CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study was designed to investigate the challenges and strategies in writing a thesis. The literature is presented in five main aspects; the definition of writing, academic writing, thesis writing for undergraduate students, the challenges in thesis writing, and the strategies in writing the thesis.

A. The Definition of Writing

Writing is an important part of communication skills. Harmer states that writing is part of language skill which has to master if they want to master in language.[18] Students can use writing as a medium to learn English as a foreign language in a way they could put the idea into an idea. Writing can be used as a way to communicate with others effectively and efficiently. Harsyaf states that writing can be a way to communicate with others successfully.[19] Writing is one way to express ideas to communicate with others.

Writing can be classified by several approaches. As stated by Crème and Lea that different types of writing require different approaches.[20] Furthermore, Harris assumes that writing can be classified by two approaches, namely purpose, form and audience, and readership.[21] Windschuttle and Windschuttle note that how much knowledge to take for granted is the most difficult about writing for an audience.[22] Therefore, writing can be classified by defining the purpose, the audience, and the form of the writing. In this study, the researcher will concern only with academic writing.

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[18] Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach English: An Introduction to The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Essex: Person Education. 1998).

[19] Harsyaf et. Al., *Teaching Writing. Supplement Module*. (Ministry of National Education: Center for Development and Empowerment of Language teachers and Education Personnel, 2009), 8.

[20] Phyllis Crème and Mary R. Lea, *Writing at University: A Guide for Students* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), 26.

[21] Murriel Harris, *A Pocket handbook: The Writer's FAQs* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Publishers, 1993), 18.

[22] Keith Windschuttle and Elizabeth Windschuttle, *Writing, Researching, Communicating* (Sidney: Mc Graw Hill Company, 1998), 16.

B. Academic Writing

Whitaker states that academic writing means writing for a university program.[23] The instructor may have different names for the tasks of academic writing such as essays, report research papers such as research proposal and thesis. There are content, register, and topic that should be considered in writing academic writing. Leo found that three basic principles that should be considered in a piece of academic writing are content, register, and topic.[24] While Blaxter comments that academic writing comes in a variety of lengths.[25] As Brookes and Grundy add that students in some academic disciplines are trained to write evaluation papers or proposals, such as project work papers, work experience papers, or thesis writing.[26] Furthermore, this study will focus on writing a thesis as one kind of academic writing.

C. Thesis Writing for Undergraduate Students

Writing a thesis for the first time is often a challenge for undergraduate students. Claudius says that writing a thesis is not an easy task.[27] "Learners usually found themselves blank when they write a thesis".[28] Besides, Bitchener & Basturkmen found that limited understanding of the thesis genre characteristics and its component parts (e.g. introduction and discussion sections) are two of the main difficulties in conducting a thesis.[29] This can be a problem encountered in thesis writing including academic factors. Additionally, Dwihandini, Marhaeni, & Suarnajaya classified factors affecting undergraduate students' thesis writing difficulties into three factors, psychological, sociocultural, and linguistics factors.

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[23] Anne Whitaker, *Academic Writing Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing Academic Papers* (Bratislava, Slovakia: city university, 2009).

[24] Leo, *English for Academic Purpose*., 5.

[25] Loraine Blaxter, Christina Hughes, and Malcolm Tight, *The Academic Career Handbook* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), 148.

[26] Arthur Brookes and Peter Grundy, *Writing for Study Purposes: A Teacher's Guide to Developing Individual Writing Skills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 108.

[27] Komba S. Claudius, *Challenges of Writing Theses and Dissertation Among Postgraduate Students in Tanzanian Higher Learning Institutions*. (Tanzania: 2016)

[28] Dwihandini L.A; Marhaeni A.A.I.N; and Suarnajaya I. W., 9.

[29] J. Bitchener and H. Basturkmen, "The Focus of Supervisor Written Feedback to Thesis/Dissertation Students", *International Journal of English Studies*. (2010)

This is a challenge in non-academic thesis writing. Thus, writing a thesis for undergraduate students is challenging.

D. The Challenges in Thesis Writing

In writing a thesis, many undergraduate students have some various factors of the difficulties they face. The difficulties will be a challenge for the students in their research. The ideas, structure, lack of vocabularies, and rewrite or paraphrase are some examples of the complexities in writing a thesis that the students commonly face. However, there are yet further researches about other factors of acquiring the second language as the basic factors to be analyzed by the researcher. For second language learners in specific, the factors of the difficulties in acquiring the second language may also encounter them difficult to write a thesis. Thus, in this research, the factors to be underlined are the factors raised by Brown as explained as follows:[30]

1. Psychological Factor

The factors related to the writers' internal factors can also be known as psychological factors. Brown believes that the psychological factors of students can be identified from the affective factors of the students.[31] Further, Brown explains that the affective factors which become the psychological factors that will affect the undergraduate students to create a good thesis writing are :

a. Self-Esteem;

b. attribution theory and self-efficacy;

c. Willingness to communicate;

d. Inhibition;

e. Risk-Taking;

f. Anxiety;

g. Empathy;

h. Extroversion;

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[30] Douglas H.Brown, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching: Fifth Edition* (United States of America: Pearson Education, Inc. 2007), 86-278.
[31] Ibid., 153.

i. Motivation.[32]

All of the psychological factors mentioned by Brown will affect the decision of a learner to create the objective of the research, the data for the research, findings of the research, and the whole research based on the proved ratio. [33]

2. **Sociocultural Factor**

Since language cannot be separated away from the culture, so, it is also important to analyze the difficulties in writing a thesis through the eyes of the sociocultural factors. Brown claims that culture becomes strongly important in the learning of a second language.[34] Therefore, the focus factor on sociocultural factors that will be arisen in this study of the difficulties in writing a thesis is bold in three aspects, such as;

a. The social distance among each undergraduate students, and the relationship between undergraduate students and their supervisor;

b. The culture in the language classroom of the undergraduate students, and;

c. The communicative competence among each undergraduate students, and the communicative competence between undergraduate students and their supervisor.

3. **Linguistic Factor**

Brown classified four categories to describe the errors in second language learner production data.[35] Browns' first overview is to identify errors by addition, omission, substitution, and order. The second category as Brown believes to identify the errors is put in the students' levels of language (phonology, lexicon, grammar, and discourse) that should be considered. Third, Errors can be also analyzed by the global errors or local errors as explained by Brown quoted from Burt and Kiparsky in 1972.[36] Finally, as Lennon in 1991 quoted by Brown suggests identifying errors by considering

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[32] Ibid., 154-174.
[33] Ibid., 152-174.
[34] Ibid., 189.
[35] Ibid., 262-263.
[36] Ibid., 263.

the two related dimensions of error, such as domain and extent.[37] Brown explains "domain is the rank of the linguistic unit (from phoneme to discourse) that must be taken as the context for the error to become apparent, and extent is the rank of a linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, replaced, supplied or reordered to repair the sentence.[38] In the context of the analysis of the factors of students' difficulties in thesis writing, Lennon's' overview of two related dimensions of error will be used to research the linguistics factors affecting undergraduate students in writing their thesis.

E. The Strategies in Writing Thesis

The writing thesis strategies in this particular study are selected from Robert Runte's research.[39] These are a few suggestions of things that might help with writer's block; dealing with procrastination and time management; keeping motivated, and keeping debilitating angst at bay.

1. Dealing with Blank Page Syndrome

Sometimes the researcher also feels that there is no idea to continue writing. There are times when we are in front of the screen and the screen is like staring at us again, making the mind stop. Because ideas do not just show up when we want them. Whether it is the thesis as a whole, a new chapter, or a new section, starting from scratch can be a bit overwhelming. Some of these strategies have also been applied by the researcher in writing her thesis;

a. Fill the page with notes

This works best with interview quotes or qualitative field notes, but whenever one has any kind of data, one can overcome Blank Page Syndrome simply by dumping the relevant raw material for the current section onto the page. Use the cut and paste commands to move the data around until they are in some logical order. Drop-in a few sentences between the pasted material to introduce the quote, or to connect the data,

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[37] Ibid., 263.
[38] Ibid., 263.
[39] Robert Runte, "Writing Strategies for Theses and Dissertations in Social Sciences, Humanities, Education and Business", *Research Gate* (Canada: University of Lethbridge, 2017), 17. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24383.61603

or to explain why the first note leads to the second, and so on. Suddenly, one is no longer staring at a blank page, but merely working with today's content. Filling the page this way is mostly a visual trick (because one had all that data sitting available anyway), but the illusion of progress works almost every time, and once one has started, keeping going is relatively easy.

b. Go back a page or section

Every time, when we sit down to work on a sustained piece of writing, we can go back to reread what we wrote the day before. We inevitably find something to tamper with, so that gets us going for the day, rather than starting from a blank page. The momentum created by remembering and perhaps re-working the argument we were trying to make yesterday (usually) carries us over onto what would have been today's blank page and well beyond. Of course, the danger of this particular tactic is that routinely 're-reading' the work from the day before can degenerate into fullfledged, obsessive, premature polishing that stalls all forward motion. Quit using this approach if that one step back does not lead immediately to several steps forward.

2. **Dealing with Writer's Block**

a. Start with writing calisthenics.

This one is closely related to addressing blank page syndrome by backing up a few steps and editing yesterday's work first, to get a running start on today. Over thirty years ago, Natalie Goldberg made the argument that just as athletes need to stretch before going for gold, writers should start with warm-up exercises before trying to write their novel (or thesis).[40] The prescribed exercises should be limited to twenty minutes (set the timer on your phone) and are not directly related to one's thesis. The purpose is to get the writer seated at the keyboard, the creative juices flowing, and the

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[40] Natalie Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones* (Boston; Shambala Publications, 1986).

writer in a positive mood for the day's work. In other words, to overcome writer's block.

b. Explain to someone else what you are blocked on

Talking to someone else is almost embarrassingly helpful because it always ends in a "duh!" moment. Talking the ideas through with a supportive other often make writer's block magically disappear. Sometimes it is because someone has been overthinking the problem, or holding oneself to impossible standards. Sometimes it is because the supportive other can ask the question that takes one in a new direction, or points out the oversight or logical flaw that has been holding one up. Sometimes it is that trying to explain the idea simply to someone else helps someone to understand it more clearly oneself. Whatever the case in any particular instance, saying it out loud is often all that is needed.

c. Try thinking way, way outside the box

When someone's writing is completely blocked, try writing the central theme of that section as a poem. Or try painting or sculpting the answer, especially if you have never done anything remotely artistic before. Sounds bizarre, but it often works because one is working through the same ideas and issues, but trying to express them in some form other than thesis writing. This worked for Stephen Hawking. One reason he is the most famous scientist of our age is that his inability to physically write things down forced him to do science through mental imagery and that imagery led him to think of things in entirely new and insightful ways. So, try to say it in a poem, or sing it, or chant it in a yoga pose. Draw a chart or the comic book version or do something else visual. Make a video. Of course, such activities do not replace thesis writing; they are just possible warm-ups to get one past a block. Eventually, it all comes back to writing.

d. Stop on the clock, not on the block

Turns out knowing when to stop for the day is as important as figuring out how to get started. We must know when to stop or take a break in writing a thesis. Sometimes the writer still goes around searching for

answers but does not write anything down in her thesis. The page stays blank without realizing that the clock is still spinning. The next day still does the same thing. The writer thinks that she has made progress, but actually, there is nothing that can be written in the thesis. That is why writing a thesis does not have to focus on things that are difficult to drag on. The writer realized that by stopping only when she hit a block she had been sabotaging herself. She had set herself up for failure because she started each day dreading the blank page or difficult passage facing her, rather than starting with an idea or phrase yearning to be put down on paper. Once what we learned here, stop on the clock, not the block.

e. Psychoanalyze oneself.

It may be helpful to understand that someone's block likely originates in grade school, with the traumatic experience of having someone's written assignments returned covered in red ink. As alluded to earlier, many well-intentioned instructors mistakenly believe that pointing out every error helps students improve; but what most students learn, whether explicitly stated or subconsciously inferred is that they are not good writers.

Twenty years later, attempting to put someone's thesis into words, one feels the ghost of that Grade 6 teacher looking over someone's shoulder, whispering, "Do not write that for heaven's sake! That is just very, very wrong!" Someone needs to consciously banish said teacher (memory/outdated message) from the room. Explain to the voice of doubt that this is only a first draft and that any errors that pop up will be fixed in subsequent drafts. (Someone's actual Grade 6 teacher would be overjoyed by the suggestion of there being multiple drafts, and would fully endorse a very rough, rough draft.)

The current draft is expected to be rough: someone's supervisor and the committee will ensure future drafts meet the required standards. Understanding what ghost is stopping the flow is sometimes sufficient to start the flow up again. Always believe in yourself that there is no right

without wrong. And the name of learning is natural if ever wrong, of course, by always trying and learning to write well.

3. Addressing Procrastination

Closely related to writer's block is the issue of procrastination. This can take many forms, from putting off starting on this or that section because one still has months before the deadline; to finding other "urgent" chores to do rather than sitting down at the computer for today; to working diligently on polishing bits of the thesis already completed to avoid having to think about starting the next section, whose looming presence is completely intimidating. Like writer's block, procrastination threatens to stop the thesis in its tracks as time passes, and the student does not.

In the author's experience, in writing her thesis she still often makes delays. Watching Korean dramas on the sidelines working on her thesis. The author considers watching is a break, but of course, that is not true. In watching writers tend not to pay attention to time, do not know how much time has passed. But she was curious about the drama being watched but could not work quietly. For that reason, the writer forces herself to hold her curiosity by adjusting the watch time. The writer only watches at breaks to eat. After completing the break then continue working on the thesis.

There are two key points I would like you to take from Getting Started. First, you are not alone in struggling with procrastination. It requires a great deal of discipline, not just to plunk your bum down in front of the computer, but to stay focused and productive. (I have, for example, spent far too much time watch movies). Of course, you already know that a bachelor's degree requires self-discipline, but it is nice to know that almost every writer struggles with writing as much as you do not just with finding the right words and ideas, but with forcing oneself to sit down at the keyboard and focus. Writing is a solitary task, and without a taskmaster standing over one's shoulder it is hard to stay motivated and on task. But they all eventually managed it, so you can too. Ultimately, the only thing that changes

'eventually' into 'this minute' is deadlines. So we will take a slight digression to talk about deadlines.

4. Dealing with Deadlines

If you are like me, then your productivity is a function of distance from the deadline: the further from the deadline, the less productive. One way that we can realize how important deadlines are is to write a few *Motivational Slogans*. The problem then becomes that as the deadline approaches, procrastination is replaced by equally paralyzing deadline panic: the realization that one has left it too late, and there is now no possibility of finishing properly in the time remaining. One thing that helped me overcome both procrastination and deadline panic was posting motivational slogans above my work station. Most prominent was the due date for the next deliverable(s) and a countdown calendar:

> **Chapter 3 — Due Dec 19th**
> **1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,**
> **13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21 days left**

That is to combat procrastination, obviously, but note that when calculating the countdown calendar, one has to account for days when one will be unavailable for thesis work: e.g., days when one has gainful employment; teaching assistant or research assistant duties; family commitments, such as a cousin's wedding or the significant other's birthday; and so on. The question has to be, "How many thesis workdays are available until the deadline?" Remember to build in some sick days too.

Remember that the supervisor or committee members are always going to want to suggest changes to whatever one hands in. If they suggest fixing the things one already knows need fixing, that becomes the equivalent of getting an extension on the deadline. So: no worries! As long as someone is handing something in, someone is unlikely to fail. Indeed, it frequently happens that they are perfectly happy with what one thought a very rough draft, because they are looking for 'done', not 'perfect'. If someone waits

until someone is perfectly satisfied with someone's draft before handing it in, the premature polishing risks the committee asking for that section to be removed or changed anyway, which not only renders the effort redundant but leaves one open to committee changes over bits someone did not want them to mess with. [Of course, that is the pep talk for perfectionists; please disregard if you are a satisficer. Your supervisor or committee will let you know if you're setting the standard too low, but do not let that happen more than once.] And then I had some slogans to make me let go of my obsessive need to include absolutely every idea and tiny detail that had occurred to me, whether it fits or not:

Better to make a few major points than fail everything

You just need enough to keep going

You can always add to it later

These sample slogans reveal my particular issues; you need to figure out what your writing process issues are, come up with the appropriate responses, and post those. It may feel silly to post such affirmations over someone's computer, but it works. Every time someone looks up (and we instinctively look up whenever deep in thought or trying to remember something) someone's eyes slide across the posters, and the thought enters someone's subconscious, even if one has habituated to the posters' presence and no longer registers them consciously. Such subliminal programming is indeed effective in motivating someone, provided someone has selected the right (that is, the convincing) slogans for someone's particular required attitudinal and behavioral changes. Whatever works for you!

5. Understanding Actual Deadlines

As an undergraduate, deadlines were relatively straightforward: one was given the date on which assignments were to be submitted, and that was that. That is because (with exceedingly rare exceptions) rewriting was not part of the dynamic. Completing a thesis is as much about time management organizing the framework within which the time for writing and rewriting is embedded as it is about the writing process itself.

Missing that deadline might mean waiting weeks for another chapter-sized opening in the supervisor's schedule and that delay is on the student, not the advisor. And when planning one's work schedule, do not count on the supervisor being able to always meet the deadline for returning one's chapter or thesis. Life happens: people get sick, planes get delayed, emergencies come up. Build-in enough leeway to cover any such contingencies.

One final note: Never, ever, under any circumstances, tell anyone that you are just about done your thesis. It does not matter what deadline you think you have, and so assume you will be done by then, you probably will not be. It always takes longer than one thinks longer than one could imagine and it is endlessly embarrassing to keep having to tell people, "No, I am not quite done yet." Better to wait until one is done before announcing the end.

6. Procrastination Part Two

The second take away from Getting Started is that sometimes it is better to just give up. This may seem counter-intuitive in a discussion on how to address procrastination, but as our hero in Getting Started demonstrates, invoking pure brute-force willpower can push one to a meltdown, which is neither productive nor healthy. One needs to take reasonable breaks: nutrition break every two to three hours (like any regular workplace coffee break), eight hours sleep a night, and at least one night a week completely off. One must take the occasional break not only to decompress but to step back from the thesis to get some perspective. Grinding away on the same sentence or idea for hours does not give one the chance to recognize that the reason the writing is not coming is that it is the wrong sentence or idea. A nutrition break

or a night off helps one start fresh and perhaps break out of whatever pattern has one stalled.

Furthermore, dwelling too long in the wretchedness of not writing can lead to defeatism and the determination to quit rather than to get done. One can only succeed in a thesis or dissertation if one is passionate about one's research because it is that passion that drives us to write, rather than to stall. Berating oneself for lack of progress, constantly driving oneself harder and harder without mercy, kills that passion and incites rebellion just as it would if it were one's boss rather than oneself making these unrelenting demands. So, occasionally one has to let oneself go out to enjoy a night off. Or, to put it another way: one needs to pace oneself. Too much procrastination leads to failure, but pushing too hard is equally dangerous. One needs to find an appropriate work/life balance.

7. Maintaining Work/Life Balance.

A common error is a belief that if one can write three pages in three hours, one should be able to write nine pages in nine hours. Full-time, single students often work dysfunctionally long hours in the hope of getting done faster (to become full-time employed people instead). This rarely works, and the failure to be productive adds to the inevitable frustrations and defeatism of writing a thesis. Part-time graduate students (which includes anyone with a family) often try to find blocks of time, so similarly expect to be able to pump out twenty pages in a weekend or the carefully hoarded day off. This is rarely successful.

The problem is that there are two-time scales at work in thesis-writing, but "page per hour" thinking only takes into account getting something down on paper. Figuring out how to word something and putting that on the page is the obvious bum-on-seat productivity that is fairly easy to measure by the page/hour. But that sort of writing only takes place within the larger time scale of reflecting on one's topic, of reaching for insights, of thinking deeply. That is much harder to pin down. Some insights pop into one's head effortlessly and unbidden; others must be courted over months; some elude

one entirely and occur instead to the graduate student two library carrels down the hall.

The longer time scale of gathering insights and delving deeper is often misunderstood because it was never a serious part of one's undergraduate studies. One's undergraduate paper deadlines came fast and furious, so most delving for insights was limited to the time spent in the shower or riding the bus. The process was there, but so severely foreshortened that it was unnoticed compared to the bum-in-seat time at the keyboard. Thus, when calculating progress, it is important to plan for the time it takes to write each page, but also for the larger timeframe within which that writing process takes place.

We can not have output without input. Sitting at the keyboard day in and day out, I had been doing it all wrong. For the thesis or dissertation writer, input naturally means books and journal articles, but that is not enough. Obsessive reading can be just another form of procrastination. One has to be prepared to digest all of that reading, and that requires talking to people. We need to talk through what we have just read with our supervisor or peers, talk through their ideas with sympathetic listeners, and listen in turn to what they have been reading, thinking, and working on.

8. **Dealing with Angst: Support Groups**

   a. Supervisors

   One's supervisor is often a useful place to start when seeking a supportive other. I certainly found my advisor wonderful when blocked: he would casually reach up into his bookcase and pull out the one book that had exactly the answers I needed to proceed, or sagely say the one thing I needed to hear.

   b. Committee Members

   One's committee members may sometimes be similarly drawn upon, particularly if one is blocked on some aspect of the writing (literature review, methodology, analysis) that falls within that committee member's particular area of expertise; or they have been delegated to provide moral

support in the absence of the supervisor. Check with the supervisor first, however, as protocol varies between faculties, and it is not uncommon for direct contact with committee members outside of scheduled committee meetings to be discouraged. (Such policies are designed to limit the committee member's time commitment to students for whom they are not the designated supervisor and to protect the student from conflicting messages and negative interference from overzealous committee members.).

c. Significant Others

Although significant others appear to be an obvious source of moral support, this may not always be a good idea. Thesis writing, like any chronic illness, can be as hard on the caregiver as the person suffering the condition; just putting up with you is already a lot to ask. Someone needs to find the appropriate balance between obsessively talking about someone's dissertation and sheltering someone's partner from the worst of someone's wretchedness. It is difficult to generalize here, as personalities and relationships vary so greatly: some significant others may want to be involved in every aspect of someone's research, and wounded if kept at arm's length; others may prefer that not every conversation be about someone's thesis, and feel they should be able to get the occasional word in edgewise perhaps even about their own needs.

There is also the consideration that sooner or later there will be a real crisis in someone's life, so someone must not use up the significant other's entire supply of empathy on someone's thesis problems. The bottom line is that the thesis journey has to take a lower priority than someone's relationship with someone's partner because the significant other will be there long after grad school is over. Or, you know, not there, if someone gets this wrong.

Even if someone significant other appreciates that writing a thesis is an inherently dreadful experience and painfully slow going (one could give them this article to read, for example), they may not always be the best

source of feedback. Like mothers of grade school children, they might feel being supportive means being overly positive ("That was a wonderful dear!") even when they know it is not. Conversely, they might be holding early drafts to too high a standard, comparing it to the published articles they are used to: "You are not handing that in like that, are you?" The fundamental problem with either approach is that, by definition, the significant other's opinion matters a great deal emotionally, but has no standing in the actual assessment process.

d. Undergraduate Student Peers

Fellow students are usually the most helpful supports, because they often have a similar background in one's discipline, and because they are going through the same process of writing their thesis and get the whole wretchedness thing. Commiserating with each other can be productive, provided everyone is equally committed to lending an ear, and the resulting group culture feels supportive rather than whiny. As suggested in the previous section, hanging with undergraduate student peers is a key factor, not just in maintaining a healthy work/life balance, but in harvesting the environment for ideas and insights.

All one's peers are reading different (but equally obscure) academic journals, talking to different supervisors and committee members and conducting different research projects, any of which might well provide the missing piece of the puzzle for their thesis. The reverse is equally true, and it is a real morale boost when you can provide some obscure tidbit from your reading to resolve the issue that was blocking a peer. Get together, make friends, find support.

e. Writing Coach

For the emotional and motivational issues around substantive writing (as opposed to research content or actual wording, for which there may be ethical constraints) a writing coach or writing workshop may also help overcome writer's block, blank page syndrome, procrastination, and isolation.

Five main aspects discussed in this study include matters related to writing a thesis. Writing a thesis which is the final project for students has an academic challenge in the process. Includes psychology, sociocultural, and linguistics. Not only knowing the challenges in writing a thesis, knowing the strategies to solve the challenges became an important point discussed in this study. Like when dealing with blank page syndrome, dealing with writer's block, addressing procrastination, dealing with deadlines, understanding actual deadlines, procrastination part two, maintaining work/life balance, and dealing with angst: support groups.