**The Relationship Between Motivation to Learn and Self-Regulated Learning**

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**Introduction/Need for Research**

Understanding and controlling one’s learning environments is referred to as self-regulated learning (Schraw, Crippen, & Hartley, 2006). Schunk (1996) posited that to increase one’s ability to manage self-regulated learning one must set goals, select strategies to achieve the goals, implement those identified strategies, and monitor the progress toward achieving the goals. Students with better self-regulation skills typically learn with less effort and indicate increased levels of academic satisfaction (Pintrich, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). How and why a student learns, along with their performance is typically associated with their motivation to learn (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Motivation was found to be a predictor of student achievement in a course devoted to language acquisition via satellite television (Shih & Gamon, 2001). Schraw, Crippen, & Hartley (2006) argued that “motivation includes beliefs and attitudes that affect the use and development of cognitive and metacognitive skills” (p. 112), which impact one’s self-regulated learning abilities. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between student motivation to learn and level of online self-regulated learning.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory, particularly using motivation. Within the context of social cognitive theory, motivation is defined as an internal state that arouses, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behavior. Students are more motivated to learn when participating in activities and courses that are meaningful and worthwhile (Glynn & Koballa, 2006). As students become more motivated, their academic achievement increases by their engaging behavior including asking questions, participating laboratory activities, and working in groups (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meese, 2008).

**Methods**

Participants for this case study were selected from enrollees in an online agricultural science course at an institution in the southwest United States university during the spring semester. Specifically, the students were enrolled in an online dual enrollment crop science course and through direct administration, 52 students completed the instrumentation used to measure motivation and online self-regulated learning. Student motivation was measured using the motivation sub-scale of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The MSLQ motivation sub-subscale is a 31 item instrument using a seven-point Likert-type scale to measure six constructs of motivation. Self-regulated learning in online courses was measured using the Online Self-Regulated Learning Questionnaire (OSLQ). The OSLQ is a 24 item instrument using a five-point Likert-type scale to measure six constructs of self-regulated learning in online environments.

**Findings**

Students enrolled in the dual enrollment agricultural science course tended to have the highest level of self-regulated online learning within the construct of environment structuring (*M*=3.73, *SD*=.89). Students tended to have the lowest levels in time management (*M*=3.30, *SD*=.96). In regard to motivation, students were highest in control of learning beliefs (*M*=5.17, *SD*=1.07) and lowest in task value (*M*=4.65, *SD*=1.40). These data can be found in Tables 1 and 2. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to determine the relationship between the two variables. Motivation to learn had a very strong correlation (Davis, 1971) with self-regulated learning in online courses (*r*= .72, *p*= .01).

Table 1

*Self-regulated learning of online dual enrollment students*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Construct | *M* | *SD* |
| Environment Structuring | 3.73 | .89 |
| Goal Setting | 3.51 | .73 |
| Help Seeking | 3.39 | .98 |
| Task Strategies | 3.39 | .98 |
| Self-Evaluation | 3.32 | .92 |
| Time Management | 3.30 | .96 |
| Scale total: | 3.45 | .80 |

Table 2

*Motivation to learn of online dual enrollment students*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Construct | *M* | *SD* |
| Control of Learning Beliefs | 5.17 | 1.07 |
| Extrinsic Goal Orientation | 5.15 | 1.32 |
| Test Anxiety | 4.98 | 1.14 |
| Self-Efficacy for Learning & Performance | 4.88 | 1.31 |
| Intrinsic Goal Orientation | 4.85 | 1.29 |
| Task Value | 4.65 | 1.40 |
| Scale total: | 4.92 | 1.06 |

**Conclusions**

Students in this course were more likely to create an adequate learning environment for themselves to focus on completing their work than they were to manage their time. It can be concluded students know how to create the environment in which to be successful, yet still struggle managing their responsibilities to meet educational demands. Interestingly, students, in this study, were more extrinsically motivated than intrinsically motivated. This raises a question regarding motivation. Have educators created an environment where students are more concerned about applying themselves simply for a grade rather than learning a new concept to use in the future? Student motivation to learn is strongly correlated with self-regulated learning. This is consistent with Schraw, Crippen, and Hartley (2006) who noted motivation is a necessary component in self-regulated learning.

**Recommendations**

Since motivation to learn is strongly correlated to online self-regulated learning, it is recommended that faculty continue to provide support for students and aid them in developing their approach to learning to be better equipped to successfully navigate online courses. Specifically, assistance with developing time management strategies and self-analysis will aid students in creating a more manageable learning experience while using an introspective approach to evaluating their own learning. Furthermore, creating authentic learning experiences within online courses will provide students more opportunity to view the course as more valuable to their future and thus, increase intrinsic motivation to succeed.

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