

Interviewer: This is *** interviewing ***, and it is ***. How would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Well, that's a big question already to start off with. I don't know. I work well under pressure. I guess if I'm a writer, my style is really to—when I write I like to just—I write as I speak so I'm not so much interested in trying to—I don't think, necessarily, about who I'm writing for all the time so much as what I would communicate to anyone in any given situation so it's very casual like that sometimes, and, more or less, what I want to talk about. I don't write, necessarily, everything unless I'm forced to for a class. My writing style reflects what I think, what I say, and what I like to talk about.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Great. You say you work well under pressure?

Interviewee: Yeah. It's because I'm a journalist, and I work for [local Ann Arbor newspaper]. I've worked with deadlines a lot, and I've just grown accustomed to putting things off, if you will. Maybe that's just a habit or something I build up before writing, but I think that when you start putting yourself, like, you've gotta have a story in before this game is over or you need to have it before they will put the paper to print. I've decided like, "Okay. Yeah. I can do this." I get myself into the moment, and I can finish it better that way.

Otherwise, if I had more time, and maybe this is the case for other people, but you just start thinking about it more, and you're like, "No. I should change that," and then you fool with it too much.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Great. How would you describe the role of writing in your life?

Interviewee: Oh, I mean, I'd say I need to write, not that I want to write. I need to write because I like to communicate because I like to express something about a game, and because I just—more or less, because it's about sports, but because I need to talk about sports, and because I can't always do it with my parents or my friends, and so I need to be able to write that out, and get it out. That's what I would say.

Interviewer: You're a sports writer for [local Ann Arbor newspaper]?

Interviewee: Yeah. Actually, just yesterday I was named [local Ann Arbor newspaper]'s co-managing sports editor so yeah.

Interviewer: Excellent.

Interviewee: It's like selling your soul to something, though.

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Interviewee: It's not that exciting. It's exciting, but it's busy so—

Interviewer: [Chuckles] How would describe the role of writing outside [local Ann Arbor newspaper] other kinds of writing in your life?

Interviewee: Yeah. Most of my writing, I would say, is through things like instant text messages, and Twitter, communications like that. I'd say, otherwise, I write papers, but a lot of the times I like to get on Twitter, and express it in shorter characters or go and something like that because I know that I can interact with others. My role in writing outside of journalism, in that respect, is just talking to others, and just writing in conversational forms as I just discussed.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began here at the?

Interviewee: I would say I was very nervous about writing, not sure where it would—if I'm at the standards that I had put in my head, somehow. I would ask others if I could read my work, and change it. I needed others to read my work just so that way I would feel better about it, regardless if it was a good paper or something. I actually went to Sweetland's peer tutors and such for papers just so that way I had someone else look over my work, and so I was very unsure there at first.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. That's your most direct answer. [Chuckles]

Interviewer: Okay. Anyone else that you—who else would ask to read your writing?

Interviewee: Oh, I'd go to my roommate even though his knowledge of writing [Chuckles] was not like an expert. I would go to anyone that was willing to read it for a couple of minutes [...]. Again, not that these people are writing experts—just because they were an extra set of eyes.

Interviewer: Okay. That was because you were nervous about your writing?

Interviewee: Nervous, or that, or because I wanted to put out the best piece of writing I could. Sometimes it's about a little bit of both. I'm nervous because I want to put out the best piece of writing or I'm just nervous because I just want to get this piece of writing done.

Interviewer: Did you think that sharing your work with others helped you with that?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. To what extent would you say that you've grown as a writer since starting at?

Interviewee: Well, I'd say so that a writer is a different—other people, a lot, from just my work, but not outta the same need.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Part of that is I might, say, ask them for questions, but I might not ask them to look over my work. I think I've gotten more competent when I write, and I, now, it's to the point—and I don't know who's going to be listening to this, but they'll be finding out. I was up 'til last night. I'm not sure how in the world someone does that, too, but I was just like, "I can put off this paper, and I'll work on my deadline, which is due right before we tie this interview.

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Interviewee: I thought, "I can do this," and I sure as hell did, and didn't have to talk to anyone about it because I knew that I could write a paper about something and it wasn't going to be the end of the world if I didn't talk to someone about it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. You put off writing a paper for your [local Ann Arbor newspaper] deadline?

Interviewee: No, for a, excuse me, for a class I had before this.

Interviewer: Oh, Okay.

Interviewee: I had a class due before this, and he said, "A strict deadline of ." I won't have any—do you know [Instructor]?

Interviewer: No. [Chuckles]

Interviewee: Okay. He's a professor here. [...] he set some deadline, and so I told myself, "Well, I'll get it done before, and I won't have to worry about that."

Interviewer: Okay.

[...]

Interviewee: That may have complicated the matter as to why I stayed up late.

Interviewer: [Chuckles] Got it. Okay. To what would you attribute your growth as a writer, your greater confidence as a writer?

Interviewee: Well, I had a teacher my freshman year, and he's in the creative writing department. I think, at first, he kicked my butt on one of my first papers, and I was like, "Oh, crap. This is gonna be a bad year already."

Interviewer: What course is this?

Interviewee: This is a [...] writing course, [English course].

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I did really poorly on that, and I talked with him, and I said, "Well, what have I gotta do?" He said, "I feel like you trying to write this, and you are reinforced to write this. Just write it for me as you would say it." That was what helped make the differences that I stopped realizing that I need to write something formal, and I can just write what I would say, or whatever I wanted, and it would be easier like that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Then papers were easier to write. I could get them done quicker or I would be less stressed because I knew that I wasn't being forced, and that professor wasn't looking for some strict style he was just looking for you to make your point so it was the content, not the style.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: That was a big shift is when I realized that I stopped looking at style, and it's more about the content.

Interviewer: Okay. Anything other than talking to your one professor that you think has helped you to grow?

Interviewee: Oh, sorry. Yeah. I mean, there's lots of things. I mean, joining [local Ann Arbor newspaper] was, probably, the biggest, though, I should say.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I think about that instance when he kind of sparked my—I think, in terms of paper writing, but when I joined [local Ann Arbor newspaper] there was—that means everything. That changed the way I wrote completely because that was a conversational writing.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I don't know. When you read a newspaper, do you think of those conversational? Yeah. It's less formal than something else, in my opinion—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: - at least. I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I don't know how you feel with that. That kind of reinforced what I learned earlier, and I just kept writing more and more, and obviously, when write more you just—the more you write the better you can, obviously—the better pieces you can produce later on, I guess.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: That was poorly phrased.

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Interviewee: I'm going to sound like a moron in this interview.

Interviewer: That's okay. It's totally fine. You're not.

Interviewee: My point is that the more I wrote the better I got because I just kept working, and revising, and building off the last piece.

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

Interviewee: Well, I achieved one of them yesterday so that was to be at a point where I could lead others into—helping their writing. I think that's one thing for myself to be able to write good stories, but to be able to help others write good stories is pretty big as a writer.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I think that when you're teaching writing that's a pretty cool thing. Otherwise, as a writer, I would love to be able to grow to a point where I could continue to do more long form work or to do something where I would get paid to

continue to write in journalism where I might have it—not as for an internship, but like a job covering sports, and being able to just write daily, freely, and about a certain athletic team.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. Can you talk a little bit more about that teaching writing goal you have?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. I think part of that is because it's a cool position of power to have at [local Ann Arbor newspaper], to be able to make decisions, and to have that kind of responsibility, but I think to see some people come in as younger writers, and I'm sure I was this way myself, and I thought, "God, this really sucks."

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Interviewee: To be able to say that to them, "Listen. You need to work on this, and here's how I want to help you out." I think that's pretty cool to be able to see someone, not take your own writing, but be able to say, "All right. I'm going to try out my own way," and then to make something really good.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: It's one thing to compete with others, and say, "Well, this—shoot. This guy wrote a better piece," but another thing to make the writer who you are teaching write a better piece.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: That's pretty cool.

Interviewer: Yeah. Great.

Interviewee: It's why you do teaching. It's why others do teaching cuz they wanna see others do better. They wanna pass that along.

[...]

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

Interviewee: Well, originally I would say, "It meant getting an A." I would now revise that to saying, "It's writing to your audience, and if you are to write well, it means two things to me. Number one, the person who read it enjoyed the piece. They at least thought, "Okay. I think this piece was well written and was understood." When I say that "it's enjoyed," it's like, "Hey, I wasn't confused.

This reading process was fun for me, and regardless of whether I disagree with, maybe, something he said in here or not, I still thought this piece was good.

The other one is to get people talking about that piece of writing. I think a real piece of writing transcends. A great piece of writing transcends a good piece of writing when other people continue to talk about it. A newspaper, a clip of mine, for example, that maybe gets people talking. Whether they hate it or not it's still a piece that's done better than the one that did not.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Great. Okay. What do you think made that change between looking at good writing as an A, and then looking—

Interviewee: Good question. Yeah. That really is a good question. I would say that it's when I started to realize that each person grading my writing was partly doing it subjectively just because that's how make 11:20 it in creative writing.

You can actually grade it objectively, and when I realized—I had a piece of writing, and people, we'd discuss it in a class once, and then it's like the longest discussion in the class for the day, and I realized like, "Wow. This must have been a really good piece if people are still discussing this in class as compared to just getting an A and one person's opinion," because I feel like I was doing it for one person, and when I realized I was starting to do it for myself, and to get others, and then—let me rephrase that. Okay. I was originally doing it for one teacher. Like, I'd be writing a piece for you.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewee: I said, "I'll scrap that. What if I write it for just myself, and then let others read it," and it's as if when I went to a bigger audience, when I went to [local Ann Arbor newspaper]. That was a shift. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: It was like, "I'm not just writing for one person. I'm writing for multiple people." I think then I stopped caring about trying to please one person, and go back to that type of formal writing I was referring to earlier, and then just kind of letting it flow.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah. That was a bunch of incoherent nonsense so I'm sorry.

Interviewer: No. That was great.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: You said, also, people talking about your work in class?

Interviewee: Yeah. I mean, it wasn't like a huge moment that I'm, necessarily, goin' back to. It was just like had we a creative writing class once, and I thought I wrote a good piece, and people, we'd go around and you're supposed to talk about the piece.

Interviewer: It was like workshop?

Interviewee: Yeah. That's the word. Plus, we'd spend about 20 minutes. That's when we spent, nearly, almost double that, not quite double that, and just kind of discussing what I maybe meant in a piece, what they liked about it, and what they disliked about it, and so when people were talking all about that, I think that really was cool to see.

Interviewer: Great. Was it a piece of fiction that you wrote?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Just a fiction. I don't even remember. Honestly, I couldn't even tell you—I could tell you what it's about, now, I remember, but I don't even know what I did well with it or what we were all discussing. We were just discussing it at the moment.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Great. Which first-year writing requirement course did you take?

Interviewee: That was the [English course].

Interviewer: Okay. Right. What were experiences like in that course?

Interviewee: It was great cuz, I mean, a lot of the people there seemed like they were being forced into it so that affects some of the class demeanor, but my relationship with my teacher was very good.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you say a little more about the class demeanor?

Interviewee: Well, it more or less goes back to you're seeing people that are not in concentrations where they need to write or maybe they're in the sciences, and they're like, "Well, the university says you need to have your first-year writing requirement," so someone is not excited to come in and write. At first, I didn't know I wanted to write so I just came in there. Everybody was kind of uneasy at first. I guess that's what I mean. Other people, when they'd come in, and they'd be more introverted, wouldn't say much, and so the dynamic wasn't there. It didn't build a class relationship right away.

Interviewer: Okay. What effect did those experiences in that course have on you as a writer?

Interviewee: My teacher there didn't necessarily push me to be a journalist. He didn't suggest anything about [local Ann Arbor newspaper], but [Instructor], was very open about writing, and was very talkative with me, and I think that I started to create—I got a lot of feedback on my writing, which is something I wasn't able to do in high school.

Back in high school, for example, you've got to turn your papers in on time. Your teacher gives you back a grade, and maybe you need to talk about it afterwards, but he isn't able to remember everything off the top of your head so when you have a class of, maybe, 15 people or less, as I did, and he was able to—he signed four papers, and that was all he had to do in the entire class.

I think he knew my writing a lot more than I ever thought a teacher would, and to be able to discuss that, and get feedback other than just what I think I do well because, otherwise, then you're just goin' by the system of you getting an A, a B, and you try to meet some sort of criteria, as opposed to you're, now, just writing—you're not tryin' to write for the system, I guess.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. You're getting feedback—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: - more constructive kind of feedback?

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Are you still making use of what you learned in your first-year writing course in your writing, now?

Interviewee: Somewhat, but I mean, part of that is it's just that was—well, now it'll be in the fall, and so part of that is I'm remembering part of it, but I've already expanded on it to the point where I don't even think about it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah. It's like I built a foundation, if you will, but it's to a point when you build a house you put down the foundation, but you don't see the foundation. You see what's on the outside so I don't see my foundation, necessarily. I see what I've put out recently, and what's on the outside for everyone else to see.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I mean, I guess as much as one can think about two years ago, three years ago in that regard, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Are you still valuing feedback pretty—

Interviewee: Yeah. I'll have to send 'em an email. That's a good reminder.

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Interviewee: I still have to send 'em an email, my teacher an email, and let 'em know about my position at [local Ann Arbor newspaper] because I still think that I value his feedback, and I want to show him that his feedback was important to me so to see that like, "Hey, I started out here, and now look at where I'm at."

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Great. Did you ever take [Writing course]?

Interviewee: No. I did not.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I did not.

Interviewer: Yeah. What is your concentration?

Interviewee: I'm a com major.

Interviewer: Okay, communications?

Interviewee: Yeah, communication studies.

Interviewer: You've had lots of opportunities to write in communications.

Interviewee: Yeah. I said, “I need to write sometimes, and there’s other times where I’m like way too much calm stuff to write about.”

Interviewer: Okay. What kinds of writing have you done there in your concentration?

Interviewee: I’ve done stuff where you watch media, and then you have to talk about the effects or like, “Oh, what did they do in this piece that’s somehow is representative of a whole media organization stuff, stuff like that.”

Interviewer: Could you give me an example of that?

Interviewee: Yeah. Okay. I had to watch Modern Family. I watched Modern Family, and then talked about how the two homosexual characters or at least as they port[instructor]ed themselves in that effect, maybe other members of a homosexual community, even those who aren’t part of that community, and how we are influenced by that or how we perceive others after that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Those are like the media-fixed ones. Then we had to do—I’ve had journalism courses, and so I dissected a piece of writing that was unethical according to many people. They said, “What did one person do, and why is it bad, and then discuss what in his writing was bad about that,” and then I’ve had media law in class two where you had case briefs, which is more like just being a lawyer so it was less about the common, the more you’re sleepin’, bein’ a pain in the ass.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Okay. Are those more like just traditional academic papers that you’re writing about those kinds of media?

Interviewee: Some. I am sure the teachers designed them that way they’re fun to write, and you get to put a piece of media, but in the end, yeah. They’re meant to formal, and make a point, and argue class concepts within your paper so yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. What effects have those experiences in your concentration had on you as a writer.

Interviewee: I think that’s tough to say. I would say, maybe, it reinforces some of the formal writing that still needs to be done or a formal tone, however, it does reinforce the idea of content or style in the sense that they want a see what you have to—if you have all these different parts the com major from law, to journalism, to media effects, they each value the same point, and that’s that you have to talk about the content, and that the style of reaching them will differ, though.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you talk a little bit about the different styles?

Interviewee: Well, when you write a paper for media law and policy you are using different terminology, different jargon stuff, and when you write for media effects, maybe you're more laid back or maybe you're referring to people in different terms. Maybe I'm referring to someone in my media law and policy classes, the plaintiff. You're not gonna use "the plaintiff" in media effects paper.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: That type of stuff.

Interviewer: Awesome. How confident do you feel about writing in your concentration?

Interviewee: Based on my grades, I suppose I feel pretty confident, and just in general my ability to write a paper, I feel confident. Let's say, "I feel confident in my writing ability. Do I always feel confident in the content?" Sometimes, yeah, it's shaky.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Every time I write a paper, yes. I'm confident in that, very confident. On a scale of one to ten, I'll give it to you as a eight and a half or a nine where I'm competent, and that I can put out a paper in a good format, and it's something like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. Any other concentrations? Communications and then—

Interviewee: Just writing.

Interviewer: - you're writing mainly?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. You could say [local Ann Arbor newspaper] is a concentration if you want—

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Interviewee: - some people argue that we—one guy, a former editor, got a class ring, and instead of his major he put [local Ann Arbor newspaper] because it's like that sometimes.

Interviewer: Okay. Great.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: What impact has the minor gateway course, [Writing course], had on your writing?

Interviewee: I would say that was the biggest—I talk a lot about that first-year course, and I think as you talk you try to get from the beginning to now—

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: - which is good structure, the questions, but the biggest impact course I had was this writing minor course with [instructor] 21:01 because, at first, we talked a lot about writing, but there were more times that I remember talking about nothing to do with writing. I talked about marriage in a class. One time, we had a weighted discussion about if you had to pick three people to get on an island with. In the class, who would you pick? It has nothing to do with writing. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: It's like something like that. That was fun, and that got me talking. That made things less formal. We discussed less about grades, and more about just writing, and when it came down, I think, to writing for [local Ann Arbor newspaper], as I still do, I was like, "You know, actually, I learned a lot in this. Number one, I learned," and I'd go through the list, and I'd think, "Oh, geez. I did learn a lot." I think the course was helpful not just in saying, "Examining writing and what we do well," but going outside of writing, and showing that how writing is just a part of everything. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. That was the [Writing course] course?

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. Has that course had an impact on your writing process?

Interviewee: Yeah. I don't know if it's, necessarily, something I can explain to you right now, but I know it has to do more with just conversational tone, and writing however I please, and as opposed—it's difficult to explain, right now.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. I don't know if really could.

Interviewer: Okay, but it's definitely influenced the [cross talk] in there?

Interviewee: Oh, certainly, yeah. I don't think my writing would be maybe as good as it is today without that course.

Interviewer: Okay. Just from all the conversations that went on?

Interviewee: Yeah. In part, yeah, in part from dialogue with [instructor] going to office hours or talking just briefly after class, maybe it's from pure editing or just the different assignments, taking a look at one, like, at an old assignment, and then revising it, just thinking about writing different ways.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you talk a little bit about that, revising, in the course?

Interviewee: Yeah. I'm sure everyone in Sweetland will be aware that one of the things like to do is take an old piece from a class I wrote for, and then take this piece, and, maybe, put it in a different medium, something like you remediate it or you would write the pieces you would want to so when I talk about that informal stuff, I had a paper that was really formal, and he says, "Well, write it how you want to." I make it really informal, and I'd get a chance here, just go off topic, maybe, and rant about something with the paper, and still get to write that paper if that makes any sense.

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely. Great. What impact have those experiences had on your sense of yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I think it instills more confidence, and part of that goes back to the competence question you asked. They're related.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. What have your experiences of working with other writers been in the course, in the minor?

Interviewee: Within that class or just in the minor in general?

Interviewer: In that gateway course.

Interviewee: Yeah. We did less workshop than I thought we might have done, and maybe, than I would have liked to at some point, but I think that when we did do workshop it was very valuable, and it got people to not just look at a piece of

writing and critique it, but to praise me, and I don't necessarily get to hear that in writing all time, and so a lot of people understood not just what was wrong, but what was right with your piece of writing.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewee: What kinds of feedback did you get from your peers with that one?

Interviewee: I don't even know if I can remember anything they say. It was just something like, "***, I liked how you started off here, and you, also, and then at the very end you brought me back to the same thing, but the exact place you started off with. That was really cool." Or, "Oh, ***, that's a really funny story. I don't think you—it's like, you tell it really well." Like, I was very clear or something like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Were those like small group peer review or whole class workshops?

Interviewee: Small group peer review, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Like, how many students?

Interviewee: Three, maybe two. I should say I've done a small group peer review with one other person, two other people, and three other people.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: All right, great. The minor gateway course emphasizes reflective writing, and how would you describe your experience with this kind of reflection?

Interviewee: I hate reflective writing.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I mean, it's good. It's very important, but when I look back at a piece of writing, it's like I don't want to be able to talk myself up or make it—I don't know. I feel like when wrote my reflective writing, and it's in my blog, which I should really take off—

Interviewer: [Chuckles]

Interviewee: - because it's sappy, but it is just sappy. It's just you're just writing, and it's like, "Oh, well, I really grew. I really grew a lot. I did pretty well. Look at where I started." I mean, I don't think that you can, necessarily, measure even right now after I had the course in winter, how much I've grown because my answer today could change tomorrow based on how much I write, or what I've read, or something like that.

Interviewer: Okay so you don't think the reflective writing helped you to see—

Interviewee: Okay. I wanna say that, maybe, I would say that, maybe, it helped me look at my writing, and be able to take a look, and the aspects that it wants you to do so take a look at your writing then access yourself, now, after the fact. I think that's valuable, but I think it's not valuable for me to write about it. I think it's tough for me to write about it to someone else, whereas, it's easier for me to look back at it, I guess, if that makes any sense.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: You can read the piece, and you'd be like, "Okay." Now, you think about it, and process it in your mind, and then to write to it out, though, I know you probably, it feels awkward.

Interviewer: Okay, especially cuz you know someone who's not you is gonna read it?

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Because then I feel like I have to craft it for that person, and then it goes back to kind of feeling like that forced thing where I was writing for one person, and not for myself.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Because if I was writing for myself in that regard, I would probably, number one, really wouldn't elaborate very long. I would, maybe, just write like a sentence like, "You did well, ***."

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Interviewee: I don't know why I'd call myself ***. That'd be really weird, like I have multiple personas.

Interviewer: Great. Okay. Are you still using reflection in your current writing, at all?

Interviewee: [Pause] By that regard, do you mean am I going back and writing about my own writing?

Interviewer: Or reflecting on it.

Interviewee: I will go back and read at pieces that—the scary thing and the great thing about [local Ann Arbor newspaper] is that it tracks the number of reads you get online so when a piece does really well or a piece doesn't do well, maybe, you can go back, and you can make yourself more paranoid about that, in that regard.

Interviewer: [Chuckles]

Interviewee: Yeah. Sometimes, what that'll allow me to do is I'll go back and check out a piece that I might have worked longer on or that it got more reads, and then I'll reflect on that, and I'll think, "Okay. Yeah. I did well here," or like, I'll hit myself like, "Damn it, ***, " or something like that—

Interviewer: [Chuckles]

Interviewee: - but nothing where I'll write or where I will make sure I sit down, and spend time reflecting. I don't actively do it. It just kind of happens spur-of-the-moment.

Interviewer: Yeah. You do some reflection, but not necessarily reflective writing?

Interviewee: Yeah. Maybe my reflection comes in the form of getting a paper back and seeing, "Okay. I've got a B plus on this paper," and I look back, and I'm writing. "Okay. I just know what I need to improve, done." Maybe, I just look at it. I think about it, and I forget it the moment I've done that, but I don't necessarily try to take notes, and then write it back down after that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Did that make sense?

Interviewer: Yeah, but that kind of reflection does help you to know what kinds of things you need to improve on, you just said?

Interviewee: Yeah. I'd say that. I would agree.

Interviewer: Yeah. What about when you go back, and look at your [local Ann Arbor newspaper] pieces. Does that help you to think about what you could do differently?

Interviewee: Yes. Yeah. Just simply, yes.

Interviewer: Yeah, but you don't write it down, at all? You just think about it.

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Great.

Interviewee: Maybe what I'll do instead, is I'll go back and reference for another piece, and to see what I did, but I won't have made it—it'll only be, maybe, because it'll jog my memory or something, but I won't have made an actual physical note to myself. It's like going back and looking at something online that you thought, like sharing that YouTube video or something like you'd wanna reference that or make use of it somewhere later on in your life, and that's what I might do with a piece of writing like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. When you say, "Referencing it," do you actually reference yourself in your articles that you're writing or you just look at the styles and the strategies you use?

Interviewee: The latter.

Interviewer: The latter?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. How would you describe your experiences using new media writing in [Writing course]?

Interviewee: I mean, I'd say they're very helpful. I'd say it's tough to find out exactly.

I truly think that [local Ann Arbor newspaper] actually gives me a leg up on some of my peers in that class because it allows me to implement new media writing, whereas, their writing is—they're not gonna be able to necessarily go out and put and online, feature-length article up somewhere for everyone to read or they'll be able to put all the time in that because of various reasons, whereas, at [local Ann Arbor newspaper] I'm trying to think about how I can implement new video writing, something along using video or audio, or pictures, and whatnot to tell a story, and then I can put that into use, whereas, and audience of however people will see that.

Interviewer: Okay. You think that using new media writing in [Writing course] helped you to do that for [local Ann Arbor newspaper]?

Interviewee: A little bit. We didn't get to do—part of that is, I think, my own effort I put forth in that I wasn't trying to expand into using like Final Cut Pro or

some video technique, but stimulating the ideas that this needs to be done is worthy of implementing at [local Ann Arbor newspaper]. Now, as I reference once again, the managing sports editor position. I think that's one of the things I was able to run on as a platform, for example, to say, "Listen. [local Ann Arbor newspaper] needs to look at doing more new media writing or at least shaping the way we view our stories online."

Interviewer: You had experience with that?

Interviewee: A bit, yeah. I don't think that people they, necessarily, when they vote they don't, necessarily, understand that, but I know that when I will start in January or I should say end of December, that my time in [Writing course] will have played a role, whether large or small will be seen.

Interviewer: Okay. That's great. These next couple of questions are about your gateway portfolio so I'm going to pull that up online—

[...]

Interviewee: When I wrote that I think I was just throwin' things together, and like, "Oh, this would be fun," and not really thinking that this would actually be something that would actually be stuck on my—what's that quote? It's, "The Internet is written in ink, not pencil," or something like that. "The Internet is not written in pencil. It's written in ink."

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: That stuff sticks.

Interviewer: Okay. I've never heard that, but that's how you feel about your portfolio?

Interviewee: I have mixed emotions about my portfolio. I don't really know how to process it at the moment.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I think people find it out when they—my colleagues at [local Ann Arbor newspaper] will do a Google search, [...] and that will come up somewhere near the bottom on the first page.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: They'll be able to point—not intentionally mock me, but give me a hard time for it, and at other times it's helpful because it's a way to, at least, track my progress. When you talk about that type of reflection, at least, the reflections

on there I'm just like, "Oh, God. Why would I say that in a public forum?" I wouldn't.

[...]

Interviewer: Okay. Great. Can you tell me about the most memorable aspect with your experience with the portfolio?

Interviewee: This is goin' really selfish and conceited. Tryin' to figure out the best cover photo—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: - for what would be seen right away in a title.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. I spent probably more time crafting, "Can they see me or can they see like other parts of the photo? What would give the best idea that I'm like portrayed?" Goin' really in-depth.

Interviewer: Yeah. [Chuckles]

Interviewee: It's like figuring out a Facebook profile picture.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Mostly unrelated to writing and more related to that type of aspect.

Interviewer: Okay, and you said the title, as well?

[...]

Interviewee: Yeah. Well, that's something that I think I was told to do by [instructor].

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: He said, "You need to designate," but it's for the minor writing, and he said, "Maybe you didn't have to," and I just chose to so that way people knew right away [...].

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

[...]

Interviewer: [Laughs] Why do you think that choosing the image and title were so memorable for you?

Interviewee: The image was, in part, because it was in the beginning of the creation of the blog so I thought that it was a good—no. I wasn't saying that I was good. That it was a way I needed to—let me figure out how to craft this sentence. As I created the blog, one of the first things I did was you set up your—and you organized it into different categories, and whatnot. Then you chose a picture to put in that within the frame, and so that was one of the first things, and that was when I knew that I would have a blog setup, and ready to go, like, my face would be on there.

Interviewer: Okay. It was an early part of the process?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, and then what were your aims for the portfolio?

Interviewee: To get a good grade, to satisfy requirements—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: - and to document my writing.

Interviewer: Document your writing? Okay. How do you feel your portfolio addresses those aims, documenting your writing?

Interviewee: Well, I got an A in the class so that was good.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Obviously, then I fulfilled requirements. I got a good grade. In terms of documenting my writing, I think it's a good way for me to look back, and see what I thought were my best pieces at the time—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: - in terms of the other pieces that I included that weren't necessarily a part of my writing for the class.

Interviewer: What other pieces did you include?

Interviewee: Just [local Ann Arbor newspaper] clips. [...].

Interviewer: Okay. It helped you document what you thought were your best pieces [...].

Interviewee: At the time, yeah.

Interviewer: At the time?

Interviewee: Some of those have changed. Some of those have remained the same.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. [...]

Interviewee: [...]. The most recent information is at the top so if you go on, I mean, like The New York Times website, you're gonna see today's. It was not yesterday's.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: If you scroll down, though, or if you went deeper into the archives, you could find out the older news, and so that's what the blog does. It gives you the most recent thing, and then goes down into the oldest then.

Interviewer: You built that feature into it?

Interviewee: No. I did not necessarily build all that. What I would just do is I would just build longer texts. What I would do is I would put my oldest text at the very bottom, and then keep putting the newer text on top of that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Great.

Interviewee: We're working backwards, if you will. You're looking, instead, if that makes any sense.

Interviewer: Yeah. It does, absolutely. Do you think creating the portfolio has had an effect on your writing overall, and how so?

Interviewee: I do not know, and I would say, "No," at this time because I would say that—okay. I guess if you want, then maybe you could say, "Yes," because it means that wanna do less reflective writing, in other words, but no. I do not look back on that portfolio as a way to influence my later writing. I'll go back and look at other [local Ann Arbor newspaper] clips or a hardcopy of my paper that I might have saved, but I won't go back to my portfolio and reference that.

Interviewer: Okay. All right, great. What was the impact of the reflective writing in the portfolio? We talked about this a little bit, but—

Interviewee: You wanna expand upon that for me? I'm kind of a little bit confused.

Interviewer: Yeah. Just as you were creating the portfolio, what purposes did you use the reflective writing for? Where did you include it in the portfolio?

Interviewee: I believe I put it somewhere miscellaneous.

[...]

Interviewer: Why did you choose to put it there?

Interviewee: That way people didn't read it—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: - or at least if they were going to read it, it would take them longer to get to.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Can you really tell how much I like to write about it?

Interviewer: Yeah. Why did you want to bury that reflective writing?

Interviewee: As I mentioned earlier, it just felt awkward to me, and it was just not my type of writing style so it felt like I didn't know who I was writing for, if I was writing for [Instructor], or if I was writing for myself, or I was writing for other people to see, and I felt uncomfortable.

Interviewer: Okay. You can't think of any other ways that the portfolio might have had an effect on your writing? You said it helped you realize you don't want to write reflective writing. [Chuckles]

Interviewee: Yeah. You want the ways my portfolio would have affected my writing in general or my reflective writing?

Interviewer: Your writing in general.

Interviewee: My writing in general. [Pause] It helps, also, to do things like forming resumes, I suppose. That's a form of writing—

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: - and to be able to decide which writing I would like to send out to editors at other papers where I might apply to so it helps you organize yourself in that regard. It helps you decide what's your best starter at the time so that way you have that—

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: - it makes you critically look over it cuz you obviously wanna present your best stuff if people are gonna see it, but—

Interviewer: Have you gone back to the portfolio for that when you needed something for—

Interviewee: No because I think I have a good sense, though, of what is my best writing already, and I don't need to go back. [...].

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. What other writing did you include besides the reflective writing and the writing for [local Ann Arbor newspaper]?

Interviewee: Writing for the class—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: - so there was a—you had to do a Why I Write, which was a really cool piece. It was part of it. I guess, if you're making a note or something, you can go back to that [Writing course] what I did that was really important, and the Why I Write was really cool. The Why I Write you're remediating a piece or taking that piece, and putting it in a medium, and then revising a piece that I had wrote like something from an old class, and then taking that, and making it the same form of writing, and the same medium I should say, but just a different piece in the end.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. You think that experience of the Why I Write, and the revising has influenced you as a writer overall?

Interviewee: I'm sure in part, yeah. I don't know where specifically it has, but it's good to be able to write more so yeah.

Interviewer: Write more?

Interviewee: To write more and more, and more. It's just like the quantity will help out in the end with your quality.

[...]

Interviewer: Okay. Great.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

[End of Audio]