

TOWARD A THEORY OF PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEMS IN GRADUATE
STUDENT WRITING

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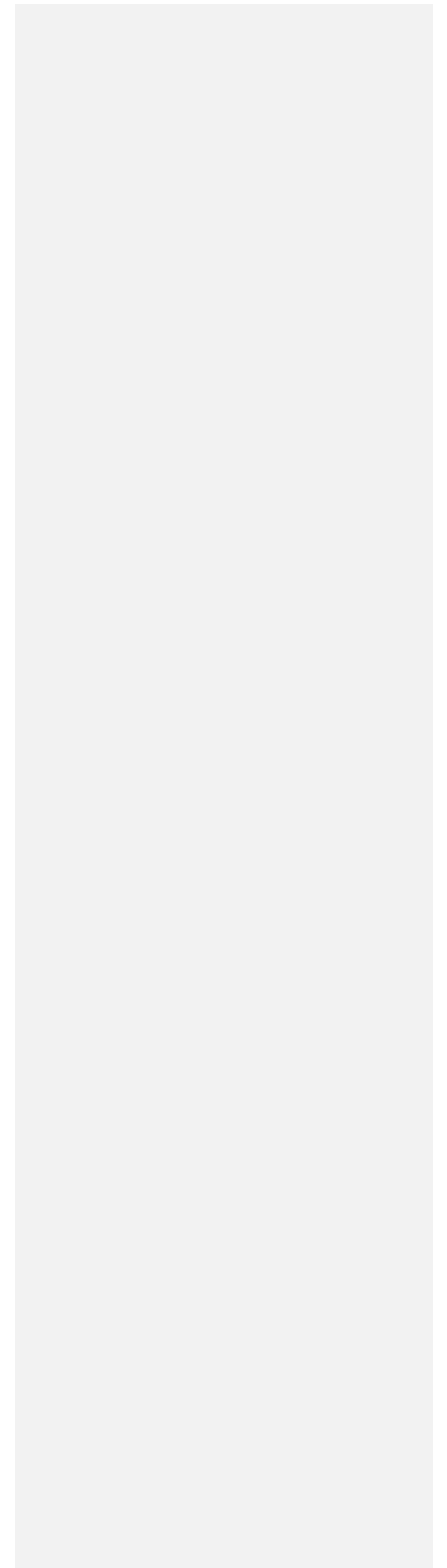
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STUDENT WRITING

by

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This case study focuses on the productivity problems that faced the dissertation/thesis writing practices of fourteen graduate students at a public university on the U.S./Mexico border. The author facilitated a series of group sessions designed to help graduate students in various disciplines cultivate awareness of Donald Murray's notion of "writing as process," as well as knowledge of writer's block and writing anxiety. Sessions also served to cultivate positive self-talk with relation to the writing process, an introduction to mindfulness meditation, and basic time management skills. Four types of data were collected: 1. field notes from participant discussion during workshop sessions; 2. journals and exercises completed by participants; 3. surveys regarding contextual factors that had the possibility of interfering with participants' writing progress; and 4. interviews with participants. The combination of field notes, journals, surveys, and interviews showed a variety of factors that contribute to writing productivity problems faced by graduate students. The research showed that cognitive distortions are a cause of these problems, which are rooted in how graduate students construct "writing" and "writers," how they adjustment to the discursive requirements in the thesis/dissertation genre, issues faced by second-language learners, and relationships between graduate students and advisors. These issues comprise the Integrated Five-Point Model of Graduate Student Productivity Problems in Writing, which has the potential for research into how graduate students are advised and taught to write across disciplines, as well as second-language writing instruction in the United States and abroad.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When I interact with people inside and outside of academia, and I share with them that I am working toward a doctorate in Rhetoric and Composition and teach English classes, I receive a wide range of responses, such as “I’m a terrible writer!” and “Why can’t any of my students compose a simple sentence?” When I began my career in academia, as an Academic Support Center (ASC) Assistant at Berkeley College, a small, private college outside of New York City, I was stuck for an answer when professors would complain about the quality of their students’ writing. Here, I had the experience of serving as the campus writing tutor for a school of approximately 600 students, over 80% of whom were second-language learners. I had been in this position for two months as of November 2007, and I was still finding my style with the students who were coming into the ASC, particularly the second-language learners, when I came to an epiphany, which would lead me to my search for possible answers to such negative perceptions of student writing. In this section, I will share two anecdotes that led to the impetus for my dissertation.

While at Berkeley, I worked regularly with a student named Chang, who had brought in an essay for me to help him with. I noticed that his essay had a substantial amount of awkward sentence constructions. In looking at one of these sentences, I wasn’t sure what he was trying to say, so I asked him, “What is it that you’re trying to tell me here? Just talk to me like you would talk to a friend.” He told me the idea orally, and I understood it. I then said, “Write down the idea the way you just told me.” He did. I then asked him, “Pretend you’re the professor. Which sentence do you think is the better one? The one you typed or the one you wrote?” He then said, “The one I wrote. It’s easier to understand. For some reason, whenever I write, I get really

nervous. I think the professor's gonna correct every single thing." At that moment, my interest in writing anxiety was born, as students often face it with regard to their audience.

Four years later, in the fall of 2011, I found myself undergoing severe levels of stress as I attempted to juggle multiple responsibilities in my doctoral student life, such as coursework, teaching, a new administrative position as Assistant Director of the University Writing Center, and a position as President of Frontera Retorica, University of Texas at El Paso's (UTEP) chapter of the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA). On top of that, I also had the fear of the qualifying exams lurking through my subconscious, along with the hardship of continuing to adjust to a locale over 2,000 miles away from my hometown in New York and a sick father. One day, while writing a discussion post about affect and social change for Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf's ENGL6320 - Advanced Critical Theories, I found my typing headed toward a post about my own academic stresses. I found that writing about this helped to alleviate such stress and refocus my thinking on my academics. At this point, my interest in the healing properties of the writing process came to fruition. As a result of both experiences, the ultimate goal of my dissertation is to measure whether writing and talking about academic stresses can help graduate students alleviate writing anxiety with regard to their theses and dissertations. This study examines such anxiety as it occurs among graduate students who are writing theses or dissertations, which signify their entry into their respective communities of scholars, and seeks to discover ways of changing their image-schemas of writing, as mentioned by Diane Clark. In order to better understand why graduate students suffer from writing anxiety, I immersed my study into a group of students from a variety of academic disciplines, who were at various stages of writing their theses or dissertations. This topic is important for our field because this topic has not been given substantial examination in recent Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS) scholarship.

The history of RWS has moved from current-traditional to process to post-process in the past fifty years. Much of the current canon of research revolves around L2 writing, technology, digital literacies, and post-process pedagogy. However, in working with students, it is apparent that their writing realities are not congruent with the scholarship in the field. Writing anxiety was discussed heavily in the 1970s and 1980s, when expressivism was the pervading pedagogy in RWS, but the scholarship became more sporadic in the 1990s, when social-epistemic rhetoric became the focus of our field. Yet, from my interactions with writing-anxious students in the tutoring center and in the classroom, as described in the introductory scenario, as well as the small amount of scholarship on writing anxiety that has appeared in the last 30 years, I can conclude it is important to continue examination of expressivist pedagogy. This dissertation will discuss seminal and recent literature to inform my research question, which is whether writing groups will help thesis and dissertation writers who are anxious or blocked to overcome their various problems.

The literature review chapter will discuss germinal and recent literature that discusses the origins of the studies of writer's block and writing anxiety. The chapter also differentiates writer's block, writing apprehension, and writing anxiety. I discuss situational factors that have caused scholars to critique primary studies in writing anxiety, and I argue for why it is important for RWS to develop a rudimentary understanding of cognitive psychology principles as pertains to self-efficacy and writing. I then examine potential solutions, such as dissertation boot camps, low-stakes writing and mindful writing practices, all of which provide grounding for my data collection. I then attempt to insert this study into the scholarly conversation that has occurred between proponents of expressivism, social-epistemic theory, and post-process theory, and I argue for elements of expressivism and post-process to collaborate in a

graduate students' writing process, as well as his/her developing awareness of such process. I then offer a brief history of Writing in the Disciplines scholarship and argue for the inclusion of the low-stakes writing and mindfulness exercises to be incorporated into the writing instruction in various graduate disciplines. I then discuss the role the advisor plays in the writing development of graduate students and the types of comments that can help or hinder progress.

Using grounded theory, I applied a triangulated methodology of journal analysis, conversation analysis, and interviews to explore how students negotiate their various anxieties, blocks, and other life issues while striving completion of major graduate projects. I conducted a series of workshops designed to help make students aware of the issues that were inhibiting their progress. These workshops were designed to teach them about understanding writing as a process, make them aware of the impostor phenomenon, help them manage their time effectively, and introduce them to mindfulness meditation. Several participants who expressed interest early on were unable to make subsequent workshops, so I added interviews to my data collection. I interviewed participants who expressed interest but did not make the workshops, as well as participants who made early workshops but did not attend workshops in the future. One interviewee also had not expressed any interest in the workshops.

I made the following discoveries in my data collection and analysis:

1. Writing anxiety and writer's block still exist among graduate students who are attempting to compose dissertations in various disciplines;
2. Second-language learners who are composing dissertations in different disciplines struggle with the discursive expectations of academic writing in the United States, and those struggles manifest themselves in various ways; and
3. Communication between graduate students and graduate advisors may not be completely clear with respect to theses and dissertations, and further study is needed

in this area with respect to how writing expectations are communicated between both parties.

These results have implications in RWS, as it results in a possible need to reexamine the process/product conversation that has occurred. It also indicates a need for further studies as relates to:

1. how graduate students and advisors discuss the writing process, especially studies that examine the advisor's point of view;
2. how second-language writers are taught about writing in their native countries, as there is a dearth of scholarship on this idea, and the way they are taught about writing has the potential to affect their writing processes in the English language; and
3. how these ideas can benefit advisors and instructors across disciplines.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Scholarship on writing anxiety and writer's block has been dormant for several decades; RWS needs to revisit the issues surrounding it and revive the line of research, as there are few current studies that show the presence of writer's block and writing anxiety among students. This literature review will

1. provide comprehensive definitions of writer's block, writing apprehension, and writing anxiety;
2. show how adding insights from cognitive psychology can be beneficial to a better understanding of why talented students experience writer's block and writing anxiety when they are composing major projects; and
3. show how these concepts need to become part of the discussion with respect to the process/product conversation and Writing in the Disciplines scholarship.

2.1 Differentiating Writer's Block, Writing Apprehension, and Writing Anxiety

In order to discuss writing anxiety effectively, it is important to distinguish between *writer's block*, *writing apprehension*, and *writing anxiety*, as much scholarship has intermixed the three terms (see Diane Clark). This first section will define writer's block, writing apprehension, and writing anxiety and provide a rationale for using the term "writing anxiety" throughout the dissertation.

2.1.1 - Writer's Block

Mike Rose defines writer's block as "an inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skill or commitment" (*Writer's Block* 3). He states that while anxious writers often exhibit "avoidance of courses and majors involving writing" (*Writer's Block* 4), blocked writers might have more confidence in their writing abilities but find their progress

blocked because they adhere to a strict set of rules based on their schematic knowledge about writing, such as always writing the introduction first, having a certain number of points in an essay, or having a perfect outline before beginning the writing itself (Rose, "Rigid Rules" 394). Such rules can contribute to writer's block in that it can prevent writers from exploring ideas that may enter their minds at a given time because entrance of such ideas may conflict with the self-imposed constraints under which the blocked writer is operating. In 1984, Rose designed a questionnaire (see Appendix A) designed to identify students who experienced writer's block; according to Rose, this questionnaire consisted of questions that "excluded potential data on psychodynamic, motivational, and situational influences on writer's block" (*Writer's Block*, 19). Instead, he designed it with the intent of focusing on behavioral, cognitive, and affective factors (*Writer's Block*, 20). Upon looking at the questionnaire, some of the questions asked for information similar to the Daly-Miller questionnaire, which will be discussed below, such as "I enjoy writing" and "I like having the opportunity to express my ideas in writing," which ask for the same information as Questions 12 and 6 on Rose's questionnaire, respectively, even though Rose stated that "blocking and apprehensive are not synonymous, not necessarily coexistent" (4). This observation can lead one to conclude that Rose saw writer's block as stemming partially from what he defines as attitudinal factors. In his study, Rose selected 351 undergraduate students to fill out his questionnaire. He also "compiled a writing history" and had students freewrite (*Writer's Block*, 26). After the freewrite, students had one hour to write an essay on a topic typically assigned in university settings; Rose determined the topic in his study. Upon completion of the exercise, students were asked a series of questions about their composing practices:

1. Was this representative of the way you compose?

2. Do you think the way you compose is similar to the way your peers compose?
3. Do you think the way you compose is similar to the way professional writers compose?

Through the tests, Rose was able to identify two types of writers: high-blockers and low-blockers. He found that “low-blockers expressed 17 times as many functional rules as did high-blockers,” such as keeping audience in mind or “when stuck, write” (*Writer’s Block*, 16), and high-blockers were more prone to dysfunctional rules, such as “premature editing” (*Writer’s Block*, 20) and “you’re not supposed to have passive verbs” (*Writer’s Block*, 71). An overall finding was that “some seemingly reflective writers might be more entangled in rigid rules and conflicts than engaged in fruitful thought” (*Writer’s Block*, 77). Keith Hjortshoj, Director of Writing in the Majors at Cornell University, builds on this idea by critiquing how “psychologists and writing teachers often use the term “writer’s block” and “writer’s anxiety” interchangeably, on the unexamined assumption that emotions such as fear are the underlying causes of a writing block” (2). He also states “blocked writers are not always anxious” and that in many instances, “anxiety appears likely to be the effect of a block, not the cause” (2). Additionally, Hjortshoj is in agreement with Rose that blocking can cause anxiety, but he diverges from Rose’s view that anxiety cannot cause block (*Writer’s Block*, 4). These findings are important in that they help to distinguish between the two seemingly related terms for the purposes of this dissertation.

2.1.2. - Writing Apprehension

A more difficult distinction to make is between writing anxiety and writing apprehension. Indeed, much scholarship has intermixed the two terms. For example, in his article, “Writing Apprehension and Writing Competency,” John Daly wrote the statement, “in the most recent research on writing apprehension, the normal procedure has been to analyze differences between

individuals classified as high and low in the anxiety” (12). In this statement, the terms “apprehension” and “anxiety” are used synonymously. Diane Clark was critical of the use of the term “writing apprehension” in that she felt it was “too narrowly defined to encompass the full range of what writing anxiety implies” (7). In her dissertation, she presented writing apprehension as being “...subsumed beneath the larger category of writing anxiety” (7). However, she did not make explicitly clear the difference between the two terms.

The term “writing apprehension” was first coined by John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller in 1975 in a study in which they designed an empirical instrument to measure *writing apprehension*, which they defined as occurring when students are “unduly apprehensive about writing” (242). They derived this definition from Gerald M. Phillips’ definition of communication apprehension: “the highly apprehensive individual is ‘the person for whom anxiety about communication outweighs his projection of gain from the situation’” (qtd. in Daly and Miller 243). They mention “individuals with high apprehension of writing would fear evaluation of their writing...feeling that they will be rated negatively on it” (244). One of the key arguments that informed the creation of the instrument was that “most teachers of composition have recognized in their classes students who seem to be unduly apprehensive about writing” (242) but their belief was that “simple observation” was not enough to truly measure writing apprehension. They wanted “...a more effective and efficient means of isolating apprehensive student writers...through an empirically based, standardized instrument” (242) in order to pinpoint an apprehensive writer more aptly than the method of simple observation was able to do.

Daly and Miller conducted an empirical study in which they tested their instrument among 164 undergraduate students “from a variety of social, economic, and family backgrounds”

(245) in interpersonal communication and basic composition courses at West Virginia University. In crafting their instrument, they designed a survey consisting of twenty-six items, which were modeled after “those in use in the measurement of communication apprehension, unwillingness to communicate, receiver apprehension, and general public speaking apprehension” (244-245). They named this the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale (which has also been labeled the “WAT” or “Writing Apprehension Test”) (Appendix B). Through their survey, they found there needed to be proper “treatment methodologies” designed to alleviate writing apprehension, such as “counseling programs where the apprehensive writer would be allowed to view writing as a successful experience” (248). They concluded that further research needed to deal explicitly with treating anxious students, as well as the effects of writing apprehension, as it would “increase our understanding of writing and student predispositions towards that activity” (249). Such a claim would create room for scholarship that would build on this idea and examine it from multiple perspectives, including scholarship that would discuss with complexity the idea of “writing anxiety.”

2.1.3 - Writing Anxiety

Two major problems exist with scholarship’s uses of the terms “writing apprehension” and “writing anxiety.” The first is much of the scholarship has intermixed the terms “writing apprehension” and “writing anxiety.” When we look at John Daly’s “Writing Apprehension and Writing Competency” piece, written three years after the Daly-Miller WAT was designed, we see him define apprehension as “a person’s general tendencies to approach or avoid situations perceived to demand writing accompanied by some amount of evaluation” (10). Anthony Onwuegbuzie cited Daly’s 1978 definition of “writing anxiety” as “a situation- and subject-specific individual difference concerned with people’s general tendencies to approach or avoid

writing” (“Relationship Between Writing Anxiety...,” 589), which was exactly how Daly defined “apprehension.”

The second problem is that scholars have simplified the term “writing apprehension.” Daly appears to simplify this term as a false binary, describing apprehension as the “tendencies to either approach or avoid situations,” which has a person either approaching or avoiding writing situations. Onwuegbuzie also cited the findings of Lester Faigley, Witte, and John Daly in that “not only do high-anxious writers tend to avoid writing situations, but also they avoid instruction in writing, thereby impeding their ability to improve their skills” (“Relationship Between Writing Anxiety...” 590). In their original citation, Daly, Faigley, and Witte mention “apprehension” as “the tendency of people to approach or avoid writing” (16). However, they also discuss “anxiety” as being “reflected in the behaviors they display as they write, in the attitudes they express about their writing, and in their written products” (16), which is where we see the two terms begin to diverge, as they present anxiety as a more complex range of behaviors than apprehension. Lynn Bloom argues that we must examine the issue of writing anxiety more deeply by looking into context to discover the reasons for such anxiety. She defined writing anxiety as “a label for one or a combination of feelings, beliefs, or behaviors that interfere with a person’s ability to start, work on, or finish a given writing task that he or she is intellectually capable of doing” (121). Bloom argued that one must consider the writer’s “immediate and broader social contexts” in order to understand anxious writers. She noted that “anxious writers” may not necessarily exhibit anxiety in other scenarios and proposed “context must...be part of the guiding conceptual framework we use to define, study, and resolve writing anxiety” (121). According to Bloom, such anxiety can result from the factors below:

1. Intellectual factors: Ability to use the technology required to compose, knowledge of the subject, writing process, rhetorical strategies, and grammar;
2. Artistic factors: The writer's willingness to take risks in his/her writing;
3. Temperamental factors: A writer's self-confidence and motivation to write;
4. Biological factors: How much energy a writer can expend at a given time;
5. Emotional factors: A writer's attitudes toward writing;
6. Social contexts: The type and extent of family and social support received by writers;
and
7. Academic contexts: The ability of a writer's environment to enable a writer's progress (122-123).

I will use the term writing anxiety throughout this dissertation, as I aim to examine how the above factors influence how writers interact with their writing processes and products.

2.2 - Situational Factors

One problem many scholars have seen with the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test is that it operates under the assumption that writing anxiety pervades in all writing situations for all "high-apprehensive" people. For example, Daly, along with Joy Lynn Hailey, designed a situational model, which was based on their critique of the original WAT in that it "ignores the situational characteristics that can affect how anxious an individual feels regardless of his or her dispositional apprehension" (260). They defined "situational anxiety" as dependent on "particular characteristics of a writing situation" (260). Daly and Hailey examined a group of 399 undergraduate students and presented them with an instrument that required them to imagine themselves in a particular writing situation (see Appendix C). Subjects were given a booklet in which they were given five variables in their respective writing situations:

1. the level of perceived evaluation present in the writing situation;
2. the novelty of the situation, in which people would feel more anxious in a novel, unfamiliar writing situation than in a familiar one;
3. the situation's perceived ambiguity;
4. the perceived conspicuousness of the situation, as when people know their work will be viewed by others, they will feel more anxious; and
5. previous experience, which has to do with when people feel previous efforts on similar tasks have not been successful.

There were two potential descriptors available to each subject, one of which would elicit low anxiety, the other of which would elicit high anxiety (262). They used this instrument in combination with the original WAT. Daly and Hailey found that there was little correlation between "dispositional anxiety," which they defined as a character trait in a person, and "situational anxiety," which created a further need to examine contextual variables that could aggravate or alleviate writing apprehension.

In addition to the critique above, Michael W. Reed, John K. Burton, and Nancy M. Vandett offered another critique of the original WAT: that of the 3, the "uncertain" response. They described this response as a "potential flaw in the test" because a respondent "could answer '3' to all statements." This would yield a score of 78, signifying medium apprehension on the part of the respondent, while not necessarily reflecting the degree of apprehension the respondent experiences (2). They state that "people will often choose the uncertain, no opinion or middle choice," which is reflective of a response style called "cautiousness," which is a "tendency not to answer specifically when the correct answer is in doubt" (2). One could argue that such a problem could be addressed by a model that was more contextually based.

Thomas McKain's critique of the Daly-Miller WAT was it seemed to measure "writing self-esteem" as opposed to writing apprehension (25), as "only 14 of the 26 questions" related to feelings. He developed a questionnaire entitled the Writing Anxiety Questionnaire, which borrowed from the WAT and from Holland's Writing Problems profile and consisted of questions that aimed to provide a purer measure of writing anxiety (81).

Several additional studies involving contextual variables have been conducted. In 1980, Roy Fox conducted a study involving such contextual variables in which he investigated the effects different methods, such as traditional pedagogies, had on writing apprehension (40). One group of students was subjected to "conventional" methods of instruction, such as writing exercises, lecture, discussion, and question-answer sessions. This group also had their writing evaluated solely by the instructor. According to Fox, "the second method of instruction involved large-group interaction exercises, paired-student and small-group language problem solving activities, freewriting, practice responses to writing, structured peer response to writing (which graduated from exclusively positive comments to positive-negative comments), and two instructor-student conferences" (40). The treatment was designed to provide a "safe environment for the apprehensive writer to sequentially ease into developing a trust of communication situations (from participating in singular, then paired, then small-group problem-solving tasks)" (40). This safe environment was designed to counteract the "negativism" they inferred would surface in a traditional learning environment.

One of the hypotheses of Fox's study was that "all students involved in the experimental group would report a significant reduction in writing apprehension as measured by pre- and post-Writing Apprehension Test scores according to the Daly-Miller instrument" (40). Another hypothesis was that students in the control group would retain their original levels of writing

apprehension as measured by pre- and post-Writing Apprehension Test scores (40). The subjects examined were six classes of first-year students enrolled in English Composition at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Those students were placed in this class because they had T-scores of below 49 on the “Missouri College English Placement Test” (44). The instruments that were used to gather data were the Writing Apprehension Test and a two-hour post-test writing sample. The analysis revealed that the experimental and control groups both decreased significantly in their writing apprehension, but the experimental group had a significantly lower increase (46).

Contextual factors also played a major part in a germinal study by Mike Rose, who interviewed several UCLA undergraduate students who, in his view, confined themselves to rigid rules and plans for writing, many of which were based on rules they had learned from their high school teachers. In his description of the writing process of Sylvia, one of his subjects, Rose indicates Sylvia “...has trouble deciding which of the rules she possesses to use...” and “...she has multiple rules to invoke, multiple paths to follow, and that very complexity of choice virtually paralyzes her” (“Rigid Rules,” 396). This inhibits her ability to progress through the invention stage of the writing process, as according to Rose’s observation, she would spend five hours on the initial paragraph (“Rigid Rules,” 396). Rose indicates that “there is an emotional dimension to Sylvia’s blocking” (“Rigid Rules,” 396) along with his recommendation that Sylvia receive “affectively oriented counseling sessions that blend the instructional with the psychodynamic” (400). A word like “psychodynamic” suggests that Rose’s definition of writing apprehension is similar to that of Daly and Miller’s, based on the fact that Sylvia feared the consequences of making what she perceived to be incorrect rhetorical choices.

Diane Clark developed a “process” theory of writing anxiety as part of her dissertation; this theory consisted of four steps (77). An individual:

1. encounters a context that involves writing;
2. reviews his or her mental catalog of information (which she defines as an image-schema) about writing and other contextual factors;
3. becomes anxious based on the review of that catalog; and this
4. leads to particular behaviors, depending on the individual (77).

Clark sought to develop a pedagogy that alleviates writing anxiety by “changing the immediate contextual factors involved such that the context no longer activates image-schemas that trigger an anxiety response in the individual,” much as Sarah did in Boice’s study by forming the Dissertations Anonymous group, which Clark also cites (119). She also cites a second solution as “changing the image-schemas themselves so that the anxiety is less likely to be triggered, regardless of the contextual factors involved” (119).

Most of the available research on anxiety has examined undergraduates. However, some research has been conducted on the anxiety of graduate students. Lynn Bloom conducted a case study in which she examined the lives of two doctoral candidates, “Sarah” and “Ellen,” who were struggling to complete their dissertations for different reasons. They had attended Bloom’s workshop on Overcoming Writing Anxiety, and she found that life circumstances had caused them to become “bogged down” in their dissertations (126). Through her case study, Bloom found that while Sarah’s family situation was conducive to her finishing the dissertation, Ellen’s was not, as she spent much of her time taking care of her family. Bloom’s findings indicated that “when contexts not conducive to writing interfere with those that are, the conflict may produce little writing – and little desire to do any” (131). While Bloom states that “writing therapists

claim that after several months of therapy their clients feel a great deal more comfortable about writing...there is no available data on whether or not the clients are actually completing the writing projects that drove them to the counselor in the first place” (131).

Anthony Onwuegbuzie discovered that writing anxiety is a major factor that “impedes graduate students’ writing of research proposals” (“Writing Apprehension Among Graduate Students,” 1034). He conducted a study in which he administered the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test, as well as a Self-Perception Profile for College Students to ninety-seven graduate students. On the latter, six items were measured: 1. perceived creativity; 2. perceived intellectual ability; 3. perceived scholastic competence; 4. perceived job competence; 5. perceived social acceptance; and 6. perceived self-worth (“Writing Apprehension Among Graduate Students” 1035-36). His findings intimate that high levels of writing apprehension correlated with low levels of perceived scholastic competence and perceived creativity (“Writing Apprehension Among Graduate Students” 1037).

Onwuegbuzie also found that procrastination was a major issue that resulted from writing anxiety, which he thought explained “why 50% of doctoral candidates from graduate programs in education never complete their degrees, with as many as 20% of students giving up at the dissertation” (“Writing Apprehension and Academic Procrastination...” 560). He conducted a study in which he gave 135 graduate students the WAT along with a test known as the Procrastination Assessment Scale, and he found a significant correlation between the WAT and the scores on the “Fear of Failure” and “Task Aversiveness” elements Procrastination Assessment Scale elements (“Writing Apprehension and Academic Procrastination...” 561), which led him to conclude that “...graduate students’ apprehension about writing appears to be related to academic procrastination stemming from fear of failure and task aversiveness”

(“Writing Apprehension and Academic Procrastination...” 562). Such a finding builds on the research of Boice, who found that blocked writers were prone to “writing apprehension,” which he described as “self-talk about the aversiveness of writing perceived as difficult, demanding, or complicated” and “procrastination,” discussed as “self-talk that justifies avoiding or delaying writing” (“Cognitive,” 97).

2.3 The Importance of Understanding Cognitive Psychology Principles in RWS

2.3.1 - Cognitive Distortions and Self-Efficacy

The findings mentioned above indicate that it is important for RWS to return to an understanding of cognitive psychology principles on a rudimentary level and realize their significance as they pertain to writing. The reason for this conclusion is that many problems with respect to students completing dissertations appear to be rooted in negative self-talk, procrastination, fear of failure, and task aversiveness, as found by Onwuegbuzie. Scholarship such as Daly and Miller’s 1975 study and the studies that grew from it appeared to address such issues. Onwuegbuzie’s study was conducted in 2001, which indicates that the problems cited by Daly and Miller are still present. Additional studies revolving around writing anxiety and self-efficacy were conducted in 2011 and 2013, which will be discussed here. It is important for RWS to know about the *cognitive distortion*, which is defined as a “systematic negative bias in the cognitive process of patients who suffer from a psychiatric disorder” (Beck 118), which, in many of the participants’ cases, has affected their writing (Appendix D).

Many of these distortions are related to the self-efficacy felt by writers, which has been inversely correlated with writing anxiety in a recent study by Christy Teranishi Martinez, Ned Kock, and Jeffrey Cass, which will be discussed later in this section. Albert Bandura defined this idea as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to

manage prospective situations” (qtd. in Pajares 544). He suggested the concept of self-efficacy “suggests that individuals will perform a task successfully if they know what behaviors will produce desired outcomes and if they evaluate themselves as capable of performing the necessary behaviors” (qtd. in McCarthy, Meier and Rinderer 466). Bandura has also suggested that “anxiety...is correlated with weak efficacy expectations, which lead to poor performance” (466). While she did not explicitly mention the term “self-efficacy,” Susan McLeod proposed a theory of affect in the teaching of writing in which she proposed that teachers “can help with strategic self-management in the affective as well as in the cognitive domain” (433), which was based on George Mandler’s theory that “a major source of emotion is the interruption of...plans which have a tendency toward completion” (431), which describes the writing process. She applied this theory to her contention that writing is an emotional process, and that it would benefit student writers to learn how to become emotionally self-aware as writers, which ties into the idea of self-efficacy in writing and can serve to reduce writing anxiety as part of the writing process.

Patricia McCarthy, Scott Meier, and Regina Rinderer sought more explicitly to apply such principles to the writing process. Grounding themselves in Bandura’s theory, they sought to assess the writing of “137 freshmen from beginning writing courses at Southern Illinois University” (468). They analyzed their writing on essays and had participants fill out a Self-Assessment of Writing. From this data, they concluded “students who accurately evaluate themselves as effective writers...write well, while those who assess themselves as poor writers perform accordingly” (469). They concluded by arguing for the importance of expanding “...the concept of self-evaluation to include evaluation of one’s writing abilities as well as assessment of one’s written work” (470). An issue arises here in that it is not clear whether students who write

well do so because of high self-efficacy or whether they possess such self-efficacy because they write well, or whether they have received external validation that they write well. An answer to this question occurs in that Pajares cited “verbal messages and social persuasions” writers receive from others as instrumental in shaping a writer’s self-efficacy perception (“Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Motivation, and Achievement...” 140).

While these seminal pieces speak to the importance of the study of self-efficacy in writing, more research is needed on this idea for the purposes of helping graduate student writers recognize the importance of higher self-efficacy and reduced writing anxiety as part of the writing process. In 2003, Frank Pajares wrote a review of the literature on self-efficacy. From his research, he found that there was a strong relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance (“Self-Efficacy Beliefs” 143), but cited that “self-beliefs about writing have received modest attention both from researchers in the field of composition....which is unfortunate, given the critical role that composition plays at all levels throughout the academic curriculum” (140). On September 12, 2013, I conducted a search on Google Scholar in which I typed the article’s title in order to see how many times it was referenced. A total of 381 pieces cited Pajares’s piece at the time of my search. Out of those pieces, thirty-seven of the titles:

- 1) specifically cited writing in the title without referring specifically to public school students;
- 2) referred specifically to self-efficacy in higher education; or
- 3) referred to self-efficacy in second-language writing (see Appendix E).

Out of these thirty-seven pieces, ten came from journals with the words “writing,” “language,” or “communication” in them, issues related to RWS. An even more problematic finding was that none of the titles mentioned “writing anxiety.” Given these sparse findings, it

can be concluded that this issue needs much more discussion in the field, particularly given the results from those participants who indicated high writing anxiety, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Martinez, Kock, and Cass wrote a piece titled “Pain and Pleasure in Short Essay Writing: Factors Predicting University Students’ Writing Anxiety and Writing Self-Efficacy,” in which they tested the following hypotheses on 127 college students at a small university on the US-Mexico border:

- 1) Students with higher GPAs feel less inclined to enjoy leisure writing than students with lower GPAs;
- 2) Students who are more inclined to enjoy leisure writing have higher writing self-efficacy than students who do not enjoy leisure writing; and
- 3) Students who experience lower levels of writing anxiety have higher writing self-efficacy than students with higher levels of writing anxiety (Martinez, Kock and Cass 353).

Through pre-assessment and post-assessment surveys, the writers were able to support all three of these hypotheses. They found that undergraduates with higher GPAs are less inclined to enjoy leisure writing, and those who are more inclined to enjoy leisure writing have higher writing self-efficacy, which the studies they cited showed were negatively correlated with writing anxiety. They discussed the importance of these findings with the WAC movement, suggesting that “universities that are implementing writing into their core requirements must develop adequate assessment measures and create innovative ways to reduce students’ writing anxiety and to enhance their writing self-efficacy and quality of their writing” (356). They concluded by arguing that “faculty members across the disciplines should encourage...more reading and

writing outside of class...which can enhance students' sense of self-efficacy...which in turn can alleviate their writing anxiety and improve the quality of their writing" (359). A Google Scholar search conducted on September 15, 2013, yielded only eleven scholarly pieces had cited this piece, which indicates the potential for a current need for further examination of these factors across the disciplines. Further, there were no studies that examined such efficacy in graduate students, who generally have high GPAs as undergraduates, and thus, might not be inclined to leisure writing. Further research is needed in how graduate faculty across the disciplines view writing and how they assign and assess it; consequently, more research is needed with respect to how this view affects the self-efficacy and writing anxiety of graduate students.

An even more recent piece that indicates the need for further discussion on this issue attempted to correlate self-efficacy and writing performance with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In 2013, Rapassak Hetthong and Adisa Teo problematized that there were few studies that "looked into self-efficacy in EFL writing and into the students' self-efficacy at a micro-skill level" (157), and so they sought to investigate whether EFL students' overall writing self-efficacy and writing performance were correlated. They examined 51 students who majored in English at Prince of Songkla University in Thailand. They were asked to write a 150-word argumentative paragraph, which would be scored on

1. relevance and adequacy of content;
2. compositional organization;
3. cohesion;
4. adequacy of vocabulary for purpose;
5. grammar;
6. punctuation; and

7. spelling (160).

They were also given a self-efficacy questionnaire that consisted of twelve questions. Through examining the questionnaire and paragraphs, the researchers concluded that writing self-efficacy was able to predict students' overall writing performance (162). Teaching implications included the following:

1. make clear to students that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct;
2. design tasks that are within the students' ability;
3. teach students learning techniques;
4. provide students with positive feedback; and
5. encourage students to try harder.

Research implications included the following:

1. explore an impact of task familiarity on learners' self-efficacy and their language performance by using tasks of different levels of familiarity;
2. explore the relationship of self-efficacy with other variables such as cognitive style, locus of control, goal orientation, etc.;
3. experiment whether certain EFL activities that promote metacognitive knowledge contribute to the enhancement of self-efficacy and learning environment;
4. explore how learners' self-efficacy is heightened during a language course; what strategies students use to enhance their motivation; or whether teacher's motivation strategies contribute to the increase of learners' self-efficacy and the improvement of their task performance.

Deanna DeBrine Mascle added to this conversation with her observations that “students with poor writing skills are more likely to be highly apprehensive about writing and less likely to be equipped to address this deficiency” and that “education pays little to no attention to writing apprehension, and writing instruction is instead directed toward error avoidance“ (Matoti and Shumba qtd. in Mascle 219). She posited the idea that “feedback, or social persuasion,” is another way to increase writing confidence and competence (222). These three current pieces are indicative that while the problems of writing anxiety and self-efficacy have been discussed in scholarship from 1975 until 2013, many writers suffer from writing anxiety and low self-efficacy.

2.3.2 - Psychology and the Writing Process

Empirical studies might continue to emanate from such research on writing anxiety and self-efficacy if we examine scholarship from cognitive psychology as it relates specifically to the writing process. For example, Alice Brand is known for her extensive study of psychology’s relationship to the writing process. In her article, “Healing and the Brain,” she found that a structure called the amygdala plays a major role in regulation of the emotions in that it influences memories stored “...and the strength with which it gets stored because it reads emotions” (207; 209). She problematized that “composition studies bears a deep ignorance about what makes our students tick” and “as a field, we have studied language from virtually every vantage point except from that of its potential for healing” (216). Her claim was that if “...things are stalled in a classroom it is because of emotion. When things go well, it is because of emotion” (216). Using information regarding the amygdala, she stated that “we make a serious mistake by not helping students to address their psychological lives, to continually humanize themselves” (217) and that “by writing about their experiences, they understand what is happening around them”

(217). While Brand did not conduct a scientific study, she found that learning and memory, two elements that have traditionally been associated with cognitive processes, “cannot occur without emotion” (217). Knowledge like this is important because the use of it may have the potential to help students develop more positive emotions about their writing processes, which can serve to reduce writing anxiety.

Brand’s finding relates to Jerome Bump’s definition of *emotional literacy*: “a requirement of personal growth, healthy relationships, and effective teaching so basic that it cannot be regulated to psychotherapy” (316). He developed a course devoted to “writing skills to communicate... emotions as well as our thoughts to others and to ourselves” (318), based on the theory that in “discovery learning, they can learn how to think, learn, and create” (324). This course relates easily to Brand’s discoveries in that both contend that the use of the emotions can contribute to learning, and emotions can also be channeled by the writing process, which can contribute to self-efficacy development and writing anxiety reduction.

Such emotional literacy development has the potential to grow in a scenario like one of the findings in Bloom’s previously cited study: one of her case subjects, “Sarah,” formed an informal support group called “Dissertations Anonymous,” which “met weekly to chart their progress, reinforce their writing goals, and encourage each other” (127). While this was not examined by Bloom, the idea of such a support group for graduate students was studied in-depth by David Pauley. The group, designed for graduate students writing dissertations, focused on alleviating anxieties related to “perfectionistic thinking,” “self-blame” and “isolation,” as well as “helping them develop a more realistic appraisal of their own worth, while calling into question their often inflated and idealized perceptions of their advisors and other mentors” (27). Ultimately, the group was intended to “affirm students’ strengths and help them to tolerate the

innumerable narcissistic injuries associated with the dissertation-writing process” (Winnicott qtd. in Pauley 27). He found that the “thirteen members involved in it...reported making progress in...

1. accomplishing at least one major goal with regard to the nuts and bolts of their work...;
2. forging improved (and often more frequent) communication with advisors, committee members and other mentors; and
3. reporting an enhanced subjective feeling of competence and mastery with regard to their work” (38).

Pauley’s findings indicated student progress on aspects of their dissertations as having stemmed from emotional literacy development, although his group did not discuss elements of the writing process.

2.3.3 - The Impostor Phenomenon

Such emotional literacy development and its facilitation of the writing process can emanate from awareness of “the impostor phenomenon,” which I will tie to writing anxiety through the examination of studies that link the two phenomena. “Impostor phenomenon” was a term coined by Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes, who defined the term as “an internal experience of intellectual...” phoniness (1). According to the authors, many graduate students “fantasize that they were mistakenly admitted to graduate school because of an error by the admissions committee” (1). In their study, they indicated women are more likely than men “to project the cause of success outward to an external cause (luck) or to a temporary internal quality (effort) that they do not equate with inherent ability” (2).

Clance built on this research by designing the Clance IP Scale, which “operationalized” the impostor phenomenon by examining “fear of failure...attribution of success to luck, error, or charm...the desire to stand out...the feeling of having given others a false impression...and the discounting of recognition of others...fear of evaluation...fear that successes cannot be repeated...and the feeling that one is less capable than peers” (Langford and Clance 496). The research they found also measured that “impostors...invest heavily in trying to live up to an idealized self-image of being intelligent in order to get the validation necessary to feel good about themselves” (497). It is also interesting to note Langford and Clance ultimately found that there was “a characteristic family background which has set the stage for the development of these impostor-related traits of excessive concern with impressing others and protection of the self from criticism” (498). In some cases, Clance cited that “some impostors’ fear of failure is so acute that they not only have to be good, they have to be the best” (*Impostor Phenomenon*, 67). These feelings are an explicit example of perfectionism, which has been tied into the type of writing anxiety discussed so far. Studies that tie writing anxiety and perfectionism will be discussed in the following section.

2.4 - Perfectionism and the Writing Process

Such perfectionism has been linked to “experiential avoidance,” which is defined as “the phenomenon that occurs when a person is unwilling to remain in contact with particular private experiences (e.g., bodily sensations, emotions, thoughts, memories, behavioral predispositions) and takes steps to alter the form or frequency of these events and the contexts that occasion them” (Santanello and Gardner 319). Santanello and Gardner conducted a case study that “examined the relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and worry further by suggesting that experiential avoidance is a mediator in this relationship” (320). They defined maladaptive

perfectionism as “actions and behaviors focused on achieving goals in order to avoid negative outcomes” (321). In the study, Santanello and Gardner found that “maladaptive perfectionism was significantly related to experiential avoidance” (328).

It is also important to discuss the types of perfectionism, as defined by Hewitt and Flett. They delineated three types: 1) self-oriented perfectionism, which “entails setting exacting standards for self and engaging in stringent self-evaluation while striving to attain perfection and to avoid failure;” 2) other-oriented perfectionism, which involves “...holding unrealistic standards for significant others, placing importance on being perfect, and stringently evaluating their performance”; and 3) socially prescribed perfectionism, which is based on the belief that “others hold unrealistic standards for them, stringently evaluating them, and pressure them to be perfect” (457).

Such instances of perfectionism have also been linked to procrastination. In a study conducted by Joseph R. Ferrari, he found that “...procrastinators compared to nonprocrastinators self-reported significantly more self-awareness, self-presentation, and self-handicapping tendencies” (81), “...procrastinators compared to nonprocrastinators have reported more self-consciousness and engaged in more self-presentation and self-handicapping behavior...” (82), and “...procrastinators with high scores on perfectionism also scored high on self-anxiety, self-presentation, and self-handicapping measures” (82). This finding is supported by two studies that tie perfectionism to writing anxiety.

The first study was conducted by Kathleen Y. Kawamura, Sandra L. Hunt, Randy O. Frost, and Patricia Marten DiBartolo, who found “there is an aspect of perfectionism related to general and social anxiety” (300). Additionally, while perfectionism has had minimal correlation with task performance, Peter Bieling, Anne Israeli, Jennifer Smith, and Martin M. Antony found

in a study attempting to connect perfectionism by undergraduates to exam performance that the “...inability to lower unrealistic high standards could leave an individual vulnerable to negative affective states and possibly distal outcomes like clinical depression” (175). This has the potential to affect negatively a writer’s process.

The second study was conducted by Ibrahim Yildirim, Dilek Genctanirim, Ilhan Yalcin, and Yaprak Baydan in which they found a negative correlation between test anxiety and academic performance, negative correlation between achievement and perceived social and family support and achievement, and positive correlation between perfectionism and test anxiety (290-93).

2.5 Potential Solutions

2.5.1 - Low-Stakes Writing

Much of the scholarship to date on low-stakes writing has been anecdotal, with few empirical studies being conducted on this invention technique. This dearth has not helped its ethos in the field of RWS. At its most basic level, Anne Lamott advises blocked and anxious writers to “let the childlike part of you channel whatever voices and visions come through and onto the page” (23). Peter Elbow formalized this idea in his iconic book, *Writing Without Teachers*, in which he described *freewriting* as writing without stopping and a good way to help a writer’s confidence by “providing no feedback at all” (4). In *Writing With Power*, he described it as being helpful “...with the root psychological or existential difficulty in writing: finding words in your head and putting them down on a blank piece of paper” (14). Robert Boice also found that “automatic writing is an effective therapeutic intervention for writing blocks” because “automatic writing gives a writer permission to write without taking responsibility for errors; it establishes momentum in writing that can be transferred to...more difficult tasks; and it can

show a writer that he or she is capable of composing competent and creative copy”

(“Psychotherapies” 193). We can extract a definition that makes it similar to freewriting.

Similarly, Joan Bolker mentions that “writing a dissertation provides the perfect medium for anxiety, for both healthy and psychological reasons” (91) and that “writing is probably the world’s best cure for a scared writer” (92). Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love* also proposed that the stress and anxiety of having to produce writing can be alleviated by viewing writing as something that can stem from within a person’s own genius.

2.5.2 - Mindfulness and Writing

Strongly related to Elbow’s concept of freewriting is that of mindful writing. Jon Kabat-Zinn, the innovator behind the practice of mindfulness, defines it as an “introduction to ways that people can use to listen to their own bodies and minds and to begin trusting their own experience more” (19). One of the goals of mindfulness is to “slow down and nurture calmness...and to learn to observe what your own mind is up to from moment to moment” (20). In relating this concept to writing, Robert Boice defined “mindfulness” as “a calm attentiveness to the present moment” (*Advice*, 106). Boice described seven ways in which mindfulness applies to writing:

- 1) “being awake,” which involves noticing our reactions to our experiences;
- 2) “clear-seeing,” which involves “staying awake by remaining in the present moment, nonjudgmentally;
- 3) “calm efficiency,” which involves looking at what needs doing and what we are actually able to do;
- 4) “freedom from excessive emotions and busyness,” which makes a greater sense of calm throughout one’s routine;

- 5) “connected and compassionate,” which helps us deal with a lack of approval from others in a more serene fashion;
- 6) “letting go of ego,” which involves distancing ourselves from the need to be liked by everyone; and
- 7) “self-discipline,” which is the ability to stay in the moment when one is fatigued or distracted from work (109-110).

Boice concluded that mindfulness is a key factor in the success of writers. He notes that they “work patiently” and “don’t rush impulsively into prose writing,” they “work regularly and constantly at writing but with moderation,” their “emotions while writing tend to be gentle and stable, punctuated by occasional bouts of peaceful “not-doing” or of mild euphoria” suffer “far less uncertainty and pain at writing” (111), they “welcome criticism” (112), and they “concentrate on efficiencies...such as getting to work in a timely fashion and doing more and better writing in less time overall” (112). Joan Bolker also advises students to use “focusing techniques...to return your attention to your subject” (89). Elbow also suggests “we need to do some writing where we don’t have to worry whether writers like it or disagree with us” (“Foreword,” vii). In this sense, Bolker and Elbow were discussing potential solutions to writing anxiety in that they could help focus the writer’s thinking on the writing itself and not on the potential outcome of the product.

2.5.3 - Dissertation Boot Camps

It can be speculated as to whether dissertation boot camps have the potential to help graduate students by enacting the types of strategies mentioned above. In an attempt to help graduate students work toward completing dissertations, the Writing Center at the University of Pennsylvania established a dissertation boot camp (DBC), which was designed to “serve

productivity goals – getting students to write as much as possible to finish the dissertation” (Lee and Golde 1). It was the underlying mission that these camps would help thesis and dissertation writers to foster new writing habits, or as Joan Bolker would put it, to “create a writing addiction” (39) in order to solve the problem described by Paula Gillespie that “Ph.D. student writers can struggle with writing because they have ‘huge amounts of data to process’ and they are attempting to express ‘disciplinary knowledge’ while familiarizing themselves with the genre of the dissertation” (qtd. in Lee and Golde 2). Sohui Lee and Chris Golde’s chief critique of dissertation boot camps was that “by focusing exclusively on getting students to write prolifically, these productivity-oriented DBCs miss the opportunity to promote graduate students’ on-going development as writers” (2). Rather, they examined the “Writing Process” DBC, which they positioned as an alternative to the “Just Write,” or product-oriented model (2) and operates “...under the assumption that students’ writing productivity and motivation are significantly enhanced by consistent and on-going conversations about writing” (2). It can be inferred that such positioning can allow room for mindfulness practices and low-stakes writing, as the process-oriented model appears to give writers agency to become mindful in their practices and engage in low-stakes writing to contribute to their development as writers, particularly with respect to raising self-efficacy and lowering writing anxiety.

2.6 Process vs. Product Orientation: Is a Revival of the Conversation Needed?

At this point, it becomes helpful to offer a history of the scholarship that has occurred with respect to the process/product debate. In the beginning of the 20th century, current-traditional rhetoric, which was “positivistic and rational” (Hobbs and Berlin 253), dominated writing instruction. This positivistic orientation was designed to prepare students for positions in which they would “...satisfy the demands of corporate capitalism” (254). Berlin and Inkster

conducted a study where they examined a variety of textbooks they saw as based on current-traditional rhetoric, which “tends to reduce the entire communication model to neutral observers in a neutral world exchanging neutral messages” (4). According to them, such instruction did not account for the writing process or audience awareness. With the onset of the process movement in the 1970s, Janet Emig discussed the need for teachers to reexamine the way they look at student writing, problematizing that “the writing process is treated as a fixed and full ordering of these three components occurring in a lockstep, non-recursive, left-to-right sequence” (131). She proposed a different way of looking at composition: “recursive, a loop rather than a linear affair...and affected by sophistication of a student writer’s skills, temperament, the ego-strength of the writer, and mode” (131-132). This idea countered the popular notion that writing was a formula and proposed that each student needed to be taught according to his/her own process. Perl also sought to address limitations in process research in that the body of research was largely anecdotal and that the field had not yet addressed composing of unskilled writers through her germinal piece, “The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers” (18), in which she examined the composing behaviors of five community college students. She chose to write about one, Tony, and found “the most salient feature of Tony’s composing process was its recursiveness” (26), which leads us to understand that the idea of recursiveness in writing was revolutionary at this time. Indeed, one of the implications of her study was that teachers needed to pay attention not just to “form or product but also to the explicative process through which they arise” (39).

In his discussion of process, Donald Murray divided the writing process into three stages: “prewriting, writing, and rewriting” (4) in his landmark article, “Teaching Writing as Process, Not Product.” He defined the third term as “reconsideration of subject, form, and audience” (4),

stating that revision "...may take many times the hours required for a first draft" (4). Linda Flower and John Hayes delved deeper into the cognitive theories that underlay process in 1981 with their article, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing." Here, they aimed to introduce a theory of the cognitive process involved in composing in an effort to lay groundwork for more detailed study of thinking process in writing" (274). They problematized Murray's stages in that they "model the growth of the written product, not the inner process of the person producing it" (275). Their cognitive process model consisted of the following elements:

1. rhetorical problem: this includes the rhetorical situation and audience that prompts one to write, as well as the writer's own goals;
2. the written text, which, as it grows determines the choices a writer can make;
3. the long-term memory, which is knowledge about the topic, audience, and writing plans;
4. planning, which is the forming of a representation of the knowledge that will be used in writing, which involves generating ideas, organizing, and goal-setting;
5. translating, which is putting these ideas into words;
6. reviewing, which is a conscious process in which writers read what they have written with the goal of further translation or revision of the text; and
7. the monitor, which "functions as a writing strategist which determines when the writer moves from one process to the next" (283).

With these seven elements, "writers create a hierarchical network of goals and these in turn guide the writing process" (286). In this network, Flower and Hayes found that the process did not follow any type of linear pattern. Rather, people start out writing without knowing exactly where they will end up; yet they agree that writing is a purposeful act...and subjects often report

that their writing process seemed disorganized, even chaotic, as they worked, and yet their protocols reveal a coherent underlying structure (286). It can be argued that awareness of this network can contribute to the raised self-efficacy and lowered writing anxiety discussed throughout this chapter.

Expressivist pedagogy came into the forefront of the RWS canon through the work of Peter Elbow and Ken Macrorie. As mentioned earlier, Elbow's ideas form much of the group's methodology. Gabriele Rico discusses "natural writing" as "an act of self-definition of what you know, what you discover, what you wonder about..." (16) as an expression of "the fundamental human desire for giving shape to experience" (16). One technique Rico recommends is "Directing Your Hand," which she describes as "an invitation to develop your natural writing skills" (20). Two exercises she endorses are "write something about yourself" and "describe a feeling, such as fear, love, sadness, or joy" (21). His findings appear to build on the theories of Carl Rogers, who stated that in client-centered therapy, "the client can let himself examine various aspects of his experience as they actually feel to him...without distorting them to fit the existing concept of self" (76). Ken Macrorie applied this concept to writing: "...asking students to write freely, putting down as fast as they can what comes to their minds, without worrying about grammar, punctuation, or spelling...excites their word-making circuits and delivers sentences with charge. This initial free writing frees them to write more strongly on assignment (sic)" (6). While the field most often associates expressivism with the 1980s, Peter Elbow's most current book, *Vernacular Eloquence*, compares writing to speaking; here, Elbow discusses "unplanned speaking onto the page" (139). Even today, Elbow discusses freewriting as having the ability to "use the unplanned speaking gear as a disciplined practice for part of the writing process, even when the topic is thorny" (148), as they often are in graduate theses and

dissertations. Through a number of examples, he cited freewriting as an effective process for writers lacking in skills and/or confidence, which has been associated with the anxiety discussed in this chapter.

James Berlin coined the label “social-epistemic rhetoric” in 1988, which posed a relationship involving “the dialectical interaction of the observer, the discourse community (social group) in which the observer is functioning, and the material conditions of existence (488). Social-epistemic rhetoric is based on the notion that language is based on social factors, such as how the individual interacts with his/her surrounding community and world” (489), which brings forth the idea that writing is influenced by an individual’s social experiences. This notion relates to Clark’s idea of changing writers’ contexts so that they do not react with anxiety at the prospect of a writing task, and it can serve to support my research question with respect to whether writing groups can help graduate student writers make progress on their theses and dissertations. In this case, the groups would function as a catalyst that reforms the writers’ image-schemas of a writing task as part of their processes.

Sidney Dobrin defined “post-process” as “the shift in scholarly attention from the process by which the individual writer produces text to the larger forces that affect that writer and of which that writer is a part” (132). This idea was based on the idea that “discourse production and reception are paralogic acts that cannot be systematized and then talked about in any meaningful way” (Kent 25). Some of the techniques used to help participants were based on post-process theory, which allowed participants to think about their own individual processes as relates to their experience in the moment. Such thoughts would become “passing theories,” or “strategies one employs during a particular instance of communication” draws upon Kent’s concept of “hermeneutic guessing,” wherein participants develop strategies based on previous

experience to interpret discourse for that moment of communication” (qtd. in Dobrin 140). As Kent’s concept draws on Donald Davidson’s theory of triangulation (140), which is interpreted by Bawarshi as “coming to know and understand objects in the world and each other only when our interpretations match others’ interpretations” (qtd. in Dobrin 141). This scholarship has not yet been applied to writing anxiety, which may be able to provide insight as to how an individual’s interpretations of objects in the world may contribute to writing anxiety, as well as how a reformation of such interpretations may be able to reduce it.

2.7 Intercultural Factors and Writing Anxiety

Frank Pajares and Margaret J. Johnson conducted a study in which they examined the self-efficacy beliefs of undergraduate writers in correlation with writing performance. While they found that there was a strong positive correlation, they also found that Hispanic students had lower writing self-efficacy and lower competency scores (171). In Pajares’s 2003 literature review on self-efficacy, published seven years after this study, he mentions how low self-efficacy beliefs provide an explanation why many minority students struggle in school and eventually “drop out.” Pajares concludes his review by stating “an important pedagogical implication to emerge from these findings is that teachers would do well to take seriously their share of responsibility in nurturing the self-beliefs of their pupils, for it is clear that these self-beliefs can have beneficial or destructive influences” (153). He cited that “attention to children’s self-efficacy beliefs is made an explicit feature of teacher education in such programs, and pre-service teachers are taught to assess both competence and the beliefs that accompany competence as part of writing evaluations”(154). I had mentioned earlier that only ten articles in RWS journals had cited this piece as of my last Google Scholar search, which indicates a dearth of current research in this area.

There is also a lack of recent scholarship on writing anxiety as pertains to second-language (L2) writers. Cheng problematized that the Daly-Miller WAT was meant primarily for native English speakers and did not take into account the linguistic issues faced by L2 writers (314). In response to this gap, Cheng aimed to conceptualize “a self-report measure of second...language anxiety grounded in both L2 learners’ reports of anxiety experiences and the multidimensional conceptualization of anxiety” (318). He cited Lang in grouping symptoms into that of somatic/physiological, cognitive, and behavioral (318). This questionnaire asked participants to

- 1) describe the situations under which they felt anxiety when writing in English;
- 2) specify their physiological and psychological reactions associated with their writing anxiety;
- 3) specify the effects of writing anxiety on their writing processes and behavior; and
- 4) explain the reasons for their anxiety feelings.

Based on the questionnaire, thirty-three questions were generated based on items derived from statements on the Daly-Miller WAT, McKain’s WAQ, and McCroskey’s Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (319). Due to the readability of the statements, six questions were discarded, reducing the number to twenty-seven. Cheng labeled this instrument the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), which he found reliable in “investigating the relationships between different facets of L2 writing anxiety and aspects of writing performance and practices” (331). I conducted a search on Google Scholar on January 24, 2014, and I examined a sample of studies that utilized the SLWAI (Appendix F). While some of those studies were published in language teaching journals, most were published in education or

psychology journals. Others were unpublished Master's Theses and doctoral dissertations. None were published in RWS journals.

2.8 Relevance to Writing in the Disciplines

It is important to begin this section by citing Ann Ruggles Gere's claim that it is important to differentiate the idea of "writing across the curriculum" (WAC) from "writing to learn" in that "writing across the curriculum aims to improve the quality of writing, while writing to learn focuses on better thinking and learning" (4). While this may be interpreted as an elided claim that WAC does not focus on better thinking and learning, one might conclude that it ultimately improves better thinking and learning through the act of writing. One might consider whether advisors and professors who teach graduate students in a variety of disciplines who have not had experience in writing or teaching writing might benefit from writing to learn strategies either in a classroom setting or in an individualized setting with their advisors. With this in mind, it becomes important to discuss the history of writing in the disciplines as a movement.

The movement started in 1963 in England with the foundation of the National Association of the Teaching of English (NATE) (Martin 16). Through this organization, the Development of Writing Abilities project began, which viewed student learning as "dependent "...on their using language to make sense of personal experience, real or imagined" (17), which, one might infer informs the philosophy of the writing-to-learn movement discussed by Ann Ruggles Gere. The Writing Across the Secondary Curriculum project followed, which "inquired from teachers of all subjects what use they made of spoken or written language in their lessons" (19). From this project, the report, *Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum*, "made theoretical aspects of the role of language in education more widely accessible" (19). In the 1970s, what is now known as the Writing Across the Curriculum movement (WAC) came to life.

In the 1970s, RWS began to gain credibility in academe, as graduate programs in Rhetoric and Composition began to appear around the United States, and research in this area began to “produce studies of the rhetorical, cognitive, and social dimensions of writing...that would provide an intellectual basis for WAC” (Russell 32).

At Beaver College, in response to a demand from her dean that was ignited by the “Why Johnny Can’t Read” article from *Newsweek*, Elaine Maimon also began to “...launch faculty workshops on writing...which treated writing (and teaching) as a serious intellectual and scholarly activity intimately related to disciplinary interest, not as a generalizable elementary skill” (Russell 36-37). These workshops began the spread of WAC to colleges and universities, which were supervised by committees of faculty from across a variety of academic disciplines (Russell 38). For many college faculty members, these workshops provided them with their first opportunity to discuss writing pedagogy in forums that were sponsored by their institutions (Russell 40). At the time of publication (1992), Russell stated “WAC thus far has only begun to explore those issues that lie behind its basic assumption: that language, learning, and teaching are inextricably linked” (41). Russell’s idea links to the thesis of this study in that students’ ability to develop self-efficacy and reduce writing anxiety as part of their thesis or dissertation writing processes can serve to educate scholars and practitioners in different disciplines about the writing process as pertains to their various discourse communities.

Several anecdotal pieces on writing across the disciplines have become part of this canon, such as Gere’s book, *Roots in the Sawdust: Writing to Learn Across the Disciplines*, which discusses a variety of techniques used by public school teachers, such as focused freewriting, listing, and dialoguing about content, which they used to facilitate learning about their disciplines (16). Such techniques as used in universities are presented by articles such as

“Interchange: A Conversation About the Disciplines,” which presents how four professors from the diverse disciplines of chemical engineering, sociology, philosophy, and physical education incorporating writing into their classes, which have the underlying motivation of “fostering understanding” (Abbott, Bartelt, Fishman & Honda 104), “helping students gain self-esteem” (Abbott, Bartelt, Fishman & Honda 105), and “helping students gain control over their own learning” (Abbott, Bartelt, Fishman & Honda 109). Overall, they believe in “...recognizing the value of personalized writing as a first stage to professional writing, enhancing communication between teacher and student, structuring the process for developing clear, organized thinking on paper, and providing a venue for self-expression: these seem to be major reasons why the four of us incorporate WAC in our classrooms” (Abbott, Bartelt, Fishman & Honda 118). This philosophy relates to the overall hypothesis of this dissertation, which is whether personalized writing graduate students do in support groups can serve as a stage to the professional writing they do in their disciplines.

However, few empirical studies have been conducted on the effects of WAC. Joy Marsella, Thomas L. Hilgers, and Clemence McLaren “hoped to learn how college students and their instructors approach writing tasks in different academic disciplines” (177). The researchers “polled a sample of twenty instructors of writing-intensive classes and found that most were willing to become involved with observations of themselves and their students” (177). From that sample, “seven teams of researchers selected one of the available classes for observation” (177), which varied from introductory composition to zoology. They have found that while the professors in the study “...have adopted expectations about the ways in which writing can relate to student learning” (185), students do not share those views, largely due to reliance on old strategies of “getting the assignment done” and a lack of “pedagogy that encourages risk-taking”

and measurement of success by “grades” on written products, which is a clear indication of the product orientation to writing described by James Berlin and Robert P. Inkster. The authors suggested that “we clearly need to work at convincing students that the benefit in learning will be worth the cost in time and energy to carry out the assignment as prescribed” (186). According to them, we can do this through the following means:

1. Helping students understand the power of collaborative strategies like peer review;
2. Acknowledging the growing numbers of nontraditional students who may not have time to experience the full benefits of writing to learn strategies;
3. Understanding students’ cultural values, which might now translate into writing-to-learn strategies;
4. Beginning the semester by getting to know them as writers and by helping them link past writing experiences with the new ones at hand (187); and
5. Acknowledging our students’ habits of handing in unrevised final drafts if we want to need to change these habits by give students practice on how to behave in collaborative groups (186-187).

In one of the essays in the book, Steve Pearce discussed writing to learn as it applied in his Introduction to Literature course by saying that “writing-to-learn activities allow students to express their feelings about literary works and concepts that they may be uncomfortable or just familiar with” (20). While he was discussing it in relation to a high school class, many of the responses of the participants with respect to their secondary school writing experiences leave room for discussion with respect to whether such techniques could apply in a graduate school setting. One might speculate as to whether such activities, as described in Gere’s book, might be effective in graduate courses in various disciplines, particularly with students who have not had

the kinds of writing experiences described in the scenarios in Gere's book and might benefit from low-stakes exercises that can reduce their writing anxiety and self-efficacy.

2.9 What We Need to Know

Several gaps exist in the current research with respect to writing anxiety and self-efficacy. While the most recent piece I was able to find on this issue, by Deanna DeBrine Mascle, discusses ideas instructors in different disciplines can do to help students build self-efficacy and reduce anxiety, she is offering these strategies primarily to undergraduate instructors. An existing question remains: how can graduate students be assisted in increasing their self-efficacy and reducing their writing anxieties? Pauley's study offered an insight to dissertation support groups, but they did not measure whether explicit instruction of the writing process can be beneficial to helping students develop self-efficacy and reduce anxiety as part of their dissertation writing process, which is something this dissertation hopes to measure.

With respect to Writing in the Disciplines scholarship, it has not been studied whether helping students develop self-efficacy and reduce anxiety can be beneficial toward writing across disciplines. In the next chapter, I will discuss how I planned, facilitated, and evaluated support groups devoted to helping graduate student writers make more effective progress on their dissertations through explicit instruction of writing as a process, the use of journaling, the use of mindfulness meditation, and the cultivation of positive self-talk strategies. I also conducted a series of interviews with participants in which I asked them about their writing histories, graduate school experiences, relationships with their advisors, and reflections on their progress with theses and dissertations. The interview was accompanied by a survey that asked participants about their personal lives outside of academia. This survey was meant to gauge the social context surrounding each graduate student writer. This dissertation hopes to fill this gap

by examining whether writing groups can help students overcome their writing anxiety and develop self-efficacy for the purposes of becoming comfortable with the genres and discourse conventions that are expected in their various academic disciplines. It also seeks to fill a related gap in whether this knowledge can educate graduate advisors across disciplines about the writing process and how to best guide their students through this process.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter 2, I established my research question: what effects can writing groups have on students who need to overcome their writing anxiety and develop self-efficacy for the purposes of becoming comfortable with the genres and discourse conventions that are expected in their various academic disciplines? I also established the gaps in the current literature on writing anxiety as the following:

1. Little discussion regarding whether explicit instruction of the writing process could be beneficial to helping students develop self-efficacy and reduce anxiety as part of their dissertation writing processes;
2. No discussion on whether the development of graduate student writing self-efficacy and reduction of writing anxiety impact research in Writing in the Disciplines; and
3. Little recent research on writing anxiety, especially as relates to graduate students and second-language writers.

This chapter will discuss the various methods I used in the workshops to address the research question, as well as the gaps found in the literature. It will also discuss the methods I used to analyze the data that emanated from the workshops. To address my research question, as well as the gaps found in the literature, I triangulated data through the following methods:

1. Field notes I collected from participant discussion during the workshop sessions;
2. Journals and exercises completed by participants;
3. Surveys completed by participants regarding the contextual factors that had the possibility to interfere with their writing progress; and
4. Interviews with participants.

3.1 Mission of the Workshop

My original research question stemmed from the hypothesis that workshops focused on helping students alleviate writing anxiety and writer's block through the use of explicit writing process instruction, freewriting, mindfulness meditation, and the fostering of positive self-talk and time management strategies would help students overcome writing anxiety and writer's block and, subsequently, make greater progress on their theses and dissertations. One of my goals was to have students understand Donald Murray's notion of "writing as a process, not product" (11); as I planned the workshops, one of my assumptions was that participants did not receive a great deal of writing instruction in their graduate coursework, or if they did, they were taught to see different genres of writing (i.e., laboratory reports, literature reviews, conference papers) as products to be written while not being encouraged to view writing as a "messy" process, which is a common idea in Rhetoric and Writing Studies, rooted in Murray's 1972 notion that writing needed to be taught and treated as a process consisting of steps, not an end-product (5).

3.2 Research Site & Participants: Workshop Design and Promotion

During the Fall 2012 semester, I conducted pilot workshops as a way to gauge how to design and implement the activities before conducting the actual study. I redesigned the workshops for the Spring 2013 semester based on feedback from the Fall 2012 participants, as well as my own reflections. I used the data collected from those Fall 2012 participants who attended most of the workshops and agreed to serve as subjects in the study, as they were able to provide relevant data for the study. All workshops were held in the conference room of UTEP's University Writing Center (UWC).

The Fall 2012 workshops consisted of seven sessions lasting ninety minutes each. They were designed based on perceived needs of anxious writers, as well as several of the readings, including various workshops from *Writing Works: A Resource Handbook for Therapeutic Writing Workshops and Activities*, a compilation of activities designed to facilitate expressive writing with the purpose of helping students experience its use as a springboard to the academic writing required for their thesis and dissertation projects. Activities included the following:

1. Explicit instruction on the writing process, writing anxiety, and writer's block. My assumption was that participants had not had extensive education or experience at looking at writing as a process, and hence, perceived their theses or dissertations as large end-products, which was emblematic of the problem Murray described in his work. I gave participants handouts describing Murray's stages of the writing process. I also gave participants handouts describing the difference between writer's block and writing anxiety in order to help them discern the difference between the two phenomena.
2. A part of a session was devoted to participants drawing their own writing processes. This idea was inspired by an activity in which I participated during ENGL5346 – Composition Theory and Pedagogy during the Summer of 2010. On August 11, 2010, Dr. Beth Brunk-Chavez had us draw our writing processes, which enabled reflection on how I composed. The rationale for this activity was to help participants to think about their individual writing processes.
3. An introduction to mindfulness meditation. During one of the sessions, participants spent seven minutes meditating to a track from Jon Kabat-Zinn's *In the Moment*. They then wrote reactions consisting of what occurred in their minds while the track

played. Participants were then given CDs of the album. The rationale behind this activity was to encourage students to listen to meditation tracks before writing in hopes they would adopt Robert Boice's traits of mindful writers.

4. A contract preparation activity. I conducted a session in which participants wrote out contracts specifying manageable tasks they could complete over the course of a week that were related to their dissertation or thesis projects. This activity was adapted from a "Reducing Writing Anxiety" workshop conducted by Jo Ann Cope and was designed to show participants how to view the thesis/dissertation writing process as a series of steps involving small tasks to be completed, which was meant to alleviate their anxieties with respect to the end product.
5. A session devoted to the cultivation of positive self-talk. Participants began the session by reading a handout on Positive Self-Talk (see Appendix G), which was taken from a website devoted to counseling patients with rheumatoid arthritis in October 2012, the title of which I was not able to find when I searched for it in March 2014. They then spent twenty-five minutes composing their projects. While writing, they completed a handout on self-talk, which I designed (Appendix H). Participants recorded any instances of negative self-talk in the first column, "Negative Self-Talk (I felt...)." They then wrote in the second column, "this led to thoughts about." After the twenty-five minutes were up, participants were instructed to write in the third column in which they replaced the negative statement with a positive one.
6. Journaling and discussion devoted to reflection on their thesis/dissertation writing progress since the previous meeting. The rationale behind this activity was to

encourage participants to develop self-awareness with respect to their writing processes.

Throughout the semester, some participants were unable to make specific sessions due to personal and work commitments. This served as the rationale for me designing a website in lieu of workshops for participants in Spring 2013 who were interested but could not attend any sessions due to scheduling conflicts or could not attend specific sessions due to family and work commitments (see Figure 3.1 for an image from the website). I spoke with two interested people, but neither person participated. The Spring 2013 sessions were an hour and a half each, but I shortened the number of sessions from seven to six. The rationale for this decision was that it would be easier for participants to write their feedback in an e-mail than to devote a whole session to feedback.

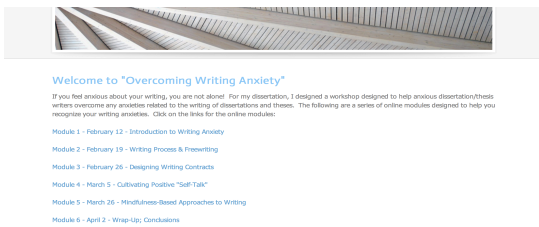


Figure 3.1: Image from Online Workshop

Promotion of the workshops had multiple components. First, I designed flyers advertising the workshops, which were distributed on departmental bulletin boards across UTEP (Appendix I). I also sent the flyers to graduate directors of the various academic departments on campus, accompanied by a short e-mail (Appendix J). Many of the advisors then forwarded the e-mail to their students. At the end of the Fall 2012 semester, I added another avenue of promotion, which was a short presentation to the ENGL5316 – Graduate Writing Workshop

classes offered by UTEP's English Department. I went into class sessions on December 6, 2012 and January 28, 2013 to promote the workshop.

3.3 Data Collection From Workshops

On October 23, 2012, the first pilot session of the workshop was conducted; twelve participants attended. They filled out a sheet on which they described their writing ability and what they hoped to learn from the workshop (Appendix K), which they then shared with each other. After this, they took the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) and the Daly-Hailey Situational Anxiety Measures (SAM) (Appendices B and C). I collected data from participants' journals and responses to exercises, as well as my own field notes from the discussion that occurred. I also collected feedback from participants' responses to questions regarding the sessions (see Appendix L). At the end of the Fall 2012 workshops, the only suggestion I received was to have more activities and less discussion, which was sent by Samantha on December 6, 2012 (see Appendix M). In response to this comment, during the Spring 2013 sessions, I limited time by timing participants' oral responses with a stopwatch when they read their responses and journals.

3.4 Data Collection from Interviews & Surveys

I triangulated the data collected from the workshops by including a survey (Appendix N), as well as interviews (Appendix O). The survey consisted of twenty-five questions, which were meant to measure academic and contextual factors that had the potential to inhibit participants' progress on theses and dissertations. I designed fifty-four interview questions, which were based on experiences participants had with writing through elementary school, secondary school, and undergraduate education, their graduate school experiences, their relationships with advisors, and their projections of where they see their progress with their projects. I designed interview

questions based on the advice of Irving Seidman, who recommends asking “open-ended questions” (84) and asking “participants to tell a story” (87), which informed my consistent use of the phrase “can you tell me a story” to begin many of my questions. These questions were designed based on the issues discussed by participants during the Fall 2012 workshop, which will be discussed in the next chapter. I sought interviewees from the following four populations: 1) graduate students who attended all of the workshops; 2) graduate students who attended one or more of the early workshops, but did not return; 3) graduate students who expressed interest in the workshops, but did not attend any; and 4) graduate students who did not express any interest in the workshops, due to either not being interested or not hearing about them, but whom I thought might provide interesting data. A total of fifteen people participated in the interviews. One elected not to sign the consent form. When they participated, they first completed the survey, which was followed by the interview. The following questions were only asked of the participants who identified as second-language learners:

4. Was this in your home country? (with respect to Question 3 – Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in elementary school?)
8. Was this in your home country? (with respect to Question 7 – Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in secondary school?)
12. Was this in your home country? (with respect to Question 11 – Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were an undergraduate?)
16. Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while you were learning English? Who gave you this feedback?
17. Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while you were learning English? Who gave you this feedback?

The following questions were only asked of the doctoral student participants, which were designed to help them reflect on the writing they had completed in their Master's programs:

18. Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master's program?

19. Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master's program?

Master's students did not answer Questions 18 and 19. Instead, I used Questions 24 and 25 to refer to the questions related to feedback in participants' Master's programs:

24. Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback you received on any of your writing while in this program?

25. Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback you received on any of your writing while in this program?

3.5 Transcription and Coding

I audio-recorded all fifteen interviews. However, I only transcribed fourteen, as one participant did not sign the consent form. Appendix P shows the profiles of people who participated in interviews and attended all the sessions. In transcribing, I used Express Scribe Professional to play back the interviews; I transcribed each interview onto a separate Word document file for each interview. In my coding, I examined participants' responses in field notes, journals, and interview transcriptions for words that appeared to function as an expression of feelings and thoughts with respect to the writing process and coded them inductively. For example, I copied and pasted chunks of responses into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. These responses were based on the themes categorized in the interviews, which are in the "Statements Column." I also coded responses from journals, and field notes written during the workshop

sessions (Appendix Q, Figure 1), which included writing from two people who participated in workshops but not interviews. In the “Coding” column, I attempted to create categories based on themes I found. In the “Conclusion” column, I composed short memos, or a “written record of analysis” (Corbin & Strauss 117), which were meant to express my interpretations on participant responses, which characterized “open coding,” or “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data” (Corbin & Strauss 195). I took the ideas I put in the “Conclusion” column and attempted to create larger blocks, or categories, of ideas. My initial data analysis netted seventeen categories of themes to discuss:

1. ICA: Intercultural Assessment
2. LW: Linear Writing
3. L2Inst: L2 Instruction
4. P/I/Con: Perfectionism/Impostor Syndrome/Contextual and Genre Issues
5. Dif: Difficulty of writing process/perception of writer
6. WM: “Writing/Writer” myths
7. PS: Public Schooling
8. I: Impostor
9. Con: Context/Genre Issues
10. EV: External Validation/Feedback
11. AI: Advising Implications
12. Alt: Alternatives to “Writing”
13. Und: Understanding
14. Proc vs. Prod: Process vs. Product
15. OI: Outside Issues
16. Com: Commenting
17. A/P: Anxiety/Procrastination

After writing a first draft based on these categories, I realized I needed to narrow them down further, as there was a great deal of overlap among some of the categories. For example, the categories of “L2Inst” and “ICA” overlapped in that they both addressed issues faced by second-language writers. I re-examined the spreadsheet and placed the data from interviews, journals, exercises, and field notes into larger categories based on themes they appeared to

address. I then added an additional column entitled “2nd Conclusion,” which attempted to group the original memos into larger categories (Appendix Q, Figure 2).

As I created these categories, a major challenge I faced was that several of the responses appeared to fit into more than one category. From this challenge, I devised the Integrated Five-Point Model of Graduate Student Writing Productivity Problems, which will be discussed in the final chapter. This model captures the problems graduate students face with respect to productivity and demonstrates how many of these problems overlap.

3.6 Limitations

In constructing this model, I faced the following limitations:

1. Problems were discussed by fourteen participants in this study, which is not necessarily representative of all problems that graduate students may face when it comes to productivity;
2. I was only able to hear participants’ versions of events described and am not aware of any cognitive distortions that may have shaped those events;
3. I only interviewed students on relationships with advisors, and hence, was only able to discern their points of view on the events they described;
4. I was limited by the fact that participants were speaking as to their thoughts and feelings in the moment they were interviewing; and
5. Participants were unable to remember details when asked about early childhood writing experiences.

The need to address some of these limitations in the research that relates to productivity problems will also be addressed in the Implications and Conclusions chapter. The Results

chapter will address how my research sought to fill the gaps I highlighted at the beginning of this chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings generally support the prediction that writing groups would help participants make progress on their dissertations. In analyzing the data, I came to the conclusion that the productivity problems participants faced were caused primarily by cognitive distortions, which were based on the following: 1. participants' constructs of "writing" and "the writer," as well as their expectations of themselves and perceived expectations from family; 2. how participants adjusted to the discursive requirements in the genre of the thesis/dissertation; 3. problems second-language learners faced with respect to how they were instructed in English; and 4. challenges participants faced with respect to communicating with their advisors. Cognitive distortions resulted from all four of these issues. In writing about the data, I found it difficult to separate categories, as there was a great deal of overlap among the categories. For example, some of the participants faced challenges communicating with advisors, which were grounded in their difficulties adjusting to the discursive conventions of their new genres.

Appendix D shows the list of cognitive distortions. It is important to note several participants exhibited some of the listed distortions based on a variety of reasons, such as how they constructed "writing" and "writers" and their expectations of themselves and perceived expectations from family. The following sections will show how cognitive distortions cause and are caused by problems related to participants' constructs of what it actually means to be a "writer," writing in different genres, and advisor problems.

4.1 Constructs of Writers

The responses many of the participants had to Question 1 ("when I say the word 'writing,' what are the first three words you think of?") and Question 2 ("when I say the word

'writer,' what are the first three words you think of?") indicated several of them had the construct that a writer is someone who is a published author. For example, Brenda had the belief that a writer was someone who published in reputable publications:

I was thinking of a writer, so I'd say newspaper, scientific journal, and proposal. (Craig: Okay). And maybe I think about Dr. Peters because I know he's the one that's gonna be reading my proposal. – Question 1 ("When I say the word 'writing,' what are the first three words you think of?")

Brenda's belief that a writer is someone that must be published contributes to her low self-efficacy. In addition, she idealizes the writing ability of her advisor because he is established in the field. Laura has a similar belief, but her thoughts were of famous writers:

Hemingway (laughs). I think of Hemingway, I think of great writers, actually, I, ya know, ummm, poets, Robert Frost, ummm, and just uhhh I guess the uhh something similar, I mean you can't do writing without reading and I think of reading so... - Question 2 ("when I say the word 'writer,' what are the first three words you think of?")

Laura's association of a "writer" as someone who has to have published well-known creative works also contributes to low self-efficacy as relates to writing her assignment. The word "creative" appeared explicitly in Bianca's response to Question 2:

Ummm, umm, I guess creative, umm, systematic, and uhh, I don't know, umm, patient.

The word "creative" in Bianca's response does not necessarily indicate low self-efficacy, but it does indicate that she has been taught to think a writer must be "creative" in order to write well, which relates to Laura's allusions to famous writers. Samantha indicated a similar belief as she mentioned a friend who is a practicing writer:

I think of my friend AJ, I think of someone proficient, and I think, I get more of a picture of someone at a desk with pen and paper. – Question 2 ("when I say the word 'writer,' what are the first three words you think of?")

All of these responses are indicative of Charney, Newman, and Palmquist's finding that "one attitude toward writing...is the belief that writing ability is a special gift, akin to talent or genius,

that certain people are born with and that others can never hope to acquire” (299). They are also indicative of Newman’s concept of “absolutism,” an epistemological style “characterized by a belief that facts are either true or false and that truth can be fully determined through objective observation of the world or in consultation with valid authorities (parents, teachers, experts, etc.)” (302), as these views indicate that if a writer is not published or well-known for writing, then he/she is not a writer. Charney, Newman, and Palmquist found in their study of 446 undergraduates that “students who had low belief in the learnability of writing had lower opinions of their own writing ability” (313). In the results mentioned here, the participants referred to the need to be published and/or creative to be “a writer,” which indicates low learnability beliefs on their parts.

Cognitive distortions of “all-or-nothing” thinking lead to constructs of what being a “writer” means, as indicated in the various responses of the participants during each introductory session, as well as the various responses to Question 1 and Question 2:

I think of my friend AJ, I think of someone proficient, and I think, I get more of a picture of someone at a desk with a pen and paper... He uhh he has written a number of short stories, he teaches English at uhhh Texas State, he understands the grammar, the technicalities of writing and he’s able to have fun with it. So it’s something that he seems to be very strong in so I think of him as having ease with writing and just enjoying it. - Samantha

Ummm, probably the same words actually, cuz as I was thinking about it, I was thinking of a writer, so I’d say newspaper, scientific journal, and proposal. (Craig: Okay). And maybe I think about Dr. Panel because I know he’s the one that’s gonna be reading my proposal – Brenda

It is thinker, it is creative, it is, what else...Ummm....Mmmm....I don’t know...Creative, thinker, and what else can a writer be...Mmm...I want to say...Uhhh...creative...He is creative...he is thinker...he is a messenger. – Melissa

Ummm, umm, I guess creative, umm, systematic, and uhh, I don’t know, umm, patient. – Bianca

Writer, I'm thinking the other words that we could write authors, I'm thinking about that words and in my feeling I just feel like writer may be easier than authors. That's for me. And the second word professional, uhh professional, and then the last one it's how can we say it's hard to be a good writer, yeah, I wanna, yeah. That's my words about writer, and I think writer it's kinda easy for me when I hear writer is oh I can do that but when I hear authors I just feel it's hard I cannot be an author for any piece of writing but I can be a writer. That's my feeling because of the words I get yes. It's easy for me when I say writer. – Patty

Books, ummm, yeah I think a bout somebody who likes to write or somebody who umm dedicates to write it's his or her career. – Lourdes

Mmmm, executed, something like that, like, elit, elit would be perfect or other than exhibited uhhh have to be precise in writing and express clearly his thoughts something like that. – Michael

Hemingway (laughs). I think of Hemingway, I think of great writers, actually, I, ya know, ummm, poets, Robert Frost, ummm, and just uhhh I guess the uhh something similar, I mean you can't do writing without reading and I think of reading so... - Laura

Interestingly enough, Laura, a confident writer, cited a pair of universally well-known authors as her definition of what a writer is, which might lead one to the conclusion that she does not see herself as a “writer” per se. Implicit and explicit allusions to creative writing also appeared in four of the other participants’ responses. Samantha made a reference to her friend A.J., whom she mentions writes short stories. Lourdes mentioned someone who writes books, while Melissa and Bianca explicitly used the word “creative” in their responses, indicating their possible perceptions that one must be creative in order to be a writer. It is not fully possible to conclude whether these writers consider themselves “creative” or not. However, since none of the participants above mentioned partaking in the writing of creative genres, it can be concluded that they may not consider themselves to be writers, which ties into the issue of writing self-efficacy in that they indicated beliefs that writers must be “creative” or “published” in order to be considered writers, which indicates their lack of belief in the learnability of writing.

4.2 Adjustment to Genre Requirements

A common cause of productivity problems in graduate student writing is their need to adjust to the new genre of the thesis or dissertation. Several of the participants had felt confident and comfortable when writing in other genres, but they faced situational anxiety when having to compose theses and dissertations. This section will discuss the following problems that occurred with participants: 1) Efficacy-Shifting in Confident Writers and 2) Family Expectations. In many cases, the perceptions of writers also overlap with the difficulty many writers face when they write in different genres.

4.2.1 - Efficacy-Shifting in Confident Writers

One such case is Brenda. Her perceptions of writers have contributed to difficulty adjusting to new genres. She was rewarded for writing according to a specific structure during her middle school and undergraduate years:

I followed the steps that he said which umm one of them was he he said always put like I believe or you know it is in my opinion and you know I guess he incorporated the I in trying to persuade somebody and that you had were opinionated and you felt strongly about something and that's how you had to do a persuasive type of essay. He also talked about like the first paragraph is an introduction, first sentence is the main idea, and somewhere in that introduction like you have to have a thesis and then usually try to name three points and the rest of the paper each paragraph or page should be on one of those three points and then the last thing is the conclusion. Which would make up the body of the paper.... Yeah, umm, well like I said, I was the essay questions from the exams and uhh you know what's funny is I followed the same format as the middle school and I mean that's very a very elementary format to follow but it's pretty basic... - Question 7 ("Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in secondary school?")

Ummm, yeah, I had this uhhh professor I forgot her name, she's in the history department, really good history teacher, and I'm not one for history or politics, but uhh the way she taught ummm and the fact that I read the book and like I was an undergraduate, it was like my first year and I was like determined. I, I read the material I was supposed to and then when it came time to the test they were essay questions and I did great on that, like, umm, and she yeah, she gave me compliments on the exams, ummm, and that felt good because a lot of people were behind in that class, you know what I mean? But it was also that I read the book well, and like I said, I'm not a big

reader but I read it well enough and I wanted to excel in the class so yeah the essay exams were were uhhh positive experience for me, and she gave me positive feedback. (Question 8 – “Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing in secondary school?”)

However, the formula that rewarded Brenda in those settings did not appear to transfer into the writing she did as she began to enter her field. The first instance came with one of her internships:

it had to be like a 15-page paper and when I first got there I was like oh my God how am I gonna do all that but by the time I was done with the project I had so much data and information and pictures that like instead of being 15 pages it stretched out to like 25 which was still okay, they said it was still fine, but it was a minimum of 15, so that was one, ummm, the one in 09 was another one, the one where I told you I just was too tired to ya know I was stuck like I had a brain fart pretty much when I was writing the one in 09 because I was just so I was getting data and last minute ya know what I mean I was trying to get results and just kinda piece it together it was my first like technical paper I had ever written... I would say that's positive feedback... - Question 18 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master’s program?”)

While the outcome was positive, the different discursive requirements of the scientific genre confused Brenda, as she did not receive the feedback in this genre that she had been accustomed to receiving in her prior writing classes. She continued to follow the same structure during her undergraduate years:

Ummm, yeah, I had this uhgg professor I forgot her name, she's in the history department, really good history teacher, and I'm not one for history or politics, but uhgg the way she taught ummm and the fact that I read the book and like I was an undergraduate, it was like my first year and I was like determined. I, I read the material I was supposed to and then when it came time to the test they were essay questions and I did great on that, like, umm, and she yeah, she gave me compliments on the exams, ummm, and that felt good because a lot of people were behind in that class, you know what I mean? But it was also that I read the book well, and like I said, I'm not a big reader but I read it well enough and I wanted to excel in the class so yeah the essay exams were were uhgg positive experience for me, and she gave me positive feedback. – Question 9 (“Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were an undergraduate?”)

Yeah, umm, well like I said, I was the essay questions from the exams and uhgg you know what's funny is I followed the same format as the middle school and I mean that's very a

very elementary format to follow but it's pretty basic, it's pretty much what you have to do now except for they're like 50 pages longer and you have an abstract and introduction that's like two pages and you still have a thesis on there, you have objectives on there so umm yeah, I would say that sticking with uhh middle school format in my undergraduate essay exams was positive feedback - Brenda - Question 10 ("Do you remember any positive feedback you received about your writing while you were an undergraduate?")

On the surface, it might seem that this type of cut-and-paste writing might be a good way to help writers develop their confidence and skills. However, it raises questions as to whether this type of writing transfers into new genres and contexts:

Mmmm, I guess it would have to be yeah at the end of every internship I've had, I've had to do like either a annual report or a, like, a conclusion of the findings of the research, so the first umm internship I had, it had to be like a 15-page paper and when I first got there I was like oh my God how am I gonna do all that but by the time I was done with the project I had so much data and information and pictures that like instead of being 15 pages it stretched out to like 25 which was still okay, they said it was still fine, but it was a minimum of 15, so that was one, ummm, the one in 09 was another one, the one where I told you I just was too tired to ya know I was stuck like I had a brain fart pretty much when I was writing the one in 09 because I was just so I was getting data and last minute ya know what I mean I was trying to get results and just kinda piece it together it was my first like technical paper I had ever written, ummm, so that and then I have had other internships where uhh in my Master's was funded by a program from NASA so at the end of every year I had to write like a five-page report uhh talking about my progress and stuff like that. - Brenda - Question 20 ("Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while in this program?")

While the structure Brenda used to complete her academic writing had a positive outcome in those classes, she needed to change the way she wrote when she entered her new scientifically based discourse community:

Yeah, so okay, I was talking about, two of them were in my undergrad after each internship I had to like do a paper that was like concluding there results, experimental data, the conclusions, and then in my graduate I was being funded by umm a NASA program and each year as part of like getting fun, qualifying for funding the next year, I had to write like a report umm talking about what I did during the year, same deal, the abstract, the introduction, experimental data, and conclusion, what I found. (Craig: Okay). So it was like a lab report, just longer. - Brenda - Question 23 ("Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while in this program?")

Well, I got funded again, so that was, I would say that's positive feedback, umm, and then also I had umm I wouldn't say, I wouldn't say it was writing, it was more of a

presentation but in a presentation I had for science, you kinda do have to do some writing so you know what you're gonna say or not say so you don't go up there and sound like an idiot, so I'd say I did a presentation once for chemistry day and I had to read through a lot of journal articles and I had to write down what I was gonna say, umm, and know you know a lot about it, and actually that presentation went really well, I got compliments on it so, I'd say that was a positive. – Question 21 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master’s program?”)

Two themes arise here. One is the view of writing as product, which Brenda seems to have. The difference is that Brenda sees “the abstract, the introduction, experimental data, and conclusion” as parts of the product, which is similar to her view of the placement of “introduction” and “thesis” in her essays. A second theme that arises through Brenda’s writing career is that of external validation. Brenda cited praise from her middle school teacher, her history professor, and the compliments she received on her presentation. Phrases like “I would say that sticking with uhh middle school format in my undergraduate essay exams was positive feedback,” “I wanted to excel in the class so yeah the essay exams were were uhhh positive experience for me, and she gave me positive feedback,” and “I got compliments on it so, I'd say that was a positive” indicate her reliance on positive feedback to form her assessments of her writing.

While it is important to note that Bianca had completed her thesis at the time of the interview, she had come to the workshop four months prior hoping for help with her thesis. Her anxiety was rooted in a difference of genre expectations. Her perception that her “professors didn’t have high expectations” during her undergraduate studies contributed to a “culture shock” with respect to genres as she attempted to adjust to graduate school, which ultimately resulted in a drop in her self-efficacy. Some of her responses indicated her need for external validation with respect to her writing, as mentioned in Question 9 (“can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were an undergraduate?”):

Ummm, I'm assuming my writing got better by then because I don't remember anything negative except for just umm becoming more concise I think by that time I had pretty much developed, developed my to become a little bit more thorough and detailed but I think in college they want you to be more concise and and so I think that's what I remember and umm a little more systematic and less creative I guess.

As with Brenda, Bianca seems to be reliant on the comments she received about her writing (“I don’t remember anything negative”) to inform her about her own self-efficacy with respect to writing during her undergraduate years. During her college years, she began to receive criticism about her writing:

Umm, I guess I would have to say during my exams, where I think I tried to be much more concise but then I missed several details that I think I over, it's an oversight that I may have thought an important thought may cross my mind and I just make the assumption the reader is familiar with what I'm talking about and I just skipped over it and maybe umm missed some points. – Question 20 (“Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in your master’s program?”)

That I'm very organized, ummm, that I'm organized and uhhh concise I guess but now I think I'm a little too concise and I miss important components and umm I guess that's it, as far as positive. - Q21 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback you received on any of your writing while you were in this program?”)

Despite such techniques, she felt anxiety with respect to her project, which was indicated by her scores on the instruments and many of her responses, such as the one below:

Mmmm, I guess it was the whole learning experience of how to, and it was the whole project as a whole, not necessarily the writing, but umm, I like the fact that I realize that I need a lot more work and I, I need to learn how to write better, I guess, ummm, I found that I guess during my undergraduate, I guess the professors didn't have as high of an expectation and I felt like, like I got a cold bucket of water in my face, ummm in graduate school where I guess it didn't meet the criteria, well it did meet the criteria obviously because I aced my, going through the graduate school but umm I think it was more the thesis project where it was the writing of the thesis that I realized I need to work on my writing – Question 42 (“What did you like, if anything, about how you wrote your project?”)

Samantha also faces anxiety and lowered self-efficacy about writing when faced with new genres, which is evident in the example involving the application essay, which manifested itself in a comparison with her friend AJ, as well as the friend who went to Brown University.

While Samantha enjoyed success in her writing experiences throughout her public school years, she appeared to struggle with adjusting to a new genre when she had to write her college application essays:

I began to really super-struggle the most with my writing when I was submitting essays for college for my college applications there because I always felt, I knew that I wasn't, I felt that I wasn't as good as everybody thought that I was and so I was always nervous that okay, now the truth is going to come out and I have to submit these essays to college it has to be me, they're asking about me, they're not asking me to describe something, they're not asking me to write a report about something, they're not asking me to research something and then put it down in writing, they're asking me about me or what do you think about this idea. It was much more abstract and so again for me it felt like I had to think of something original or something creative, uhh I had to find my own voice and I did not have my own voice so I was trying I had a friend who had gone to college a year before me and he gave me examples of his essays and then I had another friend who was a fabulous writer and extremely creative. People recognized him by his essay, I'm not lying, he went to Brown University to visit and they said oh you're the one who wrote about badadadada, they knew what he wrote. And I saw how he wrote and so I kind of tried to copy their voice, theirs, cause it sounded so great, I tried to copy the same tone or the same sound or the same style and it didn't work for me, it did not fit, and I really think that that was the weak point of all of my college applications, it was the essay part so when it came to, I remember my teacher, my English teacher, he read one of my college essays and he didn't really say anything, he was pretty quiet about it, and I didn't feel, I-I-I guess-I-I-didn't get the full idea of what it should have entailed, of what it should have said, and so I felt like it was very weak, and so that's when everything, for the writing, for me, was pretty negative at the end of my college year, my senior year, forgive me. – Question 8 (“can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, that somebody gave you about your writing while you were in secondary school?”)

Several issues are at play with respect to this experience. The first issue is lack of genre knowledge. Like many of the other subjects, Samantha enjoyed largely positive experiences with writing during her public schooling:

...in general I was really regarding as a very smart student. The others, I recall the other classmates saying Samantha's the smartest one in the class. Oh except for the teacher but after the teacher then Samantha is this the smartest one in the class. And so it that really just consisted of all subjects and I remember forgive me I always did very well on the state test, the TAWS test which was back then, I had no problem on my writing specifically, so I would always get, ya know, exemplary scores...Question 5 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, that somebody gave you about your writing while you were in elementary school?”)

While Samantha did well on her TAKS test and in the academic writing, perhaps the new genre of the application essay, which is a persuasive one with real-life stakes, caused situational anxiety on Samantha's part. The Impostor Phenomenon is also at play here, as Samantha felt her writing did not measure up to what she believed it should be, as she was comparing it to that of her friend's. The experience of having her teacher "not say anything" about her essay further exacerbated her feelings of anxiety, as she interpreted his silence as negative, which is an example of the cognitive distortion of "mind-reading," which is the assumption that "people are terribly judgmental and are looking down on you" (16). The limitation in this scenario is we do not know the full context of the relationship between Samantha and that teacher. These issues seemed to recur as she wrote her thesis project in graduate school:

...have admittedly, I have been working on my thesis project, I have been, forgive me, a graduate student for now, five and a half years, a Master's student for five and a half years. I probably received my samples at the end of the first year, and so, it has been in a stop-and-go over the past four years, and so, I have written maybe a page and a half but it's been so long ago that it really feels, it's, no, it's pretty much on square one, so I haven't, I haven't really written anything. – Question 27 ("Have you started writing your thesis/dissertation project?")

Part of the issue seemed to revolve around her fear of the idea of a "thesis":

Umm, I always pictured a thesis as something huge and big, I think since undergraduate school, I think it's been a fear ever since undergrad when you first enter college, you always hear about a thesis, oh am I gonna have to write a thesis my senior year, you know, how is that gonna happen, oh no, you know, a bunch of dun-dun-dun, you know, just scared, and so, I always stayed away from it, and then I ended up going ahead and enrolling into my Master's program and really being tempted with the idea of just doing the project but now everybody takes the route of the thesis. I never, what also scared me was, I never really dived into the lab work or research opportunities that there were as an undergrad so I didn't feel that I knew as much as my classmates or as my peers. My peers had done internships, they've done internships with NASA, with Lockheed Martin, with Boeing, whomever, umm, they had done research, undergraduate research with professors and I had already, always stayed away from those because I always felt like I was going to get exposed, I'm not as smart as everybody thinks I am, that was the big crutch for me, I'm not as smart as everybody thinks I am, I'm gonna end up disappointing them, they're going to ask me a simple question that any engineer should know and I'm not gonna have a clue and so when it came to the labs, the equipment, I always stood in

the background, stayed in the background, most of the other people, they would be the hands-on people and they were fearless, they weren't afraid of, like, doing something wrong and I was always pretty afraid that I would mess up the machine, ya know, you're talking about hundred, 200 thousand dollar microscope, those types of things and i-it always looked too big for me to be able to do, so I think since I've had that picture in my head all the way since undergraduate school going into college, that's probably what has set me up for right now. – Question 29 (“Why do you think you had those thoughts/feelings?”)

The ideas of perfectionism and the impostor phenomenon are at play in this scenario, as are indicated in the phrase “I’m not as smart as everybody thinks I am.” Samantha avoided using the equipment because she was afraid to be exposed as a fraud. This avoidance behavior has recurred in that her fear of the thesis has led her to avoid writing it. Her need for perfectionism, combined with her evaluation apprehension, is leading to “analysis paralysis,” which is preventing progress on her part.

In the case of the thesis, the anxiety of the writing of the thesis manifested itself in anxiety related to what she fortune-told as people’s negative judgments, which was grounded in the impostor syndrome: “now the truth is going to come out...they’re not asking me to describe something...write a report about something...research something...It was much more abstract...and it felt like I had to think of something original or something creative.” This perception also results in Samantha’s fear of her advisor. In this context, the words “now” and “more” are words indicating comparison, and the comparison between this genre and report/research writing, genres it can be implied she is used to writing about, created a new dynamic, which she was not used to, which was propelling her anxiety.

It is also fascinating to see how ordinarily confident writers faced the problems they did in their new genres. For example, Laura also indicated largely positive experiences with writing throughout her public school and undergraduate careers:

I had classmates who would always, I'm a bit procrastinator, but always got the job done and I always had classmates who said, how is it that you can only, you know, you write such good papers and get As when you didn't work so long or as hard as us on them, and it's just, so I remember that umm my English teachers were always very umm supportive so they always gave me good feedback on my writing abilities that umm I should pursue them further – (Question 14 – “Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were an undergraduate?”)

However, she began to face struggles when she began to write for graduate school, which have continued as she has written her thesis:

Yes, ummm, in umm one particular professor, for, I just could never write the way he wanted anything written and umm I would get low As, I'd barely make the A mark or I'd get high Bs and that was always frustrating cuz it was not umm he would say you're it was skirting around the issue rather than addressing head-on or he'd say umm like I wasn't really addressing the question uhh on paper. Again, skirting around the issue rather than addressing the main issue head-on, so I never understood, I mean, I, we'd talk about it and I, I thought I was getting my point across and he obviously didn't think so, so... - Question 19 (“Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master's program?”)

I, I just I'm stuck, I feel like I cannot, I can't write recently, I'm really, so it was really hard for me to ummm to get get it out or yeah I haven't experienced that, I always been able to write and for some reason this has been a uhh something different and challenging and hard for me so that's why it stands out for me. Question 23 – (“Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while in this program?”)

She stated she was excited about the project due to her past successes in writing, but she found that writing in the new genre was not as easy as she had professed to be originally:

I was excited. I thought it was gonna be easy, I thought it was gonna be challenging, but at the same time, I thought it was gonna be able to just let it flow like I've always felt like writing has flowed for me and umm as an extension of what I'm thinking or what how my thought process is and that's not working right now, I don't know so...but yeah, it was challenging, it was easy, I thought it was gonna be fun and exciting. – Question 25 (“Before you actually started working on the prospectus, what were your thoughts and your feelings about having to write the thesis?”)

Because I love writing. I love uhh that part of communication, I, it's something I've always done. - Q26 (“Why do you think you had those thoughts and feelings at the beginning?”)

How much writing, I don't, I have all the, I know what my research is, I have the research ideas, I have written the main body or the main ideas of what my paper's about,

now it's just filling in the, the concepts I guess, so I have a fair amount of, I guess written, but not, nowhere near a whole thesis, you know, the entire thesis. - Q27 ("How much writing have you done with respect to your project?")

Many ideas are at play here. The struggle Laura is facing relates to perfectionism. Laura has succeeded in writing, and now expects to do writing easily here. However, she is now facing the anxiety that comes with the new genre, and most likely, new discursive expectations. Since she is struggling, she is undergoing the cognitive distortion of "all-or-nothing thinking," which Burns defines as "looking at things in absolute, black-and-white categories" (16). She was excited due to those abilities, and perhaps this "shock" has kept her from writing or making progress on an affective level, and hence, on a practical level. Laura, who had also enjoyed success with writing, felt the impostor phenomenon when she attempted to compose in the new genre of the thesis because she was unaware of the conventions. Since she had easily grasped things, the idea of facing something that would be challenging has caused her to procrastinate on her thesis. This idea builds on Charney, Palmquist, and Newman's finding that contrasts "passive learning" with "active learning," in which they found that active learners sought to develop competence, while passive learners sought to display competence (300).

Like Laura, Sara had enjoyed success in her writing throughout most of her educational career. However most of the writing she did during her undergraduate career consisted of lesson plans:

...it's crazy but I don't remember writing, doing a lot of writing in undergraduate years here at UTEP at all. I remember we did lesson plans and stuff like that, we did worksheets but I don't remember writing papers at all when I was here at undergraduate school. (Question 3 – "Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in elementary school?")

She described her Master's thesis as "a research paper," for which she indicated not receiving a lot of feedback:

I had uhhh Dr. Stevens was my instructor and he, I didn't really converse with him individually but he just wrote on the paper "well-done." Just, but there were no individual comments about the writing or the style or anything else. – Question 18 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master’s program?”)

Despite the lack of genre knowledge, Sara’s empirical scores and interview responses indicated a healthy, confident self-efficacy as a writer, as well as an awareness of writing as a process:

A month from now, I would like to have the dissertation ready to submit to the committee. The first three chapters, not the whole dissertation, but the first three chapters. I'm actually at a point where I could begin writing some of the umm evaluative part of Chapter 4 the analysis part but I can't really because they haven't approved it yet, so I'm behind and ahead. – Question 41 (“What would you like to have accomplished a month from now with respect to your project?”)

Walking into her dissertation, it appears Sara did not have the genre knowledge needed to master academic writing, as she did not have experience in academic writing outside of lesson plans nor did she receive feedback during her Master’s degree. However, during her doctoral program, she received experience in writing in a variety of academic genres, such as literature reviews, comparative reviews, and article critiques. Part of her struggles appear to stem from her relationship with her advisor, which is not a discursive requirement of the genre, but it is a convention of graduate school that can determine one’s success on a thesis or dissertation. Sara’s responses with respect to the Advisor questions indicated conflict based on disagreement over ideology. It is not entirely clear whether genre unfamiliarity has impeded Sara’s progress at this point, because I was only able to hear about the advisor-advisee conflict from Sara’s point of view, which will be discussed more deeply later in this chapter.

Victoria’s interview responses indicated a strong comfort level with writing, as she indicated a love of writing poetry and fiction. Her responses to Question 4 (“Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in elementary school?”) and Question 22

(“Before you started writing your thesis, what were your thoughts and feelings about having to write your thesis?”) were in such stark contrast to each other with respect to her perceptions of her writing abilities that it can be concluded that genre unfamiliarity has propelled the negative feelings on Victoria’s part, including that of perfectionism and the impostor phenomenon:

One thing that stuck in my mind is a ummm when they asked what we did over the summer. (Laughs nervously) You know the proverbial what did you do over the summer. It wasn't really positive or negative I guess what made it negative if anything was the concept of being out of school. I enjoyed the writing it was not something that I had to wrestle with. I never had. I wrestle with more with ideas too many ideas rather than not enough or how to put words umm because I don't know them it's never really been a problem. It's really been there's so many words that come to mind at once that I don't know I had to pick and choose so that writing experience in that sense was a good one and I didn't have any trouble really putting it down. – Question 4

I was completely lost. I really had no idea what was expected. The process I knew was going to be slightly different I knew was gonna the requirements the expectations it was very different I was very confused when I first started I had no clue and since there was not I'm not gonna blame Dr. Young but there was just nobody that said this is how you need to start or this is the process you need to follow to get started so I felt completely, isolated, confused, umm, very stressed out.

And you actually answered the next question, which is why you had the thoughts. (Craig)

That's why because there was no one, I'll tell you later but I know I think you're trying to formulate something I read in the e-mail I don't know if you saw that but they're trying to do something starting next semester in the fall or something to that effect but I think it's something just because it's Master's level doesn't mean that we don't need help. We need help. We need a support system somehow or we need some group something this what we did the anxiety program is as close as we've come it's a good start I appreciate it but we've needed this sometime back cuz this is the second time I've tried this and this is a part of the reason why because I didn't know where to start I didn't know what to do. Anyway, that's... - Question 22

While these participants faced problems, one student’s ability to socialize with other graduate students in their disciplines proved to be helpful in making progress. A fair degree of anxiety was a theme in some of Samuel’s responses as well. With respect to Samuel, his anxiety resulted from unfamiliarity with the genre:

I was scared, because I had no idea what to expect. It was something I had never done before obviously, and I guess for me it's a little bit scary...Just cause it was something I hadn't done before and I didn't know what to expect, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know where to begin basically in a lot of ways, and not just in writing. I guess that happens for me...uhhh but I quickly picked up just by asking other students about their experiences in what I can expect and that helped me a little bit to shift away from that fear. – Question 25 (“Before you started writing your dissertation, what were your thoughts and feelings about having to write it?”)

In this case, socializing with other graduate students who had previously written theses had helped Samuel to become more comfortable in the new genre. It is common knowledge in graduate schools that one of the conventions of writing a thesis or dissertation is that it is generally a solitary process, unlike writing for a class during which students meet with classmates regularly. These conditions can be isolating for students (“Beating the Isolation Blues”). As Samuel works in a laboratory, he has regular contact with other graduate students who can provide him with support. In the humanities and social sciences, such contact is less common. Humanities and social sciences students such as Patty, Victoria, Lourdes, and Laura may be more prone to isolation, which can lead to the types of cognitive distortions discussed in their cases that can result from having to adjust to new genre requirements.

4.2.2 - Family Expectations

Family expectations also have the potential to contribute to cognitive distortions as relates to writing. For example, while Victoria received positive feedback from teachers, she indicated a lack of family support:

don't recall anything negative. My teachers were always very, I've been very fortunate, I didn't get the support at home so if anything that made it negative, so no, nothing negative – Question 6 (“What would you like to have accomplished a month from now with respect to your project?”)

It is possible that Victoria views her advisor as the academic “father figure” she never had, which is an example of Sigmund Freud’s concept of transference. She could be associating

what she perceived as lack of family support with her perceptions of her advisor's views, which causes her to "transfer" characteristics of her family onto Dr. Young:

Actually I can't wait to finish with this project and I told Dr. Young that. I want to show you what I'm made of Dr. Young I want to show you that I can finish this project so I can move onto my other projects that I've already started because I want the writing novels to be a part of my life. - Question 41 ("Would you like to have accomplished a month from now with respect to your project?")

Patty's perception of her family situation is causing her to feel pressure to be "perfect" on her dissertation:

at my family got very high expectations of me because in my life, I'm always, they call me the perfectionist, and I'm always getting whatever they are expecting, like for example, I'm always getting 4.0. I'm always getting something that number one, first-class honor, when I join any competition, I was the winner, always, when I joined the academy, anything, academe, competition, when I joined soccer, because I joined soccer team, I had to be the winner, and I'm always doing that, so they got high expectations and then when they ask me I feel bad because my mom ask me how many years you gonna spend for your Ph.D. Because they expect me to finish like three years but right now I spend so that that means they they they got some expectations but I couldn't do it, I feel guilty, I feel bad about that because and everyone around me they just you're always perfect, you are always good, you are always doing something that, no comment, so that's ' why and that's ' my pressure. Anxiety, stress, and everything, sometimes I just feel like why you have to expect that I have to be perfect all the time, like I don't think I can do it like two or three years, I think, so right now, I spend longer than they expect, they expect me to do like three years. Are you gonna finish it? Three years, right? When anyone expect you to do that so that's why I got lots of pressure and lots of stress and I just feel like you say sometimes when we got too much pressure and stress we couldn't concentrate on our work, like I expect to finish five pages, I can do only two pages, cuz I need to stop, I just have, I'm, I don't know, I cannot do it, I'm so worried about it so that's why that's why I need to constantly people with their help me to get through it, to control my stress and anxiety, and pressure and worries and everything because otherwise I feel I cannot complete it. Question 44 – ("Overall, what are your feelings about where you think you're going with your project?")

This response is indicative of socially prescribed perfectionism. She perceives that her family expects her to be perfect. In this case, "perfect" is having finished in four years (the "optimal" time in the program), which has caused her anxiety and stress to increase in this area. In the context of Ferrari's study, this need for perfection may be causing her to procrastinate, as

her need to have a perfect product may be keeping her from making progress. As I have not viewed her actual practice, I am limited in this idea. However, it might be worth exploring whether such anxieties are causing someone in RWS, someone who is trained to view writing as a process, to actually view the dissertation as a “product” over the “process.”

In Patty’s case, perceptions of family expectations contributed to anxiety. At the time of the interview, Patty had experienced a drop in her self-efficacy as it relates to the ability to write her dissertation due to this perception. Her response indicates family pressures as a cause of the Impostor Phenomenon cited earlier, which has only been compounded by the comments from the professor she mentioned. The family pressures she cites are also an example of socially prescribed perfectionism, as she believes that her family expects her to be perfect and she will disappoint if she does not achieve perfection. Since she has not finished in four years (the "optimal" time in her program), her anxiety and stress have increased in this area. However, she does appear hopeful, as she enjoys a harmonious relationship with her advisor, who she says has shown compassion. She is also committed to Patty’s work, as they meet once a week. A student in a situation like Patty would benefit from the type of group offered. One reason for this is that she gave the following response to Question 36 (“If you were to leave this interview right now and work on your dissertation, what would be the first thing that you would do with it?”):

I got this question last time you ask me, and this question made me get some stressed, I remember last time, oh my God, when I got home, I got headache, I need to get Tylenol, I just feel like you made me rethink about my problems and you make me think about why I have to do this and what I have to do next, so that’s why when I got this question, I feel, I need to set new goals because earlier I plan, like, as I told you, I have to complete 200 pages or 100 pages so after I got this question, you said at any plan from now right? So I just think about, I need to make a smaller plan, that’s what I intend to do.

Patty had also been a participant in a practice interview, which provides the context for “the last time you ask me.” When done in the practice interview, responding to Question 36

functioned as a form of “exposure therapy,” which is used commonly to treat generalized anxiety disorders. By having to rethink about the problems, she was able to come to a solution, which involved the setting of more realistic goals. Although she has been trained to think about process as a Rhetoric and Composition major, she needed to move from “product” to “process” in the way she was approaching her project. These goals seem to have followed into Question 37 (“What would you like to have accomplished a week from now with respect to your dissertation?”) and Question 38 (“What would you like to have accomplished a month from now with respect to your dissertation?”):

Patty: Yeah, just a week first, right? Not, because I'm planning to work in summer, but at least a week, I need to get something done for example, I tell you, maybe I need to have a couple pages for a chapter, at least, a couple pages, but you know what, my experiences, sometimes, when I plan to have like five pages a week, I couldn't make it, I couldn't make it, I can't have only two pages, but the following week, I can have ten pages, and the following week, I can have only one page, and then the following week, I can have more than that, so sometimes, I cannot reach my goals that I set.

Craig: And for the purposes of the question, what would you LIKE to have accomplished?

Patty: I want to have something like at least, few pages a week, that's my plan, that's my goal, for each week, at least, a few pages.

Craig: So by a week from now, a few pages?

Patty: Other day, I had one page a day, so I'm gonna change that to, I don't want to set a specific number, I said five pages, and I couldn't make it, I feel very bad about that, so I'm gonna say like a few pages, maybe two, maybe five, maybe seven. Something like that. – Question 37

I want to finish at least one chapter. At least, that's my plan, and it's too big. Yeah, that's my plan because earlier I just feel like oh my God just finish the whole thing, it's not possible, or I want to tell you, even if I cannot complete one chapter, maybe few sections in that chapter to make me feel better. – Question 38

These responses indicate her knowledge of “writing as process” applied to her own dissertation writing practices. While she indicated she was still scared, the question seems to

have led her toward a solution to her writing problem. If one simple question led her toward a solution, it is reasonable to conclude her affective state toward her project would benefit that much more from the strategies offered in the workshops.

4.3 Second-Language Issues

In addition to the obstacles mentioned above, a number of participants who did not speak English as their first language faced obstacles with respect to negotiating the demands of a new language in conjunction with having to learn discursive conventions of their chosen genres. Two major issues surfaced here: 1) participants' experiences in learning English as a Second Language before and during their thesis/dissertation writing processes; and 2) the way writing was taught and assessed in participants' native cultures versus the way writing is taught and assessed in the United States.

4.3.1 - Learning English as a Second Language

Some of the second-language writers, namely Patty and Alonzo, in this study, suffered anxiety that stemmed from learning English as a Second Language. In their cases, what they perceived to be negative feedback on their English writing abilities has served as a catalyst for negative self-talk, which has prevented both of them from making sufficient progress on their projects.

Alonzo indicated that he did not do a large amount of writing for school, outside of homework, in Mexico, his native country. When he was in 11th grade, he moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where he had to do his writing in English, much of which took place in an ESOL class. He indicated that in the ESOL class, his classmates admired him for his writing and would ask for his help, which resulted from him working with his father on how to improve his writing. He also indicated professors being pleasantly surprised by the progress of his writing skills.

However, he also indicated an experience he had in a biology class where the teacher had the students do peer review:

my fellow students had to review my assignment before turning it in to the professor so I wrote it down and this uhh girl she was a native speaker, she was an American, so she wrote it and she kinda uhh she didn't say anything directly to me but I noticed that she was happy or too disappointed in my writing cuz she was laughing and stuff like that so I noticed that, she didn't tell me directly, your writing sucks, but I noted that... - Question 9 ("Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in secondary school?")

He also indicated that he had a professor in the environmental science program who said the following:

he just said that my writing, that if I wanted to graduate and become competitive outside, I need to, I needed to improve my sloppy writing, that's what he said. Nahhh, and that really stick into my brain, I still remember that time. - Question 14 ("Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were an undergraduate?")

Comments like these stuck out in Alonzo's mind and have affected the way he perceives writing, which is an example of the cognitive distortion of "discounting the positive," or "insisting that accomplishments or positive qualities don't count" (16). This distortion has followed Alonzo through his graduate writing career, as he discussed an experience he had with a graduate writing workshop course he took through UTEP's English Department:

Yeah, I took this writing workshop annnd uhh we had peer review groups within the class and uhh most of us were uhhh non-native speakers and umm and we just wrote every week and we review our papers within the groups and and I actually felt impressed, well, not impressed, but I was surprised at myself because I thought my writing was really bad at that time and my peer reviewers didn't think so. They think that it was a good-good, I did a good job so... (Question 18 - "Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master's program?")

The fact that he was surprised to have received good feedback indicates another example of discounting the positive. This has followed him into his thesis writing practices. He indicated that he had not started his project as of the date of the interview:

I'm supposed to graduate this December so I need to really, really start writing on that, but I've been stuck on my uhh data processing for so long so... - Question 27 ("Have you started writing your thesis/dissertation project?")

The combination of the bullying experience Alonzo described and comments such as the one from his environmental science professor has led to negative self-talk and various cognitive distortions that have discounted anything positive Alonzo might have heard from others, and has led him to fear similar feedback from his advisor, which has prevented him from making progress on his project.

Patty was taught writing in Thai primarily from a product orientation, as indicated by her response to Question 6 ("Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in elementary school?"):

when we have to write something, we just have to write directly, we cannot add something else and we don't know how to do that, so the content is kind of boring, so just tell me about your day something, just say that we woke up, we ate breakfast, we blah blah blah so we don't have any interesting activities to add to that story, so let's say I don't have creative writing ideas at that time, so when the teacher asked me anything about, can you write this one, and I just, I have to find a book, and maybe need to get some ideas and copy that and then I cannot add something else, because I'm, I feel scared to add something else

However, when learning English, she indicated more progressive, "immersion"-like methods of being taught her L2:

I got more, umm, feedback about my creativity, yeah. I can do it more. Better than elementary and high school because it's new for me and the professor just give me challenges right, just said that you don't have to care about anything else, it's not your language. You just try to express your feelings and express your ideas without thinking about anything else. That's the way I learned English, but when I learned Thai, you have to do it, like, you have to follow this format, you have to follow this word, this sentences, this models only, so when I learn English, they just give me that option so like freewriting, okay, just do it, whatever you can, and later we can correct the other things, but you have to get your ideas, express your ideas, write it, write it down write it down so that's why that's my positive feedback, so first, I got correctness, perfect, very good because you know how to do it and the second one, I improved my creativity like I can write more... Question 13 ("Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were an undergraduate?")

This response is consistent with current scholarship in how English is taught as a foreign language in Thailand, as a 2010 study examined a teacher who used “a genre-based approach in the context of a Thai university undergraduate English major course” (181), which employed both a “process and product orientation” (189) through pedagogical practices such as 1) the use of model texts; 2) joint construction, in which the teacher facilitated a collaborative revising and editing process among students; and 3) collaborative writing groups, in which students worked together to compose a paragraph. She also indicated originally learning the British style of English, but once in the United States, she immersed herself into the American style of English, with which she indicated feeling more comfort. Patty is in the process of developing fluency in the process-oriented method of learning the language, yet her perfectionism is causing anxiety with respect to her writing.

Judging from the limitations of the interview, Patty was able to learn English relatively quickly. However, she indicated affective issues that were serving to impede her progress on her dissertation project. She indicated that she felt “scared,” “not sure,” and “not confident” in her response to Question 28 (“Before you started writing your thesis/dissertation, what were your thoughts/feelings about having to write the thesis?”). The main reason for this fear and lack of confidence appeared to be a comment she received from a professor in her program:

One of my professors told me that I cannot go through that so that's that's made me feel weak and I have less confidence because that's professor told me that I never ever gonna finish my dissertation and in that professor told me that I will never ever gonna finish my Ph.D so I lost everything during my second year here so that's why I don't wanna go through my process because of that conversation during our conference so actually I got problems in the class because umm that professor got high expectation with students and they set up everyone has to has to be like experts or something but because I'm not from here and I'm not familiar with many things here so that's why I create lots of problems in the class and I need to meet with my professor every week...So that's make me I don't wanna go through that process and I just feel that I lost my confidence and that's why I need, I need someone to help me because and when I work on that, I feel scared and in

my mind, I'm still thinking that I cannot do it. I don't know sometimes it's really affect you but it's still in my mind, I cannot erase that and if someone tell you that you will never ever gonna get through it or you will never ever gonna do it you just feel like maybe something wrong with yourself or something... - Question 29 ("Why do you think you had those thoughts/feelings?")

In this case, the comment Patty received caused her self-efficacy to drop, and it exacerbated anxiety she was already feeling as a result of trying to learn a second language and negotiate the discursive demands of her new genre.

Other participants reported having an easier time negotiating the linguistic and discursive demands of their projects. Having been educated in Mexico, Lourdes indicated that she received a great deal of praise from teachers on her writing in her native Spanish. She indicated teachers were not as strict about plagiarism in Mexico as they are in the United States. Some second-language issues arose when Lourdes came to the United States to begin her undergraduate studies:

...it was scary so you have to write like an essay and I didn't know how to do it and I think I didn't have any points for my essay so it was for the place for the English classes placement so we needed to write like an essay and I was just, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know how to express myself. - Question 11 ("Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were an undergraduate?")

As she talked about her undergraduate career, she talked about two professors who commented on her use of English. She mentioned that her ESOL professors lacked patience:

were disappointed or I don't know how to say it but I think I'll just say like you cannot write like this in college, this is not a college-level essay, something like that...they didn't have patience - Question 17 ("Can you tell me story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while you were learning English? Who gave you this feedback?")

Her reference to an anthropology professor was more positive:

I had a lot of mistakes and she really helped me but she said it was good even though I mean of course it wasn't as good as an English speaker's, but it was good...she was really supportive - Question 16 ("Can you tell me story of any positive feedback, if any,

somebody gave you about your writing while you were learning English? Who gave you this feedback?”)

When I first heard this information, I was surprised, because my perception is that an ESOL instructor would be more tolerant of linguistic differences and learning process than an anthropology professor might be. However, the possibility came to mind that Lourdes could be undergoing a cognitive distortion where she could be interpreting the ESOL professors' comments as harsher than they actually are. However, she rated herself as an 8 on a scale of 10, but she indicated she "...still need some feedback from others and there's still a couple of words I don't know that I don't know how to use or sometimes umm it's not as organized or my writing is not as organized as it should be." A response like this indicates a healthy confidence and self-awareness of her writing abilities, which has fostered over time and with experience in writing in the new language.

Like Lourdes, Melissa was educated in Mexico, but her memory of having been taught writing was quite different from that of Lourdes:

I think that we read a lot and we focus on uhhh orthography but orthography in terms of like words uhhh like I remember when I was in elementary school orthography was a very good thing but they really taught us but writing composition I don't remember I do think that we do not do that. – Question 3 (“Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in elementary school?”)

There are two possible reasons for the differences here: 1) Melissa may have been taught writing, but does not remember having been taught writing at a young age; or 2) the school Melissa attended did not offer a great deal of writing instruction, which is the more likely possibility given that Melissa appears to be a very confident, experienced writer and would most likely remember certain experiences with writing if she underwent them.

4.3.3 - Assessment and Response to Writing

Another issue that is important to discuss is the difference in the way writing was assessed in participants' native cultures, as many of the participants received different types of feedback in their native countries than they did during their learning experiences in the United States. This disparity served to cause them productivity problems with respect to writing their dissertations. The way writing is taught and commented on varies in different countries, which has an influence on the epistemology with which a student views writing.

Mary's case is such an example of this idea. She indicated during her studies in the Czech Republic, she did not receive feedback on her writing; rather, she only received a grade:

Mary: I think that the only feedback you get in Czech Republic is just the grade. No one like gives you any comments to it. - Question 9 ("Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in secondary school?")

Her contentions are supported by scholarship that discusses composition pedagogy in the Czech Republic. While attempts have been made to introduce rhetorical thinking into the writing of Czech students, the teaching of writing remains in the current-traditional canon in the Czech Republic, as "teachers have exaggerated the importance of stylistic devices over the limits of pupils' abilities and underemphasized the content of students' writing" (Saffkova 134). Even in an environment that was trying to introduce progressive ways of teaching writing, Saffkova found in the mid-1990s that "the Czech teacher is still rooted too firmly in a tradition characterized by... a lack of critical thinking and independent ideas, a pedagogy based on product orientation to writing, and a lack of pedagogical training for Czech teachers. Even more disturbing was that "criteria for assessing writing are generally absent in the practice of teaching writing at elementary and secondary levels as well as universities... so students neither know what is required from their writing performance nor do they comprehend the judgment of their

effort” (140). Saffkova concluded with the call to action that “we need immediate help for teachers of writing in introducing new approaches to writing classrooms” (140) and “we need a long-term innovation of the whole writing curriculum in the Czech Republic” (140) emphasizing that “professors must demonstrate in their responses to student writing that they care about more than grammar and stylistics” (140).

As mentioned in Saffkova’s findings, the teaching of writing in the Czech Republic is “current-traditional” (134), and form and grammar are emphasized over content. Therefore, Mary was taught writing in a current-traditional form of pedagogy, and we can infer was not taught to view writing as a process. She did not enter the United States until she began her graduate studies in the sciences, and she indicated the first feedback she received on writing came from the University Writing Center (UWC) at UTEP:

Uhhh, maybe like the first uhh project I submitted to the Writing Center here, it was terrifying how many comments I got, how many mistakes I made, but like nothing that like, I would, it's not that like they would write something wrong or something like not nice to me or something but it was just like the amount of the errors I made; it frustrated me and I opened a Word document and everything was right. – Question 19 (“Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master’s program?”)

In this case, Mary went from receiving no feedback to receiving a multitude of corrections from the Writing Center, to which she claimed to be “terrified.” So this disparity in feedback is an issue that is impeding Mary’s progress on her project.

Disparities also occurred with Michael, a participant from Bangladesh. Current-traditional writing pedagogy also seems to be prevalent in Bangladesh, as the primary focus was on error correction that was prevalent among L2 writing teachers:

The same thing I guess, we don't get like actually I didn't get uhhh feedback on the writing but my grade was okay, good, but they don't give me ohhh less I start I talked to a professor that if this is okay like submitting those this paper like this way, he said yeah, it looks good, but that's it, and they actually, yeah, yeah, so he said it's okay, like he like

the way I write in that paper yeahh I think this is kind of mixture of like what scientific things I put in there and maybe the writing as a so. I think that's kind of balanced so yeah... - Question 18 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback you received on any of your writing while you were in this program?”)

In order to discuss Michael, it is important to discuss how he may have been taught English in Bangladesh. According to Chowdhury, “English is taught as a compulsory subject for 12 years under a uniform national commercial...and tends to mean teaching grammar, reading, and translation” (284). It is also important to note that in Bangladesh, “students expect teachers to be authority figures and the teaching methods to conform to the traditional ‘lock-step’ teacher-centered approaches where teachers give orders to students, who then comply” (284). This provides an explanation for his response in Question 2 (“When I say the word “writer,” what are the first three words you think of?”) where he states the need to be “precise in writing and express clearly his thoughts,” given the likelihood that he was taught writing according to a current-traditional epistemology. This teacher-centered, product-oriented model of education also relates to his responses in Questions 9, 10, and 11 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in secondary school,” Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in secondary school,” and can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were an undergraduate?”), as he indicated that during his undergraduate years, he did not receive feedback as a writer. Learning English was mandatory for him, but he indicated being taught by a rote method, like translating Bangla sentences into English. Since he was never given actual feedback on his writing, he may not be fully aware of what to expect in the writing of the thesis. This idea is further exemplified by his response to Questions 6 and 41:

Not really. - Question 6 (“Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in elementary school?”)

I...I think I should have done my first draft within that time. – Question 41 (“What would you like to have accomplished a month from now with respect to your project?”)

As he has moved into his thesis, his lack of awareness of writing as a process has served to create a lack of knowledge on his part, as exemplified in his responses to the two questions. Michael is relying on his past knowledge from writing as it has been taught in Bangladesh through his words “precise” and “correct” to describe what he perceives as effective writing. As he thinks he will be able to complete a draft of his thesis in a month, he thinks that being “precise” and “correct” will be able to produce a solid thesis.

4.4 Advising

The relationship between graduate student and advisor is a unique one. Leonard Cassuto describes it as “the most important one in a graduate student’s training” (*Surviving Your Dissertation Advisor*, 5). Yet, many graduate students report having difficult relationships with their advisors. Several of the participants in this study reported problems, such as 1) conflict related to academic philosophies; 2) perceptions of their advisors’ opinions; and 3) lack of communication on the part of their advisors. A limitation in this section is that I only received feedback from students and did not solicit advisors’ input.

4.4.1 - Conflict Related to Academic Philosophies

During Sara’s doctoral program, she received experience in writing in a variety of academic genres outside of lesson plans, such as literature reviews, comparative reviews, and article critiques. Part of her struggles appear to stem from her relationship with her advisor, which is not a discursive requirement of the genre per se, but it is a convention of graduate school that has been shown to determine one’s success on a thesis or dissertation. Sara’s responses indicated conflict with her advisor:

Uhhh, I think the most annoying negative writing was from my chair. Ummm, because it was, she was very confusing, she was never clear about what she wanted, and so then I would, she would give me, she would write out how she wanted things, I would write it the way she wanted it and then I would go see her again, take what I had, and she would say, no, we're not doing it that way, we're gonna do it this way, so I would have to go back and redo it again and so that's been, that's probably been the most annoying piece of writing is working on the dissertation and having her continuously redo what I do and reorganize... - Question 23 ("Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while in this program?")

Ummm, up until last fall, we had been getting along very well, but I, I quoted an author whom she does not like at all and she went ballistic, so after that the relationship went downhill. It's umm I have to have her because she's my access to the kids, I can't get at the kids any way other way that I found except through her because she was ummm in charge of the program so I'm kind of stuck with her I try, I actually went to Dr. Sharp and talked to him about it, he said find another chair, work with somebody else, but I realized I can't because she my access to my participants in the study so I'm stuck with her so I'm trying to make the best of it, I'm trying to not let her get me, get to me, and just move on... We get along, k, we're friendly, but I'm really having to put out an effort to do it... - Question 34 ("How would you describe your relationship with your current advisor? You can provide a name if you're comfortable. Names will not be used.")

I think just that she seems umm sometimes she seems to be, have no direction or doesn't know where she's going and I don't know if it's because she's doing so many things, she has so much on her plate that she's not necessarily focusing on what I'm doing, but I think part of it is that it's just umm it's just the frustration that umm we seem to be going down a track and then she switches tracks on me so that's that's been a frustrating part... - Question 38 ("What are some things, if anything, you don't like about working with your advisor?")

An instance of an overlap between genre requirements and advisor issues appears to be present with Sara's project. If we look at the relationship from the standpoint of Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, and Switzler, authors of *Crucial Conversations*, Sara's advisor appears to be engaging in what they deem the "Fool's Choice," which appears to be an outgrowth of the cognitive distortion of "all-or-nothing" thinking. The Fool's Choice involves seeing the only options of communication as 1) silence or 2) speaking up in harsh, angry terms (22). Sara has opted for silence, and it is possible that her advisor picked the second option, which created a

dysfunctional dynamic between them. She seems to be progressing with her project despite the difficulty she is facing.

4.4.2 - Perceptions of Advisors' Opinions

Another source of writing productivity problems stemmed from how students perceived their advisors' opinions, which proved to be an issue in Victoria's situation:

I've never had such deep respect for an instructor as I do for Dr. Young. I'm glad you mentioned his name. I think he's just a little, maybe it's just me, but I find him very shy timid type of personality and so sometimes I wish he would be more how do I say leading me a little more as far as telling me what needs to be done what his expectations are and what I should be doing or process in that sense and so sometimes I look at him and I'm a little confused as to what he's thinking or what he thinks I probably know and I probably don't know and so that kind of relationship got started. I think we're doing much better now but I think early on I found that to be and that made me feel very uncomfortable. And I remember early on I got real upset and I started crying because of that. Cuz it got to the point where I don't know how, he's expecting this or the other or what he meant by that or should I ask him or and I don't want to make them at the same time I feel cause of my deep respect I don't want to make him feel tell him something that I just not a bad thing it's just I don't want to say something out of place that makes me look like a complete idiot at the same time well weren't you listening I took a lot of classes with him he's my instructor and I know I felt if I ask him he's gonna go weren't you paying attention in class. Anyway so that's how I feel but I deeply respect the man absolutely. – Question 34 (“How would you describe your relationship with your current advisor? You can provide a name if you're comfortable. Names will not be used.”)

Miscommunication between the two seemed to be a cause for Victoria's anxiety, especially early in the process. Two ideas are at play. One is the idea of socially prescribed perfectionism, as Victoria was labeling her advisor as a “master” on whom she relies. However, she was hesitant to communicate with her advisor due to fear. She also appears to be undergoing the cognitive distortion of mind-reading, in which she thinks that her advisor thinks less of her or will think less of her if she expresses her struggles. She used silence “as a means of avoiding potential problems” (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan & Switzler 58). In this case, the silence restricted communication and made expectations unclear for Victoria, which led to anxiety.

While her responses indicated having received a great deal of support from teachers, she indicated a lack of family support, which may be a factor in anxiety she is facing:

don't recall anything negative. My teachers were always very, I've been very fortunate, I didn't get the support at home so if anything that made it negative, so no, nothing negative – Question 6 (“Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in elementary school?”)

It is possible that Victoria views her advisor as the academic “father figure” she never had, which is an example of Sigmund Freud’s concept of transference. She could be associating what she perceived as lack of family support with her perceptions of her advisor’s views, which causes her to “transfer” characteristics of her family onto Dr. Young:

Actually I can't wait to finish with this project and I told Dr. Young that. I want to show you what I'm made of Dr. Young I want to show you that I can finish this project so I can move onto my other projects that I've already started because I want the writing novels to be a part of my life. Question 41 (“Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in elementary school?”)

This response indicates an instance of socially prescribed perfectionism. In the case of Victoria, the deep respect she feels for Dr. Young motivates her to want to “prove herself” to Dr. Young. This instance of fortune-telling results in perfectionism, which, in turn, leads to fear-based procrastination. The overlap between Adjustment to Genre Requirements and Advising Issues also applies to Victoria’s experience. As a literature major, Victoria not only enjoys success with writing, but she enjoys writing as a creative and intellectual act, in addition to being complimented for her abilities:

I've always been told that I'm articulate. The writing piece I couldn't tell you cuz it's been a thousand years but as far as what I wrote and how I wrote it I would always get feedback that said I was very articulate and that I it's like I knew what I wanted to say it's just at the time I didn't have the practice or the support to get me there. That didn't happen until years later. – Question 5 (“Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in elementary school?”)

While this response indicated a great deal of confidence in her overall writing abilities, as was evident from her empirical scores and her interview responses, her anxiety was situationally based, which led her to attend the workshops during the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters. This situational anxiety resulted from a combination of the difficulty she faced in writing in a new genre and her perception of her advisor:

I was completely lost. I really had no idea what was expected. The process I knew was going to be slightly different I knew was gonna the requirements the expectations it was very different I was very confused when I first started I had no clue and since there was not I'm not gonna blame Dr. Young but there was just nobody that said this is how you need to start or this is the process you need to follow to get started so I felt completely, isolated, confused, umm, very stressed out... - Question 28 ("Before you started writing your thesis/dissertation, what were your thoughts/feelings about having to write the thesis?")

because there was no one, I'll tell you later but I know I think you're trying to formulate something I read in the e-mail I don't know if you saw that but they're trying to do something starting next semester in the fall or something to that effect but I think it's something just because it's Master's level doesn't mean that we don't need help. We need help. We need a support system somehow or we need some group something this what we did the anxiety program is as close as we've come it's a good start I appreciate it but we've needed this sometime back cuz this is the second time I've tried this and this is a part of the reason why because I didn't know where to start I didn't know what to do. - Question 29 ("Why do you think you had those thoughts/feelings?")

In this case, the unfamiliar genre of the thesis and her isolation were causes of anxiety.

An overlap occurred between these elements, as well as her perception of her advisor. This overlap has led to cognitive distortions on Samantha's part as well:

I ummm I was visiting my professor, the one who's my advisor, and he was having a horrible day, a horrible day which is very odd for him, you don't see him mad or upset, and he was having a horrible day because he was reading someone's thesis and he marked, I mean, he says every page has red, every page, I'm writing more than they are, and he says I'm reading this and they haven't learned anything, and so my, it let me, it gave me an idea of what I need to do, or expect to put in for my thesis which you gave me some peace because I always felt pretty lost, okay well what do I put in there, do I put everything I've ever done and heard or thought and but I think at the same time it made me concerned that what if I do everything, I do all the tests, and I still don't analyze it enough, or don't do enough evaluations or understand the techniques and the testing enough to where I bring no new information, I, I, I feel that the purpose is to bring in

new information, not just research something that's already known, but I need to provide new information, so I'm afraid that I'm going to have a big pile of stuff that's, that's not valid. – Question 33 (“What do you think has been your least favorite part of writing your project?”)

Samantha is engaging in the cognitive distortion of “fortune-telling,” as she is afraid that her advisor will say the same things about her that he said about the student in question. Hearing that comment from her advisor leads to socially prescribed perfectionism on her part, which continues to inhibit her process, thinking that if she doesn't get it exactly 100% right (or the way her advisor wants it), she's "less than," which is also an example of all-or-nothing thinking, which is “looking at things in absolute, black-and-white categories” (Burns 16). Her relationship with her advisor seems positive, although she has certain expectations that she believes aren't being met:

My relationship with my advisor is, like, a Dad to a daughter... he has been umm very gracious, and very patient where he's very laid-back, he's very laid-back, he doesn't, like, umm, other professors I feel you get a lot done which probably would work for me with the way I am, ya know, they say, okay, have this, let's get this done, do this now, okay, let's get that done. Then I could be, okay, I can run and do the task. He is very much where come to me when, and, and we'll go from there, and it's just, i-i-i-it's like, it's all the responsibility on me, so I have to self-motivate myself to get everything done, and I do very well with assignments, and he doesn't assign so...but the relationship's good even though sometimes I get very embarrassed and shy because I feel like or I avoid him because I'm I haven't gotten anything done, but he keeps coming to me when he does see me, it's very brand-new, okay, so what about the thesis, and he says it very nicely, how about the thesis, we need to get it done, come to my office, let's talk about this, okay, let's get a plan, we can do this, you can do it, he's always believed in me, that's the biggest thing, ever since undergraduate school...I wish he was more, I guess, accountable with me, that's scoring it with me(?) like, I work very well just meeting with you, even though I'm busy and can do so many other things, but uh-h-h, an appointment was able to be set up, this day was able to be set up, so then that really ties me into have to do that with him, it's very, umm, ya know, if it doesn't happen, then it just didn't happen, ya know, us meeting, getting together, or umm, i-if I had like the days and times, it could be concrete days and times, not just ideas of days and times, then it would hold me accountable to it more, and that would help me... Question 34 (“How would you describe your relationship with your current advisor? You can provide a name if you're comfortable. Names will not be used.”)

Much like many of the previous participants, there are mismatched expectations between Samantha and her advisor, as she expects her advisor will take a more proactive role in managing her. The viewing of her advisor as a “father figure” suggests Sigmund Freud’s concept of “transference,” in which Samantha has transferred a need for a father figure to her advisor, much like Victoria did. As I do not know about Samantha’s family background, I am limited in this analysis. However, implications exist with respect to how Samantha views the relationship. Perhaps her anxiety is causing her to expect to be treated as a daughter, while her advisor may subtly be trying to steer Samantha toward the path of an “independent scholar” by mentioning the thesis to her “nicely,” which is a common goal of graduate advisors. In Samantha’s view, the advisor is being tentative in his communication with Samantha because he does not want to hurt her feelings, which is an example of the Fool’s Choice; in this case, he is being “too soft” (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan & Switzler 145), while Samantha wants him to be more direct.

Alonzo’s perceptions of his advisor are the opposite of how Samantha perceives hers. In Alonzo’s mind, his advisor expects him to be a perfect writer:

He’s a good guy, don’t get me wrong, I mean he’s a very friendly guy, and that’s what I love about him. He’s really umm uh friendly and stuff like that but as far as uh the actual research he’s really demanding, explosive too, he can be really mean when he’s mad so but that’s what I like him he’s friendly and he’s a very well-known researcher so he’s very smart too so... (Question 37 – “What do you like about working with your advisor?”)

Oh he’s real explosive, he’s real explosive, uh, and he expects a lot from us, uh but he, when we ask for help, he’s not there, he doesn’t have time for us at that time, ya know? Or what I really don’t like him what I really don’t like about him, when I ask, when I have a question, if the question is very simple for him, he uh he gets frustrated cuz the answer to that question is very simple in his mind but not for his students, so that’s one of the things I struggle the most with him. (Question 38 – “What are some things, if anything, you don’t like about working with your advisor?”)

An overlap occurred between his advisor expectations and that of his second-language struggles:

also another big pressure on me was that uhh English is not my first language, I mean, I've been in the US for twelve years now, and I still feel like I struggle with English a lot, uhh, especially writing. So uhh that was a big pressure on me, that umm in the back of my head, I was thinking you know what, English is not your first language, so that, that's a wall I have to overcome, so... - Question 29 ("Why do you think you had those thoughts/feelings?")

In addition to the cognitive distortion of “disqualifying the positive,” Alonzo is also engaging in the distortion of “labeling,” where the types of negative experiences he underwent had more of an impact than the positive. These experiences led to him labeling himself as a struggling English writer, which has been magnified by his advisor’s expectations. It is here where an overlap occurs between Second-Language Issues and Advising. In the meantime, the anxiety caused by this overlap has resulted in avoidance behaviors:

Those, basically, I guess, I love reading, I love reading, I guess, just that's one of my favorite things, ummm, yeah, doing the research, literature review, and reading, umm, filling my head with umm enough background in order for me to understand what I have to do for my project so...- Question 31 ("What do you think has been your favorite part of writing your project?")

Okay, alright, why do you think this is your favorite part? (Craig)

Because it's, it's easy for me to read then writing, that's why? That's the main reason, umm, and I love science, and I need to relate it to science, so really, reading science makes me happy, so yeah, that's why.

At the time of the interview, he did not feel hopeful about making immediate progress with writing:

As far as writing, I don't think I wanna, I don't think I can write anything because I'm so focused on processing my data and then after that I'm; gonna start doing my analysis so as far as writing I don't think I'm gonna do much about it. – Question 40 ("What would you like to have accomplished a week from now with respect to your project?")

Finish my data processing, I'm 60% done right now, so I'm 40% that I need to get accomplished, that's my goal, umm, and then after that, I really need to start writing and then cuz I'm gonna graduate on December and then I need to publish too so that's another big writing ass-goal that I need to accomplish. – Question 41 ("What would you like to have accomplished a month from now with respect to your project?")

One of two possibilities arise here: 1) Alonzo continues to procrastinate by doing data processing; or 2) Alonzo's anxiety has led him to procrastinate for so long that seven months before he's set to finish, he has now gotten into Walter Bradford Cannon's "fight or flight" mode and now has no choice but to progress through the project or risk not finishing his degree on time. It is also important to note that Alonzo shared during the February 19 workshop that he had mostly been doing calculations, which took time and kept him from writing. He revealed that his process was taking time and that he needed to start working on the introduction and the acknowledgements, which seems to go against writing as a process, as Alonzo is trying to work on the elements that go in the beginning first and then writing his thesis in a sequential manner, which indicates a product-based orientation.

4.4.3 - Lack of Communication

Some of the participants complained of a lack of communication on the part of their advisors. Advisor difficulty is also a theme in Brenda's experience due to what she perceives as a lack of communication. Brenda has also characterized her relationship with her advisor as not productive:

Ummm, I don't think it's what it should be, I wouldn't say it's on my part, it's on his part, ummm, I mean, we're in, we have a good relationship, it's positive, but uhh as far as him being a good guidance he's not, he's not good, a good guidance at all, he depends on the postdocs, so...we meet once a week, it's a group meeting though, so umm and he's like I said, he's busy, so if I needed to make a meeting with him I could meet with him but umm normally it's like on his way out or while he's walking to his car or something. I'd say once a week for sure...When I tell him I'm getting worried he's like why and you know he's like don't worry about it like it's gonna be okay like he's like no no don't panic like he's really calm about everything so if I'm worried about it and I mean he's my advisor he's my thesis chairman so if he's saying not to worry about it that makes me feel better, so I guess I like his reassurance...he lacks guidance, umm, he lacks guidance and also he doesn't seem, he'll tell you to do a task and then just think it's so easy but yet like sometimes we don't have the instruments like that are should be used to characterize the data where to attain data so that makes it a little bit difficult so I guess that's what I don't like. - Question 34 ("Would you describe your relationship with your current advisor? You can provide a name if you're comfortable. Names will not be used.")

The main issues facing Brenda are that her view of writing seems to stem from external validation, and since her advisor is not providing it, much like Mary, Brenda has engaged in the defense mechanism of “disassociation.” Her avoidance behavior may stem out of fear of writing the wrong thing and having it criticized harshly at her defense, or it could be rooted in a passive-aggressive response to what she perceives as her advisor’s negligence.

The overlap also applies to Lourdes’s situation. In her case, the lack of knowledge about the thesis contributed to procrastination behavior on her part. The phrase “my advisor assumed I knew” indicates a lack of communication between the two of them, which is a similar issue to what Brenda is facing with her advisor.

The overlap between Second-Language Issues and Advising Issues applied to Lourdes’s situation as well and caused some initial difficulty. While it appears she was able to pick up the conventions of English, she had difficulty adjusting to the expectations of the thesis:

Stress, anxiety, umm, I don't know, I think I procrastinate during the first semester of the thesis just because I didn't know how what were the steps to write the thesis. I think in the program they should have either a workshop or like a separate class that is just thesis, like, somebody who tells you this is what a thesis looks like and this is the process you're going to go through and so they they didn't tell us anything and umm at the beginning of the program they told us just start talking to professors about projects uh research projects and to see if you like something so maybe you can use it for your thesis and since I got a job as an RA in the bigger project I told you well the professor said you can use it for your thesis so that wasn't a problem for me but I didn't know umm how to start or or a process, I guess my advisor assumed I knew, and I didn't know so I think I waste umm the first class or the thesis one umm because I didn't do anything I just just choose some of the questions from the questionnaire to see if I could use it and so I didn't do anything then during that second semester of thesis 2 I start talking to people some although former umm MPH students, students of public health, told me it was a process, what I needed to have in order to propose and I needed to propose before I defend and they told me the process so I started working on it and I think I'm doing good until this happened, the professor leaving and all that. Question 28 (“Before you started writing your thesis/dissertation, what were your thoughts/feelings about having to write the thesis?”)

When asked to speak about her advisor, she mentioned having a “good relationship” with him and that “he’s a really good professor. . .it’s just that he umm relied on you working on your own and I didn’t know what he need so I don’t know umm I think I waste time because of that.” She mentions that during the second semester, they met more frequently, because Lourdes learned that the student is supposed to take the initiative when writing a graduate project.

Mary also faces a communication issue with her advisor; according to her, he employs a “hands-off” style when Mary’s needs seem to indicate she needs a more proactive approach to advising. Since she is not receiving it and she feels burdened by the time commitment of her job, she may be engaging in avoidance behavior as a response to this situation, which involves a slow process. This avoidance behavior may result from her advisor not being “on” her to complete, so she interprets her advisor’s apparent dismissiveness as permission to not write. In her mind, the advisor is the “boss,” which is a traditional one, but given the limitation in that I have not interviewed the advisor, the advisor may view Mary as “an independent scholar.” Conversely, Mary is operating under the assumption that her advisor will tell her what to do in her thesis; her problems with adjusting to her new genre requirements and communicating with her advisor are leading to disassociation, which has her ascribing directional responsibilities to her advisor instead of trying to write it to start out on her own.

Laura’s relationship with her advisor also seems to be a factor in her struggles, as indicated in her responses:

Regarding my thesis, not very. Regarding other things, fairly often. – Question 36 (“Before you started writing your thesis/dissertation, what were your thoughts/feelings about having to write the thesis?”)

He’s very supportive, he lets you pretty much choose your own route, he’s not micromanaging you, which could hurt at the same time, ummm, he’s just very supportive, uhh, I would say is the main thing that I like about him. – Question 37 (“What do you like about working with your advisor?”)

Ummm, I don't know, I've always had this idea as an advisor that they actually deconstruct what you give them as an idea or your concept and maybe even help you guide you like this is the methodology you should use and he's never done that. It's kind of left up to the student and I and I think maybe that's a hindrance or that's not something that, I mean, he does but I've never experienced and other students have said well I'm gonna use this methodology and I just, umm, I've never gotten that particular kind of feedback from him even though I've asked him and he said, you already have your methodology and I'm like, okay, so I guess it's the, it's ambiguous sometimes. – Question 38 (“What are some things, if anything, you don't like about working with your advisor?”)

Here, we can see that Laura and her advisor have different expectations of the relationship, which has implications for advising relationships across the disciplines. The overlap between struggles to adjust to a new genre, mismatched expectations of her advisor, and her own self-oriented perfectionism is causing productivity problems for Laura.

The overlap also applies to Bianca's situation. Adjustment to Genre Requirements and Advising Issues caused Bianca to experience some problems in her productivity early in the process. Trying to find that "happy medium" between what she perceives as conciseness and development are skills she has struggled with, which contributed to difficulty on her end when she was writing her thesis:

I thought she was gonna help explain a little bit more through the process but I think she was overwhelmed because this past year my class half of the class decided to do a thesis so she had about seven under her wing and I think it was just too much so I think she kinda left the ones that are a little bit more independent on their own and I was one of em. So she did provide me feedback when I really needed it umm she has an open-door policy, she gave me my cell phone number I could contact her at any point in time, and I, I understood that she was overwhelmed so umm I try not to bother her as much but umm I want, I guess it would be good but I think she was learning as being a professor how to just juggle all these different responsibilities as well as me trying to learn how to do this thesis... – Question 34 (“How would you describe your relationship with your current advisor? You can provide a name if you're comfortable. Names will not be used.”)

Like many of the other participants, Bianca also had expectations of her advisor, which were not completely met by the relationship, although Bianca appeared to understand the

advisor's situation, which is an example of how she turned a potential "villain" into a "human" (Patterson, Greeny, McMillan & Switzler 124), which the authors offer as a solution in preventing conflict.

4.4 Final Workshop Outcomes

During both semesters, there was a high attrition rate. Each semester's workshop started with twelve participants and ended with three. Overall, participants who attended the workshops regularly reported having a more positive outlook about making progress on their projects. Participants who did not return offered a variety of reasons for not doing so, although it is important to note that some of the participants who did not attend for the entire duration still benefited.

4.4.1 - Participants Who Attended Fully

As Samantha indicated, the workshops helped her realize she was not alone in her anxiety, and while Victoria did not mention it, it seemed the workshops had the same benefit for her. As a result of attending the workshops, Victoria was able to develop a better understanding of her thinking patterns and how they related to her writing:

We covered some interesting topics, we did them because this is the second time I take this program with you, but the first thing it just didn't sink in maybe I wasn't in that frame of mind but this time it did and it was as I read through the literature you provided which was a really good thing I was able to focus on some of the things and really focus on some of the things, the points it brought out, and maybe looking at myself looking at the way I perceive myself and my habits the things that I do the process of actually writing. I had to revisit those and kind of reexamine, is that really what I'm doing ask myself, and then see how I could change those patterns and so that helped a lot I think in taking the program. The activities were fun cause they were simple and you weren't asking like major things to do and didn't have homework to do aside from just the readings but once you did the readings you came prepared you read and you didn't just show up haphazardly and you prepared to be there, then what you said made a lot of sense. (Question 47 – "What are some things you learned about your own writing process in the workshop?")

As Victoria has had extensive experience writing in different genres, she was easily able to apply what she learned in the workshops, which allowed her to defend her thesis successfully.

Samuel was the only one of the Spring 2013 participants who stayed for the entire duration of the workshops. As a result of the workshops, he has been able to apply writing terminology into his practices:

I would read over what I've written already, and maybe just write down some ideas, do some freewriting of what I think I need to work on, and then target those areas specifically, and just try to go from there. (Question 39 – “If you were to leave the interview right now and work on your dissertation, what would be the first thing that you would do with it?”)

Having learned about freewriting from the workshops, it would appear Samuel is now able to apply that knowledge of that concept into his writing practices, based on the limitations of his response. Other responses indicated his knowledge and comfort with Murray’s concept of “writing as process,” which appears to have resulted from a combination of things, including the workshops and guidance from Samuel’s advisor, with whom he claims to have a harmonious relationship:

I feel comfortable. I enjoy what I'm doing and what I'm trying the scientific a question I'm trying to answer ya know so I feel comfortable and maybe a little behind on my progress but hopefully I can pick it up during the summer and get some stuff done, ya know. – Question 44 (“Overall, what are your feelings about where you think you’re going with your project?”)

I like, umm, I like the fact that my advisor suggested splitting it up, because that, to me, is a lot easier to handle chunks at a time vs. trying to put everything together so I guess that's what I would like about that. – Question 45 (“What do you like, if anything, about how you’re writing your project?”)

The situational anxiety she was feeling had led to procrastination. She indicated she had received the flyer for the workshop, and she originally thought she would receive help editing her thesis. However, it was something different. During the first session, procrastination and its

relationship to writing anxiety were discussed. Bianca indicated this discussion motivated her to just start writing her thesis:

I didn't realize that was hindering the whole writing process and it was my anxiety and I think once I realized that's what it was again I was just able to you know what this is it, I just gotta start writing, writing it up, it's not going anywhere, and just tackle it, ummm, a piece at a time, ummm, so yes, I, I, and that's the reason why I wanted to participate cuz I wanted to give you that feedback cuz it did help. – Question 52 (“After you attended, did the workshop meet your needs?”)

While Bianca only attended one session, she indicated that session helped her complete her project, which shows that a workshop that offers strategies on managing writing anxiety is beneficial for some students, albeit on different levels.

Laura came to one session during the Fall 2012 semester. She indicated the following reaction to it:

When I heard about the workshop and I read about it, I was under the impression I was gonna get more what say help but more feedback on the thesis writing itself umm I thought that would help me kinda get more of an idea of what, where I needed to be, what I needed to be doing, maybe the stages, cuz that's how I look at it, I think. In my mind, I guess a thesis has stages and so this is you know so I thought it was gonna be more geared towards somebody writing a thesis versus just the writing process itself. – Question 51 (“After you attended, did the workshop meet your needs?”)

It did actually, because I was able to understand one of the things holding me back and that's my procrastination. I tend to procrastinate quite a bit and so umm I've always felt that it helped me but at the same time I realize how much of it hurts me as well. – Question 52 (“After you attended, did the workshop meet your needs?”)

Well, like I said, I thought it was more geared towards, I was looking for something to give me more structure or discipline towards my writing my thesis. I think that would I think that would help if somebody put something together and has a structure or outline of maybe what the thesis writing, what thesis writing is about and how it is in stages, it really should be umm deconstructed so its' more manageable versus that's what I think I'm having trouble with cuz I see it as this big thing versus a small part of ya know it can, it can be deconstructed, I think, and if I had that mindset initially, I think I wouldn't have the problems I would be having now. – Question 53 (“If yes, why did you not attend the workshop? This is a question I'm asking to determine the needs of graduate student writers.”)

Like Bianca, she felt she benefited from learning about procrastination; however, she had not made the progress Bianca did at the time of the interview. Her indications that she needed a workshop that was structured on how to write a thesis indicates a need for a course like ENGL5316, although one might wonder why she did not know about the course.

At the time of the interview, Samantha indicated she felt “disappointed” and “upset” with herself due to what she perceived as her lack of progress. However, she had attended the workshops during the Fall 2012 semester, and she indicated a more hopeful outlook than she had in previous semesters:

Ummm, I, I feel that it's more possible now than how I felt even, last year, so I feel that it's more possible, my look about it...I learned that it wasn't so much as uh-hh a special issue that I had, that it actually felt like some sympathy which, which made I guess the condemnation lessen, that I had put on myself, I didn't know what my issue was, or what I problem was, I knew I had an issue and I knew I had a problem so the workshop really opened my eyes that it wasn't a special issue, not a personal issue, it's actually something that does exist, and I'm not the only one who battles with it, so i-it brought a lot of comfort and understanding – Question 45 (“What do you like, if anything, about how you're writing your project?”)

Not the writing process because the writing process has still been on hold, but definitely the outlook and the fear and the threat of the writing process has gone down very much, so as far as being stuck in my self-confidence, it's not on the brink when it comes to thinking about writing. – Question 48 (“What do you like, if anything, about how you're writing your project?”)

Judging from the disparity between her scores at the beginning and the end of the sessions, as well as these responses, Samantha has developed a greater self-awareness of the affective difficulties that have inhibited her progress. It seems that the next step for her would be in the application of it; one might wonder whether she might benefit from more workshops or affective counseling sessions, as I have offered to professionals outside of academia.

During the February 26 session, participants designed a contract in which they defined three small, manageable tasks related to their projects (see Appendix R). Samuel's reflection on this activity followed:

Today's session was helpful in making me realize how helpful setting deadlines is. I truly is a more effective way of doing things and might directly benefit me positively. I will try to set more deadlines from now on starting with the self-contract that we made today. I will try it this week and see how it turns out.

The interchange that occurred in response to Question 49 ("If so, what are you doing differently?" indicated that he has applied his newfound knowledge toward his writing process:

Samuel: I'm trying not to procrastinate so much, so I'm definitely taking the time sitting down and freewriting. I never did that before and I think that helped out a lot ya know just to get stuff down on paper and later reading it again is very useful so...yeah uhhh. What was the question?

Craig: The question is what are you doing differently?

Samuel: Yeah, basically freewriting and taking the time to start earlier, and don't leave everything till the end. I've been trying to apply not just to my dissertation but the classes I'm taking do require a lot of writing so I've been trying to apply it there too.
Craig: You said you haven't done a lot of writing on the dissertation since the workshop. What might you do when you start to really pick up force with your project?

Samuel: Probably write for 20 minutes and take a break and then keep writing for another 20 minutes but I would try and write every single day and yeah and just not leave it till the very end and split it up into pieces. I think that' show I would handle it.

At the time of the interview, it appears Samuel is making progress on his process, as he is taking the time to get his thoughts out on paper instead of being confined by the types of "rigid rules" mentioned in Rose's piece, which is consistent with his reflection in the final session of the Spring 2013 workshop:

Over the last month I have made some progress on my data chapter 1. I have accomplished a few of my goals mentioned in the contract made on February 26, 2013. I have read a number of scientific papers related to my first chapter (DEMs), which has deviated me from my previous plans. Maybe not one per day but it has been substantial

and has made me progress. Since my initial limited knowledge on the subject I have made much progress with reading and understanding the complexity related with this topic. I have read on geophysical data collection and analysis which is a fairly new technology being applied to ecology.

I have also made progress on writing parts of my chapter one. I have not been able to write for 15 minutes per day like I had wished simply because I found myself caught up in reading and researching the different methods that can be applied. It also took me time to refine my data processing to ensure proper analysis. I am satisfied with the progress I have made, although I am a little behind on my overall progress.

While he may not be making the progress he was hoping for, it is apparent that through the workshops, as well as Samuel's willingness to experiment with new techniques, he was able to develop his knowledge and application of "writing as process."

4.4.1 - Attrition

While the workshops seemed to work well for some of the participants, there was attrition. Participants who attended but did not stay offered a variety of reasons for not continuing their attendance. Responses to Questions 53 ("If yes, why did you not attend the workshop? This is a question I'm asking to determine the needs of graduate student writers") and 54 ("If not, what were you hoping to learn as a result of the workshop? This is a question I'm asking to determine the needs of graduate student writers") included the following:

Like I said, because I didn't have enough results, I still didn't have characterization data at the time, umm, when I was in there ya know, all I was thinking about was uhhh I need to I only attended one day I think, I was like I need to just hurry up and get that system up and running, and I'm waiting on all these parts and I can't write anything until I can do so so I guess it was more umm worry for what I had to physically be there for me to start writing. – Brenda

Uhh, the same reason, I think I mentioned you, like, uhhh, I was kind of busy to be frank, uhhh, maybe two weeks or something yeah, at that time, I guess, so that's one of the reasons and after falling out, one or two weeks, I didn't want to, and the other thing is that I first day I my expectation was like yeah, I, this workshop will help me, how to write or writing experiences or what should be in professional writing but it was not so, that's the reason I backed off. I thought it was like, I didn't, uhhh, when I got this mail, I thought it will be helpful for guiding, or writing thesis paper or research paper or what do you say, and after going there I think it was kind of like how you can be prepared, like

mental preparation or something like that, uhhh, I'm kind of right, right. Like blocking if you have any block of writing how can you remove it, I was thinking, I was wanted to go through that the workshop maybe that worked should be written in a scientific research or genre papers so that's why I went and I after first date, I deal is that it's not that way so I move back. – Michael

Ummm, I didn't care for some of the resources that you had in the workshop, ummm, I don't remember one, I think I read one of them, it stands out, I don't remember the author, I don't remember what it's about, but I just remember that I didn't care for the way it was written I didn't care for some of the language in it, it's not, ummm, so I thought I don't wanna do that. It just kinda turned me off. – Sara

Well, like I said, I thought it was more geared towards, I was looking for something to give me more structure or discipline towards my writing my thesis. I think that would I think that would help if somebody put something together and has a structure or outline of maybe what the thesis writing, what thesis writing is about and how it is in stages, it really should be umm deconstructed so its' more manageable versus that's what I think I'm having trouble with cuz I see it as this big thing versus a small part of ya know it can, it can be deconstructed, I think, and if I had that mindset initially, I think I wouldn't have the problems I would be having now. It's hard for me now to go back from a bigger concept to smaller pieces so I think that would help in the future. – Laura

Ummm, I guess strategies that can help me as a writer umm to write better and a specifically in my thesis I don't know maybe more I don't know umm to know more about how to write a thesis and if I was doing it right because I was feeling lost back then. – Lourdes

Many of these responses indicated that many of the participants were expecting a workshop that would help them explicitly with adjusting to the genre of the thesis. However, it is still important to note that some of the participants who did not attend still found the workshops helpful for their respective disciplines, as indicated in their responses to Question 52 (“After you attended, did the workshop meet your needs?”):

It did actually, because I was able to understand one of the things holding me back and that's my procrastination. I tend to procrastinate quite a bit and so umm I've always felt that it helped me but at the same time I realize how much of it hurts me as well. – Laura

It didn't meet my initial needs, but it did, because again, it pointed out something that I didn't realize that was hindering the whole writing process and it was my anxiety and I think once I realized that's what it was again I was just able to you know what this is it, I just gotta start writing, writing it up, it's not going anywhere, and just tackle it, ummm, a

piece at a time, ummm, so yes, I, I, and that's the reason why I wanted to participate cuz I wanted to give you that feedback cuz it did help. – Bianca

Ummm, yes and no, uhh, I mean, umm, I like it, I like the information that I got, like the readings they were good, but I guess I would like to have had more of feedback or maybe to, I didn't finish the workshop so I didn't know what you guys did after because it's not because I didn't like it it's because it didn't work out with my other things, other projects, so ummm I don't know I guess I was waiting to have more feedback on my paper, and to give feedback ot others of course. – Lourdes

The responses above seem contradictory with the ones presented previously. The results indicate the workshops were helpful for those who attended the entire time, and even for some of those who did not. Ultimately, workshops that are designed to foster efficacy-building have the potential to meet the needs of graduate students. However, there are larger implications for the future of RWS as a whole, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

This study attempted to examine whether writing groups could help graduate students develop self-efficacy and achieve greater progress on thesis and dissertation projects. Based on the collection of data, I found that the groups were beneficial for those participants who attended regularly. Those who did not see the benefits felt the need for more instruction in the genre of the thesis or dissertation. Through my data analysis, I found a myriad of issues contributed to the productivity problems graduate students faced with respect to their dissertations.

5.1 A Pictorial Representation of Graduate Student Writing Productivity Problems

The graphic that follows illustrates the findings of my research and the categories of issues that create productivity problems for students' writing. I have labeled the graphic the Integrated Five-Point Model of Graduate Student Writing Productivity Problems (Figure 5.1).

This model takes into account five factors:

1. Participants' Constructs of Writers: As shown in the results, several participants had constructs of writers as people who wrote professionally as journalists or were well-known for their creative works;
2. Genre Requirements: Many of the participants, some of whom had been successful with writing in other genres, struggled with adjusting to the genre requirements of the thesis/dissertation;
3. Second-Language Issues: Second-language participants struggled with attempting to negotiate a new language in addition to the discursive requirements of the dissertation. In addition, several of them had been taught how to write from product-oriented models in their native countries and were not used to the process model that is taught in the United States.

4. Advisor Characteristics: Some of the participants faced problems in their partnership with graduate advisors that emanated from the interactions between participants and advisors, as well as how participants perceived their advisors' feedback and opinions of them; and

5. Cognitive Distortions: These distortions were based on the previous four factors and, in many cases, inhibited participants' abilities to make progress on their thesis/dissertation projects.

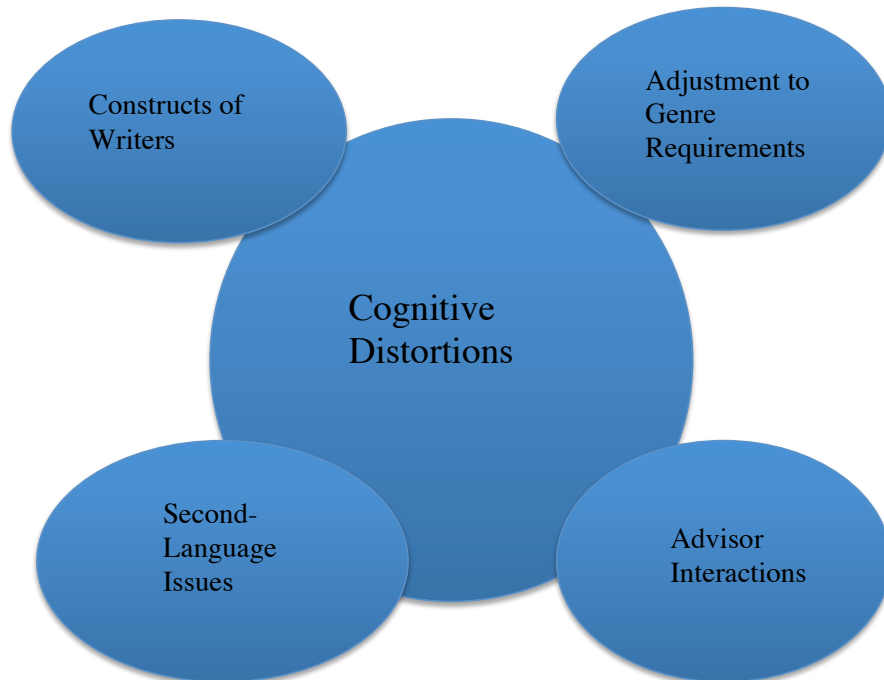


Figure 5.1: Integrated Five-Point Model of Graduate Student Writing Productivity Problems

The implications that emanate from this model are related to future directions in research with respect to: 1) the advising of graduate students across disciplines; 2) the teaching of writing

as relates to graduate students in various disciplines; and 3) knowledge related to second-language writing instruction in the United States and abroad.

5.2 Research in Advising

Research in advising as pertains to the graduate writing process has yet to be conducted in RWS, which is problematic, as several of the participants in this study identified communication challenges with advisors as barriers to their success in writing. For the purposes of this discussion, “advisor” means the faculty member who offers guidance and direction for a graduate student during the thesis or dissertation writing process. For example, Mary’s situation is an example of why it is important to examine advising as a potential implication from the results here. Mary’s perception is that her advisor only wants to talk to her when it is convenient for her. In this case, Mary’s expressed feelings of anger at not receiving the guidance she thinks she deserves may be leading her on a subconscious level to procrastinate out of anger. Laura and Brenda have the same views of their advisor. Victoria’s anxiety results from socially prescribed perfectionism with respect to her advisor due to the misplaced transference she has, as discussed earlier. As a result, Victoria’s fear of communicating her struggles caused cognitive distortions, which prevented her from making progress on her thesis prior to attending the workshop. Lourdes had the same perception until, just like Victoria, she decided to take the initiative to undergo the process. Alonzo’s perception of his advisor has caused him to undergo fear of him “exploding,” which has heightened his anxiety, and consequently, limited his progress. Michael’s relationship with his advisor has not caused any anxiety, but it has not given him any new insights into the writing process, which has limited his ability to progress or to be reflective about writing as a process. Sara’s relationship with her advisor appears to be oppositional,

which seems to be based on the advisor's use of verbal violence as a reaction to Sara's use of a scholar of whom she disapproves.

Research on advising enters the conversation at this point. I had an e-mail exchange with Leonard Cassuto, the author of the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* columns on Graduate Study, on October 9, 2013. During the exchange, he indicated a sparse amount of literature on graduate student advising; at the time of our conversation, he was writing a book entitled *Surviving Your Graduate School Adviser: How to Make the Best of A Relationship That Can Bring Out the Worst in Everyone*, which was released as an e-book in November 2013. The book consists of various essays directed toward graduate students on how to choose and manage advisors, as well as one directed toward advisors. As the relationships between participants and advisors were only discussed from the student's perspective in my study, there exists potential for scholarship that examines such relationships from the advisor's perspective, which is offered in Cassuto's book. Such questions to be asked might include: what are advisors' expectations of students? Are those expectations discussed in the early stages of the thesis or dissertation writing process? If they are not, what are the ramifications of not having this discussion, as perceived by the advisor? For example, a piece of research may distort Sara's advisor's perception of the relationship between her and Sara if expectations and boundaries are not discussed in the early stages of the writing process. Such research may also raise questions as to whether advisors should develop an understanding of individual writing processes so they may help communicate such understanding to the students who come under their care. Roisin Donnelly recently conducted a study of a writing group designed for lecturers in various disciplines wishing to increase their productivity for the purposes of publication and helping their students improve their academic writing skills across disciplines. Sixteen lecturers from a university in Ireland

participated in a module in which they were “asked to describe a critical incident or event through producing a written reflection – something significant from their writing experience – from which they could extract in-depth learning” (31). Several of the lecturers who participated in the study wrote about difficulties they had faced with academic writing, which supported research that “not all academics have practiced writing behaviors that are likely to lead to publication, and that ‘discovering and maintaining productive writing habits is not a straightforward process for all’” (Murray and Moore qtd. in Donnelly 34). Donnelly concluded with the call of action that “further research is required into continuing to increase the confidence and affective domain for the academic writers on the module with provision of writing support for skills, literacies and socialization” (36). A study on the writing practices and attitudes of advisors, most of whom, like the lecturers, are academic writers, could further support the aims of my study in helping graduate student writers develop their own writing practices for the purposes of increasing productivity. An e-mail conversation with Bonita Selting that took place on March 28, 2014 indicated that the Campus Writing Program at the University of Missouri is in the beginning stages of designing workshops for advisors on helping their students facilitate the writing process, so the field may be beginning to look into this idea.

5.3 - An Extension to Teaching Writing In the Disciplines

In 1992, David Russell stated the following about the state of Writing Across the Curriculum:

WAC thus far has only begun to explore those issues that lie behind its basic assumption: that language, learning, and teaching are inextricably linked. To understand the ways students (and teachers) learn through writing will be an unending project, for to arrive at

understanding means negotiating – and continually renegotiating – the relations between the many interests that have a stake in the ways language is used in education’ (41).

In my interviews with graduate students in various disciplines, it appears many graduate students are not taught any kind of writing process that relates to their respective disciplines, nor are they taught how to negotiate the discursive conventions of their chosen genres, despite this call to action and much more recent WAC/WID scholarship in recent years. It might benefit students and faculty in various disciplines if RWS researches whether faculty members across disciplines actually do teach these ideas, and if they were trained in a faculty development seminar on how to teach these ideas, whether they would actually follow it, or whether they might feel hampered by what they see as their “curriculum.” Suggestions brought forth by Marsella, Hilgers, and McLaren, as cited in the Literature Review, point to directions in RWS research that could lead to new studies that look at how professors in various disciplines respond to the various curricula they receive from their department chairpersons and other administrators. A future direction for research might be to examine whether professors are hampered by “too much content,” which I have heard from many professors in disparate disciplines during informal conversations. A question arises: is it possible for “content” to be modified in order to make room for the writing-to-learn strategies discussed in the Literature Review, such as focused freewriting and listing.

My model cites cognitive distortions that impeded progress on theses and dissertations as partially resulting from the dynamics of the student-advisor relationship. Researchers need to talk to advisors to gather their perspectives on the writing processes of their students and how advisors attempt to facilitate those processes. Practitioners in our field may also need to instruct graduate advisors across disciplines on how to help their students scaffold and facilitate the writing process with respect to their theses and dissertations.

Part of this instruction may include the building of self-efficacy as pertains to writing. It will also be helpful to return to studies of self-efficacy. In examining the dialogue of participants such as Alonzo and Samantha, it would appear that they have low writing self-efficacy and, as of the workshops, were working to raise their self-efficacy. As of the interviews, they were making progress, so it is beneficial to examine the self-efficacy of graduate students in their positions: graduate students who are navigating the discursive expectations of their new fields without knowledge of their own writing process.

5.4 Research on Second-Language Writing Instruction

Many of the participants faced problems related to their experiences in negotiating a new language on top of navigating the discursive demands of the thesis or dissertation genre. Barbara Kamler and Pat Thompson cited Norman Fairclough's three dimensions of discourse as having the ability to conceptualize "the tensions and demands faced by doctoral writers and their supervisors" (19). Fairclough's model incorporates text, discursive practices, and sociocultural practices, as relating to doctoral writing practices, as the text is shaped by the genre and the social climate in which the student is writing (Clark and Ivanič qtd. in Kamler and Thompson 21). However, with respect to second-language writing instruction, we can add a fourth layer to the model: the layer of linguistic practice (Appendix S). Second-language writers may have varying degrees of self-efficacy with respect to their native language that may differ from the self-efficacy they have in writing in English. This idea raises the question as to what implications this has for writing instruction in other countries.

As students like Michael, Mary, Patty, and Lourdes had different experiences learning about writing in their cultures, as well as different experiences with feedback, this has affected how they perceive writing in the United States. Their perceptions have also affected their habits

and resulting progress (or lack thereof, in some cases). A longitudinal study involving students from other cultures who receive higher education in the United States would inform RWS research about second-language instruction. In 2006, Ken and Fiona Hyland also wrote a study with respect to the impact of teacher commentary on the revision of second-language writers. They mention “ESL students...from cultures where teachers are highly directive, generally welcome and expect teachers to notice and comment on their errors and may feel resentful if their teachers do not do so” (3). A statement like this is indicative of the importance of cultural differences in the way students are taught to write, and it raises important questions with respect to the study of global education: can we inquire into student perceptions of feedback in relation to how they have been given feedback in their native countries? Will it benefit RWS to know how second-language learners are taught how to write in their native countries, particularly with respect to how their instructors comment so such research can help instructors across disciplines help their students adapt to their new language? Furthermore, how does instruction in their native countries affect students’ abilities to learn writing in the second language?

For example, there is a remarkable history with respect to the way writing has been taught in the Czech Republic. While attempts have been made to introduce rhetorical thinking into the writing pedagogy of Czech students, the teaching of writing remains in the current-traditional canon in the Czech Republic, as “teachers have exaggerated the importance of stylistic devices over the limits of pupils’ abilities and underemphasized the content of students’ writing” (Saffkova 134). Even in an environment that was trying to introduce progressive ways of teaching writing, Saffkova found in the mid-1990s that “the Czech teacher is still rooted too firmly in a tradition characterized by...a lack of critical thinking and independent ideas, a pedagogy based on product orientation to writing, and a lack of pedagogical training for Czech

teachers. Even more problematic was that “criteria for assessing writing are generally absent in the practice of teaching writing at elementary and secondary levels as well as universities...so students neither know what is required from their writing performance nor do they comprehend the judgment of their effort” (140). Saffkova concluded with the call to action that “we need immediate help for teachers of writing in introducing new approaches to writing classrooms” (140) and “we need a long-term innovation of the whole writing curriculum in the Czech Republic” (140) emphasizing that “professors must demonstrate in their responses to student writing that they care about more than grammar and stylistics” (140). The essay was written in the 1990s and was printed as part of an anthology about international reading and writing instruction in 2001. A Google Scholar search on September 20, 2013 yielded twelve sources that cited the book, so one can conclude there is still a dearth of research on this idea. Much research has been conducted into commenting on second-language writing in the United States, but there is a dearth of research on the “culture shock” that has the potential to occur when a person attempts to negotiate feedback in a new culture when he/she is not used to receiving feedback in her native culture. Mary had indicated she had not received such feedback, which is in congruence with the current finding that “students neither know what is required from their writing performance nor do they comprehend the judgment of their effort” (Saffkova 140). A direction for future research involves teaching writing in other countries to examine their pedagogical practices, as well as how those practice affect second-language learners’ abilities to understand writing norms in the United States. This research has the potential to shape how instructors and advisors across disciplines can be trained to examine how second-language learners were taught writing in their home cultures.

5.5 Closing Thoughts

The model that emanated from the research is a relevant one that takes into account the cognitive and affective issues that have the potential to inhibit the productivity of graduate students when they compose theses and dissertations. While the scholarship in RWS has diverged from discussion of expressivism and Susan McLeod's concept of the affective domain, the cognitive and affective issues addressed in the 1970s and 1980s still surface in students today, as evidenced by the findings presented here. The significance of this new model is that it has the potential to reintroduce study of these issues into RWS, particularly with respect to advising, second-language learning, and Writing in the Disciplines as pertains to today's graduate students.

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Appendix A

The following questions were excerpted from Mike Rose's *Writer's Block: The Cognitive Dimension*. Participants were given the following five options in response to each question: 1) Almost Always; 2) Often; 3) Sometimes; 4) Occasionally; and 5) Almost Never.

- 1) Even though it is difficult at times, I enjoy writing.
- 2) I've seen some really good writing, and my writing doesn't match up to it.
- 3) My first paragraph has to be perfect before I'll go on.
- 4) I have to hand in assignments late because I can't get the words on paper.
- 5) It is hard for me to write on topics that could be written about from a number of angles.
- 6) I like having the opportunity to express my ideas in writing.
- 7) There are times when I sit at my desk for hours, unable to write a thing.
- 8) I'll wait until I've found just the right phrase.
- 9) While writing a paper, I'll hit places that keep me stuck for an hour or more.
- 10) My teachers are familiar with so much good writing that my writing must look bad by comparison.
- 11) I have trouble figuring out how to write on issues that have many interpretations.
- 12) There are times when it takes me over two hours to write my first paragraph.
- 13) I think my writing is good.
- 14) I run over deadlines because I get stuck while trying to write my paper.
- 15) There are times when I'm not sure how to organize all the information I've gathered for a paper.
- 16) I find myself writing a sentence then erasing it, trying another sentence, then scratching it out. I might do this for some time.
- 17) It is awfully hard for me to get started on a paper.
- 18) Each sentence I write has to be just right before I'll go on to the next sentence.
- 19) I find it difficult to write essays on books and articles that are very complex.
- 20) I think of my instructors reacting to my writing in a positive way.
- 21) Writing is a very unpleasant experience for me.
- 22) There are times when I find it hard to write what I mean.
- 23) I have trouble with writing assignments that ask me to compare and contrast or analyze.
- 24) Some people experience periods when, no matter how hard they try, they can produce little, if any, writing. When these periods last for a considerable amount of time, we say the person has a writing block. Estimate how often you experience writer's block.

Appendix B¹

Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Instrument

TABLE I

Items and One Factor Loadings - Final Items Directions: Below are a series of statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement. While some of these statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

- _____ (+) 1. I avoid writing
- _____ (-) 2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated
- _____ (-) 3. I look forward to writing down my ideas
- _____ (+) 4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated
- _____ (+) 5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience
- _____ (-) 6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good
- _____ (+) 7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition
- _____ (+) 8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time
- _____ (-) 9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication
- _____ (-) 10. I like to write my ideas down
- _____ (-) 11. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing
- _____ (-) 12. I like to have my friends read what I have written
- _____ (+) 13. I'm nervous about writing
- _____ (-) 14. People seem to enjoy what I write
- _____ (-) 15. I enjoy writing

¹ This questionnaire was extracted from page 246 of John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller's article, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension."

- _____ (+) 16. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas
- _____ (-) 17. Writing is a lot of fun
- _____ (+) 18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them
- _____ (-) 19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper
- _____ (-) 20. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience
- _____ (+) 21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course
- _____ (+) 22. When I hand in a composition I know I'm going to do poorly
- _____ (-) 23. It's easy for me to write good compositions
- _____ (+) 24. I don't think I write as well as most other people
- _____ (+) 25. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated
- _____ (+) 26. I'm no good at writing

Appendix C

Daly-Hailey Situational Anxiety Measures

The following statements are about how you feel about your dissertation or thesis project. Please indicate whether you: 1) strongly agree (SA), 2) agree, (A), 3) neither agree or disagree (UN), (4) disagree (D), or (5) strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Just respond thinking about how you would feel in the situation described.

- ___ 1 – I feel terrified about the writing assignment.
- ___ 2 – I feel comfortable about the writing task.
- ___ 3 – I feel panicky about the writing project.
- ___ 4 – I feel calm about the writing assignment.
- ___ 5 – I feel apprehensive about the writing task.
- ___ 6 – I'm uneasy about the writing assignment.
- ___ 7 – I'm tense about the writing task.
- ___ 8 – I feel secure about the writing assignment.
- ___ 9 – I feel at ease about the writing task.
- ___ 10 – I feel upset about the writing project.
- ___ 11 – I'm worrying about the writing assignment.
- ___ 12 – I feel anxious about the writing task.
- ___ 13 – I feel self-confident about the writing task.
- ___ 14 – I feel nervous about the writing assignment.
- ___ 15 – I am jittery about the writing assignment.
- ___ 16 – I am relaxed about the assignment.
- ___ 17 – I am worried about the writing task.

Now consider how you would feel after you've completed your project. Indicate how you think you would be feeling immediately after the assignment overall.

- ___ 1 – I feel calm.
- ___ 2 – I feel secure.
- ___ 3 – I am tense.
- ___ 4 – I feel at ease.
- ___ 5 – I feel upset.
- ___ 6 – I feel anxious.
- ___ 7 – I feel comfortable.
- ___ 8 – I feel self-confident.
- ___ 9 – I feel nervous.
- ___ 10 – I feel jittery.

Appendix D

The following is a list of cognitive distortions as characterized by Judith Beck, which, in the context of this study, have affected the writing processes of my participants. This list was taken directly from page 119 of her text, *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond*.

1 – *All-or-nothing thinking* (also called black-and-white, polarized, or dichotomous thinking): You view a situation in only two categories instead of on a continuum.

Example: “If I’m not a total success, I’m a failure.”

2 – *Catastrophizing* (also called fortune telling): You predict the future negatively without considering other, more likely outcomes.

Example: “I’ll be so upset, I won’t be able to function at all.”

3 – *Disqualifying or discounting the positive*: You unreasonably tell yourself that positive experiences, deeds, or qualities do not count.

Example: “I did that project well, but that doesn’t mean I’m competent; I just got lucky.”

4 – *Emotional reasoning*: You think something must be true because you “feel” (actually believe) it so strongly, ignoring or discounting evidence to the contrary.

Example: “I know I do a lot of things okay at work, but I still feel like I’m a failure.”

5 – *Labeling*: You put a fixed, global label on yourself or others without considering that the evidence might more reasonably lead to a less disastrous conclusion

Example: “I’m a loser. He’s no good.”

6 – *Magnification/minimization*: When you evaluate yourself, another person, or a situation, you unreasonably magnify the negative and/or minimize the positive.

Example: “Getting a mediocre evaluation proves how inadequate I am. Getting high marks doesn’t mean I’m smart.”

7 – *Mental filter* (also called selective abstraction): You pay undue attention to one negative detail instead of seeing the whole picture.

Example: “Because I got one low rating on my evaluation (which also contained several high ratings), it means I’m doing a lousy job.”

8 – *Mind reading*: You believe you know what others are thinking, failing to consider other, more likely possibilities.

Example: “He’s thinking that I don’t know the first thing about this project.”

9 – *Overgeneralization*: You make a sweeping negative conclusion that goes beyond the current situation.

Example: “[Because I felt uncomfortable at the meeting] I don’t have what it takes to make friends.”

10 – *Personalization*: You believe others are behaving negatively because of you, without considering more plausible explanations for their behavior.

Example: “The repairman was curt to me because I did something wrong.”

11 – *“Should” and “must” statements* (also called imperatives): You have a precise, fixed idea of how you or others should behave and you overestimate how bad it is that these expectations are not met.

Example: “It’s terrible that I made a mistake. I should always do my best.”

12 – *Tunnel vision*: You only see the negative aspects of a situation.

Example: “My son’s teacher can’t do anything right. He’s critical and insensitive and lousy at teaching.”

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Google Scholar Search – Pajares's article

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Appendix F – Second-Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

- 1 – My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.
- 2 – I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.
- 3 – I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure.
- 4 – I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.
- 5 – I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.
- 6 – I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.
- 7 – My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.
- 8 – I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.
- 9 – Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.
- 10 – I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.
- 11 – I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.
- 12 – I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.
- 13 – Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions.
- 14 – I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.
- 15 – I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.
- 16 – I'm not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.
- 17 – I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.
- 18 – I'm afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it.
- 19 – I'm afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.
- 20 – While writing in English, I'm not nervous at all.
- 21 – If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.
- 22 – While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.
- 23 – While writing in English, I often worry that the ways I express and organize my ideas do not conform to the norm of English writing.
- 24 – While writing in English, I often worry that I would use expressions and sentence patterns improperly.
- 25 – I usually feel comfortable and at ease when writing in English.
- 26 – When I write in English, my ideas and words usually flow smoothly.
- 27 – When I write in English, my mind is usually very clear.

Appendix G
Self-Talk Handout
NEGATIVE TO HEALTHY

Self-talk is the conversation you have with yourself – a voice in your head. It shapes your expectations and your world view. It's especially important that people with rheumatoid arthritis avoid unhealthy self-talk, which can make the stress and pain of RA worse.

When self-talk is unhealthy, it holds you back and makes you feel cynical about life. When self-talk is healthy, the voice in your head becomes a cheering section urging you forward.

Here are 10 examples of negative thinking, and how you can turn them around.

1. Seeing all or nothing. You place people or situations in black and white categories, with no shades of gray. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.

Healthy response: You recognize an error but place it in the context of all the things you did right.

2. Generalizing. You see a single, unpleasant event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

Healthy response: You see a single, unpleasant event as a bump in the road.

3. Using mental filters. You pick out a single, unpleasant detail and dwell on it exclusively so your vision of reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors an entire glass of water.

Healthy response: You pick out the most pleasing detail and dwell on it.

4. Disqualifying the healthy. You reject healthy experiences, such as an acquaintance's remark that you have a great sense of humor, by insisting it isn't true. In this way you maintain an unhealthy belief such as, "People don't like me," even though it's contradicted by your everyday experiences.

Healthy response: You embrace healthy experiences such as hearing a compliment about your sense of humor.

5. Jumping to conclusions. You make an unhealthy interpretation even though there are no facts that support your conclusion. Some examples:

Mind reading: You conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you and don't find out if you are correct.

Fortune telling: You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.

Healthy response: You assume things are going well (that people like you, that you're doing a good job, etc.) until you learn differently.

6. Magnifying or minimizing. You exaggerate the importance of insignificant events (such as your mistake or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink the magnitude of significant events until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or another person's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick."

Healthy response: You celebrate your achievements and others' small and large. If you feel jealous, you acknowledge that and then remind yourself of your own gifts and share others' happiness.

7. Basing facts on your emotions. You assume that your unhealthy emotions reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore it must be true."

Healthy response: You remind yourself that most days you feel better than you do today.

8. Using "you should" statements. You try to motivate yourself with shoulds and shouldn'ts, as if you have to be punished before you can do anything. ("I really should exercise. I shouldn't be so lazy.") Musts and ought's are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration and resentment.

Healthy response: You motivate yourself by remembering good feelings or events that come with an activity. ("Exercise is hard, but I feel good afterward.")

9. Labeling and mislabeling. These are extreme forms of generalizing. Instead of describing your error, you attach an unhealthy label to yourself. You say, "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach an unhealthy label to him, such as "He's a real jerk." Mislabeling involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded. Example: Instead of saying someone drops her children off at daycare every day, you might say she "abandons her children to strangers."

Healthy response: Acknowledge your error, put it in perspective and move on. ("I'm late to the meeting. That rarely happens. I'll be on time next time.")

10. Personalizing. You see yourself as the cause of some unhealthy external event that you were not responsible for. ("WE were late to the dinner party and caused the hostess to overcook the meal. If I had only pushed my husband to leave on time, this wouldn't have happened.")

Healthy response: You don't take on the blame that belongs to other people. ("My husband wouldn't stop watching the football game on TV and this made us late to the party. My husband was rude, but this wasn't my fault.")

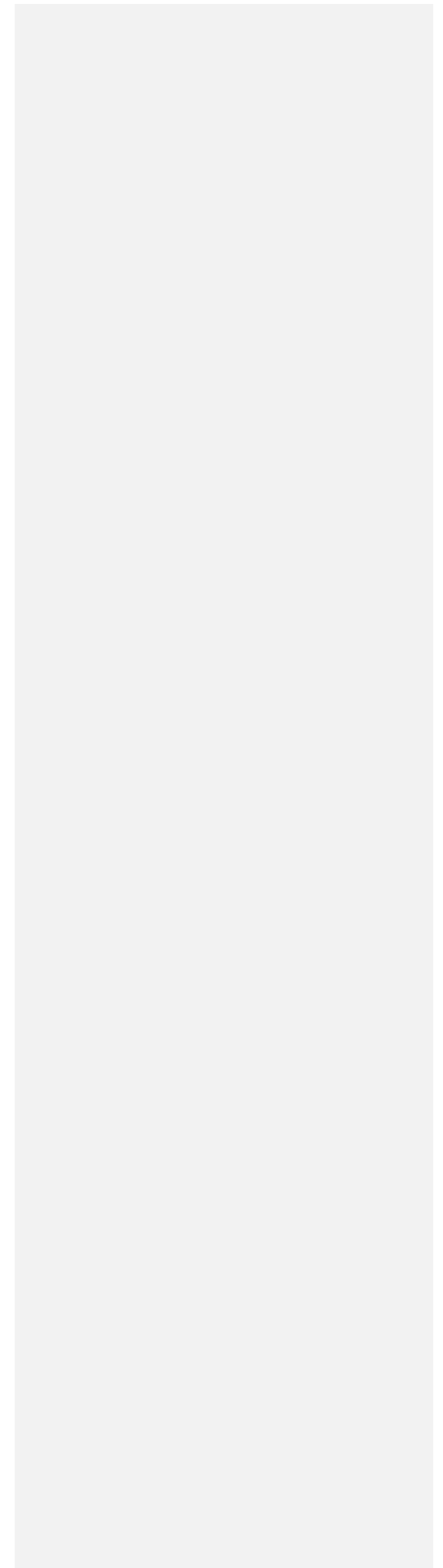
Appendix H – Self-Talk Exercise

NAME:

Negative Self-Talk (I felt...)

This led to thoughts about...

Replace the original negative self-talk statement with a positive one.



Are you writing your thesis or dissertation? And are you having writer's block? This workshop can help you!



Writer's block can be a challenge when you're trying to write a thesis or a dissertation, but there are ways to work through this. Through our workshop on Overcoming Writer's Block, you will learn techniques to work through this issue. This workshop will help you understand healthier ways to think about your writing.

The seminar will meet for seven consecutive weeks and is open to all graduate students working on dissertations and theses. You are encouraged to attend all seven sessions.

**Tuesday, October 23, through Tuesday, December 4, 2012,
5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the University Writing Center**

For more information, e-mail Craig Wynne, doctoral candidate in Rhetoric and Composition, at cwynne@utep.edu or stop by the workshop!

Appendix J

My name is Craig Wynne, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Rhetoric and Composition program at UTEP. I am currently writing a dissertation on writing anxiety and writer's block as it pertains to graduate students who are writing theses and dissertations. I was wondering if you could inform any students you are advising about this workshop. We facilitated them last semester, and they were highly beneficial in helping students complete graduate projects. I've attached a flyer here. Please let me know if you have any questions or need anything else. Thank you very much for your help.

Appendix K

Overcoming Writer's Block

Name:

Major:

In three or four sentences, describe your writing project.

In three or four sentences, what do you hope to learn from this workshop?

Appendix L

Dear _____,

How are you? I wanted to send you a few things. Can you fill these out and send them back to me? Also, could you send me a paragraph indicating things you liked about the workshop and things you think I could improve upon for next semester? Also, do you think it would be a good idea to audio record the sessions next time? I ask this because I think it would be good for data collection purposes (i.e., I could listen and reflect upon the conversations afterwards), but I'm concerned that people might be unnerved. How might you have reacted had I mentioned that the sessions would be audio recorded? Would you have responded favorably?

Appendix M

Hello Craig,

Ugh, I'm not very into feedback. Those evaluation sheets we had to fill out at the end of every class at the close of the semester was the dread of my college experience. Valid, but I hated them. Anyways....

The workshop was very enlightening and no waste of time for me. The discussions were personable which made the atmosphere comfortable to participate in. By making the readings and info available, I became informed of what I was experiencing as I attempted to write my thesis. Possible areas to improve on is finding a way to keep the flow going. At times discussions continued, which was great and beneficial, however I don't think all was accomplished that you desired. Perhaps more exercises?

I think an audio record could definitely benefit you for your research and dissertation because you will recall exact words or expressions. I would not have bothered me if you had, but I can see it possible making some people uncomfortable. If you're interested in that I don't think it would hurt to ask at the beginning of the semester.

I hope this was helpful to you. Have a wonderful Christmas and educational journey. :)

Appendix N

Craig Wynne

Dissertation Research – “Writing Anxiety, Journal Writing, and Writing Groups: Finding Emotional Connections to Dissertation Success”

Interviewee’s Name: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Time Started: _____

Time Ended: _____

I – Basic Information

1. Current Age _____
2. Were you born in the United States? (Circle the answer) Yes No
 3. If not born in U.S., where were you born? _____
4. Are you a native English speaker? (Circle the answer) Yes No
 5. If not, what is your first language? _____

II – School/Work/Family Responsibilities

6. What are you majoring in at UTEP?
7. What type of degree are you working toward? (Circle the answer) Master’s Doctorate
8. Do you currently hold a job that is related to your field? Yes No (if no, skip to 12)
9. If yes, can you describe the duties of that job? Use a separate sheet of paper to describe if necessary.
10. Do you enjoy your job?
11. If yes, what do you enjoy about it? Use a separate sheet of paper to describe if necessary.
12. What is your marital status? Single Married Separated Divorced Widowed
13. Do you have children (biological or adopted)? Yes No (if no, skip to 16)
 14. If you answered “yes,” how many children do you have? _____
15. How old are your children? Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

16. Do you take care of a family member, friend, neighbor, or spouse (examples include cooking, cleaning, driving, and helping them with their basic needs)? Yes No (if no, skip to 18)

17. If you answered yes to questions 13 or 16, approximately how many hours per week, on average, do you spend taking care of your children, fellow family member, friend, neighbor, or spouse?

- ___ 1- 10
- ___ 11-20
- ___ 21-30
- ___ 31 – 40
- ___ 41+

18. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not stressed at all and 10 being extremely stressed, how stressed are you because of caretaking responsibilities (circle your answer)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

19. Are there other family issues that might be impacting your ability to progress with your thesis/dissertation, either positively or negatively? (if no, skip to 21)

Yes No

20. If yes, describe. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

21. Have you had any major life events in the past year that have impacted your ability to progress with your thesis/dissertation project? (if no, skip to 24)

Yes No

22. If yes, was the event positive or negative? (You may use a separate sheet of paper to describe if you wish).

23. Did the event revolve around (circle all that apply):

- a – Health issue
- b – Change in relationship status
- c – Change in employment status
- d – Death of a family/loved one

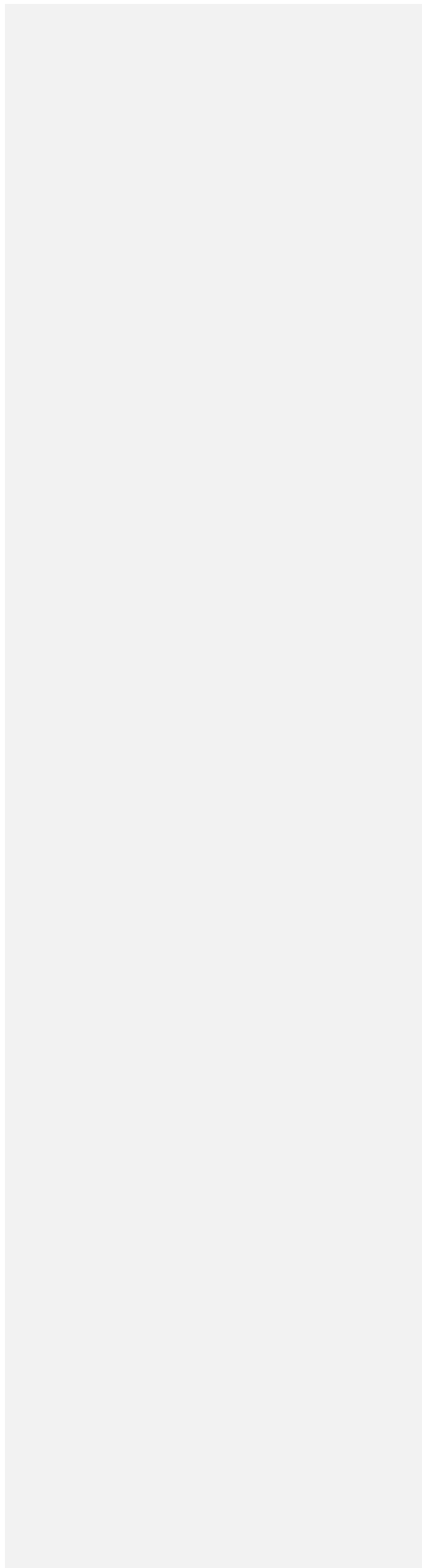
III – Project Questions

24. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rate your writing skills/abilities (circle one)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Lowest Medium Highest

25. Approximately how many hours per week would you say you spend on writing your project?

- None
- 1 - 10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41+



Appendix O

Legend – Green signifies questions for International Students, and blue signifies questions for doctoral students.

Background/Context Questions

- 1 - When I say the word “writing,” what are the first three words you think of?
- 2 - When I say the word “writer,” what are the first three words you think of?
- 3 - Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in elementary school?
- 4 - Was this in your home country?
- 5 - Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in elementary school?
- 6 - Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in elementary school?
- 7 - Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were in secondary school?
- 8 - Was this in your home country?
- 9 - Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in secondary school?
- 10 - Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while in secondary school?
- 11 - Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while you were an undergraduate?
- 12 - Was this in your home country?
- 13 - Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were an undergraduate?
- 14 - Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were an undergraduate?
- 15 - Where did you learn English?
- 16 - Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while you were learning English? Who gave you this feedback?

17 - Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, somebody gave you about your writing while you were learning English? Who gave you this feedback?

18 - Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master's program?

19 - Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback, if any, you received about your writing while you were in your Master's program?

20 - I'm sorry to be repetitious, but I'll ask you the same question you answered on the sheet you filled out. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rate your writing skills/abilities? Is it the same as you wrote on the sheet, or is it a different number? (comparisons – perceptions of "writer" identity)

"Field" Questions

21 - How many courses have you taken in your current program that required writing?

22 - What genres of writing were required in these courses? (Give genre sheet. Add Seminar papers to genre sheet)

23 - Can you tell me a story of a writing experience you had while in this program?

24 - Can you tell me a story of any positive feedback you received on any of your writing while in this program?

25 - Can you tell me a story of any negative feedback you received on any of your writing while in this program?

26 - What are you writing your thesis/dissertation project on?

Dissertation/Thesis Questions

27 - Have you started writing your thesis/dissertation project?

28 - Before you started writing your thesis/dissertation, what were your thoughts/feelings about having to write the thesis?

29 - Why do you think you had those thoughts/feelings?

30 - How much writing have you done with respect to your project?

31 - What do you think has been the your favorite part of writing your project?

32 - Why do you think this is your favorite part?

33 - What do you think has been your least favorite part of writing your project?

34 - How would you describe your relationship with your current advisor? You can provide a name if you're comfortable. Names will not be used.

Follow-Up Questions to Advisors (if not covered in the answer to the previous question)

35 - Why did you choose your advisor?

36 - How often do you meet with your advisor?

37 - What do you like about working with your advisor?

38 - What are some things, if anything, you don't like about working with your advisor?

“Future”Questions

39 - If you were to leave the interview right now and work on your dissertation, what would be the first thing that you would do with it?

40 - What would you like to have accomplished a week from now with respect to your project?

41 - What would you like to have accomplished a month from now with respect to your project?

42 - What would you like to have accomplished a year from now with respect to your project?

Reflection Questions

43 - Overall, what are your feelings about where you are right now with your project?

44 - Overall, what are your feelings about where you think you're going with your project?

45 - What do you like, if anything, about how you're writing your project?

46 - What would you improve, if anything, about how you're writing your project?

Workshop Questions (for those who attended)

47 - What are some things you learned about your own writing process in the workshop?

48 - Have you changed your writing process as a result of the workshop?

49 - If so, what are you doing differently?

50 - If not, why?

Reflection Questions (for those who did not attend)

51 - What was it about the workshop that initially attracted you?

52 - After you attended, did the workshop meet your needs?

53 - If yes, why did you not attend the workshop? This is a question I'm asking to determine the needs of graduate student writers.

54 - If not, what were you hoping to learn as a result of the workshop? This is a question I'm asking to determine the needs of graduate student writers.

Appendix P - Participant Profiles

Name	Major	Master's or Doctoral?	Native English Speaker?	Native Language (if no to previous column)
Alonzo	Environmental Science	Master's	No	Spanish
Brenda	Chemistry	Master's	Yes	
Bianca	Speech Language Pathology	Master's	Yes	
Fran	Computational Science	Doctoral	No	Chinese
Jesus	INSS	Master's	Yes	
Laura	INSS	Master's	Yes	
Lourdes	Public Health	Master's	No	Spanish
Mary	Civil Engineering	Doctoral	No	Czech
Melissa	Linguistics	Master's	No	Spanish
Michael	Mechanical Engineering	Master's	No	Bangla
Patty	Rhetoric and Composition	Doctoral	No	Thai
Samuel	Environmental Science and Engineering	Doctoral	No	Spanish
Samantha	Chemistry	Master's	Yes	
Sara	Teaching, Learning, and Culture	Doctoral	Yes	
Victoria	Literature	Master's	Yes	

Appendix Q

Figure 1

Participant	Attended workshop?	Statement	Column1	Coding	Column2	Country (if applicable)	Question	Column3	Conclusion	2nd Conclusion
Alonzo	Partially	that's for sure, and another thing is that I learned that I need to do a lot of freewriting, that's for sure, and uhh, what else, ummm, that I, I need to learn not to be so harsh on my writing, and, umm, write my first thoughts down nad just, if I don't like them, delete them later on and use what I need to use or what is good, uhh, yeah. - Q44 To be completely honest, I did not. I try, when I came to the workshops, I tried to write freewrite and umm and I did when I came but after that I was so concentrated on my data processing that				Mexico	44-49		Freewriting seemed to be instrumental in helping Alonzo understand writing as a process (I might want to go back to his understanding of process in previous questions. However, he didn't show up for further meetings, and has not made the progress he's been wanting to. Outside, intervening factors here...	WID - Process/Product
									This workshop seems to have helped Samuel adopt a healthy perception/attitude toward the writing process; I'd be interested to see what it might have been like before. I'm going to need a section in my Results section that discusses the help of these workshops. For students who attended, it seems	

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Appendix Q

Figure 2

Conclusion	2nd Conclusion	3rd Conclusion
<p>Freewriting seemed to be instrumental in helping Alonzo understand writing as a process (I might want to go back to his understanding of process in previous questions. However, he didn't show up for further meetings, and has not made the progress he's been wanting to. Outside, intervening factors here...</p>		
<p>This workshop seems to have helped Samuel adopt a healthy perception/attitude toward the writing process; I'd be interested to see what it might have been like before. I'm going to need a section in my Results section that discusses the help of these workshops. For students who attended, it seems that it has helped them develop a stronger knowledge of the process. The application, though, remains inconclusive</p>	WID - Process/Product	

Reducing Writing Anxiety

TI 038 - Thematic

By

Jo Ann Cope



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Reducing Writing Anxiety:
A Structured Group

The purposes of this group are two-fold: to reduce in the participants feelings of anxiety related to writing papers, and to enable task-relevant productive work on writing assignments.

The methods employed to achieve these ends are the following:

- 1) Group sharing and support.
- 2) Cognitive restructuring. Group activities enable members to become aware of their specific behaviors, feelings and thoughts related to writing. They are taught that negative self-talk serves to engender and maintain anxiety. They are shown how to replace negative self-talk with task-relevant self-directions and realistic self-encouragement.
- 3) Behavioral contracting. Members are encouraged to contract each week to accomplish specific tasks related to completing writing assignments. However, it is made clear that the primary task is, through attempting to meet these contracts, to become more aware of one's behaviors, thoughts and feelings about writing. Actually succeeding in completing the contracts is of secondary importance.
- 4) Journals. Members are assigned homework each week to keep personal journals in which to record their feelings, thoughts and behaviors as they approach their writing tasks.
- 5) Writing process skills. Members are offered guidelines in how to write a paper, the steps to complete. They are guided in defining discrete small tasks which are not overwhelming and which allow simple, realistic, accomplishable steps. They are encouraged to plan their time for completing these.
- 6) Free writing. This technique is used in the group to help members become more aware of their feelings, thoughts and behaviors about writing. It is recommended to them as a means of generating ideas, getting unblocked, etc.
- 7) Relaxation training. A general stress management technique to be used as the members need it.

The group meets for four two-hour sessions over four weeks.

First meeting:

1. Pre-test: Writing Apprehension Test (10 minutes)
2. Members of group get to know each other by sharing why they have come, what their experiences are with writing and anxiety about it. While they do this, the leader lists their comments on the board in three lists---feelings, thoughts, behaviors---but does not yet label these lists. (15 minutes?)
- 3) Leader's overview of group's goals and methods. At this point the three lists are labeled, as a way of explaining cognitive restructuring as a method. Group discussion re: mutual expectations, etc. (10 minutes?)
- 4) Relaxation training (25 minutes)
- 5) Break (5 minutes)
- 6) Free writing: Brief explanation and instructions: "Write whatever comes into your head for five minutes without stopping." Group reactions. (15 minutes)
- 7) Hand-out: "Hung Up on Writing." Brief discussion of the "how-to's" of "making" a paper. Feedback from group on their knowledge of process, where they are in their current assignments. (15 minutes)

- 8) Contracts: Members are asked to define small, manageable, specific, attainable tasks which they will attempt to accomplish during the week and which will enable them to progress on their current writing assignments. Much sympathy and support must be provided here by the leader: permission to fail, guidance away from grandiose self-demands, referrals for help during the week, etc. (20 minutes)
- 9) Homework: instruct members to keep a journal: "As you work in writing during the week, keep a diary of what you do, how you feel and what you think about yourself and the task of writing." (5 minutes)

Session Two:

- 1) Reports from group members on what they wrote in their journals: what they have learned about themselves by becoming more aware of their actions, thoughts, feelings about writing. Leader again lists these on the blackboard. (30 minutes)
- 2) Free writing: "Imagine yourself in the writing process. Write for five (ten?) minutes without stopping about how you view yourself, how you think about yourself, what you say to yourself." Use this as a way of enabling members to tap their negative self-talk about themselves as writers. Have them reread and underline negative self-talk. (25 minutes)
- 3) Break.
- 4) Talk about self-talk as a point of entry through which to bring about change in attitudes and feelings about writing. Point out that negative self-talk engenders and maintains negative feelings and unproductive behaviors. Replace it with two kinds: productive self-directions and realistic self-encouragement. Encourage the group to invent some positive self-talk to replace their negative self-statements. Remind them that this will be very difficult at first, takes much practice, etc. (30 minutes)
- 5) Renegotiate contracts for the week. If people tried to do too much, sabotaged themselves, etc., help them plan how to avoid this next time. (25 minutes)
- 6) Homework: journal topic, "As you work on writing during the week, keep a record of your negative self-talk. For each entry, think up an encouraging or self-directing statement, one which you can believe, to tell yourself." (5 minutes).

Session Three:

- 1) Reports on journals. Primary task of leader here is to give feedback on members' efforts to generate positive self-talk; model it, shape it. (55 minutes).
- 2) Break (5 minutes)
- 3) Free writing: "Think about the paper you are currently working on. Decide where you are in the writing process. Write for five (ten?) minutes without stopping about how you plan to proceed from this point, both with specific writing tasks and with managing your anxiety." Use this exercise to enable members to begin to take responsibility for integrating skills they've learned so far. (30 minutes)
- 4) Renegotiate contracts. (20 minutes)
- 5) Homework: journal topic, "As you work on your writing during the week, keep a diary of your effectiveness and successes, your problems and how you cope with them." (5 minutes)

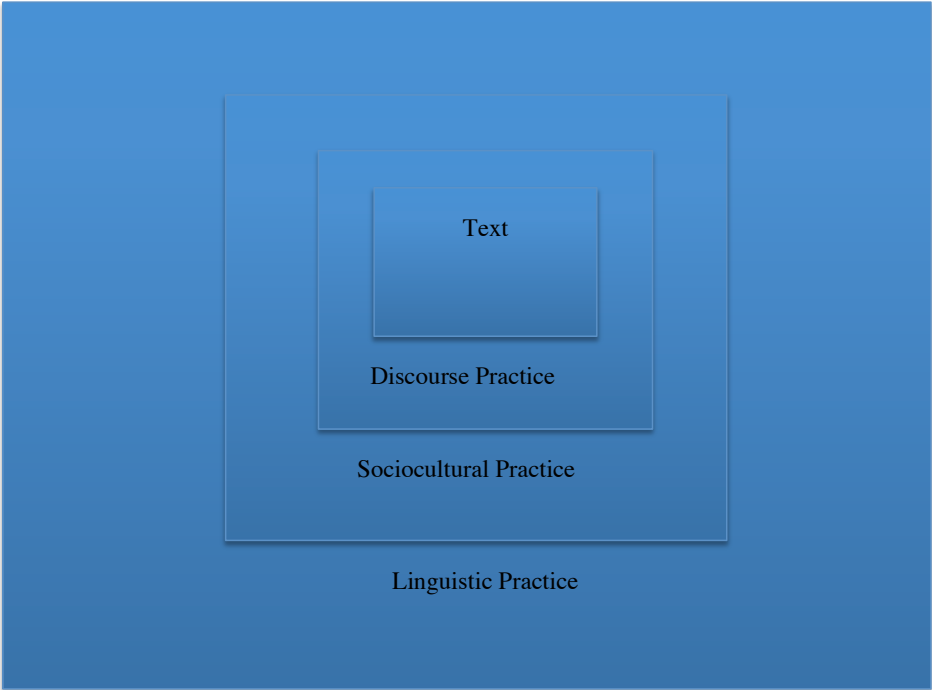
Session Four:

- 1) Reports on journals: problems? successes? Since this is the last meeting, this is a general feedback and assessment experience for both members and leader. (55 minutes)
- 2) Break (5 minutes)
- 3) Free writing: "Write for ten minutes without stopping about how you feel

you have changed in your attitudes and behaviors about yourself and writing during the last few weeks." Process results with group members. Make referrals for on-going work if necessary...i.e., class in writing process, Writing Workshop for skills help, Counseling Center for other problems, etc. (30 minutes.)

- 4) Post-test and evaluation. (20 minutes)

Appendix S – Fairclough’s Discourse Model (expanded to include linguistic issues)



Vita

Craig Wynne was born in New York, New York. The first son of Joseph Wynne and Carol Wynne, he graduated from Spring Valley High School, Spring Valley, New York in the spring of 1996 and entered the State University of New York at Plattsburgh in the fall of 1996. He completed his B.A. in Communications in the spring of 2000. After two years in the corporate world, he entered the State University of New York at New Paltz in the fall of 2003. He graduated with an M.A.T. in English in the spring of 2005. He taught at A. MacArthur Barr Middle School for two years before beginning work at Berkeley College as an Academic Support Center Assistant in July 2007. After two years in this capacity, he spent one year adjuncting at Bergen Community College and Fairleigh Dickinson University before entering the Ph.D. program in Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Texas at El Paso in the fall of 2010. Dr. Wynne has presented at several conferences, including Two-Year College Association (TYCA), and National Popular Culture Association (PCA). He has published two articles that emanated from the ideas presented in the dissertation. One was printed in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, and the another was co-written with Dr. Yuh-Jen Guo and will appear in an upcoming issue of *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*.

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