Interest describes participation, an individual’s
• psychological state during engagement, *and*
• their motivation to reengage particular content over time.

• physiologically based
  * exists and develops through interactions with others and the design of the environment

New interests may develop at any age, and by individuals regardless of their gender and/or race and ethnicity.

Characteristics of interest assessed at the level of the individual, apply at least generally, to the level of the group.

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When interested, people will...

- Search for relevant information
- Seek deeper understanding
- Persevere, even when faced with difficulty
- Engage in meaningful learning

(e.g., more attentive, willing to extend effort, able to pursue and realize goals, effectively use strategies)
Indicators of interest development

Positive feelings, in addition to:

- Frequency of engagement
- Depth of engagement

and, given the opportunity,

- Voluntary and/or
- Independent engagement
TRIGGERED SITUATIONAL INTEREST
Learners:
• Attend to content, if only fleetingly
• Need support to engage from others (e.g., group work, instructional conversation) or through instructional design (e.g., software)
• May experience either positive or negative feelings
• May or may not be reflectively aware of the experience

Phase 1

MAINTAINED SITUATIONAL INTEREST
Learners:
• Re-engage content that previously triggered attention
• Are supported by others to find connections between their skills, knowledge, and prior experience
• Have positive feelings
• Are developing knowledge of the content
• Are developing a sense of the content’s value

Phase 2

EMERGING INDIVIDUAL INTEREST
Learners:
• Independently re-engage content
• Have curiosity questions
• Self-regulates to pursue own focus
• Have positive feelings
• Have stored knowledge and stored value
• Are focused on their own questions
• May have little value for the canon of the discipline and most feedback

Phase 3

WELL-DEVELOPED INDIVIDUAL INTEREST
Learners:
• Independently re-engage content
• Have curiosity questions
• Self-regulate easily to reframe questions and seek answers
• Have positive feelings
• Can persevere through frustration and challenge to meet goals
• Recognize others’ contributions to the discipline
• Actively seek feedback

Phase 4

Figure 1: The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development (Hidi & Renninger, 2006), Revised; Renninger & Hidi (2022).
Phase 1

TRIGGERED SITUATIONAL INTEREST

Learners:
• Attend to content, if only fleetingly
• Need support to engage from others (e.g., group work, instructional conversation) or through instructional design (e.g., software)
• May experience either positive or negative feelings
• May or may not be reflectively aware of the experience

Learners need:
• To feel genuinely appreciated for the efforts they have made
• A limited number of concrete suggestions

Learners need:
• To attend to content, if only fleetingly
• Need support to engage from others (e.g., group work, instructional conversation) or through instructional design (e.g., software)
• May experience either positive or negative feelings
• May or may not be reflectively aware of the experience

Feedback needs

Phase 2

MAINTAINED SITUATIONAL INTEREST

Learners:
• Re-engage content that previously triggered attention
• Are supported by others to find connections between their skills, knowledge, and prior experience
• Have positive feelings
• Are developing knowledge of the content
• Are developing a sense of the content’s value

Learners need:
• To feel genuinely appreciated for the efforts they have made
• Support to explore their own ideas

Learners need:
• To feel that their ideas and goals are understood
• To feel genuinely appreciated for their efforts
• Feedback that enables them to see how their goals can be more effectively met

Phase 3

EMERGING INDIVIDUAL INTEREST

Learners:
• Independently re-engage content
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• Self-regulate easily to reframe questions and seek answers
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• Recognize others’ contributions to the discipline
• Actively seek feedback

Learners:
• To feel that their ideas have been understood
• Constructive feedback
• Challenge

Learners need:
• To feel that their ideas have been understood
• Constructive feedback
• Challenge
Phase 1

Learners:
- Attend to content, if only fleetingly
- Need support to engage from others (e.g., group work, instructional conversation) or through instructional design (e.g., software)
- May experience either positive or negative feelings
- May or may not be reflectively aware of the experience

Learners want:
- To have their ideas respected
- Others to understand the difficulty of working with this content
- Concrete suggestions
- To be told what to do

Learners need:
- To feel genuinely appreciated for the efforts they have made
- A limited number of concrete suggestions
- Support to explore their own ideas
- To feel that their ideas and goals are understood
- To feel genuinely appreciated for their efforts
- Feedback that enables them to see how their goals can be more effectively met

Phase 2

Learners:
- Re-engage content that previously triggered attention
- Are supported by others to find connections between their skills, knowledge, and prior experience
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- Are developing knowledge of the content
- Are developing a sense of the content's value

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Learners:
- Independently re-engage content
- Have curiosity questions
- Self-regulates to pursue own focus
- Have positive feelings
- Have stored knowledge and stored value
- Are focused on their own questions
- May have little value for the canon of the discipline and most feedback

Learners want:
- To have their ideas respected
- Information and feedback
- To balance their personal standards with more widely accepted disciplinary standards

Learners need:
- To feel that their ideas have been understood
- Constructive feedback
- Challenge

Phase 4

Learners:
- Independently re-engage content
- Have curiosity questions
- Self-regulate easily to reframe questions and seek answers
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Selected References


