Developing Writers in Higher Education

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These questions are drawn from across all sets of interviews: minor entry, nonminor entry, minor exit, and nonminor exit.

Questions for both Minors and Nonminors

**General—writerly self-image**

1. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you began at UM? How would you describe yourself as a writer now? What language have you developed to talk about yourself as a writer or how you learn to write? How do you describe the role of writing in your life?
2. To what extent would you say you have grown as a writer? To what would you attribute this growth?
3. What are your goals for yourself as a writer? Minors only: Have these changed since entering the minor in writing?

**Transfer**

4. Thinking across your college writing experiences, what do you think it means to write well?
5. What do you think is most important in learning to write?
6. Which First-Year Writing Requirement course did you take? What did you learn in this class that you have continued to use in your writing? What language did you develop in this course to talk about yourself as a writer or how you learn to write?
7. What is your concentration? Have you had an opportunity to do writing in your concentration? What kinds? What effect have those experiences had on you as a writer? How confident do you feel about writing in your concentration?
Writing Experiences

8. What experiences in and out of the classroom have had an effect on your writing?
9. How has your writing process changed as a result of these experiences?
10. If I use the term “reflective writing,” what does that mean to you? Have you used reflective writing in your own writing processes?
11. What experiences have you had working with other writers in your courses (or in other contexts)? Have you done workshopping or peer review? Group or collaborative writing projects?
12. If you were going to give someone advice about writing, what are some of the things they should think about as they begin writing a paper?
13. What is your concentration? Have you had an opportunity to do writing in your concentration? What kinds of writing? What effect have those experiences had on you as a writer? How confident do you feel about writing in your concentration?
14. Have you had any experiences with new media writing (e.g., writing for blogs or websites, using sound or video, PowerPoint presentations, etc.)? If so, what have those experiences looked like? What effect have those experiences had on you as a writer?
15. You’ve been uploading pieces of writing to the study archive on CTools. How has that process been going for you?
16. What pieces did you choose for the archive? Why did you choose them?

Future

17. What kinds of writing do you think will be most valuable for your career?
18. If you could tell your teachers one thing about writing, or how to teach writing, what would you say?
19. Any other comments?

Questions for Minors Only

Gateway course

1. What impact has the minor Gateway course (Writing 200) had, overall, on your writing?
2. What impact has it had on your sense of yourself as a writer?
3. What have your experiences of working with other writers in the course been?
4. The minor Gateway course emphasized reflective writing in various forms. How would you describe your experience with this kind of reflection?
5. Are you still using reflection in your current writing (whether assigned or voluntary)? Do you find yourself using reflective writing in other contexts besides writing papers?
6. How would you describe your experiences using new media writing (blogs, remediation project, etc.) in Writing 200?
7. The next couple of questions are about your Gateway portfolio. Can you walk me through it a bit?
   a. Separate from the other new media writing you did in Writing 200, how would you describe your experiences creating the portfolio in particular? What were your aims for the portfolio? What kinds of choices did you make in building it?
   b. What impact would you say creating the portfolio has had on your writing? What was the impact of the reflective writing in the portfolio?
   c. How has your writing process changed as a result of these experiences in the Gateway course?

Capstone course

8. What overall impact has the minor Capstone course (Writing 400) had on your writing? Has this course influenced your writing process? How so? Has this course had an impact on your sense of yourself as a writer?
9. What effect has the experience of the Capstone project had on you as a writer? Why did you choose the project that you chose?
10. The next few questions are about your Capstone eportfolio. (Have the student pull his or her eportfolio up on the computer screen.) Can you tell me about the most memorable aspect of your experience with the eportfolio? What were your aims for the eportfolio (what narrative did you hope to tell)? How do you feel your eportfolio addresses those aims? Did you design the eportfolio (navigation, links, media, visual design, etc.) to create a particular reader experience? Can you give some specific examples of your design choices?
11. Did you notice any relationships among your artifacts as you created your eportfolio? What relationships did you want your readers to notice?
12. Do you think creating the eportfolio has had an effect on your writ-
ing? How so? What did you learn from the reflective writing in the eportfolio—both the evidence-based essay you wrote and the contextual reflections?

13. What could people interested in writing development—including program administrators such as those at Sweetland—learn about writing development from your Capstone eportfolio?

**Gateway to Capstone**

14. Now we'd like you to reflect back on your Gateway course as well. How did your experience in the Capstone course compare to your experience in the Gateway course?

15. What have your experiences been of working with other writers throughout the minor?

16. What differences do you see between the Gateway and Capstone eportfolios?

17. The Gateway and Capstone courses emphasized reflective writing in various forms. How would you describe your experience with this kind of reflection? Are you still using reflection in your current writing (whether assigned or voluntary)?

**Questions for Nonminors**

**Writing Experiences**

1. Thinking back over the last two years, what experiences in and out of the classroom have had an effect on your writing? How has your writing process changed as a result of these experiences?

2. If I use the term “reflective writing,” what does that mean to you? Have you recently used reflective writing in your own writing processes (whether assigned in courses or voluntary)?

3. What have your recent experiences been of working with other writers in your courses (or in other contexts)? Have you done workshopping or peer review? Group or collaborative writing projects?

4. Now that you are about to graduate, what advice would you give to college students about writing? What are some things they should think about as they begin writing a paper?
5. Have you had any experiences with new media writing, such as writing for blogs or websites, or making an electronic portfolio, Mportfolio, or digital portfolio? What were the specific experiences? 
   a. *If yes to electronic portfolio*, probe:
      1. How has this experience affected your writing or sense of yourself as a writer?
      2. How do you think these experiences would have been different if this had been a hard-copy or paper portfolio (the kind people put in three-ring binders), not an electronic portfolio?
      3. Have these experiences pushed your writing in any new directions? How so?
      4. Has your eportfolio helped you understand the writing and learning you have done elsewhere in the university in new and different ways?
   6. You’ve been uploading pieces of writing to the study archive on CTools. How has that process been going for you?
   7. Why did you choose the pieces you chose to upload for the archive? What was it like looking back over your old writing and uploading some of it for this study? Did this process make you think differently about your writing?
   8. Finally, what do you think instructors should know about teaching writing at the undergraduate level?