



# Getting the most out of the DASH-2 Free Writing task

Presented by **Anna L. Barnett & Sheila E. Henderson**  
DASH-2 FORUM | May, 13

# Authors



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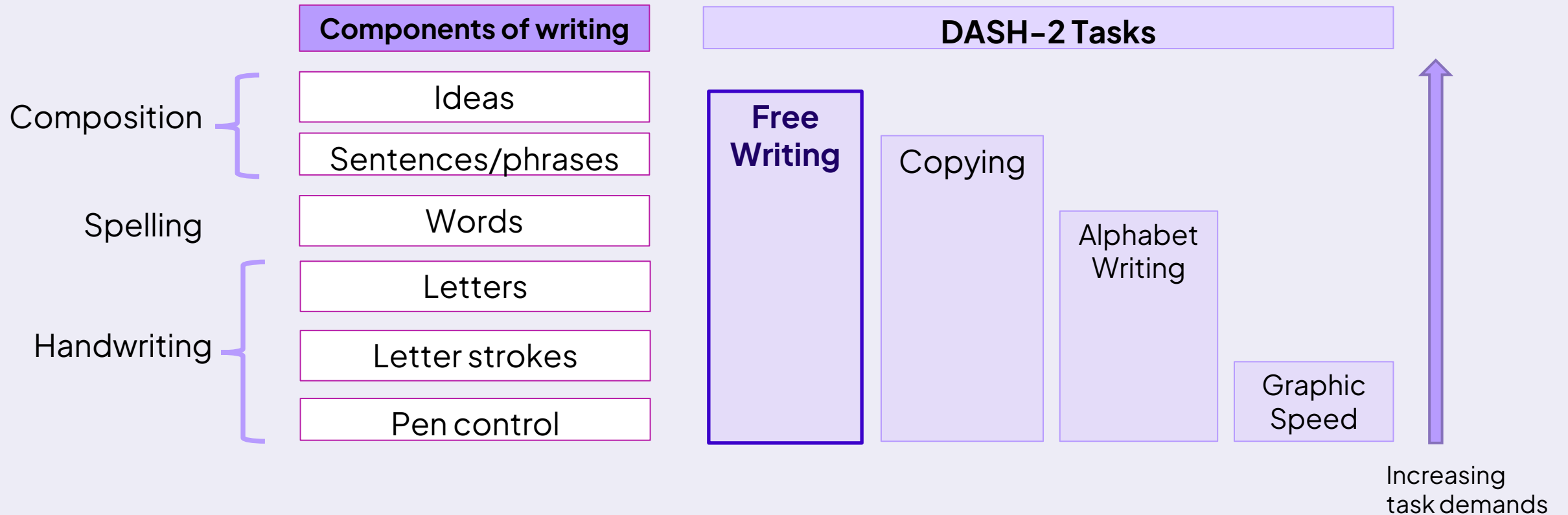


Beverly Scheib

# Aims of DASH-2

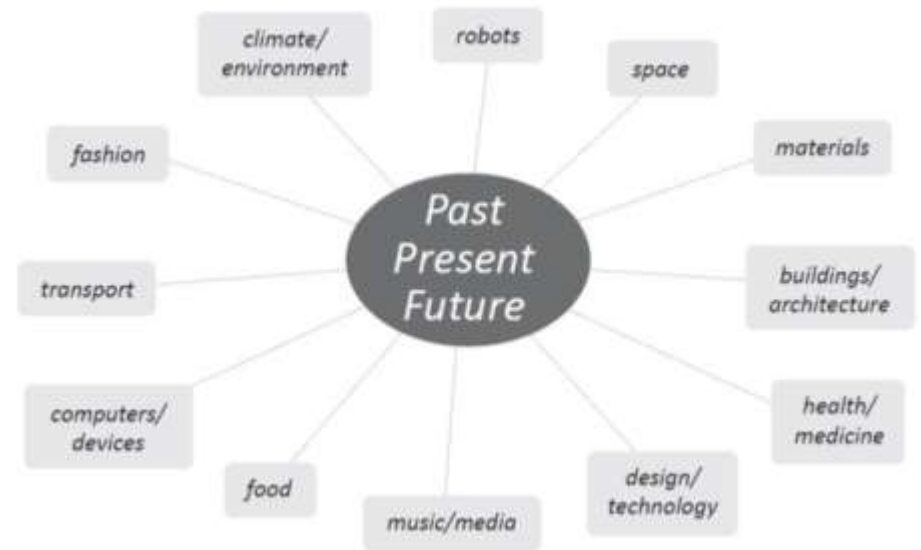
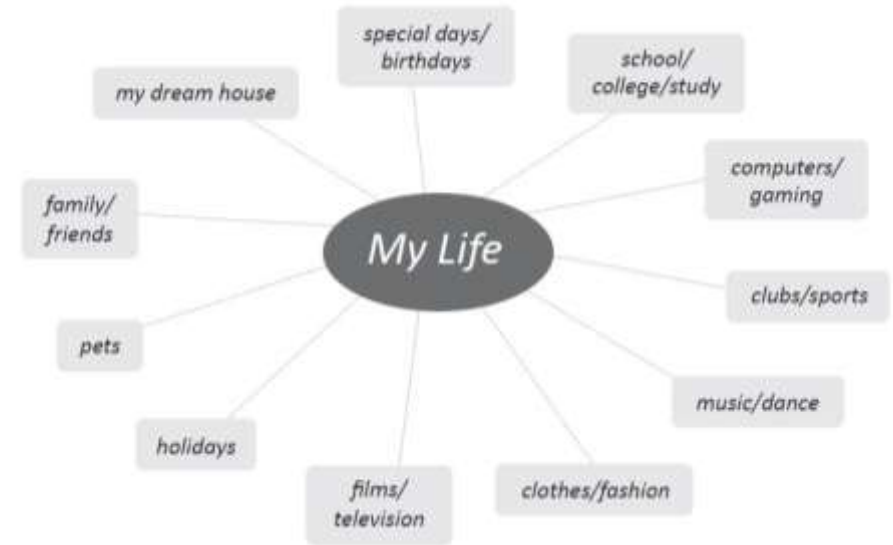
- To provide a reliable measure of the speed of handwriting, while taking account of legibility.
- To assess handwriting speed across functional tasks with different demands.
- To provide quantitative and qualitative information relevant for intervention planning.

# Theoretical foundations



# Free Writing

- **Task:** write about the topic in everyday writing for 10 minutes.
- **Presentation:** sub-topics can be discussed and used to help with ideas.
- Thinking and preparation time.
- When writing, mark (//) every two minutes.



# Examples of Free Writing

my life I love my cat and I love  
 numsters I love going places with  
 my samly I re rilly like etiny skets  
 and I gink chicks are rilly cyot  
 I love stim ant making stog wif  
 them I love my tety5 to I love  
 Art // annt amagning gings in my het  
 \* I love driving I love swingin on  
 stue ... ..  
 go  
 bi  
 I

Past	Present	Future
Football is a very interesting sport and has a lot of skills and interests needed. Football used to only be classed as a mans sport and had little pay. All footballs used to be played with a leather ball which was much heavier. However, now football is now based on both men and women, and but still has its rules an // and a		

My life

my birthday IS the first of december. I dont  
 really like having a birthday close to christmas  
 because once I get my birthday presents I dont have  
 any thing to get for christmas. when im older I hope  
 I become a nurse. This has been my dream job  
 ever since I // was little. I always loved to  
 look after my grandad when he got ill. I love getting

Now Space never ends  
 Future with robots will be  
 like sneezing and coughing.  
 Present there will be  
 disgusting food. // Now fashion  
 is really good to me.  
 Future we will transport  
 anywhere I want to  
 go. // Now computers are cool. //  
 Now my house is a  
 building. at home Now I  
 desined a // T-shirt. Present

# Quantitative information

- Raw score for legible words
- Scaled score for legible words
- % illegible words
- Profile over 10 minutes

**DASH<sup>2</sup>** SECOND EDITION  
Detailed Assessment of the Speed of Handwriting

**Detailed Assessment of the Speed of Handwriting – Second Edition**  
**Record Form**

Name: <u>EXAMINEE A</u>		Gender: <u>F</u>		
School/College/University/workplace: <u>The School</u>				
Location/address: <u>MILL ROAD, BIRMINGHAM, B2 5XV</u>				
Class/year group: <u>11E</u>	Year	Month	Day	
Administered by: <u>EXAMINER B</u>	Date tested	2023	12	21
Hand used for writing: <u>R</u>	Date of birth	2008	3	20
Test setting: <u>Individual</u> group	Age	15	9	1

**Core Scores**

Task	Raw score	Scaled score
1. Copy Best (CB): Words per minute* Version: <u>AL1</u> / AL2 / A(3) / AA	27	12
2. Alphabet Writing (AW): Number of letters	83	12
3. Copy Fast (CF): Words per minute*	37	14
4. Free Writing (FW): Words per minute* Version: <u>ML</u> / PPF	24	11
Total scaled score (sum of scaled scores 1-4)		49
Total Standard Score		113

\*Words per minute scores to a whole number; rounded down for decimals below .5, and up for decimals of .5 and above.

Confidence interval (95% level): 103 to 120  
Percentile rank: 81

See Table 8.2 of the DASH-2 Administration and Scoring Manual

**Scaled Score Profile**

**Supplementary scores**

Task	Raw score	Scaled score
Graphic Speed: Number of correct Xs	50	13
Copy Speed Difference (CF - CB):	10	10th percentile or below
Free Writing: % illegible words		0.83%

See Table 1.2 of the DASH-2 Administration and Scoring Manual

**Free Writing Profile**

# Qualitative information

- Recorded on back page of the Record Form e.g.
- Process – 4 Ps
- Product – 7 Ss

**The handwriting process and product**

**The 4 Ps**

☐ Posture \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Paper position \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Pen grip \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Pressure \_\_\_\_\_

**Other observations** (e.g. lack of 'flow'/fluency, discomfort/pain, fatigue, excessive visual monitoring when copying)

**The 7 Ss**

☐ Shape/letter formation \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Size \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Stringing together/joining \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Spacing (words/letters) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Slant/Slope \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Site/position on the line \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Shakiness \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall legibility** – within and across tasks

**Relationship between speed and legibility** (e.g. adequate speed/easy to read, adequate speed/hard to read, slow/easy to read, slow/hard to read)

**Free Writing content** (e.g. ideas, structure, grammar, vocabulary, spelling)

# Additional measure I

- Handwriting Legibility Scale (HLS; Barnett, Rosenblum & Prunty, 2018).
- **5 criteria: Overall legibility, effort to read, layout on the page, letter formation and alterations.**
- Each given a score of 1-5.
- Summed to give total score (5-25).
- Higher score = poor legibility.
- Low, medium, high categories.

December 2017 RIDD

For the first three components, consider your overall impression of the writing:

A. Legibility - An overall impression of global legibility based on your first reading of the text.  
1 - On first reading, all words are legible  
5 - On first reading, only few words are legible

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

B. Effort - An overall impression of the amount of effort required for you to read the script the first time.

1 - On first reading, no effort is required to read the script  
5 - On first read reading, the script is extremely effortful to read

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

C. Layout on the page - An overall impression of the layout of writing on the page. Well organised handwriting is consistent, with elements appropriately positioned in relation to each other (e.g. the position of the margin, placement of letters on the baseline, spaces within and between words).

1 - Very good layout on the page.  
5 - Very poor layout on the page.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Now focus on individual letters/words in more detail:

D. Letter formation - An overall impression of letter formation. Well formed letters are appropriately shaped, contain all necessary elements, neat letter closures and are consistent in size and slope.

1 - All letters very well formed  
5 - Most letters very poorly formed

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

E. Alterations - An overall impression of the attempts made to rectify letters within words. Includes the addition of elements, re-tracing or re-writing of letters.

1 - There are no additional elements, re-tracing or over-writing of letters within words.  
5 - Most words contain additional elements, re-tracing or over-writing of letters.

1	2	3	4	5
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**Sum score** (quality of the written product): \_\_\_\_

# Additional measure II

- Writing Quality Scale (WQS; Stuart & Barnett, 2023) for students in Higher Education.
- **6 criteria: content & development, structure & organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling.**
- Each given a score of 1-4.
- Summed to give total score (6-24) .
- Higher score = poor written compositional quality.
- Low, medium, high categories.

Criteria	Score
<b>1. Content and Development</b>	
• Ideas are fully extended and elaborated, using descriptive detail that results in a coherent text that engages the reader.	1
• Ideas are extended, and most ideas are also elaborated with the use of descriptive detail to provide a coherent text.	2
• Ideas are extended but not elaborated. The text may appear 'list-like' and lack coherence.	3
• Ideas are not extended or elaborated and/or contain only minimal descriptive detail. May contain just a list of ideas with no extension of detail and/or be incoherent.	4

Criteria	Score
<b>3. Vocabulary</b>	
• Precise, well-chosen words are used that are appropriate for conveying the intended meaning and show variety for retaining the reader's interest and engagement.	1
• A good choice of words is used, appropriate for conveying the intended meaning.	2
• Appropriate choice of words to convey meaning but may rely on the repeated use of a limited number of words and/or contain some inaccurate or inappropriate word choices that may impact on the intended meaning.	3
• Choice of words may be inaccurate or inappropriate for context and impact on the intended meaning.	4

# Example case: getting the most out of Free Writing

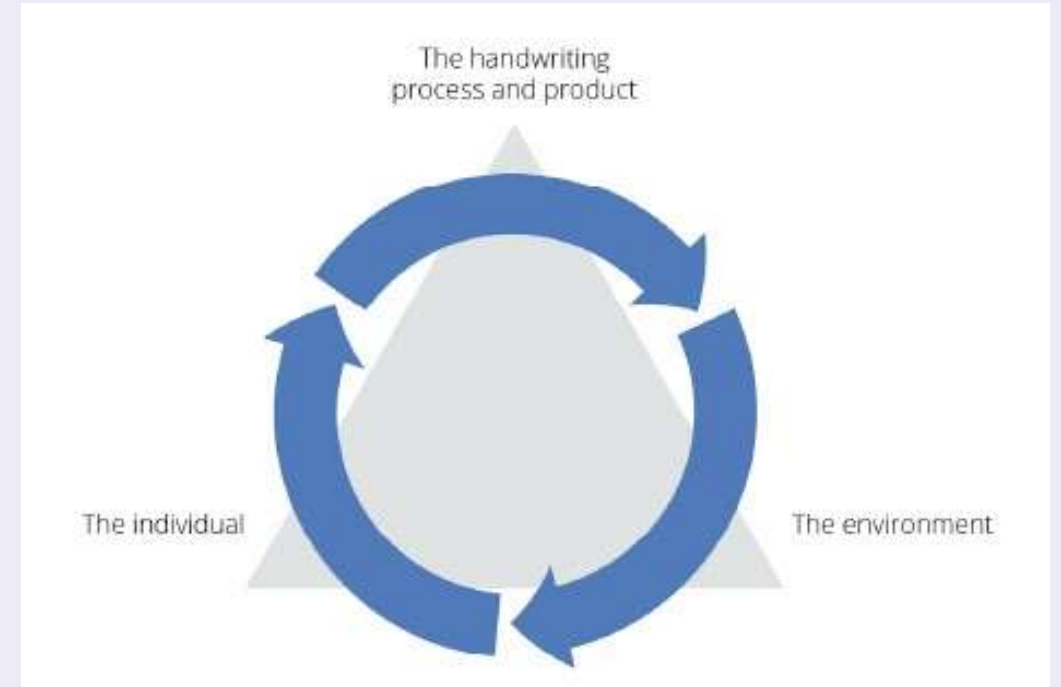
18 year old with dyslexia

- DASH-2 Total SS: 64
- Free Writing scaled score: 4, % illegible words: zero
- HLS: 16 (high), WQS: 21 (high)

This is how I live well my life is ~~ALWAYS~~ Always Busy im 18  
years old (19 in less than a month) I am studying at Richmond  
upon Thames college, // where I am taking A level National Diploma  
in Performing Arts. I also have a strong passion for technical theatre  
A // and that is something I wish to study at universities or at a  
Drama School. I am also ~~the~~ putting on my own show in college  
this show will be // the Rocky horror picture show which I am  
to put on in June of 2009. I have also taken part in A // Cross  
College (people who don't just study Performing Arts) which was  
A production ~~manager~~ of Les Misérables which was a huge success.

# Interpretation in context

- Handwriting process and product
- Background about the individual
- Background about the individual's environment



# References to other assessment tools

- Barnett, A.L., Prunty, M. & Rosenblum, S. (2018). Development of the Handwriting Legibility Scale (HLS): a preliminary examination of Reliability and Validity. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 72, 240–247.
- Henderson, S.E., & Barnett, A.L. (2023). *Movement Assessment Battery for Children – 3rd Edition (Movement ABC-3). Test manual*. Pearson.
- Henderson, S.E., & Barnett, A.L. (2023). *Movement Assessment Battery for Children – 3rd Edition (Movement ABC-3). Checklist manual*. Pearson.
- Stuart, N.J. & Barnett, A.L. (2024). *Writing quality scale (WQS): HE version. Administration and scoring guide*. Oxford, England: Oxford Brookes University.

# Thank you for listening!

**Further information:**

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# DASH-2, What's new?

## Comparison Table DASH-2



What's new with DASH-2?



Taking around 30 minutes to administer, the DASH-2 is a reliable measure of handwriting speed for children and young adults that helps identify functional handwriting difficulties. The updated DASH-2 will include many of the features and benefits current DASH and DASH 17+ users enjoy, with a number of new features that enhance its utility, particularly when repeated testing is required.

DASH / DASH 17+ vs. DASH-2 Comparison

DASH / DASH 17+	DASH-2
<b>Age range</b> DASH: 9:0 – 16:11 years DASH 17+ : 17:0 – 25:11 years	<b>Age range</b> 8:0 – 25:11 years
<b>5 subtests</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copy Best</li><li>• Alphabet Writing</li><li>• Copy Fast</li><li>• Free Writing</li><li>• Graphic Speed</li></ul>	<b>5 subtests</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copy Best</li><li>• Alphabet Writing</li><li>• Copy Fast</li><li>• Free Writing</li><li>• Graphic Speed</li></ul>
Same sentence used for both copying tasks	Updated, novel sentences for copying tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 choices for 8-16 year-olds</li><li>• 2 choices for 17-25 year-olds</li></ul>
Single topic for Free Writing task (My Life)	Addition of a second, more demanding topic option for Free Writing task: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My Life</li><li>• Past, Present, Future</li></ul>
<b>Scoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task-level Standard Scores</li><li>• Total Standard Score</li><li>• Percentile ranks</li><li>• Confidence intervals</li><li>• Copy speed difference</li><li>• WPM profile (Free Writing)</li><li>• Percent illegible</li></ul>	<b>Scoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task-level Scaled Scores</li><li>• Total Standard Score</li><li>• Percentile ranks</li><li>• Confidence intervals</li><li>• Copy speed difference</li><li>• WPM profile (Free Writing)</li><li>• Percent illegible</li></ul>
UK norms	Normative data co-collected between UK and Australia/NZ
Paper and pencil administration	Paper and pencil administration

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Offer ends **May 28, 2025** (\*)

(\*) Applies to online orders and only for Complete Kits



# Where to find out more

## Contact me



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joining us!**