



# OBM Thesis Project: Creating an Effective Thesis Manual Using Performance Management Contingencies

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# BRSS Mission Statement

Behavioral Research Supervisory System (BRSS) is a subsystem within Dr. Malott's Behavior Analysis Training System (BATS). BRSS manages performance of five groups of students; research and teacher assistants, undergraduate thesis students, graduate mentors, and the graduate student's senior managers. The timely completion of tasks allows the students to maintain and improve these projects over the course of an entire semester. BRSS focuses on promoting productive work habits and reducing procrastination of graduate and undergraduate students. This is done through grade contingencies placed on task completion.



# Importance of BRSS

- o Major problem:
  - o 60% of WMU students finish thesis project in timely fashion
  - o Importance of performance management
  - o BRSS helps students complete high-quality thesis projects



# Ultimate Goal of OBM Thesis Project

- o The ultimate goal of our thesis project is to create a better manual for undergraduate students to reference while working on their thesis projects and to provide a systematic grading system for their graduate student supervisors.



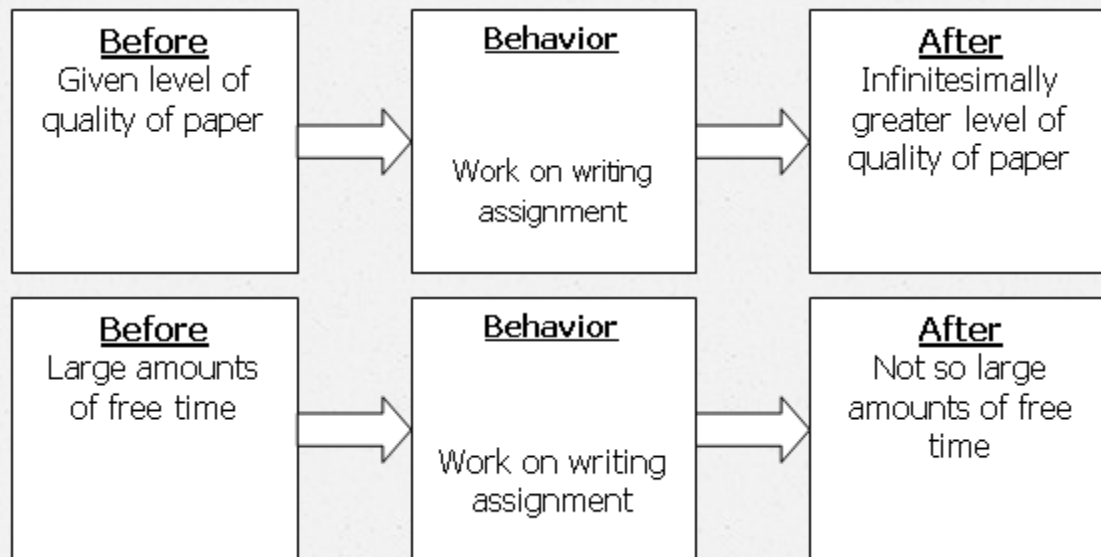
# The Importance of This Project

- o Major problem:
  - o Lack of informative job aids
  - o Lack of grading tools for Master students
  - o Unorganized thesis manual



# Analyzing the Natural Contingencies

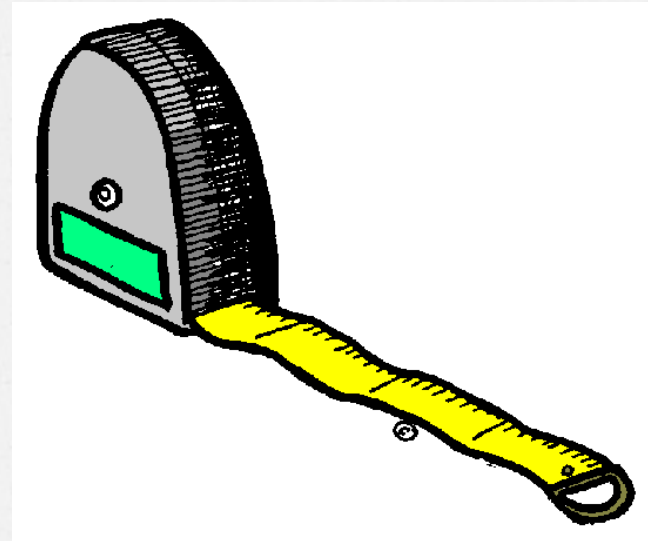
## o Ineffective Natural Contingency:



# Analyze the Natural Contingencies cont.

## o Accomplishments:

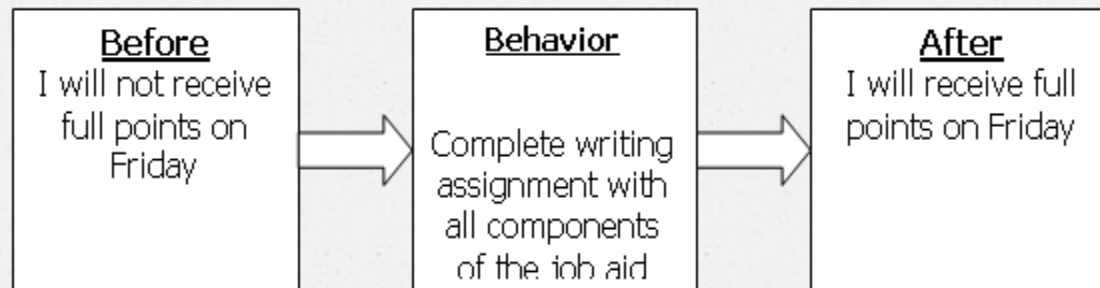
- o Good measure for quantity standard
- o Good measure for timeliness standard
- o Good measure for cost standard





# Design the Intervention

- o Importance of a deadline
- o Effective Performance Management Contingency:
  - o SD: Fridays at 3 PM





# Design the Intervention cont.

## INTRODUCTION

40 POINTS

o Job aids for each writing assignment:

### REQUIREMENTS:

The introduction of your thesis will provide more information to the reader as to why you are doing this research project. It will touch on the background of your study, drawn from your literature reviews. Discuss relevant work in the area of your project and a justification for purpose of you. You should also mention the reasoning for your mentor's current study.

<u>CRITERIA</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Approximately 2-3 pages (double spaced)	4	
Language is formal, clear & concise	4	
<b>Content</b>		
• General background of previous research	6	
• Introduce the problem	6	
• Reason for your project	6	
• Site relevant work in the area	6	
ALL sources referenced Job Aid	7	
Spelling & Grammar	6	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>40</b>	

Don't forget to send a copy to your mentor

# Design the Intervention cont.

- Pre-Manual Survey

- For Master students and Undergraduate students

- Questions:

- Organization

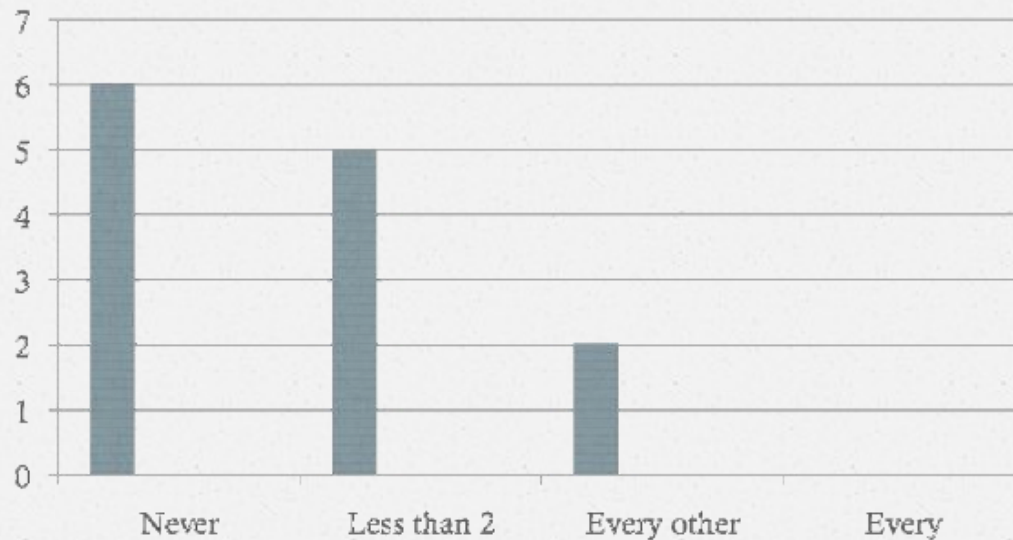
- Grading

- Requirements



# Pre-Manual Survey Master Students

- How often did you refer to the UG thesis folders/job aids while making revisions on your UG's thesis?

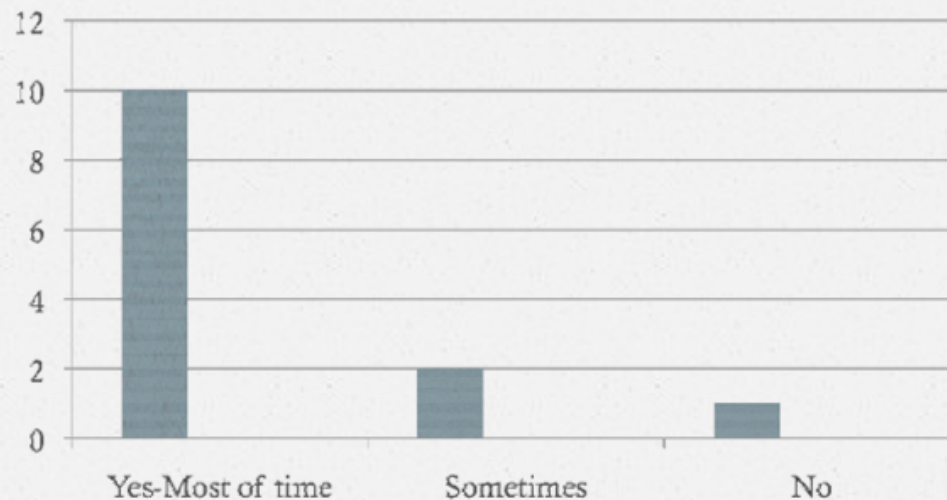




# Pre-Manual Survey

## Master Students

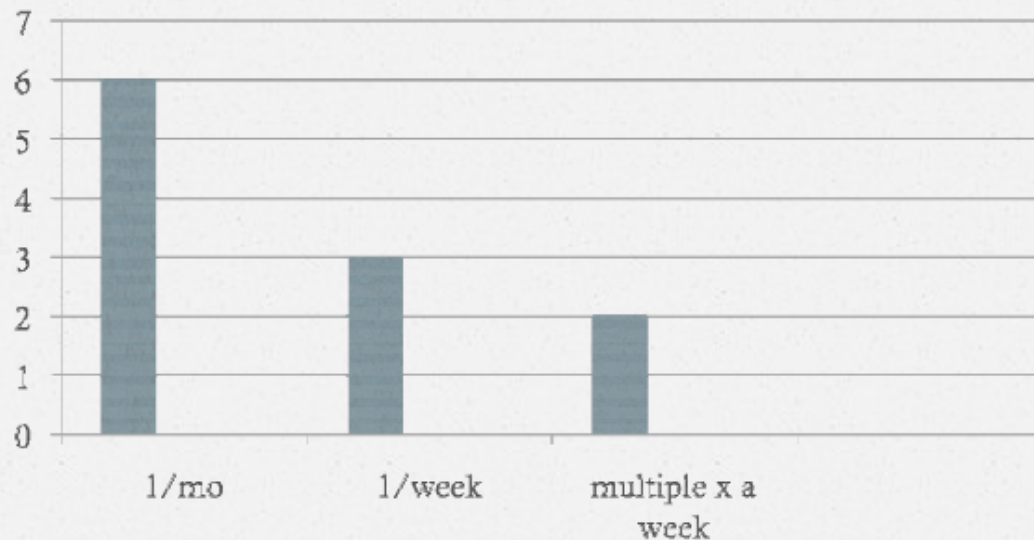
- If there were a more detailed manual to grade the quality of UG's thesis, would you have utilized it in your grading process?



# Pre-Manual Survey

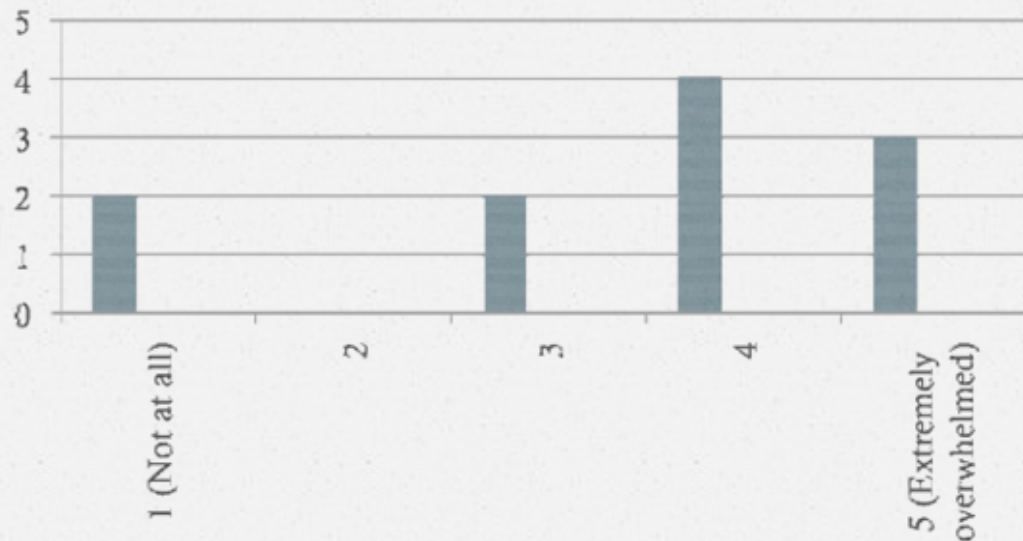
## UG Students

- How often did you refer to the UG thesis folders while writing your thesis?



# Pre-Manual Survey UG Students

- How overwhelmed did you feel when you received the UG thesis files?





# Implementing the Intervention

- o Set out to solve disconnects from survey
  - o 1st: Increase use of manual
  - o 2nd: Decrease students feeling overwhelmed
  - o 3rd: Give Master students a tool to grade the quality of their UG's work
- o Implement new Undergraduate Thesis Manual
  - o UG Thesis orientation
  - o Writing workshop

# My Roles

- o 1st Semester:
  - o Research requirements of thesis paper
  - o Help create job aids
  - o Proofread job aids
- o 2nd Semester:
  - o Help proofread and organize thesis manual
  - o Thesis manual orientation
  - o Writing workshop
  - o Mini-project

# Mini Project

## Highlight job aids:

- Requirements
- Awesome student examples

### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

AN OVERVIEW  
40 POINTS



#### OBJECTIVE:

To define the roles and responsibilities of PhD, graduate, and undergraduate students involved with respect to the system you and your mentor have chosen to use for your project. Use your graduate school mentor, manuals, dickmalott.com and archived files to define these roles.

<u>CRITERIA</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Included in the introduction section	5	
• Brief description of the problem your project will be addressing.	5	
• Define important roles of PhD students (if applicable)	6	
• Define important roles of Master's students (if applicable)	6	
• Describe the importance of the role and responsibilities of your project for the system	7	
• Describe each person's responsibilities within your project	6	
Spelling & Grammar	5	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>40</b>	

Don't forget to send a copy to your mentor

#### AWESOME STUDENT EXAMPLE:

##### Roles and Responsibilities in BRSS

BRSS requires many students to work together in order to make BATS a successful graduate program. All subsystems, including BRSS, report to Dr. Richard Malott. BRSS consists of two BRSS system managers and one undergraduate teaching assistant supervising the work of the Master student mentors, undergraduate thesis students, undergraduate research assistants and/or undergraduate teaching assistants.

As mentioned above, the first level of BRSS includes the first and second year master students. The first year master students are responsible for providing tasks for the undergraduate teaching assistants, on system maintenance, and continuous quality improvement. Second year master students are responsible for overseeing and giving weekly tasks to first year master students, facilitate a relationship with their mentee, and make revisions on undergraduate thesis students' weekly writing assignments.

Another level of BRSS is a six credit, two semester, thesis option course for undergraduate students. Students participating as undergraduate thesis students are required to complete weekly system tasks, complete weekly writing assignments, attend a monthly meeting, and complete an Honors Thesis along side a graduate student from the BATS program. In completing an Honors Thesis, the undergraduate students are able to graduate with departmental honors in psychology.

Another level of BRSS is the undergraduate teaching assistant. The undergraduate teaching assistant is a non-thesis option, three credit course, lasting for one semester. Students participating as undergraduate teaching assistants are required to complete system tasks on a weekly basis and attend weekly meetings. These students have the option to be teaching assistants in courses such as GRE/Grad School Prep, Pre-Practicum, or Self-Management.



# Maintenance of Project

- Weaved into UG syllabus
- Duties of BRSS managers



# Evaluating the Intervention

- o Results of Post-Manual survey
  - o Thesis Student Comments:
    - o The job aids showed exactly what needed to be done step-by-step
    - o They were detailed and organized in a manner that made sense while writing, thank you!
    - o The examples were extremely helpful! The rubrics also helped guide the writing, but I would say the examples were the most helpful because it allowed me to see how the requirements all pieced together.

# My Experience

- What I learned:
- Special thanks to Christina Henderson and Dr. Malott





# Comments or Questions

