



Special Edition of the
Rutgers Center for Literacy Development Newsletter:
The Pandemic Quick Writes

May 2020
Vol. 1



**A BRIEF NOTE FROM
THE DIRECTOR**

Dear Colleagues,

This is Teacher Appreciation Week May 4 through 8. Therefore, we dedicate this special issue of the Center for Literacy Development Newsletter to our New Jersey TEACHERS. What better time than now to thank teachers who, during this pandemic, have done so much in order to continue the education of their students during this time of interrupted schooling.

Recently I sent a newsletter requesting writing samples about the pandemic. The prompts were to write about:

- a. Good things that have happened during the pandemic
- b. What do students and teachers think about online teaching?
- c. General comments about this strange time in the world

The response was amazing and the ideas written so very thoughtfully. This is a special edition of the Center for Literacy Development Newsletter to showcase the many writing samples we received. If what you sent or your students sent isn't in this issue, it will be in another issue coming out soon. Thank you for joining the Rutgers Writing Club. I hope you will join us again when we post another quick write prompt. If you have ideas for the next writing prompt I would really like to see your suggestions. We can move on from this topic to "What is different now that we are able to return to normal?"

This is a shout out to thank the teachers in New Jersey. You are all on the front lines at this difficult time. Thank you for your dedication, your hard work, and for helping to make online school as good as it can possibly be. In one day you magically changed live schooling to remote learning. Hopefully, face to face school will return soon and then once again, you will have to meet the challenge of creating the new normal in school.

If your submission isn't in this issue it will be in one of the next newsletters that will be sent shortly. Thank you to the teachers who motivated their children to write. They are: Eileen Bancalari and Kelly Leary from Bethlehem Township Schools, Amy Swanson from Tinton Falls Schools, Christine Urbanczyk from Linden Schools, Jenny Ahn from Cliffside Park Schools, and Christina Kalavrouziotis and Drew Burns from Hanover Township Schools.

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PANDEMIC QUICK WRITES

Staying at home has given us more time together as a family. Usually I am very busy with school and dance. We are always on the go. Now my mom is working from our house and helps me with my school work. My mom, dad, brothers and I have movie nights, ride quads and play outside. Even though I love having the extra time with my family I miss school, dance and my friends. I can't wait till I can do these things again.

Kayla Fritchman, 2nd grade, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township

In this time of uncertainty and fear, I am thankful to have my family at home with me. We are using this time to create many memories such as cooking together, playing games, watching funny movies, and going on walks with our dogs. Before the pandemic, our family was always rushing to different activities, but now we are slowing down and focusing on the importance of being together. During this stay-at-home order, I am so grateful for my family's safety and our health. I hope that this pandemic is a once in a lifetime event?

Jillian, 4th grade, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township School District

I like staying home to do my schoolwork. It's fun to go on technology to do my work. My mom is a teacher and I always wished for her to homeschool me. Now my wish came true. We can snuggle after I do my schoolwork.

Payton Robb, 2nd grade, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township

"I feel safe because now I do my work at home instead of school. I also feel thankful for my teacher because she is helping us not get left behind."

Yavuz Cayir, 3rd grade, Cliffside Park School #3, Cliffside Park School District

"I feel sad from not being in school because I get bored sometimes when I'm not in school. I miss my friends and teacher. Mrs. Ahn is the best teacher because she helps us with multiple questions."

Domenico Denaro, 3rd grade, Cliffside Park School #3, Cliffside Park School District

During this dark time I always try to find the light. If I wasn't home I would never have started a book or read so much to get ideas. I miss seeing my friends smile and laugh because they were my greatest inspiration. In my head during this pandemic, I think of this quote from Albus Dumbledore, "Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times if one remembers to turn on the light!" I think everybody should keep high hopes and remember this quote.

Isabella R., 4th grade, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township

One difficult thing I had to overcome during the pandemic was my mom being diagnosed with the coronavirus. It was heartbreaking hearing the test result come back positive for COVID-19, but I always knew it was a possibility as she is a registered nurse. I had to stay strong and pray for the best, but it was very challenging. I wanted to be responsible and did the best I could to complete my schoolwork and focus on my education so that my grades didn't decline. Today, my mom feels much better, but the mere thought of life without her is beyond terrifying.

Karol Kozak, 7th grade, McManus & Soehl Middle School, Linden School District

There is nothing ideal about our current situation, normal life has been put on pause for all of us. I am one of the many millions of students who have had to adapt to online learning. For me, it wasn't so smooth in the beginning, but I've gotten the hang of it now. I have developed a schedule that has helped me stay on track and organized. Still, online learning doesn't compare to in-class learning. Hopefully we'll be back for graduation, but safety comes first.

Maja Czajor, 8th grade, McManus & Soehl Middle School, Linden School District

"Out of difficulties grow miracles." This is a quote I have been living by throughout this pandemic. Many difficult things have happened during this time. The pandemic has caused everyone, including me, to be distanced from the people they are very close with. I haven't seen my friends, my teachers, and many of my relatives in over a month. Being away from people I love takes a lot of adjusting. Every day, I worry if they're safe and healthy. I especially worry about my grandpa because he is high-risk and he is 78 years old. I would not imagine what my close friends and family would go through if they contracted the COVID-19 virus. Overcoming the reality and unpredictable outcome of this pandemic is challenging. What is happening in the world is something no one will ever be able to forget. Even though many people are safe at home, there are people working so hard to risk their lives on the front lines, helping our society run so we can beat this virus, and I am forever grateful for their heroism.

Molly McDonald, 8th grade, McManus & Soehl Middle School, Linden School District

When this is over
May we never again
Take for granted
Going to lunch with a friend
Being able to leave our house
Talking to friends
Being able to travel
A crowded restaurant
A roaring stadium
Each step we take
Life itself
When this ends
May people realize
How lucky we are
For the things on the Earth

James Mullaney, 6th Grade, Markham Place School, Little Silver

When this is over,
We will never again
Fall asleep in class
Complain about going
To shop at a full grocery store
Groan at getting up
To go to school.
We will never again
Hang up on someone
Midway through
A conversation.
Or tattle on a sibling
For touching you.
We'll never again
Think twice before
Meeting a friend
For ice cream
Or going to town for lunch
When this ends,
If it ever does,
Maybe we will all
Be a little different
Some of us may
Walk away
With a story
To tell their kids.
Some of us may never again
Complain
Or groan
Or carry on.
When this is over?
If it ends, we won't be the same.

Lyra Seligman, 6th Grade, Markham Place School, Little Silver

Please note the Center for Literacy Development's
Programs for the upcoming 2020-2021 year

SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 23, 2020
53RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ON READING AND WRITING

KEYNOTE AND FEATURED SPEAKERS
REGISTRATION OPENS SOON!



Tanny McGregor
Internally-know Teacher
and Author



Donalyn Miller
Texas Teacher and Author



Wiley Blevins
Author



Diane Lapp
Author



Janet Wong
Author

CENTER FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT 2020-2021 SPEAKER SERIES WORKSHOPS



Cornelius Minor
*We Got This: Equity, Access, and
the Quest to Be Who Our
Students Need Us to Be*
December 10, 2020



Lucy Calkins
Teaching Writing
February 26, 2021



Kate Roberts
A Novel Approach
April 28, 2021



John Schumacher
"Mr. Schu"
Ambassador of Books
June 3, 2021