INTRODUCTION: SOME ISSUES ON SELF-REGULATION TO CONSIDER

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This special issue entitled “Motivation and self-regulation” started after the kind invitation of Professor Hirotsugu Yamauchi to the other co-editors and the willingness of the distinguished *Psychologia Society* of Japan to host in its journal *Psychologia: An International Journal of Psychology in the Orient* the articles included in this special issue. We are grateful to them.

The special issue comprises six articles. Due to space limitations four of them are included in Issue 4, Volume 45 and two in Issue 1, Volume 46 of the journal. The introduction deals with all 6 articles because of the unity of the concepts in all of them.

The goal we set, a special issue on motivation and self-regulation, was challenging, because there is a lot and highly interesting work in this area. Self-regulation is a concept that was introduced into the psychological and educational vocabulary in the 1980s (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1992) and since then it has attracted the interest of researchers all over the world. It draws on various lines of research such as metacognition (Brown, 1987; see also Efklides, 2001), achievement goals (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984; see also Thrash & Elliot, 2001), intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), action control (Kuhl, 1985), appraisal processes (see Boekaerts & Niemivirta, 2000), etc., but the emphasis is on how the people monitor and control, i.e., regulate, their performance, their cognition and affect as well as their environment in order to achieve their goal. Self-regulation has also been related to autonomy and self-determination in goal setting (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and to cognitive or metacognitive strategy use for the successful implementation of the goals set (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

After almost two decades of research, however, there are still many issues that have not been resolved. This special issue aims at highlighting some of them. Let us name a few:

1. Self-regulation, as the name denotes, presupposes the active involvement of one's own self. However, which aspects of one's self are relevant to self-regulation and how do they interact with regulatory processes? This issue is taken up in the articles of Pajares and

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Valiante (Article 1) and Efklides and Tsiora (Article 2). Both articles point out the importance of confidence in one's capability (i.e., self-efficacy) to deal with specific tasks. Moreover, Pajares and Valiante suggest that we should also consider self-efficacy in self-regulation, and Efklides and Tsiora show how confidence in one's capability is being built (through online monitoring of one's performance) and how it influences the person's self-concept, thus shaping future expectations and performance.

2. Can self-regulation be understood at a general dispositional level or at a more specific, situational, or task-specific level? This is an issue that pervades all the articles of this special issue, since all the authors recognize that dispositions cannot fully account for the variation of self-regulation at the situational level. Thus, all authors show sensitivity to context variation, either in the setting (e.g., social context, learning environment) or in time (e.g., during a specific task or class, over the years).

3. Which aspects of metacognition are involved in self-regulation? Self-regulation has to do with control processes and therefore, one relevant aspect of metacognition is the use of strategies, either cognitive (such as learning strategies) or metacognitive (such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating); this stance is reflected in the article of Yamauchi and Miki (Article 5).

However, how does the person become aware that they need to exercise their control processes? As Efklides and her collaborators have shown (Efklides, 2001), it is metacognitive experiences, i.e., online feelings, judgments, and ideas that inform the person about this need. Such online appraisals regarding not only cognitive processing but also the person's affect and interaction with collaborators are examined by Efklides and Tsiora (Article 2), Rheinberg, Vollmeyer, and Rollett (Article 3), Niemivirta (Article 4) and Vauras, Liskala, Kajamies, Kinnunen, and Lehtinen (Article 6) aiming at a better understanding of the dynamic nature of self-regulation as it unfolds in a specific learning situation.

4. How does affect influence the self-regulatory processes? This is an issue that is taken up by Efklides and Tsiora (Article 2), Rheinberg et al. (Article 3), and Niemivirta (Article 4). Efklides and Tsiora are focusing on online affect, as indicated in metacognitive feelings and self-concept. The other two articles are focusing mainly on anxiety and interest and they show how affect interacts with the person's motivational orientations and strategy use.

5. How does self-regulation interact with the perceived learning environment, that is, the goals and task conditions other people (parents, teachers) set? This is a particularly important issue, because in school students are expected to self-regulate and develop positive and conducive learning goals although it is mostly the teacher (or even the parents) who create the climate with an emphasis on specific (e.g., mastery or performance) goals. Niemivirta (Article 4) and Yamauchi and Miki (Article 5) deal specifically with this issue and show not only how the perceived learning environment interacts with students' motivation and self-regulatory processes, but also how these relationships develop over time.

6. How does the person regulate their behavior in collaborative settings? This is a most interesting issue that has started to attract attention only in the last few years (see

Dillenbourg, 1999). Vauras et al. (Article 6) give an extensive description of how *shared-regulation* takes place in actual learning situations and the personal attributes that allow the success of this kind of regulation. This study shows that we should not look at self-regulation as opposed to other-regulation but also as a dynamic process that involves shared-regulation, which is exemplified in the monitoring and control of both one's own and his/her partner's cognition and regulatory processes.

7. Another point that needs to be stressed and which is addressed in this special issue is individual differences in self-regulation. Besides the gender effects that consistently show up in self-regulation (see Pajares & Valiante, Article 1; Niemivirta, Article 4), Rheinberg et al. (Article 3) and Niemivirta (Article 4) identify types of learners who differ from each other according to the specific patterns of motivation they exhibit when they enter a learning situation.

8. And this brings us to our last point: the relation of motivation with self-regulation. This is the theme of this special issue and all the articles deal with it in one way or the other. Self-concept and self-efficacy (Articles 1 & 2), task-specific affect (Articles 2, 3, & 4), goal orientation (Articles 4 & 5), and intrinsic motivation (Article 6) are the main motivational forces recognized. However, what becomes evident from these articles is that there is no one single type of motivation that is relevant to self-regulation. It is a multitude of motives and it is this multitude that better captures what is going on in actual classrooms.

This short introduction tried to give a sense of what is being presented in this special issue. Evidently, some of the papers are extending concepts that have already been introduced in self-regulation research in the past but with much more sophistication, so that we understand the complexity of self-regulatory processes. Other papers introduce new elements and links in the self-regulatory process and still others introduce new concepts. It is our strong belief that the reader will enjoy the high quality work that allows our deeper understanding of the functioning of self-regulation and the contribution of motivation to it. And what is really promising is that the young researchers who are presenting here their work will continue research in this area and will bring in new insights.

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