

Enhancing student motivation with flexible assessments

An explorative study on student motivation for flexible assessments

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From standardised assessments to flexible assessments

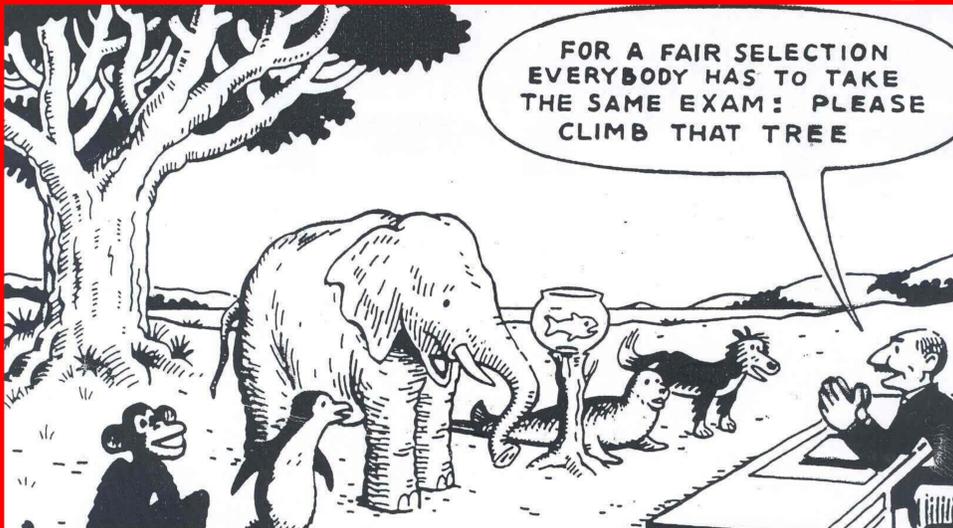


Figure 1: Standardised assessment. Based on cartoon of Hans Traxler, 1975



Figure 2: Flexible assessment. Slane Cartoons Limited, year unknown.

1. Introduction

Motivation is key to learning^{1, 2}. An assessment is an example of a controlled form of motivation which has few or none autonomy-supporting characteristics (figure 1). Flexible assessments (figure 2) may increase student motivation by supporting student autonomy. When student motivation is supported, learning will be more easy, more fun and study success will improve^{3, 4}. This study builds on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT)⁵ and on the motivation continuum (figure 3).

2. Research questions:

- What choices in assessment characteristics do VET students want to be offered in order to enhance their perceived autonomy?
- How can choice within assessments be offered according to VET students and how does the choice affect their motivation for assessments?

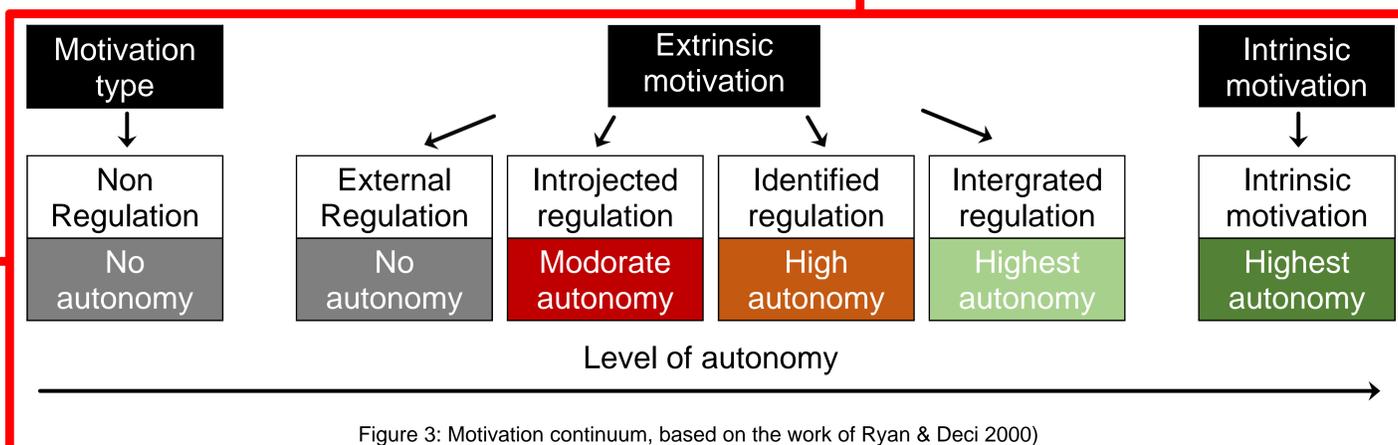


Figure 3: Motivation continuum, based on the work of Ryan & Deci 2000)

3. Methods

This research consisted of two sequential methods:

- Cross-sectional survey study (N=157); to gain insight on which assessment characteristics students would prefer to be able to choose on. The goal of this part is to form a ranking (figure 4) on which assessment characteristics students preferred to have choice on.
- Focus groups (N=11); to gain information on how the flexible assessment could be redesigned according to the interviewed students and how the flexible assessment may affect their motivation.

4. Main results and conclusion

Survey

Rank	Assessment characteristic:
1	Assessment moment
2	Number of attempts
3	Assessment form
4	How the result counts
5	Level of difficulty
6	Assessment location
7	Collaboration
8	Assessing manner
9	Assessment version
10	Assessor

Figure 4: Ranking of assessment characteristics in which students wants to have choice on

Focus groups

Tips for designing flexible assessments:

- Assessment choice options should be comparable.
- Extension of choice options as the education program progresses.
- Decreasing the supervision of students during progression of the course.

Citations

“less stress, more responsibility”
 “Own choice in planning”
 “Being able to make a choice improves my motivation”

Main conclusion

Flexible assessments in order to support students' intrinsic motivation is quite unanimously perceived as positive by the respondents.



Comment box

What's next?



References

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