

Interviewer: This is *** being interviewed by ***, and it is March 25th. All right, so—

Interviewee: And get settled. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter] Right. All right, how would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I would say I'm an okay writer. It takes me a long time to write papers, I guess, and I take a lot of breaks and get frustrated with it. I like reread everything basically, as I write it, and just kind of question it, so I don't know. I guess I'm okay.

Interviewer: Okay. What do you mean okay?

Interviewee: I don't think I'm the best. I know I have friends who are like way better at writing than me, so I kind of like ask them for help and suggestions and stuff. I guess when I do the papers I get As or Bs on them, so it just takes me a really long time to write it.

Interviewer: Okay, so what would you say is the role of writing in your life?

Interviewee: I mean, it takes—it's like a lot. I mean, like—I mean, this semester I don't have any papers to write like that, but I mean, I would say I write every day like not just essays, but just—I learn a lot better by writing than typing, so in classes I write out my notes and later put them electronically, but I prefer writing over typing for sure.

Interviewer: Is that the only kind of writing you do every day?

Interviewee: Like?

Interviewer: You said you write every day.

Interviewee: Yeah. Well, like I guess like to-do lists I write a lot, like notes to myself, sticky notes, like assignments that are online I write the problems down on paper and then solve them instead of doing it all online. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, so how would you describe yourself as a writer when you first began here at the University of Michigan?

Interviewee: It was really weird, intimidating, I guess. My high school wasn't very challenging whatsoever, so it was weird coming here. There were people who knew so many things about writing. I never heard of like a passive voice or like an active voice when I was writing. I just was like—I was really good at papers in high school, so I guess that kind of like, I don't know, affected my confidence in writing cuz I felt really incompetent compared to the other people. [Inaudible 02:38] writing class I guess it kind of helped, but also it exposed me to like wow, like my high school was really crappy.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you talk a little bit about your confidence as a writer that you mentioned?

Interviewee: Yeah. Well, when I first came it was really poor, especially in my first year writing class, but it's definitely gotten a lot better. Once you kind of know what the university expects of writing, and also like talking to GSIs as far as like what they look for in a paper, that was really helpful. Also, going to my freshman writing teacher, her office hours, and like going over what I got wrong on my papers it got a lot better in that class, I'd say, just by going over and talking to her about what she expects and like what she's seen that the university expects.

Interviewer: Can you talk about what kinds of things she said she expected or that the university—

Interviewee: Yeah. Like the passive/aggressive voice, like I wasn't very good with that, so she kind of went through my sentence structures. A lot of my sentences—like I was really good at transitioning between paragraphs, but not between sentences, so we worked a lot with that. Also, I never really knew how to do a bibliography at the back, so she helped me with that too.

Interviewer: What kinds of things did meeting with the GSIs help you with?

Interviewee: Just like forming my ideas and kind of like what they expected, like what points they wanted like put out. I mean, not specific points, but just like what they're looking for, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay, great. To what extent would you say you've grown as a writer?

Interviewee: Like on a scale would you say?

Interviewer: No, you can just describe it, or on a scale.

Interviewee: I think I've gotten a lot better, but still kind of like incompetent, I guess, when it comes to writing, but like it's definitely getting better. Before I would like—it took me a really long time like freshman—like a real long time to write papers. Now I can write a paper like relatively quickly and not get so anxious about writing it. Also, I'll write my papers kind of like a week early before they're due so I can come in here and like talk to people about it, and that really helps too.

Interviewer: At the writing center?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that a little bit?

Interviewee: Yeah, so basically every single paper usually—well, not every paper that I write, but like the ones that are the most points, I come in here pretty much like a week before a paper is due. Usually they have me read my paper out loud to them, or if we're short on time because it does start on the hour if I'm coming from class, but I usually have already edited myself too and picked up points like while I was editing my own paper what I thought was awkward. We go over those. Basically, it's just like me reading it out loud and then being like, "Well, this sounds weird," and us coming together to form a solution on what to do. That kind of helps with my confidence, I guess, in writing and also getting a second perspective from someone who knows very well about writing helps.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you think of anything besides the writing center too that maybe you could attribute your growth as a writer to?

Interviewee: Probably like reading other people's papers, like reading what—like looking at a sample A paper and with the professor pointing out why is it an A paper so you can kind of like model what they're looking for as an example and use it towards your own. Also, I don't know, I'm in a [club] and we have like—we can like e-mail each other papers and people like will edit them over for you, so that was really helpful too.

Interviewer: What kinds of things have you learned from editing in your [club]?

Interviewee: Like a lot of times upperclassmen who have already taken the class or just like are interested in writing, they're always pretty helpful as far as like sentence structures and stuff, and transitioning between sentences, and trying to like tie everything together they're really good at. Also, like word choices, they're really helpful with.

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you think you've grown at as a writer from using models like you were saying?

Interviewee: As far as like how to tie in examples, a lot of times I'll find something I'll like wanna put in a paper from a source, and it's always like how to tie in the source and also support like why the source is going in there. A lot of times I'm like, "Okay, this makes—goes great into the paper," and then I'm just like not good at like backing up why cuz it's so like I chose it to go in there. I'm always like—I don't know. I can always in the sources, or the samples, see how they incorporated the sources in.

Interviewer: Okay, great, so then what are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: As my goals, it's just to not get so frustrated with writing. I know I'm going to just cuz, I don't know, it's so not like my strongest point, but I guess just like feel like competent in myself and not second guess. Also, like always—I feel like when I'm done with a paper I'm just done with it, but I know like writing is a continuous process. You're never really done with it. I really wanna like be able to—like once I'm done with it to be able to go back instead of just being like, "Okay, that's over."

Interviewer: Okay. What kinds of things do you wanna go back for?

Interviewee: I guess like word choice and like maybe adding in or elaborating more in details, I guess, is probably—and also even like spelling and grammar errors.

Interviewer: You said you want to be less frustrated by writing. What do you think it is that frustrates you so much?

Interviewee: I think it's like the intro always gets me, so I try to make it like really drawing 08:55, and I guess that gets frustrating. Then also maybe the organization and structure of it, so I try to do outlines and that really helps, like making a really nice outline before and then trying to follow it. Also, like the flow of ideas in a paragraph because I've otherwise been pretty good with transitioning with like between paragraphs, I guess, but it's just like tying everything together within a paragraph is kind of hard for me.

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you do when you outline?

Interviewee: Usually I go through all the sources of—if it's like a class where like we're given a certain amount of sources and we're supposed to write about a topic, I usually go through all the sources again and just—or like the papers again and try to like do color coding highlighters, just like this will go with like the intro, like the history. This will go into like—I don't know. I try and highlight everything and my sources too, I guess. It's like in general just color code everything, so like break it apart and then make an outline from the stuff that I highlighted.

Interviewer: That helps you with frustration?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely, like more—like organized. I guess like the more detail I can like highlight my sources and organize them into chunks, like the easier the writing gets for sure.

Interviewer: Okay, so if you're thinking across your writing experiences at U of M [University of Michigan], what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: In like [University of Michigan] terms, I guess like a lot of professors look for like a really strong intro and conclusion, so I spend a lot of time on the intro. Then the conclusion is always like—cuz like some people want it like a summary, and other people just want like your conclusion to kind of be a summary, but like a stronger argument. I guess like making clear what the professor wants of you, also like transitions, they're really big on those and like word choice. They're also big on like using appropriate word terms too like so you don't—a lot of the classes I've been in are like social classes, so like you don't want to use offensive or slang terms, I guess. I've seen that before.

Interviewer: What kinds of word terms are appropriate?

Interviewee: A lot of professors you wanna know—cuz I'm a DAAS [Department of Afroamerican and African Studies] minor, and so like do they prefer you to say black people, or prefer colored, or prefer Afro-American? It's like what does the professor use in class trying like to write out—cuz like, I don't know, some—if you're like offended, so just that.

Interviewer: What else do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I guess like a really well written paper to me would be something like a really catching intro, a summary that's not boring or the conclusion is not boring. It's like long. It's not just like at the bottom like in summary. Just like nice transition words between like paragraphs, and also like a clear flow from the thesis. I guess just like everything like very organized is, I think, what makes something very well—like be able to like see what the writer is thinking as they write and why they chose that order.

Interviewer: Great. Which first year writing requirement course did you take?

Interviewee: [English course]. It was the one about health, so a lot of stuff—like I'm a pre-med major. A lot of articles we read were about like health topics, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay, and what were your experiences in that course?

Interviewee: Really good. My first paper was kind of difficult, but I mean like as the course progressed it got a lot better. Also, we like analyzed from different sources too. I think we wrote a paper about a website, and so that was kind of cool. I think she also tried incorporating more like multi-media also. Catching up with the technology and stuff was helpful.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that paper about a website?

Interviewee: Yeah, it was definitely interesting. I've never done anything like that, like analyzing like a picture, like why they chose the pictures, why they chose the colors, why they chose that particular font, like why they chose those and how it applies to the audience they're looking to appeal to. It was definitely really cool. I've never done anything like that, and I never thought to go through a website and think about it like that. I really enjoyed that paper.

Interviewer: What other ways did you use multi-media?

Interviewee: I can't remember if we did a PowerPoint. I can't remember, or like analyzed videos. We analyzed videos too. I think we wrote a short essay about a video we watched. I think it was the Dove transformation one, like the real beauty campaign. I think we wrote a short essay about that. I can't think of anything else that we did.

Interviewer: You said the first paper was really difficult for you in that class?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you describe that paper?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think it was a definition one where you chose the definition of a word and you talk about what it means to you, the various definitions. I remember just like I thought mine was good coming from high school, like what was expected of me in high school, I thought it was really good. Then I read the people's in my class because we exchange papers and peer edit it. I was like, "Wow! Oh, my God! This is what they do in other schools, like this is nothing like my high school." I think I was just really frustrated and just felt like not competent enough compared to the people in my class papers. I remember I was just like, really like, "Wow! Okay, maybe I'm not ready for this class," kind of thing. I talked to my GSI about it, and it was like really helpful. I think my high school wasn't that—didn't prepare me enough.

Interviewer: What kinds of things did your GSI say that were helpful?

Interviewee: Just like the whole like organization thing, and like, I don't know, just like keep up with it cuz like a lot of the kids have been writing for years at that level, so I wasn't just going to pick it up by reading theirs. I could learn some things from them, but also like it had to come from myself. I had to just be confident in what I would be able to do, I guess.

Interviewer: What kinds of things did you notice or learn from your peers' papers in that class?

Interviewee: I guess like their word choice and how detailed everything really was. They wrote so much of like sensory information to make you actually feel like you were there. Mine was just kind of like, I guess, dull in comparison to theirs. I didn't use enough adjectives and didn't explain things enough, so I guess by reading theirs I was like, "Okay, I could elaborate more on this and this and this," and like just kind of compared the amount of details I had for one of my sources to the amount that I had and just kind of figured out ways to cover it more.

Interviewer: Okay, so then are you still making use of what you learned in that first year writing course?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. She gave us a lot of sources that I still look at when I'm stuck on a paper, especially like she had this really good outline of a paper, kind of like the breakdown, I guess. She gave us examples of how to start a paper kind of like with a quote or just like a personal experience, or just different examples of that. Also the conclusion, like different types of conclusions that you can kind of ask the professor, I guess, like which one would you prefer. I use that from time to time when I write papers still.

Interviewer: Do you use the actual handout, or do you just remember those things?

Interviewee: Well, now I kind of remember the things, but before I was using the handout and stuff.

Interviewer: Is there anything else from that required writing course that you feel like you still use now that you learned there?

Interviewee: I mean, more than likely. I just can't think of anything specific. I mean, I know that was a really helpful class to me as far as like the writing process itself. Also, like how—just the whole editing, I guess, thing. Now I feel comfortable maybe to read my friend's essays and do the same thing. I do that sometimes in my [club] too, like I'll read other people's papers if they read mine. It kind of like—it helped me too with my editing skills.

Interviewer: What kinds of things did you learn about editing?

Interviewee: Just maybe like what to pick on specifically. Like you don't want to like pick at people's points of view. We just kind of help them with the structure, I guess, and the flow and not exactly just give—I don't know, not give like criticism, just give them things to think about, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you give an example of a thing to think about?

Interviewee: Yeah, like maybe if you feel like they're missing something, like they said a source and you feel like they need to elaborate more. I guess I would give suggestions on what they could like—other ways they could elaborate on it, I guess. If they said—I don't know. I don't know. Just like if you feel like something is missing, I guess, from their point.

Interviewer: Okay, to give a suggestion instead of a criticism.

Interviewee: Yeah. I mean, also then find like spelling errors and stuff, I guess, just like circle them, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you ever take [Writing course]?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay. What is your concentration now?

Interviewee: Neuroscience.

Interviewer: Neuroscience, okay. Have you had an opportunity to do writing in your concentration?

Interviewee: I've written like a formal lab report—not like a lab report, but like a, I guess, a summary of a lab. We wrote like an abstract and then like the results and the conclusions from the thing, so I guess that's the only one that I've really written in terms of like science-based.

Interviewer: What effect has that experience of writing in your concentration had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I guess it kind of shows me like how I could write. It feels—like I'm a science major, and I guess I don't really need to write that much. I guess it just gave an example of what I would write, I guess. It was like an intro bio course I wrote it in, so I guess it just gave me an example like that science majors do write, I guess. Also, I guess like writing for [English course] was more like elaborate and flowy and detailed, while like science papers are very analytical and quantitative. I guess it gave a different way of writing. I guess that was helpful.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that different way of writing a little bit?

Interviewee: Yeah, cuz like the English papers are more what adjectives can I use to describe this, and how can I make this flow, and stuff like that. Science was like instead of adjectives you put in like values, I guess, like you're not trying to make it seem really appealing to the reader. You're just trying to make your point get across very clearly in a very qualitative and quantitative way, I guess. Also like writing for English you didn't really have charts and stuff, but in science papers you definitely want your stuff in a chart so it's easy to read. Referring back to the chart and actual writing, so I guess everyone's science paper there are just more visuals that you're trying to incorporate.

Interviewer: How do you think that that has affected your experience as a writer, having to do visuals and things?

Interviewee: It definitely made it stronger. I wouldn't have been able to write it without examples of my friends' papers that they used before, and also like what they posted online as examples. I felt like, I don't know, I've read a lot of science papers before from my other classes, but like the actual like how do I write one, they didn't really address it that well in my class. I think if I would have just did it, out of the class did it, I don't think I would have gotten a very good grade on it, but by like, I don't know, looking at things that were done in previous—like that people have done in previous years really helped.

Interviewer: What kinds of things did you learn from people in previous years?

Interviewee: Like how to actually go back into, like how to refer to a chart, I guess, cuz—I don't know. It's just like—and also like how to even organize the chart too. I had collected all this data, and I just didn't know how to present it in an effective way. I guess, like the labels they use on their charts too.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that paper where you put a chart or a visual in?

Interviewee: Yeah, it was like we grew different plants. We had to measure the growth and how competition for different resources affected their growth. I had so many measurements, and we also did it with sunlight, without sunlight, and there's just a lot of different variables that went into it. I had the data. I just didn't know how to organize it for me to understand and write about, and for other people to understand and write about. I guess it took me probably the longest just trying to organize all the data and what mattered and what didn't matter.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you talk about other people having to read it and understand it?

Interviewee: Yeah, I sent a lot of it to my GSI before I turned it in just to make sure I was concluding from the details like the right way. Once I got the data read and was able to draw conclusions from it, I still wasn't sure about if I was drawing the right conclusion, so my GSI definitely helped me with that. For the most part I got it right, and then he also gave me suggestions on other things to look at, so I guess a lot of GSI help was in there too.

Interviewer: Can you think of anyone else besides your GSI who had to read and understand the chart and the writing about it?

Interviewee: No, I don't think so. I mean, yeah, I guess my friends kind of looked at it, who took the class before, but they were just like, "We didn't understand the paper," so it was kind of up to me and my GSI to work through it.

Interviewer: Okay. How confident do you feel about that writing that you do in your concentration?

Interviewee: I guess that helped, that one paper, but that was like really the only example of it. For the upper level writing I think I'm going to take that in DAAS, so like I don't really know—

Interviewer: What is DAAS?

Interviewee: Our Afro-American studies, so I feel it's gonna be more like the [English course] papers than like scientific. I don't know. Maybe formal lab reports in the future cuz I've done some for like organic chemistry too, like the formal lab reports. I feel, I guess, pretty confident towards those.

Interviewer: Okay, so have you done writing in DAAS and in neuroscience now?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you talk a little bit about the writing for DAAS?

Interviewee: Yeah, a lot of the—like I took a—let's see. A lot of the DAAS classes were like referring back to papers that they made you read during the class, and for that, like I was talking about how I would read through all the source stuff they gave us and try to highlight different parts that have contributed to my paper. That, I guess, it was more like trying to find things that would support it, like what you're trying to get across exactly. I guess they take both the same amount of time because they're both organizing details and trying to like be able to reason with them and organize them.

Interviewer: How else has writing for DAAS-type papers affected your experience as a writer?

Interviewee: Like trying to find the right word terms, like I was talking about, because depending on how your teachers talk about like—cuz you don't want to offend people. I never know if I shouldn't say like Africans, Afro-Americans, like black, colored, like I don't know. I always feel like you have to ask the professor or listen to how they talk. I guess you have to think more like am I making this correct, like politically correct or like how my professor wants things described.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything else you've learned from that writing besides that you can talk to your professors more about it?

Interviewee: Kind of. I guess the—I found in the DAAS department they're very more like relaxed and like chill. A lot of times they'll just write like a—like the one class I took that she wrote like maybe a paragraph as the prompt, and it was just like, "Okay, this is the prompt. Just make it seven pages and whatever you want." It's like way more laid back and relaxed about like what they expect from you, but also that make it kind of harder too if you know deep down she's actually kind of picky, so I don't know. I guess like the DAAS, just like trying to tailor your opinion, and then kind of like correlate with what the reader wants to hear, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. How is that different from the other writing you were doing?

Interviewee: Well, for the science papers it's like the data is like an interpretation. Like the data is there and it's like a given. Well, writing around a social issue there's so many right or wrong like—no, there's no right or wrong answer, I guess, when it comes to like your opinion on a social matter. Well, a scientific, you can't really like—you have to go with what the data gives you.

Interviewer: Do you feel like your process for writing those papers is different?

Interviewee: Kind of, but not really, I guess, cuz there all just like what does the data support and what do the articles, what do the authors of the articles support and like do I agree. I mean, it's like, for the science, yeah. For science you can't really argue with the results you got, but for the social papers you can argue with the author's point of view. I guess there's like way more ways of interpretation with the art paper or social art papers than the science papers.

Interviewer: How confident do you feel about writing in the DAAS concentration?

Interviewee: Pretty comfortable. I'm like really interested in the topics, so that definitely helps too just for like keeping interested cuz it's kind of hard to write—I don't know. Science papers are so like boring to me, so I guess the DAAS, like you explore so many different things, like social and economic and just you can focus on what you wanna focus on, especially with the department being so lax. They definitely like develop—I don't know—allow you to develop your thoughts more towards a topic.

Interviewer: Okay, so what experiences in and out of the classroom have had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Maybe just out of the classroom. What has affected your writing outside of the class?

Interviewee: I guess like at [University of Michigan] like e-mails, I guess, are pretty big, like how to dress like a professor, and then corresponding like how to dress. I'm [part of an honors society]. Like how do I address the people in the—like the alumni [of honors society], how do I address—

Interviewer: Can you talk about what that is, [...]?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah, it's like an honor society here. It's just like a service like—I don't know. We just do different events, I guess, so we do that. Then also I'm a—I hold a position for my [club] too, so also like e-mailing them is completely different than e-mailing like a professor or the people in [honors society] that I don't really like know, I guess like outside writing, like e-mails are a big thing and how to tailor it to the specific groups I'm writing to.

Interviewer: Do you do any other kinds of writing besides e-mail for your [club]?

Interviewee: No, not really. I mean, I'm a [chair] so I just kind of make announcements, but I can do whatever I want with those kind of.

Interviewer: Okay, you don't have to write them beforehand?

Interviewee: No, I just kind of do whatever. [Laughter]

Interviewer: What about for [honors society], do you have any writing besides e-mail that you have to do for that?

Interviewee: Not really, no.

Interviewer: Okay, just communicating with alumni?

Interviewee: Yeah, just communicating, like communicating with—I'm an events director, so I communicate with everyone, like our alum like supervisor. A lot of times I'm just booking places, so I guess after I e-mail the people I'm booking rooms for, but—

Interviewer: Okay, so how has having to write those e-mails and communicate with all those different people changed your process at all?

Interviewee: Definitely like you just think about who you're talking to. A lot of times I talk really like in slang, I guess, and really easygoing, but I try to formalize it up, I guess. I'll think how I normally think, and then I'll put it in appropriate ways to the audience I'm addressing.

Interviewer: Can you give a quick example of that?

Interviewee: Well, like for my [club] I do, "Hey, what's up, girls? How's it going?" For like a professor I'd be like—I don't even know if I would even like, "How's your day going?" I'm just kind of like straight to the point with them, so I definitely—it's just like how to address people, like the opening. I guess the intro, like how to you get your point across.

Interviewer: Great. If I use the term "reflective writing," what does that mean to you?

Interviewee: Reflective? I feel like that's looking back on your past—not past, but just like—I feel like that's thinking about something, and then writing your thoughts on it. Reflective—I guess I would just think that's like your thoughts kind of.

Interviewer: Okay, your thoughts about something?

Interviewee: Yeah, like whatever—

Interviewer: What kind of something would make it reflective writing?

Interviewee: I don't know. Like if you're—reflective? I guess like your experiences maybe, like reflecting back on your experiences and writing about it, whatever the experience is. I don't know.

Interviewer: Have you ever used reflective writing in your own process? No?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Have you ever been assigned reflective writing in a class?

Interviewee: No, not really. I don't think so.

Interviewer: Not that you can think of at all? What about in [English course]?

Interviewee: Maybe. I can't remember. I feel like there was maybe like a survey about how your writing has progressed the course, and I think—I don't know if we did this or not. Maybe we wrote like a two page letter or paper talking about what we learned from the class, but I can't remember. I don't know.

Interviewer: What have your experiences working with other writers in your courses or in your other writing contexts, what have those experiences been like?

Interviewee: Positive. I mean, other people write your paper. They're not going to—I mean, if they're your friends that's not going to like derail you or make you feel like a horrible writer. A lot of times they're definitely—like if they're taking the time to write, or redo your paper, they're trying to definitely help you. I guess it's always been really positive. It's always nice to collaborate with other people just to make sure you have everything you wanna say out. A lot of times they will like point out, "Maybe you worded this a little wrong," or, "Maybe you could add something a little more about here cuz you talk about it a lot. You talk about this subject a lot, so maybe add more to this subject."

Interviewer: What kinds of things have you collaborated on?

Interviewee: I wrote a group paper once for a women's studies class, and that was definitely really interesting and hard to do because I feel like a paper is something you write by yourself. I don't know. It was just hard cuz you had to go through all what they said to make sure it wasn't repetitive. We had to work really hard on our outlines before we wrote the paper just to make sure. Like I'm covering this, so maybe you can refer back to what I said earlier but just like we don't want to be too repetitive in the paper.

Interviewer: You guys used outlines to do that?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. How did you decide to use outlines?

Interviewee: We basically like got all our sources together separately on our own time and just made a very detailed—like these are examples that we're gonna use, this is what I'm gonna say about them, and then we kind of got together and the person who was doing the intro and the first part of the question would say what they were gonna say. Then it just went in order, and if there was a controversy over who should say what, the group as a whole talked about it and how they could either like split it up or who should do what.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think that group project affected you at all as a writer individually?

Interviewee: Not really. It just made me realize how much I like to write my own papers. I don't know, I feel like when something is a group it makes more sense to do like a PowerPoint than like actually sitting down and writing a 12 page paper together because it just seems so like—I don't know. I just didn't like it. It made me appreciate PowerPoints a lot more, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. Why do you think a PowerPoint is better for a group project?

Interviewee: Because you can see like the bullet points. There's an outline right there, and I feel like with a paper it's like, there's so many details and like—I don't know. It's just like a PowerPoint is just more structured for a group than like a paper cuz also, a paper, it's like everyone has their own writing styles and everyone has their own voice and it seems just like weird, almost like you could tell that, oh, the author changes here. With a PowerPoint, you're setting it yourself, so like it's more natural, I guess, for the voices to change within the group.

Interviewer: You said that group project made you realize you liked writing your own papers?

Interviewee: More than doing a collaborative paper. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Can you talk about that a little bit?

Interviewee: Yeah, cuz like some people just have their own way of writing, and it's just like—I don't know. If you're writing a paper together as a whole it's like we kind of want it to mesh, but some people are just like, "This is my writing. I like it this way." It's just—I don't know. It's just really frustrating, I guess, trying to make it all flow when everyone has different thoughts on how it should flow.

Interviewer: Did you have that feeling like this is my writing, I like my writing?

Interviewee: No. I was more like, "Okay, guys, I'll change it." There were better writers in the group, so I was like, "I'll take your suggestions," but then there were some who just wouldn't take suggestions. I don't know. It's just different—I don't know.

Interviewer: Have you ever done workshops or peer review for your courses?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely in [English course]. We would just exchange papers. I would—I think you would read two people's papers and then go through it and then write them a letter about the most important points you think that they should think about.

Interviewer: Okay. How did that experience of working in peer review and writing a letter affect you as a writer?

Interviewee: It definitely helped cuz when I saw what they were criticizing or commenting on my own paper, I started to notice trends in what people are commenting

about. I don't know, it was just like my paragraph flow a lot of times. They'd be like, "This paragraph kind of was—like didn't really make sense where it was at." I noticed that was a trend, and I don't know. That really helped just like after a while it was different people critiquing the same way of writing. I don't know. It kind of like pointed out the problems I had.

Interviewer: Did you find ways to change that problem?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, definitely. I went to office hours for that too, and she definitely was like—always like just build up. I guess like I'd have really strong sentences, but they didn't really fit where they were and they could almost be their own paragraphs themselves or like a good transition to the next paragraph.

Interviewer: Your classmates helped you to find that through peer review?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Then your GSI helped you to fix it?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: If you were going to give someone advice about writing, what are some of the things they should think about as they begin writing a paper?

Interviewee: I would definitely try and gather all the sources they possibly could, and like here don't use Wikipedia. Definitely use like the—I don't know. I use the Michigan library site or the materials that the professors gave us in class. I go through them and make an outline by reading those, and what I do is I usually make an outline one day, then write the paper the next day, and then edit it the next day just so it's like fresh to you and you don't get like—I feel like when you're working on something for so long you let things slip. When you give yourself a break from working on it, then you like—it's new to you almost again and you're more likely to catch your mistakes or think of more things throughout the day to add to it or things to change.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that, thinking about more things to add to it?

Interviewee: Yeah, like if you take a break from it and go on to other things, like maybe something will come to you like, "Oh, yeah, I could put this into my paper too," and you can always go back to the outline and just make a note of it. I think just like giving yourself a mental break from it, like giving yourself time.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have an example of a time that was useful for you?

Interviewee: Yeah, like I don't know, like a lot of times you'll talk about the stuff that you're writing in class. A lot of times I've had my outline written, and then I go to class and then people would bring up something, like a different thing they could talk about in

the paper. I'm like, "Oh, yeah, I could put that in my paper somehow," and I'd go back and write into it. Even like things just come in my head sometimes, I guess, when I'm working on other things. I'm like, "Oh, yeah, I can run with that."

Interviewer: Does that happen with your science papers?

Interviewee: No, not really. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Okay, so what papers does that happen with?

Interviewee: Just like the—probably more like more DAAS paper things than like the actual science papers. I mean, the science papers are kind of like, "Oh, crap, I interpreted that data wrong," more than like, "Oh, that's a new idea." It's more just like, "Oh, crap, I didn't understand that, I guess."

Interviewer: Can you think about a time with one of your DAAS papers that walking away from it helped you to think of something new?

Interviewee: I guess just like, even talking to my friends or my mom or people in the class about the paper, usually just talking about it you can kind of think of more things. I think—I can't remember what it was like. I don't know, something about like circumcision or something, I don't know. Somehow I was talking to people about it, and they like brought up like female circumcision. I'm like, "Oh, I didn't even talk about female circumcision in my paper. I could add that in." I guess just talking too helps.

Interviewer: That was after you'd made an outline and walked away from it?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think that was even after my first draft too.

Interviewer: Did you find a way to put things back into it?

Interviewee: Yeah. I mean, it was kind of iffy, so I came here and she taught me how to like—or gave suggestions how to incorporate it in cuz it like worked, but it wasn't completely working yet.

Interviewer: They helped you after the first draft at the writing center to put the new ideas in?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Anything else you would say to someone beginning a paper?

Interviewee: I would say like, at least for me, if you get frustrated, just take a break from it. Don't keep trying to push yourself because you're just gonna get annoyed. Definitely don't procrastinate on papers, I would say. I have friends who just like write a paper the day before it's due. I need at least two weeks, a week, to work on a paper.

Interviewer: Have you had any experiences with new media writing like we talked about?

Interviewee: What's new media?

Interviewer: Writing for blogs or websites, using sound or video, using PowerPoint.

Interviewee: I mean, I use PowerPoints. I've never done anything else really except the PowerPoint still, or making a video clip or anything.

Interviewer: You said in your [English course] class that you guys did some of that.

Interviewee: Yeah, we looked at [inaudible 43:42] website.

Interviewer: Okay, and a video, right?

Interviewee: Yeah, a video.

Interviewer: Did you compose anything?

Interviewee: No, no.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I've never composed a video or a sound clip or anything. I mean, I like PowerPoints a lot, so I feel like I'm pretty good at those now.

Interviewer: What have you had to write PowerPoints for?

Interviewee: Mostly presentations. I think basically in all my classes I had to make a PowerPoint of some sort and give a presentation for the class.

Interviewer: Okay. How have those presentations, writing that, had an effect on you as a writer overall?

Interviewee: I feel I like presentations a lot better than I like writing essays cuz it's not as structured. With writing I feel like everything has to flow perfectly. I don't know. I feel like when you're speaking in front of a class, like a presentation, you're able to just present your ideas more through like hand movements and images and videos and like writing it all down. I like talking a lot better than writing.

Interviewer: Okay, and you feel like you get to do that with the PowerPoints more?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: What do you think is different between talking and writing?

Interviewee: I feel like talking, it just comes out, like you just do it. When you talk through it in your head and then write it down you're like, when you read it you're like, "Does that really make sense?" I feel like there's a question—when you write something down it's like questioning it too at the same time. You have to go back and like, "Ah, maybe use a different word here." I don't know. I just like talking better.

Interviewer: Okay. You've also been uploading pieces of your writing to the study archive on CTools.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: How has that process been going for you?

Interviewee: Good. I mean, it's always like—cuz I had to find something like freshman year, but CTools [learning management system] is helpful for that cuz you get to keep all your like—I don't know Drop Box, but that was from way back. It's always interesting to go back and like, "What did I write?"

Interviewer: What pieces did you choose for your archive?

Interviewee: I know I chose from my [English course] class. I know I chose a couple from my recent DAAS class.

Interviewer: What did you choose from [English course]?

Interviewee: I can't remember which one it was. I don't know if it was—I don't think it was the definition one. I liked that one a lot, but I think I did like—I think it was the website one or an argument one cuz I know I like analyzing the argument between abortion and prolife. I think I did that.

Interviewer: Okay. Why did you choose that one?

Interviewee: I don't know. I think I just like found it, I guess. I think I was just like going through my files and trying to figure out where I could find little pieces of writing.

Interviewer: Okay. Why did you choose not to do the definition paper?

Interviewee: I couldn't find it. I really liked that one cuz it was my first one I wrote, and I feel like the first draft was like a C or something, and the second draft after meeting with her it got like way better. I guess that was the paper that showed the most improvement to me as a writer.

Interviewer: That's why you liked it the most?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: What did you choose from your recent DAAS class to put on the archive?

Interviewee: I think it was either about—I think it was about the circumcision or—I can't remember the other one. We wrote two papers in that—circumcision or something else. I don't know, the class was just very interesting to me. It was [Title of course] 47:34, so everything we read was like really interesting. Her prompts were a paragraph long, and it was just like do what you think is right. It was very like laid back, chill. I just really liked how she taught the class, I guess.

Interviewer: Is that why you chose papers from that class?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you remember which one you submitted from DAAS?

Interviewee: Uh-uh.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have any other comments you wanna make?

Interviewee: No, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Great, thanks.

[End of Audio]