



## **Opinions of Instructors About Writer's Block: Solutions and Precautions**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine instructors' opinions about the solutions that can be done when students have writer's block and the precautions that can prevent students from having writer's block. Quantitative research design was applied in the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained in this descriptive study. 264 instructors working at various schools in Türkiye participated in this study by completing voluntarily a structured interview form through email, social media and other internet platforms. For the analysis of data, the replies of the participants were firstly recorded in SPSS programme, and the frequency, percentage and means of participants' replies were calculated. This study concludes that instructors thought that they had knowledge about writer's block. Their experience in the state and stage of writer's block and their opinions about the precautions against writer's block are congruous with the literature. Yet, the instructors' opinions about solutions to writer's block are not compatible with the literature. This is an evidence of the fact that instructors do not know what to do in case their students have writer's block in the classroom. Consequently, it is suggested that instructors should take training about writer's block, which is a significant obstacle for the development of writing.

### **Keywords**

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## Eğitimcilerin Yazma Tutukluğu İle İlgili Görüşleri: Çözüm Ve Önlem Önerileri

### Özet

Bu çalışmada, eğitimcilerin yazma tutukluğuna yönelik görüşlerinin yazma tutukluğunun durumu, çözümleri ve önlemleri bağlamında elde edilmesi hedeflenmiştir. Betimsel nitelik taşıyan bu çalışmada veriler, nicel araştırma teknikleri uygulanarak toplanmış, analiz edilmiş ve yorumlanmıştır. Türkiye'de farklı okullarda çeşitli kademelerde görev yapan eğitimciler, elektronik posta, sosyal medya araçları ve çeşitli internet platformları aracılığıyla kendilerine ulaştırılan yapılandırılmış görüşme formunu gönüllü olarak doldurarak çalışmaya katılmış ve çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Katılımcıların görüşme formunu doldurmaları ile elde edilen verilerin analizi için öncelikle katılımcıların yanıtları SPSS programına kaydedilmiş ve sonrasında yanıtların ortalama, sıklık ve yüzdeleri hesaplanmıştır. Analiz sonucunda, eğitimcilerin yazma tutukluğu konusunda bilgi sahibi olduklarıını düşündükleri saptanmıştır. Eğitimcilerin yazma tutukluğunun durumu, aşamaları ve yazma tutukluğuna yönelik önlemler konusundaki bilgilerinin alanyazındaki bilgilerle uyumlu olduğu görülmüştür. Ancak yazma tutukluğuna yönelik çözüm önerileri ile ilişkili bilgi ve düşüncelerinin alanyazında verilen bilgilerle uyumlu olmadığı anlaşılmıştır. Bu durum, eğitimcilerin sınıf içerisinde yazma tutukluğu yaşadığı durumlarda ne yapacağını bilmediğini göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu araştırmada eğitimcilerin yazma becerisinin gelişimi için önemli bir engel oluşturan yazma tutukluğu konusunda eğitim almaları gerekiğinin altı çizilmiştir.

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## Introduction

Students can encounter many problems in the development of writing skill, which may stem from students, teachers or teaching process. It is possible to attribute these problems to cognitive and affective reasons. The studies on writing problems based on affective reasons have primarily centered on writing attitude, writing motivation, writing anxiety and writing apprehension. However, there is one more concept that should be taken into consideration when studying on writing problems, which is writer's block. Writer's block can be defined as follows:

- an inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skill or commitment (Rose, 1984, p.18)
- the temporary or chronic incapacity to put pen to paper (Nelson, 1993, p.15)
- the state of mental inactivity or tacit knowledge (Hall, 1998, p.3)
- failing to produce a text despite the desire to write (Poff, 2004, p.19)
- a mental obstacle occurring during the process of searching and retrieving content to be translated into own text (Adams-Tukiendorf, 2008, p.1)
- the condition in which motivated, otherwise intellectually capable individuals experience suffering because they cannot put or cannot keep words on the page to complete certain writing projects in a timely manner (Birk, 2013, p.6).
- a period of time when a writer can't figure out what they want to write, what to write next, or how to write what they want to or need to write (Bishop, 2018, p.94).

Writer's block is considered as a usual event that every individual may experience during learning and teaching process in addition to being a phenomenon experienced by professional writers. According to Rose (1984), students can experience writer's block because of rigid rules about composing, misleading assumptions, too early editing and inappropriate planning and strategies. Suggesting that writer's block is also among the difficulties that can be seen in second or foreign language learning, Betancourt and Phinney (1988) claim that bilingual writers can experience writer's block because of cognitive, affective and linguistic problems. While affective problems are about the attitudes of writers toward the language they use, cognitive problems are about their behaviors in the process of writing, and linguistic problems are the knowledge of writers on the languages they use.

Hall (1998) claims that among the reasons for writer's block are the teachers who are not guiding students during the writing process. The knowledge of teachers about writer's block and their behaviors to the students may either cause or alleviate writer's block. In this context, the opinions of instructors about writer's block prevail importance. When the relevant literature is reviewed, it is encountered that the studies on writer's block mostly present several reasons and solutions based on the opinions, experiences or studies of the researchers. On the other hand, Rahmat (2020) investigates the reasons for writer's block and its effects on academic writing process in a study which 29 academicians participated by completing a survey for their academic writing process. Thus, it may be claimed that this study does not reflect the opinions of instructors as an actor in teaching process since they participated in the study with their own experience in writer's block. However, the opinions of instructors, who are significant actor of teaching processes, regarding writer's block are also important in order to see whether the presented findings in the literature are effective in teaching writing. Meanwhile, Günaydin and Erdogan (2021) examine the opinions of teachers about writer's block in a study using qualitative research method. This study concludes valuable results in terms of teachers' knowledge about and suggestions

to writer's block, but it is limited with only teachers working at elementary schools in Trabzon as the participant and with the opinions about definition of, reasons for and simple suggestions to writer's block.

Writer's block is a significant hurdle for students in writing. Therefore, it should be handled with a broader perspective and solutions to this problem are to be developed by either scholars or instructors. Instructors are the actors of teaching process, so they can foresee such problems and take some measures. Therefore, the data on the opinions of instructors about solutions to and precautions against writer's block will serve as a reference for future research, particularly in overcoming or avoiding writer's block. For this purpose, this study aims to examine instructors' opinions about the solutions that can be done when students have writer's block and the precautions that can prevent students from having writer's block. In line with this aim, the answers to the following questions are sought within the scope of the study:

1. What are the knowledge of the instructors about writer's block?
2. What are the opinions of the instructors about the solutions to writer's block?
3. What are the opinions of the instructors about the precautions against writer's block?

### **Literature Review**

Although writer's block is a hurdle for writing and there are studies demonstrating its effects on writing achievement, it does not infer that writer's block makes writing achievement impossible. Rose (1984) claims that those who suffer from writer's block may produce good writing. Similarly, Lee (2005) argues that even successful writers have writer's block. Adams-Tukiendorf (2008) also stresses that writer's block is also experienced by professional writers. It can be noted that writer's block can occur at any time and condition during writing. Therefore, it is significant to prevent its occurring or, even if it is not possible, to behave in a correct way to solve this problem when experiencing.

Johnstone (1983), placing the reasons for writer's block under three groups such as cognitive, affective and environmental reasons, claims that treatment of writer's block should be compiled with the reason. For instance, using composing profile and freewriting can be helpful for the one experiencing writer's block because of cognitive reasons while providing clear goals, discussing the topic, not evaluating the product can be a solution to writer's block due to affective reasons. Encouraging them to try another mode of writing, changing the writing setting, sharing their writing can be helpful for the ones having writer's block due to environmental reasons. On the other hand, Huston (1998) suggests that treatment varies with the severity of blockage which can be mild, moderate, or recalcitrant, and gives some strategies to overcome writer's block. The strategies for mild blockage include to assess the appropriateness of one's expectations, to give oneself permission to be imperfect, to break down the work into manageable tasks, to sidestep what causes to block, to give oneself positive feedback, to optimize one's conditions for writing. Moderate blockers should address imposter syndrome, should talk through their work, should try visioning and mind-mapping, should take a break, seek laughter and relaxation. As for the recalcitrant blockers, they should consider cognitive restructuring and a system of negative consequences by taking professional counseling.

Writer's block can be experienced in the process of composing. Ahmed (2019) reports that 101 professional writers in the U.S.A. used some strategies such as taking a break from writing, keeping writing and working on a different writing project when they had writer's block. Venzin (2017) suggests writing continuously for about 20 minutes and giving quite breaks by listening to music or walking

when stocked. Chintamani (2014) also suggests more relaxing activities such as yoga and meditation as well as listening to jazz, or a long walk. Reed (1986) offers to postpone the writing for a cooling down period and to relax by imagining, deep-breathing or listening to music. Talandis (2022) also mentions about giving mediation break in order to relax at the time of blocking. Spratt (2008) also offers to try something new when stocked. It can be understood that relaxing when having writer's block is important, but how individuals relax can change person to person.

Starting to write can be sometimes very hard. Özbay and Zorbaz (2012) found that students had writer's block mostly at the beginning of writing since they did not know how to start. Chintamani (2014) and Venzin (2017) offer to start to write at any part one likes. After starting, students have a tendency to go back and correct what they have written, so this poses an interrupt in the flow of ideas. In other words, early editing is also a major reason for writer's block; therefore, students should be encouraged not to edit their drafts in the process of writing. Morton (2000) postpones to get the ideas on paper at first, then revise and edit. That's to say, students should be aware of the time to edit and revise.

Not worrying about sentence structures (Venzin, 2017) and focusing on transmitting ideas on the paper can make students firstly draft and then edit. Students should be reminded to edit after completing the drafts (Spratt, 2008). Forgetting perfectionism is suggested by many researchers (Lachs, 2008; Spratt, 2008; Talandis, 2022; Venzin, 2017) since desire of being perfect in the first draft is a cause of writer's block. Taking attention into teachers in this sense, Hsui (1993) suggests making encouraging discourse, setting aside a time for sharing their writing and not commenting on their errors.

It is important to prevent students from having writer's block so that they can easily and quickly develop their writing skills. Therefore, some precautions can be handled to decrease the probability of having such a problem in the process of writing. Healy (2010) claims that writer's block is caused by a lack of planning and suggests a process with three steps in order to prevent students having writer's block, which is shortly outline, write and edit. By implementing a case study about the effect of process writing approach on writer's block at a Malaysian institution, Abdullah et all (2020) conclude that the students broke down their ideas, formulated problems, provided recommendation to problems and wrote out these ideas into a full writing product at the end of the process involving pre-writing, writing and checking, so they lowered writer's block.

Students should be aware of the fact that they can handle with writing process with a well-done plan. This plan should contain the goals, the ways and the ideas about what they produce. So, setting manageable goals for writing (Chintamani, 2014; Morton, 2000; Smeets, 2008) and setting a due date for each task (Morton, 2000) can be very helpful before they start to write. Morton (2000) and Chintamani (2014) recommend rewarding oneself after each step of the process is completed. Furthermore, preparing an outline can help students know what to write and organize their ideas, thus outlining before starting to write is recommended by many scholars (Abdullah et all, 2020; Morton, 2000; Spratt, 2008) to prevent writer's block. Before engaging with the text, group discussions, brainstorming and list-making may also enable to cope with writer's block (Castillo, 2014).

Writing topic can be a reason for writer's block since students cannot produce written products on the topic they do not like or know. Hsui (1993) suggests asking students to write on any topic of personal interest. In this sense, brainstorming (Abdullah et all, 2020; Castillo, 2014; Chintamani, 2014;

Reed, 1986; Smeets, 2008; Venzin, 2017) is considered as a good way for the students to find any topic of their personal interest. Brainstorming may also help students focus on their ideas about the topic as well as finding an interesting topic. As Morton (2000) postpones, narrowing the focus of the topic prevents students from having writer's block and this can be achieved by brainstorming, making research about the topic, or discussing about the topic.

The negative thoughts about writing may be a reason for writer's block, too. Thus, it prevails importance to change the ideas of individuals. Rahmat (2020) found that fear of writing was the cause of writer's block in her study conducted with 29 academicians and offers some measures such as attending courses on writing and participating in writing workshops in order to overcome this difficulty. Claiming that an effective program can be useful if the underlying cause of the blocking has been identified, Reed (1986) offers to take training on writer's block. Since one of the most important ways of not having writer's block is about writing strategies, individuals should take training about how to use efficient writing strategies (Smeets, 2008).

As Talandis (2022) discusses, accepting that writing is a hard process and gaining knowledge and experience in writing by keeping a journal and making a set time to write can improve writing flow, that's, diminish the probability of having writer's block. Determining the best time and finding a suitable place for writing are also among the strategies to decrease the possibility of writer's block (Lachs, 2008; Morton, 2000). Freewriting can also have students gain a habit of writing outside the classroom (Chintamani, 2014; Hsui, 1993; Lachs, 2008).

## Method

The current study adopted a descriptive model to determine the opinions of instructors about writer's block. Quantitative research design was applied in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data obtained. The study group of the research consists of 264 instructors working at various schools in Türkiye, who voluntarily participated in this study. 200 participants were female and the remaining, 64, were male. The ages of the participants ranged between 20-30 years and over 50 years old. Most of them were in their 40s. The longest years of teaching experience reported were between 11 and 20 years. Most of the instructors in the study group were working at high schools and in state institutions. Most of the participants were teachers of English as a foreign language in Türkiye, followed by Turkish as first language. The demographic findings about the participants are totally presented in Table 1.

In order to obtain the opinions of instructors, a structured interview form, which is an online questionnaire, was developed after reviewing the relevant literature. This questionnaire consists of three sections such as demographic information, knowledge and experience about writer's block, and the solutions to and the precautions against writer's block. In the first section, the participants are asked to reply some questions about their gender, age, teaching experiences, language and institution. The second section involves some questions reflecting the participants' knowledge and experience about writer's block, some of which are "Do you have any knowledge about writer's block?", "Have you ever witnessed that your students had writer's block?", "How many of your students do you think have writer's block?", "When do you think your student have writer's block?" The questions in the third section are "Which one/ones of the followings do you think can be a solution to writer's block of your students?" and "Which one/ones of the followings do you think can prevent your students from having writer's block?" Thus, the participants would choose more than one option reflecting their opinions best. The opinions of two experts in the field were taken in identifying these items. Besides, the

questionnaire is in Turkish, and a Turkish language expert were asked to analyze the items in terms of language validity.

**Table 1.** The demographic findings about the participants.

Variable	Categories	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	200	75.8%
	Male	64	24.2%
Age	20-30 years	37	14.0%
	31-40 years	77	29.2%
Experience	41-50 years	122	46.2%
	51 and over	28	10.6%
The level	1-5 year	30	11.4%
	6-10 year	29	11.0%
The Institution	11-20 year	109	41.3%
	21 and over	96	36.3%
Teaching Languages	Primary	24	9.1%
	Secondary	88	33.3%
The level	High School	109	41.3%
	University	43	16.3%
The Institution	State	214	81.1
	Private	44	16.7
Teaching Languages	Course	5	1.9
	Not given	1	0.4
Teaching Languages	English	134	50.8
	Turkish	94	35.6
Teaching Languages	French	6	2.3
	German	12	4.5
Teaching Languages	Other	18	6.8

This survey form was delivered to the instructors in Türkiye through email and social media tools via internet. The data were collected for two months in 2023. The participants gave the consent for participating the research before seeing the questionnaire via Google Forms. For the analysis of data, the replies of the participants were firstly recorded in SPSS programme. The choices of the participants were coded as 1 point, and the remaining items were coded as 0 points. For each section in the questionnaire, the frequency and percentage of participants' replies as well as the mean of each items were calculated. In order to compare the findings, Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way Anova Test were used in case of homogenous data distribution, and Mann-Whitney Test and Kruskal Wallis were used for the data which did not have homogenous distribution.

## Findings

### Findings Related to Participants' Knowledge About Writer's Block

At the end of the data analysis, it is seen that 168 participants (63.6%) declared that they had knowledge about writer's block, 95 participants (36%) declared that they did not have knowledge about it, and only 1 participant (0.4%) did not reply to this question. Therefore, the comparison of the means was accomplished through 263 participants' responses. Finally, it is seen that the data had a homogenous distribution, therefore Independent Sample T-Test was used for the variable with two categories and One-Way Anova Test was used for the variables with more than two categories to compare the means.

At the end of the comparison of the means of female and male instructors' responses by Independent Sample T-Test, it is found that there was no statistically significant difference between the responses. In addition, the comparisons of the means of instructors' responses in terms of their age, teaching experience, working level, working institutions and teaching languages by One-Way Anova Test demonstrate that there was no significant difference between the responses of the participants in terms of their age, teaching experience, working level, working institutions, but there was a statistically significant difference between the responses of the participants in terms of their teaching language (see Table 2). At the end of Tukey Test analysis, it is comprehended that this difference was stemmed from French, which had a mean of .83. This means that the knowledge of teachers about writer's block did not change according to their gender, age, teaching experience, working level or working institutions, but the knowledge of them varied according to their teaching languages. This concludes that teachers of French had more knowledge about writer's block than any other language teachers.

**Table 2.** The comparisons of the participants' knowledge about writer's block.

Variable	Categories	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t
Gender	Female	200	.64	.482	.972
	Male	64	.64	.482	
Age	20-30 years	37	.76	.435	.229
	31-40 years	77	.64	.484	
Experience	41-50 years	121	.59	.494	.517
	51 and over	28	.71	.460	
The level	1-5 year	30	.73	.450	.533
	6-10 year	29	.62	.494	
The Institution	11-20 year	109	.60	.493	.090
	21 and over	95	.66	.475	
Teaching Languages	Primary	24	.67	.482	.494
	Secondary	88	.59	.483	
The level	High School	108	.64	.483	.454
	University	43	.72	.454	
The Institution	State	213	.61	.489	.424
	Private	44	.77	.447	
Teaching Languages	Course	5	.80	.447	-.015
	Not given	1	.00	-	
Teaching Languages	English	134	.65	.479	.474
	Turkish	93	.67	.474	
Teaching Languages	French	6	.83	.408	.452
	German	12	.75	.452	
Teaching Languages	Other	18	.28	.461	.461

As mentioned above, 168 instructors had knowledge about writer's block. When the percentages of their responses were compared in terms of their gender, it is seen that 75.6% of them were female. As for their age, it is clear that 42.3% of them were at the ages of 41-50. 38.7% of them had an 11-20-year experience, which is followed by over 21-year experience with a percentage of 37.5%. When considered their institutions, it is found that 41.1% of them were working at high schools and 77.4% of them were working at state schools. As for their teaching languages, it is seen that 51.8% of them were teachers of English followed by Turkish with a percentage of 36.9% (see Table 3). In short, it can be concluded that most of the instructors who had knowledge about writer's block were female, were between 41-50 years old, had an 11-20 year-experience, were working at high schools, were working at state schools, and were the teachers of English.

**Table 3.** The comparisons of the opinions of the participants having knowledge about writer's block.

Variable	Categories	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	127	75.6%
	Male	41	24.4%
Age	20-30 years	28	16.7%
	31-40 years	49	29.2%
Experience	41-50 years	71	42.3%
	51 and over	20	11.9%
The level	1-5 year	22	13.1%
	6-10 year	18	10.7%
The Institution	11-20 year	65	38.7%
	21 and over	63	37.5%
Teaching Languages	Primary	16	9.5%
	Secondary	52	31.0%
The level	High School	69	41.1%
	University	31	18.5%
The Institution	State	130	77.4%
	Private	34	20.2%
Teaching Languages	Course	4	2.4%
	English	87	51.8%
Teaching Languages	Turkish	62	36.9%
	French	5	3.0%
Teaching Languages	German	9	5.4%
	Other	5	3.0%

### Findings Related to Participants' Experience About Writer's Block

The experience of instructors in writer's block was inquired through three questions. The first one is "Have you ever witnessed that your students had writer's block?". As mentioned before, the frequency, percentage and means of the participants' replies were calculated after the YES-replies were coded as 1 point and the NO-replies were coded as 0 point. Since the data had a homogenous distribution, Independent Sample T-Test was used for the variable with two categories and One-Way Anova Test was used for the variables with more than two categories to compare the means. At the end of the data analysis, it is seen that 204 participants (77.3%) declared that they had witnessed that their students had writer's block, 56 participants (21.2%) declared that they did not have such experience, and 4 participants (1.5%) did not give a reply to this question. Therefore, 260 participants' responses were analyzed by Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way Anova Test, and it is found that there was no significant difference between their responses in terms of their gender, age, teaching experience, working level, working institutions, and teaching languages (see Table 4). This means that most instructors claim to witness their students' having writer's block.

When the percentages of the responses of 204 participants witnessing that their students had writer's block were compared in terms of their gender, it is seen that 155 of them were female, 91 of them were at the ages of 41-50, 81 of them had over 21-year experience, 82 of them were working at high schools, 168 of them were working at state schools and 105 of them were teachers of English (see Table 5). To brief, it is clear that most of the instructors who witnessed that their students had writer's block were female, were between 41-50 years old, had over 21-year-experience, were working at high schools, were working at state schools, and were the teachers of English.

**Table 4.** The comparisons of the participants' experiences in the state of writer's block.

Variable	Categories	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t
Gender	Female	198	.78	.413	.901
	Male	62	.79	.410	
Age	20-30 years	36	.83	.378	.598
	31-40 years	76	.78	.419	
Experience	41-50 years	120	.76	.430	.244
	51 and over	28	.86	.356	
The level	1-5 year	29	.76	.435	.612
	6-10 year	29	.76	.435	
The Institution	11-20 year	107	.74	.442	.527
	21 and over	95	.85	.356	
Teaching Languages	Primary	24	.79	.415	.329
	Secondary	86	.77	.425	
The level	High School	107	.77	.425	.612
	University	43	.86	.351	
The level	State	210	.80	.401	.612
	Private	44	.70	.462	
The level	Course	5	.80	.447	.527
	Not given	1	1.00	.	
Teaching Languages	English	133	.79	.409	.329
	Turkish	91	.82	.383	
Teaching Languages	French	6	.67	.516	.329
	German	12	.75	.452	
Teaching Languages	Other	18	.61	.502	

**Table 5.** The comparisons of the experiences of the participants witnessing writer's block.

Variable	Categories	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	155	76%
	Male	49	24%
Age	20-30 years	30	14.7%
	31-40 years	59	28.9%
Experience	41-50 years	91	44.6%
	51 and over	24	11.8%
The level	1-5 year	22	10.8%
	6-10 year	22	10.8%
The level	11-20 year	79	38.7%
	21 and over	81	39.7%
The level	Primary	19	9.3%
	Secondary	66	32.4%
The level	High School	82	40.2%
	University	37	18.1%
The level	State	168	82.4%
	Private	31	15.2
The level	Course	4	2.0
	Not given	1	0.5
Teaching Languages	English	105	51.5
	Turkish	75	36.8
Teaching Languages	French	4	2.0
	German	9	4.4
Teaching Languages	Other	11	5.4

Another question inquiring instructors' experience in writer's block is "How many of your students do you think have writer's block?". The participants were asked to tick their choice among the given ones such as "all of them", "most of them", "half of them", "a few of them". The choice they ticked

was coded as 1 point, the other ones were coded as 0 point. Then, the frequency, percentage and means of the participants' replies were calculated. It is seen that the data had a homogenous distribution, therefore Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way Anova Test were used to compare the means. At the end of the analysis, it is found that 108 participants (40.9%) ticked the choice of "most of them", 54 participants (20.5%) chose "half of them", 45 participants (17%) chose "a few of them", 4 participants (1.5%) marked "all of them" and 53 participants (20.1%) did not give a reply to this question. When the means of 211 participants' responses were compared, it is found that there is no significant difference between their responses in terms of their gender, age, teaching experience, working level, working institutions, and teaching languages (see Table 6). In other words, most of the instructors thought that most of their students had writer's block.

**Table 6.** *The comparisons of the participants' opinions about their students having writer's block.*

Variable	Categories	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t
Gender	Female	160	1.36	.797	.422
	Male	51	1.25	.935	
Age	20-30 years	31	1.26	.893	.867
	31-40 years	59	1.37	.807	
Experience	41-50 years	97	1.36	.831	.466
	51 and over	24	1.25	.847	
The level	1-5 year	22	1.18	.907	.118
	6-10 year	22	1.36	.790	
The Institution	11-20 year	85	1.27	.822	.090
	21 and over	82	1.44	.833	
Teaching Languages	Primary	19	1.16	.958	.225
	Secondary	70	1.37	.802	
The level	High School	83	1.46	.831	.118
	University	39	1.10	.788	
The Institution	State	173	1.40	.820	.090
	Private	33	1.03	.847	
Teaching Languages	Course	4	1.00	.816	.225
	Not given	1	1.00	-	
Teaching Languages	English	106	1.23	.831	.225
	Turkish	78	1.47	.817	
Teaching Languages	French	4	1.00	.816	.225
	German	10	1.60	.843	
Teaching Languages	Other	13	1.31	.855	

The last question inquiring the instructors' experience in writer's block is "When do you think your student have writer's block?". The participants were asked to tick their choice among the given ones such as "before composing", "during composing", "at the end of composing", "every stages of writing" and "no idea". After their choices were coded as 1 point, the frequency, percentage and means of the participants' replies were calculated. As the data had a homogenous distribution, Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way Anova Test were used to compare the means. Data analysis demonstrates that 54 participants (20.5%) did not give a reply to this question and the most frequent response was "before composing", which was chosen by 111 participants (42%). It is followed by "every stages of writing" chosen by 46 participants (17.4%) and by "during composing" ticked by 8 participants (18.2%). In addition, 1 participant (0.4%) ticked the choice of "at the end of composing" and 4 participants (1.9%) chose "no idea". That's to say, most of the instructors thought that their students had writer's block before composing. When the means of 210 participants' responses were compared, it is found that there

was no significant difference between their responses in terms of their gender, age, teaching experience, working institutions, and teaching languages but there was a statistically significant difference in terms of their working level (see Table 7). At the end of Tukey Test analysis, it is comprehended that this difference was between the high school and university. It can be expressed that the instructors working at high school thought that their students had writer's block "before composing" more than the instructors working at universities.

**Table 7.** The comparisons of the participants' opinions about the stage of writer's block.

Variable	Categories	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t
Gender	Female	159	1.89	1.217	.824
	Male	51	1.84	1.223	
Age	20-30 years	31	1.77	1.087	.065
	31-40 years	60	2.02	1.255	
Experience	41-50 years	95	1.69	1.140	.996
	51 and over	24	2.38	1.439	
The level	1-5 year	22	1.82	1.140	.035
	6-10 year	22	1.86	1.246	
The Institution	11-20 year	84	1.88	1.196	.997
	21 and over	82	1.89	1.267	
Teaching Languages	Primary	19	2.11	1.243	.540
	Secondary	70	1.86	1.254	
The level	High School	83	2.06	1.291	.035
	University	38	1.39	0.790	
The Institution	State	172	1.88	1.225	.997
	Private	33	1.88	1.193	
Teaching Languages	Course	4	1.75	1.500	.540
	Not given	1	2.00	-	
The level	English	105	1.92	1.230	.035
	Turkish	78	1.86	1.214	
The Institution	French	4	1.00	1.214	.997
	German	10	1.60	0.966	
Teaching Languages	Other	13	2.08	1.441	

### Findings Related to Participants' Opinions on Solutions to Writer's Block

The opinions of instructors on solutions to writer's block were identified through the items in the third section of the survey form. The participants were asked to tick the items which they think as a solution to writer's block. They can select as many items as they wish. The items selected by the participants were coded as 1 point, and the items that were not selected were coded as 0 point. When the data were analyzed in terms of frequencies of items, it is found that the most frequently reported solutions to writer's block were respectively "continuing to write by revising the outline made before writing", "stopping to write and brainstorming", and "stopping to write and reading or editing what you have written", as seen in Table 8. The least frequently reported solutions to writer's block were respectively "stopping to write and waiting for the inspiration", "stopping to write and listening to music" and "stopping to write and restarting to writing from the beginning" (see Table 8).

Mann-Whitney Test was used in order to compare the means of the replies in terms of gender, and Kruskal Wallis Test was used for the comparison in terms of other variables since the data did not have a homogenous distribution. The finding obtained from Mann-Whitney Test indicates that there was no significant difference between the means of female and male instructors (see Table 9). Moreover, the findings obtained from Kruskal Wallis indicate that there was no significant difference between the

instructors' replies in terms of their age, experience, teaching level, institutions, teaching languages (see Table 9). That's to say, instructors' opinions about the solutions to writer's block did not vary according to their gender, age, experience, teaching level, institutions, and teaching languages.

**Table 8.** *The opinions of the participants about the solutions to writer's block.*

Solutions to Writer's Block	f	P
Continuing to write by revising the outline made before writing	169	64.0%
Stopping to write and brainstorming	146	55.3%
Stopping to write and reading or editing what you have written	110	41.7%
Stopping to write and changing ideas with friends	108	40.9%
Stopping to write and getting help from the teacher	89	33.7%
Continuing to write after relaxing exercises such as yoga or walking	74	28.0%
Continuing to write after changing the environment	68	25.8%
Continuing to write with another part	33	12.5%
Forcing him/herself to write	33	12.5%
Stopping to write and waiting for the inspiration	29	11.0%
Stopping to write and listening to music	25	9.5%
Stopping to write and restarting to writing from the beginning	16	6.1%

**Table 9.** *The comparisons of the participants' opinions about the solutions to writer's block.*

Variable	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	t
Gender	Female	200	134.35	26870.00	.479
	Male	64	126.72	8110.00	
Age	20-30 years	37	123.01	-	.591
	31-40 years	77	139.38	-	
Experience	41-50 years	122	133.65	-	.397
	51 and over	28	121.11	-	
The level	1-5 year	30	117.85	-	.472
	6-10 year	29	151.09	-	
The Institution	11-20 year	109	131.06	-	.661
	21 and over	96	133.10	-	
Teaching Languages	Primary	24	127.17	-	.977
	Secondary	88	125.77	-	
	High School	109	133.25	-	
	University	43	147.35	-	
	State	214	134.88	-	
	Private	44	124.74	-	
	Course	5	100.80	-	
	Not given	1	123.00	-	
	English	134	132.12	-	
	Turkish	94	130.77	-	
	French	6	145.83	-	
	German	12	142.54	-	
	Other	18	133.19	-	

#### **Findings Related to Participants' Opinions on Precautions Against Writer's Block**

The opinions of instructors on precautions against writer's block were inquired through the items in the third section of the survey. The participants were asked to tick the items which they think as a precaution against writer's block. They can select as many items as they want. Therefore, the items selected by the participants were coded as 1 point, and the items that were not selected were coded as 0 point. When the data were analyzed in terms of frequencies of items, it is found that the most

frequently reported precautions against writer's block were respectively "making outline before starting to write", "brainstorming before starting to write", and "doing research before starting to write" (see Table 10). The least frequently reported precautions against writer's block were respectively "developing own rules for writing", "writing with music" and "obeying the rules of writing", as seen in Table 10.

**Table 10.** *The opinions of the participants about the precautions against writer's block.*

Precautions against Writer's Block	f	P
Making outline before starting to write	209	79.2%
Brainstorming before starting to write	194	73.5%
Doing research before starting to write	176	66.7%
Writing on interesting topics	165	62.5%
Setting small objectives before starting to write	158	59.8%
Getting feedback for what have been written	135	51.1%
Developing routines for writing	129	48.9%
Freewriting	129	48.9%
Not focusing on errors	105	39.8%
Having training on writing	106	40.2%
Writing without time limitation	82	31.1%
Being informed about writer's block	81	30.7%
Editing after completing composing	75	28.4%
Writing in pairs or groups	58	22.0%
Developing own rules for writing	44	16.7%
Writing with music	23	8.7%
Obeying the rules of writing	20	7.6%

As in the data on solutions, the data on precautions against writer's block did not have a homogenous distribution. Therefore, Mann-Whitney Test and Kruskal Wallis Test were used to determine whether there is a difference between the instructors' replies in terms of various variables. At the end of the Mann-Whitney Test, it is seen that there was a significant difference between the means of female and male teachers (see Table 11). Also, Kruskal Wallis Test demonstrates that there was a significant difference between the instructors' replies in terms of their age and their experience, but there was no significant difference between the instructors' replies in terms of their teaching level, institutions, and teaching languages. That's to say, instructors' opinions about the precautions against writer's block did not vary according to their teaching level, institutions, and teaching languages, but their opinions differed according to their gender, age and experience.

Since there is a significant difference between the opinions of instructors in terms of their gender, the replies of the instructors should be analyzed comparatively. When the frequencies were analyzed, it is seen that the most frequently reported precautions by female instructors are relatively "making outline before starting to write", "brainstorming before starting to write" and "doing research before starting to write" and the most frequently reported precautions by male instructors are relatively "making outline before starting to write", "writing on interesting topics", and "brainstorming before starting to write". The least reported precautions by female participants are "obeying the rules of writing", "writing with music" and "developing own rules for writing" while the ones selected by male participants are "writing with music", "obeying the rules of writing" and "writing in pairs or groups". Table 12 comparatively demonstrates the number and frequencies of replies in the order of original survey.

**Table 11.** The comparisons of the participants' opinions about the precautions against writer's block.

Variable	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	t
Gender	Female	200	139.49	27898.50	.008
	Male	64	110.65	7081.50	
Age	20-30 years	37	104.36	-	.048
	31-40 years	77	145.83	-	
Experience	41-50 years	122	130.53	-	.021
	51 and over	28	141.61	-	
The level	1-5 year	30	101.45	-	.085
	6-10 year	29	127.57	-	
The Institution	11-20 year	109	147.20	-	.333
	21 and over	96	127.00	-	
Teaching Languages	Primary	24	106.10	-	.885
	Secondary	88	124.23	-	
The level	High School	109	138.50	-	.085
	University	43	148.94	-	
The Institution	State	214	135.56	-	.333
	Private	44	121.52	-	
Teaching Languages	Course	5	88.10	-	.885
	Not given	1	183.00	-	
The level	English	134	129.01	-	.085
	Turkish	94	139.19	-	
The Institution	French	6	132.50	-	.333
	German	12	126.67	-	
Teaching Languages	Other	18	127.47	-	

**Table 12.** The opinions of the female and male participants about the precautions against writer's block.

Precautions against Writer's Block	P	
	Female	Male
1 Setting small objectives before starting to write	60.5	57.8
2 Brainstorming before starting to write	78.0	59.4
3 Making outline before starting to write	81.0	73.4
4 Doing research before starting to write	69.5	57.8
5 Writing with music	10.5	3.1
6 Developing routines for writing	53.5	34.4
7 Not focusing on errors	41.5	34.4
8 Having training on writing	40.0	40.6
9 Writing on interesting topics	62.5	62.5
10 Writing without time limitation	33.0	25.0
11 Freewriting	51.5	40.6
12 Getting feedback for what have been written	54.0	42.2
13 Editing after completing composing	28.5	28.1
14 Obeying the rules of writing	7.5	7.8
15 Developing own rules for writing	15.5	20.3
16 Writing in pairs or groups	25.5	10.9
17 Being informed about writer's block	30.5	31.3

The Tukey Test demonstrates that the significant difference between the opinions of instructors in terms of their ages was stemmed from the groups of 20-30 ages. When the frequencies were analyzed in terms of instructors' ages, it is seen that the most frequently reported precautions by the instructors at the ages of 20-30 are equally "brainstorming before starting to write" and "writing on interesting topics" with the same percentage, which are followed by "making outline before starting to write". The least reported precautions by the instructors at the ages of 20-30 are "obeying the rules of writing",

"writing with music" and "writing in pairs or groups". Table 13 comparatively demonstrates the number and frequencies of replies in the order of original survey.

**Table 13.** *The opinions of the participants about the precautions against writer's block in terms of their ages*

Precautions Against Writer's Block	P			
	20-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50
1 Setting small objectives before starting to write	45.9	67.5	58.1	64.2
2 Brainstorming before starting to write	67.5	74.0	73.7	78.5
3 Making outline before starting to write	64.8	83.1	79.5	85.7
4 Doing research before starting to write	48.6	68.8	69.6	71.4
5 Writing with music	5.4	9.0	9.8	7.1
6 Developing routines for writing	45.9	58.4	43.4	50
7 Not focusing on errors	37.8	41.5	40.1	35.7
8 Having training on writing	21.6	42.8	40.9	53.5
9 Writing on interesting topics	67.5	58.4	62.2	67.8
10 Writing without time limitation	24.3	38.9	28.6	28.5
11 Freewriting	43.2	49.3	49.1	53.5
12 Getting feedback for what have been written	40.5	53.2	50.8	60.7
13 Editing after completing composing	21.6	40.2	24.5	21.4
14 Obeying the rules of writing	2.7	9.0	7.3	10.7
15 Developing own rules for writing	18.9	25.9	11.4	10.7
16 Writing in pairs or groups	10.8	23.3	23.7	25.0
17 Being informed about writer's block	18.9	37.6	31.9	21.4

**Table 14.** *The opinions of the participants about the precautions against writer's block in terms of their teaching experiences*

Precautions Against Writer's Block	P			
	1-5	6-10	11-20	Over 21
1 Setting small objectives before starting to write	20.0	48.2	68.8	56.2
2 Brainstorming before starting to write	60.0	75.8	73.3	77.0
3 Making outline before starting to write	60.0	79.3	83.4	80.2
4 Doing research before starting to write	46.6	62.0	75.2	64.5
5 Writing with music	3.3	10.3	9.1	9.3
6 Developing routines for writing	46.6	55.1	50.4	45.8
7 Not focusing on errors	33.3	48.2	42.2	36.4
8 Having training on writing	16.6	31.0	49.5	39.5
9 Writing on interesting topics	63.3	65.5	60.5	63.5
10 Writing without time limitation	23.3	24.1	37.6	28.1
11 Freewriting	46.6	37.9	51.3	50.0
12 Getting feedback for what have been written	43.3	48.2	54.1	51.0
13 Editing after completing composing	26.6	37.9	34.8	18.7
14 Obeying the rules of writing	3.3	0	11.0	7.2
15 Developing own rules for writing	18.1	20.6	26.6	12.5
16 Writing in pairs or groups	12.1	20.6	23.8	22.9
17 Being informed about writer's block	12.1	34.4	40.3	23.9

At the end of the Tukey Test, it is seen that the significant difference between the opinions of instructors in terms of their experiences was stemmed from the groups having experience between 11-20 years. When the frequencies were analyzed in terms of instructors' experience, it is seen that the most frequently reported precautions by the instructors having experience between 11-20 years are relatively "making outline before starting to write", "doing research before starting to write", and "brainstorming before starting to write". The least reported precautions by the instructors having experience between 11-20 years are "obeying the rules of writing", "writing with music", and "developing own rules for writing and writing in pairs or groups". Table 14 comparatively demonstrates the number and frequencies of replies in the order of original survey.

## Discussion

The first finding of this study is that most of the instructors declared that they had knowledge about writer's block. Similar result occurred in the study of Günaydin and Erdoğan (2021), which reveals that teachers had knowledge, skill and experience regarding writer's block. This finding is significant in terms of solution of this problem. Since Hall (1998) asserts that teachers can also cause students to have writer's block, their knowledge on writer's block can prevent them from making their students to have writer's block.

This study postulates that most of the instructors had witnessed that most of their students had writer's block. This means that the instructors thought that their students had usually writer's block. The fact that students have writer's block in writing in their first and second/foreign language is proved by various studies. For instance, Rose (1984) demonstrated that English students had writer's block in writing in English. Peterson (1987) reported that American adults at a language course had writer's block. Özbay and Zorbaz (2012) also deduced that Turkish students at secondary schools had writer's block in writing in Turkish. Similarly, Prihandoko (2021) endorsed that 280 university students in Papua in Indonesia had writer's block in their first language in a quantitative research. On the other hand, Lee and Krashen (2003) detected that 98 university students in Taiwan had writer's block in Chinese writing as a second language. Zorbaz (2015) declared that 428 Turkish students at secondary school had writer's block in writing in English as a foreign language. In a study conducted in a setting of ESL, Rosa and Genuino (2018) concluded that Filipino students at high school experienced writer's block. There are also some studies concluding that individuals except from students can also experience writer's block. In this context, Gülay (2019) disclosed that 711 academicians in Türkiye had writer's block in academic writing in a quantitative study. Likewise, Rahmat (2020) also revealed that 29 academicians in Malaysia had writer's block in academic writing in a quantitative and qualitative study. Ahmed (2019) also demonstrated that 101 professional writers usually had writer's block in their professions in a self-report research. As a result, this finding of the present study proves that instructors' opinions about their students' having writer's block is parallel with the literature, which is a sign of the instructors' knowledge on writer's block.

This study also reverberates that instructors declared that students had writer's block before composing. The instructors' opinion about the stage of writer's block is parallel with the idea of Rose (1984), which claims that writer's block is experienced mostly at the beginning of composing process. Özbay and Zorbaz (2012) and Evdash and Zhuravleva (2020) also demonstrated in their study that students had writer's block mostly at the beginning of writing. There are also some studies suggesting different findings. For instance, Günaydin and Erdoğan (2021) concluded that the participating teachers thought that the most common stage of writer's block was draft writing. However, it is explained in the study that the stage of draft writing comprises planning and composing process. Moreover, in Ahmed's study (2019) with professional writers, writer's block was found to occur during composing. It can be concluded that although professional writers have writer's block mostly during composing, students or inexperienced writers experience writer's block mostly before starting to compose, that's to say, in the process of planning their writing. In short, this finding of the present study proves that instructors' opinion about the stage of writer's block is the mostly accepted stage in the literature, which reflects the instructors' knowledge on writer's block.

Another important finding of this study is that the most frequently reported solutions to writer's block by instructors were "continuing to write by reviewing the outline", "stopping to write and brainstorming", and "stopping to write and rereading and editing". This is not commensurate with the studies of Günaydin and Erdoğan (2021) and Ahmed (2019). Günaydin and Erdoğan (2021) suggested that the teachers considered providing psychological support and writing on their favorite topics as the most important solutions to writer's block. Ahmed (2019) transmitted that the most frequently reported solutions to writer's block by professional writers were respectively taking a break from writing, working on a different writing project, keeping writing, and discussing with the others. It should be noted that the participating teachers expressed their own ideas through semi-structured interview in the study of Günaydin and Erdoğan (2021), thus they were not presented any solutions. As for the study of Ahmed (2019), it was conducted with professional writers and they identified their own solutions; it is clear that students and instructors cannot approach writer's block as professional writers do.

The most frequently reported solution to writer's block by instructors in this study was "continuing to write by reviewing the outline". Outlining and planning are recommended in many studies in the literature (Abdullah et all, 2020; Morton, 2000; Rahmat, 2020; Reed, 1986; Salem, 2008; Smeets, 2008, Spratt, 2008). However, outlining and planning may prevent students from having writer's block, so they cannot be a solution, but a precaution. Students should plan and outline their ideas before they start to write so that they will not have writer's block. The second frequently reported solution to writer's block by instructors in this study was "stopping to write and brainstorming". However, many studies (Abdullah et all, 2020; Castillo, 2014; Chintamani, 2014; Morton, 2000; Reed, 1986; Smeets, 2008; Venzin, 2017) suggest brainstorming in order find or limit a topic. Therefore, this opinion of instructors does not reflect the theoretical knowledge about writer's block. On the contrary, many studies (Chintamani, 2014; Huston, 1998; Reed, 1986; Talandis, 2022; Venzin, 2017) offer relaxation activities such as listening to music, yoga, exercise, taking a walk at the time of writer's block. The third frequently reported solution to writer's block by instructors in this study was "stopping to write and rereading and editing", which is opposite of the relevant literature. Rose (1984) considers early editing at the time of composing as a reason for writer's block, and students are encouraged to edit after completing the draft by many studies (Abdullah et all, 2000; Baker-Brodersen, 1988; Healy, 2010; Hsui, 1993; Morton, 2000; Salem, 2010; Smeets, 2008; Spratt, 2008). Shortly, this finding on the opinions of the instructors about the solutions to writer's block postulates that instructors did not have enough knowledge about the solutions to writer's block.

The last but not least finding of this study is that the most frequently reported precautions against writer's block were "outlining", "brainstorming" and "doing research about the topic". This finding was not commensurate with the study of Günaydin and Erdoğan (2021), which concludes that teachers claimed that reading habit as well as psychological support and writing exercises are mainly recommendations to prevent writer's block. As mentioned before, outlining and brainstorming is suggested by many studies (Abdullah et all, 2020; Castillo, 2014; Chintamani, 2014; Morton, 2000; Rahmat, 2020; Reed, 1986; Salem, 2008; Smeets, 2008; Spratt, 2008; Venzin, 2017) in the literature so that students can be prevented from having writer's block. Therefore, this finding of the present study is parallel with the theoretical information in the literature. Put it differently, the opinions of the instructors about the precautions against writer's block is a prove that instructors had enough knowledge about the precautions against writer's block.

## Conclusion

Shortly, this study concludes that the instructors thought that they had knowledge writer's block. Their experience in the state and stage of writer's block and their opinions about the precautions against writer's block are congruous with the literature. From this perspective, this study has significant implications for the understanding of when writer's block may occur and how it may be prevented before teaching writing. Yet, the instructors' opinions about the solutions to writer's block are not compatible with the literature. This is an evidence of the fact that instructors do not know what to do in case their students have writer's block in the classroom. As a suggestion, training and seminars on writer's block may be provided to instructors, which focus on the differences between solutions and precautions. Besides, the suggestions found in this study may be of assistance to notice the important solutions to writer's block when encountered in the classroom. As Huston (1998) states, writer's block is a solvable problem, and the solutions to this problem are different and various.

In accordance with most studies, the present research is not without its limitations. The current study relied on self-report data through a survey form. The participants would choose the best option for themselves in this form. However, other studies using interview technique with open-ended questions may reflect self and other opinions of instructors. When interpreting the results, it should be considered that the data was collected from only instructors who are volunteer, thus the generalizability of the findings is limited to this context. Further research in this field would be of great help in conducting more comprehensive research with more participants including not only instructors but also learners.

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