

Constructive reflection is valuable, yes, as a kind of rehearsal for the reflective texts that “matter”—the ones inside portfolios and the reflections-in-presentation accompanying them. And constructive reflection is also valuable for itself, for what it captures *between and among and outside and inside the drafts: the writer inventing him or herself.*

Notes

1. Setting our own goals is what “graduated” writers do, of course. It may be, however, that one purpose of a writing course to help students learn to act that independently.
2. In another project, Meg Morgan and I are taking up this issue by reviewing a set of reflective essays culled from a set of exemption portfolios. What we’ve found so far includes: students see the first term as an elaborate exercise in revision; they have a language that they can use to talk about writing, which varies from a non-rhetorical kind of “product language” to a “rhetorically based” language; they see writing as dichotomous, with it either being “creative” or “academic”; they don’t believe that the two voices or stands can be combined in a single text. See “Reflective Essays, Curriculum, Research, and the Scholarship of Administration: Notes toward Administrative Scholarly Work,” forthcoming.
3. I’m hoping that the others on the listserv are listening, too, as I pose myself a set of new questions relating to the interaction between electronic communication and reflection. Is a listserv a particularly good place for reflection, as some have claimed, and if so, why and how, and how would we make the best use of it? What effect does having a class audience exert on our observations, our reflection? I argued earlier that having others to hear our stories is crucial for reflection: I still think this assertion is true. But I have to wonder when and where and how/often.

Reflection-in-Presentation

*What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.*

T. S. Eliot

*An age that has become distrustful of history is still willing to read
avidly the first-person account, one . . . by the participant true to
his or her subjective response.*

Robert Folkenflik

IRONICALLY, THE REFLECTION THAT IS BEST KNOWN—WHAT I’VE called *reflection-in-presentation*—is the least well understood and the least well theorized. It’s (also) the reflection that we are most familiar with, regardless of the form it takes: the introductory “Letter to the Reader” that fronts the writing portfolios used for exemption at Miami University (Black et al.); the annotations upon single pieces that accompany selections in the Missouri Western portfolio-in-the-major (Allen, Frick et al.); the final reflective essay that summarizes and interprets the exhibits appearing in the New Standards portfolios used in the K-12 context (Myers and Pearson); and the various stand-alone reflective texts that students write to conclude a course (Marshall; Perl 1997). All of these reflective texts are presentational, although as Miami University researchers Black, Daiker, Sommers, and Stygal point out, what’s valued in these presentations shifts from context to context. Part of that context is the situation within which a portfolio is read. Is the course or program grounding the reflective text one that favors cultural critique, for instance, or is it oriented more to issues of voice and expression? This context will have much to do with—may even (over)determine—what is valued in the reflection-in-presentation.¹

In this chapter we'll examine two varieties of reflection-in-presentation: 1) the reflective text that accompanies a classroom portfolio; 2) the reflective text that stands alone as a culminating document. Then, in chapter seven, we'll renew the discussion on reflection-in-presentation by examining its role in a more formal assessment context.²

In the phrase *reflection-in-presentation*, we see its dual nature: it is both a *reflection*, a "seeing inside" (to use a Yup'ik translation), and a *presentation*, a public text representing the self. Rhetorically, it is occasioned by a call to explain to someone outside the self how a practitioner—a teacher, say, or student—works to define and address problems, and/or to summarize and interpret what she or he has learned. Learning results from addressing the problems, sometimes from the materials and interactions of a course, sometimes from the teaching enterprise unproblematicized. Typically reflection-in-presentation occurs in two contexts: 1) as an independent document, in a class at the end of a term as a kind of cumulative event (Marshall; Perl 1997); 2) more commonly, within a portfolio, at the end of a course or at a point of decision-making (eg, placement into a first-year course; tenure and promotion for faculty). In this sense, then, reflection-in-presentation is public and academic, and at the same time, personal and extra-curricular—an explaining both ~~off~~ the self and ~~about~~ the self to an outside audience.

Given the rhetorical situation of reflection-in-presentation, it can be seen as drawing on several disciplinary contexts. The first, as we might expect, is the context supplied by reflection itself: its relationship to reflection-in-action and constructive reflection. Reflection-in-presentation is very like constructive reflection in that it is cumulative, and as it works from the particular to general and back, it focuses ultimately on what William Gass calls a *shaping self* (51). It is what we ask of our students when we ask them to draw texts together for review, to discern patterns, to synthesize, even to recognize gaps and make sense of those—and then to explain what they observe and understand in a public way. In writing classes, we do this when we ask students to think about who they are as writers, when we ask them to discern patterns among subject positions they have taken, when we ask them to plot their own cumulative development

as an increasing accretion of writing selves—and then to explore and explain all this in a formal presentation to an "other."

As important, reflection-in-presentation differs from reflection-in-action and from constructive reflection. For one thing, it requires different skills, as Schon explains:

Clearly, it is one thing to be able to reflect-in-action and quite another to be able to reflect on our reflection in action so as to produce a good verbal description of it; and it is still another thing to be able to reflect on the resulting description. (31)

Reflection-in-presentation is that *good verbal description*, but with one important caveat: *as prepared for an audience*. Accordingly, it is a description that must *satisfy both the writer and the reader*.

We can also understand reflection-in-presentation by drawing on its similarity to two fields of work not typically associated with reflection per se: the one, science; the other, autobiography.

In separate presentations, faculty advocate and current Carnegie Foundation President Lee Shulman and philosopher and social scientist Walter F. Fisher compare the processes employed by scientists with those employed in reflection-in-presentation. Scientists, Shulman says, use a two-stage process to make knowledge: first, they occlude the flow of work; second, they prepare that work for public presentation.³ The interruption of work allows the scientists to review what they have accumulated, to read the data and begin to make some sense of it. The preparation for a public audience requires that the scientists (working in a Vygotskian manner) explain what they have learned. In forming that explanation for others, they explain it to themselves.

Walter Fisher makes the same case for the combination of reflection and presentation as *intertwined means of learning about, of knowing*. In discussing the invention of the double-helix, Fisher explains,

Rigorous reasoning obviously was involved in the invention of the double-helix model, but so was reflection not guided by strict inferential rules but by alternative possibilities and choosing the most apt, persuasive ones. As the mental processes that produced the model were shaped

get work
public.

interruption
of work
to help
you to have
a good
presentation

W.F. Fisher

by choices with an audience in mind, the thinking became rhetorical. (182)

Reflection-in-presentation operates on the same principles: like Shulman's and Fisher's scientists, students and teachers interrupt their work, they review it, they prepare what they see for others. The thinking becomes rhetorical. Thus, reflection is both individual and social: in part, it is through the social that the individual comes to know.

Both because of its personal nature and because of its representation of the self, reflection-in-presentation also bears similarities to autobiography. For one thing, autobiographies focus on the past, as Robert Folkenflik points out: they "generally are narratives about the past of the writer," although the past doesn't necessarily "take precedence over the present moment or moments, which often provide the point of departure that organizes the autobiography" (15). The autobiography is, in another phrase, "retrospective consciousness" (217). But the perspective is not totally inward: like Shulman's scientists and like our teachers and students, the autobiographer looks both inward and outward:

retrospective consciousness

desiring tension
wanting to
see it

Autobiography promises intersubjectivity, not just intrasubjectivity. Because autobiography manipulates the prestige of the self in relation to the other, it enters the play of desire that constitutes the symbolic order. Here the self as a point of reference outside the text and the self as represented, constructed within the text, are in rightful tension. (Folkenflik 234)

The tension, then, occurs between the actual self and the represented self, a tension that is rightful, that is productive. It is perhaps, then, the kind of tension we might expect to see—even desire to see—in reflection-in-presentation.

And as important, there is more than a single self, as William Gass reminds us:

the self divides, not severally into a recording self, an applauding self, a guilty self, a daydreaming self, but into a shaping self: it is the consciousness of oneself as a consciousness among all these other minds, an awareness born much later than the self it studies, and a self whose existence

using tension productively

was fitful, intermittent, for a long time, before it was able to throw a full beam upon the life lived and see there a pattern, as a plowed field seen from a plane reveals the geometry of the tractor's path. (51)

Any self we see within text, particularly autobiography but reflection-in-presentation as well, is multiple, is shaped, is constructed; is necessarily contingent, transitory, filled with tension.

In discussing reflection-in-presentation, however, I'm working after the fact. When writing teachers first began asking for reflective text, usually in portfolios, we didn't call it reflection-in-presentation; we didn't see it in relation to other kinds of reflection; we didn't see it in relation to science or autobiography. All we really saw was a portfolio that made much more sense when it included a student's narrative or interpretive text, and we saw that, in fact, without such a text—one that came to be called reflection—portfolios were merely folders of work (Yancey; Weiser). More specifically and pretty quickly, we wanted the reflection to perform one or more tasks:

1. create a context for the portfolio documents so that we as reader can understand how they were created and thus should be read, either individually or as composed text;
2. describe (and sometimes assess) the processes that the student used in creating texts, with specific reference to processes that explain how one draft evolved from an earlier one;
3. explain the student's goals and how those were accomplished, by reference to texts within the portfolio;
4. explain the curricular goals and how well those were accomplished.

In other words, we wanted the student, at the least, to supply some context, and possibly to assess his or her work. We understood reading as contextual. We therefore wanted to students to participate in creating the contexts in which their texts would be read. But we weren't terribly clear about the specifics of reflection: for instance, about how reflection "worked," or about what was most important to our reading, or about what a reflective text might include, or about the form it might take.

How... isn't this just pure for (or any) self? We see?

and they don't can be more reflective text

(A)

Without knowing what it was that we were looking for, then, most of us—the teachers asking for this reflection—looked for anything and everything, working under two assumptions: 1) that students could easily have something to say that we couldn't predict; and 2) that we should therefore use directions that were as open-ended as possible. That's what we asked for, just about anything that the writer deemed relevant or interesting—about their texts, about their processes, about them as *writers*, about them as *persons*. For example, in a set of directions that has been widely adopted by colleges and universities across the country, a typical reflection-in-presentation—a comprehensive letter that introduces the portfolio—may do any number of things, including

assumptions

describe the process used in creating any one portfolio piece, discuss important pieces in creating the portfolio, explain the place of writing in your life, chronicle your development as a writer, assess the strengths and weaknesses of your writing, or combine these approaches. Your letter should provide readers with a clearer understanding of who you are as a writer and a person. (UNC Charlotte)

X

What we have here, of course, is a cascade of questions, one that in no way prioritizes what is expected or what is valued.⁴

Interestingly, within the same general period of time, beginning around 1988, faculty were also beginning to create portfolios, *teaching portfolios*, usually for purposes of annual review or, more likely, for promotion and tenure. These portfolios, like student portfolios, also called for reflection-in-presentation. By way of contrast, faculty were provided with both rationale and rather pointed directions. In the first American Association of Higher Education monograph on the teaching portfolio, for instance, Pat Hutchings and her colleagues talk about the rationale for reflection in ways that sound familiar:

General reflection, divorced from evidence of actual performance, fails to capture the situated nature of teaching. Work samples [eg, syllabi, assignments, sample graded work] alone aren't intelligible. But work samples *plus reflection* make a powerful formula. The reflection is grounded by being connected to a particular instance of teaching; the work sample is made meaningful and placed in context through reflection. (9)

As with student portfolios, there is a belief that the two kinds of texts—what Anson calls the primary texts (or what Hutchings calls the *work samples*) and the secondary texts, the reflection—*together*

provide a more accurate portrait of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Moreover, the view here is decidedly Schonean: the particular instance of teaching, grounded though a reflective context, makes possible some general observations about a faculty member's teaching.

But there is a telling difference here as well regarding reflection-in-presentation: while faculty are advised to write a *reflection* on every *work sample*, students are typically told to write a general, overview kind of reflection, as we've already seen. In the best known college models—those at Miami University and the University of Michigan for instance—the reflection that is asked for is an overview.⁵ And in most well-known K-12 portfolio models—the Kentucky model, for instance—again, the larger view is solicited, not reflections on individual texts or work samples.

Another telling difference: while students are given wide berth in deciding what to share and how to share it and are explicitly invited to include personal information, exactly the opposite occurred with faculty. The latter are not asked, for example, to *explain the place of teaching in your life*, nor are they encouraged to *provide readers with a clearer understanding of who you are as a person*. Rather, they are told quite specifically what is expected of them; information targeted to informing readers in very specific ways about the portfolio composer's accomplishments. Hutchings advises faculty, for instance, to include two introductory documents in addition to the individual annotations:

The first is the professional biography of the person who is preparing the portfolio. At a minimum, this could be a traditional resume. But it might also be useful to have the person write about key stages in his or her development as a teacher.

The second is information about the specific environment in which the individual works . . . what the campus and department expect in terms of teaching, research and service; what specific classes the individual faculty member teaches; and the important details about these classes that affect teaching—such as course size and the characteristics, abilities, and motivations of the students. (11)

And Christine Hult, in detailing what an administrative portfolio might look like, offers similar advice:

As with the teaching portfolio, anyone compiling an administrative portfolio should guide the evaluators through the materials by means of

diff. in how teaching portfolio work: the person who is preparing the portfolio should guide the evaluators through the materials by means of

self-reflective glosses on the contents. A self-reflective overview letter can highlight for readers those items of particular importance, tying documents to their underlying scholarship, for example. Thinking of the entire administrative portfolio as a persuasive document, buttressed by significant evidence (in the form of artifacts) to support the argument, will help the compiler toward a cohesive whole. (129)

Several observations are worth noting here. Does it matter that students are not asked for individual annotations while faculty are? I think it both does and doesn't. On the one hand, if reflection is built into the curriculum so that students continually are engaged in reflection-in-action and constructive reflection, then perhaps reflective individual annotations aren't as necessary; students will already have reflected upon these texts precisely because the curriculum includes *the processes of reflection*.

On the other hand, it seems a truism that writing individual annotations for a reader, as a kind of presentation, is itself an instructive endeavor precisely because, as Shulman suggests, it changes what you see; it makes the reflection *inter* as well as *intra*. Focused on a single work sample and presented to a public audience in a formal way, such a text requires a depth of insight that we want students to have, one that could contribute to the more comprehensive text as well. (This would be true regardless of whether the comprehensive text is attached to a portfolio or is an independent document.) And it seems likely that for many students, this more focused reflection might pose less of a challenge, so that we could build a sequence here: an integration of reflection into the curriculum which culminates in a final reflective document, a means of both process and product. One thing is clear, however: in the literature on reflection-in-presentation, we have two forms—the individual, the more comprehensive.

And a second point: the directions provided for the larger, comprehensive reflective text embody different models, the (student) one very open, the (faculty) one very constrained. Which is better? If the advice given to faculty is restrictive, and if we assume they are the better writers, shouldn't we emulate that in the directions we provide to students? Again I want to say *yes and no*. Much of my reading of what's called for here depends on context: as I argue in chapter seven, a high-stakes assessment situation demands clear directions. Such directions work toward providing the same opportunity to everyone by framing the task well. Moreover, in the process of articulating those directions, we clarify our own expectations, a

Annotations
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feature that is especially important for high stakes situations, too, given that often both faculty and students are writing to and for the "unknown" reader. Providing clear, if restrictive, directions seems only prudent.

On the other hand, students—especially those who are writing reflection-in-presentation in a class for a teacher they do know—are not writing professional documents, nor is a single course typically considered a high stakes assessment.⁶ Within the classroom, then, there is a certain freedom that we can use to learn about reflection-in-presentation—about how a reflection-in-presentation *shapes a self*, about what we value in such texts, about the forms and metaphors and connections students construct to shape themselves.⁷

In other words, it's a design issue. Given an appropriate context, the open design has much to offer it. And in fact, thinking of reflection only as modelled on the professional text is a mistake, I think: it's likely that we would lose the chance to learn from it what it can teach us. A comparison shows why: the constrained version of the comprehensive reflective text is constrained for a reason, to produce something predictable. From such a document, we will learn: about the writers individually, about the writers in the aggregate. But we will not learn much about reflection per se, about the forms such a document might take, about what we value in it—precisely because in constraining response, the directions preclude exploration that can teach. In the classroom rhetorical situation, we know more about the contexts the students have been working in; allowing students considerably more freedom—to imagine and experiment and explore, to create reflection as a specific kind of discourse taking place in specific sites—thus seems appropriate. It is through such freedom that we all learn.

As is self-evident, however, a large caveat: we have to value and engage in such freedom cautiously. We have to remember that ultimately, teachers are responsible for helping students manage this freedom; how we go about doing that in a way that isn't hegemonic, that is respectful, is a key question. We also have to remember that we are the ones who award the A's, who valorize the truths and the selves telling those truths, who compose students in this process. We are the ones who decide which reflections-in-presentation—which pluralized narratives—will be permitted, will be seen as universal truths.

well
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but

There are many questions to put to reflection-in-presentation. Some of them include:

- How explicit should the directions for reflection-in-presentation be?
- Are there specific questions that students should take up?
- What form/s will be allowed (eg, a letter, a poem, an essay, a web site)?
- What expectations come with this "assignment?"
- How will one know if it "works?"
- (Have you ever written one?) *yes*
- (Could you generalize about reflection generally on the basis of your own experience with it?)
- (What would happen if we began to talk about it?)

Regardless of the model of reflection-in-presentation we prefer or enact, however, we haven't done a very good job of talking about what we value in such a text. We have scoring guides (e.g., Miami, Michigan) that talk about what's valued in a program portfolio more generally, but we haven't talked about what it is in this particular kind of discourse that "works." This is surprising: the reflective letter, for instance, has generated considerable interest and comment (eg, Sommers et al.; Schultz et al.; Conway), but as we'll see in chapter seven, mostly in terms of individual response or in terms of the kind of author a reader is likely to construct on the basis of this discourse. What's needed is a more generic sense of what is valued in such texts, if indeed readers share certain expectations. I think we do. And perhaps the easiest way to demonstrate that we do is, ironically, to read a text that violates these expectations: by means of what Joseph Janangelo calls an "inverted exemplary narrative" (100), in this case a reflection-in-presentation.

The reason I chose this essay is because I felt it was perfect in every way. Even in the preliminary draft stage I felt confident with this essay. I only had two minor mistakes in the rough draft. The final draft was flawless. I can't find any weakness with this essay. One of the reasons it was the strongest is because it came from the heart. When I write from the heart

and deal with my emotions and feelings. I truly am being honest. This story was true and is still vivid in my memory to this very day. If I would have had to make up a fictional story, it simply would not have worked. This essay was strong because it flowed well. The reason it flowed well is due to strong transition. Strong transition from paragraph to paragraph makes an essay easier to follow for the reader. "From Butterflies to Victory" is without a doubt, the strongest essay in the portfolio. The story was true and meaningful, flawless, and flowed well due to strong transition. As I said earlier, I am very proud of this essay. I wouldn't change a thing about this essay.

I want to point my initial comments toward what I think is working. The student has written an essay that she cares about, and she evidences some understanding of textuality, for example in her references to strong transition. More generally, however, the writer in this text, in this presentation to an audience, disappoints precisely because she violates expectations we bring to such a text. These violations include:

First, the writer seems unable to see text as synthetic and to use that as a basis for a discussion about the text. The essay is perfect in every way, she cannot find any weakness with this essay, and it was almost perfect from the start apparently, since the author found only two minor mistakes in the rough draft. Now all writers aren't multi-drafters, as Muriel Harris reminds us; perhaps this writer is a single drafter. But a single drafter is capable of having the same discussion about text that a multi-drafter can. We don't have discussion here; we have a very limited, repetitious summary.

Second, as indicated already, the writer doesn't seem able to assess her own text. Even writers who are satisfied with a text can see—in specific terms—how it could be changed, how those hypothetical changes might work and make informed judgments about them. We don't see that here: what we do seem to see is a version of Perry's dualism, the perfect paper implicitly contrasted with the hypothetical imperfect (e.g., one with weak transitions).

Third, the writer doesn't seem to understand the relationship between a rhetorical situation and text. We seem to be expecting a self-assessment that is related to some notion of context, of rhetorical situation, of audience and how the needs of an audience (fictionalized or not) have something to do with the development of text, how much it satisfies them, and so on. Instead of discussing a rhetorically situated kind of judgment, the author keys on a sole criterion to evaluating text: honesty.⁸ As the writer says, *One of the reasons it was the strongest is because it came from the heart.* Without a rhetorical situation that

① extract summary not discussion
② no self-appraisal?
③ no exam. of rhet. sit.

includes an audience other than self; *she has no one to satisfy but herself*. This reasoning, we have to say, is perfectly logical. It is not, however, rhetorical, nor is it reflective.

What the writer does offer textually is length, and a certain length does seem to be a value we endorse, as it is in many other kinds of texts. That length presumes, however, a kind of development, depth of insight—*reflection*—that is missing here.

I want to think about this reflection-in-presentation in one additional way: developmentally. If this text were a reflection-in-action, or a constructive reflection, I'd think the text would provide some starting points for us: 1) given the generally a-rhetorical claims here (eg, *strong transition, vivid memory*), I'd want to know how some of them applied specifically to the (primary) text under discussion: 2) as I argued in chapter two, I think students have to know and like their texts before they are ready to re-work them. I'm not persuaded that this student actually knows her work: I don't see the specifics relating to the primary text that would suggest the writer's familiarity with it. Which wouldn't mean that the student doesn't like it (perhaps has even more reason to like it, ironically). In fact, this student shows signs of being what I call "stuck in like"; that is, infatuated with her own text, she cannot see how it might be changed, much less how it might be improved. Developmentally—for student, for text, for processes—I have a starting point. But we don't expect reflection-in-presentation to be developmental: we see it as one form of summative assessment, a concluding moment. We bring different expectations to it. But it's also true that in a larger sense, such a presentation can become a point of departure, perhaps most especially when it violates our expectations.

I'd like to point to two other inverted exemplary narratives as instructive in moving towards understanding what we value in reflection-in-presentation. The first has to do with the emphasis we in composition studies tend to place on revision. According to Elizabeth Metzger and Lizbeth Bryant, students take that emphasis and play it back to us in ways that disturb; the authors quote a student, for instance, who claims "*to have botched] a paper so it looked like I revised*" and who then claimed that the revision was part of what she should be rewarded for (7), a version of what Irwin Weiser calls "psyching out the port prof" (299). The question: how important is

revision? Do we believe in single-draft writers, as Harris suggests? Is there a single-draft reflection-in-presentation that will satisfy?

The second narrative has to do with the kinds of claims that students can make but that are generally recognized by faculty as tangential (eg, amounts of effort and time) and as unrelated (eg, shmoozing). Students often equate (confuse?) sufficient time spent with quality of product, and they associate effort with high grades, not entirely without reason, of course.⁹ Shmooz is a more direct appeal, appearing in a text that plays back to us quite explicitly (quite manipulatively?) our own values. As Irwin Weiser explains,

"Shmooz" . . . is the often indistinguishable evil twin of "glow," the telling-the-teacher-what-he-wants-to-hear that students may very well write in their reflective letters . . . I don't want to suggest that we discount or mistrust students' reflective writing; I mean that reflective letters, precisely because they do reintroduce the personal, force us to recognize the subjective nature of our readings. (301)

For readers, reflection-in-presentation, seen in this light, can be tricky to navigate. On the one hand, we create educational environments precisely so that students will be influenced in very specific and (we hope) positive ways. This is the nature of teaching: *it's reasonable to think that students will reflect that context back to us in their reflective texts*. On the other hand, we don't want to encourage nor reward what a cynic might characterize as obsequience or false compliance.

The question seems to be how we would know whether we were reading the product of (genuine) learning or the product of shmooz. How we answer that question depends on our own context for reading and the role we are playing. As I'll argue in chapter seven, in a high stakes assessment situation we probably want to be more directive in our requests, precisely because we don't know the student, and we don't know the context(s) the student is working in. The absence of this kind of contextual knowledge can make the task of interpreting and evaluating more difficult. (I have to pause, briefly, to note the irony here. It used to be the case that we assumed that the *less* we knew about the writer, the better a judgment we were assumed to make: hence two "blind" raters in a holistically scored essay exam. But once we began to apprehend the role of context in influencing, if not determining, meaning, we began to ask about what those contexts were, how they do affect our readings, and how we might externalize them in productive ways. Chapter five discusses this more fully.)

how do we know if it's genuine or schmoozing?

In the case of the classroom, however, we are talking about readers who teach their own students, who presumably do know them, and who thus can bring multiple contexts to bear in their reading, as we'll see in some detail in the next chapter. For now, it's sufficient to note that in the case of reflection-in-presentation accompanying a portfolio, the primary texts and the reflective text relativize each other, hold each other to account. In the case of independent reflective texts, the context of the teacher's experience of the class relativizes the claims in the reflection. Ultimately, of course, determining the value of the student's reflection-in-presentation requires informed, thoughtful, reflective judgment.

Textually, there are signs that reflection-in-presentation is not "working" as we'd hoped, that articulated, elaborated, complex learning is not occurring. Indicators include:

- a text that is too short
- a text that is uninformed about the composer's work or learning: the student doesn't seem to know his or her texts, his or her own knowledge, understanding
- a text where the author cannot think rhetorically or synthetically, can read neither links nor gaps
- a text that parrots the context of the class or the teacher without demonstrating the influence of either

What we also need is a set of texts that might speak to what can go right.

I don't think it's surprising that we've seen so little discussion about what *works* in reflection-in-presentation. It's always easier, more comfortable to critique. Critiquing is part of our teacherly identity; it's what many of us have been rewarded for our entire academic lives (Elbow and Yancey). But saying what we like, what we value: that's tricky. Having that kind of discussion requires a disclosure that parallels what is asked of the composer of the reflection-in-presentation. Even in the best of circumstances, revealing what we value in such a text makes us vulnerable in ways that discomfit (Allen, Condon, et al. 1997), so much more the case when we go public.¹⁰

But it is also true that without such discussion, we write and read in the dark.

I want to read several reflections-in-presentation as a way of thinking about what we might value in such reflection. Initially, in this exploration, I was looking for different kinds of texts that themselves work in different ways—to show a range of what can work, to show that students can *do* this kind of work. I did find that range:

- two texts from writing classes,
- one reflection-in-presentation from a capstone portfolio, and
- one reflection-in-presentation as a cumulative independent document.

What I also found is that these texts, as disparate as they and their contexts are, show writers engaging in similar thinking processes, processes and rhetorical moves I've come to recognize as reflective.

Daphne is a returning student in an advanced writing class. Her final reflective essay, which brings the portfolio to closure, itself concludes:

As I reflect on what I have learned in this class and what I will take with me when the class is over, I realize that the final grade was no longer the destination I was striving so hard for—what really matters is what I have learned while on this particular journey. Recently, I came across a book of poetry that I had taken as a freshman. Included in the book was the poem "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost. As I gathered up the written work from this class to put into my portfolio, these final lines stayed with me: *Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by/And that has made all the difference.* Somehow, these lines seemed to strike a cord with me. In the beginning of the semester when I started this class, my major goal was to get a good grade as well as to improve as a writer, but perhaps what I have come to realize is that the grade is not as important as the discovery of *who* I am as a writer—and that has made all the difference.

Daphne makes several moves here that I have come to understand as characteristic of reflection-in-presentation.

First, Daphne seems to answer the large question, what have you learned? Reflective writers seem to take this question up, sometimes opening with it, other times weaving it throughout the text or concluding with it. But taking this question up seems a key rhetorical move.

Can answer the question what have you learned?

② helped beyond the class

Second, in answering the question, Daphne moves beyond the class; again, reflective writers tend to draw on multiple contexts to explain what they have learned. (We might even contend that learning calls for interaction among multiple contexts.) Daphne tells us that in preparing her portfolio, she came across a book of poetry and read Robert Frost, whose lines seemed to strike a cord with me. She then uses those lines in a Bakhtinian way to talk about what she has learned: but perhaps what I have come to realize is that the grade is not as important as the discovery of who I am as a writer—and that has made all the difference. To describe what she has learned in this class, Daphne synthesizes from earlier experiences; she rewrites Frost to make her meaning.

③ invoking a metaphor to talk about learning

Third, Daphne invokes a metaphor, a common one, the class as journey, as another way of talking about her learning; about how the destination for the journey changed, how the journey itself involved a Frostian choice between *Two roads*. She understands that choosing the road of learning instead of the road of grades is taking the less travelled route.

Sharon was enrolled in a different section of the same course; and what she learns is different.

She begins her reflection-in-presentation, an essay that concludes the portfolio, by presenting; by explaining the course and addressing her reader, someone she does not expect to be familiar with the class. Because that reader isn't familiar with the context of the class, Sharon explains.

The focus of this course, Expository Writing, was on the metaphor of "voice." As you have seen in the writings included in the portfolio, we attempted to define voice, explore its uses, and "try on" new uses. We soon discovered that "voice" was not something to be easily defined, but we learned a great deal in the process of trying to attach a definition to it. My understanding of voice has come to be that particular approach that you take in writing. The voice you use, whether consciously or unconsciously, is a function of both audience and purpose.

Sharon addresses the reader directly and assumes that the reader has reviewed the writings included in the portfolio. These reflect, she says, what we attempted: to define voice, explore its uses, and "try on" new uses, the we here suggesting a kind of communal enterprise. The first

context Sharon invokes, then, is that of the class. But Sharon worked individually as well, toward an understanding of voice as a function of both audience and purpose.

Sharon invokes another context, however: that of the writer she used to be:

During this course, we also addressed the issue of finding our "one true voice" if it exists at all. When we began discussing this topic, I felt sure that my true voice was contained in my personal journal, but as I began to leaf through those pages that had become like friends to me, a whole new perspective dawned on me. As the tattered notebook was opened, each entry displayed a new and fresh voice. My voice in June was one of loneliness, but August's entry was positive and hopeful. The older entries show a voice of immaturity, and sound so unlike my voice today because of the local high school colloquialisms. Then there was the 1993 summer school entry. This entry was written after finishing a very flowery 18th Century novel, and my voice sounded almost exactly like the voice in the "2

2. more beyond the class

Here, we see Sharon weave multiple narratives. One concerns her past writing lives, her past writing selves. Like Joan Didion, Sharon sees the writers she used to be; she's someone who thought of her writing voice as true. But unlike our writer of the perfect essay, Sharon is willing to learn about, get to know her work. That's another narrative: she looks at her writing in her tattered notebook, finds multiple "true" voices. She finds her writing sympathetic to what she feels, whether that be loneliness or hope; iconic of her adolescent context, filled with high school colloquialisms; resonant with her own reading—my voice sounded almost exactly like the voice in a very flowery 18th Century novel. At the same time, this is another narrative characteristic of reflection-in-presentation—a narrative of the course, of what she learned inside that context. Here, she learned what she thinks voice is; she acquired a kind of knowledge that can be applied. And finally, Sharon answers Daphne's question, what did I learn?

1. what she learned

My conclusion, after spending more than three months in reflection, is that I don't have one true voice at all. I now believe that I have a variety of voices on hand to choose from, and can create new voices simply by trying. All that is needed to utilize a voice is to determine who your audience is, and what your purpose will be. An early architect, Sullivan, sums up my understanding of voice in his statement "form follows function." Although Sullivan was speaking in terms of architecture, this idea can be applied to voice as well. The form of voice that you choose will follow the

3. Daphne

function that you desire your piece to serve, and without knowledge of your function, you are left without a form.

Again like Daphne, Sharon shares with us the conclusions she has drawn—in her case that *I don't have one true voice at all*. We might even say that we see her move from a Perry-like dualism to a stance between relativistic and reflective. Although she sees voice as a function of a rhetorical situation, she has yet to consider the value of her move or the ethics of it, important issues, to be sure. Still, what she does consider is how a metaphorical reference will help her explain what she has learned, hence the connection to the architect Sullivan. But Sharon is not studying architecture, so where did she get this reference? From her peer review partner, an architecture major.

Through reflection, we learn to see through others' eyes.

Kate is a senior majoring in Spanish, minoring in education, and hoping to teach Spanish to secondary students. She also participates in UNC–Charlotte's honors program, which requires that students complete a final project in order to graduate with honors. Kate has chosen to compose a capstone portfolio. To satisfy the honors requirement, this portfolio must synthesize work in the honors program, which is grounded in study of peace and justice, with work in the student's major. Kate decides to use the concept of honor to perform this work: *what*, she asks throughout, *does it mean to be honorable?* Is honor merely a cultural construct, or do we see honor similarly in different cultures, specifically in Anglo cultures and Spanish cultures?

She takes this question through several sections of the portfolio: she has a comprehensive, introductory reflective essay as well as smaller reflective essays that take up questions related to her theme. Although this is a different kind of reflection-in-presentation, we will find its rhetorical moves surprisingly similar to those we have seen before.

Like the other reflective writers, *Kate begins by establishing context:*

As I began sorting through my experiences in college, I started to think about what was truly honorable in my life so far. I've worked as a babysitter at the Battered Women's Shelter in Charlotte; I've given blood to the Red Cross; in High School I did such things as making Christmas cards for the elderly in Senior Citizen's homes; I've also worked with the Food Run program [a food bank effort initiated by students in the honors program] at UNC–Charlotte and done some tutoring with local schoolchildren in

① establishing context (which also connects multiple contexts)

the Project Hope program. In all of these cases I've noticed that the difference is begun on an individual level, but that it is a group effort that sustains. This is the way in which all groups are formed, be it a non-profit organization, a political lobbying organization, or any underground revolutionary movement. I was reminded of this as I watched the Home Box Office (HBO) original movie "The Power of One." At its end, this movie reminds us all that, "Changes can come from the power of many, but only when the many come together to form that which is invincible . . . the power of one." These ideas begin with one person, spread to many, and then the many can come together to accomplish tasks which alone one person could not accomplish. The experiences I mentioned above are some of the times when I have been part of the many.

Kate cites her own experience here to show the relationship between the *individual* and the *many*. Although she understands herself as an *individual*, she also sees that her contributions contribute to a larger effort—*The experiences I mentioned above are some of the times when I have been part of the many*—and she understands this way of seeing social action as explaining everything from *non-profits to underground revolutionary movements*. We see Kate here, in other words, moving from the inside (her experience) to the outside (social theory) and back (herself as contributor): connecting what might seem to be disparate activities: putting herself both personally and intellectually into this context, into this text, authorizing herself to speak. In terms of reflection-in-presentation, we see her making connections, providing context, and beginning to put that context in relation to the question, what have I learned? To answer that, she begins to theorize about social action.

In the next section of the reflective essay, we see Kate as reflective writer: she chooses a controversial question related to her topic of honor and develops it factually. She then relativizes the situation, showing the multiple ways it can be viewed. Finally, she shares with us her judgment on the issue. In the act of writing reflection-in-presentation, Kate becomes a reflective writer.

She begins by weaving dual narratives, the one telling us about a class she took, the other again answering the question, *what have I learned?*

If I have learned nothing else from my Honors Program classes, I know that I have taken away from them the ability to understand the different points of view. In the HONR 3701 class, *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, we had to write a paper on a controversial topic in which science

what word learned

sex/metaphor

and technology have come into conflict with Human Values. Since my initial introduction to it in Biology in High School, the study of Genetics has always fascinated at me. We can actually find out which chromosomes are the cause of which traits, genotypical and phenotypical. But the focus of my paper is on what happens when we mandate genetic testing on unborn children and they test positive for abnormalities, diseases, or other genetic defects which can leave a child with a quality of life lower than that which parents hope for in the life of their child(ren). Knowing about any condition before a child is born leaves the parents in a difficult position: should they terminate the pregnancy in order to save themselves the pain and save their child from the ridicule and other suffering?

Here, then, Kate takes what we know about genetics and applies it in the specific situation of *mandatory genetic testing* and she raises (what I take to be) an impossible question: *should they terminate the pregnancy in order to save themselves the pain and save their child from the ridicule and other sufferings?*

Kate then explains how this is relevant to her theme of honor; through the questions she raises, we see the complexity of the situation. The question about mandatory genetic testing is included, she says,

because the overlying question has to do with honor. Once the child is tested, to whom does the information belong? Should there be a requirement test, and if so, should there be a requirement to reveal this information, and if so, to whom? The parents? The doctor? Should anyone else be allowed to see it, such as insurance companies? Is it reasonable to tell parents such potentially devastating news? Are the recipients *appreciative*? Are we really performing a necessary service? Or are we only trying to play God by choosing ourselves that which Nature used to sort out? Who gets to decide whether genetic testing is "beneficial"? . . . Is there honor in forcing parents to make what might be probably the most difficult decision of their lives?

Kate reminds us about something we are inundated with daily: information. But information brings with it implications. It's intolerable to acquire information, Kate implies, without establishing a context in which to understand it. That's the general maxim. The local: in this context, *honor and mandatory* are mutually exclusive.

It is my personal opinion that there is no honor in forcing this kind of decision on anyone, yet mandatory genetic testing has done just that. If parents make the decision to have the testing done and to deal with the consequences, let *THAT* be their choice Technology has made it possible to

5. explaining how this is relevant to...

make genetic discoveries which were not originally intended to be made and which humanity was not and is not ready to deal with. Heaven help humanity if we ever make it mandatory to kill a fetus which carries certain chromosomes. While the idea behind genetic testing was noble in the beginning, the moral issues which parents would face make mandatory genetic screening less than honorable.

Kate both tells and shows what she has learned: facts certainly, the process of relativizing as well, the gift of seeing gaps and drawing those to our attention and playing out the consequences of neglecting those gaps, and the art of making reasoned judgments. She shares this with us in a synthetic reflection-in-presentation that draws on multiple selves: the student in the honors program, the woman who someday would be a parent herself, the informed citizen, the person who wants to be part of something larger.

In telling us what she has learned, Kate finds out herself.

Kevin, a sophomore, is another student in the honors program at UNC-Charlotte; he is taking an honors course in the history of science from Physics Professor Mike Corwin. Although it's a history of science course, the object isn't just for students to understand how we moved from Galileo's model of the universe to Kepler's; it's also for students to identify the model of the world they hold true and to explain how that is so. Given that UNC-Charlotte sits in the middle of the Bible Belt, and given that many of our students still consider the theory of evolution at odds with "a loving God's plan," this is a harder task than one might expect.

And making it more difficult in its own way is a change in Corwin's assignments. This term the students' tests and papers have been replaced by what Corwin has called a "reflective notebook" and a final "reflective paper," defined here as a reflection-in-presentation.

We can understand Kevin's reflection-in-presentation by sampling parts of it. He begins as the others do, thus in a way we might (by now) predict. *He weaves multiple contexts, multiple narratives, the one beginning to answer, what did I learn? the other, how did this course help me learn it?*

even more specific

This semester, I have learned to think of the world and my role in it in a totally different way than I had ever thought before. Philosophy had always been something very foreign to me, until now. This semester

showed me that philosophy was something that I was capable of doing if I was willing to spend the necessary time and energy. Philosophy took two primary forms in this course: one was done through class discussion, and the other was done through a reflection notebook. The reflection notebook is the focus of this paper.

Kevin begins by focusing on the materials of the course: the *discussions* and the *reflection notebook*. That's one story. He includes another narrative as well: first, *I have learned in a totally different way than I had ever thought before*; learning requires *necessary time and energy*.

This narrative, about how difficult learning can be, acts as a refrain in Kevin's reflection-in-presentation. That learning isn't easy, of course, is a common student narrative. But the fact that we have heard these narratives before doesn't make them false; it alerts us to take their measure against the text that is to come. One way of taking their measure, Walter Fisher calls "fidelity" and "coherence." He asks,

- is the account (text) faithful to what we know to be true in other accounts (reasons)? And what values are expressed?
- is the account (text) internally consistent, complete and ethical? (177-78)

These are questions we can put to Kevin's reflection-in-presentation.

In the next section of Kevin's reflection-in-presentation, he tells us how this notebook differed from others that he's kept, and reiterates the fact that *it was not as easy as I had hoped*. But he also begins another narrative, one that concerns objectivity and the personal and truth. In many ways, this is the key answer to the question, *what have I learned?*

At the beginning of the semester when the notebook was assigned I thought I knew how to go about writing such a notebook from my past experiences and reflections. It was not as easy as I had hoped. The notebook took time and more importantly thought to get an acceptable entry written down. I tried to make the notebook somewhat personal, but I also tried to stay as objective as possible when trying to make decisions. My goal was to re-evaluate my current understanding of the universe and

particularly the world in which I live. I hoped that this evaluation would help me create a clearer picture of what has, is, and will happen in my world.

To do this, Kevin "found myself questioning beliefs I had and trying to convince myself that they were true." Put differently, Kevin wants coherence between his beliefs and what he is being taught as science: both pretend to explain the world. Kevin tries to explain his dilemma, first by summarizing a view put forward by Richard Tarnas, and then by reacting to it:

While science is "discovering new laws," and "making new models," there is a need to fill the gaps with something. Religion is the answer. In the notebook I did not state whether I believed this position or not and I should have. I think that science is a tool used to find knowledge that can be used to develop models of the universe to help us understand the world. But a disclaimer must be made: these models will never be perfect. The knowledge we do not find through science leaves gaps in our world views. These gaps are filled with beliefs in religion.

There will always be gaps, Kevin believes: science will never create the comprehensive model. Which takes us to evolution, one of the topics addressed in the course.

Evolution has always been a topic for debate in many circles. It is hard to argue that it has not occurred to some extent over time, but it is also hard to convince me that simple chemical elements some how become ordered and transform into life. It is much easier for me to believe that God was the one who set the universe in motion and made the laws that govern it today.

Again, we see *ease* as narrative, pitted against *hard*: again this reflection-in-presentation tells the story of difficult learning. Or: *learning involves multiple contexts, isn't easy, can't be neatly summarized, isn't always satisfying precisely because it can bring different knowledges and belief systems into conflict*. (Not a bad lesson.) Evolution as a test case, Kevin says, looks persuasive: *It is hard to argue that it has not occurred to some extent over time*. At the same time it's unconvincing: *it is also hard to convince me that simple chemical elements some how become ordered and transform into life*. It may be easier—and more comforting—to believe the one: Kevin seems stalemated. At the same time, we also see Kevin working toward a relativist stance, beyond the dualistic.

Kevin turns to his conclusion by rewriting his performance in the course; the rewrite is based on an *assessment* of how he learns, how he could have learned.

If I could have done anything differently I probably would have started questioning my present beliefs much sooner and then maybe I could have developed a cosmology that better estimates the world. Some aspects of my world view have been questioned, though. The biggest of these questions I feel concerns absolutes. Is there a Truth, or only truths? . . . Even though I do not believe in Absolute Truth, I believe in God because it is a reasonable solution to the remaining questions I have about life. I am willing to live a contradiction as long as it serves my purpose to give meaning to life.

Kevin has learned: about himself, about the need for a coherent cosmology, about *Truth* and *truths* and willingness to *live a contradiction as long as it serves my purpose to give meaning to life*. Like Lara, whom we saw in chapter three, Kevin has determined where he is ready to compromise and where not. His reflection-in-presentation presents a plural self, one who understands a scientific model of the world, who can plot that against his personal model of the world, and plot again against one informed by religion and a belief in God. He brings material together by locating it in his own learning as he tells us how he learned. In Fisher's terms, the reflection-in-presentation exhibits both fidelity and coherence: it is student discourse consistent with other student discourses, working both inside and out; it is consistent in method, material, and tenor.

It is, in sum, instructive, for Kevin and for us: the reflection of a student struggling to learn, learning by telling us of that struggle, showing us how we *live contradictions* when they are *purposeful*.

As I work toward completing this project, I'm asked about what a reader sees as the personal dimension of reflection-in-presentation: isn't it just another form of "personal" writing? Since I've linked it to autobiography, of course, I have invited this question. But I also think that a false dichotomy—between the personal and the academic—is suggested by the question. In my view, all writing has a personal element to it, certainly, and this is likewise true for reflection-in-presentation, as we've seen. Precisely because reflection-in-presentation is performative, in Erving Goffman's sense of

the word, however, it's necessarily social: audience-oriented in very specific ways that remove it from the sphere of the exclusively personal (if there is such a thing). In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman explains the range of roles that performers, like our students, may take on for others and of the effects such role-taking can have, particularly in a context involving evaluation:

At one extreme, one finds that the performer can be fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality that he stages is the real reality. . . .

At the other extreme, we find that the performer may not be taken in at all by his own routine. This possibility is understandable, since no one is in quite so good an observational position to see through the act as the person who puts it on. (19)

Most students, I think, inhabit the middle ground of this range. We ask them to take up certain questions, we reward certain kinds of response, and at some level, many—if not all of them—understand, as Goffman puts it, that we ask them to put on masks that (we hope) bear some relationship to the ways they do or might see themselves:

In a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves—the role we are striving to live up to—this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be. In the end, our conception of our role becomes second nature and an integral part of our personality. (20-21)

Complicating this dilemma can be the self-doubt of the performer:

While we can expect to find natural movement back and forth between cynicism and sincerity, still we must not rule out the kind of transitional point that can be sustained on the strength of a little self-illusion. We find that the individual may attempt to induce the audience to judge him and the situation in a particular way, and he may seek this judgment as an ultimate end in itself, and yet he may not believe that he deserves the valuation of self which he asks for or that the impression of reality which he fosters is valid. (21)

This, then, explains in part why and how teaching is an ethical act, why asking students to reflect for others can exert a powerful shaping effect. But because classrooms do invite certain kinds of behaviors, it's dangerous ground as well; it's easy (perhaps most especially for the

well-intentioned) to make mistakes, to insist on our ways of seeing, to demand that students revise our way, reflect in our language, play back to us our insights and understandings. When we consider reflection in this light, we are reminded about the value of a reflection-in-presentation like Kevin's, one infused not with the unity of a projected teacher's singular mask, but rather with the struggles of the multiple *contradictions* of his own life. But in order that such reflections be performed, we teachers have to accept and value and reward them.

In other words, because it works both inside *and* outside, reflection-in-presentation is personal, but it's social as well. Because it takes place in an evaluative setting, reflection-in-presentation invites performance. This problematizes our evaluation, but chiefly because it makes issues within our evaluative practices more obvious. On the plus side, this means that we can identify these issues, can talk about them, can try to fashion ways of working with them that are reasonable and responsible and ethical and reflective. Classroom evaluation has never excluded the personal; reflection-in-presentation simply makes the personal more obvious. More to the point, if there is a relationship between/among knowing/learning/the personal, as we currently believe there is, then it makes that relationship more salient and thus it works toward greater learning—which is the *point of education in the first place*.

So both—reflection and evaluation, especially when brought together—make something of a Pandora's Box, it's true. But as these boxes go, this one's an improvement on what we are accustomed to.

What I've done here is to read these reflections-in-presentation in a Schoneman way. I've focused on individual texts, reading them closely, interpreting them within multiple frameworks. I've also read across these texts in an effort to read the general as I make sense of the particular. In the patterns across these texts are the common threads defining reflection-in-presentation.

As we've seen, such reflection can take several forms: the individual annotation, the comprehensive text. It allows the individual to work in a social context to make meaning. As autobiography, it is *inter* as well as *intra*. As presentation, it is *rhetorical*.

Within the classroom, the text representing reflection-in-presentation, whether in a writing class or another class, whether attached

to a portfolio or written as an independent document, typically makes certain rhetorical moves. These include

- introducing the text by invoking a context of experience and/or a context of the class
- speaking of past selves as a way of understanding the current self
- using metaphor as a means of exploring relationships
- assessing one's work or learning
- invoking other contexts voluntarily as a means of understanding and explaining
- looking toward gaps and making connections, as two means of synthesizing and relativizing and reflecting
- answering the question, what have I learned? with as much emphasis on the I as on the learned

Past/present
(future)
future

Another way to think about these features is to say that these are the kinds of rhetorical moves we expect, ones we value. If that's so, then we have another narrative against which reflection-in-presentation can be plotted.

Notes

1. A key feature is genre: this will be discussed in chapter seven.
2. Technically, if a portfolio is used for summative evaluation, it should be governed by the same good assessment principles and practices regardless of the context in which it is produced or evaluated. But as a matter of practice, the contexts widely differ: the classroom, for instance, with a teacher reading the portfolios of students she or he *knows*, as opposed to a program portfolio that has multiple readers, none of whom knows the student at all. In fact, as in the case of the Miami University placement portfolios and the Michigan entrance portfolios, the student may not even have matriculated in the school hosting the readers. Such contexts make for very different opportunities and dangers.
3. In this research process, scientists are not composing a reflection-in-presentation; they are seeking to know. There is an intervening step, however, that Shulman skips over, the reading and interpreting of data. Since this too is a key move, it requires far more attention than we've given it. For a fuller illustration of how this can work in a writing classroom, see also chapter six.
4. See chapter seven for a fuller discussion of the relationship between directions and reflection-in-presentation.

5. The University of Michigan actually started with individual annotations as well as the overview, but moved to include only the latter.
6. For reasons not to model undergraduate work in reflection-in-presentation on the work of professionals, see Yancey in *Situating Portfolios*.
7. Lillian Bridwell-Bowles discusses alternate modalities of reflection in CCC. Sandra Murphy has discussed the kinds of formats and illustrations that students have developed for reflection-in-presentation, and Louise Phelps speaks of a graduate student writing a dissertation that develops a genre specifically for reflective text.
8. It could well be that the student here is simply reflecting values we have inscribed, like honesty: see Faigley's "Judging Writing, Judging Selves," for a critique of this view.
9. See, for example, Sadker and Sadker.
10. See, for instance, Allen et al in *Situating Portfolios*. Laurel Black made the same case for faculty course portfolios in her presentation at the 1997 NCTE conference on reflection.

Reflective Reading, Reflective Responding

But the fictions of language may in fact be reality, or at least the only reality we can know. And what we like to think of as living in harmony with reality may be simply a knack for multiplying fictions, for accommodating new versions of experience to older ones so that we may impose a personal if always tentative unity on the inexplicable richness of our imagination.

Leo Barsani

Instead of coming before practice, then, theory comes out of practice—theory helps us explain what we are already doing.

Joseph Harris

SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, GIVEN THE TEACHING, READING, AND writing that English faculty do for a living, we don't talk very much about a *philosophy of reading student work*, or a *philosophy of responding to student work*, or even a *philosophy of evaluating student work*.¹ Too infrequently do we make a Schonean reflective transfer from our own *reading practices* of non-student texts—be they texts in the mainstream media, in professional journals, or in a volume of poetry—to our reading of student work. Too infrequently do we apply what we understand, about multiple kinds of responses to and dialogues about our own writing and reading, to our classrooms, where we claim, at least, that we want conversations and excitement and passion about learning.

If these observations are accurate, it seems fair to conclude that when it comes to reading and writing, we faculty seem to operate in two different worlds: the classroom world and the "real" world. When it comes times to read and respond in the classroom world, we ultimately invoke a transmission model of education: papers turned in, papers turned back. In the "real" world (or worlds, really, since admittedly, they are plural), the texts we read and write are seen to provide something else entirely, what we like to talk about as a *site for negotiation* or an *occasion for learning*: a chance to exchange ideas, to

reading helps
what papers
from