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Héfer Bembenutty
Marie C. White
Miriam R. Vélez

Developing Self- regulation of Learning and Teaching Skills Among Teacher Candidates

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Foreword I

What I found fascinating about this book is its foundation in the social cognitive and self-regulation theories. The theoretical frameworks guide the case study in a way that one can pictorially frame the description of the four teacher candidates with clear delineation. The book invites the reader to join the journey of four teacher candidates, understand their challenges, and admire their resourcefulness in spite of setbacks.

Bembenutty, White, and Vélez are commended in their description of four major hallmarks of academic success and teaching preparation training. The first hallmark is the importance of self-efficacy for all learners. In my own teaching, I have encountered talented students, who in spite of their abilities, were not successful because they had doubts about their competence. Self-beliefs are necessary; a high level of intelligence is not enough to be a successful teacher—self-efficacy is also needed.

The ability to delay gratification is another hallmark clearly delineated in this book. I applaud the authors by taking a leadership in this area, which is so much needed at this time when our young generation is often seduced by instant gratification and immediate rewards. Some college students are not mastering self-control. Nevertheless, in this book, the reader is introduced to four conscientious learners who unlike some of their contemporaries postponed immediate and attractive alternatives to focus on the reward of becoming leaders in our society.

A third hallmark derived from the book is the importance of help seeking as a behavioral and social self-regulated learning strategy. As an educator, I intentionally motivated my students to seek help when needed but some did not. Protection of their self-esteem, concerns about how others could perceive them, and fear of demonstrating incompetence interfered with seeking help. In my work with teachers, I encouraged them to seek help. We conducted several studies that support the findings of the case study.

The last hallmark of this case study is the strong support these four teacher candidates received from their institution and teacher educators. If more educators provide caring and culturally sensitive environments, we could prepare more teachers who are drawn to teach where only a few highly qualified teachers want

to teach. Teachers with the drive and motivation of these four teacher candidates could make significant contributions to our urban communities where language barriers, low socioeconomic status, and culturally diverse children often make them feel left out of the mainstream—with these teachers who reflect the passion, caring, and commitment of their institutional core values, those children could build the self-efficacy needed to learn and reach their highest potentials.

Bembenutty, White, and Vélez have provided compelling evidence that self-regulation matters when those who are in question are teacher candidates. I am grateful to the researchers for how this book will add an important area of study to the field of education and psychology. This book is for both teacher educators and teacher candidates to read. If teacher candidates are motivated to be successful, this book tells them how it can be done. If teacher educators want their students to be successful in their programs, this book provides a model of how to transform caterpillars into butterflies and simple birds into giant eagles.

Wilbert (Bill) J. McKeachie
Emeritus Professor
University of Michigan

Foreword II

Drawing on a rich body of research and theory on self-regulation of learning, Bembenutty, White, and Vélez present compelling case studies indicating that the capability of teacher candidates to self-regulate their attainment of educational goals depends on their exposure to self-regulated teacher educators, especially as they model, scaffold, and mentor in classroom settings. This important text gives numerous examples of how teacher educators can become role models and agents for self-regulatory change, and it will be an invaluable resource for courses in education, psychology, and human development.

Barry J. Zimmerman, Professor Emeritus
Graduate Center
The City University of New York

In an effective blend of theory and case histories, Bembenutty, White, and Vélez provide valuable information and advice for prospective teachers and teacher educators. Their focus on help seeking is critical given the array of resources available to overcome early difficulties especially for teachers with significant challenges. Also important is helping them understand the role of delay of gratification in the face of expanding sources of distraction.

Stuart A. Karabenick, Research Professor
University of Michigan

This book builds a really strong case for the importance of self-regulation in teacher education. Moreover, it tells a fascinating story of educational success against the odds, made possible by personal stamina as well as contextual support. Both teacher students and teacher educators around the world will find this book a wonderful inspiration.

Ivar Bråten, Professor
University of Oslo, Norway

This is a practical book which provides a compelling narrative with page after page on teacher self-regulatory functioning. I recommend this book for teacher preparation programs, and I will definitely share it with many of my students and colleagues.

Anastasia Kitsantas, Professor
George Mason University

Preface

The area of research that investigates self-regulation and instruction in teacher candidates and teachers has been largely neglected, considering its relevance to teacher quality, psychological well-being, and students' academic growth. The purpose of this book is to report findings from an in depth case study that examines the associations between teacher candidate's self-regulatory skills and motivational beliefs during their clinical experiences both in the college classroom and school settings from the perspective of social cognitive theory and self-regulation theory.

Self-regulation of learning is known to be important for students in general, but also for teacher candidates and in-service teachers. Learning how to teach is not enough; teachers need to learn how to learn. Teacher education programs can be important contributors to the presence of self-regulated teachers in the classroom. Teacher candidates often have difficulty engaging in adaptive help seeking when a task becomes too difficult to be completed alone. They also have difficulty delaying gratification when distracted from completing a task by invitations to more attractive activities. Often, they maintain low levels of self-efficacy for learning and teacher self-efficacy beliefs that undermine their capability and competence to perform designated and important teaching preparation tasks.

This case study of four teacher candidates was based on an ongoing interest in the success of a teacher preparation program at a small college in an urban setting. The choice of self-regulated learning as a focus for the study is linked to the core values of the college. The enrollment reflects the population of most inner cities providing an edge in developing a program that is effective for urban schools. The college is nationally recognized for its ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity among students and faculty. The researchers provide an integral account of the self-regulatory and motivational beliefs in a case study format:

- Provide a direct account of the development of four teacher candidates during their student teaching clinical experience.
- Focus on contemporary educational theories to describe and interpret the experience of the four teacher candidates.

- Learn the educational and psychological experiences that impacted their learning and teaching experiences.
- Provide directions for future research derived from the experience of these four teacher candidates and directions for educational practices.

First, the introduction provides an overview of the institution and how the participants were chosen for this study. The following section, the literature review, focuses on the importance of social cognitive theory and self-regulation theory. The next section describes the settings, participants, and assessments used in the case study followed by the outcome of the observations and analyses of surveys and questionnaires. The discussion addresses what really matters. The major findings and educational implications of the case study provide the basis for future studies.

We wanted a book that would showcase the efforts and accomplishments of students who benefitted from a strategic approach towards their successful completion of a teacher preparation program by integrating self-regulatory strategies into the fiber of their learning experiences. The faculty and students worked together to establish a supportive network within and beyond the college whose members encouraged help-seeking, delaying gratification, monitoring self-efficacy for learning, and teacher self-efficacy.

This book is written for teacher candidates to believe that if they heard a call to teach, they can read in each paragraph that they can do it. Teacher candidates reading this book will find themselves vicariously portrayed in the journey of the four aspiring teachers described in this book. They can empathize with their struggles but will also find assurance that through self-regulation, their own journeys and dreams could have great outcomes. This book is also written for teacher educators in teaching education programs to realize that by transforming their curriculum in light of new findings on self-regulation, they could facilitate the training process of teacher candidates under their supervision and to understand that self-regulation of learning and teaching matters for teacher candidates.

This book differs from other books related to teacher candidates in several important ways:

- This book reports the journey of four teacher candidates over the span of 4 years from their initial student teaching experience until 2 years into their professional work.
- This book focuses on the important role of social cognitive theory and self-regulation theory as two umbrellas known to have substantial research evidence of successes.
- This book emphasizes the role of teacher self-efficacy, academic delay of gratification, and help seeking as pivotal factors known to buffer academic success and achievement.
- This book focuses on four teacher candidates from underrepresented ethnic groups who were not expected to survive their rigorous teaching program but who became self-regulated learners by postponing immediately attractive alternatives, seeking help when needed, and by developing self-efficacy.
- This book is rigorous in its methodology by triangulating its data sources, which include observation, questionnaires, archival sources, and reflections.

Acknowledgments

We celebrate and thank the participant teacher candidates because without their contribution this case study would not be possible. We acknowledge the administration and staff of the college who made it possible for our students to attend this institution because they consistently seek to be academically excellent, globally engaged, intentionally diverse, socially relevant, and personally transforming. We thank our families for their continued support while we worked on this book.

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Marie C. White is an associate professor in the School of Education at Nyack College. She serves as department chair of both the Childhood and Adolescent Education Departments in New York City. Dr. White obtained her doctorate from The City University of New York, Graduate Center in educational psychology. She maintains an active research agenda in self-regulation of learning, specifically focusing on teacher candidates in the area of academic help seeking. Her research focuses on the self-regulated learning processes that enhance teacher certification experiences through high stakes testing for diverse teacher candidates. Dr. White has a book in press, *Self-regulation and the Common Core: Applications to ELA Standards*, about applying the principles of self-regulation of learning to the common core standards.

Miriam R. Vélez is the Coordinator of Student Teaching and an assistant professor in the School of Education at Nyack College. Certified by New York State in Bilingual Education, she has 30 years of experience as both an inner city and public school instructor. Presently, she serves as the liaison for the college with the city and state departments of education and the edTPA coordinator. In addition, she teaches Foundations of Education, Health Issues, and Methods courses. She has done extensive community-based consulting in the area of education for both poor urban communities and the home schooling network.

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Case Study

A fundamental goal of education is to equip students with self-regulatory capabilities that enable them to evaluate themselves. Self-directedness not only contributes to success in formal instruction but also promotes lifelong learning. Self-regulation encompasses skills for planning, organizing, and managing instructional activities, enlisting resources, regulating one's motivation, and applying metacognitive skills to enable the adequacy of one's knowledge and strategies.

Bandura (1997, pp. 174–175)

Abstract This chapter introduces the book on self-regulation of learning and teaching by providing evidence from research conducted in an urban institution with core values that are aligned with academic, diverse, and transforming principles, which was the perfect choice for a small group of aspiring teachers. Not fully realizing the obstacles to achieving their dreams to make significant contributions to their communities, four teacher candidates entered the arena of a nurturing and caring teacher education program that welcomed the opportunity to turn their dreams into goals. Well aware of the obstacles, faculty members believed self-regulated aspiring teachers could do well in the program in spite of past academic challenges. A well-documented component of the success of the four students presented in this case study is the emphasis the teacher preparation program places on enhancing their self-regulatory skills along with the development of self-efficacy and sense of agency. The researchers employed the case study method to use real time evidence of the teacher candidate's initial steps, trajectories, processes, academic progress, and professional outcomes to provide a holistic and interesting description of four success stories.

Keyword Self-regulation • Teachers • Motivation • Self-efficacy • Delay of gratification • Core values

September of 2007 brought four young students with the aspirations, desires, and dreams to enter a teacher education program at an urban college in the northeastern part of the United States. Without fully comprehending the implications of their

actions, these students entered the arena of teacher education certification for which they were underprepared. The urban institution the students attended provides opportunities for students who desire to become teachers to qualify for the program in spite of prior academic challenges in their middle and high schools. These students' challenges included prior low academic performance and being educated in underperforming schools, some in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Similar to some other students qualifying to enter the program, they came from underrepresented cultural groups and had experienced personal challenges, which included growing up without both or one of their parents, ethnic discrimination, language barriers, and academic under preparation. As individuals aspiring to become teachers, they found a college that nurtured, scaffolded, and mentored them to take control of their academic and personal futures as well as their professional ambitions. They also came under the supervision of caring educators who introduced them to the teaching profession and helped them attain their goals by working through the processes of self-regulation of learning. These educators were a part of a social environment that encouraged each individual student to grow academically, dispositionally, and socially to reach their highest potential. The developmental process of self-regulation was not an easy task; basic academic skills needed to be acquired, self-confidence needed to be nurtured, ways to seek help needed to be modeled, willingness to delay gratification needed to be enhanced, and the skills of social and environmental control needed to be sculpted. Nevertheless, in the case of these four, and many other students qualifying to be enrolled in the teacher education program, passion for learning was a strong motivator, and their dreams were shaped into goal-oriented behaviors as they moved through the teacher preparation program.

The purpose of this book is to share the initial steps, trajectories, processes, academic progress, and professional outcomes of four teacher candidates who were followed during a span of 4 years.

The private institution in which these four teacher candidates were enrolled has core values aligned with high academic and performance standards and provides support for students who aspire to become teachers. Founded on spiritual and humanistic values, the institution has educators who promote student-centered education in a stimulating learning environment that fosters student engagement and critical thinking. The educators focus on development of personal and professional identity and development through cooperative learning, ample opportunities to succeed, transformation of limitations into strengths, and active learning. They endorse the importance of help seeking as an educational skill that promotes self-regulation rather than a sense of inferiority.

A well-documented component in the success of these four students has been the effort placed on enhancing their self-regulatory skills along with the

development of beliefs and sense of agency. Their teacher training was heavily based on social cognitive theory in which the environment, the individuals, and contextual factors interact to influence personal agency and academic outcomes. Within the context of social cognitive theory, self-regulation of learning was a key factor in their successes as both teacher candidates and college graduates. Self-regulation, as a multidimensional process, enhances learners' ability to proactively generate, monitor, and reflect on their learning process. A self-regulation approach takes into consideration learners' thoughts, beliefs, actions, feelings, and emotions while pursuing academic goals. The objective of self-regulation of learning is to empower learners to be self-directed, proactive, and competent learners who identify goals, select strategies to pursue and monitor those goals, and evaluate whether outcomes are consistent with expectations and standards. As self-regulated learners, students use strategies to overcome obstacles and sustain persistence and delay gratification when alternative choices compete for attention (Bandura and Mischel 1965; Bembenuity 2007). These four students were coached, mentored, scaffolded, and nurtured by self-regulated educators who consistently and across time modeled skills such as goal setting, self-monitoring, help seeking, and self-evaluation.

The purpose of this book is to share the initial steps, trajectories, processes, academic progress, and professional outcomes of four teacher candidates who were followed during a span of 4 years. Our systematic approach examines their transition from novices struggling to prepare for professional licensing into self-confident and proactive, self-regulated learners. Specifically, we first describe the construct of self-regulation of learning within the social cognitive theory. We then describe the educational setting where these students were enrolled, followed by the description of the individual students. We also describe our methodology for data collection which included school observations and classroom experiences, interviews and surveys, and testimonies from educators and students' post-graduation enterprises, and our outcomes. We conclude with general lessons learned from this case study that could benefit educators and students who are currently facing the challenges of becoming fully certified teachers.

1.1 A General Perspective of the Case Study

The disparity in achievement experienced by students in high needs urban areas when compared with students who have greater economic resources has become a focus in the field of education (Foote 2005). The definition of urban or inner-city is evolving, and it is becoming increasingly more difficult to make distinctions between urban and suburban based on ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity of populations living in these areas. However, it is agreed that urban schools and teachers have specific characteristics that present unique challenges to educational achievement (Foote 2005). Public schools located in high poverty areas are often

lacking in basic instructional resources including technology, textbooks, and qualified teachers. Urban teachers describe their classrooms as overcrowded and struggle with meeting the increased standards with a decline in materials and resources (Maxson et al. 2000). Overcrowding impacts classroom management and the amount of shared space makes it difficult to create a stable learning environment.

As the minority populations in urban centers continue to grow, so does the need for teachers who are bilingual and sensitive to cultural diversity. The demand for highly qualified teachers reflects a nationwide trend: student enrollments are increasing while the supply of highly qualified teachers is declining. There is an acute need for minority teachers in the inner city schools of America. Urban districts lose nearly one half of their newly hired teachers within the first 5 years (Darling-Hammond 2000). The student population is increasingly diverse (Gerdeman 2001) and the public school teacher hiring pool remains predominantly White non-Hispanic (84 %). Research provides evidence of a significantly higher dropout of students of color who enter the teacher education pipeline than their White counterparts. Often, students of color who enter college with the desire to become teachers do not remain in the program, and many do not graduate from college (Vegas et al. 2001; Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2010). Often, these students enter college without having mastered the basic academic skills, which are required to pass the first state certification exam (Mitchell et al. 2001).

1.2 Procedure in This Case Study

The design and data collection for this case study followed Yin's (2009) three general tactics reporting case studies:

- *Defining a case study*: After considering multiple ways of representing our research, the case study design was selected. We consistently collected data that supported the design, instrumentation, and expected findings of the work we started out to publish. Publications were selected from the peer reviewed research on social cognitive theory and self-regulated learning theory related to learning and achievement among students in general and teacher candidates in particular. We included scholarly work from specific researchers and educators who have conducted studies on self-regulation among teacher candidates (e.g., Myron Dembo, Nancy Perry, Judy Randi) for the literature review. The method section was drafted with a description of instruments and procedures. Several possible ways to analyze descriptive and quantitative data in the case studies were considered before we proceeded. Given that we are quantitative researchers, we were aware that descriptive data would be an adaptation from our traditional way of reporting findings.
- *Case identities: Real or anonymous*: Deciding whether or not to identify the participants by name was challenging. As Yin (2009) advises, disclosure of the identity of the participants is the most desirable option. However, there are advantages and disadvantages for disclosing the participants' identities; therefore, we opted to