



2027 Writing through the Lifespan Conference

Meeting the Moment, Building Our Futures

July 12-14, 2027
University of Maine
Orono, Maine

The 2027 Writing through the Lifespan Conference is happening at a consequential historic moment: massive social, technological, and economic upheaval; increasing international conflict; and a multinational squaring off of fascism and democracy. How can lifespan writing research (LWR) understand how people develop as writers under these changing conditions? Can we provide guidance to develop writers who can meet the challenge of these times? What is the work that we, those of us interested in LWR, have been given to do to speak to this moment? Furthermore, how might we build futures for writers and writing—and what might those futures look like—in such circumstances?

For this call, we invite our colleagues—those who have been involved with LWR for some time, those new to the scene, and those who may not have considered it previously—to consider how their work speaks to both the emerging agenda of lifespan writing research and the demands of our particular moment in history. Where do your passions and the needs of lifespan writing research, your disciplines, your communities, and the world converge? What can you tell us about that convergence? How can doing that work help us to build deliberate coalitions of researchers doing meaningful, impactful work on writing through the lifespan?

This is a capacious call: we seek to celebrate our decade of work on writing through the lifespan, to meet the challenges of the present moment, and to plan for a brighter future both in this research agenda and more widely. To suggest potential avenues for exploration, the following questions serve as an entry point into the possibilities of this call—inviting you to consider how your work might both address our current challenges and help construct a collective future:

- How can LWR be a way to facilitate interconnectedness across generations?
- How do we articulate LWR in turbulent or traumatic times?

- How do I document my own writing process, change, and growth across wide swaths of time?
- How can we examine education or other writing-impacted policy and its effects “on the ground” for writers and writing?
- How might one collaborate with writers who are no longer living, such as family members, friends, historical or organizational figures? What methods might be available?

In addition to these questions that meet the moment, participants in the Writing Through the Lifespan Conference also welcome proposals that address these ongoing questions:

- What are the latest lifespan writing research findings?
- What do lifespan writing researchers need to know? Particularly with so many researchers situated in North America and in English/writing programs, what are important findings from other fields, traditions, and contexts?
- What new language and metaphors can we use to think about writing and the development of writers?
- How might we account for the complexity and variability of writing across different epochs of the lifespan?
- How do perceptions of role and agency within communities of writers shape writing identity?
- How does motivation and affect shape perceptions of a writing self, as well as literate action?
- How do the technologies/media available for writing influence writer identity?
- How might the relationships among writing curricula, writing pedagogy, and life outside of schooling be understood from a lifespan perspective?
- How does the proliferation of writing media (e.g. social media, generative AI, digital composing) and the increasing accessibility of those media impact writers’ understanding of their work and its value?
- What are the core questions driving research in lifespan writing development?
- What does writing itself develop?
- How might the Writing Through the Lifespan collaboration form partnerships with others?

We seek proposals for individual research presentations (20 minutes), panel presentations (3 or more researchers, 60 minutes total), or work-in-progress presentations (10 minutes of presentation followed by 15 minutes of discussion).

Individual Research Presentations:

- This category is for oral presentations on individual research that is connected to one (or multiple) of the above themes. Individual research presentations will be grouped thematically to specific topics or by broad conference theme by conference committee members during the review process. Individual research presentations allow for researchers to propose new ideas grounded in the literature or to report on findings from either in-progress or completed research

projects. Presenters will have 20 minutes (15 minutes speaking with 5 minutes for questions).

- Word count limit: 250 words

Panel Presentations:

- This category allows multiple researchers to examine one topic (either a theme or subtheme) from a variety of perspectives or from an in-depth perspective. Panel presentations should be submitted by a team of researchers (3+) and should be focused on a specific linking theme or topic. Submissions should include a brief statement concerning how the panel session will be structured (i.e., three separate presentations, presentations of different lengths, two presentations with a discussant, etc.). Panels will have 75 minutes (60 minutes for all speakers with 15 minutes for questions).
- Word count limit: 850 words (750 for presentations and 100 for session description)

Work-in-Progress Presentations:

- This category is for projects or ideas in their early stages or already in progress that would benefit from discussion and insights from colleagues. Work-in-progress presentations will be done in roundtable formats grouped thematically to allow for discussions amongst colleagues. Submissions should include sufficient information about the project and potential questions that the researcher is seeking feedback or further insights about. Presenters may share empirical findings in this format as well, and we encourage discussions around preliminary findings that might spark future research trajectories with projects that are currently underway. Presenters will have 25 minutes (10 minutes speaking with 15 minutes for discussion).
- Word count limit: 250 words

Proposals are due by November 15, 2026 and should be [submitted here](#). Participants may EITHER submit proposals for an Individual Research Presentation OR as part of a Panel Presentation. All participants are eligible to submit a Work-in-Progress proposal in addition to an Individual or Panel proposal. All co-authors and affiliations will be entered at time of submission.