

*Interviewer:* Okay. This is \*\*\*, and I am here with \*\*\*. The date is December 19. [...].

We'll start from the beginning. The first question in the beginning is: how would you describe yourself as a writer?

*Interviewee:* I think that I'm analytical and that I like to make arguments and push back against arguments.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Anything else?

*Interviewee:* No. Those are really the main things I think.

*Interviewer:* Okay. How would you describe the role of writing in your life thus far?

*Interviewee:* It's just very associated with school and education. I don't really write for fun, but I enjoy writing. It's not necessarily something that it'll part of my future career, in terms of writing. Yeah, it's not something that I plan to do with my life.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. What do you see as your future career at this point?

*Interviewee:* Medicine.

*Interviewer:* Oh, I see. Interesting. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began at the University of Michigan?

*Interviewee:* I think that I came into school knowing that, at least in my high school, I was a good writer, but I think that I wasn't concise. I made arguments by saying the same things a hundred times without really moving the argument forward.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Interesting. How did that change over the course of Michigan?

*Interviewee:* I think that as I had taken more writing classes and also read more of my science textbooks, I learned to be more concise and to move an argument forward as opposed to harping on the same thing.

*Interviewer:* Hmm. Interesting. Okay. Anything else? Any other changes that have occurred in your writing since you came here to Michigan?

*Interviewee:* I think I learned that writing doesn't always have to be so formal, and that was really the result of [English course].

*Interviewer:* Hmm. What was the course title of that?

*Interviewee:* It's the [Title of course]. The one I took was [Title of course].

*Interviewer:* Oh!

*Interviewee:* That was really the first time that I took a course where you wrote about yourself, but by doing so, it could be less formal. That was really the first time that I was exposed to that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. What was that like—that class?

*Interviewee:* I loved it. It was one of my favorite classes that I took here. It was just a really—the environment of the class was one of the best that I've ever had.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. What else did it teach you about writing?

*Interviewee:* I think that I would go to office hours for that class and just talk with the professor, and that would end up helping me with my writing, but I wouldn't necessarily go in there with targeted questions that I wanted to ask about my papers. I think that I learned that facilitating conversation—even if it's about something that's distally related to your paper, it can spark ideas.

*Interviewer:* Interesting. Let's see. How else did that class change you as a writer?

*Interviewee:* I think that the main thing is that, like I already said, that I learned that good writing can be less formal, but I also learned that even less formal writing or personal narrative, I guess, style writing can have a larger point, which I think is great. Those are the two main things.

*Interviewer:* Cool. Let's see. Now are there any other ways that you would say you might have grown and changed as a writer since you started?

*Interviewee:* I think those are the main things.

*Interviewer:* Okay. As you graduate, what are your goals for yourself as a writer?

*Interviewee:* I don't know that I necessarily have any because it's not something that I plan to do every day or often. I don't know that I really have any goals for that.

*Interviewer:* Are there ways that you still feel you would like to improve your writing?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Obviously, there's lots of ways that I can improve my writing. I just don't know whether I'll have the time to do that with med school. It's not a priority of mine. It's just if I have time, then I will.

*Interviewer:* Okay. I see. Moving along, thinking across your writing experiences at U of M [University of Michigan], what do you think at this point it means to write well?

*Interviewee:* I think it means being concise but also being able to move an argument further, and I think it means having something to grapple with that you can then write about. That's when I think I write best. That's what I think good writing is, is that it's something that it's obvious that whoever wrote it was grappling with something and that by reading it, the audience can then—they see the implications of that as well.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. What are some of the things you've grappled with in your writing here?

*Interviewee:* It's all basically whatever my professors assign, so it's not really like self-grappling. [Chuckles] That's not even a word. I don't know. I guess in the capstone course I just wrote a few small essays about the implications of fashion in different situations. I like clothing and fashion, so thinking about it in a broader context with specific cases allowed me to push back against some common ideas, I think.

*Interviewer:* Hmm! Fascinating. Any other experiences that you've had at U of M [University of Michigan] that have led you to those conclusions about good writing?

*Interviewee:* No. I think that the fact that I took—I've taken courses all over the place. I've taken econ. I've taken sciences. I've taken poli sci [Political Science]. I've taken English. I've taken Hebrew classes. All these different disciplines. Learning how to read and write within those disciplines, I think that I learned that good writing changes depending on the situation and the academic discipline.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. What have you noticed, depending on the discipline? Could you talk about different disciplines and what kind of writing those disciplines seem to call for?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think scientific writing is very much concise and to the point and a lot of explaining of mechanisms. In anthropology, I think you can get away with having a lot of text about the same thing or a lot of text about nothing. It's still talking about something, but if you're looking at it through a scientific lens, they're really talking about the same thing over and over again, so it's not necessary.

Then English is a lot fluffier language, I think. I don't really know. It's hard for me to say exactly what the differences are, but I know that when I take the classes, I can pick up on the differences in the writing.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Do you consider yourself better at one kind of writing than another, depending on the class?

*Interviewee:* No. I think that I don't know if I necessarily adapt to these different writing styles because it's not like I'm a professional in one of these fields. I don't really think that I'm better at one just because I don't think I know enough about one to really write in that style.

*Interviewer:* Hmm. I see. Hmm. Interesting. Moving it back to writing courses particularly, which upper level writing courses have you taken?

*Interviewee:* I took [English course], and I just took [Anthropology course], which was upper level. I think those are the only two.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Let's talk about [English course]. That was [Title of course]?

*Interviewee:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Okay. We talked about this a little bit already, but do you have anything more to say? What effect did that class have on you as a writer?

*Interviewee:* It's basically what I already said, that I learned that good writing can be less formal and that even less formal writing can have a overarching argument and point.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Did that class affect your process at all?

*Interviewee:* No. I really had done the same writing process since I was in middle school, which is writing an essay and then rewriting it a hundred times. I think that I realized in that class that it's okay if I don't like an essay just to delete it all and start again, even if it's the day before it's due. I guess that became part of my process. It's just me being unhappy with what I wrote and deleting it, but other than that—

*Interviewer:* What would lead you to that conclusion—that you wanted to just delete it all? What are some the things you find in your writing that make you feel like, "This is just not what I want"?

*Interviewee:* I don't know if there are specific things. It's just if I write it and then I feel like it doesn't make sense to me or if I just don't like it for whatever reason. I do this a lot now. I just get rid of the whole thing, and I start again.

*Interviewer:* I see. Now let's talk about the anthropology class. What was your experience in that class?

*Interviewee:* It was interesting because we had to write four essays, and they all had the same prompt, but it was applying class readings and broader points that we talked about in class to a specific article that we were assigned. We had the option of three different articles for each paper, and we picked one.

It was interesting because we had to analyze the article through the lens of journal articles that we had read for class. It was an exercise in projecting what the journal article authors—how they would respond to the other article. In that respect it was a newer thing, but the problem with it was that when you read the articles like the ones that we were writing about, it was so obvious what was wrong with them.

Being able to apply the anthropology readings to these articles was so easy that it wasn't really an exercise. It was just writing it down. I don't know if they intended it to be harder than it was, but I didn't find—I definitely spent time on it, but in terms of applying the arguments—in terms of analyzing the article through the other authors, that wasn't really an exercise at all.

When I write something, I like to be a little challenged. I think that's what I like about writing, is not necessarily the writing but the analyzing that goes on before you write, and this—there was very little analysis and much more, "Can you write this down?"

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Interesting. Was there any assignment in that class that had more of an analytical element?

*Interviewee:* No. Those were the only assignments. I think it was probably meant to be analytical. I just didn't necessarily find it to be analytical.

*Interviewer:* Sure. How did that class overall affect your writing?

*Interviewee:* I really liked the class, and I think that even though it was a medical anthropology class, I think that a lot of the ideas spill over. I just think they're interesting to think about. I don't know if it necessarily affected my writing, but in terms of just having something else to think about, that will affect what I write about, I think.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. You learned about the subject.

*Interviewee:* Right.

*Interviewer:* Do you still make use of what you learned in either of those courses in your writing now?

*Interviewee:* I just took the anthro [Anthropology] class, so I haven't really written since that class, but the [English course] class—I definitely tried to talk through my ideas or just have a conversation related to it before I write because I think that it helped me to understand how someone else thinks about it, and it's just not all in my own head.

*Interviewer:* Hmm. Any other way?

*Interviewee:* No. That's it.

*Interviewer:* Okay. What other writing courses have you taken?

*Interviewee:* I took [English course] and [English 200 level course]. I took the minor in writing courses, and I took English—I wanna say [English [Writing course] level course].

*Interviewer:* Wow. Okay.

*Interviewee:* I think it was [English [Writing course] level course]. It might've been [English [Writing course] level course].

*Interviewer:* What was [cross talk 15:44]?

*Interviewee:* It was cross-listed as an international studies class, so I took it because of my major. [...].

*Interviewer:* Hmm. Fascinating. You mentioned quite a few courses.

*Interviewee:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewer:* Talk about the ones that you would say most affected your writing, your process, your strengths and weaknesses. Which of those courses would you say had the greatest effect?

*Interviewee:* Definitely the [English [Writing course] level course]. The other two classes—maybe it was just because I didn't go to office hours. They were just a pretty mechanistic: went to class, wrote a paper, got it back, and that it was it. They weren't necessarily so hard. If I had a problem on an essay, then I would just ask for clarification, so I would go to office hours to get help, but not to the extent that I do now.

The [English [Writing course] level course] class was really the only opportunity I had in college to analyze literature, and I think that doing that is a really good mental exercise. By doing that while knowing that whatever we read was part of

shaping human rights [...]—writing while knowing that, it shows what the small micro-analysis has to do with a larger idea.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Huh! How did that teach you about how to write? How did that change the writing the paper, thinking about this?

*Interviewee:* I just think because it shows you that these small things that look like they're isolated or have no relevance to anything besides in the book are—they have their own implications, and they're related to a broader picture, which in this case was human rights, which is a big thing.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Great. Let's see. Do you still make use of what you learned in those courses now? Well, I just asked that, didn't I? *[Chuckles]*

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think I do, but I don't know if I do it consciously. Just knowing that the smaller things have broader implications.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Okay. Did you take these writing courses in your concentration?

*Interviewee:* Two of them. The anthro one and the [English [Writing course] level course].

*Interviewer:* Okay. Your concentration is?

*Interviewee:* International studies.

*Interviewer:* Got it. Now, how have those courses affected the writing you do in your concentration specifically?

*Interviewee:* Those are really the—it's really the only writing I did in my concentration. International studies doesn't have any writing requirements, so most of the classes I took—maybe I have to write a response or an essay, but I don't even think I had to in most of them.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. What do you think it means to write well in international studies?

*Interviewee:* I don't think that I've taken enough courses to really know because so many of the ones I've taken have counted for my major but have been history or anthropology or poli sci [Political Science], so I don't know that I have an answer to that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. You didn't do much writing in those courses?

*Interviewee:* No, not really.

*Interviewer:* Huh. How did they assess you?

*Interviewee:* Exams mostly. Discussion. There were maybe one or two essays, but they were not anything that I can remember or that was particularly enlightening.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Nonetheless, now that you are about to graduate, how confident did you feel about writing—do you feel about writing in your concentration?

*Interviewee:* Because the courses I took in my concentration were all over the place, I would say that I feel confident writing in those ways, but, again, like I said earlier, I haven't really taken enough of any field besides maybe science to feel confident in how I write for that field. I can feel confident in my ideas, but I don't know necessarily if they translate into a certain way of writing.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. I see. Now, just out of curiosity, how does that relate to the medicine emphasis you mentioned earlier—international relations and medicine?

*Interviewee:* My sub-concentration within international studies is global environment and health.

*Interviewer:* Got it. Okay.

*Interviewee:* It actually bashes medicine a lot—the classes I took. Some of them talk about everything that's wrong with biomedicine, which is interesting, but I really just majored in it because I do have an interest in global health, and I also wanted to be exposed to as much as I could because I knew that once medical school started, it would be all science all the time.

*Interviewer:* Got it. Let's see. Finally, how often have you used skills or strategies learned in the writing classes in other courses?

*Interviewee:* I think the writing classes are valuable in terms of how I think about things and drawing connections between things. In the sciences, where everything is presented as—they're related to each other, but they're not necessarily presented to you in that way. It's nice to be able to draw connections between them.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Great. Now, what impact has the minor capstone course, [Writing course], had overall on your writing?

*Interviewee:* I think, again, it's really the same thing: that I realized, as I did in [English course], that talking about what I wanna write helps me write it.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. How have you had opportunities to do that in [Writing course]?



*Interviewee:* Because my class was so small—there was four or five people in it—that's really all we did, was talk about each of our essays before or during our process of writing them. I think that helps form a stronger argument.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Great. How else has the course had an impact on your writing?

*Interviewee:* I think that's really the main—really mostly what we did was talk about things and then write them down, so I think that's definitely the main way. We didn't really do much other writing besides that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Besides what exactly?

*Interviewee:* We did the capstone project, which is what we talked about that, and then we wrote the developmental essay, which we also talked about. In terms of talking it through, it was fine.

That essay itself, I could do without. I don't think it—whereas I think the fashion essays allowed me to push back against certain ideas and the exercise of doing that will help me in my writing, the developmental essay or the evolution essay, whatever, it was called—there really wasn't anything to push back against, and I don't think that writing that will help me with my writing in the future.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Could you talk a little more about that group element of the course and how that shaped your writing or what you learned from that?

*Interviewee:* I think that because I was in the other—I was in the class for two weeks maybe a semester ago or something, and I think that having a smaller class really made all the difference because when we workshop essays, you're not overwhelmed by having to workshop a lot of people's. Also, in a larger class where you split up into groups to workshop essays, you don't really get anything done.

I think it was helpful to have a small class where you knew ahead of time what everyone was writing about, and you knew their thought process in writing it. I think that helped me a lot.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Great. What was some of the feedback you were getting from people that you valued or didn't value?

*Interviewee:* Most of the feedback was in terms of ideas, like where I could be more clear. I think stuff like that was the most valuable.

I think the feedback that wasn't valuable was—my project had four mini-essays in it, so before I had written all four of them, people would give me ideas for another one to write. This is not necessarily a good thing. I'd rather just come up with an

idea by myself than write about something that someone else tells me to, so in that respect, the feedback wasn't helpful.

*Interviewer:* Okay. I see. Could you also talk a little bit about that developmental essay and maybe why that felt less important to you?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Again, I liked—when I write things, I like to have something that I can push against or have an idea that I can grapple with. When you're looking at your own development, there really isn't anything to argue against because it is what it is. I guess I'm just not particularly interested or concerned with how my writing has changed.

I also think that it would be more interesting if you trace your evolution over a 10-year period or, later in my life, a 20-year period, but over 4 years, I don't know that my writing has really changed that much. I think the argument I made in the essay was true, but I don't necessarily even believe it.

*Interviewer:* Hmm. What was your argument?

*Interviewee:* That taking sciences strengthened my writing and vice versa, so there's a spill-over effect. I think that it's true in terms of my thought process about things and how I approach things, and how I think about things will obviously affect my writing, but I don't know that it really affected my writing to the extent that I wrote about, but I had to write about something.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* It's true in terms of this spill-over. I don't think I have a large enough writing sample to really know if it's a valid argument or not.

*Interviewer:* I see. Hmm.

*[Extraneous conversation heard in background 28:32]*

*[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* I don't know what's going on. Okay. Let's see. Talk more about how else has that course impacted your sense of yourself as a writer.

*Interviewee:* I think it just made it more obvious to me that I like to write about things that I can argue against, and I like to write about things that I can learn from as I write them. Let's see. I also realized that I like to incorporate different things into my writing, whether it's from popular culture or something that I personally think about or medical school.

I like to incorporate different elements of things into what I write. I guess I think that could be due to that spill-over effect, but, again, it's one essay, so you can't really make a claim based on one essay.

*Interviewer:* Right. Makes sense. Specifically, what effect has the capstone project had on you as a writer?

*Interviewee:* The capstone project was my favorite part about the class. I just think that it allowed me to combine analytical skills that I gained from the sciences or even from that literature class—the human rights one—with the more fluffy, personal thought type thing, because I feel like most of the essays that I've written in college have been one or the other. This essay was a combination of it, so I think that will be helpful if and when I write more like this in the future.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. What was the essay about?

*Interviewee:* Fashion. It was the one I wrote four of them.

*Interviewer:* Right. How long were they?

*Interviewee:* Not very long. Three or four pages each.

*Interviewer:* Each. Okay. Why did you choose that project?

*Interviewee:* I wanted to write about something that I've never written about before and something that was not related to science or medicine in any way. Originally, it started with me wanting to make a fashion blog because I read a lot of them. I have a lot of problems with them, but I read them anyways. I don't like using the computer to make blogs or to do that.

I also found that actually making a fashion blog, I don't really have a lot to say in terms of what people should wear. I guess I don't really—I'm interested in fashion and the implications, but I don't really care what people wear. Making a fashion blog does not go with that at all. That evolved into me writing these four essays.

*Interviewer:* What was your process like in writing those four essays? Could you talk about how they were spaced out and when you got the idea for one versus the next?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I don't really know. We had to make a production plan. I think that's what it was called—a schedule of when you were gonna hand things in, and I didn't follow it at all. I wrote two of them really early in the process and then two of them fairly late in the process.

The first one was about fashion and feminism, drawing upon this big spectacle that was made of Marissa Mayer being on the cover—in Vogue. That I had read about a

lot online over the summer, so I knew that it was something that I wanted to write about, but the other ones I just started writing. Then if something came up that I was interested in it, I ended up deleting the essay and then writing something that was more targeted.

One of them was about—I was gonna write about the showgirls, but when I started, I realized I didn't have enough to say about how fashion—there just wasn't enough for me to talk about, but that ended up being a snippet in another essay. Just writing things and then finding one idea I liked and then writing about that.

*Interviewer:* I see.

*Interviewer:* [...]. Now, did you—to what extent did you return to those essays over the course of the semester, or did you hand in—what was the revision process like for that?

*Interviewee:* Normally, when I write essays, I revise them a hundred times. This, I didn't. I went over them probably two or three times, but normally it's this whole long process. I think I would've—ideally, I would've gone over them more. There was no time, with making a portfolio, and doing the developmental essay, and having other classes. It was more of a time thing, but I'm still happy with how it came out.

*Interviewer:* What do you think is strong about those essays?

*Interviewee:* I don't really know there really is anything so strong about them. I just think that they just show that I like to argue against things and grapple with different things, I guess.

*Interviewer:* If you could go back and make revisions, would you do so?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I would probably keep two of them and delete two of them, or delete all of them and start again. I don't exactly know what the revisions would be, but I guess I'm someone that, once I hand in an essay, I don't look at it, cuz I'll just make myself angry that I didn't revise something.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Makes sense. Yeah. It can be hard looking at past essays.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

[...]

*Interviewer:* [...]. Can you tell me about the most memorable aspect of your experience with ePortfolio? What was fun 00:24?

*Interviewee:* I don't really know that I—I don't really enjoy writing these things, so I would say writing the fashion essay would be the most enjoyable—that's not really part of the ePortfolio—or I guess looking at other things I had written throughout my four years.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Let's see. What were the aims of the ePortfolio? What narrative did you hope to tell?

*Interviewee:* I didn't really have anything in mind. I just was doing what the instructions told me to do, but I guess I tried to just show—I tried to pick essays that showed how my writing has changed.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Each of these [...] is an essay?

*Interviewee:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Okay. What kind of progression would you say that [they] show, like this visual?

*Interviewee:* I tried to organize them in terms of the year that I wrote them—

*Interviewer:* Oh. I see.

*Interviewee:* - except the first one is the evolution essay. The first one serves as a starting point—

*Interviewer:* I see.

*Interviewee:* - for how my writing has changed or how I guess I think it has changed, if it really has. The other ones just go chronologically.

*Interviewer:* Okay. I see. The chronology?

*Interviewee:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewer:* Did you also—was there any other way besides sheer chronology that these essays progress?

*Interviewee:* No.

*Interviewer:* Okay.

*Interviewee:* It's just chronology. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Okay. Let's see. Let me look at my next question here. Did you design the ePortfolio to create a particular reader experience?

*Interviewee:* Again, it was just that they would look at it chronologically and just see if the argument that I made in the evolution essay held up.

*Interviewer:* I see. Now, what was the argument overall in the evolution essay?

*Interviewee:* That as I took more sciences and more humanities, there was a spill-over effect between them.

*Interviewer:* Got it. Okay. [...]

*Interviewee:* Really, the only science one is the hemoglobin, but—

*Interviewee:* There we go.

*Interviewee:* - cuz I don't really write—and I said this, I think, in the evolution essay. When we had to write a scientific essay, which I think there're only two that I wrote, there were such strict guidelines that you can't really see how me taking social science and humanities affected my writing because I would've not gotten an A. Obviously, because I wanted an A, I had to write—I had to include very specific things.

*Interviewer:* I see. There was not as much room for shaking it up.

*Interviewee:* Right.

*Interviewer:* Let's see. Did you notice any relationships among your artifacts as you created your ePortfolio?

*Interviewee:* I realized that I really like pop culture. A lot of them talk about different ad campaigns, or Lebron James, or fashion, which I guess are all—I guess that's four of them that are about pop culture.

*Interviewer:* Uh-huh. Okay. Mm-hmm. Any other trends or connections across the essays?

*Interviewee:* Not really. I think that you can see that my writing—I learned that writing can be less formal. When I say that I learned that I like pop culture, I mean that I like to incorporate things into my essays. [...], but I wasn't making—I was making an analytical argument about how pop culture. I like to apply what I'm interested in into what the assignment is.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Hmm. Any other relationships that you want the readers to notice?

*Interviewee:* That I want the readers to notice?

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

*Interviewee:* No. I think the main thing was just that see how my writing has become more concise and less formal and hopefully more effective.

*Interviewer:* Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Do you think that making this portfolio had an effect on your writing?

*Interviewee:* No. I think if I would've—[chuckles]—I think that if I would've had a different approach to the portfolio and made it more text, then maybe, but as a general rule, I don't think that reflective writing helps much, or reflection on it. I think how I used to write is how I used to write but not necessarily how I write anymore, and spending time reflecting on how I used to write does me no good now.

*Interviewer:* Hmm!

*Interviewee:* That's the approach that I take. I think it's interesting or I guess almost cringe-worthy to see how my writing used to be, but I don't know that making this portfolio and seeing it 05:53 has changed how I write.

*Interviewee:* Hmm. I see. What did you learn from the reflective writing in the ePortfolio, both the evidence-based essay you wrote and the contextual reflection?

*Interviewee:* I didn't include contextual reflection.

*Interviewer:* Oh, okay.

*Interviewee:* I just chose not to, even though I might've been supposed to, so I guess it's hard to answer that question because I didn't do that.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. How about the other essay? There was that contextual reflection and then the evidence-based essay.

*Interviewee:* I don't know what that is. If that means the evolution essay, I think it just made apparent to me how taking all these different classes helped me, but I don't know that it particularly helps my writing.

*Interviewer:* Okay. I see. Last thing about your portfolio, big question: what could people interested in writing development, such as program administrators like those in [Sweetland Writing Center], learn about writing development from your capstone ePortfolio?

*Interviewee:* I think that they could learn classes in a lot of different disciplines was important to my own writing development, so it might be important to

someone else's as well. I think that—I said this before, but a key thing in my own development was talking with the professor, cuz I think talking to someone who knows how you write, and knows what the assignment is and knows the ideas you're grappling with, is the most important thing to get to making something that you like.

I think that people have a tendency to go to an outside source or someone else to have them read their writing. I think maybe that's good if you think you're done with it, but I think for me that's the worst thing because talking to the professor, who has an awareness, a little bit, of who you are is more helpful than talking to someone else who's gonna critique it based on someone else's standards.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. It sounds like that small group attention helped.

*Interviewee:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Anything else from your ePortfolio that administrators could potentially learn about your experience as a writer here?

*Interviewee:* I don't know. I don't really know. *[Pause]* I guess maybe—not to keep knocking reflective writing, but I think there's this big push for it, and I don't think it's helpful, and I don't think it's helpful for my evolution as a writer. Maybe because I didn't include it, maybe they'll realize that. I don't really know that they can really glean so much information from my portfolio.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Alright. Now we'd like to reflect—we'd like you to reflect back on your gateway course, which you took as a—

*Interviewee:* A sophomore?

*Interviewer:* - a sophomore.

*Interviewee:* Maybe a junior. A junior.

*Interviewer:* Okay, as a junior. How did you experience in the capstone course compared to your experience in the gateway course?

*Interviewee:* I think they're totally different classes. The gateway course was like a typical English class that you have lots of assignments, and you do the assignments. I really liked it, but it was just like a normal class.

I think this was probably because my capstone course was so small, but my capstone course was more like a collaborative class. It allowed you to really think out loud and get feedback. I think that, like I said, by talking to other people and getting their feedback, even if I don't like anything that they have to say, I come up with my own new ideas by talking to them.



One of the courses was just like a typical class. The capstone was more about thinking and the process behind the writing.

*Interviewer:* Hmm! What did you learn about thinking?

*Interviewee:* I just think that it's helpful, like I said, just in talking, whether it's to classmates or to the professor. My mind was constantly thinking about what I was writing about, but not only that, the implications and the consequences of the ideas that I was talking about, and that helped me write, I think.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Any other comments on your experiences working with fellow writers throughout the minor?

*Interviewee:* I think that the only time I really worked with them was in the capstone course. There was time in—I don't know if I remember it correctly, but I think in the gateway course, there was some time where you could meet with your fellow students, but because I tend to just delete what I write, getting their feedback isn't helpful. I delete it and then change it and then hand that in.

I think that in a smaller class, where I did do that once, but it's harder for me to—also in the capstone, because we were working on this the whole semester, if I would've deleted the whole thing the day before I had to hand it in, I would be hurting myself because it would not have been physically possible for me to write all that and hand it in. I think that working with other people in a small environment held me accountable for what I was writing.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Interesting. What are the differences you see between the gateway and the capstones ePortfolio?

*Interviewee:* I think that the gateway ePortfolio was a lot harder, and it required a lot more work on my behalf. The capstone—I think there's a lot of time spent talking about it, but I just made it all in a weekend and was done with it.

I guess it's interesting because a lot of people in my class were saying how they included a link to the portfolio on a job application or on a resume. For me, I don't like when other people read what I wrote, so I have no—I think maybe because the portfolio isn't useful for me in my career or in my future, maybe I approach it differently than other people, but I do think that the gateway ePortfolio was a lot more challenging than the capstone course.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. You touched on this already, but the gateway and capstone courses emphasize reflective writing in various forms. How would you describe your experiences with this kind of reflection?

*Interviewee:* Again, I don't know that I really—the reflective writing that I've done, I write that because I'm in school and I need to do my assignments. That's not to say that I'm not gonna do it well or enthusiastically. I just don't really see how it helps me.

Maybe it'll be something that'll help me in 20 years. I don't really know now, but I think that when I'm asked to write reflectively, I don't like it. I don't—it wasn't so—I feel like in the capstone course, even though we had to do that evolution essay, most of the reflection was talking in class.

I'm fine with that because I don't feel like it's trying to change how I write or something, but when we have to write reflectively, I think it's easy to make something up and write it. It's not necessarily helpful, so even though it's true, it doesn't have as a profound effect on me as I think they want it to. I don't know.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. What is an example of an assignment in reflective writing that you don't find helpful?

*Interviewee:* I don't even remember the last time—I think that the evolution essay is a perfect example of that. I wrote it, and I think it is good, but I don't necessarily see how it's helpful.

I think that a key thing that can be done when students are asked to write effectively is to explain what the point is of reflective writing because, from its name, it seems like you are doing some diary entry, like self-analysis. It doesn't seem useful.

I think it might've been more useful had there been a more targeted purpose that we knew of. Say, "This is reflective writing. The purpose of it is—" or changing its name, not calling it reflective writing and calling it "self-analysis." It sounds dumb, but I think that, for me—at least I would take something more seriously, not that I don't take this seriously because I do, but I think that changing its name to some type of analysis makes it more legitimate and less fluffy.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. I see. You talked about the evolution as being a perfect example. What exactly were the requirements of that essay?

*Interviewee:* I don't remember exactly. I wanna say it was just to trace how our writing has changed over the past four years and why it has changed.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Okay. Got it. Are you still using reflection in your writing, whether assigned or voluntary?

*Interviewee:* No. I also haven't written since—I just handed in an essay, but I haven't really done anything so substantial.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. What is your understanding of reflective writing when I'm asking you these questions? What is your perception of it?

*Interviewee:* Again, I think that it's a way for you to look back on your writing or your writing process and glean some type of information from it, but I don't—yeah. I think that I can do that without writing. I think that just happens naturally after you write something, in your mind. I don't necessarily write it down.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. I see. Has this reflection given you new ways to talk about your writing, new terms or concepts?

*Interviewee:* I don't think so. Maybe I'm just doing it wrong, but I don't think it has.  
[Chuckles]

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

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I don't know if this is possible, but keeping the classes small. The reason why I liked the capstone course so much was that it was really small and that it's easier to write something of substance if it's a small class and you're constantly getting feedback.

I also think that if reflective writing is gonna continue to be emphasized, then they either need to explain what it is, or change its name, or do something that makes it more legitimate, because I know I have friends who are in the program or who are already graduated from it, and I'm not the only one that thinks of it as a fluffy substitute to whatever else it is I'm writing. I think doing something with that would be probably a good idea.

Then, also, I get that new media is an important part of writing today, and I don't think it should be not used completely, but I think that I wanted to do a writing minor because I like to write. That doesn't necessarily mean that I want to make an ePortfolio. I think that if the writing minor is really—if it's advertised to people of all different interests, it's contradictory to making an ePortfolio, because what is that gonna do for a lot of people?

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

*Interviewee:* I think professors should make their students go to office hours because I think that it's not emphasized, and I think that it should be, because I know it helped me with my writing. I don't really know what else.

I think that the most ineffective thing that I've done is I took an English class that we read a textbook about writing, and that doesn't help. I think that just facilitating conversation about anything—that's what was done in my [English course], it was

what was done in [English [Writing course] level course], and it was done in the capstone course.

I think that's the most helpful thing for writing and that if people have their own smaller issues, that's what office hours are for. I think that people don't go to office hours, but they should.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Got it. Anything else? Any other advice?

*Interviewee:* No. I don't really have any other teaching advice or anything.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Any last comments about your writing experience or the minor program, etcetera?

*Interviewee:* I really like the minor program. I feel like I sat here for the past hour criticizing it, but I really did like it, and if I didn't, I would've dropped out of it. I did like it.

*Interviewer:* What did you find the most valuable about it?

*Interviewee:* I think it just gave me an excuse to take classes that I could write. I also think that because I took classes that I could write—like I said before, it just helps me analyze things and draw connections between things.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Great. Alright. [...].

*[End of Audio]*