

## JOURNAL WRITING

Students want and deserve credit for the journal writing they do. However, weaning them from the how-much-is-this-week's-journal-worth attitude is a worthy goal. Students in my humor classes have reread their journals for the semester, cutting out previously-written information, pasting those entries together, reorganizing their thoughts in new clusters of information. They have gone back to previous entries and circled words they really like or feel good about, reorganizing and combining information in rough drafts for pieces of writing about humor. They are finally beginning to view their humor logs as thought storage vaults, places where they can play in their own thoughts and change them around to say more or different things than originally. Thinking is a process, too.

Here are two journal writing activities from *Writing* by G. and E. Cowan:

### LOOPING

1. Begin with a specific topic.
2. Without planning or consciously thinking, write nonstop for X amount of minutes.
3. Make no changes or corrections in what you have written.
4. Choose a key idea from your writing and use it as the specific topic to begin another loop. This may continue through several consecutive pieces of writing.

### CUBING

1. Choose a topic. Imagine a cube - think of it as a solid block. Now imagine that each side commands you to write in a specific way about the topic:
  - a. describe it
  - b. compare it
  - c. associate it
  - d. analyze it
  - e. apply it
  - f. argue for or against it
2. Move fast. Don't allow yourself more than 3 to 5 minutes to respond to each side of the cube. When you have finished all six sides, read over what you have written. If one angle or perspective strikes you as particularly promising, you probably have come up with a focus for a piece of writing about that topic.

### Reference

Cowan, G. & Cowan, E. (1980). *Writing*. New York, NY: Wiley.

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