

Incubating Writing Analytics Research in the Time of COVID-19

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It is hard to believe that we are publishing the third volume of *Analytics* since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the events of the last two years, which have prevented most, if not all, face-to-face conferences and other professional events, those doing research in writing analytics have continued their work. Even without conferences in 2021 in either Europe or North America, nearly 150 of us gathered virtually for the online symposium held over nine days in May. That virtual gathering represents the largest convening of those interested in writing analytics, and we are exploring options for another virtual symposium in 2022. Perceptive readers will note that we've moved from our former "typical" publication month of December to February. This schedule will likely hold going forward, as it keeps our production staff from having to wrap up a semester and the volume in the same few weeks!

We are also discussing plans for returning to face-to-face gatherings while considering how best to incorporate online components for those unable to attend in person. The Special Interest Group (SIG) that was to be part of the 2021 Convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication will, we hope, hold its inaugural meeting at the 2023 convention. We are tentatively planning to resume our own conferences in 2023: first, a North American iteration for January 2023 in New York City, hosted by The City College of New York (CCNY), followed by a European gathering in summer 2023. As plans for both 2022's virtual gathering and 2023's in-person conferences are solidified, we will post notice widely.

The works in this volume represent researchers in the United States, Europe, and the Bahamas, and contain research that examines the use of writing analytics in K-12 and higher education settings. Our single entry in the "Advances in Code" section, Raymond Oenbring's "ThesisWorkshopper: An Automated Thesis Statement Evaluator," explores the potential of an in-development, web-based tool for providing students with feedback on thesis statements for writing assignments. Oenbring contends that compositionists should consider the potential of

natural language processing tools for providing formative feedback to students to augment instructor feedback.

We feature five research articles in this volume. Our first turns focus to K-12 teaching, specifically, writing to learn across various subject areas. Understanding how writing apprehension influences the teaching of writing at this level is the subject of Mark A. Perkins' "The Relationship Between Teacher Efficacy, Writing Apprehension, and Writing to Learn Using Structural Equation Modeling." Perkins surveyed K-12 teachers in typical content areas and found that writing apprehension in teachers may influence their choice as to whether or not to use writing to learn activities in their classrooms. While Perkins suggests several follow-up studies, one interesting outcome is the suggestion that K-12 teachers may need professional development that helps them overcome their own writing anxiety. Scott A. Crossley and Minkyung Kim's "Linguistic Features of Writing Quality and Development: A Longitudinal Approach" takes on the question of how writing development in a group of writers over time, rather than cross-sectionally, can be understood via changes in linguistic features. Kyle Oddis, Jill Burstein, Daniel F. McCaffrey, and Steven L. Holtzman also tackle the question of writing achievement in "A Framework for Analyzing Features of Writing Curriculum in Studies of Student Writing Achievement," but they do so via an exploration of curricular texts. These texts, they hypothesize, can provide elements of local contexts that are not available via analysis of student writing alone. In "Revisiting 'Family Matters': How Citation Patterns in the *Journal of Second Language Writing* Reveal the Changing Nature of the Second Language Writing Field and the Decreasing Role of Composition Studies in It," Aleksandra M. Swatek, Zehra Taşkın, and N. Claire Jackson invoke quantitative bibliometrics to examine the relationship between second language writing (SLW) studies and composition studies to understand how/if composition scholarship is being used and responded to by current SLW researchers. Lastly, Daniel F. McCaffrey, Mo Zhang, and Jill Burstein's exploratory study, "Across Performance Contexts: Using Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) to Explore Student Writing," evaluates the feasibility of using AWE to compare writing samples drawn from student coursework and standardized assessment contexts from students at four different postsecondary institutions. Their work raises possibilities for the nuanced use of AWE in post-COVID pedagogies informed by critical language awareness.

Finally, we present two book reviews: Katie Walkup's review of Cheryl Geisler and Jason Swarts' *Coding Streams of Language: Techniques for the Systematic Coding of Text, Talk, and Other Verbal Data* and Neal Lerner's review of Diane Kelly-Riley and Norbert Elliot's edited collection *Improving Outcomes: Disciplinary Writing, Local Assessment, and the Aim of Fairness*.

In closing, I want to thank all who made this volume of *Analytics* possible. Our Board of Reviewers continues to go above and beyond in reviewing and offering constructive, insightful commentary on manuscripts, while our editorial staff members listed below have done a fabulous



job in moving manuscripts through all phases of the publication process. We are pleased to bring this volume to you and look forward to hearing your responses to it.

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