After reading the first of 22 original essays in this weighty tome, I knew at once it wasn’t just another reference to slide onto a dust-collecting shelf. While this volume covers a broad array of praxis useful for both new and veteran directors, and those contemplating future careers, which would be expected, it decidedly serves another aim as well; it provides a clear photograph of the state of the profession in the early twenty-first century. Not a “how-to” guide, *The Writing Center Director’s Resource Book* instead presents researched scholarship that even beyond creating a sense of what is currently being done as “best work” in writing center spaces, extends to reveal where our theories and goals are headed for future teaching and administrative practices and purposes. To accomplish that end, each essay has its own Works Cited pages, and many have additional resources, including appendices for budgets, surveys, and other artifacts for documenting and promoting intellectual work.

As a teacher of graduate seminars in composition pedagogy, I’m always looking for ways to bring writing center pedagogy into conversation with classroom teaching and reflective teaching practices. As a writing center director, I’m also always looking for essays that speak particularly to graduate students as tutors, ones that I can use in our professional development and orientation workshops. This book delivers on both counts. While *The Writing Center Director’s Resource Book*’s collection of essays will provide common grounds for ongoing conversations in our field, the book overall also acknowledges the unique experiences that help directors recognize how to make the most of their own institutional identities and opportunities. As the editors explain in the introduction, “this book is structured to respond to diverse institutional settings by providing both current knowledge and case studies that illuminate this knowledge” (xiii), creating not just a content-based resource, but a volume of essays that can also be used as research models for directors and graduate students’ own research agendas. It has both the currency and staying power to make it an excellent choice for required reading lists and permanent library holdings.

The inquiry posed by the editors—“What knowledge do writing center professionals need to have in order to do their best work?” (xi)—drives both the collection as a whole and each individual text. This line of inquiry demonstrates that the necessary knowledge for writing center work is disciplinary and connected to the rhetorical tradition itself. Our body of
writing center theory arose from experience and observation, creating a publishing boon in the 1980s, and its evolution as revealed in these essays confirms how specialized knowledge and interdisciplinary applications have become the hallmarks of the professionalization of writing center studies within English Studies, and the professionalization of writing center work and workers; tutoring staff and administrators alike have a deep legacy to draw from, and this volume provides the evidence of that and the threshold to keep going.

To start, this anthology fittingly begins with Neal Lerner’s historic gaze at the origins for the identity and representation of “Writing Center Directors” as subjects. Lerner draws on archival research to discover the practices of hiring and training supervisors in the earliest writing labs. Citing from journal articles, doctoral dissertations, and masters’ theses, Lerner discovers that the earliest recommendations resound with many of our current views. For one thing, graduate students have staffed and directed writing clinics and writing labs since their inception. The question of necessary qualifications and adequate compensation began in the 1920s, and continues today. In 1927, E.F. Lindquist of the University of Iowa, wrote, “it should be one of the most important functions of the laboratory supervisor to engage in the research and study” of writing and teaching methods (qtd. in Lerner 5). Writing Lab Director Francis Appel described the setting at the University of Minnesota in 1932: “In a quiet skylight room we provide chairs and slanting tables for ease in writing,” where the “instructor in the laboratory merely conspires with [writers] to achieve clear expression” (qtd. in Lerner 6). And in 1951, at Florida State, a sense of community and purpose was achieved by “frequent staff meetings, where . . . friendly criticism is common, where a graduate assistant feels free steadfastly to present his point of view against that of a senior professor” (9). Just as familiar though is “the writing center as a long-standing site of struggle” (8), and the “unfortunate legacy of higher education’s unease with students least prepared for its challenges” (9). Lerner’s research provides a historical basis of “limits and possibilities” that have been inherent in writing center work since its roots. Lerner’s chapter also establishes a solid and inviting foundation for continued historical, and particularly archival, scholarship to enrich the future of writing center studies and writing program administration.

The concept of time is one that has been recently engaging writing center directors in journal articles and as conference themes and presentations, particularly in the work of Anne Ellen Geller, and in this volume, Carl Glover gives a fascinating examination of kairos, the Classical rhetorical “opportune moment” that within writing centers also translates as “discretion, appropriateness, moments of insight or connection, harmonizing of opposites, a tool for the selecting among alternatives, knowing when to speak and when to be silent,” which all contribute to “a critical consciousness essential for writing
center work” (16). He applies it to tutoring and the selection of tutors by directors through creative and highly convincing prose in “Kairos and the Writing Center: Modern Perspectives on an Ancient Idea.”

Also within this first section, “What Writing Center History Can Tell Us about Writing Center Practice,” can be found essays on sustainable history and writing center ethos, on writing centers as organic sites of professional development, and a chapter on the origins and development of “The Writing Center Summer Institute,” by the four leaders of the 2003 and 2004 institutes: Paula Gillespie, Brad Hughes, Neal Lerner, and Anne Ellen Geller. The Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors began in 2003 under the auspices of The International Writing Center Association (IWCA), providing “a weeklong experience of mentoring and fellowship, of carefully planned sessions with established leaders and co-chairs,” and “ample opportunities both for one-to-one time with leaders and other participants and for special interest groups” (33). The first institute was hosted at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and returns in July 2008 to Madison, Wisconsin, under the leadership of Paula Gillespie, Brad Hughes, and Lisa Ede. Being an alumna of the 2004 SI at Clark University, I found this essay both insightful from that position, and significant for those who have not yet attended, especially as it charts the involvement of cross-institutional collaborations and opportunities.

In fact, the other major feature that distinguishes this resource book from its predecessors (familiar and well-thumbed through though they be), arises out of its inclusion of essays from and addressing the full spectrum of sites of writing center work—universities with graduate programs, universities with multiple campuses, community colleges, small colleges, learning centers outside English departments, writing centers for graduate student writers, and writing centers in high schools—and its insistence on paying attention to diversity, which has proven a major concern in writing center work emphasized in the past two years through conference themes, keynote addresses, and journal articles. Notably here, within the section on “Managing the Writing Center,” an essay by Margaret Weaver addresses racial diversity and the nature of the term prejudice.

But wait, there’s even more, if I haven’t yet convinced you that this book is the perfect accompaniment for a hot cup of coffee, your laptop, and day-planner. Joan Hawthorne introduces directors to models for program assessment; Kevin Dvorak and Ben Rafoth analyze Director-Assistant Director relationships; Rebecca Moore Howard and Tracy Hamler Carrick examine activist strategies and plagiarism. An entire section explores electronic instruction and multimodal literacies, and the final section provides case studies and institutional histories to provide motivation and lessons for establishing or re-inventing writing centers and their models. This is the sort of book that will be constantly warm from being held open in two hands

Reviewed by Heather Russel, Georgia State University

In Can It Really Be Taught: Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy, Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice collect an important series of essays and dialogues that address challenges faced by creative writing professors who seek effective teaching methodology. The book’s subtitle refers to the editors’ hope to debunk dangerous assumptions held by many professors of literary studies, rhetoric and composition, and even creative writing itself, which collectively establish a lore that writers are born, not taught, and thus an exploration of effective practices will benefit only a few, at best. In the book’s opening essay, “Figuring the Future: Lore and/in Creative Writing,” Tim Mayers explains that the discipline of rhetoric and composition, often considered one of two camps within the English department, roots itself in a tradition of collegial discussion about pedagogy; and literary studies, the other camp, has widened its scope to emphasize effective teaching as well. But a disturbingly pervasive lore among English departments dismisses creative writers as charismatic stars hired more for their power to attract students than for their concern about good teaching. Among other pleas, Mayers asks members of English departments to strive for less fragmented versions of English studies (11), and the essays and conversations that accompany “Figuring the Future” support Mayers’s cause both in content and style.

The essays delight with narratives spun by their authors, creative writers grappling with the implications of pedagogy for their work. For example, in “Against Reading,” Katharine Haake cites Patrick Bizzaro’s concern that MFA classrooms can produce a “workshop-writing phenomenon [that] no doubt works vertically, where sameness is passed from teacher to student who, in turn, becomes a teacher who passes certain literary biases to yet another generation of students” (21). As Haake argues for a liberation from the literary canon in the creative writing classroom, she infuses her comments with poignant anecdotes about her own discoveries as a graduate student and