



# Success Center Tips for Portfolio Evaluation

Eng. 95/96 Portfolio Contents: 2 papers, 1 letter/essay, and folder. Headings: Student I.D. Number and Course Code (See instructor). Delete all references to your name and your instructor's name. Staple the pages of each item together.

## Revision Strategies for Papers and a Cover Letter/Essay

### Structure

- Introduction catches the reader's attention.
- Body contains details.
- Conclusion summarizes the paper.

### Paragraphs

- Discuss a single idea.
- Limit to less than a full page

### Sentences

- Avoid fragments and run-ons. Revise the following run-on sentence:

**College is too serious I am not ready to grow up.**

- Subject and verbs, and nouns and pronouns should agree. Revise sentences like the following:

**Everybody is dancing having a good time and there is a lot of girls dancing around getting crazy showing off there body.**

### Words

- Verbs should stay in the same tense.
- Adjectives modify nouns and adverbs modify verbs. Revise sentences like the following:

**Josh and I started working real hard running and doing drills and going to the batting cages.**

- Choose the word you mean to say. The following sentence uses two words that the writer mostly likely did not mean to use:

**If theres not alot of girls at the dance, your going to leave fast.**

## **Letters or Essays**

*Note: English 95/96 students are asked to write a portfolio cover letter, while English 101 students may be asked to compose a portfolio essay, which may also be called a commentary, submission notes, or self-reflective essay.*

### **Overview**

- The cover letter, like an essay, contains well-organized, fully developed ideas, a sense of audience, and a purpose. A cover letter introduces the reader to the selections in the portfolio and discusses the writer's method of composing and revising the essays. A carefully revised and proofread cover letter achieves coherence and is free of surface, mechanical errors. We hear the writer's voice in the letter. Word-process a neat final draft. Use 12 pt. fonts: Calibri, Century Schoolbook, Bookman Old Style, or Times New Roman are neat, readable fonts. Avoid bold, italic type styles.
- Introduce the readers to your writing experiences this semester. What have you learned about yourself as a writer? Now that you have completed the course, compare your previous ideas and methods on writing to what you are doing and thinking now, explaining similarities and/or differences.

### **Writing Process**

- Introduce the titles of the essays you are submitting in your portfolio. Why did you choose these essays? What message are you trying to get across in these papers?
- Tell the readers how you start your papers; for example, explain the pre-writing strategies that have worked best when you were gathering ideas for the papers you are submitting: cluster or web diagrams, focused free-writing, listing, outlining.

- Explain how you organize your ideas when you write. Why are you the best person to write these essays? How do you get your message across to the reader?
- Explain what you find most challenging about writing and what have you improved on this semester. Introductions or conclusions? Staying focused? Flow of ideas? Tying everything together? Eliminating awkward wording? Adding detailed examples, explanations, or descriptions?
- Explain your revision process. What are you able to change about the essays to make them better?
- If you could write these two papers one more time, what would you do differently?

### **Closing**

- Address your reasons for thinking the portfolio demonstrates writing skills needed to succeed in your present and future writing classes. Stress that you will continue to work hard to improve your writing. Thank the committee for reviewing your portfolio.

### **Evaluation**

#### Basic Questions about Essay Quality

**Fluency:** How well developed is the essay? Do you have plenty of examples, reasons, details, descriptions, anecdotes and evidence to support your ideas? Does it seem that the writer easily fills out the essay or that he/she reluctantly scratches out a few short paragraphs?

**Rhetorical Context:** To what extent is there an awareness of topic, of audience, of the writer, and of the inter-relationships between the three?

**Thought:** What is the quality of ideas? This includes inferences, analysis, connections, maturity, logic, reason, persuasion, humor, inferences, analogies, etc.

**Order:** How organized is the essay? How coherent? How clear? How are the transitions?

**Language:** How correct is the writing? To what extent is there a real writing style: alternation of sentence lengths, use of rhythms, variety of sentence structure, etc.?

**Self-Assessment/Cover Letter:** How aware is the writer of his/her own writing process? Of his/her strengths and weaknesses? How accurate and authentic is the writer in the use of terminology: Is he/she merely giving lip service to buzzwords, perhaps mimicking portfolio samples, or does he/she self-assess in a convincing way? How well aware is the writer of the role the cover letter plays in the portfolio?