

Interviewer: Recording? Yes. Good. This is ***. Today's date is April 5th, Friday. It's 9:15 a.m., and I am interviewing ***. Okay. Generally, how would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I think that I get enjoyment out of writing, but a lot of the writing that I've done has been, obviously, in the context of academics. I really like writing that allows me to reflect on my experiences, I guess, pre-university and now. Yeah, I mean—I'm not sure if that answers the question.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. For example, how would you describe the role of writing in your life?

Interviewee: Okay. I think, obviously, outside of the classes I'm taking, I write on a daily basis notes of what I've done that day or important things, [inaudible 01:14] reflecting on that. That's something that I did when I traveled a lot during high school, was reflective writing, which is kind of what I said before. Yeah, so that's kind of how writing fits into my life.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you see a big difference between writing for yourself and writing for the university?

Interviewee: I think it depends on the class, because I'm in [upper level English course] right now, and that's very reflective about moments and experiences. I enjoy writing about those things, so I think that that's—in that case, it's very similar, but then, obviously, other classes can be different. Then they're not similar to—

Interviewer: Sure, sure. Okay, wonderful. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you started here at the University of Michigan? Yeah, when you first came in?

Interviewee: I think I had a pretty good base from high school of how to write and—yeah, just like conventions and different ways of writing. I think the class I'm taking at Michigan have expanded my view of the types of writing and different structures and how to incorporate personal aspects into writing, cuz I think that's largely absent in writing that you do in high school and—a lot of times.

Interviewer: What kind of—you said it had expanded structures and forms and things that way?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: What was new, if you can remember?

Interviewee: I think—I mean, coming out of high school, it's—you learn the five-paragraph style, and just learning to write in different forms, whether argumentatively, with different structured arguments, or—yeah, reflectively, like in a personal memoir-

type style. Yeah, I think that's how I developed a lot in university that I didn't have before.

Interviewer: Okay. You had said kind of incorporating a narrative or personal into—

Interviewee: Yeah.

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

Interviewee: Yeah. In the class that I'm in right now, when we're writing these personal stories, we go into a moment and just describe every detail about what happened, and then reflect on it as you go, which is just an interesting structure, to have an argument about something or trying to explore a question, and then using three personal moments to elaborate on that.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay, great. Thinking about where you were when you came in and where you are now, to what extent would you say you've grown as a writer?

Interviewee: I think, to a large extent, I have, just like I was saying, with different ideas about how to write and the way to go about it. I mean, like I said, I think I was a strong writer coming in and had a really good foundation, so that's built a lot on—it's not like it's been a huge, drastic change. I think I've definitely been more comfortable and enjoyed writing more as time has progressed.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have a sense of what has allowed you to become more comfortable or has allowed you to grow?

Interviewee: I think just the more classes I've taken. I mean, I've taken several writing base class. Then, obviously, the minor, too, has been huge in opening my eyes, especially to new media writing [fading voice 05:09].

Interviewer: Interesting. Is it kind of a sense of practice? Is it the type of instruction you're getting? Do you have a sense?

Interviewee: Yeah. Perhaps this type of instruction, and the way in which different professors lead you into what they are expecting and what type of writing they are looking for, has kind of opened my eyes to different ways. Then I've grown through that.

Interviewer: Sure, absolutely. Wonderful. What are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I mean, that's not really something I've thought about. [Laughter]

Interviewer: That's okay. That's okay.

Interviewee: I think—like, post-graduation or just in general?

Interviewer: Well, in general or post-graduation.

Interviewee: Okay. I mean, I think I'll definitely continue writing reflectively for myself to keep track of things that—

Interviewer: Life?

Interviewee: Yeah, life—but as for how it would be incorporated into my post-graduation endeavors, I'm not sure.

Interviewer: 'Kay. What are your post-graduation endeavors, if you know at this point?

Interviewee: Yeah, I don't really know that, either.

Interviewer: Yeah. I understand.

Interviewee: I'm in the business school, so the type of writing that we do in the business school is completely different. Yeah. It's kind of interesting [fading voice 06:33].

Interviewer: Okay, wonderful. Then, thinking across your writing experiences here at the University of Michigan, what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I think that it means exploring different ideas in—okay, hold on. Let me think about this.

Interviewer: Please, take your time.

Interviewee: Can you repeat it one more time?

Interviewer: Yeah. Just in thinking of—across your experience here at the University of Michigan, what you think it means to write well.

Interviewee: Okay. Well, in some instances, I think that it's conveying an argument effectively, with the right research to back that up. In other instances, I think it's clearly expressing yourself in your own voice through your writing. Yeah, conveying your experiences and just—yeah, your tone. Not making it sound forced, but very fluid. I think that's writing well.

Interviewer: Okay. How do you distinguish between those two times?

Interviewee: I think that—I mean, whenever you are doing a research paper or something like that, I mean, there's a different—different conventions for how you're gonna approach something like that, versus the more memoir-like, personal narrative type of writing. Yeah, I think it's just [fading voice 08:02].

Interviewer: Wonderful, wonderful. That's a hard question. Which first-year writing requirement course did you take?

Interviewee: I took [Comparative Literature course].

Interviewer: Okay. What were your experiences like in this course, if you can remember?

Interviewee: Yeah, it was really good. I really enjoyed it. I guess it was different than—I didn't realize at the time, but it was different than most first-year students do, cuz it's either [English course or different English course]. Yeah, I don't know. I really liked Comp Lit. I had a great GSI [Graduate Student Instructor]. We looked at disaster and how the idea of disaster can differ between different individuals. It was just a really interesting topic. Yeah, I think it was a good introduction to the university cuz it was engaging, and I did well in the class, so it was just a—I don't know. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, helps with the confidence and things?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. What effect did that particular class have on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I feel like it's a little too long ago to even try and—I mean, I think that it continued my interest in writing because it was a class that I enjoyed. I think that it kinda got me thinking about, "Okay, well, what other classes"—or, "I should take more classes that are similar in writing," which is maybe why I eventually applied for the minor. Yeah, I guess that's not too specific, but just like—it kept me interested, I guess,—

Interviewer: Sure, which is—

Interviewee: - in writing, yeah.

Interviewer: - an important thing that—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: It didn't turn you off. Didn't turn you away, so that's good. Let's see. I know this was awhile ago.

Interviewee: No, that's okay.

Interviewer: Can you make any connections between that first-year writing requirement course and your writing now? Things that you're continuing to do or things that you've built on, or anything that way?

Interviewee: Not really. I would have to go back and read what I wrote then, to kind of see. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. All right.

Interviewee: Sorry.

Interviewer: No, no, that's okay. It's your experience. Did you take [Writing course] at all? Okay, okay. You had said you're in the School of Business?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: What is your concentration?

Interviewee: You don't have concentrations at Ross [School of Business].

Interviewer: You don't?

Interviewee: You can choose to concentrate through the electives that you take, but you never declare a concentration. You just get a BBA [Bachelor of Business Administration].

Interviewer: Do you have any sort of unofficial concentration that you're thinking of?

Interviewee: Not yet. I am thinking Marketing, but I'm gonna see after taking it next fall, kind of route. I also don't think I'm gonna have enough time to really take a ton of Marketing electives to even say that I'm concentrating in that.

Interviewer: Okay. All right. Have you had the opportunity to write much for business courses?

Interviewee: Yeah. I'm in a class right now, [Business Communications course], which is—well, okay. I guess there's two different sides to that. The business, for the [Business Communications course], were like cover letters, writing memos, writing email, like email inquiries, all those sort of things that there's a structure to. It's very—that you need to know how to do for that, for the business world. I'm in that now.

Then, I mean, through the other class I've taken, we do a lotta group projects and group papers. Last semester I was working on—I don't know, like ten pages group paper, compiling data that we had collected about an organization, and, I mean, structure and what's the method, and then analysis data.

Interviewer: Okay. In your Business Communications class, you said you're working on emails and things like that. How do you find that in comparison to a kind of English-driven essay?

Interviewee: It's kind of jarring. Yeah, it's just very different, because there's all this freedom with how you can go about setting a memo up, or a cover letter. It's like you

use—I mean, I guess you could argue this for English writing, too, but, you're using each word—each sentence has to be very explicit, conveying a certain tone, and being humble. I don't know. It's just a very—the tone's different. The structure is different, types of words—yeah.

Interviewer: Then, what kind of effects has this kind of different experience had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I think that it's good to have the contrast. It's kind of nice to be in two different classes that are so different. I don't think that the Business Communications class has had a huge effect on my other writing, but it's just made me more aware of the types of writing that's done in the business profession. Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you see some of the characteristics of your other personal or other class writing being brought into your concentration or your business writing, or do you feel that they're distinct?

Interviewee: No, not at all. They're distinct. Yeah.

Interviewer: All right. Good to know. Then, how confident do you feel about writing in the business kind of arena?

Interviewee: I feel pretty confident. I mean, there's structure to it, so—especially after taking the Business Communications class, I feel confident about being able to convey whatever I need to [inaudible 14:32] in a cover letter to a potential employer.

Interviewer: To what would you attribute that confidence, like, in your coursework or anything? How has that manifested itself, I guess? Can you give me an example of a project you did?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think through experience in class, so whether it be writing a group project and working with the people to compile a paper—I think my confidence in that came from the fact that I am in the minor in writing, and I know I'll be able to write it well, so I'll volunteer myself for that part.

Then, in the cover letters and memos and all that sort of thing, I think just from practice and the revision that we went through in class, and then—I mean, I've applied to multiple internships, and that's another thing; just having the feedback from career coaches. Yeah. I guess that that kinda writing is just so different, so I don't know if it's relevant to this at all.

Interviewer: Yeah. No, it—all writing. All writing is relevant, so, yeah. No, that's great. That's great. Okay. Now we're gonna turn and kind of talk a little bit about the gateway course that you took. What impact has the minor gateway course had overall on your writing?

Interviewee: I understand the importance of blogging a lot more, which is kinda cool. I never really had a lot of exposure to that. Then also, I really liked the freedom that the gateway course gave to make the new media projects. I incorporated a lot of photographs and stuff into my writing and into the pieces that we did in that class, and I've translated that to the upper-level writing class I'm in now, which is, I think, kind of coming—having the experience in the gateway course, so—but changing my writing. I mean, I think just how I think about new—incorporating media into writing has changed.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. That's excellent. This incorporation of new media, how has it changed you—or how has the gateway course, I guess, changed your writing process?

Interviewee: I think one of the things that we talked about was kind of just getting all your ideas on paper, and you can write a shitty first draft and it's fine. I think that's something that I've thought about a lot going forward, is just to vomit everything, all my thoughts, onto paper, and then go back and organize, rather than needing to come up with it all in my head and then put it on paper.

Interviewer: I'm just curious; at what point do you insert some of the multimedia aspects, if you're doing something that is kind of a larger project? Does that come from the vomit stage or does that come—

Interviewee: I think it mostly comes after. I think if I have an idea of how to incorporate it, I'll have the idea of, "Okay, I think I wanna use these things, like these pictures or something in it," but I don't put that in until the end of the writing endeavors 18:00.

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

Interviewee: My sense of myself?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I think that it's made me more confident about writing, and the strengths and, I guess, knowing kind of my tone, which I—I couldn't even describe it, but—I don't know, just giving me a better sense of how I write, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. All right. Making you kind of more aware?

Interviewee: Yeah.

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

Interviewee: In the gateway course?

Interviewer: Yep.

Interviewee: I mean, they've been good. Yeah, it was funny, because in my gateway class it was—one of my best friends was in the class, and we lived together, so it was good to do the revision process with her. We'd work on things together and collaborate. I'm sorry. I'm really getting off track.

Interviewer: No, that's okay. No, it's what—

Interviewee: My processes are with other people?

Interviewer: Right, your experiences with other writers in the course.

Interviewee: Yeah. The revision process was really helpful for what we did in that—like working in small groups, to give feedback about when clarity breaks down or different ideas. I think that a lot of the ideas that I used for my portfolio and things like that came from discussing it with people in small groups in the class.

Interviewer: Okay, wonderful. It's been helpful?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's been helpful.

Interviewer: Good, good, good. The minor gateway course emphasized reflective writing in various forms. How would you describe your experience of this kind of reflection?

Interviewee: It was good. I mean, it was really nice to write about whatever I wanted to, and reflect on experiences I had. I lived in Europe during high school, and so a lot of the writing that I did in the class was reflective on those experiences, which was refreshing to be able to write about it, rather than just talk about it or think about it.

Interviewer: Sure, absolutely. Are you still using reflection in your current writing,—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: - whether voluntary or assigned? Do you have a lot of assigned reflection?

Interviewee: Yeah. The class [upper level English course] is—I don't know. I think that it's very reflective in writing about moments that are specific and personal, so, yeah. Maybe it's a product of the class I'm in, but yeah, I use the reflective writing and that thought process that, I think, started in the gateway in [fading voice 21:15].

Interviewer: What about in your business courses? Is there much reflective going on at all?

Interviewee: No. I mean, other than the sense that if you're wanting to—or like talk about your experiences to a potential employer or something, then writing about those, but it's—like I said, it's a different tone.

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. Okay. How would you describe your experiences using new media writing: blogs, remediation projects, all those sorts of things?

Interviewee: Well, like I mentioned, the blog kind of opened my eyes into that world, and I kind of—I mean, it was nice. I don't think that it's something that I might consistently do, cuz I'd rather write out 21:59 experiences and stuff more personally, but that was very eye-opening. That was a really good experience, to have to blog weekly for the class. Then, for remediation, yeah, I really liked working on a project and then remediating it into something new, even though with the different argument so it's like—it was kinda nice to see something through different stages of a process that—if that makes sense?

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely. Do you remember your remediation project? Can you tell me a little bit about it?

Interviewee: Yeah. For the first part, I wrote an article for [local New York newspaper] about visiting [a national park], and kind of—let me think—why you should go to the park and not just let me tell you about it, I guess. Then, for the remediation, I did a photo slideshow—cuz I was there last summer—a photo slideshow of the experiences set to music, and then there was a few captions.

Interviewer: Very interesting. Very interesting. Okay. Then, the next couple of questions are about your gateway portfolio.

Interviewee: Okay.

[...]

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

Interviewee: Memorable aspects? Probably just deciding what to include, and how I was going to present myself, and just organizing that. I don't know if that was—like, having the About Me, but then a Welcome page, it was just—how do I wanna present myself in this portfolio?

Interviewer: Okay. How did you go about deciding those things?

Interviewee: Well, I kind of knew that I didn't want it to be anything professional, because I don't envision myself using it for that type of purpose. I wanted it to be a reflection of my experiences, and informal, I guess—yeah, to an audience of fellow peers or—yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Obviously, you wanted it to be personal in tone, but did you have any specific aims for the portfolio?

Interviewee: Not really. I just wanted to experiment with how to go about it, because I know that we—we do this in the Capstone course, too. I mean, I didn't—no. I didn't really have any specific goal of what I wanted 25:46, although I really like things that are clean and organized. Yeah.

Interviewer: All right. As far as keeping it kind of casual, how successful did you feel that you were in keeping it casual, keeping it personal, keeping it relevant?

Interviewee: I mean, I was really happy with how it turned out. Yeah, I think that the writing that I did for the About Me page was all very—I don't know, just saying what's goin' on here. I think I was really—yeah, I was happy with how that happened and how it got organized. It was like connecting all the writing together.

Interviewer: Okay, wonderful. Do you think that creating the portfolio has had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: Not any effect other than enhancing the reflective writing that I already was getting the base for in the gateway and then now. I don't think it changed anything.

Interviewer: How did it enhance? Do you have an example or anything?

Interviewee: [Pause 27:06 – 27:13]

Interviewer: It's okay.

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: You said enhance—that it enhanced your reflective writing, and I didn't know if it was a form kind of a thing, or if it was just more practice.

Interviewee: Just like more—yeah, more experience doing that, I think. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, good. What was the impact of the reflective writing in the portfolio?

Interviewee: On the viewer?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, sure.

Interviewee: I think that it lets other people see who I am as a student, as a writer, and gives them—I mean, since it's on the home page, it gives them an idea of who I am before they go in and read these pieces of writing that, for the most part, are personal about experiences that I've had. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, wonderful. I think that's pretty much it. Do you have any other comments or anything to say about your writing?

Interviewee: No, not really.

[...]

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