

Why Autonomy?

Because autonomy support in the classroom produces positive educational outcomes...

References:

Greater perceived competence	Deci et al, 1981
Higher mastery motivation	Ryan & Grolnick, 1986
Enhanced creativity	Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, & Holt, 1984
Preference for optimal challenge over easy success	Shapira, 1976
Increased conceptual understanding	Benware & Deci, 1984
Active and deeper information processing	Grolnick & Ryan, 1987
Greater engagement	Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003
Enhanced well-being	Black & Deci, 2000
Better academic performance	Boggianno, Flink, shields, Seelbach, & Barrett, 1993
Academic persistence, rather than dropping out of school	Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997

Key definitions:

Autonomy	"A sense of being choiceful in one's actions and experiencing oneself as the locus of initiation of those actions" (Connell & Ryan, 1987; deCharms, 1976; Deci & Ryan, 1985; White, 1959).
Autonomy-supportive	Environments that minimize the salience of external incentives and threats, avoid controlling language, and acknowledge the learners' frame of reference (Black & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989). Autonomy-supportive teaching involves behaviors that seek to promote students' tendency to engage in learning because they value this activity or find it interesting (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007).
Competence	Experiencing one-self as capable and competent in controlling the environment of the activity. The need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Koestner & McClelland, 1990) is the need to experience satisfaction in exercising and extending one's capabilities. Naturally, people seem to seek out challenges that are optimal for their level of development (Harter, 1978; White, 1959).

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