



# Motives and Goals

## Instructor Manual

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This module, *Motives and Goals*, focuses on the main theories and findings on goals and motivation. The authors address the types of goals and the various factors that influence motivation in goal pursuit. They also address goal conflict and the exercise of self-control in protecting long-term goals from momentary temptations.

## Learning Objectives

- Relevant APA Learning Objectives (Version 2.0)
  - Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology (1.1)
  - Develop a working knowledge of psychology's content domains (1.2)
  - Describe applications of psychology (1.3)
  - Engage in innovative and integrative thinking and problem solving (2.3)
  - Apply psychological content and skills to career goals (5.1)
  - Exhibit self-efficacy and self-regulation (5.2)
  - Refine project-management skills (5.3)
  - Develop meaningful professional direction for life after graduation (5.5)
- Content Specific Learning Objectives: Motives and Goals
  - Define the basic terminology related to goals, motivation, self-regulation, and self-

control.

- Describe the antecedent and consequences of goal activation.
- Describe the factors that influence motivation in the course of goal pursuit.
- Explain the processes underlying goal activation, self-regulation, and self-control.
- Give examples of goal activation effects, self-regulation processes, and self-control processes.

## Abstract

This module provides an overview of the main theories and findings on goals and motivation. We address the origins, manifestations, and types of goals, and the various factors that influence motivation in goal pursuit. We further address goal conflict and, specifically, the exercise of self-control in protecting long-term goals from momentary temptations.

## Class Design Recommendations

This module should be taught in less than a single class period (especially if you are on a time crunch), with the unit as a whole take 1-2 class periods. Please also refer to the Noba PowerPoint slides that compliment this outline.

1st class period (50 min – 75 min):

- Overview
  - Defining goals and motivation
- The Origins and Manifestation of Goals
  - Goal adoption, consequences of goal activation
- Self-Regulation in Goal Pursuit
  - Goal deliberation and implementation, ought and ideal goals
  - Cybernetic Process of Self-Regulation and balancing goals

- Self-Control
  - Innate ability and limited resource
  - Identification of temptations and counteracting temptations

## Module Outline

### Introduction

- This module reviews key aspects of goals and motivation. The authors first discuss the origins and manifestation of goals and then review factors that influence individuals' motivation in the course of pursuing a goal such as studying an 800-page book for an exam (self-regulation). Finally, they discuss what motivates individuals to keep following their goals when faced with other conflicting desires (self-control).

### The Origins and Manifestation of Goals

- Goal Adoption
  - Commitment stems from a sense that your goal is both valuable and attainable, such that you adopt goals that are highly likely to bring positive outcomes. This process of committing to a goal can occur without much conscious deliberation.
- Consequences of Goal Activation
  - The activation of a goal and accompanying increase in motivation can influence many aspects of behavior and judgment, including how people perceive, evaluate, and feel about the world around them (e.g., when pursuing a goal such as quenching one's thirst, people evaluate goal-relevant objects, like a glass, more positively than objects that are not relevant to the goal, like a pencil).

### Self-Regulation in Goal Pursuit

- Self-regulation refers to the processes through which individuals alter their perceptions, feelings, and actions in the course of pursuing a goal.
- From Deliberation to Implementation
  - Self-regulation involves two basic stages associated with two distinct mindsets: deciding which of many potential goals to pursue at a given point in time (deliberative phase) and planning specific actions related to the selected goal (implemental phase).
- Regulation of Ought- and Ideals-Goals
  - Research distinguishes between two self-regulatory orientations: prevention and promotion. A prevention focus emphasizes safety, responsibility, and security needs, and views goals as “oughts.” A promotion focus views goals as “ideals” and emphasizes hopes, accomplishments, and advancement needs. Emphasizing potential losses will motivate individuals with a prevention focus, whereas emphasizing potential gains will motivate individuals with a promotion focus.
- A Cybernetic Process of Self-Regulation
  - Self-regulation depends on feelings that arise from comparing actual progress to expected progress. In this cybernetic process of self-regulation, a smaller-than-discrepancy creates a signal in the form of positive feelings, which makes individuals reduce their efforts on the focal goal and focus on other goals.
- Highlighting One Goal or Balancing Between Goals
  - When people interpret their previous actions as a sign of commitment to a goal, they tend to highlight the pursuit of that goal by prioritizing it and putting more effort into it. However, when people interpret their previous actions as a sign of progress, they tend to balance between this goal and other goals and put less effort into the focal goal.

## Conflicting Goals and Self-Control

- Self-control is the capacity to control impulses, emotions, desires, and actions in order to resist a temptation and protect a valued goal. As such, self-control is self-regulation in contexts involving a clear trade-off between long-term interests and some form of immediate gratification.
- Self-Control as an Innate Ability

- There are enduring individual differences in self-control and this capacity to postpone immediate gratification for the sake of future interests leads to greater cognitive and social competence over the course of a lifetime.
- Self-Control as a Limited Resource
  - The ability to exercise self-control can fluctuate from one context to the next. In particular, previous exercise of self-control drains individuals of the limited physiological and psychological resources required to continue the pursuit of a goal (ego depletion)
- A Prerequisite to Self-Control: Identification
  - Identifying the self-control conflict inherent to a particular situation is an important—and often overlooked—prerequisite. Specifically, the successful pursuit of a goal in the face of temptation requires that an individual first identifies that she is having impulses that need to be controlled.
- Self-Control Processes: Counteracting Temptation
  - The protection of a goal involves several cognitive and behavioral strategies ultimately aimed at “counteracting” the pull of temptations and pushing oneself toward goal-related alternatives. One such cognitive process involves decreasing the value of temptations and increasing of the value of goal-consistent objects or actions. Other behavioral strategies include precommitment to pursue goals and forgo temptation, establishing rewards for goals but penalties for temptations, or physically approaching goals and distancing the self from temptations.

## Difficult Terms

Cybernetic Process of Self-Regulation

Deliberative phase

Ego Depletion

Extrinsic motivation

Goal

Implemental phase

**Intrinsic motivation****Prevention****Promotion****Self-control****Self-regulation****Lecture Frameworks****Overview**

Think about the goals of your course; at the end of the semester, what is it you hope to achieve? One goal often adopted for the course is to help students apply best practices from empirical evidence to their own lives. In this regard, the study of motivation is of great value. Talking about motivation and goal setting can be beneficial and interesting to students (who sometimes struggle to stay motivated in difficult or boring classes). Therefore, as you prepare this lecture, consider how each domain could apply to students. One way to make sure your students see the connection between the research and their lives is for you to use student-based examples for each of the concepts in the module (e.g., when talking about temptation, you could talk about common temptations students face, such as socializing instead of studying, or putting off writing a paper in order to play video games).

- Warm-Up/Introduction
  - With the above information in mind, you can start class by asking students to reflect on their own goals – what is important to them? What do they hope to achieve while in college? In the next 10 years? In their lifetime? Once you've given them the chance to think about their own goals, you can start defining and explaining goals and motivation (motivation should be somewhat of a review from the first module in this unit).
- Lecture – Refer to slides for the following:
  - To introduce the origins and manifestation of goals. Now that you've set the stage with your overview of goals and motivation, you can start talking about goal adoption, and consequences of goal activation. You can expect lots of engagement with students around these issues because they are so relevant to daily life.
- Lecture – Refer to slides for the following:

- To discuss self-regulation & self-control. These concepts are perfect for using the student goal example, as many students struggle with self-regulation and self-control when it comes to their study habits.
- Finally, you can conclude this module with a discussion on how to counteract temptation (e.g., avoiding temptation from the get-go, such as studying at the library instead of in a dorm room with the door open for visitors).

## Activities & Demonstrations

Activity: Personal Goal Audit

Time: Approximately 10 minutes

Materials: Pen and Paper

Instructions: This activity has two distinct parts-- a personal reflection and a small group discussion. To begin, encourage students to consider a personally relevant goal that they are currently working on. It may be a short-term or long-term goal but it must be something they have started making progress on but have not yet completed. Once they have identified the goal have them write it as a single sentence. Next, have them reflect and take notes on the following prompts (you can also create a 1-10 scale if you like):

- Why this goal? That is, where did this goal come from?
- How important is this goal to you?
- How hopeful are you that you will succeed in this goal?
- To what extent does this goal represent something desirable you want to achieve versus something undesirable you want to avoid?
- To what extent does this goal represent an internal desire versus meeting an external pressure or obligation?

With these new thoughts in mind, encourage the students to re-write the goal. Encourage them to modify the language. For example, their revised version may include language about the importance of the goal or of the likelihood of success. They may want to shift the orientation

from an avoidant to an approach goal. When they are finished, have them get into pairs or small groups to discuss how reflecting on the "architecture" of their goals changes their relationship to it. Specifically, they may want to consider any shifts in motivation, increased clarity in planning or resource allocation, or a better understanding of the origins of the goal.

## Additional Activities

Smith, J. (1987). The origami game. In V. Makosky, L. Whittemore, A. M. Rogers (Eds.), *Activities handbook for the teaching of psychology*, Vol. 2 (pp. 235-238). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

- This activity is designed to help students experience various emotional responses, identify techniques in the learning process, and become aware of individual motivational factors evident during the activity. This activity provides a framework on which you can build a variety of discussions. You must give thought to the specific concepts you wish to illuminate and shape the instructions accordingly (e.g., emphasizing competition or group processes). Although the author recommends the prior assignment of appropriate test chapters, the activity could be used as an introduction to the topic. Some preparation is necessary. The activity could be used with classes of any size, if the work space permits.

Smith, J. (1987). Vicarious motivation. In V. Makosky, L. Whittemore, A. M. Rogers (Eds.), *Activities handbook for the teaching of psychology*, Vol. 2 (pp. 239-240). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

- The purpose of the following activity is to help students understand the meaning of motivation as defined by Maslow, to consider the behaviors and consequences of behaviors arising from various motives, and to begin to recognize such processes in their own lives. This activity is very flexible, allowing variations in the specific motive(s) emphasized. As preparation, you must acquire the reading materials, videotape, and other items. No prior knowledge of psychology is necessary. The activity can be used with classes of any size.

## Evidence-Based Teaching



Barber, L.K., Bagsby, P.G., Grawitch, M.J., & Buerck, J.P. (2011). Facilitating self-regulated learning with technology: Evidence for student motivation and exam improvement.

*Teaching of Psychology*, 38(4), 303-308.

- This article examines how use of the My Grade feature in Blackboard affects student motivation. Student monitoring of their own grade increased motivation to study and pay attention in class. Not only does this demonstration the usefulness of providing students with an online grade monitoring system, but also provides an example to students that they can relate to.

Beehr, T.A., LeGro, K. Porter, K., Bowling, N.A., Swader, W.M. (2010). Required volunteers: Community volunteerism among students in college classes. *Teaching of Psychology*, 37(4), 276-280.

- This article examined how required versus nonrequired volunteerism is related to motivation and attitudes about volunteering. This article provides an excellent example of how motivation can be affected by the level of choice a student has.

Reiss, S. (2012). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *Teaching of Psychology*, 39(2), 152-156. doi:10.1177/0098628312437704

- Psychologists have posited two types of motivation theories. Dualistic theories divide motivation into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Multifaceted theories, in contrast, recognize a number of genetically distinct motives. Intrinsic-extrinsic dualism fails on at least three counts: construct validity, measurement reliability, and experimental control. Many researchers have thus moved beyond the study of intrinsic-extrinsic motivation and validated multifaceted theories. When teaching students about the multifaceted nature of motivation, teachers can take several steps to improve their students' understanding of this understudied area of psychology.

## **Suggestions from the Society for Teaching's Introductory Psychology Primer**

Bequette, A.W. (2013). Health, Emotion, & Motivation. In S.E. Afful, J. J. Good, J. Keeley, S. Leder,

& J. J. Stiegler-Balfour (Eds.). *Introductory Psychology teaching primer: A guide for new teachers of Psych 101*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology web site: <http://teachpsych.org/ebooks/intro2013/index.php>

### *POSSIBLE ASSESSMENTS (Out of Class)*

#### Emotion/Motivation

- Have students write a discussion paper describing how their emotions affect their drive. For example, students will likely to acknowledge that doing well in school results in positive emotions. This likely motivates them to study. Students can brainstorm other examples and describe how their emotions affect their motivation and drive.

### *ACTIVITIES & TECHNIQUES (In Class)*

#### Motivation

- Have a class discussion about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Ask students to discuss what motivates them to do well in school and how both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation applies. This is also an appropriate time to review operant conditioning and its relationship to motivation.

## **Links to ToPIX Materials**

### **Activities, demonstrations, handouts, etc.: Emotion**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980989/Emotion%20in%20the%20Classroom>

### **Activities, demonstrations, handouts, etc.: Motivation**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19981020/Motivation%20in%20the%20Classroom>

### **Current events/ news: Emotion**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/24993705/Emotion%20in%20the%20News>

### **Current events/ news: Motivation**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/24883789/Motivation%20in%20the%20News>

**Video/audio: Emotion**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980988/Emotion%20Video>

**Video/audio: Motivation-Emotion**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/39235435/Motivation-Emotion>

## **Teaching Topics**

Teaching The Most Important Course

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/1\\_Teaching\\_The\\_Most\\_Important\\_Course.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/1_Teaching_The_Most_Important_Course.pdf)

Content Coverage

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/2\\_Content\\_Coverage.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/2_Content_Coverage.pdf)

Motivating Students

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/3\\_Motivating\\_Students\\_Tips.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/3_Motivating_Students_Tips.pdf)

Engaging Large Classes

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/4\\_Engaging\\_Large\\_Classes.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/4_Engaging_Large_Classes.pdf)

Assessment Learning

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/5\\_Assessment\\_Learning.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/5_Assessment_Learning.pdf)

Teaching Biological Psychology

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/6\\_Teaching\\_Bio\\_Psych.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/6_Teaching_Bio_Psych.pdf)

## **PowerPoint Presentation**

This module has an associated PowerPoint presentation. Download it at [https://nobaproject.com//images/shared/supplement\\_editions/000/000/321/Motives%20and%20Goals.ppt?1576422117](https://nobaproject.com//images/shared/supplement_editions/000/000/321/Motives%20and%20Goals.ppt?1576422117).

## About Noba

The Diener Education Fund (DEF) is a non-profit organization founded with the mission of re-inventing higher education to serve the changing needs of students and professors. The initial focus of the DEF is on making information, especially of the type found in textbooks, widely available to people of all backgrounds. This mission is embodied in the Noba project.

Noba is an open and free online platform that provides high-quality, flexibly structured textbooks and educational materials. The goals of Noba are three-fold:

- To reduce financial burden on students by providing access to free educational content
- To provide instructors with a platform to customize educational content to better suit their curriculum
- To present material written by a collection of experts and authorities in the field

The Diener Education Fund is co-founded by Drs. Ed and Carol Diener. Ed is the Joseph Smiley Distinguished Professor of Psychology (Emeritus) at the University of Illinois. Carol Diener is the former director of the Mental Health Worker and the Juvenile Justice Programs at the University of Illinois. Both Ed and Carol are award-winning university teachers.

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