

Interview 6 (May 7, 2025)

00:00

Interviewer: Well, yeah, so thanks again. So as you know, the goal of the project is to understand how ISP100 has influenced students' writing, as well as the introduction of generative AI, how that's impacted writing. But before we get into all of that, it's useful for us to get a sense of what writing was like for you in high school. So I know that might have been a little time now, but yeah, what was writing like for you, writing assignments in high school?

00:34

Mary: It was long time, I guess, like I graduated from high school, like 2018, umm. Let me think. And I didn't- my high school was not in Canada. Actually was in *[name of country]*. So I think we didn't have essay assignments, assignments this much as much as in Canada. How could I say...it was more for *[name of language]* classes, not English classes, and I always enjoyed writing actually. Maybe, it's, coming from, from my dad's occupation. He was like literature teacher. So I always liked it, even from my young ages, I have, like, blog for my own, like, I just write time to time, not frequently, but I like writing, maybe creative writing, we can say.

01:35

Interviewer: Well, that's great to hear. Um, and so how did you find the transition to university in terms of writing?

01:43

Mary: Transition to university, I actually, I noticed a huge difference from high school, because in high school, as far as I remember, we were encouraged to write in a different way. But in university, it's like mathematical formula. Like, I don't know, there's like, there should be three paragraphs. It should be like, hamburger, like, conclusion, introduction, blah, blah, blah. So I need to use my scissor and then shape my writing according to the instructions, actually. So it's more like, yeah, this kind of difference that I noticed when I started in university. Being creative is not encouraged. On the opposite, you should always use some kind of mathematical formula in terms of writing.

02:39

Interviewer: Right. And so maybe to backtrack a bit, I know you mentioned you enjoyed writing in high school. Were there things that you found challenging?

02:51

Mary: In university, like, in terms of challenging?

Interviewer: No, so still talking about high school. I know the order- I switched the order up a bit. But yeah, wondering, you know—so it was a while back, 2018 is when you graduated—but yeah, from what you remember, you know, you said you enjoyed writing, but are there things that you found challenging or that you didn't enjoy about writing?

03:12

Mary: In high school, right? Okay. Let me think *[long pause]* Can you give me some examples? For example, what could be a challenging?

Interviewer: Oh, you know what? It's also okay. I mean, it's been a while back, but if there's nothing that you remember, that's okay.

Mary: No, I don't remember, actually, anything right now *[pause]*. Yeah, I don't remember anything challenging, actually, like, because in high school, as far as I remember, the question for essay assignments, or, like, writing assignments would be very short and succinct, and it's very clear, and then you would just write, and then nobody would tell you, "Oh, you answered wrong answer, like you misunderstood my question." No teacher would answer like this, like they would always encourage as far as I remember. Yeah, I don't remember any challenge.

04:22

Interviewer: No, no, that was useful information for me. Okay, and so, you know, starting university here in Canada, how did you feel about your writing ability and writing assignments in general?

04:35

Mary: Writing ability... actually, first of all, like language barrier, like English is not my first language, so I always felt disadvantaged in in that way, because, like in my mother tongue, I feel I'm confident, but in English, I feel like I start with minus one, like when I compare it with other people, so I feel like I'm not showing my functions 100% so it was the first thing I think. You were asking challenges, right?

Interviewer: Well, basically, when you started university, or as you were entering university, what was your feeling about your writing ability and how you felt about writing assignments in general. So, yes, that can include challenges.

Mary: Because of that, like, I used academic skill center at UTM, I really benefited from it a lot because, yeah, they were really helpful. Yeah, as I said, like, if I, if I use the mathematical formula that was demanded from me, like, as a university student, like, you should be good. Like, how could I say... if you obey what they ask you, you should be good? Like, and don't cross that limits in my mind, like it's yeah, it was like that, just do the instructions, hmmm, and then yeah, I think this is my answer.

06:19

Interviewer: Yeah, sure. Okay, so we can also transition to talking about ISP100, so do you remember the term you took the course in?

06:24

Mary: The term I took the course? *[Crosstalk: Yeah, so was it fall, winter-]* It was my first year, first term. So it's three years ago, it should be. Let me think- 2022, September.

Interviewer: Okay, okay, so that was the fall term. Okay. So, did you feel like that was the right timing? Did you feel like the fall was a good time to take that course?

Mary: Could you repeat the question? Sorry, my volume of my computer *[unclear]*.

Interviewer: Don't worry. So I'm wondering, did the fall term seem like the right time to take ISP100?

07:02

Mary: Umm, yes, because course load was not heavy. So it was like me just going to the class and then listening to the instructor, instructor. And it was like storytelling, like he- like I enjoyed it, attending to the classes like, I know most of the people, they didn't like ISP because it was, like, compulsory course, but I don't know. I was really active in the class. I was raising my hand. And then maybe it's just because of my personality. I don't know. I I enjoyed it like, yeah, it was, umm, how could I say, it was nurturing my sense of writing so I liked it, even though I didn't get the mark at the end as much as I wanted *[laughs]*.

07:58

Interviewer: I think, I think that's a good attitude to know that you, you know, learned something from it, even if the grade wasn't...

08:06

Mary: Yeah, I liked it...because there were, there was not like right or wrong answers for that. We were just learning, learning how to write or, yeah, it was- not learning how to write, but expanding our knowledge on writing, or changing or seeing different perspectives on writing, even though, it like the course has so much reading I was trying to keep up in the beginning because, like, it's my first year, first term, and I'm trying to keep up with the readings. And I thought, I should, but in the end you just give up all of your readings *[laughs]*. I even remember Professor was asking, like, "Who did the reading?" And nobody would raise their hands, nobody *[laughs]*. He was like, "Okay, it's still okay" *[laughs]*. But yeah, at the end as a university- like you, start to get a sense of university. And it's not possible to keep up with all of the readings. But, so... yes. It must be a good time to take because if I took it in the second term, then I would never even try to read any of. But at least since it was my first term, I was trying to keep up. I was trying to learn. I had energy. But yeah.

09:37

Interviewer: That's a great answer. Um, so my next question was going to be, what was the course like for you? And you've touched on a lot of that already, but I just want to know if there are any other things, any impressions, thoughts on the course, that you want to share, other than what you've already stated.

09:52

Mary: Uhh, sorry, what was the question? I didn't get it that second part of it-

Interviewer: Basically, just what do you think about the course? So you already told me some things, but are there other things you wanted to say about how you found the course?

10:00

Mary: Yeah, maybe, like, there should be, I don't know less, readings actually, because it was really very long and a lot, as far as I remember. It was literally, literally a chop- chapter of a book, for

example, for a week, and then you feel incompetent for the class always, and I don't know, but yeah, since professor didn't mind it that much, so I was okay with it. But yeah, that could be less reading.

10:39

Interviewer: What about the length of the lectures? So I've heard some students say three hours for a lecture is too long. How did you feel about those?

Mary: Was it three hours?

Interviewer: Yeah, so it was three hours. I don't know if your course was any different. It's possible, but that's just something students have told me that the length of the course, like the lectures, was long.

11:07

Mary: Oh, I don't remember...actually, how many hours was that. I don't remember it, but *[short pause]* I don't remember. I felt like, course- course was divided into small chunks, even in terms of assignments, like he would say, "Just write a draft and read your peers' draft and comment on it." So it was like divided into small chunks, and even from that comment, we would get points. So it doesn't have to be like perfect draft. I would just write something, even sometimes couple of sentence just to get that mark. But that's not our case. So I really like that assignments were divided into chunks actually, it was not like big piece of cake. Wait- it was not like big piece that we need to write in a week or in two weeks. He would remind us the assignment multiple times, like from very earlier so. But in terms of weekly hours, I don't remember actually, because it was like, more than three years ago.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, for sure, I yeah, I recognize some things might be hard to remember. Um, okay, so do you think taking the course helped change your writing?

12:38

Mary: Hmm *[short pause]*. Uh, yes, actually, I felt like I benefited from the... the tactics, not tactics- For example, the first example came to my mind, was like "They say, I say" formula. So I learned this tactic, and then I applied it to my writings, and I feel like it's more professional. My writings are more professional right now from my previous version. Umm, yeah. And these are, like, I feel like universal information on writing, on literature. Maybe we can say so in this way, we learned these from the course at the university level. So it helped, yes, it changed my writing.

13:42

Interviewer: That's great. And I know you mentioned you have used the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Center, and you found that very helpful. Can you tell me a bit more about your use of it?

13:53

Mary: Yes, they have like drop in writing sessions, and you can also book an appointment with, even with a professor, I guess, like very professional people, people who have, like, PhD in English literature or, like, it's like, literally, like a private course from someone. So I was so surprised to have

this kind of help center, because I would use it literally, let's say I wrote my essay assignment, and then I would bring it to the Robert Gillespie Academic Center, and then they would read it and give me feedback on it. So what could I ask? What else could I ask *[laughs]*. Like, I mean, it really helped me a lot. And sometimes I lose the sense of professional writing. Let's say I add too much detail, or like too much unnecessary things on my writings and before my Professor, they would give me my feedback on my assignment. So, yeah, I even mentioned about that to my family friends, and they thought it's only something that just happens at U of T. And I was like, "No, they, they have this kind of help center in all universities in Canada, you should benefit from it." And then they were like, "Oh, my God, good idea. Blah, blah, blah." Because, yeah, I don't know. I would book appointments a lot. Yes, I remember, in my first year. I also used drop in sessions whenever I can't find any like empty appointment time, I would use drop-in sessions. Well, sometimes drop-in sessions would be very crowded, because students would have lots of due dates and lots of students would be there- many students would be there and then, yeah. Sometimes it was not possible to get proper feedback as much as you want. But at the end, I benefited from that center a lot. I'm so grateful about that center actually.

16:14

Interviewer: Do you still use it?

16:21

Mary: Do I still use it? Nowadays, I don't have any those kind of assignments. But if I have, let's say, scholarship application and I need to write kind of essay for it, I would use that center still, yes, for my scholarship application feedback, let's say.

16:37

Interviewer: Do you feel that it's always been helpful, like, the feedback you received, the help has always been helpful?

Mary: Yes, it was always helpful, actually, yes.

Interviewer: And in terms of, you mentioned, sometimes there's a bit of a lack of availability of spots. So was that a major issue, or just, you know, it was an issue but you could *[unclear]*.

Mary: It's a major issue, actually. If I would almost, I would almost book appointment very beforehand, like, but not everyone can think very beforehand. Like, in the beginning of semester, I see, let's say, essay due dates, like or if I take a course, I'm a physics student, actually, so ISP was mandatory course for me, as far as I remember. And so I don't have that much essay assignment right now, but in my first years, I would see syllabus and then due dates, and I would book appointments just on the assumption of I would need it. So *[laughs]* even, like before starting writing as that essay, just to, just to take that spot, you know, not, I need, need that spot. And let's say, if I proceed to the semester and I realize I don't need that appointment anymore, or my essay was okay, so I would just cancel it. But I would take it anyway, just to make sure. I would start semester with like, two or three appointments for no reason *[laughs]*. Just yeah- the available appointments were really less because of that.

18:31

Interviewer: Yeah, I see, okay. You mentioned you're a Physics major?

Mary: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, so are you also doing Sociology?

Mary: Yes, Sociology major, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, so is this Sociology and Physics?

Mary: Yes, double major.

Interviewer: Wow, that is such a rare combination.

18:48

Mary: Yes, I hear this a lot. Yes, I just wanted to make kind of balance between science courses and social science courses. And yeah.

Interviewer: That's great. I like that a lot. Good for you.

Mary: Thank you.

Interviewer: Okay, how about peer editing? So I know in ISP100 you have to look at your peers' assignments and give comments. But outside of ISP100, do you ever share a draft with a friend and ask them for feedback?

19:19

Mary: No, no, never. I mean, people don't share that much information about themselves, so I don't think I feel close that much to show my draft actually.

19:35

Interviewer: What about Grammarly? I know that's a common tool for editing. Do you use it?

19:41

Mary: No, I don't use it that much, actually. I use... Yeah, I'm not used to Grammarly.

19:48

Interviewer: Okay, so when you say you don't use it that much, so like, do you still use it or...?

19:54

Mary: Um, I change a couple of computers, like my computer broken, and then I let's say, bought a new one. So I think my first computer had that embedded into my search engine. But after that, I didn't apply it actually. I found it a little bit distractive, so I didn't use it. And instead, like I would just show it to Academic Skill Centre, I would show someone in Academic Skill Centre. Umm, because, like, if I use those kind of engines, it automatically corrects. But I want to learn while I'm correcting, so Academic Skill Centre was teaching me how to correct. It was more... permanent learning way.

20:53

Interviewer: Right, yeah. Okay, and it's also helpful for me to hear about your writing process. So I want to ask about the last writing assignment that you had. If you remember, if there was one recently, what was the process like of writing that assignment?

21:13

Mary: Uhh...very last day or last couple of days *[laughs]*. And... I always feel like I'm in a rush, and then I don't give my whole skill to write that, since I'm in a rush. Yeah.

21:33

Interviewer: Yeah, were there specific things that you found challenging about that assignment?

21:40

Mary: Specific things... I mean, in Sociology department, actually, it's always challenging to get what they want, like, we literally don't understand what they want, and then they're not clear on it, any- never, never, ever, almost. I mean, for example, after my essay, the feedback I'm reading *[pause]* I didn't know that I was wanted, that I was *[short pause]* that I needed to write in that way. Like I have a feedback in such a way that I was not aware of that I was required to write. And it's always, always abstract. Like, "You- It should have been improved." Like, what- what does "improve" mean? Like, what do you mean? *[laughs]* I gave like, yeah. So in Sociology department, I think it's always hard to understand what they want or even a rubric- there's no clear rubric almost never, ever. If I email TA, I'm not satisfied, almost never, actually. So, they're not clear that much. I don't know.

23:08

Interviewer: I'm so sorry to hear that. I'm sure that's a common- I've heard that from students before, so it is a common sentiment. Okay, so I'm wondering- so you're speaking a bit about in general, but also about your last writing assignment, and you mentioned, you know, you email a TA and not really getting the help you need *[Crosstalk: Yes.]* Do you use office hours with instructors?

23:41

Mary: You're right, actually. Do I use office hours? I usually use it, but this past year, I didn't use that much, actually. Like, I note office hour times in my calendar or in my weekly schedule, but, I mean, it's always in front of my eyes, but I don't use it. I'm sure it would be helpful, but I didn't use it that much.

Interviewer: Yeah, I don't, I don't mean to say that, you know, you should be using it. I'm just wondering if that's something that you do use. And there's different reasons, right? Sometimes people can't make it to the office hours. Sometimes they feel intimidated. Yeah. Do you think there are specific barriers for you in terms of accessing that?

Mary: I feel like I need, if I want to go to office hours, I would be prepared. And if I don't feel I'm prepared I don't just use it, because I don't want to go in front of professor with my empty hands, and at the end, I would never go *[laughs]* because I always never feel ready to talk. Because to ask questions, first of all, you need to understand course topics, course subject, right? If you can't

understand, you can't ask questions *[laughs]*. Even question is coming from knowledge. So that's why, most of the time, I feel like I don't want to go to office hours.

25:04

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you for explaining that. That's really helpful for me to know. Okay, and then I think we can move on to talking about generative AI, so you might know more about it than I do. But yeah, it's programs like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot and many others. So yeah, I'm just gonna remind you your answers are confidential, and the whole purpose is just to learn how students use this. Okay, so I think we can start with UTM students in general. So to what extent do you think UTM students, your peers, are using generative artificial intelligence?

25:55

Mary: Uhh *[Pause]* It's really up to the person, I think, because some people have principle of not using at all. And some people surprise me that they use very frequently, because I, let's say, I don't expect from that person, and then I hear that she is using it or he is using it. So it's really depends on the person. And if I answer this question for all UTM students, I wouldn't know, actually, I only know my own environment. But from my experience, it's like, easy to use, and most of the people are using it... to my assumption, actually, I'm not like 100% sure, but...

26:48

Interviewer: Yeah, and in what ways do you think students are using AI in their coursework?

26:57

Mary: What ways...? You're- are you asking for like, essay or like, could I answer it in, like, let's say physics problems...?

27:04

Interviewer: Yeah, let's, let's focus on writing for now.

27:14

Mary: Writing, okay *[long pause]*. I actually... I don't also directly ask people like, "Did you use AI for it?" *[Pause]* But one time, I asked my roommate- *[pause]* it's really up to the person itself, like and then she said, "I never used it, and I'm not thinking of using it because it gives the laziness of not writing." And then I was so surprised, because I use it very frequently, and then I felt ashamed and then I didn't ask *[laughs]* because that sounds so confident to not use it, and I'm using it very frequently. And since I asked like, couple of people, and I get the vibe of not using it, so I didn't ask further, actually. Maybe, maybe *[pause]* maybe it's- I mean, not, not mean, many people are using it as much as I thought.

28:23

Interviewer: Right, and what have your professors said about their expectations around AI use specifically?

28:31

Mary: Just a moment, could I just use *[unclear]*?

Interviewer: Oh yeah, let's give it a try. If it works, I think it's a good idea

Mary: Let me just try it because I can't hear your voice. Um... can you hear me or is it very bad?

Interviewer: No, I can hear you. Can you- maybe don't hold it, let's see how the quality is if you don't hold it. Okay, so can you say something?

Mary: How do you hear it?

Interviewer: Yeah, it's fine. It's a bit quieter, but I can still hear you.

Mary: Okay. I mean, I can hold it, like it, it doesn't bother me.

Interviewer: Okay, if you get tired, you can let go *[laughs]*.

Mary: I hear you better.

29:04

Interviewer: That's good. Okay, that's good. Yeah, I've had that issue as well. So what have your professors said about their expectations around AI use in Sociology courses?

29:20

Mary: Are you asking if they mentioned about AI use?

Interviewer: Yeah. Like, what are their- do they talk about their expectations around using AI in the course?

Mary: Yes, actually, sometimes they note on the syllabus, um, or in the beginning of assignment, like, assignment instructions, like, "I expect you to not to use AI," and sometimes they emphasize it a lot, but I don't know if that changes anything *[laughs]*. Some professors never mentioned about it. Not even a single sentence.

30:07

Interviewer: Okay, so you already mentioned that you rely on AI a lot. So what are some of the ways that you use it for?

30:19

Mary: For example, if there's a word count for the essay, let's say in the instructions, it says it should be 1,000 words, your essay. And if I can't make it that much, I would take one paragraph and then I say AI *[unclear three seconds]* make it more wordy *[unclear three seconds]* make sentences longer, add more words to it, you know what I mean? And then, yeah *[unclear three seconds]*.

30:53

Interviewer: It's, it's actually- you're cutting. It's very hard to hear you now. Yeah, and I don't know it might be in your ear phones, but I'm not sure.

31:13

Mary: Can you hear me now?

31:22

Interviewer: Yeah, it's weird. It was kind of cutting off. I can try to speak louder, if that will help.

31:26

Mary: Can you hear me now?

Interviewer: Yeah, I can hear you very well now. I can try to speak louder, if that will help.

Mary: Okay, yeah, that will be better.

Interviewer: Okay, I'm gonna do my best. Okay, so, yeah, you were telling me, if there's a word count, let's say 1,000 words and you're having trouble reaching that, it helps you to sort of organize your paper...?

Mary: Actually, for example, I would say, make this paragraph longer, and then it would just make it longer, add more words or make sentences longer so that I can reach that word count actually. Yes, I use in this way, and mostly actually this way, to make my paragraphs longer. Yeah.

32:10

Interviewer: Okay, um, so I'm gonna suggest some ways that people can use AI, and you can tell me if you've also used it for that. So, for example, background research?

32:21

Mary: Background usage?

Interviewer: Background research.

32:29

Mary: Ah, research...But before writing essay?

Interviewer: Yeah, so let's say you need to collect some sources.

Mary: No, not at all.

32:37

Interviewer: Coming up with an argument?

32:41

Mary: Hmm... Yes, yes, I would use it.

32:49

Interviewer: Okay, and then drafting an outline?

Mary: Yes.

32:55

Interviewer: And I've also heard in other conversations that there's a bit of a learning curve to using AI. So how did you learn how to use it?

33:08

Mary: How did I learn what?

Interviewer: How did you learn how to use artificial intelligence?

Mary: Ahh...umm *[pause]* I didn't know there should be learning *[laughs]* From my peers, I can say. Just a second, let me just- I'll tell something to my roommate.

33:49

Interviewer: You know what? No problem. I can switch to different earphones. It will probably help with the sound. Do you want to wait just a moment?

Mary: Ah, sure.

Interviewer: Okay, just a moment.

35:00

Interviewer: Okay, can you hear me right now? Oh, it looks like our connection is bad. Oh, can you hear me?

Mary: Yes, I can hear it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh, boy, oh, I cannot hear you now.

35:21

Mary: It's fine the previous one works.

35:22

Interviewer: Yeah, hold on a second. I'm gonna try and figure this out. What is this? Yeah, can you hear me now?

Mary: Yes, can you hear me?

Interviewer: You can hear me. I cannot hear you. This is weird. Okay, I'm gonna try it one more time. Usually, this is a better option.

36:18

Interviewer: Can you hear me right now?

36:22

Mary: You just speak right now? Oh, are you speaking?

Interviewer: Okay, hold on a second. Can you hear me right now? Yes, jeez, this is so crazy. Okay, alright, I think can you hear me better than with the earphones?

36:41

Mary: Actually, I think it's about my computer. Its volume is really low, even though it's the highest. So it's not, I mean, choose whichever is, like, comfortable, more comfortable for you. I think I'm okay with both of it.

Interviewer: Okay, I just took off the earphones. Is this better, worse, or the same?

Mary: Same.

Interviewer: Oh, gosh, okay. No, no, no, don't worry about it. Don't worry. I just wanted to find the problem. Sometimes it's my computer, so I just wanted to make sure. But I've had that issue too, where the speakers are so bad. So okay, I'll just wear the earphones so it minimizes noise for me. Okay, okay. Okay, so, yeah, I'll do my best just to be very loud. I think my throat is still not up for it. Okay, so we were talking about how you learned to use AI. And I just wanted to clarify, because I know you mentioned, "Well, you know, what is there to learn?" But I guess what I mean by that is there are different prompts you can use. And I've heard from students, different prompts give you kind of different answers, different results. So basically, knowing how to give the best prompts and for the best answer. How did you figure that out? Or maybe you're still figuring it out?

38:03

Mary: Yeah, I just noticed, like, from my usage experience, if I give more detail, like, it can't read my mind, right? So I need to give more detail. That's what I do, actually. I need to give every detail that I want, like, even though, let's say I don't just say, "Give me an image of a rose," I would just indicate "Red rose," you know, like, because, in my mind, even though rose means, like, red, I need to give that detail, "Add some leaves and blah, blah, blah." I don't know, this kind of details like, that's just what I do.

38:44

Interviewer: Right, okay. So, I think we- you've hinted at this a little bit, but in what ways is generative AI useful or helpful to you?

38:55

Mary: In what ways... Yeah, writing our assignments actually *[laughs]*. Uhh... because once you see how professional it is, you can't get away from it *[laughs]* like it's so good. Like I even get the illusion of this thing, this, let's say, if I would write this assignment by myself, I would also write like this. It just helps me to write in a faster way. So I'm just using it to make it on time my assignment. I have that illusion like "I would write it, this assignment as well," like I- I'm that much confident in front of it *[laughs]*. So I lie to myself, you know, because it's much more professional.

39:51

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you had any negative experiences using it?

40:03

Mary: Uh... negative experience, umm *[long pause]*. Uh, no, but just feeling of my professor might catch that, it's just negative. This is the only negative thing. Like, I would feel really embarrassed if my professor would catch that usage actually.

40:21

Interviewer: Right. Yeah. And the next question I had was exactly that, like, do you have any hesitations about using it, like, in terms of ethical considerations, or, you know, worrying?

40:34

Mary: Yeah, uhh *[short pause]*. Of course, it's not ethic, like it's not showing my own knowledge you know. I don't feel like I'm improving at all. I feel like I can give my diploma to ChatGPT, like it's not mine *[laughs]*. I don't know there should be another way of learning maybe, because I feel like, if there's answer in AI, why would I try to memorize those information? Why would I try to- because there's already an answer. Uh, I know it can't like, AI can't brainstorm, AI can't apply those knowledge to its life. But we are human, we are different, but I don't find it ethic, but I don't know. I- I just tell myself, "Oh, everyone's using it so I can use it." I just- yeah, that's what I condemn myself here.

41:38

Interviewer: I wonder if you had more time to complete assignments and or clearer instructions, do you think that would change how you use AI?

42:02

Mary: *[Long pause]* I don't know *[long pause]*. I mean, the only way I think to make sure not to use AI would be just pen and paper *[long pause]*. Maybe just like in ISP, if we had- if we were given, as you said, like more time and we- and assignments would divide it into small chunks, that might help, because in ISP, I don't remember I used AI at all. And I'm not sure at that time, maybe we didn't have ChatGPT, but towards the end, we had ChatGPT, but I didn't use it at all because I didn't want to rely on it. I didn't trust that at that time. But since the assignment was also divided into small chunks, and at the end, I was forced to start that essay beforehand, like before the due date, so I didn't feel that much heavy workload or...Um... but most of the Sociology courses, we are just given only one due date, and that's it. So you just procrastinate, procrastinate, procrastinate, and then at the end, you ask help for AI, then... I don't know, just to use our brain, maybe in the class, we might be asked to use pen and paper, and everyone starts drafting. And then, just like in ISP, we would just give it to our peers to get a feedback. But at the end, to submit our assignment, the full assignment, it can be, of course, online, but maybe just starting point, I don't know. But yeah, the only ways I think pen and paper, otherwise... I mean, asking help from AI, it's also spectrum. You can just ask a draft, you can ask one small argument. Maybe, let's say your assignment needs three arguments, and then you found two of it, and then you ask just small- it's a small, and it's like a spectrum, and on the edge of it, you might use it fully, like write me an essay this kind of, this kind of, this kind of, and then you don't do anything at all. So it's also a spectrum. Maybe there should be some small open door for it instead of our instruction- instructors tell us "Don't use AI at all," because we would use it. Like, why would I not use it? I don't know *[laughs]*. *[Crosstalk: I love your answer.]* I'm way too... like how could I say? What's the word for it? Ahh... anyway *[laughs]*.

45:16

Interviewer: If it comes back to you, tell me.

45:20

Mary: Okay.

45:22

Interviewer: Okay... So I guess I—this is an interesting question, but—Umm, well maybe not this one but maybe the next one. But, would you tell others—I know we talked about this a bit—but would you tell others that you use generative AI for your schoolwork?

45:38

Mary: The word I was looking for was “honest,” by the way. “Am I too honest?” I was just gonna say *[laughs]*.

45:43

Interviewer: No, no, I, you know what? I- I really appreciate it. I mean, it's confidential. There's no other students in this conversation either. But I really appreciate it. You have been the most honest, I think, so far *[laughs]*. I mean, maybe the other people... I don't know. But, I think you are the most honest and I, I actually really appreciate that. That's, that's great, because how can instructors, how can the department make any changes that are helpful to students if we don't get honest answers, right? So-

Mary: For example, CS department, computer science department, they have exams or midterms and like, can you imagine, it's like CS, but they use pen and paper for coding. They need to know how many gaps, or like spaces they would need to put in front of something because, like, computer just does it in, like, automatic way. But to learn it to show your- what you, what you learned fully, it's only pen and paper. Can you imagine, like CS use pen and paper. So... but most of my Sociology courses, it's just virtual and it's open for AI. I don't know *[laughs]*.

46:58

Interviewer: That is so helpful to know. I really appreciate that.

Mary: Sorry for future students, maybe they will change that *[laughs]*.

47:06

Interviewer: No. I mean, I think it depends on what, you know, what you're in university for, what you want to get out of it, but I think that's really helpful to know. And I have heard that, you know, on the flip side, in computer science, they use AI a lot, and it's kind of like even recommended by instructors. But you know, maybe for the exam, not so much. For the exam, come and show us what you can do. So, yeah, I think that's very useful information. Yeah. So would you tell others that you use generative AI in your homework?

Mary: If it's very like close friend, and then, as I said, like, if she opens herself, like that, she's using it, I can also say, "Oh, I also use it," but as an in, as in the example of my roommate, like I asked her *[unclear]* and she was like, "No, I don't use it at all." And then I wouldn't tell that I- I mean, I'm not gonna lie like "I don't use it as well," but I feel, I don't feel close to tell. If I feel close to tell, I would tell that, because there's always... Yeah, it's like, very personal thing, and you're literally telling that person that you're cheating. So there should be some trust links, bond between you and her *[laughs]*. So... yeah, in a short answer, I would tell if she's close to me.

48:34

Interviewer: And yeah, this is, I think, the trickier question. Would you recommend that other students use AI to help them with their essays?

48:47

Mary: Umm... Would I recommend... *[pause, sigh]*. Like, as I said, like to get a help, I can recommend like I... I would- I wouldn't, I just, I do- I wouldn't want to be a bad example for them, I think. So I would recommend, but in a... in a helpful way, like you can get a help from AI, don't, don't feel overwhelmed by the workload of the courses, you can always use AI, I would tell them *[pause]*. Yeah, because it's also, like, even though I don't feel it ethic, because of the, and because of the ideas, or like, as I said, like, let's say there is a person, and I feel like she's very, like, hard working, she's really successful student, and she is telling me she uses AI. And if I like, I heard this kind of examples multiple times, and then I felt like it's normal to use AI, so because of that, I would recommend it. But when you ask me this question in the beginning of ChatGPT, I wouldn't tell like, "Oh, I'm not gonna- I won't recommend at all." But it's our perception of AI also changes I think. People get help. As I said like it can be a small help. It can be one argument. It can be expanding a paragraph. Yeah, I can recommend it definitely.

Interviewer: And do you have any tips, any advice for students to use it?

50:37

Mary: No... no, I don't have- I don't think I'm that much pro to use it *[laughs]*, because you also get those kinds of hints from other people as well. For example, in my one of my physics classmates, he said "I learned the topic from ChatGPT," because he uploaded the questions, and then he said, "Ask me these kind of questions, like 20 more question." And I was like, that's so smart, like he literally trained his AI or his- his self, so there's also smart ways of using it. And if I get these kind of hints from other people, yes, I would also give younger students these kind of hints as well, definitely, yes. It's just like I'm saying, I don't know that much, but if I know, I would, yes, tell.

Interviewer: Right. Um, is there anything else you want to tell me about generative AI in general, or anything in relation to writing?

51:52

Mary: Umm *[pause]*. No, actually, I don't know. Thank you.

51:57

Interviewer: And do you have any advice to instructors about AI use, other than things we talked about, anything else? You know, this is your platform, you can say anything you want to the instructors about how they should approach AI.

52:15

Mary: Umm... I'm just wondering, or I have a concern. For example, I was- maybe it's, it's a question, but I was wondering if they are, if the threshold for successful essay perspective changed. Like, because some people, they use AI, let's say, and then when they look at the class average, some people write really good, and then some people don't use AI, but they also write really good. So, does that change their threshold in their mind for a successful essay? I was wondering, if I don't use AI, would I fall behind? Because they make it, like the people who use AI, they obviously, leverage the average, or like they make the expectation higher, you know. So I feel like, if I don't use it, I'm doing wrong *[laughs]*, I should use it to reach that average, maybe.

53:30

Interviewer: Yeah, that's a great question, and you raise a really important concern. I mean, I'm not an instructor of course, and I haven't spoken to the instructors about this, so not something that I can personally answer from the perspective of an instructor. I can answer that from the perspective of a TA, because I'm a graduate student, so I do work as a TA. But if you don't mind, I do it after the recording, because the interview is not like about what I think. But yeah, I will end the recording and then I'll answer it. But I guess just to follow up on my question, and that was a good answer, by the way. Is there anything that you want instructors to do differently? I know you mentioned, you know, "Don't say you can't use AI," obviously, but anything else you want to tell instructors or something you want them to know?

54:32

Mary: Umm... *[long pause]*. No, actually. No, nothing comes to mind.

Interviewer: Hold on, I think the speakers randomly switched to my other earphones. Now it's good. So my computer is like, "We're gonna switch to the other earphones now." I'm like, "Okay, thanks." No, now I can hear you. Yeah, please go ahead.

Mary: No, I don't have any additional comment actually, thank you.

55:00

Interviewer: Okay, great. And I guess the last question. Anything else to say about ISP100 that we haven't talked about?

55:08

Mary: Umm... ISP... *[pause]*. As I said, maybe less readings or, yeah... Umm, I don't know. Most of the people, they think, actually it's unnecessary, but I think it's necessary, because even for scholarship application, you need to write almost an essay. And in Canada or North American culture, you not "should," like you must have writing skills for almost everything, like everything. People who has writing skill, they run the world like, because it's just an expression for yourself. So sometimes, whenever I do these kind of application or like scholarship applications, I'm like, what if

someone don't have, like, writing skill? What, what would they do? Like, it's almost what we do very frequently. So I find it helpful, and I find it necessary actually, ISP, but it's not for every person. Most of my friends, they just said it's, it's a trap for getting more money. Like it's a trap by UTM. It's not helpful they said, so... But you're asking my idea. But my idea is, yeah, this, this is...

56:41

Interviewer: I- I just had a question occur to me. Sorry, I said it was the last one, but no I have one more question. I found it interesting that you've used the Academic Skills Centre quite a bit, especially in first year. You also mentioned you use AI. So I wonder how that works together. Because on the one hand, you have the Academic Skills Centre, which is helpful, and then there's AI, which is also helpful. So do you think there's like, a reason why you would turn to one versus the other?

Mary: Uh, actually, like in my first year, I was not aware of AI that much, and I didn't use AI at all, and I used my own skill, my own performance, and then I used Academic Skills Centre a lot, as I said, like I didn't even use Grammarly as much as I remember, even for small grammar mistakes, I would just use Academic Skills Centre. And then once I started to go to upper years, the usage of two resource changed, actually, I use less Academic Skills Centre, and then much more AI actually. I relied on AI much more, more than Academic Skills Centre. So if I used AI, I didn't show- I didn't get feedback from Academic Skills Centre actually.

58:09

Interviewer: I mean, it seems like such an obvious question, but why use AI versus the Academic Skills Centre?

58:18

Mary: Because of the time constraint actually, it's just from my home, from my desktop and then why would I bother myself to go walk to the Academic Skills Centre, and then, yeah, it's just because of the easiness, easy to use, actually. But as I said, like AI, doesn't teach you that much. But when you're in person, in Academic Skills Centre, I mean, I feel like I learn while I'm correcting my mistakes. Yeah, just because of the laziness and procrastination, I started to not use the Academic Skills Centre as much as I used in first year.

59:00

Interviewer: Yeah, thank you. That's all for my questions. I'm going to stop the recording. Thank you.