I teach in Bedford Hills, New York, which is a suburban community approximately one hour’s drive north of New York City. The district contains diverse economic groups including blue-collar to upper-class families and has five elementary schools. My school was designed as an “open-space” environment in the 1970s, and we are organized into four different teams, with approximately 100 students and four teachers assigned to each group. I teach an interage combination of fourth and fifth graders who range from children who are barely reading to those who are functioning at an advanced middle school level. Most of the curriculum is team taught, and both the teachers and students seem to profit from this approach, which I characterize as very cooperative and supportive. I especially like the interage arrangement because I can spend two years with my students. During that time, I see great growth and change.

DEVELOPING PORTFOLIO AWARENESS

My initial interest in portfolio assessment had less to do with my professional curiosity than with my experience as a mother. My daughters, who were then in elementary and middle school, brought home evidence of their learning—test papers, graded reports, homework assignments—that were all neatly presented and commented on by their teachers. Yet, these papers were tossed away quickly, and my children didn’t value what I as a professional wanted them to value. They had worked hard on their assignments and should have wanted and valued feedback. This behavior certainly had implications for me, as a teacher of nine- and ten-
year-olds, and I questioned if my students’ work with my comments also went into the trash in their homes. Little did I know that the answers to my many questions about evaluation and learning would result from an opportunity to explore the meaning of authentic assessment. My district participated in a three-year project on authentic assessment, which included participants from all areas of the Hudson River Valley region of New York State who were willing to perform action research on authentic assessment in their classrooms. A colleague and I were accepted into the project, and so we began a journey that would alter the way I viewed teaching and assessment forever.

**SETTING A PURPOSE**

The most critical part of the entire portfolio process lies in choosing the purpose for the portfolio. Teachers are now beginning to use many different kinds of portfolios: Some portfolios showcase students’ best work; some portfolios document growth within a specific content area or with reading and writing skills; and some portfolios assess students by providing additional information not presented from traditional assessment. It doesn’t matter what another teacher may choose as a purpose; what matters is adapting the process to one’s own class. Obviously, to answer the question about purpose requires making choices.

I knew from the start that I was searching for a way to make my students’ products and efforts more meaningful to them. There was a definite disparity in the degree of investment for all of us—my students, their parents, and me. I needed to engage students in a process of reflection about themselves and their work as well as to find a means to make their growth clear to all parties. I therefore decided that the goal for using portfolios in my classroom would be to demonstrate growth in the students’ ability to communicate for a variety of purposes. I’ve discovered that the best portfolio process in my class is to use several different kinds of portfolios, each designed to meet a different purpose. In the following sections, I describe the look and feel of different types of portfolios and how I use them in my class.

**CREATING A CONTENT UNIT PORTFOLIO**

I use a content-based portfolio to evaluate students’ work in a particular subject area, either on a long- or short-term basis. For example, this year, a group of teachers created an interdisciplinary unit on the Hudson River Valley region. As we designed the lessons and activities for this six-week course of study, we were unsure about how to assess our students’ learning. Due to the great amount of group work built into the assignments, we didn’t want to grade or evaluate every piece of work that students completed. A traditional unit test was unappealing, as it could never document the breadth of knowledge we felt our students were attaining, and it certainly would diminish the students’ enthusiasm. We did plan a final unit project, but that didn’t fit our purpose of assessing students’ ongoing performance throughout the unit. Every means of assessment we had traditionally used in the past felt flat, uninspiring, or artificial. Ultimately, we decided to have our students keep all of their unit work in a holding folder while we thought about the assessment problem. Students collected a great deal of evidence of their learning and involvement in these folders
including scientific observations, point of view journal entries, art, and poetry. It soon became very clear that the most interesting, as well as the most authentic assessment, would involve this collection of work.

We had already established that the central purpose for this unit was to have the students focus on how they learned and that this would require their self-reflection. We were faced with the problem of how to choose entries for the unit portfolios. The holding folders contained a tremendous amount of work that reflected the day-to-day classroom experiences. Again, focusing on the purpose for the portfolio aided the process of deciding what to collect. Since our purpose was both to evaluate and to promote self-reflection, we decided that students should use the portfolio to show knowledge gained from the unit. From the material in the students’ holding folders, they were required to choose eight entries for the specific categories on the requirement sheet. For example, we decided that, of the nine journal entries the students completed, they had to choose two, and of the five science experiments they documented, they had to choose one. Students were also encouraged to include a free choice that demonstrated something they felt good about as well as the selection that they were least happy with. The written aspect of the students’ final project was also contained in the portfolio. Once these categories were selected, it became obvious that a process of thoughtful self-reflection was needed, so we devised a technique using evidence of learning strips. The students were aware that the knowledge we expected them to gain from the unit was in the areas of history, culture, environment, and economy. Therefore, we asked them to choose portfolio entries that demonstrated their learning in each one of these areas by completing the following learning strip: “My selection shows evidence of my learning about (history, environment, economy, culture) of the Hudson River Valley Region,” followed by two to three sentences of explanation. These strips were then attached to the work that the students selected.

We held our breath a bit in anticipation of what we might actually receive from the students. If our students couldn’t complete this task, it meant that they couldn’t reflect and make the connections we hoped for. This type of assessment not only examined our students but reflected on our teaching as well. We were both surprised and delighted that the technique worked well with many of our students; others needed more guidance to make the connection between learning and portfolio selection. Figure 2–1 is a sample of a fifth-grade student’s evidence of learning strip.

In addition to this reflective activity, students were asked to write a “Dear Reader” letter as a cover sheet for their portfolios. The letter introduced the portfolio selections and described the student’s feelings about this learning experience. Figure 2–2 is an example of a fourth-grade student’s letter, which describes her feelings about this project. Students knew before making their selections that their portfolios were going to be assessed, and we constructed a rubric to do this (see Figure 2–3). A copy of this rubric was given to the students for their use as they assembled their portfolios. Our students were familiar with rubrics, because they had been used for self-evaluation of research reports. In this instance, however, we decided not to have students do self-evaluation with the rubric, because they had already completed a great deal of reflective activities, and we didn’t want to overdo the concept. Content unit portfolios have been excellent because they focus our students and help us to achieve quality learning in a short time frame. These portfolios can also work well with longer units of study.
My food web shows evidence of my understanding of the environment of the Hudson River Valley because I learned how the sun really starts everything. Different things eat plants and sometimes we eat plants or we have eaten something that has eaten a plant. I learned we are all connected to the sun somehow.

MY FOOD WEB

Meatball Wedge

bread—primary consumer
meat—secondary consumer
sauce—primary consumer

Producer (wheat)
Producer (grass)
Producer (tomato)
Primary consumer (cow)
Dear Reader,

Welcome to my Hudson River Valley Portfolio! This portfolio contains my favorite selections from our unit of studying the Hudson River Valley. Let me tell you what we have been doing. During the past six weeks we read a book called Owls Journey. Owls Journey is a historical-fiction book about the Hudson River Valley. For each chapter in the book we re-wrote that chapter from a character's point of view. In 2.2 we study the history of the H.R.V. In science we studied the River itself. We also enjoyed speakers and field trips about the H.R.V. My portfolio contains pieces about all of these things. The thing that will stick with me is how polluted our...
river is. It's sad how much we have hurt it and how it can't do anything about it and we can. Too many people say "just a little paper, sewage, bottles, etc. won't hurt the river," but if you add all of that up, you have a big problem.

When you open my portfolio remember that the work inside is only 1/8 of all my work. Remember the river, what our job is and how we can all help. Think about our River and our future.

Sincerely,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Your portfolio contains:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eight appropriate selections, all legibly written and neatly presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven “Evidence of Learning” strips, each one attached to a selection. All strips are completed in the required format and reflect your knowledge and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One selection representing the work of which you are least proud. This selection has a thoughtfully completed reflection form attached to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One “Dear Reader” letter that describes your feelings about your participation and learning, according to given guidelines. This letter is neatly presented and reflects much thought about the knowledge you now have and the work you have completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A neatly organized folder that is appropriately designed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2 Your portfolio contains:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eight appropriate selections, most of which are legible and neatly presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven “Evidence of Learning” strips, each one attached to a selection. Most strips follow the required format and reflect your knowledge and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One selection representing the work of which you are least proud. This selection has a reflection form attached to it, but your explanation could be more detailed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One “Dear Reader” letter that follows most of the guidelines for describing your feelings about your learning and participation. The letter contains some thought about the knowledge you now have and the work you have completed, but could be more detailed or developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A folder that is mostly organized and appropriately designed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1 Your portfolio contains:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 8 selections or ones that do not meet established requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several illegible selections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several “Evidence of Learning” strips that do not follow the required format or do not reflect your knowledge and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A “Dear Reader” letter that does not follow the guidelines for describing your feelings about the knowledge you have and the work you have completed. The letter leaves the reader with little information about your experience during the past 6 weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A folder that is poorly organized and inappropriately designed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 2–3** Rubric for assessing final portfolio (*Source: The Hudson River Valley Region*)
CREATING A YEAR-LONG COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIO

Another portfolio approach I’ve used is a communications portfolio. Designed to document growth over time in the language arts, a communications portfolio represents students’ reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking activities that occur in the classroom throughout the year. My purpose for this portfolio was clear. I wanted to document the students’ ability to write for a variety of purposes and make their growth in this area important to them.

To start the process, I looked at the blueprint of my school year and recorded student experiences that provided writing opportunities and enabled data collection. This helped me stay authentic because I planned to evaluate the students’ learning regardless of whether or not students used a portfolio. Therefore, the portfolios mirrored the curriculum instead of driving it. The language arts activities I planned included experiences that spanned many curriculum areas and focused on student writing using these forms: personal narratives, descriptive paragraphs, persuasive essays, point-of-view pieces, friendly and business letters, personal journals, content response journals, literature response activities, news summaries, book reports, projects in different curriculum areas, and research reports. All of these experiences provided opportunities for students to write and produce work that they could consider for portfolio entries.

Once the purpose of the portfolio was established, I was still faced with both philosophical and pragmatic questions: What would these portfolios look like at the end of the year? Was there a right or wrong way to do this? How would I handle a year’s worth of paper? How would I guide students through the process, and could these children be reflective? This stage of teacher insecurity is to be anticipated. Let me reassure you and share my belief that students benefit from the portfolio experience even if there are some logistical errors. The process is really similar to taking a journey together; by sharing errors along the way, you create an atmosphere of trust. Be prepared to change what isn’t working, just as you do for any lesson. The main advantage of this long-term portfolio, compared to the short-term content portfolio, is that you are not using it to evaluate or grade students but to document their growth and provide the opportunity to establish learning goals. The real challenge of this long-term portfolio, however, is keeping it from becoming overwhelming to you and your students. While this is a more difficult way to implement portfolios, it proved very rewarding. Even after using this long-term portfolio for two years, I am still looking for ways to refine it by reducing paperwork and increasing authenticity.

Let me share how I handled some logistical issues. First, I decided that work could not go home without returning to school. I created a file of manila folders to store daily work and placed them in hanging files. We referred to these as holding folders. Their purpose was to contain everything for us to consider until we made decisions about portfolio contents. Students also maintained individual writing folders. This system worked well for me as long as I took the time early in the year to create a “think portfolio” mindset. Students needed to be reminded to store their work in the folders, especially when they worked with specialty area teachers in subjects other than language arts. The work from these subject classes also counted as part of portfolio contents. One tip I can never stress enough is to make sure that students put the date on all their work because this saves time and aggravation later in the
As the year progressed, students generally began to internalize the system, and the holding folders became delightfully full and never dusty!

The “think portfolio” environment is most important. Students may not initially understand the portfolio concept, and you need to introduce it to them in a tangible way. One way is to share an actual artist’s portfolio or one that you have created yourself. In our school, we have been fortunate to have a few grade levels involved in portfolios, and our fifth graders share their work with younger students. In the beginning of the year, many students collect work without understanding the true notion of a portfolio collection, but this soon changes.

In addition to setting the stage at the beginning of the year, other activities can be completed to create the foundation for a portfolio. Our students were asked to complete a writing sample for their permanent district writing folders. I made copies of this piece and used it as a baseline for individual portfolios, because I wanted to demonstrate growth in writing through the year. Fortunately, the writing sample the district required was a friendly letter to the teacher in which the students were asked to describe themselves and tell of their expectations for the year. Not only did this give me a baseline of writing ability, it provided information about the students’ backgrounds and put me in touch with their goals.

The portfolio is also a golden opportunity to enhance the school–home connection. Periodic parental feedback is invaluable. It provides students with the realization that teachers do not work in isolation and that each child’s success is orchestrated and celebrated by all who care about him or her. Of course, not all parents participate as much as we would want them to, but we need to consistently provide opportunities for them to do so. I send home a portfolio questionnaire at the beginning of the year, focusing on how each child learns. A similar questionnaire is sent home in June, and it’s quite interesting to compare the two. Figure 2–4 is a sample of a completed parent questionnaire. Students also complete a questionnaire at the beginning of the year (see Figure 2–5). It is interesting to compare the parents’ responses with those of their children.

Once initial data were collected, we needed to start making portfolio selections. After my first year’s experience, I established a goal of making portfolio selections more frequently. This is easier said than done because the process takes time, and we all know how little time we have in today’s busy classroom. I was able to plan three selection days, even though I had wanted to have students make selections every six weeks. The first round of making selections was the most difficult. It helps to model the process with your class and discuss the purpose for making selections early in the school year.

During my first year of using the portfolio process, several issues arose:

- Would students always select pieces of work that you, as their teacher, have responded favorably to? If so, how could I avoid my evaluation being substituted for theirs?
- What if the students chose selections from their bound journals, or their selections were not easily accessible on a selection day?
- What should I do with the work the students didn’t select, and what should I do with the work they did select?
- How should I guide them, but not direct them, through this process?
- How many selections should be made?
- Do all selections have to be in final draft form?
Is all work “OK” or are there limits to what they select?

What about the child who doesn’t want to participate?

A general answer to each of these questions is “It’s entirely up to you!” and there are no simple right or wrong answers. Teachers should reflect on their purpose for doing a portfolio and try to answer each question in relation to the goal. I learned that there is no exemplary

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<tr>
<th>Student’s name:</th>
<th>Helena</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Sept. 16</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. What would you identify as a strength of your child’s writing?</td>
<td>Creative expression, that she enjoys writing and research for writing</td>
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<td>2. What would you identify as an area for most improvement in your child’s writing?</td>
<td>To take time the process is as important as the final product</td>
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<td>3. If you could improve something about the way your child reads, what would it be?</td>
<td>That she takes challenges to read different types of books.</td>
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<td>4. My child does his/her best when</td>
<td>She can work by herself or in small group. Large group is very risky for her.</td>
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Please feel free to provide additional information on the back of this form. THANK YOU!!!

FIGURE 2–4 Parent response form (preportfolio)
portfolio design, although I spent much time looking for one. Based on my experience, here are some of my thoughts about the process. First, try to live with life’s imperfections. Students are insecure when they make their first selections, and they want indicators of success. For many, this may mean selecting a piece for which they received a good grade or one that looked neat. The students’ ability to make choices develops over time, based on their use of

![Figure 2–5 Preportfolio student questionnaire](image)
more appropriate criteria. As teachers, we can provide them with helpful information such as the realization that not everything in a portfolio has to be in final form. I have also found that students chose different pieces for a variety of reasons. If students chose a test to keep in the portfolio, it might mean that they studied especially hard for the test and the success meant a great deal to them. The important issue here is to inform the students that they are the decision makers about selections, and they must be able to explain why they made their choices.
### Portfolio Selection Worksheet

**Possible Categories**
- friendly letters
- business letters
- descriptive
- persuasive
- literature workshop
- Book-It
- minireport
- social studies
- science
- other

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<tr>
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<th>Date Selected</th>
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**FIGURE 2–6** Portfolio selection worksheet (to be used for selection days that precede mid year and final selection days)
Here’s a suggestion to help with the problem of work that is contained outside of the holding folders. I gave students a worksheet (see Figure 2–6) that listed suggestions for choices, and I had students write down some basic information about their choices. If an entry came from a journal, the students listed the selection on the worksheet and put a little self-adhesive note on the journal page they wanted me to copy. They turned the journal in with their other selections, and I copied or extracted the work for them.

I provided a framework for the class to use to help them make selections, although I reinforced the concept that the final decision was always theirs. I reminded the students that the focus of the portfolio was to show their ability to write for a variety of purposes and advised them to include different forms of writing when they made their selections. I urged them not to choose too many pieces and to be selective. Some teachers may want to be more direct about the type and number of selections for a portfolio. Again, this decision should be based on the portfolio purpose.

It’s also important to discuss “ownership” with the students. In my class, it’s quite clear that the students own their portfolios and the audience consists of their parents and me. The children are aware of this, and they end the school year by taking their portfolio treasures home. I don’t grade their work, and the portfolios are not given to next year’s teacher, because I want the students to enjoy them without being concerned about evaluation. I’m fortunate in this respect, because a number of school districts now require portfolio assessment for student evaluation throughout elementary school. Using portfolios for evaluation certainly affects the entire process and raises issues for me. Standardized portfolios may result if portfolio practices are mandated, and I’d be concerned about how genuine student entries would be when all parties know that the portfolio will be used to grade students. Some districts use a transfer portfolio and select a limited number of entries from a student’s final portfolio for next year’s teacher to review. In this system, the smaller transfer portfolio would be maintained in the school and the more complete version could be given to the students.

**FOCUSING ON SELF-REFLECTION**

It’s important to think about ways to help our students reflect about themselves and learn to set goals. I realize that as an adult it’s difficult to be reflective about my own work, so I certainly know how hard this can be for my students. Learning to be self-reflective is a developmental process. It’s important to provide students with lots of opportunities for self-reflection and to model this behavior. Teachers should also be reminded to listen to their students, because more reflection may be occurring than they think. I found this out the first year I attempted to document self-reflection. I had asked students to complete a reflection form for each piece that they selected for their portfolios (see Figure 2–7). However, I was disappointed in the quality of their responses, for example, “I chose this piece because it was good.” “I liked my handwriting that day.” I was almost convinced that students of this age were limited in their ability to be reflective about their work. I discussed the problem with our project facilitator, who advised me to change the way I was looking at reflection. Consequently, I decided to videotape my class on the next selection day. When I viewed the tape, I wrote down words and phrases that my students said as they made their selections. And what a difference I found! Typical comments were, “Wow! I can’t believe I used so many descriptive words in this.” “This is interesting to read.” The students may not have written
FIGURE 2–7 Student reflection form (to be filled out by the student after making a selection for the portfolio and then discussed during student–teacher conference)

insightfully on their forms, but their oral comments showed me that they were invested in the process.

After viewing the tape, I decided to document reflection in a less restrictive fashion. While I still required students to complete a form for at least one piece of work, I also asked them to assess any final piece of writing with a rubric that we devised together in class (see Figure 2–8). To develop this rubric, we talked a great deal about what constitutes good writing. Figures 2–9A, B, and C show three samples of students’ writing that we jointly agreed represented a 3, 2, and 1, respectively, based on the rubric. By seeing the rubric applied in this concrete fashion, students clearly understood how the criteria would be applied to their work.

In addition to these reflective activities, students were required to complete a mid-year reflection sheet after they had the experience with two days of portfolio selection. I tried to have this coincide with mid-year, because the second selection day is best done after the December vacation. I also find that these forms are valuable when I share with parents during conferences. Figure 2–10 contains a sample of a completed mid-year reflection sheet that reveals good insights not only about the work but about the learning process as well.

I find that the most valuable form of reflection is the “Dear Reader” letter that we used for the culmination of the Hudson River Valley Region Portfolio. After the students made
their final portfolio selections, they were told to write a letter to a person reading their portfolio in which they described what the portfolio represented about their communication ability. This letter introduced the students to the reader and provided a forum for sharing information about themselves and their accomplishments. Figure 2–11 is a letter by a fifth-grade student, and Figure 2–12 contains one by a fourth-grade student. While there is clearly a wide difference in these students’ abilities, both pieces provide evidence of self-reflection, which was my goal for them.
What I Want to Be When I Grow Up

I am a person who has many interests. I like to sing, play the clarinet, do hand work, and write. I like to write because it lets all the thoughts that are bottled up inside of me be put on paper. Writing allows me to express myself in a way that sometimes only I understand. When I grow up I want to be a writer.

Writing is a special magic that we all have inside of us, but can only be used when you set your mind to it. Many people must take classes to learn how to use this magic, but there are some of us who are born with the talent of writing and need no classes to use it.

Some people who write can feel the power of words, and when they express them on paper the words will seem to dance. They can make people feel so happy that the world seems to want to join in the happiness also. If you are a pauper who is so sad, and he reads a paper whose words are written with the magic inside of you, he will feel a joy inside of him.

I want to write so I can express all the thoughts inside of me so they make the paper seem like it’s dancing. I want to make a pauper whose never smiled smile, and I will do this by writing.

Once the students reflected on the year’s efforts, it was time for a response from both me and the parents. The students and I planned a portfolio party. To prepare, they practiced ways in which they could present their portfolios to their families. Parents were also asked to complete an end-of-year questionnaire, a sample of which is shown in Figure 2–13. I responded in each student’s portfolio and related how I’d seen the student grow in communication ability and described areas in which I thought the student could improve. I also included a statement about how I’d enjoyed a specific experience in which we had worked together. This collection, which contained a blend of student and teacher selections, was then turned over to the rightful owners—the students.

I suppose that the true compensation for keeping portfolios comes during the final hours of the school year. I will never forget the silence when students opened their final portfolios,
complete with their selections, my reflections, and responses from other teachers and family members. I now realize that without ever intending it, these folders became a great equalizer in my classroom. There was a smile on each student’s face, whether the student was a high achiever or always seemed to be struggling. For some, the smile represented validation of ability, and for others it meant recognition that they too had come far during the year. All held tangible examples of success in their hands.

I join with many other educators who continue to experiment with more effective ways to educate students, and I offer this encouragement to those who are interested in beginning a portfolio process: Keep it simple and follow your instincts, which are probably correct. Share with others; it really helps a lot. When you have questions or problems, discuss the issues with your students. Their answers may surprise you. I end with this quotation about portfolios from one of my fifth-grade students: “Keeping a portfolio is like having a reminder to not be too hard on yourself. You can see the whole picture better.”

FIGURE 2–9B Example of a 2 paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2/7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Big Gust of Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family decided to go to Flamingo. My mom told me to get my dad. I got out of the car and started to walk down the street. It was cold, but I felt safe. All of a sudden a big gust of wind came and knocked me over. I tried to get back to the car. Then I started to run down the sidewalk. I couldn’t breathe. Then my dad picked me up and asked me why I was on the ground. I told him the story while I was walking up the street. When I got to the car, I was excited because we were going to Flamingo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What a day

Oh my god in late in late!!!
in late to go baby sitting,
I ran out the door as
fast as a tiger. Soon!!
i got on my bike and
rode to Bedford Hills. In
here I yelled when I got
there. Good thing she was
running late she did not even
know I was late. After >

have from running all over
town I was very tried

FIGURE 2–9C Example of a 1 paper
MID-YEAR REFLECTION

1. As I look at my portfolio selections, the piece I like best is Cheesecake and my crave for it I like this piece because it is disruptive, funny, and had no errors.

2. The hardest piece for me to write was My elebel piece because it took alot of time to write what would happen to elebel when she got to the witches tree.

3. After reviewing my mid-year portfolio, I feel that I have grown better at spelling and breaking my story up into paragraphs.

4. I was pleased with the way I have become more disruptive in my pieces, like in Cheesecake and my crave for it.

5. I was not pleased with the way I made some spelling errors in some pieces.

6. My goal for the next part of the school year is to write a really adventures story and alot more poems.

7. I think I can achieve this goal by putting time every day to write my story, and make one of the best stories I have ever written.

FIGURE 2–10 Student’s portfolio self-assessment
May 31,

Dear Reader,

You are now looking at my portfolio throughout the year. I have written many writing pieces such as descriptive, short stories, and point of view, etc. Now I would like to share this work with you. A portfolio, though, does not just contain all your work; it is made up of special writing pieces and shows growth throughout the year.

You will read everything I’m sure, yet I would like you to notice my growth and how much more descriptive I have become. Not to mention how much longer my writing has become!

I am very proud of this accomplishment and feel special to be able to say “I have a portfolio.” I hope you will feel the same way and maybe start a portfolio of your own once you look over the contents in it!!!

Sincerely,
Dear Reader,

This portfolio shows the work I have been working on in this school year. It represents some of my best work.

You will find a lot of my work from this school year. You can tell which was written in September and which was written in May. You will find a lot of personal narrative because I feel I put a lot of effort into them.

I want you to notice the lengths of my work and look at the effort I put into them.

Sincerely,
Dear Parent,

Enclosed is your child’s final portfolio representing student- and teacher-selected samples of his/her growth as an effective communicator this year. As we discussed earlier in the year, the purpose of this portfolio is to document how your child’s ability to communicate for a variety of purposes has developed over the past ten months. The portfolio also gives your child an opportunity to select, evaluate, and reflect upon his/her own progress as a communicator. This will hopefully enable him/her to set goals for improving skills and see more clearly how much has been accomplished.

Your child has practiced the way in which he or she will present the portfolio to you. I encourage you to spend some time with your child as he or she shares this new adventure with you. I am sure that you will enjoy every moment of the trip!

I would greatly appreciate feedback from you and would find your responses to the following questions extremely helpful. Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and support.

Sincerely,

Robyn Lane

1. After viewing the portfolio, I found evidence of growth in the following areas:

   A. Expression of ideas
   B. Focus (staying on topic)
   C. Vocabulary/language
   D. Spelling
   E. Punctuation (commas, capitals, periods, etc.)
   F. Ability to revise from first to final draft
   G. Organization

   2. I feel my child has shown the greatest growth in the following area:

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

   FIGURE 2–13 Parent response form—end of year
3. I would like to see my child further improve in ________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

4. Please explain if, and in what ways, you have seen growth in your child’s reading ability and/or interests:

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

5. Additional Comments: ____________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian signature: __________________________

FIGURE 2–13 continued