



EduTrend Contents

EDUTECH · GAMIFICATION CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Motivation Detectives

Use autonomy, competence and relatedness to analyse gamified designs

Ages 11–14

Level: Intermediate

60 minutes

Groups of 3 · up to 30

Activity 03

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 03 · AT A GLANCE

Motivation Detectives

Students learn the three needs described in self-determination theory: autonomy (some choice), competence (feeling able to succeed) and relatedness (connection to others). In groups they analyse three gamified designs, such as a language app streak, a class points chart and a reading challenge, score each need and redesign one to support all three.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain autonomy, competence and relatedness;
- analyse gamified designs;
- identify risks to motivation;
- redesign for all three needs.

KEY WORDS

motivation · autonomy ·
competence · relatedness ·
intrinsic · extrinsic

CURRICULUM LINKS

Psychology: motivation. PSHE:
wellbeing. Design: user experience.

1**GOAL**

What is the
learning goal?

2**CHALLENGE**

What is the task?

3**FEEDBACK**

How do players
know?

4**PROGRESS**

How is growth
shown?

5**RETRY**

Can they try again?

6**REFLECT**

Did it help
learning?

Materials (per group)

- Design case cards
- Scoring sheet
- Poster paper
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Prepare three design case cards.
- Print scoring sheets.
- Plan groups.
- Print worksheets.

SAFETY

No specific hazards. Discuss app use without
sharing personal accounts.

ACTIVITY 03 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Rewards that feel controlling can undermine motivation; look for choice and meaningful feedback.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Learn	Three needs.	<i>"When do you feel motivated?"</i>
10–30 min Analyse	Score three designs.	<i>"Which need is missing?"</i>
30–45 min Redesign	Improve one design.	<i>"How does it give choice?"</i>
45–55 min Share	Present redesigns.	<i>"What changed?"</i>
55–60 min Reflect	Own experiences.	<i>"What motivates you?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Score three gamified designs against autonomy, competence and relatedness, and redesign one to support all three needs.

ACTIVITY 03 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The gamification know-how in brief

Self-determination theory, developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, suggests people are more motivated when they feel some autonomy, a sense of competence and connection to others.

Gamified designs that support these needs, through choice, visible progress and teamwork, are more likely to sustain motivation than rewards that feel controlling.

Common ideas to listen for

- “More rewards mean more motivation.” They can feel controlling.
- “Competition motivates everyone.” It can discourage some.
- “Choice makes things harder.” It supports autonomy.

Adapting the activity

Support

Provide sentence starters for each need.

Stretch

Survey classmates about a gamified app they use.

WORKSHEET 1

Design scores

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Score 1–5 for each need.

Design scores

Design	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
1			
2			
3			

WORKSHEET 2

Redesign

Improve one design.

Redesign

Need	Change
Autonomy	
Competence	
Relatedness	

WORKSHEET 3

Reflection

Your experience.

A time a game element motivated or demotivated me

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Explains needs	Analyses designs	Redesigns well

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Motivation Detectives is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents Edutech Gamification Concepts and Principles programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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