Quickwrites and the Quest to Reverse Writing Reluctance

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QUICKWRITES AND THE QUEST TO REVERSE WRITING RELUCTANCE

JENNA L. DUNN

HONORS PROJECT

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Abstract

Current research suggests that students’ enjoyment of writing will positively impact their writing achievement (Graham, 2007; Bulut, 2017). Given this trend, the following study explores the extent to which quickwriting, a teaching strategy developed extensively by Donald Graves & Penny Kittle (2005) as well as Linda Rief (2018), impacts the attitudes of reluctant writers. A total of nineteen eleventh-grade students were interviewed in three focus groups. All of the students within the study experienced three weeks of regular classroom quickwriting along with one week of a quickwriting extension workshop prior to participation in the focus groups. Students were asked about their feelings towards writing and quickwriting. Student responses were analyzed predominantly for changes in writing disposition. While two thirds of focus group participants expressed either general dislike or conditional enjoyment for writing prior to the quickwriting unit, findings suggest that quickwriting has strong potential to improve students’ enjoyment of writing, regardless of initial levels of reluctance.
Quickwrites and the Quest to Reverse Writing Reluctance

Introduction

Writing is a miserable task. At least, that is what many students believe (Gau, 2003, p. 9-13; Merisuo-Storm, 2006). Students, and even teachers, express a lack of self-confidence in writing, which only exacerbates the problem of the blank page. Anxieties over what to write and how to write it are so prevalent that the phrase “writer’s block” was invented to describe this uncomfortable, and at times soul-crushing, dilemma. Writing theorist Peter Elbow (1998) laments, “Most people’s relationship to the process of writing is one of helplessness” (p.12). As a preservice teacher whose degree requires numerous literature courses but few writing courses, I have a passion to teach this subject in a way that responds to many students’ anxieties about writing. My research is driven by a burning desire to know how teachers can reach those who are discouraged or disinterested in writing. As one who has herself struggled to enjoy writing, it is a quest that is deeply personal as well.

The following research was inspired by the work of renowned English language arts instructors Donald Graves (2005), Linda Rief (2018), and Penny Kittle (2018) in the field of writing instruction, and it sought to evaluate how effectively their approaches to classroom freewriting addressed the problem of student reluctance in writing. Dubbed “quickwriting,” these teachers’ form of freewriting is prompt-driven, short, and timed in nature. From a theoretical perspective, it shows potential to combat writer’s block and perfectionism and boost students’ skills and agency as writers—all factors which are associated with a decline in writing reluctance (Elbow, 1980; Graves & Kittle, 2005a; Rief, 2018; Jeffrey & Wilcox, 2016). This research probed beyond these theoretical perspectives by using focus group methodology to address the following questions: To what extent does quickwriting boost adolescent students’ enjoyment of
writing? And in particular, how much does quickwriting boost reluctant writers’ enjoyment of writing?

**Review of Literature**

**Quickwrite: Definition and History of a Term**

To understand the impact of quickwrites on reluctant writers, it is important to understand the use of these terms. In this study, *quickwrites* refer to short freewriting activities, usually two to ten minutes in length, in response to a prompt or mentor text. This practice is grounded in the work of Graves & Kittle (2005) and Rief (2018). An example of a quickwrite would be to read the two poems “Where I Live” by Wesley McNair and “City Life” by Sheryl L. Nelms and then to ask students to describe a familiar place for five minutes in their notebooks (Rief, 2018, p. 68-69). When the time is up, students will often be asked to reread their piece either to themselves or to a peer in order to search for “the heartbeat,” the core idea, of their work (Graves and Kittle, 2005a).

The precursor of quickwriting, freewriting, was prominently championed in the latter half of the twentieth century by Peter Elbow (1998). In accordance with Flower and Hayes’s (1981) Cognitive Process Theory of writing, Elbow theorized that students needed to write for discovery. He believed that when freewriting, the writer’s pen should not stop moving; any and every thought should be welcomed. Elbow claimed that such low-stakes writing frees people to write fearlessly and explore tangents, which could end up being critical after all. Most excitingly, Elbow saw freewriting as a cure for writer’s block, functioning as a bridge between the blank page and the polished product. He recommended writing in ten-minute, timed intervals and then turning back to look for a “center of gravity,” which refers to the central idea in a draft (Elbow, 1998, p. 35).
Around the same time Elbow’s theories began to gain traction, Graves (1983), later joined by his pupil Penny Kittle (2005a), translated the ideas within Elbow’s work into practices applicable to the adolescent language arts classroom. Graves and Kittle (2005a) called for regular implementation of quickwrites, their term for ten-minute, prompt-driven, timed writing exercises, as a means to combat writer’s block and collect ideas for bigger drafts. Whereas Elbow chiefly saw such short spurts of freewriting as a means of prewriting for a larger, polished draft, Graves and Kittle expanded upon Elbow’s original vision for freewriting by also seeing quickwrites as a way for students to experiment with writing voice, style, and conventions and to grow in writing fluency. In other words, while Elbow’s freewriting was always a means to an end, Graves and Kittle valued the freewriting process itself, seeing the practice as a meaningful context for skill-based instruction, and not just for idea-generation. One skill heavily developed in Graves’s quickwriting methodology is revision. Graves and Kittle (2005a) taught students to search for “the heartbeat” of their piece (much like Elbow’s “center of gravity”) and to search for sentences or phrases that sound most like themselves, a practice meant to develop students’ writing voice (p. 10-11). Graves emphasized that when used in an adolescent classroom, quickwriting should be completed by teachers as well, who would provide realistic models of the writing process in action to students.

Around the same time that Graves and Kittle (2005a) developed quickwriting for adolescent classrooms, Linda Rief (2018) began experimenting with the same processes in the middle-grade classroom. She adhered to a similar model of timed, prompt-driven free writes, but she opted for shorter writing times, typically anywhere from two to four minutes, and for prompts based on “mentor texts” (Rief, 2018). Rief advocated for mentor texts because she believed that students could best experiment with writing ideas, voice, and techniques after
finding inspiration from the words of others. Though Rief has done the most extensive work regarding the pairing of quickwriting with mentor texts as prompts, she is by no means the only instructor to advocate the use of mentor texts in writing instruction; many others find mentor texts crucial to boosting students’ writing quality and skill (Culham, 2014; Dorfman, Cappelli, & Hoyt, 2017; Gallagher, 2017).

A friend of Rief, Penny Kittle (2018) later wrote 180 Days in partnership with English educator Kelly Gallagher, in which she advocated for daily quickwriting in a way that blends the work of Graves (2005a) and Rief (2018). Kittle and Gallagher (2018) made heavy use of mentor texts, in accordance with the practices of Rief; however, their four- to eight-minute quickwrites and practice of revision and peer review more closely mirror the work of Donald Graves. Shortly after, other writers such as Jason Reynolds have chosen not to use mentor texts but have nonetheless adopted the idea of using short, low-stakes, creative, and prompt-driven writing to motivate student writing and have posted a variety of prompts freely available online (Library of Congress, 2020).

Regardless of the slight variations in approaches, all these theorists and instructors see high potential in short, timed freewriting for overcoming writer’s block and developing students’ writing abilities. Rather than seeing the methods of Graves, Kittle, Rief, and Reynolds as mutually exclusive, this study will blend their approaches in a fashion similar to that modeled in 180 Days by Kittle & Gallagher (2018).

**Writing Reluctance**

**What is a Reluctant Writer?**

Given that this study is particularly concerned with how reluctant writers respond to quickwrites, it is equally important to define the term *reluctant writers*. After extensive research
inquiring into the causes of writing reluctance, Gardner (2011) defined “reluctant writer” as a writer who “exhibits habitual barriers to writing leading to incomplete or superficial writing over a period of time” (p. 78). While reluctant writers can be identified by a variety of characteristics, Gardner asserted that the most crucial determiner of reluctance boiled down to a factor he dubbed “the affective-resistor,” which refers to “the individual’s attitudes and feeling towards writing as well as their self-view as a writer” (p. 78). Given the affective-resistor's critical role in influencing students’ writing disposition, the following study used it as the primary gauge for writing reluctance. Subsequently, for the purposes of this study, a reluctant writer was defined as someone who expresses general dislike for the act of writing or who expresses a low-level of self-confidence as a writer.

**Why Care About Writing Reluctance?**

Research has suggested that positive writing attitudes directly and positively impact writing achievement (Graham, 2007; Bulut, 2017). Because students’ enjoyment of a subject has high potential to directly impact their performance in that subject area, responsible teachers need to address students’ motivation, not just skill level, in their subject area. Noting the mere 27% of twelfth grade students who passed the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) written exam with a score of “proficient” or above, Jeffrey & Wilcox (2016) pointed out the dearth of research regarding student motivation in a call for teachers to pay more attention to student agency and enthusiasm as a significant factor in student achievement (p. 244). In short, reluctance in writing can have real and negative consequences for students’ growth as writers.

**Why Do Writers Feel Reluctance?**
Reluctance in writing has been prevalent in schools, and trends have shown that a dislike of writing seems only to grow as students progress in grade level (Gau et. al, 2003). To understand how or if quickwrites might help to decrease writing reluctance, one must first understand the cause for these struggles and analyze how quickwriting may or may not help to mitigate these causes.

Gau et. al.’s (2003) comprehensive analysis of existing literature at the time assessed the causes for reluctance in writing and arrived at the following conclusions: “Students exhibit a reluctance to write due to a lack of teacher training, poor teacher attitude, students’ poor writing skills, students’ low self-esteem, structure of the school day, gender biases, and students’ learning disabilities” (p. 3). In a different study on reluctant writers, Gardner (2011) interviewed multiple teachers to create a list of characteristics common to reluctant writers in elementary school, including “perfectionist,” “difficulty developing writing–quantity or quality,” and “low self-esteem/poor confidence as a writer” (p. 94). Bulut (2017) similarly found self-efficacy to be highly linked to writing attitude; students who do not see themselves as capable writers are likely to dislike writing. To Elbow (1998), student self-efficacy was also a concern since he blamed a sense of helplessness, the opposite of efficacy, as a source of writing anxiety (p. 13). Elbow also believed that students could change their writing perspectives for the better when they learned to discard overly perfectionist standards for a first draft. Waging a similar campaign against perfectionism, Graves named a hyper-critical “self-sensor” as an enemy to writing (Graves & Kittle, 2005b, p. 2).

While causes of reluctance in writing are numerous and varied, a low sense of self-efficacy, or confidence in writing ability, and a high level of perfectionism appear as common contributors to writing reluctance in most research summaries. Jeffrey & Wilcox (2016)
interviewed over sixty adolescent students about their dispositions towards various types of writing and added another significant factor into the mix of reluctance-contributors: student agency. Students tended to dislike highly constrained writing assignments, instead preferring assignments with high levels of perceived purpose, choice, and personal relevance (Jeffrey & Wilcox, 2016).

**Quickwriting Shows Theoretical Promise in Meeting Needs of Reluctant Writers**

Given the roles of low self-efficacy, perfectionism, high constraints in fostering writing reluctance, quickwrites appear as a promising solution to addressing attitudinal barriers.

Regarding self-efficacy, quickwrites are designed to boost self-confidence. Graves’ (2005a) revision methods teach students to first look over their writing for what they like, rather than pick it apart (p. 9). Furthermore, regular collection of quickwriting in writers’ journals is meant to help students generate a large volume of work, which they can look over as confirmation of their identities as writers. Students’ self-efficacy can also be boosted when they notice an increase in their writing abilities. Rief (2018) claimed that quickwriting helped her students to develop fluency and speed, voice, and stylistic sophistication, all of which increased their writing competency (p. 6). Graves and Kittle (2005a) added on to the list of quickwriting benefits by noting that their method of quickwriting would help students develop revision skills, organization in writing, and mastery of conventions (such as punctuation) (p. 3-4).

Regarding perfectionism, quickwrites are also specifically designed to silence ruthless inner critics due to the imposition of a timer and their low-stakes nature. Elbow (1998) described the timed freewriting process as one that allows students to “stop censoring and write carelessly” (p.69).
Finally, quickwrites show special potential in meeting student needs for agency. Because quickwriting prompts are meant to serve as springboards for divergent thinking, rather than a hard and fast constraint for writing, students have a high level of freedom in choosing their writing topics, and subsequently, they are also more likely to choose personally relevant topics (Graves & Kittle, 2005b, p. 3). Such freedom of choice and relevance are both important means of supplying students with agency and subsequently reducing writing reluctance (Jeffrey & Wilcox, 2016, p. 258, 262).

For all these reasons, quickwrites demonstrated strong theoretical potential to change reluctant writers’ attitudes about writing for the better; nevertheless, this potential was not foolproof. In fact, it was quite possible that quickwriting could catalyze adverse feelings towards writing. Quickwriting did not appear to directly address the needs of students who show writing reluctance due to learning disabilities, and the fast-paced nature of this writing practice could reduce these students’ self-confidence in their writing abilities, increasing their anxieties about writing. Furthermore, research by Myhill (2009) revealed that students likely had varying composition processes, some of which demanded more time for pausing and planning, a practice to which the fast-paced nature of quickwrites did not lend itself.

Despite possible shortcomings in addressing the needs of all writers, the practice of quickwriting still showed high potential to better students’ writing disposition from a theoretical standpoint, and it additionally had some quantitative research to back its potential as well: Gau et al. (2003) tested elementary students’ attitudinal change in response to a daily, ten-minute freewriting period and found a significant increase in positive feelings about writing. Because of close relationship between freewriting and quickwriting, Gau et al.’s (2003) research with freewriting suggested that quickwriting might also have a positive impact on students’ writing
disposition. However, these researchers were only able to study elementary-aged students, not adolescents. To this date, little research has been conducted on impact of the specific, prompt-based form of freewriting advocated by Graves & Kittle (2005a) and Rief (2018) on students’ motivation to write.

**Methodology**

In order to assess how quickwriting impacts adolescent reluctant writers’ attitudes about writing, I conducted focus groups with high school students who have experienced regular quickwriting over the month of February in 2022. The adolescents in this study came from three, eleventh-grade, general-level English language arts classes at an urban, private high school not far from Bowling Green State University. While most students had experienced quickwriting sporadically during the previous school year, they had done very little quickwriting in the most recent academic year. From early February to early March, a total of seven quickwriting sessions were facilitated with the students (Appendix K). Each quickwriting session generally lasted for about 10 to 17 minutes total. The teacher would display a prompt, most often comprised of a mentor text, and sometimes facilitate a brief discussion of the author’s craft moves within the piece that students could imitate in their upcoming quickwriting. In a protocol borrowed from writing teachers Debra Drew and Caitlin Evans, students would then write for three minutes in response to the prompt, revise or extend their piece for one minute more, and then share their writing at their table groups for two minutes (D. Drew & C. Evans, personal communication, Feb 12, 2022). During the revision minute, students were told to adhere to the following three-step, quickwrite revision protocol adapted from approaches within Graves’s (2005b) work: underline the heartbeat (emotional center) of the piece, circle words or phrases you liked or that surprised you, and write a possible direction of extension at the bottom of the
piece (Appendix F). After students had a chance to share their writing with their peers, the teacher would invite volunteers to share their writing with the class for positive commentary. During the last week of the quickwriting month, students selected one of their favorite quickwrites to revise according to Kelly Gallagher’s (2011) RADaR method, which invites writers to reimagine their work by identifying portions of it to replace, add, delete, or reorder (p. 206). Then students “published” their final piece onto a classroom slide deck. They shared their final pieces in small groups on the last day of the workshop. In order to promote intrinsic motivation, students did not receive any grade for their individual quickwriting pieces or for their participation (Feldman, 2019, p. 34). They did, however, receive a summative grade according to their ability to write a rationale explaining and justifying their revisions to their final quickwriting piece (Appendix J).

I, as the principal investigator and student teacher, ran all quickwriting sessions and the final quickwriting workshop during the three classroom sections in the morning. Since I was absent every afternoon, the classroom mentor teacher facilitated quickwriting sessions for sixth period according to the same protocols I had used in the morning. Due to the frequent tardiness of students within first period, only students from second, third, and sixth period were invited to participate in the focus groups, providing a total of three groups in accordance with best practices for focus groups (Grismer, 2018, p.8). The inclusion of sixth period allowed for an intriguing research opportunity: I was able to hear from students who did not experience me as their primary teacher during quickwriting. This likely allowed me to hear these students’ more direct opinions of quickwriting since I functioned as more of a distant third-party to those in sixth-period English. Even so, all students within the focus groups were encouraged to comment
honestly and were reminded that nothing they said about quickwriting would jeopardize their relationship with me, hurt my feelings, or impact their grade (Appendix C).

Based on recommendations from qualitative research guides, I invited between six to seven students from each period to participate in one, thirty-five-minute focus group discussion, which occurred during a regular class period in a quiet room of the library provided by school administration (Curry, 2015; Williams & Nagle, n.d.). As compensation for their time, all participating students received recognition of one service hour, which would help them to fulfill graduation requirements. Students who did not participate in the focus groups completed an enrichment exercise with the classroom teacher.

More students turned in a completed consent and assent form to participate in the study than the focus group setting could accommodate, so participant students were invited based on their classroom teacher’s recommendation. The classroom teacher recommended students according to the following list of provided criteria, inspired by Gardner’s (2011) list of characteristics common to reluctant writers: dislike expressed verbally or in writing, regular compliance issue, efficacy issue, and frequent writer’s block. If recommended students met minimum attendance criteria (present for at least four of the seven quickwrites and present during the final quickwriting share-out day), they were invited to participate in the focus groups. Since some invited students were absent on the day of the focus groups, other interested students were allowed to participate in the interviews, regardless of teacher-anticipated reluctance levels, to prevent the creation of a pressured conversational atmosphere, which can occur when too few people are in a focus group. Because all the students were in general-level English classes, rather than AP English (the school’s Honors equivalent), there was ample opportunity to study
the responses of low- to average-performing reluctant writers towards quickwriting, though not to study that of high-performing reluctant writers.

I administered all focus group discussions and asked participants to share their experiences of and attitudes toward classroom quickwriting as well as writing in general. The questions also asked students to reflect on any shifts in attitude that they may have experienced towards writing during their school years. Although I had a pre-generated list of questions, the conversation sometimes led to the exclusion or reordering of some questions, as well as some follow-up questions not on the original list (Appendix C).

After recording the focus groups, student dialogue was transcribed in a digital Word-processing file, and students were given pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. I then analyzed the transcripts for commonalities across student experiences and for any shifts in attitude towards writing. In accordance with common focus group data-analysis procedures, I engaged in semantical content analysis by sorting student responses according to themes pertaining to my original research questions (Ohio State University Office of Student Life, 2013; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2006). These topics include the following: direct statements related to liking or disliking writing in general, conditions for liking or disliking quickwriting, feelings about the week expanding on quickwrites, attitudes towards the possibility of doing quickwriting in the future, and signs of attitudinal changes—of any sort—towards writing.

I used students’ direct statements related to liking or disliking writing to determine my sample population’s level of writing reluctance. I wanted the final judgment of reluctance to be based solely on the students’ own perceptions of themselves since reluctance is, as defined in this study, a subjective affect rather than an objectively measurable trait. If students expressed a change in disposition over the past month, I sorted students based on their impressions of
writing prior to the quickwriting unit in order to obtain the best pre-intervention data about my sample population. After my initial analysis of transcription data, I developed four categories in which to sort students: Confirmed Reluctant Writer, Conditionally Reluctant Writer, Eager Writer, and Unknown. “Confirmed Reluctant Writer” describes students that verbally expressed a general dislike of writing during the focus group interviews. “Conditionally Reluctant Writer” describes those who expressed that their attitude towards writing predictably changed depending on one or more variables. “Eager Writer” describes students who expressed positive feelings for writing without providing any qualifications. While several students whom I identified as either Confirmed Reluctant Writers or Eager Writers later qualified their level of enjoyment or dislike towards writing with conditions, I still sorted these students according to their initial responses because I cared more about their gut reactions to writing. “Unknown” describes students whose responses, or lack thereof, provided insubstantial data to determine their perception of writing.

The more I analyzed the responses of Conditionally Reluctant Writers, the more I realized that this category could be further separated according to students’ default attitudes towards writing. On one hand, some students expressed enjoyment of writing under certain circumstances without expressing conditions of dislike. I labeled these students Conditionally Eager Writers (CEWs) in reference to the fact that these students could feel eagerness towards writing under the right conditions. On the other hand, other Conditionally Reluctant Writers never expressed a sense of liking writing; they only expressed a general dislike for writing with the exception of certain writing assignments that merely caused them not to “mind” writing. In other words, they experienced overall dislike for writing punctuated by assignments that they merely tolerated, rather than enjoyed. This latter type of student I labeled “Conditionally Tolerant Writers” (CTWs). Though the line of distinction between CTWs and CEWs was
murkier than the distinctions between other categories, it nevertheless provided a clearer picture of the sample population’s overall warmth or coldness towards writing.

**Results**

**Writing Reluctance of the Sample Population**

Of the nineteen students interviewed, six students were Confirmed Reluctant Writers, six were Conditionally Reluctant Writers, five were Eager Writers, and two were Unknown. Of the six Conditionally Reluctant Writers, three were easily identifiable as Conditionally Tolerant Writers and two were conversely identified as Conditionally Eager Writers. While the two Unknown writers could not easily fit within the above categories, one expressed a sense of having lost passion for writing since freshman year and the other rated their personal desire to write during free time as “five percent . . . because zero is a harsh number”; this writer did express enjoyment for poetry writing, however. Altogether, nearly two thirds of the sample population demonstrated writing reluctance to some degree and nearly a third expressed a firm overall reluctance for writing.

**Table 1**

*Spread of Writing Reluctance within Sample Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer Disposition Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Reluctant</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditionally Reluctant</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditionally Tolerant</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditionally Eager</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed both dislike and like</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eager</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conditions for Reluctance or Eagerness**

*Towards Writing in General*
Of the six Conditionally Reluctant Writers, all six gave the same condition for either enjoying or tolerating writing: choice. If students could pick what to write about, or at least how to write about a given topic, they expressed a greater level of enjoyment for writing. Even some who initially identified as liking writing (and were thus labeled Eager writers) later expressed that their enjoyment of writing varied depending on how much freedom they had in their writing assignments. In fact, one Confirmed Reluctant Writer stated that the only reason for rating personal enjoyment of writing as a “two out of ten” rather than a zero was due to certain writing assignments that offered “no stipulations.” In short, students’ abilities to enjoy writing rose and fell, practically unanimously, according to the measure of freedom they felt within writing assignments.

Towards Quickwriting

Students’ enjoyment of quickwriting largely depended on both the prompt and their mood and energy level of the day. Four students, all Confirmed Reluctant Writers, expressed flat-out dislike for quickwriting, and a fifth, while not expressing direct distaste, showed little to no compliance during most of the quickwriting sessions until the final quickwrite development week; however, nearly all other students, including all five aforementioned Confirmed Reluctant Writers, expressed liking some aspect of quickwriting, even if they did not like everything.

Just like their feelings about writing in general, students’ levels of enjoyment for quickwriting varied based on their perceived amount of choice. Interestingly, however, students disagreed on how much choice they wanted from the prompts. Two students indicated that they would have preferred freewriting (no prompts) to quickwriting. However, the number of students indicating that they appreciated having the prompts more than tripled the number of students who preferred freewriting. Furthermore, three students specifically outlined having a
prompt as a condition for either liking or disliking quickwriting. Five of the nine students who mentioned appreciation of the prompts stated that they especially liked having the mentor texts as prompts, stating that the texts either gave them ideas or gave them a sense of freedom. In general, students stated that they felt a high level of freedom to write about what they cared about for most of the quickwrites, excepting a few prompts. The prompt most often indicated as being restrictive or frustrating was one where students were given a specific line every two minutes to incorporate into their writing; it was one of the few prompts that did not draw from a mentor text (Appendix K). Overall, most students showed appreciation for the prompts, though a few delineated that they liked quickwriting so long as the prompts afforded plenty of freedom; a few students even recommended that the teacher provide multiple prompts on the board for students to choose from.

While students’ eagerness to write varied according to their interest in the prompts, students expressed a much more consistent eagerness, or at least more of an invested interest, in writing during the week when they workshoped a prior quickwrite. Of the nineteen interviewed, eight students (and three Confirmed Reluctant Writers) specifically mentioned that they enjoyed developing their chosen quickwrite further during the workshop week or that they wanted to add to their writing during that time. Three of the six Confirmed Reluctant Writers mentioned either not taking quickwriting seriously or not enjoying it until the final week when they had to develop a final piece from a quickwrite; all three expressed pride or “like” for their final piece. One of these Confirmed Reluctant Writers specifically named the ability to develop a final piece as a determinant of a future desire to engage in quickwriting, stating, “I feel like I’d be fine with [quickwriting] at first, but at some point, I’d want to eventually expand on my writing.”
In short, the process of tracking students’ comments about areas of engagement or disengagement with the quickwriting process revealed mixed results for students’ enjoyment of quickwriting itself. While most Confirmed Reluctant Writers expressed general dislike for the weekly quickwrites, most of them, along with nearly all other interviewed students, found enjoyment in at least one quickwriting prompt. Students expressed the most consistent levels of eagerness for writing when describing their final quickwriting extension and when describing other writing assignments that offered them high levels of creative freedom in either form or content. While students disagreed on whether they preferred to write with prompts or not, more students expressed an appreciation for the prompts and especially the freedom and ideas offered by the mentor texts.

Changes in Writing Disposition

Of the nineteen students interviewed, seven expressed or demonstrated a change in disposition towards writing (Appendix D). Three of these students were Confirmed Reluctant Writers. Three students, including one Confirmed Reluctant Writer, expressed greater desire to write on their own outside of class. Two students mentioned shifts in disposition towards personal writing abilities: One student who expressed a low measure of self-confidence for creative writing experienced a change in self-perception, stating that the mentor texts revealed “how creative I can be,” and the other student expressed the belief that quickwriting improved their personal writing fluency. Two students stated that their biggest takeaway from the quickwriting unit was that “writing can be fun sometimes.” One of these students was a Confirmed Reluctant Writer while the other was a Conditionally Tolerant Writer.

How About the Confirmed Reluctant Writers?
Four of the six Confirmed Reluctant Writers expressed feelings of generally disliking the quickwriting process and a fifth, though not explicitly expressing such feelings, simply did not comply with most quickwriting exercises—at least until the final quickwrite development week (Appendix E). However, of these same six Confirmed Reluctant Writers, two explicitly associated quickwriting with the word “fun,” one worked on the quickwrite final expansion during free time for entertainment, one expressed feelings of personal growth in writing fluency, and still another recommended quickwriting to teachers because of an expressed belief that it would make students better writers (Appendix E).

**Analysis: What Do These Findings Mean for Teachers?**

Since reluctant writers, either confirmed or conditional, make up the majority of the sample population, results from this study can illuminate the responses of reluctant writers to quickwriting fairly authoritatively. When it comes to quickwriting itself, students have mixed feelings; their attitudes fluctuate depending on the prompt. While they may not always have liked quickwriting, nearly every student found enjoyment in at least one quickwriting prompt. When measuring how quickwriting impacted dispositions towards writing in general, however, over a third of students demonstrated a change in writing disposition. On the basis of this high level of affective change alone, language arts teachers should seriously consider implementing regular quickwriting within their classrooms.

**Conditions for Successful Quickwrite Implementation**

When implementing quickwriting, however, teachers must make careful prompt selections and offer meaningful opportunities to extend and share quickwriting in order to achieve optimal results in boosting students’ enjoyment of writing. Students engaged most with
the prompts that afforded them plenty of creative freedom while still providing them with some ideas to kickstart their thinking. These desires aligned with Jeffrey & Wilcox’s (2016) findings that students most enjoyed writing assignments when they could view the prompts as affordances, rather than constraints. Based on focus group data, students seemed to perceive mentor texts as affordances, seeing a range of freedom and possibilities within the texts. For this reason, using mentor texts as prompts seems to produce the most reliable results in enhancing student motivation to write. Regardless of the choice to use mentor texts or not, teachers will likely find that students enjoy quickwriting more if they feel the freedom to de-rail from the provided prompts. Therefore, if teachers want to maximize student enjoyment of quickwriting, they should make the open-ended nature of the prompts explicit when outlining guidelines for classroom quickwriting or should provide multiple options for prompts on the board.

If planning to implement quickwriting, teachers must also make sure to provide opportunities to extend and share quickwriting. Student responses revealed that they found the final workshop week meaningful, and for a whopping half of Confirmed Reluctant Writers, it was the only part of their quickwriting experience in which they began to show serious investment (Appendix E). In accordance with these findings, two high school language arts teachers Debra Drew and Caitlin Evans, both of whom received professional training from Linda Rief as well as special acknowledgement within her 2018 publication *The Quickwrite Handbook: 100 Mentor Texts to Jumpstart Your Students Thinking and Writing*, emphasized the importance of giving students both an immediate chance to share their work and a chance to develop their work over a longer period (Personal communication, Feb 12, 2020). In the immediate context, these two teachers provided students with the chance to voluntarily share their work with the whole class after every quickwriting session. For further extension, Evans
and Drew would also require students to pick a quickwrite to develop every quarter. Rather than heavily grading the students’ final piece, they would assess students’ writing chiefly based on final reflections about the quickwrite extension, which required students to perform literary analysis on their own writing by identifying and explaining the specific writing choices they made when extending their piece. Both teachers reported that most students seemed to enjoy quickwriting (Personal communication, Feb 12, 2020). This study’s implementation of quickwriting drew heavily from Drew and Evans’ methods with a few alterations. Students in this study focused on the skill of revising for a specific purpose and audience during the quickwrite workshop week. They were assessed based on their ability to identify specific revisions they made and justify how these revisions helped them better fulfill a self-selected purpose and reach their intended audience (Appendix J).

Altogether, a quickwriting extension activity can be implemented in a variety of ways, but so far, teachers have found quickwriting extensions successful when they grade the revision process, rather than the final product, thereby staying true quickwriting’s magic as a grade-free space and adhering to grading practices that seek to preserve intrinsic, rather than extrinsic motivation (Feldman, 2018, p. 34). Regardless of the exact methods of extension, giving students the opportunity to extend their quickwriting is crucial. Teachers should not expect quickwrites to boost students’ writing dispositions if these exercises are treated as “one-and-done” bellringer activities. Numerous studies and theorists have already pointed out what these focus group participants confirmed: Students need to see a meaningful audience for their creative work in order to feel a sense of investment in it (Bomer & Fowler Amoto, 2014; Culham, 2010; Merisuo-Storm, 2006).
Limitations

While this study has helped to clarify and confirm the possibility for quickwrites to reverse writing reluctance, it has several limitations. Since this study only interviewed students within general level language arts classes, it primarily documents responses of middle- to low-performing reluctant writers. Gardner (2011) identifies another category of reluctant writer whose sole cause of reluctance boils down to perfectionism (p.78). These types of writers will likely be found most often among higher performing students, and their response to quickwrites remains untested.

An additional limitation is that this study measured writing reluctance solely by students’ verbal expressions of dislike for writing during the focus group. While this method of categorization can provide a general snapshot of participants’ reluctance levels, more detailed categorization of participants could be achieved through a pre-assessment survey, such as the one given by Gau et al. (2003), which asks students to rate their level of identification with statements such as “I like writing” and “I like to write when I have free time” (p. 48-49). Choosing to identify reluctance levels in this way would provide more accuracy and insight since the survey could be completed individually, outside of the sway of peer influences, and since all participants’ voices would be heard—an ideal that the focus group format could not always provide. Perhaps such a survey method would change current findings related to Confirmed Reluctant Writers’ responses to quickwriting. There are also other expanded ways of defining “reluctant writer” that would include students who demonstrate characteristics such as poor fine motor control and difficulty focusing (Gardner, 2011, p. 94). This study does not reveal the extent to which this broader range of reluctant writers responds to quickwriting.

Further Explorations for Researchers Interested in Quickwrites or Reluctant Writers
Given the lack of knowledge regarding the response of high-performing reluctant writers to quickwriting, further studies of quickwriting in the context of AP and Honors classrooms would give a more rounded perspective on how writers at all levels experience this teaching strategy. Additionally, this study reveals that many, if not most, students experience conditional enjoyment for writing based on their perceived level of choice within a writing assignment. If students grow to enjoy writing in the context of quickwriting, will those positive feelings carry over to other contexts? Or will sensations of writing being “fun” be forever dichotomized, marked by students’ perceived distinctions between creative and constrained writing contexts? A longitudinal study tracking the dispositions of students who expressed positive changes in writing disposition could provide insight on how breakthroughs in creative and narrative writing may or may not impact attitudes towards writing in other, more constrained contexts.

Furthermore, three of the six Confirmed Reluctant Writers remained just as reluctant to write at the end of the quickwriting month as they did at the beginning (Appendix E). Could more quickwriting eventually help to shift their attitudes? Or would other writing techniques yield better results? Research exploring the impact of more extended periods of quickwriting on student attitudes or of other writing techniques on students’ attitudes would provide valuable insight in the quest to engage the most reluctant of writers.

Finally, teachers who frequently implement quickwrites testify to their ability improve students' quality of writing, but these testimonials are based on teacher’s observations or students’ writing samples rather than quantitative achievement data (D. Drew & C. Evans, Personal communication, Feb 12, 2020; Rief, 2018). While the ability for standardized writing achievement tests to accurately measure writing quality—especially nuances such as stylistic sophistication and strong voice—is debatable, it would nevertheless be interesting to see
whether or not regular classroom quickwriting is associated with any measurable changes in writing achievement.

**Conclusion**

After conducting three focus groups interviewing a total of nineteen students—over half of which were either reluctant or conditionally reluctant writers—findings show that while the Graves & Kittle (2005) and Rief (2018) style of quickwriting is certainly not a miracle cure, it does show strong potential in boosting students’ enjoyment of writing. Though students did not always like quickwriting itself, the practice of either quickwriting or developing a quickwrite resulted in positive changes towards writing disposition. Seven students (three of which were Confirmed Reluctant Writers) expressed or demonstrated changes in writing disposition; of these seven, three expressed a greater enjoyment of writing, three either did or wanted to write more during free time, and two expressed having more confidence in their abilities as writers.

Of the six Confirmed Reluctant Writers identified, all but one showed or demonstrated distaste for most of the quickwriting exercises at some point during the interview, yet of these same six, two recommended quickwriting for future classrooms as “fun” and one began completing the final quickwrite extension activity for fun during free time. Of the remaining three who expressed no such enjoyment for writing, two mentioned the ability of quickwriting to improve students’ writing abilities, indicating a potential for quickwriting to improve self-efficacy—a variable known to decrease students’ “affective-resistor,” which is the central contributor to writing reluctance (Gardner, 2011, p.78).

So, all findings considered, should language arts teachers incorporate quickwriting into their classrooms? In the words of Mark, a Confirmed Reluctant Writer, “Probably, yeah, because it gives. . . the students a chance to enjoy writing.” Findings from this research study suggest
that quickwriting can propel teachers one step forward in the quest to reverse writing reluctance. In a world tempted to see writing as simply another skill necessary for career-readiness, students and teachers alike can easily lose sight of the fulfillment and pleasure writing can offer. When students discover an intrinsic love for writing, they do more than just increase their chances for higher test scores; they enjoy part of what it means to be human.
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Gau, E., Hemanson, J., Logar, M., & Smerek, C. (2003). Improving Student Attitudes and Attitudes and Writing Abilities through Increased Writing Time and Opportunities. ERIC.


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Appendix A

BGSU Human Subjects Review Board:

Jenna Dunn, a BGSU student, would like to conduct research from student data in the classrooms of one of our teachers, Mrs. Angela Mills. Her work will study the effect of a particular free writing methodology on students’ attitudes towards writing. Because her work has potential to improve teachers’ quality of instruction, we are interested in working with Jenna Dunn to assess students’ responses to classroom curriculum.

We understand that Jenna Dunn will be collecting data from students in Mrs. Mills’ general level English classes. This data will be in the form of students’ recorded responses within focus groups, student surveys, and any notes taken by Jenna or Mrs. Mills when in the classroom. Students who participate in the focus groups will be offered one service hour in exchange for their time. We understand that students’ confidentiality in all of the above forms of data collection will be protected through the use of pseudonyms but that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to inability to control what other focus group participants may say outside of the group. We know that the researcher will seek student assent and parent or guardian consent to collect any student data for research. As a result, we offer our support for this research. Additionally, we give consent for Ms. Dunn to run focus groups and will provide her a space in which to conduct them.

Sincerely,

Ms. Maegan Delp
Assistant Principal

Mrs. Angela Mills
Classroom Teacher

6 October 2021
Appendix B

Recruitment Script for Quickwrites and the Quest to Reverse Writing Reluctance

Hello everyone! My name is Ms. Dunn, and I am a preservice teacher in Mrs. Mills’ classroom. Right now, I am involved in undergraduate student research at Bowling Green State University. My research is about figuring out what kinds of teaching strategies shape adolescents’ attitudes about writing. Before I explain my research in more depth, I have a few questions to ask you:

By show of hands, how many of you would say you dislike writing?

[pause for show of hands]

How many of you would say that you have ever disliked writing—meaning, how many of you have pretty much hated writing for a period of at least several months in middle school or high school?

[pause for show of hands]

Or, have you frequently struggled with writer’s block during the writing process?

[pause for show of hands]

If you raised your hand for any of these questions, I really want to hear from you. Would you be willing to share your perspectives on writing to help teachers develop better, more helpful writing strategies?

This semester, I am focusing on researching the quickwrites that you do in this classroom. I am going to pass out some forms that will explain to you what this study is about and tell you how you can be involved if you wish. We will read the assent form together. Afterwards, you can ask me any questions you might have. Then I will provide a short survey for you all on google classroom. Please fill out the form to tell me whether you would like to be a part of this study.

If you click “yes, I want to participate,” you will need to sign the assent form that I have handed out and have your parents sign the consent form. Bring both signed forms back to me, and I will send you an email to notify you that you are officially enrolled.
Appendix C
Focus Group Questions for Quickwrites and the Quest to Reverse Writing Reluctance

**Introductory script:** I have asked you all here today because you have experienced quickwriting over the past couple weeks, and perhaps beyond these weeks as well. Your perspectives are very valuable to teachers as we try to decide what teaching methods work best with adolescents. I will ask you questions about your experiences of quickwriting and writing in general. Please know that there is no right or wrong answer, and that I am not trying to fish for any particular answer. Nothing you say in here will impact your grade. You have known me as a teacher who runs your quickwrites for the past month, but today, think of me as a researcher. I want to hear your honest thoughts—you will not hurt my feelings by what you say. That saying, do not share anything that you do not want other members within this group to know. When others are sharing, please be respectful. Do not speak when another person is speaking. If you find yourself speaking a lot, make sure that you allow others a turn to speak. This focus group session will be recorded, and the recording can likely pick up side conversations. You may be quoted directly, but all references to you will be done using a fake name. If you decide that you do not wish to participate, you may leave now and return to Mrs. Mills’s classroom.

For all of you staying in this room, thank you in advance for your time. I hope that this can be both meaningful and fun. This is truly a service hour to other teachers and to other students as you donate your honest perspectives on this topic.

**Icebreaker:**

1. How long have you all attended Central Catholic High School?

**Intro**

2. Did you ever do quickwriting with teachers outside of Mrs. Mills’ classroom? If so, how often have you done quickwriting?

**Writer Background:**

3. Prior to this school year, think about yourself walking in these doors for your first day of class as a junior, how much would you say you liked writing, if at all?
   a. What about writing made you like it or dislike it?
   b. Did you ever write outside of school, on your own?
4. Prior to this school year, how confident did you feel in your writing abilities?
5. Let’s shift back to the present. Right now, at this point in time, how much would you say you like writing?
   a. If your attitude towards writing changed, what do you think might be some reasons for this change?
   b. What was one of your favorite writing assignments to have received, either in this class or prior to this class? Or, for those of you who would say you hate writing, what was one of the more tolerable writing assignments you received?
6. Right now, how confident do you feel when you are given a writing assignment?
   a. Did you always feel this way?
b. If your attitude towards your writing abilities changed, what do you think might be some reasons for this change?

Key

7. Think back to the days when we started class with quickwriting. How did you feel when Mrs. Mills or I gave you quickwriting in class?
8. What would you say is your biggest takeaway from this quickwriting unit?
9. Do you think quick writing has shaped your view of writing in any way? If so, how?
10. Do you think quick writing has shaped your view of yourself as a writer in any way? If so, how?
11. Is there any quickwrite you are particularly proud of?
12. Would you be willing to read it? Would you also be willing for it to be included in my research?

Conclusion:

13. Would you encourage other teachers to include quickwrites in their classrooms? Why or why not?
Appendix D

Changes in Writing Disposition, Confirmed Reluctant Writers highlighted in yellow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Summary or quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mya</td>
<td>Expressed renewed love for writing, a decision to pursue a career in journalism, and newfound liberation from writer's block.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhea</td>
<td>Described self as bad at creative writing but said that the quickwriting mentor texts &quot;made me kind of . . . see how creative I can be.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Biggest takeaway from the quickwriting unit was that &quot;writing can be fun sometimes.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>&quot;I'd have to agree with Mark [that writing can be fun sometimes].&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kat</td>
<td>Expressed that quickwriting added to the desire to write outside of school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnie</td>
<td>Began working on quickwrite extension outside of school when bored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montae</td>
<td>&quot;[Quickwriting] helped me on my fluency and stuff like that.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix E

Close Analysis of Confirmed Reluctant Writers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Response causing CRW identification</th>
<th>Summary of Response to Quickwriting</th>
<th>Exact Response to Quickwriting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>“To be honest, I don't really like writing at all because I'm forced to for school and stuff.”</td>
<td>Did not like quickwriting overall but liked the final extension. Discovered that writing can be fun at times. Would recommend to other teachers as a way to boost enjoyment.</td>
<td>“To be honest, I didn’t really like to quickwrite, but like the little thing we did have at the end with the poem and stuff—I like that.” On biggest takeaway from quickwriting unit: “Writing can be fun sometimes.” On whether or not to recommend quickwriting to other teachers: “Probably yeah, because it gives the students a chance to enjoy writing instead of just giving them a certain thing to write about, like for an assignment or anything. Just something that’s no points or anything, just something you can just write.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnie</td>
<td>“I didn't really like writing at first...” On feelings towards writing at the beginning of junior year: “I didn't really like writing at first because I didn't know what to write about.”</td>
<td>Showed little compliance towards quickwriting until the final extension. Stated they would feel enjoyment for writing if they could write on a topic that would come to mind outside of designated writing time; Barnie worked on the final piece during free time. Expressed a belief that quickwriting twice a week would be fun.</td>
<td>Worked on final quickwriting piece to pass time: “I didn't really like writing at first, so I just started doodling and eventually created writing that I liked.” “At my house, I have this whiteboard that I just doodle on when I get bored. Just adding words to those, I guess, random drawings that I ended up making, that's the only thing that this quickwrite has done for me. “Nothing comes to mind on something that's not entertaining. Like if it is something that you can genuinely thing about without not writing, then I’d actually enjoy it.” When another student said they would not want to do quickwriting everyday but would rather do it once or twice a week,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordae</td>
<td>“I’m not really a huge writing fan, okay, cuz I know I mess up my sentences a lot easily.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jada</td>
<td>“I don’t like writing because it make my hand hurt. And I don’t know what to say sometimes, like, stuff just don’t be popping up in my head.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montae</td>
<td>“I did not like writing. Walking in first day [of junior year]? Nah, I did not like it.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | Appreciated the freedom afforded by quickwriting. Would consider once-to twice-a-week quickwriting fun. |
| | Did not like quickwriting but liked one prompt. Recommended quickwriting to teachers due to a belief that it will improve writing quality and help with idea generation. |
| | Did not enjoy quickwriting, particularly mentioning reluctance to jump back into school after lunch. Recommended optional quickwriting for other English classrooms because of a belief that it helps improve students’ writing abilities. Expressed a belief that quickwriting enhanced personal writing fluency. |
| | Cordae responded, “that would be considered fun,” and Barnie expressed agreement. |
| | “What I liked about [quickwriting] is that we could write about anything we wanted.” When another student said they would not want to do quickwriting everyday but would rather do it once or twice a week, Cordae responded, “that would be considered fun.” |
| | “Basically, I’m saying, I don’t want to do [quickwriting], but since it’s assigned, I’m gonna have to do it, and I’m not gonna enjoy it, because I don’t like it.” |
| | “I enjoyed the ‘Mama, Since You Asked’ that poem. I like that one.” |
| | “Basically, I’m saying, I don’t want to do [quickwriting], but since it’s assigned, I’m gonna have to do it, and I’m not gonna enjoy it, because I don’t like it.” |
| | On whether or not to recommend quickwriting to other teachers: “I feel like if they’re trying to make better essays than they should, because it can help you think about what you're going to say. So yeah, I think it’d be helpful.” |
| | Did not enjoy quickwriting, particularly mentioning reluctance to jump back into school after lunch. Recommended optional quickwriting for other English classrooms because of a belief that it helps improve students’ writing abilities. Expressed a belief that quickwriting enhanced personal writing fluency. |
| | Montae responded that the choice to engage in quickwriting should be left up to the individual students: “Because it will help them in the long run. It will help. . . it helped me with my like fluency and stuff like that.” |
| | “If I take [quickwriting] serious, I feel
| Gio | On feelings towards writing at the beginning of junior year: “I did not like writing.” Response to the question, “how much do you like writing?”: “Two out of ten.” | Did not like quickwriting overall and found it pointless but liked one prompt with more perceived freedom. | On feelings if quickwriting were implemented next year: “Yeah, let’s not do quickwrites. . . I would walk in and get annoyed.” “I would say if they’re gonna incorporate quickwriting, they should give like a bunch of options of what you want to write about. Because when a teacher puts something out there, and then it’s like a certain thing and how much time—I’m like, I don’t want to do this. . . why do I have to do this? Makes it boring. Makes me roll my eyes and put my head down.” On which assignments made enjoyment of writing a “two out of ten” rather than a zero out of ten: The ones where she would just let us write. And not-- there's no stipulations. It's just write, whatever comes to your mind. Like the one [a quickwrite], the one where she would just give us like a random phrase every like minute or two. Like I could just write whatever I wanted. |
### Appendix F

Quickwrite Revision Routine

**Revision Routine**

- The heart beat of your piece. The emotional center or main idea.
- Words or phrases that you like or that surprised you.

→ [Direction you could take to develop your piece]
INTRODUCTION
My name is Jenna Dunn. I am a student at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). I am researching the quickwriting sessions you are already doing. This letter explains how you can participate in my study.

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE
The purpose of the study is to explore the effectiveness of quickwrites. I want to know how quickwriting shapes (or doesn’t shape) your feelings about writing.

I would like to hear from you in one forty-minute group interview with other students. The interview questions will ask you about your feelings towards notebook writing, writing in general, and your writing abilities. You will also be asked how your attitudes about these topics may or may not have changed over time. I would record your voice as you speak. The group interview will occur during regular class time. It will take place in a space that Central Catholic High School provides. Permission to conduct research at this school has been granted by Central Catholic’s assistant principal. If you do not participate, you will remain in Mrs. Mills’s classroom during that class period. You will engage in ungraded, enrichment activities to practice skills related to the learning objectives at that time.

By signing this form, you give me permission to use your interest survey, your interview responses, and any writing samples you choose to read aloud in the interview as research data available for publishing. Signing this form would also give me permission to use notes that I take during the interview session or any notes that Mrs. Mills or I take during class as research data as well.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, your participation will benefit future students by helping teachers figure out what writing strategies work well for adolescents.

If you participate in this study, you will receive one service hour from Central Catholic High School as compensation. This service hour will help to meet graduation requirements.

RISK AND CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION
Participation in this study carries a minimal risk of a breach to confidentiality. I cannot control what other students will share outside of the group interview. Therefore, do not share anything that you do not want others within the interview group to know. Additionally, there is a slight risk of the data being accessed by an outside party. This is due to the fact that the interest forms and the transcription of the interview will be stored on my personal device rather than a university-protected computer. Otherwise, your risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

Here is how I will protect your confidentiality. I will use a pseudonym that you and I choose at the beginning of the research period. Only I will have access to the interest form that links you with your chosen pseudonym. Furthermore, my university research advisor and I will be the only ones with access
to the recording of the group interview. I will transcribe your responses without any personal identifiers, using only your chosen pseudonym. Transcriptions will then be uploaded to a password-protected computer and stored in a secure computer file accessible only to me, Mrs. Mills, and my university research advisor. Data will be safely preserved for three years before being destroyed.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you can skip interview questions or discontinue participation at any time without explanation or penalty. Just tell me or Mrs. Mills that you don’t want to be in the study. Your decision whether to participate will not impact your grade in Mrs. Mills’s classroom. Neither will your decision impact any relationship you may have with me, Mrs. Mills, Central Catholic High School, or BGSU. This study adheres to current BGSU COVID-19 guidelines.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me, Jenna Dunn, during class time or by email at jendunn@bgsu.edu. You can also contact my research advisor Dr. Tim Murnen at 419-372-7983 or by email: tmurnen@bgsu.edu. If you have further questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 419-372-7716 or email irb@bgsu.edu.

**INDICATION OF CONSENT**

Please keep one copy of this letter for your records. Then please sign the other copy and give it to Mrs. Mills. By signing this letter, you indicate that you have been informed of your right to participate in this study and your right to withdraw from the study at any point.

**If you agree to participate, please check both boxes:**

- ☐ I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study. I have been informed of my right to participate and the right to withdraw from the study at any point.
- ☐ I give my assent to participate in this study.

______________________________  ______________________________
Printed Name of Student       Signature of Student
Parent or Guardian Informed Consent for Quickwrites and the Quest to Reverse Writing Reluctance

INTRODUCTION

My name is Jenna Dunn. I am a preservice teacher from Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Mrs. Mills’s English classroom. I am researching the writing lessons your child is receiving. This letter explains how your child can participate in my study. I would like your consent for your child to participate in one forty-minute, group interview with other students. Your child’s voice would be recorded as he or she responds to the interview questions. I would like permission to quote your child under a pseudonym in my research findings. Consent would also include permission to use your child’s interest survey, any writing samples your child chooses to read aloud in the interview, notes that I take during the interview session, and any notes that Mrs. Mills or I may take during class time as research data available for publishing.

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of the study is to explore the effectiveness of the weekly notebook writing in Mrs. Mills’s class. The interview questions will ask students about their feelings towards notebook writing, writing in general, and their writing abilities. Students will also be asked how their attitudes about these topics may or may not have changed over time. The forty-minute interview will occur during regular class time. It will take place in a space provided by the school administration. Permission to conduct research at this school has been granted by Central Catholic’s assistant principal. Students who do not participate will remain in Mrs. Mills’s classroom during that class period. They will engage in ungraded, enrichment activities to practice skills related to the learning objectives at that time.

There are no direct benefits to your child for participating in this study. However, your child’s participation will benefit future students by helping teachers figure out what writing strategies work well for adolescents.

If your child participates in this study, he or she will receive one service hour from Central Catholic High School as compensation. This service hour will help to meet graduation requirements.

RISK AND CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION

Students’ participation carries a minimal risk of a breach to confidentiality. I cannot control what other participating students will share outside of the group interview. Additionally, there is a slight risk of the data being accessed by an outside party. This is due to the fact that the interest forms and the transcription of the interview will be stored in my personal device rather than a university-protected computer. Otherwise, students’ risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life. Here is how I will protect your child’s confidentiality. I will use a pseudonym that your child and I choose at the beginning of the research period. Furthermore, my university research advisor and I will be the only ones with access to the recording of the group interview. I will transcribe your child’s responses without any personal identifiers, using only your child’s chosen pseudonym. Transcriptions will then be uploaded to a password-protected computer and stored in a secure computer file accessible only to me, Mrs. Mills, and my university research advisor. Data will be safely preserved for three years before being destroyed for confidentiality.

VOLUNTARY NATURE
Your child’s participation in this study is voluntary. Additionally, you can withdraw your child from the study at any point. Just tell me, Mrs. Mills, or the school administration that you don’t want your child to be in the study. The decision whether to participate will not impact your child’s grade or standing in Mrs. Mills’s classroom. Neither will your decision impact any relationship you or your child may have with me, Mrs. Mills, Central Catholic High School, or Bowling Green State University. This study adheres to current BGSU COVID-19 guidelines.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me, Jenna Dunn, by email at jendunn@bgsu.edu or at 937-553-2307. You can also contact my research advisor Dr. Tim Murnen at 419-372-7983 or by email: tmurnen@bgsu.edu. If you have further questions about your rights or your child’s rights as a participant, please contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 419-372-7716 or email irb@bgsu.edu.

INDICATION OF CONSENT

Please keep one copy of this letter for your records. Then please sign the other copy and send it with your child to Mrs. Mills or Central Catholic High School’s office by February 15th, 2022. Your child has been given an assent form. In addition to obtaining your consent, your child will need to sign and submit the assent form to Mrs. Mills or myself in order to participate. By signing this letter, you indicate that you have been informed of your child’s right to participate in this study and the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

If you agree to have your child participate, please check both boxes:

- I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study. I have been informed of my child’s right to participate and the right to withdraw from the study at any point.
- I give consent for my child or the child under my care to participate in this study.

____________________________  ______________________________
Printed Name of Parent or Guardian  Signature of Parent or Guardian
INTRODUCTION
My name is Jenna Dunn. I am a student at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). I am researching the quickwriting sessions you are already doing. This letter explains how you can participate in my study.

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE
The purpose of the study is to explore the effectiveness of quickwrites. I want to know how quickwriting shapes (or doesn't shape) your feelings about writing.

I would like to hear from you in one forty-minute group interview with other students. I would record your voice as you speak. By saying yes, you give me permission to use your interest survey, your interview responses, and any writing samples you choose to read aloud in the interview as research data available for publishing. Saying yes would also give me permission to use notes that I take during the interview session or any notes that Mrs. Mills or I take during class as research data as well.

If you participate in the study, you will receive one service hour from Central Catholic High School. This service hour will help to meet your graduation requirements. You are helping teachers figure out which writing strategies work well for adolescents. The group interview will occur during regular class time. It will take place in a space that Central Catholic High School provides. Permission to conduct research at this school has been granted by Central Catholic's assistant principal. If you do not participate, you will remain in Mrs. Mills's classroom during that class period and complete any work she assigns.

RISK AND CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION
Participation in this study carries a minimal risk of a breach to confidentiality. I cannot control what other students will share outside of the group interview. Therefore, do not share anything that you do not want others within the interview group to know. Additionally, there is also a slight risk of the data being accessed by an outside party. This is due to the fact that the voice recording of the interview and the interest form will be stored on my personal device rather than a university-protected computer. Otherwise, your risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

Here is how I will protect your confidentiality. I will use a pseudonym that you and I choose at the beginning of the research period. Only I will have access to the form that links you with your chosen pseudonym. Furthermore, I will be the only person with access to the recording of the group interview. I will transcribe your responses without any personal identifiers, using only your chosen pseudonym. Transcriptions will then be uploaded to a password-protected computer and stored in a secure computer file accessible only to me, Mrs. Mills, and my university research advisor. Data will be safely preserved for three years before being destroyed.

VOLUNTARY NATURE
Your participation in this study is voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you can skip interview questions or discontinue participation at any time without explanation or penalty. Just tell me or Mrs. Mills that you don't want to be in the study. Your decision whether to participate will not impact your grade in Mrs. Mills's classroom. Neither will your decision impact any relationship you may have with me, Mrs. Mills, Central Catholic High School, or BGSU. This study adheres to current BGSU COVID-19 guidelines.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me, Jenna Dunn, during class time or by email at jendunn@bgsu.edu. You can also contact my research advisor Dr. Tim Murnen at 419-372-7983 or by email: tmurnen@bgsu.edu. If you have further questions about this study or your rights. Please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 419-372-7716 or email orc@bgsu.edu.

INDICATION OF CONSENT
Please keep one copy of this letter for your records. Then please sign the other copy and give it to Mrs. Mills. By signing this letter, you indicate that you have been informed of your right to participate in this study and your right to withdraw from the study at any point.
1. What is your first and last name? *

__________________________________________________________

2. What is your school email? *

__________________________________________________________

3. Would you like to participate in the study "Quick Writes and the Quest to Reverse Writing Reluctance" via one group-interview session during your language arts class period? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes, I want to participate
☐ No, I do not want to participate at this time
☐ Other: _____________________________________________

4. If you selected "yes," what pseudonym (fake name) would you like Ms. Dunn to use for you?

________________________________________________________

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Google Forms
### Grading contract rubric

Review your work and place an “X” in the left column when done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Self-Check (Place an X for completion)</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Teacher Evaluation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Audience:** I clearly identified the intended audience for my developed quickwrite.  
(Your primary audience should be your peers unless you have received prior approval from Mrs. Mills or Ms. Dunn). (2 points) | | |
| **Purpose:** I clearly articulated my writing purpose for my developed quickwrite, describing what effect I want my piece to have or what I want to communicate. (2 points) | | |
| **Sample purposes:**  
To help ____ [your audience] understand _____.  
To share ______ [a certain experience, feeling, or opinion] with my audience.  
To remind ______ [someone or some group of people] that they are not alone.  
Or, any other purpose that comes to mind! | | |
| **Evidence:** I have selected evidence from both the draft and the final piece. The evidence convincingly supports my claim that I developed the quickwrite to better address my intended audience and writing purpose. (2 points) | | |
| **Explanation of Change:** I have clearly explained how my draft has evolved. I have not simply pointed out the differences between my first and final drafts, but I stated why I made the changes, discussing why the changes help me better speak to my audience and/or fulfill my writing purpose. (2 points) | | |
**Quickwrite:**
I have submitted and published a revised quickwrite as instructed. My quickwrite demonstrates thoughtfulness, and I have extended my writing beyond the initial prompt to make it my own. (2 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND INFO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title of your piece:</strong> “Peanut Butter and Jelly”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intended Audience:</strong> Eleventh grade English students at CCHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your writing purpose:</strong> I want to bring to light the disorientation that many people feel when entering a new place or when returning to a place they once called home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Picture of your original quickwrite:** | [Write your name on your original draft and have Ms. Dunn scan a picture of your notebook.]

**Your final draft:**
RATIONALE

What writing choices did you make in order to reach your intended audience and fulfill your writing purpose?

Make sure to incorporate evidence from early and final drafts. You also need to explain what changes you made and why, particularly focusing on how this change helps you better address your audience and writing purpose. You can write your answers in paragraph form, or you can simply complete the table below.

Option 1: Paragraph

[TYPE PARAGRAPH HERE]

Option 2: Complete this table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>CHANGE: What I did differently and why it helps me better address my audience and purpose</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct quotes or descriptive summaries from my early draft(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Direct quotes or descriptive summaries of my later draft(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In my first draft, I followed the rambling autobiography format, writing statements about my past and switching topics every sentence.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I changed from prose to poetry. The succinct nature of a poetic format allows me to cover large periods of my life fairly easily without worrying much about inserting transitions. Additionally, the acrostic “STILL DIGESTING” emphasizes my purpose for students to see the disorientation caused by moving.</strong></td>
<td><strong>In my final draft, I drew inspiration from acrostic poetry to make my own version of this style of poem, spelling out the words “STILL DIGESTING.”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I still miss <em>la mian.</em>”</td>
<td>At first I directly stated my feelings. In my final draft however, I wanted my readers to have to figure out my feelings on their own. I believe this choice better engages my audience of eleventh-grade students because they play a more active role in meaning-making.</td>
<td>“Spaghetti tastes nothing like <em>la mian.</em> . . I can’t finish the rest of my sandwich and throw the rest of it in the trash.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YOU WILL NEED TO ADD AT LEAST ONE MORE ROW IF YOU USE THE TABLE FORMAT.**
Quick Write Prompts
Dear Writing...

2.8

Ideas for how to extend the quickwrite:

- Write a completed letter/email to “Writing” describing your feelings about this subject or your history with this subject.

- Write a text or back-and-forth texting chain to Writing as if it was a person.
I was born at the height of World War II just as Anne Frank was forced into Bergen-Belsen by the Nazis. I adore Brigham’s vanilla ice cream in a sugar cone and dipped in chocolate jimmies. I bought my favorite jacket for a dime at the Methodist Church rummage sale. I have lied to my parents. I never read a book for pleasure until I was 38 years old. One of my students once leaned in to me in an interview and said, “My mother’s having a baby; this is the one she wants.” When I was 12 I set the organdy curtains in our bathroom on fire, playing with matches. My favorite place to hide was high in the maple tree in our front yard where I could spy on neighbors. I can still smell wet white sheets pulled through the ringer washer when I think of Grammy Mac. I dated Edmundo in high school because it angered my father. I fainted when I heard the sound of the zipper as the mortician closed the body bag holding my mother. I gave birth to twin sons. I once had dinner with Judy Blume. I am a teacher who writes. I want to be a writer who teaches....

Linda Rief (2018)
2. 11 Writer Interruptus

Incorporate whatever I say as you write.

Starting with…

“Well, that was awful.”

“Too much salt will kill you.”

“And then Kevin barfed.”

“Imagine that!”

Idea: Write a flash fiction (really short story) with these phrases

OR

Go back and forth with a friend to collaboratively create a story

Adapted from the “Writer’s Block Does Not Exist” session held during the BGSU 2021 Winter Wheat Writing Conference
We Real Cool
BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS

The Pool Players.
Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

2. 15 We Real Cool

Ideas:
- Write a short piece discussing what it means to be cool.
- Write a poem imitating aspects of the structure of this poem (repetition, alliteration, or rhyme)

(Brooks, 1960)
Mom, since you asked, I’ll tell you why I’m so angry

Because Dad tried to dunk.
Because I want to win a championship.
Because I can’t win a championship if I’m sitting in this smelly hospital.
Because Dad told you he’d be here forever.
Because I thought forever was like Mars—far away.
Because it turns out forever is like the mall—right around the corner.
Because Jordan doesn’t talk basketball anymore.
Because Jordan cut my hair and didn’t care.
Because he’s always drinking Sweet Tea.
Because sometimes I get thirsty.
Because I don’t have anybody to talk to now.
Because I feel empty with no hair.
Because CPR DOESN’T WORK!
Because my crossover should be better.
Because if it was better, then Dad wouldn’t have had the ball.
Because if Dad hadn’t had the ball, then he wouldn’t have tried to dunk.
Because if Dad hadn’t tried to dunk, then we wouldn’t be here.
Because I don’t want to be here.
Because the only thing that matters is swish.
Because our backboard is splintered.
Recipe for an Evil Villain

Idea: Write your own recipe for anything. (Brave Writer, n.d.)

2.22

Here are the steps for creating your own supervillain:

- Preheat the oven to 873 degrees Celsius (1,603.4 Fahrenheit).
- In a large black bowl, combine goal, motivation, and backstory. Blend at light speed for ten minutes, until dough forms blackish lump.
- In a separate, smaller bowl, stir minor villains until thawed. Then quickly fold into the main batter until completely engulfed.
- Add the weakness and knead carefully, spreading weakness throughout the whole lump. This is a most delicate phase—too many weaknesses will make the dough fall apart, but too few will make it dry and fossilized.
- Once weaknesses have been kneaded in, sprinkle accessories on top. This is the point in the recipe where you can add your own distinct flair: the curling walrus moustache, the pocketwatch that doubles as a sword, the bright red hair standing on end, or the evil villain cape of awesomeness, for example.
- Bake for 1,095 days in the back burner of your mind. Remove from oven and let sit. Should be burned black around the edges.
- If desired, add a pinch of gold or lapis lazuli for effect. Serve frozen or boiled in the lava of revenge.
- Feeds 1 story.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups goal
- 3 cups motivation
- 6 tablespoons backstory, sifted
- 2 handfuls minor villains
- 1.5 teaspoons weakness
- ½ cup accessories
- 1 pinch gold or lapis lazuli

(Brave Writer, n.d.)
In an Ideal World...

In an ideal world
love doesn't go away;
when somebody cares
they're there to stay,

there's no money issues
or ill health to spoil
time spent together,
no mind-numbing toil

or calamitous weather
to dampen our spirits,
just helping and sharing
laughter and music

that pleases the creatures
who'd be best of friends
with our children; ideally
such joy wouldn't end.

(Jackie, 2019)