

Talk Announcement for the Psychological Research Colloquium, Winter Semester 2026/27

Barbara Flunger & Linda Zenger

Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Regulating Motivation on Your Own Terms: Finding Strategies That Fit

Thursday, 05. November 2026, 11:45 – 13:15, Room 2108/D

Abstract: Students often need to study independently and might face tasks they perceive as boring or difficult. Motivation regulation, the deliberate initiation or enhancement of motivation (Wolters, 2003), can help sustain academic engagement. Still, students differ in how they regulate motivation and in the strategies they use. This talk focuses on these differences and considers how to support effective motivation regulation. Motivation can be regulated by applying autonomy regulation: strategies to make studying feel more self-endorsed and meaningful, which could be particularly useful in case students find tasks uninteresting or irrelevant. For example, students can create choices for themselves during learning. Yet, research suggests that students do not use autonomy-regulating strategies extensively. Students might weigh a strategy's potential benefits against the effort or burden involved in using it. To explore this, we conducted a qualitative study based on 21 semi-structured interviews with university students. Students described considering a strategy's perceived effectiveness, its fit with the situation, and the costs of putting it into practice. Thus, autonomy-regulating strategies can feel like an additional demand on top of an already heavy workload. These findings point to the perceived costs of motivation regulation. Interventions that offer students a choice of strategies and invite them to plan when and how to use them show promise in reducing cost perceptions. AI tools could be helpful in offering students a choice of strategies and inviting them to plan and use more demanding strategies, reducing cost perceptions by removing the complexity that students perceive in using these strategies. In a randomized controlled study, we tested whether AI could provide additional support. We compared students' perceptions in an AI-supported intervention, a non-AI intervention in which they selected and planned a strategy, and a control condition to test whether AI-generated planning adds value beyond strategy choice and reflection.

All colleagues, doctoral researchers and students are cordially invited.

Optionally, digital participation is also possible at:

<https://uni-augsburg.zoom.us/j/98037502123?pwd=N0NPYmVLNmhKRdICSXISbGZiclhZz09>