

Writing elbow-ism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I. Writing and Non-Elbowism

Writing as a discipline of composition studies is meant to help or assist students to develop basic understanding and to be more familiar with formal written English. Basic writing courses today have various approaches and they are usually employed in courses offered to collegiate and the non traditional or the older strata of universities for the primary aim of advancing or gaining skills correlated to writing in the general hope of gaining money or for future employment.

The definitum for the category of the basic writes is static or non-parametric depending on a particular university and/or the general population literacy. As writing is of huge import as a form of medium and communication, in a general sense, that is, it may also apply to the present economic demand of most employers who look for employees who is also versatile in the written form.

Writing is necessitated by all schools as a form of general education and according to Shaugnessy (1977, p. 2), those [students] who need it are those who are behind in terms of formal education/schooling or of different language or those who are behind in their studies. Who exactly are qualified for the course and what are the complications or the problems the prospective and/or the current students encounter during the course?

As previously mentioned above, those who have lagged education in terms of schooling or who was not able to get furnished education in their high school or middle school years are qualified as well as international students who sees English as a ' foreign' language and is consequently, not well

versed with the English language. Commonly encountered or pre-existing problems associated with the study (or the lack of it) are the handwriting, spelling, verb agreements, syntax, coherence, organization, political correctness, usage, mechanics, and pronunciation. Idea development and effective writing are also problems that are commonly encountered by the students during the course.

As writing is of huge import to composition studies, most educators theorize or suggest different viewpoints on writing, and their differing vantage points on writing suggest different outlooks and different methods for the course. Shaugnessy was the first to theorized about writing in her book, *Errors and Expectations*, and although she wrote about the general common faults of the students in writing, such as poor handwriting and syntax, which she backed up with examples of thousands of student papers, and reflected the need of the teachers to adopt to the writing needs of their students, her defeating point is that her theories on the language are essentialist and overlook other important material considerations such as socio-economic, political and surrounding events of the between the writer and basic teaching. Mainstream language and rigid linguistic use is suggested by the author who does not necessarily agree with the radical opinions of others (Lu and Horner, 2000, pp. 43-52).

There are apparently those that agreed with Shaugnessy's works and included among them is David Bartholomae (1993, p. 18) who wrote *Inventing the University* who contended that her work is correct on the account that the teachers should recognized view the paperwork or the prose of the student based on complex texts but rather should recognized

the errors of the work. Bartholomae posits that teacher-writer relationship is staggered because both of them used different levels of language in their language/written discourse.

Bartholomae rectified the problem by suggesting that the teachers should evolve their way of teaching and should exposed the writers in academic writing that is almost similar to their own. Would such method provide for good transition in under-writers? Rose (1985) however, focused more on the factors that effect under-preparedness of the writers and the development of pedagogies and material to enhance the language.

II. Elbow-ism and Writing

Shaugnessy, Bartholomae and Rose are major theorists in writing who recognized the major import of teachers in writing. Unlike this three theorists though, a newer theory by Elbow revolves much on self-taught criticizing or lone writing. Elbow popularity can be attributed to the applicability, practicality and ease of the writer on his/her writing literacy. Unlike Bartholomae who wants the writers to write like the esteemed academicians, or field professionals, like letter-ate individuals, more specifically, Elbow transcends more on word control.

Inspiration of confidence and not just the technicalities of the language is posited by Elbow. He does not entirely restrict or write parameters for the language— what is good or bad— but rather focused more on the reflective indexes or the recognition of one's error in one's own work. What is perhaps most astounding about Peter Elbow (1973, ix) is that he claimed that those who wrote with ease are not necessarily better in writing than those students

who expressed difficulty in writing. Such radical thoughts do entirely agree with the academician standard of literate writing.

Elbow writing takes a step further by derecognizing the absolute need of a teacher as a guide in writing; Elbow (1973, p. ix) views teachers more as writers criticizing or reacting to the others writers in a participative/interactive learning experience. This defies the normative scheme of teaching in different countries that is used to stricter more formal approach. Take for instance, Dubai teaching in language and writing communication would never allow such informality and would opt for stricter ones. Teachers in secondary schools have almost all the authority in education/learning and students must follow the course requirements that the teachers sought. There is no freer room for self-expression in writing; in fact, education there is almost automated. Elbow writing is like the opposite of Dubai education.

Elbow (1973, pp. 3-9) writing focus is not entirely academician but rather a freer prose that would free the jailed mind or expression by doing away with the necessity of editing in the primary work. Self should come first before the opinion of the general audience and writer should recognize his truer need compared to others in terms of writing. Freewriting, as others may call it, or removing the editing during the first trial of writing produces fragmented and uninhibited thoughts which reflect what is really on one's person's mind. Voice, as Elbow calls it, can penetrate the tomes of the writings of the students through such method (pp. 6-7).

Such method can result to plentiful of garbage of words which upon editing, the writer can easily discard in favor of the meaningful ones. Klauser (1987) said that writing can remove writers block; similarly free-writing can do the same for the writer. After writing, Elbow suggested that by reading the edited work, after the summation and consolidation of ideas of course, such loud reading can create a self-audience with the reader as the audience and the critic.

Elbow naturally embraces the fact that not all ideas that the writer create is premium. In fact, he assumed that the mental garbages are better off in paper rather on the thoughts and in the long run, such chaos and/or digressions can encourage fruitfulness of ideas (pp. 38-42). Elbow also recognize the impediments such as anxiety and procrastination and other negative emotions that can twanked the brain cells which should be pre-treated or faced before writing (p. 80). Grammar, on the other hand is a terminal method (pp. 136-138).

What Elbow would like in the writers is the adoption of non-orthodox approach (pp. 70-72) or the developmental approach wherein coherence and meanings are not the primordial but rather the first step and as such, good writers should be able to write with ease, albeit more in a complicated environment, but with less restriction and less grammar jailbirds.

III. Conclusions on Elbowism

Elbow technique in writing is different from others because it is less restrictive in terms of approach and is more attuned with the needs of a writer. There is a recognition of development here although less rapid

compared to other theory who lacked views on developmental stages of writing. Elbow's technique from chaos to order is somewhat radical and requires long time compared to the traditional planned form of writing.

To follow Elbow or not? Elbow-ism has its certain advantages but note that there is a haze of ideas in his techniques which is reflected in the lack of need for an outline. While it is true that prose or any form of writing should reflect the writer voice, the discard of order or the orthodox method such as the need of an outline during preliminary writing is an absolute no-no, most especially if the writer is on technical writing. One should necessitate the objective to redirect one's thought or s I believe.

This is not to say that Elbow-ism should be discarded but rather adopted as in the developmental form but writing would be more beneficial for the writer if he rectifies some of the components of the Elbowism. I think that one should have, on the least, an objective and/or plan, which he/she can used for the initiation of his/her work. Learning is after all, the objective of all these and the ability to write is just the endpoint but the focus of the writer should be more on the developmental stages or learning the writing process. Although, Elbow-ism is somewhat radical and an extensive approach to writing, it is the best approach to the course.