



FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

Self-regulated learning in the home context: Exploring the contribution of parental involvement for students' learning in middle school

Public defense to obtain the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
of

Valérie Thomas

which will take place on

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Brussels Humanities, Sciences & Engineering Campus (Etterbeek)

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Summary

This dissertation stems from one of the biggest challenges of our current educational system: students dropping out of school early. The central aim of this dissertation is to gain a deeper insight into the aspects of self-regulated learning in the home environment and parental educational involvement in middle school in the context of preventing low achievement, a low degree of wellbeing and ultimately drop-out. Considering the ubiquitous presence of parents in students' lives and in education, parents are an important component and research subject of this dissertation. Parental involvement is particularly important for students' wellbeing and their achievement at school. The dissertation looks further into indirect mechanisms that relate to parents and impact students' achievement and discloses that students' perceptions of their parents' involvement foster their self-regulated learning (SRL), and in turn SRL shape students' achievement. Parents are also found to stimulate the behavioural, motivational, and metacognitive components of SRL by for example structuring the learning environment and stimulate student's effort. The dissertation illustrates that parental involvement in middle school can be key in enhancing students' wellbeing at school, their achievement, and their use of SRL strategies. The recommendations of this PhD dissertation therefore entail the need for a larger awareness of the importance of parents in early secondary education and a bigger recognition of students' affective aspects for learning.

Curriculum Vitae

Valérie Thomas was born in Ghent on 15 August 1990. She obtained the degree of Master of Science in the Educational Sciences in 2013 at Ghent University. Afterwards, she completed the teacher training at Ghent University and graduated in 2014. Valérie started her PhD research at the VUB in September 2014 as member of the inter-university (IWT-SBO) project "Teaching in the bed of Procrustes" that focused on finding strategies to close the gender-related performance gap in secondary education with the ultimate aim to prevent underperformance with both boys and girls. Specifically, the research of Valérie targeted parental involvement in secondary education and self-regulated learning. During the past four years, Valérie has presented her research results at various international and national conferences, has contributed to several books and articles in newspapers and magazines and has published articles of her PhD dissertation in international peer-reviewed scientific journals.