



## Prologue

The study of motivation and competencies in Higher Education is in full swing (De la Fuente & Mourad, in press; Elliot & Dewck, 2008; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). This is especially evident in this part of the world due to changes taking place in the *European Higher Education Area* (EHEA). Due to the timeliness of this topic, we at EJREP wanted to provide evidence and analysis to help fill this transition with content. Seven articles comprise this Monograph, and are presented from complementary approaches, including empirical studies and theory review.

### *Empirical contributions*

First in this series, Dr. Phan (Australia) presents a two-phase empirical study focusing on processing strategies during study, the practice of reflection and academic performance. He makes a theoretical and practical contribution to the literature which addresses mechanisms of direct mediation between the practice of reflective thought, lack of organization, persistence, effort and academic performance.

Next, Dr. Paolini (Argentina) presents an empirical study which explores the potentiality of an instructional context designed to promote greater commitment to learning in a group of students. A complementary experience is offered by Jesús Arredondo and Claudia Norzagaray (Mexico), whose main objective is to describe participants' perception of the use of the Educational Guidance Lab with university students as a scenario for work experience.

Psychologist Ibis Álvarez (Spain) offers a theory review on the concept of self-regulated learning, prompted by the growing significance of this term in recent years in the sphere of education. This analysis responds to the need to lay foundations for a methodology that makes it possible to assess self-regulated learning in study situations designed according to the authentic learning model.

Finally, two studies relating to achievement at university are presented. Dr. Derrer-Dendall and collaborators (UK) offer evidence for the relationship between achievement goals and levels of performance, through studying the relative weight of personal and contextual factors at certain universities. In complementary fashion, Dr. Aloba Obami (The Netherlands) offers empirical evidence on variables that predict academic success in the first year of university.

#### *Contributions in Theory*

A theoretical review prepared by Drs. Antonio Valle, Susana Rodríguez, Ramón Cabanach, José Núñez, Julio González-Pienda, (Spain) and Pedro Rosario (Portugal), provides a historical and conceptual panorama of the theory of achievement goal orientation, synthesizing a great deal of prior evidence that has been collected along this line of research.

In summary, this Monograph offers recent evidences and seeks to promote analysis of the present-day experience which is determining how we teach and learn in our universities.

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## **References**

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