

1. Be a Student Yourself – Take Students’ Perspectives

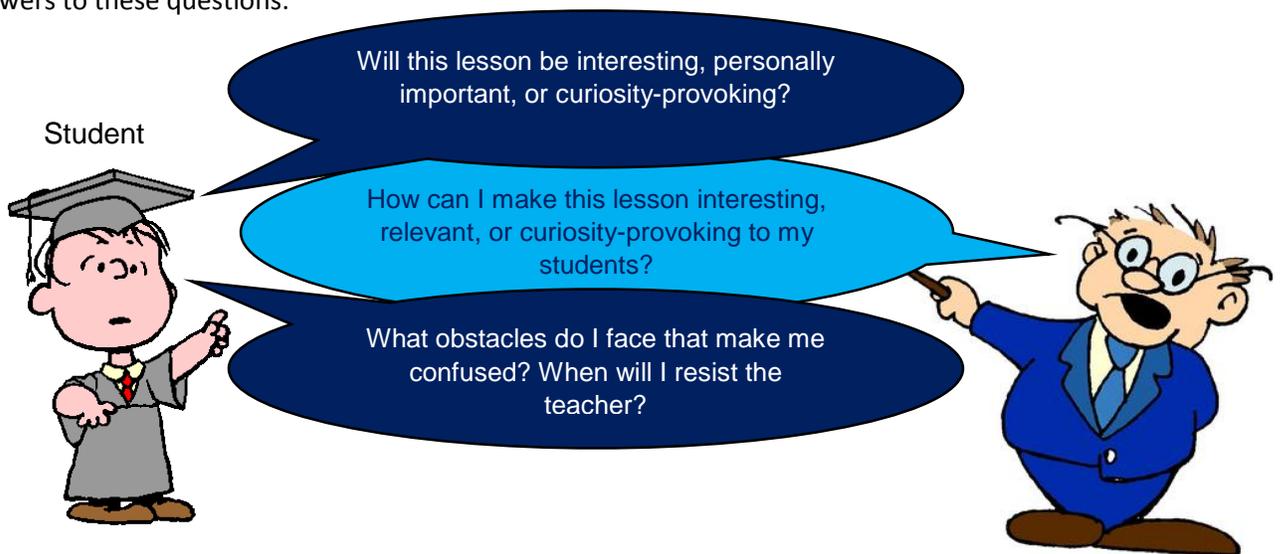
This is the first in a series of Autonomy-Supportive Behaviours that teachers can use in the classroom. Remember: You’re not responsible for creating motivated students; you’re responsible for creating an environment where students can motivate themselves.

What?

Imagine being a student yourself. As a student, how will you think and feel in your class? What are your needs and preferences? What worries you, and when will you resist against your teacher?

How?

Tap into your experience in teaching similar students in the past to anticipate your current students’ likely reactions to a range of learning activities. **Use your experience** to think of new-and-improved answers to these questions:



Why?

Taking your student’s point of view makes it less likely that your words will be ignored or resisted against. If your instructions are aligned with students’ inner motivations, your students are more likely to be engaged in class.

When?

Think about these **during the pre-lesson period as you prepare for your class** and what you will say to introduce a new topic. Being mindful of your students’ perspectives is helpful in class, but it’s the most helpful before the lesson starts.

Example of a lesson flow

Start

Here is the plan for today. Does that sound like a good use of our time? Any suggestions? Is there anything in this lesson that we might improve?



How willing are you to incorporate your students' suggestions (assuming they're consistent with the learning objective)? When you show openness to welcome, ask for, and encourage students' suggestions for the lesson plan, you build trust and rapport with your students.

During

To 'be a student' during class, notice your students' preferences and engagement levels in class – and adjust your instruction. If they are engaged in class consistently, what they're doing aligns well with their inner motivational resources. If their engagement drops, what they're doing is neglecting their inner motivational resources. Use these signals to change your instructions. Involve and vitalize your students' motivation (for more information on what this means, read the write-up on 2. Vitalize Students' Motivational Resources). Use classroom clickers to hear their opinions, choices, and preferences.

After

Being a student yourself means knowing what your students feel and think.



Conduct a formative assessment - Hand out a blank index card to each student during the last 3 minutes of class with the question "Any suggestions?" at the top.

Tell them that the purpose of the activity is only to improve everyone's experience in future classes.

Students don't write their names, and it's important that all students return their cards even if they're blank, so they can be assured that their comments will be anonymous. They are free to be honest.

This will give you invaluable insight for your future pre-lesson planning and preparing.

You can also invite your students to complete a 'weekly reaction sheet'. Students get a blank index card at the end of the week, asking them to "Express any feeling you wish that is relevant to the course". You may give suggestions, e.g. the work they're doing, what they're reading or thinking about, a feeling about the course, or a feeling about the instructor.

Source: Reeve, J. (2016). *Autonomy-supportive teaching: What it is, how to do it*. W. C. Liu, J. C. K. Wang, & R. M. Ryan (Eds.). Springer Science+Business Media: Singapore. Written by C. M. Q. Sim, 2016.