

Interviewer: Hi there. This is \*\*\*, here with \*\*\*, and she's going to introduce herself.

Interviewee: Hi, I'm \*\*\*. I'm a Junior here at the University of Michigan. I'm a communication studies and international studies double major.

Interviewer: Okay, so you said communication studies and international studies, double major?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so the first question's quite general. How would you describe yourself as a writer, when you began at U of M, and how would you describe as a writer now?

Interviewee: I thought that I was a really strong writer coming into Michigan. Then I took [English course], and I remember my very first paper back, I got a B minus, and that was the first time I ever got anything below an A on paper. Now, I'm a much stronger writer, I think. I'm much more concise. Yeah, I don't care as much about grammar and syntax. I'm still good at it, I'm still strong, but I care more about the content. When I came in here, it was more about how grammatically correct and how big of a vocabulary could I use, and that would give me the A.

Interviewer: Okay, so you mentioned this idea of being concise. I suppose, that's part of being a strong writer for you?

Interviewee: Yeah. Now, we have a lot of pages to write. I write six-page papers all the time, every couple of weeks, and when I came in here I thought that was a really long paper, but really, it's really short. I have to try to get a ton of information into just a few pages, so I have to be as concise as possible because I have so much to say.

Interviewer: Okay, so that connects back to your point about content. The concern, it sounds like, is making sure to get your points across very clearly and concisely—

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: —rather than being just concerned about sentence level grammar and things like that.

Interviewee: Right, right.

Interviewer: That's kind of what you associated with writing when you came in to U of M?

Interviewee: Yeah, when I came to U of M, I thought it was more about the grammar, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: It was using big five-dollar words.

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: [Laughter]

Interviewer: Do you think you learned that in high school? Was that the attitude toward writing?

Interviewee: Definitely, yeah. In high school, I was in AP English, and all the time they would say, “Don’t use the five-paragraph structured paper,” but—

Interviewer: It was don’t use that?

Interviewee: Don’t use that, because you want to use your six or seven paragraphs and—

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: —you can’t, you know, yeah. [Laughter] It sounds really silly now. You want to use as big a vocabulary as possible, because that makes you sound smarter. Drag things out as long as possible, because that makes you sound smarter. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Yeah, well do you think that was geared towards the AP exam? I mean, getting you to write well.

Interviewee: I haven’t thought about that. Maybe, but then I also had to write papers for like History or even Science sometimes, and they used the same mentality.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: At least in my high school.

Interviewer: Right. All right, interesting. This questions related. To what extent would you say you’ve grown as a writer, and to what would you attribute this growth? That would be more about specific experiences you’ve had writing here.

Interviewee: I guess, my first paper here I got a B minus because I was using the same skills that I learned in high school, getting the As. Then, I guess after that, I went to my professor and asked her, “What gives? I thought that this was a really strong paper,” and they told me it was about the content and they don’t really care about the words. If you have that strong vocabulary, then hey go for it, but that’s really not important. You want to get the point across.

Then I used the Sweetland Writing Center all the time. I haven't used it so much this semester, I just realized, but up until now, every semester, every paper I've turned into the Sweetland Writing Center before.

Interviewer: You have?

Interviewee: After the B minus. [Laughter] It was like—

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: —I'm not risking that anymore, and that's really helped, just having other people look at my papers and tell me, "Well, that's interesting and all, it's a good word, but really, what are you trying to say here? How can you make this work?"

Interviewer: Right, okay. Do you think it'd be fair to say that you more identify yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Or, do you identify yourself as a writer? I mean, do you think of yourself in those terms?

Interviewee: Yeah, I'm definitely more of a writer than I am a math person or a quantitative person. Yeah, I mean, I guess with my majors, you have to do a lot of writing, so yes, I am a writer.

Interviewer: Writing within your majors, communications studies and, what was it, international studies, were there—you talked about experiences in [English course] and then using the Sweetland Writing Center. Were there experiences within your major courses that kind of got you thinking about writing in different ways, or yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Yeah. Last semester, with one of my communications courses, actually I think I turned in this paper for the study. It was about Glee, which was a lot of fun to write about. It had to be a really long paper, it was like 10 or 12 pages, and it was really scary at first. Then, again, I went to my professor to work out what I wanted to talk about and what my thesis should be, and in like a 20-minute conversation, I suddenly had enough ideas for a 50-page thesis. I had to work it down to what could fit in the 12 pages and stuff. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: That was a really interesting experience.

Interviewer: That's interesting, so it seemed that you said a couple times, this idea of having lots of content and figuring out how to narrow it down or get it concise. It sounds like that's a major theme for you—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: —with what it means to write well.

Interviewee: Yeah, it is, definitely.

Interviewer: Okay. I'm probably getting ahead of myself. Let's see. The question on the page is, what are your goals for yourself as a writer, and have these changed over your semester at U of M? I guess, we could say that one of your goals is to figure out how to write in more sophisticated and concise ways. Other goals?

Interviewee: At the beginning of my time here, it was to get an A. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: I thought, okay, how could I get the grade? Now, I'm not as concerned with grades in general, as I was coming in here. I'm just concerned about learned the most, doing my very best and what is my best rating, instead of getting the A plus.

Interviewer: Okay. Thinking across your writing experiences at U of M, what do you think it means to write well, and I know you've touched on that some, but do you want to add to what you've said?

Interviewee: Writing well, I guess being concise. I think it is important to have proper grammar and sentence structure, et cetera. Yeah, I guess having a strong thesis is very important, having a beginning, middle and end. Yeah, I can't think of anything else at the moment.

Interviewer: Okay, so being concise, actually using grammar accurately and well, and then having a strong thesis, beginning, middle and end. Are these things that have been reinforced to you in feedback you've gotten on your writing?

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: Like in your major subjects, do they talk about thesis statements?

Interviewee: All the time, all the time.

Interviewer: Really?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: [Laughter]

Interviewer: Would that be apart, even from communication studies or international studies, all the writing you've done?

Interviewee: I think in an anthropology class for international studies one semester that didn't really care so much about a thesis statement, as long as you're describing the people, and that was strange to me because every other experience has been, have a thesis, have a thesis, have a thesis.

Interviewer: That word gets used a lot in your communication studies?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's interesting to me.

Interviewee: Really?

Interviewer: Yeah. [Laughter] Yeah, and I can talk about why later, but—

Interviewee: Okay. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter] All right, good. What do you think is most important in learning to write?

Interviewee: In learning to write? Well, now or when you're in elementary school and learning?

Interviewer: Well, now. At U of M, you've learned to write through that [English course] course, that experience, and then coming to Sweetland, so what other factors have shaped what it means to learn to write?

Interviewee: I guess going to professor and GSI [Graduate Student Instructor] office hours and finding out what they're looking for in a paper, like what it means to them to be a strong writer. I guess, yeah, having a strong argument is really important. Yeah, I guess outlines or having an idea of what you want to write before you sit down and just write it is really important.

Interviewer: That would be a strength, so having a strong argument, strong idea. How does that message get to you? Do you know what I mean? How is it that you learned to do that? Is it—

Interviewee: Feedback.

Interviewer: Okay, so in your courses, do you tend to write drafts of papers and then get feedback and then write again?

Interviewee: No, I mean, occasionally we had drafts. For me, I usually think about what I want to write about, the prompt that they give us, and then I have an idea or I outline it when I go into the office hours and I get feedback, and then I write it. Or, I draft it all out and turn it into Sweetland and get feedback and turn it in.

Interviewer: Okay. When you draft it out and give it to Sweetland and get feedback, that's sort of similar to drafting it out orally in an office hour with your instructor, in a way. Is that—

Interviewee: Yeah, I don't know, I find that I communicate better in writing than in speaking, so that is different. When I have a more clear idea of what I want to say, I write it down and I turn it into Sweetland. If I'm not as sure what I want to talk about, then I speak it out. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Okay, that totally makes sense. If your ideas are less formed—

Interviewee: More concrete, then I write it down. If they're less formed, I say it.

Interviewer: Okay, and then you get feedback.

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: All right, okay. Which first year writing requirement course did you take? That's [English course].

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: What did you learn in this class that you've continued to use in your writing?

Interviewee: Be concise, be more concerned about content than anything else.

Interviewer: That message was drilled home to you in [English course]?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. After the B minus [laughter] I was just mortified and was like, okay, what did I do wrong.

Interviewer: Tell me again, so it's be concise and—

Interviewee: Content is more—

Interviewer: Content is more important.

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: Okay. If you could think back, that was three years ago, so it sounds like the word concise must have been used quite a lot, and the word content must have been used quite a lot. Were there other terms about writing that you learned in that course that you remember? This question is kind of like, how was writing talked about—

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: —in the course?

Interviewee: I'm pretty sure the word thesis was thrown around, or argument, have a strong argument. Nothing else sticks out.

Interviewer: Okay, so concise, be concise, talking about content versus, I guess—

Interviewee: Grammar or style.

Interviewer: Then, having a thesis, strong argument. Did you take [Writing course]?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay. This question is, what experiences in and out of the classroom have had an effect on your writing, and you've talked about some experiences in the classroom. Have there been experiences outside the classroom that have affected your writing?

Interviewee: Not that I can think of.

Interviewer: I think this is kind of about extracurricular type of writing. Do you keep a blog and things like that?

Interviewee: I have a Tumblr, but I don't think I've updated in like a year. [Laughter]

Interviewer: I'm sorry, you'll have to tell me what that is.

Interviewee: A Tumblr, it's a blog. It's T U M B L R, and anyone can sign up for it and you can follow peoples' blogs and you can write about it, write anything you want, and you can post pictures.

Interviewer: You have one, but you don't—

Interviewee: I don't ever use it. [Laughter] Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you say why you don't?

Interviewee: I don't have time. I don't have time. I write tons for school. The last thing I want to do is write outside of it. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Tons for school, what is that? You mentioned a lot of six-page papers. In the course of a semester, how much are you writing?

Interviewee: Last semester alone, I remember I wrote at least a three-page paper every single week, starting from the second week of class.

Interviewer: For the same course?

Interviewee: No, in general. I had four courses, and many weeks it was more than that. A light week was just one three-page paper.

Interviewer: Okay. That's a lot. It's very regular, right? Three pages is not incredibly long, but it's so regular.

Interviewee: Yeah, to have to do it every single week.

Interviewer: Yeah, for sure. What type of writing was that three-page—was it argument?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Make an argument?

Interviewee: Always an argument or using some kind of text from class and dissecting it, telling what you think about it.

Interviewer: Okay. That's a lot of writing, and it would not leave you a whole lot of time to maintain your Tumblr. [Laughter] As you were kind of cranking out this writing, did you develop certain strategies or processes that helped you to get it done?

Interviewee: Yeah. Look at the prompt first, I underline keywords or phrases, kind of scribble all over it, then do an outline, take it into the professor, draft it out, turn it into Sweetland and then turn it in. [Laughter]

Interviewer: That sounds very linear.

Interviewee: Yeah. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: Every week. [Inaudible 15:09]

Interviewer: I like this idea that you're examining the prompt, you're writing notes on it, and then from there you develop an outline, then you develop a draft, then you get



feedback. Can you take me through the process of how you learned to do that? Did that, from the very beginning, come naturally to you?

Interviewee: Well, yeah, I guess that's pretty much been my process since my freshman or sophomore year, after the first bad grade. I was like, okay, well I'll have to get more feedback before I turn this in. I can't just assume I'm a gifted writer anymore. Last semester, I saw all these papers that I had to write all the time and I was like, okay, I've got to get a process down right away so I'm not overwhelmed, and that just seemed like a good idea.

Interviewer: Yeah, I like your process. [Laughter]

Interviewee: [Laughter] Thank you.

Interviewer: All right, this is a very different question. If I use the term reflective writing, what does that mean to you?

Interviewee: Reflective writing? I guess, thinking back on some kind of past experience of—you're reflecting on your experience. I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I don't know.

Interviewer: Reflecting on your past experience, it sounds totally fine. Have you done that type of reflective writing at U of M?

Interviewee: Oh, no. Definitely not.

Interviewer: How would you characterize the type of writing you've done?

Interviewee: Always writing narrative, almost always. Like 95 percent of the time it's been, develop some kind of argument from something and go for it.

Interviewer: Develop some type of argument from something. What is that something?

Interviewee: From a text or from topics that we talked about in class or, yeah.

Interviewer: Is the language used to describe the writing always argument, make an argument, something like that?

Interviewee: Something like that, definitely.

Interviewer: Okay. All right. What has been your experiences of working with other writers in your courses?

Interviewee: I've had to write group papers, and I think that's the worst idea ever.

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: I mean, I despise it. I love a group project, but I group paper is horrible, because everyone has different styles of writing and different methods of how they get the writing done, and no one is the same. We usually try to piece—like everyone writes a section of the paper, and then we kind of piece it together, and it always looks terrible. I hate it. Or, we try to just sit down and write it all together, and that takes unbelievable amounts of hours to do.

A different experience is having my peer reviews, and I also don't like that because I don't trust my peers with my writing, [laughter] because I don't know who's a strong writer and who's not. I want the person that is grading my paper to tell me what they think about it, or use someone that I actually trust, like the Writing Center, Sweetland.

Interviewer: Have there ever been instances where you've gotten good, constructive feedback from a peer?

Interviewee: No. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Really? How often have you done that, peer review?

Interviewee: A couple times a semester, every semester.

Interviewer: Really. It's used quite regularly?

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: How does it tend to be used? You submit a draft to your peers, they give you—

Interviewee: Yeah, we usually do like a writing workshop and some discussion section for a class, and we spend the whole hour reviewing people's papers, and no one likes it because no one wants to step on anyone's toes and tell you how to write better. We've all doing this a number of times, and no one likes it, so no one wants to do anything about the people's papers.

Interviewer: Right, so no exceptions. [Laughter]

Interviewee: Never, never, never.

Interviewer: Well, when you're doing that, you're also reading your classmates' text. Does that help in any way, like actually reading your classmate's writing?

Interviewee: Not really, no.

Interviewer: Do you think that partly that's because—do you view yourself as a better writer than your classmates?

Interviewee: Definitely equal to or better, yeah.

Interviewer: You haven't had the experience of reading a classmate's writing and saying, "Wow, that's good."

Interviewee: No. [Laughter] That makes me sound terrible.

Interviewer: No, it doesn't. I mean, I was just curious.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Sometimes it's like, oh, well that's an interesting point. I hadn't thought of it that way, but I've never looked at the paper and said, "Oh, that's a really strong piece of writing."

Interviewer: You've never said, "Wow, that's a cool way to open up an essay, I might use that."

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: [Laughter]

Interviewer: Okay, good. I like your categorical answers.

Interviewee: Good.

Interviewer: I had a question when you were talking about group papers. You said one of your strategies in a group is to write it section by section, and that never seems to work because it just look bad. What does that mean, though, it looks bad?

Interviewee: Because we all have different styles of writing, so you have 2 pages of a 10-page paper looks like [individual] did it, and then the next 2 pages look like [different individual] did it. They don't go together.

Interviewer: Okay, and then sitting down with your group mates and cranking it out together, that doesn't work?

Interviewee: It doesn't crank out. [Laughter] No, because we're all—no one wants to be the first one to say, "Okay, let's just say this." Someone will get stuck on some word and be like, "Oh, we can't use running here. We should use something else. It's not jogging, it's not skipping," and that drives me crazy because I just want to be like, "It's not that big of a deal. Let's write down jogging for right now. We can go back and fix it if it still bothers us."

Interviewer: That's interesting to me, because that suggests to me that you, when you write, tend to draft out pretty quickly.

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. I crank it out, and then I go back and I edit, edit, edit, edit.

Interviewer: I'm not that type of writer and wish I were. Tell me about how you learned to do that. Has that always been the case, like through high school?

Interviewee: No. In high school, definitely, I was more meticulous and I took a longer time, and then throughout college, I don't have that much time to go to a paper. I have to go get it done. I have to do it in steps. Then definitely last semester with all the writing I had to do, that was definitely—I really developed that skill, just I don't care if it's grammatically correct, I don't care if it's a good word, I don't care if this sentence even makes sense. I can't think of what I want to put right here, so I'm going to highlight this section and add something about this when I think about it, and then I just finish it.

Interviewer: I'm so jealous of that.

Interviewee: [Laughter]

Interviewer: I mean, for me, it's just pretty laborious of just sentence by sentence, and it has to be good before I go onto the next. Have you ever had that impulse? It's basically revising as I write.

Interviewee: Yeah, I used to be like that, yeah, and then I didn't have to do a whole lot of revisions because it was already revised. No, that just took so much time and it's much faster for me to just throw it out, I call it word vomit, I word vomit onto the screen, and then I go back and I make it pretty. For me, I feel that's easier.

Interviewer: Was it hard to change, I mean, change into that?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think it's definitely—I think freshman year, I definitely started off as being really meticulous, and then over time, freshman and sophomore year I was doing half and half, and then junior year I've definitely switched over to the other way completely.

Interviewer: Yeah, and it sounds like it was because you had to.

Interviewee: I had to, yeah.

Interviewer: This actually is nice, because it segues into the next question. If you were going to give someone advice about writing, what are some of the things they should think about as they begin writing a paper? Maybe think back to yourself as an [English course] student or some incoming university student. What advice would you give?

Interviewee: Definitely look at the prompt first and highlight or underline any keywords. What are they actually asking of you? What are you going to be graded on? Then, just jot down some ideas of what you want to write about. Make an outline. Definitely go into office hours. I wish I had done that more in the beginning, and talk out with your professor or GSI, what you want to talk about. Then, just sit down and just write something. Don't get concerned about the words. Just get it out there, and then go back and edit up until it's due. [Laughter]

Interviewer: You do, do that. You go back to your own writing and you edit it?

Interviewee: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: What does that process consist of?

Interviewee: I read through it and I change words and make everything grammatically correct first, and then I will look at, is this a good example, do I need to explain a little bit more here. Did I really analyze this write, do I definitely have what is my argument, have I made the argument, is it a strong argument? Is the conclusion interesting, is it just summarizing what I said or is it actually saying something?

Interviewer: Yeah, so when you go back and say, do I need to explain more or elaborate more, how do you make decisions about that?

Interviewee: I read it, and I guess as I imagine my grader would read it, I'm critical. If I state the sky is blue, is it really blue? How do I know it's blue? Do I have evidence that says it's blue? Have I explained why it's blue?

Interviewer: You're kind of stepping into the shoes of your reader. Is that the same thing you do when you decide if your conclusion is interesting or not?

Interviewee: Yeah, sort of. I don't want to just summarize it. I don't want to have my topic sentence in each of my paragraphs in the conclusion, because that's boring. That was the point of the last several pages, and that's what I do. Yeah, what was the whole point to this paper, have I made that point? Is there something else that maybe I didn't have time to consider but maybe would be good to fix it, or a future paper, maybe put that in there.

Interviewer: Yeah, so you want your writing to be interesting. You want it to read well and—

Interviewee: Yeah, my professors and GSIs have to read hundreds of papers. I don't want mine to be horrible. I want them to look at it and be like, well, that wasn't too completely terrible. I didn't mind reading that. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Well, maybe is it more than that? Do you want them to enjoy reading your essay?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean, it's their job. They get paid to do it, but it's horrible—my mom's an elementary school teacher, and she hates all the grading, but when she gets a kid that has a funny story, she's like, "Oh, well that was actually really entertaining. Thank you for that."

Interviewer: See, that's an outside writing experience.

Interviewee: Oh, okay.

Interviewer: You've learned from that.

Interviewee: Oh, okay.

Interviewer: Do you think that's fair?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: You're now saying, my instructor has to read this. I wonder how—I mean, I'm a writing instructor, so I wonder how common that thinking is for a students.

Interviewee: For students?

Interviewer: That they're thinking about me as a reader—

Interviewee: Oh, really?

Interviewer: —rather than just an evaluator.

Interviewee: Do you think they do at all?

Interviewer: I really don't know. I just wonder. I mean, I read essays that I enjoy reading very much, and I often wonder—and then I also read essays that I don't enjoy reading very much. [Laughter]

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: They sort of do the assignment, they get it done, but they're not very engaging to me.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: I just wonder.

Interviewee: Of the ones that make you a little bit happier, don't they tend to get better grades because you're like, you know what, I enjoyed reading this. I'll give you an A instead of a B.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think that's probably true, yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: I haven't actually asked you this, but it's pretty clear to me you're a successful writer, then.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: You're getting high marks on your writing?

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: I thought I should just establish that. [Laughter]

Interviewee: Yeah. The B minus my very first paper was the lowest grade I've ever gotten on a piece of writing.

Interviewer: Okay, good. Well, that was a transformative experience for you.

Interviewee: [Laughter] Yes.

Interviewer: This question is, what is your concentration and have you had an opportunity to do writing in your concentration? We've already—

Interviewee: Communications and international studies, yeah, all the time. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Yeah. This question is about confidence. How confident do you feel about writing in your concentration?

Interviewee: I feel really confident now. My first papers I was not as confident because it was a new experience, but now I'm a junior, been doing it a while. I got it.

Interviewer: Were there certain experiences that really boosted your confidence, writing in your major?

Interviewee: I remember [Communication course], my very last paper, I think I wrote about Desperate Housewives maybe, I forget, but I got an A plus, and my GSI said good

things, like, “This was the best paper I’ve seen all semester,” and, “Good job. You got this. I have nothing bad to say about it.”

Interviewer: That happened when?

Interviewee: The second semester freshman year.

Interviewer: Second semester freshman year, so you got—

Interviewee: It was my very last paper near the end of the semester.

Interviewer: Were there mostly freshmen in that course or do you know?

Interviewee: I think freshmen and sophomores.

Interviewer: You got a big boost your—

Interviewee: Early on, yeah, and it was really great to go from the B minus my very first paper to, at the end of the year, an A plus and nothing is wrong with this at all.

Interviewer: Did you begin to get As and A plus’s in your [English course] class as well?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: You did? Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. I don’t think I ever got an A plus, but, yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Yeah, those are pretty unusual.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: You’re just a junior now, so you have your whole senior—

Interviewee: Whole next year, yeah.

Interviewer: You’re going into it confident as a writer and with a pretty clear strategy for writing.

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: You must feel good about that.

Interviewee: Yeah, I’m not too nervous about next year.

Interviewer: [Laughter]



Interviewee: I'm sad that I'm going to be leaving after.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. I should move onto other questions. Have you had any experiences with new media writing? We talked about that a bit, so writing for blogs or websites.

Interviewee: In class, I've had to write things for blogs. Like this semester for one of my comm [Communication] classes, we had to write on WordPress [content management system], just wrote papers essentially and posted them onto a WordPress blog for our class, and we had to put in pictures or YouTube videos for it. That was kind of fun.

Interviewer: Why did you post them, do you think? Why did you make them public?

Interviewee: I think it was just practice with new media, because it's a comm class, so we're going to go into things like journalism or do PR, where we're going to be needing to use these skills.

Interviewer: Okay. Other types of things. You said you have a blog that you don't really use that much outside of class, but other experiences, so Power Point?

Interviewee: Yeah, I've been doing Power Point since like middle school.

Interviewer: Since middle school?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Gosh, I didn't figure that out until graduate school. [Laughter]

Interviewee: [Laughter]

Interviewer: You do presentations in class?

Interviewee: Not so much anymore, well that's not true. I guess I did a marketing class this semester. We did a Power Point for our presentation, but that was the only one. Yeah, in class a couple years ago, I used a Power Point to ask for a present for Christmas from my parents.

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: I forget what it was, but I really wanted it at the time, and I didn't think I was going to get it, so I put a whole presentation together for my parents about why I should have whatever it was. I ended up getting it. I forget what—it's been so long, I don't remember what it was anymore, but.

Interviewer: You were using Power Point to make a persuasive argument.

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: You're writing on Power Point, you're putting together, your composing of Power Point, similar in terms of process to print writing?

Interviewee: Power Point I think of as an outline, and what I put on there, I just have my main points and then I want to speak and do elaborating on it. Then I have pictures and colors and stuff, so, yeah. Put everything together in the Power Point into one presentation.

Interviewer: I mean, I'm the same way with Power Point than I am with writing that I've talked about, that each slide has to be perfect before I go to the next one.

Interviewee: Oh, I can't stand that. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: I'm a really impatient person, I think, and so I can't do that. I have to have it all out there immediately, and then I can go back and I can fix it.

Interviewer: You draft out all the slides as it were, and then you go back and tweak them?

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: Yeah. I need to learn to do that. [Laughter]

Interviewee: [Laughter]

Interviewer: This question is very much related. Do you think these new media experiences have had an effect on your more traditional type of writings? Do you think putting together Power Point or using WordPress or whatever it is, do you think that's fed back into your paper writing?

Interviewee: Power Point maybe, actually, because I was always taught to treat it as an outline and just have my main points on there and just put the main points on and then go back and make it pretty. I think that's actually where I got the idea to outline everything first and do my word vomit on the screen and then go back and edit it, now that I think about it. WordPress, no, because I treat that as—I write my paper in a Word document and then I copy and paste it into WordPress.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah, so that's, particularly in the Power Point slides, is kind of—it's fed back into your writing and forced you to draft more, or given you ideas about how to draft.

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: Okay. I asked you this in the very beginning before we started recording. You've been uploading pieces of writing to the study archive on CTools [learning management system]?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: How's that process been going for you?

Interviewee: I've only done it twice, but it's easy so far.

Interviewer: Okay, and what have you uploaded?

Interviewee: I remember I uploaded, last semester, the Glee paper that I really, really liked writing, I did really well on. This semester, I forget what I put on, but it was another piece of writing that I was proud of. I put up things that I like.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah, trying to think how to ask this. The question is, why did you choose them, and it's pretty clear that you're proud of them, but were—I guess, take me through why exactly you were proud of them. The Glee paper you mentioned twice. What do you think's good about that one?

Interviewee: I think it's interesting, it's engaging. I love the show, Glee, so I enjoyed writing it. I think that everyone should watch Glee.

Interviewer: I'm into it, too.

Interviewee: Yeah. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: I got good grades on these papers, and my professors have come back and said, "These are strong pieces of writing."

Interviewer: You got that confirmation.

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: There was a Glee paper and then what else?

Interviewee: I forget what it was this semester. Maybe something else for a comm class. I forget.

Interviewer: You're writing about Desperate Housewives and Glee. What else do you write about?

Interviewee: It's good to be a comm major. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: Let's see, writing about magazines, I wrote about Hulu one time. I wrote about Dexter, the show, the opening sequence of Dexter.

Interviewer: Are you writing mostly about pop culture, pop media?

Interviewee: For the most part, or, I guess, the industries, media industries also.

Interviewer: Have you had, and this is just totally curious, have you had writing assignments that—I mean, you're so confident it seems to me, which is great, but have you had writing assignments that's really challenged you and just has been really difficult for you?

Interviewee: I think one of my international studies majors is more difficult, because I like international studies but I love comm, so that's been much easier for me. That anthropology course I mentioned earlier for international studies, I just wasn't sure what I'm supposed to write. If I'm not supposed to make an argument, what am I supposed to talk about? That was—

Interviewer: For anthropology?

Interviewee: For anthropology.

Interviewer: It's not, then, just content, that you liked Desperate Housewives, Glee or Hulu or whatever, but the type of writing?

Interviewee: Yeah. I've been doing it the last three years. That was easy for me. I was like, okay, I know exactly what I can write about here. It's just a different argument that I'm making or it's a different show that I'm talking about.

Interviewer: But in anthropology, you had to make an argument, too?

Interviewee: Anthropology, they wanted us to just talk about what—like do a comparison contrast of the Incans versus the Aztecs or something like that.

Interviewer: It was straight up compare and contrast?

Interviewee: There wasn't an argument, and I thought that was really strange.

Interviewer: Was that the only lengthy writing you did for that course?

Interviewee: I did a couple of essays that were like that, and they were like four to seven pages.

Interviewer: The reason I'm asking this is, so you're doing argument writing in your comm major, and I assume you're doing some type of argument writing in anthropology. Do you get a sense about how to go about putting together an argument that's different? Is the argumentation different in the two areas?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. In the anthropology course, it's more of, these are the facts and this is what we have. Do a comparison and contrast. Our professor tells us, this is what's going on. In comm, we have these concepts or ideas that we're supposed to apply to any media example.

Interviewer: You have a set or a framework or theory or set of ideas and you apply them.

Interviewee: Right, and then in anthropology, it's just, here is all this information, now you pick the parts that you want to write about and it's all there. There's no room for your own application.

Interviewer: Interesting, so you're comfortable using that mode where you're taking a construct or idea from the class and then applying it to do—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: —analysis.

Interviewee: I like that better, because it's more fun for me. You watch TV for homework. It's really quite terrible. [Laughter]

Interviewer: [Laughter] Yeah, I mean, I like those assignments, too, so you're probably taking a very kind of theoretically dense idea and then applying it toward Glee or something.

Interviewee: Um-hum.

Interviewer: Is that fair?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is that what you're doing?

Interviewee: Yup, definitely.

Interviewer: Okay, so we're wrapping up. Pointing towards the future. The question is, what kinds of writing do you think will be most valuable for your career, and do you have any sense of what you might want to do?

Interviewee: Well, at the moment, I think that I want to go into PR, so I think that more the comm aspect, having an idea and then applying it to some example will be more applicable to me, because I'll be trying to make my company look good or whatever it is.

Interviewer: Okay. This is a great question. If you could tell your teachers one thing about writing or how to teach writing, what would you say?

Interviewee: Get rid of the peer reviews—

Interviewer: [Laughter]

Interviewee: —because I hate those. I'd rather them take a class day to just sit in their office and we can go in there individually and talk with the teachers, than have our peers look at it.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. I'll push you on this a little bit.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: With a peer—office hours, students coming in, talking about their papers is wonderful and ideal, it's just so time consuming.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: I'm just thinking logistically, practically. Maybe they're big courses. The peer review, partly, is to give you more feedback.

Interviewee: I can see that, I just haven't found it helpful.

Interviewer: You just haven't found it helpful. Is there any way that you think that it could be helpful?

Interviewee: For peers, no. [Laughter]

Interviewer: You really don't.

Interviewee: I really don't. I really hate them. I love my peers, they're great. I love them for maybe bouncing off ideas about a paper or something or for the group products. I trust them with that much more than my writing.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, isn't bouncing ideas part of giving you feedback?

Interviewee: In my experience, it's always been, we have a draft and they're supposed to go back and tell you, "This was good, this was bad," and fix your grammar. Early on, maybe just a brainstorming thing or something, we can brainstorm.

Interviewer: Yeah. I'm trying to salvage the whole concept of peer review for you.  
[Laughter]

Interviewee: [Laughter]

Interviewer: Maybe if that happened earlier and you're not even looking at a full draft.

Interviewee: Maybe.

Interviewer: If there's some peer review about ideas.

Interviewee: Maybe. That might be better.

Interviewer: Okay. Any other things about writing that you'd want to tell teachers of writing?

Interviewee: No, I don't think so. That's pretty much it.

Interviewer: You've been great. Your answers are really helpful. Any other final comments you would want to add?

Interviewee: Nope, I think we pretty much covered it.

[...]

[End of Audio]