

**“WRITE-TALKS” IMPACT ON BEHAVIORAL AND CREATIVE WRITTEN
EXPRESSION GROWTH IN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

by

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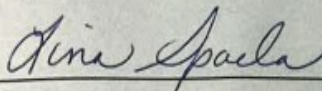
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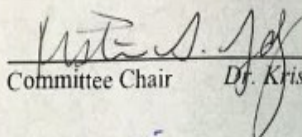
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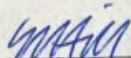
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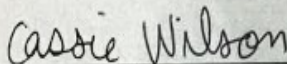
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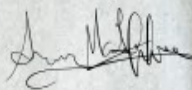
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Abstract

I conducted this study because of increasingly high undesired classroom behaviors paired with insufficient creative written expression amongst students in Ohio Christian School. I was intrigued by the idea that the two could be connected somehow, so I found a writing intervention, “Write-Talks,” that I decided to implement in my classroom to see its potential impact on both student writing and behavior. I used quasi-experimental quantitative research method to complete this action research study. I started my research with a pre-intervention survey in which students evaluated their own creative written expression and self-management behavior tendencies upon the return of parental consent forms. I also collected writing samples from each of the students from before the intervention. Then, I observed the behavior of students who I categorized as reluctant writers. The study concluded with students responding to a post-intervention survey, similar to the first, and with the collection of another writing sample. After analyzing data, I found that the intervention’s impact on student creative written expression was generally positive, meaning that students’ writing sample scores increased. However, data did not necessarily support that student self-management behavior had been impacted in any significant way. There was one student, though, whose personal data did suggest that the positive impact with this particular student could have been because of the “Write-Talks” intervention. Due to this clear positive impact the intervention had on student writing, my school, district, and others could take these findings into consideration for the future benefit of creative written expression. I am hopeful that continued research could provide insight to a connection between creative written expression and self-management behavior in students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In my one-year experience of substituting and my two short years as an educator, I formed the opinion that my students lack self-management behavior skills. Various students seemed to struggle to perform tasks like effectively expressing their thoughts (both written and verbal), managing stress or frustrations, controlling the urge to subconsciously become distracted, and their overall focus and respect seemed to suffer as well (Ohio Department of Education, 2019). As an English writing teacher specifically, I also developed the opinion that my students lacked writing skills, such as sentence complexity, spelling, punctuation, and a sense of personal voice within their writing. A subset of students that I noticed struggling greatly with both of these areas of need were reluctant writers (Trust, 2010). Self-management and writing skills are imperative for student success, both in and out of the classroom. It is known through Maslow's hierarchy of needs that writing can encourage self-actualization, increase self-esteem, and inspire love and belonging, and those students who have a grasp on these qualities tend to have better self-management skills (McLeod, 2023).

This inspired me to conduct action research on the potential benefits of a writing intervention for students' writing and self-management skills in a post-pandemic classroom environment. I want to know if targeted writing interventions can positively

impact both areas in which I see my current students struggle to become proficient, as these are skills necessary for students to work toward academic and personal success.

Background

I conducted the current study in a small private school that I will refer to as Ohio Christian School, a pseudonym. This school is located in southwestern Ohio and is considered to be in an urban setting. At the time of this study, Ohio Christian School housed grades pre-kindergarten through twelve, which consisted of nearly 500 students. It employed approximately 50 teachers and staff members as well as three administrators.

Although this school is small, according to data, it is extremely reflective of the national demographics of the United States. In 2022, Ohio Christian's student population consisted of 485 students, of which 55% were Caucasian, 45% Economically Disadvantaged, 18% African American, 15% Hispanic, 9% Students with Disabilities, 7% Limited English Proficiency (Prikkel, 2022). Being a private, religious school, approximately 59% are Catholic (Prikkel, 2022).

I conducted my research at Ohio Christian School because I am a 5th grade ELA, Reading, and Social Studies teacher in my second year of teaching there. I grew up in a lower middle class white household with divorced parents among a large, blended family of eight siblings in total. The school that I attended throughout my primary education years was a conservative, rural school with minimal and minor behavior issues. It was also a school ranked very highly in regard to state testing— English writing was a top priority because the high school English teacher was also a professor at a local college and adamantly taught her students the importance of a mastery in writing skills and

general written expression. This most definitely impacts my view of my current school, in which I feel that the students lack certain behavior and writing skills.

I chose to do my research on the “Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes” intervention because of its curriculum standards aligning well with both self-management behavior standards per the Ohio Department of Education and the basic writing standards per the National Council of Teachers of English. It was important to me to see if all the dots that I was connecting between self-management behavior, writing skills, and this writing intervention could be further linked in my students’ day to day writing and classroom behavior during writing assignments. Because of this, I decided to first ask students about their perceptions of their own self-management behavior and writing skills. I created similar pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys that allowed me to determine these perceptions. I used quantitative research design for this study. This included analyzing the pre-intervention student surveys that were collected to determine which students to observe in the next phase of research which was an observational behavior checklist during the writing intervention sessions. This also involved analyzing samples of students’ writing before and after the “Write-Talks” intervention and comparing the students’ pre- and post-intervention survey answers to gauge if there was any potential growth in self-management behavior or writing skills.

Importance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to seek to promote student self-management behavioral growth as well as writing growth through the “Write-Talks” intervention. The “Write-Talks” intervention is an eight-part implementation of writing strategies and

inspirations for elementary age students to better motivate themselves to write and recognize the many different genres, avenues, and purposes for writing.

Ohio Christian has several students who seem to be missing the same self-management and writing skills that I see in my 5th grade students, according to other teachers in the building. This study could help determine if utilizing this writing intervention, and potentially others like it for different aged students, can promote better self-management and writing skills in students, which can subsequently improve overall behavior and academic achievement. I believed that in a post-pandemic society, where teachers verbally express more academic and behavioral setbacks than ever before, it would be beneficial to use this as the focus for my research. With this action research study, I hoped to change the self-management behavior of reluctant writers during writing activities. If students with better writing skills tended to have better self-management behaviors, then my goal was to increase both with the student writers who needed it the most.

I expected that the students who participated in completing both pre- and post-intervention surveys would reveal honest improvements in self-management and writing abilities. I also anticipated writing samples to improve, as well as behavior per the observation checklist, from the start to finish of the intervention implementation, therefore deeming the intervention effective by the curriculum standards.

Research Question

I explored one major question throughout the course of this research: In what ways can “Write-Talks” impact students’ writing skills and how are those writing skills associated with self-management behaviors?

The purpose of this research question was to delve deeper into a lack of self-management behavior and writing skills that I frequently witnessed in my classroom from mostly reluctant writers. I wanted to see how I could potentially positively impact this behavior and writing through the “Write-Talks” intervention. This intervention acknowledges its own standards, meets the standards from the NCTE writing standards, and clearly supports different self-management techniques. Following the completion of the writing intervention, students could see a growth in their self-management behaviors and their writing.

Definition of Terms

I reference the following terms consistently throughout this study.

- Adverse Childhood Experiences: “...to describe all types of abuse, neglect and other potentially traumatic experiences that occur to people under the age of 18” (Ohio Department of Education, 2019, p. 31).
- Creative written expression or self-expression through creative writing: “...spoken word, poetry, prose, and creative writing...to express yourself and what you’re experiencing...writing down your thoughts...to transform the intangibility of your emotions and experiences into something more... serving as a way for you to make your feelings tangible and real (Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, n.d., p. 1).
- Reluctant writers: “... one who experiences one or more barriers to the writing process on a regular basis” (Trust, 2010, p. 1).
- Self-management: “...the ability to navigate emotions, thoughts and behaviors across different situations while managing stress, controlling impulses, and

motivating oneself... including the ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals” (Ohio Department of Education, 2019, p. 33).

- Self-management techniques:“...skills or strategies that enable oneself to navigate emotions, thoughts and behaviors” (Ohio Department of Education, 2019, p. 33).

Summary

There are a lot of important skills students learn while in their elementary years that if neglected can lead to greater struggles, both personally and academically, in years to come. These skills include a solid grasp of self-management and efficient writing abilities. This study targeted students who are seemingly unwilling to write or who exhibit avoidance behaviors when asked to complete simple writing assignments and determined if the “Write-Talks” intervention was effective in promoting growth in the behavior and writing in students who are considered reluctant writers. Before the discussion of the completed action research project, I will examine the pre-existing research regarding classroom behaviors, reluctant writing behaviors, and the “Write-Talks” intervention itself.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

I am passionate about my students and their individual success, including their behavioral and writing success. One of my personal goals is to support my students in a way to improve their self-management behavior and their writing abilities to be able to set them up for future optimal achievement, in and out of the classroom. To better address and reach this goal of mine, I examined some important components in relation to this topic. I analyzed classroom behaviors, including disruptive behavior and having self-management to minimize these disruptive behaviors. Reluctant writing behaviors specifically, that highlight information linking writing skill to avoidance behaviors, was another key element. Lastly, I evaluated the “Write-Talks” intervention, including its standards and alignments with self-management behavior and other English writing standards to emphasize its importance in the action research.

Classroom Behavior

To potentially work toward improving student classroom behavior, specifically self-management, an imperative first step is delving into what types of unwanted behaviors are taking place in classrooms currently. These undesired behaviors can include disruptive behavior and it is widely known that behavior, especially in children, is dependent on many factors (Paris et al, 2021). These previously stated behaviors are something I analyzed with the intent of expanding upon to be able to address which

students may be prone to behavior and writing struggles, and this later informs how I chose the intervention for my action research.

Often, disruptive or unexpected behavior can reveal critical information about a student and can even indicate the need for further support (Ohio Professional Development Network, 2010). ‘Disruptive’ behavior, though, can encompass many different actions. It is not uncommon to see students unable to manage themselves when they become overwhelmed, control their impulsive urges, motivate themselves to get work done, or even ask for help if they feel that they are struggling on any given day in the classroom. Simply put, disruptive behavior is any behavior that disrupts instruction or others in the surrounding environment, so usually it is easy to recognize. Although being able to recognize disruptive or unwanted behaviors is necessary for teachers, there are behavioral standards established by the Ohio Department of Education for the intent of giving teachers the information they need to encourage positive behaviors critical for succeeding and attempt to redirect negative behaviors that impair success.

Self-management is one of the behavior standards listed by the Ohio Department of Education. Because self-management is “the ability to navigate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors across different situations while managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself,” this descriptor plays a key role in addressing what may appear to be a lack of self-management in classrooms (Ohio Department of Education, 2019, p. 33). Utilizing proficient self-management skills to combat, in hopes of decreasing, unwanted classroom behaviors is the ultimate objective, but there are obstacles that tend to stand in the way.

As previously mentioned, every day, teachers observe their students' behavior, and it is important for teachers to keep in mind that there are several factors that can influence their students' behavior in the classroom, even if those factors are from the outside (Paris et al, 2021). Some of these outside factors can include growing up in poverty (Ravitch, 2014). Being exposed to daily violence is another unfortunate contributor (Finkelhor et al., 2009). Technology concerns are also prevalent as parents admit that they notice negative changes in their children's behavior as a cause of excessive technology use (Auxier et al., 2020). These factors, compounded with the aftermath of COVID-19, have created a magnitude of effects on today's youth and their behavior— perhaps inadvertently creating Adverse Childhood Experiences. Adverse Childhood Experiences are considered instances of abuse, neglect, or trauma that a person under the age of 18 endures (Ohio Department of Education, 2019). With all of this in mind, students' self-management skills could have taken a major hit in recent years, considering that they are personally dealing with a lot more than just academic or behavior obstacles. Having self-management skills could potentially minimize these behaviors.

In a 2021 Canadian study of the unique challenges and impact of COVID-19 on elementary students, various teachers and parents of students participated in interviews about the impact they believed COVID-19 had on their student(s) which included behavior as a worrisome component (Timmons et al, 2021). Teachers and parent interviews both concluded that students who were otherwise well behaved were acting out and students who normally were disruptive exhibited amplified unwanted behaviors due to a lack of social interaction and other items (Timmons et al, 2021). Teachers and

parents both mentioned that they noticed their students having a hard time remaining seated and focused as well as speaking out of turn, which included unmuting during virtual sessions at inappropriate times (Timmons et al, 2021). Academic impacts presented itself as another theme throughout this research study in that mostly parents, but teachers as well, felt that students were behind in many subjects and may be struggling to catch up for years to come, including subjects like reading and writing (Timmons et al, 2021). As a response to this, parents are stressed and overwhelmed, but collectively expect teachers and administrators to be more involved in finding solutions that include more consideration in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion for at-risk students (Timmons et al, 2021). The disruptive behaviors that these parents and teachers are consistently seeing, and a lack of self-management are in tandem (Ohio Department of Education, 2019).

Classroom behavior in a post-pandemic environment unfortunately encompasses undesired student behaviors that frequently disrupt the learning of everyone in the room. Parents and teachers both can attest to the current academic and behavioral setbacks. The studies above suggest that the disruptive behavior listed is associated with self-management because it is indicative of a clear lack of this salient skill. Moreover, a solid foundation of self-management could minimize these same behaviors that are keeping students and teachers from leading our youth to academic achievement in creative written expression as well as other areas.

Reluctant Writing Behaviors during Creative Written Expression

Aside from looking at general classroom behavior, both disruptive behavior and using self-management to minimize that, I analyzed research on which students would be

more susceptible to exhibiting disruptive behaviors. Rather research suggests that students who can be categorized as reluctant writers generally seem to lack self-management behaviors, which manifests in disruptive classroom behavior. So, what is a reluctant writer and who can become one? A reluctant writer is someone “who experiences one or more barriers to the writing process on a regular basis” (Trust, 2010). Among academic setbacks analyzed in a prior study, are student writing skills, meaning that there are likely more reluctant writers in the post-Covid classroom than before.

A study targeted types of students “who do everything they can to avoid writing” in a way that encouraged them through different technologies (Saulsburry et al, p. 30, 2015). Four women with their PhDs closely observed three students of different elementary levels who were reluctant writers because of hard of hearing or deafness (Saulsburry et al, 2015). Their reluctant behaviors mostly translated to avoiding the beginning of the writing process, exhibiting a lack of effort throughout the writing process, or improperly editing throughout writing assignments (Saulsburry, 2015). The digital tools introduced served as a more exciting alternative for these reluctant students to engage more with the topic, create higher quality writing, and decrease their reluctance to write in the first place (Saulsburry et al, 2015).

Just as students with deafness can become reluctant writers, so can ESL students. A 2002 study with an eleventh grader who immigrated from Hong Kong four years prior to the research followed a reluctant writer, revealing that he was hesitant and lacked drive in his revision process (Sze, 2002). Due to the self-awareness of his own insecurities and the fact that he felt pegged by his teachers as an incompetent writer, he conditioned himself to despise the writing process and his behavior reflected that. This student had a

poor attitude toward writing, an absence of overall effort, a hesitance toward written composition, and lacked interest and self-esteem (Sze, 2002). For this student, classroom tactics like extra practice, motivation and encouragement, and provision of input lead him to realize that he could improve both his writing skills and his avoidant behavior (Sze, 2002). Once his writing skills increased, his attitude and behavior increased as well.

COVID-19 could have capitalized on some students pre-existing academic struggles, even creating Adverse Childhood Experiences for some. For students that hesitated to write already, a lack of instruction, support, and other factors could have enabled or molded reluctant writers. A study, including eight school administrators and 26 working parents from Georgia schools, addressed the effects that remote learning presumably had on their students after the pandemic— specifically academic decline and academic behavior (Klosky, 2022). This meant that parents and administrators noticed more students not being able to focus for long, having meltdowns, struggling with comprehension, and even not being able to listen well (Klosky, 2022). Parents and teachers both speak to the link between low academic, including writing behaviors, and avoidant and disruptive behaviors as a way of acting out of character and frustration.

Steven W. Garlid even provides data on why male students can be more prone to having reluctances to write in the classroom than female students (Garlid, 2014). Factors such as peer pressure, “video games, medical problems such as attention deficit disorders, a lack of male teachers at the elementary school level, [and] ‘feminization’ of classrooms are all identified as obstacles to male success” (Garlid, p. 48, 2014). Garlid found that in an environment where students “choose their own topics, receive feedback, and have chances to share and talk about their work,” they seemed to not only be more willing to

do the work, but provided better quality and more creative writing in general (Garlid, p. 48, 2014).

Another study takes a close look at reluctant writer Shaun, a white, English speaking, fourth grade male (Hamel, 2022). Shaun experienced “negatively spiraling motivation” with his classroom writing assignments (Hamel, p.1, 2022). Creative short story writing was difficult for Shaun, but once he realized that he could write about something he knew and loved—superheroes— he became motivated. Later, Hamel concluded that Shaun’s reluctance to write could be linked to his desire to fit in culturally and socially within the world where he lives, even outside of the classroom (Hamel, 2014). After feeling a sense of belonging, his writing and behavior simultaneously saw a turn around.

A faith-based traditional women’s homeless shelter and rehabilitation center looks at adults who are reluctant writers (MacGillavry, 2016). Through letter writing, public reading of letters, essay writing, building up vocabulary, and journaling, these women were forced to confront emotions, express them in a cohesive manner, and occasionally share their thoughts and feelings with others. By way of self-management techniques, these adults were able to overcome hardships related to homelessness and addiction that they might have never thought possible.

The above pre-existing research suggests that students can become hesitant in writing due to a lack of confidence, lack of fluency, learning English as a second language, lack of grade level reading skills, deafness, and even other factors. These elements affect behavior in terms of attitude, esteem, motivation, and social interactions

and with higher proficiency in self-management behaviors exhibited through writing, people proved to minimize their own reluctance toward writing.

“Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes”

In addition to disruptive or avoidant behaviors and reluctant writers, a key component to this action research is creative written expression practices that attempt to address both the type of student writers mentioned above and their behavioral struggles because of their writing skills. Because “writing is an important form of self-expression and communication,” there can be many benefits to implementing creative writing into the classroom which can then translate into benefits beyond the classroom environment (NCTE, 2022, p.1). Research supports the plethora of advantages people can gain from creative written expression and restorative practices. Restorative practices are “proactive processes that build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing,” and are also essential for well roundedness in schools as well as other establishments (Ohio Department of Education, 2019, p. 33). A writing intervention that contains these qualities is the “Write-Talks” intervention. Wilson’s goal with “Write-Talks” was to put “brief motivational talks designed to engage students in writing” at the forefront of her teaching “with the intention of fostering a love for writing both inside and outside of classrooms” (Wilson, 2008, p. 486).

A 2016 study reiterates some of the importance of self-management that “Write-Talks” stresses with its instruction. This study recreated a 1985 survey about written forms of self-expression to reveal that modern forms of written expression include more technological avenues such as blogging and social media than other written forms of the past (Ramos, 2017). Although creative writing looks slightly different these days, the

study claimed that participants around the same age (high school and college) described feelings of happiness, content, and overall tranquility during and after completing written forms of self-expression, no matter the form (Ramos, 2017). These writing techniques allow for self-expression, dealing with stress, and motivating oneself. This is distinctly interesting because of the connections to the self-management techniques of navigating emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that can come from both personal and public platforms for writing.

The National Council of Teachers of English provides detailed standards, goals, and consequences for student and teacher writers alike. Likewise, the Ohio Department of Education provides several self-management skills through social emotional standards. “Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes” has overlapping elements of the self-management behavior requirements from the Ohio Department of Education and the National Council of Teachers of English. The intervention also meets six of the state of Ohio’s writing standards, six of the speaking and listening standards for the state of Ohio, and three standards for the National Standards for English Language Arts. National Standards for the English Language Arts that “Write-Talks” meets are:

- “Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes” (Wilson, 2008, p. 485).
- “Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities” (Wilson, 2008, p.485).

- “Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).” (Wilson, 2008, p. 486).

The latter of the standards met by “Write-Talks” particularly stand out in correlation with self-management standards because of the use of writing to accomplish certain purposes. “Write-Talks’s” intervention standards meet the standards from the Ohio Department of Education’s Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards and clearly support different self-management techniques. Below are different self-management competencies for grades 3-5 that the “Write-Talks” intervention supports because the strategies in which the document suggested could be writing strategies.

- “B1. 3.b Apply strategies to regulate emotions and manage behaviors” (Ohio Department of Education, 2019, p.12)
- “B3. 1.b Identify strategies for persevering through challenges and setbacks” (Ohio Department of Education, 2019, p.14)

The “Write-Talks” intervention standards include:

- “Reflecting on different ways they can apply the writing process for relevant texts they write in their own lives by recording how they can approach different types of personal and professional writing” (Wilson, 2008, p.1)
- “Discovering that writing is used in various real-life settings by people who want to accomplish a variety of important purposes” (Wilson, 2008, p.1)

A common thread in this section is that the form of writing is less important than the creative written expression itself. With the many different advantages people can gain from different forms of writing, the outcomes are plentiful. Self-management in the form

of creative written expression provides the specific type of techniques that elementary students would benefit from because the skills of controlling one's own behavior and motivation as well as meeting writing standards are particularly applicable.

Summary

For the completion of this study, I examined research around current disruptive and unwanted student behavior in classrooms, how that behavior is linked to self-management techniques, reluctant writers as an area of need on this topic because of a decline in writing academic success, and the "Write-Talks" intervention that connects all these elements. From this research, I gathered that students are struggling with overcoming their own disruptive behaviors and reluctance toward writing, which is affecting their overarching student success, including meeting basic English writing standards. I learned from this research that elementary students are at a high risk for exposure to these struggles and that meaningful instruction can attempt to steer them in the direction of improvements in behavior and writing that will inherently lead to improvements in other areas. Defining self-management behaviors is necessary as is recognizing the students who can be susceptible to writing reluctance because avoidance in and of itself shows a clear lack of self-management (Ohio Department of Education, 2019). This research impacted the survey questions I asked students in evaluating their own self-management behavior and writing confidence and abilities. In the next chapter, I will describe the action research that I used to determine the ways in which the "Write-Talks" intervention can impact students' writing skills and how those writing skills are associated with self-management.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to seek to promote student self-management behavioral growth as well as writing growth in elementary age students through the “Write-Talks” intervention. The research question answered was, “In what ways can “Write-Talks” impact students’ writing skills and how are those writing skills associated with self-management behaviors?” I chose quasi-experimental quantitative design for this action research study because I used a Likert Scale-style survey to begin my study followed by quantitative analysis of student writing samples and a behavior checklist to determine the impact of the intervention on writing and behavioral progress of students before and after the intervention (Creswell, 2014). The independent variable for this action research is the “Write-Talks” intervention curriculum whereas the dependent variables would be student self-management behavior and student creative written expression skills.

Participants

From Ohio Christian School, a private, religious school, and from two 5th grade classrooms, I drew a convenience sample of 18 student participants. A parental consent form dictated how many students would be able to partake in the action research, though (See Appendix B for parental consent/ assent form). Out of two homeroom classes that I see daily, there were a total of 34 potential participants, but

only 18 altogether returned the signed consent form. The sample-size of these 18 participants can be characterized as 61% Caucasian; 33% African American; 11% Hispanic; 16% Immigrant or ELL (English Language Learning); 50% Catholic; 11% on Free and Reduced Lunches; 11% on IEPs. The study later uses only six participants, chosen from this same convenience sample, for behavioral observation, so this subset of student participants is also important in terms of attempting to measure any behavioral growth possibly from the “Write-Talks” intervention. Two students from this subset are in one homeroom and the other four are from the separate 5th grade homeroom class, which is important for the understanding of the environment during the “Write-Talks” intervention.

Setting

This action research study took place in a community in Southwestern Ohio. Some students in this community open enroll who live outside of this urban setting, but many students are inner-city living. In this same community are sixteen other schools all served by one district with a general city population of about 59,000 people. It is a diverse community in that there are wealthy areas, impoverished areas, and middle-class areas. The school I did my research at was Ohio Christian School (pseudonym). Ohio Christian School is in the middle of a city which is served in part by the previously mentioned larger district but remains a separate entity from this district because of its private, religious status. The EdChoice Scholarship that provides money to public schools for individual students states that if the public school in which a student lives is underperforming, then that money can be delegated to a nearby private school for the student to be able to attend (Ohio Department of Education, 2023). Because of this

scholarship and recent academic decline of the larger district that Ohio Christian is in, many students have transferred from public schools in the community to Ohio Christian School. This means that schools in the area are generally underachieving, and the student population has grown increasingly diverse at Ohio Christian because of this.

This school is a pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade building, which is the only one of its nature in the city that houses over four hundred students and employs approximately fifty staff including administrators. Our school depends on the larger district for services such as food and transportation, but outside of those needs, is an independently operating school amongst the public schools in the area. The classroom in which I conducted the research was on the third floor of a three-story building that shares a connecting door with another fifth-grade teacher—my co-teacher. The participants see me once or twice a day, depending on the schedule and day of the week, to study different subjects. From me, the participants learn English, Reading, and Social Studies. From my co-teacher, they learn Religion, Science, and Math. Because they see two different teachers each day, the participants of the study were broken into two different groups based on their homerooms (group A and group B). On a normal school day, the desks are arranged in rows facing the smart board/ front of the classroom, but during the “Write-Talks” interventions, sometimes the desks were arranged differently, for example, in a circle for discussion. The classroom also has a wall of windows on the south side of the room that reach all the way to the ceiling from about waist level to allow for ample natural lighting. The door connecting both classrooms, though, is both the most convenient and interesting point of the room as our classrooms are the only ones in the entire building with this feature and we use it daily for communication, switching the

students between classes, and even to check in on the classes if there seems to be an issue or ruckus. The children seem to appreciate this feature as well.

All parts of the research took place in my classroom from early January to late February of 2023. I administered the “Write-Talks” intervention in eight sessions of a range of approximately twenty to sixty minutes per session. The length of time depended on the topic for discussion or activity for the day. There were usually two sessions per week, as the writing intervention was weaved into the current English instruction in the classroom (there were “Write-Talks” Wednesdays and Fridays). There were weeks in which only one session could be scheduled due to snow days or planned early release days for the district, therefore the sessions were spread out over the course of about five weeks. Because there were two classes of participants that studied English at different times, group A generally did the intervention in the mornings (9:30 - 10:00 a.m., roughly) and group B in the afternoons (12:30 - 1:00 p.m., roughly).

Data Collection

For my action research study, I chose four data measurement instruments, to collect data before, during, and after the study. Two of these tools were surveys to measure students’ perceptions of their own writing abilities and self-management behavioral habits, one before the intervention and one afterward for comparison. The questions were similar, but the latter survey included opinion related questions on the intervention’s effectiveness. The other two data tools were meant to measure any potential growth in student creative written expression and self-management behavior. The tool used to measure creative written expression was a rubric to thoroughly grade student writing prompt samples and the tool used to track behavior was an observation

checklist. All participants received self-assessment surveys before and after the “Write-Talks” intervention and were in Likert-Scale form with developmentally appropriate language for the students.

Pre-Intervention Survey

Prior to the “Write-Talks” intervention, I administered a paper copy of a Likert-Scale self-assessment survey to all 17 participants, which I intended to quantitatively measure their perspectives on their own self-management behavior during English class, specifically during writing lessons and assignments (see Appendix C for pre-intervention survey details). They completed the ten-question survey on Wednesday, January 11, 2023. I learned from my research that reluctant writers are an area of need for both writing and behavioral improvements, so this knowledge guided most of my survey questions in hope of being able to better identify reluctant writers in my own classroom. I made sure to include questions that asked students about specific self-management behaviors and how often they felt that they exhibit each behavior, allowing responses of “never; almost never; sometimes; almost always; always.” I also included questions about writing skills and confidence levels. I worded the questions to be developmentally appropriate in language to aid in reliability and validity. I gave every student in both 5th grade homeroom classes a consent form for research participation after briefly describing what the intervention would entail, verbally leaving out the part of their writing and behavior being observed and analyzed. I purposefully left out those details to discard any possibilities of student bias in being prepared for observation or evaluation and acting differently because of it. I received 18 signed parental consent forms back, but only 17 survey responses (see Appendix B for the parental consent and informed consent

document). This could impair the overall research study slightly in that it could contribute to response bias because this is only 50% of the total number of students that could have potentially participated in the study. Honest student self-assessment affects the reliability and validity of the study too and it is possible that students felt predisposed to give answers that they thought I would appreciate as their teacher, such as that they always do their best always without any distractions, even though I stressed the importance of honesty multiple times.

Writing Prompt Sample Rubric

The same day of the pre-intervention surveys conduction, I collected writing samples from students in the form of freestyle writing prompts, which students respond to weekly. These writing prompts require students to write a paragraph, at least five sentences worth, of creative expression in response to a specific theme. I then examine these writing samples and grade them based on a five-part rubric that evaluates the completion of the assignment, spelling, grammar and punctuation, sentence complexity, and the inclusion of personal voice and self-expression. I grade these categories in terms of needing support, approaching the standard, meeting the standard, or exceeding the standard, then giving an overall score out of 20 points. I made this rubric to the best of my ability to measure what I felt were the components of student creative written expression that would reveal aspects of both self-management behavior as well as critical writing skills addressed by the Ohio Department of Education and the National Council of Teachers of English. The students completed another writing prompt on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, which I also graded using the exact same rubric as the first set of

writing samples to ensure reliability and validity when examining them further during the analysis process. (See Appendix F for the writing sample rubric)

Behavioral Checklist

Upon student completion of the pre-intervention survey and collecting writing samples from students, I used a behavioral checklist during the intervention sessions to track the self-management tendencies of students (see Appendix D for the behavioral checklist items). Because of the impossibility of observing all the participants in each group's behavior simultaneously while also providing the intervention instruction, I decided to let the survey results guide who I would observe. Students who answered that they infrequently showed signs of self-management but answered that they frequently acted out signs of a lack of self-management stood out upon analysis. I gave numeric value to the students' responses. Questions indicating lower self-management were reverse scored for the sake of reliability. On a scale of one to five, for positively worded questions, "always" had a numeric value of one; for negatively worded questions "always" had a numeric value of five. Data analysis revealed which students had the highest and lowest scores, and who scored in the middle. There were seven students who scored higher overall, but there were three students upon further contemplation who I chose to exclude from phase two of research because they do not routinely exhibit the behavior they claimed to in the survey, leading me to believe that they were simply too critical of themselves. There were also two students who I anticipated to score more highly but did not. Using my existing knowledge and experience with these students and their habitual behavior that does, in my perspective, indicate a lack of self-management, I decided to include them in the study. I chalked up their low scores to dishonesty perhaps

or even oblivion. This totaled 6 students to be in the next phase of the action research. These six had scores ranging from 24-38 out of a 50-score maximum; 50 meaning that a student does all the behavior “always” during writing activities that points to lacking self-management skills.

The behavioral checklist allowed for a section for frequency of behavior observed and optional comments for any specific student behavior observed. The behavioral checklist begins with a brief introduction of the objective of the data measurement tool and a definition for “self-management behavior” for the administrator or observer to reference to improve trustworthiness in a possible replication of use. Essentially, I used the checklist to indicate if a student exhibited a lack of self-management behavior. Typical behavior that would indicate a lack of self-management could be described in detail, but I chose to focus on ten specific behaviors that I frequently witness during writing activities in the classroom. The ten behaviors are not listening to teacher’s instructions, being off task/ distracting others, talking out of turn, restlessness/ fidgeting, being out of assigned area(s), refusing to do work, unwillingness to do work, physical frustration, interjecting verbal frustration or confusion, and having an overall lack of effort. In the behavioral checklist chart, I list the behaviors, thoroughly describe them, and give examples of them, so that there can be the least amount of confusion or ambiguity for the observer, whether it be me or a duplicator of this study later. Below, through Table 1 and Figure 1, is an example of a behavior from the checklist which can be further examined in Appendix D.

Table 1

Behavior that May Indicate a Lack of Self-Management	Frequency of Behavior (Tally Marks)	Comments
1. Does not Listen to Teacher's Instructions	///	Student interjected to give answers completely unrelated to topic for the purpose of being a class clown

Figure 1

Description of Behaviors:

1. Examples- Interruption of instructions during the administration of said instructions, asking for instructions to be repeated more than twice, incorrectly completing the assignment/ task.

I documented electronically on separate copies of this checklist, one for every student I observed for each session. The sessions occurred generally once or twice a week and during these 15-to-30-minute sessions, I recorded behavior of the six specific students. The nature of this checklist made for a reliable and trustworthy measurement instrument because I could mark tallies for how frequently I saw certain behavior in all six students. Sometimes, it is easy to dismiss the behavior of certain students, as a teacher, if we feel that they are overall a good, well-behaved, or academically successful student, but this checklist is not very subjective as most of these are observable behaviors. Regardless, I still had to note the behaviors of each of the participants. Due to the mentioning of ten specific yet separate enough behaviors that are clearly the opposite of effectively practicing "self-management," I could validly gather the exact number of times that I observed a very specific behavior. With each participant having their own checklist, I was able to generally see if a participant has several frequent behaviors in

regard to a lack of self-management in each writing intervention session for later reference.

Post-Intervention Survey

The action research study concluded with a second Likert-Scale style survey, similar to the first, for participants to complete (see Appendix E for Post-Intervention survey). It allowed them to reveal how effective they deemed the “Write-Talks” intervention in terms of promoting self-management behavior and writing skills and confidence. The eleven questions asked participants how frequently they noticed themselves performing self-management behaviors, and their overall comfort with writing in terms that they could plainly understand. “Ineffective, somewhat ineffective, somewhat helpful, helpful” were the responses for selection, so that participants did not have a neutral option. I gave the surveys to all participants, regardless of whether I observed their behavior or not, and collected them afterwards to ensure that I did not have any response bias if participants chose to either not complete or not turn in the survey once done. I used developmentally appropriate language for the students to ensure reliability and understanding for the subjects’ responses. The purpose of this measurement tool was to not only see if participants felt that the intervention was helpful, but to compare these responses to the pre-intervention survey responses from the same students in attempt to determine if there was any growth in certain students throughout the process of the “Write-Talks” instruction sessions. By asking about these specific behaviors, I could quantitatively measure if students felt these behaviors had improved with the “Write-Talks” intervention and force participants to make a choice without giving a neutral option.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the quantitative data from my four data measurement tools with basic descriptive statistics. I found the important measurements of mean, median, mode, standard deviation, percentages, and totals for the surveys, behavior checklist, and writing prompt samples. I used inferential statistics to make comparisons between the pre and post surveys, specifically students' total scores and the breakdown of five overlapping questions. Inferential statistics also aided in the writing sample rubric scores in comparing before and after the intervention. Similarities in the pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys called for a joint description below for data analyses.

Pre- and Post-Intervention Surveys

The Likert style format of both surveys was helpful in analyzing student responses in Microsoft excel. Each word response was equated with a number; never =1, almost never =2, sometimes =3, almost always =4, always =5. Generally, the more frequently students performed behaviors that indicated a lack of self-management, the higher their overall score would be. For questions that aimed to measure essentially the same items but were worded negatively, I reverse scored the data to ensure that the responses and overall score would still match what was intended to be measured (Creswell, 2014). Meaning that there were questions in which “never” could equal 5 and “always” could equal 1. Students could only score a range of 10 to 50 points. Nobody scored a 10 or a 50. I found the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for all 10 survey questions to see which behaviors my class felt that they struggled with the most. Later I used the total pre-survey scores to compare with the total post-survey scores. I used inferential statistics, the dependent t test and the p value to help identify if there was

a positive impact on student self-management behavior in the six students who I chose for that part of the study. I did the same for the purpose of seeing a potential growth in student creative written expression. If there was a positive impact, a t test will help reveal how likely it was due to the intervention or by sheer randomness or other factors. These data measurement tools intended to answer the research question: “In what ways can “Write-Talks” impact students’ writing skills and how are those writing skills associated with self-management behaviors?” Descriptive and inferential statistics helped me answer this question by analyzing if students exhibited any perceived growth, through self-evaluations, after the intervention concluded.

Writing Prompt Sample Rubric

I collected two writing samples, via weekly writing prompts, from each of the 17 participants, meaning that each participant had a physical paper writing sample from before the intervention and after its conclusion. I used the 20-point scale rubric described previously to grade each writing sample based on five different criteria (see Appendix F for rubric details). Not only did I use this quantitative data to gather basic statistical data like totals, but I used the information to compare the first writing sample to the second for each student. This would be helpful in revealing if there was any improvement in either overall score or specific categories of the rubric through p values and t tests.

Behavior Checklist

After eight sessions, each student had eight sets of data. To build off the foundation established with the self-assessment survey, the behavior checklist in the observation field note gathered more detailed information on actions of the participants that displayed a lack of self-management during the writing activities of “Write-Talks.”

During the sessions, I tallied the number of times I saw behavior on the checklist and added comments in another column to accompany the tallies and give further information on what exactly students were doing, for example talking about an unrelated topic instead of paying attention. The tallies I later added up to look at each student's total number of behaviors observed in each session to track their progress over time in a line graph. I also found the basic descriptive statistics for each student for each question to compare the consistency in behaviors from one session to the next. I wanted to know if a student was constantly talking out of turn each session or if there were different behaviors depending on the style of session, length, or activities. I used the relevant data measures to determine if there was any self-management growth throughout the sessions of the "Write-Talks" intervention, which was part of my research question.

The "Write-Talks" Intervention

"Write-Talks" introduces students to a wide world of writing" by having students brainstorm daily forms of writing, categorizing them, conducting interviews of local writers, listening to speakers talk about writing, and assess how they use writing in their own lives (Wilson, n.d., p. 1). This intervention targets writing and self-management by encouraging students with "brief motivational talks designed to engage students in writing" and "with the intention of fostering a love for writing both inside and outside of classrooms" (Wilson, 2008, p. 486). "Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes" has overlapping elements of the self-management behavior requirements from the Ohio Department of Education and The National Council of Teachers of English. For example, "students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the

exchange of information)” clearly targets writing, but also targets self-management behaviors by addressing students’ abilities for self-expression of thought and emotions (Wilson, 2008, p. 486). This intervention helps answer my research question because it aligns self-management behaviors of managing and effectively communicating thoughts and emotions with the standards for writing that require students to “broaden definitions of *writing* to include visual, aural, and multimodal compositions and to include a wider variety of purposes for writing” (National Council of Teachers of English, 2022, p. 1).

Procedures

First, upon IRB approval, I discussed the action research project in short with the participants, by using incomplete disclosure about the self-management behavior and its relation to the study. I explained to students that we were going to be starting a writing intervention for the time being but that there would be optional surveys for students to partake in before and after which would require their parents’ consent. I assured them that this data would not be used for anything besides my action research project. The reason I decided to exclude information, such as the sheer fact that students would be behaviorally observed or their most recent writing prompt would be used for data analysis, and I was upfront with the students was because I did not want them to be aware of their behavior for the duration of the study in case that would potentially impair the findings. In this same conversation, I discussed the ‘Write-Talks’ intervention itself with the entire class because every student received the “Write-Talks” instruction sessions regardless of the behavioral aspect of the study which required parental consent. I explained to the students that they would not have to participate in the study if they did not want to and that they could opt out without consequence, but that the intervention

would be done in class for everyone's benefit. Then, I distributed paper copies of the Parental Consent Forms for the students to take home later that afternoon on Tuesday, January 3, 2023. I told students that I would like the consent forms back by the following Monday, but continued to accept them until that Wednesday, January 11th, giving students approximately a week to return the signed consent forms. (See Appendix B for Parental Consent Forms).

The following day, Thursday, January 12, I distributed a paper copy of the Pre-Intervention Self-Assessment Survey to all 18 participants that returned a signed consent form, and I collected them once they were complete.

The intervention sessions started on Wednesday, January 18th and were as follows:

- Wednesday, January 18th, 2023- Session 1: 15 minutes
- Friday, January 27th, 2023- Session 2: 30 minutes
- Wednesday, February 1st, 2023- Session 3: 15 minutes
- Friday, February 3rd, 2023- Session 4: 15 minutes
- Wednesday, February 8th, 2023- Session 5: 15 minutes
- Friday, February 10th, 2023- Session 6: 30 minutes
- Wednesday, February 15th, 2023- Session 7: 15 minutes
- Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023- Session 8: 60 minutes

“Write-Talks” is meant to be completed in five longer sessions, but as I previously mentioned, that was not plausible for my classroom at the time. Session one was supposed to be 60 minutes, session two as 15 minutes, session three as 15 minutes, session four as 60 minutes, and session five as 60 minutes. Amy Alexandra Wilson, the

curriculum designer, divides the sessions in these time frames solely based on the activities and how long she suggests for students to take in order to complete the individual/ group activities (Wilson, n.d.). The sixty-minute sessions usually involve having students do think, pair, share activities which naturally take up more time, whereas the fifteen-minute sessions introduce or discuss paperwork and materials for other sessions. After all eight sessions of “Write-Talks,” I distributed and later collected a printed copy of the Post-Intervention Survey to all participants on Friday, February 24, 2023. I conducted my descriptive and inferential statistics after data collection was complete.

Summary

I administered the “Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes” intervention in my classroom to help measure its impact on growth in students’ self-management behaviors and writing skills. To answer this research question, I obtained the proper consent from the two subject groups first. To accurately measure self-management behavior, I gave pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys, as well as used a behavior checklist in the moment of each writing session. I used writing samples to gather quantitative data as well. I analyzed the data and determined the effectiveness of the “Write-Talks” intervention on student behavioral growth and writing growth in Chapter Four.

Chapter 4

Findings

With the completion of the “Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes” in the classroom, I evaluated its impact on students’ self-management behavioral change and that behavior’s impact on creative written expression change. During the 2023 school year, I conducted a quasi-experimental action research study in my fifth-grade classroom with 18 student participants. All participants received two Likert-scale surveys, one prior to and one after the intervention, which aided in analyzing students’ perceived self-management and creative expression abilities and potential growth. From each student, I also collected writing samples from before and after the intervention to analyze the data in attempt to interpret if the intervention positively impacted student creative written expression. For another portion of the study, I chose a subset of reluctant writing students to observe self-management behavior over the sessions of the intervention due to their lower-than-average survey responses or pre-existing behavior and writing struggles. These behavior checklists provided further data that helped me to determine if the “Write-Talks” intervention was effective in answering the research question. I used descriptive and inferential statistics throughout this process and this chapter lays out the findings related to this subject.

Surveys

The pre-intervention and post-intervention survey questions were almost entirely identical with the exception that in the post-survey, I added a question about the overall feelings of students toward the intervention and that the post-survey asks students how the intervention impacted self-behaviors that they previously examined in the first survey. (See Appendix G for a full summary of the students' pre-survey results). Instead of analyzing all the survey questions the same, I decided to analyze the descriptive statistics of questions two through five of the post-intervention survey since they focused on students' perceived effectiveness of the "Write-Talks" intervention. (See Appendix H for a full summary of the students' post-survey results). Because of the different, positive wording of these questions, I reversed the correlating number responses to allow the data to remain consistent (2=3, 1=4). I decided to exclude descriptive statistics for the first question of this post-intervention survey because of its simplicity in asking students if they liked or disliked the intervention. I felt that it was important to include overall in the survey because of the possibility of using the intervention next school year in my classroom. I also wanted the participants to feel that their opinion was valued and that their responses were not for the sole purpose of collecting data. Furthermore, I analyzed these four questions from this survey to discover if students felt like the intervention impacted their written self-expression and behavior tendencies in any way. Table 2 displays this data.

Table 2*Post-Intervention Survey Questions Descriptive Statistics*

Question	<i>M</i>	Median	Mode	<i>SD</i>	Range	Sum
2: How do you feel the “Write-Talks” instruction has impacted your ability to express your emotions and thoughts?	2.24	2	2	0.90	3	38
3: How do you feel the “Write-Talks” instruction has impacted your ability to motivate yourself?	2.24	2	2	1.03	3	38
4: How do you feel the “Write-Talks” instruction has impacted your ability to set and work toward goals for yourself in the classroom?	2.06	2	2	0.75	2	35
5: How do you feel the “Write-Talks” instruction has impacted your overall comfort level with writing?	1.94	2	1	1.03	3	33

As shown in Table 2, the mean was the same for questions one and two ($M = 2.24$). This expressed that the average student felt the intervention to be “somewhat effective” when it came to impacting their abilities to express their emotions and thoughts and motivate themselves. The mean result of question four was slightly lower at 2.06 but still consistent with the “somewhat effective” response to the previous two questions. In comparison, question five had an even lower mean of 1.94, indicating that the data still was in favor of “somewhat effective” but nonetheless that student responses were in between “somewhat effective” (2) and “effective” (1).

The median for all four of these survey questions was two. Questions two, three, and four reveal a mode of two, meaning that students most frequently answered that they felt the intervention was “somewhat effective” with impacting their abilities. However, question five’s most popular response was one, or “effective.” Question two ($SD = 0.90$) and questions three and five ($SD = 1.03$) divulged that the data had an average scatter value of nearly one around the mean. Question four ($SD = 0.75$) was the lowest and therefore indicated that the data were clustered closer to the mean than the other three questions analyzed. The range of responses for questions two, three, and five was three, which is standard because there are only four answer options. Question four’s range was only two, revealing that no student chose to respond to the question with “ineffective” (4).

To conclude, the data from these questions told me that for the general intervention, the students found it to be at least “somewhat effective in impacting their self-management behavior and creative written expression tendencies. It also reveals that of all the self-management and creative written expression tendencies, students generally felt that the intervention was the most effective in impacting their overall comfort level with writing.

I then used inferential statistics to analyze the other six overlapping questions from the pre-intervention and the post-intervention surveys to infer if students felt that they had experienced change or growth in their self-management and writing behaviors before compared to after the intervention. The overlapping questions are displayed in Table 3, after I conducted dependent samples t tests.

Table 3*Overlapping Survey Questions Inferential Statistics*

	<i>M</i>	Variance	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
6: How often do you think you are “off-task” during writing activities?					
Pre-Survey	2.65	0.49	16	-1	0.33
Post-Survey	2.82	0.53			
7: How often do you think you get frustrated during writing activities?					
Pre-Survey	2.47	1.89	16	-0.50	0.63
Post-Survey	2.65	0.99			
8: How often do you think you fidget with an object during writing activities?					
Pre-Survey	2.82	1.65	16	-1.56	0.14
Post-Survey	3.18	1.65			
9: How often do you think you speak out of turn?					
Pre-Survey	2.65	0.99	16	0.62	0.54
Post-Survey	2.53	0.51			
10: How often do you think you talk during writing activities to the people around you?					
Pre-Survey	2.94	0.68	16	0.90	0.38
Post-Survey	2.76	0.69			
11: How often do you think you avoid or don’t want to participate in writing activities?					
Pre-Survey	2.47	1.89	16	1.30	0.21
Post-Survey	2.12	1.11			

The means for question six ($MI = 2.65$, $M2 = 2.82$), question seven ($MI = 2.47$, $M2 = 2.65$), and question eight ($MI = 2.82$, $M2 = 3.18$) all increased in number from pre- to post-intervention survey. The means of questions six and seven for both surveys still indicated that students gave a response of “almost never” (2) when asked about how frequently they were off-task or fidgeted during writing activities. These responses, though, were in the middle of two and three, revealing that the class on average was split almost between the response of “almost never” (2) and “sometimes” (3). However, for question three, the mean jumped from an average response of “almost never” (2) to “sometimes” (3), which was a noticeable difference. Question nine ($MI = 2.65$, $M2 = 2.53$), question ten ($MI = 2.94$, $M2 = 2.76$), and question eleven’s ($MI = 2.47$, $M2 = 2.12$) means decreased from the first survey to the second, but continued to reveal, like the other questions, that the class generally answered with “almost never” in response to reluctant writing and lacking self-management behaviors.

The t tests for all six questions were not statistically significant and supported the retaining of the null hypothesis because the p values were higher than 0.05. These results indicated that there was likely no significant difference between the pre-intervention survey and post-intervention survey as a result of the intervention itself. Although question eight had a p value of 0.14, which was still high enough to retain the null hypothesis, it was much closer to the value 0.05. The t value was the highest for question eleven than any of the others. The higher the t stat, the more statistically significant the data is and in this case the data still proved to be not statistically significant, but the t stat increasing could be a sign that the avoidance behaviors were the most impacted from the intervention, at least from the perspective of the participants.

The initial survey provided data that encompassed a wide range of information on students' self-evaluations of their self-management skills and creative written expression tendencies. I first calculated each student's overall score from the survey. A total score of 50 would have been an indicator that the student *never* behaved with self-management and *always* performed the opposite of it, as well as *never* embodying efficient creative written expression tendencies. This scenario was unlikely. 10 would have been the lowest score any student could receive, meaning that they *always* showed self-management and *never* lacked it, and that they *always* performed proficient creative written expression, which is another unrealistic scenario. The sheer nature of both radical positions was severely unlikely because no student is perfect 100% of the time. Originally, I received 18 parent consent forms, but Student 12 was absent for several days and never ended up completing the survey therefore, I left this student out of all other research.

With this information, I used basic math to determine that a possible near average score for the survey would have been around 30, given the range of the numbers (10-50). A total score of 35 to 45 would have been higher than average, but the participant scores between 32 and 38 could generally reveal that on average a student would have been exhibiting a lack in self-management and creative written expression habits, even if just slightly. The reason for the 32 to 38 range is that no student scored above 38. The mean score from these survey totals was 27.5 which indicated that as a class, students are performing around average, in their own opinions. In fact, their scores fell just below average, meaning that they believed themselves to perform self-management behavior and efficiency in written self-expression "almost always" as the most frequent response. From this data, I also decided to categorize students into three groups of below average,

average, or above average based on their total scores with above average representing writing reluctance and need in self-management.

In the below average group were nine students, in the average group were four students, and in the above average group were also four students. Since a total score of 30 would have been average, I made the average range from 29-31. The below average group ranged from 16-28 and the above average group ranged from 33-38 (no student scored a 32). This means that just over 75% of the participants felt that they exhibited self-management behaviors and effective creative written expression the average frequency that they should for a student their age. The data also showed that there were four students, or nearly 25% of participants, who admittedly felt that they lacked self-management and creative written expression. These four above average scoring students were S1, S2, S16, and S18. Because of their high scores, I determined them to be considered 'reluctant writers.'

An area of focus for my study was these 'reluctant writers' specifically, or students who scored above average, so I examined their data more closely. This information was particularly relevant because these students struggle the most with both self-management behavior and creative written expression and the writing intervention targeted this population with the intent of positively impacting both areas of struggle. I also include another set of students, S4, S6, S7, S11, S15, and S16, who I considered reluctant writers based on my experience with their previous classroom behavior. Table 4 portrays both the descriptive and inferential statistics on the reluctant writers of the study.

Table 4*Reluctant Writers Statistics*

	Survey Categorized RW		Prior Experience RW	
	Descriptive			
	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
Mean	34.7	31	30.7	27.8
Median	34	31	31	26.5
Mode	34	32	31	26
Standard Deviation	2.22	1.55	4.50	3.37
Range	5	2	14	8
Minimum	33	30	24	24
Maximum	38	32	38	32
Sum	139	124	184	167
Count	4	4	6	6
	Inferential			
Mean	31.7	28.3	30.7	27.8
Variance	15	10	20.3	11.4
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0		0	
<i>df</i>	8		5	
<i>t</i>	2.70		1.73	
<i>p</i>	0.03		0.15	

Note. RW = Reluctant Writers. Survey Categorized RW are students who revealed to be reluctant writers solely through their pre-survey total scores, not necessarily because of any prior reluctance or behavior.

From the pre-survey, this data reveals that the survey categorized reluctant writers ($M = 34.7$) was noticeably higher compared to the rest of the class once the data was isolated in this way. The students categorized as reluctant writers from previous

experience and behaviors mean ($M = 30.7$) was much closer to that of the entire class for the first survey and notably four points lower than the other group of reluctant writers. To me, this meant that the students who I felt were reluctant writers did not answer survey questions how I anticipated they would, or rather, in a way that I expected to display their reluctance. It also showed me that the survey revealed reluctant writers who I would have not suspected to be, based on their past behavior. A simple explanation for this could have been that students were not entirely honest or genuine with their self-assessment in the survey, or perhaps were too critical of them. The post-survey means for the survey categorized reluctant writers ($M = 31$) and the prior experience reluctant writers ($M = 27.8$) both decreased with the second survey, showing potential growth in self-management and creative written expression regardless of which group the students fell into.

The medians and modes for both groups of reluctant writers saw a numerical drop from pre- to post-survey. This drop is true for nearly every category of descriptive statistics including the standard deviation, range, minimum, maximum, and sum, except for the minimum score for prior experience RWs that stayed the same from pre- to post-survey (24). This drop showed that the middle of the data and the most popular responses from the surveys shifted from being indicative of a lack of self-management and having reluctant writing tendencies that was above average to an average score, for the survey RW. This data for the other group of reluctant writers, or the prior experience RW meant that their scores went from an average to below average. On paper, this meant that the student participants felt that they had not only improved, but reached a generally normal

level, or better than average, sense of creative written expression and self-management behavior for their age.

The span of 33-38 which represents the minimum and maximum scores from the reluctant writers' pre-survey meant that these students would have answered survey questions by frequently stating that they "almost always" exhibit a lack of both self-management and creative written expression. Overall, this suggested that these four students (S1, S2, S16, S18), whether they realize it or not, showed signs indicative of reluctant writing and stood out amongst the rest of the participants because of their pre-intervention survey responses. On the other hand, the group of reluctant writers categorized as reluctant due to my previous experience with them, showed a minimum of 24 and a maximum score of 38 points, making the range much larger for this group in the pre-survey.

I conducted a dependent t test comparison on the pre- and post-survey scores for both groups of reluctant writers. For the survey RW was statistically significant, $t = 2.70$, $p = 0.03$, $df = 8$. The p value was lower than 0.05, which means that I rejected the null hypothesis. Thus, the data results indicated that there was likely a significant difference between the first survey and the second for this group of reluctant writers as a result of the intervention. The t test for the prior experience RW was not significant, $t = 1.73$, $p = 0.15$, $df = 5$. The p value was higher than 0.05, so I retained the null hypothesis. This revealed that there was a likely chance that there was no significant difference in the first and second surveys due to the intervention.

Like the pre-intervention survey, students displayed a wide variety of total scores in the post-intervention survey. Some students' scores went down, some remained the

same, and some even went up. Seeing the total scores from each survey side by side allowed me to determine at first glance if the students noticed an improvement in any self-management or creative written expression, according to their own survey responses. Table 5 reveals this data from the pre- and post-surveys. (See Appendix E for the full post-intervention survey and Appendix H for the complete summary of responses)

Table 5
Student Survey Score Data

Student Number	Pre-Intervention Survey Score Sums (10-50)	Post- Intervention Survey Score Sums (11-50)
**S1	33	32
**S2	34	30
S3	27	29
*S4	29	26
S5	28	28
*S6	24	27
*S7	31	26
S8	26	22
S9	19	30
S10	19	17
*S11	31	32
S13	16	21
S14	21	24
*S15	31	24
**S16	38	32
S17	27	23
**S18	34	26
Mean	27.5	26.4

Note. ** = Reluctant writers based on survey responses. * = Reluctant writers based on prior behaviors or reluctance to write. S16 is bolded to indicate that they fell into both reluctant writing categories.

The mean for the post-survey was 26.4, which was one point lower than the entire class for the pre-intervention survey. Again, focusing on the reluctant writers' data, visibly, the total scores of those participants were much lower for the post-intervention student self-evaluation than the previous survey for most students considered to be reluctant writers: S1, S2, S4, S7, S15, S16 and S18. There were two students whose survey scores increased slightly after the intervention: S6 and S11.

Writing Samples

After I received consent forms and distributed student surveys prior to the intervention, I collected some writing samples from students before their writing could be affected by the intervention. The samples that I collected were in the form of writing prompts that we complete weekly in class. I used the writing prompt rubric to attribute a score, zero through twenty to each student sample (See Appendix F for the Writing Rubric details). After completing the "Write-Talks" intervention, I collected another writing sample, also a writing prompt from the participants in order to see if their writing had improved at all after the instruction. I excluded S12 again from this portion of the study because this student failed to complete other areas of the study and I felt that the data would be inconclusive. I also excluded S14 from the writing samples because this student was absent on both days that we completed the assignments. Notice the jump in the table from S11 to S13 and again from S13 to S15. The total scores from both writing samples from each participant, aside from S12 and S14, are in Table 6.

Table 6
Student Writing Prompt Summative Scores

Student	Sample 1	Sample 2
**S1	19	20
**S2	13	16
S3	18	19
*S4	14	18
S5	20	20
*S6	9	13
*S7	8	11
S8	14	18
S9	17	19
S10	15	17
*S11	7	0
S13	16	20
*S15	13	19
**S16	18	0
S17	14	15
**S18	17	18

Note. ** = Reluctant writers based on survey responses. * = Reluctant writers based on prior behaviors or reluctance to write. S16 is bolded to indicate that they fell into both reluctant writing categories.

According to the data, every student improved their overall score between the first writing sample and the second, which were approximately eight weeks apart, except for three students: S5, S11, and S16. Student 5 scored the highest available points on both writing assignments, so there was no improvement there. Students 11 and 16 did not complete the second writing assignment therefore I gave them zeros. This data is telling enough because both S11 and S16 were identified as reluctant writers and received zeros due to their reluctance or complete avoidance behavior toward the assignment. The other

reluctant writers identified all scored higher on the rubric with the second writing sample compared to the first. Other than those outliers, students generally saw an increase in at least one point from one writing assignment to the next.

For the writing prompt samples, I used descriptive and inferential statistics to further analyze the student's total scores. Table 7 showcases this data.

Table 7

Student Writing Prompt Samples Statistics

	Sample 1	Sample 2
	Descriptive	
Mean	14.5	15.2
Median	18	18
Mode	20	20
Standard Deviation	6.5	6.5
Range	20	20
Sum	243	243
	Inferential	
Mean	15.2	15.2
Variance	14.9	41.6
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
<i>df</i>	15	
<i>t</i>		
<i>p</i>	0.64	

The data showed that both writing samples had a median of 18. On a rubric ranging from zero to twenty, the natural median is 10, so the data proved to have a median well above that. Students' most frequent score was that of 20 for both Writing Sample 1 and Writing Sample 2. The median and standard deviation were the same as

well. The lowest score earned was a 7 and the highest was a 20, the most points achievable for Sample 1. The second writing sample was skewed slightly because of two students receiving zeros for their work, making the range much higher for the class's data. Overall, the students scored higher as a class and showed an improvement in their creative written expression through these writing prompts in categories of writing a complete paragraph, using correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, writing complex sentences, and including a sense of voice and self-expression in their writing because the mean increased from 14.5 to 15.2, even with two students' zeros included in the second writing sample data.

In addition to looking over the total scores and descriptive statistics of the writing samples, I conducted a dependent *t* test to make an inference on whether the students' general improvement was due to the writing intervention or possibly because of outside factors. The *t* test proved to be not statistically significant ($t = -0.48, p = 0.64, df = 15$). Because the *p* value was greater than 0.05, I retained the null hypothesis which thus concluded that even though 81.25% of participants' written expression saw an improvement and increase in total score, it was not likely to be as a direct result of the "Write-Talks" intervention.

Behavior Checklist

After receiving and examining the pre-intervention surveys from students, I chose six specifically to observe further for data collection by way of a behavior checklist throughout the intervention instruction. I chose one of the students based on the overall above average score from the survey being indicative of reluctant writing and lacking in self-management. The other five students I chose based on preexisting writing reluctance

and self-management needs. I made certain that I felt confident that each student chosen for further observation was a reluctant writer. Other criteria that I looked at in these students chosen for observation was a past lack of self-management behaviors. There were three students who I chose to exclude from this portion of data collection, even though their scores were above average like S16 because I used my prior experience with the students to infer that their scores were unexpectedly high. This could be due to high self-criticism when completing the survey. I utilized the behavior checklist during each session of “Write-Talks” that I instructed which all took place in my classroom (See Appendix D for the Behavior Checklist itself and Appendix I for a complete summary of the data).

Of the eight “Write-Talks” sessions, I chose the first and the last to analyze the students’ total number of behaviors because those were the sessions that I used to conduct the *t* test. I also found these two sessions particularly important because the session total behaviors for each student were a bit sporadic when analyzed one-by-one. Because each session is different, some being more of a class discussion and others being more partner, individual, or group work, these two sessions are important to compare because they both were more of a discussion-based session. Table 8 displays this data.

Table 8*Total Number Behaviors in “Write-Talks” Intervention*

Session 1	Session 8
Student 4	
11	7
Student 6	
7	1
Student 7	
5	5
Student 11	
8	9
Student 15	
10	4
Student 16	
6	5

From the data, it was clear that S4, S6, S15, and S16’s behaviors all decreased when looking at these two sessions: session one and eight. Although, one student displayed more lacking self-management behaviors in the last session than the first: S11, and another proved to have the exact same amount for both: S7. Four out of six students, or 67% of these reluctant writers observed during the intervention showed fewer total behaviors in the last session compared to the first. This suggested that there was potential growth in self-management as the intervention continued, or at least that there was growth from the first to the last “Write-Talks” intervention session.

Once I concluded the final session of “Write-Talks” instruction, I organized and reviewed the data from each student for each of the sessions. I then conducted dependent *t* tests and gathered inferential statistics for each of the six students as well as calculating

some basic measure of central tendency. These students were S4, S6, S7, S11, S15, and S16. The first student who I analyzed was Student 4 (S4), whose total pre-intervention survey score was average but whose historical behavior in the classroom suggested a lack of self-management and written expression skills. Table 9 displays the students' personal data.

Table 9

Statistics Student Intervention Behavior

Total Number of Off-Task Behaviors	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	Student 4			
49	6.13	0.62	9	0.55
	Student 6			
44	5.5	2.54	9	0.03
	Student 7			
24	3	0	9	1
	Student 11			
49	6.13	-0.17	9	0.87
	Student 15			
35	4.375	1.03	9	0.33
	Student 16			
33	4.13	0.26	9	0.80

Student 4 (S4) behaved in a way that was indicative of a lack of self-management a total of 49 times throughout the entire intervention and an average of about six times per session ($M = 6.13$). The t test was not statistically significant, $t = 0.63$, $p = 0.55$, $df =$

9. The p value was higher than 0.05, which means that I retained the null hypothesis. Thus, the data results indicated that there was likely no significant difference between the first session behaviors and the last session behaviors for this student, at least as a result of the intervention.

Next, I analyzed the data from Student 6's (S6) eight behavior checklists. This student's pre-intervention survey score was below average, but past behavior in the classroom as well as prior reluctance to write was the reason I chose this student. Student 6 (S6) exhibited a lack of self-management a total of 44 times throughout the intervention and an average of about 5 times per session ($M = 5.5$). This tested data was statistically significant: $t = 2.54$, $p = 0.032$, $df = 9$. Since the p value was less than 0.05, this data was in favor of the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that there was a likely possibility of a significant difference between the first session behaviors and the last session behaviors for this student because of the "Write-Talks" intervention.

The next student for whom I analyzed behavioral data was Student 7. This student had an average total score from the pre-intervention survey, but similar to the first two students analyzed had a past of behavioral and writing issues which was an imperative detail which led me to include this student in the behavior observation. Student 7's total instances without self-management during the eight "Write-Talks" sessions was only 29, which is much lower compared to the other students thus far by almost half to be exact. The average behavior per session was also lower ($M = 3$). The t test, $t = 0$, $p = 1$, $df = 9$, proved not to be statistically significant. Since the p value was larger than 0.05, I retained the null hypothesis, which means that the data provides an unlikely possibility that there

was any significant difference between the first session behaviors and the last session behaviors for this student due to the intervention.

I chose Student 11 for the checklist observation because this student frequently showed signs of reluctance to write and an absence of self-management every day in the classroom. Although this student's total score for the pre-intervention survey fell into the average category, the second survey total was higher, which put this student into the above average category—a truer reflection of the habits I saw in the classroom. The total number of times that I observed a lack in self-management for the intervention instruction was 49 with around 6 times occurring per session ($M = 6.13$). The t test for this student was not statistically significant, though ($t = -0.17, p = 0.87, df = 9$). Because the p value was above 0.05, I kept the null hypothesis and concluded that there was likely not a distinct difference in this student's behavior, from the first session to the last, due to "Write-Talks."

I next analyzed Student 15's behavior checklist data. I included S15 in this portion of the study as a result of past frustrations with writing and disruptive classroom behavior that I felt was stemming from self-management struggles. Upon the self-evaluation of the pre-intervention survey, this student scored average, but in the actual classroom, I believed that this student stood out as being above average and needing assistance. S15 displayed behaviors demonstrative of self-management inadequacy on an average of approximately four times each session ($M = 4.38$) and a total of 35 times. The t test was not statistically significant, $t = 1.03, p = 0.33, df = 9$. The p value was higher than 0.05, suggestive of the null hypothesis retaining. The data indicated that there was

likely no significant difference between the first session behaviors and the last session behaviors for this student, from the intervention specifically.

Finally, I analyzed S16's observed behavior checklist data. This student was important to analyze in my opinion because this student had been on my radar in the past for reluctance to write, but only a few times. However, S16's survey total was the highest total of any of the participants. This student went on to remain in the above average category for post-survey score for the post-intervention data analysis also. Student 16 had 33 total instances displaying a lack of self-management, a mean of about four ($M = 4.13$). Because the p value from S16's t test was higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis stands and I deemed the test to be statistically not significant, $t = 0.26$, $p = 0.80$, $df = 9$. There was no significant difference found in comparing the first session behaviors to the eighth session behaviors for S16 on account of the "Write-Talks" instruction.

Summary

My four data measurement tools provided me with information that I analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. The collective data revealed commonalities, including reluctant writing students exhibiting a lack of self-management behavior. The pre-intervention survey helped to identify some reluctant writers, but also gave me insight into who believed themselves to be reluctant. There were less students than I anticipated who answered in a way that confirmed who I felt already was a reluctant writer. The writing samples aided in understanding how all types of students' creative written expression, not just reluctant writers', improved over the duration of time in which I administered the "Write-Talks" intervention. The behavior checklist revealed that these reluctant writers exhibit their reluctance and lacking self-management

behaviors inconsistently, but the data still suggested that there may have been growth.

Overall, the three categories of above average, average, and below average from the pre-survey scores generally saw a positive creative written expression impact after the completion of the intervention.

Chapter 5

Discussion

My action research study concentrated on the “Write-Talks” intervention and how it impacted student creative written expression for reluctant writers. I analyzed the intervention’s impact on the participants by initially providing them with a pre-intervention survey to assess their own self-management and creative written expression tendencies. At the same time, I collected writing samples from each participant to gauge where their creative written expression stood in comparison to after the intervention. After analyzing this data, I chose six students who I felt were reluctant writers to closely examine their behaviors throughout the “Write-Talks” instruction. This included students who identified themselves through a survey to be reluctant writers and those who I identified as reluctant through past writing assignments, self-management behaviors, and experience with the participants. Once I gathered that information, I gave the participants another survey, like the first with overlapping questions and collected more writing samples. This chapter lays out the insight I found from this study based on the data collected from the four data measurement tools, my own reflections of the study, and the limitations that presented themselves.

Discussion of Findings

The surveys’ data that I analyzed led me to have a better understanding of my students’ perceptions of their creative written expression and self-management behavior

abilities both before and after the “Write-Talks” intervention. As an entire participant population, the class’s mean saw a drop from 27.5 to 26.4 between the pre- and post-surveys. For the reluctant writers specifically, the means decreased by a larger quantity. The survey categorized reluctant writers went from a mean of 34.7 to 31. The prior experience reluctant writers’ mean went from 30.7 to 27.8. Overall, this means that on average, each group’s data that was analyzed revealed lower scores on the post-intervention survey. Out of all the reluctant writers, 75% of them saw a decrease in their total scores from the surveys. Although the *t* test proved to only be significant for the survey categorized reluctant writers, this still was not even solid proof to say with confidence that the scores for any of these groups saw a decrease solely because of the intervention. This might be in part due to the possibility of students’ total scores seeing a drop for reasons such as social desirability to answer questions in a way that revealed progress for either themselves or because they thought that I would want that outcome.

From the writing samples collected before and upon the completion of “Write-Talks,” I learned that many students, 15 out of 18, saw an increase in their overall rubric score, which clearly meant there was an improvement of creative written expression as a group of participants. Writing sample #1 had a mean of 14.5 and writing sample #2 showed a mean of 15.2. This was evidence to support that the “Write-Talks” intervention possibly impacted student creative written expression in a positive way. A dependent sample *t* test revealed that while there may be documentation that shows an increase in scores, there is no significance to whether it is due to the intervention itself.

The behavior checklist data that I analyzed in Chapter 4 appeared to be slightly sporadic and inconsistent in that students’ total number of behaviors varied greatly from

each session to the next. When looking at students' total number of behaviors for just sessions one and eight, four out of six students decreased their behaviors. Student 4 (total = 49, $M=6.13$), Student 7 (total = 24, $M=3$), Student 11 (total = 49, $M=6.13$), Student 15 (total = 35, $M=4.38$), and 16 (total = 33, $M=4.13$) all had data analyses and dependent t tests done that revealed there was likely no significance statistically between their behaviors from the first to last intervention session due to the intervention because the p values were consistently above 0.05. Student 6's data suggested, however, that there was a significant positive difference in this participant in terms of self-management because the p value was 0.03 and this data rejected the null hypothesis. Despite this though, the data still implies that there is no significant difference in the total number of behaviors due to "Write-Talks."

I deemed it necessary to compare the literature on reluctant writing behaviors during creative written expression activities that I had done previously to my study now. I recalled the ELL student who increased his writing skills and subsequently his attitude and behavior (Sze, 2002). I compared this and another reluctant writer, Shaun, to Student 6 from my action research (Hamel, 2022). The post-intervention survey score decreased from the pre-intervention survey score, the number of observed behaviors went down during the intervention, and the student's writing samples all showed signs of improvement for S6. This student in my study compared to students in the others by showing an improvement in reluctance after intervention of some kind that allowed creative expression to the student.

I chose the "Write-Talks" intervention because it seemed to have the qualities for support in both self-management and creative written expression that the tools used in

other studies to combat reluctant writers did. In other studies, like the one with deaf and hard hearing students who leaned on technology to achieve higher writing efficiency, students were given alternative ways to complete assignments (Saulsburry et al., 2015). “Write-Talks” encouraged students to find use of creative written expression in many different platforms, including technology, even social media.

I wanted to know how I could impact students’ writing skills and how those writing skills were associated with self-management behaviors. As writing seemed to improve for the entire class, the behavior of those reluctant writers was slightly inconsistent, yet a few of the participants showed a decrease in those unwanted behaviors. Although participants did see growth in writing and some saw growth in behavior as well, it is uncertain whether that was a direct result of the “Write-Talks” intervention.

Reflections

I believe that I was successful in determining the impact of the “Write-Talks” intervention on creative written expression for reluctant writers. By studying the audiences and purposes of writing, I had hoped that the students would realize the opportunity that writing gives for self-management practices, such as the ability to navigate emotions and thoughts and the ability to set and work towards goals. The data measurement tools that I created served this study well for this specific topic. Future research may find it beneficial to conduct a study that targets writing capabilities and its direct relationship to student behavior because I believe it would add a lot to this topic and the achievement of students in classrooms.

This study has made me realize that there are so many factors that contribute to a student's behavior in the classroom and the reasons that they may be lacking self-management skills along with lacking writing skills. I believe that I will implement the intervention again in years to come because students expressed to me that they enjoyed it, and I truly did believe it to be helpful. The increase in writing prompt scores makes a case for continuing the use of the "Write-Talks" curriculum. There were, however, implementation and data collection issues that could be mitigated in the future. For example, snow days and two-hour delay days impacted sessions being consecutive, which can impact student learning if they have a hard time recalling the last session's lessons. On top of that, there was a sickness that broke out in the classroom that caused abnormal student absences that inherently affected the consistency in student session engagement and ultimately the reliability of the study.

There were successful aspects of the study. I believe that the "Write-Talks" intervention accomplished what I was hopeful it would in terms of positively impacting student creative written expression. Although there is not enough data to prove statistically that behavior was then related to this writing improvement, I still believe that the behavior checklist and the data from the surveys could be helpful in identifying certain patterns for reluctant writers. This information allowed me to be more aware of those who are reluctant writers or who may self-identify with creative written expression or self-management behaviors. Thus, providing opportunities to assist these students in a more one-on-one fashion in which I now feel more knowledgeable.

The growth that students saw from writing prompt sample one to writing prompt sample two, while apparent, could have been simply due to a couple of factors. The fact

that the intervention was done immediately after winter break, when students may be feeling a bit rusty or out of sorts with academics, could have contributed to the growth because students started off coming back from break and then gradually got back into the swing of writing and school routine in general. The notion that students generally improve as the school year progresses, as a natural factor of education, could have been the reason that students saw the writing growth from one writing prompt to the next. Aside from those two possible explanations, being the researcher and the grader could have served as a subconscious bias between the writing samples. In a replication, it would most certainly be more ideal to have a grader who is more objective to the study and the results themselves.

Student 6 is a unique case of a student who has personal and homelife issues as well as academic and behavior issues. Of all the students' data to reject the null hypothesis, her data specifically gives me hope that prioritizing writing in the classroom could potentially help other students such as this one overcome or better cope with the obstacles they face every day, whether it be inside or outside of my classroom. Another success was that the behavior checklist assisted me in being able to recognize more quickly and naturally when students seem to be lacking important self-management skills. I noticed myself, as the sessions went on, addressing the warning signs of a lack of these skills more effectively and promptly for better classroom management.

As a researcher, though, there are some different actions I would take, upon replicating the study. In terms of the writing intervention itself, it should have been completed in consecutive sessions, not like every Wednesday and sometimes Fridays the way I did. This could have aided in greater student memory of the topics and my memory

of behaviors each session. I also would have chosen to complete this in the Fall or Spring instead of Winter when snow days and two-hour delays often interrupted lesson plans. In hindsight, I would have gone back and changed a few things regarding the behavior checklist as well. Looking back at the data analyzed in Chapter 4, I would alter the checklist to encompass more specific behaviors that I most frequently noticed and would have excluded some that I nearly never witnessed. This would have condensed my checklist to be more manageable and accommodating when observing behaviors especially since classrooms often get noisy or chaotic with 18 students.

The implications of my study to my school are that I will share my findings with my co-workers, other elementary teachers, and prioritize written expression and self-management behavior in these critical stages of education. To education in general, the implications are that this should spark an interest in the possible relationship, perhaps correlation, between self-management behaviors in students and their creative written expression. With more research and data, educational institutions may be able to determine a positive relationship between creative written expression and its effect on student self-management behavior of some kind. Overall, the process of completing this action research project has allowed me to reevaluate my interactions with my students in terms of their behavior.

Limitations

The research and methodology were limited by several items. The participants being only a sample of 18 who consented, from two different homeroom classes, also from a small private religious school limits the research in that it is an extremely small group of participants from which to collect data. For the behavior checklist, I was limited

as being both the instructor and the observer because of the impossibility of being able to flawlessly observe the behavior of the students while simultaneously teaching the class. This serves as another limitation because I had to use a subset of only six participants because 18 students would have been too many for a single researcher. Although I mentioned in the survey that I wanted students to be honest, I could tell that some were either overly critical of themselves or dishonest and dismissive of their behavior altogether. There were a few students whose seemingly higher than expected total pre-intervention survey scores led me to believe they could have just been too hard on themselves when completing the survey. These students were S1, S2, and S18 whose scores were so high it indicated to me, just based off the numbers, that they may be reluctant writers, but that was not reflective of their classroom behavior. I concluded that some students may have been purposefully dishonest in the survey.

The inconsistencies with the implementation of the “Write-Talks” intervention mentioned previously due to winter weather also restricted the study because there were longer time frames between each session than anticipated, which affects students’ participation and recollection of material. With the post-intervention survey, I also noticed that some students expressed wanting to remember their answers from the first survey or wanting to seem like a “good student” on paper, so this social desirability could have impacted and skewed the survey results. Overall, these items could have impacted the data. Student 16 was an exception to the reluctant writer data in that this student was a part of both the survey based reluctant writers and the prior experience, which could have skewed the data for these groups because there was one set of data that was the same for each group.

As mentioned earlier, the use of the behavior checklist allowed me to more quickly recognize reluctant or unwanted behaviors and attempt to combat them when I could. This, in hindsight, is a limitation because it could have very well affected the overall decrease in behaviors as the sessions went on. I also had limited statistical analyses that I was able to run. More complex analyses like correlations could have given much more insight into comparing creative written expression and self-management behaviors adequately.

Lastly, another limitation that I stumbled upon throughout this action research project was the dilemma of whether behavior seemingly impacted writing or vice versa. Although I believe that these two items are related, attempting to determine which affects which in a cause-effect type of manner was difficult because both seem to be somewhat of dependent variables. Since the beginning of this research, I have learned that this topic is much more complicated than I originally thought and for that reason, this project was limited to the inherent truth that behavior may be what is impacting writing instead of the other way around.

Summary

After experiencing a classroom filled with students who lacked clear self-management skills while also struggling with creative written expression, I introduced a writing intervention titled “Write-Talks.” The research question that drove the study was: “in what ways can “Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes” impact students’ writing skills and how are those writing skills associated with self-management behavior?” Answering this question required a quantitative approach through surveys, behavior checklists, and writing samples from the students.

Ultimately, data analysis suggested that the “Write-Talks” intervention did not clearly affect self-management behaviors. I believe that this study, though, provides the potential to open doors for more research that could possibly find a link between student self-management and creative written expression in the classroom in the future.

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Appendix A

“Write- Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes”

Intervention Session Sample

Session 1 (60 minutes)

1. Ask students to write for five minutes about a person they admire in their lives.

Students should then share their responses in small heterogeneous groups of three or four. Afterward, a few students may share their responses with the whole class.

2. Give each student some index cards and a marker that is different in color from the other students in his or her group. Students should work with their groups to brainstorm the types of writing they think the admirable people they have written about might do or have done in the past. Any type of writing is acceptable including job applications, notes for classes, flyers, lyrics, blog pages, journal entries, invitations, to-do lists, calendar entries, business websites, blueprints, and diagrams of sports plays. You may have to help students get started by sharing a few examples. Every time a student suggests a type of writing, he or she should list it on an individual index card.

3. After students have brainstormed and written their ideas, ask them to do a variety of sorting activities with the index cards, including the following:

- Arrange the cards from informal to formal. For example, a grocery list or text message might be classified as informal while a wedding invitation might be formal. Afterwards, ask students how texts on one end of the spectrum may require a different writing process than texts on the other end of the spectrum.
- Arrange the cards into different categories and label the categories. Categories might include the following: business writing, pleasure writing, texts with only words, texts with words and images, digital texts, texts written just for yourself, texts written for other people, and so on.

4. Ask each group to share their index card arrangements with the class, possibly by taping their categories on the board as a string of connected index cards.

5. Ask students what they learned about writing from this activity, making sure to emphasize both the wide variety of types of writing and the commonalities.

6. Explain that to further learn about the writing process, students will have an opportunity to invite people from their communities to share pieces of writing and to answer questions about them. Have students generate a list of questions to ask people about their writing samples and about writing in general. Save the list of questions for future reference. Questions may include the following:

- Who was your intended audience? How did they respond?

- How did you use this text to accomplish something in your life?
- How often do you do this type of writing?
- Do you have any advice on writing for students in our class?
- What did you enjoy most about writing this text and why?
- What was the most difficult part about writing this text and why?
- Which types of writing do you like the most?
- Why did you write this?
- What are other reasons you write?

Appendix B

Parental Consent for Research Study

Dear Families,

As many of you know, I am currently enrolled at Wittenberg University. One of the requirements of my coursework is to complete a research study involving students in my class. I am writing to inform you of the procedures that will take place during the research and to invite your student to participate.

The Research and Intervention Procedures: I am going to implement a writing intervention titled “Write-Talks: Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes” that involves studying audiences and purposes of writing as a class to explore the opportunities that writing gives us. The goal is to help students learn to love writing and to encourage their self-management behavior. Self-management is the ability to navigate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behavior across different situations while managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. All students will receive formal instruction for each session that will be completed with the hopes of measuring if the intervention has impacted their self-management behavior during this process. Before and after the intervention, I will conduct surveys, asking participants to evaluate their own self-management behaviors.

Time/Duration: The research will begin in early January after Christmas/Winter break and will last until around mid-February. Students will participate in completing a fifteen-minute session between one and three times a week. This is time built into our schedule and has been added to my English curricula for the year. Furthermore, if your child does not choose to participate in the surveys and behavior observation, they will still receive the writing intervention that has great benefits.

Benefits: The aim of the intervention is to help students learn how to better self-manage. Students will benefit from the strategic intervention put into place to help them to establish a desire to write more and hopefully to increase writing skills, written self-expression, navigating their thoughts, emotions, and behavior, and to some degree, control their behavior and motivate themselves.

Confidentiality: If you agree to your child’s participation in this study, your child’s assessment data will be used in my report, which will be shared with colleagues at Wittenberg University. Your child’s name and any other identifiable information will NOT be shared. When I collect and analyze any data that your child produces, I will

white-out the name and replace it with “Student #” or a pseudonym. All student participants will be referred to by this and real names will never be used in the reporting of the data. Your child’s data will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Participation: You can accept or decline participation in the study. Refusal to participate will involve NO penalty or loss to your child!

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this form or the research study.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lina Spada

Please complete the form on the back of this page to give or deny consent to for your child to participate in the study.

For questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research or IRB approval, contact Dr. Darby Hiller, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Institutional Research, IRB Chair, at 937-591-1024, or by email at hillerd@wittenberg.edu.

Date _____

Parent/Guardian First and Last Name _____

Child’s First and Last Name _____

Please select one of the following options:

- I **grant permission** for my child to be included in the research study by completing a self-assessment survey prior to the intervention, being observed during the intervention by their English teacher, and completing a survey to conclude the intervention.
- I **do NOT grant permission** for my child to be included in the research study.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Child’s Signature _____

(only required if permission is granted)

Appendix C

Pre-Intervention (Self-Assessment) Survey

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability and as honestly as possible.

Circle the response that best describes how you feel your behavior during writing activities.

1. How often do you think you are “off task” during writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

2. How often do you think you get frustrated during writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

3. How often do you think you fidget with an object during writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

4. How often do you think you speak out of turn?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

5. How often do you think you talk during writing activities to people around you?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

6. How often do you think you avoid or don't want to participate in writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

7. How often do you think you write at home?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

8. How often do you think you express your emotions and thoughts in your writing?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

9. How often do you think you motivate yourself in the classroom or during writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

10. How often do you think you set and work toward goals for yourself in the classroom?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always Always

Appendix D

Behavior Checklist (Observation Fieldnote Template)

OCTOBER 2022

Directions for Administrator/ Observer

After beginning each session of the “Write-Talks: Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes,” pay close attention to the behavior of the students for the duration of the writing intervention (approximately fifteen minutes), specifically the behaviors of students witnessed that could indicate a lack of self-management.

Self-management is defined as “the ability to navigate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behavior across different situations while managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. Self-management includes the ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals” (Ohio’s K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Standards, 2019, p. 33).

Each time a behavior indicating that there may be a lack of this present is observed, record it with tally marks; one representing each time the behavior is observed.

Obtain as many copies of the behavior checklist as needed (one per each student observed).

(Observed) Behavior Checklist

Behavior that May Indicate a Lack of Self-Management	Frequency of Behavior (Tally Marks)	Comments
1. Does not Listen to Teacher's Instructions		
2. Off Task/ Distracting Others		
3. Talking out of Turn		
4. Restlessness/ Fidgeting		
5. Out of Assigned Area		
6. Refusal to do Work		
7. Unwillingness to do Work		
8. Physical Frustration		
9. Interjecting Verbal Frustration/ Confusion		
10. Lack in Overall Effort		

Description of Behaviors:

1. Examples- Interruption of instructions during the administration of said instructions, asking for instructions to be repeated more than twice, incorrectly completing the assignment/ task.
2. Examples- Talking to neighbors when not instructed to do so, making unnecessary noises, touching other students' belongings, touching other students, making distracting gestures, playing/ fidgeting with objects (i.e., pen tapping, chair leaning, etc.), provocative staring/ facial movements towards others or in general.

3. Examples- Talking out loud to the entire class in a disruptive manner, specifically speaking out without being called on or without raising hand in general about something unrelated to the topic at hand.
4. Examples- Leg shaking/ tapping, pencil tapping, making other noises and or using other objects for the purpose of a student's distraction.
5. Examples- Sitting in an area without permission (not in assigned seat), actively walking around the room for an unnecessary amount of time, unnecessarily getting up from assigned seat in general.
6. Specifically avoiding or ignoring the assignment/ task partially or entirely
7. Eventually doing the work, but only after verbally being unwilling to participate or do work or after neglecting it for a moment.
8. Examples- Flailing arms, hitting desk, throwing objects, fighting.
9. Examples- Swearing, yelling at teacher or interjecting out loud about the topic at hand in a negative fashion.
10. Note if a visible lack of effort with finished product/ conclusion of writing intervention session, in attempt to determine later if a frequent number of certain behaviors above can impact the overall effort. Lacking overall effort examples are doing the bare minimum (or less than) to complete assignment or participate, inability to edit appropriately when told to correct or add more.

Appendix E

Post-Intervention (Self-Management Survey)

Circle the answer that best describes how you feel about your behavior after the writing intervention "Write-Talks"

1. How would you describe your general feelings on the "Write-Talks" instruction?

Disliked Somewhat Disliked Somewhat Liked Liked

2. How do you feel the "Write-Talks" instruction has impacted your ability to express your emotions and thoughts?

Ineffective Somewhat Ineffective Somewhat Effective
Effective

3. How do you feel the "Write-Talks" instruction has impacted your ability to motivate yourself?

Ineffective Somewhat Ineffective Somewhat Effective
Effective

4. How do you feel the "Write-Talks" instruction has impacted your ability to set and work toward goals for yourself in the classroom?

Ineffective Somewhat Ineffective Somewhat Effective
Effective

5. How do you feel the “Write-Talks” instruction has impacted your overall comfort level with writing?

Ineffective Somewhat Ineffective Somewhat Effective
Effective

6. How often do you think you are “off task” during writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always
Always

7. How often do you think you get frustrated during writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always
Always

8. How often do you think you fidget with an object during writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always
Always

9. How often do you think you speak out of turn?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always
Always

11. How often do you think you talk during writing activities to people around you?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always
Always

12. How often do you think you avoid or don’t want to participate in writing activities?

Never Almost Never Sometimes Almost Always
Always

Appendix F

Writing Prompt Sample Rubric

Standard	Needs Support- 1	Approaching Standard- 2	Meets Standard- 3	Exceeds Standard- 4
<i>Writes a complete paragraph (at least five sentences)</i>				
<i>Uses correct spelling for almost all words</i>				
<i>Uses correct grammar and punctuation most of the time</i>				
<i>Writes complex sentences (not just simple subject-verb short sentences)</i>				
<i>Includes personal voice, self-expression of thoughts or emotions throughout writing</i>				

Total=

Appendix G

Pre-Intervention Survey Results

	1. How often do you think you are "off task" during writing activities?	2. How often do you get frustrated during writing activities?	3. How often do you think you fidget with an object during writing activities?	4. How often do you think you speak out of turn?	5. How often do you think you talk during writing activities to the people around you?	6. How often do you think you avoid or don't want to participate in writing activities?	7. How often do you think you write at home? (numbers of correlated answers reversed based on wording of question being positive instead of negative)	8. How often do you think you express your emotions and thoughts in your writing? (numbers of correlated answers reversed based on wording being positive instead of negative)	9. How often do you think you motivate yourself in the classroom or during writing activities? (numbers of correlated answers reversed based on wording of question being positive instead of negative)	10. How often do you think you set and work toward goals for yourself in the classroom? (numbers of correlated answers reversed based on wording of question being positive instead of negative)		
Student 1*	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	5	5	4	2	33
Student 2*	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	4	4	5	2	34
Student 3	3	2	2	4	3	1	1	2	1	4	2	27
Student 4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	3	29
Student 5	1	4	5	3	3	4	2	2	1	4	1	28
Student 6	3	1	1	3	2	1	2	4	4	3	2	24
Student 7	3	2	2	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	3	31
Student 8	3	5	1	1	2	3	3	1	2	3	3	26
Student 9	2	1	3	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	1	19
Student 10	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	19
Student 11	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	31
Student 12												
Student 13	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	16
Student 14	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	2	21
Student 15	3	3	2	2	4	2	3	3	4	3	4	31
Student 15*	4	1	1	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	38
Student 17	2	3	3	5	4	2	2	2	3	3	2	27
Student 18*	3	5	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	5	3	34
Reverse Scored:												
* = Reluctant Writers												
	Never =1	Almost Never =2	Sometimes =3	Almost Always =4	Always =5							
	Never =5	Almost Never =4	Sometimes =3	Almost Always =2	Always =1							
	Scores indicating below average scores (high self-management and creative written expression)											
	Scores indicating average scores (average self-management and creative written expression)											
	Scores indicating above average scores (low self-management and creative written expression)											

Appendix I Behavior Checklist Results

Session #	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT
Total # Behaviors	11	3	7	8	5	5	3	7
<i>Student 4 Descriptive Statistics</i>								
Mean	6.125							
Standard Error	0.953143							
Median	6							
Mode	3							
Standard Deviation	2.695896							
Sample Variance	7.267857							
Kurtosis	0.112711							
Skewness	0.582376							
Range	8							
Minimum	3							
Maximum	11							
Sum	49							
Count	8							

Session #	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT
Total # Behaviors	7	11	2	7	8	5	3	1
<i>Student 6 Descriptive Statistics</i>								
Mean	5.5							
Standard Error	1.19523							
Median	6							
Mode	7							
Standard Deviation	3.38062							
Sample Variance	11.4286							
Kurtosis	-0.79581							
Skewness	0.19227							
Range	10							
Minimum	1							
Maximum	11							
Sum	44							
Count	8							

Session #	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT
Total # Behaviors	5	5	3	2	3	0	1	5
<i>Student 7 Descriptive Statistics</i>								
Mean	3							
Standard Error	0.681385							
Median	3							
Mode	5							
Standard Deviation	1.927248							
Sample Variance	3.714286							
Kurtosis	-1.2716							
Skewness	-0.31931							
Range	5							
Minimum	0							
Maximum	5							
Sum	24							
Count	8							

Session #	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT
Total # Behaviors	8	10	5	5	8	1	3	9
<i>Student 11 Descriptive Statistics</i>								
Mean	6.125							
Standard Error	1.10901							
Median	6.5							
Mode	8							
Standard Deviation	3.13676							
Sample Variance	9.83929							
Kurtosis	-0.9797							
Skewness	-0.44956							
Range	9							
Minimum	1							
Maximum	10							
Sum	49							
Count	8							

Session #	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT
Total # Behaviors	10	6	3	6	6	0	0	4
<i>Student 15 Descriptive Statistics</i>								
Mean	4.375							
Standard Error	1.19429							
Median	5							
Mode	6							
Standard Deviation	3.37797							
Sample Variance	11.4107							
Kurtosis	-0.26982							
Skewness	0.10238							
Range	10							
Minimum	0							
Maximum	10							
Sum	35							
Count	8							

Session #	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT
Total # Behaviors	6	5	5	6	5	0	1	5
<i>Student 16 Descriptive Statistics</i>								
Mean	4.125							
Standard Error	0.811469							
Median	5							
Mode	5							
Standard Deviation	2.295181							
Sample Variance	5.267857							
Kurtosis	0.189831							
Skewness	-1.33662							
Range	6							
Minimum	0							
Maximum	6							
Sum	33							
Count	8							