

Interviewer: This is *** interview by *** on March 29 [...]. How would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Oh, that's a broad question—a little bit eclectic. I do it for work, I do it for class—I do it for personal pleasure. I guess to me it's just a [cross talk 00:30] way of communicating—

Interviewee: - so you can just think through.

Interviewer: Okay, great. How would you describe the role of writing in your life?

Interviewee: Communicative.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that a little bit more?

Interviewee: Let's give you an example from my job. A lot of times—I work for the [Vice President's Office], so a lot of times they'll give me an email and say, "We wanna send this to the student body. Can you make it sound better?" In the gateway course they're really drilling it home make all of your writing audience-friendly or media-friendly, and for the love of God, don't be mean to your audience, and I guess that's how I aim to view. When I write it's just what I wanna say, and then will my reader be able to get that message, so it's communicative.

Interviewer: Great. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began here at [University of Michigan]?

Interviewee: Ummm.

Interviewee: You know, one year you leave driver's ed and you think, "I'm really awesome at this." Then a few years down the road you realize, "Oh, my God. I was so bad at that but I thought I was really good at it." Kind of like that where I had the basic materials, but there was a lot of stuff that I needed to improve on.

Interviewer: What basic materials do you feel like you had when you started out?

Interviewee: When I was in the gateway course somebody told me a quote that I really like and it was something along the lines of, "You can't teach good writing. It has to come from a lifetime of being in love with words or with English or something like that, and I have that. I needed someone to really drill home the reader-friendliness stuff.

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

Interviewee: I think that in terms of growth, before I was reading it from my perspective and not really thinking about how would somebody else read this or react to this. Now that's a lot more important to me as I do my revisions and I think how would my readers see this, or take this or react to it.

Interviewer: How would you say that growth happened? What do you think influenced you?

Interviewee: My gateway professor, [Instructor], was really good at—the text that she gave us and the conversations we had. It was really good about making us see it from another perspective. I think the gateway course, definitely, really helped me get there.

Interviewer: Can you think of anything else that helped you to grow as a writer, besides the gateway course?

Interviewee: Journaling, definitely. I've kept journals since I was in middle school and it's kind of really cool cuz I can really sharply see where I grew up. There's a huge stylistic shift for me and that's really cool for me to go back and see it but, yeah, forcing myself to write, even if it wasn't for an academic purpose or a real—I don't know—not really serving like a solid purpose in the outside world—just for me. That really forced me to hone it and work on my own personal style and tone and voice.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that shift in your style that you see through your journaling?

Interviewee: It was more kind of like a—I grew up and then my style shifted because of it. Maybe it's more like a shift in my personality, than in my style, but I think the style reflects your personality. It was kind of just like I grew up from being a kid to being an adult and realizing—I think for me it was I realized this is my life. Chuck Palahniuk like, “This is your life. It's only one day at a time. Are you okay with that?” I don't know why, but it really made my tone shift to a more—I dunno'. This is really hard to describe. I dunno'. That's a really hard question for me to answer.

Interviewer: [Laughing] maybe we can switch and just start talking about maybe what are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Ummm. Well, I definitely don't wanna ever stop writing. I really wanna go into communications and my goal would be to—if I could have my hands on text every day, all day, I'd be a pretty happy camper cuz I'm a geek like that. I guess my goal would be to—I really like editing and taking what somebody else has written and then helping them achieve the point and the purpose that they wanted, but more effectively, so I like doing that.

Interviewee: If I could get to a point where that's where people perceive me as being really good at that, that's a goal for me.

Interviewer: That's great. Thinking across your writing experiences at [University of Michigan], what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: To write well. I think to be able to write clearly, but also concisely. I think you have to have a lot of—I mean obviously vocabulary's great, but you don't need a lot of flowery language or a lot of fluff to be a good writer. You just have to be able to be clear and concise. Whenever I was a kid and my dad was editing my papers, he'd say, "What you'd say as you would speak it to me—say that—but I mean, obviously, make it sound a little better. Talk to me like you would talk to a person. Don't make it painful for me to read." I think that if you can write something that easily conveys a point, but is not painful for your reader to get through, I think that's all that it really takes to be a good writer.

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

Interviewee: I think it was a comp lit class, being something around like—something awful like tragedy or loss or something. Wait, maybe it was loss. It was a comp lit [comparative literature] class.

Interviewer: Was it [English 100 level course]?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Or [English course]?

Interviewee: It was a comparative literature class in English.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, okay. What were your experiences in that course?

Interviewee: I was a little surprised. I guess I figured this is [University of Michigan] so I was just expecting a particular caliber from everyone, and then I'd read other peoples' papers and go, "Really? Like you got into college with this? Are you serious? Like, did you have to write an essay too? You're mixing up you and your and [cross talk 07:30]—

Interviewee: - like really?" I was surprised thinking that that wasn't what I was expecting. I was expecting everybody to be of a lot higher caliber. Maybe that's obnoxious coming from me, but I was just surprised.

Interviewer: Can you think about what other writing experiences you had in that course?

Interviewee: Ummm. There was a lot of peer editing. That hasn't changed in most of my classes where there is writing.

Interviewee: I guess in that class there was more of it than in the upper-level writing classes where we had to write responses and recommendations for what we thought they could do better. I guess to me sometimes it seemed a little pointless, like I was giving more than I was ever getting back, so that was frustrating. I guess the experience was generally to have your peers say, "This is what I get out of your paper. I don't know if

that's what you intended to give me, but this is, as a reader, is what I'm getting." I guess that was a valuable experience.

Interviewer: How do you think that experience was valuable? How did it affect you?

Interviewee: Just in that it started to force you to see, "Okay, I'm ready to listen. Maybe I think it's good, but maybe it's just not coming off clearly to another person who is not me and is not in my head and getting my thought process." It started to force you to put yourself in the role of the reader instead of just the role of the writer.

Interviewer: Would you say that you're still making use of what you learned in first-year writing?

Interviewee: I think a little bit, but I mean my knowledge of my experience of that class really is coming from the capstone course and not from what I got in the first-year writing course. It's more, now I'm able to see what they were trying to get at simply because I took the capstone writing course. If you had asked me after I took the first-year writing course, I would've said, "They made us do lots of boring peer editing and I hated it and why did you make me do that?"

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. Did you ever take [Writing course]?

Interviewee: Ummm, no. I think the first writing class I took was [Writing 200 level course].

Interviewer: Okay. What is your concentration—communications, you said?

Interviewee: Communications and English.

Interviewer: Have you had an opportunity to write in both of those concentrations?

Interviewee: Ohhh, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. What kinds of writing have you done?

Interviewee: Let's see. In English, obviously, I've had a lot lit [literature] analysis. I took some creative writing classes which I didn't enjoy. I know a lot of people love it. I just don't.

Interviewer: What kinds of writing did you do in your creative writing class?

Interviewee: Kind of like short stories and some poetry. At one point my—I'll call her a professor in quotations, because she was, I think, a grad student and we didn't have a real professor for that class. I'm like, "I'm paying all this tuition and I want someone who has a PhD." [Laughing] one time she wanted us to write traditional sonnets and I wrote a sonnet about how angry I was that she was making me write a sonnet—

Interviewer: [Chuckling]

Interviewee: - which my classmates thought was funny, but she didn't think was that funny.

[Laughter]

Interviewer: What kinds of writing have you done in your communications concentration?

Interviewee: In a class I'm taking right now, there's been kind of some just, "Consider this problem and evaluate it." In the past I've had to write some research papers where it was formatted, I guess exactly, like any research report you would read where there's a summary of the problem, a proposal on methods section—

Interviewee: You present your findings and tables and charts and then your results, which is kind of a fun style of writing cuz it's really, in my opinion, easy to do and enjoyable because it's very just concise. Here's what I found and here's my finding based off of what I found, and it's simple and it's easy and I like it a lot. Then in some of my other English classes, I'm taking professional writing right now where we had to do a proposal for an event where it's kind of similar to a research report, except not so much quantitative. I mean it's almost like asking to get hired like, "Here's my proposal for why I think I can do this and why you should be behind me." Yeah, that's kind of generally the writing that I've been doing.

Interviewer: What affect have all those different types of writing experiences had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: Hmmm. I'm trying to think from a bigger perspective. At work it certainly helped me be able to attack a lot of different kinds of writing problems, where a lot of time I try to write a professional proposal. Then later that week at work, that's exactly what I had to do for some different projects that we were working on.

Interviewer: This is in the Vice President's office?

Interviewee: Uh huh. I don't know. I think it's just helped practically to—all the things that I would've had to do. It just helped me do them better or more efficiently.

Interviewer: What kinds of things?

Interviewee: A lot of times what I'll have to do in my daily job is coordinate with other people, whether it's students or staff, just to get something done. I've found that the more effectively I can write, but especially if you're writing an email, if you can be concise and really clear, but also keep your reader in mind. Like how is the person reading this email gonna react to it, like am I coming off as rude? It really helps me to get things done

quickly because if I can say what I need just in like a line or two—that's really reader-friendly, cuz they don't have to go through a long email—but also if I can see it from their perspective and how they might perceive what I'm asking for. Especially if it's in the case where somebody messed up and you have to fix a problem. If you write it in a way where it's not attacking them or just saying like, "Can you help me figure out what went wrong here?" It helps you to get things done a lot faster and with people wanting to work with you, so it really helps you get stuff done.

Interviewer: Good, good. Do you think that writing in your English concentration or your communications concentration affected you as a writer outside of work?

Interviewee: Ummm [big sigh]. That's hard to say. I mean most of the writing that I do is at work or in my classes. I mean, yeah, I journal but I guess, sometimes? It's really hard to say.

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

Interviewee: Pretty confident. I mean whenever we get assigned papers I'll have my professor say like, "I'm a really hard grader and be prepared to not do as well as you expect," and I always get A's. I just don't stress about it. It's something that I just feel like I can do this. I know what I'm doing. By this point I just don't worry about it. It's kinda' just come second nature.

Interviewer: How do you feel about your confidence in your English concentration?

Interviewee: Kind of the same, where I mean they're a little more—

Interviewee: The requirements are always a lot more vague, so it's a little more frustrating and a little bit harder I find, to get the A.

Interviewer: Are these in the lit criticism-types of paper that you were talking about.

Interviewee: Yeah, exactly, where it's maybe you've proved your point but your professor'll think, "Well, you could've tied in this," and it's not necessarily about your writing, as the argument.

Interviewer: Can you talk about that a little bit—difference between the writing and the argument?

Interviewee: Not so much like your ability to prove a point. They'll usually say like, "You handled that point really well, but you could've tied in this evidence or this random quote." It's more just like a understanding-of-the-material kind of thing—not necessarily strictly the writing and your ability to argue a thesis, cuz that I've usually gotten comments that I did it just fine. They were more just saying like, "Oh you could've tied in this part of the book."

Interviewer: How would you measure your confidence besides just the getting the A grades?

Interviewee: How do you mean?

Interviewer: You said you feel confident about your writing because you get the A in your classes usually, on your papers?

Interviewee: Ummm. What were you gonna say?

Interviewer: Say, do you feel confident about your writing before you get the grade?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewee: Usually, I mean I don't really worry about it. I mean I used to be really afraid and going back over and—I mean what I'll usually do is I'll get the assignment prompt and then I'll literally make an outline from the assignment prompt, just like a general like, "I need to have this and I need to have this. I need to have this," and then I'll make that into a floor outline. I know that I have all the components that I need and then the writing parts itself—that comes naturally. I don't worry about it, and then I know that well, like I made my outline from your assignment prompt so I know that I have everything that I need. It's just not stressful. Other people stress about it. I'm just like, "Really?"

Interviewee: Okay, fine.

Interviewer: The outlines help you with your confidence?

Interviewee: Oh, absolutely. I used to just write, like just starting out writing paragraphs, but I find that if I have a pretty solid road map for my paper, I can just flesh it out and keep fleshing it out until, "Oh, I have a ten-page paper that just started from a single-page outline. I'll just keep adding stuff to it." That just makes it a lot easier and it makes it easier to remember that I have everything that I need and that I haven't forgotten anything, cuz if you're trying to read back through ten pages and making sure, "Did I really address that part or not?" That's where it gets stressful and difficult to remember if you've really tackled everything, so yeah, outlines, absolutely, I think are what make me more confident about it.

Interviewer: What impact has the minor gateway course—the [Writing 200 level course]—had on you overall? On your writing?

Interviewee: Ummm, I think that it's—I've probably already said this numerous times. I'm sorry.

Interviewer: [Giggling]

Interviewee: It makes me see things from—or try at least to see things from other peoples' perspectives. Like if I was my professor reading this, would I be irritated that I had to read through all of it, or—I had one professor tell me once—it was for, I think, like an English 400-something class. I asked, "If I go over the page limit will you still read it or will you just stop where the specified page limit ended." She said, "I'll still read it, but just keep in mind that I value concise, tight prose and I will probably give you a better grade if it's shorter, just because you'll have said all the same things, but in a shorter amount of space." That's kind of what I always aim to do is make things just—if I have five sentences, could I say it in two, just narrow it down so that it's more reader-friendly? I think that's one thing that the gateway course really helped me to do, is just see it from the reader's perspective and if I was the reader, would this be painful to read? Would it really get the point across? Is it pleasant prose or am I kind of tripping over it in my head? Yeah, it just really drove home, you have an audience. Don't forget about that. You're not just writing it for yourself or just the big academia bubble.

Interviewer: [Giggling]. How has it impacted your writing in that way? What specifically in [Writing 200 level course] has?

Interviewee: I think maybe it's helped me develop more of a—kind of helped me see it's okay to have a personality when you write. A lot of times when you're writing a lit analysis or you're writing a research paper, it's easy to forget that you're allowed to have a voice, whereas in the minor, [Instructor] really encouraged that. My final project [audible exhale of breath]—we had to do—you're probably familiar with it—but we had to do a remediation project where you took—I mean, by the end you had taken something that you had written for one class. You'd repurposed it for another task and then you put it into a third remedium, so by the end I'd taken a lit analysis that I'd written on this book about cultural diaspora, and then turned it into a conversation about sexual hegemony. It was something that I really cared about and she helped me find [Magazine] and so that helped me write it in that voice where it was just—I think that the gateway course really helped me realize that, "Oh, I am allowed to write from my perspective and have my tone and my flavor and help put the "me" in my writing."

Interviewer: Great. Has that course impacted your writing process at all?

Interviewee: I don't think so much the process. It's just the end product or as I'm writing it, if there is something that I would've edited out before because it was too—this is my voice and not necessary—now I'll leave it in or I'll find a way to work in appropriately for whatever I'm writing. That does it, but I mean the process of outlining and going from there is generally the same.

Interviewer: What impact has the gateway course had on your sense of yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I think it's stronger. I know that's vague but sometimes it's hard to reconcile your voice when you're talking with your voice when you're writing. Sometimes that's just a little bit difficult, but it kinda' helps you strike a balance between what I think in my head and what is—a way that I can achieve a [cross talk 23:00]—other people maybe would say like, “Okay, yeah, I see what you're saying.” Sorry, I know that's vague.

Interviewer: No, it's great [giggling]. What have your experiences of working with other writers in the course been like?

Interviewee: Really pleasant. I had almost thought that it was gonna be all English majors and people on the same boat as me, but there were people writing cuz they wanted to go to law school and there were some pre-med kids. There were a lot of communications kids, which was really cool. I think there was more diversity in that class in terms of area of study and I loved that cuz you're seeing people writing for different reasons. I think that's one thing that I really liked about the class was you just got to experience a lot of different disciplines. That was [cross talk 24:00] because I haven't had that in any other class that I've had.

Interviewer: The gateway course emphasizes reflective writing. How would you describe your experience with this kind of reflection?

Interviewee: Interesting. It wasn't totally foreign to me—reflective writing—cuz I think that's a lot of what I do in my journaling and I just hadn't really realized it, but I really like it. Especially in the end portfolio you have—they want you to explain each piece that you put in and why you include it. That was kind of a fun experience cuz it was—if I was gonna sit down with someone who was reading my writing and say, “This is what I want you to get out of this piece,” it was kind of a way for me to have an ability to think through what I wanted to say and then figure it all out. I liked the reflective writing. I like that a lot cuz it kinda' helped you think through it yourself, and it just forces you to give it more consideration.

Interviewer: Are you still using reflective writing in your current—in your writing now?

Interviewee: Hummm. I guess yes and no. In my journaling I will, but I don't usually find a place for it in a lot of my academic writing just cuz there's not really room for it, say in a lit analysis or research paper. For myself, yeah, I will, or sometimes if I'm about to write a paper I'll say, “Okay.” I'll write about what I wanna write and just kind of like talk to myself on the paper for a while and that will help me get where I'm going, so sometimes in a brainstorming aspect about it, yeah.

Interviewer: Can you talk a little bit about your journaling as reflective writing? You mentioned that.

Interviewee: Sometimes I'll use it to work out problems for myself, like if I'll notice that I'm doing something or having a particular problem, I'll just kind of start writing about it.

I don't remember what the term for it was, but I found it a while ago. I was surfing on the internet and ya know, avoiding doing homework and it was this. You'll get practice for—but it was something about self-reflection and what they'd tell you to do is write a question and just something that you're pondering, in a short pithy way. Then just kind of leave it and think about it, and then come back to it later and write more about it. That's a lot of what I'll do, and it's one of those things where you're doing it but you didn't realize that other people [cross talk 27:00] and there's a word for it. That's what I'll do and it'll generally help me. It's great for my anxiety. It'll help me work out problems like that. I'm trying to think of other ways that I use it in maybe like real-world writing. I think that's—yeah, that's—and journaling. That's mostly what I use for as helping myself work through problems that maybe I'm not completely conscious of all the reasons that it exists.

Interviewer: How would you describe your experiences using new media writing in [Writing 200 level course]?

Interviewee: Can you repeat the question?

Interviewer: Sure. How would you describe your experiences using new media writing, so blogs and the remediation project, in [Writing 200 level course]?

Interviewee: Blogging was different for me. I came with a very strong bias against blogs. It was actually really interesting. [Instructor] gave us this piece called—I think it was, Why I Blog—I mean going with all the Why I Write stuff. It was really interesting. It made me see it in a completely serious way, how it's actually—it can be completely professional and since then I've found a lot company blogs where there was some quote. I don't remember where it was but it was something about a blog is kind of the heart and soul or an organization. Like it lets you see their particular voice and it was—I think the one that I'm thinking of is from an ethics officer at some communications company. That's what he would do is just write about ethics issues, but it was really well-written and really gave you an insight into that corporation and their mission. It helped me remove that bias. It helped me see [cross talk 29:00] because of my experience with blogging prior to the minor had been just, "I'm gonna keep an online journal." It was really hard to respect that. I dated a guy who kept two blogs and that's really what it was, was just his online diary. It was like, "Are you serious? That's what you waste your time doing?" It helped me see it from a professional aspect and helped me respect it a little more and see the value of it. I think the only really blog kind of thing that I have is the the one we created for the portfolio, which I specified on the meaning of mine like, "This is not a blog. This is just an electronic portfolio." I could see turning it into a blog with regular posts if I wanted to have something consistently updated to show an employer. I can now see the value of it, where before I had thought this is just kind of a useless—of putting my voice into the cacophony of the internet.

Interviewer: [Giggling]

Interviewee: It definitely helped me see how it's—blogging is value.

Interviewer: What about your remediation project? Can you talk about your experience with that a little bit?

Interviewee: My original project was just a printed little analysis, and then my repurposed was another kind of—just a printed thing for just a different purpose. Then my final remediation project was gonna be an online article, so say you had a magazine that's exclusively online. That was something that I could see it going there, which was kind of fun cuz in a regular printed piece you don't have room for a lot of graphics and you don't have the ability to hyperlink and I love hyperlink. I think in my reflective pieces what I wrote about it was, "Hyperlinking helps you banish the bibliography to the [cross talk 31:00] of writing hell.

Interviewer: [Giggling]

Interviewee: It was different but I liked it in that you get all the benefits of the unlimited space and yeah, the ability to just—I wanna send you here but I don't wanna interrupt the flow of my writing, so I can just make it a link and you can go there at your leisure. Or it makes it easier to cite other things. I mean obviously you still had footnotes for like, "I got this idea from a lecture from a professor," or things like that where you couldn't necessarily link to it. Everything else—if I referenced a book I could just link to his Amazon page or if I wanted to reference an image, I could put that image in—things that you didn't have the ability to do before, so it was great. I really enjoy new media writing.

Interviewer: The next couple of questions are gonna be about your gateway portfolio. I'm actually just gonna pull it up on the screen here.

Interviewee: That's cool. It reminds me I hafta' update the resume that I have on there.

Interviewer: [Laughing] okay, so here it is. That's yours, right?

Interviewee: Yep.

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

Interviewee: In creating it or?

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: I think probably doing all of the reflective writing and also the horrible experience that it was to pick a background. You wouldn't think that that'd be so hard, but I think I went through about 100 different ones before I ended up with the one that I

had. All the reflective writing, I think, there was writing an about-me section and the why-I-write stuff. I'm trying to think of a specific instance that was most memorable.

Interviewer: You said the reflective writing was memorable for you though?

Interviewee: It was. It really was cuz it made me think about—really think about why am I including this piece and if you'd read it, what would I want you to get out of it other than—I had one piece about metafiction in Moby Dick. If I had you read it, I wouldn't want you to understand metafiction in Moby Dick. I'd want you to understand I could take this really slippery topic that is metafiction and write it in a way that is understandable so that's what I wrote about is like, I'm not just including this random essay. I just want you to be able to see that here's metafiction which is really hard to understand. It took me an entire semester to wrap my head around, but if you read it, I hope that you would be able to understand what I'm saying. Even if you didn't know what it was before, have an understanding of it by the end and have it be reader-friendly. It gave me an opportunity to work that out for myself and also explain it to my imaginary audience, I guess so I think, yeah, the self-reflective writing was the most memorable.

Interviewer: What were your aims for the portfolio?

Interviewee: Ummm, so my aim for the portfolio was to kind of just make an electronic portfolio of writing, so if I—I have taken to in my resume. I'll just have a link to it, so when I say like, "I've got writing experience," I can just say, "You can visit my portfolio at this link and I don't hafta' hand in a bunch of extra paper or stuff that they'd say like, "Ahhh, like you really want me to read all this?" If there's just a link, they could go and see and you can see my about-me and my little like, "Here's a picture of me. Oh, I'm a real person," and maybe just get an idea of my flavor of writing and the stuff that I've accomplished during my collegiate career, cuz there's a lot from English to communications to the remediation project, which is totally just my voice and was really fun. I think that was my goal, is just if I was trying to get hired based on my writing, here it is.

Interviewer: Good. Do you think that your portfolio here addresses that aim?

Interviewee: I hope that it does. I know that in the capstone course I'll probably go back and do a lot of revisions on it.

Interviewee: I'll probably work with the same raw material. That's one thing that I would really like to do this summer when I'm not constantly drowning under class reading—is go back and revise it. Maybe add some more stuff to it.

Interviewer: What kind of revisions and additions do you have in mind?

Interviewee: I'd probably add some more pieces—maybe reconsider the ones that I already have. I find no matter how good something is when I've written it the first time I'll come back to it a year later and find things that I wanna fix or update or tweak, and

it's just some of those things where pieces on the internet—they live instead of getting published and it's kinda' this dead thing that's not changeable. You can keep changing it and you can keep changing it as you change, so while it's a nice snapshot of myself about a year ago, this is one of those things where it's cool. You can just keep updating it, where if my perspective has shifted a little bit, I can make it shift a little bit.

Interviewer: That's great. Do you think creating a portfolio has had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: Ummm, maybe not so much in the fact that my writing is maybe my perception of my writing where I guess I didn't really have a picture of myself as a writer before. When I was putting together the portfolio I realized like, wow. I've done a lot of work in the three years that—or I guess at that point, two and half years—that I'd been at college. I mean you turn in all these papers and sometimes you don't even remember them. It just kinda' helped say like, "Wow. I have accomplished a lot." If I was going to go into an interview and they'd say like, "well, why do you think you're a qualified writer?" I can say, "Well, here you go." I don't know if it—maybe if I do me as a writer, it just kind of gave me more confidence that I have done this, so I shouldn't be doubting that I can do it again. Yeah, I think it just gave me a little bit more confidence.

Interviewer: Good. You already talked about this a little bit, but can we just talk about, again, the impact of the reflective writing aspect here?

Interviewee: On which?

Interviewer: On your writing.

Interviewee: Ummm, I think—so let me think of an example, cuz I know with some of the English pieces I'd write reflective stuff on, what I want you to get out of this—like I don't want you to get an understanding of a book that I read, but know that I can take a thesis and prove it. I guess it kind of helped me take a step back from all of the details and the specifics and see it as a bigger picture.

Interviewer: See what as a bigger picture?

Interviewee: I guess sometimes people get bogged down in the details of, "I'm writing a paper and it has to be about this topic and etc., etc." I'll kind of take a step back and say, "Okay, well, what is it they need to get [cross talk 39:01]—"that has a clear argument and has these components," and that's what I'll do. I'll take a step back and say, "Does this paper have a good solid argument and supporting details," and I'll just take a step back and try to see it from the instructor's perspective that way. It helps me remove myself from the details and say, "Has this accomplished the task, rather like, oh, do I think that this random quote supported this "random idea specifically." The bigger picture that way, I guess, from a broader outline perspective, than the individual assignment specifications itself.

Interviewer: The reflective writing helped you to do that?

Interviewee: I think so. It just kind of informed my thought process and yeah, just kind of thinking about the writing itself, rather than what I was writing.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Do you have any other comments you wanna add before we finish up?

Interviewee: I don't think so, other than that there's a lot of aspects of the gateway course that I wish they had incorporated in maybe the first-year writing stuff, where it's really hard for people to see the point of things like peer editing or—for example, when I was in high school, we had thing called ABCD structure, which people thought was really obnoxious. The ideas was that you start with an A—like a general statement for the paragraph and then a B, which is like more explanation on that, and C which is like the evidence, and the a D which is something related that evidence and the idea back to your original thesis. People thought it was really obnoxious cuz they're like, "What if I don't wanna structure my paper that way?" but they didn't fully explain to you that the point isn't to make you write in a formula. The point is to make sure that you just have the general component of you're saying an idea, you're elaborating on it, you're giving evidence of the idea and then you're reminding the reader like, "Why did I tell you all of this again?" "Oh, right. You had this original thesis that said this and you're reminding me that you're proving it." I wish that they would do, maybe not reflective writing, but at least explain the thought process I've always found that you just explain things to people, like why you're doing it, it makes it a lot easier for them to understand why it's necessary or why it's gonna make them better for it. They don't do that in the first-year writing courses. They just say like, "Well, we're gonna peer edit it cuz it's good for you." I'm like, "Well, why?" It's like making kids eat their vegetables, so like, "It's good for you," and the kid's like, "Well, why? I don't want it. It's gross," but this sucks and is not pleasant.

Interviewer: [Giggling]

Interviewee: If you just explain to them why I think that it makes it more palatable and you can get more out of it if you understand why, so I really wish that they would do that in the first-year writing courses.

Interviewer: You feel like you got that explanation of why peer review is good, when you're in the gateway course?

Interviewee: Maybe not necessarily peer-review specifically. When we did peer-review we were not allowed to even touch on grammar or anything like that. It was strictly ideas that we were looking at which I really liked. That was a completely different experience of peer review than I'd ever had before. I think maybe that's something that you have to get to certain level to be able to do that, cuz I mean, sometimes at the—or actually, maybe no. Maybe that's what they should do in the first-year writing cuz people will be

bogged down with, “Well, you should’ve had a comma here and you didn’t so you suck.” I liked that a lot in the gateway course where it was more just a—it was idea-based instead of nitpicking-based. It made me feel like I got a lot more out of it and more evaluation of, “Is this a good idea?” rather than like, “Did I put commas in all the right places?” and random BS stuff like that.

Interviewer: [Giggling]

Interviewee: You know there’s a lot of—maybe I just love [Instructor] or maybe that’s just the structure of class. There was a lot of explanation of things that I wish that we had gotten in the first-year writing stuff cuz I think a lot of people hate writing when it’s really they just hated the structure of the class, but they’re not able to see the difference between the two.

Interviewer: Uh huh, great. Do you have anything else you wanna add?

Interviewee: I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you so much.

[End of Audio]