



BEINGSTORMING

GRANT MILLER

Simulated images of the brain resemble a vast and rigid countryside, or some unexplored planet illuminated by flashes of lightning that allow the viewer brief glimpses of the landscape of thought. Synapses fire. It looks much like a brainstorm. But what about this: A dull pain behind the eyes. Obsessive scratching. Pacing. Seemingly empty words flow through swollen fingertips. The clucking of the tongue. The wall. The tightened chest. The reading and note-taking, thinking, the ineptitude of language to stand in for thought, the futile attempt to pull concepts from the sky like snowflakes that melt as soon as they touch the page. Brainstorming quickly becomes bodystorming becomes beingstorming in this attempt to arrange ideas into that sluggish dialectic that is the writing process.

But are there ways out of, or ways into, this blank page?

There are.

Brainstorming (or beingstorming, whichever you like) is the first stage of the writing process and is often referred to as “prewriting,” that is, writing before writing. All stages of the writing process are similar in that one can find support during any stage by visiting the Writing Center. But this stage is special in that this is the stage where Spellcheck becomes irrelevant, the stage where one’s internal editor goes on a short vacation to a sunnier place. Because brainstorming is just that: a storm. Ideas of raindrops fall indiscriminately, black clouds of freeflowing thoughts roar thunder and strike lightning where they may, without reason, and leave the blank page ravaged with tiny treasures of thoughts and ideas. And with any process or ritual, there are ways to conjure up this storm.

These are simply a few examples of how to engage with brainstorming (beingstorming), this first stage of the writing process. The process can be sluggish, and it is the brainstorm that bridges the gap between thoughts or ideas and a blank page or screen. The brainstorm is the ante, the beginning, the blueprint. The space where the ideas form and solidify, become words, which become sentences, which become paragraphs, which becomes your first draft.

This is just the beginning.

Trust the process.

Begin...

FREEWriting

Freewriting is my personal favorite way to get ideas on a page this is what you do just set a timer maybe and start writing and don't stop for anything until the timer goes off do not edit do not worry about grammar or punctatuioPk do not worry about anything but getting gthose ideas out of your head and onto the paper aor screen or whatever if you get stuck just write the same word over and oaver and over and over again unmtil something comes and when your don go back through and highlite everything that may be relevant to your topic it is a wonderful way to go about it but it isn't for everybody so lets look at some other ways we might go about it

Go through
your syllabus
your reading
your notes
your mind
and jot down
everything that
seems relevant

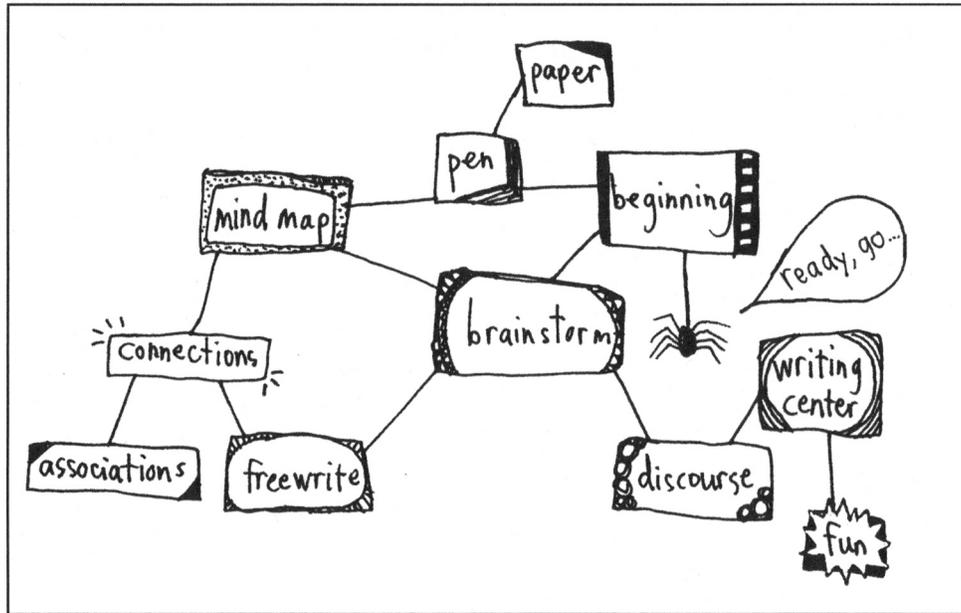
this may look like
a strange free-verse
poem

or perhaps
a to-do list
of ideas so one can
gather
them
into

CLUSTERING

murky puddles
with which one will
build
a
sandcastle

CONCEPT MAPS



Take out a piece of paper and write down your main ideas and circle them. Look for links. Draw lines between ideas. Break out the watercolors and paint your ideas and how you might translate them into words. The more ideas you put in circles, the more your ideas will come together into something you can work with.

DISCOURSE

