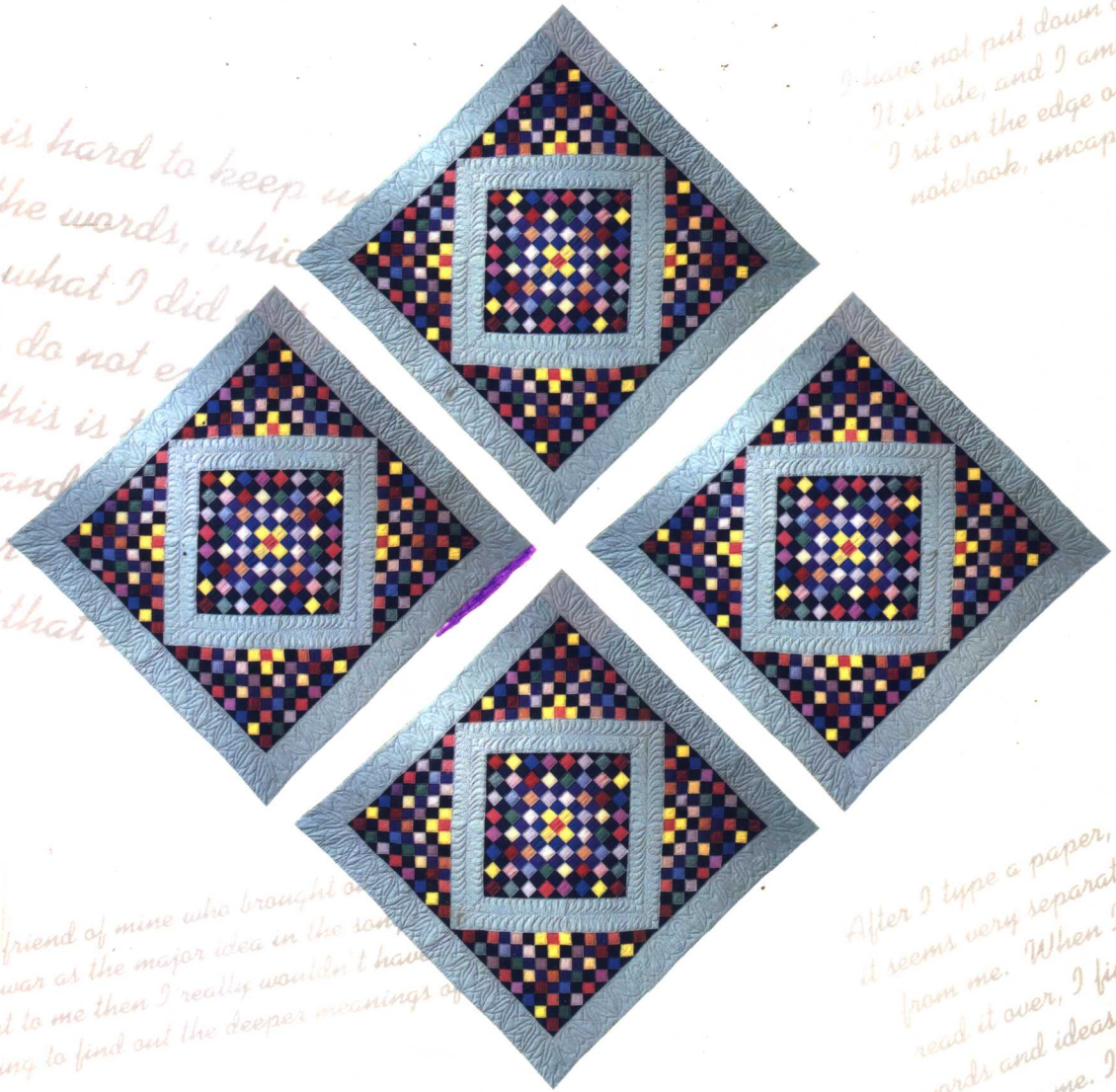
A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS

A Workshop Course in Writing

◆ Second Edition ◆



PETER ELBOW ◆ PAT BELANOFF

A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS

A WORKSHOP COURSE IN WRITING

Second Edition

PETER ELBOW
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

PAT BELANOFF
State University of New York at Stony Brook

McGraw-Hill, Inc.
New York St. Louis San Francisco Auckland Bogotá
Caracas Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City Milan Montreal
New Delhi San Juan Singapore Sydney Tokyo Toronto

This book was developed by STEVEN PENSINGER, Inc.

This book was set in Caslon Book by The Clarinda Company.
The editors were Steve Pensinger and Scott Amerman;
the designer was Karen K. Quigley;
the production supervisor was Kathryn Porzio.
R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company was printer and binder.

Cover photo credit: "Grandmother's Dream" Amish quilt,
© 1925. Photograph courtesy of Thos. K. Woodard,
American Antiques & Quilts.

A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS
A Workshop Course in Writing

Copyright © 1995, 1989 by Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff. All rights reserved. *Sharing and Responding, Second Edition, by Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff,* appears in its entirety at the end of the book. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a data base or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Acknowledgments appear on pages A-1–A-3, and on this page by reference.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

6 7 8 9 0 DOC DOC 9 0 9 8 7 6

ISBN 0-07-019693-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Elbow, Peter.
A community of writers: a workshop course in writing / Peter Elbow, Pat Belanoff. —2nd ed.
p. cm.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-07-019693-1
1. English language—Rhetoric. 2. College readers. I. Belanoff, Pat. II. Title.
PE1408.E38 1995
808'.0427—dc20 94-4027

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Peter Elbow is Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Before writing *A Community of Writers* he wrote two other books about writing: *Writing Without Teachers* and *Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process.* He is author of a book of essays about learning and teaching: *Embracing Contraries.* He also wrote *Oppositions in Chaucer,* as well as numerous essays about writing and teaching. His most recent book, *What Is English?,* explores current issues in the profession of English.

He has taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Franconia College, Evergreen State College, and the State University of New York at Stony Brook—where for five years he directed the Writing Program. He served for four years on the Executive Council of the Modern Language Association and is now a member of the Executive Committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. He has given talks and workshops at many colleges and universities.

He attended Williams College and Harvard University and has an M.A. from Exeter College, Oxford University, and a Ph.D. from Brandeis University.

Pat Belanoff is Director of Writing Programs at the State University of New York–Stony Brook. She is president of the SUNY Council on Writing and a member of the College Steering Committee of NCTE. Pat is a co-author (with Betsy Rorschach and Mia Oberlink) of *The Right Handbook,* now in its second edition. She has also co-edited (with Marcia Dickson) *Portfolios: Process and Product* and (with Peter Elbow and Sheryl Fontaine) *Nothing Begins With an N: New Investigations of Freewriting.* Pat has a degree in medieval literature from New York University and continues to teach and publish in this area, too.

PREFACE

We have written *A Community of Writers* for college freshmen and women in a one-semester writing course.[1] We've made our book as practical as we can, with lots of hands-on workshop activities. But we don't hide our interest in theory; our book reflects much recent scholarship in composition. And we push students to become thoughtful about their writing process through regular entries in a writing process diary.

We have structured this second edition of our book into seventeen *workshops*—each consisting of a set of activities and a writing assignment designed to illustrate an important feature of the writing process (and designed to take up one or two weeks). The workshops are arranged in a coherent order that provides plenty of direction for teachers who want to follow our lead. (And we've written an extensive instructor's manual for teachers to consult.) But we've also given teachers great latitude by including far too many workshops for one semester and by making each workshop self-contained—so that teachers can completely rearrange their order to suit their own approaches or priorities.

In addition to the main workshops, there are ten *mini-workshops*—short pieces each devoted to a smaller feature of writing or usage and suitable to be assigned as outside reading or used for a single class meeting.

We've made some changes from the first edition, but the basic orientation and underlying philosophy have not changed. In this revision, we've emphasized collaborative writing, writing in other disciplines, and voice more than we did in the first edition. These emphases grow out of our own teaching interests which, in turn, grow out of what we continue to learn from other researchers and scholars in the field of composition and rhetoric.

The final section of our textbook, *Sharing and Responding,* is an unusual feature we're particularly proud of: a series of graduated activities designed to help students learn to respond usefully to each other's writing. (In the first

[1]*The book is also appropriate for a one- or two-quarter course—and perhaps for a full-year course if supplemented with additional readings.* A Community of Writers *will also be useful for high school seniors or college sophomores or juniors—for we haven't much differentiated our audience in terms of age or skill level. That is, when we work with unskilled or reluctant students, we find they benefit from working on the same interesting, substantive, and sometimes difficult writing tasks we ask of our most skilled students—so long as we explain clearly what we are asking and why we are asking it, and give lots of support. On the other hand, even when we are working with very skilled and experienced students, we give lots of encouragement and take the informal, nontechnical stance you see here. The core of our book is a series of writing activities that we have found appropriate whether we're working with young children or college faculty.*

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

edition, this section was bound separately, but many teachers asked us for this change.[2]) We've met many teachers who say, "Peer feedback doesn't work." We believe it's really a matter of giving students more guidance; that's what this final section of our book aims to do.

We've tried above all to make a book that is *writerly*. Our overriding principle is that we all learn writing best by writing: writing a great deal, in various modes, to various audiences, and with lots of feedback from diverse readers. This book is not a handbook that lays out rules of grammar or guidelines for good usage—nor even principles of good writing. It is a book of writing activities.

Yet in taking this writerly—even idealistic—approach we have been mindful of the constraints of the classroom setting: grading, time cut up artificially into fifty-minute blocks and into semesters or quarters, and the sometimes vexed authority relationships that grow out of teaching a course which, at many schools, is the only one absolutely required of all students.

We spent more than three years writing the first edition of this book and over a year revising it for this second edition. We and a number of our colleagues tried out drafts of both versions in our classrooms, and we have been able to include samples of student writing derived from these trials or sent to us by teachers who used the first edition. We do not intend these samples as models of excellence to imitate or illustrations of pitfalls to avoid, but simply as *examples:* a range of what students have written in response to these tasks. We like these pieces—just as we also like the examples of professional writing that we include with them in the readings. We have purposely mingled the student and professional writing together without differentiation in order to emphasize that we don't think there is anything *different in kind* that distinguishes student writing from professional writing.

For it is a point of principle with us to treat students as writers: people who deserve to be in charge of what they write, who already know a lot about discourse (even when it doesn't look like it)—and whose greatest need is *readers*. Feeling ourselves speaking to students as other writers, we have tried to speak honestly about our own writing in a series of boxes scattered throughout the book—excerpts from our own process writing diaries. We've also collected apt pieces of students' and professionals' process writing for these boxes.

Although each workshop is self-contained, we encourage linkage between them, particularly because we want to emphasize revision. After all, most writers can wait a few weeks or even months before revising something they care about. Thus we have designed many workshops in such a way that students can fulfill the assignment by revising or transforming a piece they did for an earlier workshop.

[2]Sharing and Responding *is available separately also.*

ABOUT *SHARING AND RESPONDING*

When Peter Elbow published *Writing Without Teachers* in 1973, peer response groups were little known and the idea of students working by themselves to give feedback to each other's writing tended to be dismissed as "the blind leading the blind." Since that time, however, peer response has come to be accepted by most writing teachers and theorists as useful and important to the teaching of writing. Yet even now textbooks don't give much specific and detailed help to students for engaging in this complex activity. And students sometimes think of peer feedback as merely an idiosyncratic, experimental activity that their particular teacher happens to like.

Countless teachers have learned that it's no good saying blithely, "Okay. Now get into groups and give feedback to each other." Trying it this way—without preparation and sustained help—has lead many teachers to announce, "I tried peer response groups and they just don't work!"

We've written the *Sharing and Responding* section to remedy these problems. Students can give each other remarkably useful and productive feedback on their writing. But most of them need substantive help and instruction. And they usually take the process more seriously and do a better job when they see this help laid out carefully in a published book—not just in teacher handouts and oral instructions.

In this section of our text, then, we have gathered together a full and detailed sequence of suggestions for students to use in sharing their writing with each other and giving and receiving useful feedback. We've learned that teachers with the widest range of diverse styles and approaches to the teaching of writing often want their students to learn to use peer response.

We found that our first edition tempted some teachers to try peer responding who had been reluctant to do so—or who had had unfortunate experiences with it. For there is often something messy and potentially chaotic about using peer groups. One is always trying to shout one last suggestion while students are moving into pairs or groups, and chairs are scraping, and the hubbub of talk is taking over. *"Oh yes, and don't forget. . ."*—but they don't hear. And one is always running to the photocopy machine at the last minute to copy directions and suggestions. Of course nothing will ever make peer response groups tidy and quiet (we wouldn't want to), but these published suggestions are a good way to give students more specific help: explanations, examples, guidelines, and principles for the complex feedback process. In particular, we like being able to ask students to read about a feedback process *for homework* before we practice it in class.

Sharing and Responding contains many more techniques than a student or teacher could use all the time. Our principle in writing the book (and in our teaching) is this: that students need to *try out* a wide spectrum of ways to respond to a text in order to end up finally in the best position to *choose,* on any particular occasion, what kind of feedback to ask for or to give. Different kinds of response are suitable for different writers, different kinds of writing, and for different audience situations. But even though we are presenting a wide array of techniques, we have made the sequence clearer and simpler than in the first edition.

When we use these techniques for peer responding, we sometimes ask students to work in pairs, sometimes in small groups. We sometimes change groups during the semester; often we stick with stable pairs or groups so that students can build up safety by coming to trust each other. We sometimes try for both goals by keeping permanent pairs throughout the semester, yet sometimes shifting the *pairings* of pairs to make new groups of four. Before sending students into pairs or groups for peer response, we tend to illustrate and practice each response technique in the whole class on one or two sample texts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are greatful for help in what (like all writing and revising tasks) has proved to be a bigger job than we expected. We thank our numerous friends and colleagues who tried out early drafts and used the first edition, and we thank the students in their classes and in our own. These students and teachers have given us many good comments that have guided us during this revision. We particularly thank those students and professionals who have allowed us to use their pieces in the readings. We feel lucky to have worked with editors Steve Pensinger and Scott Amerman and to have gotten such helpful and detailed feedback from our original reviewers: Richard L. Larson, Carol Singley, Michael Steinberg, and John Trimbur, and from those who reviewed the text in preparation for the second edition: Maureen Hoag, Susan Kirschner, Jane Terry Lee, Ben W. McClelland, M. Terry Mitze, Betty P. Pytlik, Nancy L. Schultz, and Pia S. Walters.

We also thank Doris Alkon, Paul Connolly, Gene Doty, Cami Elbow, Claire Frost, Mara Holt, Roni Keane, Laurie Kutchins, Glen Klopfenstein, Irene Papoulis, Marlene Perl, Pat Perry, Debrah Raschke, Valerie Reimers, Barbara Rhodes, John Wright, and Frances Zak.

Peter Elbow
Pat Belanoff

CONTENTS

Summary Guidelines for MLA Documentation *inside front cover*
More about the Workshops *ix*
Short Essays in "Ruminations and Theory" *xiii*
Readings *xv*
Preface *xix*

Cover Letter 1
Introduction 5

WORKSHOPS

1. An Introduction to the Variety of Writing Processes 11
2. Getting Experience into Words: Image and Story 39
3. Collaborative Writing: Dialogue, Loop Writing, and the Collage 63
4. Private Writing: Finding What You Have to Say 99
5. From Private to Public Writing: Exploring Audience and Genre 121
6. Writing in the World: An Interview about Writing 153
7. Revising 175
8. Persuasion 211
9. The Essay 231
10. Listening, Reading, and Writing in the Disciplines 253
11. Interpretation as Response: Reading as the Creation of Meaning 285
12. Argument 311
13. Research 337
14. Text Analysis through Examining Figurative Language 365
15. Voice 387
16. Revision through Purpose and Audience: Writing as Doing Things to People 419
17. Autobiography and Portfolio 445

MINI-WORKSHOPS

A. Writing Skills Questionnaire 473
B. Double-Entry or Dialectical Notebooks 476
C. Breathing Life into Words: Text Rendering or Reading Out Loud 481
D. Writing with a Word Processor 487
E. Midterm and End-Term Responses to a Writing Course 494
F. The Sentence and End-Stop Punctuation 499
G. Commas 505
H. Apostrophes 509
I. Quotation and the Punctuation of Reported Speech 513
J. Spelling 517
K. Copyediting and Proofreading 523
L. The Difference between Grammatical Correctness and a Formal, Impersonal Voice 526

SHARING AND RESPONDING

Table of Contents SR-3
Cover Letter SR-5
Summary of Kinds of Responses SR-8
Procedures for Giving and Receiving Responses SR-13
Full Explanations of Kinds of Responses—With Samples SR-18

1. Sharing: No Response SR-18
2. Pointing and Center of Gravity SR-19
3. Summary and Sayback SR-22
4. What Is Almost Said? What Do You Want to Hear More About? SR-25
5. Reply SR-27
6. Voice SR-29
7. Movies of the Reader's Mind SR-31
8. Metaphorical Descriptions SR-38
9. Believing and Doubting SR-41
10. Skeleton Feedback and Descriptive Outline SR-44
11. Criterion-Based Feedback SR-50

Sample Essays SR-57

Works Cited WC-1
Acknowledgments A-1
Author/Title Index I-1
Subject Index I-6
Guide to Kinds of Responding inside back cover

MORE ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 1
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE VARIETY OF WRITING PROCESSES 11

- Generating words and ideas, getting started on process writing, practicing a wide variety of kinds of writing
- Creating a collage through cut-and-paste revising

WORKSHOP 2
GETTING EXPERIENCE INTO WORDS: IMAGE AND STORY 39

- Learning to *experience* what you write about, not just understand it
- Moving from description to narrative
- Writing and getting carried away—and then shaping and tightening your words

WORKSHOP 3
COLLABORATIVE WRITING: DIALOGUE, LOOP WRITING, AND THE COLLAGE 63

- Overcoming boring topics and the lack of something to write
- Writing dialogue
- Practicing collaboration in writing

WORKSHOP 4
PRIVATE WRITING: FINDING WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY 99

- Using strategies that help you discover that you always have lots to say
- Turning process writing into an essay

WORKSHOP 5
FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC WRITING: EXPLORING AUDIENCE AND GENRE 121

- Using private writing as a source of public writing
- Practicing writing in a number of genres
- Understanding how both ignoring and heeding audience affects your writing

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

WORKSHOP 6
WRITING IN THE WORLD: AN INTERVIEW ABOUT WRITING 153

- Getting a sense of the different kinds of writing people do and discovering how varied writing processes are
- Finding a theme in a mass of material and learning to get voice and liveliness into your writing

WORKSHOP 7
REVISING 175

- Revising a paper you wrote for a previous workshop
- Understanding better the nature of revision and its importance for good writing
- Revising at three levels: content, structure, and mechanics and usage

WORKSHOP 8
PERSUASION 211

- Planting seeds so others will be willing to listen to your opinions
- Analyzing how written words cause people to change their thinking or action
- Comparing the use of long, formal arguments and shorter, informal kinds of persuasion

WORKSHOP 9
THE ESSAY 231

- Reading and analyzing essays; seeing them as entries into the workings of the mind
- Writing both a personal and an impersonal essay and coming to grips with the differences between them

WORKSHOP 10
LISTENING, READING, AND WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES 253

- Exploring how writing differs from one discipline to another
- Using writing as a way to learn
- Writing on the same topic for a general audience and a specialized audience

WORKSHOP 11
INTERPRETATION AS RESPONSE: READING AS THE CREATION OF MEANING 285

- Developing an awareness of the active and exploratory nature of reading and interpreting
- Rendering or performing texts

WORKSHOP 12
ARGUMENT 311

- Learning to see through an essay to the skeleton of reasoning underneath it; evaluating the arguments of others and improving your own
- Thinking about the nature of argument and recognizing that there is no magic *right* way to argue

WORKSHOP 13
RESEARCH 337

- Understanding both personal research and library research and their potential interaction
- Collaborating with others in different times and places
- Documenting material from written and spoken sources

WORKSHOP 14
TEXT ANALYSIS THROUGH EXAMINING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE 365

- Improving your understanding of hard texts
- Understanding the nature of metaphor, simile, image, and symbol

WORKSHOP 15
VOICE 387

- Understanding what is meant by "voice" in writing
- Practicing a variety of ways of getting voice into your writing

WORKSHOP 16
REVISION THROUGH PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE: WRITING AS DOING THINGS TO PEOPLE 419

- Revising a paper from an earlier workshop by thinking pointedly about what you want words to *do,* and to *whom*
- Thinking about the connections between genre and purpose
- Describing writing goals as expressive, transactional, and poetic

WORKSHOP 17
AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PORTFOLIO 445

- Improving your writing by becoming a student of your own writing processes
- Looking back over the semester and what you've learned; preparing a portfolio of your writing
- Reflecting on the value of metacognitive thinking

SHORT ESSAYS IN "RUMINATIONS AND THEORY"

WORKSHOP 1

Why We Think Freewriting Is Important 21
Why We Think Process Writing Is Important 23
A Collage about Collages 24

WORKSHOP 2

Writing and Getting Carried Away 47

WORKSHOP 3

Loop Writing and the Dangerous Method 80
"It's Impossible Not to Think of Something" 82

WORKSHOP 4

Private Writing: Why Write It If No One Will See It? 107
What's the Sense in Felt Sense? 110

WORKSHOP 5

About Audience 137
Are Genres Form or Content? 140

WORKSHOP 7

Putting Revising into Perspective 184
Revising and Grammar 186

WORKSHOP 8

Informal Persuasion and Formal Argument 221

WORKSHOP 9

The Essay 239

WORKSHOP 10

Knowledge and Writing within Discipline Communities 261
An Argument for Freshman Composition 263

SHORT ESSAYS IN "RUMINATIONS AND THEORY"

WORKSHOP 11

About the Artificiality of Our Exercise: Repeatedly Interrupting Your Reading and Asking You to Write 298

WORKSHOP 12

Nonadversarial Argument 321
Reasoning and Grammar 324

WORKSHOP 13

The Ongoing Conversation 353

WORKSHOP 14

Figurative Language as a Window on the Mind 373

WORKSHOP 16

Purpose, Genre, and an Overview of Rhetorical Terrain 430
Global Goals: Expressive, Transactional, and Poetic 432
Can We Forget about Purpose and Audience? 434

WORKSHOP 17

Autobiography and Metacognition 452

READINGS

WORKSHOP 1
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE VARIETY OF WRITING PROCESSES

"Example of a Student's Freewriting" 27
"Robert Bingham (1925–1982)" 28
"The Feel of Writing—and Teaching Writing," Donald Murray 29
"Collage about Myself as a Writer," with cover letter, Steve Clark 33
"Chronic Releasing: A Collage," with process writing, Matt Ludvino 36

WORKSHOP 2
GETTING EXPERIENCE INTO WORDS: IMAGE AND STORY

"Image of Ice-Cream Man," with process writing, Mitchell Shack 50
"An Ice-Cream Man," Mitchell Shack 51
"Caye Ocho Beach," with cover letter, Isabelle Foucard 53
"A Worn Path," Eudora Welty 55

WORKSHOP 3
COLLABORATIVE WRITING: DIALOGUE, LOOP WRITING, AND THE COLLAGE

"Loop Writing about Teaching Writing," Lynn Hammond 84
"Loop Writing Collage," Darci Jungwirth 87
"Collage about Human Differences," with process writing, Amy Vignali 90
"Collaborative Collage about Writing a Collage," Laura Corry, Elija Goodwin, Matt Ludvino, Denise Morey, Tassie Walsh 92
"Process Notes about Collaborative Writing," Kathy Reckendorf 95

WORKSHOP 4
PRIVATE WRITING: FINDING WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY

"Example of Open-Ended Writing Process," with cover letter, Melissa Fogel 112
"Process Log about Using the Open-Ended Process," Manuel Depina 114
"Process Log about Private Writing," Irene Wong 115
"Example of Writing with the Perl Guidelines," Peter Elbow 116
"Felt Sense," Eugene Gendlin 119

WORKSHOP 5
FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC WRITING: EXPLORING AUDIENCE AND GENRE

"Be Brave Sweet Sister: Essay Developed from Open-Ended Writing," Melissa Fogel 142
"A Letter," Mark Levensky 144
From "Parts of Speech and Punctuation," Gertrude Stein 145
"Autobiography," Nazim Hakmit 146
"About Being a Man: Essay Developed from Private Writing," Charles Miller 148
"What's a Short, Bald-Headed, Potbellied Guy to Do? The List of Risk Factors for Heart Disease Grows Even Longer," Michael Lemonick 149
"Meditation," a student 151

WORKSHOP 6
WRITING IN THE WORLD: AN INTERVIEW ABOUT WRITING

"Portrait of My Mother as a Writer," with process writing, Kristin Bresnan 166
"Interview," Salvatore Bianco 169
"Tackling Racism in the Mystery Novel: *New York Newsday* Interview with Walter Mosley" 170

WORKSHOP 7
REVISING

"The Male Bashing Stereotype" (three drafts), Kimberly Graham 188
"Drafts and Revisions of an Editorial for the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*," with cover letter Kay Moran 193
"Drafts and Revisions of Two Short Book Reviews for *Glamour* Magazine," with cover letter Laura Mathews 197
"Divisible Man" (two drafts), John Edgar Wideman 205

WORKSHOP 8
PERSUASION

"Short Letters," Janine Ramaz 223
"Letter to a Product Producer," with advertisement, Jason Multer 224
"The Great Person-Hole Cover Debate: A Modest Proposal for Anyone Who Thinks the Word 'He' Is Just Plain Easier . . . ," Lindsy Van Gelder 226
"Some Reflections on Not Voting in Presidential Elections," Meg Hyre 227

WORKSHOP 9
THE ESSAY

"Untitled 1" and "Untitled 2," Eleanor Klinko 242
"The Essay," Edmund Gosse 244
"On Essaying," James Moffett 247
"Essay: What I Think, What I Am," Edward Hoagland 249

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com