University of South Florida

Digital Commons @ University of South Florida

USF Tampa Graduate Theses and Dissertations   USF Graduate Theses and Dissertations

3-28-2022

Writing Supports for Honors Thesis Students: An Applied Program Evaluation Study

Krysta Banke
University of South Florida

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/etd

Part of the Education Commons, and the Rhetoric Commons

Writing Supports for Honors Thesis Students: An Applied Program Evaluation Study

by

Krysta Banke

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
with a concentration in Rhetoric and Composition
Department of English
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Lisa Melonçon, Ph.D.
Jennifer Bleck, Ph.D.
S. Morgan Gresham, Ph.D.
Holly Donahue Singh, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
February 28, 2022

Dedication

This study is dedicated my mother, Mary Anne Poggi Banke, and my father, George P. Banke III.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Abstract

This pragmatic study identifies the writing supports embedded in documentation and coursework for students working on honors theses in the USF Judy Genshaft Honors College, thereby addressing the most challenging and stressful regular honors experience. This mixed-methods study draws on writing process and post-process theories and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), as well as the task analysis component of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), to answer these four research questions:

- What honors thesis program components and practices are writing supports-- resources and/or actions that appear to support student writing--at the programmatic, curricular, assignment, and pedagogical levels?

- Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the contemporary literature on writing supports?

- Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the thesis writing process and motivation theoretical foundation?

- What future additional supports of motivation and productivity/task completion are predicted to enhance or strengthen the program based on theory, experience, and applied studies?

A radical explanatory theory of human motivation, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), when combined with writing process and post-process theory, articulates elemental needs that must be met to achieve a naturally motivated state as a writer. To answer my research questions, I designed a study to review and analyze documents on the USF Judy Genshaft Honors College

webpage devoted to the honors thesis looking for evidence of SDT within writing process supports. In addition, I reviewed the Canvas courses for Thesis I and Thesis II. These courses include syllabi, quizzes, announcements from faculty, and other documents associated with the thesis-production process. Besides textual analysis, I created an online survey comprised of twenty-one questions that I circulated to full-time honors college faculty. I interviewed nine of faculty who held full-time positions within the Honors College, and three more who worked on honors theses in the Honors College or at the department level. Among the nine faculty from the Honors College, I interviewed and consulted with the Thesis Director extensively. I developed inquiry themes and applied them to program documents and faculty and director interviews. Additionally, quantitative data was gathered regarding frequency of faculty chair and staff meetings, faculty assessment of student work, and faculty years of experience as a thesis chair. Upon completion of the assessment, I determined that in this honors college site, limited autonomy as students need self-direction for energy but would not benefit from complete autonomic freedom given the high need for faculty chair mentoring, instruction, and guidance. Competence is supported by the thesis chairs as they help design a "doable" project and provide instruction and developmental feedback to students as they progress. Task analysis through writing goals and strategic planning, from Self-Regulated Learning, adds detail to ways to support competence. The thesis course is less structured than the alterative to thesis. Relatedness is supported by the faculty chair in part through meetings. Most thesis students do not have interactions with one another as part of their thesis course and mentoring experience. Discussion puts this study in conversation with writing studies resulting in a richer baseline understanding of motivation and connections between SDT and writing studies theories regarding writer motivation. It articulates that autonomy is limited by competence supports and relationships, and

that autonomy and self-efficacy both address student responsibility which can help writing studies consider habits of mind in new ways. Competence supports provided by the instructor and course assignments include the use of deadlines and can be enhanced through considering Self-Regulated Learning which includes a more thorough consideration of metacognition and self-efficacy. Finally, this study finds that relationships that support learning currently rely heavily on the chair, and that post-process theory could be considered in connection with SDT and the Zone of Personal Development. The recommendations provide pragmatic solutions at the administrative, programmatic, and curricular levels to support student writing skill development across the honors curriculum, draw on writing goal setting and use of writing strategies in assignments and practices of the class, and create greater frequency of connection between and among students. Further recommendations include assessing student needs prior to the start of thesis, creating additional interventions for those who may need them, and creating a friendly off-ramp for those students who may need a more structured approach to meeting final honors coursework requirements.

Chapter 1: Introduction

As an honors college advisor at the USF Judy Genshaft Honors College, I seek to apply current established theories on writing process and human motivation to the thesis program. In my position, I have talked with students about all aspects of their honors experience, and I'm especially interested in deepening my understanding of what is typically considered the most stressful and challenging aspect of being an honors student: completing an honors thesis. While the USF honors thesis program doesn't provide a stated theory of writing process and student motivation per se, it does reflect grounded practices in supporting student thesis topic discovery, committee formation, student production of tasks, faculty guidance and feedback, all building toward evaluation and possible dissemination of the final product. This research study draws on writing studies and educational psychology to provide a strong theoretical foundation and method for analyzing components of a writing program for motivation support, then applies this approach to a local site of practice, the USF Judy Genshaft Honors College.

Completing an honors thesis is a signatory experience in many honors programs. At best, it's an undergraduate research or creative work with appropriate faculty mentoring, scaffolding, and feedback, where the student is informed by disciplinary practices and produces a meaningful piece that builds upon the student's interests to form a bridge into the future life, lifestyle, or career they value. Anderson, Lyons, and Weiner's *Honors Thesis Handbook*, published by the National Collegiate Honors Council, (2014) advises that not all honors students arrive at thesis with all the skills needed to complete a thesis. When theses go wrong, students, faculty, and

administrators may experience intense pressure, urgent need for professional mentoring time, and even undesirable outcomes.

This study aims to document how student thesis writing is currently supported by the USF honors thesis program and generate recommendations that improve the thesis experience for students through prior coursework, pre-thesis advising, and providing more writing supports during the semester, while not requiring extra fiduciary expenditure.

The theories grounding this study from writing studies are writing process and postprocess, which argue that teaching composition should allow for writing to be produced over time, with instructor feedback, that all writing is imbricated into social power structure, and writers and readers have intersectional identities. From educational psychology, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides an overarching theory of human motivation. STD articulates the human needs for autonomy (the self endorses the use of time and energy), competence (the need to learn and grow), and relatedness (the need to have a secure social status and be connected with other people). From there, proponents claim that humans are naturally motivated when their basic psychological needs are met. Writing studies scholars like Mitchell, 2021, study human motivation usually in terms of self-efficacy and habits of mind. In this study, SDT's contextualization of motivation as present due to a base of psychological needs provides theory-informed recommendations for better supporting motivation, and can, in future studies, be used to inform self-efficacy and habits of mind.

This research study involves analyzing the honors thesis program for writing supports as part of student motivation. Drawing on writing process and post-process and SDT, as well as part of Self-Regulated Learning, I developed inquiry themes and applied them to program documents and faculty and director interviews. The result of this study is an assessment of known current

practices, highlights of successes, identification of areas of need, faculty chair and director insights, and theory-informed recommendations for program administrators, instructors, and students. The study loops back to consider in what ways writing studies can benefit from integrating SDT into current theories of writing and writing instruction.

Further, this research study lays groundwork for future investigations into student writing and motivation in other undergraduate research experiences at the junior/senior level, graduate student writing, and students engaged in multi-semester advanced writing projects.

In summary, this research study draws on writing process, post-process, SDT theory, and textual and interview results to produce an analysis of programmatic and curricular supports of student writing and motivation in the 2020-2021 USF honors thesis program, and then to provide recommendations.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2, Review of Related Literature, aims to capture current conversations in multiple fields regarding writing supports for honors thesis students. I begin by considering honors programs and colleges and particularly how honors thesis is discussed within the honors community as a tremendous signature experience. Seeking to contextualize writing supports, I draw on writing studies for process and post-process theories of teaching composition and I explore what I call "contemporary writer psychology" in writing studies to set the scene for the current major theories of writer psychology, habits of mind and self-efficacy. I ultimately conclude that while habits of mind are interesting and seem helpful, there was no way I could find to convert these habits into an analytical tool for this study. Self-efficacy has been considered a major contribution to the field regarding learner motivation. However, self-efficacy has been studied in sites where students did not perform at the level of their peers and needed to

grow, whereas honors students are performing beyond the level of their peers. I was seeking a theory that would apply to all students in honors, not necessarily a subset of students. While admitting that there are few publications on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in writing studies (Wang & Lee 2021; Madison, Anderson, & Bousselot 2019; Stella & Corry 2016), this chapter provides a thorough overview of SDT, as defined by the field of educational psychology. SDT defines motivation as the natural result of a human whose basic psychological needs are met. These needs are for autonomy, or for one's values to be satisfied; for competence, or to grow and to learn skills that one values; for relatedness, or to be recognized, appreciated, and have standing in one or more supportive groups.

Chapter 3, Methodology and Methods, provides the research study design including the pragmatic paradigm oriented toward producing actionable results, and the applied methodology, drawing on praxis. It presents the research questions, which are:

1. What honors thesis program components and practices are writing supports at the programmatic, curricular, assignment, and pedagogical levels? Writing supports are defined as resources and/or actions that appear to support student writing.

2. Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the contemporary literature on writing supports?

3. Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the thesis writing process and motivation theoretical foundation?

4. What future additional supports of motivation and productivity/task completion are predicted to enhance or strengthen the program based on theory, experience, and applied studies?

My mixed-methods approach draws on quantitative data such as faculty-student meeting frequency, faculty feedback frequency, faculty assessment of student work quality, and faculty years of experience as thesis chairs and qualitative data. To generate a thematic analysis with themes to seek out, I used a deductive approach to identify key features of the theoretical foundation of this study and recommended practices emerging from related literature, and then seek out these aspects in the data set. I additionally used an inductive approach of searching the data set for information that appears to relate to writing supports. I describe gathering and coding texts and interviews, and limitations of this study.

Chapter 4, Findings and Results, provides the result of analysis of the writing process components of the honors thesis program. These are sorted according to the SDT categories. Major findings follow: Autonomy is supported when student pick their topic, sources, or design the course of study, but student autonomy is necessarily constrained by working with faculty and the assignment requirements of thesis. The high autonomy experience of the first semester provides "novelty" and "discovery," but may feel different to the student compared to the second semester which may feel like a "long slog" (quotes are from a faculty interview). Competence is supported by the faculty and course documents. Faculty support writing competence by helping students to design a "doable" project and by providing developmental feedback to students as they progress. Writing goals and strategic planning help student complete their thesis. The thesis course is less structured than the alterative to thesis. Chairs use writing samples or exemplars to help students understand writing expectations. Relationships are supported by the faculty chair in part through meetings. The faculty chair provides the greatest amount of support for the student compared to other staff and texts. Most thesis students do not have interactions with one another as part of their thesis course and mentoring experience, with some exceptions.

Chapter 5, Discussion, presents the findings in relation to the theoretical foundation of this study and writing studies, which results in an enhanced understanding of motivation based on this study and how aspects of motivation can be considered in writing studies. It concludes that autonomy is limited by competence supports and relationships, and that autonomy and self-efficacy both address student responsibility which can help writing studies consider habits of mind in new ways. Another conclusion is that competence supports provided by the instructor and course assignments include the use of deadlines and can be enhanced through considering Self-Regulated Learning which includes a more thorough consideration of metacognition and self-efficacy. Finally, this study concludes that relationships that support learning currently rely heavily on the chair, and that post-process theory could be considered in connection with SDT and the Zone of Personal Development.

Chapter 6, Conclusion, provides recommendations for the site and conclusion to the study. Recommendations follow find a Writing Program Administrator from within existing faculty or staff. Create multiple optional 1-credit writing support classes. Review honors courses and infuse key aspects of motivation and writing productivity. Use honors class time for students to develop academic analysis and writing skills prior to thesis. Merge scientific writing and English rubrics to create a shared honors writing rubric. Ensure that the full four-year curriculum builds up research writing skills over time. A thesis readiness evaluation as part of a proposed thesis application process. Including honors advisors in proactively advising students regarding thesis options. Capture faculty and student insights on video to de-mystify thesis and inspire current and future thesis students. Seek additional funds or resources to support honor thesis/research writing. Enhance and disseminate the online sources that students can access prior to their first semester of thesis. Provide optional faculty training and professional

development. Collaborate with aligned departments and offices. Hold online thesis class meetings to inform students and provide space for them to interact with one another and ask questions of the director. Require faculty to meet with their thesis student(s) every other week at a minimum. Require students to submit the current version of their work and the total wordcount weekly. Move the deadline for the annotated bibliography to the end of Week 3. Ensure that chairs are fully supported in finding an alternative solution for students who, at the end of Thesis 1, do not appear likely to succeed in Thesis 2. Work with the Writing Studio to connect students with studio resources. Implement a more intense weekly intervention process for a subset of students that includes a 1-credit writing support class and the requirement to provide more information in a weekly draft upload to include setting a writing goal for the next week and tracking if the previous week's goal was met. Use Canvas to help students find others with similar interests and to request a writing buddy. Implications for writing studies includes considering how SDT, SRL, self-efficacy, writing process and post-process exhibit similarities that can be used to conduct research or generate more thorough models of writer motivation. Future research ideas include addressing similar sites of practice and gathering more student perspectives, capturing data at a weekly basis, and hosting reviews of results to gather feedback on the results.

Conclusion

This program evaluation study allowed me to deepen my understanding of how honors thesis works as a site of student research writing. Separating out each basic need for motivation to see how each may contribute to writing yielded additional insights. I clarified my understanding of the concept of autonomy support through applying it to the site and learned that it must necessarily be limited in education. I explored competence supports as theorized by

writing process and post-process theories and Self-Regulated Learning, and gained a sense of

how course assignments, deadlines, and faculty interactions support student ability to write, but

also limit student autonomy. I gained a deeper understanding of how to support student learning

(develop student competence) by increasing student awareness and activity regarding setting

goals, tracking results, and considering and implementing writing strategies, from SRL. I

considered relatedness support, and how the thesis chairs are currently the primary supports for

students. I was thrilled to see that through this analysis I was able to return to theory and address

how theories share similarities and are different, and to design program recommendations based

on the experience. Ultimately, this program evaluation can contribute to other programs that

involve student research writing, including undergraduate research experiences and graduate

school settings. The greatest outcome will be if, due to implementing some or all of the

recommendations, USF honors students graduate with stronger academic writing skills and

motivation-supporting habits.

      The next chapter addresses the writing studies and educational psychology theories that

relate to this topic, finally settling on a focus on writing process and post-process, and SDT for

the theoretical foundation.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Since the focus of my study is writing supports for honors thesis students, the literature review spans several areas within my own field of writing studies, and the review of literature moves outward to related disciplines that have looked more closely at honors thesis programs, as well as reviewing literature from educational psychology that will form part of my theoretical foundation for analysis. Thus, I begin with some literature on the honors thesis and then move to literature in writing studies that includes writing process, post-process, and writer psychology theories. The second half of the chapter draws on educational psychology theories to identify aspects of motivation and that can guide curriculum and pedagogy. Specifically, I draw out actionable components from Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and provide a full overview of Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

By considering composition theories of writing process in relation to a theory of motivation (SDT), I produce a theoretical foundation to analyze existing writing supports in texts and interviews to build a more nuanced understanding of the needs of student writers and the supports that can help them, specifically in the honors college thesis setting. These writing supports may be addressed and improved at the programmatic and pedagogical levels.

Scholarship on Honors and Honors Thesis

Honors Programs and Colleges. Most honors programs are known for including thesis as part of the curriculum. Within the honors setting, thesis is acknowledged to be one of the most challenging and important aspects of the honors student educational experience. Theses may draw on any single field, be interdisciplinary, and/or include a business plan, art, or creative

works (Savage, 2006). Honors thesis students may develop their research skills through coursework in the major, honors coursework, or other possible experiences such as working in a research lab.

     Honors Studies of Thesis. Within the honors community, honors thesis is central to each student's honors journey and each faculty and staff member's professional duties. This section draws on honors publications to describe thesis, curricular trends, course-based research support, pedagogical best practices, and student options.

     Anderson, Lyons, and Weiner's *Honors Thesis Handbook* presents thesis program options including the diverse range of thesis topics and methods, programmatic options in supporting thesis, and how thesis may be compared to independent studies and collaborative student-faculty research. They address typical problems related to thesis which include negative student perceptions of thesis, students not completing the thesis, faculty concerns that directing a thesis takes time away from other faculty work, and ways to reward faculty for their efforts (2014). Further, they explain that while faculty chair work is challenging, effective thesis programs aim to build student skills through coursework, "Successful thesis programs try to decrease this burden on faculty advisors. In particular they can use their lower-division courses and thesis preparation courses to help students develop the analytical and writing skills they will need in their thesis work and introduce them to successful research practices (2012, p. 62)."

     While my study will not include student voices, these insights establish known challenges in honors thesis programs. If instructional and writing supports that are developed in this study can address and reduce these known problems, then they may potentially resolve or lessen challenges that thesis administrators, faculty, and students experience.

Trends in curricular support include having an actual course instead of allowing thesis to be an independent study, pre-thesis coursework, and assignments that develop student research writing and design skills. Engel's multi-site study concludes that more curricular support helps honors thesis students complete quality work (2016). Similarly, Coey and Haynes, (2012) advocate for curricular support in the form of an accessible and productive pre-thesis workshop, presenting their revised workshop that includes student self-analysis, creative exploration, and interactions with peers. These studies speak to a need for more structure that results in developing student skills and knowledge over time across the years. My study identifies curricular supports to develop student skills across the years, resulting in greater preparedness to successfully complete a semi-independent research project.

Lacey (2008) enhanced curricular supports by requiring students to find a faculty mentor within their major in their junior year which doubles the amount of time any faculty member is likely to communicate with each student about thesis, relying on faculty to provide more support. Further indicating the shift of responsibility to faculty shoulders, Lacey changed the honors thesis program to eliminate a generic thesis course for all majors, taught by an English faculty member, that he reported did not fit the needs of students who were overprepared for research in the sciences, and underprepared in the humanities. This change reduced structural support, in contrast to my call for additional instructional supports. Further changes included streamlining the process by reducing the number of people needed to approve a thesis topic, providing an online space for students and faculty to talk about thesis, and advising first-year honors students of how honors coursework meets degree requirements as their first-year honors course fulfilled one university writing requirement and their honors thesis fulfills a second one. This change signifies that early contact with faculty ultimately supports student writing.

In order to support faculty Haggerty et al. describe their efforts to produce honors thesis rubrics that assist faculty in evaluating student work by increasing speed and/or clarity when grading (2011). A whole-faculty rubric and norming experience could help faculty communicate expectations amongst each other as well as to students and help newly arrived faculty feel secure in their decision when grading work and possibly complete grading at a faster rate. This seems to be a promising tactic that is not currently in practice in USF's honors college.

Even while faculty efforts are essential, honors students can contribute by supporting one another as peers. Beard et al. (2010) advocate for honors students to run their own thesis support groups. At the time of my study, there are no formal structures emerging from the USF honors college to foster this valuable peer support, although individual faculty and staff may well call for this, and the fact that honors faculty typically work with several students each semester seems to provide a possible cohort opportunity. In the year after my study, the thesis director created an optional thesis writing support club for students in the first and second semesters of thesis, which both supports student access to the thesis director (as the director is present) and peer-to-peer interactions.

Existing honors thesis scholarship suggests that many understand thesis writers need a variety of support mechanisms to be successful, and that programming, curricular, and pedagogical student writing supports can enhance any thesis program (Medaille et al., 2022). While the current literature does not adequately address the writing supports for thesis writers, by drawing on writing studies and disciplinary publications (Dowd et al., 2019), the picture of writing supports becomes more detailed.

Writing Studies. While writing studies includes research on honors courses and writing and communication within those courses (Danielewicz & Elbow 2009; Nowacek 2009; Wardle

2007; Thelin 2005; Wickliff & Yancey, 2001; Louis 2016; Sauers & Walker 2004), little research is specific to the honors thesis. Similarly, Guzy (2016) reported no honors composition scholarship in composition journals from 2004-2015, which indicates that the specialization of writing scholarship has not moved to the area of honors thesis.

However, writing studies reveals a trend of increasing undergraduate research learning experiences beyond honors programs, while at the same time acknowledging that this increase in need for learning support may ask too much of faculty due to the significant time commitment. This tension between ideals of providing increased support to students and the resulting demands placed on faculty is a theme in this study: increased support versus faculty resources and compensation. Additional insights include contemporary thesis topics, research topics, and tools for teaching research.

Kinkead and Grobman (2011) characterize undergraduate research as expanding beyond honors offerings to be more inclusive and include students who do not have "A" grade averages. They argue that undergraduate research is rising in practice, in part prompted by the Council on Undergraduate Research's 2008 creation of a division supporting arts and humanities research, evidenced by two 2010 edited collections on undergraduate research in English, and due to the development to more outlets for publishing undergraduate research in English Studies. Kinkead and Grobman provide examples of sites and practices that are especially fitting and historically strong for supporting undergraduate research in English Studies: literary studies of modern and less attended-to works, archival research, service-learning courses, peer tutoring researchers, and whole-class group research projects. They acknowledge that the growth of undergraduate research has raised strong concerns among faculty as this kind of work is time-intensive and is

hard to categorize in relation to tenure requirements as it may exist in a liminal space between research and teaching.

The growth of undergraduate research in English creates new opportunity for students to develop advanced research and professional skills. Johnson and Rifenburg urge faculty to foster a culture of undergraduate research. Their reconfigured course provided access and mentoring to grant undergraduate student researchers experiencing a much larger than typical role and direct experience with making decisions regarding curriculum, implementation, and analysis (2020).

In the past forty years, genre awareness has gained standing as a way to help learners understand academic writing expectations in specific fields, in part due to John Swales' work in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Accordingly, Danielewicz et al. advance genre studies as an effective and useful approach to teaching students how to write research papers. Their study demonstrates that while faculty expect student writing to adhere to genre expectations, faculty do not make these expectations clear in the assignments to students (2021). It is possible that faculty discussions of assignments do make genre expectations clear, but including language related to genre studies in assignments and any rubrics would support student learning related to genre expectations.

Dowd et al. (2016) call for to using disciplinary genre analysis to help students understand how disciplinary conventions reflect disciplinary expectations for scientific reasoning. This includes what is specific to their field and what is general across fields. They identify disciplinary expectations for conceptualizing the phenomena studied, expected location and placement of the paper's main thesis, and expectations for describing theories/research versus describing the authors of the referenced theories/research. Using their Thesis Assessment Protocol (TAP) which has been used in undergraduate research /honors classes in three

disciplines, they conclude that the fields of biology, chemistry, and economics each rely on argument in a different area of the text for "scientific reasoning in writing." Biology is characterized as requiring using the context of current literature as the basis for a paper's scientific argument, while Chemistry instead expects scientific reasoning to be most evident in discussing the implications of the findings, and Economics most values an "organizing framework" that is used to interpret the main argument (2016 p. 48)." The rubric provided by the TAP can be beneficial for assessing completed work, norming sessions within fields or across disciplines, and for attempting to gather a deeper genre understanding of disciplines (both common features as well as disciplinary differences).

Writing studies researchers help build a picture of assignments that develop student research reasoning skills. Hall (2019) presents a curricular plan where students critically assess the research methods of a published study in an undergraduate course on research in literacy and composition. This emphasis on assessing research methods allows students to take on a significant component of a full research project and could be a helpful pre-honors thesis learning experience.

In another example of student undergraduate research project formats, Bellwoar, Palmer, and Stroud (2020) provide a case study where one undergraduate student drew on writing and digital media studies to produce a final project that was a text-based game instead of a more typical paper. Given the embrace of new media, senior projects can benefit from a greater range of options that extend beyond a traditional research paper. Including a variety of potential research and creative projects enriches this study as it is a reflection of the potential range of student thesis topics and need for mentoring at the upper-class level.

Also presenting exceptional programmatic features, Ford et al present the two-semester thesis program at their institution. It includes student writing, design, editing, and presentation, and connects the thesis experience with members of the program's corporate advisory board, granting access to professional insights and comments (2009). This departmental focus on a senior thesis program expands undergraduate research and design out to the entire graduating class, as opposed to the honors model which excludes most students. It additionally forms a bridge between undergraduate researchers and the profession, which is similar to the model in engineering where the senior capstone class involves working on a project that is presented by a local company.

Addressing the need to gather student perspectives on research, Ross (2014) examines student research proposals to obtain student author definitions of research. He concludes that students have a variety of definitions for research and calls for technical and professional faculty to define the concept of research and gather student understandings in order to support stronger learning outcomes. Ross is advocating for naming and defining terms to support student research writing ability.

Undergraduate research is expanding in undergraduate settings and generally relies on faculty instruction and/or mentoring. Undergraduate research can certainly be compared with honors undergraduate research programs, as the mission, function, best practices, and labor are arguably aligned. Honors thesis, along with the rest of undergraduate research opportunities, involves faculty labor which may not be compensated and may not have a positive impact on tenure and promotion, which threatens to inhibit the growth of undergraduate research experiences. The next section draws on the honors research community to explain honors thesis program structures and practices.

Regarding how the honors curriculum contributes to preparing students for more advanced research, Camp (2014) argues that First Year Composition (FYC) courses enrich honors students and prepare them for an honors education and should not disappear as a result of AP and IB coursework completed in high school. Guzy (2011) similarly advocates for FYC in the honors college. The FYC series takes place during approximately one quarter of an undergraduate program of study and deserves recognition for fostering disciplinary research and writing skills. When FYC is integrated into the honors college, there is potential to foster skills that prepare students to become honors thesis researchers. At the same time, non-honors FYC may likely include some analysis and writing skill development.

Having reviewed honors publications on honors research, I now draw on disciplinary publications to better illustrate thesis-related developments, innovations, and concerns raised by faculty housed in the disciplines.

Disciplinary Honors Theses, Senior Theses, and Undergraduate Research. Writing in the disciplines (WID) is recognized as a way for students be exposed to disciplinary expectations and practices to form disciplinary knowledge (Carter, 2007). Disciplinary research considers curricular redesign, and pedagogical best practices in publications on thesis as well as research-related courses and independent studies. At USF, the honors college partners with other departments and recognizes their programming, especially departmental honors programs. Honors coursework may or may not address the student's major – much depends on the student's choice of course and section and the faculty member teaching it. The diversity of options is celebrated in the honors college culture where musicians are engineers and doctors are artists. Multidisciplinary has potential to enrich a student's study, but the requirement to complete six

honors courses and graduate within four years may result in students declining minors and advanced coursework in the disciplines.

Given that there is limited literature on honors programs in composition studies (Guzy 2016), I decided to draw on similar research in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the setting and possible writing supports. Senior theses housed in disciplines that are not honors programs seem to be the closest to the honors thesis. Like honors theses, they require disciplinary reading and analysis, may require research design, and require a large final written product. Next, course-based undergraduate research (CURE) within the major for juniors and seniors seems may also contain disciplinary reading, research design, and a written project, making them similar to honors thesis. These may include Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs) and Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURFs). Another college learning opportunity that is affiliated with honors thesis but not the same, is faculty-student collaboration, either in laboratory research or in advanced independent studies. As discussed below, sometimes the independent studies are paired with a thesis workshop series or class. These university experiences expose students to research methods and practices within one discipline, and may share similar intended learning outcomes, organizational and instructional practices, lab settings, student and faculty needs and concerns, and a surrounding university environment. While not all the same, each may contribute to a richer understanding of the honors thesis environment and potential writing supports, as discussed by members of the discipline.

Disciplines view a thesis, among similar advanced research experiences, as a pragmatic space for students to develop professional disciplinary knowledge (Dowd et al., 2019). For example, McGoldrick surveyed economics departments and reported that undergraduate research experiences such as honors programs, senior theses, capstone, and project courses help students

to develop hands-on pragmatic economic skills (2008). Bopegedera (2021) cites student positive evaluations of a year-long CURE research experience that was embedded in coursework and available to all Chemistry majors, not just honors Chemistry majors. Follmer et al. (2017) conclude that engineering students gained research skills as a result of participating in an Undergraduate Research Experience (REU). Karls (2017) concludes that students who participated in applied mathematics research and honors thesis case studies gained research skills that are applicable to their future careers.

A collaboration across multiple departments in Duke University yielded multiple studies that use an academic rubric across departments in thesis-support workshops or 1-credit classes for pedagogy and analysis of development of scientific writing skills and comparison across disciplines. First, Reynolds and Thompson (2011) present a scientific writing honors or research course that trains students to evaluate their writing and the writing of their peers as a strategy to reduce strain on faculty and guild student scientific writing skills. The course forwards a drafting-feedback-revision writing process that reflects the scientific paper peer review process. Meeting weekly, it assigns scientific writing readings, tasks students with drafting one component of a scientific paper or presentation per week and includes workshops and time for students to provide feedback to peers using a course structure and scientific writing assessment rubric called BioTAP, "the Biology Thesis Assessment Protocol." This rubric was mentioned in the previous section that included considering genre by Dowd et al. (2016). Students additionally submit their revised work to their faculty mentors for further feedback. Results concluded that students who took the course earned highest honors more than those who completed research outside of the course.

Dowd et al. (2015a) found that a thesis workshop series that scaffolds writing process increases student thesis completion and student success. This departmental honors thesis workshops series was in Economics. Multiple department faculty run sections of a two-semester thesis workshop series to help students to develop writing and thinking skills for a potential honors thesis, and to serve as one of two committee members in a future thesis. The first semester workshop addresses what qualifies research to be considered "novel," stages of developing research papers, and the resources including faculty, tutoring, software, and bibliographic sources are available. The first semester begins with addressing the goals of the course and academic resources. Early on, instead of a group class, the instructor hosts individual meetings with each student to consider research options. The first assignment is to review a previous economics thesis and working to identify their research topic area. After the one-to-one meetings, students identify a topic of interest and an academic journal article or two that is/are closest to their intended topic or research method and present it to the class. The next cycle is similar, with students working on their research introductions, then theoretical frameworks, then empirical design, data, and results, each time with students making presentations to class, with the final assignment being a research proposal. Some instructors require students to read another's work in advance of the workshop meeting, while others do not. The workshop structure and use of two faculty advisors allows the second advisor to focus on the content of the thesis and not as much on the writing of the thesis. As a result of the workshop, the Economics department experienced a more than doubling of theses produced after a 10-year span.

The same multidisciplinary research team, Dowd et al. (2015b) discussed using the Thesis Assessment Protocol for student peer-reviews as a way to develop student academic writing awareness. The site provided a two-semester half-credit honors capstone course, taken

alongside a thesis independent study for students pursuing departmental honors. The first

capstone course addressed basic safety, laboratory notes, and ethics, with a final expectation of a

research proposal. The second capstone course addressed scientific writing conventions,

developing a concise narrative to introduce one's research, and seeking reader feedback. The

second class was structured for students to review each other's work using the TAP rubric that

oriented students toward "higher-order critical thinking skills," present in class, and provide

feedback on the presentations. Students drew on faculty mentors in their thesis independent study

for advice. A committee of three decided if students' work merited graduating with honors

distinction. The authors conclude that chemistry students performed at a higher level when they

completed an undergraduate course that included "structured scaffolding" and employed a

targeted scientific writing rubric to review peer work, and that the students who were considered

less academic prepared showed greater skill growth.

Dowd et al. (2018) examine critical thinking and science reasoning skill in thesis writers

in life sciences, concluding that among critical thinking skills under consideration, inference was

associated with scientific reasoning.

Interestingly, Dowd et al. (2019) draw on research on student learning dispositions and

habits of mind to study learner habits and change in STEM honors capstone thesis classes. The

classes both scaffolded the thesis writing process and promoted student "metacognitive

knowledge and regulation. Dowd et al cite Costa and Kallick (2008)'s description of learning

dispositions: "the way in which learners engage in and relate to the learning process (p.2)." The

survey aims to capture students' learning dispositions with respect to writing and thus captures

student responses on their motivation for writing (intrinsically motivated mastery or extrinsically

motivated performance), self-efficacy for writing and for science, and epistemic beliefs. With

pre- and post-surveys, the findings were that there was a slightly positive increase in motivation mastery orientation and a strong increase in self-efficacy beliefs as a result of participating in class.

As noted earlier, a curricular support trend is to implement additional preparatory classes in advance of the senior thesis year so that graduating seniors will have better, more comprehensive skills. As one example, to improve senior thesis quality, Danowitz et al. created an additional research-focused course and paired lab for junior year juniors in an intense and focused 3-week January term in a teaching-oriented college. Students who intended to attend graduate school within the discipline were especially encouraged to base their senior-year thesis on their junior-year research. To share the workload more evenly among faculty, the course and labs were taught by multiple faculty addressing searching, reading, and comprehending literature, assessing safety and research ethics, and writing and presenting a research proposal, and provided a faculty mentor and laboratory within which to design and implement an experiment (2016). Similarly, Yeagley et al. introduced multiple research skill courses for chemistry students across the four-year curriculum, including reading publications, designing experiments, gathering, and analyzing data (2016). Their Stepping Stone Approach resulted in students developing more comprehensive chemistry research skills. Their method emphasizes progressive skill development over four years.

Technical skill development is enhanced by writing practices. To enhance student awareness and academic success, Mimbs presents a template for undergraduate research weekly journaling as a graded item in mathematics content classes and research-intensive classes, which includes recording times spent on research related endeavors and place for students to record observations regarding the literature they read, inventing a new solution and proof, describing a

pattern encountered in software, and "any comments, questions, or frustrations (2017, p. 539)."

The grading rubric provided a way for the instructor to include student time spent on fundamental work as part of the grade, something typically not reported out nor graded. While the number of participants in her study was small, Mimbs observed that there were fewer late projects after implementation of journals and that the average project grade was increased by one letter grade, hinting at promising outcomes. This pedagogical development may be time consuming, but may contribute to program of stepping stones toward thesis work.

Walkington emphasizes student feedback to fellow students as an instructional practice in support of undergraduate research (2012). Using wikis, geography student teams produced collaborative constructive feedback to authors of undergraduate research journal articles. Walkington and concluded that the online collaborative experience supported the students' research writing skill development, and increased familiarity with publication standards (2012).

Finally, libraries may offer honors research consultations (Isbell, 2009), something that is currently optional and not required in the honors thesis program, although the Canvas course shell may have research guides and librarian profiles as a passive potential writing support.

Having considered honors thesis, course-based undergraduate research experiences, and faculty-student collaborations as discussed in writing studies, honors, and disciplinary settings, I will next discuss theories from writing studies and allied fields to better understand the needs of honors thesis writers and ways to foster honors thesis writer productivity. As my study especially focusses on support structures for honors thesis writing, a theoretical foundation drawing on multiple theories will clarify what are fundamental human needs (and thus fundamental student writer needs), and also provide a toolset for analyzing the data collected in this study.

Building a Theoretical Foundation for This Study

To best understand writing support for honors thesis writers, I begin by considering the theories from writing studies that seem to best fit this study. These are writing process and post-process theories and writing studies considerations of writer psychology. Next, I discuss a theory Self-Determination Theory as a theory of motivation. By combining theories from writing studies and educational psychology, I develop an enhanced theoretical foundation that provides detailed ways to assess thesis support structures and affords theoretical and applied warrants for maintaining and improving writing support features. These insights provide programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical ways to support writing.

Writing Studies Theories

Process Theory. Takayoshi (2018) calls for composition researchers to return to studying writer process and the teaching and learning of writing, finding that that by 1995 research on composing process was no longer prevalent in the core journals of College Communication and Communication and Research in the Teaching of English.

Process theory emerged in contrast to current-traditional composition instructional practices and advanced an awareness of the writer's writing process and internal state in the latter half of the 20th century. Rohman (1965) describes writing as a process with pre-writing, writing, and re-writing phases. Murray's impactful article, Teach Process Not Product (reprinted in Villanueava and Arola, 2011) called on instructors to teach student writers the process of developing a new written work and rejected the pedagogical approach that over-emphasizes the qualities of polished final products. Murray and the process pedagogy theorists advocated for different ways of teaching that contrast with current-traditional composition instruction that emphasized student familiarity with polished final products, with the aim that students would

produce organized, stylistic, grammatically correct work. Process theorists instead advocated for instructors to focus more on the learner's process of writing, learning, and thinking including discovery, invention, intellectual journey, and new insights. This process relies on messy and unpolished writing to allows a more extensive intellectual journey. Middle drafts may be disorganized, challenging to read, and may disregard grammatical and stylistic rules, and then the final work can be polished at the end.

Process theorists advanced an awareness in the writer's internal state or psychology. Internal state comes up when describing writing processes, for example Elbow 1973 (1998 reprint), describes his own feelings as a writer in response to his writing process where at first he has a plan, and feels "a sense of satisfaction and control," but then the actual experience "ends up one of not being in control feeling stuck, feeling lost, trying to write something and never succeeding." (p 35). For Elbow, writing and editing can result in feelings of suffering, making agonized choices, and nearly missing pitfalls. (p. 41). In his exploration of the emotional aspect of attempting to write and not hitting the goal or mark at the time of writing, plus other emotional aspects of writing, he draws our attention to the internal emotional processes that are very much tied in with intellectual effort and judgement of effectiveness of words in capturing what he is getting to understand while writing. Murray (1972) and Elbow (1973) and discussed writer perception of one's own ability, often focusing on negative self-assessments. This topic of writer relationship with self will be later addressed in the upcoming Contemporary Writing Psychology section.

Discussing the writer's increased insight as a result of engaging in writing, Rohman (1965), Elbow (1973), Murray (1972), and Emig (1977) discuss writing as a heuristic for learning. Murray (1972) and Emig (1977) comment on the writer's transformed understanding of

the subject. These personal experiences are part of a learner's experience, even if they are challenging to capture.

Writing process attends to student productivity. This includes acknowledging that the single final piece is preceded by previous drafts, and that college writing requires more than one single final effort. Rohman (1965), Elbow (1973), Murray (1972), and Emig (1977) describe smaller writing stages, which break up the task of writing a paper into more manageable chunks.

Writing process was the focus of Janet Emig's (1971) study of twelfth graders' writing, which attended to the writer's choices and reasons for choices but failed to empathically connect with the participants. As the field gained research practices such as case-study methods and Emig's think aloud study, Voss (1983) criticized those who published after Emig with less precision and overgeneralization (p. 279); in addition to noting major challenges in Emig's study such as the taking writers into an artificial setting and additionally asking them to speak their thoughts outloud while writing, which presumably is not how they would usually write.

In examining revision, Sommers brought attention to the writing process of novices versus experienced writers. Her 1980 study compares comparing student writers with experienced writers, where student writers focused on sentence-level concerns, in contrast mature writers went through a process that included writing, gaining new insights as a result of reading that writing, and them with the perspective supported by the first draft(s), improving the writing to better match the "kernel" or emerging "argument" (p. 384). As a recent update, Ballenger and Myers (2019) assert that many student writers experience cognitive dissonance while revising. They theorize that, on the individual level, many students hold opposing beliefs: that they both believe that revision is valuable, and at the same time, don't feel confident in their own ability to revise. For Ballenger and Myers, this gap between believing the system can work

but not believing in one's own ability explains some of the writer anguish associated with writing – in this case, revising writing.

To conclude major process theory, Hairston (1982) described current-traditional instruction as being grounded in false assumptions: that good writers possess the knowledge they will draw upon to write the paper they are about to write, and so they will only need guidance as to the shape that their writing should follow; that writing follows a predictable formula of "prewriting, writing, and rewriting," that writers actually follow this formulaic approach, conflating teaching editing skills with teaching writing skills, and that effective composition teaching may take place without referencing a research base of how writers write.

Cognitive Process Theory. While the process theorists focused on writing process as it can be described while observing a writer, Flower and Hayes developed an approach using protocol analysis to develop a cognitive process theory that models writer decision-making while writing. Their model identifies three systems that are engaged when a writer is composing: task environment, writing processes, and the writer's long-term memory. The model allows Flower and Hayes to move away from a stages approach to discussing writing process, and instead model writer decision-making. They describe writer decisions: "writers are constantly, instant by instant, orchestrating a battery of cognitive processes as they integrate planning, remembering, writing, and rereading (1981, p. 277)." Flower and Hayes see writers as creating major goals and supportive purpose-driven goals, all of which may be changed writer learning through composing and reflecting (p. 245).

Flower (1989) addresses writer motivation. Flower states that the current state of the English field includes a debate over what is the "motivate force" for writers: either "individual cognition" (personal, internal thinking processes) or "social and cultural context" (the social and

cultural milieu) with the possible consequence of "reductive, simplified theories," that are not informed by observational studies (p. 282). She proposes that "context cues cognition, which in turn mediates and interprets the particular world that context provides" (p. 282). To restate her point, contextual exigencies prompt the writer to call up previously formed approaches. For Flower, cognition in the form of internal thinking processes provides the basis for making meaning out of the reader/writer's surroundings.

The awareness of process and the act of breaking a project into smaller goals addresses supports for writer productivity, as small goals can be worked toward, especially when writer can't or doesn't compose a submission-ready draft in just one sitting. Pajares (2003) notes that ability increases when students are provided process goals and associated instructor feedback. These chunks or goals make a writing project more defined and break up the task into smaller pieces. Over time, per Pajares writer ability increases through working on process goals and instructor feedback. In an educational setting, programs and instructors provide tasks and deadlines break up a larger project into chunks. A chunk that the learner can accomplish in the presence of a teacher that is beyond what the learner would complete on their own is the outcome of scaffolding in accordance with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory. In this study, the breakup of a large project into smaller components is essential as honors theses are not written in a day, a weekend, or a week. This is integrated into the honors thesis process, but administrator and faculty interviews provide additional examples of instructors facilitating development of smaller goals and providing feedback to students on their progress on those goals.

Having considered process and cognitive processing theories, the field's turn to post-process theories allowed for a consideration of how words and language are used in society, and

thus the role of the education and writing classes as a component of indoctrination and oppression.

Post-Process Theories and the Social Turn. Post-process theories fostered awareness of how language, learners, teachers, and educational institutions are embedded in and continually enacting of power systems in society, and further claimed that writing is something to do, but not something to teach. Heard (2008) describes postprocess theories as railing against teaching writing as a set of skills, and instead conceptualizing writing as engaging in written dialogue as a hermeneutic activity, which will be interpreted by others based on their own lenses. In a similar characterization, Breuch (2002) notes that post-process rejects the idea that there is a writing process to teach, and this can be mis-interpreted as claiming that teaching writing is a "hopeless endeavour," when the helpful view in post-process is an enhanced understanding that "writing is a situated, interpretive, and indeterminate act." The next two paragraphs provide greater detail of post-process theories within the field of composition. However, this study will not heavily rely upon postprocess theory unless it becomes apparent that on the program level or instructor level that a postprocess pedagogy is in practice.

A number of post-process theories in composition spotlight an awareness of text advocating for learner awareness by acknowledging how texts, society, and institutions formalize and govern people's lives of options. Olson explains how the postmodern turn changed the field of composition, as capital-T theories are rejected as totalizing grand statements that overreach in their attempt to name a truth, and not only fail to be applicable to all people's lived experiences, but also can misinform people (Olson, 2002). Olsen draws on feminist criticism of rhetoric of science as claiming to be purely objective and truthful, and names within composition a disciplinary "rhetoric of assertion," where instructors teach students to write in ways that forward

capital-T theories and to make totalizing assertions as factual claims. Instead, he draws upon Harding and standpoint theories to consider rhetoric that considers multiple perspectives, and supports dialogic inquiry, and does not provide necessarily not provide conclusions, and on Haraway to reject authoritative writing and instead shed light on the ideological system that is entrenched in any piece and gives rise to its status. So, Olsen calls for student experiences of theorizing, where, through inquiry, students can challenge received dominant theories and devise new ways of considering phenomena and the world. Olson advocates for a postmodern stance in composition that contains multiple perspectives, is open-ended, and does not forward assertions (Olson, 2011).

McComiskey (2000) argues that the social turn of our field resulted in our field shifting focus toward pedagogical choices that oriented students toward an awareness of power structures, but at the same time diminished the former pedagogical focus on process. This new focus may explain why process theory research was less frequently published. McCominskey re-maps the field to address three levels of composition, arguing that pedagogy will address each of the three in turn: textual, rhetorical, and discursive composition levels (p. 18).

Similarly, Carillo (2018) advocates for continued awareness of social and other contexts, even while considering individual habits of mind - that the awareness of social context will not be thrown out, while a renewed interest in the individual student is explored. She is concerned that when new theories are developed, sometimes they discard helpful nuance present in the antecedent theory. As such she is embracing the social turn and resisting more individualistic study of writer psychology.

McComiskey and Carillo are advocating for awareness of the social milieu that supports. In my site setting, the milieu includes faculty who mentor the students, and student peers and

friends. At the same time, I am studying individual student motivation and production. Later in this chapter I explain how Self-Determination Theory encompasses on the social and individual aspects of writer motivation.

Having discussed process and how the post-process movements contribute to our field's awareness of text, people, institutions, and power, I now turn to explore ways that educational psychology has been discussed in the field, and advocate for our discipline to embrace updated theories of human productivity and motivation as a way to enhance our pedagogical processes through bettering understand the needs of our students.

Contemporary Writer Psychology in Writing Studies. McLeod (1987; 1991) calls for considering writer affect, just as the process theorists were concerned with writers' feelings and thoughts about oneself and one's work, so what I term writer psychology is a strong component of writing studies today. While this study does not directly connect with student writers, honors thesis programming, curriculum, assignments, and instructional delivery can be aimed to support writer psychology.

Camacho et al. call for a shared definition of motivation. In a meta-analysis of empirical studies on writing motivation in K-12 settings, Camacho et al. (2021) concluded that 29 of the 32 studies demonstrated a positive relationship between the motivation construct used and writing performance, and that there were 24 motivational constructs present in the studies, reflecting the diversity of definitions for motivation in the field. Camacho et al identified 12 definitions for motivation which are "motivation, value as, attitude, apprehension, situational and individual interest, self-efficacy, self-concept, implicit theories, achievement goals, autonomous motivation and controlled motivation, and causal attributions (p. 224, 234.)"

Acknowledging that the concept of motivation is defined differently across the field, I begin by considering recent efforts in composition to consider the writer's motivation and orientation toward the world. I will briefly describe how motivation is addressed by habits of mind in the 2011 Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (Council of Writing Program Administrators et al. 2011) as motivation concepts. These are very interesting developments but do not present a full explanatory and contextualized theoretical base, which is important to this study. I will then present self-efficacy which has been most discussed in recent times in writing studies but was not developed to match the advanced-standing honors students in my study. In the next section I draw on educational psychology to discuss how I use aspects of Self-Regulated Learning and ultimately advocate for use of Self-Determination Theory when discussing student motivation in the honors setting. Self-Determination Theory is not frequently cited in writing studies but has potential to explain the needs humans have that, when met, result in humans feeling and acting motivated to learn.

Habits of Mind. As previously discussed, process theories aim to support writers by breaking writing into a process that takes place over time. They do consider the writer's internal experience of a transformed understanding, and some acknowledge writer discomfort. Writer cognitive processes were considered, and Flower (1989) discusses the "motivate force" of a writer. McLeod, (1978; 1991) calls for considering writer affect. Postprocess provides a greater understanding of the social context of writing and the intersectionality of writers.

Writing studies, as always, aims to capture writing processes and teach them. Since writing is essential to education and learning, teaching writing process requires an understanding of the writer – and this includes K-12 learners. An understanding of writing process without an understanding of young learners would be insufficient. To support effective pedagogy, writing

studies has turned to consider how student outlook and orientation toward learning and writing impacts writing. The field has adopted a stance on writer outlook: that learners with "x" qualities are ready to write ("x" is discussed below as habits of mind). The transition to considering the learner is appealing, however the published stance did not include a discussion of theory that typically accompanies new curricular recommendations. This lack of a full theoretical lineage makes the new stance of limited use to this study.

Habits of mind were presented in the 2011 Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (Council of Writing Program Administrators et al. 2011). Formulated through collaboration from writing studies organizations, the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of the Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project, the habits are curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistency, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition. A motivated student will be interested in learning, open to new experiences, engaged in the learning process, develop targeted solutions, stay on task, manage oneself, accommodate differences, and can think about their learning. A student who uses metacognition thinks about their thinking, and thus may develop strategies to enhance their performance, with examples including deciding to cluster similar tasks when that enhance one's performance and being aware of one's own thinking process and needs. The main theory that grounds my study, SDT, does provide an explanation regarding what students need in order to behave in a curious, open, engaged way.

Admittedly, the Framework has been deeply criticized as well as praised within the field. One concern is that, even though the "habits of mind" use exact multiple exact concepts from Costa and Kalick, Costa and Kalick are not cited in the frameworks document, (Summerfield and Anderson, 2012). Another concern from Gross and Alexander is that the habits advance "positive

psychology" which, as they define it, is a theory of human being that positive-valanced emotions are good and healthy, and negative ones are not. They further criticize that by ignoring these negative emotions, the framework fails to account for them, even as they are productive contributors to writing. Goss and Alexander (2016) point out that negative-valanced emotions often provoke humans to work and to act, so that the framework should embrace and include negative emotions. While I personally disagree with the definition of positive psychology presented by Goss and Alexander, and instead view it as field that cares about understanding people who are functioning normally or well in contrast to a field that focuses on people who are not functioning well, it is possible an instructor, per Goss and Alexander, may following the framework and end up avoiding addressing or considering negative emotions.

To present another side, the Framework has also been described as innovative and helpful. Johnson (2013) praises the framework for re-framing educational policy from a cascade of setting standards and measuring outcomes drawn from these standards across disciplines, to a new approach to policy that describes students' behaviors and experiences, which are intentionally challenging to convert into standards and to measure, per Johnson. Further, Johnson praises the framework for opening a space that sees students and faculty as "intellectual agents" and views writing as a "civic, ethical practice (p. 522-523)." This argument addresses the field's relationship with upper-level administration and views the Framework as creating space for teaching without being so constrained by programmatic and assessment structures.

In summary, habits of mind could be valuable contributors to an understanding of student motivation. They do have standing due to being selected by representatives of three scholarship bodies in the field. However, habits of mind don't explain the conditions that support these students. In contrast, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) describes the human basic needs that are

prerequisites for motivation. SDT will be explained in a future section. Before then, it's

important to consider the theory of human motivation that is most prevalent in writing studies

today, self-efficacy.

  Self-Efficacy. A very prominently discussed aspect of writer motivation is self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is not the core topic of this study, as internally held student beliefs were not

possible to capture in my study. However, since self-efficacy is a prominent component of

writing studies' work in student motivation, below is a careful consideration of how self-efficacy

connects with my study.

  Among the motivation concepts addressed in writing studies research, self-efficacy

theorizes that a students' belief in his or her own ability to be successful impacts writer behavior

in terms of willingness to try, coping in the face of obstacles and persist in a task (Bandura,

1977). Beliefs regarding self-efficacy can impact students' effort and persistence in self-

regulation, including setting goals, and belief in causality (Pajares and Johnson, 1996; Pajares

2003; Pajares & Urdan 2006). Pajares (2003) discusses self-efficacy, including self-instruction

strategies. This ability perception is one of the three categories of writer motivation provided by

Boscolo and Hidi (2006). Low self-efficacy can explain the degree to which some students give

up after one or more attempts, while others with high self-efficacy persist in the same task.

  Self-efficacy provides a valuable contribution to an understanding of writer competence,

specifically, self-perception of ability to complete a task. Unsurprisingly, programs that

especially consider writing supports address self-efficacy such as in L2 writing studies (Chen &

Zhang, 2019; Golparvar & Khafi, 2021) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (McCracken & Ortiz,

2013). A writing self-efficacy scale, SAWSES, was tested with undergraduate and graduate

nursing students (Mitchell et al., 2021). Another self-efficacy scale, PSWSES, was developed for

use in writing centers (Schmidt & Alexander, 2012), which are also the site of study of motivational scaffolding (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2013).

Khost (2018) discusses studying metacognition prompts regarding self-efficacy in the First-Year Writing classroom as a potential strategy to build habits of mind, and found that student self-perceptions of responsibility, engagement, and creativity were correlated with higher course satisfaction. This supports using metacognition prompts to help students strengthen or practice their habits of mind.

At first, when I was considering how to design this study I had expected to focus on self-efficacy, but after reading the current research, learned that typical self-efficacy interventions involve assessing student's self-efficacy beliefs using a standardized inventory and remediating those with low self-efficacy beliefs. Even though this is valuable and interesting, it failed to capture what I hoped to study which was writing process instruction and supports through assignments, course design, meetings, and shared strategies that nurture student motivation to do research and write. Generally, self-efficacy research in academia focuses on low self-efficacy as significant and a point for intervention and does not focus on learners with what could be described as high self-efficacy. Thus, while self-efficacy is a valuable component of motivation, it is not the core focus of my study, which aims to capture a fuller picture of what supports student motivation across all participants and not just those experiencing low-self efficacy in a setting where the vast majority of are high-achieving upperclassmen who do indeed persist and finish thesis. This makes room for other educational psychology theories that I argue are a better fit to this study: components of Self-Regulated Learning, and Self-Determination Theory.

Regarding self-efficacy, the authors of Self-Determination Theory Ryan and Deci (2017) note that while valuable, self-efficacy fails to provide a complete picture of student motivation

since it does not provide a larger framework of human needs, including autonomy and relatedness as part of motivation. Further, they state, Bandura defines motivation as having self-efficacy and lack of self-efficacy is what causes being unmotivated, which conflicts with the definition of motivation as provided by SDT (2017, p. 13, 124).

Self-Determination Theory utilizes a focus on human needs and human motivation; it also provides a more complete picture of student motivation. It has been a part of educational psychology for decades, and I have chosen it to ground this study and this framework. Below is an overview of SDT and how it contributes to my framework and study.

Self-Determination Theory

Basic Human Needs. In the field of educational psychology, a major theory of human motivation is Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory. It considers "biological, social, and cultural conditions," that either support or thwart "human flourishing," based on the assumption that "humans have evolved to be inherently curious, physically active, and deeply social beings." The theory includes humans' natural motivation to explore one's inner world and surroundings, and human development which involves "internalization and integration" of "social norms and regulations (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 3-4)." In sum, SDT describes humans as motivated, curious, and developing a set of expectations and behaviors as a result of living in society and interacting with others. Sheldon and Ryan (2011) argue that SDT should be considered a general framework for positive psychology, as it provides a cross-cultural theory that explains optimal functioning, as well as dysfunction.

SDT theorizes that there are three ongoing core life needs which, when satisfied, add up to a thriving human being and thus a motivated human being. These needs are for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and are discussed in turn below. Because they are clearly identified

and described, these needs become central themes in qualitative analysis of educational structures including honors thesis writing supports. Class structure, assignments, pedagogy, participants, and the greater community can all potentially support to each of these needs for each participant in each moment, and so this theory of human needs is the foundation of my framework for identifying and recommending writing supports. We can imagine that if the thesis director, faculty chairs, staff, students, college service providers, and supportive friends were informed of this theory, they could more effectively identify strategies to supports students, peers, family, and themselves. Each of these three core life needs is associated with entire sets of studies in psychology, and each has been associated with educational outcomes. Below I provide a more thorough explanation of the theory, the core needs, and current educational outcomes associated with each of the needs, based on SDT.

Ryan and Deci (2017) in describing the history and development of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), describe humans as, "inquisitive, curious, playful, active creatures who explore and assimilate their inner and outer worlds (p. 102)." Human motivation drives these playful, exploratory behaviors. Ryan and Deci continue, "The concept of a natural, spontaneous energy vitalizing the unfolding development through [one's own] interest and activity is central to SDT's organismic conception of human nature (p. 103)." Humans as organisms is part of SDT's rejection of a behaviorist perspective of humans as "naturally inert or passive, waiting to be acted upon by external prods or prompts (p. 103)." Human nature includes an essential drive that is tapped into when humans are learning or working on something that is meaningful to them. So, human motivation can be described as an energized drive or passion that fuels engagement with a process that results in an outcome. This energized drive is what gives our students strength and creativity to develop their honors thesis within the honors thesis program.

SDT builds upon the authors' previous 1985 Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) on supports and thwarts of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2017, p.124) to posit that there are fundamental psychological needs which must be satisfied in order to be a self-motivated, a self-directed learner who is emotionally well, or motivated. It identifies three "innate psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness – which when satisfied enhanced self-motivation and mental health and when thwarted lead to diminished motivation and well-being (p.68)." The factors that support or thwart thriving are "both intrinsic to individual development and [existing] within social contexts, [and] facilitate vitality, motivation, social integration and wellbeing, and alternately, those that contribute to depletion, fragmentation, antisocial behaviors, and unhappiness (Deci & Ryan, 2017, p. 3)." They state "SDT examines the perceptions, attributions, affective experiences, patterns of behavior, and mechanistic underpinnings that characterize healthy self-organization (p. 4)." SDT integrates psychological concepts into a theory of being. I focus on the key theoretical components that contribute to this study in greater detail in the next few sections.

In the following sections I discuss components of SDT. First, I discuss each of the three core needs that are antecedent for a motivated thriving person, then I discuss the SDT definition of motivation, and then I discuss one promising area of SDT research and education: need-supportive teaching. This paper uses SDT as the basis for interpreting thesis writer needs in a qualitative interpretive study. As such, it's necessary to have a clear definition of each concept, and valuable to consider a current site of study that applies SDT to an educational setting. Awareness of these needs is argued to be key for administrators and instructors to address the needs of students through education, and to design writing supports that align with students' needs.

SDT and Motivation. Motivation is an essential human drive that favors experiencing

new situations, building new abilities in response to possibly increasingly challenging

experience, and developing enhanced understandings, insights, or solutions (Ryan & Deci,

2000). At first glance this might call to mind only intellectual and physical adventures, however,

it can also describe social explorations and adventures such as developing relationships with

peers and mentors while a child, adult, or parent. Motivation drives humans to learn and is worth

considering when reviewing programming.

While rewards such as treats or incentives can trigger immediate action, they can also

send the message that the act is not valuable without an incentive, and result in the actor having

reduced intrinsic motivation when offered the opportunity to do this activity. Ryan and Deci cite

Houlfort et al. (2002) as demonstrating that rewards contingent on the requested activity

diminish the actor's feeling of autonomy (p. 127). Ryan and Deci list external forces that erode

intrinsic motivation: "threats, deadlines, directives, pressured evaluations, and imposed goals (p.

70)."

This study aims to capture and design writing supports that build upon student motivation

within the honors thesis program. Focusing more directly on motivation should shed light on

what additional support structures are needed to help thesis writers maintain their motivation and

continue to produce work throughout the writing process.

SDT and Autonomy. Autonomy is self-reliance, being guided by one's internal values

and preferences, and being true to oneself, resulting in actions that are endorsed by the self.

(Ryan and Deci, 2000). In their words, autonomy is "the need to self-regulate one's experiences

and actions… the hallmark of autonomy is …that one's behaviors are self-endorsed, or

congruent with one's authentic interests and values." (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p.127).

Ryan and Deci describe de Charms' antecedent research on autonomy and motivation where, using de Charms' terms, a person experiences internal or external perceived locus of causality (I-PLOC or E-PLOC). Actions driven by an Internal PLOC feel autonomous to the actor, whereas actions driven by an External PLOC feel controlled by someone or something other than oneself (Ryan & Deci, p. 127). Also, student perceptions of autonomy support effortful behaviors (Ryan & Deci, p. 73).

Through this study, I aim to discover if programmatic features are designed to support student autonomy. Supports would appear to strengthen student autonomy and thus motivation according to SDT. When considering the need for autonomy, I expect a motivation support is when the process supports the student choosing a topic that is aligned with the student's values, lifestyle, and/or career. As a counterexample, approaches that are not supportive of autonomy may be "demanding and controlling (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p.12)."

Relatedly, the student's perception of the impact of their thesis on friends, family and/or society is captured in another SDT concept, beneficence. At this time beneficence is currently viewed as a well-being enhancer as opposed to a basic need (Martela & Ryan, 2020). In this study, I consider beneficence evidence of a student's values, so it is discussed as part of autonomy.

SDT and Competence. Competence refers to one's ability to learn and meta-beliefs regarding one's capacity to learn (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci define competence as "our basic need to feel effectance and mastery. People need to feel able to operate effectively within their important life contexts (2017, p. 11)." Competence involves successful learning and actions. In contrast, an educational context that is, "overly challenging, inconsistent, or otherwise discouraging experiences, (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 12)," can diminish one's feeling and

perception of ability. Successful competence-based feedback from an expert reinforces the person's effort, progress, or task completion, enhances and does not diminish student intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 218). Truly, the same action can be viewed as competent successfully attending to the task for 30 minutes), or unsuccessful (failing to finish the exam in the time allotted).

This study assumes that when a student feels capable of completing the tasks that are necessary to complete their thesis, then the student's motivation is supported per SDT. Thesis tasks involving planning, declaring a topic, gaining commitment from a director, and completing tasks that build toward completion. These may support student feelings of competence if they feel doable but can also thwart competence if they appear to the student not doable. Assignments, deadlines, and grades communicate instructor feedback on student competence. Faculty and peers may influence a particular learner. There are programmatic options to support competence development, plus instructional options, and assignment-level possibilities.

In summary, this study aims to capture programmatic features that seem to support student competence development, such as informative or explanatory texts, assignments that seem fitting, and deadlines that suit student needs for feeling competence.

SDT and Relatedness. Relatedness involves being secure in relationships, emotionally connected to others, supported, and feeling one belongs and feels "significant among others…giving to the group or contributing to others" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). We need to consider relatedness, or feeling a connection of belonging with others, to support honors thesis writers. Relatedness emerges from the need to belong and feel emotionally secure. "The belongingness hypothesis is that human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships.

Satisfying this drive involves two criteria: First, there is a need for frequent, affectively pleasant interactions with a few other people, and second, these interactions must take place in the context of a temporally stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other's welfare." (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 497)." In a teaching setting, these ideally pleasant and caring interactions involve the teacher and each student, the students among each other, and any other participants in this setting.

Ryan and Deci advise that learners can be influenced to act in accordance with a social value that is not perceived as interesting when the desired "behaviors are prompted, modeled, or valued by significant others to whom they feel (or want to feel) attached or related (p. 73)." Highlighting the strong impact relatedness has on student success, Bonem et al. (2020) conclude that relatedness has a greater impact on learning outcomes than contact time with faculty and active learning instruction. Thus, relatedness in the form of a trusting social connection helps bring a reach activity into the zone of proximal development, affirming writing process theorists who considered relationships and connection as essential to understanding the writing process.

Relationships are important for student motivation. This study pursues an understanding of student connections with the online Canvas course shell (run by the thesis director), the thesis director, faculty chairs, thesis readers, peers, and mentors. These relationships are key to student motivation, per SDT. This study seeks out examples from the director and faculty of what relationships are fostered.

To summarize, this study aims to capture and develop programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical writing features that foster relatedness that support students as writers. In contrast, features that would diminish relatedness would be impersonal or rejecting toward the student (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 12).

SDT and Need-Supportive Teaching. Based on the three core needs of competency, autonomy, and relatedness, Ryan & Deci provide examples of factors in education that support intrinsic motivation. These are sometimes referred to Need-Supportive Teaching, but the concept most researched in SDT literature is Autonomy-Supportive Teaching. These conditions support natural human tendencies to learn and thrive, and should inform 21st century programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical decisions.

Ryan & Deci further advise that some of these supportive conditions are "optimal challenges, effectance-promoting feedback, and freedom from demeaning evaluations (2000, p. 70)." Restated, these are challenges that are right sized for the student, which can also be described as within the zone of proximal development, feedback is intended to support one's ability to be effective, and assessments must not degrade student as a person. Additional supportive conditions afford students, "choice, acknowledgment of feelings, and opportunities for self-direction (p. 70)." Choice and self-direction almost feel like a restatement of autonomy, although having the option of many choices is not the same is finding one's own direction. Self-direction in this context may include the student deciding the next steps in the process. Acknowledgment of feelings shows an awareness and appreciation for the person's internal emotional state and experience. This depends on interpersonal skills which might be addressed at the time of hiring and faculty selection or could be taught as part of faculty development.

Need-Supportive Teaching, or Autonomy-Supportive Teaching at the level of curricular design and pedagogical orientation informs this study.

To summarize SDT, three core areas of human need, when fulfilled, naturally fuel student motivation: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Drawing on SDT, my research study assumes that when a component or whole of the thesis experience supports student autonomy,

competence, and/or relatedness, it supports student motivation. The texts and people I can access to evaluate the presence of SDT are in course information, assignments, deadlines, and administrator and faculty interviews. Based on this assumption, I will seek out examples at the programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical levels that support autonomy, competence, relatedness, as part of the honors thesis experience, and assume that if these exist, they are student writing supports.

Of the theories considered, SDT is the best fit to the goals of my study as it provides a deep explanatory picture of human needs. It does not merely describe the observable characteristics of a motivated writer, but rather explains why the writer is motivated. Thus, it is deeper than habits of mind in that it describes what is a class and instructor need to do in order for these habits of mind to exist. In considering this study, armed with SDT, when looking at a task within a context, I find it doable to ask and answer, "Does this task and context support learner autonomy? Does this task and context support skills that the learner wants to learn? Does this task and context support positive learner relationships?" As a researcher these questions seem easier to test and answer consistently than questions that draw from the habits of mind, "Does this task and context support curiosity? Does this task and context support openness? Does this task and context support engagement? The latter three examples are wonderful questions, and worth asking, but much harder to answer objectively for all students as part of a program evaluation study. I would argue, however, that by supporting human motivation, habits of mind are automatically supported.

This study can contribute to the discussion of habits of mind. This study analyzing writing supports in an academic writing classroom setting using SDT and writing process and postprocess may captures a system that aligns with habits of mind. Future studies could

potentially determine if there are correlations between SDT-informed classes and students exhibiting the habits of mind.

Conclusion

This research project addresses writing supports that are in practice and can be proposed for an honors thesis program at a very high research university, a rarely studied site of practice for Writing in the Disciplines. To form a theoretical foundation, I draw on process, post-process, and the field's interest in what I term writer psychology. Drawing on SDT, each of the core components that support human motivation provide criteria for with identifying current supports and potential future supports. Combining writing studies literature with SDT provides a robust theoretical foundation that guides this study in identifying and developing writing supports. Programming, curricula, interactions with faculty, interactions with peers, assignments and deadlines all support student writing. Writing supports are especially needed when completing one's first advanced writing project.

In the next chapter, I provide an explanation of the study's methodology and methods.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter presents my research study design including the paradigm, methodology, methods, research questions, and data sources.

Research Paradigm

This study aims to capture practical recommendations for program improvement related to writing supports. It is an empirical, pragmatic, applied study designed to gather quantitative data and qualitative insights to make practical recommendations regarding the USF honors thesis program. It is empirical as it involves direct observation and assumes that analysis of texts and interviews with people capturing true information for a research study. It is pragmatic in that it aims to "solve practical problems in the "real world" (Feilzer, 2010), so the empiricism is tempered a bit as the goal is not to capture a truth for all times but rather to gather relevant information to support programmatic, curricular, and pedagogic improvement in this program. It builds upon practitioner praxis and empirically assumes that this praxis can be comprehended and discussed by the researcher (praxis is described in the section on methodology below). This study is grounded in an applied theoretical foundation but is also very open to insights from practitioners regardless of if the insights fit into the theoretical foundation or do not.

I brought to this study very rich theories regarding writer needs that warrant types of interventions and supports, in this case writing supports. I wished to test the theories to see if they were evident in the program. At the same time, I was quite sure that the program itself contained pragmatic wisdom that may go beyond what was predictable based on my carefully chosen theories and what similar sites report out in the literature. As a result, the approach is

both theory-driven in that the design relies on a theoretical foundation for understanding student motivation and writing needs, but also inductive in that it captures insights from the participants. However, it is not fully inductive as it is not aiming to generate a new theory, but rather to capture practices and insights. No single effort was fully isolated as this study was proposed based on my knowledge of theory, but also influenced by my early efforts to analyze study texts and engaged in informal conversations with the program director. What I knew for sure when starting this study was that the thesis process was challenging and drove away some students, and that the SDT theory of motivation, in my opinion, provided warrants supporting particular pedagogical practices.

To answer my research questions, I designed a study to review and analyze X number of pages of the USF Judy Genshaft Honors College website devoted to the honors thesis. In addition, I reviewed the Canvas courses for Thesis I and Thesis II. These courses include syllabi, quizzes, announcements from faculty, and other documents associated with the thesis-production process. Besides textual analysis, I created an online survey comprised of X# of questions that I circulated to full-time honors college faculty. I interviewed X number of faculty associated with the Honors College, and I interviewed and consulted with the USF Judy Genshaft Honors College Thesis Director extensively. Although the honors college offers alternatives to the honors thesis including a capstone course, I did not extensively review these alternatives for SDT and writing process. I was able to draw some conclusions, however, about student autonomy from comparing the syllabi for the thesis courses versus the capstone course.

My actual practice extended backward in time. For the sake of brevity, I will start with when I submitted a research proposal based on having worked on theory, literature, and the study design. After that was approved, I analyzed the texts about 75%, revised the interview questions

(more information on that below), conducted but had not yet analyzed the interviews, and from the proposal to after the interviews were completed, I finished about 95% of the literature review with the very last components including consideration of the secondary theory (SRL), which ended up being a supplementary theory that contributed to the findings, and what actually seemed fitting to include and exclude for this study.

To summarize, this applied study uses theory, informal conversations with the honors thesis director, textual analysis, and structured interviews oriented toward capturing administrator and instructor practices and insights in a particular setting. It is not exclusively driven by theory, nor it is not exclusively driven by participant comments, but rather aims to draw on both.

Methodology

This research study takes a praxis/*phronētic* approach, intended to inform practice in a specific site at a specific time and take into account local affordances and constraints. Crotty, 1998, defines methodology as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes (p. 3)." To restate this, a methodology is a system that informs researcher decisions, including selecting methods. Also, the methodology should show how the researcher can accomplish their desired results using these specific methods. My methodology is a praxis/*phronētic* approach to research, as further explained below.

As defined by Sullivan and Porter, praxis is "action that through a certain amount of repetition and experiential testing has become a habit or strategy that works and that is or can be passed on to others (like bricklaying, planting turnips, and writing) and that meets some standard for human excellence (1997, n.p.)." I study the praxis of practitioners to understand the wisdom

in their current practices and also check them against the diverse perspectives of their fellow practitioners and recommendations that emerge from theory and similar applied studies. Sullivan and Porter explain that praxis is connected with *phronēsis*.

Phronēsis in qualitative research involves developing contextual, site-specific insights and practices through interaction with participants to develop an action plan that reflects specific values (Tracy, 2020). This study aims to gather practice-informed knowledge through a *phronētic* approach; however, this is admittedly limited by the frequency of contact with the study participants, which may be only one meeting or in the case of one participant, a survey. The values of this study include assuming that the theoretical foundation is appropriate and kind. At the same time, the values of each participant and the honors college are partially revealed by this study.

As a result of this study, I build a rich understanding of an advanced undergraduate honors writing program grounded in program documents and interviews with the thesis director and faculty to capture current writing support praxis, then draw on theoretical research studies of writer needs and writing support interventions in similar sites, and then identify successful writing supports and formulate programmatic recommendations to both enhance writing supports but also be aware of the potential costs of these supports.

Study Credibility

One definition of qualitative research credibility is "the methodological procedures and sources used to establish a high level of harmony between the participants' expressions and the researcher's interpretations (Given, 2008, n.p.)" Strategies for strong credibility include connecting with the interviewer and the context over time, examining the data from different viewpoints to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the site of study, asking colleagues to

review the study design and data analysis results, seeking out information in multiple ways using multiple techniques, and checking in with the participants to verify if the analysis is correct and reflects their beliefs and perceptions of the site of the study (Given, 2008, n.p.). My study uses some of these approaches including access to the site of study over time, gathering data from people in two different roles, and asking my dissertation committee to review the design of the study and results.

Study Ethics

In designing this study, I was aware that a supervised program evaluation study may be permitted without an IRB review. Most of the participants knew me as a colleague, and those who didn't know me personally knew I worked for the same employer. I was concerned about any possible harm to the program and my employer. I was careful to not ask faculty members to evaluate the choices of other faculty and also did not ask faculty to critique the program. I was careful to ensure that all participant names were replaced by a participant number and to report out results in aggregate so as to not allow for tracing of a source through process of elimination. Thus, this study was limited by my aim to capture current best practices and identify future potential best practices.

Research Questions

This study aims to capture insights from relevant theory, literature, and from the honors thesis program directors and faculty. To address writing supports, I needed to define writing supports and identify practices that appear to address student writer needs, as well as consider the constraints of the program. My original set of research questions from the March 2021 prospectus, which were revised over time, are below:

The overarching research questions were proposed as:

1. What are major honors thesis program components, and do they support, thwart, have no impact, or have mixed impact on honors thesis writer motivation and productivity/ task completion?

    a. Motivation is defined using SDT theory, and is understood as essentially connected to human need for autonomy, relatedness, and connectedness

2. What insights emerge when the director and faculty use their own language and concepts to talk about student motivation and student productivity/task completion in the honors thesis program?

3. What additional insights emerge when the director and faculty draw on an introduction to SDT concepts and my study definition of productivity/task completion to talk about student motivation and student productivity?

    a. To clarify, my goal is to draw out more information and benefit from faculty insights without imposing a theory from the beginning. I am not trying to "test" faculty familiarity with SDT concepts, just trying to create space for insights that might not align with SDT.

4. What future additional supports of motivation and productivity/task completion are predicted to enhance or strengthen the program based on theory, experience, and applied studies?

After working on my study, it became clear that I had no way to measure question 1 regarding student productivity since I was not working with students. Question #2 and #3 assumed a process where I would first interview faculty, then provide them an overview of SDT theory, and then ask for additional thoughts once they are familiar with the concepts as presented in the theory. Since this approach would have required too much time and commitment from the

faculty participants, I focused instead on gathering administrator and faculty insights related to student motivation and productivity. Question #4 was reworded but remained in the final version below.

My final overarching research questions are:

1. What honors thesis program components and practices are writing supports-- resources and/or actions that appear to support student writing--at the programmatic, curricular, assignment, and pedagogical levels?

2. Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the contemporary literature on writing supports?

3. Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the thesis writing process and motivation theoretical foundation?

4. What future additional supports of motivation and productivity/task completion are predicted to enhance or strengthen the program based on theory, experience, and applied studies?

As explained previously, this empirical study draws on quantitative and qualitative analysis. There are three sources of data: (1) interviews with program directors and faculty, and (2) course materials such as preparatory materials, the syllabus, course outcomes, assignments and deadlines, and the online course system. Given the pragmatic, realistic orientation of my study, I decided to use a mixed methods approach to include factual information, text, and interviews and not necessarily aim to develop a new theory nor test an existing theory, but rather, come up with a contextualized understanding of the current successful practices and potential improvements for this particular program.

Quantitative results include:

- How frequently do faculty meet with their students 1-1 and in groups in Thesis 1 and 2?

- How frequency that faculty assess student work in Thesis 1 and 2?

- How frequently do faculty use the strategy of discussing a model of academic writing with students?

- How frequently does student's written work meet their chair's expectations?

Qualitative results include:

- What are director and faculty perceptions of challenges student face during thesis?

- What ideas do faculty have regarding student, faculty, and administrator options to support honors thesis writers?

- What strategies do faculty employ to help students select appropriate research topics?

- What strategies do faculty employ to help thesis students be productive in writing?

- What strategies do faculty employ to help students feel motivated regarding writing their honors thesis?

Methods

This realistic, applied program study is a mixed-methods study. It draws on quantitative analysis (faculty frequency of meetings with students, frequency of providing feedback to students, evaluation of student work quality, years of experience as a faculty chair, and frequency of contact with students) to create a basic scope of study and capture some key aspects of writing supports as predicted by the theoretical foundation and current literature. It also draws on qualitative analysis (analysis of preparatory documents, course syllabus and outcomes, assignments and deadlines, online course management text, and faculty and program

administrator interviews) to craft a rich understanding of practices related to writing support in the honors thesis setting.

In this applied study, I use thematic analysis as my method for analyzing the program texts and interviews. Braun and Clarke, 2006, define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently …[it] goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic, p. 79)." While theme identification is an accepted human practice, and sometimes described as present without being acknowledged as a method of analysis, Braun and Clarke remind us, "If themes 'reside' anywhere, they reside in our heads from thinking about our data and crediting links as we understand them, p. 80).

Themes are not mere clusters of information addressing a shared topic. Identification of themes and specifically "key themes" that relate to one's research question(s), relies on the researcher's judgement. Per Braun and Clarke, "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set p. 82.)" While a frequency of occurrence indicates a pattern, there is no established point at which the repetition becomes a theme (after x number of occurrences, or as y percentage of the total data set). Instead, Braun and Clarke advise, "researcher judgment is necessary to determine what a theme is (p. 82)." Another aspect of researcher judgement is additionally applied in determining themes that are "key" or most relevant to the research question.

In this study, my thematic analysis includes both deductive and inductive analysis:
1. A deductive approach involves identifying key features of the theoretical foundation of this study and recommended practices emerging from related literature, and then seeking out these

aspects in the data set. In retrospect, the previous iteration of this study design was more deductive, as the first proposed set of faculty and administrator questions were very closely tied to the theoretical foundation. This was changed to accommodate faculty who may not be particularly interested in applying provided theoretical concepts to their work, and instead I crafted the different questions that were easy to answer without knowledge of the theoretical concepts present in the theoretical foundation for this study. I provided the new questions to the honors program director and received valuable feedback as to how to improve them. As a result of this deductive orientation, I identified codes drawing on the theoretical foundation and previous studies prior to reading the dataset. The codes from SDT were autonomy, competence, relatedness, motivation; and from SRL were task analysis including goal setting and strategic planning from SRL (Zimmerman, 2002).

2. An inductive approach of searching the data set for information that appears to relate to writing supports. This includes capturing both harmonizing and divergent beliefs regarding the same writing support. As a result of this inductive approach, I gathered insights from faculty that were not necessarily framed in terms of the concepts laid out in the theoretical foundation of this study and related best practices literature. While I had the codes from the theoretical foundation and previous studies at hand, I additionally read the data and worked through it multiple times to see what insights emerged from faculty work.

Thematic coding allows for codes to be selected from "a beginning conceptual model, the review of the literature, or professional experience (Given, 2008, n.p.)." Additionally, in semi-structured interviews, "themes will be anticipated in the data set because those concepts were explicitly included in data collected Given, 2008, n.p.)"

For thematic analyses, I followed Braun and Clarke's six phases for thematic analysis (2006, p. 87 - 98):

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data

2. Generating initial codes

3. Searching for themes

4. Reviewing themes

5. Defining and naming themes

6. Producing the report

Research Data and Procedures

I began work with accessible course documents: the honors thesis prep documents that are posted on the honors website. As a current employee of the USF honors college, I approached the Honors College Associate Dean of Curriculum and Instruction to ask for permission to conduct a programmatic evaluation. Text sources available from the thesis course director include thesis prep infographic modules, the syllabus, assignment deadlines, and material posted in the thesis Canvas course. They are programmatic documents maintained and improved by the thesis course director. I kept in mind the scope and limits of this study when deciding how to analyze these sources. Having gained permission, I provided my second draft of interview questions to the honors thesis director for feedback on their effectiveness, and I revised the questions based on her comments.

Data sources include the numbers of students signed up for Thesis 1 and 2, the percent who pass, and the numbers of theses produced.

Quantitative Measures. Below are the quantitative items I gathered:

Table 1: Quantitative Items Gathered

Type of measure	Source	Concept or theme
Quantitative	Faculty chair and thesis director interviews or survey	Frequency of meetings in the first and second semester Use of group meetings in each semester Frequency of feedback Evaluation of student work quality Frequency of discussing a modal/exemplar work Prior experience with thesis

Qualitative Text Analysis. Given the thesis prep infographic modules contained a lot of guidance for students and significant images and design, my method of analysis for these modules was to read the document and for each phrase identify if it related to any one or more of the following concepts from SDT: autonomy, competence, relatedness, and general motivation; from writing process: writing process; and from SRL: task analysis or strategy, and finally, visual design elements supporting SDT. At first, I coded ideas at the sentence-level, taking screenshots of the visual elements. Then, as an experiment, I tried coding single words or 2–3-word phrases. While the latter helped me to identify words that could contribute to coding, it ultimately was too cumbersome to pursue across all texts and additionally involved less clarity,

as word-level interpretation seemed less definitive and less clear than phrase-level interpretation to me, the researcher. For the syllabus and assignments, I coded the presence of theoretical foundation components at the sentence-level. After coding these pieces, I examined the codes and asked if some were combinable and somehow not distinct. Admittedly, given there was just one reader, this study may be less easily replicated due to a lack of norming documents and training guide.

Quantitative and Qualitative Administrator/Faculty Interviews and Survey. When I received permission from the honors college to conduct this program analysis, I was cautioned that I should not approach adjunct faculty for interviews to protect adjunct faculty from extra requests of their time. I was granted permission to approach faculty who appear to be faculty directors of departmental honors programs. In this way, I accessed some of the disciplinarity variety and richness of this program. A major benefit of having an online survey was that I could use it to both ask questions and fill out the survey on the faculty member's behalf, keeping data secure and tracked. As another data collection strategy, I gathered an audio transcript of each interview using a special feature on Zoom. I conducted 10 interviews and received two survey responses. The survey that served as the interview script is attached in appendix A.

The first round of questions I had developed for faculty drew on SDT's definition of motivation and human needs, and since they ultimately asked faculty to speculate on student motivation and feelings, they were discarded with the approval of my director. The second round of questions attempted to capture the ways faculty believe they support writing process and their assessments of student work, interactions with their students, with one question directly asking how they support student motivation. The Thesis Director agreed to preview these questions and provided feedback that helped me to make the questions more effective and clearer.

I refined the faculty interviews to be completed in one session and formatted in such a way that faculty may choose to complete a survey online without talking with me or they may participate in the interview. I carefully designed the order of survey questions. I expected the survey would help the participant recall features of thesis in the early parts, activating context and memories, fostering rich recall for the participants.

My approach to interviewing while drawing on a survey format was this: I would verbally present the question and then if the faculty member was unsure or if it seemed helpful, I would volunteer the options to select from. As noted below, the phrasing of one question was not helpful, but since I already had a faculty answer to the survey, I decided to keep the text the same and ask the question in a more accurate form in person. Most of the participants know me as a colleague, and two are familiar with my study of the theory that informs this study. One participant asked me for a summary sheet prior to the interview, so I provided her with the interview questions in advance as well as my dissertation prospectus handout.

I conducted ten interviews and received two surveys. All full-time faculty from the honors college agreed to be interviewed, as well as a faculty member who had recently resigned, and one program director housed at another department at USF. Another program director housed in another department completed the survey without scheduling an interview.

I conducted the interviews across a 5-week period in August and September 2021. All interviews except two were conducted at a distance using Zoom, which allowed for distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and all were recorded and automatically transcribed using Otter. Two interviews were in person due to the interviewee's choice, and for those I still logged in through Zoom to record the session and gain the transcription.

I audio recorded faculty answers to questions in the online survey as part of the interview process. This provided me with the assurance that the interview data was doubly collected but was also a more qualitative and limited approach to questioning. The survey requested responses that fit within a range of offered range of frequency. My reason for this approach was to help faculty pick a range if they could not remember a specific number, but in practice I could see this limited the data collected via the survey (for example, faculty could pick a range of 1-5 when perhaps they might share or recall a more specific integer).

I gathered the survey results for summary charts and identified the existence of themes identified in the text analysis, and additionally read and reread the printed transcribed interviews to identify additional themes in the interviews following Braun and Clarke's 6 phase process.

Note, many questions provided limited ranges of potential answers. This supported data analysis and helped faculty pick a range if they could not remember a specific number, but it also artificially limited the data collected. I had hoped the survey would help the participant recall features of thesis in the early parts, and then included some of my most important and possibly loaded questions at the end. I would verbally present the question and then if the faculty member was unsure or if it seemed helpful, I would volunteer the option to select from. As noted below, the phrasing of one question was not helpful, but since I already had a faculty answer to the survey, I decided to keep the text the same and ask the question in a more accurate form in person. Most of the participants know me as a colleague, and two are familiar with my study of the theory that informs this study. One participant asked me for a summary sheet prior to the interview, so I provided her with the interview questions in advance as well as my dissertation prospectus handout.

In addition to these efforts, as part of my job, I support the honors thesis program which has helped me gain exposure the course director's perspective, insights, and process. I observed the director leading sessions with her thesis students and additionally observed her holding thesis club meetings in fall 2021, taking notes at each session on the director's practices, and this added detail to my understanding of how thesis runs and what one director and thus one faculty member does to help students be successful writers.

Early themes found included:

- Frequency of faculty meetings with students

- Concern about the workload related to being a thesis chair including the time spent grading

- Assignment deadlines supporting productivity

- The strategies of creating a table of contents and working on each piece, and planning backward from the deadline at the end (this surfaced through observing the Thesis Director)

- Faculty generally approving of the writing quality of the submissions that students hand in

- The challenge of supporting a thesis process that includes all disciplines and possibly interdisciplinary projects

- Lack of student communication with the instructor being a red flag that the student may need assistance

Limitations

My study benefits from my personal collegial relationship with my interviewees, although it also is limited by my personal unwillingness to foster deep criticism of a program related to my place of employment. Regarding the latter, once I began to conduct textual analyses my concerns about possibly casting my employer in a bad light disappeared, as I quickly came to appreciate how well the thesis-prep documents align with the theoretical

foundation of this study. This study would have been enriched with more exposure to faculty meetings with students, and most of all, would be more well-rounded if it included gathering thesis student insights. As mentioned previously, the quantitative format of the survey may have limited respondents' ability to provide an answer that is more detailed than the artificial range presented to them.

Conclusion

Guided by a clear research question of identifying writing supports in the USF honors thesis program and finding ways to enhance these supports for programmatic recommendations, this study takes contemporary artifacts and guided interviews to examine praxis, or the human actions of faculty reading, learning, interacting, analyzing, and production within this learning site to gather faculty insights. It then then applies this study's curated theoretical foundation to the site and interviews in order to find those practices which are aligned with theories that address student needs and writing supports. This study includes gathered practices identified by other researchers in similar sites or using similar theories to make programmatic recommendations that, in theory, will improve the experience of thesis and/or the outcome of thesis for the participants. The next chapter discusses the results from each analysis and provides programmatic recommendations.

Chapter 4: Findings and Results

This chapter provides the findings and results of this study. In it, I provide detailed analysis of the program components related to writing and how they connect with or clash against the study's theoretical foundation. This chapter addresses the first guiding research question of this study:

- What honors thesis program components and practices are writing supports-- resources and/or actions that appear to support student writing--at the programmatic, curricular, assignment, and pedagogical levels?

As outlined in the previous chapter, I use characteristics of SDT theory as an analytic tool to examine the following sources of evidence to capture components that appear to support student writing needs.

- The syllabus and the student learning outcomes (SLOs) for Thesis 1 and 2

- Assignments posted in the Canvas course for Thesis 1 and 2

- Pre-scheduled announcements sent out through the Canvas course for Thesis 1 and 2

- Thesis prep documents and the Quick sheet for thesis chairs that are designed to be accessed prior to the start of Thesis 1, or during the first weeks of Thesis 1 Structured interviews with current and former honors program directors and faculty.

The characteristics of SDT that I use are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. What honors thesis program components and practices are writing supports-- resources and/or actions that appear to support student writing--at the programmatic, curricular, assignment, and pedagogical levels?

After completing my preliminary phase of analysis, I decided to place writing process/post-process and task analysis as a sub-section under competence due the complementary nature of the scholarship. The results are discussed in the order of the framework concepts:

Results discussed in the Autonomy section:

- Autonomy is supported when students select the topic and sources, and/or design a course of study, but it is also constrained by the necessity of working with faculty and meeting requirements for the thesis.

- Relatively high autonomy may appeal to the student at first, especially during the ideation and conceptualization stages, but when high self-reliance is required for the writing stage, some thesis students struggle.

- Student responsibility contributes to student motivation.

Results discussed in the Competence, Writing Process and Post-Process, and Task Analysis section:

- Competence is supported by faculty and course documents

- Chairs support competence by helping students to design "doable" projects

- Setting writing goals helps students complete their thesis

- Strategic planning helps students complete their thesis

- Chair feedback and assessment of student work supports student competence. This study additionally captures the frequency of feedback that chairs report.

- Deadlines help students complete work, supporting writing.

- The course structure present in the thesis alternative--a pair of capstone and a core classes-- supports student success by providing organization, previously vetted readings, group meetings, in-class learning activities, instruction, and a cohort of peers. In contrast,

the thesis experience provides less course structure and thus requires more student effort as compared to typical courses.

- Student responsibility, as evidenced by completing tasks, is desired by chairs

- Chair discussing a model/exemplar with thesis students supports competence

Results discussed in the Relatedness section:

- Relatedness is supported by meetings with the faculty chair

- The chair role provides the greatest amount of support for a thesis student

- For those students who are not performing to expectations, a potential strategy to help students complete the thesis successfully is to increase the frequency and total 1-1 meetings with the chair, and/or assign the student to participate in more group meetings with the chair. This effort would provide more relationship support and thus is a motivation support per SDT.

Autonomy

As described in SDT, an autonomous student draws on their own values and interests to select work to do, or to choose to work at all, so that their time and effort are not directed by an outsider, but rather endorsed by the student's own values, preferences, needs, and goals.

To capture evidence of autonomy support in the course texts and study interviews, I tracked language that directly addressed the student as a person, and/or spoke about his or her values, interests, independence or self-reliance, career plans, or other emotional needs. In the interviews I also gathered comments regarding student behavior and task completion. I found many instances of autonomy support in the course as I analyzed the syllabus, assignments, announcements, thesis prep documents, and interviews. Below are autonomy support findings.

Autonomy, the Syllabus, and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The syllabus

contextualizes the thesis experience as an educational journey where the student achieves an

exceptional level of knowledge production and service to society. It argues that the skills and

abilities learned during thesis, including the self-aware story the student can later tell regarding

their journey, will prepare them for their next step after graduation, which could be employment

or advanced education. These concepts support student autonomy when students value these

abilities, skills, and next steps. Again, when student autonomy is supported, students are more

motivated to write.

The first section in the syllabus titled "The Culminating Honors Experience" frames the

thesis experience as the pinnacle of honors achievement, building on other previous honors

experiences and challenges:

> The mission of the Judy Genshaft Honors College (Honors College) is to develop
>
> tomorrow's leaders by providing first-rate educational opportunities to the most highly
>
> motivated, intellectually curious, and academically accomplished students at USF. For
>
> this reason, the Honors College aims for you to develop an independent identity as a
>
> citizen scholar: a producer of knowledge with beneficial societal impact. (p.1)

The first sentence connects the mission of the honors college and to the thesis experience.

Inside the mission is praise for successful students as future leaders as the mission of the college

is to "develop tomorrow's leaders (p.1)." Based on the mission, the honors college aims for

"you" (the student) to see yourself as a fully capable intellectual who serves society. From the

syllabus, "the Honors College aims for you to develop an independent identity as a citizen

scholar: a producer of knowledge with beneficial societal impact (p. 1)." The phrases "citizen

scholar" and "beneficial societal impact" may connect with student values. These both imply

beneficence through having a positive impact on society. If the student reader values being a citizen scholar and/or producing knowledge, then this goal supports their autonomy.

The next paragraph in the syllabus highlights the importance of the faculty mentoring relationship, so it is discussed in the relationship section.

A major responsibility in the syllabus assigned to the student may resonate with their values system. It is the responsibility to find their chair, schedule contact then, and cultivate an effective relationship with them. This is a task that requires effort, but it does allow support student choice and student autonomy. This, student responsibility motivates the student per the framework. Student responsibility is a theme that emerges in this study and is additionally discussed in the section on competence.

The syllabus signals growing self-reliance to students using terms like "Intentional Learner: integration of this course into your academic experience," and "first job, graduate school, or advanced education," and "developing independence in your inquiry." Self-aware autonomy and competent performance are presented as strategies to gain entry into competitive settings. These desirable outcomes support student motivation to complete the course, and thus complete the analysis, writing, and revision needed to complete the course. Additional statements in the syllabus like "Being able to articulate what you did in your thesis project, particularly why and how, is an incredibly important form of storytelling about who you are and what skills you have; your story is especially relevant in medical school applications, graduate school application, or pursuing career opportunities in the workforce (p. 3)" further signal student competence.

Autonomy and the Canvas Course Assignments. Generally, the Canvas assignments focus on competence, but they include student autonomy by addressing the reader as "you."

However, the thesis experience is not fully autonomous. Thesis assignments both reduce student autonomy by narrowing down the student's options, and also support student autonomy by providing guidance regarding how to be successful in this specific program. Examples of terminology indicating tasks assigned to the student are: "you will… develop; you will…. draw on; your focus will be; you are expected to; you should identify; you will obtain; you will meet with (from the Thesis Prospectus Review (First Day Attendance) assignment)." Also from the same assignment, personal experiences are called forward such as "[your prior] undergraduate experience," and personal interests, "research that genuinely interests you; your current area of study and interest, your own [area of interest] (n.p.)."

The assignment texts state questions from the perspective of the student thesis reader that fit the reader, supporting autonomy as critical analysis. From the Identify Prospective Chairs assignment, examples include "Who/What is a Thesis Chair?" and "What is a Thesis Committee and why do I need one?" This assignment is also discussed in the Relationship section.

The first writing assignment focuses the student on their topic of interest and tasks the student with working through literature in order to obtain background disciplinary (or multidisciplinary) knowledge that relates to their possible topic. It tasks the student with writing up an annotated bibliography based on "the area of interest of [a] potential faculty or your own [area of interest]." Students are advised, "You do not need to finalize these ideas and questions— it is OK to change your mind later," and asked to, "do what you can (Canvas Annotated Bibliography May 28 assignment)." Autonomy supportive pieces include acknowledging the student writer's interest, ideas, competence, and accommodating the option to change one's mind later.

The Thesis 2 Confirm Thesis Chair assignment supports partial student autonomy as the student decides "the purpose" of their research study in collaboration with the thesis chair. Given that the overall task of thesis is a large, cumulative, culminating, and a never-before-attempted project within the college setting, it relies on student autonomy supports as well as instructor guidance and input. This could also be described as a student semi-autonomous research project.

In the final Thesis 2 assignment, the student is cheered on, an act that reinforces their semi-autonomous accomplishments, "Congratulations - you are almost done!" Along with other tasks, the thesis student is asked if they, along with their chair, agree to make the abstract and/or the final document accessible to the public. It supports values of helping others as it is described as having the beneficial outcome of helping future honors thesis students: "It helps us archive and showcase your work in an organized way, which will be particularly helpful to our future thesis writers! (Canvas Final Portfolio assignment, n.p.)."

The last chunk of Thesis 2's the last Canvas course announcement connects with the students' autonomy and values:

> My sincere hope is that you will take a moment over this well-earned break to reflect on your accomplishment and how you are now positioned as a citizen scholar. I encourage you to express your deepest appreciation to your thesis chairs and mentors: in serving, they go above and beyond because they genuinely care about your success. Kudos to all and congratulations to students who are graduating this semester!

The thesis director speaks in first-person "I," which is a more personal and intimate use of language. She praises students for academic accomplishments. The student is urged to thank their chairs and mentors who "go above and beyond because they genuinely care about your

success." This last statement reinforces the relationship between the student and their mentors. While faculty are praised, an additional message is that faculty do more work because they care about you, the student.

Autonomy and the Thesis Prep Documents. The documents occasionally include questions the reader might ask in the header: "Why honors thesis? What is Honors thesis? and What's your plan?" in the thesis prep materials and the syllabus. Placing these questions as headers with a larger font encourages the reader to ask questions about thesis as a normal part of the thesis discovery process and as part of reading the documents. This validates the need to ask fundamental questions, supports students questioning, and welcomes all readers, even those who unclear about thesis at the time they read these documents. The prep documents provide a process to students that can support their sense of being connected with a previously established process and ownership of their own growth. The writer encourages student awareness and ownership of thesis choices and student own decision-making as part of the thesis process. The overall design of the prep documents names student questions and then responds to them with contextualized, specific information. This supports autonomy and competence.

The thesis prep documents make it evident that students may choose among options, including alternatives to the honors thesis program itself, like honors capstone course options as well asor department thesis programs. Another instance of choice is student choice of the faculty chair, described in the Prep 1 document as, "faculty selected by each student based on their area of inquiry." This description of "selected" makes evident that seeking out a faculty mentor requires effort; some faculty are not interested in being selected, resulting in a small pool of faculty available to work with honors thesis students.

The thesis prep documents advise that capstone instructors select topics as opposed to thesis where students have significant power to select the topic. As such, the alternative to thesis for honors students is a lower-autonomy option. The contrast between the two options highlighting that this thesis project requires students to make decisions. This can be attractive as the thesis experience requires autonomy, but it can also be more challenging to accomplish.

The thesis prep documents and the syllabus tap into student values, interests, and career plans. The documents promote the connection between the thesis and the student's career or personal interests including post-graduation hopes and plans.

Autonomy and Topic Selection. Faculty chairs and directors bring up the importance of students selecting a topic and project that supports their interests and profession. Faculty rely on the benefits of student autonomy in topic selection to support student writing. One of the earliest interactions students have with a potential chair is a meeting to consider options for a research topic and research question or other form of inquiry. This may be the first time the faculty and student meet, although in many cases the student has completed a previous course with the faculty chair previously. When asked about their process to help students identify their topic, faculty overwhelmingly consider the student's immediate values and mid-term plans, described as: interests, passions, inspiration, enthusiasm, questions, prior experience, and career path. As one said, "I always start with their career path: what they're trying to do. Because, to me, the thesis should connect to their future and something they're interested in." Another faculty member described encouraging student self-reflection including prior coursework to discern interests.

Faculty describe hearing out students, drawing out what they are curious about, and then after exploring possibilities, helping the student find a question that is central to their interests.

As one said, "I start off by trying to just get to know them and understand like what inspires you in the world. What lights you up? What do you care about? And I try to find several points of contact there, and then work from several things towards a question that addresses something that lies at the intersection."

Faculty are clear that student interest fuels student progress and contributes to student work productivity during the thesis process as they aim to answer their research question. One respondent stated, "When you get students connected up in that way with their interest and they really want to know the answer, then it becomes an exercise of an intrinsically motivated research project rather than just kind of going through the motions."

A thoughtfully designed project can fuel the student. One faculty member comments on working with a student to envision a project that is deeply interesting to the student, "[I'm] trying to get clear on what they're really interested in doing and finding a topic that is sufficiently motivating to them and that they are that they are interested in following that project all the way through."

Not only is topic an important student writing motivator, but it also can be used by faculty to revive flagging student interest later in the process. As one stated, "But often it's reminding them why they started in the first place, like why is it that you care about this, and that's part of part of why that part was so important for me at the outset. If you grounded in their passions, then you can always go back to that fire and blow on it and rekindle it."

Autonomy and Student Struggles. A finding of this study is that while relatively high autonomy may appeal to the student during the ideation and conceptualization stage early in the semester, when high self-reliance is required for the writing stage, some thesis students struggle. The faculty and director interviews present times when student struggle. In the cases below, the

students' reliance on their own autonomy sometimes harms their outcome, and sometimes supports their outcome.

Faculty call for students be self-motivated and responsibly complete their independent work. One commented that students need to "prepare mentally" in advance of signing up for thesis. Another stated that chairs who wish to support students more would be more outreach, "The difference might be in how hands-on, [for example] how many reminder emails they're willing to send."

Among students who struggle are those who don't follow the course and chair's direction. This is an example of a student being too autonomous and not attending to faculty guidance or possibly not receiving much faculty guidance. From the interviews, one faculty member describes students who do not commit to the project and to completing the assignments in the course shell, and/or students who create thesis projects that are truly independent and not following the chair's direction. Another faculty member commented that students need to be flexible when they work with the chair, as they would benefit academically. Another faculty member commented that students may start Thesis 1 with the expectation of implementing a survey, and be less open to other research methods, even while surveys may not be the most effective approach to answering the research question. So, students may present a range of outlooks that do not accord with faculty guidance.

Faculty report that the first semester and second semester feel different to students. Many students will successfully work within the course structure and manage their time. However, faculty report that students may find the second semester of thesis more challenging than the first. As one said, "The first semester has "novelty," and "discovery," while in contrast, the second semester requires different work from the student: "a lot of it is just writing… the second

semester is more of a slog." Per faculty, this can increase the pressure on the faculty chair, "it is at times like dragging them across the finish line to get it done." Another faculty member reported that sometimes students wish to change the study's focus in the second semester. This may indicate the student experiencing a diminishing interest or an experiencing an outcome that is unappealing. In contrast to these second semester challenges, one faculty member reports, "far fewer problems in semester 2."

A finding of this study is that at times when the topic is appealing to the student, but the writing tasks are not, the student may be vulnerable to academic risk. This may contribute to explaining why some students lose steam in the second semester when the process involves writing and not as much ideation, discovery, and creative design.

Competence, Writing Process and Post-Process, and Task Analysis

From SDT, competence is both one's capacity to grow and one's beliefs about one's own ability to learn. Growth in competence reflects a human need to feel capable and to successfully develop new, valued abilities. However, educational experiences that are "overly challenging, inconsistent, or otherwise discouraging experiences (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 12)," can be experienced as unsupportive, or put another way, discouraging and de-motivating.

Competence supports help the learner to accomplish their goals. In writing courses such as Thesis 1 and 2, competence supports help learners accomplish their thesis writing goals. Writing itself, in this study, is conceptualized as a process of questioning, reading, writing, and revising.

This section considers competence as a writer motivation support, which can be a self-regard support, but also an exterior support such as an instructor or peer sharing an approach to writing that fits the writer. I then address forms of competence support that connect with writing

process and post-process theory from rhetoric and composition, and then finally address competence and task analysis including goal setting and strategic planning from Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) (Zimmerman, 2002), which is fully discussed in Chapter 5.

Competence and the Syllabus. The syllabus, by defining writing tasks and writing instruction, establishes the general tasks to be completed and the resources available to students to support their writing.

The course student learning outcomes (SLOs) are similar to the course objectives, stated separately in a section, and the Enhanced General Education High Impact Practice Indicators of Achievement (web link: https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/general-education-council/enhanced-gened/enhanced-curriculum.aspx). The SLOs focus on competency practices. They include autonomy and responsibility by using the typical SLO phrase, "Students will," and one SLO references the chair, showing the competence-supporting relationship with the phrase, "under professional oversight."

The first outcome requires "meaningful critical reflection (Syllabus, p. 3)," which is part of thinking process that needed in writing process. The second connects with the relationship with the chair and focuses on skills: "contextually-appropriate behaviors, tools techniques, and/or dispositions (Syllabus, p. 3)." The third involves incorporating "discipline-specific knowledge" ways into the experience. This knowledge likely includes the discipline's genre approach to communication from the discipline, as well as theories, lenses, and ways of analyzing that are typical in the discipline. The fourth learning outcome calls for students to "synthesize discipline-appropriate learning via a culminating assignment," recognizing the ending assignment as a vehicle for student synthesis. In the field of writing studies, synthesis is recognized as part of writing process.

In the syllabus, Thesis 1 assignments are described as "a series of assignments that build upon one another and attempt to prepare the student to complete #GEA1_Thesis Draft and #GEA2_Thesis Final, Syllabus, p. 4." The goal includes scaffolding where the course assignments build up toward the student finishing the thesis draft and final thesis. Assignments support student goal setting when the assignments are doable with instructor support.

Each small assignment as presented in the syllabus is defined by the assignment title and one or more associated student learning outcomes which at the assignment level contain added detail beyond the plain Indicators of Achievement. The larger assignments, Prospectus Draft, Prospectus Final, Thesis Draft, and Thesis Final all have a one- or two-sentence description and a student learning outcome. The Canvas course, discussed later, provides more detailed assignment descriptions.

Returning to the concept of competence, the Prospectus Final and Thesis Final are the culminating assignments of the first and second semester, so I will use them as examples of how the description and student learning outcomes generally point out criteria for demonstration student competence building:

From the syllabus:

"#GEA2_Prospectus Final is the final prospectus-like document, in which the student took into account feedback from their thesis mentor to improve the effectiveness of their written communication and research plan. Aligns with SLO #3: Students will integrate discipline-specific knowledge into the contextualized experience by demonstrating a depth of knowledge in the area of investigation through a complete literature review in written component of final submissions and crafting a structured framework to transform ideas into active inquiry. Also aligns with SLO #4 Students will synthesize discipline-appropriate learning via a culminating

assignment by producing a final artifact that advances or has high potential to advance the discipline(s).

The Final Prospectus will be graded on the overall performance, quality, and process, and also evaluated based on the General Education Assessment Rubric (Criteria: Integrative and Applied Learning, Communication, Critical & Analytical Thinking, and Problem Solving) (Syllabus, p. 5)."

The above assignment description shows how student competence support is built within the course structure by incorporating instructor feedback to produce tangible outcomes. The outcome is described generally, "the final prospectus-like document." The student is expected to use thesis chair feedback to improve their writing and their plan, and presumably to stay aligned with disciplinary expectations.

Similarly, the final thesis builds competence through the same process of the student drawing on the chair's feedback to improve, revise, and prepare the resulting document. Below is the first sentence of the final thesis assignment:

> #GEA2_Thesis Final is the final and complete thesis itself, in which the student has taken into account feedback from their thesis mentor to improve the effectiveness of their written communication and demonstrates continued development of his/her project, the process of revising approaches (if necessary), responding to challenges, analysis of findings, and then articulation of the entire experience (Syllabus, p. 6).

Regarding assessment of student work, the syllabus explains that while there is a rubric for General Education assignments, thesis chair evaluation of student work is based on "the standards of the field in which his/her work aims to contribute (Syllabus, p. 7)" and that the

Thesis Director has database of examples of student work for thesis chairs to reference as needed.

In the syllabus, the Disability Access statement is oriented toward student strategy, "Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (SVC 1133) in order to receive academic accommodations p. 10)."

In the syllabus, the Statement of Academic Continuity provides strategic tasks to continue as a student, supporting task analysis including goal setting and strategic planning, "It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Learning Management System for each class for course-specific communication, and the main USF, College, and Department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information (USF Policy 6-010). (Syllabus, p. 11)."

In the syllabus, a section titled "Course Policies: Student Expectations" highlights four "student expectations." Expectations are student tasks. The first policy regards attendance and assigns students to complete all assignments in Canvas and create a meeting schedule with their chair to keep in regular contact with the chair.

The Writing Studio is presented, with a description of the studio, and the advice, "To request an appointment, please complete this Qualtrics survey to describe your project and availability. For more information, visit https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/academic-success-center/writing-studio/ (Syllabus, p. 11-12)." The Writing Studio is presented as a competence-supporting resource. During the COVID pandemic, it is only available online, "free, remote writing assistance (Syllabus, p. 5)."

The additional course policies include stating the few times when a grade of incomplete or "I" may be allowed, "only when a small portion of the student's work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade (p. 12)."

Another course policy states that the course is delivered via Canvas, and that students who need help regarding Canvas can check a USF Innovative Education website/guide or contact USF's IT department.

Finally, the last section provides the deadlines for drop/add, a vacation day, the withdrawal deadline, and regarding holidays, a link to Academic Calendars. This attention to deadlines supports student task scheduling and thus supports competence.

The syllabus' section on Undergraduate Research Attribute speaks to the reader's sense of competence, as the thesis course may be awarded the Undergraduate Research Attribute on the transcript.

Parts of the syllabus are addressed in other sections.

Competence and the Canvas Course Assignments. Supporting competence and strategic planning, the Canvas assignments provide more detail to the reader regarding what are criteria for final products and ways to get there. In each semester of Thesis 1 and Thesis 2, two or more assignments use the quiz feature as a multi-question survey.

The assignments have point values, but ultimately these points are replaced by the final grade on the final prospectus or the final thesis, as stated by this first-page chart in Canvas. This could confuse the reader since each quiz question is presented as having point values.

The Thesis 1 first day attendance Canvas assignment using Canvas' quiz function to "familiarize you with the thesis process (Thesis 1, Summer 2022, n.p.)." This quiz provides a text-based overview of the thesis experience and success strategies. It conveys information and strategy but does not include social support such as a speaker or faculty providing an overview in person or via video. Given that thesis is a mostly independent project, this beginning matches the

mostly independent structure of the course, by providing information without a textbook or sample.

The attendance quiz presents students with four components of the thesis program and details regarding how to do these components, and then requires the reader to summarize each section in their own words. The first component addresses the process of "work[ing] with your faculty mentor to develop a structured framework for moving from idea to active inquiry." The details include identifying a set of sources, training in research, expectations regarding meetings, feedback, and "evaluation standards," a project timeline including steps, identifying the second committee member, production of a written document that "defines the scope of the project, including methods of inquiry, what will be produced." After this section, the reader is prompted, "Write a brief summary of what you understood from this reading."

The second section of the quiz discusses the need to find a thesis chair and committee member "as early as possible," using informational interviews to find a chair, provides the strategic goal that "the prospectus is your honors college thesis "plan" of action," explains that self-plagiarism is not allowed, and provides four informational interviewing steps, then asks the student to provide a summary.

The third section of a quiz advises that a formal agreement with the thesis chair will be required as an assignment, and that "the thesis chair has the final approval of what is included in the prospectus and thesis." Then, students are provided the strategy that they must be aware some faculty are not available to provide thesis support in the summer. A final part provides requirements for gaining a permit to register in Thesis 2, which include the signed formal agreement "signed by you and the thesis director [I believe the intention is thesis chair, not director]," and the statement that a passing grade is required and "S [for satisfactory] is not

acceptable." The signed, formal agreement requires the student to connect with and declare their chair, or not progress to Thesis 2.

The fourth section of the quiz asks the student's planned graduation semester and year, and the name of their honors advisor.

The next assignments are to complete a Prospectus Draft and the Prospectus Final. The guidance in the Prospectus Draft assignment covers a lot of ground quickly:

As early as possible, you should begin working on the literature review and you should begin working on a draft of your literature review and have potential methods of inquiry mapped out. Once complete, you should be working on a draft of prospectus, with specific emphasis on editing and process. This is also a period of time when, depending on the project, your thesis chair might provide training on tools of inquiry/development of methods. For example, students might work on a draft of an interview guide, questions for a survey, learning design software, specific artistic techniques, or other methods. You will regularly meet with your thesis chair to go over rough draft of prospectus and provide revision (Prospectus Draft, n.p.).

Students are provided a template cover sheet and table of contents with headings: "Introduction p.1, Literature Review p. 3, Outline p.5, Proposed Work schedule p. 7 and References, p. 9." The outline section includes guidance at the beginning of the page:

In this chapter, you can create multiple sections as needed such as a Project Summary, Conceptual Framework, Research Questions, Research Methodology, Expected Outcomes, etc. Be sure to discuss your Outline with your thesis chair in advance and come up with your own design. This is where you identify the critical aspects of your thesis project and explain "what" you are doing/producing as well as "how" you are

going to conduct your research and develop your project. Then, in the next section

(proposed work schedule), you will include "when" you are going to do each aspect

described here. The purpose of the prospectus is to simulate the whole thesis process and

come up with a plan together with your chair so that you and your chair are on the same

page and you can complete your final thesis on time next semester.

**Please note: you are always welcome to start early and include any items developed

this semester for your final thesis—in that case, add any chapters as needed either here or

somewhere else. (Prospectus Draft, n.p.).

The draft is due the end of week 9 in a 15-week semester, and the final prospectus is due week

12 of the semester. The instruction is very simple, "Completed thesis prospectus approved by

thesis chair," and the Enhanced General Education rubric is visible below the place to submit the

document.

Moving ahead to Thesis 2, the Thesis 2 first day attendance Canvas assignment uses the

online quiz format again. It reinforces the primacy of thesis chair in supporting the student and

gathers the name of the chair, of the thesis is a group project or part of an existing lab, and a

student outline. Below are the rest of the instructions:

Thesis Project including: 1. Draft Title 2. Basic Project Ideas 3. Basic Plan and Schedule

4. Group Information (If you answered 'yes' above) 5. Existing Research Information (If

you answered 'yes' above)." This task requires the student to present an overview of the

thesis in the first week of classes. The next assignment, using quiz format, asks six sets of

questions to check in with the student regarding if they have a good working relationship

with the chair and a clear plan for questions regarding the student's communication plan

with the chair, the student's project plan and deadlines, how the student is doing, the

planned final work and what is expected by the chair, if the student has any difficulties,

then directs them to talk with the chair about the difficulties, and if they have solutions

the same difficulties, and then asks if they have questions and if they need any help

(source: Canvas Assignment Thesis Schedule: Project & Coordination (with Thesis

Chair) n.p.).

The next two assignments are to submit the Thesis Draft and then the Thesis Final. The

Thesis Final assignment provides a template cover sheet and table of contents, section headers,

the Main Body explanation that the student "can create multiple sections as you wish such as

Research Methods, Analysis, Discussion, etc. – discuss with your thesis chair and come up with

your own design. The contents are, "Introduction… 1, Literature Review… 3, Main Body… 5,

Conclusion… 7, References… 9 (p. 2)." The assignment again has Learning Outcomes from

four General Education areas, as thesis chairs both grade the thesis and complete the learning

outcome assessment.

The last assignment, Final Portfolio, asks 15 questions. Overall, it asks the student to

provide their name, thesis title, and abstract, if the student and chair agree to allow the thesis and

abstract to be posted on the web, request for comments on the honors thesis experience, and

request for tips for fellow thesis students. The request for tips allows for the thesis writer to have

a beneficial impact: it speaks to relationship support, and it connects with one's values, so can be

viewed as autonomy supportive. Note, the next iteration of this class included two more quiz-

based check-ins for the students to share out how they are doing with the thesis director and thus

have more frequent connection, so that they have an assignment or check-in every two weeks,

according to the thesis director (Personal communication, Fall 2021).

The assignments are intended to help students gain a sense of the resources and opportunities presented to them in relation to their thesis and be aware of limitations such as time constraints and chair interest, guiding them to do the early work of thesis topic and research design and to connect with potential faculty and obtain commitment from a chair. The assignments other than the final thesis are described as "scaffolding assignments," showing their connection with student actions and writing that are intended to support the ultimate end product of a thesis.

Similarly, there is a draft prospectus and then an actual prospectus due in the first semester, and a draft thesis and then the final thesis due in the second semester. As such, students are rewarded with recognition of progression on the project, and at the same time the chairs are expected to provide be expected to provide feedback that helps students know what to focus on in their next work. The syllabus on page 5 states, "revising written component by responding to critical feedback from thesis chair."

Competence and Canvas Announcements. The course announcements provide strategic information and contribute to student awareness of upcoming assignments, which may result in students completing assignments.

In the course learning management software, Canvas, the planned thesis announcements emerge as timely, strategic reminders of upcoming tasks with deadlines. The tone is polite and direct, addressing the student as you and speaking from the perspective of the program director using "I." There were seven announcements in Thesis 1 and seven in Thesis 2. The messages prompt students to be aware of what thesis assignments are due soon, and/or of key resources. The vast majority of the messages direct students to complete tasks. A sample sentence from Thesis 2 is, "Please complete the Confirm Thesis Chair assignment at your earliest convenience

(Due this Wednesday); as this Thesis course does not have in-class meetings, this assignment will be used for First Day Attendance purposes (Canvas course announcement, n.p.)." A key announcement regarding submitting the final thesis includes reminding students of the upcoming deadline, directions to communicate with the chair, and frank acknowledgement of the possibility of a negotiated extension, not otherwise discussed:

Be sure to receive a good amount of feedback from your chair BEFORE completing the final. In addition, please let your chair know that your final thesis is available for grading after submitting the final thesis--your chair may not realize that your thesis is sitting in Canvas! If you are anticipating the need for an extension in discussion with your thesis chair, I recommend that you submit what you have thus far on time and resubmit as needed--please leave your note in the comment box to inform your agreement with your chair with a specific date that you are aiming to resubmit (Canvas course announcement, n.p.).

The messages additionally provide competence support by offering to connect and solve problems, "If you are facing any difficulties or need any help, you are always welcome to reach out to me [the program director] (Canvas announcement, Thesis 2)."

Like the syllabus, the announcements reference to the key relationship with the chair, including "You have worked closely with an expert in your area of interest," and "Please contact your chair immediately if you do not see the grade and/or the rubric [showing the final thesis has been graded] (Canvas announcement, Thesis 2)."

The announcements highlight tasks due, deadlines, the faculty chair, and the option to reach out to the thesis director. All support competence and student performance. The announcements conclude the semester with hearty praise for the student, which may support

student self-perception and identity, student sense of competence, and student sense of being connected with the honors thesis program. However, student emotional responses are not captured in this study.

Competence and the Thesis Prep Documents. The thesis prep documents' language, concepts, and visual design inform the student reader and break a large and undefined upcoming design project into steps.

The thesis prep documents use of the phrase "Intro to Honors Thesis" implies that anyone (including any student) can read and understand this document. The language is supports competence, as it seems to not require specialized knowledge to read.

The thesis prep documents present steps toward designing a thesis. The use of the term "steps" implies that this is a doable task, turning the upcoming process into something tangible and named. The thesis prep documents break the early thesis collaborative design process into four steps, with 2-4 options at each step. This breaks the task into smaller components, making it easier for the reader to understand and to feel that this process is known, systematic, and usual. This aligns with task analysis including goal setting and strategic planning from SRL (Zimmerman, 2002).

For example, at Step 2: Type of Research, four research types are listed, and comments in the smaller font address the student's options after having progressed past Step 1, "Now that you have determined your project type, consider what kind of research you would like to do or experience. These categories are also useful to determine the skills and specialties that you would learn from your thesis chair (Thesis Prep, p. 5)." The categories are presented as four options: Theoretical, Interpretive, Empirical, and Experiential. Admittedly, there may be more

than four options, however, in an introductory text, this gets the student thinking about various options.

Prep document #1 explains that the time available affects the overall research project. It explains that the reader's thesis project may be limited and depends on discussing the scope of the work with the director. One way the project may be limited would be the necessity to emphasize one particular aspect of research instead of comprehensively addressing all aspects, "A research process can be very long. Therefore, you may have to focus on a certain area. For example, if you focus on collecting data, you may not have a lot of time to analyze and synthesize the data. Therefore, discussing the scope of work and expected outcomes with your prospective chair is critical. Your thesis chair should be able to support both the overall process and each step is listed here." The chair's perspective is necessary to plan a project that meets expectations and yet has a realistic understanding of the amount of time available to work on and finish the dissertation.

The thesis prep documents support competence by adding comments and details to the same string of core concepts. For example, on page 6, "What Can I do with my honors Thesis? – From an Idea to a Project" has the same four research types at the core, which are then surrounded by disciplines and then noted with types of research projects. As an example, with Interpretive at the core, Social Sciences is placed along the diagonal, with Anthropology named, and then these types of projects listed, "Behavioral Analysis; Human Experiences; Observations; Interviews; Case Studies."

The prep documents advise the reader to talk with faculty and others to brainstorm ideas for thesis, providing a proximal step to help the student work on the beginning stages of developing a thesis.

The student is tasked with specific requirements regarding communicating with chair. The prep documents and quick sheet for chairs assign tasks to the student and chairs. In the "overall course schedule," students are given deadlines for each assignment based on week of the semester and day of the week (Thesis Prep 3, p.15). In the same row as each student deadline are the tasks that chairs must complete. Thesis chairs are similarly tasked: complete an "Agreement Form (Signature), Mentoring: Draft Prospectus, Mentoring: Final Prospectus, Grading," and "Submission: Final Letter Grade." For thesis 2, students are tasked with submitting "1st Day attendance, Thesis Schedule & Coordination, Thesis Draft, Thesis Final, and Final Portfolio (explained as (Thesis Abstract) in the quick sheet). Thesis chairs are tasked with Project & Schedule Coordination, Mentoring: Draft Thesis, Submission: Midterm Grades, Mentoring: Final Thesis, Grading (& Mentoring if revisions are needed), Final grades.

The thesis prep documents and syllabus task the student with responsibilities that include scheduling meetings and submitting multiple drafts. The frequency of meetings and the number of submissions is not presented to the student nor the chair. In the documents, the student carries greater responsibility for these, "You [the student] are expected to meet with your thesis chair throughout the thesis process. You are responsible for initiating, scheduling, being prepared to discuss and updating your chair on the thesis process. It is a good idea to keep a log of all meetings (Thesis Prep 2, p. 10)." The last sentence presents a strategy for competence building.

The Thesis prep documents provide strategies for student success. Reproduced below is a warning about the timeline to approve an IRB:

**Be Aware--IRB Related Issues:

If your project is both research and involves human subjects, it requires USF IRB approval. Please note that the application process is very long (often, winter break is not

long enough), and you will also need a thesis chair who can support your IRB process.

(More Info about USF IRB [USF IRB is hyperlinked to:

https://usflearn.instructure.com/courses/1573094/pages/usf-irb]).

Supporting competence via use of USF resources, the thesis prep documents highlight

resources under two headers, "Understand what "Research" is," and "Search Research

Opportunities," with enthusiastic comments about how these sources can be used, office names,

and links (Prep 4, p. 20).

In the thesis prep documents, terms are well defined and are used repeatedly. Definitions

become summarized into key concepts, and these key concepts maintain the same color and

placement in visual illustration.

Competence and Writing Process. In this study, teaching writing as a process and post-

process writing theory align with competence and are analyzed as competence supports.

Writing process is included in the course design, with stated references to designing a

research process with the chair, drafts, and using chair feedback to make revisions. For each

major assignment, a draft is due weeks before the final version is due. The final thesis is

expected to include content written in the first semester. Process and post-process come from

composition studies.

From the syllabus, Section Description (Course Purpose) Semester One, in the section

regarding the Thesis Chair, student research as a writing process is specifically stated in the

syllabus, and provided as the reasoning behind expecting student to draft work and then make

revisions incorporating instructor feedback, "Since the focus of this course is on the process, you

are expected to submit multiple drafts of your work to your thesis chair in order to receive

appropriate feedback prior to your submission for the final thesis (Syllabus, p. 2)."

Further, in describing the first semester of thesis, the student is tasked with refining the process, formulating, planning, and beginning their project, "you will consequently hone the process, development, planning and commencement of your creative, applied, or scholarly research project (Syllabus, p. 2)." The project is in the student's hands which is autonomy supportive. Use of the term "project" conveys that this is complex enough to require a process to be created and requires planning. The overall goal is for the student to experience the process of generating a study in response to a germane idea, "the central aim is for you to practice the mechanics of moving from idea to active inquiry. It is precisely this craft that we want students to understand and experience in this first sequence of the 6 credits. (Syllabus, p. 2)." Viewing this experience as a craft again reinforces that this major project will go through a process, and by going through this process the student will become more familiar with designing and implementing a research project. Furth addressing writing as a process, aspects of writing and research design are highlighted, "Depending on the nature of the project, you might generate a research question, literature review, methodological approach and begin preliminary inquiry p. 2."

Further discussion of writing process in Semester Two includes revision, "Continue development of your project, the process of revising approaches (if necessary), responding to challenges, analysis of findings, and then articulation of the entire experience, syllabus, p. 2-3." In the second semester, the student continues to work on their project. Revision and adaption in response to challenges highlight the process orientation. These descriptions of writing process support student competence, as they demystify the process of planning, analysis, revision, and research writing.

The syllabus' three identified "Major Topics" are all aspects of writing process. They are: "research methods, writing and revision, [and] literature review syllabus p. 3)." Research methods are approaches to creating a perspective on the phenomenon observed and within a college setting are typically an advanced aspect of writing process. The phrase, 'writing and revision,' highlights writing as a process that include codifying what one can, then effort to improve the text. Use of a literature review assignment again is part of writing process by encouraging the reader to synthesize information from relevant sources and gain insights into how information is organized in the field or field(s) targeted by the study.

Like the Section Description, the syllabus' Course Objectives include writing process. The first three objectives include writing process as "inquiry… use of disciplinary methods and frameworks to inform a research study design," and creation of a "digital artifact appropriate to the disciplinary practice" (Syllabus, p. 3). The fourth course objective focuses on working with the thesis mentor (the mentor is the faculty chair), which is a competence support that relies on a relationship. Still, the relationship with the mentor specifically supports the student's "writing and revision process (Syllabus, p. 3)." The chair is discussed at greater depth in a later section.

A few faculty specifically described teaching writing as a process, and none made a statement contrary to writing process. As one stated, "[I tell them to] just to think of it as a process. Do it in chunks. Don't worry about that first paragraph, because it's paralyzing…. And so, to kind of break it up into pieces, and if you can, then you're working on it every day and you'll see progress and progress begets more confidence and progress."

Faculty describe a practical process in the beginning of the thesis program, "brainstorming, listening to their interests, helping them narrow things down to something that

they can get data on and that is narrow enough that they can address it over a two-semester period."

Another faculty member mentioned sharing writing strategies:

I've been big on giving them along the way kind of tools to support writing thesis, like creative ideas about the writing process like, you know, introducing them to the Pomodoro method, or to the idea that there are different methods for kind of helping people like facilitate writing but also make it a sort of like, you know you write for a certain amount of time and then you get a reward or you build in that like you're going to get up from your desk and do something else for a few minutes, or that you at the end of a writing time you give yourself some kind of treat.

In the first semester of thesis, students are unclear regarding what the thesis project is or will be. Two faculty report student "indecision" regarding the research topic. Two report students being challenged by the need to define the research project. Two pointed out students suffer when they do not follow direction from the chair. The project, when first envisioned by the student, may be too large - as one participant noted, "[students] need help envisioning a thesis that is viable to complete." As one participant stated, "There was a lack of clarity around what the purpose of a thesis was as an intellectual exercise, what its structure generally was, the importance of a literature review, and a research question. So that's I feel like that's a little bit like saying everything. Many really didn't know what they were getting themselves into."

One faculty member stated, "They generally have no sense of how to approach this gargantuan endeavor, and they feel overwhelmed." This warns of a potentially discouraging experience, again, as Ryan and Deci describe, an "overly challenging, inconsistent, or otherwise discouraging experience." (2000, p. 12)." When students are overwhelmed by thesis, a few

options exist. The diverting options follow: One is to encourage the student to exit thesis with no financial penalty by dropping from the course in the first week of classes. Another is to encourage students to consider withdrawing from the course by the withdrawal deadline of the first semester. A third option is to refuse to chair the student's thesis. A fourth is to not issue a permit for Thesis 2, again stopping the student's progress in this direction. For the overwhelmed student who decides to stay, most likely the faculty member or the director or both will do the labor that helps an overwhelmed student continue and finish successfully. Drawing on SRL, task analysis including goal setting and strategic planning can provide a clearer and more accessible breakdown of writing process.

Various faculty described specific components of research writing that students may struggle with the prospectus, lack of familiarity with research methods, and the physical structure of the thesis. Five faculty members volunteered that students struggled with the literature review. Specifics included not knowing why it's needed, how to create one, and how to synthesize sources. As one said, "Sometimes we'll end up with students who will just describe an article, describe the next article without kind of putting it together in a coherent fashion which is what a good literature review will do." Three faculty mentioned students needing help with sources: searching databases, accessing relevant literature, and deciding what articles to include.

A major finding of this study is that students struggle with multiple components of the research writing process. Challenges can include finding a chair, designing a viable study, the research design and writing process, and finding the time to work.

Competence and Task Analysis: Goal Setting. Student task analysis through goal setting and strategic planning comes from SRL (Zimmerman, 2002). Student goal setting is when the student creates a proximal goal within reach (Zimmerman, 2002). In the texts and interviews,

language features that helped with identifying competence supports included assignments and any mention of task, project, quality, example, and any evident way that the student gains clarity on how to accomplish the task at hand.

The syllabus establishes a minimum goal of a "cumulative minimum of 4500 words." Given that the syllabus is for both thesis 1 and thesis 2, it may be setting a minimum final word count or minimum word count when adding up significantly revised drafts.

The syllabus tasks students to establish their meeting schedule with the chair, "Make sure to set the schedule with your thesis chair at the very meeting of the second semester of your thesis (Syllabus, p. 2.)." This supports scheduling, but it also doesn't provide expectations regarding a minimum (or maximum) number of meetings.

Detailed descriptions of assignments support competency and task analysis by providing goals for the end product. In the syllabus on page 5, the prospectus draft is described, "Depending on the nature of the research question, the submission might include an abstract, literature review, methodology section, thesis outline, and timeline for completion of work." This provides a basic structure but no explanation as to what the components might be like.

For both Thesis 1 and Thesis 2, the syllabus and prep documents provide a schedule of tasks with deadlines for students, and in the thesis prep documents the grid includes deadlines for chairs in the same grid, providing task names and end dates within a context of two people collaborating. The Canvas website shows the assignments, the points the assignments are worth, and the deadline, but unlike the syllabus and prep documents doesn't show the thesis chair deadlines. The course schedule lists the week due, the assignment, and the associated learning outcome or activity.

The work students complete in the first semester supports the work that will be needed in the second semester. The Thesis 1 Prospectus requires students to create an outline of the major components of the thesis, and to create a proposed work schedule which will result in goals that might be large or medium, so the supervising faculty chair will be very aware of the proposed timeline and goals.

The prep documents are designed to help students use forethought to get going with their research project planning prior to the start of the first semester of thesis, and specifically to consider steps for honors thesis research planning. Consequently, they support task analysis and strategic planning. As an example, on page 4, students are advised, "First determine your **Project Setting** – are you starting from scratch or creating a thesis project within an existing research lab/team/program which you belong to? Note: Finding a thesis chair and research lab opportunities can take time – **start early**! [bold appears in original]." The prep documents support student task analysis and planning at the beginning of the thesis design journey by laying out steps of decisions to make and providing information regarding potential alternatives. There are no deadlines associated with these tasks, but they are tasks for the reader. The first decision, "Step 1," is to determine project setting, "Individual-based or Team-based Project?" The description "starting from scratch" guides the reader to be aware that a new research project is more novel and must be built up without a pre-existing foundation, whereas a lab-based research project has an existing research foundation (which would include already having established the guiding theory/theories, antecedent studies, and research processes).

Early instructor feedback or redirection may protect the student from taking on too much. Faculty describe the beginning of thesis as a time of student ambition, when the student's may be much larger than an actual thesis topic, and so faculty may need to help students believe in the

value of a thesis that is smaller than their first imagining. As one faculty respondent stated, the chair "gives them the nuts and bolts of how to construct the prospectus." Another described, "students come in with very audacious and ambitious ideas, great. Now if you want to get to that ambition, it'll take you 40 years. So where are you going to start? And so, we aim to identify a starting point that is within the tractability of a two-semester timeframe."

Competence and Task Analysis: Strategic Planning. Student strategic planning is when the student makes decisions to use one or more strategies based on awareness of what approaches will most likely lead to a successful writing outcome. Strategic planning is a component of SRL (Zimmerman, 2002). Strategic planning supports writing competence.

Overall, the Thesis Prep Documents are intended to support students planning for thesis before they are enrolled in thesis and are posted on the honors website for students and academic advisors to access. This is strategic planning support. Use of the term "Prep," again supports student strategic planning. One header in the second prep document on page 18 is "Preparing early for Your Honors Thesis."

Faculty help students design a thesis project that is doable in a two-semester timeframe. Faculty are involved in strategic changes to the topic and study direction. An example of strategic planning that a faculty might anticipate is the amount of time required to propose and wait for possible IRB approval, potentially putting the entire thesis project at risk of not being completed within two semesters. "If the student has sought IRB approval, waiting for that is a problem. That's a huge, huge burden for students in the second semester because if they're waiting on approval, they feel stymied in everything until they can get that."

Even though there are specific assignments with deadlines, two chairs report helping the student identify sub-tasks that are to be completed between the current meeting and the next

meeting. Over time, these efforts will result in the final written project. The next section addresses chair feedback that may contribute to students identifying sub tasks or tasks to complete.

Competence and Chair Feedback. Most assignments are graded complete/incomplete. The syllabus on page 5 states "Scaffolding assignments will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis only and include" then four assignments are bulleted, each with a student learning outcome but no further assignment description. The assignments are: Identify Prospective Thesis Chair, Annotated Bibliography, Interview Prospective Thesis Chair, Confirm Thesis Chair."

These scaffolded assignments have no line space between each one, but are followed by a line space, and then the last two assignments of the first semester are described in a sentence or two and again are followed by one or two aligned student learning outcomes. The end of one section and the beginning of another implies that the general rule of complete/incomplete grading ended with the first section and does not apply to the next one. Also, the spacing seems to indicate overall size or weightiness of a particular topic, or possibly an effort to limit document size. It is known by the thesis director and ongoing chairs that the draft prospectus is not graded for a letter grade. This contrast between the syllabus and the actual experience may result in students both assuming and expecting that their draft prospectus will be graded. The ambiguity seems out of step with the general role of syllabi making clear to students the expectations of class.

The complete/incomplete grade reduces the burden of grading on the faculty chairs. Faculty may choose to use grades or descriptions to assess student work at any point, but only provide a grade for the final prospectus.

The faculty interviews gathered frequency of chair feedback to students in the first and second semester of thesis. The totals exclude one of the interview participants as the program that person runs is a one-semester model and doesn't align well with the semester-by-semester approach to gathering faculty practices. The question assumes that when faculty read student written work, they provide feedback to the student.

During the first semester of thesis, fewer than half of the respondents (4 out of 10) provided feedback 5 or more times per semester. The majority (6 out of 10) provided feedback between 1-5 times in the semester.

Table 2: Frequency of Faculty Reading Student Work in Thesis 1

Respondents	During the first semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how frequently do you typically review thesis student written work?	Total reviews of student work
0	Once per week	Around 15
2	Every other week	Around 7
0	11+ times per semester	11+
2	5-10 times per semester	5-10
6	1-5 times per semester	1-5
0	None	None

Table 3: Frequency of Faculty Reading Student Work in Thesis 2

Respondents	During the second semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how frequently do you typically review thesis student written work?	
0	Once per week	Around 15
0	Every other week	Around 7
1	11+ times per semester	11+
3	5-10 times per semester	5-10
7	1-5 times per semester	1-5
0	None	None

During the second semester of thesis, fewer than half of the respondents (5 out of 11) provided feedback 5 or more times per semester. The majority (7 out of 11) provided feedback between 1-5 times in the semester.

Faculty commented that providing formative feedback to the student, pointing out what the student does will, helps student motivation. One respondent highlighted advising students "what's strong" to help them be assured that they have already produced some successful work.

> I tell them what they need to work on, but also what's strong because that's a big motivator knowing what is working and you do sometimes need to hear it explicitly from somebody else, to be sure you're on the right track.

Competence, Time Constraints, and Deadlines. In both Thesis 1 and Thesis 2, the syllabus and prep documents provide a schedule of tasks with deadlines for students, and in the

thesis prep documents the grid includes deadlines for chairs in the same grid, providing task names and end dates within a context of two people collaborating. The Canvas website shows the assignments, the points the assignments are worth, and the deadline, but unlike the syllabus and prep documents doesn't show the thesis chair deadlines.

Faculty mention student problems with time management, self-direction, and self-pacing. The long-term time and topic commitment of the thesis project is likely a new experience for students. One faculty member noted that students may be unfamiliar with managing a student-led long-term project, "they've never done a self-directed long term research project before… It's a year-long process, and that's a lot of time to be committed to the same topic." Two faculty commented on student putting off working on thesis and then running short on time, running the risk of not completing the thesis within the two-semester timeline. Two faculty commented on the two-semester schedule as a challenge. One reinforces that given the short time allowance, the student must be ready to take up the chair's recommendations quickly, "It's a really, really short period of time for a thesis, so if you're not following someone who already knows all the pitfalls, you're going to fall into all of them."

Two faculty were specific regarding the amount of time students should invest in working on their thesis. One advises that students should work "10 hours a week," while another encourages students to "make it part of your daily routine… setting aside even 40 minutes a day."

The majority of thesis student are not in cohorts. This may add pressure on faculty and students to move deadlines when the student encounters setbacks. However, while sub-task deadlines might be re-negotiated with the chair, the semester deadlines are firm.

Deadlines are endpoints of planned goals or assignments. The thesis prep documents, the syllabus, and the Canvas course shell assign tasks with deadlines to students. Multiple faculty interviewees brought up that deadlines help students to be motivated to finish their thesis project. For many students, a successful thesis experience is the final undergraduate learning task that must be completed to graduate and go on to other roles such as being a graduate student or full-time worker. Two faculty brought up the upcoming pressure of graduation. One describes it as motivating students to finish their thesis, while another advises, "that can bring on an extra layer of pressure for them."

Competence and Structure. Another finding of this study is that class structures support student success. On the Tampa campus there is no thesis class, but some of the faculty chairs host group meetings with their own thesis students. The curriculum provides an alternative to honors thesis: taking an honors capstone class plus another honors core class. This provides a valuable contrast to the thesis experience that can help an honors student consider what option best fits their goals and current lifestyle. As described in the syllabus, "[capstone] brings honors students together…Instructors select engaging topics of interest and use an experiential learning model to guide students through structured, collaborative group research projects (Syllabus, p.2). The capstone is more social than the typical thesis, providing a community of approximately 18 peers, with twice-weekly meetings and pre-selected readings that support developing a knowledge set guided by a key topic or theme. It provides less autonomy as the topic has been selected by the faculty, but it does provide more structure that can contribute to student success. The phrase, "experiential learning model," adds a firmer sense of structure and guidance from the instructor. A major finding of this study is that thesis is less structured than other class experiences, making it more challenging for students. The alternative to a thesis is a capstone

project and a core class. This alternative provides a course schedule, assignments, pre-selected readings to an instructor. In contrast, many thesis students have to build a project from scratch while consulting with an expert who is not the instructor, but a thesis chair. Of the thesis options, there is more structure when students work on a project that is within their major and emerges from ongoing prior and continuing activity in a research lab, and there is relatively more relationship support when the project involves being part of a research group or having a research buddy.

Similarly, the prep documents touch on the greater structure in capstone the alternative, "[Capstone instructors] guide students through structured, collaborative group research projects (Thesis Prep 1, p. 2)." In many ways, capstone is easier for students to complete because faculty pick the topic and guide the work. According to one instructor, her students write more and write better in their one semester capstone class than their two-semester thesis class.

The thesis program is invested in supporting creative, multidisciplinary, and disciplinary theses where students learn how to manage their semi-independent research study. A semi-independent research journey is demanding, and thus thesis may not be a good option for all honors students.

Competence as Student Responsibility. Per the quick guide info sheet, the "student's responsibilities are communication, coordination, and submission (Quick guide info sheet, p. 1)." The specific responsibilities provide tasks that are directly in support of responsibility and student autonomy. Because they are presented as tasks, I'm discussing them within the context of competence support. Per the document, student responsibilities are:

Communication:

- Informing & updating the course activities and due dates

- Discussing & understanding what the thesis chair expects

Coordination:

- Creating the overall project schedule and organizing meetings (meet regularly!)

- Requesting for feedback in a timely manner to meet the deadlines

Submission:

- Submitting assignments on time – your student should make sure that you receive each submission via a delivery method you prefer. However your communication as needed is greatly appreciated. (Quick sheet, p. 1)

The document, addressed to potential chairs, highlights the course expectation that the student will communicate with the chair, plan meetings and request feedback, and hand in work on time, and defines what student responsibility looks like according to program expectations.

Competence and Quality of Work. The syllabus establishes high expectations regarding the quality of the final thesis produced in the second semester of thesis,

You will complete a final digital artifact that builds on work from the previous semester. This is a substantive and culminating reflection of your undergraduate Honors experiences and should thus be your absolute best work. (Syllabus, p. 3).

While the majority of chairs and directors described student written submissions and meeting expectations most of the time, two said submissions meet expectations always, two said they meet expectations half the time, and one said they sometimes meet expectations.

Table 4: How Frequently Student Work Meets Faculty Expectations in Thesis 1

Respondents	Submissions meet expectations
2	Always
6	Most of the time
2	About half the time
1	Sometimes
0	None

In this program, use of Turnitin is mandatory, described as "mainly for students to conduct a self-check during the developing stage syllabus, p.6." with the director entering a complete/incomplete grade for that assignment," with use of Turnitin after that upload "up to each student in consultation with his/her thesis chair, p. 6." The minimum expectation is that student will be made aware of overlap between the thesis paper and other sources including student papers and published work. So, Turnitin may help students and chairs as well as the director be aware of possible plagiarism and the need to ensure final products are not plagiarized. The student focus as actor and conductor of a "self-check" supports student autonomy, and the decision on how to use Turnitin is a strategic decision.

Relatedness

The third major area of student motivation, according to SDT, is relatedness. As described in SDT, humans have a basic need and drive for relatedness, defined as feeling secure in one's relationships, emotionally connected, supported, significant, as well as "giving to the group or contributing to others" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, 2017). Relationships that include an emotional connection with others plus one's impact on others is significant in SDT. When this

need for connection is satisfied, a student is more likely to feel motivated or energized to be productive while working on doable tasks that relate to their values. While this study does not investigate the depth and quality of student emotional relationships inside and outside of honors thesis, it captures some aspects of relatedness support. These include student contact with the chair, the director, the committee member, and with peers. Ultimately, this study captures some significant points of contact and frequency of contact as described by thesis chairs and thesis program directors.

The course assignments, syllabus, and prep documents support student awareness of potential and actual supporting relationships with mentors and peers.

After reviewing the below information, I conclude that students experience support from their relationship with the chair, as well as other people.

Relatedness, the Syllabus, and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). On the first page of the syllabus, under "Where to Direct Questions," in left column, Thesis Process (Course Director) & Thesis Permits, the thesis director is named. Under Thesis Content & Direction, Faculty thesis chair is listed. Degree Works & Course Requirements, Assigned Honors College advisor. In the second Colum, under Brainstorming & Ideation – Honors College Faculty, the full-time Tampa campus faculty are listed.

In the first section of the syllabus, the second paragraph points out the importance of working with the chair, "A key objective of the thesis experience is to expose you to the kind of mentoring relationship you might experience in graduate school. Thus, your most important activities will be the development and maintenance of a meaningful working relationship with your thesis chair (Syllabus, p. 1)." While a key objective is not necessarily the prime objective,

the second sentence makes primary the importance of developing and sustaining the relationship with the thesis chair.

On the second page of the syllabus, Section V is dedicated to the Section Description (Course Purpose), with three sections, Thesis Chair, Semester One, and Semester Two. The first section is Thesis Chair, which is only somewhat matched by Semester One and Semester Two. This reinforces that the Thesis Chair is important. Here, the student is expected to meet with the chair "throughout the thesis process (Syllabus, p. 2)" Signifying responsibility, the student is tasked with "initiating, scheduling, and being prepared to discuss and update your chair with the thesis process (Syllabus, p. 2)." The student is "expected to submit multiple drafts of your work to your thesis chair in order to receive appropriate feedback prior to submission of the final thesis." So, the student is responsible for finding the chair, scheduling meetings, and writing the thesis.

The syllabus section on Undergraduate Research Attribute has an implied relationship component as the findings are shared out through "presentation and/or publication," and these are designed to be read by other people. This reinforces the traditional outcome of research, which is to share results with the community and gain feedback and standing.

Relatedness and the Canvas Course Assignments. The assignments for Thesis 1 and Thesis 2 further emphasize the primacy of working with the thesis chair as the most important aim for thesis students. The thesis director monitors how things are going by sending out course announcements approximately every other week and ending them with encouragement to reach out to the thesis director if there are any questions or concerns. The director noted that once she is contacted, her next step frequently is to encourage the student to communicate with the chair. However, she can help students who don't find chairs early on or otherwise need extra support.

There are three assignments related to finding a chair who is a good fit to the intended topic, all in the first semester. The first is titled Thesis Prospectus Review (first day attendance) and is a first-week class assignment where students are asked to show they have learned key topics from the class via summaries of presented text. The topics presented include first the thesis project, "your focus will be on process of inquiry: the development, planning and commencement of your original project. The central aim is for you to practice the mechanics of moving from idea to active inquiry (n.p.)." And then the definition of the prospectus as an "honors college thesis 'plan' of action. It should be done in consultation with your thesis chair, and in the writing style of your discipline (n.p.)." The third presents the requirement to sign a thesis agreement with a chair, that the chair "has final approval of what is included in the prospectus and thesis (n.p.)." a warning that "some faculty may not be available in the summer (n.p.)." and states that in order to have a permit to register for Thesis 2, the student must have submitted a signed agreement with the chair, the Final Thesis Prospectus, and a passing grade. The last question asks for the student's planned graduation semester and year, and their honors advisor's name.

The second assignment is titled Identify Prospective Chairs. This assignment requires the student to provide an academic overview of at least three prospective chairs and to work on the upcoming two assignments to confirm the thesis chair. This assignment provides a summary of what a chair does. It lists out topics the chair will mentor the student through, including research design and writing process competence supports:

Your thesis chair is the faculty member who will mentor you through the thesis process. You will meet with this person on a regular basis to determine such things like the purpose of your research, methods of inquiry, developing a prospectus, developing a

reading list, conducting your research/creating art, etc., writing your thesis paper,

obstacles, questions, changes in direction, and more. This person will be with you from

beginning to end. Thus, you should make sure to confirm that they will be available to

work with you during the term when you will take IDH 4970 Thesis II (9-month faculty

may not be available in the summer) (Canvas course, n.p.).

The assignment also reinforces the strategic need to have a good relationship with the chair to

earn a good reference, "Keep in mind that Thesis Chairs are often key people for writing

recommendations on your behalf for graduate school, prestigious scholarships and jobs. So, be

sure to maintain a good working relationship by demonstrating strong work ethic and interest in

their mentorship (n.p.)."

The third assignment is to interview 2-3 prospective chairs and provide a summary

reflection on the person, how the interview affected the student's "thinking about your

prospectus (n.p.)" and to evaluate the interaction with the candidate for chair.

The fourth assignment, Confirm Thesis Chair: General Information, requires the student

to submit the chair's name and contact information, declare if this is a group project and/or

related to a research lab, provide a summary of the thesis project including the "Draft Title, Basic

Project Ideas, Basic Plan and Schedule," and information regarding the group project and

research lab, if applicable. The last question of the assignment includes additional information

about the chair, space for submitting a coordination meeting plan, and advises the student to

provide that information to the chair:

Maintaining a good relationship with your Thesis Chair is critical—it is YOUR

responsibility to communicate with your chair. Note that your chair may not be familiar

with our Canvas system or aware of all the deadlines—please let your chair know when

you submit your work and keep him/her informed about the status of your work. It is also important to understand what your chair expects from you in terms of the amount and the quality of your work—remember, your chair is the one who is grading your final work! Please coordinate with your thesis chair and provide your main communication tools/strategies and a brief coordination meeting plan with your chair (specify either dates or how often—review the due dates). Be sure to share this information with your chair (Canvas course, n.p.).

In multiple places including the syllabus and the assignments, the thesis student is tasked with the responsibility to communicate with their chair, update them when work is submitted, and to be aware that the chair grades the work and determines what length and quality is required for a passing or excellent grade. Thus, the chair is a faculty mentor who supports and teaches related to thesis design and provides feedback as the student produces work. However, in contrast to the general structure of a regular class where the department and instructor arrange meetings, in this semi-independent experience, the student must make the effort to remain in contact with the chair, including a "coordination meting plan" with the chair.

Relatedness and the Canvas Announcements. The Canvas announcements remind the reader of the importance of the chair as "an expert," as the grader of the student's work, as the person who provides feedback needed prior to submitting the final thesis, and as a person who may need to be advised once the final thesis is submitted to the Canvas course and awaiting grading. This reinforces the message in the syllabus that the chair is essential to receiving credit for the course.

Relatedness and the Thesis Prep Documents. Thesis Prep #1 advises students that their thesis project may be part of a team or individual. A team project provides support through

relationship and shared experience and goals. Like the syllabus, it highlights the need to identify a thesis chair, "The Honors Thesis Track provides students with a 1-1 mentoring experience similar to a graduate program with faculty selected by each student based on their area of inquiry (Thesis Prep 1, p. 2)."

Thesis Prep #2 highlights the faculty as "selected by each student" (the choice is an autonomy support) and emphasizes the chair as facilitating, supporting, and sharing the "journey together." The focus is on how the chair facilitates the student's exploration and scholarship, as well as a collegial connection, "the key feature is the process of establishing a meaningful working relationship with the chair in order to effectively support the student's curiosity and scholarly work, encourage interdisciplinary approaches to solving problems, and share the ongoing academic journey together (Thesis Prep 2, p. 2)."

While not as important as the thesis chair, the committee member additionally has a supportive role. As described in Thesis Prep 2, "The College prefers that the second person is a faculty member, but we have allowed advanced doctoral candidates to serve on thesis committees. You do not need to have one right away - talk with your chair, and no need to submit an agreement form for these members (the form is for thesis chair only) (p. 9). The committee member provides another formalized supporting relationship.

Thesis prep #3 includes an image of a faculty chair and student smiling together. They are of equal height and size, indicating parity, with both smiling indicating a positive or even joyful shared experience for both (Thesis Prep 3, p. 11).

Relatedness and the Quick Information Sheet for Thesis Chairs. The quick guide info sheet for Thesis Chairs presents responsibilities of the student and chair. It is intended for the student to provide the sheet to the potential Thesis Chair. Thus, the student is assumed to be

familiar with it, but the messages are tuned most to the potential Thesis Chair. It describes the chair's role as mentoring the student, submitting grades, and communicating to course director issues and concerns. Mentoring has five aspects, "Guiding the overall thesis process; sharing knowledge and resources; supporting challenging tasks and encouraging taking creative risks; reviewing student's work; providing clear expectations and feedback on each submission (there is no specific word count page # requirement - please show what an excellent work for an undergraduate student might be and set the goals together.) (p. 1)." The chair is responsible for instruction to the student. Neither the course nor the director provides direct instruction beyond providing shared definitions, deadlines (that can be moved), and support. There may be an expectation that the chair will show the student what excellent work is like, touching on the possibility of providing an exemplar or articulating criteria for quality work, all supporting competence development. This approach of showing what is excellent work can be done through providing a model or exemplar or discussing the disciplinary effectiveness of sample texts. The finding of the approach to providing a model was also discussed in the Competence section.

Relatedness and Frequency of Contact. Since relationships are formed through contact, either prior to the start of thesis or during, the frequency of contact captures some aspect of student connection with chairs, particularly the frequency of meetings during the first and second semester of thesis. A finding of this study is that meetings are relationship supports. New faculty chairs might benefit from an understanding of the typical meeting frequency of chairs with students.

Chair Interviews: During the first semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how often do you typically meet 1-1 (in-person or electronically) with your thesis students (11 respondents)? In order to provide options that may better fit chair and director ways of recalling thesis meetings, I

provided overlapping ways of thinking about meetings: per week or per semester. The Frequency column was provided as response options I added the column on total meetings to facilitate analysis (for all the below charts).

For the first semester, the majority of respondents (7 out of 11) met with their thesis student 5 or more times, and a small cluster met with students once per week (3 out of 11). More than one third (4 out of 11) met with their student 1-5 times in the first semester. The interview process necessarily asked respondents to provide a single answer that could somehow represent multiple experiences with students. A future study could make a more precise effort to gather meeting frequency from students, faculty, and chairs based on a specific semester instead.

Table 5: Frequency of Chair 1-1 Meetings with Advisees in Thesis 1

Respondents	Frequency of 1-1 meetings in first semester of thesis	Total meetings
3	Once per week	Around 15
1	Every other week	Around 7
3	5-10 times per semester	5-10
4	1-5 times per semester	1-5
0	None	none

The second section continues to address the first semester of thesis but asks about possible group meetings including more than one student.

Around half of the faculty led group meetings (6 out of 11) and around half of the faculty did not lead group meetings in the first semester of thesis (5 out of 11).

Table 6: Frequency of Chair Group Meetings with Advisees in Thesis 1

Respondents	Frequency of group meetings in Thesis 1	Total group meetings
2	Once per week	Around 15
0	Every other week	Around 7
0	5-10 times per semester	5-10
4	1-5 times per semester	1-5
5	None	None

The next section asks the faculty how many 1-1 meetings they typically held with thesis students in the second semester. In the second semester, more than half of the respondents (6 out of 11) held 1-5 meetings in the second semester, more than a quarter (4 out of 11) held 5-10 meetings, and one held meets every other week.

Table 7: Frequency of Chair 1-1 Meetings with Advisees in Thesis 2

Respondents	Frequency of 1-1 meetings in Thesis 2	Total 1-1 meetings
0	Once per week	Around 15
1	Every other week	Around 7
0	11+ times per semester	11+
4	5-10 times per semester	5-10
6	1-5 times per semester	1-5
0	None	

Below is a table showing how frequently faculty hosted group meetings in the second semester. In the second semester, the minority (4 out of 11) held group meetings in the second semester of thesis, and the majority did not host group meetings (7 out of 11).

Table 8: Frequency of Chair Group Meetings with Advisees in Thesis 2

Respondents	Frequency of group meetings in Thesis 2	Total 1-1 meetings
1	Once per week	Around 15
0	Every other week	Around 7
0	11+ times per semester	11+
0	5-10 times per semester	5-10
3	1-5 times per semester	1-5
7	None	None

This study has a finding regarding meeting with students 1-1. In short, if a student is not performing to expectations, increasing the frequency and total 1-1 meetings with the chair, and/or assigning the student to participate in more group meetings with the chair will provide more relationship support, likely provide additional competence support, and thus is a motivation support.

In greater detail, in the first semester, a faculty member who meets 1-5 times with a student and does not host group meetings has student with the lowest frequency of meetings. Half of the faculty interviewed provide group meetings in the first semester. When thesis students are doing well academically, then the frequency of meetings seems to be working. However, in the case that a thesis student seems to be struggling, one direct intervention from the faculty member or director could be to increase the frequency of meetings. More frequent meetings can accommodate smaller student goals between meetings, which again helps student

work on proximal goals that seem doable. In the second semester, the faculty interviewed provided a split: around half hosted individual meetings between 5-10 times in the semester, and half 1-5 times. Also in the second semester, 4 faculty host group meetings, when 6 did in the first semester. This reduction in faculty reliance on group meetings to support students in the second semester may indicate a reduction in student need for group meetings as assessed by faculty.

Regarding meeting frequency, one faculty member reports that some thesis students need infrequent check-ins and some need more frequent ones. While students were tasked with creating a communication plan in the first semester, some do not follow through. Another faculty member comments, "And then also I would say, following up with your chair when you need help, and not feeling like you're just burdening them." The general solution to student needs is contact with the faculty chair.

Faculty interviews provide additional support to the SDT claim that quality relationships support student motivation and action. When asked how they help motivate students to finish their thesis, faculty report they check in with students and interact with students. One faculty member talks about how their emotional and intellectual stance on the thesis project supports student motivation:

> I'm enthusiastic. That's half the battle is just infusing some confidence into the system and letting them go off and work on it. I think that goes a long way, so that's probably my main, like, that's the main tool I've got to pull on you know is, go, go, go do it.

Use of a Model/Exemplar and Chair Expectations. Writing samples or models provide a contextualized example of a completed work that is in the same genre of the intended outcome and likely acceptable (but don't have to be as long as the faculty member clarifies what is exemplary and what should be avoided). So, they convey a sense of the conventions expected of

116

a certain work and lay out examples of major sections, organization, phrasing, word choice, formatting, and how the components reflect the study research question and overall design, among other features. There are no examples of student theses posted within the Canvas website, but individual faculty may share out resources, as one faculty member advised. The course does not point students to thesis examples generally available on the internet. There is a static USF Honors Outstanding Honors Theses website for 2010 – 2013 only on the University's Digital Commons website: https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/honors_et/

The vast majority of chairs (9 out of 11) discuss an example or model of research writing with students. One more discusses an example most of the time, and one does so sometimes.

Table 9: Faculty Frequency of Discussing an Example of Research Writing

Respondents	If discuss example
9	Always
1	Most of the time
0	About half the time
1	Sometimes
0	None

A future study could contribute to an understanding of how faculty and students use of examples or models to support discussing academic writing.

Chair Prior Experience with Honors Theses. The majority of chair and director respondents had chaired fifteen or more theses, so their responses are based on multiple experiences with individual thesis students. All respondents except one had chaired five or more. While twelve faculty and thesis chairs participated in interviews, certain aspects of thesis did not

apply to all participants. The meeting frequency responses will exclude the one respondent who serves as chair of a departmental thesis program. The reason for the exclusion is that this particular department thesis program only has one thesis of semester, and the questions were designed assuming a two-semester thesis program.

Table 10: Number of Theses Chaired

Respondents	Number of theses
8	15 or more
3	5-10
1	1-5

Conclusion

This study was designed to capture textual and personal perspectives on the honors thesis course. The research questions, theoretical foundation, and early conversations with the director informed my inquiry. The texts and interviews with faculty revealed major areas from SDT, SRL, and writing process. The texts capture detailed instructions for each assignment, while the interviews were regarding faculty experiences in a per-semester, specific topic, or as a total experience, across multiple semesters and years of experience. The interviews captured faculty wisdom. In the honors thesis program, faculty chairs are essential to the student experience, so the interviews especially capture strategies and a range of perspectives regarding student needs. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to writing studies.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter considers how the findings of this study relate to similar contemporary theories of writing support in composition. It returns to two of the four research questions of this study:

2. Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the contemporary literature on writing supports?

And

3. Do the writing supports align with or diverge from the thesis writing process and motivation theoretical foundation?

Autonomy

Total autonomy, when considered in the light of this study, does not always lead to student success. It seems fair to conclude that autonomy is always limited to some degree in higher education and may be both supported and limited in the honors thesis program. Further, it seems that some number of thesis students do not do well with the high degree of autonomy currently integrated into this program, so, as I discuss further in Chapter 6, the program can be enhanced by identifying those students who need more competence support at the cost of some autonomy and providing more supports to those students. I further call for whole-class meetings which constrain student time autonomy, but provide competence and relatedness supports.

Autonomy Supports Writing. Per SDT, autonomy is anything that the student's self endorses as a good use of the student's energy. Consequently, when the writer's self endorses working on a writing task, the student is experiencing autonomy support for that writing task. Put

another way, if a student values their writing task, that supports them in writing. In this way, support of student autonomy is theorized to support student writing. Autonomy can also be defined as responsibility or self-reliance.

A strategy to help students benefit from their autonomy is to ensure that the goals of the class accommodate and emanate from the values of the students. Student autonomy is valued, supported, and expected in the thesis program. Autonomy is supported through students selecting their topic and faculty chair and setting up the meeting schedule with the faculty chair. Chairs are enthusiastic about helping students find the topic and approach that motivates them. As one chair described while working with a student on the topic and study design, "I have to [see] those sparkles in the eyes when we are talking and realize, 'Oh, you like this!'" Sometimes faculty interact with students who already have a plan and a chair. One mentioned, "Sometimes the student says, 'Here's what I want to do. I've worked on this already with this professor.'" Students who already have an idea of what they will study and who will mentor them have a plan that supports their thesis. They are more certain of what they will do than those who are not yet clear on their topic and methods.

The program further supports autonomy by addressing the student in ways that show openness to student questioning of the process in the Thesis Prep documents, by thoughtful Canvas messages, and by providing the opportunity to meet with the program director.

The evidence from the documents and interviews provides a picture of autonomy supporting writing by providing students with topics, studies, and avenues to explore something that appeals to them and may connect with their future career plans. The fact that the faculty chair is part of the journey is a relatedness support that is discussed in a later section, but even so, in my interpretation a student valuing working with their faculty chair experiences autonomy

support in favor of that relationship. So, in many ways the course language, tasks, faculty work, and other components encourage autonomy. At the same time, there are examples of both failures of autonomy and successes of autonomy that result in students not completing tasks.

High-Autonomy Learning Tasks Challenge Students. A higher amount of autonomous work is required of students on the Tampa campus where there are no synchronous class meetings, and thus no direction nor social support except what they find on the honors website and in the Canvas course, as well as the supports provided by the chair. Students must read and interpret quizzes, directions, and assignments on their own, but they can contact the program director with questions. They may also connect with their chairs.

In thesis, smart, responsible students are challenged by the autonomy expected of them. As one faculty member described students being challenged to work according to their own pace, "that self-pace, putting something off. Especially if they push really hard, [then] they finally got it done in the end of the first semester. Now they're like, "I'll never do that again." But two months gets away from him pretty quick. And then next thing they know they have a full draft due, and they haven't written a word."

Two interviewees emphasized the student experience of learning how to be autonomous as an essential part of the thesis experience. One described it as learning lessons on how to work before entering graduate school, and the other described giving students enough room to try out ideas and then reigning them in with enough time to finish the project.

As one former thesis director advised, "Not every student should be doing thesis. Or to put it better, not every student will engage in thesis in a way that's going to benefit them in line with the goals set out by the thesis process. And therefore, it's better to decide early that thesis is not for you, then to go down that path."

Autonomy Does Not Always Support Writing. In this study, the limits of autonomy end up being particularly interesting. Total student autonomy is not desirable, as students' growth and learning require the guidance and feedback of a professional. Limited autonomy has more successful outcomes than complete autonomy, which would be a student without any class structure, assignments, or faculty guidance. Autonomy that is limited by a plan, or limited by the chair, is typical of autonomy in a college setting. While accommodating the goal of the student as much as possible, the thesis student's research project requires permission and advice of a faculty chair. As chairs report it, they are helping students to narrow down the study to something more manageable and doable in 2 semesters. Thus, USF honors thesis seems to be a semi-autonomous educational experience that is more autonomous than all other college classes except, possibly, independent studies.

Interestingly, while autonomy is required of students in both the first and second semesters of thesis, each semester requires different skills. The actual experience of the second semester of thesis is an ongoing, focused, sustained writing practice that always aims toward the same research goal. It thus involves less ideation and creative exploration (less "novelty" and "discovery" per one faculty interview). Unfortunately, the second semester can be a time when student autonomy, or student responsibility, is not enough. As one faculty member commented, "it is at times like dragging them across the finish line to get it done." The faculty member is in a position to encourage and support student work via feedback and instruction.

A couple faculty pointed out that not all students are functioning at a self-motivated level. One notes that this is a more self-motivated pathway in comparison to the alternative of capstone, another emphasizes that students must be willing to do the assignments in order to

successfully complete the process, and another noted "psychological impediment or life challenges that prevent them from self-motivated work [as students] experience fatigue that comes from doing research over sustained period of time." These students would have benefitted from early redirection to a non-thesis path, or more supports during thesis that don't only rely on the chair.

So, while student autonomy most certainly is required, and per SDT theory, fuels student motivation and work, it is possible that student autonomy could lead a student away from thesis at times when the tasks at hand appear overwhelming (a competence need), are unappealing (doesn't fit their values and so challenges autonomy) or are asocial (if the thesis chair and the student's friend set are not enough for the student).

Autonomy Informed Study Conclusion. A conclusion of this study is that limited autonomy supports student thesis writing more than total autonomy.

The current approach to instruction and resource distribution may require a degree of autonomy in the form of self-reliance and responsibility that may stress a certain number of students and may overwhelm some others. Increased direct instruction, increased social support, and increased structure may better fit the needs of honors college thesis students. Further, some students who need more structure in order to successfully participate in thesis may be identified or self-identify to tap into additional services. In the case where level of autonomy may overwhelm some learners, those learners can benefit from guidance toward less-autonomous, more structured ways to finish honors thesis or exit honors thesis and finish honors requirements through capstone. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Autonomy and Writing Studies. Autonomy may contribute to an understanding of some or even all habits of mind. The field of writing studies can benefit from considering if SDT's

concept of autonomy to better understand what nurtures or supports the habits of mind. Student selection of topic likely aligns with student curiosity. Student completion of tasks likely aligns with responsibility. As a thought experiment, autonomy defined as following one's own values seems allied with or even a prerequisite to the habits of mind. More study is needed in Writing studies to understand how one's autonomy is connected with one's curiosity, responsibility, and the rest of the habits of mind: openness, engagement, creativity, persistency, flexibility, and metacognition. In discussing writing transfer, Driscoll and Wells (2012) discuss four habits of mind or dispositions, which they identify as self-efficacy, self-regulation, value, and attribution, and they provide the theories that inform these aspects. The latter two are educational psychology motivation concepts. Value refers to if students value the experience or outcome of learning, and attribution refers to if students consider their accomplishments the result of their own effort and capacity, or to outside factors such as luck or chance. Writing studies continues consider habits of mind and motivation, including Driscoll et al. (2016) and Driscoll et al. (2017). The latter study shares out the study's "failure" to reach agreement when coding for five key dispositions: attribution, self-efficacy, persistence, value, and self-regulation (n.p.), advising that this may be due to cultural, psychological, and temporal complexity. Writing studies can benefit from investigating relationships between SDT, habits of mind, and dispositions.

Thesis provides a real-life study of writerly despair (Elbow, 1973) and joyful insights (Murray 1972; Emig 1977). I believe that writerly despair may, at times, be the result of student overwhelm, where the task does not seem doable by the student. This could be connected with negative self-efficacy beliefs, but it also could be a fair evaluation of the demands of the task. More studies are needed to capture student perceptions of their own autonomy and associated with writing in thesis and other writing classes, including further exploration of how self-

efficacy, or possibly positive self-efficacy, may contribute to student motivation and success. The methods of this study could support new approaches in researching self-efficacy. Further, in an applied educational setting, autonomy and competence seem to have an interrelationship. Further study would be worthwhile to better understand if there is an interrelationship between autonomy and competence.

Autonomy and Self-Efficacy. Pajares' 2003 synthesis of studies on self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and writing includes the valuable insight from that "student's writing confidence and competence increase when they are provided with process goals (i.e., specific strategies they can use to improve their writing and regular feedback regarding how well they are using such strategies (p. 147). This complex system adds up to a belief system. The process by which the belief system is created is a series of educational experiences, and Pajares' description defines self-beliefs as created within a context of competence-building activities. Self-efficacy addresses autonomy and competence support in a system. The current practice of studying student self-efficacy is to measure the student self-perceptions on a scale as part of the educational experience. While few studies of self-efficacy in advanced writing populations exist, a future study could employ a self-efficacy writing scale, such as the Situated Academic Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (SAWSES) (Mitchell et al., 2021). As a researcher, I would like to see more study of autonomy and competence as part of a self-efficacy system in writing studies.

Competence

The thesis program deserves recognition for the efforts of the program and especially the thesis chairs to build student competence and help students achieve a new level of research and writing. Competence is supported in the thesis program through faculty, course documents, assignments research project design, faculty feedback on works-in-progress, deadlines, use of

models/exemplars, and relying on student effort. However, competence is an area for potential improvements as well.

This study found that frequent meetings with faculty are a competence support. The relationship with the chair supports the student, but I see the competence side of this as the faculty ability to evaluate where the student is and help the student set a doable proximal goal that supports competence and successful progress. As discussed further below, chairs can provide writing process instruction, supporting student goal setting, and share out writing strategies with students.

The study found that deadlines are a major writing support, suggesting that more deadlines with smaller target goals could help make thesis feel more doable. Currently the only deadlines for written work are the draft and final prospectus, and the draft and final thesis, plus anything the faculty member assigns. Chapter 6 discusses ways to increase the total submissions and thus decrease the size of each goal to finish a quality thesis.

Among the faculty and directors who were interviewed, the vast majority had experience chairing 15 or more theses, so this program benefits from a large cohort of faculty who have mentored 15 or more students through thesis. This expertise is a strength of the program.

Among the faculty and directors, there is some disagreement as to where the instruction should happen. The current faculty director is careful to provide the quick guide for thesis chairs and the thesis prep documents (labelled student support materials), clear assignments and deadlines, but does not aim to teach research design and development within the class to accommodate the types of projects and disciplines. At the same time, several note that the thesis experience requires a lot of new skills from students who don't have significant prior experience in research and would like to see students arrive at thesis with more research related skills.

Suggested solutions from faculty include the honors college teaching research skills during the first course at USF (something that is increasingly included in the first course, Acquisition of Knowledge IDH 2010), research in honors courses (some self-report that they do indeed teach how to do research in their other honors courses other than the first course), or outside the college such as in the major that trains students in research methods. Two faculty members mentioned ways that they include research in their classes. These curricular supports are discussed in Chapter 6 as well.

Competence Supports. Arguably, when faculty help students envision and formalize a research plan, the faculty member builds into the project their knowledge what is more likely to be successful. Thus, while the passion and curiosity are from the student, the scope of the work or question to be addressed is limited and refined in ways that are doable in this setting. The task becomes doable through instructor insight and guidance.

Assignments support competence when they inform the student regarding the thesis development process, expectations, and assignments. The quiz format used to disseminate the details of the assignments in this particular site results in the prompts and possibly the answers disappearing from the student's view. Given the detail of the advice in the quiz, and that not all of it is provided in other areas, it may be worthwhile ensure that the information is available to students after completion of the quiz.

An example of instructor guidance was shared by a thesis director who describes how they meet the student, explain the context of the situation, and convey a sense of pacing across the two semesters: "[Some students] question 'What can I possibly say I'm just an undergraduate student here at USF?'. And to kind of get over that and to kind of push them. To say, 'You know, you have a lot to say, but you're also entering your conversation that's already going on.'" In

contrast, later in the two-semester process he can assure them that they will experience, "firm

terrain under your feet." So, the discomfort is heard, understood, used as a place to introduce

relevant information, and share out true experiences to help students feel like they can keep

going on the thesis path.

Enhanced Understanding of Competence Through SRL Theory. Writing process

theories including Elbow's understanding of writing as feeling like a Sisyphean act (1973) may

signal writer overwhelm, where the writer's task at hand truly feels undoable. Zimmerman's

theory of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) discusses task analysis through goal setting and

strategic planning, where the writer would use writing-informed strategy and develop and work

on proximal writing goals. Additionally, SRL addresses metacognition and self-efficacy, two of

the habits of mind, as part of the motivation process. SRL is a complex theory that includes

thirteen motivation concepts and three phases with multiple sub-systems. The focus is on the

learner's internal processes to learn, so in the case of this study, it would be internal processes to

learn via researching and writing one's thesis.

Self-Regulated Learning. Schunk and Zimmerman (2012) define Self-Regulated

Learning (SRL) as "the process by which learners personally activate and sustain cognitions,

affects, and behaviors that are systematically oriented toward the attainment of learning goals (p.

vii)." As the learners personally activate this work, they are responsible for it happening. As

they sustain it, they are showing a certain level of maturity or self-control. By including

cognitions, affects, and behaviors, the authors include internal processes that can be lived or

described, but not directly captured by an observer, as well as behaviors that can be observed,

but that observation is not a complete picture of student's approach and experience. By only

addressing some sort of goal, this appears to be a narrow characterization of education, as

learning can happen without a goal. However, when a learner needs to accomplish something by a deadline, a goal can support timely completion.

Schunk and Zimmerman place self-regulated learning (SRL) at the center of their theory and arrange motivations as factors that impact self-regulated learning at precursor, mediator, concomitant, or exclusive outcomes stages across time (2012, p. 2). They believe motivation can change over time, and that Self-Regulated Learning can impact motivation. Schunk and Zimmerman list sources of motivation as, "goal orientation, interests, self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, future time perspective, task values, volition, intrinsic motivation, causal attributions, goal setting and self-reactions, gender identity, and cultural identity (p. 7)." Many or all of the terms in this list are core concepts that have been defined and studied independently and in combinations in educational psychology.

Zimmerman draws on Bandura's 1997 definition of self-motivation, "self-motivation stems from students' beliefs about learning, such as *self-efficacy* beliefs about having the personal capability to learn and *outcome expectations* about personal consequences of learning (Zimmerman, 2002)" Zimmerman theorizes that motivation is not merely the result of experiencing a task and finding it appealing, but rather, it's the learner's psychological interpretation of his or her own series of experiences that determines motivation (p. 67). Specifically, for Zimmerman, "learning processes, self-awareness, and motivational beliefs combine to produce self-regulated learners (p. 67)." Since student experiences will not be directly captured in this study, only components of this theory that can clearly inform director and instructor decisions regarding curriculum, pedagogy, and assignments will be included in this study.

Zimmerman (2002) describes his model of self-regulation. Self-regulation is an internal process of planning, decision-making, self-management, appraisal of own ability, and internal reaction to accomplishments and progress toward making effort toward developing new abilities. Zimmerman describes it as "the self-directive process by which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skills… Self-regulation refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are oriented to attaining goals (2002, p. 65)." The model theorizes processes and beliefs that take place across time with three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. Some components of each phase are included in this study.

Zimmerman emphasizes that self-regulation involves a proactive stance, including planning, and executing strategic actions, and is not merely a "reaction to teaching." The learner is "aware of their strengths and limitations," and harnesses his or her resources to direct the outcome of a learning experience in accordance with his or her goals (2002, p. 65-66). Crucially, the learner is monitoring his or her actions and degree of success, in order to be successful (p. 66). This self-monitoring is essential for the learner to have an understanding of his or her own ability, how particular decisions impact the intended outcome and to have a feeling of self-satisfaction upon meeting one's goals (p. 66). Self-monitoring is a metacognitive act, where the learner thinks about their own process and outcomes. It is a valuable component to consider including in instructional design, and pedagogical training and can contribute theory-informed recommendations after this study but can't be measured within this study.

Zimmerman cites Schunk (1983) to argue that awareness of small increases in performance is significant: those who "have the capabilities to detect subtle progress in learning will increase their levels of self-satisfaction and their beliefs in their personal efficacy to perform at a high level of skills (p. 66-67)." Further, Zimmerman states that the learner is not merely

enjoying learning something new but also gaining satisfaction from "their use of self-regulatory processes, such as self-monitoring, and the effects of these processes on their self-beliefs (2002, p.67)." Again, awareness of small increases in performance are valuable to consider in instructional design and pedagogical training and can contribute theory-informed recommendations after this study but won't be effectively captured in my current study.

Zimmerman argues that those who are in a position to view and celebrate small accomplishments can and may experience a positive feedback loop, where their efforts produce fair rewards of small improvement, and the learners gain enough satisfaction from the experience and self-evaluation of one's own ability to keep making effort. Zimmerman advises that a self-regulated approach to learning is correlated with "achievement track placement as well as with performance on standardized test scores (p. 69)." As such, he is commenting on the population that enters the honors college at USF, as they frequently have recalculated GPAs over 4.0 reflecting AP and IB study, and high standardized test scores, so that in general, honors students are roughly the top 10% of academic performers in their class at USF. We can then assume, for the purposes of this study, that honors students have accomplished a strong history of self-regulation for academic tasks. At the same time, I imagine a task that is beyond their experience can tax or challenge their system of self-regulation.

Zimmerman cites Schunk and Zimmerman (1998) that self-regulation can be successfully taught and emphasizes that all self-regulatory processes and beliefs can be taught. Consequently, I plan to gather strategies from the model for consideration in instruction and pedagogy.

One successful self-regulating strategy is to "seek help from others to improve their learning (p. 69-70)." Considering this example, help-seeking can be beneficial to the thesis student, but that behavior may not always be is not always considered helpful faculty. I can

imagine help-seeking that has a demanding tone or is inappropriate in terms of expectations

related to timeliness or may be requested when the learner has received instruction on a prior

task and seemingly not done what they can do on their own. Since this study doesn't involve

observing student-faculty interactions, the insights drawn from this theory will inform the

discussion.

Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2006) connect the model with a basic composition theory of

writing process: planning, writing, and reflection, or forethought, performance, and self-

reflection. Zimmerman's model of processes and self-appraisement that take place across time is

presented in three phases.

Forethought Phase. While this is the first figure on the page, the arrows on the model

indicate that this is a cyclical model, where each phase influences the next in a spiral.

The Forethought Phase has two main areas. The first is task analysis where the learner

forms "proximal goals," or reachable goals that are accomplished in a short timeline and devises

a strategic plan of action (p.68). This seems an area that can be targeted for curricular design and

pedagogical training.

The second area is self-motivation beliefs which includes self-efficacy, or the learner's

perception of his or her own ability to learn, and his or her outcome expectations or predictions

of what will be the result of efforts to learn (p. 68). Also, the learner's intrinsic interest involves

"valuing the task skill for its own merits," or an appreciation of the task skill without reference to

attendant social status. Finally, learning goal orientation can be the learner "valuing the process

of learning for its own merits," or the appreciation of the learning goal that is integrated into the

particular learning experience (2002, p. 68). Forethought Phase task analysis may be discussed or

Supported in the classroom, and it's possible to work with self-motivation beliefs in classroom, journal, and one-to-one settings.

Regarding honors thesis, forethought may involve thinking about how one will write their honors thesis, and planning out the entire first semester, including writerly habits such as writer environment, a writing schedule, and deadlines. This work is done by students in consultation with the faculty chair and possibly the thesis director via assignments or conversation.

Performance Phase. This phase involves self-control or strategies for managing one's attention, memory, behaviors, environment, and other resources (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 68). Zimmerman lists associated strategies, "imagery, self-instruction, attention focusing, and task strategies (p. 68)." The Performance Phase includes self-observation which may be self-recording or tracking relevant aspects of one's learning such as start and end times, time needed to complete a task, current abilities, and needed skills. The Performance Phase also includes self-experimentation, where the learner tries out different approaches to studying, tracking the impact of these. These behaviors related to performance can inform curricular and pedagogical choices. The Performance Phase includes overall strategies for doing work, so it is rich with possibilities for instruction and pedagogy. Regarding honors thesis, the entire first and second semesters are performance phases, where the student is conducting work, and each time the student writes or works on their research they are in the performance phase. This study did not involve direct or even indirect observation of the performance phase.

Self-Reflection Phase. Zimmerman's Self-Reflection Phase branches into two. The first is self-judgement, which involves the learner evaluating his or her performance and the factors impacting it (p. 68). In self-evaluation, the learner compares his or her performance to prior performances or those of peers (p. 68). In causal attribution, the learner accounts for the

determinants of outcomes (p. 68). The second branch is self-reaction/affect which involves emotional feelings regarding oneself and one's performance (p. 68). Ongoing positive self-satisfaction has a positive impact on motivation, whereas a decrease in self-satisfaction diminishes motivation (p. 68). Adaptive reflections involve making changes to be more effective while learning, while defensive reflections, in contrast, "protect one's self-image by withdrawing or avoiding opportunities to learn and perform (p. 68)." Defensive efforts reveal a need to support one's image either to oneself or to society and show extrinsic influences on motivation. This phase includes a lot of potential for metacognitive reflection, where the learner reflects on their own efforts either on their own or as prompted by an educator or peer. This metacognition can result in a process where the student forms habits and beliefs that are supportive, neutral, or negative in relation to the student's goals and the course goals. It is possible to foster self-reflection in classroom, journal, or 1-1 contexts, but this study is not likely to capture such individual practices. As a result, recommendations drawing on this phase will be theoretical.

To summarize Self-Reflection Phase, SRL theorizes the learner as having an internal process involving planning, conducting, and evaluating their own work on an academic goal(s). The theory provides specific strategies for productivity that can be judiciously embedded in assignments, instruction, and deadlines that thesis administration and faculty chairs manage in the USF honors thesis program. Per SRL, a self-regulated learner will analyze the writing project and set proximal goals, monitor one's own small achievements and consider the small accomplishments to be progress.

Even though the phases discussed are not directly captured by the data in this study, I consider the theoretical contributions very valuable as they provide a theoretical explanation as to what a self-directed learner does and thinks and provide a model for supporting growth toward

being a more self-regulated learner. From SRL, task analysis and self-observation prompt completing work, tracking completion of work, and develop willingness to try out different strategies for learning. Self-evaluation can involve awareness of what works, and how one's product measures up to external and internal standards, and fuel motivation to do more work.

The current thesis program could include more support to help students plan out their upcoming work, monitor their own task completion, and monitor their own process and the quality of their work at what can be considered the final stage, thus supporting self-regulation habits. With time, students in this scenario could internalize these processes while developing and finalizing their thesis, in which case they would become more self-reliant and independent in their actions and could be described as more fully self-regulating as thesis writers. However, given that thesis is the first large writing project the students will do in their careers, they may need much more support than they may need at their 10th large writing assignment.

In conclusion, SRL describes known and theorized processes in relation to educational goal(s), which are valuable and helpful for instructional design and pedagogical practice. While SRL is commonly referred to as a motivation model, I am more drawn to the way it explains how to support student writing productivity and thus, supports student competence as defined by SDT. A faculty member who is oriented toward SRL can make writing strategies evident and help students to identify a proximal writing goal to work on for the next hour or the next week. However, in this particular site of study, given that the regular thesis course sequence does seem to overwhelm students, an expectation of complete self-regulation without instruction and guidance seems unhelpful in the same way that complete autonomy without supervision doesn't support productivity.

This study draws out Self-Regulated Learning's strategic planning component, where students set goals and use strategies. It calls for setting goals and using strategies support student productivity. While valuable, SRL does not provide an explanation of what human needs are and how they connect to educational experiences. In contrast, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a theory of human needs and human motivation, and it provides a more complete picture of student motivation.

Competence Informed Study Conclusion. SDT Competence, as enhanced by SRL learning strategies, provides criteria for including or developing competence supports. In a site where high autonomy is expected, competence supports may be necessary to result in more students successfully completing the tasks. Moreover, more competence supports may help students have a more comfortable overall thesis experience.

Competence and Writing Studies. A significant contribution to the field would take SDT's competence, consider it in light of SRL and after integrating the two, see if they connect with habits of mind.

Competence, SRL, Habits of Mind, and Writing Process Cognition. Habits of mind name observable student behaviors. These are: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistency, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition. Responsibility is scaffolded by course structure that provides instruction, tasks to be done, and assignments to complete. Student responsibility may increase or decrease based on these components and the student's own abilities. SRL explains how to support student responsibility through fostering student use of writing strategy and goal setting to behave responsibly. This does not necessarily address all areas of responsibility, but it does seem to directly address productivity which is a requirement of responsibility. Secondly metacognition involves reflecting on one's own learning. Metacognition

may be addressed within the SRL theory where a self-regulated student uses self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction to evaluate their own learning and better understand their learning process.

The use of goals, strategies, and metacognition could potentially contribute to a reconsideration of cognitive writing process (Hayes & Flower, 1981).

The analysis addresses both responsibility and metacognition using SRL. Given the overlap, it would be productive for writing studies to consider how one or more habits of mind relate to competence in a consistent way.

Relatedness

While somewhat obvious, the high impact of the student relationship with the chair is one of the findings in this study. This mentoring relationship is arguably the most important aspect of thesis, as the course is incomplete and impossible without a chair. Upon finding a chair, the student is not allowed to be passive, but rather is expected to initiate a plan of scheduled meetings with the chair, seek feedback from the chair, and incorporate the chair's recommendations regarding the thesis project design and the written thesis drafts. The student is explicitly prompted to facilitate planning and communication with the chair in the syllabus, assignments, and announcements. Thesis has no pre-scheduled group or 1-1 meetings, in contrast to the alternative research path option, which is a capstone course and a core course. In thesis, scheduling meetings is the responsibility of the student, primarily. Faculty chairs have the experience to teach research and writing strategies through interpersonal communication and an educational relationship and are the primary source of instruction and support.

When studying relatedness, the faculty chair can be considered both as having a mentoring relationship, that is, being a personal guide in the life of the student, and as a

competence support, since the faculty chair provides the majority of competence guidance to the student, assesses their work, and provides feedback. Faculty describe this dual role. One faculty member "provide(s) resources and guidance, as well [as] encouragement." They recommend sharing the strategic understanding that tasks that may feel draining, "It can be a long process, and I think student sometimes feel bogged down by the preliminary work (such as the lit review). Explaining why these steps are important and inherently valuable can provide motivation to get them done." Making thesis feel achievable can include helping students see what their peers are doing in similar circumstances. This may be a blend of competence awareness and social standing and authority that add gravitas to faculty instructions.

Interestingly, there is a more social thesis model on the St. Pete campus. Students are expected to attend 5 group meetings with the dissertation chair that includes all Thesis 1 and Thesis 2 participants. Additionally, the thesis director is the reader on all student committees. This provides students with a connection with the thesis chair, who hosts 1-1 meetings as needed at the end of meeting sessions or outside of the sessions. This structure also facilitates students connecting with each other. Generally, at each group meeting, students report out where they are in the thesis process, their topic, and if they are experiencing any issues. The director frequently breaks participants into groups and gives them a task to work on and report back. Drawing on the St. Petersburg class, the thesis director on that campus described how a written writeup can help students approach potential faculty chairs effectively, and how student peer interactions can help student clarify how they describe their project and also "to get in the habit of sharing your ideas and discoveries with other people." The St. Pete campus approach allows students to hear what other students are experiencing, and work in groups during class. This may result in social support for students to progress in their work in order to fit in to class discussions.

Relatedness and Social Aspects of Learning. Post-process writing theories characteristically consider writing to be a socio-political act and build in an awareness of social implications of language use and the writer's and reader's intersectionality. Breuch's 2002 conveys the post-process perspective that "writing is a situated, interpretive, and indeterminate act." The indeterminate aspect of writing speaks to writing being interpreted differently by various people, contributing to the already established contemporary practice of engaging peer-to-peer interactions on the same writing project in the classroom. This study is compatible with the post-process orientation and provides support as to why a writer's intersectionality is part of their motivation as a learner. Where writing tasks, the social milieu, and the faculty's approach align with the writer's intersectionality and current interests, it would be expected to align with the student's motivation and thus support student writing. SDT claims that unsupportive instruction harms student motivation. SDT can thus provide support to the growing picture of human diversity and education among people who do not share the same intersectionality.

Another theory addressing social aspects of learning is Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory including the Zone of Personal Development (ZPD), a theorized explanation as to why peer-to-peer interactions support learners. Some compositionists do reference Vygotsky (Van Horne, 2012), but ZPD appears to be more present in the TESOL/EAL literature than in the composition field. ZPD theorizes that there are openings for learning that are challenging enough that the learner can only accomplish them with the assistance of a peer (or a teacher) (Jaramillo, 1996). Writing studies could benefit from considering additional theoretical considerations of the social aspects of learning, and their connection with student motivation.

Meetings with the Chair and with the Class as Learning Supports. One of the findings of this study is that there is no minimum number of meetings with chairs and no

minimum number of times chairs provide feedback to students. Since meetings and feedback are competence-supporting, Chapter 6 includes recommendations to increase the frequency of contact with faculty and with peers, to support student motivation.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings in relation to the theoretical foundation of this study and writing studies. The theory that informs the study's theoretical foundation was carefully selected in light of the setting: undergraduate advanced writing instruction in a semi-structured honors these course setting with students who are at the peak of their undergraduate writing career and encountering a new challenge in the form of a two-semester thesis. This study finds that student writing is supported through autonomy support, with the additional insight that autonomy is limited by competence supports and relatedness, and that autonomy and self-efficacy both address student responsibility which can help Writing studies consider Habits of mind in new ways. Further this study found that writing is supported through competence support by the instructor and in course assignments including the use of deadlines assignment with deadlines, writing process instruction, sharing out writing strategies, and instructor feedback, and competence can be enhanced through considering Self-Regulated Learning which includes a more thorough consideration of metacognition and self-efficacy. Finally, this study concludes that relatedness that support learning currently rely heavily on the chair, and that post-process theory could be considered in connection with SDT and the Zone of Personal Development.

The next section provides recommendations for the program and a conclusion to the dissertation.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter provides recommendations for the site and conclusion to the study. It addresses the fourth research question:

4. What future additional supports of motivation and productivity/task completion are predicted to enhance or strengthen the program based on theory, experience, and applied studies?

The analysis and results in this study lead to practical options for this program and other programs like it that support undergraduate research, master's theses, and even doctoral dissertations. The options presented in this discussion chapter could be considered for administrative and programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical considerations for instructors who teach writing across disciplines. The recommendations are ordered by the timeline of before, during, and after class. For each one I provide an example of how it might be implemented and aim to address the perennial concerns of how to maintain current programs and improve outcomes without increasing overall costs.

Recommendations. Administrative recommendations rely on the administrators of the honors college to develop new resources and fortify current ones to help students be successful in honors thesis. Currently, students seem to struggle with the requirements of thesis, so the recommendations aim to provide more support to students and to faculty chairs. The chapter 5 discussion is extended to include recommendations below. As stated in chapter 5, the student experience of thesis includes a lot of autonomy, strong competency support, and strong relationship support, but each of these can be modified to provide more support for students.

The recommendations below reduce student autonomy, increase student competency support through instructions and interventions, and increase relationship support through providing more staff hours, programming, and interactions.

Administrative Recommendations. Identify a WPA from among the current faculty and staff.

Research is one of the core values of the honors college and mentioned in the mission of the honors college: "Provide transformational educational opportunities," by "Encouraging each student to pursue a significant and rewarding research experience that takes advantage of USF's resources as a Top-30 Public Research Institution. (USF Honors College, n.d.)." Consequently, research support is essential.

Given the limitations of today's budget, a pragmatic approach to support research writing beyond what is currently done is to seek from among existing administration, faculty, or staff a Writing Program Administrator (WPA) who would, as part of their regular work duties, promote research writing motivation and productivity information and resources among faculty, staff, and students, and serve as an in-house consultant on those topics.

The WPA may seek additional funding and staff to support this initiative. As a promising option, the English department may be amenable to offer more 1-credit writing support supplementary classes, something that was piloted a year ago with strong student demand. The English department can benefit from this as the 1-credit approach allows the English department to retaining the tuition earned. A strong exemplar is Dowd et al.'s model of a thesis workshop series that scaffolds writing process and uses a shared scientific writing rubric to support student thesis completion (2015a). Similarly, the Writing Studio may consider hosting honors thesis students in an event with current studio consultants, or otherwise connect studio consultants with

honors students. Other avenues to consider include applying for a grant, hiring a postdoctoral fellow, using part of a visiting faculty line, providing a course release for a faculty member, funding a graduate assistantship, and/or seeking collaboration from the English department, Writing Studio, Library, Office of National Scholarships, Office of Undergraduate Research, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, and/or the Provost Scholars Program.

The WPA can provide resources to support writing motivation in programs and courses. This includes making recommendations and being present to lead initiatives. Below are the early recommendations and initiatives I can recommend:

The WPA would teach workshops for faculty in which recommendations and research writing rubric are presented in context and test out the materials. Faculty can bring sample student papers or their own work to the workshop, and work through the key components of the rubric across workshops.

Rubrics have been identified in the literature as a way to support faculty (Haggerty et al., 2011). The WPA would host an optional series of meetings for faculty to consider the academic rubric used in Reynolds and Thompson (2011), called TAP, to consider its effectiveness and consider options across honors and across disciplines represented in thesis. The WPA would additionally ask the English department if they have a writing grading rubric to share. The two rubrics, along with notes, thoughts, and rubrics provided by faculty, can be considered to create a single rubric for use in the honor college for research-based papers. The WPA would support a group that pilots the single rubric and would draw out feedback and ideas from faculty across the semester. Once a rubric has been established, it can be used to support an optional faculty norming session while grading research paper drafts and final submissions.

The thesis course may benefit as an example where the WPA infuses motivation, writing process, and writing productivity supports into the course through reviewing the class syllabus and schedule, creating content and activities that support faculty to host discussions of writing components and writing workshops in class, and develop more writing supports for the first-year class, such as 1 credit writing support classes from the English department, identifying text and video resources that can be used prior to class or in class, and creating modules of information, activity, and assessment that align with the purpose of the class and can be used to support writing discussion and developmental writing feedback and revision experiences.

The WPA can formally propose a thesis readiness process. This process would allow the honors college to identify students who are interested in thesis in advance and check for preparedness for thesis. As part of the check process, new interventions can be requested by the student for support and/or can be assigned to the student as a requirement of the thesis permit. It would strengthen the current process in place, where students who apply for a thesis permit must have completed 60 hours of coursework, and if they have not, they are referred to the advisor for advising.

The readiness process would require students to apply to the thesis program during the semester prior to the first semester of thesis. As part of the application, students who have completed an 8-page research paper and have learned about research methods through coursework or prior learning experience would be allowed to request the additional supports, be issued a permit, and be tasked with reading the thesis prep documents prior to the start of the thesis semester.

Those students who have not accomplished the baseline level of experience would be required to attend a thesis readiness assessment meeting. This assessment would build on the

144

positive working relationship students have with their honor advisor, the WPA, or an honors faculty member. It would be a prerequisite to gain the permit to register in thesis. The meeting would capture the capture the student's preparedness to start honors thesis and their history of academic writing and research design. Sample questions could be: How many papers have you written that were 8 or more pages? Are you familiar with research methods in your field? How many research papers have you written thus far? About how many academic sources have you cited in your largest research paper? Are you part of a research lab? How much writing support would you like to have during thesis? As a result of the assessment, the honors advisor or faculty member can recommend or require interventions to support the student during thesis and/or decline the request for permit and provide the student with information about how to finish their honors requirements through the non-thesis pathway. The interventions that take place at the same time as the thesis class are described in the next section, programmatic recommendations.

If approved by the director of advising, the WPA can train advisors and remind them to email the thesis informational link to advisees and host group and individual thesis conversations with sophomores, juniors, and seniors in individual and group settings. Fostering conversations about thesis would help students of the same major connect with one another and foster supportive relationships to help with thesis and writing. Advisors may invite a guest speaker who has worked with the population on previous thesis.

The WPA can collaborate with faculty and the honors marketing GA to produce a series of videos capturing honors students as they present their research at conferences as a way to provide context and model the experience for future researchers.

More study is needed to determine if other coursework can be improved to better prepare students for thesis. If there is a need, the WPA would foster faculty awareness of best practices of helping students in an honors class students see how the course topic, research, methods, writing process, writing goals, writing strategies, and the faculty member themselves can connect with a future thesis. The WPA may produce a video modelling instruction in these areas and serve as a guest speaker, as needed, to help faculty adopt and further develop these resources. As mentioned in Ch. 4, some faculty bring up teaching writing components such as how to analyze a research article in their pre-thesis classes. Recently, the first-year introductory honors course was changed to include a fascination project, which is a short research paper. This is beyond the scope of this study but is an example of research preparedness being integrated into one required honors course.

Further study is needed to consider how honors coursework prepares students for thesis. The WPA on their own or as part of a committee can contribute to Gen Ed course revisions as needed, and review and certify specific honors and departmental courses as research-oriented thesis preparation courses. These courses should be oriented toward planning and writing a research paper and instruct students on study design, methods, and the components of an academic or scientific report that aligns with the class topic and develop student writing skills using a writing process approach, where students receive feedback from peers and the instructor as part of the development process, similar to Walkington's student constructive feedback to undergraduate research journal articles (2012). This can support an increase in research-oriented courses over time, filling out the course opportunities that prepare students for thesis and additionally for the alternative, capstone. This accords with Yeagley et al.'s (2016) Stepping Stone Approach to building scientific writing and analysis skills across the curriculum.

Further study is needed to determine if other honors coursework can be improved to better prepare students for thesis. If there is a need, the WPA would facilitate a process of course reviews, covering the full honors curriculum over a series of semesters. For each course, considering the course description, sample syllabus, and learning outcomes, the WPA can conduct an audit of motivation and writing support components and offer resources for consideration in the syllabus. SDT theory would be embedded throughout, as a strategy to support student motivation. Specifically, the WPA's writing strategy recommendations would address developing student writing skills including setting writing goals for the next writing session and for one week (the total hours they expect to work, the topic/area(s) of the paper they would work on, and planned readings or searches), tracking one's progress (the hours worked last week, if writing goals were met), finding and using writing strategies (finding out what environment seems to work, what time of day and length of time for writing seems to work, developing one's own checklist of what to check for when revising one's own work), and participating in of a community of writers.

Further study is needed consider how valuable course time could be effectively allocated. With additional consideration, the WPA's writing process recommendations could include setting aside time in class for students work individually and in groups to analyze components of a key academic paper that informs the class, setting aside time to for students to connect with peers and the instructor regarding their work-in-progress, spreading out large papers across a long period of time with multiple submission deadlines to help students complete work, supporting more frequent faculty developmental feedback on writing through providing an example research writing rubric and a bank of faculty feedback that has historically been provided to students as they write academic research papers, and being available before and

during the semester to support faculty as they implement writing initiatives. The model of faculty providing developmental writing feedback to a class as a group instead of individualized feedback is being studied and in practice in USF's Rhetoric and Composition Technical Communication program and informs this discussion.

Further study is needed to consider how FYC can support research writing skill development. A mid-term goal of the WPA and honors college would be to consider creating honors-specific sections of ENC 1101 and 1102, the First Year Composition (FYC) introductory writing course sequence, to propose minor changes to the course readings and assignments that would better support a first-year student who would complete an honors thesis or capstone course before graduating, following Guzy's (2011) recommendation for FYC to be an honors college course.

Programmatic Recommendations. This study found programmatic writing supports are generally provided by the thesis director by directly supporting faculty and students. The thesis director is available to meet with current and new faculty, emails out messages via Canvas reminding students of upcoming assignments and including a supportive statement, invites students who need help to email the program director, schedules a modified assignment structure where students either hand something in or complete a report to the program director regarding their thesis progress every two weeks (two required reports were added in Thesis 2 for 2021-22), and hosts the a new thesis writing club (implemented 2021-22) as a biweekly one-hour teams meeting, and other ways that may have not been captured such as hallway conversations and faculty meetings.

Online Thesis Resources. To support student writing, the WPA can work with the Thesis Director to increase the online resources available for students, faculty, and advisors to consult

prior to the thesis semester. If the website can't accommodate more text or hyperlinks that could change over time, then a thesis prep Canvas course that doesn't have a start or end date can be created to help students prepare for the honors thesis similar to the Canvas course for completing community service, which students self-add into. The recommendations below assume the improvement would be to the website.

Currently, the honors college webpage provides an overview of thesis goals and deadlines, a sample syllabus, a recently added Thesis Roadmap that shows how thesis fits to in the four-year journey an honors student, the Thesis Prep documents, and the Quick Info Sheet for Thesis Chair. These existing guiding documents can be used more frequently to help honors college sophomores and juniors plan ahead for thesis and be aware of the major tasks of thesis. I recommend changing the thesis goals and guidelines chart to include the annotated bibliography assignment, which is currently due Friday of week 2, to help students be aware of the upcoming deadline before the semester starts.

The WPA can work with the Thesis Director to propose adding text and web-based resources to the thesis webpage, including suggested or required books, and the websites that are already recommended within the course to give students early access to these resources prior to the first day of Thesis 1. Charles Lipson's How to Write a BA Thesis, Second Edition includes information about writing and research for an undergraduate thesis and normalizing and contextualizing some of the extremely challenging aspects of thesis for students. Additional recommendations for the website would be to add a statement by the WPA with guidelines for writing process motivation and productivity.

The WPA can work with the Thesis Director to propose adding videos to the thesis webpage and course space. A short video series of the thesis director and thesis faculty talking

about their process to work with a student to design a thesis, advice on how to write a thesis, and a rich description of their own writing environment and research and writing practices could help novice writers both get to know honors faculty and learn about writing practices. This would help students gain a practical understanding of the writing processes of academics in the college.

The WPA can work with the Thesis Director to propose adding videos of recent honors thesis students that address key aspects of thesis such as: How did you pick your topic? How did you find your chair? What did you keep from your prospectus and what did you end up discarding? How frequently did you work on your thesis in your first semester? How frequently did you work on your thesis in the second semester? What helps you get your academic writing done? These videos can demystify the experience and help students

Faculty and Staff Support. More study is needed to see if faculty and staff can benefit from considering motivation and writing support theory. If desired, the WPA could develop an optional training to support current and new faculty chairs. Below is a sample agenda for a training that uses a case study.

1. Present the case study vignette of a student who struggles through thesis but wants to continue as a thesis student and use this to frame each part of the training.

2. A friendly overview of SDT theory to understand human motivation including being part of a community of writers; an overview of SRL theory including writing supports such as setting writing goals, using writing strategies, tracking one's progress; and writing process with a focus on the drafting-feedback-revision process for scientific writing (Reynolds & Thompson, 2011).

3. Examples of student survey comments regarding what works and what is most challenging about thesis.

4. Resources to support student writers including the option to refer the student to their assigned academic advisor to find a way to graduate without finishing thesis, the honors librarian, shared documents.

5. Give faculty time to process what they consider works, and doesn't work, and should be changed for the honors thesis program.

6. Form affinity groups of faculty who share similar disciplinary orientation and/or method, and a way for the faculty to be in contact easily.

The WPA can create an online resource bank for faculty, staff, and librarians to contribute resources that faculty can assign to students as part of the thesis journey, such as book chapters, articles, handbooks on writing, research support staff on campus in the Writing studio, Library, and Office of Undergraduate Research, and other resources. These competence supports can be shared across the faculty instead of being discovered by one faculty member at a time. This resource bank can be stored in a shared access space such as Box.

The WPA can support student research by sharing out information to encourage effective faculty and staff referrals of students to Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) resources. This includes the zero-credit Fundamentals of Academic Research course, recordings of previous workshops and upcoming workshops, the opportunity to consult with staff, support to prepare to present at the Undergraduate Research Conference on campus and the opportunity to attend, the UGR scholar award, Thesis Thursday, Coffee and Conversation, and the student organization Undergraduate Research Society. The WPA can ask to speak at the monthly staff meeting and share out updates, as well as send out a link to the online resource bank. If desired, the WPA can recruit student volunteers to attend Undergraduate Research Conference presentations and

provide feedback, as OUR aims to have informed visitors provide feedback regarding presentations.

The WPA can provide a public-facing webpage on resources students may apply for as part of their research needs in the honors college. Currently, this information is distributed within the honors thesis course. The timing of this may be too late for some student research. The WPA can manage applications, set deadlines, and provide recommendations regarding funding student research.

After the curriculum has been reviewed, the WPA can focus on recruiting and training honors thesis readers to specifically support the writing process, writing goals, and writer motivation. If there is no compensation available, this can be a service role for honors students, helping to fulfill community service hours. It may appeal to some graduate students on campus, particularly members of the English Graduate Student Association.

Student Supports. The WPA can help student participants expand the honors thesis club activities to include weekly meetings and student-led online writing groups. Further, while unrelated to this study, the honors college will provide a 24-hour lab where students can write their thesis and other academic work in the honors college. Currently there are 5 workstations in a busy space, but a student computer lab is included in the new honors college building.

Curricular Recommendations. A major finding of this study is that the current thesis course does not have a lot of structure, and that more structure supports student writing and course completion (Engel, 2016; Coey & Haynes, 2012). The below recommendations address structure and include new writing supports for the thesis course.

Recommended Efforts to Support All Students. The thesis chair or a rotation of faculty can host a weekly or biweekly class meeting with all students at in Thesis 1 course level. The

new arrival of Teams makes it possible to connect with 100 or more people in a single meeting. The class meeting would include an overview of upcoming assignment(s) which would provide competence support, breakout sessions for students to interact with others regarding what they have recently accomplished as writers and researchers which primarily supports relationships, assign students to set writing goals and identify writing strategies for the next week, supporting competence in the area of writing goals and strategies, and time for questions and answers, again supporting competence. It may be possible to have students sign up as groups early in the semester and then have break-out sessions together repeatedly across the semester, fostering connection and relationships.

Currently there is no minimum requirement for faculty chairs to meet with students, even though early access to a faculty chair is considered ideal (Lacey 2008). If possible, it would be ideal to require faculty chairs to schedule at a minimum one meeting with thesis every other week throughout the semester, which can be a group meeting or an individual meeting. This would encourage communication and allow faculty to redirect students early in the process as needed. Bi-weekly meetings provide relationship support and help. As an honors applied mathematics thesis faculty mentor, Karls met with his students weekly, and reports all students produced a thesis that met his expectations, suggesting that weekly meetings with students and faculty engagement in the learning process may help students accomplish quality work (2017).

To ensure students feel accountable for making progress on a weekly basis, require students to upload the current version of their work and enter in the total wordcount each week. This would provide a log of how much work is completed each week that the student, thesis director, and thesis chair can access as needed. This takes partial advantage of Mimbs (2017)

weekly research journal recommendations. This supports self-monitoring. Additionally, lack of uploads may signal a student is in distress, especially two weeks in a row.

To allow more time for students to complete tasks, move the deadline for the annotated bibliography to the end of Week 3, to allow students more time to create an annotated bibliography. Also, the WPA can recommend a link to add to the annotated bibliography assignment. The library has an overview page that can be provided to students.

Currently, some students are allowed to progress from Thesis 1 into Thesis 2 even though the chair is unsure of the student's ability to finish Thesis 2. The Thesis Director or WPA can provide faculty development regarding exits for those students who appear to not be ready for the writing tasks coming up in Thesis 2. Options may include withdrawing during the semester, earning credit and not going on to thesis 2, or other possible options. The student's academic advisor may be included in the discussion.

The Thesis Director and/or WPA can continue to work with the Writing Studio to identify resources and distribute them to students, such as upcoming workshops or specialists on the staff.

Recommended Interventions for a Subset of Students. Interventions may be required or optional. Students may opt-in or be assigned to one or more interventions at any point during the process of pre-thesis, Thesis 1, and Thesis 2.

The WPA can organize providing a supplemental 1-credit writing class that provides space for students to work in small groups to share out recent work and provide feedback to one another, identify writing and research questions, ask questions of the instructor, and to write. This class can be taught by English faculty, with the course funds being directed to the English department. The instructor of the 1-credit class can determine what can be addressed within the

class, and what the student would need to ask of their chair. Those faculty who already provide writing group meetings may decide to waive this intervention for their students if desired.

An intervention can require students to provide additional work on the weekly hours worked report, bringing it closer to the vision of Mimbs (2017) weekly research journal. This would include setting a goal for the amount of time the student plans to dedicate to research and writing in the next week, identify writing strategies to use for the next week, and upload a log of what the goals were and what the outcomes were to the Canvas shell. For students who opt-in to interventions, this may be an appealing task. It would be worthwhile to track the submission habits of the student who opted-in to this intervention versus those who were assigned this intervention based on their thesis readiness assessment.

Using Canvas, the course can provide an optional discussion thread for students introduce themselves, their topics, and their research method so that they can search through the thread to see who is studying a similar topic or using a similar method.

Using Canvas, the course can provide distribute a poll that allows students to request an online writing group. The WPA can host online writing sessions for the first three weeks and then if desired, back away and allow the students to run the sessions on their own, in accordance with Beard et al.'s call for honors students to run their own thesis support groups (2010).

Using Canvas, the course can provide distribute a poll that allows students to request a writing buddy. The WPA can connect writing buddies and be available if there are concerns.

Pedagogical Recommendations. A contribution of this study is that students can benefit from instruction and support from faculty regarding setting doable goals for the next week, and from faculty feedback, based on SRL. The programmatic changes are intended to support faculty in using these strategies. Perhaps all faculty already do, as pedagogical choices. Still, there is a

benefit to converting these pedagogical options into programmatic plans to provide greater consistency.

Implication for Writing Studies. The field of writing studies is interested in student dispositions and orientations toward learning. By articulating the relationship of SDT to other writing studies theories such as self-efficacy and habits of mind, new approaches to capturing elements of learner motivation may be discovered. Early areas of connection include autonomy, self-efficacy, and responsibility, competence, self-efficacy, and metacognition, and relatedness with Vygotsky's ZPD and post-process theory. All of these theories exist in relationship to motivation, that is defined by SDT is a natural state for humans whose basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met.

As writing studies interacts with disciplines across academia, we can support new initiatives in undergraduate research by contributing our knowledge of how to support student autonomy, competence, and relationships as part of writing process education, as well as the value of setting writing goals, and employing writing strategies. While this study begins with a grounding in theory, arguably some of the insights regarding writing goals and strategies may already be embedded in our instructional practices of assessing student needs, designing assignments, and providing instruction. Certainly, the thesis program showed SDT features even while not necessarily having been originally designed with those theories in mind.

Some of the findings from this study can be applied to other large-scale writing projects, a such as undergraduate research, disciplinary theses, and dissertations, so the recommendations for this study can be considered for use in other areas. Further, having established the student writer's need for motivation support and doable goals, it may be possible to aim to support autonomy, competence, and relatedness as well as writer goal setting, writing strategies, and

large-scale project management in more detail in other composition settings such as FYC, and in Writing Center conversations, if not already present.

To improve instructional practices, more study is needed to understand how student motivation can be utilized to educate students and support their personal and professional growth across the field. Research into student motivation and writing supports in writing courses in all settings including honors can contribute to an understanding of the current state of the field and contribute to finding ways to improve the course experience for students and for faculty. Writing-intensive courses are already recognized as High Impact Practices (HIPs), contributing to student retention (Conefrey, 2021). Writing studies may benefit from considering if student motivation theory relates to HIP characteristics.

Motivation contributes to student well-being, per SDT. As writing studies captures ways that our courses and curricula potentially support student motivation, our role in the university is buttressed. Student motivation theory has potential to help departments and faculty maximize their time with students, to have a greater impact. Teacher training could benefit markedly from a deeper awareness of student motivation and writing supports. Instructor feedback practices and peer-feedback practices could also gain through alignment with motivation theory. Greater familiarity with motivation theory and alignment with SDT could have a positive impact at administrative, programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical levels in writing departments. Motivation theory informs the allied field of coaching.

This study is taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic. In these times, there are constraints on in-person relatedness, and in this time of a natural study, the need for relatedness as part of well-being is highlighted. Considering student motivation in writing studies has the potential to not only enhance the effectiveness of our programs, but also be a counterbalance to

other life challenges, student motivation supports could potentially contribute to the wellbeing of all class participants, including perhaps the instructor.

   Future Research. This study establishes the value of assessing writing-intensive courses for alignment with student motivation theory and using the findings to generate recommendations for program improvements that should result in measurable change.

   More study is needed to generate fair program assessments that don't burden student and instructor time but do capture student motivation and writing productivity. Deadlines and frequency of contact are relatively easy to capture, but student perceptions of the "right amount" of autonomy may differ from faculty and administrator perceptions of the "right amount" of autonomy. Spigelman (2001) considers how student autonomy exits in relationship to instructor autonomy. The entire class is filled with competence supports, so it may be useful to use a theory of learning to identify a subset of competence supports such as genre instruction to fairly prepare students for assessments (Danielewicz et al., (2021). Relatedness is particularly germane for considering the impact groupwork and teamwork may have on students.

   Further research is needed to develop a greater understanding of the similarities, differences, needs, and possible improvements in honors thesis programs. Thesis programs share a commonality of high challenge. Comparing programs with a shared interest in motivation could result in discovering innovations and cross-fertilizing ideas. Ideally, this would take place as a multi-site study.

   The theoretical foundation for this study can be applied to honors courses, writing-intensive programs, undergraduate researcher experiences, and graduate students' writing, resulting in capturing best practices at different points in a writer's career, and contributing back

to the greater community by informing disciplines of ways to integrate student motivation and writing support into their programs.

In an effort to support calls for attending to race and diversity in writing programs (Wright 2019; Poe & Zhang-Wu 2020; Passwater 2019), assessing and improving the motivational aspects of learning and work has the potential to form a bridge to support and retain underrepresented students in Writing studies.

Future research is needed in similar writing-intensive programs in higher education and the greater field of writing studies. Motivation theory has potential to improve the student experience in any place of learning.

Future study is needed to capture student writing motivation and other motivation constructs as the class progresses over time and as the student progresses from first-year to senior.

Future studies may include hosting a circle-back process to bring the results to the faculty and gather feedback and greater insight.

Conclusion

Ideally, program evaluation gathers valuable information regarding how well the intended outcomes were met and also recognizes unplanned positive outcomes, driving the next cycle of instructional design, implementation, and assessment. When writing program evaluation includes updated educational psychology theories, administrators, faculty, and students can benefit from a system that acknowledges the needs of writers and provides more comprehensive writing supports.

By separating out writing motivation and considering it in relation to writing process, postprocess and writer self-regulation, each component becomes clarified in relation to the other.

Regarding motivation, writing can be an autonomous act, where the writer relies on oneself to complete a task and may, as a consequence of accomplish that task, view oneself as capable of writing at that level as a self-efficacy appraisement. Writing is competence task, serving as a support for developing new competencies and also a technology that can be scaffolded through classroom experiences. Writing studies has articulated how writing is a relatedness task in considering how writing connects to society at large, and very recently the world pandemic experience highlighted how nurturing peer and instructor interactions can be, and how interpersonal interaction is important to wellbeing (Benjet, 2020).

Writing process and post-process theories could be modified to include a full consideration of motivation theory, including the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and may, as a result, be more effective and practical to implement in the classroom, and better support writing.

Self-Regulated Learning includes many motivation components, and in the case of this study, it provided a breakdown of writing that allows for consideration of creating short-term writing goals, considering writing strategies, and theorizes the process of learning to become a responsible, independent writer.

The cycle of program assessment provides a systematic way to consider including a relevant theory, applying it to existing program components and using it to strategically modify, create new ones and set others aside, and then testing to see if the new theory contributed to student learning and well-being. This study contributes to visualizing how a theory can be tested for in an already existing program and then used as a generative tool to assess and modify writing support.

References

Anderson, M., Lyons, K., & Weiner, N. (2014). *The Honors Thesis: A Handbook for Honors Directors, Deans, and Faculty Advisors. National Collegiate Honors Council Monograph Series.* National Collegiate Honors Council http://ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.397006238&site=eds-live

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 191–215.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497–529. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497

Beard, J., Shelton, R., Stevens, A., Swindell, G., & Green, R.J. (2010). Student guided thesis support groups. *Honors in Practice, 6*, 69-72.

Benjet, C. (2020). Stress management interventions for college students in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, Advance online publication, n.p. https://doi.org/10.1111/cpsp.12353

Bonem, E. M., Fedesco, H. N., & Zissimopoulos, A. N. (2019). What you do is less important than how you do it: The effects of learning environment on student outcomes. *Learning Environments Research*, *23*(1), 27–44. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-019-09289-8

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Ballenger, B., & Myers, K., (2019). The emotional work of revision. *College Composition and Communication*, *70*(4), 590–614.

Bruce McComiskey. (2000). *Teaching Composition as A Social Process*. Utah State UP.

http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=29003&site=ehost-live

Bellwoar, H., Palmer, J., & Stroud, F. (2020). Multimedia undergraduate research in

composition. Composition Studies, 48(1), 124–160.

Camp, H. C. (2014). Generative intersections: Supporting honors through college composition.

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council, *2*, 59–68.

Carter, M. (2007). Ways of knowing, doing, and writing in the disciplines. *College Composition

and Communication*, *58*(3), 385–418.

Carillo, E. (2018). *Teaching readers in post-truth America*. Utah State UP. https://usf-

flvc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay/cdi_gale_lrcgauss_A638567284/01FAL

SC_USF:USF

Chen, J., & Zhang, L. J. (2019). Assessing student-writers' self-efficacy beliefs about text

revision in EFL writing. *Assessing Writing*, *40*, 27–41.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2019.03.002

Coey, A. T., & Haynes, C., (2012). Honors pre-thesis workshop, 2.0. *Honors in Practice*, *8*, 109–

131.

Conefrey, T. (2021). Supporting first-generation students' adjustment to college with high-

impact practices. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*,

23(1), 139–160. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025118807402

Danielewicz, J., & Elbow, P. (2009). A unilateral grading contract to improve learning and

teaching. *College Composition and Communication*, *61*(2), 244–268.

Danielewicz, J., Jack, J., Hall, A., Singer, S. A., Stuemke, E., & Ware, J. (2021). Assignments and expectations: The role of genre and faculty expectations in transfer. *Composition Forum*, *46,* n.p.

Danowitz, A. M., Brown, R. C., Jones, C. D., Diegelman-Parente, A., & Taylor, C. E. (2016). A combination course and lab-based approach to teaching research skills to undergraduates. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *93*(3), 434–438. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.5b00390

Dowd, J. E., Connolly, M. P., Thompson, R. J., & Reynolds, J. A. (2015). Improved reasoning in undergraduate writing through structured workshops. *Journal of Economic Education*, *46*(1), 14.

Dowd, J. E., Roy, C. P., Thompson, R. J., & Reynolds, J. A. (2015). "On course" for supporting expanded participation and improving scientific reasoning in undergraduate thesis writing. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *92*(1), 39–45. https://doi.org/10.1021/ed500298r

Dowd, J. E., Thompson, J., Schiff, L. A., & Reynolds, J. A. (2018). Understanding the complex relationship between critical thinking and science reasoning among undergraduate thesis writers. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, *17*(1), n.p. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.17-03-0052

Dowd, J. E., Thompson, J., Schiff, L., Haas, K., Hohmann, C., Roy, C., Meck, W., Bruno, J., & Reynolds, J. A. (2019). Student learning dispositions: Multidimensional profiles highlight important differences among undergraduate STEM honors thesis writers. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, *18*(2), n.p. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.18-07-0141

Dowd, J. E., Thompson Jr., R. J., & Reynolds, J. A. (2016). Quantitative genre analysis of undergraduate theses: Uncovering different ways of writing and thinking in science disciplines. *WAC Journal*, *27*, 36–51.

163

Driscoll, D. L., & Powell, R. (2016). States, traits, and dispositions: The impact of emotion on

 writing development and writing transfer across college courses and beyond. *Composition*

 Forum, *34,* n.p. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1113424

Driscoll, D. L., & Wells, J. (2012). Beyond knowledge and skills: Writing transfer and the role

 of student dispositions. *Composition Forum*, *26*, n.p. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ985815

Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without teachers* (2nd ed.). University Press.

Emig, J. (1971). The composing processes of twelfth graders. National Council of Teachers of

 English.

Emig, J. (1977). Writing as a mode of learning. College Composition and Communication, 28,

 122-28.

Engel, S. (2016). Honors thesis preparation: Evidence of the benefits of structured curricula.

 Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council, *17*(2), 115–124.

Flower, L. (1989). Cognition, context, and theory building. *College Composition and*

 Communication, *40*(3), 282–311. https://doi.org/10.2307/357775

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition*

 and Communication, *32*(4), 365–387. https://doi.org/10.2307/356600

Follmer, D. J., Zappe, S., Gomez, E., & Kumar, M. (2017). Student outcomes from

 undergraduate research programs: Comparing models of research experiences for

 undergraduates (REUs). *Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research*, *1*(1), 20–27.

 https://doi.org/10.18833/spur/1/1/5

Ford, J. D., Bracken, J. L., & Wilson, G. D. (2009). The two-semester thesis model:

 Emphasizing research in undergraduate technical communication curricula. *Journal of*

 Technical Writing and Communication, *39*(4), 433–453. https://doi.org/10.2190/TW.39.4.f

Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing—Selected Research Bibliography. Council of

    Writing Program Administrators. (n.d.). http://wpacouncil.org/research_bibliography

Given, L. (2008). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. SAGE

    Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909

Golparvar, S. E., & Khafi, A. (2021). The role of L2 writing self-efficacy in integrated writing

    strategy use and performance. *Assessing Writing*, *47,* n.p.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2020.100504

Gross, D. M., & Alexander, J. (2016). Frameworks for failure. *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to*

    Teaching Literature, Language, Culture, and Composition, *16*(2), 273–295.

    https://doi.org/10.1215/15314200-3435884

Guzy, A. (2011). Why honors students still need first-year composition. *Honors in Practice*, 63,

    n.p.

Guzy, A. (2016). Research on honors composition, 2004-2015. *Journal of the National*

    Collegiate Honors Council, *17*(1), 9–21.

Haggerty, M., Coladarci, T., Killinger, M., & Slavin, C. (2011). Honors thesis rubrics: A step

    toward more consistent and valid assessment in honors. *Journal of the National Collegiate*

    Honors Council, *12*(2), 154–166.

Hairston, M. (1982). The winds of change: Thomas Kuhn and the revolution in the teaching of

    writing. *College Composition and Communication*, *33*(1), 76–88.

    https://doi.org/10.2307/357846

Hall, R. M. (2019). Analyze a published research study: An assignment to scaffold reading

    challenging academic texts. *Prompt: A Journal of Academic Writing Assignments*, *3*(1), n.p.

    https://doi.org/10.31719/pjaw.v3i1.32

Hayes, J. R., & Flower, L. S. (1986). Writing research and the writer. *American Psychologist*, *41*(10), 1106–1113. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.10.1106

Heard, M. (2008). What should we do with postprocess theory? *Pedagogy*, *8*(2), 283–304.

Hidi, S., & Boscolo, P. (2006). Motivation and writing. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research.* 144–157. The Guilford Press.

Isbell, D. (2009). A librarian research consultation requirement for university honors students beginning their theses. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, *16*(1), 53–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/10691310902754072

Jaramillo, J. A. (1996). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and contributions to the development of constructivist curricula. *Education, 117*(*1)*, 133 - 141.

Johnson, K. (2013). Beyond standards: Disciplinary and national perspectives on habits of mind. *College Composition and Communication*, 517–541.

Karls, M. A. (2017). An applied project-driven approach to undergraduate research experiences. *Primus: Problems, Resources & Issues in Mathematics Undergraduate Studies*, *27*(4-5), 461 - 475.

Schmidt, K.M., and Alexander, J.E. (2012). The empirical development of an instrument to measure writerly self-efficacy in writing centers. *Journal of Writing Assessment 5*(1), n.p. https://www.journalofwritingassessment.org/article.php?article=62

Khost, P. H. (2018). *Rhetor Response: A Theory and Practice of Literary Affordance*. UP of Colorado.

Kinkead, J., & Grobman, L. (2011). Expanding Opportunities for Undergraduate Research in English Studies. *Profession* (1), 218–230. https://doi.org/10.1632/prof.2011.2011.1.218

Johnson, K. & Rifenburg, J.M., (2020). Theorizing with undergraduate researchers. *Composition Studies*, *48*(1), 119–159.

Kastman Breuch, L.M., (2002). Post-process "pedagogy": A philosophical exercise. *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory*, *22*(1), 119–150.

Lacey, J. (2008). The senior honors thesis: From millstone to capstone. *Honors in Practice*, *4*, 143–144.

Lipson, C. (2005). *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper.* University of Chicago Press.

Louis, R. (2016). Food as social justice: Critical ethnography as a lens for communication activism. *Communication Teacher*, *30*(2), 87–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2016.1142102

Mackiewicz, J., & Thompson, I. (2013). Motivational scaffolding, politeness, and writing center tutoring. *Writing Center Journal*, *33*(1), 38–73.

Madison, E., Anderson, R., & Bousselot, T. (2019). Self-determined to write: leveraging interest, collaboration, and self-direction through a journalistic approach. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *35*(5), 473–495. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2019.1579127

Martela, F., & Ryan, R. M. (2016). The benefits of benevolence: Basic psychological needs, beneficence, and the enhancement of well-being. *Journal of Personality*, *84*(6), 750–764.

McCracken, I.M., & Ortix, V.A. (2013). Latino/a student (efficacy) expectations: Reacting and adjusting to a writing-about-writing curriculum change at an Hispanic Serving Institution. In *Composition Forum* (27) n.p. https://compositionforum.com/issue/27/student-expectations.php

McGoldrick, K. (2008). Writing requirements and economic research opportunities in the

undergraduate curriculum: Results from a survey of departmental practices. *The Journal of*

Economic Education, *39*(3), 287–296. https://doi.org/10.3200/JECE.39.3.287-296

McLeod, S. (1987). Some thoughts about feelings: The affective domain and the writing process.

College Composition and Communication, *38*(4), 426–435. https://doi.org/10.2307/357635

McLeod, S. H. (1991). The affective domain and the writing process: Working definitions.

Journal of Advanced Composition, *11*(1), 95–105.

Medaille, A., Beisler, M., Tokarz, R., and Bucy, R. (2022). The role of self-efficacy in the thesis-

writing experiences of undergraduate honors students. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry 10,*

n.p. https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.10.2.

Mimbs, D. (2017). Assessing aspects of undergraduate research through journaling. *PRIMUS:*

Problems, Resources, and Issues in Mathematics Undergraduate Studies, *27*(4–5), 537–

547. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511970.2016.1225875

Mitchell, K. M., McMillan, D. E., Lobchuk, M. M., Nickel, N. C., Rabbani, R., & Li, J. (2021).

Development and validation of the Situated Academic Writing Self-Efficacy Scale

(SAWSES). *Assessing Writing*, *48,* n.p. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2021.100524

Murray, D. M., Teaching writing as a process not product. (2011). In Victor Villanueva and

Kristin L. Arola (Eds.) *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader* (3rd ed.) 3-6. National

Council of Teachers of English.

Nowacek, R. S. (2009). Why is being interdisciplinary so very hard to do? Thoughts on the perils

and promise of interdisciplinary pedagogy. *College Composition and Communication*,

60(3), 493–516.

Olson, G. A. (2002). Toward a post-process composition: Abandoning the rhetoric of assertion. In *Dialogue on writing: Rethinking ESL, basic writing, and first-year composition,* 233-241. Routledge.

Pajares, F. (2003). Self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: A review of the literature. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *19*(2), 139. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573560308222

Pajares, F., & Johnson, M. J. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs and the writing performance of entering high school students. *Psychology in the Schools*, *33*(2), 163–175. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1520-6807(199604)33:2<163::AID-PITS10>3.0.CO;2-C

Pajares, F., & Urdan, T. C. (2007). *Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents*. Information age.

Poe, M., & Zhang-Wu, Q. (2020). Super-diversity as a framework to promote justice: Designing program assessment for multilingual writing outcomes. In *Composition Forum 44,* 1-15. Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition.

Reynolds, J. A., & Thompson, J. (2011). Want to improve undergraduate thesis writing? Engage students and their faculty readers in scientific peer review. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, *10*(2), 209–215. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.10-10-0127

Rohman, D. G. (1965). Pre-writing the stage of discovery in the writing process. *College Composition and Communication*, *16*(2), 106–112. https://doi.org/10.2307/354885

Ross, D. G. (2014). Defining "research": undergraduate perceptions of research in a technical communication classroom. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *44*(1), 61–99. https://doi.org/10.2190/TW.44.1.e

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic

motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68–78.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Ryan, R. M., Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory: Basic psychological needs in

motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Publications.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination

theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary

Educational Psychology*, *61*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860

Sauers, D., & Walker, R. C. (2004). A comparison of traditional and technology-assisted

instructional methods in the business communication classroom. *Business Communication

Quarterly*, *67*(4), 430–442. https://doi.org/10.1177/1080569904271030

Savage, H. E. (2005). How to write a BA thesis: A practical guide from your first ideas to your

finished paper. *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, *6*(2), 139–141.

Schunk, D. H., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2012). *Motivation and self-regulated learning: theory,

research, and applications.* Taylor and Francis.

http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=995650

Sheldon, K. M., & Ryan, R. M. (2011). Positive psychology and self-determination theory: A

natural interface. In V. I. Chirkov, R. M. Ryan, & K. M. Sheldon (Eds.), *Human autonomy

in cross-cultural context: Perspectives on the psychology of agency, freedom, and well-

being.* 33–44. Springer Science + Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-

9667-8_2

Stella, J., & Corry, M. (2016). Intervention in online writing instruction: An action-theoretical perspective. *Computers and Composition*, *40*, 164–174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2016.03.010

Sullivan, P., & Porter, J. E. (1997). *Opening spaces: Writing technologies and critical research practices*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Summerfield, J., & Anderson, P. M. (2012). A framework adrift. *College English*, *74*(6), 544–547.

Takayoshi, P. (2018). Writing in social worlds: An argument for researching composing processes. *College Composition and Communication*, *69*(4), 550–580.

Thelin, W. H. (2005). Honoring class: working-class sensitivies in honors composition. *Composition Forum*, *14*(2), n.p. http://ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1082267&site=eds-live

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

USF Honors College. (n.d.). Mission. https://www.usf.edu/honors/about-us/mission.aspx

Van Horne, S. (2012). Situation definition and the online synchronous writing conference. *Computers and Composition*, *29*(2), 93–103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2012.03.001

Villanueva, V., & Arola, K. L. (2011). *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A reader*.

Voss, R. F. (1983). Janet Emig's the composing processes of twelfth graders: A reassessment. *College Composition and Communication*, *34*(3), 278–283. https://doi.org/10.2307/358258

Walkington, H. (2012). Developing dialogic learning space: The case of online ondergraduate research journals. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *36*(4), 547–562. https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2012.692072

Wang, L., & Lee, I. (2021). L2 learners' agentic engagement in an assessment as learning-focused writing classroom. *Assessing Writing*, *50*, n.p. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2021.100571

Wardle, E. (2007). Understanding "Transfer" from FYC: Preliminary Results of a Longitudinal Study. *WPA. Writing Program Administration*, *31*(1–2), 65-85.

Wickliff, G., & Yancey, K. B. (2001). The perils of creating a class web site: It was the best of times, it was the …. *Computers and Composition*, *18*(2), 177–186. https://doi.org/10.1016/S8755-4615(01)00048-2

Wright, C. A. (2019). Beyond good intentions: Learning to see and address race and diversity in the work we do. *Writing Program Administration*, *42*(3), 120–131.

Yeagley, A. A., Porter, S. E. G., Rhoten, M. C., & Topham, B. J. (2016). The stepping stone approach to teaching chemical information skills. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *93*(3), 423–428. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.5b00389

Yvonne Feilzer, M. (2010). Doing mixed methods research pragmatically: Implications for the rediscovery of pragmatism as a research paradigm. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *4*(1), 6–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689809349691

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory into Practice*, *41*(2), 64–72.

Zimmerman, B. J., & Kitsantas, A. (2006). Chapter 4: A writer's discipline: The development of

self-regulatory skill. *Writing and Motivation*, 51–69.

https://doi.org/10.1163/9781849508216_005

Appendix A

Instructor/Administrator Survey

Information type	Question	Offered options	Type of question
Demographic	What is your first and last name?		Fill in the blank
Demographic	What is your academic discipline?		Fill in the blank
Demographic	What USF college employed you the most in 2020-2021?	Arts, Arts and Sciences, Behavioral and Community Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Global Sustainability, Honors College, Marine Science, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health	Multiple Choice
Demographic	When were you most recently a USF thesis chair?	Fall 2017 – Summer 2021 Prior to Fall 2017	Pick one
Demographic	How many USF undergraduate honors theses have you chaired?	- 5-10 - 10-15 - 15 or more	Pick one
Demographic	Please select all that apply:	- For at least two semesters, I have been a thesis chair in the USF honors college thesis program where students enroll in IDH 4970 (previously IDH 4950 and IDH 4970). - For at least two semesters, I have been a thesis chair in a USF department-hosted thesis program (such as English, Psychology, Sociology, and Business thesis programs). - For at least two semesters, I have been a USF honors college thesis program director/manager/coordinator/instructor. - For at least two semesters, I have been a USF department-hosted thesis program director/manager/coordinator/instructor. None of the above	Pick one

Thesis student challenges	During the first semester of thesis, what are typical problems/challenges that thesis students seem to experience?		Fill in the blank
Student, faculty, and administrators, or other people as helpful supports	Regarding the above question, what can students, faculty, administrators, or other people do to help thesis students overcome problems/challenges that occur in the first semester?		Fill in the blank
Frequency chair meets with student(s)	During the first semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how often do you typically meet 1-1 (in-person or electronically) with your thesis students?	- None - Once per week - Every other week - 1-5 times per semester - 5-10 times per semester - 11 or more times per semester	Pick one
Frequency chair meets with student(s)	During the first semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how often do you typically have group meetings (in-person or electronically) with your thesis students?	- None - Once per week - Every other week - 1-5 times per semester - 5-10 times per semester - 11 or more times per semester	Pick one
Frequency chair provides feedback to student(s) on writing	During the first semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how frequently do you typically review thesis student written work?	- None - Once per week - Every other week - 1-5 times per semester - 5-10 times per semester - 11 or more times per semester	Pick one
Thesis student challenges	During the second semester of thesis, what are typical problems/challenges that thesis students seem to experience?		Fill in the blank

Student, faculty, and administrators, or other people as helpful supports	Regarding the above question, what can students, faculty, administrators, or other people do to help thesis students overcome problems/challenges that occur in the second semester?		Fill in the blank
Frequency chair meets with student(s)	During the second semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how often do you typically meet 1-1 (in-person or electronically) with your thesis students?	- None - Once per week - Every other week - 1-5 times per semester - 5-10 times per semester - 11 or more times per semester	Pick one
Frequency chair meets with student(s)	During the second semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how often do you typically have group meetings (in-person or electronically) with your thesis students?	- None - Once per week - Every other week - 1-5 times per semester - 5-10 times per semester - 11 or more times per semester	Pick one
Frequency chair meets with student(s)	During the second semester of thesis, as thesis chair, how frequently do you typically review thesis student written work?	- None - Once per week - Every other week - 1-5 times per semester - 5-10 times per semester - 11 or more times per semester	Pick one
Strategy: help select research topic	As thesis chair, what's your approach to helping students identify a research topic and research question?		Fill in the blank

Strategy of discussing a model	As thesis chair, how frequently do you discuss an example or model of research writing with students? [revised in interviews as: As thesis chair, for each student do you discuss an example or model of research writing with each student? Never, Some students, half the students, most students, always	- Sometimes - About half the time - Most of the time - Always	Pick one
Productivity support	As thesis chair, what's your approach to helping students finalize and submit their written thesis?		Fill in the blank
Motivation support	As thesis chair, what's your approach to helping students feel motivated regarding writing their thesis?		Fill in the blank
Faculty expectations	As thesis chair, how frequently does your thesis students' written thesis submission(s) meet your expectations?	- Sometimes - About half the time - Most of the time - Always	Pick one