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## The Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors and Professionals: A Narrative Bibliography

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**Abstract:** Since 2003, the International Writing Centers Association has held a Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors and Professionals. Encouragement of scholarship, writing, and publication are important aspects of the institute. We have compiled a bibliography of scholarly works emerging from the first seven institutes. These works include web publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference presentations, dissertations, and one book. The entry for each work is followed by a narrative by the author or authors describing the influence of the Summer Institute, how they conceived and developed the work, and how they met their collaborators. Through these narratives we see that the IWCA Summer Institute offers a model for seeding an active community of practice that brings people together from diverse institutions, giving them new perspectives on their work through mentoring, collaboration, and the development of professional friendships. For many, this also results in development of a professional and scholarly identity more deeply connected to writing centers and their attendant fields. We also speculate on the meaning of identified publication patterns and make suggestions for future endeavors.

For years, professional conferences have gathered people with like interests, like scholarship, and like concern for sharing knowledge and building networks. They have contributed to the growth and development of disciplines, as venues for learning and gathering feedback on works in progress. Conferences do not, however, provide much opportunity for sustained dialogue, collaboration, or the working through of actual drafts of writing. Because of this, organizations such as the National Writing Project and the Council of Writing Program Administrators have begun institutes and workshops that provide more prolonged opportunities for professional learning. Taking the WPA Workshop and Frank Christ's learning center institutes as models (Gillespie, Hughes, Lerner & Geller), Paula Gillespie and Brad Hughes co-chaired the first International Writing Centers Association Summer Institute in 2003. Now, every summer writing center directors and professionals from all over the world convene for a week at the annual International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors and Professionals. We believe that the IWCA Summer Institute and other institutes like it represent important disciplinary practices and cultural phenomena capable of producing institutional and personal development in ways that coursework and conferences cannot. Therefore, we are attempting to document through narrative some of the less visible effects of the IWCA Summer Institutes. During a time when budgets are strained and teachers often feel isolated, we hope that the narratives below will provide data useful in building the case for developing and supporting extended, collaborative professional development opportunities. Furthermore, we hope that the narratives and our reflections will spark additional conversations about collegiality and what it means to be a scholar who values collaboration and interaction in the ways that Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Myles Horton, and other such scholars theorize; for us, this signifies the enactment of egalitarianism, in-depth conversations, reflection, revision, action, social/playful interactions, and reciprocity between theory and praxis.

At the first Summer Institute (SI) in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2003, attendees spent a week together doing all of the above, but most importantly to this project, they formed writing groups and were asked to draft a piece that would be useful to them in their careers. Also at this first SI, a special interest group (SIG) on publishing convened. The format and related protocols of SI writing groups have varied over the years; however, writing groups, whether formal or informal, have been a significant component of SIs. Typically, writing groups consisted of 4-6 people, and participants created their own protocols, which generally involved reading drafts aloud and providing oral feedback. Sometimes, participants would write each other letters or comment directly on drafts.

Participants at each institute have written essays, poems, songs, research papers, proposals, tirades and manifestos, and institute leaders have run workshops and convened SIGs about the ins and outs of publishing. Because writing and publishing have formed a core value of the Summer Institutes, we, as SI alumni, were curious to see just what that thrust had produced. We knew that several publications grew out of the SI (some of us had written them!), and we wanted to compile a bibliography of these works and, through narrative, explore the synergy of the IWCA Summer Institute on the scholarship and publishing of participants, leaders, and chairs.

Although there are several other Summer Institutes, such as those for Writing Program Administrators, we did not find bibliographies dedicated to the work emerging from those Institutes. Some exceptions are the National Writing Project (NWP) summer institutes, through which all participants publish their work each summer in local and national anthologies. Another exception is the *Ethnologue* web site that hosts a bibliography of publications arising from the Summer Institute for Linguistics (SIL), [\[1\] \[#note1\]](#) which began in 1935. The bibliography contains more than 20,000 citations of works by participants and those works published by the SIL. Our hope is that someday this IWCA SI bibliography will grow, if not to these dimensions, then at least to include more works that reach a wider audience.

Realizing it was impossible to gather citations in the usual way (some do not mention the Summer Institute at all, and some that mention the SI do not have direct connections to an actual SI or are not written by SI participants), we posted announcements to the WCenter listserv, put an "ad" in *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, emailed participants and leaders, and even put a notice on the IWCA website, [writingcenters.org](http://writingcenters.org). We surveyed the participants in the summer institutes from 2003-2008. There was an average of 48 participants per year for a total of 287. Participants attended from 4-year colleges and universities (238), 2-year colleges (30), elementary and high schools (17), and one participant each attended from a commercial venture and an upper-division institution. Eighteen of the participants were from institutions outside the U.S.

In terms of the content of the bibliography, we decided to include any publications—including web-based publications, conference presentations, and dissertations—that began as Summer Institute writing group assignments, received inspiration from the SI, or included work from collaborators who met and began their work together at the SI. While we recognize that these publication types hold different value in the academy, we also recognize that all ways of disseminating information and knowledge are important to authors, audiences, and the writing center field at large. Therefore, the context that authors write from represents a key point of analysis for our project. Julian Thomas, an archaeologist, writes, "We always write from a perspective which is located both in time and space. This is not merely to say that we write from a position of imperfect knowledge; it is only by having a particular Being within the world that we are in a position to write in the first place" (382). In other words, the SI and all that the SI is—time, space, location, and a diverse body of participants—creates a unique occasion from which to write that would not have existed otherwise. Furthermore, by including a broad range of publication types, our project aims to honor the expertise of all writing

center professionals (regardless of identity politics imparted by institutional structures) and to subvert the "usual" rules about the public communication spheres worthy of scholarly reference.

While a presentation at a regional writing center conference or an article in *IWCA Update* (the IWCA's biannual newsletter) may not hold the cachet of a Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) presentation or an article in a peer-reviewed journal, for some scholars these publication venues begin the intellectual conversation, increase the scholarly presence of the individual, and provide a needed line on a vita, yet they all belong to the same discursive formation. As the narratives in this bibliography show, smaller conference presentations sometimes lead to more formal publications, and afford an audience and a dialogue to work through new ideas. This is often a first step for a scholar and a way to share scholarship with a wider, and sometimes friendly, audience, and represent "the various statuses, the various sites, the various positions he [or she] can occupy or be given when making a discourse" (Foucault 54). In fact, the narratives below trace such progressions and indicate the Summer Institute's role in seeding writing, research, and collaborations.

As humans, we make sense of our lives and experiences through narrative (Fisher). James Phelan writes that "Narrative is not just an object to be interpreted, but also a way of interpreting and evaluating" (167). As writing center people and academics, we value narrative because, as Lynn Briggs and Meg Woolbright point out, "stories constitute our professional knowledge; they need to be trusted; they need to be taken seriously. They need to be shared publicly" (x). In *Stories from the Center: Connecting Narrative and Theory in the Writing Center*, Briggs and Woolbright compile what they call "academic narratives," which "tangle story and theory inextricably" (xii). In their introduction, they write about how theory and story can be used to understand one another and how some of the contributors to their collection use theory to explain a narrative and some use a narrative to explicate a theory. For our project, academic narratives as Briggs and Woolbright define them didn't seem feasible for an article-length piece; however, we believed that stories reflecting on the relationship between the publication and an SI would be more valuable to writing center and composition studies colleagues than a customary summary. Instead of a traditional annotated bibliography, then, we decided our material would be better served by a *narrative* bibliography, in which the authors would share the stories of how their work came about and how the SI influenced their work. We wanted to better understand the role the social interactions of the SI played in their writing projects and scholarship, and we wanted to create space for other scholars to build theory from SI narratives and to apply theory to SI stories. Thus, we use the term *narrative bibliography* to denote our focus on authors' own reflections of their processes and the role of mentoring and collaboration.

By exposing these narratives of writing, research and collaboration, we make visible the authors' behind-the-scenes processes of knowledge making. We asked authors to write their own narratives, giving them agency to determine what was significant about their writing process and the SI's connection to it. Similarly, collaborators of co-authored pieces were allowed to decide themselves whether to write narratives together or individually. With over half of the projects included in this bibliography being collaboratively written and the fact that this article is a co-authored piece, it should be clear that collaboration is a valued and important part of not only the SI but the writing center and composition fields at large. The differences in the ways that collaborators chose to write their narratives also demonstrate a breadth of approaches to collaboration. As a final note about methodology, readers should know that we have tried to be true to the narratives while only lightly editing them, and although they are sometimes informal, we attempted to preserve the writers' voices because we as bibliographers are not only interested in summary but in the authors' reflections on their experiences, which are often nuanced by syntax, diction, and tone.

As Paula Gillespie, Brad Hughes, Neal Lerner, and Anne Eller Geller acknowledge in their reflection below, the establishment and work of the SIs represent "a significant moment in writing center work." When significant moments occur, it is important to not only document them but to also reflect on them. In a broader sense, we hope that this project helps educators across disciplines think about the ways in which events and processes like an SI facilitate individuals and groups to publish and build scholarly identities.

## **Bibliography of Works Arising from the Summer Institutes**

Unless otherwise noted, all bibliographic annotations have been composed by the authors of the work. In the case of collaboration with non-SI participants and others, the names of SI alums, SI leaders and SI chairs will be marked with asterisks. We do not further differentiate between participants, leaders and chairs, because many people have served in several of these roles.

**Babcock, Rebecca Day. "Outlaw Tutoring: Editing and Proofreading Revisited." *Journal of College Reading and Learning* 38.2 (2008): 63-70. Print.**

**Day, Rebecca. "Outlaw Tutoring: Editing and Proofreading Revisited." International Writing Centers Association (IWCA)/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW), Hershey, PA, 23 Oct. 2003. Conference presentation.**

These two versions of the same paper grew out of a writing assignment at the first SI. I wrote about something that was on my mind because of the SI "sharing spaces" project, which was an activity where everyone shared the floor plan and artifacts of their writing center. While looking around I saw many signs and flyers with anti-editing and proofreading policies, and I realized from my recent research on disability that these signs and policies were discriminatory and exclusionary. I had been researching deaf people being tutored in the writing center, the ADA, and other laws guaranteeing equal access, which made me think about deaf students as a special population that should get help with editing and proofreading. I find that WC people are so stuck on this "No Editing/No Proofreading" policy that anything that goes against it makes them uneasy. Especially my claim that these policies may be Illegal! Talking to people (especially people with various ideas/philosophies) brought this out. Our writing group helped with this as well. I remember reading aloud and getting and giving feedback. Of course, there was resistance and tension, as there always is when a writing assignment is given. The relationships that developed at the SI, compared to those at a conference, seemed less superficial and deeper because there was a sense that you were there to do work. Not to say that attending conference sessions isn't work, but a noticeable difference in depth results because of the extended amount of time, the collaborative environment, and repeated encounters with the same people day after day. When I polished the piece and presented it at the IWCA/NCPTW, the session room was packed and people were visibly and vocally engaged in the discussion. When the editor of *The Journal of College Reading and Learning* asked me to send something for consideration, I sent this piece, which grew directly out of my SI experience and wouldn't have existed without it. In addition, it was my first invited article in a peer-reviewed journal.

**Bruland, Holly, Pamela Childers\*, Joan Mullin, Trixie Smith\*, and Terry Zawacki, "Reconsidering Research on Writing Fellows/Mentors in the Classroom." Conference on College Composition and Communication. Louisville, KY. 20 March 2010. Panel presentation.**

For narrative, see [Childers and Smith \[#childers-ryan-smith-mentoring\]](#).

**Childers, Pamela B. (Ed). *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*. Special Issue on Secondary School Writing Centers 80.2 (2006). Print.**

(Pamela Childers) I met John Tinker briefly at the 2002 IWCA Conference in Savannah, but I didn't get to know who he was as a writing center director, educator, and friend until after the 2003 Writing Center Summer Institute. At the institute we talked about creative writing, high school-college collaborations, and connections between art and writing in writing centers. We began corresponding after the institute and later our conversation included discussion of one of my former students, Tommy Tobin, who attended Stanford and looked up John when he got there. We began planning some collaborative workshops and other activities, including a special issue of *The Clearing House* on secondary school writing centers. I invited John and some other SI participants and leaders from other years to contribute to this issue. We kept in touch during the planning and eventual publication of *TCH*, which included John's valuable and oft-cited article [see [Tinker, below \[#tinker-generating\]](#)]. We also got together at NCTE in Nashville, where we both gave presentations/workshops on secondary/college writing center collaborations, and I enjoyed attending the Stanford session featuring John.

**Childers, Pamela\*, Leigh Ryan, and Trixie Smith\*. "Mentoring Teachers of Writing: Utilizing Time and Place." Writing Development in Higher Education Conference 2008. University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland. 26 June 2008. Presentation.**

**Childers, Pamela and Trixie Smith. "Problems and Solutions with Secondary School Writing Centers." Tennessee Writing Centers Collaborative. Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN. 29 Oct. 2005. Presentation.**

**Childers, Pamela and Trixie Smith. "Writing Centers and Writing Across the Curriculum." Tennessee Writing Centers Collaborative. Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN. 4 November 2006. Presentation.**

(Pamela Childers) Trixie Smith and I began working together within a year after the 2003 SI. Our work relationship at the SI was different from those at academic conferences because we could work together intensely for several days, even meeting after the day was over to talk and plan. The exchanges were not brief ones of a few minutes but extended ones. After the SI, we continued those dialogues through email and meetings at academic conferences. Together we helped organize and work with what became the Tennessee Writing Center Collaborative (TWCC). Serving together on the board of Southern Writing Centers Association (SWCA), I got to know Trixie better and we started a tradition of having drinks or a meal together at every conference. I thoroughly enjoyed

helping Trixie, who hosted SWCA in 2007. We spent weekends in Nashville or Chattanooga, working on the program for the conference, and developed a real respect for each other's work. Both of us have served as references for the other, and we have even planned some future professional writing projects. The list of workshops and presentations that Trixie and I have done together only partially explains the personal and professional collaboration we have done and will continue to do. Many of my revisions on projects are due to Trixie's ideas or questions, and I hope I have done the same for her. Since I met Trixie at SI 2003, we have gotten involved in many professional projects, including conferences in Germany and Scotland. I have been honored to be invited to keynote the East Central Writing Centers Association (ECWCA) 2010 Conference that Trixie will be hosting with another SI 2003 leader, Jill Pennington Reglin. I have a feeling we will be involved in even more collaborations in the future.

(Trixie Smith) Before attending the SI, I had, of course, heard of Pamela Farrell Childers and had read some of her work, so it was a pleasure to meet her and to learn that she was just down the road from me in Tennessee. After returning home, we kept up an email correspondence that served as a place for mentoring and led to collaborative work; likewise, we started getting together at every conference we attended. We worked together on the board of SWCA, helped start the TWCC which met twice a year, maintained an email group for discussions and collaborations, and worked on the program for the SWCA 2007 conference. The TWCC meetings were set up as conversations, some large group but mostly small groups. The meetings also included breakfast, snacks, and lunch to encourage even more talk. Each table had a facilitator but there weren't long, formal presentations—only a few mini-lessons or demonstrations. The SI was instrumental in demonstrating the important role of informal talk among writing center directors (the NWP model was also important for this—a conversation I often had at NWP meetings with Kirsten Jameson, someone else I met at the SI). In addition, I found Pam to be a great reader and listener, sharing with her materials for T&P, annual evaluations, and manuscripts. We even applied together to co-edit the *Writing Center Journal (WCJ)* when IWCA was looking for new editors; we weren't chosen, but the process led us to brainstorm other ideas for future collaborations and publications. Our collaborations progressed because we began talking with each other on a regular basis—corresponding through email and getting together for a drink and conversation at conferences. Through these talks, we shared what we were working on in our centers and teaching, asked each other questions, offered advice, etc. These talks then led to working on joint projects and proposals for conferences. During this time, Pam also served as mentor by introducing me to others in the field, which led to more conversations and more opportunities, with or without Pam. The best aspect of my mentoring relationship with Pam is that she is not at my school. It allows me to talk with her about issues I'm facing without having to worry about school politics. It is also a way for me to get a more neutral perspective on events. Important ways Pam has mentored me include introducing me to others in the field, inviting me to research/present with her (then later having it work the other way around), serving as a reader for my work, and becoming a friend I admire and respect (and have fun with). I think the SI helped foster this relationship because it gave us time to get to know each other, so we had a foundation for our continued relationship. Early SI reunions at conferences also helped. The nature of the SI gives participants more time to get to know each other including institutional backgrounds/strengths/weaknesses. It also gives participants the impetus to work together during the SI, which then spills over into collaborations once participants leave. Writing and working groups build a type of community that just can't happen in the 60-90 minutes of a conference presentation.

**Deal, Michelle L. "Convergences of Talk and Text: A Qualitative Assessment of Writing Center Tutorials." Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Francisco, CA. 12 March, 2009. Presentation.**

This presentation grew out my dissertation project, which has its roots in the IWCA Summer Institute at the University of Kansas (2005). I was drafting my dissertation prospectus around that time and had the great fortune of having dinner with most of the Institute's organizers. Their questions about my research interests and their responses to my questions about writing center research enabled me to think more critically about what I wanted to do—investigate what students learn from writing center tutors—resulting in my research focus: Though WC workers know that students are often satisfied with their tutorials, we do not know how or if students have been changed as writers. During an SI presentation/workshop, Neal Lerner explained the pros and cons of the assessment work he and others had done, and the questions that remain unanswered. So, in a sense, I took my cue from Neal. He also provided an annotated bibliography of writing center assessment that I used to refine my research questions and methodology. Though I was already interested in learning outcomes, the SI experience confirmed my hunch that I was on the right track: there was plenty of work to be done in this area, and I left with more resources (texts and mentors) for writing my prospectus. After completing my prospectus, I was awarded an IWCA Graduate Research Grant. Had it not been for this grant, I would still be transcribing tutoring sessions and interviews. Some of the preliminary results of my data collection and analysis are reported in my CCCC presentation, which I was invited to submit to *The Writing Lab Newsletter* (WLN). Because I am writing my dissertation now, I plan to rewrite that presentation for publication. Though I could have met folks such as Neal Lerner, Michele Eodice, Anne Ellen Gellar, Frankie Condon, and Beth Boquet at conferences, I doubt much would have transpired beyond initial hellos. The SI provided time for multiple one-on-one conversations that conferences generally do not (at least not in my experiences). The SI also introduced me to professionals in the field who in turn introduced me to professional development opportunities outside of my institution. I met Harry Denny at the SI, and I've since worked with Harry on the Northeast Writing Centers Association regional steering committee. One of Harry's former graduate students had served on the committee, so I figured I could, too, and he encouraged me to join. Also, I met Neal Lerner at the SI and have since joined a regional writer's group that Neal coordinates through the NEWACC affiliate of NEWCA (that's the Northeast Writing Across the Curriculum Committee that now meets at our NEWCA conference). Also, last year, Michele Eodice invited me to participate as an IWCA book award committee member. Whenever I see these folks, they ask me how my work is going, which motivates me to persist with the diss. In other words, I returned from the SI institute with a more intimate sense of audience and clearer purpose for my dissertation. It was the first time as a student that I began to feel part of a discourse community; I had face-to-face conversations with published experts and with writing center workers in the U.S. and abroad.

**Dennen, Leslie. *How Does Student Engagement Affect Cognitive Development?* Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2008. Print.**

**Dennen, Leslie. "The Role of Writing Centers in Shaping Student Cognitive Development." *Northern California Writing Centers Association Conference*. Gavilan College, Gilroy, CA. 28 February 2009. Conference presentation.**

My dissertation idea was sparked by a discussion of writing center assessment at our 2004 Summer Writing Center Institute. Writing centers are always trying to explain and justify their presence (and

budget allocations) at the university, but finding valid quantifiable ways to assess writing work has always been a challenge. As Neal Lerner and others have pointed out, correlating writing-center work with course or paper grades is a flawed methodology. We discussed "Choosing Beans Wisely" in which he critiqued an earlier study he did about writing center effectiveness and listed several reasons why his methodology was flawed. His point was that we shouldn't be looking at grades as a viable measure of effectiveness, but rather, at retention. I think this idea was one the seed-kernels for my research since my school was doing a lot of work with retention, integration, and the freshman experience. I don't know if I would have gone down the same path without participating in the Summer Institute, but I was interested in doing some kind of study about Writing Center effectiveness, and I also agreed with Neal that it's very difficult to come up with empirical data that supports writing center work. During our conversation, we talked about considering writing center work in a larger context of student out-of-class activities, and this idea led me to the concepts of academic and social integration. Researching the work of Tinto, Kuh, Astin (*College; Achieving; What*) and others, I got interested in how writing centers and other out-of-class activities contribute to academic integration and retention. I wanted to investigate how student engagement with writing centers and similar out-of-class activities were related not only to retention, but also to student perceptions about learning. It was a long and winding road, but I think it all started with Neal.

**Denny, Harry, Rebecca Day, and Dawn Fels. "Review of the Second Edition of the *Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring.*" *The Writing Lab Newsletter* 28.8 (2004): 11-13. Print.**

(Rebecca Day Babcock) At the first SI, Mickey Harris asked for volunteers to write a review for *WLN*. Harry, Dawn and I and one other person volunteered, but the fourth person never ended up participating, which was a disappointment. This collaboration was my first experience writing long distance, all sharing the same Word document, emailing it back and forth. It was an excellent collaboration because we were all prompt with our responses, and added and took away from the document freely, so it was really a group effort. By the end, none of us owned the text, but we all owned it together. We each got to review the book by whatever criteria we wished, so that was fun. I would like to work again with these two wonderful collaborators. I cannot say I would not have met them but for the Summer Institute, but it probably would have been much later, and we probably would not have collaborated in this fashion.

(Harry Denny) When Rebecca, Dawn, and I worked on the review of Paula Gillespie and Neal Lerner's *Allyn & Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*, we approached our work much like what Michele Eodice and Anne Ellen Geller have described as their process—the peloton pace line from cycling, where one person takes a lead, sets a pace, bears the resistance for a period, and is replaced by another from the group. Dawn would plug away writing from her experiences as a high school writing center director, Rebecca from her experiences as a graduate student and researcher, and then me as a faculty leader at colleges. We'd circulate the text between us and were also spurred by the shared bond and chemistry from collaborating and working together at the inaugural Summer Institute.

(Dawn Fels) Prior to the inaugural Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors, I'd worked in writing centers since 1995. But I'd only run the high school writing center that I set up at University City High School for two years. While I had met many of the leaders prior to that week at IWCA conferences, including Neal Lerner and Paula Gillespie, I had not yet met Muriel Harris. Nor had I met Rebecca or Harry. So there's no question that the co-authored review of Neal and Paula's second edition of the *Allyn & Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring* that Rebecca, Harry, and I later published in *The Writing Lab Newsletter* came out of our time together at the SI. In a talk I gave at the Watson Conference a couple of years later [see [Geller, Denney, Fels and Mendoza \[#geller-et-al-connection\]](#)], I spoke about the invaluable influence the SI had on collaborative efforts among writing center

colleagues from across institutional levels. The co-authored piece Rebecca, Harry, and I published certainly reflects that type of collaboration. Each of us wrote from our various institutional contexts and capacities. Rebecca was a doctoral candidate and writing center researcher at IUP, Harry taught and ran the writing center at Stonybrook, and I taught and ran the writing center at University City High School. Each of us brought our experience with different student populations to bear on that review: deaf and other-abled students; ESL students; high school tutors and students. Our review was not the only project hatched that week or shortly thereafter. I think what the SI affords participants and leaders is time to talk and get to know each other as professionals, yes, but also as people. When we have that time together, relationships form, understanding grows, and ideas take shape into projects that benefit us all.

**DeCiccio, Al, Lisa Ede, Neal Lerner, Beth Boquet, and Muriel Harris. "Work in Progress: Publishing Writing Center Scholarship." *The Writing Lab Newsletter* 31.7 (March 2007): 1-6. Print.**

(Lisa Ede) This article grew out of a session that Al DeCiccio and I lead for the 2006 SI. As part of our preparation, we asked the editors of *WLN* and *WCJ* for advice for authors. Once the SI was over we all put it together.

(Al DeCiccio) Our article begins by citing the Londonderry teacher who had published a piece that spring in the New Hampshire Council of Teachers of English Newsletter; the reason for doing this was to encourage writing center workers to refrain from the "arm of excuses" we all use that prevents us from publishing, that all of our voices need to be heard for our community to remain vibrant.

(Neal Lerner) The article came directly from Lisa and Al's experience as SI 2006 leaders leading a session on WC scholarship, so I suppose you could say the SI was a catalyst from the start. Mickey, Beth, and I were then recruited after the SI (though we've all been SI leaders, too, just not that same summer). We were all trying to encourage WC folks to engage in meaningful scholarship and to offer a variety of ways as to how that might happen. When Beth and I were co-editors of *WCJ*, we certainly had a self-interest in getting quality submissions, but I believe we both also have a commitment to the progression of knowledge making in our field.

(Muriel Harris) When Lisa Ede and Al DeCiccio asked the editors of *The Writing Center Journal* and *The Writing Lab Newsletter* to contribute our comments, their intent was to gather additional suggestions from the editors of both journals for their Summer Institute (SI) session on publishing. Later Al and Lisa had a broader aim, to publish an article encouraging all writing center people to engage in scholarly writing, which we defined as any writing (or communication in various media and formats) that would offer well-thought-out insights, information, and reflection about the field or the writer's particular context. That includes the particular focus of a particular piece of writing, and the writing should be appropriate for the intended audience. Such writing is informed by previous scholarship (though it doesn't have to trot out all the previous scholarship) and—when writing for audiences beyond the writer's institution—moves it forward in some way. Writing for audiences in one's institution is scholarly when it contributes to knowledge at that institution. Scholarly writing is the product of careful reflection, and it can stem from personal experience, anecdotal evidence, questions we seek answers to (in our daily work such questions often pop up), stories or narratives, qualitative and quantitative research, responses to scholarly writing we've read or conference talks we've heard, and sometimes, just random "A HA!" moments that are enlightening in some way. Some of the advice we gave in "Work in Progress" was definitely in response to conversations we had with participants, conversations in sessions, responses to essays intended for publication, and in e-mail exchanges with conference participants after the SI ended. The SI experience helps us form friendships with colleagues that continue long afterwards, and some of the advice in that article is

influenced by those later interactions. The SI is intended to inform, educate, and build networking connections, all of which contribute to enhancing further knowledge-making. And the SI sessions on publishing are part of that, along with the emphasis on the leaders becoming mentors for participants. An added factor is that I, like the other leaders, were able to learn so much that being part of the SI led us to more knowledge-making that grew from the collaboration with participants. Because a goal of the SI is to help professionalize participants, the SI creates an intense atmosphere of learning and personal growth where people come to realize how valuable new knowledge is and how important it is to disseminate it. The SI is an empowering experience—purposely so and structured to be so, and that very empowerment helps participants find their voice and enter the public discourse in the field. The friendships formed with the leaders enhance that. As proof, we should take note of how many of the participants have become major voices in our public scholarship and have become leaders in writing center work. (As a side note: I tend to distinguish between “public” scholarship, which is any scholarly communication directed at audiences outside our institution. That’s different from “institutional” scholarship which I have written about, both in terms of how our writing center administrative work constitutes institutional research and, most recently, about how the rhetoric of our institutional communication is less effective than it could be.) Lisa and Al sought to incorporate what we had offered as advice for the SI session. All three of us, Neal, Beth, and I, were SI leaders and editors, so the invitation to join them in co-authoring an article for publication tempted us to write about what prospective authors should keep in mind as they search for topics, write, and submit essays. That’s a tricky two-step dance because we very much wanted to encourage people to engage in scholarly writing to contribute to the field but also to warn them about the kinds of inappropriate boxes some authors get trapped in. So, our contributions to that article have a mixture of both kinds of advice. As I now re-read the contributions of all the authors of that article, I find the advice to be still relevant, still offered to some authors as suggestions for revision when manuscripts come in, and still applicable to every author. And our goal remains: to encourage our colleagues to engage in research and to write to share their new knowledge with the rest of us.

**Tokay, Dilek, John Tinker\*, Tommy Tobin, Pamela Childers\*, Reid Alexander, and Nolan Boyd. “International Secondary or University WAC-Based Writing Centers: What’s the Difference?” Ninth International Conference WAC 2008: Writing Across the Curriculum. The University of Texas, Austin. 30 May 2008. Presentation.**

(John Tinker) I can trace a number of writing center projects and initiatives to the Summer Institute, including hosting our regional writing center organization’s annual conference in 2004, where we initiated the first in a series of pre-conference workshops for writing center directors, a popular offering and one directly inspired by and modeled on the Savannah Post-Conference Workshop and the Summer Institute. Several conference presentations, including a presentation on Ravenswood Writes at the NCTE annual convention in Nashville in 2006 and preparations for a presentation with Pam and others at the International WAC Conference in Austin in 2008, also have a clear connection to the Summer Institute. I was unable to attend the WAC conference because of my cancer diagnosis and treatments, and Pam and I are now preparing a book and website titled *Celebrating Life after Cancer Diagnosis*. The project will include narratives by cancer patients, and we find ourselves, most unexpectedly but upon reflection not unsurprisingly, using our writing center connection to offer resources and techniques for living well after a cancer diagnosis.

(Pamela Childers) I really got to know John a bit on the boat trip we took the first or second night of the SI. After that, we talked online, made contact through one of my students who was attending Stanford, and kept in touch through email or by meeting at NCTE in Nashville, for instance. While we were at the 2006 NCTE in Nashville, John Tinker and I began planning a workshop for the 2008

International WAC conference that would include Dilek Tokay of Sabanci University, Tommy Tobin from Stanford, and Reid Alexander and Nolan Boyd from McCallie. Unfortunately John could not attend for health reasons. When I discovered those health reasons were cancer related, we immediately developed a different level of communication that involved both our writing center work and our personal experiences with cancer. Out of John's sharing an essay he wrote with his partner Adrian, I suggested that the piece be part of a book on the celebration of life after an experience with cancer. Through our email exchanges, we developed the idea for the book project we have continued working on to help those who have just been diagnosed with cancer, as well as those who have been treated. We even proposed a roundtable for the 2010 CCCC, although it was not accepted. In summer 2009 John spent five days at our home in Colorado working on the book, and I think we have both gained knowledge about working as writers, editors, and publishers in new ways. My students in the writing center have learned from our work over the years as well. This rich and rewarding personal and professional relationship would never have developed if we had not spent a week together at the 2003 SI.

**Ede, Lisa, Paula Gillespie, and Brad Hughes. "The 2008 IWCA Summer Institute at UW- Madison: Some Reflections from Lake Mendota."**

***International Writing Centers Association Website*. 14 Feb. 2009.**

<http://writingcenters.org/2009/02/the-2008-iwca-summer-institute-at-uw-madison-some-reflections-from-lake-mendota/>

[\[http://writingcenters.org/2009/02/the-2008-iwca-summer-institute-at-uw-madison-some-reflections-from-lake-mendota/\]](http://writingcenters.org/2009/02/the-2008-iwca-summer-institute-at-uw-madison-some-reflections-from-lake-mendota/) (13 Aug. 2009).

The three of us, co-chairs of the 6th Annual IWCA Summer Institute which was held in July 2008 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, wanted to offer a behind-the-scenes look at some of the planning and philosophy behind that year's summer institute. We wanted to share some of the highlights of an exciting week spent learning together with a great group of leaders and equally wonderful participants from around the world. By writing this piece we were also deeply committed to sharing the institute with a broad writing center audience, which we tried to do in many ways during the institute itself—by, for example, creating an institute blog and by webcasting one of the institute's sessions. Our collaboration was extraordinarily intense, productive, and rewarding (personally and professionally), and we felt that it could be useful to document that. Also, it felt momentous to Lisa that the SI had returned to Madison, where Paula and Brad co-chaired the first SI in 2003. We had originally planned to publish this piece in the print version of the *IWCA Update*, but the newsletter switched to electronic form with the launch of the [new IWCA website](http://writingcenters.org/) [\[http://writingcenters.org/\]](http://writingcenters.org/), and we were eager to contribute to the new site. Over a long period of time while we juggled too many other work responsibilities—starting in August and finally finishing in December—we outlined the article collaboratively, divided responsibility for drafting various sections, used Google docs and email to co-write and exchange drafts and revise, and we fought over the order of names, all trying to go last. It was such a joy to write this because it allowed us to re-live and cast into language one of the most delightful experiences of our professional lives.

**Fallon, Brian and Moira Ozias. "Top 10 Reasons Summer Institute is Like Summer Camp (or 'Toward a Higher Risk, Higher Yield Model of Camp WC')." *The Writing Lab Newsletter* 30.9 (2006): 6-7. Print.**

We began writing this piece almost immediately after the Summer Institute at the University of Kansas ended. Michele Eodice prompted us to document the experiences we had during the week because our roles as organizers provided us an opportunity to see the SI from a different perspective

from most participants. As we sat at a coffee shop in downtown Lawrence, KS, we brainstormed around the significance and value of the SI experience for us and others. We decided that the camp metaphor was apropos after discussing a recent *This American Life* episode that helped us see how much summer camp experiences facilitate learning. While we drafted together in person, we revised by passing drafts back and forth via email, with a smattering of phone calls thrown in here and there. Our collaborative, scholarly relationship began during that SI, took shape through the writing of this piece, and continues to this day.

**Geller, Anne Ellen, Harry Denny, Dawn Fels, and Dawn Mendoza. "Connection and Change," Thomas R. Watson Conference in Rhetoric and Composition. Louisville, KY. October, 2004. Neal Lerner, chair. 8 October 2004. Panel presentation.**

(Dawn Mendoza) The four of us all offered different papers that had to do with what we'd learned/gotten out of the Summer Institute. I was thinking a lot about Patricia Bizzell and alternative discourse when I left the institute, so that's what I wrote about. I'd been an SI participant in 2004, not a leader. So, maybe my paper was kind of out of line with others.

(Dawn Fels) The talk at the Watson conference brought several SI participants/leaders to talk on a panel. We talked about our SI experience, and my piece focused on how the SI brought together people from different institutional levels/types together in a way that immersed us in "metanoic moments."

**Geller, Anne and Michele Eodice. "The Rewards of Summer: IWCA Summer Institute." *The Writing Lab Newsletter* 29.7 (2005): 6-7. Print.**

We drafted this article in early 2005, just before we co-hosted the third IWCA Summer Institute at the University of Kansas. After the SI at Clark University in 2004 where Anne was local host and both of us were leaders, Anne completed a pilot study of what SI participants said about their experiences one year after attending the SI. We wanted to use that research to explain the value of the intensive institute and advertise the 2005 SI at Kansas, but we also wanted to highlight the SI as a potential site for future research (interesting research has, for example, come out of National Writing Project Summer Institutes). Anne did not follow-up with exactly the research described in the endnote of this article, but she is now completing a study of the experiences of early career writing center professionals (some of whom attended the SI) with Harry Denny.

**Gillespie, Paula, Brad Hughes, Neal Lerner, and Anne Ellen Geller. "The Writing Center Summer Institute: Backgrounds, Development, Vision." *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book*. Ed. Christina Murphy and Byron L. Stay. Mahwah: Erlbaum, 2006. 33- 51. Print.**

As co-organizers of the first SI (Paula and Brad) and co-organizers of the second SI (Paula, Neal, Anne), we wanted some way to document our experiences about what we felt (and still feel) is a significant moment in writing center work. We also wanted to offer the Summer Institute to veteran, new, and future writing center directors as a powerful professional-development experience, one we felt was sorely needed in light of the high turnover of writing center directors (particularly new ones) and general lack of professional opportunities. Paula first talked with Christina Murphy about contributing a chapter on the origins of the SI for *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book*, focusing on the motivation for creating the SI and explaining the philosophy behind the institute, and

once Christina and co-editor Byron Stay expressed interest, Paula and Brad sketched out the preliminary draft. Neal then added historical context on summer institutes in composition studies, and Anne described her experiences with the second SI. Overall, it was a chapter that just about wrote itself!

**Grady, Kelli, Carol Mattingly, Leslie Olsen, Connie Sirios, Katie Hupp Stahlnecker, and Sheryl Tschetter. "Connecting through Humor: Collaboration at the Institute." *The Writing Lab Newsletter* 28.7 (2004): 13-15. Print.**

(Katie Stahlnecker) The co-authors of our article found each other on the first night of the Summer Institute in the bar on the lower deck of the ferry boat ride that we took as a group. We introduced ourselves and sort of laughed about being the ones who went straight for cocktails. Then, we talked and laughed and bonded over a few more rounds. For the rest of the week, we hung out together and had a few more drinks and lot more laughs. We were pretty sure that the rest of the group found us obnoxious (in a good way we hoped :-), so by the end of the week, we decided we should perform a skit of some sort to thank the hosts, Brad and Paula, for a fabulous week. How we landed on the Hank Williams song ["Jambalaya"], I can't recall for sure. I remember Carol having a lot to do with it, so it was likely her idea. We spent an evening together altering the song's lyrics to fit our purpose and laughed and laughed all the way. Then, on the final day, we got up and sang the song for the group. In the light of day, we were at first worried that we weren't half as funny as we thought we were when writing the song, but, fortunately, the group was generous enough to get a kick out of our song. And, if I remember correctly, it was Mickey [Harris] who suggested that we write an article about the experience. From that emerged our thoughts on the value of humor in the writing center. We drafted parts of it individually, I think, and then together revised and tightened the article—all via email. It was good fun, start to finish! (Carol Mattingly) This publication was a simple extension of the Institute. We had great fun creating our skit and wanted to share that. There was little else involved. We weren't in the same writing group. We just got to know one another. And, I suggested and coordinated the writing after we returned home.

(Leslie Olsen) I can add a little to Katie's story; we were indeed the group that gathered around the food and drink on the first night's cruise—what a wonderful way to start the Institute! As we were enjoying our refreshments, we actually started singing Hank Williams's songs. Carol Mattingly started the singing, as Hank is one of her favorites. As Katie and Carol both said, we bonded. When we were given the writing assignment, we decided to share some of our fun and bonding with everyone else at the Institute, thus the song was born, which, by the way, was written over dinner (there seems to be a pattern of food going on here). After our "performance," Mickey Harris did ask us to write about it for the *WLN*, so we chose to write about humor in the writing center and did, indeed, write it in separate pieces over email that Carol finally brought together as the main editor. It was a wonderful experience!

**Levin, Katie. "More Things Than Dreamt of in Our Philosophy: Tutoring, Administration, and Other Peculiarities of Writing Center Work." Diss. Indiana University, 2006. Print.**

I brought the barely-begun conclusion of my dissertation to SI 2006 as my writing group project. At the time, I thought I would only rely on the group for accountability, since I was having a hard time making myself write and also do my full-time job at the University of Minnesota's Center for Writing. However, the group ended up playing a much more meaningful role. Through the SI workshops, conversations with other writing center folks, and discussions with my writing group

members, the SI changed the way I thought about myself: I felt like a member of a larger professional community (an especially resonant feeling since much of my dissertation had to do with ideas of professionalism), and I was able understand how what I was learning about tutors' beliefs and practices fit into a larger administrative and professional context—I came to believe that administration and pedagogy were fundamentally inseparable. The word "administration" made its way into the title of my dissertation because of the new beliefs and ideas I encountered at the SI, and Lisa Ede and Michele Eodice's presentation from Day 1, "Pedagogical Models for Writing Center Work," has an important place in my conclusion. By helping me see myself and my scholarship as part of a larger professional community, the SI helped me to own a professional identity that went beyond "grad student who has always loved doing and thinking about writing consultancy." My group's feedback on my writing, and the way they saw me as scholar *and* administrator, put me in a position to finish the dissertation in a far more interesting and relevant way than I ever would have without SI.

**McKinney, Jackie Grutsch\*, Jason Luther\*, and Nikki Caswell. "Developing IM in the Writing Center: Platforms, Discourses, and Hidden Benefits," East Central Writing Centers Association, 4 April 2009, Purdue University. Panel presentation.**

(Jackie Grutsch McKinney) Jason Luther and I were in the Summer Institute (2008) in Madison together. We were not in the same writing group at the SI, but I *believe* we both attended a session on research and said during that session that we'd be collaborating. He mentioned adding IM to his writing center during one session. We got to talking after that session because we had been using IM in my writing center and Nikki, the other presenter and I had been collecting data on it. We decided to stay in touch and compare notes. We originally proposed the project for IWCA, I think, and didn't get in, so we tried a revised version for ECWCA. We used FB messaging, regular email, and GDocs to work out the proposal and presentation details. This led to the ECWCA presentation in April 2009. We hope to do something else together in the future, but we haven't yet.

(Jason Luther) Jackie and I met at the WCSI 2008 in Madison. In one of the breakout sessions I put the Syracuse U Writing Center website on the front monitor and Jackie noticed that we had something in common with the Ball State website: we, too, had an AIM widget that allowed any visitor to our site to chat with the receptionist. Jackie approached me after the session and asked if I was interested in collaborating on an article that coded and discussed the uses of this little widget and for instant messenger more generally. As I remember it, she had an audience in mind that reached outside the WC community, inspired by the WCSI "webinar" plenary on publishing in the field. In the end, however, she pulled in Nikki from Kent State and we collaborated over email and Facebook to write our proposal for a conference: ECWCA 2009. Since I spent most of my travel allowance on WCSI, Jackie and Nikki were kind enough to let me produce my paper via iMovie and play it at the conference. I also "attended" and fielded questions with Nikki and Jackie, live from Syracuse, NY using IM. (The video is still up on my server:

[http://writing.syr.edu/~jwluther/ecwca/ecwca\\_Luther.mov](http://writing.syr.edu/~jwluther/ecwca/ecwca_Luther.mov)

[\[http://writing.syr.edu/~jwluther/ecwca/ecwca\\_Luther.mov\]](http://writing.syr.edu/~jwluther/ecwca/ecwca_Luther.mov).) I credit Jackie for following up over email the next year. I probably would not have, only because as a staff member with scant support, it's difficult for me to prioritize research unless I'm taking doctoral classes. I need pushes like those from Jackie to collaborate outside of my institution. I think the SI helped me put names to faces, and in this particular case, put me in contact with an emerging leader in the field. [Authors' note: because of the contact made during the follow-ups to this project, Jackie and Jason are preparing to collaborate again.]

**Odom, Mary Lou.** "Finding Theory at the IWCA Summer Institute." *International Writing Centers Association Website*. 15 January 2009. <http://writingcenters.org/2009/01/finding-theory-at-the-iwca-summer-institute-by-mary-lou-odom-kennesaw-state-university/> [<http://writingcenters.org/2009/01/finding-theory-at-the-iwca-summer-institute-by-mary-lou-odom-kennesaw-state-university/>] **31 Aug. 2009.**

Reflecting on the tension between theory and practice is sort of constant for me as both a teacher and a researcher. It was, in fact, a key focus of my dissertation several years ago. The fact that some people view writing centers as particularly "far" from theory has always been especially problematic for me. At the 2008 IWCA, when we were asked to write simply on "theory" at the start of a morning plenary session, my mind returned to this tension and how it actually played out in the writing center. I found, as I often do, that thinking about difficult issues in the context of writing center work can be quite generative. But the time we had to write to this prompt was brief, and while the ensuing discussion about theory was a fascinating one, I left my writing in our notebook as we moved on to the next task. At dinner that night, Nita Meola mentioned that she would like to have me write something about the Institute for *IWCA Update*. She repeated her request in an email a month or so later, and I wrote the piece that, starting in January of 2009, was featured on the IWCA site (which had by then taken on the role of *Update*). The piece debuted, fortuitously, around the time that Paula Gillespie and Brad Hughes were giving a talk at the University of Wisconsin Writing Center colloquium planning and running the IWCA Summer Institute, and Brad was kind enough to point it out in his emails announcing the event.

**Ryan, Leigh, Trixie G. Smith\*, and Pamela Childers\*,** "Teacher/Tutor/Scholar/MENTOR: Perspectives on Mentoring to Facilitate Professional Development. Workshop on Mentoring." *European Writing Centers Association*. Freiburg, Germany. 20 June 2008. Presentation.

**Smith, Trixie and Pamela Childers.** "Creating Safe Writing Center Spaces for Diverse Students." *Conference on College Composition and Communication, Pre-Conference Workshop*. Louisville, KY. 17 March 2010. Presentation.

**Smith, Trixie and Pamela Childers.** "'Mind the Gap': Creating Safe Spaces for Writing Center Students." *International Writing Centers Association Conference*. Las Vegas, NV. 31 Oct. 2008. Presentation.

**Smith, Trixie\*, Pamela Childers\*, and Reid Alexander.** "Writing in the Sciences on the Secondary and College Levels: Is There a Connection?" *International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference*. University of Texas-Austin. 31 May 2008. Presentation.

See entry under [Childers and Smith \[#childers-ryan-smith-mentoring\]](#) for narrative.

**Stewart, Candace, Helen Szymanski, Albert Romano, Zisca Burton, and Valerie Combie. "Book Review: Shanti Bruce & Ben Rafoth. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors.*" *IWCA Update* 5.2 (2004): 13-16. Print.**

(Bill Macauley) I was the editor at the time of the 2004 SI, which put me in a place to start ongoing relationships with other writing center folks. Ben and Shanti's book had just come out and *IWCA Update* needed a review of it. Helen, Candace, and Valerie were at the Summer Institute that year. I already knew Helen but had just met Candace and Valerie. I heard them talking about ESL issues. I talked to each one of them to see if they would be interested in reviewing the book. After the SI, I emailed the group and got them copies of the book and got them in touch with each other and got it rolling.

(Candace Stewart) I remember writing it over email. We met once at the summer institute to split up the work and then wrote it by email. It was Bill Macauley's idea, and he organized it since he was the editor of *IWCA Update* at the time.

(Helen Szymanski) All of us met at the SI 2004 and really jumped at the opportunity to collaborate. So we each did a portion of the review and put it all together through email. (Valerie Combie) The IWCA Summer Institute was an inspiration to me. Not only did it expose me to the workings of the writing center, but it prepared me to set up and run (quite successfully) a writing center on our campus. During the institute, we were encouraged to network and engage in scholarly publications. I knew nothing about setting up or running a writing center before I attended the Summer Institute; I knew that we needed one, and I wanted to introduce it to our campus. The literature and the experiences of veteran writing center directors gave me a clear image of what I needed to do and how I could physically set up the writing center. I learned about the importance of the whole university community buying into the writing center concept. As a result, I outlined the operations to faculty and administration in a forum and in writing. I also understood the importance of record keeping. Our writing center is partially funded through Title III, which requires me to present quarterly reports. The exposure I had at the IWCA Summer Institute prepared me adequately to fulfill that role. The various forms that I received guided me in customizing forms for our writing center. I also learned the importance of training tutors and the format and contents of the training sessions. The IWCA Summer Institute prepared me to undertake an unknown task and to successfully implement it. We celebrated our fifth year this past spring and the writing center continues to make a difference in students' lives and in their academic performances. When the invitation was extended to write the review of the book, the volunteers met a few times (I'm not sure how many times), to determine which chapters we would review, and the format. The SI facilitated this by including time during the afternoons for us to collaborate, or just to share our writing. I think we submitted the review electronically. I also think that we sought colleagues' assistance via the listserv [WCenter].

**Tinberg, Howard. "An Open Letter to New Peer Tutors." *The Writing Lab Newsletter* 29.9 (2005): 14-15. Print.**

I recall, during the Writing Center Summer Institute, that each participant was given the task of composing a writing project that would have practical significance in our day-to-day work at our writing centers. Over the years, I know that I had struggled with finding materials suitable for tutor orientation that would at the same time provide a statement of our writing center's mission and best practices. I figured, why not produce an Open Letter to Tutors? That would give me the opportunity to articulate bedrock principles on which the center was founded as well as allow me to offer a statement of best tutoring practices. But this Open Letter would not be simply for our tutors. It would also serve as a personal statement as to the value of the work for me as an individual. I aimed to get

personal. I really did want to explain how I felt about this work, which for 15 years proved so very satisfying. I recall that my writing group members were helpful in clarifying for me the precise audience that I was aiming to reach (e.g., faculty? tutors? administration?). As it turns out, recent events have made this document and this moment even more poignant, since this past June I had to step away from our writing center because of a disagreement with administrative policy. I shall miss the work tremendously: as I note in the Letter, tutoring calls upon our better natures. I was the better for having done the work. [Authors' note: for more on this see "Really disturbing news" in the Wcenter archives for Aug 31 to Sept 4, 2009.]

**Tinker, John. "Generating Cultures of Writing: Collaborations between the Stanford Writing Center and High School Writing Centers." *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 80.2 (2006): 89-91. Print.**

Two IWCA workshops for writing center directors, the Post-Conference Workshop for Writing Center Directors in Savannah, Georgia, in 2002 and the IWCA Summer Institute in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2003, helped Wendy Goldberg and me develop our expertise in the field and fulfill the mission statement for our new center at Stanford: celebrating cultures of writing across campus and across communities. I had met Pamela Childers both at Savannah and Madison, and she became a valuable consultant, colleague, and friend as I learned how universities and colleges could most effectively work with secondary schools, taught classes to train Stanford undergraduates to tutor high school writers, and helped develop and implement the Ravenswood Writes program. Pam edited a special edition of *The Clearing House* on secondary-school writing centers and invited me to submit the article listed here describing Stanford's collaboration with these high schools.

**Winans, Sherri. "Writing Selves in the Center: Possibility, Play, and Potential Space." Northern California Writing Centers Association Conference. Santa Rosa Community College, Santa Rosa, CA. 1 March 2008. *International Writing Centers Association Website*.**

**<http://writingcenters.org/2009/04/nocal-wca-2008-conference-keynote-address-by-sherri-winans/> [<http://writingcenters.org/2009/04/nocal-wca-2008-conference-keynote-address-by-sherri-winans/>] 15 December 2009.**

The featured article (Summer 2009) on the IWCA home page called "Writing Selves in the Center: Possibility, Play, and Potential Space," came about through my interactions with members of my writing group at the 2006 SI. "The Pink Ponies," as we called ourselves, were very interested in the work we at Whatcom Community College were doing with improv techniques in staff education, and they encouraged me to write about what we were doing. One of the group members, Sheryl Cavales Doolan, was interested enough to come to a CCCC session I did with Whatcom students in 2007, and she was later instrumental in inviting me to do the keynote address for the 2008 conference of the Northern California Writing Centers Association. If I'd not gone to that SI and been in that writing group, I might not have written this piece. This kind of networking happens at conferences, too, but I do think the friendships were able to become more solid because of all of the time we had together. My relationship with Cheryl Cavales-Doolan at Santa Rosa JC comes to mind. We were in the SI writing group together and got to know each other. Later, she came to my pre-conf wc workshop at the C's, and our conversations continued. Then she and the No Cal WC regional invited me to do the keynote address; there, my husband and I had dinner with her and her spouse, as well as with Scott Miller and his partner. Scott was another SI 2006 leader, with me. At the recent CCCC, Cheryl and her spouse and I and mine met up at the Bedford party, for drinks and some more great conversation.

Our working relationship is fed by our social relationship—and I think that being at the SI together helped us set that up. If the group directly helped me generate ideas about the piece, I do not remember specifics on that. We were not focused on my writing of this piece specifically. Mostly, we talked about what we would like to write, but we did not start working on specific projects. What happened in the group was that we got to know each other better, and that led to the invitation from Cheryl and others to do the keynote, and that invitation led to my writing of the piece that the IWCA published. As I have said before, I do hope we're expanding our definition of "published writing" and even "professional." The more I see of this two-year college teaching and writing center world, the more I marvel that anybody from a two-year ever publishes anything at all. We are understaffed, overworked, underpaid, most often unable to afford such things as SI's and national conventions (at my institution, we have \$300 per year for professional development, which includes all professional memberships, conferences, workshops, etc.). I am not whining. I'm representing. The only reason I got to attend the SI was that I was invited to lead—my way was paid by IWCA. I have wormed my way into the larger conversations, and have found ways to get myself to CCCC and PNWCA events with college support (that support is gone now, with the budget crisis), and it has not been easy. Publishing is a step beyond what I've been able to do. I have tried. I could write articles on this! Perhaps when I retire, I will.

## Conclusions

In their chapter in *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book*, Gillespie, Hughes, Lerner and Geller discuss some of the guiding principles of the first SI: "to foster collegiality and to provide sustained opportunities for networking, mentoring, and discussion; [and to] tap the 'collective intelligence' of all involved, participants as well as leaders" (37). They designed the workshop as a "carefully planned, coherent, weeklong residential institute, during which participants and leaders come to form a community, learning interdependently, with and from each other both formally and informally" (37). The above narratives are one indication that these original goals were realized and persisted through the years. Because of this careful and intentional planning, the IWCA Summer Institute offers a model for seeding an active community of practice that brings people together from diverse institutions, giving them new perspectives on their work through mentoring, collaboration, and the development of professional friendships. For many this also results in development of a professional and scholarly identity more deeply connected to writing centers and their attendant fields.

In reflecting on the Summer Institute's role in the dissemination of the pieces included in this bibliography, authors noted the importance of mentoring and collaboration, both between participants and among participants and leaders. These practices, sponsored by the Summer Institute, have cultivated a community of practice, one of which includes newer members in the knowledge-making and practices of the writing center field. Summer Institute leaders recognize what Etienne Wenger and the authors of the *Everyday Writing Center* posit about design for learning: it "cannot be based on a division of labor between learners and nonlearners, between those who organize learning and those who realize it, or between those who create meaning and those who execute it" (Wenger; qtd. in Geller et al. 7). As early chairs describe, the Summer Institute brings together "a group of established leaders mentoring forty or so people relatively new to the field" (Gillespie et al. 34). While the term "mentoring" itself may point toward hierarchy, authors' reflections in this bibliography describe this mentoring as mutual engagement in the discourse and practices of the field. Participants such as Deal and Dennen describe how their dialogues with Institute leaders helped to shape their dissertation research. Other participants such as Levin, Winans, McKinney and Luther describe the formative effects of their conversations and writing group work on the research they did subsequent to the SI. While the curriculum itself sometimes fostered these discussions, leaders also created space during the week-long institute for these informal discussions between newer and more experienced members of the field. As researching and writing are central practices of the community, the Summer Institute's

planned times for informal dialogue about and work on research and writing opened up these practices to newer members.

The narratives above also highlight the roles that personal invitation played in many of these projects. Several of these articles were published because an editor recognized that an individual (or individuals) had something to say and something to teach. Long-time leaders in the writing center community offered invitations, encouragement, and connection with resources to people who were newer to the field, thereby engaging them in the practices of writing and scholarship that are central to the growing writing center field. For example, Muriel “Mickey” Harris requested that articles be written up for *The Writing Lab Newsletter* (e.g., Denny, Day and Fels; Grady et al.), and numerous IWCA board members and individuals associated with the *Writing Center Journal* and *IWCA Update* nudged and encouraged others to share their projects publicly (e.g., Deal; Dennen; Fallon and Ozias; Odom; Stewart et al.; Winans).

Even more, collaboration between newer and more experienced members of the writing center community (Childers and Smith; Childers and Tinker; Geller, Denny et al.) provides fuller access to and understandings of the sometimes invisible practices of research, theory-making, and publication. In an active community of practice, after all, design for learning cannot found itself in divisions of labor between teachers and learners, “between those who organize learning and those who realize it” (Wenger 234). Paulo Freire discusses similar ideas concerning divisions between professionals and novices within the context of social and structural change: “The revolutionary effort to transform these structures radically cannot designate its leaders as its *thinkers* and the oppressed as mere *doers*” (126). While the SI does not explicitly identify as a revolutionary effort, it certainly proclaims through its design and methods that it values collaboration and nonhierarchical communities focused on co-learning—which in some academic settings would be regarded as revolutionary or deviant at the least. Given the stratified state of post-secondary education in the United States, it is not often that teachers are afforded the opportunity to dialogue and collaborate with colleagues from different institutional types. As this narrative bibliography shows, the IWCA SI frequently facilitated collaboration between scholars from deferent types of schools and even across grade levels (Denny, Day and Fels; Tokay et al.). Day and Eodice, in their research on co-authoring, also note that “successful co-authoring invites voices that might never have been heard at all otherwise, especially less powerful voices that might have been drowned out in a hierarchy” (35). Collaborative writing can deconstruct traditional divisions of labor in the academy, creating environments where learning is facilitated rather than frustrated.<sup>[2]</sup> [\[#note2\]](#)

The narratives themselves also illustrate the extent to which these collaborators construct their relationships as dialogic rather than hierarchical.<sup>[3]</sup> [\[#note3\]](#) (Childers and Smith; Deal; Tokay et al.) Dawn Fels’s concluding thoughts in her narrative accompanying the article she co-authored with Harry Denny and Rebecca Day demonstrate the ongoing nature of these collaborations. Fels writes, “Our [book] review was not the only project hatched that week or shortly thereafter. I think what the SI affords participants and leaders is time to talk and get to know each other as professionals, yes, but as people. When we have time together, relationships form, understanding grows, and ideas take shape into projects that benefit us all.” Fels’s remarks speak to the important role that co-learning between SI participants and leaders plays, what communities of practice theory names “legitimate peripheral participation,” which leads to learning (Wenger 100).

When looking at co-authoring relationships in particular, Day and Eodice also note that “The ineffable and affective dimensions of the relationship, though difficult to articulate, are central to [its] success” (39). Our findings, as well as those of the National Writing Project,<sup>[4]</sup> [\[#note4\]](#) support this as well. The benefits of sharing meals and social time run throughout many of the narratives (e.g., Childers, Deal, and Grady et al.), substantiating the value of the SI’s *campiness* described in Fallon

and Ozias’s article. In addition to the opportunities for collaboration, the emotional benefits should not be overlooked. Writers like Grady et al. found true joy and friendship in their collaborations, and other authors mention delight (Ede, Gillespie, and Hughes) and inspiration (Stewart et al.). While these outcomes may be valuable in and of themselves, they also speak to a realization of the writing center pedagogy that Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll and Boquet advocate: “praxis compellingly situated in the relational—not as things, but as ways of acting with and for one another” (9). Such relational outcomes support a learning culture,<sup>[5] [#note5]</sup> and point to the importance of “mattering” in such a culture (Geller et al. 125-26).

All of this—mentoring, collaboration, and co-learning in the context of a community of practice—facilitates participants’ development of professional and scholarly identities that are more deeply connected to writing centers and their attendant fields. Geller and Eodice, in their article “The Rewards of Summer: IWCA Summer Institute,” describe such outcomes. Specifically, they found that “[t]hose who attend the Summer Institute feel connected to their colleagues and peers and to disciplinary conversations,” and that “[t]hose who attend the Summer Institute feel prepared to, interested in and encouraged to join professional and disciplinary conversations (through regional and national networks, through research and publishing, etc.) and feel more supported as they do so” (6). The narratives above illustrate the ways in which Summer Institute participants were made to feel connected and prepared to join in disciplinary conversations. Geller and Eodice’s third conclusion concerns administration, and while few entries in this bibliography explicitly describe how the Summer Institute encouraged the author’s development as an administrator, they do not close off this opportunity. In fact, Katie Levin notes that the SI helped her to see herself as part of a larger professional community and encouraged her to include issues of administration in her writing center-focused dissertation. Levin’s statement—“By helping me see myself and my scholarship as part of a larger professional community, the SI helped me to own a professional identity”—exemplifies the profound impact that extended professional experiences like the SI can have on individuals’ professional and scholarly identities.

Despite the fact that the narratives above point toward some realization of the explicit goals for the Summer Institute, and the value it has for cultivating a community of practice based on collaboration, an analysis of publications may not be as encouraging. For one, the venues for publication represented in the bibliography indicate that the scholarship currently growing out of the IWCA SI has, up to this point, limited visibility outside of specifically writing center focused publications. Of the 30 entries, half of them were conference presentations, meaning that the circulation and permanence of their ideas were limited because of their format. Furthermore, only seven presentations were given at a larger composition or writing across the curriculum conference, and only two of the print pieces were articles in longer format peer-reviewed publications such as the *Journal of College Reading and Learning* or *The Clearing House* (Babcock; Tinker). In some respects, these observations about the insular nature of SI publications should not be surprising given what we know about how disciplines and institutions function. Disciplines, after all, “constitute a system of control in the production of discourse, fixing its limits” (Foucault 224). While the Summer Institute generates energy and knowledge that is shared among people within writing center studies, it seems to remain located primarily within writing center focused publications and conferences. This echoes Boquet and Lerner’s findings<sup>[6] [#note6]</sup> in “Reconsiderations: After ‘The Idea of a Writing Center’” and their concern with the recent “lack of reach of writing center-related publications” (171). Boquet and Lerner point out how *Writing Center Journal* articles frequently cite scholarship from general composition studies journals (e.g., *College English*, *CCC*, *JAC*, etc.), but that articles in these same journals rarely cite *Writing Center Journal* articles (181). They conclude by arguing that “[writing center studies] can no longer afford, if it ever could, to have forged a separate peace between classroom and nonclassroom teaching” (186). We agree. While it is important that the SI and other writing center initiatives promote more writing scholarship in general, it is equally important that we

strive to have these scholarly conversations with our adjacent composition studies colleagues and colleagues in other departments, such as communication and education, who share our interest in helping students generally and writers specifically. Much can be gained by listening to and learning from scholarship from disciplines outside of our own. Academics are quick to recognize the interdisciplinary nature of our postmodern condition, but we are slow to incorporate this knowledge into our twenty-first century professional communication practices and academic culture.

As Boquet and Lerner point out, the issue of publishing to an internal audience rather than reaching out to a wider one is a discipline-wide problem, not just a quirk of these SI-related publications. As the SI grows, we might ask how it could do more to nurture and produce scholarship that is more widely available to scholars unfamiliar with writing centers, and in Boquet and Lerner's words, "represented in richly textured accounts that are concerned with the full scope of literacy studies, as befits the complexity and richness of writing center sites and the people who populate them" (185). How could the IWCA SI not only encourage and prepare people for participation in professional and disciplinary conversations, but also encourage and prepare people for participation in *interdisciplinary* conversations about writing and learning?

While evidence does not indicate that the SI is preparing participants to publish in interdisciplinary venues or even publication venues within the broader fields that writing centers are typically associated with (composition studies, English, education, etc.), our bibliography does show how many collaborative projects are cross-institutional. Perhaps a regret of many fields within education is that the scholarship is noticeably stratified and collaboration across institutional types is rare and difficult to facilitate. However, as this bibliography demonstrates, a great deal of writing center scholarship results from people from a variety of institutions and educational settings collaborating. Not only did some of these projects bring people from small private colleges and large state funded research universities together (e.g., Gillespie, Hughes, Learner, and Geller), but several also brought graduate students and high school teachers into conversation with their post-secondary colleagues (Denny, Day and Fels; Tokay et al). This to us seems extremely important to note, and equally important for SI planners to consciously facilitate cross-institutional collaborations in future SIs.

As Anne Geller, Michele Eodice, Frankie Condon, Meg Carroll, and Elizabeth H. Boquet emphasize in their explorations of a writing center community of practice in *The Everyday Writing Center*, "one of the necessary conditions both for individual and organizational learning is a shared conviction that one's presence, one's engagement, and one's contributions matter" (125). The SI and the way it constructs a week-long community of practice communicates to attendees that they matter. We all benefit when we recognize what we have to teach and learn from each other. Our field surely would be the lesser without these publications and presentations, which provokes the following question: How many more of our colleagues, writing consultants, and students have contributions that could expand our theories and improve our practice? These narratives teach us that, as writing center administrators and tutors, we should mentor and "encourage our colleagues to engage in research and to write to share their new knowledge with the rest of us" (Harris, above) whenever the opportunity arises. Similarly, we should resist diminishing our own scholarly identities. Just as we strive to facilitate students' identities as knowledge producers and consumers, we must own the identity of scholar through action, which includes engaging in dialogic and supportive interactions with others. Not surprisingly, these observations are similar to some of the main suggestions made in "Work in Progress: Publishing Writing Center Scholarship" (DeCiccio et al). In fact, the opening paragraph addresses identity matters and much of the remainder of the article discusses the importance of writing, sharing writing with colleagues, and writing for an audience broader than one's local context. The Summer Institutes are an ideal opportunity for this sort of nurturing and encouragement. That said, however, in a community where connections are based on personal relationship and invitation, a danger lies in insularity and a narrowed scope of learning. We might ask how the Summer Institute

could work as a catalyst for expanding the diversity of scholars who consider writing centers as a site for scholarship and research. As DeCiccio states in the conclusion of his narrative, we need to "refrain from the 'arm of excuses' we all use that prevents us from publishing[;] all of our voices need to be heard for our community to remain vibrant." For writing center studies to realize this goal, structures like the SI need to be intentional not only in their curriculum but also in the way organizers recruit participants. Therefore, future researchers or SI planners may want to ask the following question: Is the current practice of offering an open invitation to attend the SI facilitating diversity in participants, or is it resulting in the replication of similar participant demographics year after year?

It's clear from the reflections above that these 37 SI alums' Summer Institute experiences brought them into theory, scholarship, and collaboration. These narratives demonstrate that the IWCA Summer Institutes allow new and experienced writing center professionals to meet collaborators, share and generate ideas, and receive an extra "push" to finish lingering projects or embark on new ones. The writing groups and focus on writing at the SIs should be continued, and even expanded. Perhaps a parallel advanced session could be offered where "returnees" could focus exclusively on research and writing. The narratives also demonstrate that SI participants' thinking and writing is enriched by the interpersonal interactions that take place during and after the SI. The dialogic aspect of the SI seems to play an important role in introducing those new to writing centers to the theory, scholarship, collaboration, and action involved in writing center work, and to strengthening the commitment of more experienced participants and leaders to these same endeavors. We would also add that SI conversations and social interactions were couched in a sense of security, creating a "sandbox" space for trying out new ideas for scholarship and research in an environment of trust (e.g., Babcock; Winans).

It is our hope that this list will be augmented by participants in future Summer Institutes. It is also our hope that this bibliography represents the early documentation of something that will eventually be able to proclaim a historical tradition as longstanding as the National Writing Project (NWP) Summer Institutes or the Summer Institutes of Linguistics. We look forward to witnessing how the annual IWCA Summer Institute develops. Will it, like the NWP, become more localized? Will an advanced institute focused on professional writing become a part of the writing center culture as it has for NWP? As Ede, Gillespie, and Hughes suggest, will the community sponsor an extra day, or even devote a new institute to research and publication? How will the SI leaders continue to use the SI to nurture scholarship, leadership, diversity, and cross-institutional collaboration within and from the field? The Summer Institute helps individuals to develop professional and scholarly identities more deeply connected to writing centers and their attendant fields. With the IWCA SI still being a relatively young tradition in the field of writing centers, it is important to imagine the possibilities and pivotal role the SI can play in building a community of practice that facilitates a wider sharing of knowledge and cultivates future scholarship, research, and publication within fields concerned with writing, learning, and literacies.

**Note of Thanks:** This document is an example of the kind of collaboration that can grow out of the IWCA Summer Institutes. Some of these people were known to us and some were total strangers, yet they all agreed to participate in this project. Many, many thanks go out to the Summer Institute leaders, participants and chairs who shared their knowledge and their stories with us. Thanks also to Shareen Grogan and Brian Fallon for their interest in helping get this idea off the ground, and to Anne Ellen Geller and two anonymous reviewers for their useful comments.

**Dedication:** After this article was completed we learned of the passing of colleague and fellow SI alum John Tinker. We humbly dedicate these efforts to his memory.

## Notes

1. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Bibliography is widely recognized by linguists as the reference of first recourse for information on minority languages around the world. It is a meta bibliography of world languages that has as its goal the preservation of minority languages world-wide. While it is associated with a faith-based organization, it is widely contributed to and used by linguists of many religious and non-religious persuasions. ([Return to text. \[#note1-ref\]](#))
2. In his book, *Communities of Practice*, Etienne Wenger writes, "*Learning cannot be designed: it can only be designed for— that is, facilitated or frustrated*" (229). We think that collaborative writing, as a practice, can do much to create environments where learning is facilitated through a shared endeavor rather than frustrated. ([Return to text. \[#note2-ref\]](#))
3. Lunsford and Ede, in their research on collaborative authoring, differentiate between hierarchical and dialogic collaboration in multiple author situations. ([Return to text. \[#note3-ref\]](#))
4. The importance of co-learning between participants and leaders in National Writing Project (NWP) SIs is well documented. Several NWP scholars have written about the value of participating in an egalitarian learning community and explicate the significance of developing personal relationships during SIs. Bradley and Vanderslice, Halbert, Maneno, and Navarro in their first-person narratives about their SI experience each comment on the impact that dialogue and collaboration had on them personally and professionally. In their article, Bradley and Vanderslice share daily reflections about the SI from their different perspectives as a participant and leader respectively. Vanderslice, one of the SI leaders, writes about how much she's learning from the SI participants, and Bradley reflects on the role the SI played in helping her view herself as a writer. Halbert ends her article with a quote from a piece that she wrote during the SI: "The summer institute works because teachers teach teachers. It isn't one voice, but a community of voices, a dialogue." Maneno's narrative contains similar statements that argue that the best professional development takes place when teachers participate in a "community of learners." Navarro also discusses dialogue and learning communities but emphasizes that it's the process rather than the individual activities that are important. For an in-depth analysis of the impact of collaboration and dialogue on NWP SI participants, see Caswell's dissertation, "Teacher Transformation Achieved through Participation in the National Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute," where he concludes that collaboration is one of five contributing factors to SI participants experiencing "radical transformation" as a result of participating in an SI. Another interesting finding within Caswell's work is that "active involvement" and "leadership" are two of five themes that emerged from NWP site directors' reflections on what constituted "radical transformation" of SI participants. This is interesting to us because of the correlation we see between publishing and leadership. ([Return to text. \[#note4-ref\]](#))
5. While narratives in this bibliography highlight the positive affective dimensions of collaborative and collegial relationships, Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet note that tensions, dissent, and challenge are also legitimate and constructive ways of participating in a community of practice. Quoting Wenger, they encourage writing centers to "embrace the idea that 'disagreement, challenges, and competition can all be forms of participation' (77), [though] 'disagreement, challenges, and competition' should [not] thrive in all forms and at all costs" (7). ([Return to text. \[#note5-ref\]](#))
6. Boquet and Lerner report in "After 'The Idea of a Writing Center'" that "in the 154 issues of *College English* from 1985 to 2005, only five articles have appeared in which the authors cited something from *WCJ*, none since 1998; in the 84 issues of *CCC* over that period, only seven articles have made reference to a publication appearing in *WCJ*" (181). They contrast this dearth of citation with the regularity with which articles in *WCJ* "cited sources appearing in

*College English*, CCC, JAC, and *Research in the Teaching of English*" (181). ([Return to text. \[#note6-ref\]](#))

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