Writing Reflective Tags for ePortfolio Artifacts
Professor Kenneth E. Koons, Spring 2012

The ePortfolio is a personal workspace, the main purpose of which is to showcase the growth and development of your learning about the target culture(s). To maximize the effectiveness of your ePortfolio as such a workspace, each artifact placed into it should include a "reflective tag." In writing this tag, you should briefly describe the substantive content of the artifact, reflect upon its significance in light of topics, themes, and issues raised by course readings or in class discussions, and explain how it connects to other artifacts in your ePortfolio. Effective writers are good observers and noticers of things. In this case, you are being asked to observe and notice—and reflect upon—the process of your own learning.

Near the end of the semester, you will be asked to write a reflective essay in which you explain what you know (about the material covered in this course) and how you came to know it. The artifacts you place into your ePortfolio serve as "evidence" for making your case. Accordingly, a central question that each reflective tag should address is "how and in what way does this item represent a step forward, or mark progress, in my understanding of the target culture(s) ?" Approached in this way, at the end of the semester these tags will prove of great value as you write the reflective essay.

Do note, however, that in some instances your work may lead to puzzlement or lack of clarity, which may seem a step backward rather than forward in your understanding of course material. If this happens, acknowledge it (and recognize it as inherent to the process of learning), and move on. As you engage in subsequent course work and the issue clarifies, you may wish to revise (or add to) the earlier reflective tag in order to document the clarification and your deepened understanding of the issue.

Concerning the length of reflective tags: although it's conceivable that a reflective tag of two or three sentences could be effective, I suggest that you aim for a paragraph of four-to-six well developed sentences. If you feel the need to write more than six sentences—say seven or eight—do so but be aware that as length continues to grow you are producing more than a "tag."

Every time you place an artifact in the workspace of the ePortfolio, you will be presented with an opportunity to write a "description." In doing so, begin by typing the words "Reflective Tag." Then, type your reflective tag in the space that follows.