



BEGINNING THE WRITING PROCESS

For as long as I can remember, I have been a slow writer. To frame “slow” in a quantitative perspective, I have averaged 2.5 words per minute at the onset of typing lengthy papers. On a good day, it can take an hour or two to type a single paragraph. Spending too much time thinking and impulsively correcting dramatically reduces my overall progress. For a while, it seemed as though beginning papers at anything faster than a snail’s pace would be impossible to achieve.

Then, for one paper which required more organization than average, I decided to start with a brain-dump. Essentially, brain-dumping is the act of rapidly putting thoughts, ideas, concepts, phrases, and words onto paper with all organization thrown to the wayside. By the time I was done with this initial brain-dump, I had typed over 200 words – in less than 5 minutes! During the brain-dump I embraced frequent typos, ignored ridiculously unorganized phrases, and blasted out jumbled thoughts at an unprecedented rate. Yes, my page was littered with unappealing red and blue squiggles where a very unhappy Spell Check disagreed with my abuse of the English language. But after a few minutes of correcting spelling mistakes and fleshing out partial thoughts, my notes were ready to be organized, expanded upon, and linked together in a completed paper.

Beginning a paper and getting words on paper is one of the hardest aspects of writing. But once words are present, even if they are in need of a dire overhaul, they establish a foundation from which to build upon. So the next time you are staring eye-to-eye with a blank document and unsure of how to start, begin with the brain-dump – it might just save you a few hours.

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