

Interviewer: This is *** interviewing *** on, what is the date, the 19th, November 19, [...].

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

[...]

Interviewer: The first few questions are pretty general, and they're just about how you consider yourself as a writer, your self-image as a writer. The first question is how would you describe yourself as a writer? Good question, yeah.

Interviewee: So, I guess, right now, all of my primary motive writing is academic. I enjoy creative writing. I enjoy journaling. I guess a lot of the writing I do, and myself as a writer, is to try achieve, to really convey certain information and do it in a way that's easy to read, clear, compelling, and sort of helps me get the grades that I want. Does that sort of ...

Interviewer: Yeah, no, definitely. I mean we're just, I'm just interested in sort of what—so you said academic, you consider yourself sort of ...

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean because philosophy is a very—I'm a philosophy major—and philosophy's a very specific sort of, type of writing, and it's not necessarily the most fun style of writing. It has to be sort of limited in your style and that sort of thing so that you can convey information a little more easily. I definitely find creative writing really enjoyable. If we're going into self-image—

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: - I think I, like many, I mean I'm in a writing minor, and in our introductory class everyone had to blog and before every assignment people were like, "I don't know if it's good." So I think a lot of us consider ourselves writers, or particularly enjoy it—

Interviewer: If you don't enjoy it, you struggle.

Interviewee: - I do enjoy it, but everyone has this angsty self-esteem problem about their writing.

Interviewer: Sure, yeah. What would you say is the role of writing in your life? What does it do for you, or, yeah?

Interviewee: I think, at one level, it's really a sort of basic self-expression that feels very deeply a part of who I am because I find it's a form of self-expression that I particularly connect to, or whereas, my relationship to photography, you know. My younger [sibling] really good at making the house look cute and that sort of thing, but there's many different art forms that thrive. I feel like writing is the one that I personally sort of just click with the best. Could you remind—the role of writing in my life?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee: Then I think it's possibly one of the only, I mean, the only ways that you can really communicate with someone else if you're not in the same place. So it's a really important tool for conveying information, and experiences, and stories. Both in my personal life, of like conveying to someone how I feel about something, and in the academic world of trying to think about something, trying to sort of get at the heart of things to make an argument, the role of it is just sort of like conveying who I am as a thinker and a person.

Interviewer: Yeah, great. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you first began here at U of M [University of Michigan]?

Interviewee: My freshman year English class, for me, the topic was mostly about what is writing? What is an author? I think when I first began, one of the things that I didn't do very well was sort of allowing things to be complicated, especially in making an argument or writing an essay, sort of realizing that it's okay to have details that don't always fit in with what you're saying and having to sort of give the other side some sort of charity while you're writing. So, as a result, I think one of my professors, GSIs, wrote, "Understated elegance is really important," and not to try so hard to seem really poetic or really intelligent.

I think maturing as a writer included finding some level of confidence so you can just sort of, sounds cheesy, but be yourself on a page instead of trying to prove to people that you are doing certain things. I guess I've taken a lot of other writing classes, I've taken, have realized emphasized writing for your audience and stuff like that, which I think is important, but, also, just I think to a certain degree you sort of, even without thinking about who your content's for, you sort of do that a little bit. I don't know if that, if that sort of idea has changed my writing in particular, but I think just maturing as a writer has involved being less aggressive about certain aspects.

Interviewer: But that seems like usually goes with confidence in some way.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: What do you attribute this growth to? What is it that changed you, do you think?

Interviewee: I think just repetition, so writing, doing a lot of writing. Getting feedback from your professors is really valuable. I end in going into office hours afterwards and saying, "Okay, what didn't I do well? What can I do better? What did you like?" This helped me understand their comments a little bit more in depth, and asking them how can I improve as a writer.

I think reading good writing helps. I think when you have to write about things that are difficult that that really helps. Then like in our introductory class, we had [Instructor] 07:27, and she said, "Good writing is researched writing," and I think that's one of the things that's also stuck with me, is like the idea that if you sort of can think about things and reflect on them and look at. So, if you maybe write a narrative an experience you had in high school, if you can sort of look further into the experience, it helps you sort of connect a little bit more completely to other peoples' experience.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. What are your goals for yourself as a writer, do you think?

Interviewee: Geeze, that's tough. I hope whatever career I end up going into that I do have a lot of writing that I have to do. If the world was maybe a slightly different place, I would love to just write for a living, but it's very difficult to do that. I'm thinking about potentially going to graduate school for philosophy, so if I did do that, writing would have a very important place in my life because it would sort of be a very important tool of creating philosophy. I guess my hope is that writing is always in some level part of my life because I know I'm happier when I am, you know, journaling or getting to write papers and stuff like that.

I guess for goals, it would be to continue to progress as a writer throughout my life, and then just to have it be a part of it, even when I'm much older than I am now. Then for my career, have it allow me to sort of do well in my career in the sense of—if you're doing like nonprofit development, and if you're trying to communicate to people what your mission, what the mission of your organization is. Doing that well is very important of the success of your organization. That communication is writing in many different ways.

Interviewer: Yeah. Cool. The next few questions are about transfer, some of which you've touched on a little bit, but thinking across your experiences here at U of M [University of Michigan], what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I think writing well involves thinking well at a certain level, and sort of having your thoughts clearly developed, and understanding what's at stake for certain things. I think it's also being able to connect outside of yourself, so writing about—you can write about your experience in such a way that no one will connect to it because it's really self-focused, or you can write about it in such a way that it also allows people to feel like they're heard. Sort of like when someone gets really excited certain song lyrics because they feel like it's telling their story.

So I think good writing, at a basic level, does that, allows people to feel like they're being seen. I think good writing understands. It points out something that's interesting in a thoughtful way, which is sort of vague, but like a good news article or a magazine article doesn't necessarily have to be ground-shattering, but if it points out something interesting and does it in a way that like, "Hmm, that's well-reasoned." They didn't like try to claim that the world wasn't flat—sorry, world isn't round [laughter].

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: That the world is flat, so just like that sort of balance allows writing to be good.

Interviewer: Yeah. Great, and it sounds like you took one, what first-year writing requirement did you take?

Interviewee: [English course].

Interviewer: [English course]. What were your experiences like in that particular course?

Interviewee: It was amazing.

Interviewer: Oh, really? Good.

Interviewee: Right. The GSI or instructor was awesome, but so we looked at what's it meaning being author? Who is an author? Are we authors? Sort of like what is writing? All this sort of stuff. It was really exciting and read Sartre's *Nausea*, which is an awful book, but very interesting, just stuff like that. The format, the class was smaller. I was a freshman, it was just like really cool to have that sort of dialogue, especially about something that you particularly care about.

Interviewer: Great, and what effect did those experiences, do you think, have on you as a writer?

Interviewee: It made me feel like it mattered, that I mattered because we had to write sort of like a more, I don't want to say journal, but it was sort of like that. It was more reflective and our teacher responded to it at the end of the class. It just made you feel like you were significant, and you had something to contribute, and that at some basic level, your writing was important because it helped you establish this relationship with your professor, or this relationship with your classmates, or even this relationship with yourself, or with the academic world. I think that just fostering some confidence and making writing seem very exciting and, I guess, open to interpretation because I think you come from high school, preparing for the ACT. There's a very certain—and like the APSAs [American Political Science Association] and stuff like that you have to write for all these standardized tests. There's a very specific way to write, and it's very limited. You come from that setting and you're kind of like, here you go, do whatever you want. It's exciting

Interviewer: Do you feel like you're still making use of that, of what you learned in that class in your writing now?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah, uh huh.

Interviewer: How so?

Interviewee: Just sort of like this idea that you can sort of ask yourself questions and be a part of even a larger dialogue than just what you're sure to engage in, and sort of realizing what is the obligation of someone who's writing? How can I try to relate to their audience? Are you directly responsible for how what you wrote affects another person? What if you never meet that person, are you still responsible? Looking at questions like that, I think, is still really interesting, and to see that sort of excitement that helped me developed, I think, has stuck with me.

Interviewer: Great, yeah, and did you take—what, you didn't take [Writing course], [Writing course]?

Interviewee: Hm-mm.

Interviewer: No, okay. You told me your concentration's in philosophy.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: So have you had an opportunity to do writing in your concentration?

Interviewee: Lots of writing [laughter].

Interviewer: Lots of writing. What kinds? How would you describe that writing?

Interviewee: Some of it we do in philosophy classes. You try to start out with a really interesting introductory paragraph. You try to tell some story and use a quote, you really want to engage the reader. Then your professor is like, "Don't use a quote. This is too sort of fluffy." You're like, "Okay, so then you just start off with argument and there's things that you do in philosophy that you wouldn't do in other, like suitable to other essays or like I'm gonna talk about Kant's thesis [German philosopher] on this, this, and this. I'm gonna say how well he achieved this, and then I'm sort of going to sort of tie that to this other argument, like you literally say that in introductory paragraph, which is sort of like, you wouldn't do that, really, otherwise.

Also, there's like, you just, because an argument can be like, so there's this guy named Pete Singer [Australian moral philosopher], and he has this sort of argument about people, our obligation to people in need, and he uses the phrases, "comparable moral worth" and "moral significance, comparable moral significance." So even the difference between worth and significance, it like totally changes things. So you have to be really attuned to your little word choices. Sometimes I'll get my essays back and I'll have "it" circled, and like, "Well, it's pretty clear what it refers to," but there's this really high degree of specifics you have to go into and having to consider lots of possibilities and then be able to sort of critically engage with them.

I tried to write a more philosophically attuned, like editorial for [local Ann Arbor newspaper], and it was really hard to switch styles because it so like this very specific,

concise sort of way of writing that is sometimes it's hard to switch that into other forms, to allow you to sort of use a word a little more liberally or use the connotation in a certain way to convey certain things, even if it doesn't completely convey the best thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's interesting. What effect has that had on you as a writer, do you think, being in philosophy?

Interviewee: I think it's helped me in some ways because I just, the level of thinking, you're always pushed, and it's sort of like your professors really don't let you settle. That humility is really good. Back in fifth grade, you're like, "Yeah, okay, I guess that was A+ work." Just like learning how to really sort of be able to draw out the relationships, and then the trickiness of feeling like you know something. You're thinking about something, and it makes sense to you, and then having to spell it out or like having to look up what someone else says. It sort of makes sense to you, but then you have to regurgitate it to the reader. It definitely shows you how well you understand it. What was the question again?

Interviewer: Yeah, what effect has that had on you as a writer? Essentially, what's it done to you? Yeah.

Interviewee: In some ways, it sort of inhibited my creativity in other styles because I'm like, it's hard for me to let go of the sort of details that you need because I think in other styles of writing, some of that detail is just like oppressive, too much, and you can have a little bit more sort of liberalness with it. So, I think that sort of is difficult.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, and how confident do you feel about the writing in your concentration?

Interviewee: Every time I write a paper, particularly when the class gets hard, and you're reading really famous works of writing, you have this period of what my dad and I call angst, where you're like, it's like, "I can't do this. This guy's so smart. I'm just like a senior in college." So you have this big period of angst that you have to battle through at some point because there is a deadline, and there is a grade. So I know that I can get by and sort of get the grades that I want, but there's definitely a feeling when I start out writing essays where I'm like, "Mm, anxious. I don't know how this is going to turn out." I think, also, as you write more and more, your confidence gets better, and it shouldn't be the case when someone reads something and tells you that it's good that you feel like that it is good, but I feel like it sort of is the case for writing, if that happens, to a certain degree, you feel, "Okay, this is acceptable work."

Interviewer: So confident, sort of, or how would you ...

Interviewee: I would say—so I have sort of a personal blog, and sometimes I'll write something, and it'll take almost two months later to feel okay with posting it, which is isn't—and sometimes there's this tricky problem with writing and honesty. If you really identify with writing and connect with it, I think letting people read it sort of exposes part of yourself, and you're really worried that there's something that you really love and

enjoy and that you identify with, you're not good at it. What does that mean for you? I think there's always that element there, even in settings of philosophy where it's maybe a little bit easier to sort of, to be able to do certain things.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, that makes sense.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: The next few questions are about the gateway course you took last winter, right?

Interviewee: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Yeah. What impact has that course has had on your writing, would you say?

Interviewee: It was neat to sort of get to work in different styles of writing, especially since, by and large, in college unless you take—you know, you've got your one-credit, your creative expression class, and then if you do stuff outside of class, there's really no—you're doing a very specific sort of writing. If you go into like communications or like you're doing some sort of fund raising work, you're not always going to be using this academic essay sort of writing. It is in some ways helpful to get to develop other parts of yourself.

Then making the portfolio was cool because it sort of is something that you can really tangibly show other people, like, "Hey, look I did this," because, otherwise, I think some people view it as impractical. I think, I guess my one frustration with that class a little bit is that we talk a lot, a lot, a lot about drafting, and, for me, I think that drafting involves producing good writing at some point involves having to just write a lot. I think sometimes talking about your writing process too much can almost inhibit you, I guess, because at the end point you have to move beyond the process and actually begin writing, although the beginning stages are important. I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah, that make sense. Has it had an impact? I mean the next question is about process. Has the class had an impact on your writing process, do you think?

Interviewee: I think, what [Instructor] 24:27 said about good writing is researched writing, I think I definitely now try to, just even, increase what I know about whatever I write, definitely. I think that has definitely held true that when you just sort of learn more about something, you're more able to write about it well. I think just, I think the projects were really helpful too, and we need to do some of that stuff and develop yourself in different ways also helps you feel more confident. I guess didn't like the sort of writing process is focusing on that too much, I felt like it wasn't in particular super helpful to move forward.

I think that writing just might also be kind of difficult to teach in some ways because it's like how do you convey certain things? You know what I mean? You can give principles,

but those aren't always true. You can say don't use that, don't use this sort of style in certain settings, but even that's sort of up for interpretation. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. What impact did the class have on sort of how your sense of yourself, your sense of yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I think that it helped me see that I can be a writer in many different settings, not just my concentration, and that I should have more ownership of that, just sort of like being capable to write different things in different settings.

Interviewer: Can you give some examples, like what kinds of ...

Interviewee: We did a lot of like—we did a remediation project where we took an essay, or something we'd written for another class, and turned it into something else. I took a really heavy philosophical essay and tried to turn into a blog post because I had failed at that that first time, trying to write that thing for [local Ann Arbor newspaper]. I think that sort of helped me because now I do have a personal blog, and I find that enjoyable and find that worthwhile, where in the beginning, I was like, "I don't know if I can do this," like sort of helping you develop confidence in other areas.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. What have your experiences of working with other writers in the course been like?

Interviewee: We did do a lot of drafting stuff. I don't know if you've had a similar experience, but sometimes I feel like other writers don't even like to work with other writers because it is sort of like, almost always, a competition. There's sort of like this very subtle judgment that everyone brings to the table, like, "Are you good? Are you not very good?" I think the feedback is really helpful, but I think sometimes having it from your professor is most helpful because you know that they sort of, they know the game, they've had to do a lot of it, they've read a lot of good or bad writing. They just sort of have this experience. Sometimes I feel like your peers can point out certain things that are going well for you, but aren't as helpful constructing, if you're like, "Okay, I'm having a problem doing this," and that sort of problem solving isn't always as productive, I guess.

Or even like allowing someone to have their own voice instead of when you're like editing it, trying to turn it into yours, or like just, "Oh, it's just different." It's sort of like that difference is fine. That's them, and I have my own different way of writing and respecting that. I think sometimes when you get edits back on a paper, some of that stuff can be about that. I don't know if it's just—I feel like there's some people that you trust for feedback, and they're sort of like, "Here, I'm handing over something I feel slightly insecure about to you. Take care." Then they, because you sort of know them in a way, maybe they edit for you more than once and have a sort of detachment, you just feel a little bit better about the feedback, where you can be more receptive to it, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, yeah, it totally makes sense. It totally makes sense. The minor gateway emphasized reflective writing, right, in various forms? How would you describe our experience with that kind of reflection?

Interviewee: What do you mean by a reflective writing?

Interviewer: Well, did you, how—I mean because I haven't taken the course you have, did you feel like it was a part of the course, reflective writing, or how was it framed to you?

Interviewee: Sort of like, you know, if we had peer edits that day, we would sort of write about our paper, and we're like, "Wow, we're struggling with ..." We had blog posts where we would sort of, you know, talk about certain things or there was definitely a dialogue about how, if we were struggling or not with certain assignments, stuff like that, sort of like talking about writing as a whole. I guess it's helpful to be aware of, if you're writing a piece, what's going well with it and what's not, but sometimes, I feel like you can get stuck in that stage of just being like, "I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do," and moving past that. I think someone needs to come in and be like, "Hey, you can do better than this," like, "stop sort of thinking about it, and you need to go do it now." So I think reflecting is a very important thing to sort of be aware of when it's going well, but I think sometimes you can, I personally, and I think other people in my class, get like stuck in this stage of not really being able to move on from what we know isn't going well.

Interviewer: Do you use that kind of reflection in your writing that you're doing right now, do you think?

Interviewee: I feel like, you know, when you turn in a paper, you sort of know how well it's written. When you get a grade back, you generally not too surprised if you're being honest with yourself. I guess I often find the times like, I know that it's not, I'm not really—my writing isn't like as clear as I need to be, as it needs to be, or it's not like, it's not as critical or in-depth as it needs to be, but by the time I'm turning when I turn in my essay, the problem is that I didn't know how to fix it, or how to make it more clear on my own. I guess that's sort of the reflectiveness that comes in your—or just even not being aware, sometimes it's not until you've gotten feedback that it sort of helps you become more aware of things in the future. When my professor is like, "You need to have understated elegance," instead of really force-fed, trying to be elegant. Only until he sort of gave me that feedback was I like, "Okay, maybe I need to tone it down a bit," I guess. So sometimes it's more like long-term stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah, that stays with you, yeah.

Interviewee: Uh huh.

Interviewer: How would you describe your experiences using new media writing in the gateway course, like the blogs, the remediation project?

Interviewee: The blogs are interesting because you get to publish things, be published, which is exciting, but it's also you lose the sense of hard, sought-after significance because they're so many blogs out there. How do you make yourself competitive? Sometimes I feel like your writing, it can fall into a trap of writing for entertainment, I mean writing to sort of, like using lots of pictures, like a blog isn't successful if it's primarily focused on the writing, and it doesn't have certain elements like pictures or movies or stuff like that, which I think is sort of hard because then I think the writing can suffer if you're spending most of your time looking for pictures to fit what you wrote. You're not spending as much time really concerned about your writing. But it's also kind of liberating in the sense that you get to be more—play around, have fun with your style, stuff like that.

Then I think a lot of, increasingly a lot of employers sort of look for that sort of experience. If you tell them that you—well, there are people that, in particular, look for, "Do you have experience with social media?" or "Do you have experience with new media?" So anything I can do to experiment with that in a structured setting, I think, is really valuable, even outside of just being a good writer. It has some sort of practical benefit.

Interviewer: How about in the class itself? Did you feel like it was a—how did that affect you?

Interviewee: I think just anytime you're out of your comfort zone to have to write something, it's a good experience for you, helps you grow. So when you get out outside of your comfort zone and have to produce something in a new setting, that's really good for you to learn from. Learning how to do that well and learning how to transition certain things, I think, is a really, really important skill because there's many forms of writing. Some have very set guidelines, like it would be a very bad blog post if I just took one of my papers I had written for my [Ethics 400 level course], like threw it on the screen. No one would want to read that. So, just like, being able to tear things apart and then keep certain elements is a really—I think it's a hard skill to develop, and that practice is really important. Getting a setting, a structured setting, to do that is really neat.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. The next few questions are actually about your portfolio, so if we could pull it up, just so you can have something to sort of refer to. Do you know how to get it?

Interviewee: It would be—yep.

Interviewer: Usually when I get this, it's gonna have me log in, let me just log in a quick sec—sorry. Okay. So if you just type in the address, it should go there.

Interviewee: Let's see. Yep, here we go.

Interviewer: So it's totally public.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: That's great. Can you tell me about some of the most memorable aspects of your experience with the portfolio? We just wanted you to talk about your portfolio.

Interviewee: When I went home last summer, and I saw one of my friend's mom. She asked me, "What are you studying?" I said, "I got a major in philosophy and a minor in writing." They said, "Oh, two impractical things." I was like, "Uh, knife to the heart like." So with the ePortfolio, it's sort of like, "Look, it's not impractical. Look, here's what I've done. Here's what I can do. Here's what I do well. Here's my range. It's not unpractical." Then it's a very easy showcase. When this summer I was applying for jobs, I sent a link to this site to people. There's a literary press on campus that I wrote for, and they recently followed this blog, followed the ePortfolio. Stuff like that, it's cool because it sort of gives you a way to find new avenues for your writing outside of just class and to prove to people like, "Look, this is an important skill and you can see how well I do certain things." So it's really empowering in a way.

Interviewer: Oh, great, yeah. What were your aims for the portfolio? What were you thinking you ...

Interviewee: I wanted to sort of show—I wanted it to be—I wanted it to convey the relevance as to who I thought, who I think I am, but I wanted it also to be sort of able to be more professional in the sense that if I sent it to someone I wanted to get a job from, I wouldn't feel embarrassed of certain things. I think some of the other blogs or other portfolios just have different photos or a style that was less serious. But then I also wanted, because I really do enjoy writing stuff creatively, I wanted to have that on there as well to show that I can do stuff like that. I don't know. Other aims for portfolio. I focused a lot on trying to make—I mean I'm not super comfortable with—I'm not a computer programmer or like a software engineer, so like learning how to use WordPress [content management system] and how to try to make everything accessible, like setting up the format and explaining to people what's going on.

Well, it's really hard to add the papers so all of them come off in PDFs, so trying to make it such that it's like you want to read it or like you understand, independently of me explaining it to you, who I sort of think of myself as a writer. Then, see, I have a photo here because I understand that sometimes you need on websites and such, like a load of images to break it up for your reader or just sort of like to engage them.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. So you sort of partly answered the next question, which is how your portfolio addresses those aims—

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: - of being, sort of representing who you are and ...

Interviewee: Then just having things laid out in a functional way is tricky, but I think that's important too because you have to entice people in certain ways so, "You want to read this," to get them to do that.

Interviewer: Do you think making this portfolio had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: I think it's just like a legitimizer. It gives you a relevant—I do well on this. If I do this thing, I can put it on my ePortfolio. It's an avenue that you just wouldn't have, really, otherwise. It's exciting and having to think very, and struggle with how to set things up, how to inform the reader. That was really hard. I think our professor did a good job of pushing us in that because I definitely wasn't—I want to slop all the PDFs on there, "Here you go." Realizing that there was sort of a style to even writing for the web. I think that was really important.

Interviewer: Were there specific examples of pieces of writing you think that were different because you knew you were going to put them in the portfolio?

Interviewee: Let's see, deciding what to put on here, like discriminating against certain stuff, I've got one paper for philosophy. I've got two free-written stuff. I've got draft-to-final. This is even showing people that you have a process, that you sort of take it seriously, I think, if you go in looking like, "Why should I sort of trust you as a writer?" "Well, look, I'm serious about it. I have a method." That sort of thing. There's a lot of—I think some of the minor in writing stuff is a little bit more accessible than a lot of my papers in philosophy, so having the right—this is an example of sort of more writing for a class that it's a little bit more accessible.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. What was the impact of the reflective writing? We've talked about that a little bit, but the reflective writing you did on the portfolio itself?

Interviewee: I guess I'm trying to remember. A lot of that we did—so we went around and everyone looked at each other's portfolio to sort of give each other feedback. That was really helpful or just seeing what other people did to set things up and get ideas. That was really helpful. I think [Instructor] did sort of a good job of pushing us a little bit further because I remember at first just really like, "Ah, I'm so exhausted from this, I'm just gonna let it—this is fine." Then realizing that, just going back and making it a little bit more put together, sort of realizing that that needed to happen was important.

Interviewer: Was the reflective writing in the portfolio? Did you sort of incorporate it into the portfolio?

Interviewee: So you see it like the, you see the minor writing blog. You see the draft-to-final, so like an example ...

Interviewer: Oh. Cool.

Interviewee: So like a really brief example of drafting process for me, that sort of thing. Then the "why write" is really reflected in the remediating process, the initial process. I think I probably put some of the stuff right here, just giving a little background to the paper. Then showing the thing that I created. Then like the final, other remediated thing. Oh, and then I wrote about it. I forgot about that. So I made a video about it.

I think the reflective writing is incorporated in the—part of you wants to have the pieces turn out as polished. Then you think when you can kind of help people guide the more, it does show that you kind of have a flexibility, and you can understand, you and part of this larger picture, and what you have achieved and what you haven't by a certain piece.

Interviewer: So has that impacted sort of how you think of the portfolio or what it's done for you? That's interesting.

Interviewee: What do you mean?

Interviewer: Well, just sort of all these different aspects that it sounds like you wouldn't necessarily have done unless—

Interviewee: Someone pushed me.

Interviewer: - you were pushed to do it.

Interviewee: Yeah, because it just makes it so much more thorough, and if it's going to be like the tool that it needs to be it, it needs to be thorough. Even just like the process of, "Look, here's something that you're not comfortable with. This is a medium. You need to be able to do this, this, and this. This is your goals for it. I'm gonna help you get there." It's just so different than writing a paper, but it's a very important, and it's communication. You're trying to convey something, but it's so much less like intuitive, I guess, to know like, "Oh, yes, if I write this here and then have a picture." So I think being forced to sort of write in a medium that you're not comfortable with, and have it be thorough, and have all these other elements. It's very, I think it really helps you progress.

Interviewer: Uh huh, yeah, I think so.

Interviewee: Just like feel like, you know like, "Hey, look, here's a finished product I can show to all my friends who are engineers." I get made fun of all the time. I will prove them wrong [laughter].

Interviewer: And prove what, exactly, what would you say you're proving?

Interviewee: That writing is important and that it is a real skill, and that it's something that matters, has significance that is a worthwhile endeavor that has a practical application, a necessary application. Sort of that thing. I get a lot of flak for being a philosophy major [laughter]. They're just like "What is the point of that?" Like, "Look, here, here's the point of this." You can communicate things with people. That's important.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. That's a good note to end on. The last question is just if you have any other comments, things to add that you feel like we sort of touched on but didn't really get into enough.

Interviewee: I think writing professors are in a really interesting spot because they have to push people, but also foster their confidence, which if there's one thing that was really funny that happened in the class, it was when we were reflecting on something that we were about to turn in on our blog posts, everyone was like, "I'm so, I don't know. I don't know if it's good." It was so funny because we were like every single person in the class is feeling this way. It's important to help people feel confident and understand what this sort of—even though it's not necessarily like a creative piece, how this is someone expressing themselves and respecting that and fostering that, but also being like, "Okay, this could have been better, and this could have been better," without undermining someone's confidence. That would be really tricky to do. I don't know how I would do that.

Interviewer: Yeah, that is hard, a hard aspect. Do you think you got better at doing that for your peers as the course went on because you're in that spot, too, in a way.

Interviewee: I would like to say I did, but I think it's like—I don't think I have because I edit my sister's papers and I wish I could do—it's like a shortcut, almost, to be really red marks sort of thing instead of being like, "Okay, [sister], so this paper is like, you're writing a varied view history. It needs to sort of have these elements, and you're not doing a very good job of that in this way, but this is going well." That takes a lot of time, and it's just sort of like it's difficult, also, too, if you're just editing someone's paper, to convey all that stuff. I think I need more practice.

Interviewer: Interesting, yeah, interesting. Cool. [...].

[End of Audio]