

Loop Writing Prompts
Marty Williams • Bay Area Writing Project
National Writing Project Annual Meeting • 2002

First thoughts, questions, prejudices, preconceptions

Pick a topic and free write on this topic. Write down whatever first comes to your mind about your topic. One way to start: *When I think of this topic, I think of/remember/wonder....then I think ofAnd this leads me to ask/wonder/question....* Jump into your topic and keep writing even when you think you are not making sense.

Moments, stories, portraits

When prompted, jump into whatever moments, incidents, events and people you think of that somehow seem linked to your question, or for whatever reason are now appearing in your mind. It is not necessary to connect these moments to the writing you've already done. Focus on *capturing the experiences* rather than *explaining* them. Don't worry about analyzing or explaining the significance of these moments unless it happens naturally as you write.

Dialogue

This could take various forms. It could be real, fictitious or projected. It could be a dialogue you have had with yourself, with a colleague, with a school administrator, etc. It could represent dialogues you have engaged in willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously. It could be a dialogue you have overheard or imagined. The emphasis here is to bring anew form of energy into your thinking and/or writing. "The goal is not fidelity, but thought stimulation." (Elbow, p. 58)

Variations on Audience

Now focus on your question in a different way. You could ask your question from a different point of view (e.g., a student, an administrator, a parent) or explain your question to a different audience. You could write about your question using a different form or structure (e.g., a play, a monologue, a letter). You might experiment with time or context (write about your question in the past or future). Approach your question from a different angle and see what emerges.