

Interviewer: This is ***. Today is June 25, and I'm here [...] with ***. [...]

Interviewee: ***.

Interviewer: ***. Okay, wonderful. We'll get started. The first question I have is how do you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I would describe myself as a writer—I would say actually within—so in the past two years I've been in the architecture school [Taubman College of Architecture], and I would say that being in the architecture school has made—well, I just graduated from it. The first year, there was a lot of analytical and I would say argumentative writing that I did. I would say that I would be still though inexperienced as a writer. Inexperienced in that I don't practice it and don't feel like it's my best way of proving an argument, through writing. I don't think that it's my best or highest strength. That could be that I'm modest.

I also went to [University of Michigan], so I must be good compared to the average human being. I would say that I do feel though—I do feel comfortable in writing. Definitely it's a comfortable and a fluent tool that I use. I would say that I'm just not as confident in it as I would be in speaking my argument or presenting my argument.

Interviewer: How do you describe the role of writing in your life in general?

Interviewee: It always has been school-based. I did journal, and I do write for myself often, so that I would still count as writing because I read that, I guess. I would say that writing for me has always been a tool to understand and create a new way of thinking for myself that I wouldn't just get through just sitting here and thinking about it. Writing for me is a tool of thinking, I would say, like a process tool. That's the first and foremost way that I use writing, I'd say in my daily life, both in journaling and in also writing an argument. It's a process or mechanical [inaudible 02:25]. [Laughing 02:27]. I would say that the—so I guess that would be my answer.

Interviewer: If you can think back, how would you describe yourself as a writer when you began here at the University of Michigan?

Interviewee: I would say that I thought less about the techniques of writing, but I was more—I was just more natural in my writing and I didn't really think about it. I'd say through my learning at [University of Michigan] I've definitely—I know now. Before, I would stick to a format, so I would always have this certain format of writing that I would go through. It's like a checklist. Now, I definitely use writing as a more creative way, I would say because I'm more open with it and have more tools I guess to utilize when writing. I can write many different types of argument, or analysis, or different types, and also I can use it for—it's a before or thinking or for proving an argument.

Interviewer: You talked about some of the growth that you feel you've done.

Interviewee: Totally.

Interviewer: To what extent would you say that you've grown as a writer?

Interviewee: I would say exorbitantly. I would say that I think I've grown a ton, simply because coming from—I'm thinking of how my high school writing and my college entrance essays versus where I—I just wrote my entrance essay for my graduate school, so I'm thinking of just the difference between that. I would say my writing is a reflection of my change of intellect and growth of intellect, totally. I would also say that—I would say that it has definitely become more versatile and become more of a tool versus a means to an end.

Interviewer: You talked about this growth of intellect and whatnot. What would you attribute that growth to that happened while you were here at the university?

Interviewee: Opening up to new ways of thinking, so being taught new ways of thinking, and being taught new things to think about I think as well. For me, I do a lot of thinking. I do a lot of talking to myself in my mind. Whenever there's a new subject or a new stimulation that was given to me through a class, or through a new discipline, be it architecture, architectural theory, that definitely stimulated a huge growth of I would say opening up to new ideas that I never had thought before. I'm speaking more towards my architectural theory classes because that's where I have done most of my writing, and that's definitely where I did most of my "intellectual" growth in college. That was my junior year mainly.

In thinking before, I'm just thinking of the different writing courses that I'd done. In my senior year, I took a class that was in Pynt 05:47, so it wasn't in the creative discipline. It was an analytical paper where I had to cite sources and it was a resource paper—a research paper. I had never written one of those before. That, to me was so unfamiliar, and it was very hard to me.

I was telling people before, and I know I use writing as a way of thinking and creatively, and that type of a thing, and so it was very hard to switch and use it as research, and trying to really edit down my writing. That's hard for me. I think that editing is definitely something that has grown in importance as I've realized its crucial role. I think that has also has [inaudible 06:32]. As I've progressed in college, that's become a more important thing as well.

Interviewer: Now that you've graduated, what are your goals for yourself as a writer as you continue on?

Interviewee: I'm going to graduate school. I think my goal has always been being able to edit down. Editing has become—as I was just telling you, it's become of highest importance lately, in both my creative studies and my creative discipline, and also in my writing. I think that's also my weakness. I think that editing is something—it requires a certain tool that is—I'm trying to—definitely that's a tool I'm always trying to grow and

always trying to get better at. That for me would definitely be my main goal. I would say that's been my goal for the last year and will continue to be it because I think that being able to edit has always been my weak point.

Interviewer: Thinking across your writing experiences at the university, what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: Interesting. I think that writing well—let's see. I'm trying to think when I've written well—when would I think I have written well? Usually, writing well to me is a combination of—let's say I'm writing a paper that's analyzing another paper, so analyzing a theory paper or something. For me, writing well would be stating a new argument and a creative way of thinking against that. First coming up with a new and creative way of answering the question and then really proving that through refined answers—not answers, but refined arguments. It's a combination of the two of them.

It's not only having that argument that's well proven and well written in terms of diction and that kind of thing, but also having or answering whatever you're doing and thinking about it creatively and in a new way. That's something that sets papers apart. For me in the past, that's always been the way that has always set my papers apart has been whenever I really take on challenging whatever I'm arguing against or writing.

Interviewer: Which upper-level writing courses have you taken?

Interviewee: I took—my junior I took two upper-level writing—I think they were upper-level writing courses. I'm not sure how they were classified in LS&A, but they were architectural theory courses. I had taken—my freshman year I took a—I think that was my [Slavic course], which was interesting. That was a really good class for teaching me how to analyze literature, which I had never done before, or to that extent. I took two classes that were architectural theory-based and required you to read theoretical papers, two or three weekly, and write against them two or three one-page arguments, so about 500 words, two of those weekly—a lot of writing and a lot of analyzing.

Interviewer: What was your experience in that class? How did those weekly assignments or frequent assignments help or—what do you think?

Interviewee: I think they totally helped. I think they—it was different than writing for my—so I have also taken—this is very architecture-based. All my classes are. I had taken—the requirement to take two architectural history classes, and those ones are analyzing historical precedence. You're saying, "What is Brunelleschi's dome versus this dome? How does that relate to the Renaissance?" Then, it's more of a straightforward looking back at history, analyzing it, and thinking about it a little bit creatively.

In my actual theory classes it was, first of all, way more difficult to understand; never a straightforward answer, and always opinionated. There was never an answer to what you were trying to say. That was something new. It was not based in history. It was not based in precedence. That was really challenging.

I remember the writing twice weekly was probably the best thing for my writing I've ever done. Especially trying to come up with creative arguments against these well-proven philosophers twice a week was very hard. It was difficult to keep up with, but definitely a challenge that I embraced. I think now I'll have those writings that I did forever. I would still look back at them and use them on some of my architecture projects.

Interviewer: How did this challenge affect your writing? If you take it away from that class, what kind of effect did it have on you actually writing in other areas?

Interviewee: It definitely taught me—it taught me a certain way of thinking about writing an argument, and it also taught me—I'm forgetting now since I haven't written an argument like this in about a year. If I look back at it today, it definitely—what did it teach me? Again, I'm repeating myself, but ways of creatively arguing against something else, and also ways of always bringing in exterior sources. Even if I'm writing against this paper by Baudrillard, I would bring in—I would say I disagree with this or whatever, and then I'm bringing in another example from Ledoux or someone else into the argument that isn't necessary and wasn't asked for. That was always something that I learned always really benefitted.

I continued to do that in other areas of my writing outside of that class. That always was very much a welcome. In my history class it was, "Wow, you took the extra step to analyze this with this whole other thing as well." That's something other—it definitely improves your writing and also forces you to really take an individual stance. I think that—yeah.

Interviewer: Now that you've graduated and I know this is a short little area, do you still kind of make use of some of those benefits from that class?

Interviewee: I would say that in the way—in architecture, we do a lot of stand-up presentations. I would be presenting twice a week, three times a week verbally, and that was in school. Now, the way that I'm used to talking about my work and also writing for my portfolio, writing for my resume, those are kind of where I am now, at least over the summer, especially writing for my portfolio.

My portfolio is the way that I show my work to future employers. It's explaining all my projects from the last two years, and I have to have little edited down blurbs; the shorter the better, the more precise the better. That, I would say, is where writing is taking an analytical and academic part of my life. Besides that, I'm journaling often every day, so that's where writing is also present.

Interviewer: Other than the courses we've talked to, what other writing courses did you take, and what sort of effect did those have on your writing?

Interviewee: I did that Slavic one my freshman year, and then I took those two architectural theory classes. I'm trying to think of where else writing has been in my

career. I took a class in Pynt last semester, I was telling you that, and we did a five-page research paper. That was my most recent writing experience. Those are the only classes where I've really had writing, and also in applications.

Outside of school, but it still is concerning school, writing for and writing personal statements. In that, I definitely used what I've learned in writing for those. I know it's not part of a class, but those have been my main challenge, and definitely the area of writing that was the most present in my life for the last year.

Interviewer: How do you see the work that you've done in your classes relating, or not relating, or in forming your personal statements, and things like that?

Interviewee: For the personal statement, I used directly what I had learned in my design theory classes of writing, where bringing in extra sources, like I told you, and creating a fluid argument that brings you through the different stages of it. I did that in the personal statement. My personal statement used some theory in it. There were references that I used. There are also self-references that I used. I think it's—it was a different style of writing that I'm used to, but it definitely was academic still. It definitely—my design theory courses helped a lot in writing that, totally.

Interviewer: All of these writing courses, a lot of them it sounds like were within your concentration area, right, within architecture?

Interviewee: Yeah, the two main ones were.

Interviewer: How confident do you feel about writing in your concentration now?

Interviewee: I'd say much more confident, I mean a hundred percent more confident than I was when I started [laughter]. I would say that if I had to sit down and write a paper right now I would feel confident about it, if it was relating to architectural history or architectural theory, a hundred percent. If you sat me down and asked me to write a research paper, I would be, "Oh, my gosh, I have no idea what to do." That posed a lot of challenge for me this semester. I would say within my concentration, I'm pretty fluent in terms of writing style and definitely with creative freedom, taking creative liberties. I don't know if they would be welcomed more in a research paper of writing. I mean that by not, I guess not always sticking to certain formats or not using fluff words.

Interviewer: If you could talk a little bit more. What sort of projects are you writing within your concentration, as opposed to the research? What sort of things are you creating with it?

Interviewee: Within my concentration, in architecture, in the architecture school in [University of Michigan], your junior year you take your theory classes. Your senior year—and every single year, so junior and senior year you also take studio courses. Studio courses are where you do your design work. For me, my design work always begins with writing, and writing about it. Writing is a tool that I use to think through all

of my designs and all of my—just like a way of spotting or brainstorming, that kind of a thing. Repeat the question, too, one more time. Sorry, I lost myself in [cross talk 19:13].

Interviewer: That's okay, I'm just wondering what sort of things you do write about. Give me specific examples.

Interviewee: I would write stuff like [distorted audio 19:22] happens in design courses, but that's more where my own personal writing for myself and then writing the presentations that I have to give. Within architectural history courses, there's a lot of writing that's analyzing certain historical precedents. Usually, those papers would be one page or two pages long, about 300 words, or they would go up to—I think the last—my final paper was a five-page paper relating something in the Renaissance to something in a different age and then how certain styles crossed over, and what influenced what, and where those came from.

The other type of writing that I do—that I had done is in my theory courses. That was always based on analyzing and arguing against; always arguing against, never agreeing. You never agreed with whatever argument you were given. You always had to argue against it, which is very hard. Arguing against how to read a journey page essay by someone who you barely understand, then trying to really go through that and understand that in order to then synthesize and base your own argument against that person, and proving that with certain other examples from other practitioners 20:46 or philosophers, or that kind of a thing. Those were always short papers as well, so probably around 300 to 500 words. I'm used to short analytical papers and argument papers.

Interviewer: I just want to go back. You had mentioned that when you start to design you write. Is that something that was required of you, or is that something that's your process?

Interviewee: Totally me. Everyone else makes fun of me for that. It's a total individual thing. I had a professor my first semester of my senior year. My studio professor is a writer—was a writer, [inaudible 21:30]. He taught me very interesting ways to think. Most of those ways of thinking I couldn't just sit there and think. I had to write through them.

Writing became a tool for me to create, I guess, and understand what I was thinking. It's more of a process versus an end product. I had stacks of paper that's just me writing and trying to logically connect the dots through a design sequence. If I had to explain that, it's like I have this idea stimulating to me, and I knew I can use it for design. How do I use that? I write. I use—I start thinking and I start writing through, and lots of arrows, diagrams—it's like half writing, half diagramming. It's basically trying to prove my own logical design proof, I would say. Why do this design move? Why make this form? I go back and I try to relate this argument to this, and it's a lot of process. I would say I'm definitely individual in that.

Some people do—you'll meet some architectural students who write two or three words, and that's all that they'll write for the whole project, and it all stays in their head. For me, I have to constantly battle with always wanting to make a creative move that comes from a logical standpoint. That's something that is personal to me. This cup is shaped this way for a reason, and I'm going to tell you why because I've logically thought through that through writing. That's where I use it.

Interviewer: How often have you used some of these skills and strategies that we've been talking about in your other courses?

Interviewee: I'd say studio is the first one that I use it often. What other courses have I used it in? We take, as architecture students we take structures, construction, and more like math and physics-based courses. Those usually always require some synopsis of whatever you're doing, so that's the writing. It's simple, one-page, but you have to be explicit, straightforward, able to present whatever project you're doing very fluently. You have to be still a proficient writer to be able to explain whatever you're doing to someone else who has no idea what's going on, explain your creative project. I've used it in that way.

Basically, I'm always a person to write for my projects. I'm always the writer for all the things that I do in other classes for partner projects. The Pynt class that I took, used writing for that a lot. I would say writing, if not writing papers, but writing shows up in every class that I have. It might not be writing—like I said, it might not be writing a paper for it, but it might be either thinking through an argument and using it that way, or at the end presenting my structural bridge and the synopsis of what I did for the structural bridge.

Interviewer: Thinking back over the last two years or so, what experiences in and out of the classroom have had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: Interesting question. I would say as I read different—as I start reading more for other classes that has a huge effect on my writing. Whatever I'm reading—I'm someone—I definitely draw influence from what I'm doing in the present moment. If I'm reading some complicated theory article, I'll probably write differently for that than I will for some history paper. I would say whatever I'm reading at that moment has definitely a large effect on what I'm writing about, or the style that I'm writing. I'm definitely one who—I don't copy, but I definitely draw—I definitely draw influence from whatever I'm doing at that moment. Say I'm interested, really interested in my personal life in someone who I'm reading, I will definitely unconsciously use their style or their voice 'cuz I admire it. That has an effect on it.

Interviewer: If I used the term “reflective writing,” what does that mean to you?

Interviewee: I think of just journaling. I think of my own self-reflection. I guess that that might be where I am right now in this moment—done with school, doing a lot of journaling, figuring out my life, so that's immediately—I just think of self-reflection. I

don't know if that's what you're thinking of with reflective, but that's what I immediately think of.

Interviewer: How often or how recently have you used reflective writing in your own writing process, whether in school, or career wise, or voluntary, or—how often does that happen?

Interviewee: I use it—I would say it goes back to studio classes again, reflective writing. I guess I see reflective writing as process writing, reflective writing as—I'm creating my own definition for it. Who knows what reflective writing means, but to me it's going to mean, in this moment, thinking—using writing as a process and as a thinking tool. I'd say in studio, like I explained to you before, and then in journaling.

Interviewer: What have your recent experiences been of working with other writers, in your courses or in other contexts?

Interviewee: The last time I worked with I would say other writers or other students attempting to write, was in my environment class. We had to write a 20-page—oh, no, sorry, a 40-page synopsis of memo on our project that we were proposing. We were proposing a project [...]. We had to go through all of our initial research, all of our analysis, propose something new, and then propose what we were taking action on, and then prove that. It was a team project with five people and a 40-page analysis or memo. I don't know what I was going to call it, but a 40-page paper. That was hard because we all had very different writing styles. We all had very different things that we were looking for. Me, coming from architecture—very big words, very creative, very loose in my writing—very different than the Pynt major sitting next to me and the engineer on the other side of me.

It was a multidisciplinary class and we found that there were some of us who we trusted more to write than others. My friend, Kurt, who was the engineer, we gave up on his writing immediately and he just did other things and was useful in writing the outlines for me. I and my friend, Michelle, who was a Pynt major, became the two main writers for the essay because our voices sounded alike in writing. We were able to take the outlines of others and then simply just change those into paragraph format. It was a hard process, I would say, so it definitely wasn't easy. I would say—just say that working with other writers is always objective, right? Subjective; objective; up to opinion; so, interesting times. [Laughter]

Interviewer: What about work-shopping or peer review? Has that been a part of your experiences?

Interviewee: Yeah. I did take a psych class, and I wrote for a psych class as well. That's the last time I think I did peer review was in that class. That was my freshman—oh, sophomore year. That was my sophomore year. I took a com [communications] class. I wrote in that, too. I forget everything that happened before I entered the Architecture School, I forget those things. I took [Communications course], which entailed writing and

then my psych [psychology] class also entailed writing. Those were definitely more difficult for me than what I am doing now, totally more difficult, I think because maybe the Architecture School is just more lenient in terms of writing structure. I think with my Com and my psych classes, that was when I came to Sweetland the most, actually was with those—those essays. Sorry, I forgot our question. What were you saying?

Interviewer: No, that's great. I was asking about work-shopping and peer review and what your experience has been.

Interviewee: Peer review, yeah. I would say that peer review—I don't know if I've ever done workshops on my writing, but peer review, I—the more peers that see my paper the better my paper will be. The more people who tell me what's their opinion, I think, I view that as constantly improving my own writing, and understanding from others. With my college entrance essay for graduate school, I gave—I wrote my paper and I had it analyzed and written—I think I did the 10 or 20 drafts of it. Each time, I took it to a professor, one of my close friends, and then the last times I took it to one of my best friends who goes to [University]. He had a total different way of writing, and I think that's just because of his concentration versus mine.

I am not—I'm never very good at using my grammar and my tenses and my—I always am—I was never I feel like classically trained as a writer to understand that. I make mistakes that I know I'm going to make them. I think peer review for me is a powerful tool that I will always utilize. I'll never just submit a paper blind. I know I have weaknesses, and I think that—I guess that the more people who will see my paper the better.

Interviewer: Has your experience with peer review, has that mainly been independent? You make the effort to get it looked at by others, or has there been mandated by class, formal peer review groups?

Interviewee: I think only maybe once or twice has it been mandated by class, and that was thinking solely in my writing classes that I've taken. I think we did that in psych and I think that—or in com. I did it in com and I think I did it in my Slavic class. Usually, in my history class, I remember specifically we would alternate our papers individually. When we'd get them back then we would, as a class, go over one paper that stood out significantly. I don't know if that's not really peer review, it's like post-peer review. It's not like we're correcting it.

I would say mainly peer review for the sake of correcting and for understanding someone else's opinion and bringing that into my paper has been mostly on my own. It's been with professors and with students, and with Sweetland. I would say that's even peer review.

Interviewer: Yeah, I'm thinking. Now that you have graduated, what advice would you give to college students about writing? What are some of the things that you think they should do, or think about before they start writing a paper?

Interviewee: I would say I wish I wrote more in college. I wish I took specific writing courses because I think that would have helped me enormously. I think that we take for granted as students the intellectual atmosphere that comes with school. When you're out of that, like right now I don't have that in my life. I would say in terms of writing, I would say a peer review paper, go to Sweetland. That, for me, helped me so much, enormously because you learn every time someone says, "Oh, you know, this tense is different," or "Oh, you know, you could prove your argument much better if you do it this way."

I would say that is really important. I would say, I guess it's my personal problem, but don't try to do it perfectly the first time because it's not going to be perfect. Just put it all out there and don't be afraid to put it all out there. Always go over it multiple times.

I know with me, I had a lot of stress with writing my freshman year. There were a lot of papers, and I wasn't used to writing that much. I would always put it off. I would dread it. I used to dread writing. I think it just takes a different level of effort than doing a math problem does. It's just different. It definitely takes a lot more creative and ingenuity and effort. It's worth it after you write it. You feel really good.

Interviewer: Going back a little bit earlier, you said, when we were discussing this question, you said that you would have taken more specific writing courses. What do you mean by specific writing courses?

Interviewee: In LS&A and more geared towards maybe creative writing or different types of writing that I never really got into. I think my English—I took English classes. I took my [English course] or—whatever the number is, and that was the Slavic one, where you read, and then analyzed, and did those types of papers. I think it would be interesting. I don't know if there are any classes that are classified as [Writing course], a sole writing class. I think it would have been really interesting to take. When I go to graduate school, there are more theory classes that I'll take that are solely writing-based and that are—there's another class that I was just looking at, actually, that's like that that I'll take in graduate school.

Interviewer: Fantastic. Have you had any experiences with new media writing such as blogs or websites, making an electronic portfolio, kind of those?

Interviewee: Yeah, I have. Not with blogs. The only blogs I've been a part of have been part of—I went on a [trip] to [country] and we had a blog, so I blogged in that a little bit. For [Scholars Program] we had a blog, so I blogged on that, but I've never had my own sole blog. I would say most of my new media writing has to do with having a portfolio and having a website. I do have a website and I do have an online portfolio that goes with that. I've done it, right, but it's always been very small. It's never been—running out of battery. That's okay, I have to move downstairs. That's where I've done that.

Interviewer: Your portfolio and website experiences, are those largely professional in nature or personal? How does that—

Interviewee: Professional. Very professional in nature and the about me page, that kind of thing where it's "Oh, this is who I am, this is what I do." Portfolio is explaining the portfolio and explaining my work to an audience outside of architecture who would understand it. We, in architecture, have these certain words and make up words, and are very hard to understand. I think that the best way to explain an architecture project is to explain it to someone who has no idea of what architecture even entails, and no idea what you're doing because then you truly can edit it down.

Interviewer: What effect have these new media experiences had on you?

Interviewee: I would say that, let's see—let's say it's been more reading of new media than writing on new media. That's probably affected me more than the writing for it. I've had my portfolio on websites since I was a freshman, actually, in college. We had to make them for a class. I actually found it much more difficult reading than writing—

Interviewer: How so?

Interviewee: —a paper. I think it's really challenging to show your voice and to show your personality through a snippet. To write in about—I think that's the hardest thing to write is to write about, "This is—my name is ***, I go to dits, and I think it takes a—and also cover letters. I would say cover letters within new media—I don't know if that counts as new media writing, but it's definitely professional writing that I try to do. It's hard. It's definitely a challenge. It's definitely not what I am used to. It definitely—I go to a lot of peers for help with those. I just find it very challenging.

Interviewer: You said that yes, you have done an electronic portfolio kind of a thing. Has this experience affected your writing or your sense of yourself as a writer differently?

Interviewee: Yeah. I would say my electronic portfolio is more creative-based and image-based because it's for my architectural work. Any time I try to write for anyone outside of my discipline it affects my image as a writer. It makes me question, but in a good way, and challenge myself in a good way, in a learning way, for how to edit and how to explain, and how to think. I have to think differently in order to write differently. I'm not used to that.

Interviewer: What you were talking about, you have to think differently. You have to write differently. How do you think your e-portfolio would be different if you were to put it in a hard copy, three-ring binder or something? What do you think those differences would be?

Interviewee: Actually, my portfolio online is my portfolio, my physical one. They're actually the exact same. The only thing that limits it is some paper stuff that has to do with design and not with writing. I would say that my portfolio, though—I'm going to change and say my portfolio for graduate school applications is drastically different than my portfolio for professional use. Those two things are very different in that portfolio for

graduate school was always more—is more academic and more—I’m assuming the people who I’m writing for will know what I’m talking about.

My portfolio for professionals and for public, I’m assuming they have no idea what I’m going to talk about. I really have to—I think editing just plays such a crucial role there. I really have to rethink my argument, rethink my project in a way of someone who doesn’t understand or who doesn’t get what I’m—these ideas of architecture, and form, and all these words that I use which mean nothing to someone who doesn’t use them in their daily vocabulary. It pushes me outside of my box for sure.

Interviewer: Has your e-portfolio helped you understand the writing and learning you have done elsewhere in the university, in different ways at all?

Interviewee: Kind of. It’s more, again, based in my college. I would say it hasn’t really engaged in that writing. Yeah, I’d say it’s not just my—I’m thinking of my portfolio. It’s a snippet project with images, a snippet project with images. That’s the portfolio that I’m speaking of. I’d say yeah, it hasn’t really engaged that. I personally have been affected by that and it’s engaging me, so I could say it engages that, but yeah.

Interviewer: You’ve been uploading pieces of writing to the CTools [learning management system] site, archive site, sort of thing. How has that process been going for you?

Interviewee: Great.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewee: Yeah, it’s awesome. It’s easy. It’s actually interesting because I know it requires—CTools asks for a certain type of writing, and I have found myself, in the last few years, or at least in this last—my senior year, I only had two options of writing to give. I was asked to give two samples. I was, “Okay, well you’re gonna get whatever I have.” It’s been great. It’s been very easy, and it’s been interesting to—I actually, when I submitted my last one, I looked back at the other ones that I had submitted before, so it was interesting.

Interviewer: Why did you choose? You just said one semester you only had two pieces.

Interviewee: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: The other ones that you’d looked back at, what made you choose those specific pieces, if you can remember?

Interviewee: I think I chose—let’s see. What did I choose? The ones I got the best grade on. I think the ones I thought were my best pieces of writing. I definitely chose the ones that I was proud of, or the ones I thought were interesting. Usually, in each class, I had

one piece—one writing that I feel was my best work from that class, so usually that would be the one that I chose.

Interviewer: Do you know what contributes to that feeling of this being the best work? What are the parameters that you use to decide that?

Interviewee: How happy I am with it afterwards, I guess; how proud I am of it. It's a personal gauge. Also length because I am proud of myself whenever I write anything that's long because I'm not used to writing anything that's long. I'm like, "Go me. That's an awesome paper. Good job." Length had something to do with it. You know what I think I did? I'm going to say one more thing. I did some writing my freshman year in this evolutionary biology class, which was interesting. I think I might have submitted one of those papers. If it was interesting, I think so, and accessible and easy to find on my computer.

Interviewer: Good criteria. Good criteria. When you were kind of looking back over the papers that you did submit—

[...]

Interviewer: [...]. Looking over some of those papers that you had submitted, did that process make you think differently about your writing at all?

Interviewee: Totally.

Interviewer: How?

Interviewee: It definitely made me realize how much it's changed in the last two years with my different courses. It made me appreciate my writing a lot more. Mainly, I think I hadn't [inaudible 47:12] of low self-confidence when it comes to my writing. Definitely, I looked back and it was like, "I wrote that? Nice. Good job, ***." You would have never thought the best writer in the world; it's a nice thing to look back and know that I'm capable.

Interviewer: Finally, what do you think that instructors should know about teaching writing at the undergraduate level?

Interviewee: Good question. I think that—read my writing, please. Sometimes I've had professors who don't even—not professors, or GSIs who—so many papers are so overwhelming they skim. I think that the more red marks that come back with my paper the better. The more that you really edit or show me how I'm wrong, I want to learn. That, for me, was always the most helpful. I don't want a minus check and that's all. I didn't learn anything from that. I think that I would say it's more in the grading of it. I never really was taught. I guess I was taught techniques of writing, but I think the last time I was really taught structure of writing was in high school, almost, so it has been on

me to be able to write since then, and to be able to learn from my writing due to the comments I get back from professors. I think that's just due to the courses that I've taken.

Interviewer: Do you think it would be helpful to have more explicit instruction in some of that structural—

Interviewee: I think first off, and I think that in my history course going over someone else's paper after we've submitted it, that helped. To look at someone else's writing and analyze it in terms of structure, and content, and how they've fluid—the different things that you look for, organization, that helped a lot. I think whenever you can—because I don't inherently know how to write. It's not something that I inherently have.

Interviewer: Any other comments?

Interviewee: I love Sweetland. [cross talk 49.44].

Interviewer: [Laughter]. Wonderful.

Interviewee: [Cross talk 49:46] a lot. I always recommended people to go to it. Not very many people did, which I was surprised by. I know no one in architecture went besides me, and that was out of a hundred people. I thought that was interesting.

[...]

[End of Audio]