PETER ELBOW AND PAT BELANOFF’S *BEING A WRITER: A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS REVISITED: A SOCIAL-EXPRESSIVIST APPROACH TO FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION*

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PETER ELBOW AND PAT BELANOFF’S BEING A WRITER: A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS REVISITED: A SOCIAL-EXPRESSIVIST APPROACH TO FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

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Abstract

of

PETER ELBOW AND PAT BELANOFF’S BEING A WRITER: A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS REVISITED: A SOCIAL-EXPRESSIVIST APPROACH TO FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

by

Rebecca Leigh Henning

This thesis serves as a pedagogical introduction to the theory of social-expressivism, or the convergence of two main composition theories: expressivism and social constructivism. The author conducted a textual analysis of Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff’s Being a Writer: A Community of Writers Revisited using Thomas Huckin’s context-sensitive method of examination to trace social-expressivist patterns throughout the textbook. The author’s analysis of her course syllabus, writing assignment prompts, and peer workshop scripts verify the value of social-expressivism as a theory and classroom pedagogy that develops students’ “composing flexibility,” or the ability for students to compose private and public texts while recognizing the natural intersections of personal and academic discourses.

________________________, Committee Chair
Daniel Melzer, Ph.D.

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Date
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Chapter 1

EMERGING FROM DIVERGING COMPOSITION THEORIES

[The] social-expressivist classroom borrows from expressivism and social-epistemic theories, encouraging students to ‘carry out negotiations between themselves and their culture,…[by] first developing a sense of [their] own values and social constructions and then examining how these interact or do not interact with others’ value systems and cultural constructs.’

~Christopher Burnham in Sherrie Gradin’s Romancing Rhetorics 419

While drafting a composition teaching portfolio several semesters ago for my English 220A class, Teaching Composition in College, it became clear to me that my pedagogical approach straddles two prominent theories of Composition: expressivism and social constructivism. As the portfolio assignment served to assess my unique teaching perspective and learning objectives for potential first-year composition students, I wrangled with deciding which theoretical camp would best support my teaching philosophy. At the time, I recall reciting a passage from Donald Murray’s “Teach Writing as a Process Not a Product.” Before my composition colleagues and advisors I would state, “He [the student] uses language to reveal the truth to himself so that he can tell it to others” and then propose Murray’s rationale that writers should first discover the world around themselves before unveiling it to others (4). As I further considered the theoretical tension between the individual writer and the academic writer, I then designed
an example first-year composition course that encouraged students to write both within and outside of academic discourses. My course proposed three units that enabled students to become acquainted with the social forces that surround and ultimately shape their writing experiences. For example, the first unit explored the expressivist nature of the writer while the second and third units explored the writer’s presence in collaborative settings both inside and outside the classroom. As students were asked to self-direct three major writing assignments by selecting topics that interested them most, they were also asked to constantly position and reposition themselves as individual writers as well as social, academic writers or scholars who share a common discourse. The structure of my course supported the negotiation of discourses and thus expressivist and social constructivist theories or what the late twentieth century has termed social-expressivism. The course proposed a merger of non-academic and the academic writing approaches as students explored the intersections of personal writing and the standard writing expectations imposed by academia. The intersections, or the theoretical blending of expressivism and social constructivism, are where social-expressivism begins as a theory and thus is my starting point for exploring how social-expressivism serves as practical classroom pedagogy.

My interest in social-expressivism, which is modeled by my teaching portfolio and my experience as a Teaching Associate for first-year composition, is what I will explore in this thesis. When given the opportunity to instruct, I was faced with the problem of designing a practical approach to teaching writing. While I knew that social-expressivism was a theory that would allow me to employ both expressivist and social
constructivist theories, I was uncertain of how to effectively structure the course in such a way that both theories could contribute jointly. As I perused several composition textbooks, the task of finding a textbook that best exemplified social-expressivism was difficult since most textbooks prescribe one unique process-approach to teaching writing rather than allowing the possibility for exploring the many ways to approach writing. For example, Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper’s *St. Martin’s Guide to Writing* (2009) models a more systematic approach to learning how to write by modeling how to construct different writing genres; for example, summary, memo, expository essay, and research essay. Because particular kinds of writing are modeled, the imminent risk is that students will adapt writing formulas rather than explore other creative processes for developing a research essay, for example. Although Axelrod and Copper’s textbook is indeed a process-based text, if the writing process is made too prescriptive then the practiced pedagogy echoes current-traditionalist composition, or a hegemonized approach to teaching and learning writing. Similarly, David Bartholomae’s *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers* (2008) is example text that provides a social constructivist framework for learning to write as the textbook supports the interaction between students and the tasks of reading and writing about academic texts. However, the textbook’s emphasis on reading and meaning-making is intended to connect the writer to the academy, which lessens the emphasis on the individual writer. From these textbooks and other similar textbooks, I concluded that I needed a textbook that emphasized writing as a process but did so from a more individual and expressive standpoint. My examination of textbooks concluded when I reviewed Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff’s *Being a Writer: A*
Although the textbook by nature is expressivist with its emphasis on the individual writer, and in fact Elbow, as a composition scholar, has been assigned to the expressivist camp, my thesis will reexamine the expressivist label given to the textbook and scholars like Elbow and thereby argue that *Being a Writer* is an effective example of social-expressivist pedagogy and not solely expressivist.

*Being a Writer*, a revision of Elbow and Belanoff’s former textbook, *A Community of Writers: A Workshop Course in Writing* (2000), contains practical exercises throughout its workshop approach, which include freewriting, responding to student writing, guidelines for assignments such as a personal essay or an argumentative essay and activities which assess the rhetorical effectiveness of a piece of writing. The layout and contents of the textbook support the intersections of expressivist and social constructivist writing as the individual writer is explored in relationship to his or her role within a community of writers. The textbook, as an example of social-expressivism, redefines how students and teachers could potentially approach writing within the classroom while proposing a reexamination of theoretical perspectives about writing.

Although social-expressivism has been examined by theorists who propose the strong relationship between expressivism and social constructivism, theorists have yet to conduct an extensive textual analysis of *Being a Writer*. Conducting a textual analysis of *Being a Writer* allows for the textbook’s social-expressivist foundation to be made explicit as the textbook merges two opposing theories. My foremost purpose in conducting a textual analysis of *Being a Writer* is to demonstrate the pedagogical validity of a social-expressivist approach for learning and teaching first-year composition.
Being a Writer, the primary text of my thesis, will serve as the study corpus, or the text of shared interest that I will interpret as a social-expressivist rhetoric. I will use context-sensitive text analysis as my primary research method for looking at Being a Writer. According to Thomas Huckin’s essay in Methods and Methodology in Composition Research, context-sensitive text analysis is a particular method of research that accounts for the context of situation, or the textual interpretation that is imposed by the writer. Because Elbow is characterized naturally as an expressivist who also employs social constructivist activities, the immediate contextual interpretation is that Being a Writer will possess social-expressivist patterns, which I will trace. In the larger sense of context analysis, my thesis is theory-driven since my interest is to explore the emergence of Elbow’s theoretical context, or the proposed social-expressivist nature of Being a Writer. At the same time, my thesis is also problem-driven since I am curious to see if the contraries of expressivism and social constructivism can in fact be embraced through the practical classroom use of the textbook.

As I argue that the textbook is an effective example for developing social-expressivist pedagogy, I will continue to refer to the original contention between expressivism and social constructivism, which I will introduce in this first chapter, for further support. By referring to the diverging characteristics of the two theories, my argument that Being a Writer creates a space for the negotiation and fusion of these opposing theories validates the theory of social-expressivism while supporting the interaction between private and public discourse within the classroom. My target corpus, or my concluding interpretation, is two-fold. My analysis will verify the value of social-
expressivism as theory and as classroom pedagogy. Furthermore, my concluding argument will demonstrate how social-expressivism contributes to Maureen Neal’s idea of “composing flexibility” or the ability for students to compose multiple kinds of texts and the ability for teachers to assess these different kinds of texts based on their varying contexts. Composing flexibility is significant for the foremost reason that a composing flexibility approach opposes the dominancy of an expressivist or a social constructivist classroom by proposing a pedagogy that merges the theories and facilitates students by broadening their writing experiences. Finally, my thesis will contribute to the field of Composition by reaffirming the effectiveness of social-expressivism as theory and practice within the writing classroom through the primary example of Elbow and Belanoff’s textbook.

Social-expressivism: a Theory that Emerges from Two Diverging Theories

As the field of Composition has branched into distinguishable theories of rhetoric, for example, current-traditional rhetoric, expressivism, social constructivism, and cognitivism, the late twentieth-century theory of social-expressivism has questioned theoretical boundaries by merging principles of the individual writer and the writer that belongs to social, academic discourse communities. The theory of social-expressivism invites the blending of expressivist and social constructivist pedagogies by embracing the contrary nature of expressivism’s allegiance to the individual writer and social constructivism’s allegiance to academic knowledge. The issues that arise from blending expressivism and social constructivism and thus question the value of social-expressivism stem from the twentieth-century’s division of composition theories and the difficulty of
teaching a merged pedagogy. Questions concerning the merger of theories include: can the field of Composition recognize the merger of the two theories? Is it possible for teachers and students to negotiate expressivist and social constructivist rhetorics in order to effectively teach and learn writing in the classroom? Thus, in order to argue for the value of social-expressivism for twenty-first-century Composition Studies and outline the social-expressivist nature of *Being a Writer* by conducting a textual analysis in the literature review below, I begin by first introducing current perspectives of social-expressivism as well as the theory’s relationship to late eighteenth-century poets who rallied for educational reform. I then proceed to address the issues surrounding a merged pedagogy by conducting a literature review of the twentieth-century’s theories and theorists of expressivism and social constructivism, which distinguishes the theories from each other while highlighting their practical interaction and thereby foregrounding Elbow and *Being a Writer*. Although Elbow is unmentioned in my expressivist and social constructivist literature review, his presence in the extensive social-expressivist literature review affirms his theoretical straddle of expressivism and social constructivism and thus the potential for the fusion of these conflicting theories. Thus, my circular approach of introducing social-expressivism, reviewing expressivism and social constructivism, and finally returning to social-expressivism to conduct a more extensive literature review allows me to support the argument that social-expressivism is a theory that has emerged from two diverging theories.

Social-expressivism, as defined by Sherrie Gradin’s text *Romancing Rhetorics: Social Expressivist Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing* (1995), fuses the polarized
theories of expressivism and social constructivism and thereby validates combined pedagogical approaches by espousing both private and public writing situations within academic settings. Gradin characterizes social-expressivism as a theory that Blurs the categorical lines between social theories and theories of individualism. Social-expressivism stresses the need for teachers to focus on writing for discovery, writing to discover self and voice, and development of power and authority of one’s own writing. But it also focuses on those things that social-epistemicism is being praised for: positioning the self within the world and writing for change. (xv)

A review of Gradin’s text and her introduction to social-expressivism published by the National Council of Teachers of English confirms the correlation she makes between Romanticism and expressivism by stating that Gradin “historicizes expressivist rhetoric by tracing its roots back to Romantic poets Coleridge and Wordsworth and their ideas on educating the imagination, an imagination based on empathy and social awareness” (“Review” 304-05). Gradin acknowledges Coleridge and Wordsworth as well as Byron, Blake, and Shelley as poets who “issued a call for change on all political, social, and class levels” during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (17). The revolutionary spirit of these poets prompted them to argue for social as well as educational reforms, which drew upon social-epistemic, and expressivist theories. For example, Wordsworth and Coleridge argued that in order to attain a higher form of intellect “children must not be denied their childhood; they must exercise the imaginative and creative imagination in conjunction with a more traditional approach of mechanical
exercise, memorization, and analytical reasoning” (26). Thus, the Romantics rallied for a combined pedagogy of expressivism and social-epistemic or social constructivism, which placed an importance on both the presence of the imagination and formal education. The Romantics’ emphasis on the imagination meant that if education did not create a space for the individual then higher learning could not be achieved. Indeed, the Romantics, according to Gradin, believed that “the potential for the intellect, will remain unfulfilled if the student only learns through books and rote exercises, and if the imagination is not nurtured through experience, perception, and interaction with nature” (28). And just as the Romantics rallied for educational change by calling attention to the imagination, composition scholars of the 1960s who headed the process movement and include Elbow, Murray, Ann Berthoff, and D. Gordon Rohman, would likewise seek change within the field of Composition by challenging current-traditional rhetoric or “academic writing in standard forms and ‘correct’ grammar [that] reinforced middle-class values such as social stability and cultural homogeneity” (Theorizing Composition 107-8). Indeed, scholars of the 1960s who initiated the idea of process writing in response to current-traditionalism would later be defined by social constructivists as expressivists as they place importance upon the individual writer. The labeling of theorists and theories in the late twentieth century occurs as a result of defining new writing practices. As the so-called expressivists reacted to current-traditionalism by proposing a more expressive model for teaching and learning writing, social constructivists then reacted to expressivists by proposing an academic and social theory for teaching and learning writing. Thus, as the term expressivist or expressivism denotes an emphasis on the individual writer, the next
section will further define the beliefs of these process-movement scholars as well as shed light on how the theory of expressivism accounts for social constructs.

Divergences and Convergences of Expressivism and Social Constructivism

With the spirit of the Romantics, the twentieth-century expressivists continue to place importance on the individual writer without deemphasizing the role of social constructs, which inherently shape the individual. As Gradin reasons in her text, the relationship between expressivism and social constructivism is still very much intact as it was during the time of the Romantics. According to Gradin, “‘the expressivist concern for voice, emotive process, and lived experience’ with reflection on how the expressive writer is socially constructed and situated in culture” are characteristic of the theory (“Review” 305). Although the individual writer is indeed the focal point of expressivist theory, expressivists succeeding the Romantics are interested in how the individual relates to the social world. As the individual writer seeks personal truth, the individual writer likewise seeks truth and experience of the world outside of their personal experience. The nature of the expressive discourse, according to James Kinneavy’s *A Theory of Discourse: The Aims of Discourse*, upholds the “importance of the individual, of subjectivity, of personal value in an academic, cultural, and social environment [in contrast to current-traditional rhetoric] which tended to ignore the personal and the subjective” (396). Expressivism’s pull away from current-traditional rhetoric and embrace of personal and subjective experiences in turn redefines how writing is taught since personal experience cannot be explored within a theory that homogenizes a particular experience and way of writing. Indeed, the rise of expressivism not only calls
for a very different kind of writing, writing that positions the individual writer in relationship to the social world, but also an entirely new approach to teaching the writing process, an approach that empowers the individual’s experiences.

For instance, in his essay, “Teach Writing as a Process Not Product,” Murray proposes the redistribution of power and responsibility. It is students and not teachers, as in the case of current-traditional rhetoric, who are vested with power. Student knowledge and the process of revealing this knowledge or truth to the self is of utmost importance. Expressivist pedagogy, according to Murray and as mentioned earlier, trains students to “use language to reveal the truth to [themselves] so that [they] can tell it to others” (4). Writing then becomes a process rather than a current-traditional product. Writers are empowered to define their thoughts and discover their use of language and voice in order to refine the writing process. Murray’s statement concerning the individual’s construction of truth is followed by the statement that this truth is then shared with “others,” meaning fellow classmates and writers who are separate from and a part of academic discourses. Murray, like other expressivists, believes that expressivism is not an isolated practice of writing to discover knowledge. Indeed, expressivists, such as William Coles, credit the social constructs responsible for influencing the journey toward truth, constructs that model many of social constructivism’s twentieth-century sense of language, thinking, writing, and reading. In the case of Coles’ classroom, which employs the textbook *The Plural I: The Teaching of Writing* (1978), the “realization that expressive discourse has both individual and social function [is used] to great advantage” as students through self-critical phenomenology “agree on a set of meaning and values
concerning the purpose of education” (Theorizing Composition 110). Coles directs his students to collaboratively assess why education is valuable by first recognizing their individual experiences before engaging in an academic conversation that includes multiple experiences. Similarly, expressivists and their texts, such as Ken Macrorie’s Telling Writing and James Moffett’s Teaching the Universe of Discourse, support expressivism’s social function as a theory that values the interaction between the individual writer and a community of writers (Theorizing Composition 107-16). The question to ask then as expressivists argue that expressivism maintains principles of social constructivism is what has changed since the Romantic era?

If the theoretical principles of expressivism have not changed much since the Romantics, then what has changed is the role of social constructivism, or its recognition as a theory of its own. As expressivist theory has become associated with composition theory in the late twentieth century, the separation between the individual writer and the academic writer has become more visible. As social constructivism became a distinguishable theory in the late 1980s, the social constructs originally assigned to expressivism became detached and in turn the newly defined social constructivist theory then opposed expressivism’s emphasis on the individual writer by stressing the formation of social constructs such as language rather than the formation of the imagination. The distinction between expressivism and social constructivism, or social rhetoricians’ reaction to expressivism’s primary flaw—“false and otherworldly epistemology of the self that privileges individualism and rejects the material world”—remains present even in the twenty-first century (Theorizing Composition 111-12). From the viewpoint of
social constructivists, expressivism simply ignores the material world’s social influences of language and thought which dictate the social constructs of our writing processes. Social constructivists agree that knowledge within any discipline “assumes that entities we normally call reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves, and so on are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers” (Bruffee “Social Construction” 774). Personal truth cannot be simply conjured up since one’s personal truth is merely part of a larger social construct that has already been discovered and to differing degrees evaluated by a community.

For social constructivists, social constructs are tied to the function of language, which is learned in social environments. The phrase, “how can an individual learn language any other way than engaging in social conversation with someone else or a text” operates as the central question that divides social constructivists from expressivists; simply, language cannot be constructed in isolation. As James Berlin states in his essay, “Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories,” “Language is at the center of this dialectical interplay between the individual and the world. For the New Rhetoric truth is impossible without language since it is language that embodies and generates truth” (774). Thus, it is the role of language and its social manifestation that permits even the individual writer, the expressivist, to generate truth, which Kenneth Bruffee, along with fellow social constructivists, would argue is already socially constructed. For social constructivists like Bruffee and Berlin, the distinction between social constructivism and expressivism is discernible for the reason that social constructs overpower personal thought when it comes to engaging intellectually within academic
institutions. For social constructivists, personal writing with the hope of revealing higher truth to one’s self is not realistic since the writer cannot possibly reveal anything more that has not already been engaged by social constructs such as language or social discourses such as the academy. For social constructivists, expressivist writing is ultimately powerless and disadvantageous for students entering academia. According to Bartholomae’s “Inventing the University,” students must “invent the university” every time they write by “assembling and mimicking its language” while adopting all that the university selects, evaluates, concludes and argues (624). Because students must adopt the language of the university and thereby the experience and knowledge certified by academia personal experience or personal truths are exempt. The clash of discourses for students who can relate to their own experiences but must disregard these experiences in order to embrace the university points to the problematic nature of the split theories. As Bartholomae and other social constructivists would attest to, a hybrid pedagogy, a pedagogy that merges expressivism and social constructivism, is ineffective simply because students run the risk of appropriating both their individual experiences and the academic discourse that invites them to join communities of experience. As social-expressivism proposes an approach that bridges expressivism and social constructivism, students risk misrepresenting their individual as well as shared experiences simply because social-expressivism is interested in the intersection of these experiences rather than the distinction between these experiences. By appropriating one or both of these experiences, the conclusions that are drawn concerning the late twentieth century’s theories of expressivism and social constructivism are that the theories are truly
independent of each other and from a social constructivist standpoint should be kept separate from each other rather than merged as social-expressivism. Expressivistic rhetoric results in isolated, non-academic writing while social constructivist rhetoric engages a community of writers and thinkers who produce academic writing.

While the development of social constructivism, as a composition theory, has caused the two theories to diverge, the argument that expressivism maintains particular elements of social constructivism further complicates both the division and the possible fusion of the two theories. Gradin’s claim that expressivism has not isolated itself from social constructs is supported by current composition pedagogy and particularly by Elbow’s “doubting and believing game.” The doubting and believing game, as first introduced in Elbow’s text, *Writing without Teachers* (1973), and with the goal of “developing empathy with others,” is a dialectic of propositions, the former seeking error and the latter seeking greater truth (Burnham 419). With this game, students ask their classmates to read their essay from a “doubting” perspective, disbelieving everything that is written in order to introduce arguments that the writers may have neglected. In the case of the believing game, the goal is to try to “get inside the head of someone who saw things this way. Perhaps even constructing such a person for [themselves]. Try to have the experience of someone who made this assertion” (*Writing without Teachers* 149). In both cases, the doubting and believing game is an opportunity for writers and readers to establish empathy for each other’s experiences. As the game recognizes differences and similarities of thought and experience, a connection is made between the individual writer and a group of readers, or as the Romantics would argue, the individual is valued
by a larger discourse. For Gradin, the concern for establishing empathy between writers and readers just as the Romantics did with their poetry is paramount in proposing the relationship between expressivism and social constructivism.

Besides the interaction of expressivism and social constructivism, as exemplified by Elbow’s doubting and believing game, other composition scholars have noted the overlapping relationship between the theories. For example, Stephen Fishman and Lucille McCarthy state in their essay, “Is Expressivism Dead? Reconsidering Its Romantic Roots and Its Relation to Social Constructionism,” that expressivism involves “reinserting personal experience into human interactions [with the hope] to increase our chances for identifying with one another and, as a result, our chances for resurrecting community” (649). The importance of the individual writer’s identification with a community is reinforced by Murray’s similar concern for empathy. According to Gradin, “‘He [Murray] wants, then, through receptiveness, sympathy, reflection and ultimately through writing to discover other worlds, and to make connections through language with those who are different from them [meaning writers]’” (Burnham 419). Murray’s appeal to the interaction between the individual writer’s world and the world of other writers proposes that expressivism is not a solitary theory concerned only with the individual writer. Rather, expressivism’s embrace of community, the center of social constructivist theory, then allows for the individual writer to move outside of himself and enter into the social dialogue or social knowledge surrounding him or her. Expressivism’s interest in community—for example, an audience of readers—allows the individual writer to consider his or her interaction with a particular audience. In the case of Elbow’s essay,
“Closing My Eyes as I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience,” the tension between including and excluding an audience is flexible within expressivist rhetoric. While social constructivists would question the expressivist’s rationale for ignoring an audience, expressivism’s ability to address an audience signifies expressivism’s social constructivist concern for community. Thus, as Elbow argues for rhetoric that is capable of addressing or ignoring outside perspectives, Gradin’s primary argument that expressivism retains some social constructivism qualities is further suggestive of an already present merged pedagogy, or what Joseph Harris terms as “polyphony pedagogy” (“The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing” 17).

Polyphony pedagogy, or “an awareness of and pleasure in the various competing discourses that make up their own” is the kind of pedagogy that exposes students to different kinds of academic discourses that are both social and individual and can be effectively implemented in the classroom (Harris “The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing” 17). Rather than proposing one pedagogy over another, either expressivist or social constructivist, a polyphony pedagogy ensures that teachers expose students to a broadened discourse that values the individual writer as well as the academic writer. Because teachers, according to Elbow’s essay, “Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process,” are asked to be loyal to both students and the academy, a polyphony pedagogy melds these loyalties enabling teachers to recognize students as writers who can negotiate discourses of academic and non-academic writing. Elbow states the dualistic loyalty of teachers to students and to the academy as follows:
Our loyalty to students asks us to be their allies and hosts as we instruct and share: to invite all students to enter in and join us as members of a learning community. Our commitment to students asks us to assume they are capable of learning, to see things through their eyes, to help bring out their best rather than their worst. But our commitment to knowledge and society asks us to be guardians or bouncers: we must discriminate, evaluate, test, grade, certify. We have a responsibility to society—that is, to our discipline, our college or university, and to other learning communities of which we are members—to see that students we certify really understand and can do what we teach. (“Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process” 328)

Because the responsibility of teachers is two-fold—facilitate individual writing skills that bridge students’ personal learning discourses with the academy and teach academic writing skills that are standard within academic discourses—the task of teaching and learning calls for a mixed pedagogy. And because the role of teachers is dualistic, likewise, the role of students is also two-fold: to develop their own individual writing skills and to adopt the academic discourse that surrounds them.

Although expressivists and social constructivists may not agree on expressivism’s supposed adoption of social constructivism’s principles, composition scholars on both sides are reconsidering the benefits of a merged pedagogy. For instance, Joseph Harris, a social constructivist, states in his essay, “The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing,” “Instead of presenting academic discourse as coherent and well-defined, we
might be better off viewing it as polyglot, as a sort of space in which competing beliefs
and practices intersect with and confront one another” (20). Harris’ understanding of a
polyglot pedagogy creates a space for conflicting discourses to interact in hopes of
assigning value to the academy as well as the individual writer and therefore the role of
the individual writer within academia. As Harris proposes a polyglot pedagogy, the role
of the student and the teacher are equally valued as both represent the individual writer
and the academy. For Harris, a course that encourages a space for competing beliefs is a
“course [that] appears to build on the overlap between the students’ ‘common’ discourses
and the ‘academic’ ones of their teachers, as they [meaning students and teachers] are
asked to work ‘within and against’ both their own languages and those of the texts they
are reading” (17). The negotiation between teachers’ loyalties to students and to the
academy, the role of the student as both the individual writer and the academic writer,
and the synthesis of expressivist and social constructivist principles beg for a polyphony
pedagogy. In other words, teachers and students must be communicative about their
assumed roles and the purposes for their role-playing.

According to Neal’s essay, “Social Constructionism and Expressionism:
Contradictions and Connections,” both teachers and students need to develop their sense
of composing flexibility or their ability to function within a mixed discourse. Neal states
that students “need to hear the many ‘voices’ inside their heads; [and] they also need to
understand that one of those voices is their own” (47). As students are asked to position
and reposition themselves between personal and social writing situations, communities of
self, and communities of others, likewise, teachers, according to Elbow, must constantly
clarify to students how the composition classroom is valuing both expressivist and social constructivist models of rhetoric. Elbow states, “The more I can make it clear to myself and to my students that I do have a commitment to knowledge and institutions, and the more I can make it specifically clear how I am going to fulfill that commitment, the easier it is for me to turn around and make a dialectical change of role into being an extreme ally to students” (“Embracing Contraries” 335). Elbow’s recommendation that teachers shift their roles in order for students to in turn shift their roles is valuable in developing a classroom that enables composing flexibility. By situating and resituating the key classroom figures, the writing that is produced can then take full advantage of a merged pedagogy. As Gradin and other composition scholars, expressivists and social constructivists alike, acknowledge the presence of social-expressivism as a theory that has the ability to dramatically reshape the composition classroom, the practical application of social-expressivism can in fact be explored further.

The means I have chosen from which to explore social-expressivism as a merged pedagogy is the textual analysis of Being a Writer. Although there are other potential textbooks most certainly worth examining—Murray’s Write to Learn (2004), Barry Maid’s Writing for College, Writing for Life (2007), and Sheryl Fontaine and Cherryl Smith’s Writing Your Way Through College (2008)—because of their ability to position the individual writer within the academic world of social constructivism, I have chosen Being a Writer simply because I have employed the textbook in my first semester of teaching College Composition. As I stand back from my teaching experience and assess the course goal of composing flexibility and its influence throughout the course, I
recognize how students conceive the significance of transforming their personal freewrites into potential drafts for a formal research paper. Semester evaluations and autobiographical cover letters, which accompany my students’ end-of-the-semester writing portfolios, reveal the usefulness of writing within personal and academic discourses. As my students reflect on what they have learned within a sixteen week semester, they return to the course goal of composing flexibility to assert how they have grown as writers of various discourses: writers who can argue about something of personal interest, for example. While *Being a Writer* has given my students a polyphony approach to writing, the textbook has provided me with an opportunity to assess the practical application of social-expressivist pedagogy. Because I believe that the goal of a good writing course is to in fact broaden students’ approaches to the writing process, not propose one approach to writing over another, I believe that social-expressivism as a theory and classroom pedagogy is a worthwhile study and that *Being a Writer* is an effective example of how theory can be successful in praxis.

**Overview of Chapters**

Chapter 2: Redefining a Writer and a Community of Writers as Social-expressivist(s), is an overview as well as a systematic textual analysis of Elbow’s textbook, *Being a Writer: A Community of Writers Revisited*. While this chapter has provided an introduction to social-expressivism, as defined according to Gradin’s *Romancing Rhetorics: Social Expressivist Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing*, Chapter 2 will extend Gradin’s proposal for merging paradigms by providing a textual analysis of *Being a Writer*. In this chapter, I will acknowledge specific components of
the textbook that lend themselves to supporting expressivist and social constructivist rhetorics. I will examine the twelve workshops—that is, the main writing assignments, the minor writing assignments, which scaffold the main assignments, the freewrite exercises that initiate personal writing, and workshop scripts for sharing and responding to student writing—in order to reveal how the exercises appeal to expressivist and social constructivist principles.

After dissecting the parts of *Being a Writer* that most contribute to the social-expressivist qualities of composing, I will present and examine a sample course syllabus, three major writing assignments, and two peer workshop scripts as an example of a social-expressivist approach to designing a first-year composition course in Chapter 3: Moving from Social-expressivist Theory to Classroom Praxis: Example Syllabus, Writing Assignment Prompts, and Peer Workshop Scripts. Following the inclusion of a sample syllabus, writing assignments, and workshop scripts, I will present my rationale statement of how these samples develop the practical framework of social-expressivist rhetoric within the classroom and why these particular composition components validate the grounding of social-expressivism.

The conclusion of my thesis, or Chapter 4: Conclusion: How Social-expressivism Develops Fluency within the Classroom and within the Field of Composition, proposes the value of social-expressivism by extending the argument that the embrace of social-expressivism is contributing greatly to students’ composing flexibility by preparing students to discover their inner writer and the role they play as a writers within larger academic communities. Essentially, this final part of the thesis will draw conclusions as
to how and why social-expressivism benefits students as writers and active participants in knowledge and teachers as facilitators of knowledge. In particular, I want to reflect on how the melding of expressivism and social constructivism, as proposed by Gradin and exemplified by Being a Writer, broadens the field of Composition. In this chapter, I will clarify how the support for polyphony pedagogies, or the embrace of compositional tensions between the writer and knowledge and between expressivist and social constructivist theories, greatly affects the writing process, teachers’ assessment of student writing, and thus the field of Composition as the theoretical boundaries overlap and merge to form the theory and praxis of social-expressivism.
Chapter 2

REDEFINING A **WRITER** AND A **COMMUNITY OF WRITERS** AS SOCIAL-EXPRESSIVIST

As Chapter 1: Emerging from Diverging Composition Theories has introduced my proposed research method, or Huckin’s *context-sensitive text analysis*, for examining the social-expressivist qualities of Elbow and Belanoff’s textbook, *Being a Writer*, and the benefits of a polyphony pedagogy, this chapter will enact Huckin’s research method with the purpose of supporting the pedagogical presence of social-expressivism. Because Huckin’s *context-sensitive text analysis* is a methodological examination characterized by specific features—“to solve some problem in the teaching of composition, to account for the context of situation or the contextual factors that shape the ways students write, to rely upon plausible interpretations rather than concrete proof, and to combine multiple forms of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative”—it is of foremost importance to justify why I am employing *Being a Writer* as my *study corpus* rather than a body of student texts in order to show the effective presence of social-expressivism (89-90). My rationale for examining *Being a Writer* solely and not student texts produced from the textbook’s writing activities or assignments is to isolate the textbook as the initiate for the kinds of student texts that can be labeled social-expressivist. Rather than tracing linguistic patterns of social-expressivism within student texts that have stemmed from the textbook, I believe an examination of the textbook will provide sufficient support for the argument that social-expressivist pedagogy can produce social-expressivist student texts through the practice of composing flexibility. This chapter will present a strong
qualitative analysis of the textbook’s merger of expressivist and social constructivist theories. As Huckin proposes that conducting a context-sensitive text analysis “procedure is not a discovery procedure but a process of constructing an interpretation that will make sense to the composition community, be interesting, and bear up under their scrutiny” my intention is to extend Gradin’s interpretation that social-expressivism is present in current composition practices and to promote Elbow and Belanoff’s textbook as a primary example of social-expressivist pedagogy as the textbook coalesces many features of both expressivist and social constructivist classrooms (90).

The unique merger between expressivism and social constructivism is first introduced in the textbook’s preface. Here, Elbow and Belanoff state, “writing requires two mental abilities that are so different that they usually conflict with each other: the ability to create an abundance of words and ideas; and the ability to criticize and discard words and ideas” (xix). The ability to create an abundance of words and ideas suggests the expressivist nature of the textbook, which begins by focusing on the individual writer and his or her generation of ideas. The ability therefore to criticize and discard words and ideas suggests the social constructivist nature of the textbook by reasoning that the individual writer must develop a rhetorical awareness in order for his or her ideas to be shared with other writers and readers. Thus, the process of writing and thereby the production of writing is two-fold in that writing is an act of creation coupled with contouring as writers must fashion their words and ideas in order to create meaning for themselves as well as for their readers. The tasks of creating and contouring are the main expressivist and social constructivist exigencies found within the textbook’s twelve
workshops that develop a writer’s composing flexibility. The process of developing the writer’s composing flexibility is the main pattern I trace in my analysis, which is broken into three major parts that reflect the three major sections of the textbook: Part One: Creativity and the Writing Process, Part Two: Revising, and Part Three: Important Intellectual and Academic Tasks. A visual breakdown of the textbook’s three major parts and respective workshops appears as the following:

**Part One: Creativity and the Writing Process**

- Workshop One – Discovering Yourself as a Writer: An Introduction to the Variety of Writing Processes
- Workshop Two – Getting Experience into Words: Image and Story
- Workshop Three – Moving from Private Writing to Public Writing: Exploring the Relationship between Content and Genre

**Part Two: Revising**

- Workshop Five – Drafting and Revising
- Workshop Six – Revision through Purpose and Audience: Writing as Doing Things to People
- Workshop Seven – Exploring Voice

**Part Three: Important Intellectual and Academic Tasks**
Workshop Eight – Reading as the Creation of Meaning: Interpretation as Response

Workshop Nine – Persuading and Arguing

Workshop Ten – Interviewing as Research: How Do Writers Write?

Workshop Eleven – Research

Workshop Twelve – Reflecting on Your Writing: Portfolios

From this linear breakdown it is clear that the textbook presents a natural progression from expressivist pedagogy to social constructivist pedagogy. As Part One initiates the discovery of the individual writer and Part Two further introduces the role of an audience, Part Three refines the writer’s rhetorical awareness by asking the writer to produce academic compositions such as an argument and a research paper. And while the progression from Parts One to Three—from expressivist to social constructivist pedagogy—may seem hastened as the writer is directed to discover his or her writing process and then produce academic texts, each part contains writing activities that help to bridge both discourses. In other words, while Part One does help the writer establish an expressivist foundation by introducing different kinds of writing tasks on the subject of the individual writer within the writing classroom, Part One also asks the writer to produce public texts on the subject of the writer’s role in relationship to other writers in the classroom. These writing tasks, which possess characteristics of expressivist and social constructivist pedagogy, initiate the student writer to explore social-expressivism, or the melding of the two distinct theories and practices. The opportunity to consider personal and public modes of writing and more specifically, a personal response that is
intended to be public, challenges the student writer to further analyze the relationship between the conventions of personal and public texts while exercising composing flexibility.

Within each of the textbook’s three major sections, a brief summary is provided and followed by example workshops and assignments, which validate the presence of social-expressivist pedagogy. I have chosen particular workshops and assignments that best lend themselves to my analysis of social-expressivism. For example, in Part One, I emphasize Workshop One; in Part Two, I analyze Workshops Six and Seven; and in Part Three, I emphasize Workshops Eleven and Twelve. While the textbook is inherently social-expressivist with each of the twelve workshops contributing to a melded discourse, I have selected certain workshops and their respective assignments with which to present the best possible argument. To complement my analysis of the workshop and activities, I have also included an analysis of a Sharing and Responding activity from Workshop Seven and a Cover Letter assignment from Workshop Twelve. The Sharing and Responding activities and Cover Letter assignments found throughout the textbook are added social-expressivist features that are intended to provide writers with feedback from other writers.

In the case of Sharing and Responding activities, the textbook includes one activity per workshop, along with several others in a separate section titled Sharing and Responding, which follows Workshop Twelve. The activities found within this section and within individual workshops are designed for different stages of the writing process and thus give different kinds of feedback—from general to specific. Similarly, the Cover
Letter assignment results in the writer receiving feedback from other writers; the main
difference between the Cover Letter assignments and the Sharing and Responding
activities is that the Cover Letter is a letter drafted by the writer concerning his or her
piece of writing. The letter not only introduces the piece of writing at hand but also
directs how the writer would like another writer to respond.

Again, in the case of workshops, activities, and assignments, I have chosen
representative examples, which support the presence of social-expressivist discourse. In
Part One, I argue that social-expressivism is present in the public texts the writer
produces about him or herself; in Part Two, I argue that social-expressivism is present in
the merged processes of drafting and revising; and in Part Three, I argue that social-
expressivism is exhibited through the presence of the individual writer within academic
texts. What will be made clear by my analysis, which follows, is that social-expressivism
is present throughout the textbook as it challenges the student writer to develop his or her
composing flexibility by employing both expressivist and social constructivist modes of
writing.

Textual Analysis of *Being a Writer*: Part One

The title assigned to Part One—Creativity and the Writing Process—suggests the
expressivist foundation of the textbook as the four workshops contained in this first
section seek to unveil the individual writer. The individual or expressivist writer,
according to Donald Murray, employs creativity in order to generate ideas that then
initiate a writing process. In the article “Teach Writing as a Process Not Product,”
Murray questions and responds to the act of teaching students a writing process: “What is
the process we should teach? It is the process of discovery through language. It is the
process of exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we know through
language” (4). According to Murray, teaching writing as a process involves exploring
ideas. Because “All writing is experimental” for Murray, “The student finds his own
subject [and] explores his own world with his own language, to discover his own
meaning” (5-6). Like Murray, Elbow proposes the exploratory nature of writing by
describing a similar writing situation in his text, Writing without Teachers (1973), which
we associate with the theory of expressivism. According to Theorizing Composition,
Elbow’s textbook Writing without Teachers
values the act of writing as a means for both making meaning and
creating identity. Freewriting helps students to discover ideas and their
significance, center-of-gravity exercises develop and focus these ideas,
and peer response groups allow writers to test their writing on an actual
audience and revise based on that response. (Theorizing Composition 108)
While expressivism strongly emphasizes the acts of exploration and creativity, it is
important to remember that what the writer creates must also be contoured or revised
with an audience in mind. In the case of Elbow’s text, Writing with Power (1981), Elbow
“instructs writers to maintain a paradoxical tension between individual and group”
(Theorizing Composition 108). As the writer identifies with his or her individual self by
generating ideas, he or she must also consider how these ideas will be received by an
audience. Thus, as the theory of expressivism has been associated with personal
expression, creativity, and the creation of words and ideas, these first four workshops
seek to give students an opportunity to explore who they are as writers while gaining some sense of how their unique writing processes must consider social, academic influences such as peer response. In particular, Workshops One and Two—Discovering Yourself as a Writer and Getting Experience into Words—are intended to get the writer to simply write (or create) while Workshops Three and Four—Moving from Private Writing to Public Writing and Writing as a Social and Collaborative Process—challenge the writer to fashion a piece of writing for a specific audience (or contour). As the workshops in Part One introduce the writer to the tasks of creating and contouring, the social-expressivist function of Part One emerges as the writer must address the merger of expressivist and social constructivist pedagogies.

Workshop One—Discovering Yourself as a Writer: An Introduction to the Variety of Writing Processes—which is the workshop I will emphasize in this section, is perhaps the most pivotal workshop in Part One in that it exposes the writer to various tactics for beginning the writing process as well as social influences such as the role of the reader. Not only does Workshop One with its expressivist foundation induce the writer to create, but the workshop also encourages the writer to contour his or her writing in a way that appeals to his or her audience. The activities that follow—Activity Two: Focused Freewriting, Activity Four: Invisible Writing, and Activity Five: Public Freewriting—introduce the writer to composing flexibility in personal and academic discourses by asking the writer to write in order to further discover himself or herself before attempting to introduce himself or herself as a member of a learning community.
Collectively, these activities are representative of the composing flexibility techniques found throughout Part One.

Workshop One: Discovering Yourself as a Writer

In particular, Workshop One, Discovering Yourself as a Writer: An Introduction to the Variety of Writing Processes, pairs these two objectives—creating and contouring—by introducing eleven writing tasks for the purpose of “generating words and ideas” about students’ roles as writers (Elbow 3). Activity Two: Focused Freewriting, for example, asks students to “pour words down on paper quickly without planning or worrying about quality, but [to] stay on one subject” (5). The assignment proposes the following writing prompts:

- Write about a time when writing went particularly well or badly. What was the topic and who was the audience? Try to tell in detail how you went about writing and what happened. What can you learn from this example?
- Write about someone who was important to your writing: a teacher or someone else who was helpful or harmful. (6)

This particular writing activity asks students to freewrite about previous writing experiences and influences but in a focused manner. The details of these experiences are focused in that they are connected to the topic as the act of writing is itself intended to be personal like a diary entry as students recall personal writing experiences.

Activity Two and Activity Four: Invisible Writing are similar in their expressive nature in that Activity Four asks students to explore their personal writing processes.
Activity Four prompts the writer to focus specifically on the physical conditions that influence their writing process by asking students to

• Write about the physical conditions of your writing. Where and when do you like to write? What implements do you use and why: pen, pencil, typewriter, computer? Do you need silence and solitude or do you prefer to have music on or other people around? (7-9)

The main difference between Activities Two and Four is that Activity Four asks students to pull down their laptop screen so that they cannot see what they have written. While Activity Two challenges students to write focused sentences, that is, sentences that connect or are related to each other, Activity Four simply asks students to just write sentences, keeping what has been written out of students’ sight. Both activities are indeed exercises intended to aid the generation of thoughts. In the case of Activity Four, students are able to write without an audience in mind as they maintain less control over the connectedness of their ideas. The creation of words is the only purpose of Activity Four, as opposed to Activity Two, which asks students to connect all their thoughts to an assigned topic.

Collectively, both of these writing activities enable students to think more carefully about how they write and when they write as well as the external forces that influence their writing processes. In the case of Activity Two, sentence coherence is important not only for the student writer but also for anyone who may read the writing. The student writer is then practicing the process of contouring as he or she creates a brief composition on a personal writing experience. The act of contouring within a creative
writing assignment is exemplary of how Workshop One’s writing activities lay social constructivist roots. As Activity Two initiates the student writer to compose focused sentences, the activity also prepares the student writer to do more than produce an expressive composition. Activity Two primes the student writer for Activity Five: Public Freewriting, which asks the student writer to introduce him or herself to the classroom, thus making the writing process simultaneously expressive and social. Activity Five: Public Freewriting asks the student to do the following:

• Introduce yourself as a writer. What are your strengths as a writer and learner? What do you need from others in the class to do your best as a student and writer? What can you contribute to a learning community? (9)

Because this activity requests that the student explore his or her role in the classroom in a composition addressed to the class, this activity is in fact both expressivist and social constructivist in nature. While this activity produces a piece of writing that is “not private but rather is for sharing with others,” the writing is indeed expressivist as it is a personal reflection of the kind of writer the student contributes to the classroom (9).

Thus, this assignment could be considered social-expressivist, or an example exercise of composing flexibility, in that it combines expressivist and social constructivist principles. In the case of Activity Five, students must consider their purpose and audience more carefully since the writing is intended to be public while exploring their personal thoughts of being a writer within the classroom. The task of writing an expressive reflection with an academic audience in mind develops the student’s composing flexibility by challenging the writer’s application of both discourses.
The presence of social-expressivism appears as early as Workshop One in the textbook as the individual writer is carefully introduced to potential readers. While Part One is largely expressivist in defining the individual writer’s writing process, the skill of composing flexibility is developed early on as the writer must consider his or her audience’s readerly expectations. Since the goal of the textbook, as cited in the preface, is to challenge the writer to both create and contour his or her writing, the writer must in turn employ a writing process that caters to both personal and academic discourses. By introducing some social constructivist aspects of writing here, the writer can then proceed through Workshops Two, Three, and Four with a greater awareness of audience as he or she learns how to connect to the reader through image, genre, and collaborative writing processes. What follows is a summary of Workshops Two, Three, and Four for the purposes of further contextualizing the connections between expressivist and social constructivist pedagogies in Part One.

Summary of Workshops Two, Three, and Four

As the first workshop introduces a spectrum of writing tasks with the generative intention of allowing the writer to produce words and ideas while beginning to think about possible readers, Workshops Two, Three, and Four proceed to develop the individual writer’s rhetorical awareness, or how his or her personal experience translates for an audience of readers. Workshop One’s Activity Five, as an activity that accounts for the presence of an audience, and thereby the social constructivist nature of writing, is an appropriate activity for preparing for Workshop Two, Getting Experience into Words: Image and Story. Workshop Two calls for the individual writer to “make readers
experience what [he or she is] writing about” (25). As the writer attempts to develop images that are visible for readers, the writing produced is expressivist in that the image or story is generated by the writer and the writer’s experience, yet the writing is also social constructivist in that the purpose for writing is to convey the image to an audience. Activity Two: Can Listeners See It? is a good example for testing the expressivist image created by the writer. After the writer presents a verbal image of a scene, object, or situation, feedback from other writers concerning the image’s sensory appeal to hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling should be given in order to strengthen the presence of the image through revision. This workshop is particularly useful in showing the relationship between expressivism and social constructivism. The creation of images coincides with the creation of words and ideas that are unique and personal yet meant to be shared and experienced by an audience of readers.

The straddling of personal and social discourses in the case of Workshop Two magnifies Elbow’s discussion of the writer’s uncertain relationship with his or her audience. In Elbow’s article, “Closing My Eyes As I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience,” Elbow renegotiates the role of the audience as he explores the contrast between what Linda Flower terms as “writer-based prose” and “reader-based prose.” Writer-based prose is essentially expressivist writing that does not account for audience and is therefore considered weak writing while reader-based prose accounts for audience and therefore produces more polished writing. The decision to produce either writer- or reader-based prose or some combination of both where expressivism meets social
constructivism is where Elbow resolves the writer’s challenge of straddling personal and social discourses. According to Elbow,

It’s not that writers should never think about their audience. It’s a question of when. An audience is a field of force. The closer we come—the more we think about these readers—the stronger the pull they exert on the contents of our minds. The practical question, then, is always whether a particular audience functions as a helpful field of force or one that confuses or inhibits us. (51)

Rather than moving back and forth between expressivist and social constructivist modes of writing, Elbow is suggesting the writer’s need to recognize the influence the audience has on the writer and his or her writing content. Elbow argues that it is perfectly acceptable to ignore the audience, for example, in the case of Workshop Two, in order to develop a descriptive image that can then be revised for an audience to experience. In addition, the textbook proposes other writing activities that possess an expressivist foundation such as Workshops Three and Four in order to help the writer generate ideas before introducing these ideas to an audience.

In Workshops Three and Four, the movement from private writing to public writing is made possible by the preceding workshops which stress the creation of words and the presence of audience. Workshop Three, Moving From Private Writing to Public Writing: Exploring the Relationship between Content and Genre, helps to further shape a piece of writing by using genre, or kinds of writing such as description, narrative, and persuasive and expository essays, to give a piece of writing form. In other words, form
and even content will vary among genres as in the case of a description essay, which describes versus a narrative essay, which describes while telling a story. The introduction to genre is useful in thinking about both private and public forms of writing. While description is a private form of writing, a persuasive essay can be a more public form of writing as the writing conventions of the latter dictate the presence of an audience that must be persuaded through language. With genre then, a narrative that is expressivist in nature can be transformed into say an expository essay by taking the shape of a personal example in a definition or a compare-contrast essay. The idea in Workshop Three is that genre, which accounts for rhetorical conventions, can reshape a personal piece of writing into something that is read by an audience. The presence of an audience again signifies the social aspects of writing and creating meaning for others. The writing then has the potential to reach a more broadened discourse community that can then interact with the piece of writing.

As in the case of Workshop Four, Writing as a Social and Collaborative Process: Using Dialogue, Loop Writing, and the Collage, a composition written then for an audience that is familiar with the particular genre conventions employed in the writing can initiate collaboration between writer and audience. By employing what the textbook terms “playful techniques,” such as simple dialogue with other writers and even loop writing or collage projects, the interaction of ideas among writers can aid the individual writer who may feel as though he or she does not have enough to say. In fact, the textbook states, “When others come at the same topic, they don’t just add to the thinking, they multiply the thinking through the interaction of ideas” (75). Therefore, dialogue
between the writer and someone else who may represent a professional, academic, or other specified audience is useful in further shaping the writing into something that is tailored to the audience and the discourse at hand. Similarly, loop writing, or approaching the writing from other angles, writing structures, and genres allows the writer to explore multiple perspectives and writing strategies, which will appeal differently to a specified audience. As the individual writer looks to his or her audience and perhaps a community of writers, as in the case of classroom peers, to further his or her own ideas, the writing process then becomes collaborative and less exclusively expressivist. For example, a piece of writing like Activity Five: Public Freewriting from Workshop One has the potential to become a personal definition essay that explores who a writer thinks he or she is as a writer and learner in a classroom setting after undergoing exploration of the image of a writer and learner, genre selection, and dialogue between the writer and classmates. This process of transforming a personal freewrite into an academic essay involves both expressivist and social constructivist approaches. In order to generate thoughts about what it means to be an effective writer and learner in the classroom as well as self-reflect on what kind of writer and learner a writer is involves an expressivist mode of writing. And in order to form this expressivist freewrite into an essay that critically defines what kind of writer and learner a writer is for an audience of academics—classmates and the teacher—a social constructivist mode of writing is needed. The collaboration of creating and contouring processes or expressivist and social constructivist pedagogies is justified by Elbow as a “natural connection between
the individual and the community” that exists without coercion (“Forward” 14).

According to Elbow,

the personal and social are reciprocal. That is, it is as natural that they
support each other as they fight each other (just as the activity of
generating ideas can naturally support the activity of criticizing ideas, or
the process of relinquishing control can naturally support the process of
achieving more control). (14)

What can be concluded from the interaction of the personal and the social in Part One:
Creativity and the Writing Process is that creativity can play a part in the creation of
writing. Writing, academic or not, can entail an expressivist process of freewriting,
reflecting on personal experiences, and developing relatable images. The writing process
is dependent upon the expressivist purpose to generate ideas. Once the writing has an
expressivist foundation it is then ready to be contoured or revised. Part Two: Revising
will highlight the process of contouring and the social constructivist aspects of writing
such as audience and voice which compel the reader to revise a piece of writing in order
to better suit an audience’s interests and predisposed knowledge.

Part Two

The progression of workshops in Part One of the textbook proposes a forward
movement as the individual writer is exposed to social influences. These social
influences, such as collaborative discussion with other writers, help shape the spectrum of
writing tasks and thereby the writing stages of drafting and revising as an individual
writer must consider how his or her expressivist piece of writing will best be received by
readers. In Part Two of the textbook, Revising, all three workshops—Drafting and Revising, Revision through Purpose and Audience: Writing as Doing Things to People, and Exploring Voice—like Part One’s workshops, seek to aid the individual writer in reshaping an expressivist piece into something that not only speaks to the writer but also to the readers using revision strategies. What follows here is a closer look at each of these workshops and selected activities that demonstrate how the merger of processes—drafting and revising—enables the merger of expressivism and social constructivism.

Workshop Five: Drafting and Revising

Workshop Five begins by introducing the processes of drafting and revising separately. In the case of drafting, the purpose is to “concentrate almost solely on what you want to say” (113). The generation of words and ideas can be initiated by Workshop One’s freewriting activities, which I mentioned earlier. The expressivist goal is to create something on paper by doing what the textbook terms “Quick and Dirty Writing” (116). The process of just writing things down on paper has been expressed in my classroom as a new and challenging task for many students. For many students, writing quick and dirty drafts is counter-intuitive to their high school experience of writing one draft and editing it before turning it in. By spending some time talking about how it is appropriate to produce dirty first drafts, or what a favorite author of the classroom, Ann Lamott, coins as “Shitty First Drafts,” students are then given an opportunity to explore their ideas on paper without having to produce an organized and well-developed piece of writing on the very first try. Drafting, by using quick and dirty writing as well as multiple drafts, is a way for the writer to discover as well as begin to clarify ideas that are perhaps unknown
or underdeveloped. While social constructivists would take issue with expressivists’
approach to drafting as a creative and individual process believing that the act of writing
is social and therefore framed by the writer’s previous experiences, social-expressivist
Maureen Neal believes that the process of drafting merges both personal and social
pedagogies. In Neal’s article, “Social Constructionism and Expressionism:
Contradictions and Connections,” she asks us to more carefully “consider some of the
common ‘expressionist’ methods of composing—free writing, clustering, and looping,
for example” (45). Neal claims,

Ironically, these methods work to help students achieve fluency—a
desirable goal in any pedagogy—because they rely on the social
constructivist assumption that language is a social construct which
human beings enter *en media res*, in mid-stream. Free writing and
clustering work because students tap into that flow of always-present
language and allow it to rise to the surface of the page. (45)

According to Neal then, the process of drafting is not simply an expressivist activity as
words are generated by the individual writer but rather a social-expressivist process
which recognizes that the writer’s linguistic capacity stems from his or her social
experience. What is then attained by crediting the drafting process as a social-
expressivist act is a fluency or facility for the writer to present a written experience that
melds personal and social discourses.

Neal’s argument for fluency echoes Elbow’s earlier discussion with social
constructivist David Bartholomae concerning language. The debate, which is published
in *College Composition and Communication* and titled “Responses to Elbow and Bartholomae,” acknowledges the common ground between expressivist and social constructivist theories as Elbow recognizes that language is socially constructed. In this debate, Elbow agrees with Bartholomae when he states, “You [Bartholomae] insist that individuals are socially constructed. I agree to a significant extent—especially insofar as you make positive arguments about all the voices and forces that help make us who we are and that color what we think and write” (“Responses to Bartholomae and Elbow” 88). To credit the social constructivist nature found within the process of drafting, Elbow cites the act of freewriting. He states:

Nor does freewriting pretend magically to reveal one’s pure natural essential self or to escape the effects of culture and the past. Far from it. People who use freewriting tend to notice immediately that it shows more nakedly than other kinds of writing all the junk that culture and the past has stuffed into our heads. Nothing is better than freewriting at showing us how we are constructed and situated. Another way of saying this is that freewriting is the opposite of an attempt to preserve the idea of a self-generated autonomous author. (89)

While Elbow acknowledges the inherent social constructivist qualities found within the act of freewriting, he also questions the expressivist qualities. In the passage above, Elbow renounces the idea of the self-sufficient writer to acknowledge that the writer’s ideas are indeed dependent upon language and his or her social experiences. Here, Elbow proposes that freewriting, or the process of drafting, is a social act and not an isolated act,
which aligns with social constructivist thinking. For Elbow then, the only issue he finds with Bartholomae’s argument that language is socially constructed is that it doesn’t “celebrate ‘independent, self creative, self-expressive subjectivity’” (88). Elbow’s work, and in particular, “Embracing Contraries,” has been devoted to arguing for “both/and thinking” and not “either/or thinking” which has long since divided social constructivism and expressivism (88). Elbow reasons that freewriting not only involves social constructivist qualities, or an experience that Elbow associates as “real,” but freewriting also involves a “utopian” experience (88).

Elbow proposes that freewriting is utopian in that it “frees the writer from planning, from meeting the needs of readers, and from any requirements as to what [he or] she should write about or how [his or] her writing should end up” (“Responses to Bartholomae and Elbow” 89). In this case, freewriting enables the writer to have a personal experience of generating ideas that are not too influenced by impinging authorities such as the teacher, peers, or any other audience of readers. Freewriting in this sense celebrates the writer’s independency, self-creative, and self-expressive nature. Even though the ideas generated are linked to the writer’s social experience as argued by Bartholomae and social constructivists, the act of freewriting maintains a personal or expressive quality as the writer attempts to ignore his or her audience. Thus, as Elbow concludes that freewriting is both “utopian and real”—since it invites the generation of ideas that are shaped socially by the writer’s knowledge and experiences yet allows the writer to block potential audiences—the process of drafting is therefore social-expressivist and not solely social constructivist or expressivist (88). The argument that
drafting is social-expressivist, as stated most currently by Neal and confirmed by Elbow’s earlier discussion with Bartholomae, facilitates the next argument that the revision process is also social-expressivist. The process of revising involves reshaping a piece of writing with the intention of making the writing more accessible for a specific reader. Like drafting, the process of revision is influenced by both personal and social discourses.

According to *Being a Writer*, revision is best characterized as a process intended to “improve a piece of writing in terms of getting closer to what you want to say to a particular reader or readers” (124). Revision is divided into three steps and given a bodily analogy of bones, muscles, and skin. As bones and muscles represent the processes of rethinking and reworking a piece of writing, skin entails the final process of copyediting (129-37). Together, all three aspects of revision exemplify a social constructivist approach to writing as writing undergoes a three-part process of reshaping for the sake of making the writing more effective for the audience in mind. To further distinguish the revising process from the drafting process, Elbow and Belanoff include a sample student paper written by Beth Spencer on the topic of how writing is similar to the act of prayer and the peer response questions and feedback directed from an audience of classmates. As Beth’s first draft is representative of the drafting process that the textbook proposes, that is the quick and dirty writing, her peers’ responses to her draft initiate the revising process that Beth’s paper will undergo. It is clear from the peer response questions that revising is indeed a social process as peers are asked the following:
Where does the writing really become interesting? Why? Where does it go flat? Why? Do you as a reader make a real connection with the idea of writing as ‘prayerlike’? Why or why not? What can the author do to illustrate this idea more? Which areas of this essay need more discussion?

These peer response questions provoke a response from the reader, which in turn validates the paper as a public text meant to be shared with an audience.

Here, however, Beth’s peers have an opportunity to inform her of their thoughts on writing as an act of prayer as well as point to particular places in the writing where more development is needed for them to understand her argument. Peer response, in this case, can be characterized as personal and social responses to a piece of writing as Beth’s peers represent an audience of readers as well as individuals. From Elbow’s discussion with Bartholomae, it is clear that the peer in writing or verbalizing a response to a reader must contend with social influences and personal perspectives about the writing. For example, Beth’s peer may respond from a social constructivist perspective that employs prior knowledge about the acts of prayer and writing. At the same time, Beth’s peer may choose to ignore what scholarly authorities have said about writing as an act of prayer and respond with his or her own personal experiences with writing and prayer. In the case of this workshop, both social and personal discourses converge to make the act of revision social-expressivist. Even in the occasion that revision does not always involve peer response but involves a response generated by the writer regarding his or her own draft, as in the case of Workshop Six, Revision through Purpose and Audience: Writing
as Doing Things to People, social-expressivist theory is present. Here, the writer must imagine or assume his or her audience’s needs in order to revise; however, the revision process is ultimately conducted as an independent act since it only involves the writer. Thus, as Workshop Five introduces both processes of drafting and revising which model expressivist and social constructivist approaches, Workshops Six and Seven demonstrate practical applications of drafting and revising that then merge these two approaches.

**Workshop Six: Revision through Purpose and Audience**

After introducing and distinguishing the processes of drafting and revising, as in the case of Beth Spencer’s paper, the textbook proposes a secondary revision activity that is likewise social-expressivist yet does not involve direct peer response. In this particular workshop, the textbook suggests that before the writer shares his or her writing with readers, an analysis of purpose and audience be conducted by the writer. Analyzing purpose and audience is one way for the writer to not only begin to think more carefully about the message he or she has generated, but also the kind of readership that this writing may or may not interest. To conduct this activity, the textbook proposes that the writer take a piece of selected writing and answer the following questions:

1. **Audience.** Whom did you see then as your audience and whom do you see now?

2. **Purpose.** Were you consciously trying to do something to readers when you were writing your piece? Can you now see any unconscious purpose you had? Would you specify a different purpose now? (159)
The act of the writer answering these two evaluative questions regarding his or her own writing presupposes two key points: one, that the writer has given some forethought about his or her audience and purpose, and two, that the writing is in a constant process of drafting and revising as the writer compares initial and current reactions. As these two key points are interrelated, that is, the processes of drafting and revising are motivated by the writer’s decision to continually analyze his or her audience and purpose, the writer is in turn practicing a merged pedagogy of expressivism and social constructivism. As the writer is formulating a plausible reader response by assessing his or her readers’ needs and expectations from the writing at hand, he or she is also using this information to aid the revision of the writing. The connection then that exists between analyzing audience and purpose, which initiates the processes of drafting and revising, results in the writer practicing social-expressivism. The process of drafting is not then solely expressivist but is informed by a probable audience as the writer begins to redraft or revise the writing. Likewise, the revision process is not solely social constructivist or generated from an audience of readers. Rather, the writer has proposed an intended audience and is accounting for their plausible needs. The revision process in one sense is then an individual act since it is informed by the writer’s preconceptions of an intended audience and not an audience of peers. The integration of drafting and revising processes and thus the merger of expressivism and social constructivism theories in the case of Workshop Six is further demonstrated by Workshop Seven’s emphasis on voice through a Sharing and Responding activity.
Workshop Seven: Exploring Voice

Workshop Seven, Exploring Voice, asks the writer to explore voices through a series of acts—Activity One: Trying Voices Out Loud, Activity Two: Inhabit the Voice and Play the Role, Activity Three: Describe the Voice, Activity Four: Harvesting Your Own Voices, and Activity Five: Bringing Your Own Voices to Life. The goal of Workshop Seven is to sharpen what Elbow and Belanoff term the “reading ear” and the “writing ear,” that is, how the writer hears the voices of the text when reading and how the writer shapes voices within a text when writing (171). Workshop Seven further refines Workshop Six’s emphasis on audience by asking the writer to consider the voice within his or her writing and the effect that the voice has on the message. For example, Activity Three instructs the writer to

• Use analytic language to describe the voices you hear in it. What are the tone, character, and mood of this voice? (177)

Analyzing voice will aid the writer in focusing more carefully on the content of the message being presented and the manner in which the message is being presented. Because voice is a channel with which to carry the writer’s message to an audience of readers it is important that the writer not only consider his or her expressivist voice but also how he or she can revise his or her voice to communicate more effectively. While voice is best associated with expressivist modes of writing following the discussion of Elbow’s article, “Closing My Eyes As I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience” in Chapter 1, the purpose of analyzing voice can in fact be aligned with social constructivist goals. For social constructivists, voice is indicative of a particular discourse community.
Effective communication is therefore achieved when the voice behind the language of a text reflects the discourse community’s understood communication. In the case of an academic discourse community, for example, the biology department, diction and tone would then reflect an academic and scientific usage rather than a personal, expressive usage to convey research in a systematic manner. Although the concept of voice is most easily associated with creative and expressive discourses, social constructivism analyzes voice for the purpose of communicating with an audience of readers. Like the acts of drafting and revising, analyzing voice involves both expressivism and social constructivism as the writer considers his or her personal message and the reception of the message in order to reshape the voice presented in the text.

To facilitate the back and forth process of drafting and revising, the textbook provides the Sharing and Responding feature along with the five activities noted above. The Sharing and Responding revision assignment intended to help the writer discover and refine the voices within a piece of writing is a social-expressivist activity that stems from Workshops Five and Six because it involves the processes of drafting and revising but also because the activity’s directions can be undertaken by either the individual writer or a peer. The activity states

• Describe the main voice or voices you hear in my revised version. How is it (are they) different from the voice(s) of my piece before it was revised?
• Describe any changes or variations of voice you can hear within the single piece of writing (for example, confident to timid or serious to
humorous). Do these changes or variations work, or are they a problem for you?

• Do you hear any echoes of outside voices—voices that are not mine?

In the case of peer responding, the foremost argument that comes to mind is that responding is a social constructivist act as peers represent an independent audience that the writer must address. While peer response is most readily assumed to be a social constructivist act, the example here proves that peer response can be an expressivist act. The second bulleted question asks the peer responder if the changes in voice are or are not agreeable to the peer. This question allows for a more personal response to the text rather than a socially constructed response, as the peer is able to represent himself rather than a specific audience. Similarly, the third bulleted question enables the presence of expressivism as it asks the peer to determine if the writer’s authentic voice is present throughout. The emphasis on authentic voice rather than a voice constructed with a specific audience in mind signals the expressivist nature of peer responding as the peer traces the writer’s authentic voice.

The role of authentic voice also affirms the expressivist nature of drafting or what Elbow termed as the utopian aspect of freewriting. In order for the peer to trace the writer’s authentic voice, the writer must first be given an opportunity to employ his or her authentic voice. This opportunity, which was afforded during the drafting process, in turn has enabled the peer response process to also maintain some expressivist qualities as the peer shares his or her individual response to the writer’s expressivist text.
Recognizing the presence of the authentic voice supports the argument that this workshop is also social-expressivist in that it initiates a revision process, which is linked to the drafting process. These acts of revising and drafting, which shape and reshape audience, purpose, and voice, prove that the text upholds a social-expressivist pedagogy. As a peer response to the writer’s voice initiates revision, the process of drafting or redrafting also occurs as the acts of drafting and revising go hand in hand.

Like Workshop Six, Workshop Seven’s Sharing and Responding activity further exemplifies the interrelated acts of drafting and revising and thus the connection between expressivism and social constructivism. The activity demonstrates how these theories can operate collaboratively with either the writer or a peer responding to a text that is then drafted and revised by an individual writer yet intended to be a public document. Part Two’s emphasis on drafting and revising nicely follows Part One’s focus on generating words and ideas as ideas are first constructed and then subjected to revision. As the earlier workshops in Part One introduced the writer to his or her own writing processes by presenting multiple writing tasks to generate the writer’s words and ideas from an expressivist standpoint, these middle workshops attempt to make the writer more consciously and rhetorically aware of his or her writing task. As the individual writer engages in social-expressivist discourse when considering the effects that his or her text will have on an audience, the transition from Part One’s expressivist foundation to Part Three’s social constructivist concentration is also taking place. Part Two serves as a bridge between Parts One and Three by not only exploring the merger of expressivism and social constructivism through the process of drafting and revising but also by
distinguishing the two theories. Part Three then is the last major section to be analyzed in
this chapter and therefore the main social constructivist section of the textbook that
introduces the writer to academic writing structures. In Part Three, I will explore the
social constructivist nature of the section as well as the social-expressivist features that
unite Parts One and Two.

Part Three

In Part Three, Important Intellectual and Academic Tasks, Workshops Eight
through Twelve instruct the writer on how to become a writer within a community by
exploring intellectual tasks such as reading, arguing, and conducting research. As Part
Three acknowledges the importance of reading as a process of making meaning, while
providing an overview of how to structure an academic argumentative essay and an
academic research essay, the final workshop, Reflecting on Your Writing: Portfolios,
invites the writer to reflect on his or her writing journey from an expressivist perspective.
While argument and research essays impose social constructivist principles of social
issues and areas of interest important to academia and require specific structures and
rhetorical appeals, which suggest that the kind of writing belongs exclusively to the
academy, the textbook does not neglect the expressivist writer that is already developed.
Rather, the textbook employs expressivist activities such as brainstorming and
freewriting about research topics that interest the writer, as in the case of Workshop
Eleven, Research, and drafting an autobiographical reflection on the writer’s journey, as
in the case of Workshop Twelve. Part Three essentially revisits the expressivist activities
introduced in Part One for the purpose of scaffolding an academic text.
Summary of Workshops Eight, Nine, and Ten

Workshop Eight, Reading as the Creation of Meaning: Interpretation as Response, emphasizes the importance of reading as a process of constructing meaning and thereby invites the individual writer to consider the relationship between reading and writing processes. Because reading suggests the importance of language and meaning-making, the emphasis on texts—that is, the creation and interpretation of texts—is important in thinking more about audience and other social constructivist aspects of writing that are found within the writer’s message. After analyzing the voices within a text, as in the case of Workshop Seven, Workshop Eight, Reading as the Creation of Meaning: Interpretation as Response, then pushes the writer to further consider the meaning that is generated through the inflection of voice and word choice. Developing how the writer reads texts assists the writer in focusing more on how their texts are read by audience. As the writer considers his or her reading process in relationship to his or her writing process, Workshop Eight then prefaces Workshop Nine’s emphasis on persuasive and argumentative texts as the writer’s reading skills help formulate stronger arguments.

In Workshop Nine, Persuading and Arguing, the writer is introduced to the rhetorical structure of an argument essay. Although the textbook introduces main claim, reasons, and support, which derive from a standard argument model, this workshop is interested in how arguments create assumptions and how these assumptions affect readers’ interpretations. The argument essay as a genre or kind of writing “makes arguments, solves problems, analyzes texts and issues, [and] tries to answer hard questions” (Elbow “Forward” 7). Unlike the narrative genre, which was examined in
Part One of the textbook and is rooted in expressivist writing, the argument essay is generally employed for public issues related to the academic community and therefore maintains a more academic writing structure. In this workshop, the writer is asked to draft a persuasive letter addressed to an editor of his or her choice for the purpose of reshaping it into an argument essay. The shift that takes place occurs when the persuasive letter then becomes an argument essay. The persuasive letter, which is inherently social-expressivist because it is addressed to an outside audience yet takes the form of a personal genre, becomes a piece of writing that is social constructivist as the writer’s purpose shifts from personal persuasion to logical argument. The shift from social-expressivism to social constructivism is noteworthy as Part Three emphasizes other social constructivist tasks such as research.

Workshop Ten, Interviewing as Research: How Do Writer Write?, introduces the writer to the interview process as one example for conducting research. This small workshop provides six steps for interviewing: Choosing Someone to Interview, A Practice Interview with a Classmate, Your Real Interview, Reconstructing Your Notes after Your First Interview, Your Second Interview, and From Interview to Interview Essay (256-63). This example process of interviewing not only walks the writer through one research process but also preps the writer for designing a research plan as well as conducting research through surveying and using internet and library sources as in the case of Workshop Eleven. Workshop Ten is essentially a supportive and social-expressivist introduction to the research process that primes the writer for integrating research more formally into social constructivist texts. As the writer receives informal
and formal practice in the act of interviewing, he or she is formulating personal or expressivist questions that then drive the conclusions of his or her social constructivist text. These interview questions—which undergo the processes of drafting and revising and echo my earlier discussion of revising for audience in purpose—confirm the presence of social-expressivism in this workshop. Like Workshop Nine, the interview questions operate in a similar fashion to the persuasive letter. The questions, which began as expressivist inquires and are then revised to address a more formal audience, in turn shape an academic research essay that is essentially social constructivist with an expressivist foundation.

**Workshop Eleven: Research**

Just as the argument essay from Workshop Nine induces the writer to experience social constructivist writing, similarly, the research essay calls for a shift from expressivist writing to social constructivist writing. The research assignment in Workshop Eleven begins with the writing sketches that the writer has produced thus far. From these writing sketches, a topic of interest may be selected or a new topic might be introduced. Either way, the topic of choice undergoes what the textbook titles as Step Two: First Round of Freewriting which states:

- Once you’ve selected a topic and framed a question for your research to answer, reread what you’ve already said about the topic and do some focused freewriting or clustering about what else you’d like to know. Share this freewriting or clustering with others in and outside the class.
Just in this step, the writer has taken expressivist and social constructivist measures to begin the research essay by freewriting and sharing the proposed direction of the research essay with others. While the theories of expressivism and social constructivism have been explored earlier in Chapter 1 as opposing writing theories, it is clear in Workshop Eleven that these theories do in fact inform one another. From the freewrite or cluster activity, the presence of social constructivism is recognizable as the writer relies on an external audience to provide some kind of feedback concerning his or her research ideas. What is arguable then in Part Three of the textbook, in the case of the argument and research essays, is the intersection of expressivism and social constructivism. By asking the individual writer to compose a research essay that is both expressivist and social constructivist, the writer enacts Neal’s composing flexibility by taking a personal approach to present research through writing. Here, fluency is achieved as the expressivist freewrite, which is grounded in a communal language, is presented to an audience of readers (Neal 45). Both the task of drafting and peer reviewing are social-expressivist practices that challenge the writer to straddle the contraries of expressivist and social constructivist discourse. Even though Part Three of the textbook further introduces the writer to social influences exceeding audience and purpose to include academic writing structures for the argument and research essay assignments, Part Three maintains the expressivist quality of writing by proposing that the writer begin these academic tasks with expressivist activities.
As the writer drafts a final Cover Letter that examines a first-year’s work of writing, he or she is doing something that is both personal and social. The Cover Letter is innately personal since it is an individual reflection of the writer’s writing process. At the same time, the Cover Letter is also social in that it asks the writer to address his or her writing process.

Workshop Twelve: Reflecting on Your Writing

As the final workshop of the textbook, Workshop Twelve, Reflecting on Your Writing: Portfolios, results in producing an autobiographical Cover Letter that explores the progression of writing sketches as well as the writing process behind these writing sketches, the foundations of expressivism are once more present. The autobiographical Cover Letter asks the writer to carefully examine what experiences he or she has gained from developing a writing process by comparing his or her current writing experience to his or her experience before using the textbook. This examination could point to particular writing sketches that show a great deal of growth within the writing process as well as feedback given to the writer for revising purposes.

The Cover Letter assignment is a reflective piece that can accompany a writing portfolio or sample of texts that the writer may wish to submit as representative works of a developing writing process. The Cover Letter assignment asks the writer to consider these questions when seeking a response from peers:

- What is your main point and what effect are you trying to have on readers? What do you feel works best in your paper and where are you unsatisfied? What changes did you make on the basis of any feedback?

As the writer drafts a final Cover Letter that examines a first-year’s work of writing, he or she is doing something that is both personal and social. The Cover Letter is innately personal since it is an individual reflection of the writer’s writing process. At the same time, the Cover Letter is also social in that it asks the writer to address his or her writing
process to an academic community. The writer is indeed presenting an argument or two about his or her writing process. For example, in order to argue that his or her writing process has developed through revision, the writer must research evidence by returning to several writing drafts. In order to make the claim that peer revision has aided the writer’s process, the writer must cite specific examples from his or her drafts. Here the writer has employed social constructivist tasks of argument and research in order to produce an autobiographical Cover Letter. What can be concluded then from this workshop as well as the preceding workshops is that expressivism and social constructivism work beside each other throughout the textbook. While the textbook most certainly presents a natural progression from expressivism to social constructivism, or the transition from the individual writer to the intellectual writer, it is evident that expressivism and social constructivism work collaboratively in the form of social-expressivist discourse to challenge the writer’s ability to create and contour, to draft and revise, and to foreground the individual writer within academic texts.

Conclusion

The twelve workshops analyzed and summarized in this chapter along with the Sharing and Responding activities and Cover Letter assignments present the merged pedagogy of social-expressivism by acknowledging links between expressivist and social constructivist pedagogies. While the opposing theories are regarded separately in the field of Composition, Neal’s composing flexibility argues that “In the world of classroom practicality, neither social construction nor expressionism fares well by itself. For social constructionism, the problematic issues revolve around questions of membership and
function of discourse communities” (Neal 43). By this, Neal is suggesting that the issue with social constructivist pedagogy is its sole embrace of the academic community and therefore its denouncement of the individual writer. Just as social constructivism presents a shortcoming as a theory that supports only academic discourse, expressivist theory is also problematic in being defined by social constructivists as narrow because of its “extreme position, which suggests that knowledge and language are entirely individual constructs” (Neal 44). Because of the opposing nature of both theories neither theory recognizes any clear relationship to the other and thus they remain separate pedagogies.

The inherent problem with separating these theories is that neither social constructivism nor expressivism presents a strong pedagogy that endows writers with a complete picture of the writing process. Writing, according to James Moffett as cited in the introduction to Active Voices IV (1986), “is both personal and social’” (Neal 44). Being a Writer supports Moffett’s statement by modeling how the diverging theories of expressivism and social constructivism operate jointly. In the case of the textbook, both expressivism and social constructivism exist in the composition classroom as the processes of drafting, revising, and peer responding involve a negotiation between personal and social constructs. While Elbow, as a composition scholar, is misunderstood to be primarily an expressivist because of his belief that private writing is purposeful in producing academic texts, his contribution to the textbook supports his practice of social constructivism alongside the expressivist foundation. In response to Elbow being pigeonholed as a true expressivist, Elbow states,
Because I stick up so enthusiastically for personal writing, even private
writing, and because of the doctrine that the personal must be at war with
the social, people can’t seem to see that most of what I’ve written is built
on an equal commitment to collaboration and the social dimension—to the
process of listening, taking in what is outside, and connecting with others.
(“Forward” 16)

Elbow’s commitment to collaboration and the social dimensions of writing can be found
in the skeleton of his textbook which is workshop based. Every chapter is not only a new
workshop directed at a particular lesson—for example, exploring the individual writer,
exploring voice, or writing a research paper—but within each workshop is a series of
workshop activities that invite the personal to merge with the social as individual and
peer responses are directed. The textbook values social dimensions of writing while
maintaining the goal of discovering the individual’s unique writing process.

The effective merger of expressivism and social constructivism in turn resolves
the inherent tension between the two theories as outlined in Chapter 1. The disagreement
over which theory is more beneficial in teaching students to write is met with a merged
pedagogy that values both students and the university or the personal and the social. As
Elbow concludes that “there is obviously no one right way to teach, yet in order to teach
well we must find some way to be loyal both to students and to knowledge or society,” it
is clear that social-expressivism is a method of writing as well as approach to teaching
writing that resolves the opposing natures of both theories (“Embracing Contraries” 338).
Approaching writing from a social-expressivist standpoint enables the opposing
processes of creating and contouring that the textbook’s prefaces addresses. Elbow proposes the benefits of embracing these opposing processes when he says, “it helps to move back and forth between sustained stretches of wholehearted, uncensored generating and wholehearted critical revising to allow each mentality and set of skills to flourish unimpeded” (339). Thus, as student writers practice creating and contouring while drafting, revising, and peer responding it is important not only to discriminate how these processes are different but also to recognize the natural connection that exists between the processes: after creation comes contouring which in turn leads to more creation. Without this connection the merged theories of expressivism and social constructivism seem contrived. According to Elbow,

    Even though this theory encourages a separation [between creating and contouring] that could be called artificial, it also points to models of the teaching and writing processes that are traditional and reinforced by common sense: teaching that begins and ends with attention to standards and assessment and puts lots of student-directed supportive instruction in the middle; writing that begins with exploratory invention and ends with critical revising. But I hope that my train of thought rejuvenates these traditional models by emphasizing the underlying structure of contrasting mentalities. (339)

As Elbow recognizes how separating the process of creation from contour lends itself to a pragmatic and traditional perspective of the writing process that the field of Composition has upheld by separating expressivism from social constructivism, Elbow proposes that
connections be drawn between the two so as not to oppose tradition but rather to recognize
the benefits of embracing contraries. In Chapter 3, which follows, I will extend Elbow’s
embrace of contrasting theories by producing and analyzing supplemental materials that
further illustrate how social-expressivist pedagogy might operate and progress within a
first-year composition course. These supplemental materials include an example
syllabus, three major writing assignments, and two peer workshop scripts, which stem
from Being a Writer.
Chapter 3

MOVING FROM SOCIAL-EXPRESSIVIST THEORY TO CLASSROOM PRAXIS:
EXAMPLE SYLLABUS, WRITING ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS, AND PEER WORKSHOP SCRIPTS

What follows in this chapter is a presentation of texts, which I have drafted as supplementary materials for the purpose of extending Elbow and Belanoff’s textbook. These texts include a syllabus, three major writing assignment prompts, and two peer workshop scripts, which are printed in Appendices A-C for further reference. The texts have undergone some revision to support the social-expressivist framework that Being a Writer provides and to further structure the course. These texts, in being adopted from Being a Writer, function as social-expressivist texts that merge expressivism and social constructivism or personal and public writing modes in order to challenge the writer’s composing flexibility. These texts provide a practical foundation or praxis that stems from the theoretical foundation that Chapters 1 and 2 discussed. By transforming theoretical discussions of social-expressivism into tangible writing activities and workshop scripts, students are then able to experience social-expressivist pedagogy in a more practical light. This chapter then not only extends the features of Being a Writer that I discussed in Chapter 2, but it also aids my final argument for the value of social-expressivism as a composition theory and classroom praxis.

The first section of this chapter will present an example syllabus as well as further explore syllabus components such as the course description, learning outcomes, and specific assignments. The syllabus, of course, is a document intended to be a contract between the student and the teacher that identifies what material will be instructed over
the span of the course and how the material will be instructed and assessed. While not
every component of the syllabus is thoroughly examined in this chapter, the syllabus in
Appendix A is a complete version of the syllabus I used to teach a first-year composition
course and thus includes additional resource information such as office hours, attendance
policies, and even a week-by-week course schedule.

Following the syllabus are the three major writing assignment prompts, which are
adapted from *Being a Writer*. These prompts provide general guidelines for composing a
Personal Essay, an Argument Essay, and a Research Essay. Prompt instructions for this
essay are taken directly from the Main Assignment activities found in Workshops 3, 9,
and 11. The additions made to the assignment script include Evaluation Criteria, which
are intended to aid the writing process by providing further structural guidelines while
also helping the writer to identify the essay’s main goal. For example, in the case of
Personal Essay #1, the goal is for the writer to further develop a freewriting sketch into
an essay that examines his or her writing process. The assignment challenges the writer
to produce writing that is both reflective and academic as the essay accounts for
rhetorical elements of content, audience, purpose, and persona. The social-expressivist
goal of composing flexibility is then met by producing a text that is both academic and
reflective.

Following the three major writing assignment prompts are two respective peer
workshop scripts. These scripts have been designed with the main goal of the essay and
the Evaluation Criteria in mind. The scripts give further direction to the peer workshop
sessions by determining the kind of feedback the writer will receive. In the case of both
scripts examined here, the feedback is driven by leading statements that ask for both broad and specific responses from the reader. As Chapter 2 examined how the act of responding is in fact social-expressivist and not solely a social constructivist act as readers are able to respond to texts using their personal and academic perspectives, the scripts are then exemplary of how readers practice the social-expressivist act of responding as both an individual and an academic reader.

Collectively, these three different kinds of texts are examples of social-expressivist pedagogy that provide a general and specific framework for a first-year composition course. As the syllabus outlines course requirements and outcomes, the assignment prompts and workshop scripts reinforce social-expressivist goals by facilitating students to produce a specific text that is both expressive and academic. What follows here is a more in-depth examination of the syllabus, the three major writing assignment prompts, and the two peer workshop scripts for the practical purpose of validating social-expressivism as effective composition pedagogy.

The Syllabus

When designing a first-year composition syllabus, my most immediate concern was to compose a course description that encapsulated the social-expressivist goal of composing flexibility while keeping in mind the University’s writing standards. The University’s description for a first-year composition course is stated as follows:

Intensive writing that provides students with practice in the kinds of challenging thinking, reading, and writing required in academic discourse.

Concentrates on prewriting, drafting, and rewriting processes that address
a variety of rhetorical and academic tasks. Special attention given to
effective development and support of ideas. (“Course Description”
http://www.csus.edu/engl/course.htm)

The University’s emphasis on academic discourse and academic writing tasks recalls
Bartholomae’s position that language is socially constructed and that knowledge lies with
the academy (“Responses to Bartholomae and Elbow” 88). To support Bartholomae’s
point, students must produce academic essays as well as practice prewriting and drafting
from the perspective that their ideas are connected to their social experiences. To design
a course in accordance with the University’s course description, I extended the
University’s goals to include social-expressivist pedagogy. My course description states:

This course will develop your writing through a series of workshops that
negotiate the dimensions of both private and public writing situations.
While composing effective academic writing is our ultimate goal, this
course will encourage you to explore private writing as a means to
improve your writing process. Private writing will function as the germ for
brainstorming, drafting, and even revising as you will reflect upon how
you write as well as what you write. As this course addresses discourse
conventions that define academic writing and greatly impact your
composing process, this course will broaden your writing experience by
challenging your “composing flexibility” or your ability to produce both
private and public writing and to recognize how both kinds of writing
enhance each other.
Here, my course description further emphasizes the importance of private writing for the purpose of strengthening the public writing that is produced throughout the course.

What is of foremost importance to recognize here with the course descriptions is how social-expressivism fits within the University’s expectation for a first-year composition course. Although the University’s description is vague in the actual framework of the course, it does highlight the components of the writing process in light of academic discourse. In other words, the University supports the view of treating writing as a process by listing the steps involved: prewriting, drafting, and rewriting. The texts that are then produced from the writing process are meaningful, academic texts and not specifically expressivist texts. However, the University’s description, while emphasizing academic texts, does leave room for expressivism to be emphasized as well. For example, prewriting exercises might entail freewriting for the purpose of ignoring audience and focusing solely on content. As freewriting enables the writer to explore his or her own thoughts, this text can then undergo drafting and revising processes that then shape the text into something more academic like Personal Essay #1, Argument Essay #2, and Research Essay #3, which originate from an expressivist text. In the case of these three major writing assignments, which are central to the course as the three main documents produced during the semester, it is clear that social-expressivist pedagogy meets the University’s writing standards as expressivist activities support the academic texts that are then produced.

Like the course description, the learning outcomes are also written by the instructor specific to the course. To reflect both the University’s expectations of a first-
year composition course and the goals of social-expressivist pedagogy I have listed the following outcomes on the syllabus:

1. Identify and employ effective strategies for pre-writing, drafting, and revising
2. Apply effective structures and rhetorical devices used to produce a Personal Essay, an Argumentative Essay, and a Research Essay
3. Collaboratively engage with other students inside and outside the classroom through Peer Workshops
4. Assess individual writing process and progress through Cover Letter responses
5. Produce three writing Portfolios that evidence writing development

Collectively, these learning outcomes comply with the University’s writing standards as academic texts are produced following a social constructivist pedagogy that values rhetorical writing structures and collaboration within the classroom. While social constructivist pedagogy is most recognizable, the goal of practicing social-expressivism or composing flexibility can be derived from these learning outcomes as expressivism is emphasized alongside social constructivism.

For example, in the case of learning outcome number three, which emphasizes the social dimension of peer response, I cited Elbow’s argument from Chapter 2 that responding is not merely social constructivist. Because expressivist theory recognizes that language is socially constructed, peer workshops are regarded as opportunities for students to exchange ideas as well as comment on each other’s ideas from both personal
and academic perspectives. What peer response in turn allows students to do is to return to their texts and revise or redraft in light of new knowledge. New knowledge, as we now understand from Chapter 2, does not necessarily imply academic knowledge as social constructivism would denote. Knowledge can in fact be personal perspective that one student shares with another student which then initiates revision. What is understood here is that peer response is not an activity that falls under one theory but instead entails both expressivism and social constructivism. Although these learning outcomes derive from the University’s writing standards they can be adopted to develop social-expressiv...
assignments are then social-expressivist extensions of the three major writing assignments as the assignment calls for a personal and social response to each of the writing assignments. These particular syllabus components—course description, learning outcomes, and Cover Letter assignments—are social-expressivist elements that provide a framework for a first-year composition course and shape the three major writing assignments, or the course’s primary evaluation of students’ writing processes.

Three Major Writing Assignments

The Three Major Writing Assignments that I have developed for the course include Personal Essay #1, Argument Essay #2, and Research Essay #3. As these three assignments stem from Being a Writer, which Chapter 2 has established as a social-expressivist composition text, these assignments challenge the writer’s composing flexibility as he or she must produce a text that merges both expressivism and social constructivism.

Personal Essay #1, which comes directly from Part One of Being a Writer, asks the writer to develop his or her writing sketch into a coherent essay that explores his or her writing process. The Personal Essay #1 prompt is stated as follows:

Develop your selected writing sketch(es) (Wksp 1: Acts 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and Wksp 3: Acts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7) into a coherent essay that explores your writing process. Use our textbook’s prompts and our assigned readings (Lamott and Didion) to focus your essay. The essay must be 3-4 pages double-spaced (a minimum of 3 full pages). Draft One should be written with the rhetorical elements of Content, Audience, Purpose, and Persona...
in mind. As we begin to address revision, our goal will be to rewrite Draft One for the purpose of developing these rhetorical elements and the respective genre structure.

The foundation of this assignment, like the other major writing assignments, is expressivist in that students must return to previous writing sketches in Workshops One and Three to find the germ for developing a fuller essay. In order to create a social-expressivist text that merges personal and academic discussions of the individual’s writing process, students must develop and revise their writing sketch to include particular academic components. For example, the prompt suggests returning to two assigned readings: Ann Lamott’s “Shitty First Drafts” and Joan Didion’s “Why I Write.” These readings, which have been chosen by the English Teaching Associate Program at Sacramento State University, are useful in that they discuss personal perspectives on the act of writing. These readings not only emphasize rhetorical elements of content, audience, purpose, and persona, which the writer must also address in his or her essay, but also exemplify good description that the writer strives to achieve in order to meet one of the Evaluation Criteria concerning subjective and objective description.

Challenging the student to compose an essay that is both reflective and academic involves what Joseph Harris termed as “polyphony pedagogy,” which I introduced in Chapter 1. Polyphony pedagogy develops the writer’s awareness to recognize competing discourses and how these discourses can operate collaboratively (Harris “The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing” 17). In the case of Personal Essay #1 and the other major writing assignments, workshops in Part One of Being a Writer are preparing the
writer to experience both expressivist and social constructivist components of the
assignment. As Workshop One, Discovering Yourself as a Writer, introduces freewriting
tasks of expressive nature, Workshop Three, Moving from Private Writing to Public
Writing, exposes the writer to elements of content and genre which give an essay form
for the purpose of sharing the essay with an audience.

As a draft of Personal Essay #1 emerges the draft is then subject to Evaluation
Criteria which are intended to assess how well the draft captures particular elements of
the writing assignment. The Evaluation Criteria for Personal Essay #1 as well as the
other essays are evaluated using a √+, √, √- scale (√+ Maintain excellent control of
Evaluation Criteria, √ Consistent use of Evaluation Criteria or Complete, √- Inconsistent
use of Evaluation Criteria or Incomplete) which was designed by the Teaching Associate
Program during a rubric assessment workshop. The Evaluation Criteria listed include the
following:

- Essay addresses the prompt noted under “Your Task”
- Essay presents a clear thesis statement and purpose (to narrate, to
describe, to persuade, to explain)
- Essay establishes audience awareness (an appeal to the reader’s
attention has been made)
- Essay employs appropriate objective and/or subjective description
- Essay is of appropriate length

At first glance, it might appear that the Evaluation Criteria aside from the first and the
fifth, which are intended to keep the writer on track for understanding general
expectations of the assignment, are mainly social constructivist components that the writer’s essay must address in order to make the essay academic. Here, criteria two, three, and four are concerned with genre, audience and content or rhetorical elements which are generally categorized as social constructivist components. Although these criteria are easily associated with social constructivism, my discussion here will highlight their expressive function in order to prove the polyphony nature of the essay assignment.

To begin, the second Evaluation Criterion refers to Workshop Three’s emphasis on genre. In order to demonstrate that the draft has form, the writer must consider what purpose the essay will present. Deciding the draft’s purpose—for example, to persuade an audience of readers that his or her writing process has recently undergone development—then determines the shape the draft will assume, that is, the language the writer will use. This particular criterion follows social constructivist pedagogy as the writer must realize that the essay is intended to be read by an audience.

The emphasis on audience as noted by the third Evaluation Criterion is interested in how well the essay appeals to the reader’s interest. Although audience is given a workshop of its own in Part Two of Being a Writer, appeals to audience in this essay assignment are intended to get the reader to think about how the writing sketches from Workshop One are different from those in Workshop Three. As Workshop One explored invisible writing or writing intended for no one to see, Workshop Three’s introduction to narrative and story are not only intended to give writing form and more developed content but also to give an audience an opportunity to experience the writing. The challenge the writer then faces is how to discuss his or her writing process in a manner
that appeals to an external audience. In other words, how does the writer discuss something that is expressive to an academic audience?

In Chapter 2, I discussed how Elbow addresses this concern of straddling personal and social discourses with his essay, “Closing My Eyes As I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience.” Here, Elbow proposes that instead of moving back and forth between expressivist and social constructivist modes of writing the writer must practice recognizing the influence the audience has on the writer and his or her writing content (51).

In order to appeal to an audience, the writer must consider how accessible the content is to the reader. The fourth Evaluation Criterion is intended for the writer to consider how well he or she has employed description within his or her essay. Description, in the case of Personal Essay #1, aids the essay’s content by assessing how well the writer’s words paint a picture in the reader’s mind. While the social constructivist goal of reaching the audience is met with good description and language familiar to the reader, describing one’s writing process is strongly expressive and thus this criterion functions dualistically.

As genre, audience, and content are interrelated rhetorical components that the writer must address, it is clear from Personal Essay #1 that these components do not operate solely within social constructivist pedagogy. Because Personal Essay #1 instructs the writer to develop a previous writing sketch, the foundation of the essay, that is, the original genre, audience, and content are expressivist before the essay is drafted and revised into an academic essay.
The collaboration between expressivist and social constructivist pedagogies recalls Elbow’s discussion of how the personal and social are reciprocal. In Chapter 2, I mentioned Elbow’s acknowledgement of the “natural connection between the individual and the community” that exists without coercion (“Forward” 14). In the case of Personal Essay #1, it is clear that this assignment challenges the writer to experience how personal and social discourses “support each other as they fight each other” (14). As private writing serves as the germ for drafting an academic essay, this assignment addresses the social-expressivist course description and learning outcomes by broadening the classroom pedagogy to include expressivism, social constructivism, and social-expressivism. Practicing polyphony pedagogy in turn develops students’ fluency as Neal acknowledges how the drafting process enables the writer to experience the “flow of always-present language” (45). Tapping into this flow of language recognizes that the writer’s linguistic capacity stems from his or her social experience, which then allows the writer to present a written experience that melds personal and social discourses. The writer is not only drawn closer to his or her own writing process but also develops an aptitude for explaining his or her writing process from a social standpoint that acknowledge the rhetorical elements of genre, audience, and content.

Like Personal Essay #1, Argument Essay #2 shares the social-expressivist goal of addressing rhetorical elements. The main difference between these essay assignments is that the argument essay employs the genre and structure of argument while the personal essay employs reflection. The writing task states:
Argument Essay #2 is adapted from our text *Being a Writer: A Community of Writers Revisited* (p. 230-31). Workshop 9: Persuading and Arguing is the foundation from which you will develop your Persuasive Letter Draft into an argumentative essay. For this essay, you will want to review the conventional tools for both persuading and arguing (p. 227-28, 234-36).

To begin your essay, you will need to clarify your proposed argument. What is your purpose for supporting your particular argument? Consider who would propose and who would oppose this argument (for Purpose and Audience refer back to Workshop 6). Also, recall our discussion of language and voice (refer back to Workshop 7). What kind of writerly persona are you trying to convey? Is it appropriate for your argument?

Although the foundation for all three major writing assignments is indeed similar, as each assignment maintains an expressive origin through writing sketches, freewrites, and in the case of Argument Essay #2, a persuasive letter to the editor, Argument Essay #2 and Research Essay #3 extend the goal of polyphony pedagogy by challenging the writer to shape an expressive text using structures and language that are common to the respective genres.

Here, the expressive and social constructive natures of both the argument and the research essay are prominent as the essays are drawn from expressivist texts that then undergo revision in order to become academic texts. For example, the argument essay instructs the writer to draft a letter to the editor following these directions:
Spend some time reading and scanning newspapers: neighborhood papers, local papers, school newspapers. Pick several issues out of these newspapers that you feel strongly about and begin freewriting, telling why you feel strongly about them and why you think others ought to as well. In your freewriting, concentrate on your reasons for your strong feelings on your topic. Don’t think yet about persuading others. It’s your own emotional and intellectual commitment that you need to tap now. (230)

The act of freewriting about a local issue relevant to the writer is an expressivist act that supports the final argument essay. The freewriting, according to the prompt, undergoes peer response as well as an examination by the individual writer. Here the persuasive letter employs social constructivist theory as purpose, audience, and voice are more carefully considered. In order for the writer to effectively address a newspaper editor concerning some local issue, the writer must consider the following questions that the textbook provides:

- What is my purpose in writing this piece?
- Who is my audience? How do I expect them to react?
- What am I assuming to be true?
- What sort of voice have I embedded in my letter? Why did I choose this voice? (232)

The textbook’s emphasis on these rhetorical elements, which were discussed in Chapter 2, draws forth the social constructivism as the writing assumes a more public purpose rather than its expressive origin. After the persuasive letter has undergone revision in
light of these rhetorical elements, the letter is then ready to be further revised into Argument Essay #2.

The next step for shaping the persuasive letter into an academic essay is to consider the structure or form of the essay. The structure of Argument Essay #2 is accounted for in the Evaluation Criteria which state:

- Essay presents a clear thesis statement (main claim) that is arguable
- Essay presents reasons and evidence that support the main claim

These two criteria are taken from Workshop Nine and exemplify what Part Three of Being a Writer terms as intellectual tasks as academic structure insists that an argument essay have a main claim or main argument as well as reasons and evidence to support the main claim. Unlike Personal Essay #1, the argument essay has a more fixed structure and purpose. While Personal Essay #1 was more reflective and descriptive, the argument essay follows a patterned structure of claim, reasons, and evidence in order to convince an audience of readers. As argument is regarded as an academic or intellectual task, the assignment is regarded as social-expressivist as the content or foundation of the essay is expressivist. Here, the argument essay assignment furthers the goal of polyphony pedagogy by asking the writer to not only explore rhetorical elements of audience and content as in the case of Personal Essay #1 but to employ the structure of the argument genre which is considered more academic than the reflective genre that the personal essay employed.
Like Argument Essay #2, Research Essay #3 shares a similar goal in producing an academic text that follows a genre structure for presenting research findings. The assignment prompt, which is adopted from Workshop 11 of the textbook states:

Like Essays #1 and #2, this essay is adapted from our text, Being a Writer: A Community of Writers Revisited (p. 272-74). As our text suggests, please return to your earlier writing sketches with the inquiry of “what do I already know, and what is there still left to learn.” While the first half of our course focused on you as an individual writer, this assignment is asking you to focus on a community issue. Who are you in relation to your community and the multiple discourses you belong to? How does a particular community influence your language and how you think?

To generate potential research topics and questions, you might begin by freewriting or even interviewing someone within your community. From these resources, we will design a research plan to answer your research question as well as raise new questions. As you construct your research plan and draft your essay, you will want to think about your Purpose, Audience, and Persona. How are these rhetorical conventions different from the preceding essays? To further prepare for this essay, we will review Outlines as well as Sample Research Essays to examine how Content is presented in an academic essay. Remember, that the foremost goal of Research Essay #3 is to effectively convey your research findings.
Like the preceding essays, Research Essay #3 is expressivist in origin yet involves similar academic structures like Argument Essay #2 as it is considered an intellectual task in Part Three of the textbook. The research essay asks students to devise a research question relevant to a discourse community they belong to or a community that interests them. The personal investment in a discourse community hinges on expressivist pedagogy as personal writing sketches are once again the impetus for the research project. The selected writing sketch then evolves into a more academic task as a research plan and outline transform the writing sketch into an essay that answers a research question. Using academic sources to answer a research question engages the writer in the discourse community’s language and issues central to the community. By reading academic sources written by community members or sources written about the community, the writer is then practicing social constructivism as the knowledge obtained from the academic sources is then incorporated into the research text.

As the academic features of both the argument and research essays are most visible because of the nature of the essays, Being a Writer maintains the social-expressivist purpose of the assignments by drawing connections between expressivist and social constructivist components. In the case of Research Essay #3, the textbook states, “We’re asking for a paper that grows out of your own thinking but that joins your thinking, not only the thinking of others but also to what you can learn from observation and interviewing (272). Here, the research essay is interested in the convergence of expressivism and social constructivism, or polyphony pedagogy, as the writer’s knowledge stems from his or her own thought process as well as the thinking presented
by scholars and those closest to the respective discourse community. To best visualize the emergence of expressivism and social constructivism in a research essay, the textbook provides an example outline that appears as the following:

1. Statement of question.
2. Statement of methods of research.
3. Recounting of observations.
   a. Engineers.
   b. Classrooms.
4. Recounting of interviews.
   a. Engineers.
   b. Undergraduates.
5. Recounting of information gleaned from books and magazines.
6. Reflections on the ways the interviews, observations, and printed sources confirm one another, if at all.
   a. Similarities.
   b. Differences.
7. Conclusions.
8. Possible explanations of conclusions.
9. What I learned and what it means to me.
10. What I’d still like to know. (290)
From this outline, it is clear that the structure of Research Essay #3, like Argument Essay #2 involves genre components which will be accounted for in the Evaluation Criteria. These criteria include the following:

- Essay presents a research question
- Essay presents research findings from observations and interviews
- Essay draws conclusions from research findings
- Essay employs three academic sources and includes a Works Cited page

Although these criteria affirm the social constructive nature of the research assignment as the use of academic sources supports the role of academic language and audience, it is important to recognize the expressive foundation of the assignment as well as the expressive conclusion, which serves as a reflection of how the research bears upon the writer’s experiences. As expressivism serves as a starting point for generating each of the three major writing assignments, social constructivism aids the final production of these essays by shaping rhetorical elements of audience, content, and genre to transform expressive texts into academic texts.

**Two Peer Workshop Scripts**

Once the essays have been drafted, peer workshop scripts are then intended for the purpose of collaborating with peers as defined by learning outcome number three on the syllabus. The peer workshop scripts examined in this section are scripts I have drafted myself using components of the Sharing and Responding activities found in the
textbook and using ideas shared among colleagues in the Teaching Associate program. These scripts are flexible in that they can be used for first drafts as well as revised drafts.

The peer workshop script for Personal Essay #1 is divided into four parts. Parts One through Three are directive in that the leading statements provoke a specific response from the reader. Part Four is blank with the intention of the reader asking a question most relevant to the writer’s essay. This question is then answered by the reader and thus redirects the writer’s attention to the reader’s question and response concerning the essay.

The leading statements in Part One of the script, Responding to the Essay’s Focus, include the following: “So far, I understand your focus to be…; Some main points I noticed were…; Here is a place where I wanted to know more…” These open statements, which echo the Sharing and Responding activity titled, “What is Almost Said? What Do You Want to Hear More About?” allow the reader to respond to the writer’s essay from an expressivist standpoint. The reader and his or her curious nature are asked to respond to the essay holistically by acknowledging places where a focus was presented and places where the writer could further develop his or her ideas. The expressivist response shared between the reader and the writer complements the purpose of the assignment, which is for the writer to develop a writing sketch concerning his or her individual writing process. Here the expressivist nature of Personal Essay #1, that is, to reflect on one’s unique writing process, is met with an expressivist response from a peer as the reader points to content that most resonates with him or her.
Part Two of the script, like Part One, operates in a social-expressivist manner as the reader generates a visual map of the essay. This section of the workshop script is adapted from Activity Three in Workshop One and permits a more creative response to the writer’s essay as the reader maps out the essay’s focus. This map could be something as structured as an outline or even a web cluster where the reader places pieces of content in bubbles to draw connections within the essay. As this exercise is inherently creative, it also allows the writer to begin to contour the essay as the visual construction of the essay enables the writer to identify places where ideas can be further developed in light of his or her reader’s needs. Here, the statement from Chapter 2 about the benefits of peer workshopping applies to this exercise as the textbook states, “When others come at the same topic, they don’t just add to the thinking, they multiply the thinking through the interaction of ideas” (75). This exercise, like the questions in Part One, initiates the writer to further consider the needs of the reader but not just in terms of content but also in terms of audience awareness and persona. As the creative activity produces a need to then contour the essay, the exercise then becomes social constructivist as the reader’s needs must be further addressed through revision.

Part Three, Responding to the essay’s Audience Awareness and Persona, is indeed social constructivist in that it asks the reader to closely analyze rhetorical elements of audience and persona. Part Three’s leading statements are as follows: “I understand the audience of this essay to be…; Here is a place where good audience awareness is established…; Here is a place where the writer’s Persona is identifiable…” These leading statements initiate the reader to scan the essay for specific places where good
audience awareness and persona are identifiable. Here the reader must be more objective and serve as an academic peer rather than the expressivist individual he or she plays in Parts One and Two of the script. The reader’s response to audience awareness and the presence of persona confirms the academic nature of the assignment. Although Personal Essay #1 is a response to the individual’s writing process, the reflection is academic and therefore discourse specific as it is addressed to the composition class and references Lamott and Didion. Thus, to complement the social-expressivist nature of the essay assignment, the workshop script asks the reader to respond from both an expressivist and social constructivist standpoint.

Like the first script mentioned here, the peer workshop script for Research Essay #3 is also divided into four parts. The first three parts consist of one leading statement and several questions while Part Four is blank for the reader or the writer to develop a question most relevant to the essay. As the first part of the script asks the reader to identify the research questions presented by the writer, Parts Two and Three of the peer workshop employ the following “how” questions: “How is the essay organized? How are the essay’s ideas developed? How does the writer employ academic sources to support his or her research topic?” The most obvious difference between the research essay script and the personal essay script is the objective questioning that begs an objective response from the reader. For example, when Part Two asks how the essay is organized this section is interested in the academic structure of the research essay. Does the essay follow cause and effect structure or some other identifiable structure? The question is not proposing that the reader offer an expressivist opinion on how to strengthen the structure
of the essay but instead an explanation of how the research within the essay is organized. Rather than asking a closed question like “Is the essay organized?” these open-ended questions encourage the reader to identify how the essay is or is not organized. These questions support a more analytical response from the reader as the reader points to places where the essay demonstrates strong organization and places where the essay’s structure could be stronger. The social constructivist nature of these questions asks the reader to assume a more academic role as an audience member concerned with the writer’s research.

While this particular peer workshop script emphasizes social constructivism by employing an objective examination of the essay to complement the academic nature of the research essay, it is important to recognize that even intellectual tasks which are associated with social constructivism begin with an expressivist foundation. A peer workshop script, like Personal Essay #1, in fact, could be adopted for addressing the expressive foundation of a research essay’s earliest drafts. As the research draft progresses into an academic essay, the workshop script and peer response adapt to reflect the social constructivist nature of the essay. Thus, it is clear from these two peer workshop scripts that a social-expressivist course is designed to challenge the writer’s composing flexibility and at the same time challenge the flexibility of his or her peer response by responding to a text from both expressivist and social constructivist perspectives.

The polyphony nature of these peer workshop scripts, which derive from the essay prompt, not only assesses the writer’s ability to draft a social-expressivist essay but
also challenge the writer to respond to peers from a social-expressivist viewpoint. The act of the writer continually repositioning him or herself between personal and social discourses develops fluency in writing, drafting, responding, identifying with one’s self and identifying one’s self with community. For Neal, fluency means that students not only hear the many voices within their own heads which shape their own thoughts but that students recognize their own voice amongst the many voices (“Social Constructionism and Expressionism” 47). Students then recognize the personal and social discourses that shape the social-expressivist texts they produce.

From this practical analysis it is clear that a social-expressivist course is designed to challenge the writer’s composing flexibility and at the same time challenge the flexibility of his or her peer response by responding to a text from both expressivist and social constructivist perspectives. As this chapter has provided practical insight into three major components of a social-expressivist course—the syllabus, three major writing assignment prompts, and two peer workshop scripts—the next chapter will serve as a conclusion that validates the theoretical and pedagogical purposes of social-expressivism within the field of Composition.
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION: HOW SOCIAL-EXPRESSIVISM DEVELOPS FLUENCY WITHIN THE CLASSROOM AND WITHIN THE FIELD OF COMPOSITION

An inch of progress in one direction, whether toward knowledge or toward students, is always an inch in the direction of the other. The needs of students and of knowledge or society are in essential harmony.

~Peter Elbow “Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process” (329)

In the previous chapters, I introduced social-expressivism as an emerging theory that derives from two contrasting theories—expressivism and social constructivism—and conducted a textual analysis of Being a Writer in order to argue for social-expressivism’s pedagogical role within a first-year composition course. As the textual analysis and presentation of example syllabus, writing assignment prompts, and peer workshop scripts, have supported the theoretical and practical applications of social-expressivism in Chapters 2 and 3, I now want to return to Maureen Neal’s idea of “composing flexibility” in order to propose the benefits of adopting social-expressivist rhetoric as a model for learning and teaching writing.

Embracing “Both/And” Thinking

Although the question of “how could social-expressivism effectively operate within a first-year composition course” has been addressed through example texts, the question of “why should classrooms adopt social-expressivism” remains to be answered. According to Elbow, as stated in “Embracing Contraries,” either/or thinking proposes one dominant theory over all others—for example, expressivism, social constructivism, or
current-traditionalism—rather than recognizing the intersections and commonalities of these theories (“Responses to Bartholomae and Elbow” 88). As the role of the teacher is to recognize the either/or contention between students and knowledge and between personal and academic discourses, the decision to embrace a “both/and” approach to teaching involves a pedagogy like social-expressivism that aims to resolve the contention. As Elbow believes that there is “no one right way to teach,” he argues that teachers must find a way to be “loyal both to students and to knowledge or society” (“Embracing Contraries” 338). The adoption of social-expressivist rhetoric allows teachers to straddle their commitment to students and to knowledge or society by designing their composition courses to reflect the equal importance of expressivist and social constructivist methods of writing.

As the teacher functions as an ally to the student and to academic discourse, the pedagogy that unfolds for students is a learning experience that values the individual writer in relationship to a larger discourse such as the university. My reference to Sherrie Gradin’s Romancing Rhetorics in Chapter 1 acknowledges how social-expressivism encourages students to “carry out negotiations between themselves and their culture” and thereby embrace “both/and” thinking (Burnham 419). The act of negotiating between the individual and culture is exemplified in the writing assignment prompts presented in Chapter 3 and in Appendix B. As the prompts for the three major writing assignments ask students to return to their freewriting sketches in order to develop a public text, negotiations concerning content, language, audience, and voice occur as a personal text is transformed into an academic text. As students explore their writing, they
develop a “sense of [their] own values and social constructions and then [examine] how these interact or do not interact with others’ value systems and cultural constructs’” (Burnham 419). As students evaluate their own personal constructs in relationship to their classmates’ constructs through the act of peer workshoping, writing is then revised to reflect the “both/and” mentality or a more harmonized experience of personal and social discourses.

What is gained by embracing “both/and” thinking, according to Neal, is fluency as students recognize the social nature of writing through social-expressivist rhetoric. Students gain competency to produce different kinds of texts from a more broadened viewpoint of composing rather than a narrowed pedagogy. Students’ facility to position and reposition themselves within their writing is the goal of composing flexibility that is achieved as they hear the many voices inside of their heads and work within their writing processes to discover their own voice (Neal 47). The act of discovering themselves through the social process of writing is pivotal as the opposing natures of expressivism and social constructivism contend in a writing assignment like Personal Essay #1, which asks the writer to discuss his or her writing process. The fluency attained by discussing one’s individual writing process to an academic audience suggests that the writer recognizes both his or her voice for relating a personal experience and the academic voice that must be employed in order to address the specified audience. What social-expressivist rhetoric is endowing students with is a broadened experience of language and critical thinking that prepares them to approach future communication opportunities—for example, writing within other academic disciplines and writing within their career field—
from a more flexible standpoint. As students are exposed to new and challenging writing situations, they develop the skill of adapting their unique writing processes to address different writing tasks while gaining access to other discourses of interest.

Indeed, from my experience of teaching first-year composition at Sacramento State University and of using Elbow and Belanoff’s textbook to scaffold the course’s writing assignments, I discovered the benefits of employing social-expressivist rhetoric. Throughout the course, I found that students welcomed opportunities to freewrite about their own personal experiences in order to generate ideas and to enrich the texts they produced. Before emphasizing the academic structure of the research and argument essays, I would have students employ freewrite activities in order to return to the expressivist foundation of the course. What I then found in their texts was an authentic voice; a voice that the readers could relate to better as the issues were made more relevant to the readers. I also found that the language presented in student writing was more accessible. Even though academic research was incorporated into the argument and research writing assignments, my students employed the skills they had developed from Part One’s focus on description and translating an experience into words in order to make the writing more tangible for readers. As students gained flexibility within their writing process, I too developed some flexibility in responding to student writing as I repositioned myself to complement the stages of the writing process.

For example, my initial responses to students in the earliest of writing stages echoed the expressivist mode they were employing. As their drafts underwent peer workshopping, I then adjusted my responses to reflect the social constructivist concerns
of audience, language, voice, and genre. Rather than functioning solely as the gatekeeper and upholding a social constructivist pedagogy, I was able to act as the ally in the pre-writing and drafting stages of the writing process and thereby allow my students to express and develop their ideas before revising for an academic audience. What was achieved by maintaining a flexible classroom was fluency within students’ writing processes and within my own experience of responding to writing. To accompany the benefits that social-expressivism has for students and teachers, I would now like to propose some recommendations that further address our classrooms and the field of Composition.

Recommendations

To extend the contribution that this thesis makes, my foremost suggestion is for composition instructors to assess their current classroom practice in order to recognize inherent traces of social-expressivism. After a great deal of research and textual analysis, it seems clear to me that first-year composition courses encompass elements relevant to those identified as social-expressivist. Elements such as freewriting, drafting, revising, and peer workshopping as well as discussions of language, audience, and voice occur in typical composition classrooms, yet the emphasis may be assigned to expressivist or social constructivist theories solely. It seems to me that associating these elements using an “either/or” mentality denies the opportunity for the classroom to embrace “both/and” thinking and thereby practice composing flexibility. If teachers employed a “both/and” pedagogy like the one presented in Chapter 3 using Being a Writer, then the contention between theories of expressivism and social constructivism within the field of
Composition would look very much different than it currently does. The separation between the theories, which dates back to social constructivism’s reaction to expressivism in the late 1980s, would now be met with the recognition of intersections between the theories. In order to produce change within the field of Composition, connections between the theories would first need to be highlighted in the classroom. As the goal of composing flexibility heightens students’ fluency, or the ability for students to think, write, and respond to writing, fluency within the classroom is exchanged between students and teachers as both key players straddle personal and academic, ally and gatekeeper functions, respectively.

Besides identifying the role of social-expressivism within the classroom, I would also recommend that further research be conducted. This research should examine student writing from a first-year course and attempt to quantify the presence of social-expressivism. From this thesis, it is understood that social-expressivist writing can be developed from Elbow and Belanoff’s textbook by designing a course that supports the fusion of expressivist and social constructivist theories. What remains to be examined in order to complete Thomas Huckin’s research methodology is quantifiable evidence of social-expressivism within student texts. To complement my qualitative interpretation that social-expressivism functions as an effective theory and praxis for learning and responding to writing, an analysis of student writing, that is, an examination of a writing portfolio that traces the development of a major writing assignment from its expressivist beginnings as a freewriting sketch to its final stages as an academic text, should be undertaken. An examination of student writing will further validate the role of social-
expressivism and contribute to the field of Composition by widening the study of social-
expressivism as a theory and praxis intended to develop flexibility and fluency within the
writing classroom.

By identifying social-expressivist foundations within the classroom and extending
the research to include an analysis of student writing, the possibility to initiate change
within the field of Composition is imminent. In order to assess where the boundaries of
expressivist and social constructivist theories exist and where the intersections can be
discovered, the field of Composition needs to recognize that “an inch of progress in one
direction, whether toward knowledge or toward students, is always an inch in the
direction of the other. The needs of students and of knowledge or society are in essential
harmony” (Elbow “Embracing Contraries 329). Thus, it is important to remember as
teachers, as students, and as the embodiment of the field of Composition that as we
contribute to one direction—aligning ourselves with students by practicing
expressivism—we are in fact contributing to another direction—aligning ourselves with
knowledge or society by practicing social constructivism—as the two opposing theories
converge to develop greater fluency within the classroom and within the field of
Composition.
APPENDICES
Welcome to English 1A: College Composition! This course will develop your writing through a series of workshops that negotiate the dimensions of both private and public writing situations. While composing effective academic writing is our ultimate goal, this course will encourage you to explore private writing as a means to improve your writing process. Private writing will function as the germ for brainstorming, drafting, and even revising as you will reflect upon how you write as well as what you write. As this course addresses discourse conventions that define academic writing and greatly impact your composing process, this course will broaden your writing experience by challenging your “composing flexibility” or your ability to produce both private and public writing and to recognize how both kinds of writing enhance each other.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students shall be able to:

1. Identify and employ effective strategies for pre-writing, drafting, and revising
2. Apply effective structures and rhetorical devices used to produce a Personal Essay, an Argumentative Essay, and a Research Essay
3. Collaboratively engage with other students inside and outside the classroom through Peer Workshops
4. Assess individual writing process and progress through Cover Letter responses
5. Produce three writing Portfolios that evidence writing development
Required Texts and Materials
• SacCT Photocopies
• 3-Ring Binder for writing assignments (Remember to save all of your work!)
• Pocket Folder to submit your mini Portfolios

Bring Required Texts and Materials to each Class Meeting!

--------------------------Course Methodologies--------------------------

I see, I forget. I hear, I remember. I do, I understand. ~Chinese Proverbs

Attendance and Participation
ACTIVE Attendance and Participation are necessary for your success! Students are allowed three absences total. After three absences, your grade will drop 5% for each absence thereafter. If you accrue more than six absences, you cannot pass the course. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. If you are not present and active in class, then you will receive an absence. Consistent tardiness will also count toward absences, so please be on time! If you are more than ten minutes late on two different occasions, you will be given an absence. Also, if you are not participating in class—sleeping, texting, or interrupting class with noise-making devices—you will be given an absence for the day.

I expect a full investment of time and energy from each student when preparing for class. The key to becoming a better writer is allowing yourself sufficient time to complete the work. Please take the time to focus on your writing process by organizing writing and reading assignments before class. Being prepared will allow our class meetings to be more effective.

You will be required to attend two student-teacher conferences. During the conferences we will discuss your classroom performance and your progress toward your writing goals.

Writer’s Collage
A Writer’s Collage is an opportunity for you to creatively explore and present who you are as a writer with regard to your unique writing process. To prepare for this assignment, we will produce several pieces of writing from which you can choose from. You will want to assemble your writing along with any images that relate to you as a writer on a poster board. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade and is based
on creativity, organization, and overall presentation of writing assignments and images. An Extra Credit opportunity to present your collage to the class will be given the day the collages are due.

**Homework**
Because this course is workshop-based, I will be assigning particular writing activities adopted from our main text *Being a Writer: A Community of Writers Revisited*. These writing assignments are not to be taken lightly since they will serve as springboards for the Three Major Writing Assignments and the substance of our class discussions and workshops.

All Writing Assignments must adhere to the following instructions: 1-2 pages typed, double spaced, Times New Roman 12pt. Font, 1-inch margins, and MLA Heading (YMCD= Your Name, My Name, Class, and Date). Please bring a clean, typed copy of your Writing Assignment to class on its assigned due date. No late or electronic papers will be accepted!

If the Writing Assignment is noted in the course syllabus as “SacCT Post and Response” you must log on to SacCT [http://online.csus.edu](http://online.csus.edu) and upload your assignment so your fellow classmates can respond to your writing. SacCT Posts and Responses must be at least a paragraph long (5-7 sentences) and consist of thoughtful feedback in order to receive credit. **Credit/No Credit** will be assigned to Posts and Responses. You do not need to bring a copy of SacCT Posts to class; however, all Posts and Responses must be completed before class.

**Three Major Writing Assignments**
This course entails producing three major essay assignments which are spread throughout the semester: the Personal Essay #1, the Argument Essay #2, and the Research Essay #3. All essays must be completed for you to receive credit for this course. Each essay will be introduced in-class and linked to the previous Homework and In-class Writing Activities that have prepared you to compose a fuller essay. Each essay will entail two Rough Drafts, two Peer Workshops, a Final Draft, and a Cover Letter. Materials for each writing assignment will be submitted in a pocket folder as **three separate writing Portfolios that are worth 25% each** (Portfolio process points are as follows: 10% for two Rough Drafts, 5% for two Peer Workshops, 5% for a Final Draft, and 5% for a Cover Letter).

**Rough Drafts and Final Drafts**
Writing Drafts is an opportunity for you to experiment with your writing process. To prepare for each Draft, you will be given an essay prompt as well as pre-writing
assignments to help initiate your writing task. It is important that you spend time drafting in order to make your workshop and revision processes more effective.

**Peer Workshops**
Peer Workshops are an opportunity for students to bounce ideas off each other as well as explore each other’s writing process. I am anticipating that thoughtful criticism will be the centerpiece of these workshops and that the class will develop a comfortable atmosphere in which to share their work with others. Bring **two copies** of your essay to share with your classmates on days when a writing assignment and peer workshop are assigned.

**Cover Letters**
Cover Letters are essentially letters of introduction to a piece of writing that direct your reader on how to read and respond to your paper. For each of the Three Major Writing Assignments, you will submit a one to two page Cover Letter that thoughtfully reflects on your writing process and the writing task.

--------------------------**Course Assessment**--------------------------

*What's the big, I say what's the big idea. ~Foghorn Leghorn*

The breakdown of your grade is as follows:

- **Attendance and Participation**: Adjusts final grade
- **Writer’s Collage**: 5%
- **Homework/SacCT Posts**: 20%
- **Personal Essay #1**: 25% Each of the Three Major Writing Assignments involves two Rough Drafts, two Peer Workshops, one Final Draft, and a Cover Letter.
- **Argument Essay #2**: 25%
- **Research Essay #3**: 25%

A, A- 90-100%  B+, B, B-  80-100%  C+, C, C-  70-100%

**NOTE**: You must earn a final grade of “C-” or better to pass this course.

--------------------------**Resources**--------------------------

*I not only use all of the brains I have, but all I can borrow. ~Woodrow Wilson*

**University Writing Center**
The University Writing Center is available on campus for free one-on-one help with writing. I myself have used the Writing Center for undergraduate and graduate courses and even for writing outside of the English Department! Having another pair of eyes look over your work is useful in thinking about the kinds of responses your writing produces and the kinds of responses you intend to produce. It is highly recommended that you stop by the Writing Center (Calaveras 128) or call to make an appointment (916) 278-6356.

**Plagiarism**
See the CSUS Academic Honesty Policy at [www.library.csus.edu/plagiarism](http://www.library.csus.edu/plagiarism) for complete definitions of plagiarism and how to cite sources properly to avoid directly or indirectly claiming another’s work as one’s own. We will be practicing proper parenthetical citation as well as formatting Work Cited pages in class using MLA guidelines from our textbook.

**Disabilities**
Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities or meet course requirements must register with the Services to Students with Disabilities Office. If you qualify for services through SSWD, bring your letter of accommodations to me as soon as possible.

**English 1A Classmates**
Student Contacts for information and assistance if you are absent.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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Welcome to English 1A!
---Course Schedule---

Reading and Writing Assignments are noted on their respective due dates. This schedule is subject to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Introductions, Course Goals Activity, Student Contacts</td>
<td>Review Syllabus, Introduction to SacCT, My Writing Experience Activity</td>
<td>Practice SacCT Post and Response, BF p. xxvii-xxix “Writing Skills Questionnaire” (photocopy), Freewriting Activity, How is Writing a Process Handout, Introduce Writer’s Collage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class</td>
<td>Mon, Jan 25th</td>
<td>Wed, Jan 27th</td>
<td>Fri, Jan 29th</td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>Mon, January 25th</td>
<td>Wed, January 27th</td>
<td>Fri, January 29th</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Feb 1st</td>
<td>Feb 3rd</td>
<td>Feb 5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>BF p. 3-9 Acts 1, 3, 5 Freewriting, Clustering, Public Freewriting</td>
<td>Ann Lamott’s article “Shitty First Drafts” (see SacCT), BF p. 20-22 “Why We Think Freewriting Is Important”</td>
<td>BF p. 7, 11 Acts 4, 7 Invisible Writing, Letter, Pointing and Center of Gravity Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class</td>
<td>Mon, February 1st</td>
<td>Wed, February 3rd</td>
<td>Fri, February 5th</td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>Mon, February 1st</td>
<td>Wed, February 3rd</td>
<td>Fri, February 5th</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 8th</td>
<td>Feb 10th</td>
<td>Feb 12th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Writer’s Collage, SacCT Post and Response, Extra Credit Presentations, Introduce Personal Essay #1 BF p. 69-70 “Developing your Sketch”</td>
<td>Joan Didion article “Why I Write” (see SacCT), Cover Letter Handout, Rhetorical Analysis and Cover Letter Practice</td>
<td>BF p. 56-68 “Trying Out Genres” (select two from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7), BF p. 71-73 “Ruminations”, Genre and Conventions Discussion, Bring all Personal Essay #1 Materials to Class for in-class writing</td>
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<td>In-class</td>
<td>Mon, February 8th</td>
<td>Wed, February 10th</td>
<td>Fri, February 12th</td>
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<td>Mon, February 8th</td>
<td>Wed, February 10th</td>
<td>Fri, February 12th</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 15th</td>
<td>Feb 17th</td>
<td>Feb 19th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Draft One of Personal Essay #1</td>
<td>BF p. 124-26, 129-38 “Three Levels of Revising”, Revision Activity Says vs. Does Activity</td>
<td>Draft Two of Personal Essay #1, Conferences: No Class</td>
</tr>
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<td>In-class</td>
<td>Mon, February 15th</td>
<td>Wed, February 17th</td>
<td>Fri, February 19th</td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>Mon, February 15th</td>
<td>Wed, February 17th</td>
<td>Fri, February 19th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Mon, February 22nd</td>
<td>Wed, February 24th</td>
<td>Fri, February 26th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>SacCT Post and Response</td>
<td>BW p. 143-158 “Audience and Purpose”</td>
<td>Portfolio for Personal Essay #1</td>
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<td>In-class work</td>
<td>Begin Cover Letter</td>
<td>Continue to revise</td>
<td>Introduction to Persuasion and Argument Essay #2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conferences: No Class</td>
<td>Analyzing Purpose and Audience in a Piece of Writing Activity BW p. 159</td>
<td>Evaluating Letters to the Editor Activity BW p.225-28</td>
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<th>Mon, March 1st</th>
<th>Wed, March 3rd</th>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Draft of Persuasive Letter</td>
<td>BW p. 232- 36 “Moving to Argument”</td>
<td>James Baldwin article “If Black English Isn’t a Language” (see SacCT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
<td>BW p. xxvii-xxix Writing Skills Questionnaire</td>
<td>Argument Terminology Handout</td>
<td>Analyzing and Assessing Baldwin’s argument</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Responding to your own Letter Activity BW p. 232 Step 2</td>
<td>Rhetorical Triangle (Appeals) Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>BW p. 246-54 “Some Sample Arguments”</td>
<td>Draft One of Argument Essay #2</td>
<td>BW p. 237 Step 2 “Revising Your Own Argument” Map out your argument essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
<td>BW p. xxvii-xxix Writing Skills Questionnaire</td>
<td>Peer Workshop</td>
<td>Revision Plan Activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SacCT Post and Response</td>
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<td>Mid-semester Evaluations</td>
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<td>Transforming your Letter into an Argument</td>
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<th>Mon, March 15th</th>
<th>Wed, March 17th</th>
<th>Fri, March 19th</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>BW p. 246-54 “Some Sample Arguments”</td>
<td>Linda Flower article “Step 5: Know the Needs of Your Reader” (photocopy)</td>
<td>Begin Cover Letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
<td>BW p. xxvii-xxix Writing Skills Questionnaire</td>
<td>Revision Plan Activity</td>
<td>Conferences: No Class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SacCT Post and Response</td>
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<td>Transforming your Letter into an Argument</td>
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<th>Mon, March 22nd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>BW p. 246-54 “Some Sample Arguments”</td>
<td>Bring all Argument Essay #2 Materials to Class for in-class writing</td>
<td>Portfolio for Argument Essay #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
<td>BW p. xxvii-xxix Writing Skills Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SacCT Post and Response</td>
<td>Continue to revise</td>
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<td>Transforming your Letter into an Argument</td>
<td>Conferences: No Class</td>
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<th>Wed, April 7th</th>
<th>Fri, April 9th</th>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>BW p. 271-74</td>
<td>Bring two newspaper</td>
<td>Paulo Freire chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
<td>Introduction to Research • Introduction to Research Essay #3 • Brainstorm research topics</td>
<td>articles or text from discourses of interest • Discourse Community Activity</td>
<td>“Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (photocopy) • Discussion of Freire’s article and the academic discourse we belong to</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mon, April 12</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Wed, April 14</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Fri, April 16</strong>th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>• SacCT Post and Response</td>
<td>• Formulate Research Questions Activity</td>
<td>• BW p. 274-90 Research Chp cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
<td>• “First Round of Freewriting” Activity <em>BW</em> p. 273-74 Step 2</td>
<td>• Share/Revise Research Questions</td>
<td>• Computer Lab Visit (Library Research Activity)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mon, April 19</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Wed, April 21</strong>st</td>
<td><strong>Fri, April 23</strong>rd</td>
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<td>In-class work</td>
<td>• MLA Troubleshooting</td>
<td>• What makes this paper a research paper Activity?</td>
<td>• Share Outlines Activity</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mon, April 26</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Wed, April 28</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Fri, April 30</strong>th</td>
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<td>Homework</td>
<td>• Revise Research Outlines</td>
<td>• Draft One of Research Essay #3</td>
<td>• Revise a section of Research Essay #3</td>
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<td>In-class work</td>
<td>• Share Outlines Activity</td>
<td>• Peer Workshop</td>
<td>• Criterion-Based Feedback Activity</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mon, May 3</strong>rd</td>
<td><strong>Wed, May 5</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Fri, May 7</strong>th</td>
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<td>Homework</td>
<td>• Revise a section of Research Essay #3</td>
<td>• Draft Two of Research Essay #3</td>
<td>• Revised Portfolios (Personal and Argument)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
<td>• Criterion-Based Feedback Activity</td>
<td>• Peer Workshop</td>
<td>• Begin Cover Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 16</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mon, May 10</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Wed, May 12</strong>th</td>
<td><strong>Fri, May 14</strong>th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>• <em>BW</em> p. xxvii-xxix Writing Skills Questionnaire • Bring all Research Essay #3 Materials to Class for in class writing</td>
<td>• Bring all Research Essay #3 Materials to Class for in class writing</td>
<td>• Portfolio for Research Essay #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class work</td>
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<td>• End of semester POTLUCK</td>
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APPENDIX B

Example Writing Assignment Prompts

**Personal Essay #1**

*It is exactly the transformative nature of writing that is of interest here, using it as a prism through which to explore what is valued, remembered and understood. ~Matthew Reason.*

**Your Task:**

Develop your selected writing sketch(es) (Wksp 1: Acts 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and Wksp 3: Acts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7) into a coherent essay that explores your writing process. Use our textbook’s prompts and our assigned readings (Lamott and Didion) to focus your essay. The essay must be 3-4 pages double-spaced (a minimum of 3 full pages). Draft One should be written with the rhetorical elements of Content, Audience, Purpose, and Persona in mind. As we begin to address revision, our goal will be to rewrite Draft One for the purpose of developing these rhetorical elements and the respective genre structure.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

Personal Essay #1 will be evaluated on a √+, √, √- scale (√+ Maintain excellent control of Evaluation Criteria, √ Consistent use of Evaluation Criteria or Complete, √- Inconsistent use of Evaluation Criteria or Incomplete) for the following criteria:

- Essay addresses the prompt noted under “Your Task”
- Essay presents a clear thesis statement and purpose (to narrate, to describe, to persuade, to explain)
- Essay establishes audience awareness (an appeal to the reader’s attention has been made)
- Essay employs appropriate objective and/or subjective description
- Essay is of appropriate length

**Draft One Due** ______________________

**Draft Two Due** ______________________

Remember to bring 2 copies of your draft to peer workshops.

**Portfolio Due** ______________________
Argument Essay #2

The moment we want to believe something, we suddenly see all the arguments for it, and become blind to the arguments against it. –George Bernard Shaw

Your Task:
Argument Essay #2 is adapted from our text Being a Writer: A Community of Writers Revisited (p. 230-31). Workshop 9: Persuading and Arguing is the foundation from which you will develop your Persuasive Letter Draft into an argumentative essay. For this essay, you will want to review the conventional tools for both persuading and arguing (p. 227-28, 234-36).

To begin your essay, you will need to clarify your proposed argument. What is your purpose for supporting your particular argument? Consider who would propose and who would oppose this argument (for Purpose and Audience refer back to Workshop 6). Also, recall our discussion of language and voice (refer back to Workshop 7). What kind of writerly persona are you trying to convey? Is it appropriate for your argument?

Appropriate sources such as interviews, journal articles, newspapers, websites, etc., may be included but are not required; however, they may substantially strengthen your argument and the overall development of the paper. Reviewing sources now will prepare you for the Research Essay #3, which requires sources.

The essay must be 4-5 pages double-spaced (a minimum of 4 full pages).

Evaluation Criteria:
Argument Essay #2 will be evaluated on a √+, √, √- scale (√+ Maintain excellent control of Evaluation Criteria, √ Consistent use of Evaluation Criteria or Complete, √- Inconsistent use of Evaluation Criteria or Incomplete) for the following criteria:

_____ Essay addresses the prompt noted under “Your Task”
_____ Essay presents a clear thesis statement (main claim) that is arguable
_____ Essay presents reasons and evidence that support the main claim
_____ Essay establishes audience awareness (language should appeal to a specific audience and counterarguments should be addressed)
_____ Essay is of appropriate length

Draft One Due _____________________
Draft Two Due _____________________
Remember to bring 2 copies of your draft to peer workshops.

Portfolio Due _____________________
Research Essay #3

What is research, but a blind date with knowledge. –William Henry

Your Task:
Like Essays #1 and #2, this essay is adapted from our text, Being a Writer: A Community of Writers Revisited (p. 272-74). As our text suggests, please return to your earlier writing sketches with the inquiry of “what do I already know, and what is there still left to learn.” While the first half of our course focused on you as an individual writer, this assignment is asking you to focus on a community issue. Who are you in relation to your community and the multiple discourses you belong to? How does a particular community influence your language and how you think?

To generate potential research topics and questions, you might begin by freewriting or even interviewing someone within your community. From these resources, we will design a research plan to answer your research question as well as raise new questions. As you construct your research plan and draft your essay, you will want to think about your Purpose, Audience, and Persona. How are these rhetorical conventions different from the preceding essays? To further prepare for this essay, we will review Outlines as well as Sample Research Essays to examine how Content is presented in an academic essay. Remember, that the foremost goal of Research Essay #3 is to effectively convey your research findings.

The essay must be 5-6 pages double-spaced (a minimum of 5 full pages) and include 3 academic sources and a Works Cited page with correct MLA format.

Evaluation Criteria:
Research Essay #3 will be evaluated on a √+, √, √- scale (√+ Maintain excellent control of Evaluation Criteria, √ Consistent use of Evaluation Criteria or Complete, √- Inconsistent use of Evaluation Criteria or Incomplete) for the following criteria:

- Essay addresses the prompt noted under “Your Task”
- Essay presents a research question
- Essay presents research findings from observations and interviews
- Essay draws conclusions from research findings
- Essay establishes audience awareness (language should appeal to a specific audience)
- Essay employs three academic sources and includes a Works Cited page
- Essay is of appropriate length

Draft One Due _______________________
Draft Two Due _______________________
Remember to bring 2 copies of your draft to peer workshops.
Portfolio Due _______________________
Personal Essay #1 Peer Workshop Script
To the reader and responder of this essay:

- Please read the statements and questions below in order to frame the Peer Workshop session.
- Please conduct a “Close Reading” of the essay in front of you. A close reading entails annotating the essay and examining particular essay components (i.e. thesis statement, organization, audience, etc.).
- Please respond thoughtfully to the following statements and questions.

1. Responding to the Essay’s Focus
   So far, I understand your focus to be…

   Some main points I noticed were…

   Here is a place where I wanted to know more…

2. Responding to the Essay’s Organization
   An outline or a map of the essay might look something like the following…
3. **Responding to the Essay’s Audience Awareness and Persona**
   I understand the audience of this essay to be…

   Here is a place where good audience awareness is established…

   Here is a place where the writer’s Persona is identifiable…

4.
Research Essay #3 Peer Workshop Script

To the reader and responder of this essay:

- Please read the statements and questions below in order to frame the Peer Workshop session.
- Please conduct a "Close Reading" of the essay in front of you. A close reading entails annotating the essay and examining particular essay components (i.e. thesis statement, organization, audience, etc.).
- Please respond thoughtfully to the following statements and questions.

1. The Research Question(s) presented in this essay is/are…

2. How is the essay organized? How are the essay’s ideas developed? If time permits, map or outline the essay.
3. How does the writer employ academic sources to support his or her research topic? Are the sources used effectively?

4.
WORKS CITED


“Review: [untitled].” *College Composition and Communication* 47.2 (May 1996): 304-305.
Theorizing Composition: A Critical Sourcebook of Theory and Scholarship in

Contemporary Composition Studies. Ed. Mary Kennedy. Westport, Connecticut: