

Interviewee: My name is ***, and I am interviewing ***. Today is November 26, 2013. All right. Again, thanks for coming today to talk with me about your experiences of writing here. We're also gonna talk about yourself as a writer. Let's start with that. How would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I have a background in journalism. I started writing for our school paper in high school. Sophomore year, I was named our editor-in-chief, and so got very into it. The paper was a joke in the community before then, and by the time I left, we were winning national awards. With the help of an advisor and people that were very interested, we made it something that I cared a lot about and got excited about.

Then, within journalism, I found that my favorite things to write were human interest pieces, columns. When I think of myself as a skilled writer, it's in that realm: human interest; things like that, I guess; opinion pieces. I don't like academic writing where I have to take myself out—my voice out of whatever I'm writing. I like where my voice can be present, and I'm trying to convey something specific to the reader. I see it as a challenge. I like that.

Interviewee: How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began here, at the University of Michigan?

Interviewee: I think I was skilled, like I said, in that area because I had experience in it, and I don't think I realized how, maybe, weak as an academic writer I was. I think that I came in thinking, "Yeah. I'm a great writer." I think, when I came here, I learned that there is a difference, and had to learn how to write academically to get all of your points across in a page limit, things like that. I definitely feel like I've grown in the four years, academically. I don't think I was as strong when I came in here.

Interviewee: What would you attribute that growth to?

Interviewee: Partially, I think, trial and error, getting papers back that I got B's or B+'s on, which is a good grade, but I like to hold myself to high standards. Going into office hours and saying, "Okay. What do I have to do to get to that next level? What do I have to do to get to that A?" My teachers always said, "You have a good voice." I'm sure teachers here get papers where people aren't as experienced with writing, but my issue was making sure I was getting all of my arguments across.

I think it had more to do with the classes and the content, and learning what was most important to make my argument. I think office hours was the biggest help for that. I don't think I ever sat down in a class and learned. I think through trial and error, and through seeing what teachers wanted included, talking to them one-on-one like this, I think that is probably where I learned to get better at that and what I needed to do.

Interviewee: What are some particular aspects that you are working on in terms of making your argument stronger?

Interviewee: I think, in college, I learned the value of outlining. I would outline in high school, but outlining in heavy detail, and almost taking more time on the outline than on writing the paper because that's never hard for me to go from sentence to sentence and transitions. I found that if I put that part of it away and really focused on bullet points—what am I trying to actually say? There's no fluff there. There's no transitions. You can see on one piece of paper what are you arguing here, and is it strong enough or not. I think taking the time to outline and understanding that if you outline well, writing the paper is only gonna take an hour, an hour and a half, instead of five hours of, well, what do I say now? What do I do now? I would say outlining has been the biggest thing, for sure, that has helped me get better at that.

Interviewee: What are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I think, academically, to get good grades, which I'm second—or, I'm about to be a second semester senior. I don't think I'm gonna go to grad school. I've gotten through most of my schooling, and I've gotten good grades with that. Where I see myself writing in the future? I see it more as—less

academic, obviously, and more for presentations at work, or for letters to—a thank you note or something, things like that. I think I really enjoy writing because I like having an impact on the person that you're writing something for. I always try to write hand-written thank you notes, and things like that, and I think that that is something that's lost through technology. I enjoy getting stuff like that, and I think it's very powerful to sit down and articulate when you appreciate something or something like that.

Then, at work, I found in my internship that if you can—public speaking and writing are a little different, but you have to know what you say before you get up there. Writing things down, and being able to keep your audience's attention, and make them stay with you with whatever you're trying to present to them. I think those two main things—presenting at work, and I'll always be writing in a personal sense to other people, things like that. Probably those two things. As I move forward, that's how I see myself writing.

Interviewee: What's your internship?

Interviewee: This summer I worked at [insurance corporation] in New York City. I was doing a human resources internship and had a few presentations where I had to really think about what I was gonna say, and presenting to a group of people that were much higher than me. I didn't like that job, and I'm not going back to the same job because it—I missed writing. It was problem solving, but in a very technical sense, and I missed interacting with people, which I feel, in ways, gives you a chance to write more, and things like that. It was a good experience, but I also found myself missing writing during that.

Interviewee: Then, are you doing any internship right now?

Interviewee: No. Nothing right now. I'm looking for a full-time job, which, that's to be determined. I'm not sure where I'll be after I graduate yet, but I'm in the process of looking for that.

Interviewee: What's your concentration?

Interviewee: My—

Interviewee: Your major?

Interviewee: My major is organizational studies, along with my writing minor.

Interviewee: Thinking across your writing experiences at U of M, and if you went to a transfer institution, what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I guess, from what I've said earlier, whether you're writing personally or you're writing academically, writing in general is getting your point across in a concise manner. If you're writing academically, and you have a five-page limit, making sure that everything that you want to say is within those five pages. If you're writing personally for different reasons, are you really getting across everything that you're trying to say?

I think that writing well is being able to think of something in your head and feel by the end of your draft or—by the end of your final draft, feeling like everything you were thinking has made its way onto the page in a concise manner. Sometimes people are able to do that, but they also drag on forever, and it's not totally focused. I think if you're able to focus while still getting down everything that you were hoping to, I guess I would consider that to be good writing.

Interviewee: Which first-year writing requirement course did you take?

Interviewee: I took Comp Lit 122, which isn't—people usually take English 124 or 125. That was a little different. Sometimes I wonder, too, if maybe I would've picked up more by taking one of the more standard freshman classes, but I took

Comp Lit 122, something about writing about disaster, or something. It was interesting.

Interviewee: Yeah. Tell me more about that experience.

Interviewee: It was first semester freshman year. It was a class with 20 people, so it was small. It was run by a graduate student. I don't know. I remember coming in and writing, and I think I got a B+ on my first paper, or a B, and I was like, "Well, no. I can write. What's the problem here?" That was the first taste of, okay, you can write and put sentences together, and they sound nice, but that doesn't necessarily mean that you're a good writer. You have to, academically, be able to prove your points, and things like that.

I think we wrote three papers in that class. One was defining disaster. It was all based around disasters, which I don't really know why I took that. That's not necessarily interesting to me. I think I started to get a small taste of it, but maybe because of the professor's, maybe, lack of experience—I don't know. Maybe I didn't learn as—I don't necessarily think back on it like, "Oh, I learned so much in that class," as much as I feel like a first-year writing requirement, maybe, I should've. I don't know. I think I got an A- in it. I was doing something right.

Interviewee: What are some of the things that you think you would've gotten if you were to take the 125?

Interviewee: That's a good question. Like I said, I learned how to outline, but I had to figure that out myself. I feel like, maybe, in those classes because they're—aren't they argumentative writing, or maybe not?

Interviewee: I'm not that familiar.

Interviewee: Okay. Yeah. I think the basis of them is that they are argumentative writing. I don't know how those classes work, necessarily, but I have a feeling

that there was probably more emphasis on planning out your argument, where I think my class lacked that a little bit. It was more produce a rough draft and then, okay, here's what's wrong with it. For me it's easier to—if I write a good outline, my first draft is a lot better. I guess I prefer that, and maybe those classes were more geared in that way, instead of trying to figure out what you're saying a rough draft, and then fix it. I prefer to try and figure out what I'm saying in an outline, and then having a pretty good first draft, and then only fine tuning things for that final draft. Maybe there would have been more of that in those other classes.

Interviewee: In terms of your 121—right?

Interviewee: One twenty-two.

Interviewee: One twenty-two. Sorry.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yep.

Interviewee: In terms of your experiences in 122, what effect did those experiences have on you as a writer?

Interviewee: To be honest, I can't say much. I don't look back on it and think of it as a class that impacted me a lot. I see it as a class that I had to take for a requirement, and the most that I—thinking back on it four years later, the most that I can remember is not getting the best grades I wanted, and being confused because it was a writing class. Coming from high school to college, I was like, "Well, this isn't right. This is what I know how to do." I don't think the realization of why I wasn't getting those best grades came until later. I don't know. I don't look back on it and think of, "Oh, I learned so much." I guess it was just the first time that I thought, "Okay. There's something more to academic writing that I'm gonna have to figure out here, but I don't really know it yet." Then, that came later.

Interviewee: What course would you say had a strong impact on you as a writer, or what experiences?

Interviewee: I'm in English 325 right now with [Instructor], and it is the Art of the Personal Essay. I think, partially, because that's the type of writing that I'm drawn to more, so I'm more passionate about it and more interested, I've definitely learned the most in that class about finding a focus and what type of idea can sustain a paper of X amount of pages, which sounds weird. We write three ten to eleven page essays in that class, and my first essay, I was like, "This is gonna be so good." I wrote it, and it was good, but it was a little too—I was talking about too many ideas. [Instructor] really helped me think about—for an 11 page paper, you can answer this one question, instead of these three that you're proposing, in its entirety, and that's enough. That's gonna take up those 11 pages.

That has been something that I've learned a lot, fully sustaining and wearing out an argument, I guess, in a sense, instead of bringing a bunch of things in and never completely finishing those ideas or concepts. In my second paper, it was much more focused, which I thought was an improvement. In my third, now I'm looking to do a different—not a standard essay, more a different form where writing is involved, but not the standard paragraph, paragraph, paragraph type. Yeah. I've learned to focus my writing a lot more from that class, and I've learned—or I'm trying to go through the process right now of using writing to present ideas in different ways, which is what the minor is a lot about.

I started to get that idea with [Instructor] in the first Capstone class that we took, but this is reinforcing that a lot. Writing can be presented in a lot of different ways, which is comforting because I'm not going to be a writer when I grow up, but it's cool to think of ways that I'll always be able to incorporate those skills into certain things, whether it be presentations, or this, or that. That class has definitely taught me more about writing than any other one at Michigan so far. I mean, I guess we'll see what I'm taking next semester, but I'm almost done.

Interviewee: Could be surprised. *[Laughter]*

Interviewee: Yeah. Who knows?

Interviewee: Okay. Did you take Writing 100?

Interviewee: Hm-mmm. No.

Interviewee: You mentioned that you're concentration is in organization studies.

Interviewee: Yep. Organizational studies.

Interviewee: Organizational studies. What kinds of writing do you do for your major?

Interviewee: The way the major is set up, you take a class each semester with the cohort, and then you pick your own schedule, so people are doing different things. In the classes that we have all taken together, it's a lot of theory-based writing, using arguments of other writers and formulating your own ideas based on their previous ideas. I think that's where outlining came in a lot because I had to bring in other people's ideas and somehow make my own argument.

Right now we're doing a semester-long project, and we're writing a lot for it, where you—we go into an organization, and we study it the entire semester. Every week we have a few pages of writing due, at least, and at the end of it we're gonna have an entire research report due, which is writing which I'm not too familiar with, having an introduction section, a methods section, a results section. I've been learning about that this semester as we've gone along. That's been interesting.

Then, for the classes that I'm choosing, specifically, to tailor my major to what I'm interested in, it's based—there's a lot of self-reflection writing. I'm focusing

on leadership. A lot of it is, how do you lead people? What's a good leader? A lot of reflection like that. I'd say most of it, for the classes that I'm choosing, is self-reflective writing, and then for our actual classes that we all have to take together, it's a lot of theory-based writing.

Interviewee: What effect have those experiences had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I think the theory-based writing, as I mentioned before, has—it has probably been the thing that's been helping my academic writing, in the sense of getting my argument out there while also using other people's arguments to support my own new claims, which, like I said, through outlining, that has become easier for me. That's something that's different. That's a lot harder to me than, "Tell me what you think about this." That's a lot. I think those org studies classes have helped me become a stronger academic writer through outlining and bringing other people's writing in.

Then the other classes, the self-reflective writing, it's helped me—that writing isn't hard for me, but it's helped me—I don't know. I've had to do it so many different times that I feel like I really have a good elevator pitch, I guess you could say—ideas of how I think about things. If you caught me on the street corner, I could talk about it in a very, I guess, professional fashion because I've written so much like that, that it's helping me think about my career, and ideas about my career, and leadership, and organizations. I can talk about it at a high level, instead of being like, "Um, well, I don't really know."

I feel like I've had to write so many of those sentences for papers that they're just second nature knowledge, which I've appreciated. It's not really an obvious thing that I ever thought I'd get out of those, but you write about the same thing so many times, you have this bank of phrases, and specific words, and things like that, that you can call upon very quickly, which—I guess those built that up for me, which I think will help when I'm in a corporation or wherever I am.

Interviewee: How confident do you feel about writing in your major?

Interviewee: In my major, I feel much more confident about those self-reflection things because in my opinion, that's not really hard. It's like, "Well, how do you feel about this?" Theory-based writing, I have gotten a lot better at. If you would've asked me at the beginning of junior year when my major starts, I probably wouldn't have felt as confident, but now, after having to do it for two or three classes, I've gotten better. I think at the beginning of this semester, if you asked me about research writing, I wouldn't have felt good about it at all. I still am not too confident with it, but throughout this semester I am learning a lot more about writing research questions, and potential hypotheses, and things like that. That's coming along, but I think out of the three types that I do the most, that I'm still the least confident with that.

Interviewee: We're gonna talk a little bit about your Gateway course, the Writing 220. What impact has that course had on your writing overall?

Interviewee: That's an interesting question. That class has been one of my favorites since I've been at U of M, but I'm not sure how much it's impacted my writing. I think it's impacted my way of thinking, more than it has my writing, if that makes sense. The way the class is set up, it's—at least the way that [Instructor] runs his class, you go in, and you just talk for an hour about random things. You learn so much about the people around you. That sounds very like, "Well, what did you guys"—I don't know. [Instructor] always had a question. He always started with something, and it got us thinking about a certain thing, and we would have great discussions about it.

I feel like I learned a lot about—we had a diverse class. Seeing things from people's point of view and—that was very interesting to me and I think very helpful. The time that we spent doing that, that was less time spending on specific writing things. I don't know how much it's impacted my writing, to be honest with you. I do think it's impacted my way of thinking, very much, which I think has a lot to do with writing. Maybe in an indirect way, it has. I think I was a little surprised when I got out of that class that—how it was set up, and what we did and, and for calling it Writing 220, but I loved it. I wasn't disappointed with it, by any means. It was just very different than what I thought it would be.

Interviewee: How has it impacted your ways of thinking?

Interviewee: I don't know. I think I see things—for example, one class, we talked about how hard it is to come into an institution like U of M, that is so big, and how they have resources for students, but they can't really help you one-on-one to find what you're gonna need to—and transitioning into U of M was very hard for me. To hear other people, that that was something that they struggled with, too, but in different ways, that was very helpful. I think hearing about other people's experiences in situations like that, and we talked about a bunch of different things. Just an open-mindedness to people's backgrounds, where they come from, and how they deal with being at such a big institution.

I grew up in [City], Michigan, which is very—not much diversity and not a lot of people that were different than me. Coming to U of M, in general, has been a big eye opener, but being in a class where you have people from all different areas, and you just talk the whole time, you learn so much about the randomest stuff. I think, thinking of everyday situations in lenses different than how I was brought up, my background, my socioeconomic status, things like that, just seeing things from how, maybe, other people with different ethnic background or socioeconomic status—like I said, how they see things, and how it may affect them differently than myself.

Interviewee: Has the Writing 220 course had an impact on your writing process?

Interviewee: I'm not sure. I think traditional writing or writing that I'm used to doing, like the types that I mentioned earlier, I don't necessarily think so. Our last project, though, we could—it was a multimedia. I think I did a podcast, which I had never considered doing and never thought of. When there's a voiceover, someone has to write what that voiceover is. I think that's what I got out of that class the most, thinking of things like audio, background, to photos, things like that. That's writing, also, which, for a new media course, I guess that that was a main goal, which I—it opened my eyes to.

We also had a blog page or something, and I had never done anything like that either. The small things of, okay, it says your name. Then under that, what's that one sentence that you want it to say? Thinking of writing in those ways, and how you present yourself on a internet page like that, I guess that it helped me build an approach to writing like that 'cause I had never even done it. Now I think it's

very valuable that that's on my radar, and it never was before, if that makes sense. I guess that is how that course taught me to do that.

Interviewee: How about the impact that course has had on your sense of self as a writer?

Interviewee: I think it reinforced that I know the type of writing that I like. It was great because it wasn't academic writing, it was more—my voice was allowed to be in everything that I was writing, which I really enjoyed. The first essay we had to write was why I write. We had to answer that question, and I thought that was fascinating 'cause no one had ever asked me before, and it was such a big part of—it was, in a lot of ways, how I defined myself. To sit down and really think about, well, why do I like this? What benefits does it have? Why do I enjoy this? That was very interesting. I think I know now why I write 'cause I wrote a paper on it, but I really enjoyed that process, and I learned a lot about myself throughout writing that.

Just, in general, writing in that style for all three assignments that we had, I think it reaffirmed that that is where my skill lies. It's more in that type of writing, and it's made me try and think of how, in the future, when I don't have a professor saying, "Write me an essay on why you write," how, if this is something that I enjoy, can I incorporate it into my daily life when I'm not a student anymore. I think that I've thought a lot more about that, after that class, because it reinforced how much I enjoy that type of writing, I guess. After writing why I write, I realized that it's a big part of how I define myself. I don't want that to end once professors aren't asking me for ten-page essays about whatever I feel like writing about. I think post-graduation, it's made me think a lot more about how I'm gonna continue to be a writer.

Interviewee: What have your experiences working with other writers in the course been like?

Interviewee: We did some peer editing. I wish we would've done more. I really enjoy peer editing and breaking down in small groups to workshop things. I think that that's very powerful. That was a good thing that we did. It's always interesting. You're writing. You have a draft, and there's a few things that you

wanna do, but you're not sure how to do it. Having three other people read it that think completely differently than you do, getting that advice, and how they see it, and how, maybe, things—because it's personal writing, having them tell you you're not exploring this enough. You need to get outside of your own head. You need to explain this more to the reader 'cause that's a big thing that I struggle with in personal writing. How much do you choose to explain? How much do you choose to just let it be and speak for itself? I think peer editing helps that a lot.

I guess my only wish is that we would've done—for English 325, the essay class that I'm in right now, once a semester we get workshopped in front of the entire class. You bring a draft in, and everybody reads it for homework and then comes back in, and you're not allowed to say anything, and they just talk about your writing. That, I find very, very helpful. I'm surprised. I feel like that's a pretty common process for writing courses. I'm surprised that we haven't done that or—I've only had one minor course, but I'm surprised [Instructor] never had us do that. I feel like he'd be all about that. It was good, but it was only in small groups, and I think it would have been beneficial to also do it as one big group, I guess.

Interviewee: The Gateway course emphasized reflective writing in various forms. How would you describe your experience with this kind of reflection?

Interviewee: I think, like I said, in high school I had some opportunities, more than most people, I think, because I was on the school paper, to write like that and learn from an earlier age that I really enjoyed it. I think I came into the class knowing that it was something that I enjoyed, and something that I was pretty good at, but I also learned that I still have a lot to learn about it. I guess that's how I would answer that.

I think in high school, I won some awards and was praised a lot for that type of writing, and I thought I was very good at it, and coming into that class, I realized, okay, I am good. It reaffirmed that I liked it, but I still have a lot to learn. There's still a lot of other people that can help me even get better at this style and stuff. I guess it taught me that other people are also good at this type of writing, and there are things that I can do to get even better. Because I enjoy writing in that style, that's something I should look to improve.

Interviewee: The reflective writing that you did for this course, is it similar or different to the reflective writing that you do in your major?

Interviewee: Very different. The reflective writing that I do in my major is always based around—it's personal, but very specific. How do you see yourself as a leader? How do you define a good leader? How do you think it's most effective to work in groups? It's all based around working with other people, organizations, leading in organizations, managing and organizing people, things like that. The Gateway course was refreshing because [Instructor] wasn't asking me, "Why do you want to be a leader?" He was like, "Well, why do you write?" That was a really good question. I think it's much more true reflection in that sense because you have the ability and the freedom to reflect on anything that you want that's speaking to you at the time.

In my major, it's much more, "Yeah. We're gonna ask you to reflect, but we're gonna tell you what to reflect on." It feels very forced a lot of the time. It's a gift and a curse, I guess. I said earlier that I've written so much like that, I have a bank of knowledge, and I can quickly speak about it, but also, sometimes I'm like, "Okay. How many times have I written a sentence like this before?" It's reflective, but it's very forced and sometimes feels inauthentic. Where in the Gateway, everything I wrote for that was very authentic and true, and that's a refreshing feeling.

Interviewee: I'm just checking the time. We have plenty of time. *[Laughter]* How have your experiences using new media writing been like in the Gateway course, like blogs or the remediation project?

Interviewee: The remediation project. That was—

Interviewee: You may or may not have.

Interviewee: No. I know I did it. I'm just trying to remember what I—oh, that was when we took a paper that we had written before and wrote it for a different medium. Okay. Yes. Can you repeat the question? I'm sorry.

Interviewee: How would you describe your experiences using new media writing in the Gateway course?

Interviewee: I think that it opened—it completely introduced it to me. I don't think I really had that concept at all before. It was something that was completely new. I think the most I got out of [Instructor]'s class was him explaining the power behind being about to write in those ways, and being able to write for a specific audience or a medium, depending on what you need to convey and who you need to convey it to. It didn't really change because there was no thought process there before about it, but it definitely introduced me to thinking more about that.

I'm interested to see, when I take the next course next semester, how that evolves, and how it changes, and if I really like it or not after having a little bit of experience. It was definitely an introductory course in that sense because I had never really been challenged to, or even really thought about writing in that sense before. It was interesting to learn about, and it—for me, as a writer post-grad, it made me see different ways to keep that skill alive and use it in everyday situations.

Interviewee: Did you enjoy those writing projects?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewee: Writing in the blogs or—

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah. I think I did. It was challenging. I had to do something different. Yeah. I mean, I think I enjoyed it. I don't necessarily know

how much because it was all new, and I think there was frustration that came with not knowing how to set up a blog, not knowing how to use WordPress. There was a frustration there, but it didn't mean that I didn't like what it was teaching me to do. I think that question will be easier to answer next semester, once I have more exposure. Do I enjoy it, or does it feel like I'm doing it for a class? I don't really know. I think I enjoyed having it introduced to me, I guess, but I don't know how much—if I necessarily enjoyed it more than writing a standard essay like I'm used to.

Interviewee: These next questions are about your Gateway portfolio. Just to refresh your memory about 'em, I'll ask you to pull up your portfolio. It'll take me a minute to get on.

Interviewee: No problem. *[Laughter]* I'm trying to think of what my portfolio even is. Is that my WordPress blog, or no?

Interviewee: It was a portfolio where you compiled a bunch of different writing for a final—it was a final project *[cross talk 41:27]*.

Interviewee: Yeah. I think it was the WordPress thing.

[Pause 41:30-41:47]

Interviewee: It always takes forever to get on the internet. Okay. Internet is working.

Interviewee: All right.

[Pause 41:56-42:31]

Interviewee: Okay. I'm on this right now. This is the WordPress site that we had to—but these are only things that I wrote for this class. We were also told in that class to upload things that we had written earlier in different classes. I'm thinking that that's maybe what you want to look at. Sorry. I should know the difference between these.

Interviewee: Yeah. I'm not totally familiar with this course. *[Laughter]*
I'm sorry.

Interviewee: No. It's okay. I feel bad. Obviously you're looking for—

Interviewee: Oh, no, no, no. If it's not—

Interviewee: Am I allowed to ask, what are the next questions that they're asking me about it?

Interviewee: Yeah. I mean, basically, it's asking—I don't know if these questions will help you find the—can you tell me about the most memorable aspect of your experience with creating this portfolio? What were your aims for creating the portfolio? How do you think creating this portfolio has had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: Okay. I think it's this, and I think—

Interviewee: I think we can talk about these questions with these.

Interviewee: Okay. Yeah. I think it's this.

Interviewee: [Laughter] Let's start with the first one. Your most memorable aspect about creating this portfolio?

Interviewee: I think learning how to use WordPress, learning the technology side of it. How do you literally upload a draft? How do you make different categories? What type of design layout do you want it to look like? What colors do you want? Oh, my God. There's so many colors you can choose. It was a lot more of, okay, this website is going to represent me. How's it gonna look? I think it was less about the drafts that I was putting on there 'cause I had already spent so much time on those, but more, how is this going to look for someone looking at it right now. I think a lot of the design elements behind it is what I remember the most because I had no experience with that. I had to learn it, and I was surprised how much I cared about those things. It was interesting.

Interviewee: What were your goals for this portfolio?

Interviewee: I think the way that [Instructor] framed it, he was like, "You can put as much on this as you want, but you need this bare minimum," and I think I did the bare minimum because it was new for me. Putting the bare minimum up there, I feel like I learned a lot because I had never done that before. I think I was trying to meet the requirements of the class. I don't really remember being too into it for any other reason than that, I guess. Probably not the best answer [laughter], but that's the truth.

Interviewee: It's fine. Do you feel your portfolio addresses those goals?

Interviewee: Yeah. I feel like it addresses, not necessarily personal goals, but I think I achieved what [Instructor]—the bare minimum that [Instructor] required, which to me, at the time, was fine enough.

Interviewee: Has creating this portfolio had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think so. I think it was interesting to think about drafts. I have why I write the first draft, the second draft, the final draft. That was interesting in that class for me because a lot of times the way that I—drafts are interesting to me because a lot of times, the way that I write, I will—for academic writing, I do a lot of outlines, but for writing more like this, I just write ‘til I can’t write anymore, and then I read what I have, edit what I have. I start to think of different things, and then it gets me on another train, and then I stop. By the time I have my first draft, I have read it probably 15 times, the beginning of it.

It’s a weakness, I think, because the beginning of my papers are very, very strong because I keep reading them, but at the end, you don’t want to read a five—or I guess, double-spaced, ten page essay fifteen times. My end has less work, usually, than the front end of the paper. It was always weird for me to define what a draft is because it’s—well, my whole thing. This is probably the second draft, but how many times have I gone back to that beginning, and how many times have I read through this? That could be ten or eleven times.

It made me think of, how am I gonna define—because I think there were six or seven drafts to this paper before I gave the final, but we only had to upload three. That was hard for me to define, well, what was the first draft? What was the middle draft? What was the final draft? I guess that was what I thought the most out of how I write, and drafts, and maybe that’s not the best way to approach things. Maybe I should try and write the whole thing, and then go back. Maybe that’ll help my endings more, but definitely how I define drafts because I was forced to define them through uploading them and titling them. That was something that I had never thought about before, that made me think differently about my approach to that.

Interviewee: Since labeling your drafts, have you taken a different approach to your draft [cross talk 49:03]?

Interviewee: I don’t think I’ve taken a different approach, but it is something that I’m more conscious of, and I think it’s something that I think, “Oh, maybe I should take a different approach.” It’s hard to change the way you’ve done something all of your life, or however long I’ve been writing. It hasn’t changed anything yet, but I also have seen—I just got a paper back, and my—there was a

scene in the end of it that my professor didn't really like, but he loved my beginning.

I was like, well, yeah. That makes sense because I didn't have enough time to look at that ending because I was down to the wire and had to write it, read over it once or twice, and then turn it in. Whereas, my beginning, I had had for a week and was really comfortable with—down to every word, how that was written. I think I'm starting to notice it more, and I think in the future it may be something that I change, but for now, I haven't been proactive enough to try a different approach.

Interviewee: How about the impact of the reflective writing for this portfolio? What impact has that had on your writing?

Interviewee: I think that that's something that I had never really had to do before. I remember being like, "Oh, this is weird." I think it helped to think of a process where you write something, you finish it, but there's also a benefit in not going back and necessarily editing what you wrote, but thinking about the process of how you got from start to finish. That was never something that I had done before. I think it introduced reflection to me, in a way. Before, when I would think of something like this, I would think, "Okay, well, why wouldn't you just go in and change the things you're thinking about in the paper?" This made me realize, it's not all about what would you maybe change. It's what went well. What did you like?

Physically writing those things down and making yourself think about it, I feel like helps for future pieces. To have to sit down and name what went well, you remember that, instead of just turning it in and being like, "Oh, I liked that." Okay. Well, why did you like it? What did you struggle with? What did you excel at? A lot like this interview, just sitting down and being asked these questions. It's usually nothing that you're ever really asked, and I'm learning as I'm talking about what I do. I think it was a very similar process. Being asked those questions, you think about things that you wouldn't otherwise. I think that that was beneficial and something that I wasn't used to before at all.

Interviewee: Is there anything else about your writing experiences or yourself as a writer that we haven't touched on?

Interviewee: No. Not that I can think of. I feel like I've been talking a lot.

[Laughter] No. I think that that's everything. I think of writing in two realms, academically and the more personal reflective writing. I think we talked a lot about both of 'em. I can't think of anything else.

Interviewee: Well, thank you so much.

Interviewee: Oh, you're welcome.

Interviewee: I learned a lot as well. *[Laughter]*

Interviewee: Oh, well, good. I hope it was beneficial for you as well.

Interviewee: *[Laughter]* It was.

Interviewee: All right. Great.

Interviewee: Well, have a good holiday break.

Interviewee: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Interviewee: Thank you so much.

Interviewee: No problem. Good luck with your project.

Interviewee: Thanks. Bye.

Interviewee: Bye.

[End of Audio]