Chapter 12
Self–Regulated Learning and Student Success, Retention, and Engagement in Online Courses

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyzes self-regulated learning and student success, engagement, and retention in online learning contexts. The conceptual literature review was adopted as the research methodology. The search engines such as Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, PsychINFO, Science Direct, Academic Search Elite/EBSCO, Blackwell Synergy, and JSTOR were used to obtain secondary data. The results from reviewed literature indicate that self-regulation was effective in enhancing student success, engagement, and retention among students in online learning. Therefore, the chapter recommends that instructors should train students on scaffolding as a classroom technique which would help to strengthen self-regulation. The study is quite significant because understanding self-regulation is very important in the development of these achievement capabilities for students.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes self-regulated learning in relation to student success, retention and engagement within online learning contexts. Over the years, most research on individual differences among students that bear on school success retention and engagement has focused on general intelligence. Moreover, educational institutions worldwide are shifting to online learning in an effort to cope with increasing demands for knowledge acquisition and address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With this new shift in mode of teaching and learning, learners now have more roles to play to ensure success in online learning. This is because learning in the online environment is highly dependent on an individual's ability to direct and manage the learning process. Thus, the online learning environment requires that learners set goals and develop appropriate methods for realizing goals. For the learners to be able to do this, they need to effectively manage both time and resources. One of the intrinsic constructs that would be of interest in helping learners to have successful online learning is their self-regulation. However, in as much as research on self-regulated learning exists, there is very little information on self-regulated learning and student success, retention and engagement. The chapter is guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).Therefore, this chapter reviews previous research and analyzes self-regulated learning and student success, retention and engagement. The chapter recommends that instructors should train students on the use of learning enhancement tools, such as taking notes, as an important self-regulatory behavior among learners.

BACKGROUND

Student success, retention and engagement has received attention in research for decades now. Student success is predicated on the ability of institutions to actively engage students in the learning process and increase students' use of self-regulation skills (Mello, 2016). Student success is important since when students perform well in academics in school, they increase their opportunities for better-paid and more satisfying career. However, research also indicates that students do not perform in class at similar levels and that there are individual differences among them, even when family background and school and teacher quality are controlled for (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005). This implies that individual differences play an important role in determining whether children thrive or fail in school. One of the most important goals of education has become to help students acquire self-regulation skills that to improve learning during school years. Self-regulation looks at the triadic interaction between the person, their behavior, and the environment (Zimmerman, 2000). According to Patock-Peckham, et al., (2001), self-regulation involves the ability of a student to function as an autonomous individual. Thus, a self-regulated individual sets attainable goals and takes appropriate actions to achieve these goals, utilizing their resources while remaining aware of their limitations (Miller & Byrnes, 2001). The well self-regulated learner recognizes limits on cognitive capacity and the necessity to be strategic in the deployment of these resources (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). This knowledge generally is revealed with increased effort, time management, and focused attention (Mrazek et al., 2018).

Online learning has become a popular means of greater access to higher education among students (Stack, 2015). Despite the increased access, the retention rate of students using this learning modality remains a concern for higher education administrators. Research indicates that school managers are constantly exploring ways to improve student persistence and student satisfaction of online learners.

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