Clustering¹

This is a structuring technique based on the same associative principles as brainstorming. It connects visual and conceptual thinking and helps to bypass the Inner Censor. This can lower anxiety when approaching new topics.

Instructions:
Every cluster starts with a core idea or word, which you write down at the center of an empty page. Circle it. Then starting from this center, associate freely. Materials: an empty sheet of paper (as big as possible) and a pen (or several in different colors).

1. **Determine the core idea/word:** This is the center from which words, sentences, terms etc. will originate.
2. **No filter:** Write down everything, do not cross out anything.
3. **Continue as long as possible:** Follow every associative chain as long as you can; start a new chain once one association is finished.
4. **New idea – new chain:** Every new associative chain starts again at the main idea.
   Tip: Always leave a couple of circles blank. This visual may prompt another idea later.

At first glance, the various words of an associative chain do not seem to be connected, but after some time you will be able to differentiate between patterns. This is the transition to the “Design”, i.e. a pattern: in this phase you will concentrate on the associative chain that seems important for the pattern, aiming to sketch out a basic text structure. The next step is writing this text.

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