

Interviewer: This is *** interviewing ***. It is February 6 [...]. ***, how would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I would say I tend to write both creatively, but also professionally. I like to keep my creative writing separate than my professional writing. I still do an equal amount of both. In terms of professional writing, I've written many articles for [local Ann Arbor newspaper]. Over my summer internship, I would write articles for the internal newsletter for the company. Those kinds of things were much more professional and structured.

I also consider myself a very creative writer. The Sweetland minor in writing, I've been able to exploit the creative side of my writing more; especially with my final project, where I worked on a magazine and things like that. I also do a lot of my magazine journalism. Basically, both creative and professional.

Interviewer: Okay. Could you give any other examples of your creative writing, besides the magazine writing?

Interviewee: Sure. I'm actually working on my own young adult novel right now, which I hope to self-publish [...]. I've only written a couple of chapters, but it's focused on—well, the target market is for seventh to eighth grade girls in middle school. Just writing a fun, playful novel about the stress and fun things that happen in high school, just to give them—I don't know how to describe it exactly. It's just a playful, young adult novel about freshman year of high school.

Interviewer: Oh, great.

Interviewee: Yeah. That's my other big creative project right now.

Interviewer: Okay, great. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began at the University of Michigan?

Interviewee: I would say I've always had an interest in writing. I started at [University of Michigan] as an engineer. Even though I liked writing, that definitely was not the path that I wanted to take with my future and my career. Once I realized engineering wasn't right for me, I focused—well, actually I realized engineering wasn't right for me because I missed writing creatively and things like that.

That's where I came into communications as a major. My writing has really transformed from just academic high school level essays, to the things that like writing young adults novels and magazine journalism. I've just been able to grow in so many different directions with writing during my experience with not only Sweetland, but within communications and just extracurricular activities at

[University of Michigan]. It's really developed into something great, and I'm thankful for them.

Interviewer: Okay. What do you think helped you to grow and change from that more academic high school writing that you talked about, to the more communications and novels and magazine creative kind of writing?

Interviewee: Good question. I guess it wasn't really academic work particularly; but it was kind of the—it was more like the essay prompts that I was given in school. For example, with the minor in writing. For our capstone class, we had the freedom to do whatever we wanted for our final project. I know that was senior year, so that's later in my college career. That's just an example of how I was able to go with this creative route of coming up with my own idea for a magazine, things like that. It's nice when some classes gave you options to do whatever you wanted with the assignment. Other classes, it was still very structured writing, which didn't help me grow so much into the creative.

Then an organization that I write for called [Online Magazine]. It's an online magazine for [girls]. They have a chapter at U of M [University of Michigan]. I got into that, and that's also helped a lot. A combination of Sweetland, just the autonomy that we had, and also my extracurricular activities.

Interviewer: Okay, great. As you've graduated now, what are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Right now, my main goal is to complete this young adult novel. I still want to make sure that whatever I do career-wise, I still have writing. I still want writing to be involved. During my summer internship, I asked if I could write for the summer newsletter, just because that wasn't one of my projects. I still wanted to incorporate writing. The projects that I had didn't have too much writing involved. Whatever I do, I want to be proactive and make sure that I'm able to write. Whether it's creative or professional, I don't have a strong preference for. I'm definitely going to take proactive measures to make sure that in my career, I can incorporate writing somehow.

Interviewer: Yeah. What was that internship that you had over the summer?

Interviewee: It was with [Manufacturer]. I interned in their communications department and did a lot of work on social media. Just getting them up to speed, helping a lot with Facebook, things like that, doing competitive research. Honestly, the most fun part was being able to write articles for the internal company newsletter. I would interview employees who had won awards, things like that. It was a lot of fun.

Interviewer: That wasn't originally a part of your internship responsibilities, but you asked to take that on?

Interviewee: I did, yes.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Thinking across your writing experiences at University of Michigan; what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I think to write well is being able to communicate your message effectively and having the audience respond. Having the audience react—I want to say react well, but I don't know if that's really helpful. Having the audience—having things to say about your writing. I think writing well means you get a response from the audience; whether it's good or bad, that's a different area. Just communicating your message as best as you can.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: It doesn't need to be complex, like in words or anything. One of my arguments in my writer's evolution essay was just that I'm not too much of a complex writer. I can write simply, but I still think I write well because the language I use is clear, it's coherent. People have lots of things to say about my writing. They're very responsive, which I think is good because it means they're engaged. I think engagement is another big part of writing well.

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

Interviewee: I've taken a political science—it was [Political Science course], [Title of course]. We had a lot of writing about policy briefs and things like that. Then I've taken [Communications course], which was [Title of course]. We had a lot of creative assignments with that. I remember one of my favorite pieces was, I was able to be a hypothetical editor in chief of a magazine, and go through the logistics and the creative side of how I would create that magazine just to explore what the magazine industry was all about. That was cool.

Interviewer: Great. What effect do you think that experience of [Communications course] and creative writing with the magazine had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: Honestly, it's had a lot of experience. I took that comm [communications] class my sophomore year. I've actually used that essay, not only in the intro to the writing minor, which I took junior year, but also the capstone project. For the writing minor, we had to do a remediation project. I actually transformed the written language of the comm essay, too. I used design to create a magazine cover of what the magazine would look like. That was nice to connect those classes.

Then with the capstone project, I created my own magazine. I got the inspiration from the comm class. That was very beneficial. I loved seeing that what I did in comm helped me with my minor.

Interviewer: Okay, great. What about your [Political Science course]; what effect did that kind of writing have on you as a writer?

Interviewee: Honestly, that was a terrible experience. The one assignment that I'll tell you about was the policy brief. It was a very structured assignment, where we had to just analyze a piece of legislation in a state, and just go through the process of what we would do differently, recommendations and things like that. The biggest problem I had with that the professor did not let us explore this from a creative angle at all. I remember one girl in my writing capstone class was in the same class with me. She started her brief off with a little background story, kind of an abstract story. They did not like that at all. They suppressed any form of creativity. That just made me unhappy with the class. It had to be very structured. It was just not so good.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: That made me realize the creative side—I need to bring in creativity, too.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you still make use of what you learned in that poli sci [political science] course in your writing now?

Interviewee: I don't currently. I could see maybe in the future if I end up working in corporate America. Potentially, the thought process, the logic process involved and more structured analysis definitely could be beneficial. It's not my first choice in how I would write. Yeah, it's not that it's not beneficial at all.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you still make use of what you learned in the [Communications course] in your writing now?

Interviewee: I guess a little bit, yeah. I think I make more use of what I learned through the writing minor because of comm. It kind of went from comm to the writing minor. Now, I use the writing minor more so than I did the comm class; but I wouldn't have got the experience from the writing minor without that. I guess it's all integrated. Yeah, I do.

Interviewer: Okay. What was your concentration when you were here at Michigan?

Interviewee: It was communication studies.

Interviewer: Okay. That [Communications course] class was the writing course that you took for that concentration?

Interviewee: Yes, that's correct.

Interviewer: Did you take any other writing courses in comm?

Interviewee: I took a bunch of comm classes. Some of them had writing components, but they weren't upper level writing. All comm classes, you usually write essays for it and things like that. I'd taken a class on media and violence, and technology and how that effects media, things like that. I generally had a lot of opportunities to write essays and things like that in my comm classes. Most of them were more structured, academically structured. The [Communications course] with the magazine, that was the one class where I really had the freedom to do something fun with the magazine thing.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think that structured academic writing in communications had any effect on you?

Interviewee: I do think it's helped me to develop a strategic formula for writing academic essays, and even professional pieces. I know when I wrote newsletters for the internship, I would think back to some things I did in my comm class in terms of structuring essays. That helped a little bit. I don't use that knowledge too much, but it's still definitely applicable in some areas.

Interviewer: Okay. Now that you've graduated, how confident do you feel about writing in your concentration of communications?

Interviewee: Very confident. I'm very excited. I'm applying to grad school right now for communications studies. I know writing will be a big part of what I do to earn in that degree. I'm so excited about it, just because I feel like I have the tools and the skills and the knowledge. I could go from writing a creative piece to a professional piece at the drop of a hat. I would have no problem transitioning between both because my experiences as an undergrad have been in both the academic and professional structured-driven writing, but also the creative writing. It's nice to be able to switch between those with no problem.

Interviewer: Okay. Could you give an example of a piece of writing that you felt confident about in your concentration?

Interviewee: I would have to go with a creative piece that I did. I got a very good grade on it; but also I just felt confident writing it because it made sense. It was something that I could see myself using in the future and turning into something real, like I've done with the writing minor capstone project. I did feel confident about how that one turned out, just because it was me.

Interviewer: That was the magazine that you wrote for?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, great. How often do you think you use the skills or strategies you learned in communications writing courses in your other courses?

Interviewee: Probably a decent to a significant amount; somewhere in the middle between a fair amount and significantly, just because I notice now—I'm still finishing up classes this semester. I'm taking classes through the Ross School of Business, a lot of marketing classes. I've noticed it's such a different discipline that I don't really get to use my communication skills that much, but I still want to have the marketing aspect.

I feel like if I do use the communication skills, it's when it's writing my young adult novel and magazine articles, more than in the academic environment now.

Interviewer: Okay. Now we're gonna talk a little bit about the capstone course. What impact has the minor capstone course, [Writing 400 level course], had on your writing?

Interviewee: I think it's been very helpful to reflect on my overall writing when we did the writer's evolution essay. I really liked that just because I was able to just put into perspective what I've done in writing and who I've become as a writer and things like that. I don't know how much it'll help me going forward, but it's nice right now to understand where I'm at with writing. I remember one of the main things I talked about, like I mentioned earlier, is just I'm not much of a complex writing. I go with the more conversationalist and simplistic approach. It was good to reflect on that and understand, okay, this is who I am as a writer. I'm not ever going to be a complex writer, but that's fine. It's really given me a good direction on where I want to go.

Interviewer: Okay. You say it helped you realize you're not a complex writer. What do you think that means?

Interviewee: I guess I don't want it to sound like I'm not intelligent or anything like that. I think it's just I like conveying my messages in more conversational approaches. With magazine journalism and how you have witty language, more playful conversation language. I think that's how I like to write. The young adult book that I'm writing is definitely playful and conversational. That's just what I'm comfortable doing. Complex writing, to me, is just like very dense language that's tricky to—can be tricky to navigate, and a lot of high-end vocabulary words, things like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think that the minor capstone course had an impact on your writing process at all?

Interviewee: Not so much the process. I guess, maybe a little bit in terms of thought process, but not the physical writing process. It's got me to think about things from a new angle. [Instructor] is really great about making us think about

things we would never think about before. It's been helpful in terms of brainstorming things to write for our essay; but in terms of physically things, I didn't really get much direction through the course on that.

Interviewer: Could you talk a little bit about the brainstorming, and what you learned about that in the course?

Interviewee: Yeah. Every day, we—well, what I liked about the course is very different than most academic courses you'll have in other areas, just because it was a very conversational seminar-type course. Every day, [Instructor] would have a different topic that we would talk about. He would just ask questions. I can't really remember particular examples. It's just the questions he asked and follow-up questions that really make you think twice about things in general. If you thought you wanted to write something going in this direction, he might ask you questions. Then you're, like, "Oh, wait." Actually, I could see it going in this direction.

It kind of just opened up the realm to experiment more than I typically would. It was just nice with having more options to experiment with writing through those conversations.

Interviewer: What effect did the capstone project have on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I don't think it's had too much effect on my writing process, as much as it has on my creative thinking. Again, I created a hypothetical magazine and made a WordPress [content management system] site for it and things like that. This is something I do want to pursue in the future if I can. It's definitely impacted my future in the sense that this is a project that I could still work on, so that's nice. I feel like I didn't do as much writing for the project. I wrote a little bit, but it was also a lot of graphic design in there. It's more just the creative idea that I think was helpful. That's what stands out from the writing project for me.

Interviewer: Okay. Why did you choose the project that you did? The magazine.

Interviewee: Because I've always been interested in magazine journalism. I thought it would be cool to take what I did from my comm class and combine it with the graphic image that I made for the writing minor intro, and then have everything come together. I didn't want to do just a standard academic essay. I definitely wanted to do something different.

[Instructor] encouraged us to take whatever path we wanted. Some girls in the class still did traditional academic essays. One girl in the class, she made a game book, an interactive game book. That was really cool. I thought, "Hey, why not make my own magazine?" It's something I've always thought about. It was nice to be able to combine the classes that way.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Now we're gonna talk about your capstone ePortfolio.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: If you have access to that, you could pull it up in front of you if it helps you to talk about it in any way.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Can you just tell me about the most memorable aspect of your experience with the ePortfolio?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think the most memorable aspect was definitely deciding on the final design, the layout piece of the portfolio. Because I wanted the design to reflect a magazine style, I thought that would be a fun way to bring all the magazine stuff together. I ended up going with a [design], which I hope resembled what a magazine would look like electronically. Anyway, the most memorable part was definitely that because it was fun to see the magazine layout, but also know the content is about magazines. That was pretty cool and unique, I thought.

Interviewer: Okay. What were your aims for the ePortfolio; what narrative did you hope to tell?

Interviewee: I guess I hoped to show—I wanted to highlight my magazine journalism experience. I didn't really want to go the academic route with it. I know we had to include a couple of academic pieces. My overall goal was really just to convey my creative writing side, not so much the professional side. That's why I focused on including the comm piece on the magazine, and then the remediation project that I did creating the cover for it. Then finally, I included a link to the mock-up site of the magazine I created for the final project. It was really to show my creative, highlight my creative side as a writer.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you feel that your ePortfolio addressed that aim of telling that more creative side of your writing narrative?

Interviewee: I do. I think if I had more time, I probably could have tweaked some things just to make it perfect. I'm happy with it, but I think it could be a little bit better. I do think overall, yeah, it's accomplished what I wanted it to.

Interviewer: Okay. What kind of changes would you want to make to it?

Interviewee: I think I would just want to put in some more information. I realize it's kind of scarce, especially when I compared it to other people in my class. Well, there are only five of us; I think three of the girls had a lot of content, and two of us didn't have so much. Again, that's a personal preference. Now that I

think about it, I think there's other things that I could put in. I would want to put in a couple of chapters from the book that I wrote, things like that. It's just building up the content is the biggest thing I would change.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you design the ePortfolio to create a particular reader experience?

Interviewee: I tried to; but based on the feedback, I don't think I accomplished that very well. I tried to have the four blocks front and center. Well, the four blocks were front and center. Then when somebody opened the block, they would read through that. Then they were supposed to be able to click to get to the next box. I think there were some tech issues there, and they had to go back to the home page. There were a couple of complaints about that.

I was still trying to think about reader navigation while I designed it. I think that was probably the least of my concerns when it came down to the wire. Again, that's something else I would fix if I were to go back and update this.

Interviewer: Why do you think that idea of reader experience was something that fell out, or was the least of your priorities?

Interviewee: Probably because I knew I wasn't really going to use the ePortfolio much, besides just for the grade in the class because I knew it was a requirement and Sweetland evaluators would look it. I did think about using this for my grad school applications, but then I decided against it.

I know if I was going to go ahead and use it for grad school, absolutely, I would definitely focused on the read navigation a little bit more. Basically, it was just because this was more of a basic requirement. I knew I wouldn't get points off just based on readers having to go back to the home page to get to the next section. Maybe it was a little lazy on my part, but that's the reason.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you talk about why you decided not to use it for your graduate school applications?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think because I know it showcased my creative side. I think I still would have liked to include professional writing if I were going to give it to grad schools. I didn't want to combine those on this ePortfolio, just because I didn't have a strategic layout in mind because then I would probably have to change the template. If I were going to combine professional info, I don't think I would want the magazine style anymore.

It was really just a time constraint. I didn't think through it enough for a way to combine the creative and professional if I wanted to send it to grad school. I just didn't want the grad schools just seeing the magazine side of my writing.

Interviewer: Right. What kind of professional writing would you have wanted to include?

Interviewee: I'd would want to include articles that I'd written for [local Ann Arbor newspaper], and then articles that I've written for [Manufacturer]. I guess now that I think about it, even though those were newspapers, I think they'd still fit in with the magazine theme, and probably just some other research papers that I'd written. Again, those didn't really fit in with the overall magazine creative theme. Again, this is still something I could consider. I would definitely consider updating it to include those.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you notice any relationships among the artifacts as you created your ePortfolio?

Interviewee: Well, the obvious one is the connection between the comm essay and then the remediation project. I guess just the overall magazine theme. I don't remember exactly what else I put in there. Again, it was really just the connection with the magazine journalism.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: The writer's evolution essay was the other thing. I know we had to put that in. I probably would take that out in the future, just cuz I don't really see a strong connection between that and the other artifacts. Although it does explain why I'm interested in magazine journalism, so maybe.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think that creating the ePortfolio has had an effect on your writing overall?

Interviewee: I think, yeah. I want to say yes because it's made me realize how creative I can truly be with writing. It doesn't have to be just structured or anything like that. It's nice to have the opportunity to reflect on myself as a writer. I guess in terms of thought process, it has a little bit of an effect.

Interviewer: What kind of effect do you think that reflection had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I think this is similar to what I answered before. It just showed me the direction that I'm going, in terms of I value my creative writing more than professional; but, again, I can do both. It was nice to get in tune with my creative writing side. As a student, we're usually trained to be academic and professional all the time. It was nice that an academic class opened me up to creativity. It was nice to see the connection because I thought of the writing class more as—it blended in more with my extracurriculars than other academic course, which was nice.

Interviewer: Okay. Could you say a little bit more about that?

Interviewee: Yeah. For example, for the final project. We had a lot of time. We didn't have much time in class to work on it; it was more of an outside thing, like a homework assignment. I didn't really view it much as a homework assignment because this is something I want to pursue. I thought of it more as I would writing my young adult novel, which is something I do on the side for fun. It was nice to be able to enjoy the experience of creating that magazine because it'll be beneficial to my future. Yes, it's great to have the "A" in the class. I didn't view working on this assignment as homework, daily homework; it was more of an ongoing semester project, which was nice.

Interviewer: Okay. You said you felt like that had connections to more of your extracurriculars than your academic experiences?

Interviewee: Yeah. I write for a magazine called [Online Magazine] at [University of Michigan]. I was able to take strategies that I would use for magazine article writing and apply it to this project. I made some sample articles for the writing minor project. I would refer back to some of [Online Magazine] articles to see the language I used, the style, pictures, things like that. It was a great connection between that magazine and then the project.

Interviewer: Okay, great. What could people interested in writing development, like the program administrators at Sweetland, learn about writing development from your capstone ePortfolio?

Interviewee: I guess they could learn that there is a student dissatisfaction with the very structured academic writing. I remember in the class, we would all go over evolution essays together and get feedback from other class members. When I brought up the point that, for example, in my poly sci [political science] class, the teacher really suppressed creativity. Everyone seemed to agree with that.

It's just, I guess they could learn that students need freedom to develop as a writer. It's great to train them in professional writing. I'm not saying they should dismiss the structured writing because students need to learn that. I think there comes a point where students should be able to go the direction they want to. Maybe that's more of an upperclassmen level thing that they can do. It just seems like there's not many opportunities for creative thinking throughout the [University of Michigan] curriculum in general.

It was great to have this opportunity with Sweetland; but I can't think of any other courses where you can really just creative your own thing and there's really no limitations, things like that.

Interviewer: Okay. You said in that response that you see both academic and professional writing as structured. Do you think you see any differences between academic and professional writing?

Interviewee: I guess the biggest difference is just academic writing, you're always—you're more guided. You have a prompt, and usually you have research and things like that. With professional writing, I just feel like you're guided a little bit less. For example, when I wrote articles for [local Ann Arbor newspaper], I considered that professional writing. I was given the topic in a sentence or something. If you have an academic paper, usually you get a paragraph or two prompt about what's going on and what you need to do. With professional writing, I still think you get more autonomy than you do with academic writing.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Anything else we can learn about writing development from your capstone ePortfolio?

Interviewee: No. I think that's all.

Interviewer: Okay. Now we're gonna reflect back to your gateway course, as well.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: How did your experience in the capstone course compare to your experience in the gateway course?

Interviewee: Okay. I remember the gateway course was still very loosely structured, in a sense. It was still a seminar style, where most of the class was spent discussing issues and things like that. There is a similarity there. In terms of the content, though, I believe—I'm just trying to think of the assignments we had for the gateway. I know there were a couple of essays, a "why I write" essay. There might have been something else.

We still had freedom to go whichever route we would want with that. We didn't have to do just an academic essay format, even though the examples we looked at were in essay style. I think if we wanted to show pictures or something to explain why we write, we were able to do that. There was a nice parallel between the freedom and creativity that we had. I know with the writing capstone project, we really could think of something from complete scratch.

With the remediation project—I'm comparing the capstone with the remediation assignment from the gateway. With the remediation, I think that's where we had the opportunity to exhibit creativity, but we were still working off of a previous artifact. We still had a lot of creativity ability, but it was still based off of something else. With the capstone project, we could start from scratch. There was definitely a difference there.

Interviewer: Okay. What have your experiences of working with other writers been like in the minor?

Interviewee: It's been great. I think that's one thing I really liked about the structure of the class, is just the open discussion style. I got lucky because I took the capstone last semester. There were only five girls in the class. A lot of the time, we would get personalized attention to talk about our projects. We'd get great feedback from everyone.

Honestly, my project wouldn't have been as successful without the feedback, not only from [Instructor], but the other girls in the class. Because they were in my target market for the magazine that I was writing, so it was really nice to get firsthand feedback about what a reader would think about it. That's been very valuable.

Interviewer: Can you give an example of some feedback that you got in class from the other writers?

Interviewee: Yeah. For example, I remember one class. I talked to them about what ideas I wanted to include in the magazine. The magazine was all about finances. Helping girls to balance their money while at [University of Michigan] and helping them figure out strategies for money management, that kind of thing. One idea I had was one section would be about groceries, how to grocery shop on a budget. One section was about clothes shopping. Then girls were giving me ideas for other sections that they would want to see [audio distortion 31:50], that kind of thing. They just helped me with idea generation mostly.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Anything else you want to say about your experiences with other writers in the minor?

Interviewee: I guess, not only was it helpful to receive the feedback, but it was also nice to see what everyone else was doing. Giving them feedback, I hope, was just as helpful. That's all.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that a little bit more; seeing their work and being able to offer feedback on their work?

Interviewee: Sure. I guess I learned, in giving feedback to other girls, I learned where they're at with their projects and their thought process and their creative track. It was nice to see everybody had a completely different project. We're all connected through writing, but you can have so many different ideas and paths and ways of doing things. That was nice to see all the different things people could do with their ideas in writing.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you give an example of some feedback that you offered someone else?

Interviewee: Sure. I remember I offered somebody feedback on their portfolio. They needed help finding images. The images that the girl had chosen were really off. They just didn't really convey anything or help the portfolio. They didn't bring it to life. I offered some image suggestions. She loved all of those. She ended up incorporating my suggestions into her final ePortfolio. It was just nice to see maybe as a comm major, I just have that knack for images and detail and things like that, how to brighten up something. It was nice to be able to help her in that regard.

Interviewer: Great. What are the differences you see between the gateway and the capstone portfolios?

Interviewee: Yeah. Now that I look back on my gateway portfolio, it was kind of—the gateway is something I would not use in the future at all. I mean, I don't know what word I'm trying to use. It was underdeveloped, now that I look at it. I just saw it as practice. It was a little messy, in terms of what was included and the overall layout. I labeled things like remediation project, one, two, three. I don't like that now looking back on it. It's kind of boring and stuff like that.

With the capstone project, it was just a chance to really highlight things in a different way and be creative and more professional, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay, great. The gateway and the capstone courses both emphasize reflective writing in various forms. How would you describe your experience with that kind of reflection?

Interviewee: I think I'm definitely way more happy with how my reflection turned out in the capstone project with the writer's evolution essay than I am with the "why I write." The "why I write", I don't know. It was a short—my "why I write" essay was pretty short. Now that I look back on it, there's so many things I would want to include. I don't know, maybe I just didn't take it as seriously as I should have, or I just didn't think about it as much as I should have.

With the writer's evolution essay, maybe it was the prompt, too. Just kind of reflecting back on your whole entire experience with writing at [University of Michigan] just gave me a lot of things to write about. I definitely think the capstone helped more, the evolution reflection, than the "why I write."

Interviewer: Okay. Anything else you want to say about your experience with reflection in either one of the courses?

Interviewee: I mean, it's a great tool. I think Sweetland should definitely—I'm sure they're going to keep doing the reflective writing. Even if they wanted to

incorporate more reflective writing during the semester, I think that would be great, too, just midway through the capstone project because I know sometimes students see it as a chore. I do, too. It's, like, "Oh, another reflective writing piece." You're really proud of yourself when you do it and you see how helpful it is.

If I didn't write the writer's evolution essay, then I probably wouldn't have come to the conclusion that conversational writing and playful writing is more my style than academic complex writing, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Okay. You said that reflective writing made you feel proud?

Interviewee: Definitely, yeah.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that a little bit?

Interviewee: Yeah. Just because when you're in the process of writing it, it might not be the most exciting thing. It's, like, "Oh, I'm writing about myself." A lot of people don't like doing that. If people read it over, they're, like, "Wow." I really accomplished a lot during my career; or look how I've transformed from I used to write about this, but now I found I'm successful in this. It's just a great opportunity to figure out what you're good and what you should continue doing and what other aspects maybe aren't as beneficial.

Interviewer: Okay. Are you still using reflection in the current writing that you're doing?

Interviewee: Not this semester, just because with the classes I have, there's not much of an opportunity. I know reflective writing is something I can do on my own. No, I currently don't do too much, but I would still like to.

Interviewer: What about for your writing not in courses?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's a good question. I do think about my young adult novel all the time and just debrief. What's working, what's not working with my writing style or whatever. I don't formally write it down. I'm thinking that might be a good way to understand where I'm at and where I want to go. I just think about it in my head; but I know physically writing it down is definitely a huge help.

Interviewer: Okay. Has the reflection that you've been doing given you new ways to talk about your writing, new terms or concepts?

Interviewee: I don't know about new terms. No, probably not. We didn't really go over many terms and concepts for how to write reflectively in these classes, which I think I would have liked more. It was just write about your writing however you'd like. Maybe sometimes having more tools and learning different

concepts in the class could be nice. We didn't do too much of that, like learning concepts.

Interviewer: Okay. The minor program is still relatively new. Are there any suggestions you would have for instructors or administrators for the program?

Interviewee: I guess maybe if—for example, I know one of the most beneficial things was being able to connect my writing minor to my major. Maybe if instructors can find a way to connect—have writing minor students connect—to basically connect students in the minor to their major somehow. I don't know if that would be through an assignment. I don't have a suggestion for how to implement it. I think it might be beneficial if students can see a connection between the writing minor and their major.

I know there was a premed in my writing in minor class. She was taking the class just because she loved writing. Maybe that's a different example; that might not be totally connected to her major. I think for many students, it is connected. Just helping them to apply the writing minor to their major, they might find it beneficial.

Interviewer: Okay, great. More generally, what do you think professors should know about teaching writing at the undergraduate level?

Interviewee: I think the biggest thing is just that students are still trying to find out who they are and why they write and what aspects of writing they're good at. It's kind of just being patient with them and giving them options, I think, is the biggest thing. Not everybody is going to do well writing in the three-paragraph structure. Some people might do better writing in a magazine style. It's just being flexible and understanding the students' needs as they develop, and exposing them to as many different writing styles as they can.

Interviewer: Okay. You said being flexible. Can you talk about that a little bit more?

Interviewee: Yeah. Just in terms of if a student is really passionate about writing in a different format, help them. I think the professor should help them with it. I think Sweetland teachers do a great job of that, though. That might not be an area they need to improve. It would just be nice to see that across other courses like in that poly sci class. If a student came with an idea to write the policy brief from a more creative angle, it would be nice if the teacher worked with them to be able to incorporate that somehow.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Do you have any other comments you want to make?

Interviewee: No. I mean, well, I just hope that—I think Sweetland is getting more participation with the new cohorts coming in. It would just be nice to see more

promotions around on campus because it is such a great program. I just feel like not that many students know about it still. If there's new ways to promote, I think that would be super-beneficial.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you so much.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: All right. Well, have a good rest of the day.

Interviewee: Thank you, you too.

Interviewer: Bye-bye.

Interviewee: Bye-bye.

[End of Audio]