

# LOOPING AND CUBING

*Finding something to say*

Methods for finding something to say are called “invention.” Here are two methods that usually work for most writers. One is formal, asking you to respond to a series of specific questions. the other is less formal, asking you to just write non-stop for a little while, find a focus sentence, and then write some more. Use one or both when you need to explore a subject.

## LOOPING:



- I. Write for two to three minutes, none-stop, about your subject. This writing isn't graded or edited, so write without thinking about spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc. Just write your thoughts about the topic.
- II. Read what you have written and identify one sentence or idea that you consider to be the “center of gravity” – and idea that merits more discussion or about which you have more to say.
- III. Write for another two to three minutes about your “center of gravity”, then identify a new “center of gravity” within what you have newly written.

Repeat these steps at least two more times. Your ideals and questions should begin to come into clearer focus each time you “loop”.

## CUBING:

Respond to each of the six “sides” of the cubes (six sets of questions) as fully as you can. Repetition and editing don't matter here. Write for about two minutes per “side”.



- I. **Describe** – color, shape, dimensions, age, sequence, contents, maker, nationality, etc.
- II. **Compare/ Contrast** – how is X like Y? How much are they alike? How are they different?
- III. **Associate** – events, persons, concepts, ideas, times, places you associate with your subject.
- IV. **Analyze** – what are the parts of X? How do those parts relate to each other? What is the origin of X? What is the outcome of X?
- V. **Apply** – How can X be used? What can be learned from X?
- VI. **Argue** – Take a position for and against X and explain your reasons.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers*. New York: Oxford UP, 1975.  
Cowan, Elizabeth & Gregory. *Writing*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1980.