

7. How Do I Know if I'm Autonomy Supportive?

This is the seventh in a series of Autonomy-Supportive Behaviours that teachers can use in the classroom.

In the previous 6 write-ups, we explored the 6 different actions you can take in your classes to create an environment where students can motivate themselves. How do you know if what you're doing is working?

Ask your students

The [Learning Climate Questionnaire](#) is commonly used to assess students' perceptions of autonomy-supportive teaching.

Example items are:

"I feel understood by my teacher" and
"My teacher tries to understand how I see things before suggesting a new way to do things."

Ask a trained observer

The observer visits your classroom, observes your motivating style, and scores your teaching using a rating scale*.

If you can't find a trained observer, you can ask a trusted colleague, videotape or audiotape your own class, and use a rating scale* to self-assess your own teaching.

Notice students' engagement signals

When you're more supportive of autonomy, students' engagement will rise, and vice versa.

The engagement increase in students should be large and easily noticed.

Notice your own feelings

Research has shown that you will experience many personal and professional benefits as you become more supportive of autonomy in class.

Are you becoming more effective in teaching?
Is your job satisfaction increasing?

*Rating scale for autonomy-supportive teaching:

Takes the Students' Perspective

- Invites, asks for, welcomes, and incorporates students' input
- Is 'in synch' with students
- Is aware of students' needs, wants, goals, priorities, preferences, and emotions

Vitalizes Inner Motivational Resources

- Piques curiosity; provides interesting learning activities
- Vitalizes and supports students' autonomy, competence, and relatedness
- Frames learning activities with students' intrinsic goals

Provides Explanatory Rationales

For Requests, rules, procedures, and uninteresting activities

- Explains why; says "Because...", "The reason is..."
- Identifies the value, importance, benefit, use, utility of a request

Uses Non-Pressuring, Informational Language

- Flexible, open-minded, responsive communication
- Provides choices and options
- Says "You may...", "You might..."

Acknowledges and Accepts Negative Affect

- Listens carefully, non-defensively, with understanding
- Acknowledges students' negative affect ("Okay", "Yes")
- Accepts complaints as valid ("Okay", "Yes")

Displays Patience

- Allows students to work at their own pace, in their own way
- Calmly waits for students' signals of initiative, input, and willingness

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.