

Provide Rationale to Uninteresting Lessons



Students would be motivated to learn if the lessons were interesting. However, not every topic to be learned is interesting. Most educators would resort to [controlling](#) forms of [extrinsic motivation](#) which stifles learning. So how can students be motivated when it comes to uninteresting tasks or lessons?

According to Jang (2008), students who received rationale had more [autonomous](#) motivation to engage constructively in and learn from uninteresting lessons compared to those who did not receive any rationale. Those who received rationale exhibited more interest-enhancing strategies, conceptual learning, behavioural engagement, and [identified regulation](#), as the lessons were more important to them personally.

Hence, educators should aim to provide rationales that make the lesson personally important to students. Rationales should also be framed in an [autonomy-supportive](#) way (Reeve, Jang, Hardre, & Omura, 2002) for it to be effective.

Practical examples:

- ✚ Explain importance of what is being taught to their future education or career.
- ✚ Provide examples that relates to what interests the students or things that they value presently.
- ✚ Get students to set their own goals and explain how the lesson links to their goals.
- ✚ Ask students to provide the rationale for the lesson themselves.



Key Definitions:

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Autonomous motivation	Reflected in feelings of choice, leads to more exploratory and flexible modes of behaviour because the experience of choice allows the child the freedom to adopt a more open and flexible stance.
Autonomy-supportive	Environments that minimize the salience of external incentives and threats, avoid controlling language, and acknowledge the learners' frame of reference (Black & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989).
Controlling	Events that pressure people toward specified outcomes, thereby denying them the experience of choice (Deci & Ryan, 1980).
Extrinsic motivation	Refers to partaking in an activity to attain an outcome separate from the activity itself. Extrinsic motivation can be further divided, in a descending order of self-determination, into <i>integrated</i> (pursuing an activity because it is congruent with other aspects of the self), <i>identified</i> (undertaking an activity because one accepts the value of the activity), <i>introjected</i> (partaking in an activity because of internal pressures such as guilt or shame), and <i>external</i> (doing an activity because of external pressures or incentives) <i>regulations</i> (Ryan & Deci, 2002).
Identified regulation	Involves identifying with the personal value of an activity so that the person can regulate the behaviour more willingly or volitionally (e.g. planning to attend college because of its personal relevance) (Niemi et al., 2006).

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