

## Focus Group 2 (April 17, 2025)

00:00

**Interviewer:** Perfect. Okay, so yeah, thanks for- oh no, that's not the recording. That's a different button. Zoom is so much easier. Okay, so yeah, thanks for joining us. As I said, we can get started with the experience, with your experiences writing before university. So the first question was, what was your experience like writing essays in high school?

00:23

**Didi:** I guess I could start. Um... throughout high school, it was a little bit more difficult for me. From Grade 9 and 10, I thought I was a science kid. And then... when I started my sciences in Grade 11, I quickly realized it wasn't really for me, and I started trying to do better in English and, like history, because it was very like writing-based. However, my grades were not the best, um, and I had amazing teachers that were, like grad students from like Oxford and I lived in a really small town, so for them to be able to, like, critique me, to up that level, but still get, like, pretty good grades, it kind of motivated me to do really good in university, but I guess, like, teachers, like them, kind of motivated me to do better, even though I wasn't getting the grades that I wanted. So it was kind of like an uphill journey, I would say, 'cause, like, it started off really rocky for me in the beginning, I got really good peer advices for my- my friends, and then also, like my mentors, and then starting ISP in university, that's when I started to see like a better, um, like result with better like, I guess professors.

01:30

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Does anybody want to add about their experiences writing essays in high school?

01:39

**Amna:** Yeah, I can go. My experience was kind of the opposite, it was more like I had more trouble with science and math, but writing was never really an issue for me. Like, I don't know, throughout high school, my grades were good. I got compliments from, like, my English teachers and such on my essays, so I felt like I was a strong writer, just like going through high school and coming into university. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for sharing.

02:03

**Kitty:** I would say for me, yeah, it's a similar experience where I felt like writing, like, was my stronger skill out of like doing math and focusing more on numbers, I guess. It was definitely an up

and down process, it highly depended on, like, who my teacher was and how that teacher taught English and other writing-based courses, and that, like, varied how much I enjoyed writing as a process. I think coming into university, I was really intimidated hearing that it was- like my writing style would have to change, because there was more of a focus on like, less of a focus on, I guess, persuasive arguments, but more on like, seeing, examining various sides of like, of research, and... in like my subjects of interest. So, it was kind of a big jump for me, and I didn't realize as well how much time management would affect my writing and like my enjoyment of the writing process as well. So that was, like, kind of a hard, a harder curve that I'm still like working on, um... working on improving, if that makes sense. So yeah, that's my experience.

03:12

**Didi:** I really like the point that she pointed out, like how your interest in writing kind of changes in university, 'cause in high school, I kind of got used to being able to write very structured. My teachers would provide us like topic sentences and all that, and she would give us like questions that we had to answer, so it was so easy to write. And then I started into university, I'm like, obviously I liked writing better than I did in high school, but the intensity and how like, the difficulty of like writing was so much different, and I feel like it was sometimes really hard for me to say "I really like writing" and me hating it too at the same time. So, I say it was a learning curve.

03:51

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Okay, so we spoke a bit about the next few questions, but if you want to add anything about any challenges with writing or things that you enjoyed. And you know, if you feel like you've already covered that you can, you can skip it, but if there's anything you want to add, in terms of in high school, what you enjoyed about writing or find- found challenging,

04:18

**Didi:** I guess in high school... pros and cons, I would say, so for pros, I really liked the fact that the assignments weren't that bad, like two pages and then, like, you had your question written out, and there was one answer your teacher would hint you towards. And that was amazing, 'cause I just had to find my sources, write, and that's it. And the cons about that is, obviously, there's not a lot of space for creative writing, um, I was very limited to what my teacher would tell me to do, and I never went above that, and that was a huge issue when I started university, 'cause it brought in both empirical like, research, on the top of that, also bringing in creative writing styles, and that was the most difficult thing for me when I started ISP, but also the best thing about ISP was for me to be able to freely write, and that there was no wrong styles of writing. If that makes sense?

05:06

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it does. Thank you. Anybody want to add anything?

05:12

**Amna:** Yeah, I feel like in high school, yeah, it was a similar kind of experience for me, and that um... I don't know, I felt like my writing didn't really change based on what I was writing about or the class I was in. It was the same kind of structure that I was like, taught my whole life, like the paragraph structure, persuasive arguments, and I didn't really like change my style or tone or approach depending on the class, like looking back, but now, like, after doing ISP and everything, and learning that there's such a different way to approach it for each different like, you know, field, subject, or even just being in different classes and having my assignments being all graded differently, the way they're looked at, like the structure and idea of writing, it's very different.

05:58

**Kitty:** For sure. I- I agree a lot with ,and I resonate a lot with what both of you said. I also feel, yeah, I also resonate with, like, being given that structure already, with like the hamburger chart and everything like that, being- like, I felt like my hand was held through like, every step of the writing process, for sure and that helped me a lot, and helped me feel more confident in my writing and then that very quickly stopped once I entered university and understandably so. And yeah, I did also have, like, realized that, like, I need to, like, adjust my writing a lot depending on the subject, and because I was taking a bunch of like, different random electives to see, like, what I was really interested in studying, especially throughout my first year. So it was, it was a big jump even, even with citation styles, I felt like I had to tread more carefully in that sense, and it really impacted the way that I- I've been continuing to write throughout the years, and it's still like a learning process for me, for sure.

**Didi:** Yeah, that's one thing I also like, learn in university, because, like in high school, it was just one type of style of writing, like you said, *[participant name]*. Um...

**Interviewer:** No worries, we're gonna de-identify everything anyway, don't worry.

**Didi:** *[laughs]* I need to remember.

**Interviewer:** I know, it's hard, isn't it?

07:09

**Didi:** But one thing, that in high school, I was struck- like, just one type of style of writing. I answered the question, that's it. When it came to university in like, first year, you know, it's like very general, it's broad. I took courses in like, every field, and even though I didn't like the field, I had to write so differently, like in my anthro classes, it's a very different style of writing. In my poli sci courses, it's very different. And then crim too was very different for me. And then when I did my- when I took a science credit, too, it's a very different style of writing too, it's very direct and all that but, that was one thing that, it was kind of difficult to learn too *[higher pitched]*, because, like,

it was just first year, it was the one time I was going to do it, and that's it, like I never looked back at it, so.

07:48

**Interviewer:** Yeah, thank you, it's really helpful. Um, okay, and can you maybe walk me a bit through what sort of research you did when preparing essays? So kind of the process that you had. If you remember.

08:04

**Kitty:** This is specifically for high school, right? Okay.

**Amna:** Oh, for high school? Um, until Grade 11 or 12, I wasn't like, looking for proper scholarly sources, I would Google *[laughter]* and be like, like I knew about, like, reputable sources. I wasn't, like, citing some randos or something and- but like, I would just Google and there'd be a news article or something that'd be like, from, you know, Mayo Clinic or Web MD or something, and I'd be like, "Okay, that's an organization, that's good, it's reputable," which it is, but like, it was a very different approach, for sure, and then in Grade 11 and 12, that's when they started, like, prepping us for university, so they were like, you gotta use, like, you know, Google Scholar, and look at these things. We didn't have access to databases like we do now. But it was like, you know, go on whatever's, like, available and free, but it has to be like, peer reviewed and scholarly. They weren't as strict with it, but it was something that was, like, really encouraged. And now I see why, after going to university, that that's the kind of thing you're supposed to use. So, yeah.

09:04

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

09:07

**Didi:** I guess I could start, um, for me in Grade 9 and 10, it was, like, really random researching, whenever I saw my essays, it's like, I go on Google and I search for it, and that's it. Citing wasn't really a thing *[laughs]* in Grade 9 and 10, I don't remember about it. And also, I was a COVID kid, that time, so like, I was just submitting work because I had to submit it. Other than that. But Grade 11 and 12 is when I actually started going back to school. And I'm very- I'm very thankful that starting at Grade 11, my teachers, both in like, history and English, were very, I guess, in, um, I don't know what's the word, but they insisted in really using peer reviewed, like works and all that. Like, they would not allow any, like, any... any information that wasn't peer reviewed. And they were like, saying, like, it's 'cause I want to set you for university and all that. And my teachers knew that I wanted to get into university, so she's like, it's fine, like for you, I want to keep a higher level than the rest of the class. So I'm like, I really recommend you starting to know how to- how to identify about articles, like peer reviewed or not, and process-wise of like, doing work. I kind of kept the way I did my work from Grade 11 up until now. I started for like, a brainstorming I like to

do, like a little road map of ideas that I want to answer. And then I would start off with a very rough first copy, and I would just spur in words, like it would just be, even if it's like wrong spelling, there's no grammar, nothing, I would spur in words. And one thing that I also really found helpful in Grade 11 and 12, that my teachers taught me, is that every source that we were looking at on Google Docs, I will put the link to that source, and then bullet point notes for that, it would be the page number, and then bullet point notes- notes that I wanted to add in my- in my paper. And I kind of did that too for university, and it's helped out with, like tracking what sources I've used. Obviously, Zotero is here now but, I still like the way I do it, I'm not used to it yet. And after that, that's when I start taking that information, putting it down to my own words, and then writing it down, and I'd have about like three to four different copies of my, like, one singular essay and I feel like that's really worked out for me in first and second year.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

11:15

**Kitty:** Yeah, for me, I resonate with both experiences. Again. *[laugh]* Um, but yeah, I- yeah, over time, I felt like I was using like, more academic sources. Well, actually, it depended a lot on the different subjects I was taking. Like, towards my last year of high school, I was using a lot, like, mainly news articles, um, especially for like classes involving like, like subjects about the law and even about history and everything like that. News articles were, like, the- my main source. And then we started being, like, taught more and more about media biases and everything like that. And I think, yeah, in like, the very last part of my last year of high school, that's when I started to learn about peer reviewed resources and, like how to, like, sift through them a little bit. Of course, like, the free resources, whatever was made available to us and whatever the teacher provided for us, we mainly used those as well as... as well as mainly our textbooks as well. And Britannica, *[group laughter]* because it was- it was considered the better alternative to Wikipedia. So, yeah, that was, that was my experience.

12:24

**Interviewer:** Yeah, great. Thank you.

12:26

**Amna:** Oh, could I actually amend my answer?

**Interviewer:** Sure, of course.

**Amna:** Just because you saying that reminded me? Oh, my God, we did have databases, like it was a whole own thing. It's just that no one knew how to use it, and it wasn't very enforced.

12:37

**Didi:** Did you use JSTOR in high school?

12:41

**Amna:** No, I didn't even know it existed. No, we had, like, it was like a Peel thing, because I went to high school here. You go into like a portal, and then it's like, Canadian issues in law, world issues, this and that, like, high schooler databases. Britannica was on there as well.

**Kitty:** Wait, I remember using that.

12:56

**Didi:** That is so different 'cause I studied in uh, North East district board. It's up north. We did not have that, *[laughs]* obviously, I don't think we got enough resources in our area, but my- my teachers would really try to, he's like, "Guys, I know we don't get enough funding in our area, but like, please use JSTOR and Google Scholar." But I'm like, that's amazing, though.

13:17

**Amna:** It's just like, free, right?

**Didi:** Yeah.

**Amna:** No, for us, like, we had library sessions where they'd be, like, "Everyone, listen up. This is how you use this- this is what a boolean operator is, and like, what you do," yeah. It's just that people forgot, and like, I guess it's used, like, I was okay, I tried using them some- but the thing is, its use wasn't, like, enforced. Like, now it's like, you have to get your sources from sociological abstracts or this and that. But then, it was like, it's great if you do use them, but no one really cares if you don't. So most people opt in not to because it can be confusing, I guess. So, yeah, that's what it was like.

**Didi:** That's cool.

13:53

**Interviewer:** Great. Okay, and... okay, so maybe now moving on a bit to when you actually started university. So again, we kind of touched on some of these questions as- already, but maybe if you want to add anything else, how did you feel about your writing ability when you started university?

*[long pause]*

14:25

**Kitty:** For me, I felt like it was going to be a trial and error experience, like I came in with um, mostly like, the same writing skills as I did before in high school. But then I knew, oh, as I get, like, my grades back, I wanted to see what feedback I get initially and how I can improve, improve my writing style, or just make it- like I was really, like, I'm- I was terrified, especially like, like, of course, the academic offenses, which was like, understandable, um, but I felt like that also made like- it also started to like impact my writing, and it made more anxious to write honestly, because, I mean, ISP made writing more fun, but at the same time, like, just the jump to university, it was, it's just very, like, scary for everyone, so I- about the same time, I was like, okay, if, if I'm going to, like, actually learn from this and actually improve my writing, I need to, like, make a couple mistakes first, and I should probably have some leeway, at least for now, because I'm just in first year. So, I just, waited and saw whatever feedback came back to me, and hopefully I tried my best to improve from there.

15:32

**Didi:** I would say it's the same thing for me. As I told you, like starting Grade 11 and 12, it was very recent for me to start liking to write, like it wasn't natural in me, I had to kind of learn how to be good, how to be a good writer. And getting to university is when I really tested out what I learned in like, a year and a half in high school, and there was a lot of anxiety, 'cause the level of writing that I've seen with my peers in ISP, because I remember in ISP, we had to do this, um... we have, like, every essay that we did, we had, like a bonus opportunity to exchange papers with peers, and just seeing the first draft that I've submitted and exchanged with a peer, and seeing what my peer gave me to edit, I was like, there's no way I'm gonna excel in university *[laughs]* when I saw that type of writing. And then I had to give myself grace, obviously, because the late- the person that I, um, that I exchanged paper with, she's been, she's been awarded all these different awards and, like, writing and all that, so I'm like, it was terrible luck that day, but I saw that, I came home, I'm like, thinking, I'm like, is this a good program for me? Should I even be here? But like, I really trusted the process, I trusted the fact that my professors are here to help me and not try to push me away, and I've seen good results, and I'm really happy at where I'm at right now, but in the beginning it was, it was- I was full of anxiety, I was full of doubts, like I was even considering and changing into a program that wasn't that writing extensive *[likely meant "intensive"]* but right now, I'm happy at where I'm at. I'm glad I trusted myself.

**Interviewer:** That's great.

17:02

**Amna:** And I agree, yeah, like, *[laughs]* I think I definitely got, like, humbled coming into university. It's like you do good in high school, and I came in thinking I was good, which I was, you know, but like, like, doing very good in high school is, like, just alright in university, because it's a whole different context. Plus the goal is, like, to get you to improve and whatever. So I was doing, like, all right, but I was like, whoa, this is not like, what I was expecting. And, it just made me, like,

learn to, you know, I had to take that criticism as, like, what it is like, it's to help make me a better writer, it's important. And now I really, like, I feed off of that kind of stuff, I think it's really important and good to just have that, like, every little bit, like, picked apart, I guess, in a way, that's meant to be constructive, but it was definitely, yeah, somewhat like, nerve inducing. Plus, I don't know, once you're in university, at least, what I felt like was like, oh, suddenly, like, everyone's pretty good at writing. *[laughter]* Like, not that people in my high school were bad. It's just that, well, everyone had their own interests too, right? So some people didn't even care about writing, and so they wouldn't try, because they're like, oh, I'm going to do engineering, who cares about writing? And then not every program even required the ISP. So like, the people who were going into programs that required ISP, maybe they had some inclination to write, I don't know, but I'd look at this and be like, oh, suddenly it's not so easy to be like, "Wow, I'm so good compared to everyone else." *[more laughter]* Yeah.

18:27

**Interviewer:** Did you have any expectations? Did you hear anything about what writing in university would be like? Like, did anybody share that kind of information with you before you started?

18:39

**Didi:** So I did tell you, right, in Grade 11 and 12, my professor- professor, sorry, my teachers already started like preparing me for university. I love my teachers in high school, I really do. Um, they already started to prepare me for the intensity of writing, but not their writing style. That's what- something that kind of stuck with me. Um, my history teacher was telling me how the amount of work that he gave us in, like, in one semester in high school, he said, like triple that. 'Cause he's like, you're going to do five courses, and at university level, he said the course load is moreso the ones that's going to really impact you and feel like you're a terrible writer. But he told me, he's like, at the pace that I was going at, he's like, there's no way you're not going to be able to improve because you were putting in that much effort. And the same thing in high school, where in English- in my English course, she was also saying that she wasn't preparing me for the different style of writing, I guess she also went to university, like a different place, maybe it's different at UofT, but she told me the intensity is something that a lot of first-year students are taken back with. Because, like, I remember in first year, when it came to midterm season, I was bombarded with assignments, and I was like, it was not the fact that I was a terrible writer at that point, it was just that I didn't have time to prepare it like I did in high school, where my teachers would give it to me the first day of class. It's like, that's your final essay, you start whenever. Or, like, I obviously they give it to us in the, like, early enough, but, like, we don't have time at uni *[higher pitched tone]*, but the intensity is something they prepared me for, but not the writing style.

20:13

**Amna:** Time is such a good point, oh, my god, sometimes I feel like I sacrifice good writing on purpose because I just don't have time, and there's so much to get done, and that's something that I kind of got warned about in like, high school in regards to writing, like, again, it's the same thing, it wasn't really about how, oh, the writing is really different, the structure, the expectations. It was just that, like, you're gonna be bombarded with work, and if you don't have a caffeine addiction now, you're gonna [laughter]. That kind of thing. From all my teachers, they get like, that look in their eyes [more laughter]. They feel like, you're gonna have so many essays to write. You poor thing. Oh, I want to go into, like, law and whatever, crim and my teacher studied the same thing was like, yeah, no, it's great, I just want you to know that one time- I remember this, he insisted. He was like, "Do your citations as you go. It's so hard because, like, I thought I could leave it till the end. I was awake 'til 4am adding my footnotes and everything for an assignment." And I was like, huh, okay, so good to know, good to know about, like, time crunching and, like, you know, little things to be aware of, I guess. But no, I don't think it really, like, prepared me for what I found to be the most difficult. I came in with the expectation I wasn't going to have time, really. What I just like, you know, was shocking to me, I guess, was like, the style changes and everything, yeah.

21:30

**Kitty:** Yeah, for sure, yeah, my experience was like, about the same, where I mainly got the warnings about time management, and I didn't realize it until, like, I actually was in university and got caught up with my first round of midterms, and I was like, oh, wow, like, this is what it's- like this is what my teachers have been talking about and I really should have prepared, like, improved on my time management skills before I came in here. And yeah, I definitely felt like I also had to sacrifice time for, like, good writing, just to, like, submit something before 11:59 [laughter] and it was- yeah, it was- yeah, it was a big jump for sure. And I think- sorry, what was the question again?

22:13

**Interviewer:** Um, so, I mean, first of all, you're welcome to speak to anything that comes to your mind, but mainly about sort of what you'd heard about writing in university, sort of how that might compare to high school.

22:25

**Kitty:** Oh right, okay, thank you. I thought I was like veering too off course.

**Interviewer:** You can. You can veer in any direction you want.

22:31

**Kitty:** Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, I participated, actually in the EagleConnect program before I came here, and that was like an online, like Quercus course module all about, like, transitioning

into university, and we had one of the professors come in, oh, my god, I forgot his name, but it was one of the professors from UTM who always comes in and gives those presentations about writing.

**Didi & Amna:** Was it *[professor's name]*?

**Kitty:** Yeah, yeah. It was him, yeah. He gave a presentation about writing like “They say, I say” and it really, like stuck with me. *[laughter]* And it continued sticking with me because he came into, like, all our different courses and presented and love that for him, he was so helpful. It really, like helped me, like, solidify, like, the information that like about how exactly university writing was going to be different. But with all those resources, came in, like, oh, I have so many resources I need to, like, put them all together now, within this, like, limited amount of time, so it starts to get overwhelming for me to even start. And I didn't realize that starting would be the hardest part in university, and how, like, that would continue to follow me. And I'm still, like, working on it, and, like, really, really working on learning how to take those baby steps and be okay with it. I don't have to come in with something like, like, 100% like, perfect, like, I don't know, like, when I was also intimidated by the peer reviews that ISP100 like, at one point, I just had like, bullet notes of, like, my draft and, like, barely anything, like, maybe a couple of introductory sentences and I just came in, I was, like, as long as I get my peer- like my peer review point, I'm okay. Yeah, so.

24:04

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah, thank you for sharing that. Okay, so now we're gonna jump into ISP100. That's a good segue. Before I ask about ISP100, did you take any other writing courses apart from ISP100?

**Amna:** Does SOC2XX count? We were all in that.

24:20

**Didi:** I would consider it, honestly. 'Cause it was very- I didn't learn anything about SOC like I did that in 1XX. Um, apart from in first year, I did ISP100. I did also ENG1XX with *[professor name]* or *[professor name]*, I'm not sure, but it was how to argue argumentatively in first year. So a lot of, like people trying to get the humanities credit, was taking that. That course, I would say, was surrounded on using the “They Say, I Say” book, like we were studying that. Like it was very like focused on that. And obviously there were a few articles here and there to kind of support the “They Say, I Say” but was predominantly using that as a structure and he went by chapters. It did get boring at one point, because in every class I was in, I was in anthro, like, three poli sci courses, three crim courses. And I, I love *[professor's name]* with all my heart, *[laughter]* but I was seeing him so often, and I was also taking a class that was going through every chapter of that book. I kind of got fed up with that, but honestly, I have used, “They Say, I Say”, like the templates that were on that book, I have used it before, but that's one of the courses I took. And also in second year, SOC2XX, I took that. It's- I feel like it was a writing course more than it was for, like, learning

about different theories. Another course that I feel like was writing intensive is also POL2XX. POL2XX is a mandatory course for poli sci students. I am a poli sci major as well. I don't necessarily- I wouldn't say that I learned a lot about, like, the history of political scientists in the beginning. I learned how to creatively write only. There was no scholarly articles. Obviously there were, but we couldn't have- we couldn't use them. We had to use, like, original work, like Aristotle. If we read him for that week, we had to write about him only, and we couldn't seek out like sources from outside, so it was a very different style of writing for me, 'cause like, my professor, *[professor name]*, amazing professor, but um... it was very difficult for me. I've never written, um... I guess it's not old English, but it's kind of like the- a little bit of Old English, like she said, to act like Aristotle, and how would he reply to with, like, a certain question. So that for me, was a huge jump, like from the- in first year, like I was only writing the way ISP was kind of teaching me, and somewhat ISP was broad enough that it was applicable to all my courses at that time. But in second year, there were like opposite ends for some of my classes, like in SOC2XX, it was very argumentative. It was structured. My TA was like, "If you're going to say this, are you going to underpinning a source? You have to make sure you're talking about that source right after that sentence", or something like that. But in POL2XX, she's like, um, I'm going to give you a question. Like, oh, "if Pierre Poilievre was alive at this time, what would Aristotle say?" And she would give us no other instruction other than that. She's like, just reply with your heart. *[laughter]* And I'm like, "No, I can't, it's hard," but it was very difficult for me. I had a really hard time in the beginning of the semester. It's a full year course. The first two assignments I got back, it was not the grades I was expecting to see. The feedback I got was so broad for me, it was really difficult to work from that, but over time, I kind of, I kind of saw what they wanted from my, my friends that did better, and I adapted to that. And thankfully, I ended the course with a grade that was good enough. Yeah.

27:58

**Interviewer:** Good. Okay, well, so, you're the only one who took something, um... ENG1XX.

**Didi:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's another like, you know, let's say, strictly speaking, writing course. Yeah, thanks for that information. Okay, so do you remember what term you took ISP100 in? Fall or winter?

**Kitty:** Fall...

**Amna:** Fall, yeah... we were in the same one.

**Didi:** Oh...

28:19

**Interviewer:** It's okay if you don't remember.

28:21

**Didi:** I think it was fall too, I think- I took it when everyone took it, so that was fall, right?

28:25

**Amna:** Probably, right. Get it over with.

**Didi:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** I did have a student who said winter, so it's possible winter as well, but yeah.

28:33

**Didi:** Okay, I think I did take it fall then, because winter would have been too late.

28:37

**Interviewer:** Did the timing seem right for you? Taking it in the fall to prepare you for your first-year, second-year courses?

28:44

**Kitty:** Yeah, it was really helpful for me, and it helped me, like, also transition into university in general, because it was a smaller class size, and I had like, like difficulties and like anxiety with like socializing as well, so it helped me a lot, like, to adjust and also to make friends, so yeah, I would say was helpful for other reasons.

29:04

**Amna:** Yeah, it was so helpful. I'm so glad I took it off the bat.

**Didi:** Me too.

**Amna:** Yeah.

**Didi:** I'm glad I took it in the beginning, 'cause it was kind of funny, um, some of my friends in soc and crim did not know it was mandatory in fall, and they thought it was for the students coming in next year. I'm like, that was our cohort, and then they quickly, like, took it in winter, and I feel like, obviously, for them, they took it out of panic. For me, I really was able to enjoy the process of ISP, because it really set me up for the courses I took in second semester first year.

29:34

**Interviewer:** Okay, well, yeah, that's great. So the next question is, how did you find the course?

29:38

**Didi:** Oh, this is a long- do you guys want to go ahead? Yeah, okay. ISP100 for me, it's been the biggest blessing up until this point, right now, and I for sure, in the future, I came into class my professor was *[professor name]*. He is the sweetest prof ever. The reason I took him, actually, was 'cause of- I found a woman on Reddit, where I was like, "Which ISP prof should I take?" And she was a third-year bio student, she was not in English, she was not in crim, nothing. She took it because she wanted to. So for me to get that type of like, advice from her, she's like, "I'm not even an English student, whatever. I took him and I loved him, and he's like, also, for someone who's never, ever written in their life, he can prepare you to be amazing at the end of the semester." So I took him, and I- I moved courses around to fit him in my schedule, and I loved him the first day of class, we had that writing assessment, and like, off the bat, when he was introducing himself and everything, it was genuinely such a welcoming environment. He's like, "I'm not here to stress you out about university writing, and I know a lot of you here are not in, just, are not in, like, social sciences or humanities. A lot of you are in different courses." Like, there were, one of the one of the students that was in my class was a comp sci student and all that, like, it's- they've- she's never written in her life, ever, and I've seen a lot of anxiety in her face when she's like, I have to take it because it's somehow mandatory in her program. I'm like, we'll get through this together. 'Cause, like, I'm still learning how to write too. Um, throughout the term, obviously, like, I said, um, it was difficult for me, the first assignment I got and seeing other people's writing styles compared to mine, I'm like, I'm not reaching that level that I wish I was at, and I would often go to office hours, the one thing I really liked about the classes, I was able to get to know my professor and... when I tell you, *[professor name]* really was my, like, guiding hat throughout university, he really was, and even though, like, he was not, he did not know anything about crim and poli sci, he really kind of guided me with resources and such, and that was the best thing about ISP, was like, it's small classroom size, and also the fact that the professor knew me. And throughout my time I obviously, I, thankfully, I did get better at my writing style. The only thing I didn't really like was the three-hour, um... classes. I feel like two hours was sufficient enough, because the last hour, um... I think majority of the people that I know that took ISP classes ended 30 minutes early. Majority, I knew about that. There's only, I think, about one or two profs that did stay to the three hours, but majority of us finish it in like three- in like, two and a half hours. So I feel like the timing was the most difficult part for me. Um, like, by the last hour I was clocked out. I genuinely whatever he was saying was going out one ear. I'm sorry- I love the prof too, but I couldn't imagine if I didn't, like, maybe after the one hour I was clocked out, but, like, I really couldn't handle it and I feel like a lot of my peers said, have said the same thing.

**Didi:** But other than that, I feel like when you're making genuine connections in the classroom, and I was really genuine with my professor, he allowed me to gain opportunities that I never thought I would have in first year after I finished my time in ISP, he really enjoyed his time with me, and I enjoyed his time in class. He was able to offer me a position with *[name of organization]*

as a journal reviewer. And that was really um... what's- it's rewarding because, like for me, I was like, I never thought I'd get to this position, never thought I'd be able to get into a place where my professor actually saw that I had potential and working with another ISP [professor name], I got to work with different ISP profs. He also, like, reassured me. He's like, "You don't need to doubt yourself at this point." I'm like, "You got this position for a reason out of how many students that took ISP" and then, obviously, I love my time there, they rehired me again this summer, but this time with a better position. Um, so I say ISP for me has really been beneficial, and I wish I could take more classes if it fit my schedule, but unfortunately, it doesn't. But I really recommend even people who are not in like, in like social sciences or humanities to take ISP. I feel like it really just helps you learn how to write at least. You will learn how to write in one type of like, style or aspect, like, either- either it's like, reporting or email drafting, or even, like, obviously, our essay styles, but... I really loved the ISP.

34:08

**Interviewer:** That's great. That's a glowing review.

**Didi:** Thank you. [laughter]

**Interviewer:** Wonderful. Okay, what did you think the course was like, how'd you find it?

34:19

**Amna:** Um, okay, so it was good. I don't think I have such, like, positive things. But it was really nice to hear how much you liked it. No, but I agree on the thing that, like, the three hours was so long. Like, we also had breaks. We left early, like every time. So if you add up all that time together, you totally could have cut off an hour. Three hours is too long for any human being. I cannot. It was so rough. [laughter]

**Amna:** And like, I don't know it was like, in the middle of the day too, I just- I could not handle that. But like, content-wise, instruction-wise, I thought it was fine, honestly. Like, I thought- I went in thinking, "Okay, this is really important, and I need to know this stuff to be a good writer in university". And so that's what like, you know, kept me going through it, but I don't know, um... honestly, I can barely remember it. It's like, something I took first year because I had to, and... I only start thinking about the things like that we talked about, like, looking back on it, it's not, I don't know if it's something that stayed with me, like, now I can remember, oh, we talked about discourse, and we talked about intertextuality, but, like, I don't know if I'd say I remember that, like, throughout my writing without, like, you know, having to think about it in, like, a context like this. Like, I think other courses, to me, had a more lasting impact, like, SOC2XX, or something, which, like, I mean, I just took but it was very like, you know, writing intensive, and I felt like, all the focus put on improving it that, like, you know, stuck with me more, I guess, in other courses as well. But yeah.

35:45

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

35:49

**Kitty:** Yeah, I feel about the same way. Yeah, those three-hour classes are way too long. Yeah, I also clocked out in the last hour. *[laughter]* Um, and yeah, I feel like, yeah, I didn't remember a fair amount of the concepts after first year, just because, yeah, other courses were, like my main priority, and also just figuring out, um, like, just other external circumstances in my life, as well as trying to balance out, like, my extracurriculars too, it was just a lot in my brain. But yeah, I started to feel it slowly come back to me, as I did SOC2XX, a little bit. And I feel like, um, SOC2XX being more specific to, like, sociology and criminology helped a lot with, like, giving that specific advice on, like, how to, like, navigate research in the field, but at the same time, I feel like my experience with ISP was kind of weird, because I felt like I learned more, but my grades worsened throughout the semester, and that was because of my, like, time management skills, mainly, and I- I didn't really know how to navigate, even though everyone was saying like, "Oh, just take it one step at a time" but starting was just really hard for me and I- I had like, other like circumstances coming in, like, just before I came into university, so that also affected, like, my time management skills and my ability to really just focus on my writing, and my ability to, like, um, improve and to at least get into POST (Program of Study), which wasn't, like, too scary, um, like looking back, but it was really scary at the time. Um, so, yeah, that was my experience. I feel, like most people, I mean, I have like this, like, preconception in my head that, like, everyone improved in that course, except for me. And like, I didn't really know why, I thought, oh, maybe I did, like, something, like, maybe I am, like, not a good writer. And like, we had that, like, end of the semester, like, reflection. But really it was just time management that really made it difficult for me to um... kind of improve and, like, take that feedback from, like, my previous assignments and put it all together in the end.

38:03

**Didi:** I have something to add on that. You know, I always wondered if I took ISP without the anxiety of POST. I feel like if that anxiety was gone from POST, I feel like people really would have thrived in that course, 'cause, like a lot of my other friends, too, it's not- my experience is in a very- like it was, it was a rare- like a, what's it, a blue moon, I'd say. But a lot of my friends did struggle with that course, and I always thought for them, it was kind of the stress of getting into POST like SOC1XX and 1XX was running that time, and it did- I guess for our batch, we had the tougher batch, because it was the first time they were introducing a different style of testing. 'Cause the test the people that took 1XX and 1XX, before our cohort, apparently was, like, open book test and all that and everyone was getting in like, like easier, but they made it more difficult at our year. So having that stress running, like 1XX at the same time as ISP100. Obviously, they want to put in the more like, put in more effort in like, SOC1XX to get into POST. But I feel like if the anxiety of that was all gone, I genuinely believe ISP100 was gonna be really beneficial. 'Cause, like, if we had, like, a

continuation of ISP, but like, more crim and soc focused, like for SOC2XX, I feel like students would have thrived, like, um, like, way better. Like, way better. But there was so much, like, there were so many factors that happened in first year. Like, for me, I didn't know about POS until I started my first day of class, [laughs] and then anxiety settled in. I'm like, oh my god. I didn't know I had to get into my program. Having that stress in the back of my head and also trying to do well in your course, I believe really made my first year GPA... very... iffy, I would say, but, if like circumstances up until this point, I feel like things would have been way different in first year.

39:56

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that's very helpful. Thank you. Yeah, and I guess, another general question, what do you think the course aimed to do? ISP100.

40:11

**Didi:** I mean, it's kind of in its course code too, like "Writing for University and Beyond", right? It really, I guess, helped me write for a university because, like, it was so different than writing for high school. And when I hear them say, "beyond", I was able to apply a lot of the skills that I've learned in ISP to my courses, but also when I was starting to review journals, I mean, it was different when I was the one behind the scene in editing people's journals, I'm like, it's different, like, it was- I took a very different consideration and like, pair of eyes when I was looking at people's journals, like it was not the same as like, if I was- if I- let's say if I was a TA, let's act like I'm a TA- I feel like it would be a very different lens, I'd be looking at the students' work. But when I was not doing it for academic reason, but for the fact that, like, it's um, I guess, like the fruit of the essay, I had a very different set of eyes looking at the essays like when I was peer reviewing, like articles or, I mean, papers during ISP100 I had very much like academic-focused eyes and whatever my teacher thought, like taught me, that's what I would bring in, also during my feedback from my peer. But when I was doing the same thing for reviewing journals, it was very different. It was moreso, make it personal, make it you, like, make it reflect of yourself. Like, grammar was never that much of an issue. Obviously, it is, like, it needs to be up to dates, like- up to base like, for like, grammar, grammar wise and all that, but for me, the fruit of every essay, when I was like, reviewing them, was the fact that it was personal to yourself and it was unique compared to every other like journal I'd have reviewed. So I'd say it has set me for what it needed to. But obviously... I feel like I could have aimed higher in that course without the anxiety from first year. So, yeah.

41:57

**Amna:** Oh, sorry. I was just gonna say, yeah, I feel like you got it, especially, yeah, in the course name, "Writing for University and Beyond". For me, it was mostly focused on, like, the first part, I didn't really think about the "beyond" or just like, oh, this is good- how I'm gonna have to write going forward and it's what's like, you know, expected of me, what I need to learn. Um... I don't know. I feel like I could have, yeah, you know, maybe gone at it with more passion or interest. I

think the essay I did the best on in that class was, like the first one that was, like, your author's story, because it was very like broad, like you were just supposed to talk about your story with writing. And so there was a lot of room for creativity. And it was something that, you know, I felt interested in. But like going on from there, I didn't really focus on, I guess, like, you know, expressing my own creativity, or what I thought, like, interested me to write. I mostly wrote about what I thought I needed to do to, like, you know, get a good grade, or something like, even for the discourse communities, people were choosing things they were, like, interested in, passionate about, someone did, like a video game and all that. I thought that was so cool. But for me, I chose something that I don't know wasn't super- it sounded interesting, like I did it on like, a subreddit, Heavy Metal, because that's the kind of music I was into, but I didn't actually care that much about it or anything. I just thought, oh, it actually has all these things that fit into what they want from a discourse community, and it sounds somewhat interesting, you know. So I'll do that. And so I feel like I didn't really, like, put my all into it. I could have gotten more out of it, maybe, if I had written about, I don't know, a game or something I liked, like other people did. So, I don't know, but overall, I do think that it was still important and helpful that I took it especially in that first semester before everything else going on in the winter, because, like, it was a- my first exposure to, like, you know, having that kind of writing, criticizing it, and, like, growing in that. Because the whole course, I think, was focused on growing as a writer and improving. And so we had all those, like, peer feedback circles. We had like, you know, huge focus on, like, you know, what you could do better. And I guess that helped moving forward. Yeah.

44:03

**Kitty:** Yeah. For me, I also felt like I didn't put like my all into the course, and that I could have, like, reaped more rewards from it if I did put like more effort into my writing. And I also felt like I did way better in like, the first, the very first assignment of writing about my personal story, but then um, like, the scope and also like the limitations, like, as they narrowed throughout the semester, I felt like I was being pulled in so many different directions, like throughout all my different, like courses, but whole bunch of different course codes, so like... I was being pulled in so many different directions of writing styles alongside ISP, that I didn't really get to focus on, like, what my writing style was and how to write to the best of my abilities for university in general. And I also felt like I didn't focus on the "and Beyond" part. I didn't even realize that that was, like in the course title. I didn't even remember. I thought it was just "Writing for University", but I really- I found it really cool that, like, the university was, like, promising a lot in like, in terms of academic writing, like making it more inclusive, but I started to see less of it as I got into like, the nitty gritty of, like, research throughout different courses and I felt like, I don't know, um... I felt like there was, like, still, like, a significant barrier between me and, like, the material that I was like, actually reading throughout my courses because, I mean, even though, like, I come into like, the privilege of English being my first language and English being like, my family's first language as well, I still felt like I couldn't, like, pick apart at, like, I don't know the academic jargon and

understand the actual meaning and significance of researchers- which is still something I'm working on. And like, I still, like, I still love soc, I still love criminology and like, that's why I'm doing this major but at the same time, I feel like there's still that, like, massive barrier, and it's still like, makes me feel- um, it makes me feel like maybe I'm doing something wrong in like, um, writing, or like I'm not coming in with like, the right, um, knowledge. Even though I've been like, I've been provided, like, so much help and support from like, my professors, my peers and through different readings and everything like that, I still feel like- I don't know. I still feel like there's that barrier between me and academia.

46:15

**Interviewer:** Yeah, thank you for sharing that. Okay, so probably speed up a little. I think we covered a lot of the questions that are on here. Yeah, in the interest of time, what other types of writing supports have you used? So apart from ISP100 which is, you know, I guess a writing support. There's the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre. Have you used it?

46:46

**Amna:** I went there once. They had a drop-in for, like, SOC1XX, for essays?

**Kitty:** Yeah, me too.

46:50

**Didi:** I did. I was also in the drop-in at 109. I didn't really find that helpful. I mean, the professors were really detailed enough in how to research, um, like articles and everything, and [*professor name*] coming into class, also going step by step, like, the first ever session I have, was very like, sufficient enough for me to navigate throughout, through using like, the library. The drop-in was kind of a repetitive- like, was kind of repetitive on that aspect. Like he sat down with me and just found sources for me. And then, he kind of really- not that he wasn't helpful, but I guess it probably was helpful for other students, but I already had that, like that, um... that lecture about like finding library resources, and also like, looking at your paper back to back and having, like, people look at your paper, like I already had that in the back of my mind, he was just another set of eyes looking at my paper for me, and it wasn't really helpful. I tried doing it again for um... I had a hard time writing for one of my poli sci courses in first year, it's called POL1XX. It's like poli sci-based writing. I also came for help, and wasn't really that helpful for me in that aspect. I guess the only thing that they kind of helped me out with is finding sources, but I could have also done that too, if I had extra time. So I didn't think it was that helpful for me. I think what was helpful for me was going into office hours with my professors, or also setting up one-on-one meeting with my TAs.

48:20

**Amna:** Yeah, I agree. The only time I ever used the Centre was for the SOC1XX drop-in, and it was fine. I think I was having trouble with, like, a thesis statement or whatever. And talking to the professor there, I don't know how much it helped me, like she, you know, she knew what she was doing, she was helpful, but it's just that she said something and then suddenly it gave me, like a light bulb moment. I was like, oh, wait, I know what I'm doing wrong now, unrelated to what you were telling me, but it just reminded me of something, *[laughter]* and I left. But like, it was useful in its own sense, and I'm sure, like, you know, um, I considered booking appointments with them before, and then I saw how busy it was, and I was like, you know what? I'll figure it out on my own. Or, like, you know, I would like read stuff online too as well. Like OWL Purdue is always recommended for citations and stuff, but they also have, like, writing guides too, like, how you should write. So, I'd like, look at stuff like that, or like this isn't specifically meant to be writing advice, or look at other people's work, like online, like what I could find, you know, in like, you know, people like writing articles, people who have, like, published their, you know, essays from their undergrad years, that kind of thing. And I just see, like, you know, how they wrote, and be like, okay, well, this is something they got published in a journal. This is something you know, that is, like, clearly well-written. So what did they do? What kind of style did they use that I could follow. Like that.

49:40

**Kitty:** Yeah. For me, I also used the RGASC (Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre) only once, and that was for the SOC1XX essay, but I feel like I came in kind of unprepared, like with just some, like, base notes, and like, my introductory paragraph, and then there's a couple of other notes and things, and I felt like, if I came in more prepared and with more material set, and I feel like I could have gotten more help like, or could have like, gotten more benefits from the session and from talking with the professor there, but either way, I did find it pretty helpful, and it helped me feel less intimidated thinking like, oh, like, I can go next time, but I haven't gone there since then, I was really planning to like throughout the school year, but I- I didn't realize how big of a transition first year to second year would be, so, I found that kind of difficult to, like, have that time dedicated to, like, going to the RGASC. But I also, like, mainly learned from like student examples, like whatever was available to me, like, even like throughout ISP, when they gave those like student examples and publications of like, what the assignment should look like. Or even in SOC2XX, they provided those examples, at least for like, the last, um, last couple of assignments? Yeah, I found those, like, really helpful just learning from like, um, yeah, student examples, and even like, what the TA provided us, the TA was super helpful in that regard. So yeah, those, those were the main resources for me, at least.

51:02

**Interviewer:** Thank you. I know in ISP100, you did this peer editing. Do you use it otherwise, like in other classes? Do you share drafts with peers to get some feedback?

51:16

**Amna:** Not in a structured- like a structured way? Like we did in ISP where it was facilitated?

51:20

**Interviewer:** Oh, no, no, just like on your own, you have a friend, or, you know, a peer, and you're like, oh, can you look over my stuff, and then they give you feedback.

51:28

**Amna:** Sometimes people would ask me to do that, like, if we could exchange, but honestly, I would never be the one like, you know, starting it. Um, I don't know, it's just not something I was ever used to, like ISP again, it was like, mandated, it was part of the class. But other than that, I'd never been like, someone who'd done like peer editing, and then, you know, I did find it helpful, actually, at times, but it's not really something I do of my own will. I guess.

51:51

**Didi:** I have been using, like, peer feedback since high school, um, and I have been using it up until this point. I mean, it's- it catches in things that I don't see because, like... I'm gonna, I'm gonna say something right now, but I always submit my essays, like, an hour before it's due *[laughter]*, and I'm tired by that point, 'cause I've been working on that essay for almost, like, 12, 15 hours, and I'm tired, I don't want to see the paper again. So I always call my friend, I'm like, "Can you just look at the grammar wise", like, I know for a fact the juice of that essay is good, but I don't know if the structure is good, so I'm like, they'll catch in the tiniest thing, like a little apostrophe, that period, a comma, all those things, like super simple mistakes, is what I miss out once I'm at that point. So I feel like having that second set of eyes is amazing and has been super helpful, and I can see the- a lot of improvements in my essay after I get it done.

52:45

**Kitty:** Yeah, for me, I also use peer review, like, way more in high school, and then in ISP, yeah, but like, afterwards, it, like, not really, it kind of like dwindled after first year, actually, in general. And that's because, yeah, mainly peers came to me for help, and then I- I didn't get, like, I don't know, even the bare bones of my assignments done in time for them to, like, look it over. And so it would mainly be like, me looking it over, like, every now and then I'd be like, calling my mom for help. Um, but other than that, like, I think once second year hit, I kind of just, I didn't really get to, like, ask for that help anymore, or I just felt so insecure in my work that like, I just was too scared to ask anybody, I was like, oh, I don't even have like, the meat and bones of my essay done *[higher pitched tone, quieter]*. So yeah, I was- I would just like, submit it and be like, it's off my hands. I can rest, I can focus on my next assignment. So that was my experience.

53:41

**Interviewer:** What about Grammarly? Do you use that as a writing support?

53:45

**Amna:** No, I hate Grammarly. Oh, my god, with a passion. I'm sure it's useful to so many people. In high school, that was, I think I was in high school when it first even became a thing, it's very different now. But like, back then, it was like a Chrome extension and you add it in, it was supposed to like, you know, read and give like, suggestions if you're writing an email, or Docs. It did not work. I don't know, I don't think I did anything wrong, because I had other Chrome extensions that were just fine. It wouldn't, like, catch stuff in my Docs, or I made grammar mistakes on purpose to test it. *[laughter]* It didn't catch them. It would be the most obvious thing, like spelling, not using a comma, whatever, I don't know, obvious stuff. And it didn't catch it. And so I was like, okay, you know what? Well, screw this thing, I'm not using it then, I'll learn grammar myself. And then, um, just like, this is kind of even more recent. Someone was, we were talking about, like, the kind of extensions or things we use because, like, it was before a test, they're like, turn off all your extensions so you don't, like, get an academic offense. And we were going through, like, what we had, and she had Grammarly. I was like, what do you use that for? Does that even work? And now it's really different. It's like, AI and everything. And I guess maybe that makes it better. I don't know. It looks so different than any idea of what I had, but I've already had my experience I'll need from the first round of Grammarly I did, and that made me like, be like, you know what? It's me and Google spell check against the world *[laughter]*, it's what I know and what Google catches, and anything other than that is not my problem. So I don't really, yeah, use that kind of stuff, but I've noticed lots of people using it, and that it looks very different now, so.

55:15

**Didi:** I hated Grammarly too. I feel like it made my work so wordy. Like in high school, my- my teachers were like, I want you to be clear and concise. Like, he had a little block. I don't know if you know that, like, like, they're like, little motivating letters on like block that you can find in Dollarama, but he made it on him- by himself. He got this little wood piece and wrote clear and concise. And like, every time you came up to ask, essay, he's like, "Is it clear and concise?" *[laughter]* And he would show it to us, and I said, "Yes". He's like, "You're not using Grammarly", I'm like, "No", because he would call it you out in class, so I was traumatized *[laughter, exaggerated tone]*. And then going to university, I'm like, I'm not touching it. And the AOs (academic offenses), like hearing AOs happening with, like, Grammarly, um, QuillBot and Chat and everything, I'm like, um, I don't know how to navigate any of AOs happening in class, and I wouldn't know how to defend myself. So like let me not touch it at all. But he told me about that, he's like, um, Grammarly is a great tool for people who've never written their life and don't need to write in their life, but you, on the other hand, are going into academia, you want to get into law school, you're going to crim and poli sci- I'm like, these are- like you, we need people like you to, like, navigate our world,

like, talk about our world and everything, you can't use AI for that, so I'm like, obviously good, good point. And I did test out Grammarly for myself too in Grade 11 and 12, and I kind of use it at the end of my essay, when I'm done everything, and just to see what they would say. And I hated it, like they would make things that I obviously, like I purposely put it to be like, more concise, like the words like I wanted to be, wanted to be like, straight to the point, Grammarly would be there, and he would be like, "This is terrible. Add this word. Actually, matter of fact, change this whole sentence and add a new paragraph" *[laughter, used a villain-like tone]*. So then I said, this is awful, I hate it. But, yeah, I hated Grammarly from the beginning, I have never used it in- I never used it at all in university. I did try it out in high school, but university, I haven't. I did use other types of AI for different like, help, I guess, but it wasn't- it wasn't for Grammarly, no.

57:17

**Kitty:** For me, in high school, I found it very helpful, because I would just, yeah, I would just copy and paste, like, my- like draft there, and then it would correct, like, oh, like, put the commas here, the quotation marks, just like the minor mistakes. And then, like, as I came into university, it started, like, underlining those things in yellow and, like, blocked it behind a paywall, and I was like, oh, like, this is, this is, like, not helpful to me anymore. Like, it'll help me with, like, the minor grammar things, but then it would also like, suggest, like synonyms and like phrasing to me that just didn't make sense to me, like, didn't at all, like, adhere to the assignment and what I wanted to say, and it was just rewriting those things for me, and like, why should I trust it at all? Like, why should I trust you to, like, revise my assignments? *[higher pitched voice]* So, like, I still have the extension on to, like, correct my minor mistakes along the way, because I tend to forget a lot of those towards the end. But then, like, I take everything else with a grain of salt, like, it trying to find synonyms for me it, trying to rephrase my sentences and even my emails. I'm like, watching it like, I want there to be, like a human behind all my work at the end of the day, behind my emails and like, even, like, my messages on, like, when I would type on like, WhatsApp on my laptop, it would try to revise those. It would try to revise everything. And like, it was just, like, I was just like, no, like, I'm done with you. I'm taking everything you say with a grain of salt. Like, I- I just, I can't anymore and even, and there's no way that I'm gonna pay for, like, Grammarly, or for, like, any AI at all, too, so it being like, like, having a lot of those features blocked behind a paywall, like underlining things that, like, made sense to me, but it not telling me what I did wrong. I was, I don't know, it was just so off putting. And I was like, okay, I might as well just, like, learn this on my own. Like, if I wanted, like, teach someone, like, younger than me, I don't want to be like, oh, like, I just use, like, Grammarly, or like, AI for everything, like, I can't actually teach them, like, I don't know, the bare bones of, I don't know, writing or something like that, or like, kind of guide them through writing in university, for example. I don't, I don't know if anything I said makes sense, but yeah, that's just my experience.

59:18

**Interviewer:** All of it made sense. It was great. Thank you. Um, okay, and so I think it's helpful to think about a specific writing assignment to kind of understand how you write. So thinking about your last writing assignment, what was the process like for you? Walk me through your process of writing, your last writing assignment.

59:38

**Amna:** Can it be like any subject or anything?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Amna:** I just wrote like a philosophy essay. Also got my mark back, I was so happy, I did good. And that was, like my first philosophy essay ever. So that was a thing I had to go into, like, approaching it, because I'd taken courses, but they didn't require writing essays. And so, I was like, this is a whole subject. They write differently. This is not like a crim or soc paper. You gotta write how these philosophy people write. And I think my process at first, I was like- I looked at my professor's work actually, which is like a whole other thing, I mean, this is a woman with her third doctorate and everything like- but I was just like, okay, this is how like philosophers write, let me get an idea of the style. I looked at more simple things. I looked at some of our class readings and things like that, and I was like, let me think, this is the kind of voice I use, the approach. Honestly, it was kind of like ISP, actually, now that I think about it, like putting on a different hat as a writer, because it was, like, the first time I ever had to write something like that, I- and so I looked into the writing style too first, like, before you start, I always like to know how I'm gonna format it- my citations. I always write it like in the proper format, just off the bat. So I was like, okay, I don't- this is how I cite. This is the style I'm using. I think it was, it was probably MLA or ASA, I don't know, or APA, but yeah. So I went in with that, and then also, because it was, like a philosophical response thing, I didn't have a lot of sources either, so I knew I could, kind of like, write without doing research, because it was my response to an author. So I only had one source, which was the original text, and I was responding to it. So then I remembered, like, you know, again, with the style wise I can use "I" because this is, like a personal thing, and I'm just like trying to be concise and easy to understand, not using too much jargon- that was the thing we learned in class, they were like, you know, even though this is like a philosophy course, anyone from any discipline should be able to understand what you're writing as long as they're literate. So I was like, okay, gotta keep that in mind. And not, yeah- I don't know. I felt like I used to use, like, jargon and big words, like too much, because I thought it was what was needed, when really it's not. And that was basically what I did, like I made my structure, I had my intro, my responses, I followed the whole premise, conclusion, thing you're supposed to do in philosophy, and, you know, after I was done, I guess the last part of my writing process was just like, I finished it early for once, so I left it for a bit, and then I came back with fresh eyes to look at it, to edit it, and other than that, yeah, that was it. Then I submitted it and it was done with.

1:02:05

**Didi:** For me, I did also one of my final writing was actually from POL2XX as well. I would say it's also philosophical writing. It was a letter to an editor, like an editor that's alive right now, but I'm gonna have to act as John Locke, that was the author that I chose, and it was very difficult. I mean, I got an extension for that essay because I had a hard time. I really did have a hard time, I try to talk to my TAs, my prof, and really get as much... um, like, I guess, guidance to write this essay compared to my other essays. John Locke, for me, wasn't the hardest reading to do, but it was the hardest to reply to, because I feel like he was so broad in the sense, like he was talking about, like, liberty, property, um, and a lot of other things there was- there was something else I don't remember I kind of erased it in the back of my head, but the beginning of starting that essay was very difficult. I mean, I started already a month before it was due, and I still had to ask for an extension because I was not confident at all. And on top of that, I had courses that I was not confident in, like, SOC2XX was happening at that point, and I said, I have to put my all into this, 'cause, especially since I'm terrible at math, it was a math intense course. I'm like, I have to put my 100% into this course as my final test, I have to, like, make it. Um, after I did that, and it came back to writing, it was so difficult to even start that essay, because she specifically asked us to have the same tone as John Locke did in his writing. And I had a terrible- like, it was so terrible to write that paper, I was like, I just need to submit this, I'll take a 60 in this course. But one thing that I helped- that helped me out, was going over the reading again, and then going at the question that she asked us too, so then I came up with, like, about three to four points, including like, a counter argument and a rebuttal to that.

**Didi:** And I had, like, I solidified this points, and this is where I kind of used, like AI for this ChatGPT, what I did was I was like, make a structured outline and see how much words I have to put, because I was having a hard time fulfilling the 1200 limit. I was, I felt like I was cutting really short. So I'm like, divide it into like, like an outline and tell me how many, how much words I'm supposed to put in, and kind of like, give me ideas on what I could talk about. So, like, introduction, he said, obviously, welcome your readers. Introduce yourself as, like John Locke. Introduce on what, why is he popular, and all that so, and then Chat would tell me, "Do about 150 words to 170" and it was like breaking it down to that point made it so much easier for me to start, and like, during the body of the paragraph, was the easiest part for me, 'cause I just had to find quotes and then put it into that and then like, Chat would give me, be like, if you want to talk about this, make sure that you're mentioning these points, because this is what Locke is pretty known for. So then I made sure when I was writing it, I would mention those points. And even something, like I would also put into Chat. Like. What, what my professors and TA told me, like my professor said, make sure in the body of your paragraph you put this and then Chat would also make sure to remind me throughout the essay, make sure you're telling this, because your professor told you to do this. So, Chat having to kind of break it down, like do 250 words for each main point, like, really made it less anxiety inducing. And then at the end of the paper, that's when I went back to my TA and then also a peer who was taking the class with me just to have a fresh set of eyes, because she already

submitted the work. I submitted mine late, but it was a really difficult paper for me, and also we weren't allowed to use outside sources, it was really based on my creativity and how I interpreted John Locke's work and... um, but yeah, I feel like it wasn't my best paper, because it was, like, one of the worst papers I've written, but apparently it was the best paper I wrote in that class grade-wise. *[laughter]* I saw it, I'm like, oh, I did not expect this at all. But it was difficult, and I feel like AI can be useful in the way that it could break down the assignment, 'cause for me, I saw 1200 and on a paper, I don't even know what I'm supposed to write about, and I have a bunch of notes for my TA, a bunch of notes for my prof. I'm- I'm like, so overwhelmed, and I put into Chat, I'm like, please organize my notes in a way that is not overwhelming for me. And it did, so I feel like that was kind of like something new that I learned that I could use AI to be helpful in that sense, and not in a sense where I'm like, write the essay based on this. But when you, when you put it into this point, like, for me, it was really helpful, so. Yeah.

1:06:27

**Interviewer:** Yeah, thank you. I don't use AI. I just got deterred by having to create an account or, like, it's like, oh, I have to do this. Too lazy for that. So yeah, no, I'm learning a lot. So thank you for explaining how it's been useful. Kitty?

1:06:46

**Kitty:** So for me, like my writing, like my latest assignment, that's like, from what I can recall, I had a significantly easier time because it was, um, it was for SOC2XX, *[name of course]*, and I found it significantly easier, because it was about like my own positionality. It was also like a shorter essay. And also, that course, to me, it was easier than, like, all of the other courses I was taking, um, at that point, because I was also taking SOC2XX, and everything like that. So, I had an easier time. But like, I'm registered with accessibility, so like, I get like, extensions on, like, all my assignments, and I got on accessibility recently, so I was still learning how to navigate that and overcome, like, my internal like, I guess, biases towards it, because I would be, like, only requesting, like, maybe three extra days, and three extra days were not enough for me, even though accessibility would 100% allow me to get an extension of more than three days, so I was learning to, like, use that throughout the semester, and it really, like, came- it really came through and helped me out, like, towards the end of the semester too. But with that assignment, I, like, tried to my best to start early, because I was like, I think this is the course that's going to save my GPA. I need to do- I need to do decently in this course so, um, I was able to, like, get like, to gather, like, my research and everything. But I had like, difficulties with brainstorming and applying things to course concepts that, like, I wasn't sure 100% resonated with my personal experiences. So I did, like, use ChatGPT to confirm, like, what I felt internally, of like, oh, I should connect it like this- this experience connects best to this course concept. This connects to that. So it kind of was like giving me that,

like confirmation of like, oh, I can do my essay on this. Like that would be helpful for me, but that's mainly what I use like, ChatGPT for in like, the late stages- the late stages of the brainstorming process. So, yeah, I was kind of like, so then I started writing. I mainly, like formed my body paragraphs and like, I based everything off of like the examples I could find, like within the text directly. And I built like my arguments around that, and then I did, like my conclusion, and then I did my introduction. I find that that helps me best, because otherwise, like, if I don't have anything in my body, like confirming my arguments or just backing up my points, and I- like, my assignment is just based on nothing. So I felt like working, kind of like backwards, and like in that like, process, like, helped me a lot with that assignment. But I also, like, still got it done, like, just before 11:59 and I just submitted, I was like, this is off my hands. I- I wish I could have revised it more, because I did notice, like, once I got it back, like, oh, I'm- um, I had to, like, cut down some things and like, because I tend to, like, ramble in, in general, but also, like, especially in my assignments, so I was like, oh, there are some parts that, like, I could have done a bit more explaining and I could have cut down on. But in the end, like, that assignment saved my GPA. *[laughter]*

1:09:53

**Interviewer:** That's great. Okay. Okay, so the next question will be about generative AI, and you've already mentioned some programs like ChatGPT. You're probably aware there's some other ones, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, Dalle, Perplexity. Yeah, so let's talk about UTM students in general first. So to what extent do you think your peers in the program, or peers in general, are using AI in their coursework?

1:10:26

**Amna:** A lot.

**Didi:** For one- percentage base, I think 90%. Yeah, I don't think it's lower than that. I really think it's high.

1:10:36

**Amna:** Even if it's not to do whole assignments, I feel like almost everybody is using it for something. *[series of agreements]*

1:10:40

**Didi:** Yeah, I've seen people use it in a terrible manner, and I've seen people use it in a smart manner. That's kind of how I found out that I could use it to my advantage, 'cause, like, I was kind of hesitant in first year because of AO, but when my friends started introducing me, and, not in a way that it was like, oh, that you could write your essays, I never thought it was going to be good at doing that, because I feel like our questions are very, like, very complex, like it, you have to really like, like, uncover it, like, step by step. But one thing it really did good in is helping me plan my essays and, like, navigating my schedules to like- one thing, Chat was really good at was

actually like... if I have an assignment that I wanted to start two weeks before it can give me, like, a planner of how to start that, so I think it's beneficial in the aspect for like, time management and just managing my schedule for me, and even starting essays just to, like, reduce the anxiety of how much I'm supposed to put in, like, each paragraph with the word limit I've been given, and it really helps me structure my mind in that sense, because, like, for me, that's how my brain works, I like when things are structured in that manner. I hate when I go, like- I love being creative at the same time, but I'm like, it needs to be structured in a creative manner. So, I feel like Chat was able to do that way for me and like, allow me to be creative, but put a little boundary into that according to the assignment guidelines. So, yeah.

1:12:00

**Interviewer:** So I'm curious. You all think it seems that it's a- the use of AI is widespread. Kind of where, where do you get that impression from? Is that people like talking to you about it? Do you actually see people using it like in real time? What would you say?

1:12:15

**Amna:** It's so inconspicuous, I swear you don't even know until someone brings it up, like, this was at my work, but like, I work with peers 'cause it's a job at the school, right? So students as well, and they were just randomly talking, and they were like, yeah, so "Oh, what's your prompt that you use for ChatGPT to, to write your emails?" I was like, wait, wait, hold on, you guys aren't writing the emails, it's ChatGPT? *[laughter]* What have I been doing? What's going on? Who am I talking to? Is it ChatGPT, or is it my coworker? I'm lost. I had no idea, I really- and that could have scared me in a way, because I was like, whoa. I could not tell. And they were like, like, it was straight up, not like, "Oh, give me an idea" or "How do I say this more formally?", it was just like, oh, this is the topic, write me an email that's, like, concise about this. I was like, okay, okay. And then, I don't know otherwise, like, people just like, I feel like they talk about it, like, whether it's online or, like, in person, people just say, like, oh yeah, I know, I used ChatGPT for this. I used- I honestly don't know the names of a lot of these things. I know there's Copilot as well that we have, just that kind of thing, making jokes about it too. And, yeah, I don't know it's just this- I guess that's where I got the impression that basically, like- oh, teachers, I still keep in touch with some of my, like, high school teachers, because we're, like, tight like that, and they were complaining to me. They were like, "Oh, my god, these students are using, like, ChatGPT for everything, and it's so obvious, like, we can tell that they didn't write this." That this, like, you know, ninth grader is not going like, "Oh, this rich tapestry of my story". *[laughter]* "Rich tapestry" was the word specifically that a prof I had here, said, every time AI writes something, it uses the word, it's a "rich tapestry", he was like, if you use that in your essays, I will kill you. Don't do that.

1:13:59

**Amna:** So I was like, okay, I could never say that. God, I wasn't using AI, but good to know. So it's like, they certainly have the impression that everyone's using it. Our professors are teachers, and they're the ones seeing all this work, so that gives me the general impression that, like, okay, yeah, I guess a lot of people are using it, and those are people who get caught. Again, it can be inconspicuous where you don't know necessarily that it was an AI, so it could be even more than what I think. Yeah.

1:14:25

**Didi:** I'd say the same thing for me, um, I see also my friend group, and we're a pretty big friend group, and I've seen all of them use it so- and we're in kind of like a very diverse program, but the fact that- like that many different programs, we're all using Chat, and I've also seen it in, like my writing intensive classes, I see Chat being opened, whenever our professors say something and they're putting it into Chat, and I see big blocks being generated, so that, for me, is a huge impression. And also my professor's like talking about it in class, and when I go to office hours, she's like, she's like, "I'm not against AI when you're using it to your benefit, but not when it writes for you", and that also tells me the impression that, they have encountered different students with AI. And also my TA in SOC2XX has told me, like, I mean, she told the class that she did catch many people using it. And that also kind of gave me the impression that a lot of us are- have been using it. And also in class, I mean, you could see everyone's laptops, so. *[laughter]* Not that I'm snooping around, but it's, it's bright, and a lot of people's laptops are big, so I can see it. But yeah, that's where I got the impression.

1:15:29

**Kitty:** Yeah. Yeah, for me, it's like, mainly coming from conversations with my peers, and also just, yeah, the professors talking about it. Even, like, to an extent, in high school, when it was like, really, like, new in, like, my last year of high school, in the very last semester, the- my English professor made us all write our like essays on paper in class, and we weren't allowed to, like, take it home, or anything like that, because they were so worried about like, ChatGPT and everything. And like, I didn't use like ChatGPT or any like, or like any, like, generative AI to see, except *[unclear]* like Grammarly, like, revise those little commas and everything like that. So it was, I know, I then I realized, like, oh, this is serious, like, this is here to stay. But then, yeah, I would hear, then, like, once I come to university, like students using it for all different sorts of reasons, like, for example, with help with time management. Help with like, brainstorming. Help with like, doing those, like, minor revisions, like just before you submit work. And even, yeah, like, with my work, because I also like, work on campus, and with, like, helping out with peer events, they use it a lot. And, like, even in the brainstorming process of, like, give me ideas for different events, because I mainly, like help out with campus events and everything like that, or, like, with, like, social media captions too. It was, it was insane. Like, hopefully- I'm hoping that they, they probably changed around a lot of things I didn't like, do, like, a copy paste from ChatGPT, but seeing them

use it in those processes while at work was just shocking to me. And I was like, oh. Like, I thought, all this came from your noggin *[laughter]*.

1:17:08

**Amna:** No, our bosses use it too. We work at the same place. Oh, my god, our bosses, our supervisors, everyone's using it, not even just our peers, I was so surprised at that. I was like, you're old, what's going on?

1:17:19

**Kitty:** Yeah, I feel like at work, it's used to a greater extent than I see with students.

1:17:23

**Didi:** Yes, absolutely. Then my dad has, like, sent- he always asked, he's like, whenever I talk to him on the phone, I'm like, "I'm so stressed about this course". He's like, "just use AI". *[laughter]* I'm like, I can't. I'm like- "you know you're paying for this education, you want me to use AI?" I told him straight up. He's like, "but you're stressed out". I'm like, "I understand I'm stressed out, but that's part of the process". He's like, he's like, "But I use it for work. All my team meeting notes are from AI". I'm like, "Okay, that's good. Keep it that way, but it can't enter my area". And my mom too, she's like, "I don't understand why you won't use it. Like, I know 100% of all the students are using it". I'm like, I'm like, "Mom, I can't be part of that 100%". I'm like, I'll help- it'll help me in some ways but I'm like, it can't help me write things that are so serious. Like, imagine, I'm like, talking about the tariffs happening in the world, I'm like, Chat, what are your thoughts? *[laughter]* What do I say about this? I feel uncertain. And then just write some type of like, oh, I don't even want to think about it. But yeah.

**Amna:** It thinks about it for you.

**Didi:** It thinks about it for you. You don't have to think about it, but yeah, *[exhales]* it's scary.

1:18:30

**Interviewer:** So you already touched on some of these things, but in what ways do you think students are using AI in their coursework?

1:18:37

**Amna:** The obvious is, like, the cheating, right? Like, oh, write me an essay on this. Another thing I heard about, though, is that, like, people will ask it for sources, or, like, a works cited, but it'll make stuff up. Like my professors were saying stuff like that, like, oh yeah, I'll get a works cited, and I'll look and like the authors are real people. The topic is, like, real. The journal might be real, but, like, the article itself doesn't exist. *[laughter]* These authors never worked together. They never wrote about this. It never got published in this journal. That's not a thing. It's made up. And that really

surprised me. But, like, I mean, at the same time it's like, what do you expect? Like, I feel like that's a skill. Finding articles is something you have to do yourself, and that people don't understand how it works because, like, that's what AI does, it like, it gives you a statistical response, right? Based on the most probable like option from its like, you know, data set, whatever it's working from. So, like, it's not gonna actually, like, go and actively search for that kind of stuff for you, but yeah, I guess people don't get that, and so they use it to make their whole like bibliographies and like their in-text and their sources. I even tried once, like this was in high school, when it was first a thing I was like, "Oh, I'm having trouble writing a paper. I can't find a source. Maybe it can find a source for me." So I was like, "Oh, do you have any sources about this and this." It made something up. Like, straight up, I could immediately tell it didn't sound real. I googled whatever the article was. There was nothing. And I was like, okay, okay, I see, so this is useless. But, like, apparently it's something that a lot of people do, and maybe it's gotten better. Maybe, in some ways, it can work somewhat, but like, clearly, not so well if so many people are getting caught doing it, yeah.

1:20:09

**Kitty:** I would say, yeah, for me, I've mainly heard of being used in like, like, the brainstorming process, or just to, like, do those final revisions of like work, um, and not, not some, not necessarily, like to generate, like the text for you, but I'm sure that that does happen. And maybe just like, not in my circle, from what I hear. And I also... what was I saying? I completely forgot what I was gonna say. Um, I would... I'm sorry I'm completely blanking out.

1:20:45

**Interviewer:** It's okay, if it comes back to you- well, just what are the different ways that people are using AI?

1:20:51

**Kitty:** Yeah, I would say mainly for like, final revisions, and also, like for courses requiring, like, courses involving, like, some level of math, I would hear, like to generate, like, practice questions and everything like that, or it's like, walk through the stages of like, I don't know, a different like problem. For me, it hasn't worked, because there was one time when I, like, I'm taking like, a personal finance course, so if, like, a complete, like, elective, like, completely different from what I'm taking right now, and I asked it to walk me through, like, a different, difficult problem, because I couldn't, like, figure it out for the life of me, like, even when I would, like, look it up on Reddit or, like, on Quizlet, like, I just wanted to, like, do, like, some kind of, like, cross referencing. And then, it walked me through a process so confidently, and I was- I noticed that, like, it was missing like, a step in, like, the like, doing an equation. So I was like, oh, like, what about this part? And it was like, sorry *[laughter]*. I was fully about to believe, like, it was so confident in its initial answer. And I was like, I don't know, it really, like, turned me off from, like, using AI for like, at least, like, walking me through like problems, like, I'll use it maybe to, like, um, generate, like, like, connect, like, certain ideas together in, like, yeah, just the brainstorming process later on, or just narrow things

down, or, like, confirm, like my gut, like my gut suspicions and expectations. But other than that, like that really veered me.

**Amna:** *[unclear]* in math a lot, though? In SOC2XX.

1:22:18

**Didi:** Yeah, I used it like-

1:22:20

**Amna:** Not even, it was, what's it called, Copilot, because someone's telling me, even a professor-well, we had different ones- he was like, you can, I thought- I tested it myself, and it can give you good practice questions. I trust this man. He knows everything about what he's talking about. He's obsessed with statistics. *[laughter]* None of us came in like, having a very strong backing in math. Most people, I think it was, like, a common sentiment, like, "Oh, we're all here. We hate it here. We took soc to get away from math." I mean, stuff like that, and so, it could be difficult, and so, like, what you could use Copilot for is, I tested it out with a friend, you say, like, oh, you know, you give it a problem. It explains it to you, and it explains why, and it can, like, it puts out the formula, like the way it's supposed to be written with, like, the math symbols and everything. I don't think it can make graphs and pictures, because that was another part of the class. I didn't ask it to do that, but people were saying it doesn't make graphs. And so that would be kind of helpful, but like, because it could explain it step by step. But the only thing was, I think you had to go in knowing what you were doing, so you could recognize the steps it's taking and making sure it's right when it's like, explaining it to you or giving you practice problems. So even then it's not, like, super useful without like, that prior knowledge. I ended up using, like, I think, textbook questions more because I was thinking, like, this is stuff the professors are actually gonna ask, you know? And like, I don't know. I know the steps are right, and explain to me in that way too. I don't see the difference between using that and, like, something generative. So yeah, but like, I totally got using Copilot. I was suffering in stats, we all were, so I'm usually, like, a bit of a hater against AI. But like, that's when I was like, okay, maybe, maybe for math, it's different.

1:23:58

**Didi:** My- my roommate is a comp sci major, and she told me how everyone uses AI there, like, if you're not using AI, like, what are you doing with your life? Like, it genuinely makes their life easier and explains the codes that they use. And I feel like AI has excelled in that component, like, at least in comp sci and in maths and stats too. I think it's excelled, like, greatly, because, like, I was doing, I was asking it to make a graph for me for my SOC2XX, and it was able to accurately depict the graph that I saw in my textbook. So I'm like, this is really good, on the coding side of things. Like for art, for soc, it was not helpful at all, like, I really had to learn how to code that point. And like it was not helping me. And my co- my comp sci roommate, tried to help me too, and she's like,

the way you code in SOC2XX is very different from the way we code in like, in comp sci. And so I say for that part, it's really been- it like, that's where it's excelled at. And I feel like if you're not using at that point, you're just making life harder for you. And I feel like, profs too, at that, at that, like, in that field, have, like, really encouraged students to use it if you don't understand, because, like, there's only one prof and about 500 students having the same question, right? And in social science and humanities wise, I'd hate to say, like, obviously, a lot of students... I know, a lot of students that want to get into law just seeing as undergrad as like something I need to pass, and they just want to submit essays, unfortunately, so I do see people use it to write their essays, and then they just go in and add quotes that they'll find- that they'll find is similar. And then for me, obviously, I use it for time management, planning out my essays and that sort of thing. I also do use it sometimes for grammar, but it's not accurate at all. And it doesn't- sometimes it doesn't even change anything. And it's- it will say that it changed anything, and it went back and forth my essay. I'm like, "You didn't change anything". So then I obviously, I'll go back to my peer review. But editing wise, I really still trust, like my peers and my friends, like editing my essay. Finding sources, I don't trust it at all, I will find the sources. The one thing that actually is really interesting I've seen recently, from first year to now, in such a short amount of time, my poli sci courses are allowing us to use ChatGPT to summarize our readings. My prof has told us, like, you can use ChatGPT to summarize the reading. I have done it, and it accurately depicts with the main arguments. Because, like, our readings are so... they're so... they're a lot, they're a lot, like, I don't know, like, I've never done the reading word for word ever in my first and second year. I have always done the introduction and look at the conclusion and then skim like, that's what I've always and I've never read it, so having Chat like, I'll tell Chat, don't change introduction, conclusion, but summarize, main bodies. It's so far, has been beneficial and hasn't really caused any issues, like during exams and whatnot. And I really like the profs that are encouraging us to use it for that aspect, to make it easier for us. So yeah, I've seen that change recently.

1:26:58

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah, thank you. Yeah, I think we talked a lot about how people use AI in general, like your peers. We've talked a bit about how you've been using it. We're, yeah, we're at about an hour and a half at this point, so I do want to be mindful of your time, but you were just starting to talk about what prof sort of stance is on AI. So maybe you can talk to me a bit about what profs have told you about AI, you know. Yeah, what, what is their stance in the classes you've taken?

1:27:37

**Didi:** I guess I could start. In poli sci, it's been kind of mixed, in my more theoretical aspects, where we're looking at classical writings, they have been really against it. And I guess I understand it, because the profs in that, in that field, have really tried to protect classic writing and protect the art that's in writing. And my profs that are in more modern politics, like current day politics, have really encouraged us to use it to think critically of other things, rather than just looking at like or

understanding what you're trying to read. For them, like there's that different aspect in that field, so I guess it's been controversial, at least in poli sci. In crim too, it's not that my professors have said that we can't use it, but they also say that- they haven't said that we can use it too. So I feel like there's also a controversy in that field. But my younger, my younger profs that I had for SOC2XX, he hasn't explicitly said that we could use it, but he has, like pushed us to say you can't- if the readings are too long for you, you can use it. He hasn't prohibited, like, us from using it. So from that aspect, I think it's still a controversial topic at this point, but I feel like people are leaning towards using it more at this point than I did in first year. First year, I only had about one prof tell me that you can use it. It was my POL1XX, class. It was about global politics and all that. She did say, like, again, it's like younger profs and more modern politics, where they're like, you can use it. I want you to think more critically about it, though. And then my old- like profs that are- have been doing this course for years and years, they're against it. They really want to protect the material of the course, so it's, it really depends. And I feel like, like old school profs will say absolutely not. But more modern pros and younger pros would, would lean on saying that it is beneficial.

1:29:25

**Amna:** Controversial, yeah, is the best word for it. But like, I don't know the way I've been seeing it, like, again, it does definitely vary by like, the field they're in, but for the most part, like, I've seen like, a growing sentiment, like against it, like, it's more of the idea that, like, I've heard profs think like that we're relying on it too much. And when I say we, I don't really use AI, I just mean people in general, but like, that like people are relying on it for things they should know how to do themselves. And I feel like the stuff we've been bringing up is something like too like, because the thing is, like, if you're going in for scheduling or even checking something, you know that, because you know what it's doing is right, and you can do it yourself. So it's like an aid. But then for some people, they don't start with that beginner knowledge of, like, what to do, or, like, what something is. They can't do it themselves. And it's just like a reliance on this, like we talked about in my ethics class as well, because, like, duh, ethics, and my professor was, like, strictly against it. She took a lot of measures to make sure we weren't using AI, like, in-class assignments and stuff that were on paper and, you know, like, very specific things. And she would say it all the time, like, oh, the class used to be taught differently, but because of the rise in AI, I'm teaching it differently because in an ethics class, you should do this yourself. Like, if you're using, she went on a- she was like, if you're using, like, ChatGPT to help you with an ethical dilemma, that's an ethical dilemma in itself *[laughter]*, that's an issue. And, but, yeah, like the things I've heard, I guess, I think, like, I've mostly heard things like, you know, in English classes I took quite a few, definitely, like, very against AI, especially because there's a huge creative component to that as well, right? It's like, I don't know what you'd use it for, other than to generate text for you in that kind of context, other than, like, checking grammar or something, and even then, they want you to have those skills and do it yourself, right? So it's like this idea of like, having that skill in you already, but I guess I've heard some things like the soc professor I mentioned, who was like, yeah, you can use it for practice problems. Like, I think it's fine, it makes sense. But like, yeah, there was always that aspect there

of, like, I approve of you using it because I know it's right, because he checked it himself, he was like, the map is right, the process it's doing is right. But he was able to recognize that look at it himself. Like, I don't know if it'd be that same feeling without actually, like, knowing or being- having that capability to check if something is right. Or if it's doing right. And you can't always do that for everything. So like, I don't know, like, that's just what I've heard- all the professors who are, like, somewhat, like, supportive of it, have tried it themselves and have, like, you know, specific areas they approve of, or even heard you can cite ChatGPT now, like, there's a way to cite it properly in all the formats. And so they were saying, like, Oh, if you use it for this or that, so I don't know. I don't know what you'd use it for. I've never cited it, but like, you can, so sometimes, yeah, that's my answer.

04:07

**Kitty:** Yeah, I- yeah, I've experienced a lot of the same things. I think that there's a, like, because a lot of my professors have like, there's an absence of saying anything about AI is like, it almost feels like forbidden in that sense, so I think there's a lot that's to be said about the lack of saying anything about AI. And yeah, I do find that, like, I mean, I'm- I would say, yeah, in like, it was more discouraged in like, my like courses that were more writing focused. But then in like courses like, SOC2XX, it was more encouraged because of, like the practice problems and like helping you understand, like math and everything like that, and ChatGPT generally seeming to perform better in that functionality rather than in, like, actual creative writing and more writing-based courses. So I would find it was more encouraged in those kinds of courses than in others. Um... I think that's all that comes to mind in terms of that question for me right now. So yeah, about the same experiences.

05:06

**Interviewer:** One thing that you're sort of alluding to, and I've heard in the other focus group, is that you kind of need to know how to use AI to use it effectively. And I've heard that there's a bit of like a learning curve on how to sort of give it the right instructions, to get the best sort of answer. So maybe you can talk to me, if you have any thoughts on that. Yeah, what would you say about that?

**Didi:** So I feel like when, like, as we're talking about AI, I feel like I'm the only one that has been using it for structuring essays, so kind of navigating through that, I would begin with inputting my assignment requirements. So like, you know how like profs they would send in, like documents of how to write the essay. I would tell Chat, don't give me answers for now, I'm going to give you information. Learn this information. So I'd given the assignment requirements. I'd given my notes from my prof and my TA, what they've given to me, and then I would tell, "This is the essay that I want to write, and these are my three points. Can you divide it and follow the guidelines that provided. Make sure that it's following like 1200 words and that it's going to mention like the three four points that I want to talk about, and put in beside each subheading, how much words

I'm supposed to aim for in each topic, and then remind me of what points that my prof or TA told me to- to, like mention about in each of the subheadings that they like talked about", and Chat would give me a really good answer, like, if I had to do it myself, it would obviously be time-consuming, and that aspect that it's really good for, like cutting down hours of me, like just organizing it. So when I properly knew how to do that, I only learned about it in second year. Obviously, Chat has existed when I was in Grade 12, but I was not aware of how much you could use it to your advantage. So when I started learning how to input the proper prompts and like, and telling it what it needs to know for that, for this specific aspect, it has benefited me, because, like in first year, if I had to ask him, if I had to ask, like Chat, to do the same thing as I did now, I would get a very different result. But when I ask it to learn about specific guidelines that I had for assignments and, like word limits and all sort of that things, it has benefited me and it like cuts down at least hours for me, just organizing my work, and then from there on, that's where I freely write about what I want to write about and it's easier for me to know what kind of, like quotes or sources I need to go seek about, because, like, it's, it's already told me, "Make sure you add in a source here that specifically talks about this point". So then I know when to go back to my notes, like my bullet points for my peer review, and then make sure that sure that I add it there. So having to know proper prompts is really important in navigating Chat.

I genuinely believe it can be beneficial, but if you use the wrong prompts, and you're not aware of what it can do, and you're not using it for the fact to help you out, it can lead you to sway the other way, like, where the profs are they- really scared about where it's like, it's doing the thinking for you. I think that that is the terrible part about Chat, where you're lenient on it for writing your assignments, planning assignments, and even giving you the bullet point notes, or even like you give like a, like a peer-reviewed article, and tell- you ask to summarize it. That's when I'm like, that's not, then it's not useful in that term. But when you have the information, when you have done the part where it's supposed to be manually on your part and you're asking Chat to organize it, that's when I see it as a beneficial and when you're prompting it the right- prompting it the right way.

**Interviewer:** So how do you learn these correct prompts?

**Didi:** So for me, I kind of learnt it throughout, like second year in the beginning. So I learned it from my friend, and even TikTok has been on it recently and on LinkedIn. A lot of professionals in at UTM have connected with like in networks, networking events. There's this one student, she's pretty popular in UTM. She is a DEM (Digital Enterprise Management) student. Her name is *[student's name]*. She has talked about how to use, um, generate- generative AI the right way, and what prompts you should focus on, because, like, they were looking at, like the coding mechanisms of that sort. So when you say a specific word, like, "what", "how", or "tell me", there's different prompts that you're going to receive. And I have tested this out. If I say, "can you" or "provide me" like there- it has a different answer, so being aware of those type of prompts, I- you kind of learn

on the way. So LinkedIn has helped, has kind of given me that sort of like handbook and then TikTok as well. A lot of- there's controversies around that. Like people are using it for the wrong reasons and TikTok, but for me, when I started learning the specific wordings that I can use to benefit me, that's when I started seeing better results and better like, I guess, structuring of my essays. So, yeah, it would be my friends. It would be like TikTok and LinkedIn predominantly.

**Interviewer:** It's, one thing that comes to mind is that, it sounds like work to have to learn how to do this.

**Didi:** Yes, yeah, absolutely.

10:00

**Interviewer:** But it feels worth it.

**Didi:** It's definitely worth it. Like, in first year, I knew that there were prompts, specific prompts, for specific coding. Like my comp sci roommate was telling me that she's like, make sure you word it this way. And then, first year was like, just learning about it. I'm like, I'm iffy about it, but she's like, if you learn how to use it, it can benefit you, because, like the work that I'm do- doing is not that it's like- I can do it myself. It's just that I'm starting to gain more responsibilities, and I'm taking in more positions in my time where AI can be beneficial in structuring those work, so when I started learning about these prompts, I use it mostly just to organize my work. It was never to do the work for me, but to lay out, okay, for my work-study, I make sure that I'm doing this task in this amount of days. For my academic stuff, this is the amount of stuff that you have for this day, and prompting them, the prompting how to, like organize them, it's really, like, you have to learn how to do them. Obviously, there's work and learning about those, but it's the same thing about learning everything new at university. Like for me, like I told you, it was a learning curve for me, learning how to write. I see ChatG- like AI for me, like something that I'm supposed to learn and like, as much as people want to say that we have to sway away from it, I've seen it integrate into a system in so many ways, like banking-wise, too. If I did not know how to navigate, like AI, it would be really hard for me to navigate things like my banking. So... yes, you have to learn a little bit about it. It took time for me to learn. I mean, I took all of first year to learn how to do prompts, right? And now for me, I see it as a very rewarding like tool to help me organize, like my, I guess, like tedious tasks, like just organizing things in time management.

**Interviewer:** Kitty, do you have anything to add?

**Kitty:** Um, yeah, I think for me, like I'm learning in this conversation, I feel like I'm still, like, learning how to use AI properly, or, like, AI in a way that's more like, constructive and like, helpful for me. And I also noticed, like, I would have to run through, like, for example, when I would use it in revisions. I would like do the revisions, and then I would send it back multiple times, and then I

would get different answers each time that could have applied before, that- could have been given to me before, but they haven't. So I've noticed that, like, it would take, um... it would take some time like to use it, and like to use those certain prompts and those certain keywords, because sometimes I felt like AI was using, like, very flowery language and not giving me actual critique. And then, sometimes I felt like I just couldn't figure it out and couldn't navigate it and then I would just, like, give up on using AI and then I would like, use like, other methods, and like, rely on, like, my peers and whoever's around me more to like, listen, listen to my like, problems and dilemmas, like regarding, like, like my academics and everything like that. So, yeah, it's still a learning process for me.

12:51

**Interviewer:** Thank you. [Undergraduate research assistant 1], do you mind closing the door? Thank you.

*[overlapping voices]* Something really cool.

**Amna:** Well, yeah, of course, also, sorry, I just had like, a different take on that question, and so I wanted to share. Yeah, um. See, I feel like it's a like, I took the question differently, like, there's another level to it. I don't think it's really about the importance of prompts and knowing them. I think it's further than that. It's about like, it's what you said, Didi, it's what you said about, like, I can do it myself. I think that's the difference, because like, prompts and what you're doing, you're training an AI model, and you're the data set kind of thing, you're stemming from. It's like, it needs something to learn from. It needs to have a source. That's how AI works, right? And so I feel like it's not really that you know, just- that's part of it, sure, you know how to say the right thing or use the right prompts, but it's that other level of knowledge you have going in that you could do it. You know how to do it. You understand these things in another way. Same thing with math. It's that like, oh, I can use AI because I know it's doing it right, because I understand the math. I know what it's doing. I know it's doing the right process. There's like, this whole other level of understanding. Or even to know, oh, I have to ask ChatGPT to summarize my notes in this way or write in this way. It's because, you know, that's the way it's supposed to be done. But if you don't come in with that knowledge, then it's a whole other thing I feel like navigating the use of it like, which is the thing I think with like, younger generations who don't learn these things first, who don't learn how to write an email, how to like, write anything, take notes, all of that, and they just jump straight to ChatGPT. It's like, they'll probably take whatever's given to them at first, as long as it's not total nonsense, because, you know, you have nothing else to base it off of. You just like, give it a- it gives you something that sounds coherent and because you don't know what you're doing, you think, oh, okay, this is good. It's the same thing. Like, if you- if it gave you a completely wrong approach to math, and you had absolutely no idea what like the math behind it was. If you looked at it, you'd just be like, oh yeah, numbers, it looks good, it's right. And you wouldn't have any actual like knowledge of if it was wrong or not. So I think really the most important thing that comes to using

AI is that knowledge that people have, that especially I feel like, is going away, with generations, because we're still like, like, we were in high school and the stuff started becoming a thing. We were like- we learned a lot. We were near the end of our learning career, right for, like, before post-secondary. And it's like, you know, for people who aren't like that, I think it's very- I think it's just very different. I think you have to come in with, like, a level of knowledge, or otherwise it's useless. It's like, like, a tool doesn't work unless you know how to use the tool or like what it's for.

**Didi:** Yeah, I feel like the one thing that made my experience, I feel like the way I learned AI was at the perfect time, because I did already get the knowledge from high school, like I did high school without Chat. Like I tell my brothers, I'm like, you know, I did better than you without Chat, I read books. *[laughter]* So I told her, I'm like, I had knowledge. I knew how to do academia. And it's up until first year, is when I've started being able to integrate how I learned academia and how I learned how to write, and integrating tools that could hopefully better the way and, like, strategize how I could learn more at like, a smaller amount of time because, like, I feel like, I feel like the intensity of things now nowadays, I'm like, I really need it to benefit me and that sort of thing. And obviously, I know there were PhD students that did, um, got their degrees without ChatGPT *[laughter]* and I'm like, when I think about that work, I obviously, I do feel guilty where I'm like, I do need it. But at the same time, I'm like, I really want to be able to do it without it, like, I have become reliant in the aspect that I want it to help me to structure things, but... I have to take advantage, I mean, it's the generation that it was created, so I'll take advantage of it. I mean, if it didn't exist, then I wouldn't have to, like, yearn for it. So I'm like, if, if, if I like, graduated, like, a decade ago, it'd be different, like, I wouldn't have ever thought about it. But now the fact that I have it in front of me, I can use it then, I mean, might as well use it to your advantage, though, like.

**Amna:** You could do it.

**Didi:** But you could do it, yes, yeah, yeah, absolutely. But-

**Kitty:** Oh, sorry- oh, I was just, like, I was just agreeing with you guys, because I feel like it is its own separate skill, or at least its own separate skill, like, of, like, technology, like, every kind of, like, technological aptitude, but then, yeah, for me, like, I'm still learning that skill, I feel like I'm still, like, in the early stages of it. That's why sometimes, like, I give up before I start using it. And I mainly get that in the initial information about ChatGPT from my friends. I haven't like looked at external resources just yet, but thank you, I will, I will check them out and see how, so yeah.

*[laughter, unclear]*

17:32

**Interviewer:** Thank you. So some summing up questions. What advice would you give to instructors about AI use in the classroom, in the course?

17:45

**Didi:** I would say... it's.... okay. I feel like with courses like the one I took, like POL2XX and ENG1XX, ISP as well, I feel like they have the right to say that it's not allowed at all. I mean, they're training you to be able to get the knowledge of writing from the basics. If you're not able to know the basics, how are you able to navigate tools that will aid you for that? So I feel like courses like that really have the right, like instructors have the right to be able to take extra precaution, to be able to find out if students are using it or not, and if they do end up using it, I feel like a penalty makes sense to me, because, like, like you're using it to the point of, like, trying to know basic knowledge. Like, for me, I remember ISP, I did not use Chat at that moment in like, organizing my essays. I really did learn how to use, how to structure it, like, manually, like pen and paper wise. And having said that, I know that's my- that's the way I do my essays. That was the only time that I knew I could use Chat to mimic what I was doing. So courses like that, I believe professors have all the right to take whatever precaution they want to and whatever penalty they have for students. Courses like my poli sci, courses like that, are more, more modern wise, and like where we're reading articles that are not just like academic writing, but we're- we have like graphs, like regression tables that are sometimes hard to like interpret, I feel like that's where professors should be able to say that you can use it to summarize readings that are very hard for you to understand. And obviously it is better that you try to understand like academic writing and that type of language, 'cause obviously that's the point that we want to get to in, one day. But professors allowing you to be able to say that, yes, it's fine to use it, however, use it for your own precaution, where it won't write essays for you. You can help structure your essay, and maybe even professor says you can ask Chat to, like, structure your essay using this prompt, this prompt, and you can then it would be fine. But other than that, I feel like they should still take careful consideration when it comes to, like, writing the actual papers.

19:51

**Amna:** Is it okay if I go? Yeah, what I think, as just like, as a first thing to just say, like, when a class starts as a prof, there was this tweet I saw where this person was saying something like, oh my god, how come I can't even text my friends without asking ChatGPT to come up with something for me. Insane. And the person responded to them, and they were like, because your brain is the size of a peanut, *[burst of laughter]* and you're doing it to yourself. And it was like, the- especially the last part, you're doing it to yourself. Like, yeah, you're even using it to text your friends for you. You could do that, but like, if you're relying on it to that point, it's like you're losing those skills you could have had, you're not even developing them in the first place. And so it's like, a funny way of saying it, but really, I'd want to emphasize that, like, if I was a prof, like, have these skills, do not do that to yourself, where you're so reliant, like, there's no skills in the first place, and you never develop them or use them like you are, just like you're- it's like, a complete like thing you lean on right? Like, I would say, if you were gonna use it, for math or for like ideas of organizing or whatever, have it generate something, come to me and explain exactly why it did that and why you think it's right. And then if you can, if you actually understand it, then I'd be like, okay, whatever.

But like, otherwise, it's like, if you don't get it at all and you're just using it, that's really concerning, especially when, like, university, like, especially we were talking about ISP and everything, it's a new thing, it's a learning curve. If you're using generative AI, what are you learning? Yeah, nothing, right? You're not building any skills or anything. It's very different versus if you actually had some skills or understanding as, like, a first-hand thing.

21:25

**Kitty:** I completely agree. I completely understand how like, professors are, like advising students to tread carefully and to, like, avoid it, especially in those, like writing heavy courses, because those, like preliminary skills are, like, it's so important and yeah, like you said in your earlier answer, like, having those initial skills can really, like, take it to the next level and like, allow you to actually, like, use AI to your advantage, and like, enhance those skills, rather than just, like, generate like, a bunch of word vomit. Or, like, generate it based on like, the probabilities that will pull from like, a certain amount of like resources on the internet. So, I- yeah, I completely understand that. I would say, like, if teachers are really feeling bold, like, maybe particularly in like, the areas of like maths, like, maybe professors, like, it wouldn't hurt to, like, give it a try themselves and to see how students like, to test out how students may be inclined to use AI, or, like, may not be inclined to use AI, so that, like, they can provide their own background experience to students, and maybe, like, they could sway the students a certain way by saying, like, oh, this is my experience. Like, for example, it generated a wrong answer, or, like it generated great practice questions. So I really, like, appreciated, for example, what my SOC2XX prof said about, like, hey, like, it can provide really helpful practice questions, because that's what I did to, like, run it through, but also, like, I would be very mindful of AI and, like, all these other aspects, so I think having that like, like experience, like, even just giving it a try once, just to see, like, and know what it's like, and to provide students with that, like, first-hand knowledge as well. I wouldn't hurt, like, it wouldn't hurt, but I'm not saying like, they should, like, oh, you have to give it a try before having any opinion on it. Like, I completely understand where they're coming from.

**Interviewer:** Okay, two questions left. Any feedback you would give about ISP100, so we talked a lot about what you thought about it, but sort of like, you know, you kind of have the platform here to say, hey, here's how ISP, you know, apart from cutting down the length of the class, like anything that we haven't discussed about ISP100 that you'd like, you know, administration, profs to know?

23:30

**Didi:** Obviously, profs to know, I love my prof, teachings that obviously like the cutting down of class hours. If they can't cut it down, maybe divide it so like how SOC1XX and 1XX, were like, two classes a week. Maybe we could do like, two hours of lecture time and then one hour of that to be like, maybe tutorials, or like, like, or another smaller class that the prof would be teaching. That's one thing that I really think would be helpful. I think, other than that, I think ISP was run pretty

well. I don't know if they've changed it much more this year, but I think the, the writing wise, like how it was divided and how we were learning different ways to write, I think it was organized enough. It was just again, for me, the factors that were playing into my first year made it really difficult to navigate ISP, but now that I'm in second year, it's a little more relaxed. Like, obviously it's like harder courses, but like, if I took ISP100 right now, I think I would have excelled, like 10 times better. So I feel like, it's been- it's organized enough. I think the ISUP, the ISUP department did pretty good on that part. But I think more than that, I feel like a little more hands-on things. I feel like two hours of kind of like him talking to us, and only about 30 minutes of us doing hands-on work was very draining, and it kind of made a lot of people just not focus that much. So I think more hands-on training. Maybe one thing I liked about my POL2XX class that I feel like ISP could have also done was talk about careers in the, like that program area, having events where you're able to bring your students in ISP100 and just see, like, yeah, like the work that you're doing right now, see what it can be applicable to real life. So having kind of like that, I- that, that hands on experience, because for me and POL2XX obviously, it was a very difficult course. It was intense in like, writing, reading and all that, but what made it really rewarding for me was the fact that I was able to meet MPs from the government and talk to us about experiences, how they were, like, I was in your seat at one, like, before in the past, and like, look at where I'm at right now. So having that kind of motivating factor, I feel like ISP100 could benefit from.

25:40

**Amna:** I just found it to be kind of like... boring. I think the motivating thing is actually really cool too. But for me, I don't know, I felt like there wasn't a lot of, and it could have just been like, my class, I just feel like, content wise, not a lot of passion or heart behind it. And like, I don't think, you know, academic writing is necessarily, like, you know, super boring and, like, without passion because, like, the people who write it, it's so much work, so much time they spend, like, in their fields, clearly, they're writing from a place of interest. But like, all the things I say about ISP, when I say, oh, I know it was helpful. It's good that I took it. I don't have any like, meaning or heart behind it. I don't really like feel it. I'm just saying it because I know it's true in a way. And I just feel like, if there was a way that like, like, this is also what I find sets human writing apart from something like AI that generates text, is that there's like, you know, your life, your passion in behind it, like, like, the way, like, I don't know, yeah, the life you put into it, it's very different. There's like, some soul in it, or whatever. If that sounds so corny, *[laughs]* but something like that, you know, and I just feel like it could have been made more I don't know, fun in a way. Like, the best English courses I took were the ones where the professors were just so in love with their craft and everything they did, and it made you want to, like, write something good, not because, like, oh, like, this is, like, the rubric, this is the criteria I have to me to make it good and academic, but because you actually, like, cared so much about the topic, you wanted to create something, least for me, like something that was good out of, like, love for that topic itself, you know, and that's something I feel like. Especially like at the beginning of first year, when you're in university and you're like, this is so hard, it's so stressful. I feel like a lot of people say university kills their passion and the things

that they love. If they come in thinking, like, oh, I love writing, I love this and that, and then, like, the spark leaves them after uni. Now there's just, like, some ways you can try and keep it alive. So I think that's important.

27:32

**Kitty:** Yeah, I agree like, a lot with what you guys said. I also, like, I do agree a lot with, like, I wish there was more of a hands-on aspect and, like, more, more time, honestly, to do peer review, because I didn't realize, like, how helpful it would be for me. And I think that if I came in with like, more like of my material prepared, I think it would have helped me a lot too, so having more time dedicated to like, peer review and like, actually talking about each other's work would have been really helpful. I also think that like, maybe targeting like, I mean, it's okay to like, say like, maybe some general statements about like, specific programs that like, are taking ISP. So for example, saying like, providing like, certain help that's specific. For example, it's like criminology, or like, whoever else is like, coming into ISP who's taking it as a prerequisite. I think that could have been really helpful, because I had a hard time tying that to like criminology, because with criminology, I felt like, it's like a whole, I know, a separate language, because, like, I need to, like, this is a lot like, it's statistics too, um, and then, you know, with ISP, was focusing on creative, creativity, and then I felt like a lot that, yeah, was taken away. And I was like, oh, I really can't be that creative anymore, as I went in and took more, like, criminology and sociology courses. So I think like that could have been really helpful, targeting it to the specific fields in like, some aspects, and just not in a way that, like, discludes everybody else, I know that's like a lot maybe to ask for. But I think that could have been more beneficial for me to see like how it's applied, rather than like being kind of talked at about the nitty gritty of writing and about like, different audiences, without being able to, like, actually see how it's being applied, beyond the ISP course itself and beyond seeing how students are writing if that makes sense.

**Didi:** I really like that point. I feel like ISP could kind of like boil down to like dividing things, I guess. I could be- like ISP for social sciences, and then ISP for humanities, ISP for like sciences itself and all that, I feel like that would have been really nice. Because, like, you can tailor the writing for that specific, um... that specific field.

29:45

**Interviewer:** Okay, well, that's basically it. And we really ran way over time, but I really appreciate it. I just want to give you space to add anything that we haven't discussed, any kind of additional things that you get off your chest, that you didn't have a chance to say. In relation to anything, AI, ISP100, writing in general.

30:11

**Didi:** I don't think- I feel like I've been able to say everything I wanted to say. The prompts were really good.

**Amna:** Right? Yeah, same.

**Kitty:** I completely agree. Oh, there was something that I forgot to say, I wish there was maybe more emphasis placed on time management and how to navigate that in terms of writing, because I felt like, for me, that significantly impacted, like, the quality of work that I had and like the ability-um, like how much I could, like put into my work before submitting it. I think that could have been really helpful to touch on time management in some aspect or another, in terms of the writing process. And also, I guess, maybe a little more freedom in making mistakes along the way, because I felt like, in ISP, it was like, oh, you're guaranteed to, like, improve your writing over time. But then my marks got worse, and I was like, oh, my god, like, what am I doing wrong? Like, did I just, like, become a, like, a terrible writer, even though I was given all these, like, all this helpful information? So I was like, I was a little worried when I got like my, um, like final marks towards like my final assignments. I wish that there was more flexibility in making mistakes.

31:11

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Thank you. Okay, I will pause the recording. Now that was an hour and 59 minutes. I'm very sorry. I think the first section talking about high school maybe could be cut down a bit. So that's helpful for me to know.