**Identifying and using student learning motivations as a tool for course delivery management**

**Introduction**

Motivation is seen as a crucial element in the success of any learning activity (Cole, Feild & Harris 2004; Cheon ,Reeve, Lee & Lee 2018; Pan,Wang & Luo 2018). The field of learning motivation has attracted a great deal of interest, and a number of instruments have been developed to measure student motivation, drawing on different models of motivation. A number of studies draw on the Deci and Ryan (1985a) self-determination theory that identifies amotivation, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation categories. Research has shown that student motivations differ from one discipline to another (Breen & Lindsay 2002), and that affective and intrinsic motivations were the most important elements.

It is important for the educator to understand why students have enrolled in their particular class, so that they can identify the best ways to engage their students in the most appropriate way to meet course and learning objectives. Identifying these student motivations at the level of a particular class is a challenge. Although a number of learning motivation measures have been developed, these require large numbers of respondents (i.e. large classes) for validity, and it may not be possible to process the results within the timeframe that the course is delivered (especially for intensive-delivery courses). In addition, these instruments measure pre-determined aspects of motivation that may or may not be appropriate or relevant for a particular class or group of students.

This session describes an exploratory grounded qualitative approach that implements the concept mapping research method to explore the enrolment motivations of undergraduate students in a number of classes. This approach allows the educator to identify the reasons why that specific group of students enrolled in the course. Overall, it was found that extrinsic and utilitarian motivations were the most frequently mentioned.

This exercise was presented in the context of undergraduate business education, but the approach is applicable and useful in any teaching environment, including professional development workshops.

**Theoretical foundation/Teaching Implications**:

Motivation in a learning environment can be described as the “energy and drive to learn, work hard, and achieve” (Martin 2001, p. 1). Individuals vary in their level of motivation, as well as in the orientation of that motivation. The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci 2000) distinguishes between intrinsic motivation (wishing to do something because it is inherently enjoyable or interesting) and extrinsic motivation (wishing to do something because it leads to a particular externally-defined outcome that has instrumental value), and amotivation (absence of motivation). In education, intrinsic motivation has been regarded as particularly desirable, and the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci & Ryan 1985b) was developed to specify social and environmental factors that either facilitate or undermine intrinsic motivation. In particular, activities such as well-designed challenges, feedback, and positive evaluations are found to facilitate intrinsic motivation, and that these need to be associated with a feeling of competence, and a sense of autonomy on the part of the learner. Extrinsically motivated behaviors can be considered to vary in the degree to which they can be controlled or influenced by the individual, and can be regarded as providing a continuum between completely externally determined, through to internalized acceptance of external requirements (Ryan & Deci 2000).

This field of study has attracted a great deal of interest, and a number of instruments have been developed to measure student motivation. For example, the Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al. 1992) is a seven-factor measure that builds on the Deci and Ryan (1985a) self-determination theory, and participants were students entering college. These factors included amotivation, extrinsic motivation (external regulation consisting of rewards or punishments, introjected regulation relying on approval from self or others, and identified regulation with internalized goals), and intrinsic motivation (knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation). Martin (2001, 2003) drew on a range of theories to develop and validate for secondary school students a 9-factor motivation scale consisting of factors encouraging motivation (self-belief, the learning focus, the perceived value of education, persistence, planning and monitoring, and the management of study) and factors discouraging motivation (self-handicapping, avoidance of failure, uncertain control over activities, and anxiety).

The study of learning motivations has attracted a great deal of interest on account of the recognized importance of motivations as a crucial element in the success of any learning activity (Cole, Feild & Harris 2004). There has, however, been limited investigation of student learning motivations at the individual classroom level, especially with relatively small numbers of students (such as fewer than 100).

**Learning Objectives**

By attending the session, participants will be introduced to a method that can be used to identify and use the learning motivations of students in their class in order to improve student engagement with course delivery.

**Exercise overview**

This session will be carried out as a simulation of the experience that classroom students have in the first class of course delivery.

Participants will be asked to reflect on the reasons why they decided to attend this particular workshop and to write on a blank sheet of paper one or two reasons why they decided to attend the workshop. (This is a data collection exercise using a “minute paper” method (Stead 2005).

Participants are formed into teams of 5, and a randomising process is used so that each team analyses the data on five anonymized debts of data, and then reports this to the whole group.

The presenter summarises the results of the exercise (this gives quick quantitative feedback on the results), and then presents typical results from classroom exercises, and describes how the results are used.

**Session Description**

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| Timeline | Activity |
| 5 | Overview of the project and the literature |
| 15 | Participants formed into teams and carry out a first team-building exercise (choose a team name) |
| 20 | Participants carry out the classroom exercise to identify the reasons why they enrolled for this particular workshop session. |
| 25 | Participant responses are anonymized, and participants analyze these results in their teams |
| 30 | Representatives of each team report the results of their analysis to the whole session, and the presenter captures the key points using a flipchart or a whiteboard. |
| 35 | The presenter summarizes the results from the workshop session, and relates these to the literature. |
| 40 | The presenter shows results taken from typical classes and describes how the data is processed and presented. |
| 45 | The presenter explains how the results are used in a typical class to improve course delivery |
| 50 | The presenter summarizes the session and its outcomes, and invites questions |

**References**

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