*Interviewer:* This is \*\*\*. I am here with \*\*\* and it is April 28th. Double check myself, keep losing track of days. Thank you for meeting with me, \*\*\*. I appreciate it. Do you still have exams you're finishing up?

Interviewee: I've been done for over a week.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I'm studying for the LSAT [law school admissions test] and that's why I'll be here until June. It's taking me here.

Interviewer: That's intense.

Interviewee: Fun times. Fun times.

*Interviewer:* Really intense. Well, today we're just going to have a little chat about some of your experiences with writing. Some of your experiences in the minor. Then it won't take more than an hour, probably less than that. At some point in the interview we'll look at your capstone portfolio, so pull that up on my computer here and we'll chat about all kinds of things.

We'll start with some general questions about how you think about writing in general, and then we'll talk a little bit about your writing experiences here at [University of Michigan], the capstone and the gateway courses, and then we'll be done.

My first question is kind of broad, and it's how would you describe yourself as a writer?

*Interviewee:* Well, I guess this goes back to in the gateway and the capstone the assignments we have to do about why I write. Then we have to do the writer's evolution this past semester in the capstone. I guess to borrow from my own arguments, I guess I'd say that I've always—my passion for writing is stemmed from just a general curiosity. I think I first really liked to read when I was really young. I think that eventually evolved into really liking to write.

I went from oh, I really find this interesting and I'm really curious about X, Y and Z to now I want to tell other people about X, Y and Z. The best way to communicate that and convey those things is through writing. That's my motive as a writer. Just help explain things to people because things can get—people can be a little bit careless with facts and can make arguments based on faulty evidence.

I think my purpose is to set the record straight and inform people to the best of my ability. Yeah. All of that began as my writing experience really began in

journalism. As early as elementary school and that was the majority of my writing experience up until college. Then this minor and other writing opportunities, it blossomed into other things. That's my purpose, I guess. The long-winded answer to inform.

*Interviewer:* No, that's great. That's perfect. How would you have described yourself as a writer when you came here to [University of Michigan]?

*Interviewee:* I definitely think I was, relative to the rest of my grade, a fairly high level. I think just because I'd done a lot of journalism work in English classes in high school. I had really started, I think, in eleventh grade and then senior year I had really taken a big leap in terms of my progress and my ability. I think I came in at a fairly high level, but I obviously still had a ton to learn and a ton to improve on because you can always get better.

Interviewer: Of course.

Interviewee: Sorry, what was the question again?

*Interviewer:* How would you have described yourself as a writer when you started?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I think I wasn't struggling as a freshman, and it's not like these four years I suddenly became competent. I think that I started in pretty good, but I guess I tended to be a little rambly still. There were still a few high school English class conventions that I stuck to a little bit too religiously. Those sort of things set me back a little bit. For the most part I think I came in with a pretty good background.

*Interviewer:* Good. As you're looking towards graduation what are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: As a writer in terms of in the future?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* I'm taking the LSAT which means I guess I want to go to law school, which probably is—

Interviewer: You guess you want to go to law school?

*Interviewee:* Well, I'm working for two years to confirm whether or not that's true.

Interviewer: That's a good idea.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. If that's the chosen field or if it's something else, writing is going to be heavily involved obviously. I think that's where legal writing will be a big part of my future. I think in any field of work, any occupation, any job, whatever, you're always going to be emailing people. I think it's underrated how important a form of communication—how important it is to be a good emailer. I think that for anybody that's going to be a big thing once you get out into the—even when you're in college I've learned that. That'll be important.

Just it's a way—when you're applying for jobs or introducing yourself to new people over online communication or written communication and not in person, their first impression of you is all right, what did this kid write? What is he writing to me? Did he spell? Did he use the wrong form of your or there or whatever? Cuz that'll jump out at somebody, be like all right, well I don't want to deal with this person.

It's sort of like a first impression for a lot of things that are coming up in life. Then in terms of other future writing, obviously it's as far—even if journalism isn't my primary occupation, I'd like to maybe contribute to some news media outlet, or maybe eventually write a book or something. I don't know.

Interviewer: Cool.

Interviewee: Yeah.

*Interviewer:* As you think about the experiences you've had with writing here at [University of Michigan]—you started here as a freshman?

Interviewee: Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Okay. What do you think it means to write well? What does good writing look like?

*Interviewee:* It can take many forms, obviously. I think there's a few things you can spot in any kind of good writing that all good writing shares is there's a logical, coherent structure to how if it's an argument or if it's a story, a narrative or whatever it is, there's some sort of coherent, logical structure to it. That, to me, means it's good writing. If the purpose of whatever the piece is is clear, that means that's a key to good writing. If it's error free, that's obviously a big one.

I think anything that pressures the reader into thinking about something in a new way or teaching them something new. I think good writing should always either teach you something that you didn't know before, or force you to think about something through a perspective or a lens you hadn't thought it through before. Those are just some things. Obviously there's a ton to—let me just put this on airplane mode, cuz I'm—I don't know why this is—

Interviewer: Of course. Which upper level writing courses did you take?

Interviewee: I took [English course].

Interviewer: That's [title of course], right?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

*Interviewee:* Study of narrative non-fiction. That was with [instructor] and the English professor [...] second biggest to [English instructor].

Interviewer: I was going to say [English instructor]?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I unfortunately never took his course. I kind of regret that, but I took his course which was great. I'm a political science major, and I took [political science course] which is [title of course]. We had this essentially design a research proposal for an honors thesis, which even though I could've ended up doing, I decided against it, cuz I was like this was brutal and I didn't want to do that.

*Interviewer:* It's tough.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. It was a really, really good—I'm glad I took it because I understood what goes into real research like that, like academic research. It taught me that a lot of times in order to make an argument, a lot of times you have to—you can't just lay out terms and expect people—you have to measure them and define them clearly so everyone knows what you're talking about. There's a common lynchpin of understanding. That's something that that taught me, which was interesting.

Yeah. He sort of—you have to conceptualize everything that you're talking about to make sure that—so you can measure it to accurately reflect what you're saying.

*Interviewer:* What was your experience like in [title of course]? The [English course].

*Interviewee:* That was also a really good experience. I took that as a sophomore, I think. It forced me to do a lot of writing that I hadn't done before, and forced me to do a lot of reflecting, which I didn't totally like, or personal writing, because everything is—one was make an argument about something that happened to you. Make an argument about your past. It's really just all about you, and you're telling your own narratives of different things that happen to you.

Which is hard, because I never liked being the subject. That was one of the hardest parts of it, and then just writing a narrative was also new. Journalism, obviously there's certain narratives inherent when you're writing journalistic style, but not in the exact same way. This is something I talk about in my righteous revolution essay. I ended up when I was at first struggling with one of the assignments, how to go about it, journalism—the assignment was to make an argument about your past. I was talking about something that—this trip I had gone on in high school, and I didn't really remember. The details were kind of fuzzy. I did reporting on myself, and that's how—I used what was comfortable and tangible to me and what I was familiar with to do—that worked out.

*Interviewer:* That makes sense. Do you still make use of what you learned in both of those classes in your writing now?

*Interviewee:* Definitely. Cuz with the narrative stuff, I definitely hit—especially my capstone project, even though it was more like a—the genre I was going for was a long-form magazine feature. That blends journalism and a narrative non-fiction sort of style. That was really important to use. Yeah, for the [political science course], it really, really heightened my analytical ability, just because I knew that every sort of piece of information that I came across, someone had—if it was done correctly—someone had conceptualized the terms and measured it. There was an actual concept behind their measurement and their argument and their data.

That really is sort of in the back of—I think for every writer, everything they've ever learned is—you can somehow point it out. It might be latent, it might be really explicit, but everything a writer's ever learned is somewhere in every piece of their writing. It all contributes to where they are now.

*Interviewer:* What other writing courses have you taken? Did you take [English course]?

*Interviewee:* I took [English 100 level course], [English 200 level course], [English 300 level course].

Interviewer: Oh wow.

*Interviewee:* I took obviously the [writing course]. Or I think it's called [writing course] now. I forget. The capstone. I think a lot of the poly sci [political science] classes I've taken weren't designated as upper level writing, but they easily could've been, in my opinion. A lot of them were pretty writing-heavy.

Interviewer: A lot of writing, yeah.

*Interviewee:* Like two of the poly sci took just this past—in the fall, one was about—it was called law culture and identity, and there was—we did like six or seven fairly short papers we had to do throughout the semester. Each of them required you to either compare two different readings to each other, or compare a reading or class concept to some content, something outside of class. That required a lot of analysis which is something that I have been able to—a skill that I've been able to cultivate all throughout college which helped me in that class.

Then I took, in my senior poly sci seminar, I took a class on modern day interpretations of the constitution. We had weekly writing assignments for that. Which we could just—we had to respond to whatever reading we had. There was a prompt and we just had to respond to it. Also fairly short, but still. It was like—

Interviewer: That's a lot of writing.

Interviewee: It's a lot of writing. What else? What other writing classes?

*Interviewer:* What about [English 100 level course] and [English 200 level] course? Can you tell me about your experiences with those courses?

*Interviewee:* Mm-hmm, [English course] I remember coming in thinking I'm pretty good writer, I've done all this stuff, whatever. That paper was the first and last—I think first and last time I got a B on a paper in college, which is good. I remember being like what? I remember being like a little discouraged and thinking—I guess it grounded me. It was a good learning experience, obviously.

That sort of introduced me into how [University of Michigan] writing classes are structured, and the way—it really taught me how to better structure and better tighten up your arguments that you're making. [English course] was also a great class. I'm trying to—I mean they're really—the three of them are all pretty much the same base, just with more things thrown in for the more advanced classes.

Interviewer: How do you mean the same base?

*Interviewee:* Just like the way they're structured. It's like each paper builds on itself and they're trying to—the focus of what they're trying to teach you is the same. Each paper builds on itself to teach you a more advanced and more sophisticated and nuanced way of doing what the class is supposed to do. Like whatever argument structure they're trying to teach you. Yeah, those were both really formative in my writing experience here.

Interviewer: You kind of answered the next question already. About this one-

Interviewee: Yeah, I tend to do that.

*Interviewer:* It's great. It's perfect. How often have you used the skills or the strategies that you've learned in these writing classes in your other courses? It sounds like you've done a lot of writing in your poly sci [political science] classes.

Interviewee: Right.

*Interviewer:* Can you think about the ways that you've taken the skills that you've learned in these writing classes and applied them in other places?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think a key—one huge thing is even if it's not writing per se, inherent in every writing assignment you get in every writing class you have is you have to know how to do research. That has been—that has been crucial to succeeding in other classes and in things outside of—like internship experience, too, which is that *[inaudible 16:34]* that prompted this question, or just other classes?

Interviewer: Yeah, that was great.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think that your writing experience—I guess this was more in the papers I've done, this is more—I've more argued that journalism's taught me this, but really it could go to writing in general. It just sort of teaches you how to be resourceful and just know how to do things and where to find things. In any internship experience, like when you have someone—any internship, you're not just given things to do because you're an intern and the people are busy. You're only there for ten weeks, so they're not trying to give you any sort of long-term—

[Extraneous Conversation 17:15 - 17:44]

Interviewer: Sorry about that.

Interviewee: No, that's okay.

*Interviewer:* You were talking about using the writing skills that you've learned in your internship, I think?

*Interviewee:* Right. Yeah. People at any internship, you're only there for ten weeks. There's only so much they can give you. It's really more work for them to give you work, which is what I realized by the end of my second internship that I had.

Interviewer: Yeah.

*Interviewee:* You have to be resourceful in that sense. It's like just drop by people's offices, be like hey, do you need help with X? Is there anything I can do?

Whatever. That's resourceful. The other thing is when they actually give you an assignment, or give you something to do and they're not going to tell you all right, first you go here, then you go here, then you—you have to figure it out for yourself. I found that that's a skill that I had that not—people who are other really smart kids who may not have ever studied journalism, may not have done a ton of writing, that's just something that I consistently saw that they didn't have, which I found interesting.

That's what, I think, writing, the research that's involved, journalism, they all teach you that resourcefulness.

*Interviewer:* Let's talk a little bit about the capstone class, because I think some of these things might pop up there as well.

Interviewee: Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Can you talk a little bit about the impact that the capstone course, that's the [writing course] classroom has had overall on your writing?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think that the evolution, just like of every other assignment I do where I was the subject is that, in itself, that is difficult for me. I think the way that we have to structure that argument was also a challenge. You had to—I forget exactly what the prompt was now. We pretty much had to just make an argument about how we evolve. It wasn't supposed to be strictly chronological, and there were all these things that we know we weren't supposed to do, but it was still a pretty broad prompt. There was a million different direction you could've gone which also poses difficulties, and poses a number of challenges.

I think the purpose of that assignment is easy to see. It's like this is a capstone project. It's not only building up the final project that you're going to do, but it's supposed to be a coherent and cohesive wrap up as your four years as a writer. That's the best way to track it is through writing about it and making an argument about it. That, I think, taught me a lot. I think that allowed me to crystallize all my thoughts on my development and my evolution as a writer.

It allowed me to see my—essentially my thesis was—the theme of that was that journalism and academic writing have had this symbiotic relationship that's allowed me to grow as a writer. I just talked about what the purpose of journalism—or the type of journalism I did in college, with the purpose of that, was. What the purpose of academic writing was. What the particular skills that each teach you individually and how that each contributed to better writing, and the academic writing to better journalism. Vice versa, sort of back and forth.

That taught me a lot. That's sort of crystallized and allowed me to really—that was a big takeaway. I could leave that class saying all right, this is what I learned as a writer. This is how I grew. This makes sense. Then, obviously, the capstone

was a really cool experience cuz I knew I didn't wanna—after that [political science course], I knew I didn't want to write a thesis, but I didn't, I guess, expect that I'd be doing thesis-level work anyway.

Interviewer: In your capstone portfolio?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

*Interviewee:* Obviously it wasn't the same sort of academic rigor, and I chose something that I knew would be more fun for me to write, because I did this long form feature that you would find—it was modeled after things—like I read the *Graland* a lot, which is like an ESPN [Entertainment and Sports Programming Network] offshoot website.

Interviewer: Okay.

*Interviewee:* The *Atlantic* [American magazine and multi-platform publisher]. It was sort of based off of that. Just the research and reporting that I got to do for that, I chose to—I don't remember how I chose this topic. It's something that I— it was pretty much about the issue—well, I guess the argument at the end of my writer's evolution essay was that the purpose of me as—my purpose as a writer has always been to inform people and to—yeah, inform people so people can know about certain issues, and so I can relate what I know about them to other people. It's always lacked some sort of call to action.

It's remained neutral in terms of taking a firm position on what to do. I've made arguments in the past saying NCA should pay its staff and dumb things like that. I haven't had as strong of a call to action. I guess I wanted to do that with this final project. It was all about [who pays for sports stadiums].

[...]

*Interviewee:* The public bear way too much of the cost. They don't get any—owners or the politicians who support it love—always say how oh, it'll create all these jobs, it'll be great for our local economy, but any economic analysis of it says that that's just not true.

Interviewer: Fascinating.

*Interviewee:* My project was about—it looked at three—and so mine was about this whole issue and how voters have been involved in these decisions in the—like I looked at three cases. Even though it's like we have a referendum for voter approval for these projects is not the norm, I looked at cases where it did happen, and the first one was in [city] when they were building a new stadium for the

[local baseball team]. The voters in [city], they voted against raising taxes to pay for this stadium. It was a very slim margin, but they voted against it. Then the state legislature circumvented that and passed this bill, and they built the stadium anyway.

Interviewer: That's crazy.

*Interviewee:* The cost to the public ended up being more than they initially projected it would be. The cost overruns were crazy. The common thread in all these cases is that the teams always threaten that they're going to leave. Oh, if you don't—we'll just move to wherever. They always gets their way.

Interviewer: The city wants the revenue from the games and stuff?

*Interviewee:* Well, no they just want—they just don't want to be—they don't want to be remembered as the mayor who let the Yankees—

Interviewer: I see.

*Interviewee:* I mean not that the Yankees would ever leave New York, but the whatever, the guy who let whatever leave. They just don't want that as part of their legacy. That's really what drives these things, because economists pretty universally say that a city wouldn't be—it wouldn't be an issue economically if a team left, because the reverse argument is if you build a statement, and if a team comes and you say we have all this—it's going to do wonders for our economy, it's not like people are spending more money.

If the stadium is getting fans, it means that those fans are spending their money there instead of somewhere else.

*Interviewer:* It sounds like you've done a lot of research and really thought carefully about this issue.

Interviewee: I kind of went on a-yeah.

*Interviewer:* No, no, I mean it's really interesting. I'm wondering if you can talk about how that course and this project where you've really—you're clearly really invested in this issue and you've done a lot of work. How that shaped your writing process.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, so it was really cool. This project was especially cool because—and I think journalism really helped me here cuz the breadth of sources I got to talk to for this was pretty—I mean I talked to a former US Senator.

[...]

Interviewer: You got to talk to him.

*Interviewee:* I talked to him. Most of the people—the majority of the sources I talked to are people who are on my side of the issue, who are advocates against this. He's obviously on the opposite side.

Interviewer: Yeah, so that's interesting.

*Interviewee:* That was interesting. I talked to him, I talked to a former State Supreme Court Justice in the State of Washington [...].

[Discussed various sources used and cases]

Interviewer: You got to talk to all these sources.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Really interesting insights, it sounds like.

Interviewee: Yeah.

*Interviewer:* How did having the opportunity to talk to these various different sources affect the way that you wrote? How did that shape your writing process?

*Interviewee:* Well, I had a lot of experience doing just that. Obviously on a smaller scale with just any article I ever wrote for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper]. That's your writing—you have a story. You know it's going to be—like you know what it's—you know what the general topic is going to be going in, but then you talk to a source. They say certain things, and what they say drives how you shape your story. It always does. Because they have—obviously they're closer to the issue than you are. They know more about it than you do.

Some writers like to frame everything that they get around their initial agenda that they saw for themselves. That usually leads to not-so-good things, because you're just going at it—that demonstrates a clear bias because you're shaping it the way you want to initially before you talk to people. Then you're shaping everything they said towards that initial goal.

I do the opposite where I have an initial idea of what it's going to be about, and then you talk to people. Then that ends up shaping—I just pretty much—I record every interview I do and then transcribe it, read it through and see what's there, kind of. I mean it's hard to articulate what the—how that experience changes the process, but I guess the simplest way to say it is they are the drivers of the content. They're the ones who provide the insight and the perspective. In addition, it's like any other research I do about the issue. They always mention things that'll point me to do more research on this, which—that'll give me more information to convey. Yeah, the interviews always provide the most insight, and they are really good jumping-off point, I guess.

*Interviewer:* In general, then, what affect do you think the capstone project has had on you as a writer?

*Interviewee:* It was the first time that I really—I mean I think, obviously, it was a good piece of—it was a good piece of writing. It was really long. It was the longest thing I've ever written which is testing you on your stamina as a writer. It was like over 10,000 words.

Interviewer: Wow.

*Interviewee:* I think more than just that, I think it was one of the first—as writing for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper] I never posted links to my stories on Facebook or Twitter. I just never did that. I didn't do that with this. This was the first time where I just emailed people, or messaged my friends. Like hey, read this. Not that I haven't been proud of other things before, but I want—I just was really proud to the point where I wanted to share it with people. Which I guess it—it's a little different.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's awesome.

*Interviewee:* I guess I knew part of—also, it would be online regardless, because that was the portfolio.

*Interviewer:* Sure. You might as well share it with people if it's already out there, right?

Interviewee: Yeah.

*Interviewer:* The next couple of questions ask you to talk specifically about some of the choices you made in the portfolio, so I'm going to have you—

Interviewee: I'm not sure if you have the-cuz I updated the link.

*Interviewer:* I don't have the link at all, so I'm going to have you pull this up as soon as my computer will connect to the internet, which sometimes takes a second of thinking.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, cuz my [instructor] I thought I had emailed him saying oh, I just changed the link because I want it to say something different. He emailed me on Monday saying your link is dead. I was like yeah, I changed it.

[...]

*Interviewer:* Okay. I want to just talk about what you've produced here, and this way we can look at it and ground this conversation in something. I guess this is tangible. I guess tangible.

Interviewee: I'm actually going to pull up one other link just to-

Interviewer: Yeah, sure.

*Interviewee:* When I first would—when me and [instructor] were meeting to figure out just to shape what my project would be, he said after we had discussed it for a while he was like you should publish this on *Graland* [like an ESPN [Entertainment and Sports Programming Network] offshoot website] which is something that I was like—

Interviewer: This is the website you were talking about earlier.

[...]

*Interviewee:* Yeah. It's actually very crazy how—yeah, this is—I just wanted to show you this, because this is what I modeled the design after.

Interviewer: Your inspiration? That makes a lot of sense.

Interviewee: There's that title to it.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's really similar.

*Interviewee:* I'm not sure if that's copyright infringement, but whatever. Yeah, this is going slow. Yeah, so that's the same.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, this is kind of the same font looking.

*Interviewee:* I designed it after that. Obviously it was hard for the front page to do much, because they have a million—they have a ton of content that they can push and feature on their front page.

Interviewer: It's always changing and stuff.

*Interviewee:* Right. Mine would just be an introduction, and then I did recent stories to—this is the capstone projects and this is one of the other artifacts I have in there. Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool.

Interviewee: This is the introduction.

*Interviewer:* What, to you, was one of the most memorable aspects of creating this portfolio?

*Interviewee:* I don't know, it was putting together the capstone project was fun. Just designing everything. Yeah, like the stories. They are totally designed just like *Graland*. It's like very, very basic. No frills, really. It's just the text and a ton of white space. That was done intentionally.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's very journalistic.

Interviewee: Yeah.

*Interviewer:* What kind of experience, then, did you want the reader to have with this? It sounds like you put a lot of thought into the design.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I wanted to—it was intentionally minimalist, both because A, I mean it makes for less work. Also it just made sense, given—I wanted the focus to be just on the writing. I wanted that to be the experience. Also, because the—there was things to distract them within—cuz there's hyperlinks within here that they can click, and it goes to a new link and they can read that. There are other things other than just everything that you see in front of you to look at. That was really the—I just wanted the focus to be on the writing.

There were pictures thrown in here, too, and links to YouTube clips.

*Interviewer:* Did you notice any relationships among your artifacts as you were putting this portfolio together?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, well I think I chose things that blended journalism and academic writing. The skills that I acquired from both, and I talked about that [English course] piece that—like I was having trouble with it first, but then I used journalism skills to make it work. That's the piece I—that's the first thing on here.

Interviewer: Yeah.

*Interviewee:* I chose one thing from the [local Ann Arbor newspaper], which was a bit longer. It was about how the [University of Michigan] was handling the Obamacare rollout. Like straight-up hard news reporting with a little bit of narrative mixed in. I just did things that blended things.

*Interviewer:* What do you think that program administrators, like people in Sweetland, and people who are interested in writing development, like me, what can we learn about writing development from your capstone e-portfolio?

*Interviewee:* I guess you can learn that—huh, that's a tough question.

*Interviewer:* What do you think we could see about how students develop as writers from this particular e-portfolio?

*Interviewee:* I think that a big bedrock of every writer's development will be something that they're passionate about. Passionate about will be what will come out of any sort of end of any project. Something that they—that's what you see at the end. It's something that that, more than anything, should really shine through, is that the person is passionate about the subject. That's another thing that writing allows you to do. It allows you to explore your passions more than just studying a subject. It allows you to write about it and just explore that even further through the writing process.

I think it shows that you can see how people have—how *[inaudible 00:42:34]* writers improved through reading their capstone project, but also you see how important passion is to that entire process of development.

*Interviewer:* I want to reflect back on the Gateway course for just a minute. How do you think your experiences in the capstone course compare with your experiences in the gateway course?

*Interviewee:* They both challenge you in terms of you have to make arguments and you have to really think of yourself as a writer. You're usually just writing, just doing it. You're not really thinking about the process that's involved and how you—who you are as a writer. There's the commonality. I think the capstone, obviously, was a lot more work. I think coming from the Gateway, I don't think anyone really expected, given what their experience in the Gateway was like, they weren't expecting this amount of work. Kind of caught them by surprise.

Sorry, what was the other part of the question?

*Interviewer:* How they compare, the experiences in the capstone versus the Gateway.

*Interviewee:* Right, so the experiences are similar in terms of your—it's a lot of reflecting on who you are as a writer, and that can be a struggle, if it's not something that you've really thought about before. Both experiences are really good in terms of forcing you to figure that out. They compare that way. They're similar that way, and they're different in terms of the workload and how much is expected of you.

The focus is really on you. You're not studying—most courses you're studying a subject, a topic. In this one, you're the subject.

*Interviewer:* Yeah, so you just mentioned reflective writing. Both of the courses emphasize reflective writing in various kinds of forms. How would you describe your experience with that kind of reflection? Are you still using it in your current writing? What did it teach you? That kind of thing.

*Interviewee:* I don't think I use it explicitly because I don't blog about myself or my own experiences. I think, in the future, my writing will be about something else, and not about me. I think it still teaches you important things that I'll use with writing in the future. In my decision making process, and going through any sort of writing process you are now more self-aware of what you do as a writer, who you are as a writer. Obviously, I think it can be very helpful in terms of just being successful and knowing what you're trying to do with whatever you're writing. Knowing who you are really helps with that.

*Interviewer:* Has this reflection given you new ways of talking about your writing? New terms or concepts or anything like that?

Interviewee: Is there any example? I don't know.

*Interviewer:* Some people have adopted ways of thinking about the reflection or terminology they've used to think about their reflection. I'm not saying you definitely should have.

*Interviewee:* I don't know. I mean I think the way I describe things, just in general, the way I talk a lot of times you can tell that I write a lot cuz I tend to ramble. I don't know. I don't know if I have any.

*Interviewer:* Fair enough. The minor is pretty new, still. Are there any suggestions you'd have for instructors or administrators of the program?

*Interviewee:* When the capstone, I think as far as the—the third year grade is the portfolio. Third is the evolution, and the third is those gamafied point, like the mini-assignments. I think that section could be improved in terms of having it more worthwhile towards—making it more—cuz a lot of the goals of them you see is geared towards helping you brainstorm for your project or for the evolution. I think a lot of the sentiment among a lot of my class at least was that it was hard to fit what those assignments were asking of you into our brainstorming. It just made—

Interviewer: Just extra work.

*Interviewee:* Made for extra work, even though [instructor] ended up lowering the threshold for everything, because I think he realized that. I think there could be a

better use of that third of the grade than that sort of system. I think it's hard for people—I think even though this could be—maybe it's just the fault of how everybody works—how students work, but I think it's really hard for students to just say, instead of having this is due on February whatever, this is due on March whatever, to have you just have to have a certain amount of these mini assignments done by the end of the semester.

Maybe it's there to teach us, to force us to plan better and to organize ourselves better which, maybe that's an argument for why it should stay. The majority of the people in my class did not do that well. I think that there could be just, in place of that, there could be a couple of assignments that cover that portion of the grade that are still just as valuable and instructive to the course. Whether some sort of papers, just like writing assignments that relate to either project or to the evolution essay.

Then, in terms of the minor as a whole, I guess it'd be good to have more community cohort events that—I don't know, one thing I'm realizing as I compare to my friends' experiences in other majors and minors and whatnot like in poly sci [political science] there's absolutely no sense of community within the major. You could go four years without taking a single class with somebody else in the major. In fact, that's probably the case for most of the other people in the major.

There's not a whole lot they can do to change that because it's so big. With the minor it's small enough where it can be more things to be done to create a sense of community or something. Some people may not like that and they want their own—I think it's good to have a really diverse set of social experience—like you have your group of friends from whatever, then you have groups from other things.

Interviewer: That makes sense to me.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Also, the last thing is, I guess, when I tell people I'm a writing minor, they're like oh, creative writing, or what? I don't know. I don't have a good answer for them. If that was—

Interviewer: More clearly articulated—

Interviewee: What's the purpose of the minor?

Interviewer: I see.

Interviewee: Honestly, I'm graduating and I don't know.

Interviewer: You're not sure. That's a really good point.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Well, that's all the questions I have.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for coming.

Interviewee: Of course.

*Interviewer:* Hanging out and chatting with me about your experiences. Appreciate it.

[...]

Interviewee: Great.

*Interviewer:* Thank you so much.

Interviewee: No problem. Good luck with the rest of the-

Interviewer: Thank you.

[End of Audio]