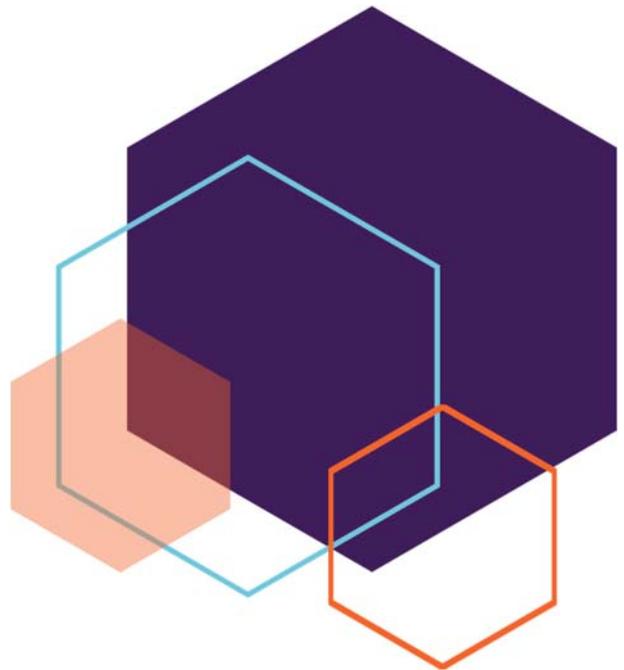


# Foolproof Formulas for Aspiring Researchers Pursuing the Field of Self-Regulation of Learning: An Interview with Dr. Anastasia Kitsantas

By  
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You have been an active member in the Studying and Self-Regulated Learning SIG for many years and have served as the Senior Chair from 2002-2003. Which moment during your time as chair would you consider the highlight of your service?

It was a big honor and privilege to be elected as the Junior and Senior Chair of the Studying and Self-Regulated Learning SIG. Serving on SIG committees is important because without volunteers who serve the profession, we would not be able to disseminate information and contribute to our society. Getting to know the wonderful colleagues in our SIG and working with them to understand the issues and grow membership were some of the highlights of my service. It was a great experience and avenue to network with other researchers in the field, and seek answers, recourses, and support.

**Your research has focused on self-regulation and motivation, and its relationship with**

academic achievement and performance. What inspired you to pursue this field of research, and why do you think these topics are of great importance to both teachers and learners?

I have always been interested in improving teaching and learning across a variety of domains. However, Dr. Zimmerman's seminal article "*A Social Cognitive View of Self-Regulated Academic Learning*" published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* in 1989 was an inspiration for me to conduct research on self-regulated learning and achievement. In this article, Dr. Zimmerman emphasizes the importance of specific processes (such as goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation) and the role of student behaviors and motivational beliefs in the pursuit of attaining personal goals.



Dr. Anastasia Kitsantas

Dr. Anastasia Kitsantas is a former senior chair of the Studying and Self-Regulated Learning SIG and has contributed greatly to our SIG's mission. She is also a professor of Educational Psychology in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Her research focuses on the influences of self-regulated learning processes on learning and performance across diverse areas of functioning.

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These topics are important for educators and learners to understand because self-regulation is more than beliefs about personal will power. It involves specific teachable self-regulatory processes such as selecting a strategy, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating its effectiveness, and seeking help. The pedagogical implications of these self-regulatory processes have been well documented by researchers in improving students' academic functioning. Thus, it is vital for educators to design instruction that fosters the development of these skills.

**From your research, what is the most important message about self-regulation you want students and educators to know and utilize in their classrooms?**

The most important message about self-regulation for students and educators is the importance of focusing on strategic process oriented goals. That is, goals that emphasize processes rather than outcomes. Specifically, it is very important for students to learn how to adapt strategic process goals (a focus on the strategy) in the initial stages of learning, self-monitor these goals, and self-evaluate during the learning process. Research evidence across domains shows that students who focus on process

oriented goals tend to set more challenging learning goals for themselves once they achieve earlier goals, show more interest in the task, and display effort, persistence, and enthusiasm during learning. In contrast, students who focus prematurely on outcomes fail to succeed, and then following repetitive failures they give up all together. Learners should shift their attention to outcomes once they have demonstrated automaticity of required skills.

**You were a student of Dr. Barry J. Zimmerman and a long-time collaborator with him. What was your experience like learning from and working with such a seminal figure in the field of self-regulation research? What impact did this experience have on your development as a scholar?**

I had the remarkable good fortune to be one of Dr. Zimmerman's students and collaborate with him for more than 20 years. Learning from and working with Dr. Zimmerman has been an amazing and rewarding experience. First, his vast knowledge of the field, intellectual curiosity, professionalism, amazing teaching grounded in modeling, guided practice and collaboration, integrity and support, and enthusiasm were incredibly motivating. Second, his compassionate, loving,



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nurturing, and kind personality, and the energy he put into his students was boundless and continues to be a remarkable source of inspiration for me. In regards to the second question, the passion for discovering new knowledge through creative research methodologies and carefully designed experiments and for sharing what is learned have certainly impacted me at a very deep level. As I mentor graduate students, I try to emulate his teaching/mentorship practices. He has been a fantastic catalyst for me and I am very grateful for his mentorship and the time we worked together. It is an honor and a privilege to learn from and work with Dr. Zimmerman!

**Finally, what piece of advice would you offer to aspiring researchers and scholars pursuing the fields of studying and self-regulation?**

First, I would advise aspiring researchers to find mentors throughout their careers to shadow them and ask to review their

manuscripts and provide feedback. Learning to conduct research through modeling and social guidance, and forming collaborations with other experienced researchers in the field leads to outcomes that are more meaningful. Second, aspiring researchers should try to make an effort to continue collaborating with and educating practitioners about the value and importance of reading research journals and using research findings to improve teaching and learning in schools and other settings. It is through research that we can improve instructional practices in educational settings and indirectly develop competent, independent, self-regulated students. Finally, I encourage them to join and volunteer to serve on SSRL SIG committees. It is a great way to connect with other colleagues in the field and promote self-regulation across different domains. These are the foolproof formulas for aspiring researchers and scholars pursuing the fields of studying and self-regulation.

Mr. Kyle Du is a co-historian for the Studying and Self-Regulated Learning SIG and is a doctoral student in the Educational Psychology program at the CUNY Graduate Center. His research interests lie in the use of innovative statistical strategies to report and summarize data.



Mr. Kyle Du