# PROMOTING SELF-REGULATED LEARNING IN K-12
## PANELIST: DAWN BUZZA

Dawn Buzza (Wilfrid Laurier University)

## OVERVIEW

Research in education has shown consistently that achievement, both in and outside school, is higher when students use Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) skills. When learners self-regulate, they manage their abilities and surroundings to reach their goals for learning and achievement.  In this research, self-regulated learners are viewed as proactive in their use of goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation strategies and in their task strategies such as time management and organization. Self-regulated learners also have internalized self-motivational beliefs, such as self-efficacy and intrinsic interest in their academic work. In self-monitoring, these students apply metacognitive knowledge and control, which is an awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses as learners and an ability to apply strategies effectively to manage challenging tasks (Winne & Perry, 2000). Self-efficacy beliefs have been found to influence students' academic goal setting and also their achievement of those goals (Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992).

We know that SRL is important for school success, and that learners can develop these skills and approaches to schoolwork over time. But we also recognize that students don't necessarily become self-regulated learners on their own, and that teachers can promote the development of SRL in the context of regular school tasks.



## IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research will contribute to our understanding of how the transition to high school can be better supported by classroom teachers. The study of students' development and use of SRL early in their high school experience and the transfer of these emerging skills and motivational beliefs across learning contexts is a unique feature of the study. Issues related to meaningful assessment of SRL are also addressed in this study.  One concern raised in the literature is that learners may not always report accurately about their learning behaviours when asked to complete questionnaires or interviews. Observing their actual self-regulatory behaviours, such as in samples of their schoolwork or in "think-aloud" tasks, may provide more valid and useful assessments of SRL. Teacher-generated assessments of learners' SRL behaviours and strategies are being developed and tested in this study. For instance, one measure of students' application of SRL skills is based on the teacher asking them to write their learning goals for each week, then analyzing their progress toward their goals during class, including reasons why they did or did not meet them and what they need to do next.

## WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

During students' transition from elementary to high school, it may be particularly important to help them develop effective strategies and behaviours that will enable them to manage their academic work and also their emotions and motivational responses related to school work. Many students experience a decline in attendance and grades, as well as increased perceived isolation when they make this transition. For students who are already at-risk for school failure the problem is more severe. Supporting the development of self-regulation and self-motivation skills is one way to address this concern and to try to reverse the potential downward trajectory experienced by many students.

In this project we are working with grade nine teachers who want to help students develop and use Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) skills in their classes. These teachers are coming together in a collaborative, inquiry-based professional learning community, aimed at developing and testing SRL-supportive teaching practices. Randi & Corno (2000) describe researcher-teacher professional learning communities that allow for what they call "collaborative innovation." Here, teachers are encouraged to create, share and test novel instructional practices, while researchers provide appropriate theory and models in support of their efforts. Thus, teachers may combine and/or adapt instructional models found in the literature to their own curricular objectives and classroom contexts, or they may generate their own instructional strategies. Given the iterative ways in which teachers typically plan instruction, in which student cues about their ongoing understanding and interest play an important feedback role, teaching specific SRL skills in the context of ongoing content instruction seems a

Dawn Buzza: dbuzza@wlu.ca

The Canadian Consortium for SRL in Schools
**www.srlcanada.ca**

## FINDINGS

In the first phase of our research, a group of teachers began to explore ways of integrating SRL skills into their existing classroom practices. Strategies for supporting students' SRL development were implemented in the context of French immersion literacy, science, careers, a co-op program, instrumental music, and a school-wide program in which the library is a focal point for scaffolding students' self-directed study time.

While each teacher identified one aspect of SRL, such as goal-setting, to build into their teaching practices, the curricular and contextual differences in which they were applied meant for very different learning experiences for the students. For example, while the librarian's efforts to support SRL were focused on students' goal-setting, planning and monitoring their study time, research, and group work for specific courses, the Careers teacher helped students to examine and assess their goals and plan strategically for larger and longer term objectives. In the first instance, the librarian is able to scaffold students in their learning how to make optimal use of unstructured time by engaging in SRL behaviours aimed toward achieving specific course-related learning goals. In the latter case, students are provided with concrete evidence of their performance in various courses as informational feedback about their strengths, interests, and current efforts. They are able to consider this feedback in considering their goals and directions for their future careers, while at the same time building deeply personal intrinsic motivational orientations and a sense of purpose for their day-to-day course-related schoolwork.
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