

## THE SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

The psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy can be explained as follows:



**Need for competence:**  
the desire to feel competent, the desire to understand 'how to do' and have control over desired outcomes.



**Need for relatedness:**  
the desire to feel socially connected to others and experience warm and genuine social relationships.



**Need for autonomy:**  
the desire to feel one has control to choose tasks and activities that align with one's interests and preferences.

"We believe that all students want to and can learn. When students are motivated, they learn better, put more effort into learning, and are more willing to take on new challenges."

Motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic in nature. Students are extrinsically motivated when they engage in an activity as a means towards an end, such as for rewards, or to avoid guilt/punishment. Intrinsic motivation is demonstrated by students who engage in a task because they find it interesting, enjoyable and satisfying. Students show extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, depending on contexts, the nature of the tasks and their own personal needs and preferences. Excessive tangible rewards, however, can negatively interfere with intrinsic

motivation for learning. Research has shown that motivation could decrease when the reward for learning is subsequently discontinued.

A lack of motivation impedes learning and manifests itself in the form of disruptive behaviours in class, procrastination or indifference. These are counterproductive to learning. Unmotivated students will find the schooling experience disenchanted, learning a struggle and as a result will not realise their full potential.

