



# FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

## **Navigating an Extended Classroom: Self-regulated Learning of University Students in Open Online Courses**

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

**Ms. Shihua Li**

which will take place on

**21/05/2019, 16:00**

**(K.2.Auditorium.1.P.Janssens)**

**Brussels Humanities, Sciences & Engineering Campus (Etterbeek)**

How to reach the VUB: <http://www.vub.ac.be/campus/brussels-humanities-sciences-engineering-campus>  
Pleinlaan 2 – 1050 Brussel

Please confirm your attendance before : 16/05/2019 via [shihua.li@vub.be](mailto:shihua.li@vub.be)

### **Jury:**

INTERNAL:

Prof. dr. Katrien Struyven, (Chair)  
VUB, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Prof. dr. Fred Mednick  
VUB, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Prof. dr. Koen Depryck  
VUB, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

EXTERNAL:

Prof. dr. Katie Goeman  
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Faculty of Economics and  
Business and Faculty of Psychology and Educational  
Sciences

Prof. dr. Johan van Braak  
Universiteit Gent, Department of Educational Studies

### **Promotors:**

Prof. dr. Koen Lombaerts  
VUB, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Prof. dr. Chang Zhu  
VUB, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences



# FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

## Summary

A recent trend in education is the proliferation of online courses that can be openly accessed. Open online courses provide students with more flexible learning pathways as well as enhanced learning experiences. Our digital native students may be able to access these online courses, but it does not mean that they can effectively learning from them. Open online courses are designed to be stand-alone online courses with limited support from the course instructor and few opportunities for peer interaction. As such, students need to harness their self-regulated learning (SRL) skills to participate and thrive in such highly authomous learning environments.

The central aim of the dissertation is to gain insight into the ways to support students to effectively self-regulate their learning to achieve academic success in open online course environments. Four studies utilized data gathered from different open online courses in Belgium and China. These studies explored the relationship between aspects of SRL and course learning outcomes as well as how factors in the learning context affected students' SRL.

The dissertation demonstrates that SRL is important to student academic success in open online course environments, and time management and an adaptive motivational profile can be key in promoting student success. The main recommendations of this PhD research are that open online courses should be carefully chosen, structured and implemented to foster adaptive motivation among students and efforts can be made to train students in specific SRL strategies.

## Curriculum Vitae

Shihua Li obtained the degree of Master of Educational Sciences in 2004 at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL). Prior to her PhD research at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Shihua had been working at Xidian University, Shaanxi, China.

Shihua started as a PhD student at VUB in September 2013. Her research focuses on self-regulated learning in open online course environments in higher education. During the past years, Shihua has presented her research results at various international conferences and has contributed to articles in online magazine.