

TIME TO REFLECT

What has your instructor, team leader, or supervisor asked you to create? Are you working on a process or a presentation portfolio? Are you expected to submit your portfolio as a paper document or electronically? What choices do you need to make about tools or variety or time frame? Now that you have a better understanding of how portfolios can differ and how they often are used among writers, you're ready to begin portfolio keeping. But before you read on, take time to reflect on where you are right now.

TIME TO REFLECT

1—*Predicting What's Ahead in Your Portfolio Journey*

Now that you have had an overview of writing portfolios, write one or two paragraphs about any questions you have about the portfolio you'll be expected to produce. If you already know something about portfolios — you have prepared one before or have heard about them — you might address how what you've read so far fits — or doesn't — with your earlier experience or with your assumptions. If they are new to you, what interests you about portfolios? From what you know so far, what parts of the portfolio process do you expect to do well on or succeed with? What parts of your reading and writing history make you confident about creating either a process or a presentation portfolio? What makes you hesitant? Once you are finished with this brief, informal piece, give it a title and/or file name and store it where you can find it again; it may come in handy later.

PART ONE

The Process of Portfolio Keeping

1

Setting Goals and Planning Ahead

Depending on how much time you have to plan your portfolio — several weeks, a semester, or a year — some of the early-stage questions to consider include: Who is the audience for your portfolio, and what are the elements of the rhetorical situation? Will your portfolio focus on process or presentation? Should your portfolio be a paper document or an electronic one? Which tools will you have access to? Will the portfolio be checked or assessed before the final evaluation? Will you choose all of the artifacts, and if not, which ones are required or expected?

Make sure that you answer these questions as early in your portfolio process as possible, and try to spend some time imagining what your portfolio might look like. Portfolio designers often sketch out the structure of their work on paper, much like a writer might use clustering or mapping (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2 on pp. 60 and 61 for examples). That's a great approach. The sooner you begin to imagine your portfolio's purpose and appearance, making it your own, the sooner you can begin to get the work done.

What are some of the possibilities for arranging and presenting artifacts? Consider the tools that you have access to, the software and hardware you already know how to use or would like to learn to use, and the experiences you've had with writing texts or creating documents. Do you know how to change fonts, margins, tabs, spacing? How to add and reference copyrighted images from the Internet? How to create graphs? How to insert footnotes? How to add sound or video clips to an electronic file? You do not have to use state-of-the-art technologies to create a state-of-the-art portfolio, of course, but thoughtful design, which requires reflective thinking, will enhance the content.

As you start to imagine your portfolio, think about the people you know who will be reading it and others who might have the opportunity to view

it, and what they might need in order to understand, appreciate, and navigate through your work. The ability to anticipate readers' needs and expectations is at the heart of good writing. You might pretend you are taking your readers with you on a trip, but they don't know the way — only you do. Show them how to navigate through their journey. Or think of your portfolio as a movie in production, with you as the director, setting up each scene and making connections between things. Writing and directing have much in common.

In this planning stage, remember the three principles of portfolio keeping: choice, variety, and reflection.

TIME TO REFLECT 2—*Preparing to Present Yourself*

Some of the questions below will help you think about how you want to achieve choice, variety, and reflection in your portfolio, and how you might want to present yourself. Write down the answers to these questions, and save them or be ready to discuss your responses with other students or colleagues.

- Do you want to show progress — how much your work and thinking have improved? How might you do that?
- Do you want to show persistence — your ability to stick with a project over a period of time? How?
- Do you want to show your abilities as a designer of Web-based materials? Why?
- Do you want to show flexibility — the ability to write in different styles or voices? What can you do to demonstrate this?
- Do you want to show creativity — how you have made an instructor's assignments your own? How could this be accomplished?
- Do you want to show independence — revising well beyond your peers' or your supervisor's suggestions?

Your answers to the questions in Time to Reflect 2 may change later, but having goals to help shape your portfolio is a good idea. If you are in a class, your instructor may help you address these questions once the class settles into a routine and as soon as at least one writing project has been taken through each stage of the writing process. Some instructors use contracts to help students set and meet certain goals; these contracts are tailored to students' strengths, but they also address weaknesses head-on. In the following list, check off what you would like to accomplish in the course. What is important to you?

- I hope to keep up with my portfolio project, to stay on top of things and not fall behind.
- I want to become more comfortable with sharing my work with others.
- I want to learn more about writing and design in a digital age.
- I'd like to better organize my thoughts.
- I'd like to be able to take constructive criticism without feeling defensive.
- I want to find out if my writing skills are strong enough to choose a career that involves writing.
- I want to create persuasive arguments that convince people without offending them.
- I'd like to be able to review a draft once and know what to do to make it better.
- I want to try to write every day.
- I want to figure out why some of my projects go so smoothly and some are so difficult.
- I want to be proud of my portfolio and do the best work I can.

2

Planning an Electronic Portfolio

Your instructor or program may require that you create an e-portfolio, rather than a paper-based portfolio. Regardless of its form, a portfolio is a composition created by combining multiple artifacts using reflective and descriptive writing that connects all of those artifacts together into a coherent whole. An e-portfolio adds another dimension into the mix: *multi-modality*, which is the use of multiple modes of expression (e.g., text, images, audio, video, links, graphic elements, etc.) to communicate and express ideas. An e-portfolio requires you to consider how to design a navigable and logical organizational structure, create links between different artifacts (and even to outside sources), and use visual elements to create a desired effect. Consequently, it makes sense to think of an e-portfolio holistically as a composition that requires as careful a process of developing and drafting as any research paper or full-length video project. Although it may take more time to develop an e-portfolio than a paper-based portfolio, the pay-offs make the extra time worthwhile: electronic portfolios can be updated, maintained, and distributed more easily; and they offer more flexibility for making connections among your artifacts.

E-PORTFOLIO PLATFORMS

Hyperlinks make navigating e-portfolios easier than paper portfolios and these links allow the writer to make connections beyond the materials in the portfolio to anything available on the World Wide Web. Although a paper portfolio can include photographs and other visual elements, the e-portfolio allows for the use of a variety of media types, including audio and video. Consider, too, the accessibility and portability of the e-portfolio. You can create, store, and present it online; and you can easily access it whenever

and wherever you want to work on it. Even if you choose to prepare and store your work on an external storage drive, when your portfolio is ready for evaluation or presentation, all you have to do is upload it to the Internet.

You may be required to use a particular program to create your e-portfolio, perhaps one used by your academic institution as a whole or by a particular program within your school. There are many tools, though, that can be used to create an e-portfolio, from programs that help you create a custom Web site, to blogging applications, to cloud-based file creation and storage programs like Dropbox or Google Drive, to specialized e-portfolio platforms like the *Bedford e-Portfolio*. If your instructor has asked for an electronic portfolio, you need to know if it needs to be prepared and submitted online, or if it can be submitted offline on a media storage tool.

With any of these platforms, you must consider what options the program allows and how much choice you will have with regard to the overall design of the portfolio in order to work effectively and make smart decisions within the constraints of the program. Think carefully about the computers and other digital devices your audience will use when reading and viewing your portfolio. If readers do not have high-speed Internet access, for instance, you should consider incorporating fewer or smaller graphics, audio files, or videos. Similarly, screens come in different sizes. How will your portfolio look on a tablet screen as opposed to a large monitor? Will the font types you have chosen display on most computers? These are some of the variables you must consider when planning the design of your e-portfolio.

PRESENTATION TOOLS

There are many presentation tools that can be used to create e-portfolios, and each has its benefits and limitations (see Table 2.1). The type of presentation tool you use plays a significant role in the type of navigational structure you can develop. Ask your instructor if you are required to use a certain presentation tool. If you can choose the presentation tools, read through Table 2.1 carefully and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each type.

E-PORTFOLIO NAVIGATION AND DESIGN

Once the form of the portfolio is chosen — by you or your program — your next step is to think about how your readers will navigate through the document. This requires considering how to organize the portfolio pieces into categories or sections and create an indexing or labeling system that will help readers access your work in a way that takes advantage of the unique properties of digital media. If you would like your readers to view sections

TABLE 2.1 *Presentation Tools for e-Portfolios: Benefits and Limitations*

Portfolio Tools	Benefits	Limitations
Common Tools: blogging applications, Google Drive, online presentation tools (Prezi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may already be familiar with these programs and find uploading files to them easy. • These tools lend themselves to creativity and provide a number of visual design elements. • It is easy to add multiple media like audio files, video, images, and to hyperlink to other sites and files online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your work is publicly available online unless you set the privacy options that limit access to certain viewers. • You will have to work within the constraints and templates of the program and may not be able to design your portfolio exactly as you want.
Electronic Portfolio Programs: <i>Bedford e-Portfolio, Digication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your instructor may be using a program that has the tools you need to create an e-portfolio. • Institutional support services are likely to be available to help you solve technical problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your school may not have ready access to these programs. • The program may limit your ability to personalize your e-portfolio.
Web Site-Building Program: text editors, Dreamweaver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your work will be scalable and can grow as you read, write, and think about concepts during and after the course. • Your navigational tool set can include useful mouse-over effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be tempted to spend too much time on the design and look of your e-portfolio at the expense of reflection and work on its content. • You must have a working knowledge of HTML and CSS code. • It can be confusing to upload work to an online space. • It is easy to get links wrong. • These programs can be difficult to troubleshoot.

or items in a particular order, you will have to structure the links to make that happen. If you would like readers to be able to move around the portfolio in any order they choose, you should make sure that you provide context and explanation throughout the portfolio that will help them understand your work and ideas. For example, you could use hyperlinks on your e-portfolio home page to connect readers to other pages on the site, or you could create menu items that readers can click to go to a particular category of work such as your research projects or your reflective writing. You might decide to use reflective writing to introduce different sections of the work on different pages of the e-portfolio if you are creating a multipage Web site. The home page of the e-portfolio might be the place for you to provide a brief overview of yourself and your work. Ultimately, you should think about your portfolio as a “network,” much like the Web itself. Through links between items in the portfolio and ideas and techniques within the items themselves, you create a unity that makes the portfolio appear seamless though it is richly layered.

As you develop your portfolio, you will need to think about your work and working process as a way to connect the ideas and artifacts in the portfolio. This kind of reflective thinking is especially useful when you are working on an electronic portfolio because it can provide the unifying themes and metaphors that influence everything from navigation and linking schemes to visual design to the development of an effective authorial voice and persona. An electronic portfolio can function like a company’s Web site in its ability to showcase who you are and what you have to offer, and the overall design and appearance of the site conveys information on a variety of levels. For example, the visual look of a site can instill confidence in an audience by appearing sophisticated and stylish, rather than garish or cartoony. A video message from the founder of the company can put a face on an otherwise abstract entity that helps visitors to the site feel a sense of trust. A well-designed, seamless system of links and categories provides a smooth user experience and prevents the frustration that arises if users get lost or stuck in the web of a site. Designing and creating an e-portfolio means not only that you can gather your work together into one space, but also that you can create a new, coherent, and convincing text out of those pieces, one that demonstrates how the skills you are highlighting in individual artifacts — such as the ability to organize information effectively or make connections between ideas or use visual design principles — have given you the tools to create a complex, multilayered composition like an e-portfolio.

With an e-portfolio, think about how to present yourself through the usability of your design; that is, the functionality of your portfolio design provides insight into who you are and how you think. The connections you make between your artifacts and your design choices are key in successfully guiding your readers through the portfolio in a way that makes the portfolio

meaningful. If the e-portfolio is to be more than just a collection of diverse pieces of work, identifying your purpose and goals for the portfolio is essential. Although they can be used for print portfolios as well, metaphors are especially meaningful in e-portfolios because of the graphical user interface. Instead of using words as links to different sections, you can use images or icons. In an effective design scheme, the images, fonts, colors, and graphic elements all relate and work together. In other words, you should think of an overarching metaphor or theme that symbolizes the work and what you want the portfolio to demonstrate, and then develop a visual design theme that connects with that metaphor. (We talk more about metaphors later in the book.)

The reflective components of the e-portfolio help guide and direct the reader, so you must think carefully about where to place the reflective elements in the portfolio. Readers of e-portfolios need some guidance and context, so on your portfolio's home page, you might introduce yourself and the portfolio (what it is for, what it contains) and provide instructions or suggestions for how to navigate through the rest of the portfolio. Then, you can give readers the option to go to any artifact next. You might want to categorize your work according to an indexing scheme that puts artifacts of the same type in clearly labeled and understandable sections accessible through a menu. Of course readers can skip around in a paper-based portfolio, too; but traditionally they read one page at a time in sequence. (By limiting the links you insert in each section, you can achieve the same effect in an electronic portfolio.) If you have posted a single reflective essay or letter, but it can be read anytime, provide links to it from each of your other pages. A good rule of thumb with e-portfolios is that readers should be able to get *to* anyplace in your work *from* anyplace in your work. Many e-portfolios are designed so that readers have to click on the reflective elements before reading the artifacts themselves. This ensures that readers will at least have the opportunity to understand the context of each entry, how and why the artifact was created.²

MULTIMODALITY IN E-PORTFOLIOS

The other important aspect of e-portfolios that you should keep in mind is their multimodal capabilities. Digital media and the networked environment allow us to compose and publish using a wide variety of modalities — text, images, audio files, video, symbols/icons, even links. Even if your e-portfolio is for a writing class, you should consider how to draw on other modalities when you create your e-portfolio. An electronic portfolio

²Miles A. Kimball, *The Web Portfolio Guide: Creating Electronic Portfolios for the Web*. New York: Longman, 2003: 11–12.

that does not effectively make use of the multimodal affordances of the digital medium might be considered less successful as a whole, even if all of the writing samples included within it are strong. Think about how you might use other modes of expression in simple ways to make the portfolio truly a multimodal composition. You might include an image of yourself or something important to you in the introductory section. You could compose video or audio reflections. You could even link to other online spaces you keep, such as a blog or a social networking profile, provided those serve a purpose in achieving your goals for the portfolio. Multimodal elements such as these can be important in creating an electronic portfolio that is persuasive and polished.

TIME TO REFLECT 3—*Searching for Models of Effective Sites*

One of the best ways to develop your own ideas for the design of your e-portfolio is to look at examples of Web sites. Use an online search tool or your own bookmarks to find and examine sites that you regularly visit or that cover topics that interest you — personal blogs, social networking sites, corporate and commercial Web sites, personal portfolio sites. Look carefully at these sites in terms of their organization and design. How do the sites organize their content or the information they provide? Is it easy to access? What are the names of the menu items, and do those make sense to you as a user? How easy is it to find and navigate between areas or pages on a site? How does the overall visual look of the sites affect your reaction to them and your ability to use the sites? What do you notice about color schemes and use of images and multimedia that seems important? When you find some sites that you think work effectively and are visually interesting and well-designed, bookmark them as models that you can refer to for inspiration as you develop your own e-portfolio. Then, write a paragraph or two about why these sites inspire you and how you would like your own e-portfolio to be arranged and presented.

3

Staying Organized and Keeping a Working Folder

Once you begin to see how you will construct and design your portfolio and what presentation tools might work best, you are ready to begin keeping your working folder. Don't wait long to begin this step. You'll have a better experience with portfolio keeping if you take some time early on to begin your working folder. If your portfolio will be electronic, you should keep an electronic working folder. Some students use cloud storage (online services like Google Drive, Dropbox, or iCloud, etc.), USB drives, or Web or remote server space to store their electronic working folders. If you're going to rely on a number of paper documents, you may need a notebook or an accordion file folder to hold your work. Invest in a good organizer or binder that will withstand the wear and tear of backpacks or book bags and your busy life, and use the folder just for your portfolio project.

STAYING ORGANIZED

The first rule of portfolio keeping is to keep everything! When you're building a portfolio, don't discard notes, past projects, or anything you wrote that you got tired of or found frustrating. Upon reflection, you might find that the scattered bits or discarded drafts tell you something about your working habits and process. Keeping a portfolio means becoming a saver, but the saving needs to be organized. It's probably true that organized people generally have an edge in portfolio keeping, but if you aren't as organized as you would like to be, there's still hope. Start by thinking about how organized you usually are. Do you keep all of your appointments, deadlines, and to-do lists on your phone, and do you keep those up-to-date? As a student, an intern, or an employee, can you usually find the files, documents, or records you are looking for? When you sit down to complete a task or study for a

test, are you generally able to locate everything you need, or do you spend a lot of time gathering materials? Depending on how organized you are, you may have to give more or less attention to a working folder or other storage system. Basically, don't park anything in the back of a spiral notebook, in your car, or on your "desktop" if it is crowded with files. If you have different electronic storage locations, you might need to create names for your drives or files. With good storage habits, drafts will be easy to find at a later date.

In this guide we use the term *working folder* to designate a place for your collection — a destination for all of your stuff that you will select from later. If you saved seashells, your collection might be on a set of shelves or in glass jars; coin collections are often kept in velvet-lined boxes. The work you collect for your portfolio needs a home, too — a three-ring binder or the digital equivalent of a shoebox under the bed or a desk drawer. Nothing saved is too small or irrelevant if it serves to illustrate your working and thinking processes. You might want to show how you found an idea when scrolling through some old text messages, developed that idea with an outline, and then got more ideas from friends or a peer response group. You might want to show this process in your portfolio. Being organized — keeping your work or files in order — might not come naturally to you, but it can help tremendously when you're building a portfolio.

KEEPING A WORKING FOLDER

A working folder houses your collection — all the work that you have done before it's time to select the pieces for your portfolio. A portfolio, after all, is a collection of *selected* work. You'll need storage space because you're going to end up with a number of items, especially if your process extends over several months or a full year. If you are building an electronic portfolio but think that keeping hard copies will help you stay organized, then print out some of your work and file it in a paper folder. Many writers, including those who can't imagine writing without a keyboard anymore, edit and revise best on hard copy. You also might print hard copies after you make significant changes to a paper. Printing your drafts regularly can help you see your writing differently; it also expedites portfolio keeping. If your life is mostly paperless, and if all of your drafting and feedback is electronic, make sure you have reliable cloud storage that you can access from any computer, or invest in a portable storage device (but remember that those can, unfortunately, get lost).

Labeling and Saving Your Files

Whatever your storage system, your goal is to make it easy to find a specific draft, project, image, or other artifact. Label everything with a date,

and make sure that each pocket or file folder has a name. Here are several examples of labels you might use for hard copies of your work:

- First draft of Learning Contract
- Notes from field observation, 10/14/13
- Summary of coastal flooding article, returned with comments
- Peer feedback — Argument
- Draft of complaint letter
- Ideas for Web page design

Other logical ways of organizing your working folder include labeling or sorting according to (1) chronology, (2) topic, or (3) your own level of interest in each project. Table 3.1 shows examples of each.

The way in which you label the contents of your working folder is up to you, but some kind of labeling and ongoing organization system will help you enormously. Time spent labeling is time well spent. And if you are enrolled in an online class, or if you have been asked specifically to produce an electronic portfolio, you should at least make sure your working folder has an electronic component. Learners who prefer paper, though, may still want to keep their work in both printed and electronic form.

Electronic portfolio keeping requires careful saving, file naming, and storage. Keeping your work on a public computer is not a good idea unless your school requires you to log in to use it. Your work could be removed or copied by anyone. So protect your work, and always back it up. Find a reliable storage space like a cloud tool or a remote server (some schools provide all students with a certain amount of space on an institutional server), and save your work, regularly, to a second location like a USB drive.

TABLE 3.1 *Sample Labels*

Chronological Labeling	Topical Labeling	Interest Labeling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 1, drafts and notes • Project 1, instructor comments • Project 2, outline • Project 2, peer response • Project 2, revisions, round 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review for research project • Analysis of three shows • Informed argument about talk radio shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorite piece so far • Work I could revise • Projects I don't want to revisit

From all of this advice, try to remember these two important points:

1. Store all of your original files in the same place, a folder on your computer, for example. (Keep your backup copies elsewhere!) The folder can have multiple subfolders, but everything should be in the same place. For example, if you will be creating a portfolio for a specific course, create a folder labeled with the course name and number; then create subfolders within it for each assignment and all the associated files. If you are keeping work for a multicourse program or major, you might create a new folder titled *Final Portfolio* and then create subfolders within that for all the associated courses, assignments, and co-curricular activities that will need to be represented in the portfolio.
2. Use a consistent and clear labeling system that will enable you to determine which files are older versions of a project and which is the most recent version. If your instructor gives you guidelines on file naming, follow them. Otherwise create your own file-naming convention. For example, you might name a file *Last3B.rtf*, where “Last” is your last name, “3” denotes the third paper you wrote for a particular class, and “B” refers to the second draft of that paper. If a peer or the instructor offers comments on your draft, you could call it *Last3B-Peer.rtf* or *Last3B-Instructor.rtf* where “Peer” or “Instructor” would be the last name of the responder. Note that it is especially important if you are keeping an electronic portfolio to avoid having spaces in your file names; instead, use a hyphen (-) or the underscore symbol (_) in place of spaces between words in file names. If you create a Web site for your portfolio, you may want to upload these files to a server so that readers can download them, and Web browsers cannot process file names that include spaces.

Practice naming a file here with your name and your instructor's name:

When the time arrives for you to make selections from your collection, you will be able to quickly find the files you need if you have a clear and consistent file-naming convention. Your reviewers or editors, too, will know exactly which version of a project you're sharing. And again, back up your work frequently, rename files with every new version, and *save your work frequently*. Anytime you make a significant change (for example, moving a section of text, writing a great sentence, entering a series of statistics in a carefully designed table), save your document file again. At the end of a drafting or revising session on the computer, save your work and then back it up. Finally, if you really want to be safe, make a backup of your backup!

Tracking Readers' Comments

The portfolio method allows writers to trace their progress and chart their improvements. Electronic technologies can simplify your record keeping, save you time, and help you present a quality product at the end of the course. This is especially important when it comes to keeping track of the comments and responses you receive about your work.

Your readers — your instructor or supervisor, collaborators, peer reviewers, friends, even family members — influence the portfolio process and the final product immeasurably. When someone reads one of your drafts, quickly or carefully, as a favor or as an assigned activity, it is important to track his or her reactions, comments, and suggestions. If you wait until it's time to choose which projects to revise and submit, you won't remember what your readers said about the piece unless you have recorded their comments. For example, during a meeting in the library for your collaborative report, one of your teammates makes a great suggestion for organizing your information. When she has to leave to go to work, no one can remember what she said! Use the tools you have with you to capture brainstorming sessions or planning meetings: recording a conversation with your phone is a great idea, and you can listen to it later when you are composing or revising. Similarly, if you receive an e-mail from your supervisor about a change you need to make to the brochure you're working on, make sure you copy that e-mail to your working folder and label it.

If your instructor returns an assignment with comments via a course management site (e.g., Sakai, Blackboard, Moodle, Desire2Learn), you need to take the extra steps to open the document, perhaps by downloading it first, and read through the comments. When you do this, even if a revision is not required, or you don't anticipate choosing this piece for your portfolio, record your reactions or ideas in the margins, alongside the instructor's comments, so that you don't forget them.

In either case, before you file a returned project, make sure you label it *and* understand the comments. And before the opportunity passes, make some changes in response to the suggestions right away, while the ideas are fresh. Sonya, for example, gets her paper back and reads the following comment her instructor has written: "You've used organic cotton as an example of a sustainable fiber, but that depends on how you define sustainable." Sonya isn't sure why her example might not be working as she thought, so she e-mails her instructor later that day to ask for clarification. The instructor suggests that her definition of sustainability should come sooner in the paper and be more expansive, or she should drop her organic cotton example because it doesn't quite fit with what she's trying to argue. Sonya doesn't decide yet; but after the e-mail exchange, she labels that conversation in her Inbox for reference later, and she copies the exchange to Evernote, filed under "Revising Sustainability argument." In other words, Sonya

makes notes that will help focus her revision if she decides to include a revised version in her portfolio, and she also takes steps, before the moment passes, to retrieve the records of those ideas. It's best not to wait before reading your reviewer's comments or writing your own responses or ideas for revision. When you're ready to work on the piece again, you won't be starting from scratch.

Managing Your Time

In addition to tracking reviewers' comments, saving copies, making backups, and practicing good record keeping, you can also stay organized by managing your time wisely. If time management is a challenge, consider scheduling a block of time (for example, Wednesday nights from 8:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M.) to work on your portfolio keeping. Even if you have a deadline or another reading assignment you have to get done, you should still take time to review your returned drafts, to make notes that will help you reflect on your process, and to work on organizing your materials. Such time is very well spent because you'll be able to present a well-developed portfolio later.

TIME TO REFLECT 4—*Remembering a Time When Learning Clicked*

We learn in plenty of places other than classrooms, lecture halls, or labs, and we learn in ways other than by listening or watching. Describe a situation where you learned a lot and enjoyed the learning experience. It may or may not be an academic class; maybe it was a lesson or a series of lessons; maybe it took place at a camp, gym, temple, fairgrounds, museum, golf course, shop, library, or farm, or in a home or place of business. What made this learning experience a positive one for you?

4

Becoming a Reflective Learner

Consider a lighthouse keeper, a groundskeeper, a timekeeper. What do they have in common? Keepers keep watch. The reflective portfolio method asks you to keep watch over your own work and your own learning, and to pay close attention to your strengths and weaknesses, including your preferences and practices when working on projects. Understanding more about yourself as a writer, reader, and thinker helps you make sound choices for your portfolio.

With practice, you'll notice patterns or preferences in your learning. Reflective learners develop the ability to identify and discuss their choices, strengths, and learning processes. For either a process or presentation portfolio, you may be expected to include an introductory reflective essay or other reflective elements. For a process portfolio, you will want to identify what you have learned both from working on the individual projects and from the process of collecting, selecting, and arranging the entries. For a presentation portfolio, your reflective elements might outline the skills and strengths demonstrated by the artifacts and why you chose them for inclusion in your portfolio. Is this something you need to do? It's better to begin developing your reflective-thinking skills now than right before your portfolio is due.

PRACTICING REFLECTIVE LEARNING

Step back and evaluate your performance: What do you do well when faced with a new project? What do you need to do better to improve your working process? Maybe you have great ideas but find it difficult to organize them. Maybe you come up with provocative solutions but have trouble organizing and presenting sufficient and relevant evidence to support them. Maybe

you have trouble incorporating feedback during the drafting and revision process. If you can identify your working attitudes and habits, you've made a great start toward practicing reflective learning.

You've made a start, too, if you wrote in response to Time to Reflect 1 (p. 8). Try to cultivate the habit of recording, at least once a week or so, some thoughts about your learning in your course, internship, or other portfolio context. Ask yourself: What am I learning? How am I learning it? What is or isn't making sense? coming together? clicking? Remember: You can do this with a pen in a notebook or journal, or on your laptop or tablet, or on your phone in some quick notes to yourself. Write and reflect on your writing, and then store your reflection in your working folder. If you get into the habit of recording details about your learning experiences, you will have considerable materials to draw upon later in compiling your portfolio.

Write informally about the material you've covered recently in your course or internship:

- What do you understand, or what could you explain to others?
- Record your observations about the pace and quality of the course and your role in it.
- Have you made a contribution that made others think?
- Did someone else contribute something that made you think?
- What are your goals for next week?

It may seem like busywork, but this kind of record keeping and self-analysis will help you compose a first-rate portfolio. For instance, you can use this reflective writing as a springboard to the more formal self-assessment that your instructor might ask for later. It's difficult to go back when the class is nearly over and trace what you were thinking in the second week of class. Keeping watch now of your working process may lead you to an idea for a navigational scheme in your portfolio, to a design framework, or to a holistic and unifying metaphor for your learning in the course.

To make sure you are practicing reflective learning throughout the course, to help you keep watch, your instructor may assign one or more of the following reflective-writing tasks:

- Making regular entries in a writing journal or blog
- Composing reviewer memos
- Carrying out a midterm self-assessment

If you're not assigned one of these writing tasks, do at least one anyway on your own. Keeping watch can help you in the long run, and writing informally is a good way to learn material, rehearse main ideas, reinforce classroom discussion, and respond to assigned reading material. *Writing to learn* is the popular name for this kind of activity, and reflective learners depend on it.

JOURNALS AND BLOGS

Journals or blogs can take many forms — a personal diary, a travel narrative, a professional record. Generally, a journal can contain anything its keeper chooses to record; but for the purpose of becoming a more critically reflective learner, keep a writing journal in which you work through the decisions you're making for your portfolio. Track ideas, questions, problems, and triumphs; jot down possible titles, your work schedule, outlines, and lists. Note the ways your projects are developing or changing, too. Record your learning evolution using a method that is comfortable for you, whether that is a paper notebook, a document on your computer, or an online blog.

If you're not familiar with blogs, review some blogging applications like WordPress, Google's Blogger, and Tumblr to see what possibilities and features they offer. Using a blogging tool for reflective journal keeping is convenient because you can access your blog from any computer that is connected to the Internet. If you are in a class or internship that requires you to keep a blog, or to use another social media tool for your class (Twitter or a Facebook group, for example) there may be specific questions you need to answer; however, what makes blog writing effective is the immediacy of the

TIME TO REFLECT 5—Analyzing Keys to Reflective Learning

Here's an entry from Yvette's writing journal:

I think I'm trying to do way too much in this version. By the time I get to the conclusion, I'm having to summarize too much and cover the same territory again, which may be a sign that I've been over-ambitious. Shane [a peer reviewer] hinted that my thesis was too broad, but I didn't want to hear it because I was still very excited about the ideas and still finding plenty to say. Now that I've found more examples and developed most of the major points, I see that I need to go back and sharpen the thesis by dropping the historical stuff, where I cover some of the earliest uses of social media. I think the paper will work better without that overview, and I'll just concentrate on the uses of social media as activism. It seems as though I've done a lot of writing on the history part for nothing, but maybe I can use it for another essay later if I stay interested in it.

What evidence do you find here that Yvette is a reflective learner? How does this entry move her writing process forward? Compare Yvette's journal entry about her writing process to one of your own. Have you found yourself making decisions about a project through your reflective writing? To what extent are you able to identify patterns or habits in your own work?

ideas. When you think of something, blog it. Don't wait until next week. Later you can spend time reviewing your blog. You also can copy and paste links to Web pages you want to review later into your blog. You can use it as a research log, too. Some students, in fact, use their blog as their working folder or even as an electronic portfolio tool itself. You can link all of your artifacts through your blog. (Because blogs are an online space, there are privacy issues. If you wish for your blog to remain private, use the privacy settings that most blogging tools provide to limit access to your blog. If your instructor wants to be able to review your reflective blogging, you can set your blog up so that only those you invite have access to it.)

Read Time to Reflect 5, and answer the questions in your journal or blog.

REVIEWER MEMOS

Since writing is a way of working out ideas, we often are able to write our way to a solution or to a valuable insight. Various forms of reflective writing ask you to write about the work you're currently doing. In other words, you might write to a potential reader about how a project is going or what you've accomplished so far or what's not going so well. In the act of writing, for a real or imagined audience, you might solve the problem you're having. You can write reflectively at any point in the writing or working process. Some people use reflective writing between drafts to help sharpen the focus of their writing or to help figure out the most effective organizational structure. Others find it helpful to write a cover note when preparing to share a draft with reviewers. That is, when you are about to share your writing with peer reviewers, a valued colleague, or your instructor, you would write a note or memo that gives them some insight into your goals for the piece or asks them to pay attention to a certain part.

Before asking other people to review your work and offer feedback, reflect on these questions about your project: How do you feel about it, or how is the process going? What shape do you think it's in? What questions do you have for readers about the piece? Do some work judging your own work before you ask others to judge, and do it in writing. It's not enough to think about your answers to these questions: The act of writing your answers gives you more insight.

The questions in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, on pages 30 and 31, were designed by an instructor for students to answer about their own essays, the processes they went through to write the papers, and their thoughts on the feedback or advice they received from readers. (Reflection shared between readers and writers helps both get more out of the response process, as we discuss below.) You might use the sample questions as prompts for your own reflection.

FIGURE 4.1 *Reviewer Memo for Your Informational Brochure*

To:

From:

Re:

1. My target audience for this brochure is:
2. My key purpose in designing this brochure is to:
3. My most important decisions or choices included the following:
4. The most useful and credible source I am using is:
5. The design element I like best right now is:
6. The design element I'm frustrated with or don't like is:
7. Reviewers can help me most by helping me answer the following questions I have about this version:

Using Reviewer Memos to Get More Out of Peer Review

Because they give your readers direction and focus, reviewer memos help move the peer response process along in ways that you need them to move. Composing a reflective memo for a reviewer or reader helps you identify areas in a draft with which you feel dissatisfied, even if you cannot quite name, let alone fix, the problems. Alerting readers to these areas will help them help you — if your cover memo can focus readers on what you feel your writing needs. It also leads to more thoughtful responses. Without a cover memo, reviewers often give generic, unfocused commentary. How many times has a classmate read a paper of yours and said, “I like it; it’s good,” and nothing more? When you reply, “Are you sure?” your reader finds a spelling mistake, but that’s about it. Reading a memo first helps readers know where to look and encourages them to give considered and thorough feedback.

When you compose a memo, usually you describe your working process, identifying the steps you took or a strategy that proved fruitful. These descriptions — one account for each project — provide a record of how you felt about each work before readers saw it. This is an excellent form of directed reflection. Reviewer memos concentrate the reader’s attention on your focus, support, or organization so that they have more to say to you about what works and what needs work in your draft.

FIGURE 4.2 *Reviewer Memo for Your Proposal Argument*

Name:

Title:

1. What problem or issue are you addressing in your proposal, and how did you come up with this topic? If you changed topics along the way, when did you switch and why?
2. What exactly are you proposing — a solution or change in policy, procedure, or attitude? Who will be interested in this proposal?
3. What is the most important piece of research that informs your proposal? Summarize the author’s argument in two or three sentences.
4. Name three specific ways that your paper has changed since our last workshop. If you wish, identify someone who was very helpful in guiding those changes.
5. How can I [the instructor] help you most in my response to this draft? Be specific about parts or passages that you think still need work or that you want me to look at carefully. What questions do you have for me as a reader?

Reviewer memos can vary in form or function, but they help writers keep track of the process they went through to plan, research, and draft each paper, as well as where they got stuck and where things clicked. These notes help jog your memory and provide you with phrases to use when you are asked to explain your writing process in your portfolio or are expected to reflect on choices you made. Keep these memos in your working folder, and review them frequently to move in directed ways on your revisions. The

TIME TO REFLECT 6—*Generating Reviewer Memo Questions*

Review the sample memos in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, and then draft three or more questions for the project you’re working on right now. Your questions should ask what you have done so far and what you still need to do. Answer your own questions in your journal or blog. You might also do an Internet search for blogs that reflect on writing in progress to get some ideas for your reflective questions.

memo examples in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate how the questions should change according to the assignment and what you've already done in the course.

MIDTERM SELF-ASSESSMENTS

It is very important to keep watch over your work as your course or internship program approaches its midway point. By this time, certain concepts or routines should be familiar to you. If you've missed a class that covered something important, or if you don't quite understand a term, concept, or assignment, there's still time to catch up, clarify, or ask for extra help. If you don't get help in a timely way, you may not have a chance to learn from the task you were assigned and apply your learning to what comes next in the course.

Plan to take stock, then, of how you're doing at midterm or at the half-way mark in your portfolio process. Examine which strategies are or aren't working for you, and what you need to concentrate on for the remainder of the course. Your instructor may ask you to take stock by conducting an inventory of your working folder for your portfolio. You should try to look both forward and backward at your progress in the course and write some sort of self-assessment or reflective piece. This is good practice for the reflective elements that will be included in your portfolio. Even if your instructor doesn't require this type of reflection, it's an excellent idea to review your working folder at midterm and spend at least thirty minutes writing your own self-assessment. Answer questions you have about your process, about your strengths, and about your preferences and working habits. Try to evaluate your habits and see where your record keeping, organizational skills, or reflective learning practice could use some work.

In writing self-assessments, students often discover something about their working patterns that they had not noticed before, and sometimes they find areas where they need to work harder. Aisha, for example, describes her typical writing process: "I tend to write one draft, bring it to the workshop, then edit that one draft a little and hand it in as a final draft. I never spend a lot of time writing things over or revising my papers. This is a habit I still have from high school classes." Kabir sees a lack of development: "I find that in my writing I have good ideas, but I don't develop them enough. I feel all my papers are good, but they need more." And Jamie admits that she isn't giving readers enough help: "I tend to leave things unclear. I assume because I know what I'm talking about that my readers should also." Each of these students identifies areas where his or her writing could use work, and recognizing problem areas is a great place to start. Because these students took stock of their work at midterm, they can benefit from their self-assessment over the rest of the course.

Journals, reviewer memos, and self-assessments are just three ways of keeping watch over your own learning. Your instructor or team leader will likely have other ideas as well. Practicing reflection throughout your portfolio process, using any method that works for you, makes your learning more meaningful and increases your chances of pulling together a first-rate portfolio.

5

Keeping Company and Working with Others

Many people find that they need privacy and quiet to concentrate when working on complex and difficult projects. But being able to present the final product of that work is crucial, so it's important to remember that even writing is not really a solitary activity. We get our ideas from our environment, and we communicate those ideas with an intended audience in mind. In other words, nothing is done in a vacuum; projects grow from ideas that are planted or nurtured by others through social interactions that may be educational, professional, or recreational. The actual physical activity of working on a project may take place in what appears to be a closed environment, but the mental activities involved are heavily influenced by society and culture.

No matter what kind of work you do, you must be able to effectively communicate the result of your work to others whether in the form of a final paper, presentation, report, or multimedia production. In some cases, you are communicating with an intended reader such as your supervisor, instructor, or those on your peer review team, but sometimes you also are communicating with a *broader* audience — others outside your specific classroom or work context who need to be informed or convinced. Perhaps you're trying to persuade decision makers to adopt a particular policy, or perhaps you're writing to inform a prospective employer of your skills and experience. You must always think, as you work, about those with whom you are trying to communicate and begin to understand the collaborative nature of work, even writing.

Classes that emphasize discussion, participation, and group work often foster a community of learners. You are part of a subculture, in effect, with shared experiences, vocabularies, and concerns. And a writing class that relies on group work offers distinct privileges: you're aware of the history of the class, along with its inside jokes and stories; you know who is most

helpful and whom to ask for help; and you know you'll be missed if you're absent. Any group that meets regularly and has a common goal or mission is bound to establish patterns of communications and relationships. Familiarity and shared experiences, however, cut two ways: communities offer a sense of belonging, but they also insist on responsible membership.

Being a responsible and reflective member of a writing team, response group, or workshop classroom means being prepared to do your share of the work. You need to be ready to help others by meeting deadlines, for example. You also can practice responsible group membership by paying close attention to how your group works and how it might work even better.

TIME TO REFLECT 7—Evaluating a Recent Peer Review Session

Analyze your most recent peer response session; that is, take it apart to see how it worked. Who participated? Did each member contribute? How? If you've worked with the same group before, what rules — both formal and informal — have been established about how group members are expected to work together? What patterns of communication have developed? What ritual activities does your group engage in? If you've recently joined a new group, what went well in the process of communicating? What didn't? Did everyone participate equally?

Write two or three paragraphs in response to these questions. Share your response with your group members, and then formulate a set of goals for improving your next peer response session.

The writing process is perhaps most social when it involves sharing your drafts with others and receiving their feedback. Writing courses that include portfolios tend to offer many opportunities for this kind of sharing and response, and you are expected to seek and to offer peer response. Even if there's not enough class time to allow for adequate responses, and even if you're not required to do reviewer memos, you should be a responsible learner and group member, sharing your reflections and asking classmates to exchange responses, perhaps via e-mail.

In class or in a workplace setting, there are many ways to offer comments on your peers' work. If someone has asked you to follow a particular strategy, you'll want to go with that. If not, here are some ideas for reviewing others' electronic drafts:

- You can offer your comments at the top of the draft or in a reply e-mail.
- In your word processing program, you can use Track Changes to show your comments, or insert your remarks in a color, in brackets, or in all

caps. These programs also have a “commenting” feature that allows you to insert marginal notes on the document.

- Google Drive is a document-sharing site where writers can collaborate on one document. Those invited to share can all make changes to the document or post comments.
- Hyperlinking can also be helpful for commenting. If you check out the companion Web site or do an Internet search on “online writing lab,” you’ll find a list of portals that have a number of valuable resources for writing. You could copy a relevant URL, select a word or phrase in a draft you’re reviewing, and insert the link, and then add a comment if you like. When the writer gets the draft back, he or she has a link to a web page that gives particular guidance.

Whatever tool and technique you use, be specific and, where you can, phrase your comments as questions. By asking rather than stating, you are offering advice that keeps on giving. That is, your questions may apply to more than just one point in the paper. Help your fellow writers develop a plan for their revision. Without a plan, the response you offer — or receive — may be too vague or take too long to be useful.

In any situation, becoming a good reviewer takes practice. In writing classes, many students new to peer response groups struggle with what to say. The sentence openers in the following list assume that you are sitting with a small group of peers discussing your drafts, or that you’re at a computer with someone else’s draft on the screen. It will help the discussion and your commentary if you can point to specific passages to illustrate your point. Try using some of these phrases as starters to break the ice in your next peer response group or to begin a comment that you find difficult to express:

- “I like the way you . . .”
- “What strikes me most about your project is . . .”
- “Why did you decide to . . .?”
- “This part made me [smile, wonder, feel sad].”
- “I wonder if you should move this part to here so that . . .”
- “I get lost here when . . .”
- “I am surprised by this conclusion because I expected . . .”

Sharing your work and giving helpful feedback get easier with time and practice, and you’ll learn the benefits of working with others to improve your writing and communication skills.

The next time you ask a friend or roommate to read a draft for you, even casually or quickly, use the guidelines offered throughout this chapter, or refer to the sample reviewer memos in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. It takes extra work to be a good reader for others, but it shows that you respect the

process and respect others’ ideas if you can engage in a sincere and intelligent conversation. When a friend or peer reviewer just says, “It’s good,” you may be pleased initially. But you need to know why it’s good. If you don’t, you haven’t really learned anything. By the same token, you may think you’re being kind by writing “It’s good, no problems” on a classmate’s work; but this kind of response lacks depth and doesn’t help writers improve or realize the true effect of their words. Instead, be honest and give constructive criticism, the kind of criticism that’s intended to help.

Readers can only be as helpful as writers want and expect them to be, of course. Here are some questions that might help shape your next peer response session. Ask your next reader to answer these questions for you about your draft:

1. If you read it quickly, can you read it again before we talk about it?
2. What part stands out most for you? What do you remember most about it?
3. Can you point out a passage that seems out of order or might be a stronger point elsewhere?
4. Where should I add another example or a fact or an illustration?
5. The assignment requires _____. Do you think I’ve done that?
6. Can you point out one sentence that you stumbled over or had to reread?
7. Is my project important? How can I make it more significant?
8. Are there places I can be more concise or precise?
9. Do you know of any good Web sites or key terms that I should use to search for sites that might help me think about my paper in a different way?
10. Do you think my style, tone, and word choice are appropriate for my audience and purpose? Can you point to one of my stylistic choices that is inconsistent?

6

Keeping Up and Getting Unstuck

As you know, much of the work in your course or program happens outside of the classroom or working environment. You often face your work alone. You may have left your peer response meeting with a list of suggestions from your reviewers, but late at night in front of the screen, with no one else around, *you* have to make decisions; *you* have to keep the process moving. Sometimes, though, you can't. Even the most experienced professionals get stuck now and again. When you don't have the option of putting a project away until next week or next month or however long it takes for inspiration to strike, you need to develop strategies that can help you make steady progress or at least keep you from falling hopelessly behind. As you read the three scenarios in this chapter, think about what you would do if you were stuck in the same way.

GETTING STARTED

On a typical Wednesday during Daria's first-year writing course, the class spends twenty minutes or so discussing a new writing assignment: *Write a review of a book, movie, restaurant, performance, or exhibition for a specific type of publication.* Daria's instructor emphasizes the importance of following certain criteria for the review, and the class generates a list of criteria for reviewing both a restaurant and a horror movie. Students ask questions about length and what newspapers or magazines would be acceptable to target, and then class time is up. Daria is expected to report orally on her ideas for this review in class on Friday, in just two days, and she'll need to have an initial draft for Monday's peer response workshop. But Daria is stuck. She prefers assignments that are more specific and that give her few options; for example, she would feel more confident if the assignment was

to review a specific movie for a particular publication. She doesn't know where to begin.

What are Daria's choices? Here are some ideas: She can hope that inspiration strikes in the next forty-eight hours. Or she can stay a few minutes after class to ask the instructor for help. She can e-mail the instructor later that day, or she can call or stop by the instructor's office for a quick appointment. She also can stop by or contact the writing center, to see if a tutor has time to help brainstorm ideas.

Like Daria, if you leave class without fully understanding an assignment, you're going to have to figure it out somehow. Take advantage of any available class time to ask for clarification. If you're confused in class but aren't sure what to ask yet, make sure you have the instructor's e-mail address and office hours, and ask as soon as possible later in the day. Or if class time runs out and your question wasn't answered, stick around to ask the instructor your question, or see if a classmate has time to discuss the assignment. Maybe the assignment seems clear in class but gets murky when you first sit down to work on it. To sort through what's being asked, circle or underline the key words or phrases that signal exactly what's expected. Pay special attention to the verbs. Look for key words like *analyze*, *explain*, *illustrate*, *argue*, *support*, *show*, and *discuss*. For terms you don't understand, check the dictionary or textbook, and be sure to ask about them during the next class if you're still unsure.

Getting started with ideas and narrowing the writing task may take considerable time, but if that first step goes well, chances improve that the other steps will also go well. There might not always be enough class time for you to plan your paper or get ideas from others. But if you feel all alone in getting started, find ways to reach out for help.

PLANNING AND DRAFTING MORE EFFECTIVELY

Antonio is working at an internship with a local nonprofit community organization that provides a variety of services for the elderly in the county where his college is located. His supervisor has asked him to draft a new brochure that will provide information about a new service being offered through the organization. The information needs to be presented in a way that is clear, concise, and easy to comprehend. Antonio is used to writing long end-of-term research papers in school and has not thought about having anyone but an instructor read his writing, or having others review early drafts to help him determine whether he is communicating his ideas clearly. With this project, however, he realizes he will have to figure out how to organize and condense information and then decide if that information is clear to people.

Antonio begins by trying to use his research paper writing experience to help him compile all of the background he needs on the new service by

collecting information from the staff members of the organization who are in charge of developing and implementing the new program. He realizes that much of this information is not going to be necessary or relevant to the seniors who will be using this new service, though, so he has to understand more about who those people are and what they are like in order to figure out how to communicate with them effectively. He compiles a list of questions that he e-mails to the program director. After learning more about the audience for the new service, he is able to cull his research and select the key pieces of information that he needs to convey.

When he has a first working draft of a brochure, he prints several copies and submits them to his supervisor and to other members of the staff familiar with the project. He also provides them with a reviewer's memo that asks specific questions which will help him revise the brochure and adapt the content for inclusion on a new information page for the service on the organization's Web site.

SEEKING OUT OTHER READERS AND LEARNING ABOUT RESOURCES

Jasper begins his business writing class concerned about whether his writing skills are good enough. He's worried that his work won't be up to par. Struggling alone with the first assignment, he wishes he had some way of knowing if he is on the right track. Then, during the second week of class, a tutor gives a brief presentation about the campus writing center's services. She says they take walk-ins on a first-come, first-served basis, but that appointments are also available. For those who cannot always get to the center, some information (handouts on avoiding plagiarism, for example) is available on the writing center's Web site. The tutor recommends that Jasper and his classmates come prepared with a copy of the assignment, with any notes or drafts, and/or with a paper returned from an instructor. In response to a question about a typical session, the tutor clarifies that every session is different depending on where students are in the writing process, what they need to work on, and what they bring to the session. Tutors are trained to focus the session in productive ways. Finally, the tutor announces that "we will not proofread your papers," but she also explains that tutors will teach students strategies for finding and correcting their errors.

Jasper learns that the writing center is a place where writers meet to talk about their work with other writers, and that most colleges and universities have writing centers. These places are friendly and informal, with an atmosphere defined by the idea that "everyone is learning to write." Writers at all levels and in all disciplines are welcome. It's not unusual on a given day to find a graduate student writing a thesis in microbiology, a budding poet working

on verse for a creative writing course, and a senior working on a résumé. Jasper learns that writing tutors are often students, too, studying writing every day, and that most colleges and universities offer other tutoring or support services, usually paid for by tuition and fees. Even if he just wants to use a computer or have someone explain CBE documentation style, Jasper can visit the writing center and find someone to talk to about his writing.

FINDING GOOD READERS

Daria, Antonio, and Jasper got stuck at different points in the working process, something that happens to all of us, especially when we are faced with deadlines. Finding a good reviewer is often the first step toward finding the solution to getting unstuck. But what makes a good reviewer and how do you find one? Good readers can be found in many places, both in and out of class. Even though your peer response group is the most obvious place to find readers, it's often a good idea to seek the advice of other readers whose judgment you can also trust, especially if you prepare that person well with clear and specific questions. A spouse, friend, roommate, classmate in another course, and tutor in the writing center can be good readers as well.

After sharing a draft of a work-in-progress with someone, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I want to work on this again? Can I imagine a starting place for revision?
- Do I know exactly what my reviewer suggested?
- Did the reviewer's reaction confirm my suspicions or reinforce what I think my project needs?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then you've found yourself a good reviewer for your work now and in the future, even if that person is not enrolled in your class.

You might also find credible writing help online through an independent service. How do you know the information offered about writing and writers is legitimate? What kind of help do you think a service could give you and other writers in your class?

Now that you have begun working through the process of planning and organizing your portfolio, selecting and revising samples of work, and thinking reflectively, you should turn your attention to presenting the portfolio to others. In the next section of this booklet, we will discuss the way assessment and evaluation fit into the portfolio-keeping process and how you, as a portfolio keeper, should consider the way your portfolio will be assessed as you continue this process. Now is a good time to revisit some of your earlier planning activities and refresh your memory about your purpose

TIME TO REFLECT 8—*Imagining a Place for Support*

Where might you find ideal readers, those who are trained and attentive? Many campuses have a writing center, career center, or learning center. As your portfolio process gets well under way, it might be time to find out where it is, and go there! Take notes or collect a brochure or pamphlet that explains the center's services and procedures. In a short paragraph, describe what you found when you got there, whom you talked to or corresponded with, and what you found out about the help that's available to you. Then write clear directions for students or visitors who have just arrived on your campus or who are just learning their way around the school's Web site. Be sure to put what you've written into your working folder.

and audience in creating this portfolio. See if you can answer each of the following questions.

- Is my portfolio supposed to show development, best works, or some combination of the two?
- Do I make all of the choices about what to include, or will I be following guidelines, and am I sure what those are?
- How many artifacts or entries should be included? What kind? Can I include work I've done in different contexts — or from different classes? work I've produced for an internship or job? pictures, maps, or other graphics? sound clips or other multimedia files?
- Do all of the entries I include need to be revised and polished? If so, what level, quality, or extent of revision is expected?
- What are the stakes for this portfolio, or how will it be assessed?
- If it is assessed, are the different artifacts or entries assessed separately? Or is the entire portfolio evaluated as a single document?
- Who will be reading, viewing, or grading my portfolio?
- What writing will I have to do specifically for the portfolio? Will I need a preface or introduction? Does each entry need its own introduction? Is reflection or self-assessment expected, or are description and explanation adequate?

If you are uncertain of anything, now is the time to get answers as you start to prepare your portfolio for assessment.

PART TWO

From Process to Product—Preparing for Assessment