed especially at people of color, disabled people, and queer and trans people. Following the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020, soon after the killing of Breonna Taylor earlier that spring, many writing centers created solidarity statements, which were shared widely through our professional mailing lists. These statements recognized the systemic marginalization of Black people in particular and people of color, queer, and trans people more broadly as writing centers (re)committed themselves to actions that actively promote antiracism and justice, equity, and inclusion. Writing center scholarship too turned a critical lens to examine, as Faison and Condon assert, the legacy of white supremacy and how this “legacy has been made manifest in writing centre scholarship, practice, tutor education, and writing centre design and management” (Faison and Condon

2022, 5). The chapters in Faison and Condon's collection, similar to those in ours, which narrate the lived experiences of WCAs, provide resistant counterstories to the dominant racial ideology that infuses all aspects of writing center work. As Aja Martinez explains, counterstory can be understood as a rhetorical method informed by scholarship in critical race theory and when practiced provides a way to tell the "stories of . . . people whose experiences are often not told" (2020, 26). With these social and disciplinary frameworks in mind, this collection is thus situated within discourses and surrounding activism focused on recentering historically marginalized voices and making those voices heard.

We are also aware that our collection is far from being comprehensive. When reviewing submissions for the collection, we found some of the omissions were obvious. For example, we noticed the lack of submissions from writing center practitioners representing tribal colleges or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). There are contributors in this collection who have attended or worked in HBCUs, but we recognize that race, racialization, and writing center administration need deeper exploration within this collection and in writing center scholarship more broadly. In the case of tribal colleges, we made serious attempts to contact administrators, faculty, and tutors in tribal writing centers, creating a spreadsheet of thirty-seven tribal colleges after researching contact information for their student support services. We emailed their administrators or writing tutors multiple times, but we received no responses. The silence, though, may not be due to lack of interest. Considering the narratives conveyed by our own authors in this collection, the silence may speak to how writing tutoring is positioned institutionally, how employees are rewarded or recognized (or not) for particular activities, and whether administrators/tutors see themselves as part of a larger writing center community. These structural, material, and perceptual realities—also voiced by our authors in this collection—may be barriers to participation and publication.

Another barrier to publication may be our field's emphasis in the last few decades on validating writing center experiences through research that is replicable, aggregable, and data-supported (RAD). First proposed by Richard H. Haswell (2005), RAD research aligned with research principles in the sciences and social sciences and thus offered a way to reach wider audiences and legitimize writing center work (Driscoll and Powell 2015). Following Haswell, RAD research has become more than just a way to (re)conceptualize writing center work as something other than social interactions and observations; RAD has been defined as a "process that shapes our inquiry, strengthens our

credibility, and positions us to speak with authority” (Driscoll and Powell 2015). While scholars emphasize that RAD research is not only about quantitative data collection, there has been a notable turn to writing center scholarship that is less “lore-based” and more grounded in methods of handling data using systematic practices such as qualitative coding strategies or other ways of measuring writing center phenomena (Driscoll and Wynn Purdue 2014; Lerner 2014; Driscoll and Powell 2015; Mackiewicz and Thompson 2015). However, with increased focus on antiracist and inclusive writing center practices in recent years, some scholars have pushed back on the assumptions that RAD research is the primary way our field can be recognized as a “respectable intellectual discipline” and no longer compared to an “academic ghetto” (Lockett 2019, 23). With this collection, we aim to demonstrate that the experiences of WCAs shared here may in themselves be worth examining; some of the contributors do employ RAD practices in their chapters. However, we also include embodied narratives of writing center tutors and administrators for two reasons: first, because the perspectives of those who are marginalized are still “overwhelmingly absent from [our] scholarship” (Lockett 2019, 21). Second, conducting and publishing RAD research may not be possible within the constraints of the positions of some authors, who are not provided the affordances of time, support, or training necessary to conduct research “both within and beyond writing centers”: a central tenet of RAD research (Lerner 2014; Driscoll and Powell 2015).

Finally, with research-based studies and narratives, we attempt to move writing center scholarly conversations forward by not only exploring topics of marginalization but also assembling this collection through what we call an activist editorial methodology. Through the chapters, the contributors provide an important and, for some topics, still undertheorized look into the experiences of writing center professionals in a range of positions: faculty tenure-track, full- and part-time staff, contingent faculty or staff, and professional tutors. As a whole, this collection asks readers to reflect on and question how current writing center scholarly practices remain invested in dominant narratives and traditional publishing methods that fundamentally contradict our field-wide values of inclusivity, diversity, and multivocality.

Whose Narrative Is It Anyway?

One way to study “grand narratives” is by examining who is writing the narrative in the first place. This collection emerges from an earlier study we

conducted drawn from our interests in understanding who is speaking (i.e., publishing) and whether the “collective” voices were representative of the diverse community it sought to represent. In “Whose Voices Are Heard? A Demographic Comparison of Authors Published in *WLN* 2005–2017 and Writers Interested in Publishing” (Kleinfeld, Lee, and Prebel 2021a), we wanted to know whose voices are actually being heard in writing center scholarship and therefore shaping the grand narrative. Consequently, we examined authors who published in *Writing Lab Newsletter* (*WLN*), the oldest peer-reviewed journal in writing center studies and, arguably, the most well read and influential among writing center practitioners both in the United States and around the globe.

For our study, we conducted two surveys. The first one (which we called the “Author Survey”) focused on *WLN* authors spanning more than a decade. For comparison, we also conducted an “Interest Survey” of those who wanted to publish. The Author Survey involved creating a list of all *WLN* authors from 2005 to 2017. The Interest Survey was conducted in 2018 through several writing center list services in the US, Europe, and Asia. We had the following three major findings. First, we found that people from comprehensive institutions with graduate programs were heavily represented in authors who published in *WLN*; they exceeded the percentage of those in the Interest Survey by 10 percent. By contrast, community colleges were dramatically underrepresented: only 0.7 percent of *WLN* authors were authors from community colleges, compared to 10.6 percent of those in the Interest Survey who work in community colleges. In addition, we discovered that respondents held a wider range of positions in our Interest Survey than in the Authors Survey. Many more occupied part- and full-time non-tenure-track positions. Finally, our last important finding indicates that an overwhelming majority of published authors were self-identified as white. Interestingly, by comparison, our Interest Survey showed that there is a higher percentage of people of color who want to be published.

Our three findings may not be surprising, considering the demographic studies done by Sarah Banschbach Valles, Rebecca Day Babcock, and Karen Keaton Jackson (2017) on writing center professionals (see also Olson and Ashton-Jones 1988; Healy 1995), but we thought it was important to qualitatively mark how writing center scholarship remains largely represented by tenure-line white faculty in comprehensive universities. Our findings reinforce what others discovered about our problematic system of academic publishing. Elisabeth Buck (2018), for example, in analyzing writing center

publishing sites and those who publish in them, sees publishing as deeply embedded in the old guard ethos and methods of getting writing center scholarship into print. In surveying more than 200 writing center scholars, Buck (2018) brings our attention to issues of access—the ease with which one can locate and engage with articles in the top writing center journals—and connects access to labor. Our findings support this connection, as we recognize that because of how writing center positions are structured, we are *least likely* to hear stories from people in positions that are insecure and low paying. Moreover, our publication survey mirrors a glaring absence of diversity in writing center leadership in general. All of these factors make it even harder for alternative voices to break the grand narratives that are shaped by scholarship.

The findings of our study indicated clear publication trends on white authorship (and most often authors with higher institutional status) and suggested white authorship's connections with the current and most common process for evaluation of manuscripts: the double-anonymous peer review. Currents of underlying assumptions and thoughts—that writing center directors are faculty, that writing center directors are white (though tutors are diverse), that writing centers serve (but don't employ) people with disabilities, that writing center tutors should be peer tutors, and that the US writing center model is the default writing center model—ripple through the grand narratives circulating in and through writing center scholarship. Jaqueline Jones Royster reminds us that “disciplinary practices have built up a high intolerance to the assigning of value and credibility to any site, focal point, theory, or practice other than those whose contours are already sanctioned historically within the circle of understanding” (2003, 150). Thus, as Royster explains, a barrier to even noticing so-called writing center outliers is the lack of scholarship on them, which creates a closed circle versus space for inclusion.

When the entire picture of who works in writing centers, how their positions are structured, and what models of writing center work they enact in their centers is shaped by a demographically narrow group of scholars, it is harder to imagine writing center work, scholarship, and models that look different from what is established as “normal” or expected. Writing about similar concerns about scholarship in geography, Carrie Mott and Daniel Cockayne connect a discipline's citation practices to knowledge production. Looking at citation in geography through an antiracist feminist lens, they note that “citation is equally a technology for reproducing sameness and excluding difference” (Mott and Cockayne 2017, 960), echoing Royster's comments that the status quo reproduces itself (2003).

This collection makes an intentional effort, then, to counteract and disrupt the reproduction of “sameness and excluding difference” both by the selection of our theme on marginalized writing center professionals and the practice of activist editing.

Enacting an Activist Editing Methodology

For us, activist editing means to openly acknowledge how traditional publishing practices favor high-status white authorship and to adjust practices that help diversify authorship in scholarly publication. Activist publishing has been growing in the writing field. Kelly Blewett, Christina LaVecchia, Laura Micciche, and Janine Morris describe work they have done as editors of the journal *Composition Studies* to resist and push back against structural inequality by practicing antioppressive work as editors (Blewett et al. 2019). They outline specific steps they take to diversify the authors featured in the journal, including moving beyond the traditional genre of the scholarly article and working closely with authors who received revise-and-resubmit requests to increase the likelihood of publication. Moreover, the University Press of Colorado recently added to their website a document called “Our Publication Processes and Timelines” (2022), which aims to make explicit publication processes that often are shrouded in secrecy; that secrecy functions to maintain the dominance of the established voices who have already made it through the system and thus understand it. In the writing center field, the editors of *Writing Center Journal*—Anna Sicari, Harry Denny, and Romeo Garcia—released an “Editorial Philosophy and Vision” (2021), which proclaimed a commitment to enacting the ideas put forth in “Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices” and an intention to mentor and publish “voices that remain on the margins” (Sicari, Denny, and Garcia 2021).

As activist editors, we aim to practice and reimagine a publication process that is intentionally inclusive and supportive of difference. Traditional publishing practices for peer-reviewed journals go through a process of double-anonymous peer review, and this practice has its roots in a history of peer reviewing that dates back to the 1600s and 1700s. The double-anonymous peer-review process emerged to validate emerging scientific findings and disseminate these findings through some of the first scientific scholarly journals. This process became the preferred method for determining the legitimacy of an author’s data, quickly creating a system for evaluating or ranking the prestige of an academic journal. Figure 0.1 is a simplified diagram of the

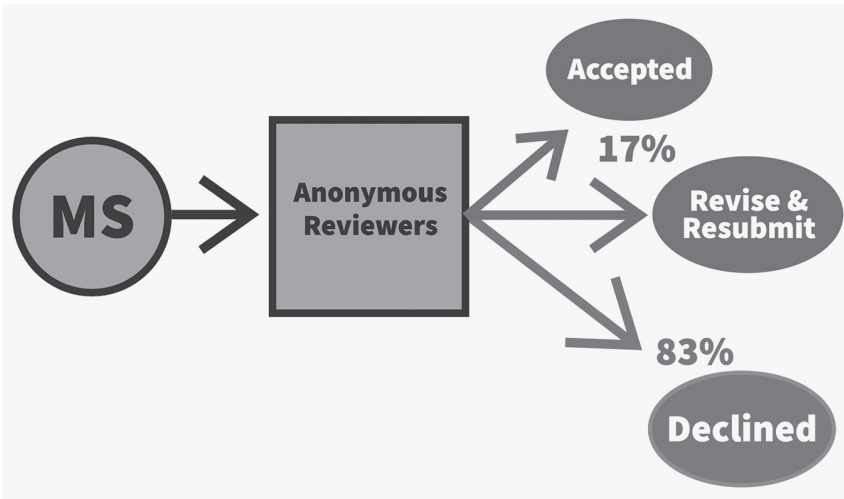


FIGURE 0.1. Traditional double-anonymous publishing process in peer-reviewed journals.

typical process where the anonymized manuscripts, after being considered by the journal editors, are evaluated and recommended by anonymous reviewers and then returned to the journal editorial team for the final decision.

This is what we call “double-anonymous”: authors do not know who is reviewing their manuscript, and peer reviewers do not know whose manuscript they are reading. The argument for this process is that it ensures fairness and minimizes bias (or prejudice). In peer-reviewed journals like *WLN* or *Writing Center Journal* (WCJ), less than 20 percent of manuscripts are either accepted or recommended to be “revised and resubmitted.” At WCJ the acceptance rate is 17 percent of all submitted manuscripts; *WLN*’s acceptance rate is even lower at 12 percent. Reviewers recommend manuscripts based on factors of its innovative argument, quality of writing, and appeal to the audience.

Although double-anonymous peer review is widely considered to be an objective means for assessing scholarly work, both by peers in disciplinary fields and for tenure and promotion, the review process’s objectivity has been questioned. Notably, one study found that reviewers using the double-anonymous method are more likely to recommend for acceptance submissions from already-known authors and those from top universities (Tomkins, Zhang, and Heavlin 2017). In our study of the publication trends in *WLN*, for example, we found much the same (Kleinfeld, Lee, and Prebel 2021a); peer-reviewed journals following the double-anonymous process tend to publish authors who are more likely to represent full-time tenure-track directors (44%), work at four-year comprehensive institutions (67%), and who are

primarily white (90%). Our study's published author profile mirrors Valles, Babcock, and Jackson's (2017) demographic finding of writing center directors: 57 percent identified as faculty, 77 percent worked at four-year institutions, and 91 percent identified as white. Some important limitations acknowledged in Valles, Babcock, and Jackson's study are that their data missed Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and that their data on Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are "not entirely representative" (Valles, Babcock, Jackson 2017). Overall, the comparable data gathered on the percentages of those who represent the director roles (Valles, Babcock, and Jackson 2017) and those who are published (Kleinfeld, Lee, and Prebel 2021a) in writing centers suggest a dire lack of diversity in writing center work relative to the national population, which is increasingly more racially and ethnically diverse. In other words, writing center leadership (directors and coordinators) as well as writing center scholarship are not reflective of the current US population. According to the 2020 US Census, only 63.7 percent of the US population identifies as white alone (Jensen et al. 2021). And while our study on publishing authors showed that no Hispanic or Latinx authors have published in *WLN* between 2005 and 2017, Hispanic or Latinx groups now comprise 18.7 percent of the US population.

For writing centers, known for their wide range of institutional contexts and administrative roles, this fact should be unsettling. Focusing on published authors specifically, we realize how current publishing practices tend to magnify stories by particular populations in the writing center field and synecdochically distribute stories of this group as stories of the whole. One goal of this collection was to explore how we might disrupt the traditional publishing process. As editors we asked ourselves: What stories and voices of writing centers can we feature through our activist editing practices that haven't been heard? How do we find and support these stories through a process that traditionally filtered them out?

Like Blewett, LaVecchia, Micciche, and Morris (2019), we believed that part of our role as editors of this collection included the responsibility of identifying and supporting underrepresented writers and scholars through an editorial process that increased the likelihood of publication. Our activist editor methodology included first designing a survey to intentionally collect (rather than hide) demographic information of authors and using this information to help inform our selection, and second, scaffolding of extensive support for authors in the editing process. We started by creating a submission survey that asked authors to provide information that is traditionally hidden in the

double-anonymous process: name, race/ethnicity, disability, degree, status of position, institution, and even publication history. With our collection, the editors then collected all submissions and created a spreadsheet with these demographic identifiers. We discussed each submission and considered them for inclusion in our collection based on how well the proposal addressed our call for papers (CFP), the type of proposal submission (narrative chapter or research-based chapter), and the contributor demographic representation. We spent significant time discussing why having both types of chapter proposals was important: narrative articles, in particular, were designed to be short (no more than 1,500 words) to accommodate authors who may not have training, experience, or resources to write research-based or theoretical chapters, which were between 5,000 and 6,000 words. In other words, our selection process aimed to balance ideas proposed with the perspectives and proposal types so that we could recruit authors from a range of backgrounds, positions, abilities, and national affiliations. After receiving the submissions and inputting the demographic and publishing data into a spreadsheet, each of the three editors were also readers: we read all submissions, provided a column for comments, and provided another column where we made one of three recommendations (Yes, No, Maybe). Whenever there were disagreements on a submission, we discussed the work at length until we arrived at consensus. The following example of review comments illustrates how editors considered one author's underrepresented role in writing center discourse and the proposal's fit for the collection:

EDITOR 1: Yes. She's both "deeply immersed" and "adjunct"—what an interesting tension.

EDITOR 2: I think this is a very solid proposal as a short narrative that I could see fitting into a section of the book that looks at marginality and contingent faculty/staff.

EDITOR 3: I was really drawn to her story, and I believe she is right—Writing Center talk about adjunct status is not explored deeply, especially in terms of how they collaborate and maintain professionalism.

This process for submission ranking allowed us to identify and accept eleven submissions that all three editors agreed upon quickly and discuss eight submissions that generated mixed responses. Those with mixed responses were considered based on how many submissions covered similar topics, originality of idea explored, appropriateness for the collection, and type of chapter proposed. Race and ethnicity as well as disability were on our minds, and

these categories were highlighted on our spreadsheet, but this factor was not necessarily a deciding one. Proposals by underrepresented perspectives were prioritized over the writing quality of a proposal, as we assumed that we would be providing extensive feedback and support for the authors. Ultimately, our selection process resulted in the following:

- 13 out of 28 submissions were accepted (46% acceptance rate);
- 7 out of 16 (43%) of total authors (including all coauthors) were authors of color (5, or 31%, of accepted authors self-identified as Hispanic/Latinx; 2, or 12.5%, were Black/African);
- 8 out of 16 (50%) were authors who did not have faculty status;
- 6 out of 16 (38%) were authors who identified as being a person with disabilities;
- 5 out of 16 (31%) had never published before.

After the selection process, the second part of our activist editing process was in providing feedback for our authors. Our feedback process was more extensive than most editorial feedback practices, as we needed to consider our authors' particular positionalities within writing center communities and their experience. Authors submitted their first draft on July 1, 2021. They received responses from two editors as first reader and second reader and were asked to provide their first revision. As readers, we rotated with each round so that each of us (Julie, Sohui, and Elizabeth) read all chapters at different stages of the revision process multiple times. Between July 2021 and June 2022, we provided authors four rounds of feedback and multiple one-on-one Zoom conferences to help them prepare their chapters for the collection. The meetings with authors helped editors improve their understanding of the author's perspective and approaches while also aiding in communicating more substantial revisions that needed to be done. Zoom meetings also improved interpersonal communication between editors and authors: seeing one another helped establish trust that strengthened communication and timely completion of tasks.

Finally, we invited established writing center scholars to provide a response to the chapter essays organized in three thematic sections of our collection, which we explain in the next sections. Kerri Rinaldi responded to section one, "Structural Marginalization"; Weijia Li and Ester R. Namubiru on "Globalization and Marginalization"; and Rachel Azima on "Embodied Marginalization." We found each respondent's work to be critical to this collection in three ways: first, they provide unity, threading chapter narratives and

research together and helping readers make thematic connections. Second, they provide new insights in reading these stories together. For instance, Li and Namubiru remind us that the “foundation of writing center work” is literacy, and the two chapters in the section “Globalization and Marginalization” demonstrate that this literacy work is not always in English. Finally, the section responses allow for the work of our authors (a third of whom have never published) to be folded in dialogue with established scholars from the onset that set up future conversations.

Organization of the Collection

This collection, through its activist editorship, presents narratives and quantitative research studies by diverse authors ranging in race and ethnicity, abilities, experiences in publication, and professional roles in writing center work. The majority of the authors in this collection are not tenure-line faculty, and some are staff or professional tutors. As noted in the previous section, manuscripts were selected based on a range of factors, but one of the critical selection criteria was how proposed topics investigate or challenge some important assumptions carried in writing center grand narratives; others provide valuable qualitative perspectives that are often overlooked or missing in writing center discussions. Through these chapters, authors seek to help readers complicate their engagement with writing center grand narratives in three thematic categories of marginalization experiences: structural, global, and embodied.

STRUCTURAL MARGINALIZATION

The structural marginalization of writing centers has often been tied to physical location in basements or less visible spaces, or where centers are housed administratively as adjunct to departments or other services (Perdue, Driscoll, and Petrykowski 2017). Just as significant, WCAs may experience marginalization within their institutions because it is unclear where they fit in, often finding themselves “positioned as substrata of writing program administration, even further removed from the academic scholarship and intellectual inquiry of English studies” (Geller and Denny 2013). In this collection, the theme of structural marginalization in academe expands on the peripheral and ambivalent role of writing center administrators by exploring how writing studies graduate programs do not adequately prepare future WCAs for their work, how job descriptions perpetuate such ambivalence, and how marginalization is systemically reinforced in contingent labor practices.

GLOBALIZATION AND MARGINALIZATION

Although writing centers' marginalization in the academe is familiar to most readers, globalization of writing center work is a topic that is less explored and exposes the assumptions of US-based scholarly discourse. Early on, Joan Mullin (2000) noted the impact of "local conversations" of writing center work on "other countries" and lauded the "increased visibility of colleagues in journals" like *Writing Lab Newsletter* (WLN) and *Writing Center Journal* (WCJ) (3). But even as we began to see the emergence of US-style writing centers in countries around the world, concerns immediately popped up: Tracy Santa (2002) and John Harbord (2003), publishing in *WCJ* and *WLN* respectively, questioned the unseen application of writing center theory, shaped by writing center scholarship, which was primarily written by US authors for US institutions. Underlying the writing center's grand narratives, then, are assumptions of the US-based tutoring system and the assertions of Western academic practices. As writing centers appear across numerous other countries with different roles and missions, there is an obligation of scholars to increase our awareness of the global writing center audience and incorporate language that recognizes these differences (just as we now recognize different Englishes); or, as Santa put it, writing center scholars need to acknowledge they also write to "an international community of writing centers" and situate their various environments and cultures into "professional conversation on local levels and . . . global [levels]" (2002, 37). As of 2022, twenty years since Santa's call for professional conversations that recognize and invite conversations involving global writing center practices, we have identified only fifteen articles or chapters that examine writing center studies in countries outside the United States: 60 percent (nine) of these works are not published in recognized writing center journals and thereby have diminished impact in professional discussion among writing center professionals. To revisit this conversation in this collection, two directors of writing centers, in México and Ghana, explore US writing center practices through a transnational, postcolonial lens, exploring their cultural contexts and the limits of US writing center theories and practices in their country.

EMBODIED MARGINALIZATION

Finally, under the theme of embodied marginalization, the collection explores how WCAs experience marginalization because of their lived experiences within institutional structures of hegemony (Faison and Condon 2022) or social expectations of ableness. In a field where white people—and more

specifically, white abled women—occupy the majority of WCA positions (Valles, Babcock, and Jackson 2017), Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) WCAs and WCAs with disabilities experience intersectional forms of marginalization. Racial hierarchies and power structures within academic institutions and in writing center scholarship more broadly are additional barriers that impact the labor experiences of racially marginalized WCAs (Jackson 2018).

Covering these three themes, this collection explores how marginality impacts writing centers, the people who work in them, and the scholarship generated from them. The collection examines the consequences, both positive and negative, of marginalization through a mix of narratives and research. It is unique in providing perspectives ranging in status, role, nationality, race, and ability that have been absent or little explored in writing center conversations. This collection will be important to those who are training to be writing center administrators, current administrators, and scholars who want a more complex picture of the varied challenges of writing center work and those who provide it.

Overview of Chapters

While this collection is arranged into three sections exploring common themes of marginalization, the chapters connect across sections with authors echoing one another in their experiences, research topics, and recommendations. As part of our inclusive, collaborative revision and editorial process, we asked authors to read and refer to each other's chapters, even if briefly, to deepen or extend these connections. Moreover, instead of introductions to each section, we include respondents' reflections on the common themes highlighted in the chapters (and the respondents' own similar experiences of marginalization in writing center work), which amplifies the connections. Our approach to creating cohesion in the collection thus affirms our intentionality in bringing more voices into the conversation about writing center administration and in forging new conversations among writing center professionals.

The chapters in the first section of the collection explore experiences of what we term structural marginalization in the form of lack of professional preparation, knowledge of often-ambiguous writing center expectations, and managing writing centers while laboring in contingent or underrecognized roles. Together these chapters not only point to the effects of such marginalization but also propose solutions to mitigating or eliminating systemic, structural barriers to meaningful writing center work.

In chapter 1, “Of Budgets and Institutional Bumbling: New Writing Center Directors Reflect on Their First Year,” Enrique Paz and Elise Dixon interrogate the discourse of the grand narrative passed down through stories or lore of what to expect when taking on a new role as a writing center director. They argue that the quotidian practical labors of writing center work result in the perpetual marginalization of writing center directors and undermine their professionalization. This chapter explores narratives of marginalization of writing center administrators, focusing on the material realities of writing centers and WCA positions for new WCAs, assessing how narratives of marginality have shaped graduate training and professional development. The authors ultimately argue that attention to the practicalities of writing center administration, such as budgeting and maintaining spaces, is critical to transitioning out of marginality and must be included in writing graduate program curriculum and training.

Joshua Botvin and Elisabeth H. Buck similarly examine how the structure of WCA positions can impact the marginality of both writing centers and the people who run them in chapter 2, “A Tale of Two Writing Centers: Navigating Fraught Institutional Legacies.” Botvin and Buck examine how the structure of WCA positions can impact the marginality of both writing centers and the people who run them, and they offer guidance to job seekers about questions to ask when accepting a new role managing a writing center. The authors argue that when hired to work in a center, a new director is often expected to navigate a set of “lived realities” that are far different from the job as outlined on paper. They point out that WCAs often are expected to make changes to the status quo but given little support to succeed in enacting such changes, which can result in tensions within existing center and administrative structures that contribute to WCA experiences of marginality. Picking up on the recommendations posed by Paz and Dixon, Botvin and Buck offer concrete questions newly hired writing center directors or assistant directors might ask to help address such tensions between new expectations and previous practices and structures.

In the narrative of chapter 3, “Belonging in the Center,” Wendy Rider approaches structural marginalization through the experience as an adjunct faculty member who may be unrecognized in the grand narrative despite having a leadership role in her center. Rider examines the institutional structure that simultaneously allows adjunct faculty to contribute to the work of supporting and educating students and denies them the full privileges of the academy. Rider argues that despite the challenges that come with adjunct status

in the academy, she has been able to develop her identity as a writing center professional through mentorship and involvement in regional writing center associations. Rider's chapter thus points to ways to mitigate the effects of not being included in the grand narrative or being marginalized in the profession.

Shareen Grogan, Pam Bromley, and Denise Stephenson point to another facet of structural marginalization and invisibility in writing centers and writing center scholarship in chapter 4, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Professional Tutors in the Writing Center." These authors challenge the grand narrative that peer-ness is a prerequisite for collaboration, arguing that professional tutors should be made visible, their contributions explored, and their presence celebrated in writing center scholarship. They argue that professional tutors are made invisible both in writing center scholarship and in the field more broadly by the focus on the centrality of undergraduate peer tutoring and idealized notions of what constitutes peer-ness and collaboration. As they show, tutor identity has been defined largely as representative of undergraduate peer tutoring, which results in the marginalization of graduate and professional tutors, whose expertise is often diminished in the writing center grand narrative.

Writing from the perspective of both an adjunct faculty member and professional tutor in chapter 5, "From Pieces to Whole: Professional Tutors and Instability in the College Writing Center," Aja Gorham argues that the "labor instability" of contingent faculty and writing center staff has an impact on students' writing center experiences. Gorham's research utilizes interviews with professional tutors at a community college writing center to examine the intersection of contingent labor and the tutors' ability to contribute meaningfully to the writing center. Citing factors such as work exhaustion, feelings of underappreciation, and stress (both emotional and financial), Gorham's interviews reveal ways that the marginalization of contingent writing center professionals can result in detachment from students and negative effects on a student-centered writing center mission. Like Grogan, Bromley, and Stephenson, Gorham calls for more accountability to professional tutors in both writing center theory and practice.

In responding to this first section Kerri Rinaldi recognizes their own professional journey in the stories of the chapters' authors, noting that this pathway began by cobbling together a living through an "assemblage" of contingent positions (like those described in the chapters). Rinaldi identifies a profound sense of "powerlessness" in the effects of structural marginalization and highlights the implications of working in contingent, staff, and other non-tenure-line writing center positions, especially the lack of institutional

support, which often results in experiences of invisible labor, a devaluation of that labor, and the ways that the “grand narrative” reinforces individual versus structural responsibility for these experiences of marginalization. Of importance, Rinaldi calls for an “ethic of responsibility” both institutionally in the ways we structure our writing center laboring practices and in our scholarship, which needs to recognize and promote critiques of our laboring conditions.

In the second section of the collection, we turn to the intersections between marginalization and the increasing globalization of writing centers. The chapters in this section examine and critique the pedagogical assumptions and narratives in writing center scholarship that tend to focus on US-based models and practices. In this section, two directors of writing centers, in México and Ghana, explore the challenges of adopting US writing center structures and the tensions between practices supported in the grand narrative and those rooted in the locality of global contexts.

In chapter 6, “Becoming a Writing Center Administrator: A Transnational Counterstory,” Nancy Henaku interrogates the stories told in writing center scholarship as dominated by North American experiences and thus lacking the diversity of practitioners working in international centers or with international students. Henaku explores the challenges of both being an international student in a US writing center, as a non-native English speaker from sub-Saharan Africa, and of co-directing a newly created writing center in Ghana. Using a transnational lens and the methodology of counterstory, Henaku exposes the invisible cultural markings and assumptions that frame the structures of US writing centers.

Echoing Henaku’s focus on the challenges of establishing a writing center outside the US, in chapter 7, “Harnessing the Periphery: A Community of Practice in México,” Abigail Villagrán Mora argues that internationalizing writing centers means looking beyond preparing tutors to serve multilingual writers. Villagrán Mora points to the material and systemic realities that separate academic communities from each other and prevent a community from coalescing, particularly in writing centers in the Western periphery. The author shares research from the writing center she directs in Puebla, México, which indicates that a focus on fostering the learning culture in the community of peer tutors can sustain a knowledge initiative regardless of the ever-changing nature of our learning ecology.

Li and Namubiru point out that the majority of writing center scholarship shows an investment in a central “grand narrative”: the “Western-dominated

stories about writing center work.” In their response to the section on the intersections of globalization and marginalization, Li and Namubiru amplify Henaku’s and Villagrán Mora’s focus on the “unique characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds” of writing center work in non-Western locations. They situate their own experiences alongside Henaku and Villagrán Mora, noting that they have been both placed at the margins as international scholars and have also resisted this marginalization by centering their multifaceted experiences and identities through their work as writing center practitioners, scholars, and journal editors. Li and Namubiru remind us that there is “no single story about writing center” work and call for an “interrogation” of literacies of writing center lore.

In the third section of the collection, the authors examine and challenge commonly held beliefs about writing centers as inclusive spaces through a focus on embodiment. The chapters in this section explore many ways writing center practitioners are marginalized through narratives about bodies and mind-bodies. As the chapters show, even as writing center practitioners look for ways to make writing centers safe(r) for diverse students, the safety of writing center staff, tutors, and administrators often gets overlooked. These chapters explore how embodied experiences of marginalization intersect with disability studies, and critical race, gender, and sexuality studies, as they pose challenges to the hegemony of the writing center grand narrative.

In chapter 8, “Tutors/Tutees Tango: Cross-Stepping [Dis]Abilities in Writing Centers,” Myra Tatum Salcedo shares what it is like to have to constantly “come out” as a hearing-impaired tutor and the challenges of confronting negative perceptions and stereotypes about hearing impairment. Salcedo sheds light on an underdeveloped topic in writing center literature: the experience of being a tutor with a disability. Exploring how some disabilities are rendered invisible through common writing center practices, Salcedo’s narrative shows the devaluing of tutors’ embodied experiences that occurs when centers prioritize ableist concepts of “good” tutoring as she offers concrete ways to bring disability out of the writing center margins.

Karen Moroski-Rigney similarly engages writing center best practices from her position as a neurodivergent (autism spectrum disorder [ASD] and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD]) WCA to interrogate the silence surrounding disabled writing center professionals in chapter 9, “Crippling Marginality: Disability and Directing a Writing Center.” Moroski-Rigney weaves together disability studies—the work of Margaret Price, Catherine Prendergast, Allison Harper Hitt, Jay Dolmage, and others—with writing

center theory to engage questions about why disabled people are underrepresented in writing center work, what aspects of writing center work pose particular challenges to disabled persons, and how disability interfaces with the marginality of writing center work to create a unique nexus of career challenges. Moroski-Rigney offers concrete ideas for how to transform our writing center practices, and their chapter represents an important contribution to disability justice in writing center scholarship.

Elena Garcia shares the experience of embodied marginalization in the tension between living with a chronic illness and the expectation to work oneself to exhaustion in writing center practice. In chapter 10, “Please! Stop Doing More with Less,” Garcia frames the tendency, which is often affirmed in the narratives of writing center scholarship and practice, to do whatever is asked of us as an ableist position that negatively impacts our bodies and our field. Contributing to the focus on disability justice in writing center scholarship, like Moroski-Rigney, Garcia argues that resisting such expectations constitutes an act of care for ourselves and each other.

In chapter 11, “Sign of the Cross: A Case Study of a First-Gen Latina’s Experience of Marginalization at an Evangelical Christian University,” Deborah Escalante shifts our focus to the “white habitus” (Inoue 2016) of our academic institutions and the writing centers within. Escalante explores the embodied experiences of racial microaggressions and the impact on her writing center work. She uses her experience as a case study for better identifying and responding to microaggressions that are psychologically and emotionally harmful—and which contribute to a toxic working environment for many writing center tutors, staff, and administrators. Ultimately, Escalante posits that one of the major barriers to diversity in writing center administration may be academe itself, which builds and reinforces structures of marginalization.

Echoing Escalante’s focus on the institutional structures of marginalization that have an impact on embodied experiences, in chapter 12, “Is the Writing Center Safe Yet? Narrative Vignettes of Women’s Bodily Security in Our ‘Cozy Homes,’” Sarah Fischer unpacks the patriarchal frameworks in canonical best practices for writing center tutoring. Fischer argues that writing center scholarship would benefit from a more explicit acknowledgment of the ways in which women, including but not limited to those who have experienced sexual assault and harassment, often find the “cozy home” narrative challenging to their sense of personal safety and comfort when working in close proximity to students. Fischer’s chapter underscores how valuing the lived experiences of

tutors (undergraduate and professional) can help make our spaces safer and mitigate experiences of marginalization in the writing center.

In the final chapter of this collection, chapter 13, “Womanist Way-Making in Writing Center Administration: Reflections on Marginalization, Misogynoir, and Resistance,” Zandra Jordan acknowledges, as do the authors of all of the preceding chapters, that misperceptions of writing center work have resulted in the devaluation and marginalization of writing center practitioners. Jordan describes, more specifically, the marginalization she encountered as a Black woman, non-tenure-track, writing center director in two contexts: first as founding director of a center at a small, private, predominantly white theological institution in the US South offering masters and doctoral degrees and currently as director of a center at a large, private, predominantly white research institution in the US West serving undergraduate and graduate students across the disciplines. Drawing on misogynoir and womanist ethics, this chapter theorizes both Jordan’s lived experience and her approach to writing center administration. Jordan’s conceptualization of “womanist way-making,” with specific strategies for recognizing and valuing Black women’s embodiment, offers the means to disrupt normative expectations and marginalization toward the creation of more equitable writing center practices and inclusive scholarship.

As Rachel Azima points out in the response to this section on embodied marginalization, all of the chapters “uncover deep fault lines in the ‘cozy homes’ grand narrative” by exposing assumptions about what constitutes a writing center safe space. Azima underscores how the chapters’ authors recognize the oppressions that occur in writing center work through the harms of assuming and reifying white, able-bodied norms. Disclosure of embodied experiences and histories can itself be harmful, and telling our stories does not necessarily result in catharsis or equity. We must, as Azima reminds us, be vigilant in recognizing the oppressions we might inadvertently or knowingly perpetuate as we reexamine our writing center practices and the scholarship produced in response to our work.

Looking Ahead

We hope that this collection will inspire writing center practitioners to think more expansively about what writing centers do, who works in them, and how those nuances are represented or overlooked in writing center scholarship. We anticipate that this collection will raise more questions than it answers

and some of these questions might be uncomfortable. Perhaps the questions that get asked can be reformed to take another point of view into account.

As we worked on this collection, for example, we examined our own positions within our institutions and in the field more broadly. In our afterword, we discuss how our pathways to writing center work invariably shaped our perspectives and interests in this collection, and we note that at times we have experienced aspects of marginalization in this work. While we may have experienced marginalization as academics or writing center administrators, we also recognize that we, unlike many of the contributors to this collection, benefit from having positions that are stable, tenured, and afforded opportunities for professional growth and development. Examining our privileges helped us to recognize the white supremacist academic values and experiences that have shaped and inhibited our perspectives and thinking. In many ways, ours are the voices that are already heard in the “institutional pathways” (Inoue 2016) where writing centers and writing center scholarship exist. With this collection, we seek to disrupt those pathways.

Our attempt at such disruption includes turning a critical lens on our own assumptions as directors of writing centers and as editors of this collection. In our afterword, we consider how the contributors’ experiences of marginalization within their institutions might help us transform our writing center practices and make our work responsive to the critiques raised in the chapters. We recognize too that the chapters in this collection narrate experiences of marginalization on people’s lives—and not only their work lives. As we discuss in the afterword, in working on this collection we found that their stories and the themes or topics they explore resonated with us and, at times, uncomfortably. Part of our commitment to making space in this collection for more voices to be heard meant acknowledging our implicit biases, which inevitably surfaced especially in the process of selecting essays for this collection and working closely with the authors in the revision process we describe above. In the afterword, we thus resist offering firm conclusions or suggestions for readers and instead generate questions for reflection that we hope lead to further discussion.

This is not a collection that will lend itself to a list of best practices, although we have discovered takeaways through discussions with colleagues at IWCA (Kleinfeld, Lee, and Prebel 2021b) and through the experience of working with our authors and publishing this book. In fact, we hope the pieces in this collection will lead writing center practitioners to question: Who are best practices

best for? Who determined they were the best practices? Who is not served by those practices? What is obscured by those practices? Paying closer attention to the voices from the margins enables us to get a fuller understanding of writing centers and writing center work and also provides lenses through which to recalibrate how we interpret what it means to be inclusive. As inclusivity and social justice become more central to the work we do in writing centers, now is the time for us to problematize whose voices have dominated our scholarly discussions and whose have been silenced or ignored.

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