

Focus Group 1 (April 14, 2025)

00:08

Interviewer: Okay. Does it show like it's recording for you?

Ivy: I think it's being recorded.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, I feel like in the past, it would be a red dot telling me that it's recording, but okay, as long as it's telling you it's recording. I'll also do a backup on my phone. You never know.

00:25

Interviewer: Okay, perfect. So, thanks again for joining us. I have a list of questions, because there's just so many things that I probably would lose track of. So I think what we can start with is just about your writing ability before you started university. So before you came to UTM, uh, what was your experience like writing essays?

00:51

Ivy: Who's going first?

00:53

Interviewer: So before you started UTM, at UTM, what, like before you started university, what was your experience like, with writing essays?

01:04

Ivy: For me, I took, um, like, international baccalaureate, the program in high school, and I really liked English subjects, so I really liked, like, actually enjoyed with writing, like creative stories writings, and also in-depth writing skills. So I think I personally had a pretty high level of like, writing skill, even entering the college before. Yeah.

01:27

Interviewer: Thank you. And Sarah, what about you?

01:32

Sarah: Um, I personally don't consider myself as an excellent writer, 'cause English is my second language, and I went to school back in my home country, and I never approached this, like, a Canadian learning systems before. So before entering UTM, my- my only link to the academic writing is like taking my TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam.

01:58

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. And can you also speak to maybe what you found challenging about writing essays?

02:07

Sarah: For me, the most challenging part is actually the most, like... niche part, the grammar, the proofreading one, the editing one, I need to keep my sentence like, the- the fluently and to keep them out of like, grammar mistakes. For the structural, the bigger structural one, I think I am, like, pretty good at doing that.

02:32

Interviewer: Thank you. And Ivy, what about you?

Ivy: For me, for the entire two years of, like, the high school diploma, to get the high school diploma, I had to only write like a specific, like Latinized, that repeat, like a specific format, which is focusing on, like riotic [*rhetoric?*] or simile, or like, identifying those stuffs, um, literally features, yeah, identifying the literal features and a specific articles or news articles, or, like, maybe on comic books. But in here, UTM, you have to write about a specific topic, or, you know, you have to create a topic research question, right? So I think transitioning from one specific genre, from another specific topic, I think that was really challenging for me.

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you for sharing that. And are there any aspects of writing that you enjoyed when you were in high school?

03:30

Ivy: I just like write, I just like writing, and I just like English, so I think that just makes me interesting... and makes me fond of it. Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. And what about you, Sarah, were there any aspects that you enjoyed about writing?

Sarah: Yeah, I create some, like, short stories myself when I was in high school using English, and I was because I was deeply inspired by several authors, so I just like, kind of like mimicking their writing styles, but it also helped me to improve the English. I feel like, yeah...

Interviewer: That's great.

04:03

Interviewer: Okay, so, did you have any expectations of what writing would be like when you would enter university? So back when you were in high school, did you have any ideas of what might be expected in terms of writing in university?

04:20

Ivy: I thought, like the essay instructions? It will be more specific and overall? But then some of the professor and some of the courses, they're not really specified, so you have to create your own thing, own essay, and you have to follow your own rules and some aspects, and maybe that might be not graded as like A or A+ as what you expect, Aspie [*unclear, as me?*]. So I think that was like the part where I was kind of disappointed about.

04:51

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. And what about you, Sarah?

04:54

Sarah: Um, I was actually hoping that the profs would teach us something like, um, doing our own research or finding journal articles, and they indeed do that, but I feel like it's more, um, not that specific. It's just, just like general, um, technology of how to using UTM libraries, but for like, finding high quality journal articles, I- I have to do this by myself, and I ensure like whether I'm doing it great now.

Interviewer: Right. So it sounds like you were just hoping for both more specificity in the instructions themselves, but also more detailed guidance on how to find sources.

05:34

Sarah: Yeah.

Interviewer: Mhm. Okay.

05:37

Interviewer: Um, alright. So overall, how do you think the writing assignments you've been doing at UTM so far, how do they compare to the writing assignments you had in high school?

05:49

Ivy: I think the rubric really differs. And also from first-year essays and second-year essays really have a big gap in between each other. First-year writings, including ISP100, it's more specific, but the rubric or the grading scheme is more like, general, it's more lower than the second-year ones. Second year- it differs by TA styles also, but it's more specified, they focus on the general essay structure, topic sentences and also the details supporting our arguments, but also the page breaks, the paragraph breaks, and stuff, all the details. So I think it requires more.

Interviewer: Right. Thank you. What about you, Sarah?

06:34

Sarah: Um, I haven't really like writing English during high school, so um, after I entering the first year in UTM, I actually using the hamburger structures, which like, most profs and TAs don't really like. At first, I find this is, it's actually helpful, because I can just like, list my thoughts, like I feel like it's vividly but after that, um, I try to, like, um, make my structure more sophisticated, but, and coming like, really good results, like, sometimes my TA don't understand what I'm trying to say, and sometimes I'm too, like, out of the track of my topics. So I feel like I'm still on the way of finding that.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Thank you for sharing that. Okay, yeah. So we can jump into talking about ISP100.

07:20

Interviewer: But before we talk about that, other than ISP100, are there any other writing courses that you've taken at UTM?

07:32

Ivy: Um... no, I don't think so.

07:34

Sarah: Yeah, me neither.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, yeah, thanks. I know [*undergraduate research assistant 1*] and [*undergraduate research assistant 2*], they were in the program before ISP100 was introduced, so they both took a writing course. But yeah, it sounds like once you have ISP100 there's not really any-or something in addition to that. Okay, great. So I guess the first thing is, when, which term did you take ISP100, fall or winter?

08:01

Ivy: I took it at fall.

08:05

Ivy: Did I? Maybe winter.

08:10

Interviewer: Do you remember, Sarah, when you took ISP100?

08:14

Sarah: I'm like, double checking that.

Interviewer: Yeah, sure. Take your time.

08:20

Sarah: Oh, I took it in the fall.

08:28

Ivy: Oh, I took it in winter.

Interviewer: Okay, okay, yeah, and winter, okay. So that's great. A little bit of diversity.

08:35

Interviewer: Wonderful. So because you took it at different times, I want to ask you about the timing. Do you feel that the time you took it in, whether the fall or the winter, was the right time to help you prepare for, you know, writing in your courses?

08:52

Ivy: For me, I think it will be way better if I took it in the fall? Because ISP100 actually really helped me throughout the, like the coursework and also developing my writing skill. So, if I took it more earlier the term like which is fall, then maybe I would have written my essays like the future essays better... with an improved skill.

09:17

Interviewer: And Sarah, what about you? Do you think it was good timing?

Sarah: Yeah, I agree, because I feel like this cour- at, at first I thought this course would be like, super hard for me, 'cause I'm like a beginner of writing, so I feel like, um, I need to, like, get on this as soon as possible, so fall would be like, a better time for me.

09:40

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you for sharing that. Yeah, the plumbing noise is starting, so I'll be muting myself sometimes. Okay, so. Now, can you tell me what the course was like? So just a very general question, but how did you find the course?

09:56

Ivy: I personally found out, first and the first impression, the course seems so boring, um, based on the course content, but then as I write more, and I think also the professor that I had, I think he was really a good professor, that kind of led me like to figure out my journey, of my writing path.

So overall, I really enjoyed it, but just looking at the course content, I can tell it's like little boring, just focusing on, like, riotic *[rhetoric?]* genres and the definitions of it.

10:32

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you for sharing that. What about you? Sarah?

10:36

Sarah: Yeah, I agree, because it was like three hours learn *[unclear]* for each lecture, and it's all like academic writing, focusing and without, like, too much, and students' participation, at least in my course, but my prof is like, super good. So I feel like, sometimes it's boring, but when I write and I gain the feedback and get grade, I know, like, how can I improve my writing? I feel like I'm doing something like, that's like, true.

11:07

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. And what do you think were the goals of the course?

11:16

Ivy: Sorry, what did you say? I had, like, an internet, a disconnection, sorry.

Interviewer: No problem. I'm wondering what you think the course aimed to do? What were the goals of the course?

Ivy: Course goals? Uh, I think it's like the main goal is to improve the students' ability of writing, because ISP100 is mostly required in all of the major requirements, and that, I think that means that every of the majors that they require pretty high quality of writing skills of students, and that's why the first years want to take that course and succeed in that course. And also, they have, uh, they have, I think, initial one they have, they do the exam, like short test, and that if you fail that exam, you go into a lower course level something? As I remember. But I think that gives you where you're categorized as a high-quality writer or a low-quality writer. And based on that, I think the goal is like to improve the individual students on writing ability... and skills.

12:23

Interviewer: Thank you. And what do you think, Sarah, do you have anything to add in terms of the goals of the course?

12:29

Sarah: Yeah, I feel like it's an opportunity to transition students from, like, high school writing habits to the university ones with, like, clear levels of expectations of how will we be working in academic writings? And also, I feel like some, some of the ISP requirements, like how to search for

journals. I don't know whether there is one in there, but I feel like it's, it's useful, like when I'm taking those level *[unclear]* courses.

12:59

Interviewer: Great. Thank you. Um, so when you were going through the course, how useful did you find it? I know you spoke a little bit about that, but how did useful did you find the course?

13:12

Ivy: I found it really useful.

13:15

Ivy: Um, I think the first reason of that is because it's really a small class size, that the professor can stick to you, like one on one, and they have, like, more office hours, more feedback session. And then throughout those sessions, you get to know about the professor style and how his grading, grading scale is, but also know, like, what mistakes you're making, and how can you improve that mistake throughout, like the assignments that you have and throughout, maybe the teamwork, team, I don't know, team assignments, team group works that you have in the class.

13:53

Interviewer: Thank you. And, Sarah, what about you? How'd you find the course?

Sarah: Yeah, I agree. I feel like it's- it's helpful, although the topics is kind of like separate and not like too professional or academic for me, but it indeed helped me, like, find a way to integrate the research, like the every week's readings into my assignments, as it's one of the requirements.

14:21

Interviewer: Great. Thank you. Do you think that the year that you took it, so last year, do you think it changed your writing? Did it help change your writing?

14:32

Ivy: I hoped it changed. *[laughs]*

14:36

Ivy: But then, um... I had really- when I took ISP100, I really had a good score on essays, and I had, uh, clear topic sentence, thesis statement, and really very organized structure. But as I don't write, um, that much essays throughout the breaks, and also re-enter the second year, I think my writing ability has decreased. And then that's why, probably my grade has also changed *[laughs]*. There were also fluctuations. And also, when you enter second-year courses, there are not many professors who give you, like one on one feedback or, or um, grading schemes, or they don't, even

they provide office hours, the professor and the TA grading scheme is their friend, so I don't think that's really a helpful thing.

15:29

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. And Sarah, what do you think?

15:34

Sarah: I think the most important thing I learned is to keep my words concise, 'cause when I was doing ISP, my prof wasn't really strict about the work count, so for each essay I go for about like, 3000 words. It's like too much, and because I'm not really that professional, so I'm basically just like being tedious, like repeating the points I'm, I'm trying not to like, make like one again and again, and after I entering, um, like this 200-level, I feel like this is no longer that acceptable now, so I try to, like, keep my words more concise.

Interviewer: Right, yeah. Thank you. So um, from what I hear from Ivy, it's that the course felt like it was useful, but then you just don't get that practice so much, and maybe it's not so useful when there's different standards, *[laughs]* TA and the prof, and perhaps not as much guidance. So yeah, that's very useful feedback to have.

16:33

Interviewer: Okay.

16:35

Interviewer: So, I guess we spoke a little bit about this already, but now that you are wrapping up second year, how useful was ISP100 to you this year? Were there any specific instances or assignments where you felt like, oh, like, I learned this in ISP100, this is really useful?

17:02

Ivy: I personally, I don't think there was like a moment where I felt like, "Oh, I learned this in ISP100", but I went through the ISP100 professor feedback, to kind of reorganize my essay, and kind of improve that, improvise on that essay feedback, to use it as a tool to improve mark for an essay and assignments.

17:30

Interviewer: Sarah?

17:31

Sarah: For me, the help is more on the conscious level. I remember like, oh, I've read a... a article called "The Mother Tongue" in the ISP100 and it's basically talk about, like, um, non-native speakers struggling to express their ideas.

17:53

Sarah: Because before that, I was, like, really nervous about me being a English language learner, but after that, I feel like I'm more ease now, so when doing like, 200-level works, whenever I feel like difficult works, I'm not so confident, I just like, reminds me of that. I'm not a, like, native speaker, and I'm achieving a, already a, I-I feel like it's fair level *[laughs]*.

18:20

Interviewer: That's great. So sounds like the course was helpful and just giving you more confidence.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah, totally.

18:27

Interviewer: Great. And then, so apart from ISP100 which is meant to help you with your writing, are there any other types of writing supports that you have used so far in university? So that would be things like, if you're familiar with the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre, or maybe peer editing, so your peer is helping you. Have you used any of those two resources?

18:57

Ivy: I used the Roberts, the writing help centre in first year a lot, but because my timetable was more wise *[unclear, wide?]*, but as entering the second year, I really couldn't go to the Skills Centre, even if I wanted to, because of my timetable schedules and gaps, and also like volunteering, like clubbing stuffs. So... um, and also the Robert skill library- the centre, the writing centre, they have a really filled like the slots, right? So, you have to make the reservation first, but I always miss out the timing, and I think that's just goes over and over and on that I only relied on myself as individual.

Interviewer: Yeah, and in the times that you've accessed it, mostly in first year, what did you find helpful about it?

19:50

Ivy: They give you, like since you upload like every, the guiding instructions of the assignment, and I prepare myself of like the basic outline of the essay and goal, right? So they give you real-time feedback and how to like, make the essay sounds more better or concise with a these-like strong thesis statement, and they clearly identifies my weaknesses, and how can I, how I can improve that to a strength? So I think that was really helpful for me.

Interviewer: That's great. And Sarah, what about you? Have you used the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre?

Sarah: Yeah, I use it a lot when I'm like, taking ISP100. Um, but honestly, I find the helpful is, like, moderate level, because um, I know that, like, they are all like, excellent and professional writers, but they tend to like, more like proofread my grammar rather than, like, go through the structure with me, probably because, maybe because I-I was, like, submitting late or something, I don't know, so then I just give up using it.

21:04

Interviewer: So you were looking more for help with the structure of your writing. They were focusing on the grammar, and so you felt like you weren't getting what you were looking for.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, I see.

21:17

Interviewer: Okay. And then have you used any sort of peer editing, so maybe just sharing drafts with classmates and getting feedback?

21:27

Ivy: I personally don't do that because *[laughs]* I feel like, um... I think it varies by who I share with, but I don't really like sharing my work to someone else. I mean, if this, if the person is really, like, more educated, more than me, I did- I would, but then sharing with peers, I think it sometimes caused, like, sharing my ideas to them, which kind of result in like, they copying my idea. I think that quite happened me a lot in my first year, ISP. So I didn't want to, like, you know, repeat on that mistake.

Interviewer: Yeah, for sure. What about you, Sarah?

Sarah: Yeah, I agree. I-I prefer, like, to do the peer addition *[editing?]* after we submitted the assignments and under the prof's consent, so we can, like, do better, polish and give us, each other advice.

Interviewer: Gotcha, okay. Um, what about Grammarly? Do you use Grammarly as a writing support?

22:29

Ivy: I do, but I only use it as um, just like punctuations and the actual grammar? Or the vocabulary mistakes? Because Grammarly, if you, if you like, have a free subscription of the Grammarly, it automatically edits your sentence structure into what Grammarly wants it to be. But- and

somehow it kind of, I think it overall changes your writing style too. So I try, and I'm trying, to avoid those type of like options, and only use it as, like, a mistakes, corrections.

23:04

Interviewer: Okay, I see, do you feel like you're able to learn from Grammarly, like, if it makes some edits? Do you feel like, "Oh, I see why this was done. Oh, I'll, I'll, like, I'll- it'll be useful for me in the future when I'm writing."

Ivy: Oh, yes, I do. Um, because I think it also is more helpful because my English is also my second language, so that it shows like, oh, this, maybe this, like "the" or "a" is not suitable in this type of sentence in between a word and word. And it shows like, oh, "s" belongs here, or the comma is really like- happens a lot for mistake for me, so I think it helps me, "Oh, this should not be here." And I actually learned from that, that I can improvise that for next assignment when I have the same sentence structure.

Interviewer: Great. Thank you. Sarah, what about you? Do you use Grammarly?

Sarah: Yeah, I use Grammarly only for, like, proofreading the grammar mistakes 'cause I, I don't go to for the premium, for their like, pay for Grammarly, so, I can't access the more like, it, it costs like, more professional advices.

24:16

Interviewer: Yeah. Um, so do you find it helpful?

Sarah: Yeah, I find it helpful, like, because, um, I have some, like, not very good writing habits, like, I misused all the, like, double em dashes Like, I use it a lot, but I've, I found, like, it's not supposed to be using too frequently in academic writings.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah, you know what? My only knowledge of Grammarly, I've never used it, is the ads on YouTube, which are very *[laughs]* when they're like drowning, and then Grammarly saves them. So, I really don't know much about Grammarly, so it's very useful for me to learn about how students use it.

24:57

Interviewer: Do you consider Grammarly as generative AI, is it the same thing? Do you think, or is it different?

Ivy: I think if you use free version, no. But if you use premium version, yes, because I have some of my friends who use the premium version and the quality is like totally different. So if you use ChatGPT to use like, generate essay, that really happens a lot in high school- here, here, right? So

when you do that, I heard that you can do, uh, AI detector check, something like that, that can also detect like, which sentences are generated, like possibly- have a possibility of create- by created by AI. So I think that's where it goes, like in the section for AI.

25:49

Interviewer: Do you have anything to add, Sarah?

25:53

Sarah: Yeah, I agree. Agree.

25:56

Interviewer: Okay. Alright. Um, so we can move on to the next section.

26:02

Interviewer: So now just, let's talk about the last writing assignment that you had. Maybe it was recently, since it's basically, you know, final exam, final assignment season. So I think it's useful to talk about a specific assignment so we can get, like, a better picture of what your writing process is like. So thinking about the last writing assignment you wrote, um, what was the process that you went through in writing that assignment?

26:28

Ivy: For me, every essay assignment I start, uh, when the outline is out. So it, it depends by professor, but earliest, I think it will be like month ago, or two, I don't know, beginning of the course, maybe, might be. But I start a month beforehand, I read the structure and the rubric, and then I start grasping my ideas of the course content.

26:57

Ivy: And then I write an out- like brief outline of it. But then, if you did not have done like the course reading or the lecture, went over the lecture yet, then you have less information to add on to the essay structure. So you wait for the lecture to begin, but as soon as the lecture ends, I bring that information, like my notetaking and also the reading information to add on to my essay structure. So I pretty take a longer time, compared to other students, students, to structure out the essay, because I feel like essay is some essay, essays are writing, so I think it takes a lot of time to re-edit and go on and remove and delete stuff to make a perfect outcome. So I think it should take more, longer time to reshape, um, to create like outstanding outcome.

27:50

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you, Sarah. What about you? What's your process like when you write essays?

Sarah: My latest essay assignment, I feel like since the CCT2XX, media representation essay, and that essay due on a week that I have three finals, so I just like, give two days to writing it, but because I- it's about, like analyzing a media outcome and the, it's like connections with the marginalized group. And I got, like, a movie that I want, I really have something to say, so I feel like it's a smooth process. I just, like went through the movie again, and then I started to, like constructing the- my essay.

28:34

Interviewer: Thank you. Um, and what did you find difficult about this most recent writing assignment?

28:43

Sarah: Oh, me?

Interviewer: Yeah, either one, you can.

28:49

Ivy: You can go first.

Sarah: Yeah, sure, sure, sure.

28:52

Sarah: I was actually quite confident about this essay 'cause I thought I got a lot of things to say about the marginalized group, and I was really not that satisfying with how the media, that specific movie was like representing them, um. But unfortunately, I don't think the outcome is so good, like the TA is not agreeing with what I'm saying, so I actually like quite arguing with him and the professor and um... but I didn't, like, make an appeal to the dean's office where, like, beyond the instructor, but somehow we just, like, manage a result that we three both quite satisfies. So yeah.
[laughs]

29:34

Interviewer: Yeah, that can happen. I mean, it sounds like the process wasn't too difficult, because it's something you were interested in and had something to say about so the, the writing itself, because you were interested in the topic, was not so difficult.

Sarah: Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. And Ivy, what about you? What was difficult about your last writing assignment?

Ivy: Um, my last writing assignment, I think it was pretty chill compared to the other past, previous assignments, because it was like reflection of writing on a course called, something "Anthropology of Law". And I personally did not like the course, but I like just the writing of the reflection of the coursework in the docu- it was on reflection on two documentaries. And I like writing about, like writing reflection on documentaries, so I think I did pretty well on the grades, too.

30:29

Interviewer: And so you said this was more chill than typical writing assignments. So in other writing assignments that are maybe, let's say, more rigorous or difficult, like, what do you find difficult about those?

Ivy: Okay, so I think it's most of the TA style and my style. So *[laughs]*, there I really don't get that much, like unsatis- dissatisfied grades on essay, throughout like my whole UTM courses, but that course specifically, the TA, I didn't like the TA, and TA did not like my writing style and my arguments, so I really had a tough grade overall, the course assignments. But I think that's something that I can't change, but also TA can't change, because if I regrade, if I ask for regrade, there are some students resulting in a more lower grades. So there's, like, not actually an improvement for that, so it's just better to just leave at a silence place and just acknowledging for that. *[laughs]*

31:31

Interviewer: Yeah, sure, yeah. There's a lot of variation out. I agree with you. Um, okay. So, we talked about difficulties.

31:46

Interviewer: So in your last writing assignments, were there any supports that you use? So any of the things that we talk about the Academic Skills Centre, you know, Grammarly, any, any kind of writing aids that you use in your last assignment?

32:01

Ivy: I used Grammarly because Grammarly is, like, automatically showed on a Google Docs if you use it, really, so I use that. Other than that, um, I asked ChatGPT to, like, give him feedback of my entire essay. So to verify like what my strengths are and my weakness are that I can improve.

32:27

Interviewer: That is very cool. Yeah, as somebody who did undergrad a long time ago, that sounds really cool. Okay, thank you for sharing that. Um, what about you? Sarah, what writing aids or tools did you use in your last assignment?

Sarah: Yeah, I used Grammarly to check for my grammar, and when constructing the essay, I was asking ChatGPT whether, um, it thinks I'm like, able to represent this topic, like saying from outside the community I'm like, trying to expressing, would that be like, sensitive or offensive? And it actually says, like, I'm doing it brave but, but the TA doesn't really think so *[laughs, higher pitched tone]* I don't know.

33:12

Interviewer: Right, ChatGPT and the TA do not agree.

Sarah: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, that, that's um, yeah, it's really interesting. Thank you for sharing that. Okay, so yeah, we're going to jump into talking about generative AI. So I know you both mentioned ChatGPT, there are some other Gen AI tools that people use, so Microsoft Co-Pilot, Claude, Dall-E, the list probably goes on and on.

33:36

Interviewer: So yeah, just wanted to reiterate, so the point of these questions is to learn from you, in terms of how students are using this, what can instructors do to help students? So all your answers will be confidential, so hopefully you're able to share freely. Okay, so let's start with your peers. So your peers in general, how they are using generative AI. So the first question I have for you is, to what extent do you think UTM students use generative AI in their schoolwork?

34:09

Ivy: For me, I think they use a lot.

34:13

Ivy: Some of my friends even went to the Dean's Office for academic integrity of using the ChatGPT in a wrongful ways.

34:22

Ivy: So I think it happens a lot in UTM recently, since I did not know that was ChatGPT in my high school too, I did not use any of the AI tools in high school, but as I came in for the first year, I knew that because of my friends, and peers, and I began to use it more in a helpful way that I can use it, not only like 100% copying it, but I think it's going more in a wrongful way, and more stronger ways that AI shapes human writing.

34:59

Interviewer: Sarah, what about you, to what extent do you think UTM students are using generative AI?

35:13

Interviewer: Sarah?

35:17

Interviewer: Maybe we lost Sarah for a moment.

35:21

Interviewer: Let me write in the chat in case there's any audio issues.

35:41

Interviewer: Okay, oh, we, we can't hear you. That's very odd.

35:47

Interviewer: Okay, I think you can.

35:55

Interviewer: Ah, yeah, sure, yeah, you can. You can leave and then re-enter. Yeah, no problem.

36:01

Interviewer: Okay.

36:10

Interviewer: Just wait till Sarah is back. That way we don't miss any important ones.

36:18

Interviewer: Yeah, it's part of the problem with Zoom, these things can happen, but that's okay, otherwise we wouldn't have been able to have this conversation.

36:36

Interviewer: How is it now? Sarah, can you hear us?

36:43

Interviewer: I still can't hear you.

36:46

Ivy: Her camera shows us like a black screen.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I mean the, I don't need the video so much, but the, oh yeah, because there's not even a name, yeah? Okay, maybe there's something wrong.

37:00

Ivy: Maybe a network connection.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

37:06

Interviewer: Let me type something.

37:19

Interviewer: Well, I should probably say something. If I'm going to say, can you hear us, I should probably also say something.

37:31

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, we still can't hear you. Um, oh, so here again. Okay, let's, let's try it again.

37:41

Interviewer: Let's wait for her to rejoin.

37:44

Interviewer: Okay.

37:52

Interviewer: Can you hear us? Sarah, can you say something?

38:00

Interviewer: Sarah?

38:11

Interviewer: No, we can't hear you, unfortunately.

38:17

Interviewer: Do you think you're able to join maybe through a phone or some kind of device, a different device, that, that would help?

38:28

Interviewer: Okay, okay, well, we'll just, we'll just wait a little bit. Right now you're on mute. I don't know if that's, that's an issue.

38:55

Interviewer: So how late do you usually go to bed? Ivy?

39:01

Ivy: How late do you mean?

Interviewer: Yeah, how late do you-

Ivy: But after flying back here, I sleep like at 11:30, 12, but it's late.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, yeah, I hope you're not too tired.

39:17

Interviewer: Okay, um, Sarah, can you say anything now? We'll see if it works. Right now, you're muted, but no, we still don't hear you.

39:34

Interviewer: Not sure what to do if there's another device you can join from. Okay, okay, yeah, so we'll, we'll just give it a couple of minutes again.

39:53

Interviewer: Yeah, no problem. I know I've had so many zoom difficulties when I, I mean, I work as a TA as well. I'm a grad student, right? And I have had issues. My computer is like, I think it's nine years old, and it's starting to show its age. So I have had some issues with Zoom as well.

40:12

Interviewer: Yeah, I get it.

40:17

Interviewer: Okay. Do you want to try say anything now?

40:24

Interviewer: Sarah? We still don't hear you.

40:32

Interviewer: I don't know if it makes sense maybe to, like, restart your computer or restart Zoom or something.

40:39

Interviewer: Oh, she disappeared. Okay, I'm going to give Sarah a couple more minutes, and if not, we'll just continue with the, with the questions, and then she can just join us when she comes back. But I don't want it to be like we're jumping back and forth. So yeah, best to have this figured out.

40:59

Interviewer: So how long are you staying, Ivy, in *[name of country]*?

Ivy: I'm staying here for like about two months, and I'm going on to take summer courses.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, yeah. Would that be in July?

Ivy: Yeah, but I'm also taking summer courses here online too, so.

Interviewer: Okay, wow.

41:21

Interviewer: It's not really a break. Are you doing that to get ahead or, or.. for what reason?

41:27

Ivy: Um, yeah, to get ahead too. But I feel like to graduate is four years. Um, taking six courses every semester is, I think, too much for me. So I really want to go for like, four courses or five courses, because there's also tutorials and labs going on.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think it's easier if you take summer courses and trying to cram everything in one term, because just having, like, you know, five courses to keep track of and all the assignments, it's a lot. I mean, yeah, yeah, thinking back to undergrad, that was, I like, I don't even know, I guess, you just can't do it all anyway. You can't, you can't do all the readings for all the classes. You can't, yeah. I mean, grad, grad school is intense too, but it's intense in a different way. It's, yeah, it's a very different experience.

42:17

Ivy: Yeah, also, like U of T gradings are really tough, so you can't do that.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

42:25

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, alright, let's see if this will work.

42:32

Interviewer: Can you unmute Sarah, and then we'll see if we can hear you. Whoa, we still don't hear you. This is so odd.

42:43

Interviewer: Okay, I have a few suggestions. So if there's no other way, like if there's no device that other device that you can join from, if there's not a device you can join from, if you cannot restart things and or if you've tried and nothing will work. I think that the next best option, unfortunately, is just typing in the chat. I think there's an option to save... I think there's an option to save the chat, and I would just obviously de-identify everything.

43:21

Interviewer: So what do you think? Sarah, can you type in the chat, what you think, what we should do? Should we try, like a different device or restarting, or should we do the chat? Unfortunately? Oh, she- we lost her again. Okay, try again.

43:41

Interviewer: Sarah, can you say something? Can you unmute? Okay, you'll type. Okay, all right. I'm really sorry. Unfortunately, yeah, technology, there's not much you can do. Okay, so I will try to figure out, I mean, I guess it's okay. I'll try to figure out how to save the transcript from the chat later. Okay, maybe, maybe I can ask [*undergraduate research assistant 1*] and [*undergraduate research assistant 2*] to figure that out for me, how to save the transcript. I'm sure it's straightforward, and then just before I close it, okay, so, yeah, like, I'm really sorry that this is we're having some difficulties, but let's continue, and then we can figure out something else, you know, maybe there's another solution later on. Okay, so we were just talking about how students at UTM are using generative AI for their schoolwork. So, Ivy, you shared that you think people are using it a lot. Uh oh, there's another one. Another one in the waiting room. Okay, we have two Sarahs.

Ivy: Oh, we do.

44:45

Interviewer: Maybe it'll work. I've done that before. I've had like four [interviewer's name] before in the Zoom, which is me four times. Okay, Sarah, can you? Can you talk?

44:58

Interviewer: Oh, we still don't hear you.

45:00

Interviewer: I wonder if you tried earphones or earbuds or something. I've had that happen where I was connected to Bluetooth to earbuds, and then it like the audio didn't work. But

anyways, yeah, we still don't hear you. But just feel free as I ask the question, Sarah, if the audio continues not to work, feel free to just type your answers in. I know it's not ideal, but just type them in and yeah, I can try and build off of that. So the question was, yeah, how do you think UTM students are using, to what extent do you think they're using AI in their schoolwork? So I'll just keep on asking Ivy the questions, and you just, just type your answers in as you know, as, as I asked them, and I'll be sure to reference them as well. And yeah, if anything ends up working out with the sound just like, feel free to jump into the conversation. Okay, so Ivy, you were saying that, you know, you, it sounds like a lot of students are using this, and you know, possibly kind of not for, in good ways.

46:08

Interviewer: So can you tell me, Ivy, thinking about writing essays, what are the different ways that students can use generative AI in their assignments?

46:18

Ivy: There are many ways, so ChatGPT, if you do premium, they generate AI essays based on the essay guidelines too, because you can unload, I think you can upload like PDF files or photos. So I think that's where it's my origin [*unclear, original?*] all starts from.

46:40

Ivy: But also, they also give you ideas like, um maybe, like giving examples like essay structures or ideas on what you can write about. But I think it's okay to just use some, some sort of ideas from like the structures or the ideas that ChatGPT give. But I think it's become more problematic where you imply and rely on that idea 100% and don't use your like, you know, thinking or creative thinking skill.

Interviewer: Yeah, gotcha. Okay, so it sounds like what you've seen is people can use it to write their essays. They can also use it to generate ideas, and it just depends, you know, how much they're using this, in their assignment. Okay, and what have professors, your professors said about their expectations around AI use?

47:32

Ivy: I think some of professors, they want you to get help by the generative AI, because in the syllabus, they actually use that, oh, you can get- gain ideas from ChatGPT, but don't just use like, use it as like, ordering them, um, you know, to like, write an entire essay about it, but also, some of the professor want you to, 100% use your own knowledge and your thinking skills to write it as they, um, write it in your own words. So I think the expectation really varies by professor and the course's content.

48:10

Interviewer: So do you feel like you could say, you know, it's like a half, half split. Some of them are okay with it. Some of them don't want you to use it at all. Or is it like, really heterogeneous, where, like, you know, some say this. Some say that, you know, can't really.

Ivy: I think mostly, you know how, like, the digital society has been changing a lot, and there's, like, ChatGPT more, getting involved in many more aspects. I think as the time flies more back-more forward, I mean, the professor kind of acknowledged the ChatGPT visible- visibility. And then they try to perceive like, how ChatGPT is- can be used to a more helpful tool for each individual of the students, so that they were, they're trying to promote ChatGPT like, not, not in a bad way, but in a good way that the students individual can more improve on.

Interviewer: Right, so you see some change happening, so profs are kind of cap- catching up with technology.

Ivy: Yeah, they do.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay, so Sarah wrote, I feel like they may be using that on the similar level with other university students. Since are all university students facing similar academic challenges. Okay, yeah, that's for sure, useful to know.

49:25

Interviewer: Okay, and so why do you think, I guess alluding to that, why do you think generative AI or ChatGPT specifically, would be useful to students in writing their essays?

49:39

Ivy: I think that's more of like, um, since you have to put on um, your like, own work and your knowledge to create an outcome, it takes several days, right? But then ChatGPT or AI, they can create it in a second. So when you see that actually happens, you probably, as a human, I think you want to put less effort and make a good more potential output *[laughs]*. I think that's where all that happens from.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah, okay, so it's, it's time saving. And as Sarah was saying-

Ivy: More efficient, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I mean, people are facing, we were just talking, it's hard to balance all these courses.

Ivy: It is.

Interviewer: You have something that saves you time for sure. Um, would you say, we talked a bit about this, but do you think there are any drawbacks to using generative AI in, in assignments?

Ivy: I think it definitely does. I feel like if you more lean, more on ChatGPT or generative AI, you lose more of your creativeness and imaginary thoughts.

50:45

Ivy: Um, because I think it is more of like, since ever you're using generative AI, you have, like, less knowledge gaining, because every after more assignments, each every assignment, you gain more knowledge of that particular assignment and you can apply to the next assignment. But I feel like, um, hearing from my peers and also myself, as you use more of that tool, um, you don't really gain that much knowledge or improvement from that specific content that you can actually apply for the next, following assignment. So that's probably the biggest drawback that it gives.

51:31

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, definitely. Um, okay, so yeah, I hope, I hope Sarah can join us. But if not, we'll figure it out. Um, maybe I'll do like a mini-interview with her separately later on. Um, so what would you say about your own AI use? So compared to other students, how would you describe your AI use for schoolwork?

51:53

Ivy: I think I'm pretty using in a smart way. *[laughs]*

51:57

Ivy: Um, I use it.

52:00

Ivy: Um... I rely on AI, but I don't 100% rely on, I use it more as a tool that can help me and support me that I can have, like, a better score and improve my skill, such as, like, sharing my own essay and telling him, how can I improve my skills and what are my weakness? Pointing out that, and then I also use it as like, showing like my previous assignments and my scores that, oh, I got like this score on this previous assignment, but how can I improve more on my current assignment? And what are the difference between the two, and what grade do you predict for this particular assignment, you know, stuff like that.

Interviewer: That is really cool. I had no idea AI could do that. That is, I think the only issue really, is that the TAs vary so much where-

Ivy: Yeah, I know *[laughs]*.

Interviewer: -that matters for this TA, but if you get a different TA, it's like a whole different, you know, answer.

53:03

Interviewer: Yeah, for sure. Um, Sarah, are you able to unmute and we can see if we can hear you.

53:11

Interviewer: Oh, no, still can't hear you. But yeah, we're just discussing. We were discussing while you were gone. We were discussing how students at UTM are using generative AI, we were discussing, you know, in what, in what ways they are using it, what expectations profs have around AI use so- oh, yeah, yeah, okay, no, it's no problem, I was just thinking that maybe for you, we could just do like a mini-interview later on. Um, yeah. Like, if you need to go, and if you think it's not working, for sure, we can- we can reschedule and do our own and just pick up where we left off. So yeah, if you, if you want to go, no problem. Have a good night, and we'll reschedule something just you and me.

53:57

Interviewer: Does that sound good?

54:00

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. No worries, no worries. It's okay. So yeah, let's- we'll just do a separate one, you and me, we'll continue where we left off. Okay. Well, have a good night. Thank you so much for joining us. I really appreciate it.

54:12

Interviewer: Bye. Okay, well, alright, we'll continue. So it sounds like you use generative AI for feedback, mostly.

Ivy: Yeah.

54:21

Interviewer: I'm going to ask you about specific things in writing essays and basically see if you've used AI for those things. So something like background research, synthesizing sources, coming up with an argument, or drafting an outline, and I can repeat them, if you like. Have you used AI for any of those things?

Ivy: Um, I do. I- little portion I do for the drawing the outline. The essay outline. Because sometimes you're really stuck when you look at a topic and you don't even know where to start it from, right? So I get-

55:00

Ivy: I- I ask him to write an outline for it, like a general outline, simple outline, and then, when I see that, I have like, oh, maybe I can improvise on that point, to make it a better, stronger idea, and that's where I can actually start my essay, so I think that's part, that part is really helpful for it.

Interviewer: Right, so getting some inspiration for your own paper when you're feeling a bit stuck. Okay, this might sound like a weird question, but how did you learn to use I mean, assuming just ChatGPT. How did you learn to use ChatGPT? Because when you're telling me things, and I have even no idea you could do that, so yeah, how did you learn to use it?

Ivy: Oh, I think it's like more of experience. But I can tell myself that I use AI in a best way, I think among my peers.

55:52

Ivy: Um, I think as you more talk to ChatGPT, you know like, how to give him order to make a better outcome.

56:02

Ivy: So I think that's a way. And also, I watched some YouTubes, how like which order, when you give some order to ChatGPT, what outcomes it make. So if you just give a simple, like order, they, they give you like broad perspective of an outcome, like response, but if it becomes more detailed, more specific, they give you more specific and detailed idea, focusing on your, um, I don't know, your theme, so I think that's where you learn from it.

Interviewer: It sounds like to get the best possible answer, you need to give kind of the most detailed and accurate instructions, right?

Ivy: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, that's really interesting. And there's even YouTube videos telling you, like how to do that.

Ivy: Yes.

Interviewer: That is so cool-

Ivy: Crazy. *[laughter]*

56:50

Interviewer: Okay, wow, um, yeah, and okay, we talked about how it's been helpful with your writing assignment. Did you have any negative experiences using your AI?

Ivy: Oh, ChatGPT, especially. So, there's another AI that I use to do some researches and gather a, find information or answer. It's called Perplexity.AI.

57:16

Ivy: That's when you ask a question, Perplexity.AI finds an answer throughout a specific resource or journal or article, so they have like a source, like a writing when we write, but the ChatGPT, they just gather random type of sources and give you random answers, so that sometimes they give you wrong answers.

57:38

Ivy: So sometimes you have to correct him. So I think that's a big issue for it.

Interviewer: So you're able to pick up on the fact that those are the wrong answers. Do you feel like other students who might be using AI or ChatGPT, do you think that some people might not be able to pick up that this is the wrong answer, that it's kind of giving you?

58:02

Ivy: No. Um, I know that because if you re-ask the ChatGPT several times, he sometimes acknowledges mistakes and say, "Oh, I'm sorry. I have acknowledged my mistake" *[laughs]* and goes back. Or sometimes I ask ChatGPT on my, like, one Google account and second Google account ChatGPT, and ask the third version of the Perplexity.AI to verify the answer that I want to get, and if they have all different answers, then I mostly rely on the Perplexity.AI response because they give you a specific resource where the answer is drawn from.

58:43

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay, so it seems like there's a little bit of work involved in navigating, sort of, is this the right answer? Double checking, okay, yeah. And do you have any hesitations about using AI?

59:00

Ivy: *[pause]* Not really.

59:03

Interviewer: Okay. So, so, things like ethical considerations or any academic integrity issues.

59:11

Ivy: Um... I don't think I have that much hesitation, because I don't see myself that I'm getting over the line of academic integrity or copying 100% of that work, because, as I see, like AI, is pretty much getting involved in our everyday lives, and also pretty much helpful in academic works. I think it's really, it's really useful, and it should be included in an academic work to make more, um, improved progress in a student like academic, you know, path.

59:48

Interviewer: Um, alright, so it sounds like you feel pretty confident that your use is something that instructors would be okay with.

59:57

Ivy: Yeah.

59:59

Interviewer: Um, and would you tell other students that you use generative AI in your schoolwork?

1:00:05

Ivy: Yeah, we all share the knowledge of ChatGPT. So, so one of my friend has encouraged me to buy their premium ChatGPT, and I did, which made my life more easier, for sure, but yeah, all of my friends share ChatGPT, or the other AIs. I heard like there are other AIs that give you more better answers for some subjects, like such as math or econ or sciences, but I have no clue what that sources are. I'm just, like, even I have, like, even too much pressure, even using the ChatGPT workload, too much order. So, yes.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, so you, you currently pay for a premium version of ChatGPT, yeah.

Ivy: I do.

Interviewer: And how do you find the difference between the free version and the premium? I know, I know, I think you said that it's like, way more detailed or accurate, but if you could speak a bit more about that.

Ivy: Oh, yeah. Um, so first of all, you can attach PDF files and you can attach more photos. So one time, I didn't want to do one required reading, so I attached a PDF file, and I asked him to take detailed, like notetaking or detailing explanation of, can you explain this in more, easier words that I can understand? And he have done that. But I think if you use, like a free version, I think you can only attach, like one PDF file per day. They have more restrictions on it, I think, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, wow, that is really cool. Kind of makes me feel like I should be using it as well. Very useful stuff.

1:01:50

Interviewer: Okay, and so would you say, then that you would recommend other students to use generative AI for their writing?

Ivy: I would recommend to use that, to them to use if you really want to just get help or, you know, like as a writing assistant, but if you want to use that as a cheating tool or in a sneaky way to improve your grades, I think that's really a wrong way, because you, anyways, will have drawbacks on yourself, on your skills. Yeah.

Interviewer: Right, yeah, we talked about that, that you're kind of not really learning and not building up your skills.

1:02:27

Interviewer: So then what tips would you give to others, other than you know, obviously don't use it to cheat. But what other tips would you give students so that they could use generative AI well?

1:02:38

Ivy: I think if you feel so stuffed on your work schedule or academic works like final exams, and you have too much work to do, you might want to lean forward on the generative AI to create write an essay, like full essay, or do readings, or whatever that is. But I think it's better to just let him, to explain the coursework or the questions that you don't know in more easier terms than you can also understand, and also you can use the generative AI in a more helpful way.

1:03:14

Interviewer: Yeah, we're kind of getting towards the end of our questions, but what you were saying just made me think about like our discussion so far- I wonder whether if TAs and profs had more clear expectations and instructions and were more available for support, including the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre, if all of that was a lot more kind of tailored to you and more available, do you think that would change how you use AI or basically, it's just a useful tool, and you would use it anyway?

Ivy: If that was there like that, more clear instructions, more resources available in our school, I would not buy the premium for ChatGPT, for sure. Um, and I wouldn't use the ChatGPT that much to, like, explain what the instructor is talking about, like, um, explain what the professor mean by the grading scheme or stuff like that. Or, yeah, I would really not use it that much for sure.

Interviewer: Yeah, I'm just wondering, like, sort of, you know, what gaps is AI filling for students that they're not getting from the university? Okay? Is there anything else that we haven't talked about with regards to AI or student writing something I haven't asked, but you wanted to, to add?

1:04:39

Ivy: Oh, I wanted to ask, as I told you, like some of my peers got caught by academic integrity, right? But as AI, has actually really developing since then, they also have, the university obviously use, like, Turnitin, like the check in, like the possible, the similarity check and stuff. But are they able to, like, actually detect AI or see like this, similar sentence structures for AI?

Interviewer: Yeah, I will speak now as a TA.

1:05:09

Interviewer: So, you know it depends on the course, but, I had a course I was TAing where in the beginning of the term there was an in-class test, and students had to, and it's, obviously, we're telling them, you know, don't use any, like, Grammarly extensions, or any sort of, like, just, you know, it's your work here in the in class. And so they submit their test, there's some short answer questions, and then you kind of see the quality of the writing, which you understand. It's a test. It's maybe the first test of the term, it's under time pressure. Okay, it's fine. But then later on, if you have a writing assignment, and the difference between the writing assignment that they took home and had time to complete and what they did in class, night and day, well, there's some question marks, right? Like, how come this person went from this level of writing to this level of writing. So you don't really need any like tool to see that, right? You just see yourself like this. Makes no sense, like, how this person improves so much. And I think it was Sarah who said, you know, when you are using like, a bunch of like, those em dashes, en dashes, whatever they're called, if you're using a bunch of those dashes all the time, and you're using some language that doesn't really sounds too polished or sounds then that's a, that's a flag for sure. You're like, where is this writing coming from, right? So, you know, I think TAs, if they're doing their job right, they can pick up on those things and ask, you know, this looks a bit suspicious, doesn't it?

Ivy: Yeah, true.

1:06:40

Interviewer: So, you know, I don't think that they're- so far, I'm not aware of any tools that have been developed to detect AI, but those tools are the TAs right now or the prof if they're the one grading.

Ivy: Yeah, I can tell.

1:06:52

Interviewer: Okay. So yeah, if there's anything else about generative AI that haven't asked about or writing, just yeah, let me know. And then, just to sum up, what advice would you give to instructors about AI use in the classroom, in their courses?

1:07:12

Ivy: I think they can be strict on stuff that *[brief silence]* ... can, I don't know, they can avoid students from cheating or using AI like 100% that they can use their imaginative tools or their knowledge to improve on their, improvise on their assignment. But I think as technology is improving, and if the professor is not going to teach about the stuff, I think they should let the ChatGPT or the AI to explain, or let them to more, give them on explanation, on assignment, like course instructions or assignment details. And they can also, I think, unless they use the AI to write like a whole essay, I think giving like an, some ideas or like outlines, if they can, if that can help the students to get an idea and inspired by, I think that's okay.

1:08:16

Interviewer: Okay, okay. Um... do you think that the university or the department should have sort of standard guidelines that professors should sort of relay to students at the beginning of the term?

1:08:36

Ivy: I think it will vary, *[pause]* they will vary, um, varies by the courses and also the professors. *[pause]*

1:08:50

Ivy: So I don't know, like, what to say.

Interviewer: Okay, so, so you, you don't feel like there needs to be one clear, uh, standard across the board. It should be up to the professor.

1:09:02

Ivy: Yes, and I think it's, it will be also really hard for themselves to, to have, like, a clear one stance, because AIs keep on developing, and also students, their sneakiness is also developing as the AI goes beyond. So it's really, I think it's really hard for them also to make a clear one stance, but I wish there would be.

1:09:27

Interviewer: So right now, you feel like there isn't really enough clarity from instructors regarding what they're expecting. Or?

1:09:37

Ivy: Some of the courses, yes, and some of the courses, no, because they also, as I said, they all varies how they can use the AI, how they allow the AI to be part of the coursework, so.

Interviewer: And so. For, for professors who say that, you know, I want you to use 100% of your own work, don't rely on AI. What do you feel about that kind of stance?

1:10:03

Ivy: I feel like, okay, if the professor *[laughs]* explains everything really gently and specifically, I would 100% say, "You're the best, you, you can do whatever you want", but most of the professor here really don't. So I become really speechless, and I just need to do, I don't know, I just need to just do the readings and lecture notes, and that's all I can do for it.

1:10:32

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, alright. Um, thank you. Um, so I think Sarah, you joined us as well. Do you want to unmute to see if we can hear you.

Sarah: Um, can you maybe hear me?

Interviewer: Yeah, we can hear you now.

Sarah: Oh, my God, thank God, I figured out what's happening. Like, because, like, China banned Zoom, and I bought a VPN, and now I'm, like, connecting using another site.

Interviewer: I was a bit worried about that. I-Google, yeah, Zoom should be okay, Sarah, if you don't mind, I'm just going to wrap up with Ivy, and then we can just go over, if you have time to stay, we can go over the questions that we missed together.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: Okay. Awesome. So yeah, just like, give us maybe couple more minutes, and then we can say goodbye to Ivy. So Ivy can go to sleep. Hopefully. And then you, you and I can continue, and then *[undergraduate research assistant 1]* and *[undergraduate research assistant 2]* can stay or leave based on their schedule.

1:11:27

Interviewer: Okay, cool. So I guess maybe the last question would be, is there, um, what feedback would you give, Ivy, about ISP100, anything we haven't mentioned about ISP100 that you would want to tell us?

1:11:44

Ivy: Um, I think for ISP100, you don't need to reuse generative AI at all. You can just rely, stick to professor, go to office hours, take the professor as an advantage, because they're not really a small size classes, and, throughout the whole UTM courses, use your time wisely to write essay, start early, as soon as possible.

1:12:12

Ivy: I think the best advice that I can give is to stick to the professor, um, get, go more office hours, to ask questions, what your weaknesses are, what improving- improvement you can make from it?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Um, I'm sorry, there is one more question, based on what you just said.

Ivy: Okay.

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that kind of, you know, you take the course time passes and, you know, you maybe forget stuff, or you're not really applying those skills. Would you want there to be continued, sort of writing instruction throughout your time in UTM.

Ivy: I kind of want it, but I feel like most of my peers will disagree for it. *[laughs]*

1:12:52

Ivy: Personally, I really like writing, so I really wanted to have, like, more, um, developed version of ISP100 in UTM that I can also take course and improve my skills. Because if I- if it's not there, I know that myself, I won't be taking other courses to improve my writing skills.

Interviewer: Yeah. I mean, you already have so much going on for sure.

1:13:16

Interviewer: That concludes my questions. Is there anything that you want to add that we haven't talked about?

1:13:22

Ivy: Think I'm good so far.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Well, thank you so much for joining us. When this is all done, we will have a raffle for the gift card so you know, I hope you win.

1:13:35

Interviewer: And yeah, thank you for joining us. Good night, and then we'll just continue with Sarah.

Ivy: Have a good day, bye bye.

Interviewer: Bye bye.

1:13:43

Sarah: Bye.

1:13:45

Interviewer: [*Undergraduate research assistant 1*] and [*undergraduate research assistant 2*], do you want to stay? It's probably going to take about half an hour.

1:13:51

[Undergraduate research assistant 1]: I'm good to stay.

1:13:55

[Undergraduate research assistant 1]: I don't know about [*undergraduate research assistant 2*].

1:13:58

[Undergraduate research assistant 2]: I think I'm gonna have to go, if that's okay.

Interviewer: Yeah, of course. No worries. Okay, well, thanks for joining us. And then yeah, we'll, we'll see you at the next one.

[Undergraduate research assistant 2]: Okay, perfect. Thank you all. Thank you so much.

Interviewer: Bye.

1:14:10

Interviewer: Okay, so Sarah, thank you so much for trying to make it work. I feel like my internet is getting a bit glitchy, so let me know, and if anything, I will turn off my video if it's bad. So I think where we stopped, Sarah, is we were just discussing AI in terms of UTM students' use. So you wrote in the chat that students just have a lot going on. And so, you know, AI can be useful because there's just so many different courses and things to be doing.

1:14:46

Interviewer: So yeah, I think I'll just go back to the beginning of that section. So, because I don't think you got to answer that, so to what extent do you think UTM students use generative AI for their schoolwork?

1:14:58

Sarah: I really feel like it depends, maybe some students use that more, and some students, like, rely on personal aids like, just like the writing centres more.

Interviewer: Okay, um, and in terms of writing essays, in what ways do you think students use AI for writing essays?

1:15:21

Sarah: Um, I personally feel like the, the wise users would not fully depend on AI to write for them, because and their original thinkings and AI, um, are not like too smart to really write in-depth. I feel like. They often like give complex sentences. *[pause]*

1:15:47

Sarah: But I kind of like, know some of my peers has, like, offend the academic integrities. So maybe there are some people that's like, rely on AI too much.

1:16:01

Interviewer: I see.

1:16:03

Interviewer: Okay and have your professors set up anything about their expectations around AI use?

1:16:11

Sarah: Yeah, some of my prof strictly forbid using AI, and others said, like they're okay with using AI, as long as like we list in the document, in our essay, like, for which part we're using AI.

1:16:27

Interviewer: Okay, um, and why do you think generative AI would be useful for writing essays?

1:16:36

Sarah: Um, I personally, um, don't really think it's useful for like, like for replacing like personal writers for writing their own ideas, but I sometimes feel like it can be a good friend just like, like in ISP, the prof like told me to, told us to like, we can read our like, first draft out loud, to our family

and peers, friends, for them, and to getting advices. So I feel like ChatGPT can be a substitute of this part, and it's like, kind of even more professional, for sure.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, definitely. I can see why that would be the case.

1:17:23

Interviewer: Do you think there are any drawbacks to using generative AI?

1:17:27

Sarah: Yeah. Um, I feel like, if people's like, for me, I feel like, if I'm relying on AI too much, I'll like, be lazy on my mind, like, because sometimes when I review for my finals, I just like let ChatGPT to create a review guide for me, but then I feel like,

1:17:50

Sarah: I- I can't remember, I just like go through what ChatGPT gives me, and it's actually better for me to create my own, so I think it saves on the writing- it's important to take this progress of writing.

1:18:07

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, so going through that exercise yourself kind of helps you retain more and learn more, rather than relying on a tool that does it for you.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And so, compared to other students, how would you describe your use of AI in your schoolwork?

1:18:29

Sarah: I feel it's like relatively quite low, because I mainly use AI for the preparing process, like I brainstorm and I ask whether these things I'm like, doing it properly. If it is like, it doesn't seem like I'm out of track, I'll just like, go- go through it myself. Then after that, I'll probably use Grammarly rather than ChatGPT to polish my essay for me, 'cause um, it's giving too complex, uh, wordings and it's out of my league, I think *[laughs]*.

1:19:09

Sarah: Yeah, I finished.

Interviewer: Okay, sorry. I wasn't sure if you got cut off or not.

Sarah: Oh, yeah, yeah, oh.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, no worries.

1:19:15

Interviewer: Okay, and then I know you said that you're using it for brainstorming. I was also asking Ivy the same question, but in terms of using generative AI for writing essays, I'm going to list a few different ways that people can use AI, and you can tell me if you've done that with AI. So if you use AI for background research, for synthesizing sources, for coming up with an argument, which is, I guess, brainstorming and drafting an outline. So maybe you can speak to which one of those you've used AI for.

1:19:54

Sarah: Um, honestly, none of them because I personally really like, like treasuring the process of, like, gathering resources, because I planning to, um, to refer like PhD level, and I feel like gathering my own sources is like, super, super important. 'Cause at that level, like, people are being like, too professional, that maybe ChatGPT *[laughs]* can't even like be professional than themselves. So it's important to have my own ability to gathering important sources, and to, like, read through the abstract and know which part of the source I'm using that in order to complete my own task. And for the brainstorming part, I don't usually use it to generate a whole argument for me, but rather, like, maybe brainstorm several potential aspect I can- or like topics I can go with my essay.

1:20:51

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you. And so I was, again, I was asking all these questions to Ivy as well. So for me, I've never used ChatGPT, mostly because I just was, like, too lazy to open an account. But I'm wondering how you learn how to use ChatGPT, so you know, you've heard about it, but it sounded to me from Ivy that there's a good way, better ways of using it than other ways. So how did you learn how to actually use it as a tool?

1:21:20

Sarah: Um, actually, like through social media. There are some people that's like, maybe like technical influencers. They taught about how to train my AI to make it more personal oriented and to more use it wisely, and they can be like, smarter to answer my questions, rather than like, just simply, like, list all these synthesized resources it get from is, like, text and datas.

1:21:48

Interviewer: Right. Yeah. Ivy was mentioning as well that, she said that there's YouTube videos that can teach you how to do that. So that sounds, yeah, that there's a level of, there's a bit of a learning curve involved in learning how to use this tool to, to its full potential.

Sarah: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Um. Yeah, great. So, have you had any negative experiences using AI?

1:22:16

Sarah: Yeah, um, sometimes when I- I, I'm not, like, really understanding the concept or certain theory that prof saying on the class, and I just, like, ask ChatGPT, but I find, like, um, the answer is giving is like, totally different with what the prof said.

1:22:34

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I see what you mean.

1:22:37

Interviewer: And do you have any hesitations about using AI, like, in terms of ethical considerations or academic integrity issues?

1:22:46

Sarah: Yeah, um, I personally try to avoid to let ChatGPT every, like, generate this sentence for me that I'll be using it for my, for my essay, like, exactly I won't like be copy pasting it, but sometimes if it... *[long pause]* ChatGPT's ideas, but it's not ChatGPT ideas. It's like from the data set that it mines the tags and datas from, so I'm afraid it's actually some like real person's ideas, so I- I'm trying to find similar ideas, not using that exactly the same, but I still feel like it's maybe not that ethical, I don't know.

Interviewer: Okay, let me, you know what? Let me just turn off my video, because I found that you just cut out of it, everything froze for me, and I don't want to impact the transcription, so I'll just, yeah, unfortunately turn off my video.

1:23:45

Interviewer: Yeah, hopefully it will be a lot smoother now.

1:23:49

Sarah: Yeah, sure.

Interviewer: That's- internet. *[overlapping voices, laughter]*

1:23:51

Interviewer: Yeah, so I think it sounds like you do have some concerns about, you know, are you using it sort of correctly or acceptably? Did I get that right?

Sarah: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, um. And would you say that's because there are unclear instructions from professors or, well, is there a different reason?

Sarah: Oh no, no, no, it's- it's just, like, my personal concern about, like, being ethical, because I don't want to plagiarize from others, but whenever I'm using ChatGPT, I feel like it gains others', idea like, 'cause the whole data sets, it's come from like, maybe like humans... informations.

Interviewer: Okay, I see what you mean. So it's just a question of, is me consulting this sort of or potentially using it, is it considered plagiarism or not?

1:24:46

Sarah: *[pause]* I think it- it depends on the extent that using AI. Um... I feel like... um... *[long pause]*

1:25:01

Sarah: I feel like for some like review part, like review for exams part, it won't be considered plagiarism, but for creating new stuffs, maybe kind of.

1:25:14

Interviewer: Okay. Um, and would you tell others that you use generative AI to help with your schoolwork?

1:25:21

Sarah: Um, 'cause I'm- I never use AI for like, to truly generate things that I would submit for my essay, so I'm okay to tell others how I'm using AI. And I feel like, me personally, speaking, I feel like um, it's, it's like, better than the lying saying, like, I'm not using AI 'cause I am using it to help me study.

Interviewer: Right, right. And would you recommend that other students use generative AI to help with their essays?

1:25:53

Sarah: Um, if they find it helpful if you like- I-I- don't really recommend them to using AI for their essays, but if they help, they feel, feel like ChatGPT is a good like listener or like friends that can give advice. Um, I feel like it's okay to do so, but not for like a mentor or tutor that create, go beyond themselves as writers.

Interviewer: Right. Okay, and I think we touched on this a little bit, but what tips would you give to others so that they can use generative AI well.

1:26:28

Sarah: I feel like important things to first, like concisely, tell ChatGPT what's like, I'm- I'm currently onto the level and what I currently got and what I'm trying to write and some of the like, maybe the first draft I'm writing, and then tell like, directly what I'm hesitating, like, whether I feel like this is appropriate to be in my work, or like this is an appropriate topic it would be using and then, after ChatGPT gives me the answer, I feel like it's better to still do my own research, not to, like, fully rely on this, like, whether it's like, it's good or not, I feel like it's important to still, um, maintain the users as the, the one who like, who host, the more, more authority.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah.

1:27:28

Interviewer: Okay. And just to go back, I- like to that learning curve of learning how to use AI and you mentioned there was some social media, media sources help you figure out how to train it. How did you find that learning curve? Did you find, you know, oh, it took you a little while to figure out how to use it effectively or was it, like, a pretty smooth process?

Sarah: Um, when, when ChatGPT was for, like, first launch out, like, I feel like so many people were, were teaching others, like, how to use ChatGPT? So I go through some of the, like, the posts, and then my algorithm, just, like, giving me more and more, and first, for a while, I was, like, my social media was, like, full of ChatGBT, then, then I just, like, gained some insights from that.

Interviewer: Gotcha, okay.

1:28:19

Interviewer: Alright. So, yeah, we're just coming up to the last section here. Is there anything that we didn't talk about related to generative AI or student writing that you would like to share?

Sarah: I feel like um... um, I feel like I'm good.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. And then a few summing up questions, what advice would you give to instructors, to professors, about AI use in the classroom, or in the course?

1:28:57

Sarah: I personally feel like, um, maybe instructors and professors should like be more encouraging students to um, to like, be confident about themselves, to write without using ChatGPT, although I know like it's a trend, and that it's like, super popular and maybe a, a must-change thing for the future, but I still feel like maintaining our own creative ideas is the key for writings, because, if we don't have, like our original ideas like, others can all be, like, replaceable

so I kind of like disagree with profs that's super open or like encouraging use ChatGPT for your academic writings.

Interviewer: Yeah, I actually feel the same way as you.

1:29:49

Interviewer: Okay.

1:29:52

Interviewer: Is there anything that you think, we touched on this a bit, but anything that you think professors can do differently, or that you would like them to know? Other than what we already talked about, with regards to AI in courses?

1:30:07

Sarah: I feel like prof could maybe, like, write about more specifically about their expectations of the writing like the- the topics, the goal, what should they be like, um, saying in essay, in the instruction. I know, like, profs give rubrics, but sometimes it's a little bit like too concise and they mainly focuses on, maybe like grammar, on the scale from 1-5, or like, structure, or concise, or precise, or something.

1:30:41

Interviewer: I see, okay. Um. Yeah, and do you think it would be helpful if the university or the department had one set of standards that all professors adopted or do you think it should be up to each individual professor sort of what the policy would be?

1:31:05

Sarah: Hm... I personally think it would be, actually be fair if we all have the same standard, but I feel like it's really hard to achieve 'cause people have, like, really different opinions on AI. Um, so if like profs having different opinions on certain courses, maybe they can have, uh, like a specific standards for that certain courses to make it like more fair.

1:31:36

Interviewer: I see. And is there any feedback, did you want to give about ISP100 that we haven't discussed yet?

1:31:43

Sarah: Um... I- I actually heard that like the instructors of ISP100, like, have quite varied standards of writing, like, consider what is good or bad, and I'm actually quite curious about that, so, I don't know whether it's true, like, the- the grading they give and the criteria is like varies a lot.

1:32:08

Interviewer: Yeah, I don't have an answer for you, 'cause I'm not involved in that course, but I would imagine that, yeah, that would be true. I mean, I have to say, that even in something like qualitative methods, which I'm TAing this term at *[name of campus]*, you know, I had students who were talking about the intro to qualitative methods, and the course I'm TAing is intermediate qualitative methods, and they're saying, oh, like this is different from what we learned last year, well, it's qualitative methods, there's different ways, different approaches, different schools of thought, so I think when it comes to writing, you know, there's some very clear things that are, are bad, like *[unclear]* grammar should be correct, and things like that, but I think, I think standards and schools of thought on writing also vary and so, there's different ways of doing it and sometimes even professional writers, you know, they can break rules and they'll, they'll still work. So, yeah, I mean I think, you know, that could be an issue, right, when you're trying to teach writing, it could be an issue that one professor teaches you one way, and a different professor teaches you a different way, so I think, yeah, the question you raised is an important one.

Sarah: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, well, that, that concludes all my questions, um, I'll just ask one more time in case we missed anything, is there anything else you'd like to share that we haven't talked about?

1:33:33

Sarah: Um, I'm actually quite wondering like, do you have a like, kind of like, a standpoint about generative AI like specifically for your project?

Interviewer: Um. So... you know what, no, I have to say that the goal of the project is really to learn from students, um, I think each different member of the study has their own ideas about AI, um, but we, we don't have an agenda, uh, we really just trying to learn from students, and, you know, whatever sort of insights we gain from this would be based on what students tell us, so, you know, if students are telling us while it would be great if we got more support from instructors, then that's definitely a message we are going to amplify. Um. If we hear that you know, for example, students are really hesitant about what counts as an academic offense, so that's going to be something that we would want to amplify, but we don't have like, you know, a set sort of standpoint that- that we personally have, we just want to understand, you know, is ISP100 helpful, how is it helpful, how is it not helpful, um, is generative AI useful, how are students using it, you know, what can instructors do to help students, so yeah, that's- those are the goals of the research I would say.

Sarah: Yeah. That's so kind of you and your team.

1:34:55

Interviewer: I think it's a great research project, I mean, you know, the world is changing, and I think, you know, the department needs to understand how it's changing and what it can do to support students, so, yeah, it was not my idea, *[laughs]* but I think it's a good one. Um. I guess one last thing I just realized, I asked this to Ivy as well, do you feel as though it would be helpful to you if there were ongoing writing courses in the program, or is it just like, ISP100 is enough, and we don't need more of that?

1:35:25

Sarah: I feel like that would definitely be helpful, but I don't- I don't know whether we should make it like required, 'cause people have different schedules. Maybe like, um... specifically target it like some to the more like research-oriented academic writing, or some to more like, um... just like giving example like autobibliography *[autobiography?]* or something, if courses like specifically, like targeting more in-depth of a certain genre of writing, I feel like it would be really helpful.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, gotcha. Well, yeah, that concludes our interview. I'll just stop the recording.