Composition teachers,

Last semester during our review of ePortfolios, we had some problems deciding what needed to be read, so we want to make a couple of things clearer.

In the portfolio for the assessment reviewers, please include the following:

- **We want only the final, revised drafts of papers.** In your class you may evaluate the portfolio by including journals, previous drafts, and so on, but all the reviewers need are the final drafts. You may want your students to create two portfolio files on ASULearn: one for your class and one for the reviewers.
- A table of contents
- A brief description of the type of paper (personal narrative, literacy narrative, argument, research assignment, etc. We do not need the entire description of the assignment.)
- A reflective portfolio letter if you assign one (We would like to encourage you to include a reflective letter in the portfolio, a self-assessment by students of their own writing. See the attached handout on Reflective Writing for specific suggestions.)
- Don’t forget to mark the appropriate goals and outcomes on ASULearn. See Sherry Hart’s handout (also attached) on how to mark Goals and Outcomes on ASULearn.

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REFLECTIVE WRITING

In REFLECTIVE WRITING the writer explores his or her emotional and cognitive responses to a given academic task or subject. This type of writing is heavily emphasized in the new GEN ED and WAC curriculums, and I see it as some of the best writing that students do in my classes.

METACOGNITION (roughly “knowing about knowing”) refers to the self-awareness of how one writes. Some composition teachers ask students to contemplate how they write and to be aware of the steps they go through in the writing process from idea to final product and to include this metacognitive thinking in the reflective letter.

CLASSROOM REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES

- Reflective letters for assignments
- Sideshadowing (Nancy Welch)
  - Readers sideshadow for writers
  - Writer sideshadows for self
- Letters for peers (Art Young)
- Timelines
- Reflective Journals
REFLECTIVE LETTER QUESTIONS (adapted from John Zubizarreta)

- What have I learned about myself as a learner?
- What learning tasks were most difficult?
- What learning tasks did I respond to most easily?
- What have I learned about my emotional responses as a learner?
- What was the most significant thing that happened to me as a learner?
- What learning activity was most surprising?
- What would I do differently?
- What do I feel proudest about regarding my learning activity?
- What do I feel most dissatisfied about concerning my learning activities?
- What are my plans for learning?

PORTFOLIO LETTER QUESTIONS

- Discuss your strengths and weaknesses as a writer. What do you do well when you write? What do you struggle with?
- Explain the process you go through to write a paper—the steps you go through from idea to final draft: What works for you? What have you tried that doesn’t? Have you tried anything different this semester?
- Explain the topic you chose and discuss why you chose to write about it.
- What do you like or dislike about the one-topic format?
- Discuss each paper’s merits and faults, including problems or challenges you faced in writing the papers. What is good about the papers? What could improve them?
- Which papers are you submitting for the grade? Why did you choose to revise these papers? Why did you not choose to revise the others?
- Discuss the ‘other writing’ you submitted: What is it? Why did you choose to submit it?
- What class activity or project helped you learn the most? Why?
- Which activity was the least helpful? Why?
- Has the portfolio helped you improve as a writer? Why or why not?
- Has the class helped you improve as a writer? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about yourself as a writer in this class? What did you learn about yourself as a reader? What did you learn?

For more information about reflective writing, contact Dennis Bohr (bohrdj@appstate.edu).