

Digging Deeper through Timed Writing

Total time: ~12 minutes

Object: walks participants through any sort of internal/reflexive question, as it promotes deeper, narrowed introspection with each iteration.

This writing exercise is borrowed from a radical social justice advocate before me. Thank you.

1. Have everyone start with a blank piece of paper. Invite them to write for the whole 5 minutes, encouraging them to write in prose (complete sentences) and with a “stream-of-consciousness” style, so that they aren’t overthinking their answer, but instead writing everything that comes to mind.
2. Offer a wide-answer question (not a yes-or-no). I put it on the screen for referring back to. For the bell hooks workshops, I ask:
 - a. What is your ideal classroom?But I have done this exercise with questions like:
 - b. What is your resistance, and where is it located?
 - c. What is your favorite part of your self?
3. Announce “start” and start the timer for 5 minutes.
4. Either allow the timer to ring or announce the end of the writing period.
5. Thank them for their effort!
6. Ask them to look at their writing and underline one sentence, phrase, or thought that resonates the most.
7. Announce that now, we’re going to write about *that* sentence/phrase/thought for 3 minutes.
8. Announce “start” and start the timer for 3 minutes.
9. Again, either allow the timer to ring or announce the end of the writing period.
10. Smile with them, and thank them.
11. Ask them to, again, look at their writing and underline one sentence, phrase, or thought that resonates the most.
12. Let them know that this will be the last sprint to the end, as they will write about *that* sentence/phrase/thought for 1 minute.
13. Announce “start” and start the timer for 1 minute.
14. Finally, either allow the timer to ring or announce the end of the writing period.

This concludes the activity! This is a great jumping off point for discussion, and people generally want to discuss the process and/or their findings afterwards.