MORE INVENTION TECHNIQUES

adapted from Linda Flower’s Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing and Constance J. Gefvert's The Confident Writer: A Morton Handbook.

1. **Focused Freewriting**: Write non-stop on your topic; that is, turn off the editor-in-you and try out, in writing, a variety of approaches to your topic.

2. **Looping**: This is a specific kind of focused freewriting, in which you freewrite, then pause to determine the central or best idea in the preceding “loop” of freewriting. Then, you begin your next loop by pursuing that idea.

3. **Cubing**: Describe your subject. Define it. Compare it and contrast it. Look at the cause(s) of it and the effect(s) of it.

4. **Question-asking**: Ask the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” and “how” of your topic.

5. **Brainstorming**: Using free association, list perspectives and points relevant to your topic.

6. **Tagmemics or the Grid**: Look at your subject from three different perspectives:
   a. As a particle or static object with individual parts
   b. As a wave or object changing over time
   c. As a part of a field or larger system of comparable or contrastable parts.

7. **Aristotle’s Topics**:
   a. **Topic of Definition**: Ask what larger class x is in and how it differs from other members of its class.
   b. **Topic of Comparison**: Ask what your topic is similar to and different from, in kind or degree.
   c. **Topic of Relationship**: Explore the various relationships that may shed light on your topic:
      1. what are the cause(s) and effect(s) of x? (Relationship of Cause and Effect)
      2. What will happen if x occurs? (Relationship of Antecedent and Consequent)
      3. What is contrary to, incompatible with and opposite to x? (Relationship of Contraries’ and Contradictories)
   d. **Topic of Circumstance**: Explore what is possible and impossible in a given circumstance.
   e. **Topic of Evidence**: Ask what the following types of evidence reveal about your topic: Authority, Testimonial, Statistics, Maxims and Proverbs, Law, and Precedent.

7. Imagine and talk to your reader.
8. Freewrite specifically on your purpose.

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More Pre-drafting Techniques: Invention and Topic Narrowing
Brainstorm, Listing, Mapping through Using Question Asking

Mapping:

Water Pollution in Iowa River

Who
- Farmers
- Consumers
- Manufacturers
- Environmentalists

What
- Arsenic
- Selenium

How
- Run off from farm pesticides or fertilizers
- Drought in previous 2 years caused pesticide/fertilizer buildup

Sub-Map:

Consumer interest

Who

What
- For pollution control
- Against pollution control

Why
- Safe food
- Low food cost

When
- Letters to congress persons
- Voting for or against specific politicians

How
- Increase crops/increase income
- Increase in opposition since 80’s

Why
- Increase in production, cut more land, use more fertilizer and pesticides
- Pesticides

Farm interests

Who

When

Large banks

Coops

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Tree Diagram:

For pesticides and fertilizer use

Consumers

Low costs for food

More jobs and more taxpayers

Against this use

Safe food

Avoidance of storing and subsidizing surplus crops

Protect environment for future

Audience:
Purpose:

More Examples of Pre-drafting Invention and Organizations Strategies

I. Assignment: Write a 500 word essay on a job you like or dislike.

Listing and Clustering in related groups:

Learn to deal with authority
Job related to career goal
Will look good on resume
Disorganized boss
Generous vacation time
Learn latest stats software
Little chance of promotion
Good health insurance policy
Interesting coworkers
Learn desk-top publishing
Poor ventilation
Lenient smoking policy for losses
Long commute

Tree Diagram:

Skills
Stats Software
Desk-top

Future
Related to career goal
Resume

Benefits
Good Parts
Quality of life

Bad Parts
Job Limits
Disorganized boss
Little chance of promotion
Long commute

Drawbacks

Health insurance
Interesting coworkers

Vacation

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Audience Imagining through question-asking: who, what, when, where, why, how?

**Purpose? Set in relation to Audience**

- Defend taking the job ← Parents ← Who
- Communicate your skills ← Future Employer ← Who
- and qualifications for job and your values
- Help them decide on whether ← individuals considering this job ← Who
- you want the job