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Editorial Introduction

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Editorial Introduction

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Welcome to the Fall 2020 issue of the *Journal of Response to Writing*. Despite the upending of many of our professional lives and day-to-day realities due to COVID-19, our dynamite authors, reviewers, and editors have been hard at work to bring you a robust collection for this new issue. If you are like us, one of the things we have missed the most during this time of emergency migration to online instruction has been the regular interactions we are used to having with the students in our classes. Aptly, many of the articles in this Fall 2020 issue focus on response to writing as it affects the students we teach. Whether it is recognizing the value of student-to-student exchanges during peer review, allowing students agency and choice in feedback and support processes, or keeping them in mind when we plan lessons and try out new techniques in the classroom, the valuable role students play in the process of response to writing cannot be overstated.

The first feature article is Dan Melzer's "Placing Peer Response at the Center of the Response Construct." In this large-scale corpus study, Melzer wanted to know the similarities and differences in the ways writing instructors and peers responded to writing and college students' perspectives on the feedback they received from instructors versus their

peers. Importantly, the study revealed that students learn as much from reading their peers' in-progress drafts as they do from the comments they received on their own papers, whether from peers or from their instructor. Melzer asserts that writing teachers should consider placing added importance on peer response to writing rather than seeing peer interaction as only a complement to responses from instructors.

The next feature article follows Melzer's focus on students, this time at the graduate level. Roger Lee Powell and Dana Lynn Driscoll's "How Mindsets Shape Response and Learning Transfer: A Case of Two Graduate Writers" is a mixed-method case study that follows two student writers over a six-year period in their transition from undergraduate to graduate school. Powell and Driscoll used Dweck's (2006) theory of mindsets to discuss how the students' mindset, whether fixed or growth, intersected with both the process and application of teachers' written responses to their writing. This article revealed the highly individualized nature of what can help or hinder student opportunities for learning transfer and overall development in writing. Powell and Driscoll's work has implications for two major populations: First, for teachers of graduate-level writing, who benefit from sharing with their students the necessity of processing and engaging with feedback on their work, especially at the introductory level when students are still enculturating to graduate student life. And second, for graduate students themselves, as they learn the disciplinary practices and expectations of their field, and as they process and apply teachers' comments to their written work, both immediately and over the long term.

Two past articles published in *JRW* have examined student agency and choice in writing response. Shvidko (2015) challenged the traditional "giver-receiver" relationship between teacher and student in the feedback process and endorsed a peer-review genre of "Letter to the Reviewer," a space where students can make requests about specific feedback. Shepherd et al. (2016) introduced the idea of grammar agreements/contracts, wherein students had the agency to request different options and amounts of grammar-based feedback throughout a semester-long course. Rachael Ruegg's feature article, "Student-Led Feedback on Writing: Requests Made and Feedback Received," can be added to this collection, as it shares the kinds of feedback students request when given the autonomy and agency to

communicate their feedback preferences directly to teachers and peers. This study of 53 Japanese university students noted the importance of learners' engagement with feedback processes to foster more engaged and successful learning. Results shared the type(s) of feedback most- and least-requested by students and explored the differences of feedback requests when those who provided the feedback were peers or the classroom teacher. The study also analyzed the feedback received in accordance with the writers' feedback requests. This move to a more agentive, student-centered pedagogy may help teachers of writing structure feedback practices in their classrooms. Ruegg suggests that students, when given the freedom to do so, make decisions about their feedback preferences that contribute positively to their improvement in writing.

Our final feature article in this issue comes from Megan M. Siczek. In "L2 Writers' Experience with Peer Review in Mainstream First-Year Writing: Socioacademic Dimensions," Siczek investigated how second-language (L2) writers describe their own experiences with peer review when enrolled in a mixed first-language (L1) and L2 mainstream first-year writing course. She utilized her own model of socioacademic space—the theory that "learning is situated in a context that is shaped not only by the course material but also by mediated interactions among members of the classroom community" (this issue, p. 104)—to reveal three prominent themes with regard to student perceptions of self, peers, and feedback processes. Like Ruegg's article, Siczek noted that writers—in this case, multilingual college students—find peer contributions and feedback on their writing to be valuable and validating, thus suggesting teachers learn as much as they can about students' lived experiences in the classroom and across the wider academic community.

Two teaching articles in this latest issue point to various innovations and collaborations experienced by many writing teachers in the audience of the *Journal of Response to Writing*. First is Lucie Moussu and Christina Grant's "A Collaborative Approach to Supporting L2 Students with Multimodal Work in the Composition Classroom and Writing Center." A writing center director and first-year writing instructor, respectively, Moussu and Grant shared their "different but parallel" paths to going multimodal for the first time at their university in Canada. This article noted the authors' need to collaborate and join forces to find ways to best teach, support, and respond

to a range of students' multimodal projects. In sharing the various challenges but the ultimate "exciting synergy" of necessary collaboration, this article has implications for writing teachers, writing tutors, and writing center directors who are interested in incorporating multimodal pedagogies in their work, and it highlights the value and importance of forging nontraditional partnerships that lead to unexpected positive collaborations across campus.

The second teaching article is Catherine E. Showalter and Ilka Kostka's "The Potential of Flipped Learning to Prepare ESL Students for Peer Review." Their article acknowledged the time-consuming nature of adequately preparing students to conduct successful peer review and offered a solution—the flipped-learning approach—to mitigate these challenges. Showalter and Kostka offered samples of assignments and homework questions that can facilitate flipped learning of peer-review processes, and they discussed the benefits of implementing flipped learning (e.g., allowing students more time to learn new content at their own pace, allowing more in-class time for peer-review practice and asking questions). A flipped-learning approach is a technique many writing teachers can adopt, considering the hybrid/hyflex and/or completely online instructional environments many readers are currently experiencing this Fall 2020 semester.

Finally, this issue closes with a book review: LeNora E. Candee's "Review of *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts* (1st Edition)," which assesses Icy Lee's 2017 text. Candee recommended Lee's text for L2 writing teachers and teacher educators and anyone "looking to create a more efficient assessment and feedback loop" or for resources to cultivate stronger, more confident L2 writers (this issue, p. 168).

We are pleased to share this issue, which is rich in student perspectives and which looks at response to writing at both undergraduate and graduate levels and in U.S. and international (i.e., Japanese and Canadian) contexts. This is our repeated request to readers who are investigating response to writing in other languages, other countries, or other contexts: We are very interested in your work! Please consider sending us a manuscript. Some underrepresented contexts we would love to learn more about include, but are not limited to, professional/technical writing,

writing across the curriculum/writing in the disciplines (WAC/WID), writing that happens in the K12 classroom, and writing practices in classrooms across the globe. And finally, here is a biannual reminder to follow us on social media. We are on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and look forward to connecting with you on these various platforms. Thank you for your continued support of *Journal of Response to Writing*, and please enjoy the Fall 2020 issue!

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