CHAPTER 10

INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

"Most of the people who worked for me at AltaMira started as interns. It was a way of trying them out to see if I wanted to hire them; and a way of them trying out the company to see if they wanted to work there."

—Mitch Allen, Founder, Left Coast Press, friend and publisher of this book

INTRODUCTION

Got a day, week, or month available? Although spending the time relaxing with a book (murder mystery or trashy romance) or the full set of DVDs of the last season of your favorite TV program may be what you really want to do with your well-earned time off, we recommend that you actually use it to your advantage. Volunteer! (Yes, this is a one-word sentence that can be read as a command.) While volunteering or interning at an agency or organization may not pay money, it does pay for itself ten times
over when you begin applying for jobs. Money gets spent. It disappears out of your wallet and bank account faster than you can track it. The “payment” from volunteering is one that can pay dividends well into the future. Payment may be in the form of the experience and skills you gain, the additions to your professional network, or the letter of recommendation that you will request from your supervisor prior to your departure from the volunteer position. So, how do you find a place to intern or volunteer?

**INTERNSHIPS**

Internships, also known as practicums, can be arranged through your university, through your department, or sought out on your own. Some internship sponsors provide a stipend or honorarium, which is an added bonus. The advantage of arranging the internship through your university or department is that you can then arrange to receive college credit for the experience. If your college does not offer a formal internship program, speak to your adviser about the possibility of receiving credit as a directed reading or independent study.

Before arranging your internship schedule, talk to your adviser to find out how many hours of work are required per credit hour. It may seem like a lot compared with how many credits you earn per class, but class credit includes more than face-time with the instructor. Class or course credit also calculates in the learning you do when researching, writing papers, studying for exams, preparing presentations, and other class-related activities. The number of internship hours per class credit varies. Our limited online research found that most universities require approximately 15 hours per week during a 10-week semester to accumulate the 150 hours needed for a 3-credit-hour internship.

Internships are beneficial to both the intern and the sponsor. As an intern, you get hands-on experience you would not have access to in the classroom. Use your ethnographic skills to study the workplace and the organizational culture. The more you understand of the big picture, the more you will learn from the experience, and the more likely you will be hired to stay on. If you choose not to stay on, you can still use the experience gained during your internship in later job situations. Use your journal skills to build the lists of key informants—people you are close to, who you might use for references, job leads, or general information about the company and the industry. The people you work with can also help you network within the company or organization.

The sponsor has the benefit of training someone they might employ sometime in the future. If they do hire you, they have the added benefit of
reducing the time it would take to familiarize you with their business or activities. Jennifer Carden Kersey conducted her practicum with a small market research boutique, Intrepid Consultants in Seattle, WA, and has worked there for two years now. (See her full career story in Appendix 2.) Robynne Locke looked and looked for a place to do an internship. Eventually she found a research and consulting firm that, while in the private sector (which she had presumed would not be in keeping with her personal philosophy), actually worked in areas she cared passionately about. Despite the fact that the company had no established intern program, she applied anyway and was given a chance—which led to an eventual job there. Carolyn J. McClellan, in her career story, related the following: "One of the biggest life-changing events of my college career was when I applied for and was accepted as an intern in the American Indian Program at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History the summer prior to my senior year. I worked for Dr. JoAllyn Archambault on the Mohave Tribal Catalog Project researching the Mojave collections, not only at their museum but across the country. Dr. Archambault then asked me to stay on for the fall semester of my senior year, and the University allowed me to earn credit for my research project which allowed me to graduate in the spring of 1996. This experience taught me the value of research, of the vast amount of data available at other repositories, and working with tribal communities other than my own." Dr. McClellan is now the Assistant Director of Community and Constituent Services at the National Museum of the American Indian. (To see more about Dr. McClellan, read her career story in Appendix 2.)

Bear in mind, however, that interns are not free labor. There is a cost to the employer. They must take time to supervise you when they could be doing something else. Instead of giving your tasks to someone who already knows the job and could complete it quickly, they are giving it to you as a learning experience, which means a slower turnaround for them. There is a chance that you might leave before the tasks are completed, so they might have to spend time training another person to complete the job. All of these things cost money. The cost-benefit ratio needs to be in balance because, if it is not, this employer may think twice about offering internships to students again in the future.

**Scheduling an Internship**

Don't wait to schedule an internship! Look back to your five-year plan. Perhaps you already planned to do an internship. Is the timing still good, or do you need to alter your plan to accommodate changes that have occurred since you originally laid out your plan? If you have not yet incorporated an
Internship in your five-year plan, where would it fit? Janet Chernela, professor at the University of Maryland, says, “While I was going for my M.S. (Hunter College 1970-73) and Ph.D. (Columbia University, 1975-83) in anthropology, I had a research assistantship at the American Museum of Natural History. I learned far more as a research assistant than I did in any class. It was the activity of scholarship-in-process rather than the reading of finished scholarship that was so useful.”

If you are a planner, you might want to initiate a conversation with the intern sponsor so that you can get placed on the practicum schedule early. This is particularly important if there is a specific place you want to do your internship. Since most organizations accept only one or two interns per year, waiting until the semester you plan to do this internship might be risky: they may have already selected their student interns for that period of time.

Larry Zimmerman, in his review of this chapter, noted that “the best internships happen after a reasonable amount of classroom instruction so that students have at least some knowledge of a subject area. We recommend, for example, that our M.A. museum students wait at least until they have had the required intro class and at least two additional classes, which effectively means no earlier than their second semester. We really like to have them in the last half of their degree. With undergrads, we require that they have the intro class and the museum methods class before their required internship. This way, students have a framework on which to hang their on-the-job experience.” Kelley Hays-Gilpin, in her comments, said that some museums sign up their interns as much as six months in advance, so it’s best to think ahead.

Identifying Potential Intern Sponsors

If you want to do an internship but have no idea where to start your search for one, we have a few suggestions. Begin by identifying what you are looking for. Grab your journal and flip back through the pages. Look for any notes or comments you may have made that identified geographic locations where you would like to work, skills that you would like to build, and knowledge that you would like to gain. Check the list you generated of places that hire anthropologists within your discipline. Start a new list of the experiences you would like to gain from an internship. If you are taking classes during the same time frame as your internship, then you will probably need to stay fairly close to home. If you are planning an internship for a time when you are not in class, however, that may open you up to working in another geographic area.
If you don’t have a specific agency or organization in mind, you can check the listings at your university career center for places seeking anthropology students.

- Check the Yellow Pages telephone book. With the Web, we sometimes forget to use this useful reference.

- Talk to your professors. There is a good chance that they have worked with students in internships in the past and may be able to recommend good sponsors to you.

- Talk to the people in your network. Ask them about their internship experiences and recommendations for potential sponsors.

- Check the Internet. Interested in working for the federal government? They now have one web page that can link you to all positions, http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/. Many of the government agencies offer a Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) that bypasses the formal hiring process and allows them to select students directly for specific positions. To qualify for the STEP program, you must show that you are currently a student and that you are enrolled for the term following your internship.

Carol’s daughter worked as a STEP employee for the Forest Service for five summers, and received college credit for two of those summers; one summer she worked as an interpreter and one as a member of an archaeological survey crew. She selected different geographic areas and different jobs based on the skills and knowledge she thought she would need when she graduated and was fortunate enough to work in Alaska, New Mexico, Utah, and Washington. (She also selected areas based on access to kayaking or rock climbing!) During her senior year, she started her job search (with a bit of prompting by mom) in February before graduating and was hired in a full-time temporary position in the location of her choice (close to prime rock climbing). Her five summers with the STEP program put her miles ahead of a student walking out of college with a degree and no job experience.

**Before You Start**

An internship is a learning situation. Like a regular job, internships require a scheduled commitment, but your payment is the knowledge you gain. Although an intern is not merely free labor, bear in mind that all jobs, especially entry-level ones, include some menial tasks that someone has to do. So, while you may take the internship with the intent of assisting with data
collection and analysis, don't be surprised if you also have to put stamps on envelopes or answer the phone.

Contact the internship sponsor. Find out who your supervisor will be and make contact with this person either by phone or by email. Build your base of knowledge so that you can walk in feeling a bit more comfortable knowing what you will help with. Ask what books or other resources might broaden your knowledge about their programs or the work you will be doing. Find out what the normal work schedule will be. If you need to negotiate your schedule because of other obligations, now is the time to do it.

Before starting an internship, create a learning contract for yourself, similar to the contract that you made with yourself in Chapter 2. Share the draft with your adviser or departmental sponsor and with the person who will supervise your internship at the work location and finalize it once you have incorporated their comments. The learning contract will provide the framework for the internship, so make sure that you list the types of tasks you will be involved in and the knowledge you'd like to gain. Note in your contract how this internship relates to previous classes or work that you have done and how it will assist you in achieving your goals for getting future jobs.

**During Your Internship**

Use your journal skills during your internship. Note meetings, conversations, recommendations, and contacts. Ask questions and jot down the answers. You may also wish to use your journal to record time spent on various tasks. Tracking information in this way will help when it comes to writing your performance evaluation at the end of the internship.

Set regular meetings with your direct supervisor for the end of each week or every two weeks. Use the time to note what they would like you to do next and to discuss what you have just completed. If you are confused, speak up. Ask for clarification or additional background information. Midway through the term, talk with your on-campus sponsor. If you are having difficulties, speak up, ask for help. They are not going to know what is wrong unless you talk to them. Don't let this opportunity go to waste, even if you figure out partway through that this is not really what you want to do with your life. Find a way to end it positively. Anthropology is a small community, and people talk. You want to make sure that what they say when your name comes up is positive.

**At the End**

At the end of your internship, evaluate your own performance. Look at the contract you wrote before you started. How well did you do in relation
to what you’d hoped to achieve? Also, ask your internship supervisor for a performance evaluation. If you have not done so already, show your contract to your supervisor so he or she has a base on which to build your evaluation. Set up a time to meet and discuss the evaluations of your performance. This is also the ideal time to request that all-so-important letter of reference or to ask if you can rely on your supervisor for a letter when you are applying for specific jobs in the future.

**Volunteering**

Do you have limited time but would still like some practical experience, networking, and letters of reference? Volunteer! While an internship is generally scheduled as a single quarter or a semester-long commitment, volunteering can be as short as a day, or a day here and there. We recommend, though, that regardless of the duration, you treat it as a serious commitment. Even though this is not a paid job, these people are counting on you and your time.

**Scheduling When to Volunteer**

Volunteering can be a less formal arrangement than an internship, and fitting it into your already crowded curriculum should be easier than designing a semester-long internship. There is no limit to how often or how many places you can and should volunteer, and the more you do it, the better known you will get within a community. Our recommendation is to start volunteering early in your educational career and continue doing so as you progress. You may want to try spending time with various agencies or organizations. If you find that you like one particular group, stick with it.

If you would like to contribute to your field of study, volunteer for the professional or avocational associations in your area. They are always looking for volunteers to assist with everything from annual meeting registrations to stuffing packets to monitoring sessions at meetings. One advantage of volunteering at conferences or events is that they are short-term annual events that occur at specific times of the year. You can build their schedule into yours and block out the time well in advance. Some professional organizations, like the Society for American Archaeology, offer waived or reduced registration fees in exchange for a specific amount of volunteer time. Thus, volunteering serves the purpose of getting you into the all-important national meeting where you can network (see Chapter 12 for more on the importance of national organizations and networking to your transition to professional life) at a cost far below what most other attendees have to shell out.
Identifying Places to Volunteer

Larry Zimmerman says, "Volunteering opportunities may be as close as down the hall in the archaeology laboratory or with a faculty member on a research project or helping out a graduate student who is doing a short dig on a site near campus. I always mention in letters of recommendation student participation in our anthropology or museum studies clubs where you can actually pick up lots of skills and sometimes rub shoulders with high roller speakers." Imagine the conversations you might have with Donald Johanson and Jane Goodall (or Joe Watkins or Carol Ellick) if you were to pick them up at the airport and drive them to the symposium on campus!

Many of the same places that you would work or intern also accept volunteers, but there are even more places that you may not have considered. As mentioned above, getting involved with the local archaeology, anthropology, or historical society can be very beneficial. Volunteering with local avocational societies helps them and helps you. You might also want to consider helping with the Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops in your area. Most groups could use a workshop, speaker, or badge sponsor. Many organizations depend on volunteers and will take as much time as you make available, but you can hold your commitments down by offering to give a presentation or help at an event or annual meeting.

Museums are another excellent venue for volunteering. They always have a backlog of projects and a lack of funds to pay to get them done. Back in 1977, between jobs and schools, Carol wandered down to her favorite high school hangout, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. When she walked in, she just stood there, uncertain of what she wanted to do or where she wanted to go. The person at the information desk asked if she needed help. In an instant that changed her life forever, she said, "I'd like to volunteer." The information person asked her if she had a particular area of interest and she said, "Anthropology." The next thing she knew, she found herself being led down to the anthropology laboratory where she spent the next two months sorting through fossil hominid fragments and making molds and casts of Lucy. Other less tangible experiences included meeting Mary Leakey and listening to the sometimes heated debates on human origins. The tangible outcome was a letter of recommendation from Donald Johanson recommending her as an excellent addition to any project team.

If you are not sure where to start looking for a volunteer position or who to contact, start with the people you know. Ask other students, your faculty, and your mentors for suggestions and recommendations. They have the background and experience to help you identify a place to start and a person to contact.
Before You Start Your Volunteer Gig

Do your research. Within moments, a simple Google search can turn up more information than you could ever imagine. Look up the organization. Read through the mission statement. Find out who works there and what their specialties are. Develop some questions that you can pose to the people you will be helping. Think about how much time you can reasonably devote to volunteering. Be realistic in your plans, and try to remember that there are only 24 hours in a day and that school is the equivalent of a full-time, 40 hour a week job. Don’t put yourself in a position where you might start feeling exploited. Most places will accept as much as you can give, so it is up to you to monitor what works. If you get overwhelmed, let someone know that you need to cut back.

During Your Volunteer Work

Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Clarify your tasks with the person giving you the instructions. Working independently is a good thing, but make sure you are doing what the supervisor envisioned. If you are producing something, do the first one and then check to make sure it is what they wanted. If you are monitoring an event, run through the checklist before the event begins. Know where the light switches are if you will be turning down the lights. Try it without the audience in the room so you know which switches dim and which ones turn the lights off completely. Check that the extension cords are taped down or out of the way of people’s feet. If you are operating a projector, make sure you know how to turn it on and cool it down before shutting it off, and where the spare bulb is.

If you are volunteering at a public event, giving a talk to a classroom, or teaching a workshop for scouts, we recommend that you read through the chapter on communication (Chapter 11). In the past 20 years, public outreach and education have become recognized as an extremely important component of professionalization. The American Anthropological Association and the Society for American Archaeology both have extensive resources available on their websites for practicing professionals. Carol has chapters published in books that provide information on presenting in both informal and formal learning situations. (Check her bio in Chapter 7 for the titles of both books.)

At the End

Talk to the person who oversaw your work or participation. Thank him or her for the opportunity to volunteer. If you enjoyed it, offer to help again
though, difficulties arise in communication when what is said is not what is heard. There is an art to listening that goes beyond simply hearing what is being said.

In this chapter, we cover a wide range of topics relating to verbal, non-verbal, and written communication. Good communications skills lie at the heart of most things that go radically right or drastically wrong in your efforts to begin a career. Our goal in this chapter is to provide you with some basic information that will help you in moving toward your goals.

**Learning Styles**

The saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" is true. If we could all be as verbally descriptive as a picture, then part of the issue concerning communication with others would be solved, at least for the auditory learners. The visual learners would still need that picture.

There are three primary learning styles—auditory, visual, and tactile. The majority of people process information best by listening, but we also take in information through sight and touch. In theory, a good teacher will teach to all learning styles, since all classes will have all types of learners. It's easy to envision teaching a tactile and visual math lesson on percentages at the elementary level if you consider what can be done with the number of each color of M&Ms in a bag. In middle school, high school, and college, teaching becomes oriented more toward auditory learners. But learning styles don't change. If you are a visual learner, you are not going to automatically become an auditory learner to accommodate a teacher whose only teaching method is to lecture. Those of us who are visual or tactile learners and who have made it through the system, have taught ourselves learning techniques to compensate for lecture-based teaching.

"The discussions of learning styles gives us the information necessary to start being active in the professional world and pursuing our career choices. It also provides us with information necessary to interact in the professional world."

—Gwen Mohr, journal comment, Avenues to Professionalism class

**Types of Learners and Why the Differences Matter**

As anthropologists, we are taught observation skills. Observation is a fundamental skill within every subdiscipline. The ability to take what you have seen and detail those observations as completely as possible—as if drawing them on the page, so that readers will feel as if they are having
the experience themselves—is what is most important. These same skills—observation, inference, listing of data, and descriptive writing—can benefit you in your career. To some of us, observing and describing come easily; others struggle with converting observations to details on a page. How we best take in information is based on our learning style, and knowing how we learn can make the classroom or the job easier.

**Visual Learners**

Visual learners take in information by seeing it. There are two types of visual learning: graphic/image-based and text-based. The text-based visual learner can pick up information more easily from reading words. Graphic learners may also pick things up by reading, but sometimes they see words as a form or shape rather than as the individual letters that make up the words. As anthropologists, perhaps we all tend to be somewhat visually oriented.

**Tactile Learners**

See it; touch it; do it. Archaeologists study material culture. They must use their visual as well as their tactile senses in order to fully comprehend the material culture that they are analyzing. Tactile learners have the more hands-on style of learning. Once shown, they need to touch it, do it, and create it to learn it.

**Auditory Learners**

Auditory learners learn best by listening. Perhaps linguists lean more toward the auditory end of the spectrum. Auditory learners process lectures best and succeed well in “traditional” learning situations. Most of us who have survived or flourished in college and graduate school are auditory learners or have developed our auditory learning capacity. But mistakes and problems can arise if we automatically assume that everyone takes in information adequately by hearing it. If you want to make sure that the people you are talking to have understood what you said, ask them to repeat portions of it back to you. This is a simple technique that may help alleviate some frustrations.

It may seem strange to think about learning-styles at this point of your life, but to be a successful communicator, it is important to understand how people learn. Knowing how people learn is not only relevant to those going into academic fields of anthropology. If we supervise employees, interact with others, and present at professional conferences, understanding how people learn helps us gauge how best to communicate with them.
Cultural Influences on Communication

Cultural influences. Wah-hoo! We should be good at this! Cultural influences—isn't that what anthropology is all about, people, culture? Yes, but our involvement in culture is generally as the observer and annotator. As the scientist, we are the outsider looking in. Linguists might focus on the influences of culture on communication, but that doesn't mean that the interactions influence our speaking, hearing, or relating. And, we might examine the influences, but how deeply do we think about the consequences or make recommendations for reducing impact?

Communication among individuals is more than merely talking and listening. Our communication—beyond the words we speak—is influenced by the amount of shared experiences and cultural information we presume others to have. For example, most of us have friends that we know so well that a glance, word, or action can convey a whole series of thoughts or reactions. Conversely, there are some people who, no matter how hard we try, we just can't seem to comprehend (and we're not talking about accents here). Such shared information relates to the level of cultural (shared) context between individuals.

"For me, being a Native American and trying to be an archaeologist I find myself in a little pickle. Being Native, I realize now, after Joe explained communication styles to us, that I am very indirect and require high context when communicating. As an archaeologist, I should have the opposite communication style. I need to find a way to communicate more directly. It's not that I have to change who I am, but I need to learn how to play the game."

—Joseph (Woody) Aguilar, journal comment, Avenues to Professionalism class

High and Low Context

Archaeologically, context is the relationship of one artifact to its place and the other objects around it. When we communicate with others, our communication gets placed within the context of the situation. A broader generalization might be that our various cultures provide us the "context" with which we interpret and deliver communications.

"Low context" communication occurs when there is little shared cultural experience. Most of the information is fact filled and explicitly presented between individuals (or groups). College classrooms are perfect examples of a situation in which low context communication is required. The "culture" is varied; there is no cohesion within the group. To success-
fully communicate the content of the course, the instructor must explicitly communicate specific ideas and thoughts.

“High context” communication tends to occur when most of the information and background are shared. Families or groups of friends are good places to find high context communication. For example, communication at the completion of a two-month field season is different than at the start. The group, through time, has created its own shared culture. At the beginning of the field season, everything had to be explicitly stated. By the end, everyone has shared the same experiences and stories to the point that if someone were to mention that today there was another problem with shoelaces, everyone would understand the reference, and the new story could be told without explaining the previous experiences.

**Direct and Indirect Communication**

In conjunction with the level of shared cultural context, communication can also be direct or indirect. Direct communication is straightforward and explicit. It leaves no doubt as to what was said. Indirect communication is more subtle. Meaning may be conveyed through an action rather than voice. Indirect communication requires inference. You need to ask yourself, what did they mean? Were they trying to communicate something beyond telling me a story? Was there a moral to the story? When a supervisor tells you that he really liked the look of the lab yesterday, is he trying to simply praise you for cleaning the lab, or is he implying that you should try to keep it that way daily?

Understanding communication styles and the importance of cultural context will help you as you transition from school into your career. Ed Jolie, speaking of himself and his wife, says that communication is essential to survival in graduate school and beyond: “Both of us being in grad school, though difficult, made it easier in some ways. We each knew what the other was going through. We’ve been, I think, very good at communicating with each other in our relationship. Couples, whether one or both are nascent academics, need to make sure that they’re communicating very well with their spouse/partner. You cannot do this alone, and that means leaning on your friends and loved ones as much, if not more, than on your academic advisors/mentors.” Utilize the analytical skills gained through working with people. Become sensitive to the way that culture influences the ways humans communicate with one another. As you move into an organization, you will likely have to interact with people from many different backgrounds; being aware of the various culturally influenced communication styles will make your understanding of group
dynamics (and your integration into the group) easier. More information on cultural context and communication can be found in the Peace Corps training guide, Culture Matters (see Appendix 3, Resources).

**Nonverbal Communication**

We communicate consciously and subconsciously in many different ways. In addition to the obvious spoken word, we communicate loudly by the way we stand, sit, and make eye contact. We transmit signals to those around us whether we are aware of it or not. As with other forms of communication, our "body language" is influenced by our culture. People in many European cultures stand close to one another during conversations, but people in the United States tend to stand farther apart while talking. Some cultures think nothing of people touching each other during conversations, but, in the United States, touching is usually reserved for close acquaintances. This is not the place to discuss the many cultural differences in the ways that body language is perceived or the protocol involved in presenting yourself to others. It is necessary, however, that you understand that people always gather information from the way you present yourself to them.

**Exercise: Observing Body Language**

Be an ethnographer. Grab your journal and go to a public place. Find a comfortable place to sit on the outskirts of the area you will watch so that you can observe people alone and in conversations. Begin by watching how people move and how close they stand or sit to each other. Do they have their arms crossed? Are they slouched? Do they look at each other when they talk?

Select an individual. On a clean right-hand (odd) page in your journal, describe his or her posture and body language. On the left-hand (even) page, describe what you believe the body posture means. Next, select a pair or group of people to observe. Repeat the process that you used for the individual on each member of the group, and then describe the interactions and the ways the body language changes among the different individuals in the group as the conversation evolves. Based on your observations and their body language, do you believe they are colleagues, friends, or strangers? Do they appear nervous, wary, or confident?

Consider your own body language. How have you been sitting while watching the others? Think about how others in this location would perceive you if they were observing your body language.
As you enter the workforce, become aware of your body language, because what you say and how you are perceived by others includes more than the words that come out of your mouth. At your job interview, sit straight with your shoulders back and down. Practice keeping your legs uncrossed so that others will believe you are comfortable and accepting of them and their ideas. When sitting, keep your hands clasped together in your lap; when standing, keep them in front of you or at your sides. If you are in a formal situation, keep your legs together and feet on the floor. When you are asked a question, look at the person who asked it, but then also look at the others in the room, if there is more than one interviewer. Try to portray confidence, even if it is not quite what you are feeling.

**WRITING AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

"The past belongs to everyone, not just anthropologists. That totally changes my attitude towards publishing! It's not just about colleagues showing off to one another, it's making the research available to everyone. It's not self-serving at all! It's for the benefit of everyone that is interested in the subject!"

—Gwen Mohr, journal comment, Avenues to Professionalism class

Just do it. There is no other way to get better at it. The first piece of advice for becoming a better writer: write, write, write (words from our editor and other wise individuals)! Writing is a skill, an art, and a craft. You can't dream yourself better at writing any more than you can dream yourself to fly (try as we might). The second-best advice for becoming a better writer is to read and analyze the writing of those you admire. The third piece of advice is to write descriptively, as if you are having a conversation.

Finally, be aware that the way you write should be focused on the audience you want to reach. If you are writing to specialists in your field, your writing can use jargon that presumes high context/shared knowledge; if the work is for the general public, throw the jargon out and write in such a way that anyone could read it and understand it.

Larry Zimmerman, in his book *Presenting the Past* (2003: 32), offers ten tips to help simplify writing. Many are commonsense suggestions. For instance, "1. Figure out who your audience is"; or "10. Read the work aloud. Normally, people don't speak in as complicated a way as they write. If the prose sounds complicated, it probably is." Others are more esoteric: "9. Every so often, calculate a readability index to see whether your writing meets what you think the appropriate reading level is for your audience. If it doesn't, then rewrite." Applying these suggestions will help you improve your writing.
Learn to Write

You may think this section doesn't apply to you, but at some level it does. You may not be following an academic “publish or perish” path or planning to write a book, but your career will probably entail writing something. One of the biggest complaints we've heard from employers across the profession is that students graduating from college cannot write. Professors complain that students arrive at college with the inability to write proper sentences, format papers, cite sources, and/or construct the list of references. It takes time to learn to read and write, and the only way to get better is to do it.

We highly recommend that you write and submit articles to newsletters and journals. Take every opportunity that is offered that will help develop your writing skills, build your résumé, and get you noticed by potential employers.

If you know your writing is deficient, get help. Your journal editors, employers, and clients will thank you for it later! Most campuses have a writing center where you can get help on particular papers, but most of the time these centers do not actually “teach” you how to write. Read and study some basic writing books such as Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. This advice is especially important if you are a graduate student.

Find a good editor, or two. Technical editors will look for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. They will check word choice to make sure that you have not used “there” when you actually meant “their.” They will look at your hyphens and recommend when to use an “en-dash” or “em-dash.”

Content editors will look to see how the thoughts you have developed are connected. They will identify where you may have wandered off topic or where you need more information. They will be able to see if point A leads to point B, and then arrives at point C, which in turn leads to the conclusion, and if your conclusion relates to your introduction. Content editing involves linear and lateral thinking, and a good content editor will make recommendations on how to broaden or focus your argument.

As a writer, you should carefully consider the recommendations from your editors and reviewers. Good editors will provide constructive criticism and will make recommendations they think will improve your document. It is up to you as the author to consider their recommendations and decide whether to incorporate them or not. Read what they recommend, and do not be frightened by the red ink. If you do not understand what they have said, ask. It may be that they did not understand what you
wrote in the first place, in which case you need to fix the sentence to alleviate confusion. One of the most important pieces of advice we have ever heard about writing was also from Brian Fagan. He said that writers should "lose the ego" and not take criticism about writing personally. It will get in the way of your ability to improve your writing.

In the workplace, your writing should improve as you learn from your mistakes. As it improves, you will reduce the amount of time it takes you to write, the amount of time it takes for someone to edit your writing, and the amount of time it takes to incorporate the recommended fixes into your document. But having a good basic writing ability to begin with ensures that you can more quickly become a more valued member of the team. And, in order to become an even better writer, check out such "how-to" books as Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article (Becker 2007). A more comprehensive list of writing resources is included in Appendix 3, Resources.

**Deadlines**

As educators, writers, editors, and publication managers (we've worn a lot of hats), we can't stress enough the importance of holding to a schedule. Establish a writing routine and chart out the plan. If you have the habit of procrastinating, break it early in your professional life and you will be a much more productive and a much less stressed individual. Stop thinking "I can't." Remove the excuses that allow you to push writing aside.

Deadlines are important. If you're writing a grant or turning in a report, meeting the deadline may mean the difference between keeping your job, or not. If you are contributing to an edited volume, you are just one of several writers who will be submitting work to the editor. If you are late, your actions affect everyone. Don't fall into the trap of thinking, "Well, the editor has everyone else's work to look at, so it won't matter if mine is late." Set a deadline for the completion of your project. If someone has set a deadline for you, establish your own personal completion deadline a week before the actual due date. If your project has sections or chapters, chart out a course for competing each. Create a schedule and post it on your wall. Physically mark off each task as you complete it. A visual reminder that reinforces what you are accomplishing is positive reinforcement. Reward yourself when you complete the project. Too often, we finish something and move on to the next task without congratulating ourselves for getting it done. Think of extrinsic rewards (bribes) for a job well done. Small accomplishments deserve small rewards. Bribe yourself: "When I finish writing 1,000 words, I will allow myself 15 minutes of
reading in the novel before I have to move on to the next task of the day." Submitting the completed chapter or book deserves a much larger reward.

**Technical Writing**

Most anthropological jobs require you to contribute financially to your own employment in some way. Even university professors must conduct research, which means they must procure grants that will fund their research and provide a healthy percentage of the overhead costs to the university. Learning the strategies (and tricks) to technical writing early in your career can mean the difference between continued employment and the unemployment lines.

In our Avenues to Professionalism class, we provided copies of a request for proposal (RFP) and grant applications to help students understand some of the basic techniques of writing proposals. We covered important information about the proposal, submission requirements and deadlines, and ways of "parroting" back information within the proposal. We also discussed how to develop associated cost proposals and justifications, and helped students understand what was required within each document. However, for this book, we are simply going to encourage you to seek out sources, look at RFPs and grant applications, and familiarize yourself with the types of writing that will be required in your dream job or jobs.

**OTHER COMMUNICATION CAVEATS**

This section is a catch-all, to cover other communications topics that don't fall under any particular category. Some of these relate directly to your job search and your interview and some to employment. Our reason for including them here is to build your awareness of these issues.

**Emails**

If you are like us, email rules your life. It can be an extremely efficient means of communicating with others, but it can also be extremely vulnerable to miscommunication. All the discussion about context and directness applies to email communication. As you compose a letter or email, remember that what you are producing is a written document that will be read once or more by the recipient. It is not just what you say, but also how you say it that matters.

Don't be drawn into the "web" of immediacy! Email can eat up your entire morning; it can become a long, drawn-out conversation composed
of one-sentence responses. If something takes a series of emails to explain, pick up the telephone and call. A “New message” indicator in your in-box doesn’t mean that you should stop work to read and answer it.

There are also rules about email etiquette that are important to know.

- ALL CAPS IS AKIN TO SHOUTING! (Please don’t yell.)
- If you receive an email from a list-serve, but only want to reply to the author of the note, do not simply hit “Reply.”
- Don’t forward jokes, no matter how cute, to everyone in your email directory.
- Reread and spell-check your email before you send it.

Probably the most important rule, however, is to never write anything in an email that you might regret. Email communications, once sent, stick around forever. Email communications, taken out of context, can make a saint appear to be satanic or an angel agnostic.

- Never write an email in the heat of the moment.
- If you are angry, turn off your machine and walk away or throw a pencil across the room (providing there is no one across the room who could get hurt).
- Do not write a snappy, vitriolic response intending to delete it; what happens if you accidentally hit Send instead? You can’t take it back.

If you find that your email tends to get the better of you, check your emails only at specific times of the day: when you first get to work, sometime during mid-morning, after lunch and mid-afternoon. Scan for High Priority emails if something is pending, but don’t open emails from friends.

It’s amazing that even as recently as 20 years ago, it used to take messages weeks or even months to arrive, and we were content to send a response and wait for an answer. Now the immediacy of it all seems to drive our need to respond at a moment’s notice.

Email Etiquette
Bear in mind that anything you write can go anywhere and to anyone. There is nothing private about an email unless you specifically request that it not be forwarded by the receiver. If you are having a private email discussion, do not send a blind copy (blind carbon copy—BCC) to someone outside the conversation. If this were a face-to-face private meeting,
you would not bring colleagues with you to support your side of the discussion.

**Too Much Information**

Just because you think it, it doesn't mean you have to say it! This is especially true for oral communication, but it applies equally well to written communication. Learn to think before you disclose. Do you need to tell the entire story? "...I was on my way out the door when I realized that there was something wrong with the cat and I had to take her to the vet, but when I went to start the car, the car battery was dead so I had to call my friend, but she wasn't available for an hour, so I had to wait for her, then we had to wait at the vet because we didn't have a scheduled appointment." You could simply say, "I'm sorry, an emergency arose and I am going to be two hours late. I will make it up this week."

**Wait Time**

Another communication technique that can be quite valuable is "wait time." Sometimes, we reply to a statement or question without actually processing what was said. We respond to what we thought we heard. Stopping for a moment and fully processing the information before responding can reduce the potential for misunderstanding. You can also give yourself processing time by repeating or paraphrasing what the other person has said by stating, "I think I heard you say..."

Once again, culture can play an important part in the conversations we have with others. In consultations with Native American groups, it is often considered respectful to wait an appropriate amount of time (often unstated) between speakers to let the information "soak in."

**Eye Contact**

In the United States, many of us are taught as children to "look people in the eye" when you talk to them. We may have been told that "honest" people will look you in the eye during a conversation. However, many American Indian cultures believe it is an insult to look directly into the eyes of a speaker. Avoiding direct eye-contact is a sign of respect. If you are working with people from cultures not your own, it is important that you conduct additional research on intercultural communication beforehand so that you can be a better communicator during your work with them.
In this chapter we covered topics relating to communication—verbal, nonverbal, and written. We discussed some of the issues that can be encountered when communicating with those outside our culture and recommended using your anthropological skill set to better relate to or blend in with the community.

Each form of writing has its own style and purpose. In this chapter, we've touched on some of the problems pointed out to us by colleagues and friends, and we've made recommendations for how to learn from your mistakes and become a more valuable employee.

However, only so much can be said in a short chapter. In the case of learning how to write, we highly recommend that you not only read, but critically evaluate how what you enjoy reading was written. Work with your editors to improve your writing and consult additional sources that delineate the writing process. We recommend Writing Archaeology: Telling Stories about the Past by Brian Fagan (Left Coast Press, 2010) and Presenting the Past by Larry Zimmerman (AltaMira Press, 2003).

For the Portfolio

No new content was produced for your portfolio in this chapter. We would recommend, however, that, given your new insights on writing, you reexamine the documents in your portfolio and make sure that they actually communicate what you intended to say. We also recommend that you place a copy of your best written work into your portfolio to use as an example of your writing, should a potential employer request one. This document should be traded out for newer work as time goes by and your writing skills improve.