

Interviewer: This is ***. It's April the 28th, and I'm here with ***.

[...]

This will just be an informal conversation about your experiences with writing here at the University of Michigan. [...].

Interviewee: I think, yeah.

Interviewer: Does that sound about right?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: We'll talk a little bit about the artifacts you've uploaded, and your experiences. We'll start with a general—some questions about how you see yourself as a writer, and then we'll think about the experiences you've had in writing courses here, and how those experiences have shaped your writing. That will be it. It will take absolutely no more than an hour. It should be a little less.

Interviewee: That's fine.

Interviewer: The first question's pretty broad, and it's just how would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: As a okay writer. I don't know, it's intimidating being here. I know I've progressed a lot since my freshman year, especially comparing myself to people who went through way better schools than myself. I thought I was a good writer in high school. Then I came here and realized I was not the best anymore, I guess. I guess now I feel like I'm more comfortable, and I know how to approach writing a lot better than I did before coming here.

Interviewer: When you say, "It's intimidating being here", you mean—what is here? There?

Interviewee: Oh, at [University of Michigan].

Interviewer: At [University of Michigan]?

Interviewee: Yeah. Especially freshman year, people had been taught different ways of writing, and my teachers weren't the best, I guess, compared to other people when—in writing classes, reading other people's essays, doing proofreading, I was, "Wow." [*Laughter*].

Interviewer: [*Laughter*]. What kind of high school did you go to?

Interviewee: I went to a pretty—I don't know, it's average size, but there wasn't that many AP classes, compared to other places here. Moneywise it wasn't there.

Interviewer: I can understand that. I didn't come from a place that had a lot of money either. Where are you from?

Interviewee: [city].

Interviewer: Here in [state], is that right?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: [...]. What kinds of things did you feel were different in your classmate's writing, in your freshman writing class, than in your own?

Interviewee: I guess just ways of incorporating quotes, and flow through the paragraphs. Then they would just—terms in class I had no idea what they were talking about. I was, “Oh”, I just wrote an essay. I didn't really think about all these things that you incorporated, and I don't even know what they even mean.

Interviewer: [Laughter]. To what extent do you think you've grown, and changed, since that freshman class?

Interviewee: I think I've gotten a lot more confident in my writing, and how to—I remember my major problem in my freshman year was flowing, not from paragraph to paragraph, but the sentences with other paragraphs. I think I worked on that, and how to tie sentences together. Yeah, just more effective timing in my essays. 'Cuz I used to handwrite all of them, initially, and then—

Interviewer: Oh, wow.

Interviewee: - type them in. I've never typed a essay on a computer before. Knowing how to better use technology, too.

Interviewer: That's a lot of change. That's a lot of change to deal with when you first got here.

Interviewee: Yeah. Everything was always handwritten, and I would go and type it up. People would be going, “What, you will have to write things down, and think about it?” “Yeah.”

Interviewer: Did that help you, though, handwriting things? Did it help you think about it differently, or was it just the habit you had?

Interviewee: I think it was just the habit I had. I never had written something on a computer first off, so I think that was probably just the comfort of it.

Interviewer: Do you compose on the computer now?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That would be a change. Thinking about your experiences, you started your freshman year here at [University of Michigan] it sounds like?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Thinking about your experiences from your freshman year, all the way until now, right before graduation, which is such an exciting moment. What do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: To write well, first all the grammar and spelling has to be probably the most fundamental level. Then also knowing how to tie specific examples that actually support what you're trying to say. Also the flow and organization of the paper.

Interviewer: You've talked a little bit about the flow of a paper. What do you think that means exactly?

Interviewee: Setting up your argument in a specific way. Knowing how to naturally progress, so your argument—when to actually incorporate which examples, and at what time. Also how to link the introduction to the conclusion. How they stay supporting, and strong, I guess.

Interviewer: It sounds pretty tricky.

Interviewee: [Laughter].

Interviewer: Did you take [English course] your freshman year?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: What upper-level writing requirement courses have you taken?

Interviewee: I did [African-American Studies course].

Interviewer: What's that class about?

Interviewee: It was [Title of course].

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: It was for my minor. Then I also fulfilled the requirements of—

Interviewer: What's your minor in?

Interviewee: African-American Studies.

Interviewer: Cool. Very cool. Who taught that class?

Interviewee: I can't remember his name.

Interviewer: That's okay. There's a lot of courses.

Interviewee: He was from [country], though.

Interviewer: Oh, fun. What was your experience like in that class?

Interviewee: It was good. It was definitely—the final paper was 20 pages. I had never written anything close to that.

Interviewer: That's quite long.

Interviewee: It was definitely intimidating, but the whole class was working your way up to writing that paper. All our writing assignments was first developing what you were gonna find—what you were gonna write about. The next was writing a bibliography, trying to find the sources you want. Then the third was your outline. The fourth was the paper. There was a lot of feedback.

Interviewer: That's good. That's good. How do you feel like that paper went for you? Do you feel like you—it went pretty smoothly? Or did you have trouble along the way?

Interviewee: I thought it was not as bad as I thought it was gonna be. My outline was pretty detailed and, along the way, he would be, "Yeah, this is your question, but maybe you could add this to it. Or add this to it. Or take this away." There was a lot of feedback.

When I finally got to writing the paper, my outline was so detailed with his comments, and everything I needed to say, that writing the paper was not nearly as long as I thought it was gonna take me to do.

Interviewer: That's good. That's good. What would you say that you really learned from that course? It sounds like you had some experience developing a pretty sustained argument?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: What do you feel that course really taught you, as far as writing in general is concerned?

Interviewee: I guess just how to—more in-depth—think about a question. How to look at it from different angles, and I guess how to build up an argument that lasts for 20 pages. How you can include counter-arguments, and certain aspects of the argument that you could talk about for 20 pages, I guess.

Interviewer: Have you taken the other writing courses here?

Interviewee: Well, I'm in [English 300 level course] right now and—well, there's four short essays.

Interviewer: What is that course exactly?

Interviewer: The section was adolescence.

Interviewer: Oh, interesting.

Interviewee: We read a lot of good books that I hadn't read since middle school.

Interviewer: That's fun. That's really fun. How has that class affected your writing?

Interviewee: Well, it was different because one of the papers we had to go to the museum for—the art museum for, and they made you write about compare and contrast two pieces of work. I've never—

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: - I've never done anything—I've never even gone to the museum before that. I had never done anything remotely close to analyzing art. That was tricky, I guess, 'cuz I've never done anything like that before.

Interviewer: That sounds really different. Interesting. I know you mentioned your minor is African-American Studies. What's your concentration?

Interviewee: Neuroscience.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. Those are two really different things.

Interviewee: Yeah, it is. Definitely.

Interviewer: What made you decide to pick that concentration and minor?

Interviewee: I want to be—I'm pre-med. That's why I picked the neuroscience. Then I worked for [organization]. It's a tutoring, [...] in [city]. I decided that that's the population I want to serve. Under-privileged, urban settings. That's why I just—well, I might as well minor in DAS 11:09, 'cuz that'll help me for med schools.

Interviewer: Wow, that's really interesting. Have you taken any writing courses in your concentration?

Interviewee: Not really, but a lot of my labs we had to write formal lab reports for.

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

Interviewee: Off and on, I guess. It's tricky 'cuz it's so different from English. In a lot of ways it's more straightforward. Because you have to say, "This is what I did. This is what happened." You don't have to think about metaphors, or anything like that. It's more straightforward, to the point, and how precise can I make this. I think it's more—maybe a little bit more tricky to write for science papers, especially if you don't really understand the experiment that you're writing on.

Interviewer: How do you feel like that's more tricky than what you did for your DAS class?

Interviewee: You had to think of very concise words. Also, it's hard writing quantitatively into a paper. How the data quantitatively into a paper, instead of in tables. How to talk about something quantitatively-wise, and then try to relate it back to the table. Then also there's a lot of math, too, in science papers.

Interviewer: That is tricky. That is tricky.

Interviewee: Just trying to get everything included. It's getting your math right too. It's—

Interviewer: It's a lot to juggle, it sounds like?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewer: Being really concise, and including all of the tables, and the math, and—yeah, it sounds really—

Interviewee: Yeah, especially Excel is a pain.

Interviewer: Oh, I hate Excel so much. I hate it. I'd prefer not to ever use it again. That's not really an option. How often have you used skills, or strategies, that

you've learned in one of your writing classes in other courses? Maybe skills or strategies you picked up in your DAS class? In one of your other courses.

Interviewee: In my sophomore year, especially my freshman teacher—yeah, my freshman year [English course] teacher gave us this outline-thing of how to look at papers. What you could include in an introduction. Different ways to start an introduction. Then, in the conclusion, different ways to end the paper. I'd use those a lot my second, or—yeah, my second semester in freshman year, and throughout my sophomore years here. Just to get into the routine of how to write a paper.

I think definitely utilizing the stuff that I got, or the things that my course—or my [English course] professor taught us, I used a lot. I think now it just became routine.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Over the last two years, so junior and senior years, what experiences, in and out of the classroom, have had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: I don't know, just let me think about that.

Interviewer: It's a tricky question. It's a big question, I think.

Interviewee: Yeah.

[Pause 14:37 -14:35]

Well, as I've gotten older in school, the papers that I've had to read for my writing assignments have gotten trickier. Especially the science, way more science-based. Obtaining a lot more vocab words, or specific neurological things. Then, for my DAS assignments, because I work in [city], my experiences working with the children there, and seeing what actually is happening in [city] on a day-to-day basis definitely gives you more support, or more emotional tyings to what I'm writing about.

I know one of my favorite papers I wrote was—we had to find someone on the census, and check their movements from the south to the north, starting with the great migration. We had to make a fake bio about them, and talk about why they moved there.

Interviewer: Oh, interesting.

Interviewee: It was pretty cool that—I found someone from [state] who moved to [city]. I made a false life about him, but it was cool.

Interviewer: How interesting. That sounds like a really interesting assignment?

Interviewee: Yeah. I had to find, first, him in the census from their—I think it was 1930s, 1950s. I had to find him in the census. Then I looked up newspaper articles, and clippings, from the south when he was moving. Then in the north when he moved there, and tie those experiences from the newspapers into what his life was.

It was fun. It took a lot of work. A lot of research, but it was fun.

Interviewer: It sounds like a different kind of—set of research skills—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: - than what you're getting in your neurology courses?

Interviewee: Yeah. I had to go through newspaper archives, and browsing through the census. It was just weird because they tracked—they had a hard time tracking people back then. There was a lot of people I'd find. "Oh, they seem really interesting." Then I couldn't find them in the next year's census.

Interviewer: It's hard to keep up with people. Wow. That sounds really interesting. Has your writing process changed as a result of those experiences?

Interviewee: I think I've gotten a lot more efficient at writing. These days, especially for my [English 100 level course]—or not [English course], but my [English 300 level course] with the adolescence. If we get a prompt, I will go through the paper, or go through the book, and trying to look at what I highlighted, and what I annotated. Just write it all down on a word doc. Then go through and make my outline, and use the quotes I pulled out. Then go from there. I think that's just—I don't know, it helps me.

Interviewer: Did you use the same process before? Is that what you learned, and that's what you're using now?

Interviewee: I think that's what I learned, because I can't remember how I did it before—

Interviewer: Don't need to.

Interviewee: It just seemed way more efficient, as far as, "Well, let me just look for a quote about this." I think I would do it—I would look for a quote about this, and then go back and do it. Instead of doing all the quotes that could possible match at one time.

Interviewer: I see. I see. That is more efficient. If I use the term "reflective writing", what does that mean to you?

Interviewee: I feel that's writing about yourself. I actually never wrote, really, anything about myself, but I have had friends who did it in high school, like a bio. Maybe I did it in high school too. All of my stuff has been writing about science, or articles.

Interviewer: You haven't really done much of that?

Interviewee: No, not—

Interviewer: What have your recent experiences been working with other writers in your courses, or in other contexts too? Places where you're working collaboratively, or doing any kind of peer review, or other kinds of work with your peers?

Interviewee: The [inaudible 18:49] class I'm in right now, I think it's four—I can't remember what it is. It's [inaudible 18:55]. We had to make a Podcast about—we had to make our own course. Then we had to make a Podcast off a chunk of a lecture that we'd do in our course. Then I did that. Then we had to go peer review 20 other people's podcasts in the class. That was definitely interesting. That was the first time I had done anything peer review-wise like that, since freshman year. It was cool.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Interviewee: Different. I've never made a podcast before. It was frustrating.

Interviewer: I've never made a podcast before either. Was it the technology that was frustrating?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. I had to go to north and do it. Then the computer they had up there was super slow, and you would type in a letter and you wouldn't see it for a minute.

Interviewer: Oh my gosh.

Interviewee: I was, "How am I supposed to make a video on this computer, when I can't even type?" It was just really frustrating. You would think they'd have a better technology that wasn't so slow. It was good at making the video, but it just—I don't know.

Interviewer: That's so weird.

Interviewee: I hadn't worked with a computer that was that slow ever. I think it was just frustrating. I've never edited a clip, or a movie, and I don't have a Mac. I had to borrow my roommate's and do it. It was just a lot of different technology. Technology I've never used.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's sounds like a lot of frustrations in the—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: The first time I ever made a video, it took three times as long as I thought it was going to. I didn't know how long that took. It takes forever.

Interviewee: Yeah, it was definitely—there were so many outtakes of me, just [*cross talk 20:28*].

Interviewer: [*Laughter*].

Interviewee: My friend was, "You should make a video to all your—your whatevers." Just—

Interviewer: All the outtakes?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's too funny. Now that you're about to graduate, what advice would you give to college students about writing? What are some of the things you think they should think about when they start writing a paper?

Interviewee: I would tell them to definitely utilize the Sweetland Writing Centre, 'cuz especially freshman year, when I realized that my writing wasn't really up to par to the other students in my class that going to the Sweetland, getting their suggestions really helped. Also utilizing the professor's office hours, and seeing what they want specifically, or how you could—bring them a rough draft of your paper, and going through it with them. Seeing if they have any suggestions.

Interviewer: Those are really helpful pieces of advice. The next question I have is about new media writing. It sounds like you've had a little bit of experience with this podcast that you had to do. What other kinds of experiences with new media writing have you had? For example, writing for blogs, or websites, electronic portfolios, digital portfolios, other kinds of experiences you've had like that.

Interviewee: I think that was the first.

Interviewer: That was just this semester?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think my freshman year, we analyzed a website, but we didn't do anything online with it.

Interviewer: You didn't do your own?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you feel like your experience with that podcast has affected your writing at all?

Interviewee: Not really.

Interviewer: Not really?

Interviewee: It was different. I mean, I did have to make a—it was like a presentation almost, but instead of doing it in person, you did it over the video. The reason she did it is ‘cuz she realized that so many people have never used any of those technologies. We pay a bunch of money for them, in our tuition, so she, “Guys, you might as well learn how to use this.”

Interviewer: Do you think that was valuable for you, learning how to use the tool? Or is it something you’ll ever use again?

Interviewee: Probably not, but it was still cool video editing. I didn’t really like—I think I would have had a better experience if the computer was actually a real computer, and not—

Interviewer: It sounds so weird, and frustrating? I can’t imagine.

Interviewee: ‘Cuz I was trying to make it pretty, and have my name under—[...] a headline at the bottom. To make it look pretty, it had a [University of Michigan] thing on it, and all that. Then I tried typing my name, and it took 20 minutes to type my name, to get it all in. I was, “This is—I don’t have time for this.”

Interviewer: That is crazy.

Interviewee: I don’t know what the deal is with that computer, but it was just not—

Interviewer: Was it the only computer that had the video software on it?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Ahhh, that’s the worst.

Interviewee: I mean, if I could have used my computer, it would have been fine. It was just—

Interviewer: That’s the worst. That’s terrible.

Interviewee: [Laughter]. I was getting really—that's why I was getting so frustrated, because I wanted to make it like that, but I couldn't wait 20 minutes when I had kept wanting to do the—re-doing my video.

Interviewer: You've been uploading some pieces to the study archive on C-tools 23:53, how has that process been going for you, just as far as the technology is concerned?

Interviewee: Oh yeah, it's fine.

Interviewer: Is it working fine?

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Then why did you choose the pieces that you did choose to put up there?

Interviewee: I'm not sure. I think they might have just been the most recent ones I did. I think those are the ones, "Oh, I did that. Here's a writing one." I don't think I specifically was—maybe in the beginning, I was trying to decide which ones I thought were the best. I think it's a mixture of the best and the most recent. The one I feel the most—the best piece of mine was, and it's usually the most recent ones, because it's the one that's fresh off my mind.

Interviewer: That makes a lot of sense. What has it been like, looking back over your old writing, and thinking about what to upload, and not upload? Has it made you think differently about your writing? Or—

Interviewee: I mean, yeah, 'cuz I want to usually upload them all. I got the best grade on.

Interviewer: As you've looked back—I know at one point we asked you to go back to freshman year, and upload some things from freshman year. When you went back to look at those, did you read over the one you chose again? If so, did you think about it differently than you did when you wrote it?

Interviewee: I'm not really sure if I read through them. I looked at the different papers that I wrote, and I chose the best one, I thought. I can't really remember which ones I chose now.

Interviewer: It's been a while since then.

Interviewee: I'm sure I chose the ones from my [English course], and then probably the ones toward—the later in the semester.

Interviewer: That would make sense. What do you think instructors should know about teaching writing at the undergraduate level? What should we be thinking about?

Interviewee: I think they need to understand—I don't know. Especially in my freshman year, I always felt in my classes, especially—I just felt really underprepared compared to the other people. Adjusting to the different levels that people came from, but also trying to get everyone at the same level at the end of the semester.

My English teacher did help me with that. I was just, “Listen, I don't know what you're talking about in class. This is my English.” I took all the AP Englishes that my school offered, but those were—the teacher would be, “Read this book.” Then he would sleep at the desk. I don't even think he read our essays. He would be “A”. He'd just check it off.

Interviewer: That's really different. I'm really interested in that, and I frankly have a very personal interest in it. My dissertation is looking at how students transition from small, rural high schools in the south, is my dissertation. Into college, and into their college writing classes. What things are hard, and what things aren't hard. How we can do a better job of preparing. I would be really interested if you could say some more about the things, in particular, that were really difficult for you that first year.

Interviewee: I remember just, specifically, after the first paper, and pure edit. Because after every paper you wrote, two people had to read it. I remember this one girl was, “You really should've used the active voice here, not the passive voice.” I looked at her, “I don't even know what you're talking about.” Then the rest of the class went on the discussion about active versus passive voice. I was just sitting there, “Wait, I don't even—

Interviewer: You didn't know the terminology?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Did your instructor pick up on the discussion about active versus passive voice? Or did they take time to define it and explain what it was?

Interviewee: She didn't define it.

Interviewer: She just went on?

Interviewee: Yeah. Then I went in the office hours, and “I don't know what that means.” When you put it in my paper, “Use the active voice here”, I don't know what you're talking about.

Interviewer: That would have been helpful then, I guess, to get some—

Interviewer: Definition, or an example. Then, since everyone in my class was talking about it, and yeah—I hear—I just didn't feel comfortable being, "umm"—

Interviewer: I don't know what that is?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That would be really uncomfortable.

Interviewee: That, in particular—I went home, and I was, "Mom, I don't even know what just happened in my class. I don't know what these words mean."

Interviewer: That would feel so uncomfortable. Thinking about maybe having instructors think about the terms we should be defining?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: When students bring up issues, particular—especially mechanical things like that, like terminology?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That would be more helpful, wouldn't it?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's 'cuz a lot—that was just the one example I can think of in particular. I really didn't get much mechanics feedback in high school.

Interviewer: I didn't either. I didn't either. It was a big shock for me too.

Interviewee: I think that, in particular, just addressing those terms. What is wrong, and when to use them.

Interviewer: You felt, in general, it sounds like you just felt behind, or underprepared? Or—

Interviewee: Yeah. A little bit behind, and a little frustrated with my high school. 'Cuz they just didn't—

Interviewer: You felt that they didn't do a good job?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you feel, by the end of that semester, in [English course], did you feel like you were ready to move on? Or did you wish—did you feel like there were still things that you quite hadn't grabbed a hold of yet?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Or how did you feel by the time that semester was over?

Interviewee: I think I felt ready to move on, but at the same time, I knew that—I just came to the acceptance that I'm just not going to be as good as a writer as certain people in my class. Maybe 'cuz they're more passionate about writing, and I'm just in this class 'cuz I have to be in it, kind of thing. I felt like I was ready.

I mean, I knew that my writing was gonna take a lot more work, and the sophomore year I'd probably work on it.

Interviewer: What year did you start here at [University of Michigan]?

Interviewee: [Year].

Interviewer: [Year]. You did the DSP then, coming in, the essay that you wrote before school started?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you remember—this has been a long time, so I'm sorry in advance. Do you remember how you felt writing that essay? Did you feel pretty prepared to write it?

Interviewee: I remember that was about robots, and—

Interviewer: Yeah, that was the robots that [*inaudible 29:57*]. Not the most exciting article in the world.

Interviewee: I think I actually read over it during the [English course]. We had an option to go over, and re-do it. I thought it was too boring, and I didn't really want to do that. I did look over it, and saw a lot of things that needed—that could have been fixed, could've made it better. Even from reading that—and my high school—my teachers thought I was a really good writer. I had come here with a big head, I guess, about it. Then when I got here, I was, "Oh that was good for my high school." I didn't edit it, or didn't re-submit it. I looked over it and definitely saw that I had improved.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing with me about that first semester. I think it's really interesting to think about how we can—

Interviewee: I was really overwhelmed my freshman year. I would always call my mom. After my first Orgo [organic chemistry] exam, I got average, but it was a 70. I thought it was so bad. I called my mom crying. I was, “I just had to call my teacher now. I don’t know if I can be pre-med.” [Laughter].

Interviewer: Awe. It’s a rough semester for a lot of people. Not just here at [University of Michigan], but other places too. It’s a big change. [...] I think sometimes high school English teachers don’t really know what students are gonna have to do in college.

Interviewee: Yeah, I agree.

Interviewer: You’re like, “Yes.” Bad. Do you have any other suggestions about what instructors should know about teaching writing at the college level?

Interviewee: I feel they need to tackle one thing at a time, especially knowing from where people are coming from. ‘Cuz it’s super overwhelming when you get all red, and you’re, “Well, I thought it was good. I didn’t have any spelling errors.” That’s all my high school teachers looked for. I think knowing when—starting with the little things, the things that are most important to be successful here. Then going into the tougher mechanics.

Interviewer: What do you think is most important to be successful here?

Interviewee: I think at [University of Michigan], what they really want, is a good—they definitely don’t want the five paragraph kind of thing. That’s all I did in high school was thesis at the end of this paragraph, and natural flow. I think here what’s most important is giving evidence, and when to give evidence. Also knowing what your instructor wants, and then thinking about your instructor’s point of view while you’re writing it.

Interviewer: That’s really helpful. That’s the last main question I have. Do you have any other comments, or questions, or anything else you’d like to add? Anything you thought we might talk about but we didn’t?

Interviewee: I’m trying to think. Not really. I was just curious, do you guys read over my papers that I submit?

Interviewer: Yes, we do. We do. Yes, we are just doing this study on how undergraduates develop as writers over the course of the four years while you’re here. One of the things we’re looking at, we’re going into those archives, and looking at the way they’ve—your pieces changed from your freshman year till now. It’s interesting to hear you’re choosing a lot of pieces from—towards the end of the semester, because then you can track the end of the year.

We'll do some—I'm not sure exactly how we're going—what we're going to do with those. How we're going to analyze them. I think a lot of that will depend on what we hear about in the interviews. What you think you're growing and developing on. We'll look at that.

We do some kinds of analysis using—it's called Corpus Linguistics. We go through and have programs that search papers for certain kinds of grammatical structures. Think about what those tell us about what students are learning about writing. Logical things, like “however” and “therefore”. Words that indicate logical relationships will tell us something about how you're learning to analyze things. That kind of stuff.

We do some of that. Yeah, but that is the next step, after we've finished all of the interviews. I think that's part of our process for this summer. Yeah, we do, but we're not looking at them to be, “Oh, this person's a good writer.” Or, “Oh, this person is not a good writer.” It's more, “Ah, look at—look at how this has changed.” Or, “Look at how this first piece is more like a five paragraph essay.” Then after this upper-level class, this student wrote a 20-page paper. Right? What does that tell us about what they're learning?

It's more about how we can think, and help instructors think more about, what developmental steps have to—I mean, you're taking this class on adolescence. You've probably thought a lot about how people develop cognitively. Part of this is us thinking about how do we better prepare instructors to teach writing in such a way that they're helping students along this process.

Interviewee: That's interesting.

Interviewer: It's a big study. It's got a lot of moving parts. It's been a really interesting study for us. Those of us who are interested in researching writing, and writing development. It's been really interesting. It's a good question.

Interviewee: I was just curious. I haven't really—when I submit them, I don't overly—really read over them. I just—

Interviewer: We don't expect you to.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Not necessarily. No, no, no. We just wanna see—people don't do this kind of longitudinal study very often about writing. We don't have a lot—in our field, we don't have a lot of longitudinal studies. Particularly of students from the beginning of their undergraduate experience, all the way through the end. It's unique in that way that we're getting a very robust picture of what writing looks like at this institution. Obviously, it's different in different places. What writing looks like at this institution for undergraduates. It's been pretty cool.

[...]

Interviewee: Okay. All right.

Interviewer: Thank you again so much.

Interviewee: Yeah, thank you.

Interviewer: I appreciate you taking time. I know this is a busy time of the—

[End of Audio]