

# The Inaugural Writing Analytics Special Interest Group at the 2025 Conference on College Composition and Communication Annual Convention

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## Scopus Abstract

Following the success of [The Eleventh International Writing Analytics Conference](#), held at the University of South Florida in March 2025, the first in-person Special Interest Group (SIG) for Writing Analytics convened at the 2025 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), held in Baltimore, Maryland, in April 2025. To commemorate and celebrate this inaugural meeting, we situate the SIG for Writing Analytics within the history of SIGs at the CCCC convention, report on the work of the 2025 SIG for Writing Analytics, and connect this work to ongoing initiatives in the writing analytics community. Attendees reported the need for community, expressed interest in learning how to analyze existing datasets, and discussed the need for writing analytic in the classroom.

*Keywords:* Conference on College Composition and Communication, Special Interest Groups, Writing Analytics

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## The Value of SIGs at the CCCC Annual Convention

SIG meetings create space for diverse connections and responsive affiliations, which, in turn, help substantiate a field's claim to interdisciplinarity and deepen collaborations. For decades, the field of writing studies has asserted that it is fundamentally an interdisciplinary field. In the first chair's address, at the 1977 CCCC convention, Richard Lloyd-Jones (1978) acknowledged the field's use of language as its "instrument" (p. 27) and positioned members as "the ones at the center who reach to all other disciplines" and who "draw from the wisdom of other disciplines" (p. 27). For Lloyd-Jones, the ability of the field to make knowledge was tied to its interdisciplinarity, as well as to its members' interdisciplinary pursuits: "In order to know more," Lloyd-Jones (1978) explained, "we will have to draw into our work the scholarship of many disciplines; we will have to recognize ourselves in the roles of interdisciplinary scholars—with all of the attendant embarrassments that come of trying to speak in fields far from one's own base" (p. 28). Lloyd-Jones's claim to interdisciplinarity functioned, also, as a call for writing studies to increase its interdisciplinarity.

At the 2011 CCCC convention, interdisciplinarity was similarly evoked when chair Gwendolyn D. Pough recognized that members of the field "all *do* language"; Pough (2011) saw the work of writing studies as "so much bigger than how we draw the disciplinary boundaries around both our field and ourselves" (p. 303). Invoking the "obligation" to do language "bigger and to reach every place and everyone we can reach" (p. 303), Pough (2011) called for writing studies to expand its reach through shifts in individual decision-making and encouraged convention attendees to visit certain sessions and engage with specific topics that contest the borders of their individual professional identities (p. 311). Broadening individual interests seemed to be a first step toward increasing our interdisciplinary efforts. Building upon Lloyd-Jones's claim and call, Pough (2011) tasked writing studies with breaking down disciplinary boundaries and scaling up interdisciplinary efforts: "We can all do more to embrace the interdisciplinary aspects of our own field" (p. 310). Whatever progress had been made over 30 years, there was clearly still a need for more.

One key interdisciplinary aspect of writing studies is the member group meetings that occur at the CCCC annual convention. In fact, both Lloyd-Jones and Pough noted the role of member meetings in advancing the field's interdisciplinary work. Lloyd-Jones (1978) saw standing groups and SIGs as reflecting convention diversity by helping "folks with related enthusiasms to cluster together" (p. 28). Pough (2011) recognized member groups as critical sites of interdisciplinary influence at the convention (p. 307). Other CCCC chairs have, likewise, emphasized the influence of SIG meetings in forging connections among members, diversifying the convention's program, and providing members with a professional home—all in addition to promoting interdisciplinarity. Member group meetings have been understood as "little 'togethers'" formulated "in the face of the larger collective" (Lovas, 2002, p. 266), as a "home" that keeps members coming back to the annual convention (Anokye, 2007, p. 268), and as one way to respond to "the many voices and address the diverse needs of our growing profession" (Anokye, 2007, p. 270). Participating in a SIG has been framed as an opportunity to attend to one's "life in the field" (Bishop, 2001, p. 331) and as an action item that can help CCCC membership "be better connected" (Valentino, 2010, p. 370).

Notably, CCCC has few requirements for member groups, giving participants freedom to address "issues related to the profession" in the ways they best see fit (*CCCC member groups*, 2025). Some operate loosely as an annual conversation regarding contemporary or persistent topics among members; others have bylaws, hold elections and business meetings, and conduct ongoing work throughout the year. As an emerging research area, writing analytics is developing and growing, and we see the SIG as more than a place for scholars and teachers to meet and share. That is, the work of initiating a member group

has allowed us to address important questions about how our work is situated within writing studies while also being truly interdisciplinary.

## The Value of a Writing Analytics SIG at the 2025 CCCC Annual Convention

If one purpose of a SIG at the CCCC convention is to foster connections, then one main value of going through the application process to create a Writing Analytics SIG can be understood in terms of three interrelated needs for connection: (1) the need to connect scholars interested in writing analytics; (2) the need to connect the emerging suite of research methods that is writing analytics to perennial conversations about research methodology; and, (3) the need to connect writing analytics approaches to the specific exigence expressed in the convention theme.

The SIG for Writing Analytics was designed to forge connections among a community of scholars from a wide range of disciplines interested in the pursuit of writing analytics. In fact, the introduction to the inaugural issue of *The Journal of Writing Analytics* discussed the need for connectivity and concerns about scholarly isolation in a way that sounds very much like former CCCC chairs Lloyd-Jones or Pough: “There is more to the analysis of writing than any one field can manage alone” (Moxley et al., 2017, p. vi). Writing analytics thrives on connections between scholars and across various fields and subfields. Establishing a SIG for Writing Analytics connected the interdisciplinary aims of both knowledge-making communities—writing studies and writing analytics. Here, the writing analytics community could maintain connections established in *The Journal of Writing Analytics* and at other professional conferences, such as the International Writing Analytics Conference, the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) conference, or the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, while also expanding to include colleagues from across the wide field of writing studies, such as those focused on two-year college literacy studies or medical rhetorics.

A second need for connection—the need to connect the emerging suite of research methods that is writing analytics to perennial conversations about research methods—was met by establishing a SIG for Writing Analytics, as well. In *Where’s the Rhetoric? Imagining a Unified Field*, S. Scott Graham (2020) documented “boundary work” that maps onto “an anti-empirical sentiment” in the field, an aversion to quantitative methodologies, and more broadly an attitude “against computing in the humanities” (p. 13). Graham referenced Charney’s (1996) “Empiricism Is Not a Four-Letter Word,” which called upon members of the field to move past facile endorsements or condemnations of “methods a priori by ideological purity” and to consider “our ability to work with each other to conduct the very best research we can and to expand our understanding of academic and nonacademic discourse” (pp. 568-569; cf. Haswell, 2005; Takayoshi, 2018). Graham (2020) invoked writing analytics and, more specifically, *The Journal of Writing Analytics*, as providing evidence of this boundary work (p. 13); boundaries, as Graham suggested, can be changed—worn down or broken, even—and convening a SIG for Writing Analytics helps to forge the connections that might alter these boundaries.

The SIG for Writing Analytics addressed a third need for connection—namely connecting writing analytics to the exigence expressed in the convention theme. The 2025 CCCC convention was titled “‘Computer Love’: Extended Play, B-sides, Remix, Collaboration, and Creativity.” The call for proposals, issued by chair Kofi J. Adisa (2024), encouraged CCCC members “to explore intersections of technology, collaboration, and creativity in our writing and teaching practices.” The SIG for Writing Analytics was well-positioned to speak to this theme; its goal was to bring together researchers, writing program administrators, and developers working at the intersection of large language models, big-data research, software, and ethics. Recognizing that writing programs increasingly rely on data-driven research, we

viewed the SIG proposal as indicative of our commitment to encouraging networking and offering mentoring related to collecting and analyzing data, developing programmatic approaches, applying what we learn in the classroom, and a range of other emerging topics.

Members of the emerging community of scholars and teachers doing work related to writing analytics were already connecting at and beyond CCCC conventions, but we knew that there were others in writing studies who were using methods, tools, and approaches related to writing analytics without claiming the category or connecting to the community. Publications applying writing analytics are found in journals across our field and are often categorized by topic more than method. Launching a formal SIG served not only as a way to name the work we knew so many of us were doing but also to invite others to join in.

## **The Work of the Writing Analytics SIG at the 2025 CCCC Annual Convention**

The SIG for Writing Analytics was accepted for the 2025 convention program and was categorized in the convention program under the “Theory, Research Methodologies, and Praxis” cluster. Morgan Gresham and Danielle Zawodny Wetzel led the group of nearly twenty participants, many of whom were new to the community. After welcoming attendees and offering a brief definition of writing analytics built upon two foundational overviews (Lang et al., 2019; Moxley et al., 2017), the group began by discussing how a writing analytics approach to research in writing studies is typically characterized by working with data and advancing research questions that can be answered through empirical techniques that support “inference about situated language use” (Lang et al., 2019, p. 17).

Many attendees had experience as department chair, division head, or program coordinator. Some connected the assessment work that often accompanies these roles with their interest in writing analytics. Other attendees were doctoral students seeking a way to add an empirical layer to their work. Some viewed writing analytics as allied with subfields they identified with, such as digital humanities and computers and composition. Several were entirely new to writing analytics and simply sought more information on the topic. Attendees spoke of a wide range of experiences with varying writing technologies, computer applications, and analytical tools. Some shared their interactions with *The Journal of Writing Analytics*, emphasizing the value of mentoring during the manuscript development and submission process.

Participants largely belonged to one of two primary constituencies. The first constituency can be described as individuals engaged in ongoing writing analytics projects. These researchers possessed both a writing-focused dataset and a method for analysis that engaged with descriptive or inferential statistics and centered constructs of fairness, validity, and reliability as part of the research plan. Members of this group shared stories of their own interest in and use for writing analytics, as well as the purpose behind their ongoing writing analytics research.

The second group generally possessed a dataset and was searching for ways to analyze and use the data. Several individuals discussed being inundated with data by virtue of their professional appointments as administrators and literacy program coordinators. Some expressed a desire to learn new methods to ask different questions of their data. Some also expressed a pragmatic need to learn these methods as a way to curate data in a timely manner and respond to pressing questions, intervene in emergent situations, and suggest data-driven solutions to problems at their home institutions.

Broad discussions of writing analytics moved from what it was and what it could do to an exploration of the interaction and intersection between how methods could enable particular kinds of writing pedagogy, research, and tool development. While much of the work of writing analytics has focused on empirical research, SIG participants considered implications for the classroom, pointing toward a necessary direction for future research. Participants agreed that data-informed writing pedagogy transforms the classroom and enhances student learning. Discussions moved from the sharing of general practices to a specific example of corpus-based writing pedagogy using tools such as DocuScope (Laudenbach et al., 2024; Wetzel et al., 2021) and the DocuScope Corpus Analysis and Concordancer for instructional design (Brown et al., 2025).

The discussion also suggested consensus among attendees that institutions desire, if not require, analytics-driven arguments in their decision-making processes. At the same time, attendees shared a need for more foundational expertise and accessible resources with which to formulate and deliver these analytics-driven arguments in clear and convincing ways. The group began outlining a series of next steps for the SIG to promote access to learning about writing analytics and support the development of expertise in writing analytics within the larger field of writing studies. The SIG was discussed as a key opportunity for the writing analytics community to create space within the CCCC convention for sharing and learning while also showcasing more polished writing analytics work.

The meeting concluded with participants looking forward collaboratively. A small team formed to draft a proposal with the goal of attaining standing group status in the future. In addition to broadening the community, participants requested writing analytics onboarding. While such opportunities are plentiful at the annual Writing Analytics Conference, participants agreed that providing such opportunities at the SIG would be valuable. Another team was formed to coordinate a writing analytics panel proposal intended to highlight writing analytics projects at early, middle, and late stages of research. Another team was formed to develop a space for sharing and helping each other peer review in advance of submitting manuscripts to *The Journal of Writing Analytics*.

In all, the success of the SIG mirrored the ongoing success of our writing analytics conference and journal, to great degree by representing the same positive and productive sense of community and collaboration. Participants reported a somewhat surprising surplus of data from a variety of institutions that they were eager to use as research datasets for writing analytics work given a set of tools and methods to support their expert analysis. Less surprising but as exciting was how passionate participants were to share the ways in which they were already engaging students with concepts of and approaches to writing analytics in their classrooms—and how students were excited to look at their own writing closely and carefully with an analytic eye. Not surprising but salient was the recognition that researchers and writing program administrators across institutions were being expected to support claims and decisions with analytics. Overall, these shared experiences confirmed our expectations that, while our international and interdisciplinary conferences are bringing a broad community together, (1) the work of writing analytics is happening across writing studies, perhaps on a larger scale than anticipated; and (2) the expertise of writing studies scholars and teachers remains critical for contextualizing and operationalizing this work.

## **The Future of the Writing Analytics SIG and Beyond**

The CCCC Writing Analytics SIG proves an important addition to the writing analytics community's ongoing work. SIG meetings will be replicated at future national and international conferences, including the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW). The theme of the 2026 convention is "Conference and Our Conversations," summoning attendees "to push

forward the current scholarly conversations of the field” (Ianetta, 2025), and the Writing Analytics SIG will appear on the 2026 program to “push forward” the work of using writing analytics in research, in the classroom, and in programmatic and institutional decision making.

In 2025, SIG attendees named much of the potential value associated with analytics but expressed concern about *how* to better understand writing processes and products using available local datasets or tools. As such, the 2026 SIG planning team expects to create a program that provides outreach to potential attendees and onboarding demonstrations with existing datasets using tools like Docuscope. Slated discussion topics include analytics methodologies for better understanding writing processes, as well as the consequences and related real-world impacts of these methodologies, especially as writers choose whether and how to engage with generative artificial intelligence. Discussion topics will surely address strategies to utilize innovative data sources and explore techniques that can be used in real-time to provide feedback or support writing processes.

The 2026 CCCC convention program will also feature the panel proposed by three attendees of the 2025 SIG for Writing Analytics. Titled “Writing Analytics and the Writing Classroom: Referencing, Reflecting, and Reviewing,” the panel borrows Palmquist’s (2019) definition of writing analytics—“the use of quantitative data (including quantitative data derived from qualitative analysis of written text) to assess the quality and characteristics of student writing and activities associated with writing instruction” (2019, p. 4)—and uses writing analytics to understand three typical activities in the college writing classroom: referencing, reflecting, and reviewing. Varied in their choice of analytical platforms and datasets, the three panelists will report findings from ongoing research in writing analytics and showcase the pedagogical takeaways from this emerging research strand. The panel reflects a felt need in the writing analytics community to offer more connections between analytics and pedagogy, including a new submission category for *The Journal of Writing Analytics* called “Writing Analytics in the Classroom” (2025).

Further, the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) holds its national convention on the first day of the CCCC convention. Their 2026 program includes a session sponsored by the Writing Placement Network (TYCA networks are akin to CCCC member groups) devoted to the *White Paper on Generative Artificial Intelligence, Writing Placement, and Principled Decision-Making*, which is forthcoming in volume 9 of *The Journal of Writing Analytics*. The white paper, designed for literacy program coordinators who are considering possible applications of generative AI for writing placement processes, provides six principles that serve as a touchstone for decision making. The authors, who are members of the writing analytics community and SIG participants, will also host sessions about the white paper at regional TYCA conferences this fall.

Finally, participants in the SIG expressed interest in continuing to develop the writing analytics community’s relationship with the WAC Clearinghouse, which publishes *The Journal of Writing Analytics*. The WAC Clearinghouse has been one of the community’s most trusted sources for knowledge production and circulation in writing studies. The relationship promises to be strengthened in three ways this year. First, an idea to establish an open-access prompt library for the field that was hatched at the Eleventh International Writing Analytics Conference will be realized with the launch of the *Writing Studies Prompt Library: Expert Approaches to Generative Artificial Intelligence Prompting*. The resource will be published through the WAC Clearinghouse’s *WAC Repository*. Second, the WAC Clearinghouse awarded *The Journal of Writing Analytics* a twelve-month New Scholars Fellow to serve as the Assistant Editor of the journal for its eighth and ninth volumes and who will assist in the launch of the *WAC Clearinghouse Collection of Writing Corpora* (WAC Clearinghouse Leadership Team, 2025). Third, SIG participants plan to offer a fall workshop on writing analytics, which could build upon the summer data

workshops offered by members of *The Journal of Writing Analytics* editorial board (Eubanks, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c; Laudenbach, 2025).

Conversations from the SIG also influenced the conference theme for the Twelfth Writing Analytics Conference to be held in 2026, which will focus on “Analytics in the Classroom and Workplace.” The roots of writing analytics emerged from learning analytics, and as scholars of writing studies, it is important that we highlight our expertise in contextualizing and interpreting writing as it is used by researchers and administrators across institutions. SIG participants shared how analytics were playing a vital role across their institutions, and as the connection between metrics, rankings, and resources continues to develop, so too will the importance of writing and learning analytics; however, it is vital that our focus remain on supporting “the teaching and learning of writing” (Palmquist, “Directions,” p.7). Feedback from participants helped clarify that including the work of writing analytics in classrooms is the connection that advances the research of writing analytics into practices and into direct support for teachers and students.

In all, we considered the inaugural Writing Analytics SIG to be a success. The community of writing analytics scholars and teachers has been developing for nearly a decade. We see that our work as administrators, researchers, and faculty is important and impacts institutions and individuals, and we want to share our successes with the broad members of the writing studies community. Offering a SIG at the CCCC convention was a wonderful way to expand our reach. In addition to learning more about what the writing studies community needs and sharing more about what writing analytics is and does, new members joined our community. The scope of writing analytics continues to expand as we develop related methods, theories, and pedagogies, which we think will play a growing role in writing studies and beyond. At the same time, we do not imagine our community becoming huge or trending within or beyond writing studies. We appreciate that being small and truly interdisciplinary is beneficial in ways, but we do think that the related methods and emerging pedagogies will play a growing role in writing studies and beyond. We also believe that empirical work is an important part of writing studies and should be taught and applied. As the writing analytics community continues to develop, it is our hope and plan that our continued focus on student learning will attract scholars and teachers who will maintain the positive and supportive community we have built.

### Note

The opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the view of CCCC, its officers, or its Executive Committee.

### Author Biographies

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Brian Gogan is Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies in the Department of English at Western Michigan University, where he also directs the first-year writing program. His research has appeared in *College Composition and Communication*, the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *The Journal of Writing Analytics*, and *Rhetoric Review*, among others. He is a member of the Board of Reviewers for this journal.

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