

## Direct Writing: How to Develop Revising Skills

- ➔ Divide the time you can spend on the writing task into two halves. The first half is for writing very quickly as thoughts occur.
- ➔ If knowing the audience and the purpose helps, keep them in mind. If not useful, ignore either or both.
- ➔ Write fast. If you can't think of a word, leave a blank space. Don't think about paragraphing, grammar, or any matters of presentation.
- ➔ Do watch for digression (don't allow) or repetition (ditto).
- ➔ If new thoughts crowd in while you are writing, note them. Don't cross things out. Don't worry about the organization of the piece just yet. Your concern here is to capture your thoughts as they present themselves.
- ➔ As soon as you have used up half of your time, **STOP** the raw writing process.

Now you will begin a completely different process, with completely different skills and outcomes: logical, structured, and tough-minded.

- ❖ Focus on your audience and your purpose.
- ❖ Find the good bits and mark them with an underline or arrow.
- ❖ Figure out your main point and arrange your best bits in the best order. As you do this, you will probably think of things you left out—now is the time to include them in their proper place.
- ❖ Then write a clean, but not yet final, draft. Don't agonize over the opening statement unless it comes to you readily. Continue to work on the revising. Put the thoughts in proper order. Write transitional elements to get from one point to the next.
- ❖ Change from writer mode to reader mode—read your sentences sub-vocally, so you can hear them in your mind. Correct the dissonances and ineffective repetitions.
- ❖ Tighten by clarifying and cutting.
- ❖ Get rid of grammar errors and spelling mistakes.