Group 1:

Theoretical perspective: Academic buoyancy theory; also called academic resilience theory. Graduate students at the University of Florida are individuals who have had great academic success throughout their lives. They are the “best and brightest” among students. However, graduate study is challenging, even for students who have been high academic achievers throughout their lives. For many of these best and brightest students, graduate study is the first truly challenging academic experience of their lives. The normal disappointment of less than “super” academic achievement (like getting a B instead of an A) may therefore be a new experience to them. Their ability to respond effectively to this challenging academic environment is critical to overall success. Your research team has decided to explore the factors that contribute to academic buoyancy or resilience – essentially the ability to effectively cope with the ups and downs of academic achievement in graduate school. Constructs for this project: academic resilience is just one construct, but it has many dimensions. You must include two of the dimensions of this construct suggested by Martin et al (2010) -- confidence (self-efficacy), coordination (planning), commitment (persistence), composure (low anxiety) or control (low uncertain control).


Theoretical perspective: Achievement goal theory. Graduate students are obviously “high achievers,” at least academically. Otherwise, they would not be in graduate school. Nonetheless, some graduate students fail to establish and reach satisfactory achievement goals. As a result, educators continue to try to understand what motivates graduate students, what helps them set and reach high achievement goals academically. Your research group wants to explore the prevalence of mastery and performance goals for graduate students and understand how they are related to academic achievement in graduate study. Constructs for this project: mastery goals (only in the approach sense, not the avoidance sense), performance goals (again, only in the approach, not the avoidance sense) – see Senko to understand the difference between approach and avoidance goals.


Viera, E.T., Jr. & Grantham, S. (2011) University students setting goals in the context of autonomy, self-efficacy and important goal-related task engagement. *Educational Psychology* 31(2), 141-156.
Theoretical perspective: Self-regulation theory, specifically self-regulated learning. One of the distinctive characteristics of graduate education compared to the previous learning experiences of most students is the need for a great deal of self-regulation. Professors assume that graduate students will not need “to be spoon fed,” that they will take responsibility for their own learning experience and outcomes. This often rather abrupt shift from a very directed learning environment to one in which the student is called upon to manage his/her own learning is a challenge for many graduate students. In fact, in my experience, failure to self-regulate is probably the number one cause for failure in graduate school. Your research group wants to explore the degree to which graduate students engage in the several components of self-regulated learning. Constructs for this project: self-evaluation, causal attribution.


Group 4:

**Theoretical Perspective: Identity theory.** Professional socialization and assuming the culture, including the ethical norms, of a profession have long been a concern in some professions like medicine and law. They have recently emerged as a concern of graduate schools in general, in part due to observed deficiencies in professional standards among graduates. However, professional socialization is not just about “teaching ethics” or even “adhering to the norms” of a profession. More recent concepts of professional socialization expand this construct to include components like learning about expected role orientations and role expectations, acquiring “legitimacy” as a professional, and learning to negotiate the professional workplace. Professional socialization and the accommodation to profession culture is a challenge for many graduate students and failure to negotiate this transition can lead to failure to assume professional responsibilities. Your group wants to explore the ways in which graduate students negotiate the transition and their perceptions of what they need to accomplish to complete the transition from student to professional. **Constructs for this project: Professional socialization and professional culture**


