

Interviewer: Okay. My name is *** 00:03. I'm interviewing ***, and it's November 26th. All right. Today, we're just gonna talk about your writing and yourself as a writer. Let's start with that. How would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I would say that writing is something that I enjoy and something I always find challenging and interesting. Since I'm primarily a science major, writing is usually supplemental to most of the things that I'm doing here, but I think it's always important so it's always been a goal of mine to develop my writing just because I think it's necessary in all fields. As a writer, I think—I don't think I'm the most *[laughter]* prolific or *[laughter]* artistic or anything, but I think that I try to just develop solid writing skills so I can use it in whatever discipline.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began here at the University of Michigan?

Interviewee: I knew that writing was something I was interested in. In high school, I always enjoyed my English classes, and I did take a writing seminar I think at the end of senior year which I really liked, but I just didn't imagine writing being a very big part of my life at [University of Michigan]. I guess I just hadn't thought that I could do the same kind of—more creative or more interesting writing in college. I thought it was all gonna be long term papers and things like that. I didn't really anticipate being a writer at [University of Michigan], but my view really changed during my first-year writing class.

Interviewer: How did it change?

Interviewee: I just felt really lucky. I had a professor who was *[laughter]*—just let us do whatever we wanted, and his assignments were really vague which was hard *[laughter]* for some people, but I kinda thought that was really unique. I was really challenged, and he was just—I enjoyed going to his office hours. I really benefited from that, and I think that class was the only reason I took any other writing or English classes just 'cause I saw that writing didn't have to be a five-paragraph essay, or it didn't have to be like the term paper in my evolution class, and it didn't—it could be something more interesting or more fun.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. When you were describing writers, you would kinda use quotation marks, so what's your image of writers? What are writers doing?

Interviewee: I guess it would be like—*[laughter]* I guess I think of it—which is totally untrue, and I've—my view has definitely changed but coming into [University of Michigan], I thought of the writer as someone who used writing beyond a practical application and was writing more for the writing's sake and not for the purpose of conveying the information in the evolution term paper or

something like that. I didn't think that I was going to—I thought that I was gonna use writing in other skill sets, maybe, and not—like I was saying, as a supplemental thing as opposed to being an English major who was gonna write papers for the sake of the quality of the writing as opposed to the content, or combination of the content.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. From when you began to now, how would you say you've grown as a writer?

Interviewee: I think that I've learned how to—I've attempted to learn how to write in different—write different kinds of writing and different mediums. Our [Writing course] has really emphasized being able to—blogging or new media writing and things like that. It was just something I never had done before I came to [University of Michigan] and something [laughter] I was really uncomfortable with, especially [laughter] the blogging and things like that. I would say from when I came to now, I'm just more—I think I'm also—I can write faster. If I need to write a paper, I can just pound it out. [Laughter]. I would like to think my writing's better. I don't know. [Laughter]. I don't know, but I think—now, I strive more for clarity just in terms of technical writing skills.

Interviewer: What you attribute this growth?

Interviewee: Like I had mentioned, the [Writing 200 level course] class in terms of allowing me to see different mediums of writing and how I can apply—we did repurposing projects, so how I could—I took my evolution term paper [laughter] and then wrote a piece that could be put in a science—a pop culture science magazine type thing, so just looking at different places of publication and how to write in different voices and styles and things like that. I would attribute that to that class, probably. In terms of being able to write quickly, I took [English 400 level course], and in that, we had to write ten pages twice a week. That was literally just teaching you how to write and write and write and write [laughter], which I think is a really good skill for someone who wants to become a better writer, just to [laughter] sit and pound out the words—

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: - even though that class is painful at times. In terms of the quality of the writing, maybe—I took [English 300 level course] that I thought was really helpful.

Interviewer: [English 200 level course]?

Interviewee: [English 300 level course].

Interviewer: [English 300 level course]?

Interviewee: Just because of the feedback that we got—one thing was that in [Writing 200 level course], we didn't get any feedback, necessarily. If you went to office hours, you could, but it was gamified, so it was a point system. It was completion-based, so we didn't really see a critique of the writing as opposed to in my Writing—in my [English 300 level course] class, I really felt like my professor was invested in developing me as a writer. He would give very specific feedback and wouldn't just be, like, "Oh, this looks good." He would offer ways to improve it and push me out of my comfort zone. That was I think instrumental in improving the quality. I'm trying to think of other things that I've mentioned. I think that's probably the big 30 07:31 ideas.

Interviewer: The [English 300 level course], what subject is that?

Interviewee: It's [English 300 level course]. It's [Title of paper].

Interviewer: Then the other class was?

Interviewee: [Writing 400 level course] level course] is [Title of course].

Interviewer: Nowadays, what would you say are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I'm not sure [laughter], which is slightly a sensitive [laughter] subject because I'm a senior, so everyone wants to know what my goals are [laughter], and I don't know myself. I would say that in my last semester at [University of Michigan], I will—I'm taking [Writing 400 level course], so I'm—really am looking forward to having that—have certain experience and fully developing the final portfolio and being able to look at all the writing I've done in [University of Michigan]. I know it's silly to have [laughter]—care too much of the distinction, but I think I'm gonna be happy to graduate with a minor just because—like I said, I'm a science major, so most of my time goes into that. It's kind of nice to also see that I can get awesome thing on my [laughter] transcript that is a testament to all the time I've put into these writing classes. Then beyond [University of Michigan] since I'm running [laughter] out of time here to have goals [laughter] here with my writing—

Interviewer: These could be future goals.

Interviewee: Yeah. I guess just I would like to be involved with writing throughout my life. I'm applying to veterinary school right now, and that's not very much writing, to be honest, but I do—I peer tutor here in the undergraduate peer tutoring center for [Sweetland Writing Center]. That's something I enjoy so much is helping other writers grow and develop and just talking about writing. I would love to do maybe tutoring while I'm in vet school and maybe work with high school writers on college applications—just something to combine my love

of writing with maybe community service or something to that extent since it probably won't be the primary focus of my career. *[Laughter]*.

Interviewer: I know you touched on this a bit, but maybe there's something else you wanna say. In thinking about your writing experiences at U o M [University of Michigan], or if you want to—if you transferred here—what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I think that's hard 'cause writing is so subjective *[laughter]*. All the time, students come into the writing center, and they always ask me, "What grade will this paper get?" I'm, like, "I have no idea." *[Laughter]*. I would say writing well—I mentioned this earlier, but that's something that I've—I try to strive for is clarity. I understand, especially with my first-year writing class, there was so much ambiguity. *[Laughter]*. I think that part of that—[instructor] was, like, "Go out and find a hawk," and that was the whole prompt. *[Laughter]*.

I think it was the exercise of trying to draw clarity from ambiguity. I guess for me, I always like to just identify the purpose of each piece of writing and make sure that I'm getting that point across, even if it's not through topic sentences or the five-paragraph structure or a thesis sentence in the traditional sense. I would say that clarity is an element that I am trying to develop in my writing to make it good or strong.

Good writing? I guess it's hard for me to say that it should be interesting because I find a lot of the writing that I do in science classes in terms of lab reports and things like that's not interesting. That's just listing methods, but it still gets a good grade. I think that writing for different disciplines, I definitely have a different sense of what is good writing than a lot of my peers who are English majors, just because they're always, like, "Oh, it needs to be interesting or challenging or thought provoking." I do a lot of writing that's none of those things that I still think is really good writing. It's definitely hard to say. It varies discipline by discipline and professor by professor, day by day. *[Laughter]*.

Interviewer: *[Laughter]*. How 'bout in the science discipline? In the kinds of writing that you do, what makes it good?

Interviewee: I guess that's why I mentioned clarity as an overarching theme because I think there—that's essential. Going there is like Thoreau, I would say, and it has—properly cited. That's huge. Accurate? I think we get points taken off *[laughter]* for not being accurate, and then logical, easy to follow. I guess those would be elements of good writing there.

Interviewer: Just to make sure, what first-year writing requirement course did you take?

Interviewee: I took [English course].

Interviewer: [English course]? What were your experiences like in that course?

Interviewee: I enjoyed it thoroughly. I recommended that class to everyone. It was the—I was in a learning community, the Michigan Community Scholars Program, just a learning community for community service and social justice. In order to foster community within that program, they offered specific sections of introductory classes. They had sections with [English course]. They had a section [laughter] of [Calculus course]. They had a few first-year seminars, and so I just happened to enroll in the—that was the Michigan Community Scholars English class. Because of that, I could recommend it to all my peers ‘cause they offered it every semester, so it was the same class.

I really enjoyed it. I thought it challenged my idea of—like I said earlier—what writing would look like in college. Also, just ‘cause Michigan’s such a big school and I was all these huge science classes—I was in [Biology course] [laughter] and [Chemistry course] and [Calculus course]. It felt like nobody was paying any individual attention, so I think that was really important, too. I just realized if I take English classes, someone’s gonna look at my writing and write me a paragraph back about how I did and what I can do to improve. They generally care. I don’t know if necessarily—I think subconsciously, I could’ve [laughter] taken more writing classes just because I wanted that personal connection with my professors and my classmates. I wanted that feedback that I wasn’t getting somewhere else.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. With the Michigan Community—what is it?

Interviewee: It’s Michigan Community Scholars Program, which means not thinking 15:04 in the name.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: I don’t know. People [cross talk 15:06].

Interviewer: Did you have to apply to that before you enrolled in—

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. Yeah, and generally [laughter]—to be honest, most people just applied so they can live on central campus [...] which is a very good location. [Laughter]. I actually didn’t even know that. [...] I didn’t know much about [University of Michigan], but I just knew I wanted a smaller community, so I applied to that.

Interviewer: Then so in general, those classes were smaller?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. It was the same size, I think, as a normal [English course] class. It just guaranteed that it was all people you lived with, and then it was

taught in the dorm, which was really nice. Then you didn't have to get up in the freezing cold Michigan winter and walk across [laughter] campus. You could just—

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Interviewee: - wear your slippers downstairs. Then I guess it just also was people were familiar with the professor 'cause he taught every semester for them. It was just more a sense of familiarity and closeness in the whole class, I would say.

Interviewer: Then did—you mentioned social justice issues. Were they embedded in these courses, or it was just the formatting of—

Interviewee: Yeah. They were embedded in the first-year seminars, but not necessarily—[Calculus course], they weren't gonna have [laughter] any social justice. I don't know if he was supposed to include [laughter] anything about social justice, but it didn't seem like he followed many of the rules of [laughter]—or it didn't seem like he was very concerned with—

Interviewer: The overall?

Interviewee: - the overall, "This is how English is supposed to be taught, and these are the rules," so I wouldn't be surprised if maybe there was supposed to be something about social justice [laughter] and it just wasn't there. Yeah. [Laughter].

Interviewer: [Laughter]. In terms of this [English course], what effect did it have on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I think it definitely—like I said—just realized college writing wasn't—it just challenged my view on college writing and made me realize that there's more to it than just, "Read this book and write about the literary devices." In fact, we didn't write one of those essays. I thought it was funny that [instructor] had nominated me to be a peer tutor through [Sweetland Writing Center], and then when I went to do the application, they asked for a [laughter] academic essay that I had written at [University of Michigan], and I didn't have one [laughter] 'cause we didn't write one. [...]. [Laughter]. What am I supposed to do?"

I found one that was the closest and kinda tweaked it, and it was fine. It was, like, "Do not use a creative writing or narrative," or just, like, "Give us an academic essay [laughter] that we can work with to see, 'Okay. This person can write.'" I was, like, "Oh, shoot." [Laughter]. Yeah, just definitely challenged my view of what writing was at [University of Michigan] and then helped me develop those skills and work on my—maybe more narrative voice or exploring my own personal experiences through writing. Like I said, just the feedback was very

valuable in terms of improving my writing. I really appreciate when—if I give a professor or an instructor a draft that—and I put a lot of work into it that I see that they've put some work into the response. I definitely got that in that class.

Interviewer: Are you still making use of what you learned in [English course], that—in your writing now?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think so. Like I said, I'm not an English major, so I don't take as many classes where this—I'm doing that kind of writing. Earlier in my [laughter] college career when I thought that I had all the time in the world and could take as many English classes as I wanted, and I took [English 300 level course]. That's very similar 'cause it's [Title of course], so that was mostly creative nonfiction like narrative. That used a lot of the skills that I had developed in [English course]. In a similar vein, English [Writing 400 level course] level course], which is [Title of course]—that was also personal narrative for the most part. That was a lot of the skills. I think even though a lot of the classes I'm taking now aren't narrative or that kind of thing, it's still—a lot of the generals of seeing an exposition and techniques that I developed are still applicable, just maybe not as explicitly.

Interviewer: Do you take [Writing course]?

Interviewee: Hm-mmm.

Interviewer: You start talking a bit about how even though the writing that you do in science isn't so narrative, right? What kinds of writing do you do in science?

Interviewee: In lab classes, it's lab reports, which are introduction, methods, results, discussion, and—so the methods and things like that are literally just, “A pipette was used to place four microliters.” There's no—not much creativity [laughter] there. I guess there could be a little more, “You need to explore your results”[...]. We don't have a PhD. They don't want much of our interpretation [laughter] in there. Writing is pretty straightforward for the lab classes.

Like I had mentioned, this evolution class I took was a fair amount of writing, and we had to write a term paper in that, which was one of the hardest things I've written in college. It was a review of primary literature, so that it was just a lot of summarizing and bringing ideas together. That did need to be written fairly well. The clarity was probably the most important, but you also needed to know how to rephrase things from other sources and integrate multiple sources together.

That was an important—those were skills that I think I picked up through various writing classes and were really useful in that class. I think I didn't have as much trouble with that paper as a lot of people did just because of my writing background, whereas most people in that class were coming from a pure science background. Then it's really hard to produce 15, 20 pages [laughter] of review.

Then I'm currently taking a class. It's [Molecular, Cellular, and Development Biology course], which is Molecular and Cellular Developmental Biology, and it's called [Title of course]. In that class, we write—it teaches—it's professional development of the scientist, and [laughter]—the writer, the scientist—and we write grant reviews. It's really boring—

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: - but it's a good skill to develop. Today, I have a grant review due that's six pages. You read a grant, and then you write as if you were on the review panel. I'm trying to think of all the assignments we did for that. We had to do—something that was more interesting in that class—we did a profile of a research community, so we are all—to be in that class, we need to be involved in research in a lab here at [University of Michigan], so we did a profile of our principle investigator, which [laughter] I wanted to make mine very artistic [...], but I think I had to make it more on the science [laughter], but she still appreciated it. [Laughter].

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: Most of that writing is pretty bland and just grant writing, grant reviewing, figuring out how to fill out IRB [Institutional Review Board], things like that.

Interviewer: Why is writing important in science?

Interviewee: I'm taking this whole class where they had to justify to a bunch of science majors [laughter] why they should be there 'cause it is—it's upper-level writing in the biology department, so a lot of people take that who wanna avoid taking [English 300 level course] or [Writing 400 level course] level course] or some other upper-level writing, but I had to take it 'cause for the minor, you need an upper-level writing in your concentration. I think she makes really good points about why it's important—my professor—and she just—it's you have to be able to articulate your ideas. Your science means nothing if you can't explain it to other people.

In terms of the current state of the economy, where money is going right now in science—having a grant that's well-written means so much because if you can't get funding, good luck getting tenure. [Laughter]. She was saying that the writing now makes a big difference. A lot of people have good ideas about good science, but if you can convey the merit and value of your specific proposal over someone else's whose science might be equally strong, then that could be the difference in getting the funding.

Just in a practical sense in science, I think writing is very important. It's often overlooked, so if you can—as a scientist, you can develop your writing, I think it's just gonna give you the extra advantage in terms of presenting your case for why you should be funded or why you should have a promotion or why some post-docs should come to your lab. It definitely has a place. *[Laughter]*.

Interviewer: What effect have these experiences—writing in science—I'm sorry. What's your particular concentration in science?

Interviewee: Biology.

Interviewer: Biology? [Title of course], what effect have those experiences had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: *[Pause 26:01 – 26:16]*. I guess just like I mentioned in the [Writing course], the importance of being able to write in multiple disciplines, and how we had to transition our writing from one—it wasn't disciplines, but it was from one place of publication to the next. It's just helped me see that, okay, you could write this lab report, but then you could translate that into a grant proposal, which is slightly different audience. That's your basic research and then moving it into—you still need those same ideas, but the writing needs to be a little more persuasive. You need to work a little harder to establish your professional ethos.

Then that proposal can be moved into some sort of brochure or something that will relay the relevance of your research to the general public or something like that. I guess it's helped me see how it's not black and white, like, “This writing is for science, and this writing is for English classes,” but it's more of a great skill, I guess. I don't know if that answered that question at all. *[Laughter]*.

Interviewer: *[Laughter]*. What I took away from that *[laughter]* was that your [Title of course]—well, your thinking about how you write in different disciplines and also different types of writing.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: *[Laughter]*. That's what I got out of *[laughter]*—how confident do you feel about [Title of course]?

Interviewee: I would say right now, I feel fairly confident just because a lot of my peers in [Title of course] I'm taking right now *[laughter]* are not as strong of writers as I am, and I think that's just because I have made writing a priority here at [University of Michigan] as opposed to a lot of my peers who've made science classes a priority. I think that I definitely had to sacrifice there. When I look at applying to veterinary school, I know that I don't have the same—I don't have all the science classes that they have, and places where they may have taken additional science classes, I took writing classes.

In that particular aspect, I think I feel pretty confident that my writing is strong, and that when I take this class, I'm doing very well, and I have no problem writing these assignments whereas some people—and I'm a peer tutor, so I'm very keyed in to other people's [laughter] writing processes by this point. I watch in classes. They struggle, and I think that—I wish that there was room for everyone to take these writing classes and also pursue their major to the extent that they want to. I think it was valuable that I made writing a priority, but I also see the things that I've missed out on by taking all these writing classes. I think the skills I gained are valuable.

Interviewer: In terms of particular pieces of writing that you're confident about or proud about, are there—in biology?

Interviewee: I keep mentioning that evolution paper. I think that was a very strong piece of writing. I don't know. I took [Anthropology course], which isn't a—it's a social science, but I wrote a final paper for that, which I actually really liked. I think sometimes it—I feel like writing—sometimes you get lucky, or you get—you come up with a thesis that you really like or is really interesting or—for some reason, all of a sudden to sound really good. Then sometimes [laughter], it's a piece of crap. [Laughter]. I guess papers that stand out to me would be the evolution paper I thought was really strong, and my [Anthropology course] paper [...]. I really ended up liking the paper I wrote for that.

I liked all of the papers—I don't know. I feel like I have one good paper a class, if that makes sense. Just like you get—if you have four papers due in a semester, one of them I feel like is gonna stand out more than the rest. In terms of building that portfolio that I was talking about, I think that there'll be at least one thing from each class that I can take away and say, “This was the strongest piece,” or, “This is what I'm most proud of.”

Interviewer: Let's talk about the Gateway course, the [Writing 200 level course]. Overall, what impact has that course had on your writing?

Interviewee: I would say—just like I was saying, looking at different—just how you can convert from place of publication to place of publication or audience to audience or how—we do a lot of repurposing, and I never—I'm terrible [laughter] in the fact that I hardly ever revise just 'cause I'm very busy. I think most people on campus are busy, so I write the paper, and I turn it in. That class forced us to revisit some pieces of writing that we've done before, which was valuable. Then there was also multiple drafts due. Like I said, because we didn't really get feedback on them, I thought that was not necessarily a valuable thing because—I would've appreciated some feedback going forward if I was gonna have to turn in multiple drafts.

Interviewer: Did you do peer feedback in the course?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think we did. Yeah, but like I said, I'm also a writing tutor, so I take my papers to Sweetland peer tutoring 'cause I work with those people, and I try to *[laughter]*—really, I think that you have to practice what you preach. I think I can get that peer feedback from my peers in the writing center, so I would've—I definitely did get valuable feedback from my peers in that class as well, but I think in terms of being required to turn in multiple drafts, it would've been nice to have seen some feedback from the instructor. *[Whispering 33:14]*.

Interviewer: Has the course had an impact on your writing process?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think it did show me how revision can be very useful if you have time for it *[laughter]*, which is always hard. It's easier said than done, but—and it also showed me how looking back on my writing and developing—and creating that portfolio or comprehensive collection of my writing, how just in doing that, I can learn a lot about myself and my writing and how it's developed. I never stepped back before to look at all the writing I'd done at [University of Michigan]. That was useful.

Interviewer: How 'bout the impact that course has had on your sense of yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think it's helped me see the growth throughout my time at Michigan, and I think I've become—it helped me become more confident, just 'cause seeing the amount of things I've written—and like I said about that [Writing 400 level course] level course] class, we just wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote, and I think that's really valuable stuff to look at and be, like, “Oh, I wrote all this. I must *[laughter]* be improving somehow, right?” Just 'cause I've never, like I said, stepped back to look at everything I'd done together. It was helpful.

Interviewer: What were your experiences like working with other writers in that course?

Interviewee: I really enjoyed it. Like I said, I think one reason that I like writing classes and that I like them—that I continue to take them is just because of that sense of community, and I think people who want to take those classes are trying to—generally want to develop personal relationships with people in the classes, and they wanna have a good time and wanna foster interesting conversations. We had our blog, which was so fun. I'm not a blogger at all. I'll probably never blog again, but I loved it while I was *[laughter]* in the class. That pushed me out of my comfort zone.

I think it was just nice to be with a community of writers and just people who—and a lot of the writing we were doing was really personal, so you got to make these personal connections. Never in my science class do we write about the

problems that we have at home or something like that. Just by virtue of the content that we're writing about, I think it draws people together.

Interviewer: Your Gateway course emphasized reflective writing in various forms?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: How would you describe your experience with this kind of reflection?

Interviewee: I would say this is another place where just we're so busy that we don't really stop to reflect on much, I think, so it was helpful to me to reflect on my writing as well as reflecting on—we have the blog to reflect on the week that went by. We're able to stop and reflect if there was something big that was happening in the world or something that was bothering our class. It was valuable in terms of reflecting on all the writing we'd done and the process and that, but just in general, having more time for reflection, which is very useful in this *[laughter]* campus. Sometimes it feels like everything is just spinning *[laughter]* out of control.

Interviewer: Yeah. Are you still using reflection in your current writing, whether it's assigned or voluntary?

Interviewee: I wouldn't say not—I probably couldn't point to an example for you and say, like, "Oh, here's one where I'm using reflection," but I'm sure subconsciously, that type of reflection is happening. *[Laughter]*. Like I said, I'm not taking—I'm taking primarily science classes that don't even necessarily involve—I'm taking P-Chem. That's physical chemistry, so there's not really much writing there *[laughter]* at all. I'm sure here and there, it's reflected—the reflection is reflected. I'm sure here and there, reflecting, but just not so aware of it. *[Laughter]*.

Interviewer: You mentioned blogging. How would you describe your experiences using new media in the Gateway course?

Interviewee: I kind of was maybe indifferent to it. It's just not something that's very interesting to me, I guess. I don't know. I could've seen more valuable ways to spend our time than developing—sitting in class and developing the online portfolio, almost because of the technical—we would spend entire classes sitting there, clicking around, figuring out how to make the heading bigger. *[Laughter]*. Just to me, that didn't seem like the most productive way to spend our time.

I can see the value in that, as technology is changing, if you want to go into some writing field, that you would need to be able to navigate through new media, but I guess for me, I was just not—probably won't ever make another website

[laughter] with my writing. It wasn't something that I was passionate about, so it was hard for me to see the benefits when we were sitting there for hours, just trying to pick the background image.

Interviewer: Did you do a remediation project?

Interviewee: I did. Yes. *[Laughter]*.

Interviewer: *[Laughter]*. Did that involve new media kinds of writing?

Interviewee: Yeah. I did a podcast, and I am a huge This American Life fan, [...]. We were supposed to model it off of something, so I just pretended I was Ira Glass for the day, and *[laughter]* did a podcast, which I really enjoyed, but it probably could've—would've been better if it was something I was more passionate about.

Interviewer: These next couple questions are about your Gateway portfolio. Can you tell me about your most memorable aspect of—the most memorable aspect of your experience with the portfolio?

Interviewee: *[Laughter]*. Just having it be done—

Interviewer: *[Laughter]*.

Interviewee: - which sounds very cynical, but I—it was cathartic to be done just 'cause it was totally painstaking to put it together, but just in general, seeing it all together was very—I—well, my thought was, like, "Nice," to have all my writing in one place and well-organized. It looked about right. I guess it's also I'm not—I'm a sciency person, not an artistic person, so when I saw everyone else *[laughter]* making these really cute whatever, I was, like, "This isn't my thing." That was frustrating *[laughter]* for me, but it did look—by the end, it looked good, so that was kind of nice to feel accomplished in that sense and see all the writing in one place together and how it all related and was tied together throughout the portfolio.

Interviewer: What was painstaking about it?

Interviewee: I think just like I was saying, the—designing the website and uploading the images and making sure everything was in the same format. It just seemed more technical than actually improving our writing. There was definitely value to it, but it was harder for me to see, I think, than for other people.

Interviewer: Is anything from that portfolio—do you see yourself using anything from that portfolio to your next—your four—

Interviewee: *[Laughter]*.

Interviewer: - is it [Writing 400 level course]? [Laughter].

Interviewee: Oh, [Writing 400 level course].

Interviewer: [Writing 400 level course]?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think so, just 'cause there is writing on that portfolio that's from previous classes which I'd wanna include on the [Writing course] one. I'm trying to think if I actually liked any of the stuff I wrote for that class. [Laughter]. I brought this [Title of paper] paper, which I'm sure it would be useful to include in the [Writing course] portfolio. It's interesting because I took—I've also taking [Writing course] and [Writing 300 level course] which are the directed seminar and peer tutoring, which is the—where they train you the techniques of peer tutoring, and then [Writing 300 level course] is the class when you're in your practicum for becoming a peer tutor.

In that, we had to write a [laughter] [Title of paper], and I—it just showed the lack of creativity, I guess, on the part of the instructors that we have the exact same [laughter] assignment in both of these writing classes. There was me and one other girl who were in—had overlap, so we were just kinda sitting there and being, like, “Oh, that's interesting.” [Laughter]. Yeah, this exactly the same. It was the [Instructor] 43:27, and I don't know if you've read that piece. She writes a [Title of paper], so I think a lot of instructors take that, and they ask students to replicate it. Now, I have two [Title of paper] pieces, and I think that's an interesting thing to juxtapose because one of them is from earlier in my writing time in Michigan, and one's from later. That's something I wrote for [Writing 200 level course] that I would use in the [English course] just as [inaudible 43:55] maybe I could write another [Title of paper] and put that in there.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: I don't know. [Laughter].

Interviewer: What were your aims for the portfolio?

Interviewee: I guess to just compile—I guess to represent my work logically and clearly and to have all the links go to a specific place. [Laughter]. That was my main problem [laughter], I think. Yeah. I wanted it to look professional, and I wanted it to be as simple as possible. I wanted the content to all be—I didn't want there—she kept wanting me to put in more content, and I kinda [laughter] wanted to take out content 'cause I wanted to be—if I had put in all the writing that I'd done at [University of Michigan], it would've just been this haphazard mess of a million different lab reports mixed in [laughter] with [English course] mixed in [laughter] with [English course] or [Writing 400 level course]. I also wanted to

decide what writing to include and make sure everything I included had a purpose and was contributing to the overall message or theme of the portfolio.

Interviewer: What was the theme?

Interviewee: I guess I was—I wanted mine to reflect the repurposing, remediation, and—I forget what the third thing was.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: I don't know. [Laughter]. I wanted to just take that class and put it—all the work I'd done for that class on the portfolio and have it very clearly laid out, like here is—these are the assignments we did, and here is each of the drafts for them, just to show—like you were saying 'cause so much of it was about reflection, to show the process and then—and then I did a reflection on each project. It was the project, and then three drafts, and then the—it was just 500 words on the reflection of the whole process. I was kind of—wanted to just—it to be this neat package of that class, and she kept being, like, “Add these things,” [laughter], but I thought that maybe took away from the portfolio. I don't know.

Interviewer: Do you think creating the portfolio has had an effect on your writing?

Interviewee: Yeah. Now that I think about it, the—writing just the, “Hello. This is my name, and here's what I'm—” That kind of thing was useful, and that—kind of like I borrowed from the blog. It was that kind of voice. Like I was saying, this thing I wasn't really comfortable with or hadn't written in that style, which is just a very informal, casual—that kind of—I know it's a small thing, but that was really useful just 'cause we had to introduce each essay or introduce the blog in general. Then I did my blog posts from that class on the website as well. I would say yeah, the writing that I did for the blog and then the website itself was useful.

Interviewer: How 'bout the impact of those reflective writings in your portfolio?

Interviewee: To be honest, I think that if—since the class was the gamification point system, and we didn't—it was like if you turned it in, you would get credit—I think that I didn't put as much effort into them, especially having a lot of other classes at the same time. I think that if I had actually taken the time to—if I had known that I was going to be graded on them and that it would've mattered what I said, I think I would've taken the time to reflect more.

Instead, I just kind of—like I said, I have taken a lot of classes [laughter] where you just have to write and write and write, so that's no problem to get out 100—get out 500 words about the process without necessarily understanding much about what the process was. I think if I had known it would be graded, then I would've taken more time to actually reflect and it might've been more valuable.

Instead, I just was, like, “Oh, I have to turn in that process reflection.” Let me look at the drafts and see what changed.

Interviewer: Is there anything else about your writing or yourself as a writer that we haven’t touched on, of any of your writing experiences?

Interviewee: I guess I would say just the fact that writing has become such an important part of my time at [University of Michigan], but I never anticipated that coming in. I think that, like I said, [English course] was really valuable. I think since everyone is—since pretty much everyone here has to take that, I was really glad that I—I think I got lucky. I had a good instructor, and he really clicked with me. Like I said, maybe it was less about the writing and more about just having a class where you knew the people in it and you cared about them and the professor cared about you and you really getting his feedback. I think that class was instrumental in helping me continue on as a writer at Michigan. I wish everyone would have this. I hate when writers come into the writing center and they’re, like, “I hate my [English course] instructor.”

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: I’m, like, “Oh, don’t say that,” [laughter] ‘cause it was so important to me.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, thank you so much.

[...]

[End of audio]