Interviewer: I think we're under way here. My name is ***. I'm interviewing *** on April 28 […].

[…]

Interviewer: The study, at this point, is interested in hearing about your experiences looking back, and across your experiences at U of M [University of Michigan], and also in the Writing minor.

Interviewee: Sure.

Interviewer: The questions start broad, and then will narrow in to talk a bit about specific things that you encountered along the way.

Interviewee: Great.

Interviewer: This first question is very broad. It essentially just asks how, at this point, you would describe yourself as a writer.

Interviewee: That's always a—I'm sorry, that's always a fun question. I love those ones. I'm still growing as a writer. I think my biggest thing, as a writer, is to leave myself out of whatever I'm talking about. By that I mean, so when I write I don't write necessarily for personal narrative, or I don't write poetry. I write about other people. My writing style is mainly descriptive, and whatever I observe. The kind of stuff that I do as a work—in work as a journalist, excuse me. My writing style is very simple in that it's almost too repetitive, too. I'm writing the same things over and over. You're writing about a game, and this is bound to happen. A game has the same event happen over and over.

Interviewer: Yeah, and when you make reference to writing about the game, we were just talking about the fact that you *[cross talk 01:42]*.

[…]

Interviewee: […]. Yeah, as a […] journalist for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper], and then as freelance authors in freelance work and internships […] and such, a background all in that, yeah.

Interviewer: That's great. Thinking about that description of yourself, the next question asks how you would describe yourself as a writer when you came to [University of Michigan]. We're interested in—do you feel like that image has changed at all, or that sense of yourself?

Interviewee: Oh, sure. Well, yeah, yeah. That's definitely a change. I think—and this is gonna build off of what I just talked about—as a journalist, I was writing

concise work. I was writing descriptive work and about other people. When I was in—maybe, came into college, I was writing longer and more about myself, 'cause this is a—as a freshman, they want you to talk about yourself sometimes. I'm thinking I—it felt uncomfortable. I guess I became more comfortable from when I first started.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you have a sense what you would attribute that to?

Interviewee: I would say experience, number one, and just working with others. The [local Ann Arbor newspaper] is very hands on, of course. Of course, I shouldn't discredit this, too. There's a lot of teachers that were very—worked much closer with me than they could in high school, or in the beginning years in college. I think hands-on work and experiences, pretty much, the overall consensus on that.

Interviewer: That makes sense. As you're getting ready to graduate right now—we talked about this a little as we were just settling in—the question asks what your goals are for yourself as a writer and, in your case, it sounds like that intersects some of just professional goals, too.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. I think that I would like to continue being a journalist in some capacity, whether it's in an editing role or a reporting role, something where I can interact with sports in that capacity, too.

Interviewer: Thinking about your writing experiences across U of M [University of Michigan], did you transfer here from another school at all?

Interviewee: No, no. I came—

Interviewer: Just here at U of M [University of Michigan] then. What would you say, at this point, it means to write well?

Interviewee: Well, my general idea is that it's just to please someone else, with your writing. I think my idea of writing well is to get someone talking about your writing. Maybe you've written something that sparks that conversation, or even something that writes well enough where you actually do please someone and someone says, "I think you did a very nice job. Thank you for doing this," or "Hey, I'd love to talk further about that." That's just my experience as a journalist, too. When I wrote my better pieces, I know I heard people who were sharing them on social media or emailing me, or coming up to me and saying, "Hi, I really like 'X' piece." I think that it tells me what you write well.

Writing well is tough, because you're supposed to—and we're supposed to wait for others to tell us if we write well or not. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: If I was just writing for myself, at some point, you may need other human interaction to tell you that feedback.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know. It's not always in isolation, right?

Interviewee: That's why we have teachers, people like this, who are listening and you who are interviewing, because you're tryin' to—you're gonna read my work later, or they're going to talk about that. Someone's gotta tell you whether you did—about your job that you just did there.

Interviewer: That makes a lot of sense. The next couple of questions ask specifically about teachers and writing courses. They're interested in learning what upper-level writing courses you ended up taking. Then, we'll talk a little bit about what your experiences were like with those.

Interviewee: Okay, yeah.

Interviewer: For you, what counted as upper-level writing courses?

Interviewee: If I'm correct, I know I took [English 300 level course]. It's [Title of course]. I know I took [English 400 level course], which is [Title of course]. I've taken [Title of course], that's [English 300 level course]—I wish I had a number in my head. I just took the class, too. That's embarrassing.

Interviewer: [Title of course]?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, with [Instructor], good guy.

Interviewer: Okay, great.

Interviewee: Then I'm sure there were a couple Com courses in there that are counted, like Com—it used to be [Communications course]. Now it would be [Communication 200 level course], with [Instructor]. It's on my transcript somewhere.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I probably should have—I should actually have come up with a copy for that. Those are the ones that I think were those.

Interviewer: Either thinking across the experiences of those classes, or if you want to pick one or two that might we might look into, they're interested in your thinking about what effect those upper-level writing courses had on you as a writer.

Interviewee: There's [English 300 level course], was with getting [Instructor].

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: [Instructor] is a really brilliant guy and was really cool to talk to. I actually ended up having him for three classes throughout college, which seemed incredible, because I got him randomly assigned for two times.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah, [Instructor] and I became really close. In the minor in Writing, we'll talk about this, I'm sure. On one of my Capstone projects, we had to have an advisor. He because me advisor. That was cool. He got to see my growth from freshman year all the way to senior year. I think what he did, primarily, that was so helpful, […]—

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

Interviewee: - yeah, besides bringing me down to earth, was help me find some, I guess, transitions, are the best way of sayin' it, tryin' to make my writing flow—I'm using the "flow" as such a real buzzword—making my writing transition smoothly, go from one point to another, because there—his argument was, "You've got some good points. I'm not gonna dispute those, but you've gotta make it consistent, and make it sound good." That was always helpful. Then, I had [English 400 level course]—

Interviewer: Did you have—I'm sorry to interrupt.

Interviewee: - no, it's all right.

Interviewer: Did you have [Instructor] as your [English course] instructor?

Interviewee: Yes, [English course]. Then, I had him for Creative—I took his Creative Writing course, 'cause he said he was teaching that. Then, I ended up taking [English 300 level course], found it 07:37—the random teacher. Then, all of a sudden, he got switched into that section instead. He said, "You're not gonna believe this, but I'm gonna be your teacher." I said, "That's incredible." So, I had him for freshman year, junior year, and then worked with him for senior year.

Interviewer: Great, great.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Then, [English 400 level course] was with [Instructor].

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: [Instructor] 07:57 talked about a number of these things before. [Instructor]'s a funny guy. I think I was so involved with the [local Ann Arbor newspaper] that, maybe, I didn't get to spend as much time working on his class. If anything, I think—'cause he has a lot of grammar-style things. I didn't want grammar—with the [local Ann Arbor newspaper]. I think I learned about finding a voice or—they say that, too. That's another buzzword. Man, I'm really comin' up with buzzwords today! That was one of the ones where I had tried to write about myself. To write about myself is cool to talk it out with [Instructor], with other people in the class. How are you gonna confront those things and share them with twenty-so people.

Interviewer: Is that personal writing, how you think of this idea of finding your voice?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. That's the best way thinking about that. That's good.

Interviewer: Thinking about the experiences in those courses, a few that you've described, do you feel like there are still things from those courses that you're making use of, or your—

Interviewee: Oh sure, yeah.

Interviewer: - that you use in your own writing? Can you talk a little bit about that?

Interviewee: Yeah. I mean, when I'm writing a game score or something that's important, I really watch the transitions from one of them to the other. How do you connect things? Those were always big things that I worked with, with [Instructor].

As I wrote columns, even for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper], I noticed that, as I went on, even after [Instructor]'s class—I don't know if this is, necessarily, intentional or just some sort of revelation right now—but I started inserting my own voice. They were saying, "I believe this," or more personal. Which is interesting, because when I had been taught how to write, the tone, for example, it's been always, "Omit yourself from the story. Don't make yourself the center of the story." I don't necessarily try to do that in columns following. It's interesting because—I had to be able to do that with 20 different people. That was a warm-up act for the thousands that will read my story when I write for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper].

Interviewer: Right, that's a nice way to think about that. Are there other writing courses that you've taken that you would wanna draw attention to, or think about how those have affected your writing?

Interviewee: Sure, yeah. [Instructor], we talked about [Instructor]. [Instructor] has a class, [Title of course], was interesting in learning how to set up arguments more, and how to back them up.

Interviewer: That's [English 200 level course]?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. It's not so much how do you back up a point. Everything I did, it seemed like I would've needed more support. That was [Instructor]'s big thing. I don't know if she was just, at some point, doing that to keep pushing me. That was a big thing I learned is that you can never have enough. I had a class with [Instructor], another one.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, another colleague.

Interviewee: She's in [Title of course].

Interviewer: [Business course]?

Interviewee: That might be it, yes.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: That one was just great, because I needed to learn […] how to put myself out there was a journalist, coming back to that. She was excellent for reviewing and talking you through what she might think would work. […]. I'm hoping that it worked in some capacity.

Interviewer: That's great. Were you a Com [Communications] major? Was that your concentration?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. We talked a bit the courses on the English side—

Interviewee: We should talk about some on the Com, yeah.

Interviewer: - I was gonna say. In your concentration then, were there courses that emphasized writing, or where you did intensive writing?

Interviewee: Somewhat. The classes I specifically took in Com were directed towards journalism. My thought was that I set up—when I figured out that I wanted to be in the [local Ann Arbor newspaper] long term, I thought I would set up my major as Com, so that I would get the needed impact with that. I set up my minor in Writing, so I would be able to develop that more. That's how I set myself up. […].

Whatever writing assignments—for sure, I wrote eight-page term papers […]. Then I wrote a long term paper, about the same length […]. The entire class wasn't developed around that. The entire class was more discussion. Those were less writing intensive, I think.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. That makes sense. The question's a little odd for you because, obviously, you're doing writing professionally. The question here is how confident you felt writing in that area of concentration around media ethics, media law, the kinds of things you were asked to write about.

Interviewee: Yeah, sometimes too confident, where I would procrastinate too long, or think, 'Nah, I don't even have to worry about proofreading this stuff," something where they'd come and bite ya in the butt.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, sometimes it happens, yeah.

Interviewee: I would say, sometimes "too confident" would be the word. But also, at the same time, I felt very comfortable. That just gets to the heart of the question. I knew about the subject coming in, or I felt I was digesting the material much easier than other classes, perhaps a novel class. I understood more if we talked about the *New York Times*, rather than talking about *Oliver Twist*. Of course, granted, I read the *New York Times* more than I read *Oliver Twist*.

Interviewer: Right, right. That's interesting. Again, this question is a little hard odd because you do writing professionally. The question is interested in whether you're using the skills and strategies from those upper-level writing courses in other spaces. You talked a bit about how it, maybe, applies to journalism. Are there other ways to think about transfer of –

Interviewee: Yeah, oh boy.

Interviewer: - work and ideas?

Interviewee: That would be awesome also to be thinking about that. I think that I always thought about writing in the professional sense, how I would use it professionally—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: - but it can just go as something as basic as writing emails. I mean, professional writing, for example—*[inaudible 13:49]* upper-level writing courses. Either way, I could still use things about finding my voice in social media, on Twitter, or Facebook, in emails to others, thank-you notes even. Something as basic as those small things that we might do every day are things where I've noticed that I'm connecting the stories, or using my voice, using humor, those things.

Interviewer: Great. The next few questions ask about the Capstone course from the Writing minor. The first question asks what impact the Capstone course had overall on your writing. If you think about that class in a holistic sense.

Interviewee: Oh, the Capstone course was great for putting everything together, in that sense. What you wanted to do, I think, is culminate all that. It was a way to build off of what I have come in—in my early years, we had personal narrative work, but also talking about others, and reporting, and doing some investigative work. My big project was—you'll have to tell me what you think. I had the idea of, "What constitutes adulthood?" […].

[…]. Anyway, I wrote about that. I also talked about that through the lens of others. What did others say? I talked to a professor about it. It was cool, because it felt very natural, as my journalistic background has taught me. At the same time, it was cool to culminate how I think about it and how I process it. That was ultimately the toughest part, was thinking about my personal narrative and my—the analysis at the end. I think the Capstone was great for harnessing that, in a way, because I was very awkward. I wrote that—you write very cheesy when you start to write about—at the very end. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: At the end, you start to think nostalgia and all that. I tried to put it all together. I had [Instructor] and [Instructor], who are telling me, "You can tone it down. It's okay." Sometimes, it's good to just let—there isn't a conclusion.

Interviewer: That's great. In thinking about that project, about the work across the class, what is your sense of what impact it had on you as a writer, the way you're writing evolved in that course?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think that if—I'm not even sure that it evolved beyond what I've already been taught, necessarily. I think that it evolved in the sense that I was able to put it all together, and that I felt more comfortable in doing that.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I just felt comfortable in talking about myself at the end, too. Those were about the two biggest areas. I think that's where the confidence and comfortable feeling is really the ultimate thing.

Interviewer: The next question is about what effect the specific experience of the Capstone project had on you as a writer. We've been talking about that. Are there other ways you think that specific idea of working on that project about this theme of adulthood, maybe, also shifted how you were thinking about yourself as an adult writer?

Interviewee: Okay. I mean, I've already touched on how I was able to write about myself. I think that, as a writer, it really just goes back to that thing I just talked about: confidence. I guess I'm a little at a loss for words when it comes to how I felt as a writer after I took the Capstone , because it was just—it was interesting because I was able to focus on, mostly, one project, and harness in on that. I don't necessarily know if my writing—I mean, I'm haven't been able to see myself go beyond the Capstone, because the Capstone just finished up. I'm still trying to process that and my writing. After that one project I thought was a great project, I'm still trying to see how I'm gonna be able to put that to use later on.

Interviewer: I think that's a really fair observation. I know when I was doing the same interviews last spring, people said the same thing. "I'm still finishing the project. I'm still processing the project" I appreciate *[cross talk 18:20]* your thoughts.

Interviewee: Sure. Yeah, I know, I know. The project is going to be bigger, too. It ended up being like 21 pages of writing. It's tough to go back and think through each part of it, and how that's gonna impact me still. […].

Interviewer: That theme of emerging adulthood is really interesting. It sounds like it could be a good book proposal, even. I'm interested in how you chose the project you chose, or if it chose you.

Interviewee: Yeah, it just chose me. It's like *Harry Potter*, and you put the hat, "No, it *[inaudible 18:52*] adulthood." One of my friends who had also been in the course said, "Yeah, I did a bucket list about things I needed to complete before graduation at [University of Michigan]." I thought, "Okay, that's cool. What are the things I need to complete before I graduate?" I didn't think of things that were on campus. I thought about those things that my mom had said, or my dad had said, or others had said: you need to be an adult.

One time, I had [Instructor]. He's in the minor […] 19:18. He had said, "You guys feel like an adult?" I said, "Well, I recently got a bird out of my furnace. I had my car break down and helped fix that." I said, "I feel like I—competent, like an adult." We had, maybe, two minutes' worth of back and forth. I didn't think much of it, but those little things impact me. When I heard that she said, "Things I need to do before I graduate," I thought, "What are the things I need to do before I go out into the real world?" All of it came together like that. It is an interesting topic. There's a professor here who's teaching a [Psychology course].

Interviewer: Is that the person you interviewed for the project?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, [Instructor]. She actually gets to use my project. She asked to use my project for her class, as a point of reading and reference for her students in the future. That was cool, to see how that can be of some use.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's an interesting topic, because no one has an answer.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: If you're thinking about it right now, it's tough to—I mean, you've got so much—you've gotta ask me all these questions. In terms of the content, I find it fascinating because no one's ever said, "Well, I actually don't have an answer for it." I should say, everyone has said that, not "no one."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I know. It's a really interesting project. […].

[…]

Interviewer: […]. It sounds like a great project, yeah. The next few questions ask about the Capstone portfolio. If I pull it up, would you be able to pull it up on the computer?

[…]

Interviewee: - great, and you scroll down. There we are. I've got different—this is just the homepage.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: At the very top, if you don't mind me—

Interviewer: Sure.

[…]

Interviewee: Oh, too far. Right up here. We had the minor in Writing. Then, I compiled pieces that I wanted to include, with their titles from different classes all the way from freshman year, with the lame title, to now with the Capstone. […]. This is my way—they talked about packaging the minor to be something for professionals. I thought that if this is what they want, then this is the greatest way to—I might was well put the minor in Writing on my professional website.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: This is a way where, hopefully, employers can look and say, "Okay, I got his clips, but I've also got his—I can see that he's spent extensive time

writing outside of journalism. He's got a voice developed, and that he's comfortable in that." Hopefully, they can go through those pieces, as well.

Interviewer: Was the professional site something you had already started prior to the Capstone portfolio requirement?

Interviewee: Sure, it was—the idea had been started. I needed a kick in the pants to get goin' there, someone to get me off my ass. The minor was a great idea. I thought, "Well, my portfolio should just be my website," because I want them to know that I listen—[…] as a journalist. I haven't done all these fancy pieces about myself. I've just written about others. I thought, "Why, this would be the best way to see […] 'Oh, he's a journalist, and he's a minor in Writing. It's in here.'"

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: I'm hoping that doesn't backfire when it comes to the grades. The idea—that was the idea—was that I wanted to—if I was gonna package it, I should just do it based on my background in journalism.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, that makes sense. If your aims for the portfolio are primarily professional representation, how well do you feel this project, as it stands now, met those goals as you set them up?

Interviewee: The portfolio met 'em? The goals, or the project, not the goals?

Interviewer: The portfolio met the goals you had for this idea of professionalism.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, I think the portfolio came together very well, because—I base this a lot, too, on what my other friends, past colleagues of the [local Ann Arbor newspaper] had done, or what I've seen around. The idea was that an employer's not coming to, and looking for, some intensive layout. I can't even think of the word right now I'm looking for, but some layout that has a lot of different parts to it. They wanted just to know directly, "What have you done before? What can you show me all ready?" Then, they can contact me after that. That was the idea behind that. I think that the project itself lays that out so very clearly in that it gives you a picture, a contact in my Twitter feed, so you can tell what I'm doing right now. It gives you my past clips, so you can tell what I have done. It gives you my minor, to continue what I have done […] to see, "Okay, where can we go with him from here?"

Interviewer: That makes sense.

Interviewee: I think, in that basic layout, that's what it does.

Interviewer: It looks terrific. The question asks what were the most—what might be the most memorable aspect of compiling this, or putting this together as you look back on this as you were wrangling it into shape.

Interviewee: Yeah, my most memorable part is how much of a pain […] building your own website is.

Interviewer: You're not the only person to say that.

[Laughter]

Interviewee: So, that was fun and memorable, certainly, me just screaming at my computer. I think it was also memorable to see how I selected pieces, in that sense. It didn't take—

Interviewer: Your own work, you mean.

Interviewee: - yeah, yeah, sorry. It didn't take very long. That's what I was surprised about.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

Interviewee: Because I think I had built a résumé before, and had to have an idea of clips. Also, because I knew—the cool thing about doing my work in journalism is that—and this sounds terrible—you know the pieces that are gonna be better automatically, because they may be longer or they're more human interest, as opposed to a game story. You're not gonna look at my reporting of a game story and say, "Well, this guy is a fantastic writer." You might look at a feature profile, more than 2,000 words of someone at times, and say, "Okay, now I can see what he's done." So yeah, just the—I mean, *[inaudible 26:20]* is gonna tell you the same thing. You're not looking for a short news burst. It's the longer stories, so yeah.

Interviewer: Right, that makes sense. I wanted to follow up on the point you made, just about certain navigating the technical aspects of designing the site. Were you aiming for a particular reader experience? Or, as you were making those choices and wrestling with it, were there certain things you were trying to achieve that, maybe, added to the complication?

Interviewee: I think—I'm mostly just technically challenged sometimes, when it comes building my own website. What I was trying to do was lay it out where it didn't look like it was just so basic as just lines, cuz I wanted to actually show that I have some knowledge. I was also trying to make it—I don't know, I've seen—we had a thing in class on too much white space or—I can't even think of—everyone writes designables as if they seem to know design better than anyone else's before. I was tryin' to follow those rules, and put it to halves, or to

thirds, or something like that. That way, it was more appealing to the eye. Following those rules was my—it was hard to learn about that.

Interviewer: You talked just a few moments ago that you find it fairly easy to select the pieces that you wanted to include on your website.

Interviewee: Sure, yeah.

Interviewer: The question asks if you noticed any relationships among those pieces or artifacts as you were compiling them. Or—and this may be more relevant for you, given how you're using this—what relationship you wanted your audience to notice between the pieces you put up?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. The first part of that question was just—

Interviewer: Did you have some sense that there was a certain relationship among the pieces, or did you want the audience to notice that in some way?

Interviewee: - ah, okay, yeah. I don't know if it was necessarily—I wanted the audience to just see what my best work was. That was the biggest thing. I thought that my best work came, and I had this in, maybe, more column writing or feature writing, something where that voice that I developed in [English 300 level course] and [English 400 level course], and just in writing in general, came through.

Interviewer: Sure, okay.

Interviewee: That was something that was more interesting to read, I guess, is the basic way. […].

[…]

Interviewer: Thinking about creating the portfolio, just the creation of this overall, the question asks whether you think this project had an effect on you as a writer.

Interviewee: That too, I think will be coming to see in the future. I'm hoping part of this effect on me as a writer will be getting a job out of this.

[Laughs]

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: That's what I'm hoping. I think, just again, honest, that my confidence in knowing what I was better at and what my best pieces were. We had talked about that before. The Capstone helped me feel more comfortable in talking about myself and more confident in just my writing, in general. You can

take this all the way full circle. The beginning is just the experience that I had. Doing this makes me feel more comfortable in future, when I need to be able to update this website, or when an employer says, "[…] let's talk about this piece. Why do you like it? Why did you just give it to me to look at?" Then I can say with some sort of confidence, "Hey, this is why."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. There were certain reflective writing requirements as part of the e-portfolio.

Interviewee: Yeah, and I hated all of 'em.

Interviewer: That's interesting, because what you're describing right now suggests a certain kind of reflection. The question asks what you learned from—whether you like them or not—what you, maybe, took away from them. I'm interested in hearing why. Also, that's your first response.

Interviewee: Well, so talking about this is a little bit easier, because I can—'cause I don't feel it's something I have to be so cheesy, too. I think what I learned in the reflections was, primarily, for these types of events, when I need to be able to talk about them, is how I'm going to process that a little bit. I learned that I'm not very good at it. My reflections went by very quickly. I remember from the Gateway course to this Capstone course, when I had to reflect, they would say, "Why don't you guys write us a little bit and tell us what you thought about something." I would be one of the first ones done, because I had very little to say in that regard. I think reflections, yeah, it was a recap. It was just easy ways for me to—I didn't take them as seriously as, maybe, I should have. They were just quick and easy things, recaps, of what I had done, yeah.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay. That makes sense.

Interviewee: I think, part of that is—because we talked about it in the very beginning, too. I don't wanna talk about myself, because I've always been taught not to talk about myself in the stories.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: If we'll take this even more full circle, what I think writing is, good writing is when someone tells me something. I don't know if it's gonna be good writing until I've heard feedback from someone else, and says, "[...], I really like this piece." Then, I might be able to reflect and say, "Well, so this person liked this piece." I may even disagree with them on that, in that regard. That's why reflections were so tough and, maybe, not as fun for me.

Interviewer: Because you view it as more of this conversation, or like a feedback loop of sorts? You find that kind of reflection more—

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: - useful for your own processing.

Interviewee: Right. When you say, "I think you're portfolio looks okay," somewhere in my head that's clicking, "Oh okay, it actually does come across all right." If I had I reflected on it right away, I wouldn't have been as pleased. I think that's, just in part, because I didn't have anyone to give me feedback about if it worked for them, necessarily.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: That's why that's important.

Interviewer: That makes a lot of sense. The next question asks what folks who are interested in writing development, say administrators at [Sweetland Writing Center], people like me who teach writing, what do you think they might take away if they looked at your e-portfolio about your own writing development? Do you think there's a story that shows your growth as a student?

Interviewee: Well, I think in the minor they'd be able to—in the page on the minor in Writing, they'd be able to very clearly see my writing, 'cause I include something from my freshman year, [English course] course, that sparked this whole idea of writing better than other people, and then being able to see that captured on projects. They'd be able to see me merge from the very beginning, my own voice with reporting. I think they would see more of that. I think they would actually see that confidence come through or, at least, more humor.

Interviewer: What was the piece from [English course]?

[…]

Interviewee: The assignment was from [Instructor]. [Instructor] had said—it was a really cool assignment. "Just go do something you've never done before. I want you to be honest with me—never done before, just do it. Write about it." He says, "You're gonna find it's an easier assignment." I thought it was one of my favorite ones, because I went to the—I took a tour, I talked with the guy about the process behind it all, more in depth than when he gives the tour, and people are just there for the gelato sample and the cheese sample.

Interviewer: [Chuckles] Right, that's me.

Interviewee: Yeah, I know. It's real tasty 33:50. […]. We got a chance to check it out. That piece was cool because I was just writing about, "Yeah, I walked in. I was really out of place because I had a pen and a piece of paper in my hand. Nobody else was there doing that."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I used humor like that. It had come full circle then to the Capstone project, which is me processing things, doing some reporting, talking about myself, and using humor in that regard.

Interviewer: Had you done any reporting work at the point that that ended up being that [English course] assignment?

Interviewee: I had not, no. I mean, it looks like that's—

Interviewer: I mean, it's just that you can definitely see the parallel there, just like this ended up being a reported piece for the [English course] class. It's interesting.

Interviewee: - right, right. That, I imagine, is one of the things they might notice, is how that's the first piece. Then, we are with the [local Ann Arbor newspaper], 'cause every piece I wrote for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper] started in January. Otherwise, my journalism experience was reading three papers every day with my parents, or newspapers, that is—

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: - or writing a couple of articles for a school paper. We'd have to have a whole 'nother half-hour discussion about my *[inaudible 34:59]* high school, and a school in that writing.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah, I really didn't have much journalism experience before that.

Interviewer: That's interesting. The last set of questions ask you to think some about the Gateway to the Capstone experience, so that your—really focus on your experience in the Writing minor. In the question they ask you, thinking back to the Gateway course, how did your experiences compare between the Gateway course earlier in the minor and the Capstone course that you're just now concluding?

Interviewee: Will there be a question about how they differ, too? I don't want to jump ahead, 'cause there's—I think of them as separate a little bit.

Interviewer: Yes, and we can move to that directly.

Interviewee: I'll talk about both. I'm just gonnna—

Interviewer: Compare and difference.

Interviewee: - yeah, yeah. I'll compare.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Way to preview the—

Interviewee: Yeah, because they were—the primary difference is—

Interviewer: - the question. It makes perfect sense.

Interviewee: - the primary difference was that I talked a lot more in the Gateway course. We had more discussions. That makes sense. We'd walk into class, and [Instructor] was really cool. There were times when I'd wonder what exactly we did that pertained to writing, sometimes. I would learn, five classes later, "Oooooh. I guess now we're putting it all together." It was cool to get to go and talk. In the Capstone course, we did less of that because—we were told at the very beginning, "You have a very big project to put together." You gotta go put it together."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: We would spend time working, and talking with each other less. I think that the—there are a few things that overlap, and that's, number one, peer review, and how that happens for the end.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Normally, in a lot of courses, I've done [Instructor]'s or [Instructor]'s, you talk a little bit for a couple of classes. Then, boom, you start writing essays, start peer reviewing. You don't do your own revisions or talk with the teacher. In the Gateway and the Capstone, I don't think we did each one until the—if we're talking about four months—probably until the third month.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Two months' worth of waiting around peer reviewing. You're thinking, "I want to know how I'm doing." It's not necessarily to say that's bad. I shouldn't say that's bad.

Interviewer: No, no, no. No, no, no. It's an interesting distinction to the structure of the other English courses.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. As you noted, that was different than what I had been used to.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: That was one consistent measure. I think the other thing, too, that was overlapping was individual feedback from my instructor.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: That's not to say the other classes didn't do that, as well. I had one-on-one meetings with [Instructor], and one-on-one meetings with [Instructor], who—

Interviewer: You were having more of that in both the Gateway and Capstone, or—

Interviewee: - maybe. I was having longer—I shouldn't say—maybe not in terms of the quantity of interactions but, maybe, the length of those interactions. You were required, maybe, to speak with my [English 300 level course] professor once or twice. With [Instructor] and with [Instructor], I'd be in there once or twice for 30 minutes, or 45 minutes. We'd be talking, and they'd be more hands on. "I know your project," whereas the other professor was tryin' to catch up at the same time, too.

Interviewer: You're drawing the comparison there between the Gateway and the Capstone to other English classes. I just wanted to make clear, in case we got muddled as we're going.

Interviewee: That's correct. Yeah. I'm surprised you're able to make a lot of sense of what I'm saying, since I talk so fast.

Interviewer: No, no, no, I'm with you. Are there other ways that you would compare or contrast the Gateway and the Capstone courses? You talked a bit about discussion versus workshop versus—

Interviewee: Sure, I think, number one, too, is we had—this was a more—the Capstone was more of a sustained one project. That's just very basic because it says you're gonna make one project, whereas in the Gateway it was multiple, different, multiple projects. When everybody said—when we came to the Capstone, I said, "You have this one project." Then I thought, they talked about your portfolio from the Gateway course. They said, "Well, what was your big thing?" I thought, "I didn't have a big thing." I just did a couple of different things, but nothing—a couple of different projects, but nothing so large as this. That was the difference between the Gateway and the Capstone, I think, was that the Gateway was comin' at you from different directions, whereas the Capstone was one way and you having to handle that.

Interviewer: Okay, that makes sense.

Interviewee: For example, in the Gateway, I did, "Why I Write." We did a remediated and a repurposed—I know you've heard those, probably, before.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Whereas, in the Capstone, I'm doing just original pieces of writing.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Some of these are original pieces of writing still, but they're based off other things, as well. That's important to note, is that the Gateway is trying to build off of what you've already done, whereas the Capstone, interestingly, at the very end, is saying, "Come up with something new."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. That's a nice way to think about that.

Interviewee: Granted, we still did an evolution essay in this Capstone course.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Process, all that. I think that the project itself was so, so new.

Interviewer: You made reference to peer review. One thing that they are interested in is what your experiences were like working with other writers in the minor.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think they were—this is interesting. My Capstone course, I was the only male in the course.

Interviewer: That's interesting, mm-hmm.

Interviewee: That was interesting, yeah, to get different—gender feedback was primarily female, so I was coming at it from that. That's not to say, again, it's bad or good one way or the other, but it was just—

Interviewer: It's just something to note. Sure, yeah.

Interviewee: - yeah. We're all influenced by these differences outside of these factors. That was interesting. The Gateway, too, was very much similar in that regard, where I was getting a lot of feedback from females, because it's a very—there's not a ton of males, necessarily, in this minor.

Interviewer: Okay, okay.

Interviewee: I thought that was always interesting. I was working a lot like that. The feedback, too, wasn't so—I'm sorry, I have to go back again to [Instructor]'s.

[Instructor]'s are so—he wanted four-page, five-page intensive paragraph-on-paragraph type of breakdown, whereas these were more broad, general scope. A lot of peer reviews, too, came in places in the Capstone looking at what you could do to add on, not so much revise if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Whereas, I would write an essay, then say, "Here, revise this," in my English courses, the Sweetland minor writing courses, are saying, "Here's what you can add on to this." I don't know if that's necessary to suggest that things were incomplete, so much as just they were looking at a whole beyond the scope of what you already put in front of them.

Interviewer: That's a really interesting distinction. Did you feel in the Capstone and Gateway course you were getting that kind of feedback because that was what the other students were offering or just thinking of, or was that the guidance you were receiving from the instructor?

Interviewee: Oh, I see. Oh, I see the question, yeah.

Interviewer: How can you help this person build on, versus go back and fix or revise.

Interviewee: Well, to be fair, [Instructor] and [Instructor], they gave—I don't know if they—they didn't really give extensive feedback on how they wanted their revisions. They were very broad in that sense. I think that's why people became more broad as well, because they didn't have someone telling them, "Well, you need to look at these things. You need to be able to give them line-by-line feedback." They were very much like, it wasn't, "Be specific. Give your examples, but you can look at the piece as a whole." It didn't last—I mean they probably didn't talk more than 10, 15 minutes about peer review. They probably will tell you they talk more, so they probably did. My memory is slow in that.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Say that question again for me: being compared to other classes—

Interviewer: I was just tryin' to set you—you seemed to be suggesting that you got that kind of feedback in the minor courses.

Interviewee: - sure.

Interviewer: I was just tryin' to get a sense, was that just what those students came up with, or was that how the courses were directed.

Interviewee: Sorry, I was just trying to process that.

Interviewer: No, no, no. Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: You're right. Most of that was through other students. That was their own doing. If students built up what other students did previously, and it never was bad the first time, so it must have been—it just was a continuation of that.

Interviewer: Right, that makes sense. What did you take away from your peer review work as a—in the minor courses?

Interviewee: Yeah, peer review—I don't necessarily know if I—it's tough, because I'd rather go to the instructor for my feedback.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I didn't always take away a ton. I took away more—I actually did take away more line-by-line stuff.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: The stuff that was simply saying, "This line doesn't make any sense. This line has a grammatical error in it. This small section right here doesn't need to be here."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: People would try to, I think, go so large in the scope that I may not have a finished project on hand, and they were trying to suggest something. I thought, not necessarily—well, almost in the sense that, "You're not giving me the feedback I want, because you're telling about adding onto this. I'm telling you, no, I don't want to do that. I plan to do this."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Whereas, when I'm talking with [Instructor] or [Instructor], for example, they would ask me, "Where are you talking this?" That was interesting. I would say I lacked a little bit of trust with them. The funny thing—

Interviewer: With "them," meaning students reviewers.

Interviewee: - students, yes. Excuse me. "Them," meaning student peers. That's not to say I didn't take their feedback, or didn't ever use it, because they're brilliant writers. That's why we're here, so, yeah.

Interviewer: That's helpful. So both the Gateway and the Capstone included an e-portfolio. We talked pretty extensively about the Capstone e-portfolio. The

question asks you to think a bit about how those two e-portfolios were different or useful to you, or—and some students build one from the next. I don't know—

Interviewee: Yeah, so I'll say this. I'm very close to deleting my Gateway portfolio from the Internet itself, because I would like to eliminate any trace of it. It's actually very similar to my professional website, in the sense that it lays out my minor in Writing and my quotes from Journalism.

Interviewer: - was it like an early—just an early cut of that?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's a little cheesy, corny. It has all those things in it. It has more reflective writing.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: My friends have stumbled upon it when they Google my name, so I've become very quoted 44:57. I thought, "I'll keep it around until this minor is done, until I get that grade. I have this interview." Then, immediately, it's going, because this professional website that I've created is, I guess, a more mature, experienced version. I know what should be out there versus what shouldn't be out there. What I like—

Interviewer: So they were similar projects for you, because you saw the later one as—I don't know.

Interviewee: - yeah, I saw this later one as a chance to actually—before, when I used the Gateway project, I think that I was thinking, "Okay, I'll use it for the grade, but I will not, necessarily, need to use it beyond the minor itself."

Interviewer: Oh, right, right.

Interviewee: Whereas, this one I thought, "I can use this beyond the minor, making use of what I've just spent four years of college working on."

Interviewer: Okay. Speaking of writing development, right? *[Chuckles]*

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's interesting. I hadn't really thought about it until this interview. That's a good question to ask, and a good way to process that.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, but you're done with it.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. One of them was a WordPress [content management system], the other was like a Weebly [website creator] website. The layout's a little bit funky, too. The design is less appealing than the Gateway one. The writing is still less mature. I'm thinking about how quickly can I—I've got my finger on the trigger ready to go.

Interviewer: We talked about, earlier, both courses and the Writing minor, in general, really emphasizes reflective writing.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: The question asks how would you describe your experiences with that kind of reflective writing. We talked a bit about this all ready—

Interviewee: Yeah, and I think my answer—

Interviewer: - in the context of the portfolio, but thinking, maybe, more broadly across both courses and across the Writing minor.

Interviewee: - sure, okay. I think, yeah, across both courses of writing, the reflective writing was still like a chore, not something I was interested in doing, because I didn't want to discuss that part about myself. Also, because I hadn't had feedback from my instructors, it was tough to reflect about something when I haven't heard other opinions.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: You know what I mean? Also, too, because you wanna—when you put out something you're supposed to reflect on, are you gonna really say, "I thought I did a terrible job. If I really could, I would go back and change this all up and, hopefully, get a better grade." No, you gotta come up and support yourself, I think, in my mind. That way, when someone reads it, they're sayin', "Okay, this is his thinking behind it."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm

Interviewee: Again, it goes all the way to this beginning, when we talked about what—good writing is based on someone else's opinion, in part, because you really need someone else to push you forward. Otherwise, you'd be stuck in the same place.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Did you feel, in any way, that the reflective writing gave you any sorts of—and the fact that it was required and really emphasizing the minor, gave you any new ways to talk about writing, like new terms, or concepts, or pushed in those directions *[cross talk 48:03]*?

Interviewee: I'd say, no, I don't necessarily know if I've developed any sort of different writing style or terminology based on those.

Interviewer: That's fair. The Writing minor is still new at [University of Michigan].

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: You were one of the first groups that went through.

Interviewee: Which is cool.

Interviewer: The question is really open ended. Are there any suggestions you'd have for instructors or administrators in the program, as they're continuing to rethink and reshape and revise?

Interviewee: Yeah, I always thought about what would happen if they'd make the Capstone two semesters. I mean, as you're—how long you've been tryin' to teach in the Doctorate or the—

Interviewer: This is year four. *[Chuckles]*

Interviewee: - year four, yeah. You might notice the more you—the longer you work with someone, the more you can know their writing, the more you can truly develop.

Interviewer: Of course, mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I always thought about what would happen if they did a year-long Capstone. For logistics and for practicality's sake, it seems like that would be very tough. I thought it would be interesting if they had a professor, or somewhere where you worked over the course of a year, that, number one, you don't have to rush, necessarily, through everything at the end, because we're talking about putting all these hard deadlines on. I'm still hearing from [Instructor], who is saying, "Listen, I'm taking every single last second I've got to read all of your projects, because there's a lot on them. I haven't been able to…" He hasn't been in much communication.

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: That's my thought. We can still get them in early enough for everybody to read in time, but we could also package the minor in different ways, maybe, have more discussion that was heavy in the Gateway course early on.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Those things would be interesting to—if you lengthen it like that. Otherwise know, the courses itself, the Gateway and the Capstone, are a great idea, have a beginning to an end.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I'm seeing now the connection between that. I like the use of some English courses. I think the way you incorporate that with your major, itself, for upper-level writing is interesting.

Interviewer: That makes sense. That suggestion about could the Capstone experience be extended, or your work with that instructor be extended, is also interesting. Thinking about the fact that you had this experience on the English side, where you had the same instructor over three courses. You were speaking from that background, too, where you had that experience of, "This person knows my work across time," and what you can learn from that.

Interviewee: Right, right. I don't wanna make it sound like, too, though—it almost makes it sound like they were a crutch. You know what I mean? I needed them to—

Interviewer: No, no.

Interviewee: - well, maybe I guess, that's how I perceived it. Excuse me, then. I guess I perceived it as like they might have been a crutch at some point. "Oh, my writing's slow. I need to go back to this one person."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Well, I suppose it's really fair, because I—when you're a journalist, you've always got one single editor, really, who reads everything. You could go to that one person. It's good to have more constant, consistent feedback.

Interviewer: Yeah, no. I think that's a really interesting suggestion. More generally, they also ask are there things that you would suggest that professors/instructors should know about teaching writing at the undergraduate level, thinking now across the minor, your experiences with instructors on the English side.

Interviewee: My favorite experiences were when I got to sit one on one with [Instructor] or with [Instructor]. Even these things, working one on one with someone else—

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

[Crosstalk 51:16]

Interviewee: - those are just the best moments. I noticed [Instructor] was teaching, probably, 25—no, more than 25—I guess, closer to 30 kids in a semester, and having to read all these projects. At times, when you could tell that [Instructor] was so engrossed in my writing, then it felt great. There were times when he was

just tryin' to play catch up, and I thought, "This is tough, because I want you to be involved. I know what we can talk about." That's why I think the more time they have to sit down and individually talk with others, to simply say, "Hey, no class today. Schedule your times to meet with me for 30 minutes so we can talk these things out. You need to come to office hours." Those things I've always found to be most helpful.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. You're right about the time demands that that does require, but the value of it, I think, it's really true.

Interviewee: Well, too, I mean, I imagine that what you've learned in this program is that, as a teacher, you want to be able to give as much individualized feedback as possible in any sort of subject.

Interviewer: Of course, right, mm-hmm.

Interviewee: It's tough to go abroad. There are massive on-line courses that can teach thousands. The best learning, I've always felt like, comes from when I can speak when I one on one.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: That's not just for writing. I think that would be for lots of other courses.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Again, talking' practicality's sake, that would impossible.

Interviewer: That's the challenge. Are there any other comments, any other things that you're taking away that you'd want to make sure the Sweetland folks hear about, or think about?

Interviewee: No, you've done a really, really good job of packaging everything I've thought of. I apologize for being so off the charts in terms of—

Interviewer: Oh, no, no, not at all.

Interviewee: - all over the place. No, no, I think that I'm glad I did the minor. I just am glad to be able to—chance to talk it out with someone like this, where I don't have to reflect in my own *[inaudible 53:16].*

Interviewer: Oral reflection.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, and that I will be deleting that […]. I apologize in advance to them.

Interviewer: No, no, no. I mean, it's your project.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: It's yours to choose what you do with it. That is really interesting, thinking about the evolution from the first course to this one, and what you were able to do with that project.

Interviewee: Well, I don't know we can never really delete anything off the Internet, too. You know at old phrase that the Internet is written in ink, not pencil.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. I'm sure there are ways to make it less visible, I'm sure.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. Google is the devil sometimes, for that.

Interviewer: There's probably something to do that, yeah. That makes sense. […].

[End of Audio]