

*Interviewer:* All right. This is \*\*\*. It's [...], November 22nd, [...] and I'm here with \*\*\*. This is the fall semester [...] my first question for you is how do you describe yourself as a writer?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think beginning in the writing process—I actually didn't realize I liked writing until I think later high school or in college. I had never seen myself as a writer before. The only writing I had was very analytical. I think in the beginning I always thought of myself as more of like an analytical writer and so more like academic. I've always loved reading and I started taking more lit [literature] classes in high school and early college. I started to see myself as like, "Oh wow," like I could go down the more creative route.

I think at this point I'm more probably mixed in both sides. I haven't done, I have had way more experience doing more analytical stuff and writing more academic things and research papery type of stuff. I definitely see myself now as a writer going towards more the creative side of things, and writing stories and poems and like that type of stuff.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. How did that change take place?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I think first, like I said before, I never thought of myself as a writer and I never thought I was actually good at writing either. I still don't think so, but [chuckles] people have—tell me like, "Yeah, this is really good." I started thinking about it more and it was like, "Oh, maybe this is something I might be interested in."

I think that change kinda took place by just taking more classes that had to do with more the creative side and more of the actual writing side rather than taking classes where you have to write a paper as an assignment. It's more like just taking a lit classes. I think just reading more books, just in general, really inspired me. Yeah, so I think it kinda turned; I twisted that way.

Especially I'm in the writing minor program, so I've been getting, so I had to take a, the, I think it's the gateway course for the writing minor, which is you have to take it if you're a writing minor. That's the first course you take in the program. That really opened me up, I think, to the different creative side of writing. Cuz I met a lot of other writing minor kids, obviously, in that class. They all come from different backgrounds, and—

*Interviewer:* That's amazing.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, so I kind of shifted my thinking of writing from then on. I tried to learn more about writing as like a subject and topic rather than like a tool that people use in other modes of discipline rather than—this is writing minors and in that class especially we would just read essays about just writing. I think I

had never done that before, and it had always been like, “Oh writing for like the sciences and like writing for academics.” I don’t know if that, if my answer’s clear?

*Interviewer:* Oh yeah. Definitely.

*Interviewee:* Okay. Okay.

[...]

*Interviewer:* All right, continuing here with \*\*\*. Second question. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you first began at [University of Michigan]?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Someone that was very, someone, I guess, someone that knew she was interested in writing, but not very sure how to like take that into account like when choosing classes and like just as a degree or in an academic standpoint. Someone who would definitely—I was definitely someone who came from a very, like I said, academic, analytical writing standpoint, so I hadn’t done a lot of creative stuff.

I definitely knew I was interested in writing cuz second semester of senior year in high school we had a writing center actually in our high school, so I was a writing tutor for that second semester. Which is kind of similar to, I think, with the peer and tutoring program at Sweetland. I was tutoring other students in their writing and helping them write their essays. At the same time we had our own class where we would share each other’s writing and talk about writing as a whole. I definitely knew I was interested in writing.

I was very not confident in my writing though, so I wasn’t sure if I wanted to be gung-ho and be an English major at the same time. I’m in the business school now, so I have a strong interest in business as well. I think entering in as a writer, as how I saw myself entering in U of M [University of Michigan] I didn’t see myself as a very confident writer, but just definitely someone who wanted to take more classes to explore that.

*Interviewer:* What kind of classes did you take in lit here that sort of led to that new interest?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. It was, I think, second semester freshman year I took this childhood lit class. It was really interesting. It was all about reading children books, and kinda analyzing them, and thinking about them in more of like a lit analytical standpoint. It was just cool cuz I realized like, oh, like—I mean people never think of children’s books as something that’s opening—I mean compared to reading Chekovski 00:02:06 , or reading—doing Dostoevsky 00:02:06, or like someone really deep like that compared to reading like Peter Rabbit. Like no one

makes the connection and says like, “Wow. This is as meaningful as that.” I was like, “Wow. People can be so powerful in their message just by writing children’s books. Like maybe like the creative side of things is like a really cool route to go down.”

I began thinking about that. I think the writing minor class especially like I mentioned really opened me up. Just because there was—I was taking this class with kids who had been writing novels and stuff for such a long time. I was like, “Wow. This is definitely an avenue to go down,” or it’s definitely approachable. I was always really scared and intimidated by it cuz everyone had read and even like my peers their stuff was awesome. It was like, “I could never do that,” but I think it’s just the process of going down that road that’s exciting.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. When did you decide to do the minor?

*Interviewee:* I wanted to do it, I think, the end of freshman year. I wasn’t completely sure yet, and I think—and how the school works is I really wanted to go to the business school, so I knew that for sure. I was really stressed about applying to the business school cuz you apply freshman year and you get in sophomore year. I was caught up in that, and I was like, “Okay, I’ll figure it out if I like get into the business school then I’ll definitely pursue it. If I don’t I’ll see how it fits in.” I got into the business school sophomore year.

I ended up taking—I remember first semester sophomore year I ended up taking like an [Title of course] with this GSI that I actually had for first-year, first semester English. I had her again and she’s really cool. I really like her, so I had an [Title of course] class, which was all writing, of course. After that I was like confirmed like, “Yeah, I definitely wanna pursue writing at [University of Michigan],” and ended up taking the minor course second semester.

*Interviewer:* Wow. That’s exciting.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* How do you feel like you’ve grown as a writer?

*Interviewee:* I’m definitely more willing to take risks. I think I’m a little more comfortable with like going out into new avenues and trying new styles of things. Before I was never, I still am to some extent, but I was never confident about my writing, so I would always be very cautious in trying new things in case it didn’t work out or kinda sticking to the same stream of thought. I think like now, I’ve just realized it’s more of just putting something on the page rather than worrying about constantly will it turn out good, and this, and that.

I didn’t realize looking back at all the stuff I have written the things that people liked the most usually were the things that I thought I did the worst in. It was

usually stuff that I took risks in. For example I remember end of senior year I was applying to the scholarship, and you have to write a scholarship essay or a story of some sort. I don't even think there was a theme or a question. It could be about anything. I was like, "Well, I'm probably not gonna get this," so I just wrote like—it wasn't a story that meant a lot to me, but it wasn't something that I thought was necessarily good or something that would be chosen. I won. I did get some scholarship money out of it.

I think just from that experience and like more so in college, especially in the writing minor class, I was starting to explore new routes. I haven't touched some things still because I'm very scared, but I'm, I definitely opened up more, I think [cross talk 00:05:42]. Especially the class you don't get graded on your writing, so that definitely helps.

*Interviewer:* In the writing minor class?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I mean you don't get graded on—if you don't turn your essay in, she says, "Well, this is a B," or anything like that. It's more of just—that really gives you an opportunity to explore everything. It's nice.

*Interviewer:* Talk to me about some of those risks that you've taken. Like what's an—

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* - example of a risk that you would take?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Like I said, I was really analytical before, so that essay that I had written end of senior year was like a short story. It was something more like the lit [literature] aspect. I had never written short stories before. Just because I had this, I mean, with my idols are like Amy Tan and those type. They're incredible writers, so I was always really intimidated to catch like the creative space and create stories and characters. Something like that I think is definitely a risk that I've taken.

This past semester I started writing a short story. Kind of like that had to do a little bit with my experiences in the business school and being a women in business especially. I have had the opportunity to connect my different interests together in writing, which was really cool. Yeah, the risk taking, I think, is really going down the creative side of things in writing stories and characters rather than just writing about pursuing some topics and more of the academic style of things. It's scary. I still haven't done poetry. That would be a real risk for me cuz I've never done that. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* When did you start like doing creative stuff here in [University of Michigan]?

*Interviewee:* Probably sophomore year actually, like actually did creative stuff. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* What class was that?

*Interviewee:* That was the writing minor class. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Cool. You talked about sort of your growth in terms of the genre.

*Interviewee:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewer:* Like thinking this genre like, “Okay, I’m gonna write creative, or like a story, instead of an essay.”

*Interviewee:* Right.

*Interviewer:* What about growth in terms of like even specific aspects of your writing within the genre—

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* - or within multiple genres that have improved over the course of your time so far? Within creative writing, within essay writing, how have you seen that change?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I’m trying to think. I’ve always found, I guess, in general, finding inspiration as writer I’ve always found a lot of inspiration with people Amy Tan and jumba 00:08:12, people growing up. Because I find their experience kind of mirrors my own, or my own growing up in—my parents are from [country], but I grew up in the U.S., so it’s always interesting to see, in my own life I’ve always seen that culture clash. Cuz I’ve grown up in one culture then I come out, and I study, and I have friends in another culture.

As a writer I think I’ve seen that come more into my writing. At the same time I think in terms of—I’m trying to get away from that as well cuz I don’t want it to turn into a cliché. I don’t know if that answers your question. You’re asking about how my writing has changed over time?

*Interviewer:* Uh huh.

*Interviewee:* I think beforehand or I’ve, before I used to see myself going towards that. Not as a comfort zone, but definitely something to draw from as experience. I’m always scared of becoming a cliché or becoming too genre specific. I’ve been taking my risks and doing something completely different. I have friends that like to write too in their free time. One of my biggest fears is writing about things that

I'm comfortable about cuz if it's not, they always say write about things you know. At the same time if you know it it becomes too comfortable. It's not as interesting to read. Not just for you, but even for someone else. Cuz they can just tell. I don't know if that answered your question.

*Interviewer:* Definitely.

*Interviewee:* Okay, okay.

*Interviewer:* Yeah, it did.

*Interviewee:* I'm trying to skew away from the clicheness and just do random stuff.

*Interviewer:* Yeah, it's exploring new ideas.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Themes and stuff, subjects.

*Interviewee:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. I hear you. [*Chuckling*] In terms of improvement.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* How has your writing improved?

*Interviewee:* I think I definitely, like something definitely clicked. I think it was probably the beginning of college or maybe end of high school of what teachers meant when you have to have flow and organization. I think, I mean I feel like I was pretty successful in terms of grades wise as a writer up to that point, but something definitely clicked. I definitely got more of the analytical aspect of writing and understanding really how to structure your writing in an effective way where it doesn't seem like it's an intro body paragraph.

It's not that formula like, but it flows between paragraphs and it's very seamless. I think I've been able to cultivate that skill more. It's something I'm still improving. I guess in other aspects of how I've improved as a writer I've definitely improved in getting out of the formulaic. Like I said I think getting out of the five writing paragraphs and being a little more creative, and risk taking with it, and being successful in somewhere else by doing that.

*Interviewer:* What do you think attributed to—what would you attribute this—to what would you attribute this growth or change?

*Interviewee:* Definitely professors and teachers that I've had in writing in the past. Definitely looking at peers, being inspired by them, I think. I definitely—I know people say peer review—I used to always think of actually—I'm being really honest. I'm sorry. *[Chuckles]* I used to always think of peer review as like, "Oh," no one will ever say to you, and never have I ever told anyone like, "You're paper's horrible. Like let me rip this apart," because there's always that barrier no matter, especially if they're your best friend. Even if it's a stranger you've never met before there's always that barrier of you don't wanna hurt them because writing is very delicate and people are very cautious with it. I have always seen peer review in that regard. In that sense—I lost my train of thought, where I was going with this. Can you repeat the question?

*Interviewer:* Yeah. It was what has influenced that growth or caused that growth?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Definitely seeing my, so yeah. People underestimate peer review because you're always scared to berate someone's work per se. I don't think it's—peer review isn't just about the critical aspect. It's more of like you just got an opportunity to read someone else's writing. I think just doing peer reviews just in class or having people ask like, "Oh, like can you read this?" or me asking other people to read my stuff, has just opened me to different points of view and different types of thinking. Just taking a writing writing class, or just an English class, or just an anthro [anthropology] class, with the types of writing and the types of people you even encounter in those classes are very different. I think seeing that has opened me up to different avenues that I can take in my own writing.

I think also classes also open you up to different types of things you can read as well. Cuz I think reading—to be a writer I think you have to read. *[Chuckles]* You have to read other people's writing. I think sometimes when you do it on your own and when you kind of just take your own opinions you, again, you fall into a certain stream of thought, and books, and authors. When professors assign you reading even that opens you up to different things. There's some things I've read in class that I probably never would have read on my own.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. That sounds amazing.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Professors, students, and reading?

*Interviewee:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Great. What are your goals for yourself as a writer?

*Interviewee:* I definitely, I have some ambitious goals. I do wanna write a book at some point. *[Chuckling]* It's very ambitious and it's very, very long term. Right

now as a writer is just to keep writing I think. Cuz I think it's so, right, if this schedule it's been so hard to find time, so that's really, just to keep writing something. Whether it's reflection, or stories, or just anything, or like short essays. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. How often do you wanna write?

*Interviewee:* It's kind of like exercise in the sense like where I feel like if I don't get on it it'll never happen. I've been trying. It's been hard to get into this habit, but I'm really setting a goal for myself this year is to write a little bit every day. I'm a morning person, so either in the morning or before I go to bed or something. Because if you do it a hundred percent of the time it's easy to carry on the habit rather than saying like saying, "Oh, I'll write like once a week." The once a week thing gets pushed back for other stuff.

*Interviewer:* Right. Interesting. What about goals in terms of aspects of your writing you wanna strengthen—

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* - things like that?

*Interviewee:* I definitely wanna strengthen my creative side of writing, I think. I've always loved watching movies and film and art, and I think I definitely wanna incorporate that love in writing, in the sense of exploring my creative side. Being a little more comfortable with writing what characters that are institutions that maybe I know nothing about. That's always scary to me. Because they always say like, "You should write what you know," and stuff, but I really, but to think about it, you're like, "I'm like [...] years old. Like I would never actually experienced some of the deeper stuff that people do go through in life yet." That part is scary.

I'm never really sure what to write about when I write stories cuz I'm always, like I told ya, I'm always afraid to get into the clicheness of things and being the typical [...] girl writing her teenage angst story. Yeah, that's probably something, that's a goal I wanna set for myself. Getting to a point where I can write a book, creating things comfortably. Even though I haven't maybe been in that situation before.

*Interviewer:* Awesome. Thinking across your writing experiences at U of M [University of Michigan], what do you think it means to write well?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think definitely one thing I have learned is that writing well doesn't necessarily mean following a certain formula. It's not even following, hitting a bunch of bullet points, like it has to be this, this, that. I think that works in one stream of thought, but I think overall writing should always have some sort

of connection to the reader. Some people argue, “Well, look it’s hard to cater to your reader because they have different interests and you should be writing for you really.” That’s true, but I’ve read stuff that I’ve would never been remotely interested in topic wise, but I’ve read it and like, “This is a good piece of writing”. Cuz I think it immediately draws a reader in. It allows them to connect to you kind of, in that sense.

It’s hard to get to that point. I don’t think I’ve gotten to that point either, but it’s definitely—I’ve definitely figured out that good writing is definitely when a random person can look at it and say like, “Wow. That was interesting.” Even though it could have been about something that was completely not interesting. It’s like TED [Technology, Entertainment, Deign] talks I think in the sense where you see people giving random stuff about thing, topics that you probably wouldn’t, not care about necessarily, but you don’t have an interest in. They give a talk about it for 15, just 15 minutes, and it’s, “Wow. That’s really interesting. Like I never looked at it from that point of view.” It’s that idea. It’s supposed to draw the reader in.

*Interviewer:* How would you do that in different genres of writing?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, it’s hard. I think creative writing is maybe a little easier. Just because when you are writing with characters and emotions, and stuff, I think people do connect with that even more. I think it’s much harder with academic writing. If you’re writing a story about, like a paper about some random tribe in Africa, I’m sure an economy major would find—or maybe an engineering major would find that hard to connect with. Sometimes I think writing is about exploring more of the universal aspects of anything.

I think one of the biggest things in writing is even if you’re not—if your paper isn’t aiming to connect with every audience it, should at very minimum connect to the audience that it’s intended for. Yeah, I guess that kinda contradicts what I said before, but I think that’s the bare minimum. Even if your African tribe paper won’t connect with everyone, again, it should very minimum connect with the anthropology majors that you’re writing for. That’s the department that’s gonna look at that paper.

If anything I feel like writing is always about giving in the sense it’s giving to yourself because you are exploring that side of yourself, and you’re putting out your thoughts on paper. I found it’s always important to consider your audience too and think about how they think and react as well, or think about how other people fit in that situation. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. Anything else what makes good writing?

*Interviewee:* I’m trying to think. I’ve always—most of the writing I’ve thought of has always been more like race and stuff, but the things I’ve read that I’ve always

been good at physically always given goose bumps. I don't know what quality they have necessarily. That's something I'm still learning and trying to figure out, maybe to see if I can them in my own writing. I think it's always cool when writers—I don't know if this answers your question, but when writers write things and they make connections, or like the reader makes connections in their writing, but the writer never realizes, or the writer never intended for those connections to be made.

I've seen a lot of interviews with novelists, for example, where people are like, "Oh. That was really cool how you used that boat in your book. Like I think it symbolizes this and this, and the character really is that. It symbolizes the character's struggle." I've seen authors be like, "Oh. Wow, that's so cool. I never actually intended that connection to come about." I think that's just like a—it's almost like a supernatural connection to the reader. I think you get that in writing when you're really passionate about whatever you write about, and you really write with conviction and belief and confidence.

I think each writer will have their own experience. It's like art. I'm sure Da Vinci or, I don't know. That's probably too much, but I'm sure any artist has a certain vision in mind, but every audience member or every one doesn't have the same interpretation when they look it. I think good writing is something that, again, gives like a wide canvas for someone, people to connect to and gives everyone their own experience. Even it could be very limited and specific. For example, people like Amy Tan and Jeff Palari 00:21:10 I think they're very focused in what they write about. Again, they're always on the best sellers lists and that, I mean, even apart from the business standpoint of things like that should tell—tells people even if it's a very specific experience it connects to a lot of people. Yeah. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. Absolutely.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* All right, so shifting gears a little bit.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Which first year writing requirement course did you take?

*Interviewee:* I took [English course]. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* What were your experiences in this course?

*Interviewee:* I thought it was good. I'm trying to remember. I don't think I learned. I mean from a learning standpoint I don't think I learned too much from that course. In the sense like—but it's hard to say what you learn in writing I

think. More because you have to implement it, and practice it, and something you realize later on when you look at your writing and reflect on it. One thing I did like about the class was because it's required you meet a lot of kids from different majors. That was cool. I had friends in art school who were in that class and they were taking it. Their friend like engineering—I don't think engineering, but people from just different, also met majors like history, and statistics, like math, and law, and business. That was cool.

I think—and then when we share each other's writing it's cool to see how they're background kind of influences how they write. Like how long their responses are, how short they can be or how creative. I like that aspect of the class. I think it definitely does give you a good background into different types of writing. I think more so, more than the actual assignments I think I liked reading the articles that we had in class. Which was just different types of pieces that people wrote from. Like we read a feminist piece and a piece from someone who does new historical writing, I think, and stuff like that, different genres. I think it's a really good exploration class. Also, I could be—I'm sure people learn a lot of stuff in the class. I could be just like biased. Just because I think coming out of high school I came from more of a writing background than other people. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* You said—you made this point that writing is a lot of implementing the practices.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* In that class did you find any—what were you practicing writing in that class, or—

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I really had journal assignments and stuff like that, so that was definitely helpful. I think that gets your mind running and thinking of class. I remember we had a couple of papers. One of the cool things, the class that I took, or cuz I know there's different versions. I think everyone has, depending on the GSI, you get different experiences. My GSI, the whole class was based on incorporating identity and your interests into writing, a writer from and looking at place and that sort of thing.

I remember we wrote a paper on how our major connects to, or I think it was, I don't even remember, but I think it was like persuasive communication in our major or what we're interested in a career field. I'm very interested in marketing, so I remember writing my paper about marketing and that was really cool I think. Just because you're obviously maybe more interested in the class when you write about things you like versus being given a topic and say like, "Write about this." That was really cool. It was also cool to hear about what other people thought about writing and their majors. Yeah, that was an example of implementing stuff.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Great. Thinking about that class, any experiences you had, what effect did that, did those experiences have on you as a writer?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. It definitely made me more confident in the fact that I knew I was interested in writing. Yeah, I wasn't sure. Even it seems like I was sure being I kept on taking English and writing classes, but I still wasn't sure if that, if it was just like a—I feel like every person, or maybe me at least, every time I succeed in something sometimes I'm waiting for the next step, and be like, "Oh no, like everything that just happened was just like luck. Like I don't actually have skill or ability in that." I was thinking about writing in the same way, but I think taking that class and I had done well in it and I had a lot of good experiences with it. It just boosted my confidence and my interest.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Great. Are you still making use of what you learned in your [English course] class in your writing now?

*Interviewee:* It's hard to say because I'm trying to—cuz I feel like I did learn things in that class. I think they weren't—nothin' that was monumental that completely shifted my style of writing or it wasn't like pre-[English course], or post-[English course] or anything like that. [*Chuckling*] It definitely has opened me up to writing as a study of topic, just writing in general. Just because of the articles that we read in that class. I still find stuff by those authors really interesting.

*Interviewer:* Do you know what articles they were, what authors?

*Interviewee:* There was—I'm trying to remember, there was this one really cool article. There was a couple. There was one actually by Amy Tan. It was funny. She was talking about language and coming from a background where you grew up with English or you don't grow up with English. I think she was comparing her mother and her experience. It was just interesting dealing with—thinking about bi-lingual languages, and writing, and seeing how that translates into how people write. Yeah, I think every culture writes differently, or has a—obviously they act differently, they live differently, but I think translates into writing too. We read that article.

There was another really cool article. Sorry. There was another really cool article on, I wanna say, it was by Deborah Tannen, I think. It was on feminist theory, and it was all about how women depending on how—how women will always be judged no matter what they do or dress like. If you have short hair and they'll think something. You could wear jeans and they'll think something. If you wear pants, skirt, and that was really interesting, I think.

She was talking about it more through a business lens. Whereas, like guys, like even if you look at anything, even titles. Even if a man is married or not married he will always be a Mister. It's just like a woman, you can be Mrs.; you can be

Miss. There's so many different connotations you can use. Not just that, and I think, it was just interesting. Because I was going into the business school, and it's pretty known that there's not a lot of women in business. Let alone even in the business world. It's just interesting to think about that and see how that played out. I think more I just found, I liked those articles because I found relation to them in my own life.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Did they influence your writing at all, reading those things?

*Interviewee:* No, I don't think they influenced my writing. I think it opened me up to different types of writing though. Cuz I don't think I've ever—I never read something like that beforehand. It had been mostly like, it had been mostly up to that point just either really creative stuff or really argumentative stuff. Nothing about like writers talking about random topics.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Great. Did you take [Writing course]?

*Interviewee:* No. I don't know what that is. I don't think so.

*Interviewer:* Okay. [Chuckling] Okay.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* No problem. Your concentration is business?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Have you had an opportunity to do writing in your concentration?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I have.

*Interviewer:* Okay.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. They make us take a communications course, which has a little bit of writing. I have done some; there have been some essays for classes and stuff, but a very different type of writing.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Yeah. Being [chuckling] —the question is what affect have those experiences had?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* [Cross talk 00:29:30] change your writing?

*Interviewee:* I definitely separated my writings spheres a little more. I think my business writing is much more concise, to the point. It's very different style and different expectations, I think, in the business world. I definitely actually see some of that spilling over into my other sphere of writing. Because I'm all—I usually, I, as you can tell by this interview, I'm usually a little more super fluent or wordy sometimes and I have trouble staying brief in writing. I like to go on. Not in details, but just go on and keep writing about things. Because of business you're kind of forced to stay concise and brief. That has helped me a little bit in my other sphere of writing. Where it's like, "Okay, what's the plight of this character right now?"

*Interviewer:* Okay, so there are a little bit of—

*Interviewee:* There's a little bit of overlap, but not much. Cuz I think the expectations I get in English classes and stuff are very different from the writing quotations I get in the business world.

*Interviewer:* Uh huh. How so?

*Interviewee:* I think in English classes and stuff you're always encouraged to explore. If you're getting, kind of hitting the bush right on, straight on, it's almost too direct and not very, not—I don't know if creative is the right word—but not very fluidy or not very proper. I would say it's not—it's almost too easy if you do that for the reader. It's not very general to read, basically. It's like reading a list of bullet points. In business people that don't have time; they wanna get straight to the point. Like the writing I've done in business hasn't been very challenging. I can definitely see why being brief, it hasn't been that difficult to switch over for that.

*Interviewer:* Okay. How is the process different from one kind of concentration to the other?

*Interviewee:* Writing process in business writing is very short. *[Chuckling]* It's actually been interesting because business—in business school in general everything's a joint group project. A lot of the writing I've done in business school has been group writing actually. The process is different in that sense because not only do you write your own part, but you have to also work with other people and make sure it flows and meshes together. Cuz people do have different styles and voices. It's more of an information-based style. Where you figure out how to get your information out in the most brief and concise way without using too many words and stuff like that. In the creative side, it's a much longer process. You usually have a lot thinking about the topic, and then I look at how to approach it, and then I'm always challenging myself. Like, "Oh, that came to me really quickly. Is there something else I can try?" and stuff like that. It's more drawn out.

*Interviewer:* Right. Interesting. How confident do you feel, you sort of answered this, about writing in your concentration?

*Interviewee:* About business writing?

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

*Interviewee:* In general?

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* I think I feel pretty confident. Despite the fact that actually a lot of people in the business school don't like writing. [*Chuckles*] I usually actually end up doing a lot of the—I'm usually the person that ends up writing a lot of the stuff. Just because other people will give me their information, or I'm the person that adds things to our paper to make sure everything sounds good, so I'm pretty confident in that aspect. I've gotten better at it. Better at being concise and that's definitely helped me in that train of thought. I think I am fairly confident. Then again, I think I'm in a field that doesn't have—the writing isn't a huge emphasis. Whereas, I'm sure if I was in history or going to be—aiming to go to law school then maybe it'd be a different story. Where I'm surrounded by people with stronger writing backgrounds.

*Interviewer:* Right. Right. Okay. What impact has the Minor Gateway course—

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* - [Writing 200 level course], what impact has that had on your writing overall?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I think it's, like I said before, I think it just opened me up to different types of writing and realizing that writing can be a topic of study. Different types of writers too. Just writers that I had never heard of before. Just like, "Oh, this is really good." Cuz before I think the only writers I'd really been exposed to were books. Like people who wrote novels or the famous poets and like people you would know. Like Emily Dickinson or someone like that. I had never heard of some of these short story writers, and Alice Munro I had actually never heard of before [Writing 200 level course]. Now she has a Nobel Prize, so it's just exposing me to different lenses of writing I think.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Did it change your process at all?

*Interviewee:* It definitely made me more risk taking. I think just by the fact that the class isn't graded on the quality of writing. It's more of just completing your assignments and such. It definitely made me more open to taking risks and being okay with the fact that the first draft doesn't have to be perfect. [*Chuckles*] I think

because when you write, again, it's like you're putting yourself out on paper and you can be very self-conscious and cautious about it. I think getting in, taking that class kind of made me realize the process is difficult for everyone and writers actually hate the process. That made me even feel better about the fact that I hated it too. I was like, "I'm not alone in this," [chuckling] but, yeah, I think it's definitely made me take more risks in writing and explore more things.

*Interviewer:* Great. What impact has that class had on your sense of yourself as a writer?

*Interviewee:* Sense of myself as a writer? I definitely see myself more as a writer after that class. That's definitely true. I think before that class I hadn't thought of myself as a writer. Now when people ask me what I do outside of school I definitely make sure I include writing in that description. I think it's definitely made me form more of a writing identity. Just because maybe this might have influenced it, but part of the course you have to start creating a writing portfolio, that you eventually complete after you're completed the minor. You keep on adding your different types of writing. Just looking at my writing and reflecting back on it, and I was like, "Oh, like this is definitely—maybe I am a writer. I've written all of this and I'm definitely interested in this." Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Great. What have your experiences of working with other writers in that course? What were those like?

*Interviewee:* It was really cool, also slightly intimidating. Cuz I think there were a lot of really good writers in that course. It was really inspiring to learn from them, and actually a lot of them were—I wouldn't say seasoned writers, but writers that have known they've been interested in writing for a long time. A lot of them are English majors and just people who generally would be writing all the time.

There is a girl I met that had written novels already. There were people who were writing stuff for the [local Ann Arbor newspaper] and do blogs and stuff like that. That was interesting being in that atmosphere. Cuz I think I came from the business school, where I was the only one who wrote or read and going to the writing minor class where everyone did that and to some extent even more than I did. It was a good environment to be in. I think I learned a lot from people.

*Interviewer:* Was that inspiring or was that—was it sort of inhibiting to be around people who were, who you considered to be such great writers?

*Interviewee:* I think it was inspiring. I don't think it was inhibiting. I think though it, on a negative note, it could be intimidating. Cuz it definitely made me feel like, "Oh, I'd be like somewhat I'm behind," but which was not the case at all. It was just not the case at all for anyone. Yeah, I don't think it was inhibiting or it didn't stop me from doing things. It did make me feel a little intimidated and a little bit

unsure about showing my work at first, but people are always really open and it's—I definitely felt comfortable by the end of the class to show my work.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. What did you learn from those students in the class?

*Interviewee:* Just like—I think like I said before, just opening up to different styles of thinking about—definitely some of these writers were more—they just wrote more. I think just the activity of writing definitely makes your writing better, just writing more. It's like a habit. I think that just inspired me. It was like I should just write more. I think that definitely helps you. Yeah, and just looking at how they write their process. A lot of them are very passionate and focused on their writing. They write essays weeks beforehand and stuff like that. I think just learning from their habits I think really helped. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Great. Anything to do with style or content?

*Interviewee:* I'm trying to think. I don't think—nothing in the content range, but I did have—I did meet this girl who wrote a lot of fantasy. That was something I had never considered, but after reading her stuff I was like, "Wow, this is really cool." I think it just inspired me to go into different genres I think. There was another student who wrote a lot of stuff about some struggles that she went through earlier in her teenage years. It was a very personal, really raw filled emotional type of piece. I've never actually put—at least I've never showed people writing that's been so emotional and really connected. I think that—even seeing that has led me to open up more and show people more in my writing.

*Interviewer:* Great. This Minor Gateway course emphasized reflective writing.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* How would you describe your experience with reflective writing?

*Interviewee:* I like reflective writing. I think it's a good way to formally sit down and say like, "This is how my writing has changed." As long as I—I feel like I'm usually analytical anyway. This may be just for me, like just a personal bias, but so I don't—doing the reflective writing assignments didn't add a tenfold to me cuz I automatically do that in my head. I always look at it and I'm like, "Oh, this is kind of a little different from before." If anything I think it just gives you an opportunity to put those thoughts down on paper. I think it's definitely important to reflect.

Sometimes, I think sometimes when you reflect too much you're kind of dwelling in the—not dwelling in the past, but too caught up in how you were doing things and how you are doing things now rather than just putting stuff on paper. Cuz when you reflect, I think, automatically when you reflect, I think at the side you're also planning. Like you're reflecting on something and then you're also

like, “Okay, that means, based on this, I should be doing this,” and I’ve been trying to get away more from the really planned aspect of writing. I think I used to be like that a lot and I felt that inhibited in my creativity a lot more, and made me more conscious, self-conscious in my writing.

I do reflective assignments. I think they’re good. I think they’re just like more manifestations of things that I had already been thinking about. I don’t usually take those too much into heart. Cuz I’m always afraid of falling into a certain comfortable path rather than just opening up, and exploring, and just doing random things on paper.

*Interviewer:* Just thinking about it, funnily enough that is reflection.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. [Chuckling] Yes. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Great. Are you still using, not necessarily these formal reflective questions, but reflection in your current writing, either assigned writing or voluntary writing?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, definitely in assigned writing if I do it. That’s like that comes naturally. I think voluntary writing, sometimes. I mean, again, I’m always afraid of becoming too self-conscious about my work. Cuz when you reflect I think you automatically, not only do you start planning, but you automatically think, “Was this good or bad?” [Chuckles] For a long time I think I was so unconfident as a writer cuz I always thought everything I wrote was bad. Like, “This is bad. This is bad.” The thing is you have to write bad stuff to write the good stuff. I think more than—and I don’t like to do too much reflection with my voluntary. Just because I don’t wanna get in the stream of thought of like, “Was this good? Was this bad? Was this like something I wanna work with?” I think it’s more just in getting thoughts down on paper, and it felt like those instances when I did that felt a lot more freer as a writer in my head.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Great. Let’s see. Now how would you describe your experiences using new media writing? That would be like blogs, remediation project, et cetera in [Writing 200 level course]?

*Interviewee:* I think it was a good experience cuz I had never done anything like that before. It definitely gave me that opportunity. I’m definitely more into blogs now after taking that class. I think I was much more like a very a conventional paper, book person before. After that I started noticing my friends had blogs and I had no idea they did. It was just opening up my mind to reading blogs, and doing more new media, or being exposed to more new media writing. Personally would I see that in my own writing yet? I don’t know, but I definitely see myself maybe going towards a blog type of deal. I think it’s definitely helped me, yeah, get exposure to that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Great. What kind of blog do you see yourself—

*Interviewee:* I don't know. I'd have to think. I usually write and think about really random stuff that's not even related to the things that I'm interested in. Just something really random. I don't know. *[Chuckles]* Yeah, because I don't know it'll probably be pretty random, but yeah.

*Interviewer:* Something. The next couple of questions are about your Gateway portfolio.

*Interviewee:* Okay.

*Interviewer:* Can you tell me about the most memorable aspect of your experience with the portfolio?

*Interviewee:* I think it was cool to pull out stuff. I had some stuff from high school. I don't know if I—I think I did put stuff from high school.

*Interviewer:* I think you can probably log in and open it.

*Interviewee:* Oh.

*Interviewer:* Yeah, that's it.

*Interviewee:* I think the most memorable part actually was actually working with WordPress [content management system] cuz that was a challenge, but now that I got the hang of it. Yeah, I think it was just looking at all the writing that I had done, and finally getting a chance to kind of accumulate everything and taking things out of old files in the computer. That was really cool. Seeing as how I had grown as a writer from a reflective standpoint. I think it's logging in. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* How did you find that you had grown as a writer looking at those pieces?

*Interviewee:* I think I saw myself being more creative. I think towards this end of writing rather than beforehand. Definitely less formulaic and more viscous 00:45:04, I think. The writing I did later on and more stylistic I think. I had done a lot more reflective pieces closer in college rather than pieces in high school, which had been mostly class work. I think the one thing that I put on there, or maybe I didn't. One of the things I was really proud of in high school was this 30-page term paper that I had written for AP English. It was on [wolves] 00:45:35, like it was stalays 00:45:36. It's a very depressing book. *[Chuckles]* The paper was like death basically. It was about perceptions of death. I was really proud of that just for the sheer massive size of 30 pages. Also I felt like that was like the gem of my analytical writing in high school. Just looking at how I progressed

from that to more of the types of analytical, maybe less serious writing that I did in college and now more creative stuff. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Is it coming up here?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I got my C-tools [learning management system] 00:46:07 up.

*Interviewer:* Great. Okay.

*Interviewee:* Like the archive or the—

*Interviewer:* The actual portfolio I think.

*Interviewee:* Okay. [Scrapping noise 00:46:16]

[...]

*Interviewer:* Okay. Tell me a little bit about the pieces that you chose for the portfolio and why you chose them?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* What they show about you?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, definitely. I think some of these pieces we had to put in the portfolio, but I still think I would have chosen them anyway. Some of the pieces so why are, so we had to put three pieces about [writing]. [...] I think first of all the reason why I didn't like writing or I thought writing was not for me was because I was so frustrated by it. I'm still frustrated by it I think. It's like, cuz it's always like that inability to find the right word and things you write are always interpreted differently. It's not always like a one-way street really, "This is what I wanna say and this is how it's gonna be read." That used to always frustrate me and fascinate me though at the same time. I like that piece just because it's why I don't write, but it also turns into why I do write at the end. I think those, just in general those three pieces are really reflective and I think they've given me a chance to finally assume my writing identity per se, and be comfortable with it.

We also had to put our art of transformation so I think that was our, that was a draft where we had to take a piece of writing and then remediate it, so put it in a different medium. I had done—and we had to re-purposed it and remediated, so I had taken an essay that I had originally written for [English 200 level course], which is [Title of course]. It was all about how more women should be on [boards] in business. It was something in that the assignment for that class had been something about incorporating your career interests, so I picked business.

I had taken that essay, which was very analytical and very academic, and I, trying to explore more of my creative side I turned it into a short story about an executive woman going through some of the struggles that I described in the essay. Then I took that short story and I made it into a book trailer of some sort for my remediation. That re-purposing was a short story. Then remediation was the book trailer. It was just getting your story out and then remediate it. That was just interesting. That was also completely unexpected. I didn't think I would do that. I put that up there cuz I think it's a couple of examples of how I am slowly experimenting with the writing process. Academic writing, I don't think I actually have anything in here yet. Personal writing, I put a little bit of my musings, just random stuff.

*Interviewer:* I'll check it out.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Random stuff I've written about. [...], I used to write for the business school newspapers. This is more like the journalistic side that I've explored. Cuz I had never really done that before either.

*Interviewer:* I see. Okay. *[Mumbling 00:03:11]* again. What were your aims when you made the portfolio?

*Interviewee:* When I was making the portfolio I remember being so time crunched. The only aim I had was just to get all my writing together. I think long term it's definitely more of having a space for all my writing to be put together, but also being able to go back and look through everything, I think. Because you say you have files in your computer, but it's you're never gonna actually open the files, and go look back unless they're all in the same place.

*Interviewer:* Right. Right. Interesting. What was the most memorable aspect of your experience with the portfolio?

*Interviewee:* I don't know. Probably working with WordPress. *[Chuckles]* Not just that. I think, yeah, I think figuring out what pieces I wanted to be put in and what pieces I didn't. Finally coming over the hill about showing writing to other people, I think. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Do you think creating the portfolio had an affect on your writing?

*Interviewee:* I think it's definitely made me more—no, I don't think it's definitely, it's affected my writing writing, but I think it's affected about how I feel when I write though. I think it definitely makes me feel like more of a writer, more of someone who can take risks, and do stuff.

*Interviewer:* The confidence aspect?

*Interviewee:* Yes. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Cool. What was the impact of the reflective writing in the portfolio?

*Interviewee:* Impact of the reflecting writing in the portfolio? Again, like I said before, in general just with any reflective writing I think it gives you a good chance to think about how you've grown as a writer. I think it, especially specifically the ones I have in this portfolio, I think solidified my identity as a writer. Like the [writing]. I think I finally—when you're writing about your process and you think, when you finally set it out into story on paper it makes me feel so much more like a writer compared to fluidly seeing it in there I think.

*Interviewer:* Yeah, having it all kind of condensed there.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Having it out on paper definitely always makes an impact for anything. Be it like a contract or it's the same, it's was kind of like I guess signing a contract with my writing stuff like. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Any other comments?

*Interviewee:* No, I don't think, no. I hope I answered all your questions.

*Interviewer:* You did.

*Interviewee:* Okay.

*Interviewer:* Very thoroughly.

*Interviewee:* [Chuckles] Thanks.

*Interviewer:* Great.

*[End of Audio]*