What’s control like? Why do you do it?

Controlling teaching style is

- Minimizing, ignoring, or denying students’ perspectives at the advantage of your agenda and using pressure to make students act, think, or feel in a particular way (Reeve, 2009).
- Examples (that you can best avoid):
  - Using explicitly controlling language eg. “You must” or “you have to”
  - Yelling eg. “Mary and Thomas, are you deaf?”
  - Commanding eg. “No one stops until I say so”
  - Pressuring awards eg. “Only if you read 10 min every day, you get a reward”
  - Losing patience or becoming irritated eg. “Nicky, I’m getting sick of your behavior”
  - Destructive criticism eg. “Unbelievable, it’s really not difficult to simply do what is asked”
  - Denying input from students eg. “I don’t want to hear it, just get started with what you have to do”
  - Threats of deadlines and punishments eg. “You really must do this otherwise you will lose two points”
  - Drawing out students’ shame, guilt, or contingent self-worth eg. “Everyone should be able to do this. Even a toddler can do it!” or “I’m really disappointed with some students in class [while looking at certain students]”

Controlling happens when teachers are

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressured from above</th>
<th>Pressured from within</th>
<th>Pressured from below</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are strongly held accountable for students’ performance, high-stakes testing</td>
<td>Teachers who tend to feel easily pressured by external evaluations, pressuring school leaders, or their own teaching agenda</td>
<td>Passive, disengaged, and defiant students, or simply expecting students to be demotivated</td>
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What happens to students who are taught in a controlling way?

- Effort and persistence to learn
- Academic performance
- Interest and creativity
- Real learning
- Passivity and school dropout

- Anger and anxiety
- Rejecting requests and doing the opposite of what is required
- Superficial learning and compliance
- Depressive symptoms

“But a controlling and stricter style is needed for some students!”

- Some believe it’s sometimes necessary or beneficial to use controlling practices for student cooperation
- Note that control is NOT equals to providing structure (scaffolding and expectations). Students do benefit from structure, especially those who are anxious and uncertain
- “Benefits” of control like compliance and superficial learning come at a cost – anxiety, anger, and defiance!
- Even for students who’re used to being controlled, a controlling approach is still detrimental for them AND you