



VIDEO SUMMARY

Practical Strategies to Develop Motivation

Resource person: Luis von Ahn | Duolingo co-founder, chief executive and computer scientist | Curated from TED
Practical Strategies to Develop Motivation | Motivation and Engagement | psychological-literacy

Luis von Ahn begins with a problem of access. Education can widen inequality because high-quality teaching is expensive and unevenly distributed. Duolingo's response combines global smartphone reach with a freemium model: learners can use the core product without paying, while subscriptions and advertising fund the service.

Access alone does not create a learning habit. Educational applications compete with games and social platforms whose interactions have been refined to capture attention. Von Ahn describes several design choices Duolingo borrowed from that world. Streaks make continuity visible. Reminders arrive around a time when the learner has previously been active. The application eventually stops sending them to an inactive user. A recognisable mascot gives the prompts a comic narrative.

These features can support frequent, short practice. They also create ethical questions. A streak can help someone remember an intention, and it can make a missed day feel like a loss. Notifications can be useful cues, and they can become pressure. A responsible learning design gives users control, explains its purpose and leaves room to stop or resume without shame.

Von Ahn observes that language, early mathematics and reading involve substantial repeated practice. The closing discussion also marks a boundary: topics that depend on sustained explanation, conceptual change or complex transfer require richer instruction. Gamified practice is one part of that system.

Faculty can use the case without copying the entire product. A short retrieval routine, immediate explanatory feedback and a visible record of progress may be enough. Evaluation should examine accuracy, delayed retention, application and learner wellbeing. Counts of visits, completed screens and streak length provide behavioural data, but they cannot establish what a student understands.