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Reading Response Paper 4

In Wendy Bishop's article, "My Favorite Balancing Act" (pp. 239-252) she writes about Peter Elbow and his style of writing in his book "Writing Without Teachers". Bishop, a teacher, and a writer, speaks on the impression that Peter Elbow's writing has had on her. She uses one large analogy of plates being balanced to illuminate Peter Elbow's writing. Describing his ideas and techniques as the plates, she further analyzes the inventive nature of Elbow's writing, and how to put it into practice for herself. "Peter Elbow reminds me of those Chinese acrobats who got their plates spinning on the end of long sticks-first one, then two, then three, ten, twenty, an impossible display..." (Bishop 239). Peter Elbow is described as a Chinese acrobat by Bishop because of his ability to keep the plates spinning all at once (Bishop 252). Throughout her article, Bishop highlights Elbow's skillful balancing act and dedication to his craft as something to aspire to. Bishop breaks down the writing of Peter Elbow into six parts or "plates". She communicates clearly that each "plate" explains the intricacy and poetic process of Peter Elbow's style of writing (Bishop 244). Her fondness for Elbow is evident and she strives to write in the acrobatic style that he does.

This article was helpful because of its clarity of voice which allowed Bishop's ideas to be understood. Bishop touched on freewriting, and critical thinking. Listening to the writer and not making your mind up right away is essential to critical thinking. It can be quite easy to get

caught up in the words chosen for a paper and I tend to fixate on things that don't matter in the bigger picture. Bishop and Elbow have both given me a perspective of writing that I am ecstatic to use in my next paper. "This vision of composing is similar to that of the poet who finds her poem's frame and then fusses with it – changing one word, then the next, going back to the middle stanza like terrier, moving down, returning to reopen, fussing with drafts, with scraps of paper in a pocket (Bishop 244). The manner in which Bishop paints a picture for her reader give such intricate detail to grasp and relate to. I will enjoy practicing this style of writing to better inform my reader of what it is I am saying through analogies. It is a creative way to involve the reader to really submerge themselves in your writing. I hope to write in a manner that reflects the cooking metaphor Bishop uses of letting your thoughts and habits simmer to become refined and to improved in quality (Bishop 252).

Work Cited

“My Favorite Balancing Act” (pp. 239-252), from *Writing with Elbow*, by Wendy Bishop.
University Press of Colorado, Utah State University Press (2002)

“Writing Without Teachers” By Peter Elbow, Oxford University Press, London (1973)