Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

SARAH DAVIS

MA (University of Iowa, 2008)
BA (University of Iowa, 2002)

“Optimizing Mental Health for Student Success at University: A Case for Self-Regulated Learning”

Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

Friday, December 18, 2020
1:30 pm (PST)
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Allyson Hadwin, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Todd Milford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Non-Unit Member)
Dr. Catherine Costigan, Department of Psychology, UVic (Non-Unit Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Andrew Szeto, Department of Psychology, University of Calgary

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Kim Juniper, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Mental health is one of the biggest issues facing governments around the globe (Keyes, 2013). Mental health is a state of well-being wherein individuals realize their potential, cope with normal life stressors, work productively, and contribute to society (World Health Organization, 2014). Findings from the American College Health Assessment survey reveal the vast majority of postsecondary students in Canada and the United States report (a) feeling inundated and exhausted by their academic work, and (b) experiencing levels of stress and anxiety compromising physical and mental health, academic learning, and personal success (ACHA, 2016, 2018). Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a key component of student success at university, however despite the large body of research establishing the role of SRL in student success at university, there is a paucity of research on mental health and SRL at university. To date mental health and SRL have been underexamined as dynamic processes that develop over time as highly situated, metacognitive processes. The purpose of this multi-paper dissertation was twofold: (a) to examine the interplay between self-regulated learning and mental health in student success at university, and (b) to explore a variety of methods and analyses examining this interplay. Davis and Hadwin (2019) examined psychological well-being (PWB) and SRL and how they differ between groups of students with different levels of within-person PWB during an academic semester of a learning-to-learn course. Davis, Milford, and MacDonald (2019) used multi-level modelling to further examine the association between students’ PWB and academic engagement, goal attainment, goal satisfaction, and rating of mental health and well-being challenge. Finally, Davis, Rostampour, Hadwin, and Rush (2020) built on the findings of Papers 1 and 2 by using a case study approach to examine mental health and adaptive regulation exhibited by two contrasting groups of students (i.e., the high mental health group and the low mental health group) in a university learning-to-learn course. There were five main findings from the studies in this dissertation. First, there is a positive relation between PWB and SRL. Second, mental health is a condition and product affecting learning. Third, students’ mental health affects metacognitive standards and is a target of learning goals. Fourth, students’ mental health affects their engagement in adaptive regulation of learning. Fifth, including mental health in online SRL diary tools may benefit all students. Finally, the main findings from this dissertation provide two directions for future research: (a) considering the interplay of mental health SRL as a heuristic process fueled by metacognition where students take an active role, experiment, and consider feedback in their learning, and (b) situating mental health within metacognitive SRL interventions.