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Self-regulation, motivation, and math achievement in middle school: Variations across grade level and math context $\hat{\sim}\dagger$

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Abstract

The current study examined grade level, achievement group, and math-course-type differences in student self-regulation and motivation in a sample of 880 suburban middle-school students. Analysis of variance was utilized to assess group differences in student self-regulation and motivation, and linear regression analysis was used to identify variables that best predicted students' use of regulatory strategies. A key finding was that although seventh graders exhibited a more maladaptive self-regulation and motivation profile than sixth graders, achievement groups in seventh grade (high, moderate, low) were more clearly differentiated across both self-regulation and motivation than achievement groups in sixth grade. The pattern of achievement group differences also varied across math course type, as self-regulation and motivation processes more consistently differentiated achievement groups in advanced classes than

regular math courses. Finally, task interest was shown to be the primary motivational predictor of students' use of regulatory strategies during math learning. The study highlights the importance of identifying shifting student motivation and self-regulation during the early middle school years and the potential role that context may have on these processes.



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Keywords

Self-regulation strategies; Motivation; Learning context; Math achievement; Middle school

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