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## First Things First: Writing Strategies

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# FIRST THINGS FIRST: WRITING STRATEGIES

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Marilyn L. Grady

This is a new section of the *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership*. The purpose of this column is to encourage writers to write and to offer suggestions about writing. Mary Poppin's "Well begun is half done" should be the mantra of the writer!

First, Select a Topic!

Although the topics you can write about may appear to be endless, you would be wise to *stay close to your areas of expertise*. Your expertise may be based on the work you do every day. It may be showcased in papers you have written in the past. Your dissertation may be a focus of your expertise. Your expertise may be linked to a workshop you have led or a class you have taught. As a beginning, identify your areas of strength and stick with them!

It is easier to *choose your topic* than to have a topic assigned to you. Beware the trap of unmitigated enthusiasm. This would be the time when you say "yes" when you should have said "no." When someone suggests a great writing idea or topic, encourage that person to write about it. When it is time to sit down and write, the words flow more readily when the topic is yours. Writing can be very enjoyable—when you write what you know.

*Consider your passions.* Think about the topics you can talk about constantly. These topics may lend themselves to writing. Imagine sharing your passions with others through a printed manuscript. In education, there is a constant conversation about our knowledge of the craft of teaching, learning, and leading that is never translated into writing. The individuals who are specialists at this craft knowledge rarely write about their experiences. We need to remember that writing is one way to "pass it on!"