Teachers’ Motivating Styles

All teachers face the instructional challenge to motivate their students to engage and benefit in class. No two teachers share identical styles. Even then, shared practices exist among autonomy-supportive teachers. First let’s look at the two general motivating styles commonly used:

**I will monitor you**
- More controlling
- “I’m your boss, I’m here to socialize and change you.”
- Pressure students to think, feel, and behave in your way.
- Neglect students’ inner motivations

**I will help you**
- More supportive
- “I’m your ally, I’m here to support you and your strivings.”
- Support students’ need for autonomy
- Recognize students’ inner motivations. Vitalize, nurture, develop, strengthen, and grow them.

Does it matter? Yes - **When teachers are helpful and supportive,**

**Students show**
- More intrinsic motivation
- Greater classroom engagement
- Higher-quality learning
- Preference for optimal challenges
- Better psychological and physical well-being

**Teachers show**
- More vitality
- Greater teaching efficacy
- Higher job satisfaction
- Less emotional and physical exhaustion
- Higher satisfaction

**How to be autonomy-supportive? 6 Steps:**

1. Take the Students’ Perspective
2. Vitalize Inner Motivational Resources
   *If the learning activity or teacher request is potentially an interesting thing to do.*
3. Provide Explanatory Rationales
   *If the learning activity or teacher request is potentially an uninteresting thing to do.*
4. Acknowledge and accept negative affect
5. Rely on informational, non-pressuring language
6. Display patience

For details on these 6 practices, read the individual write-ups on them on the Resources page.