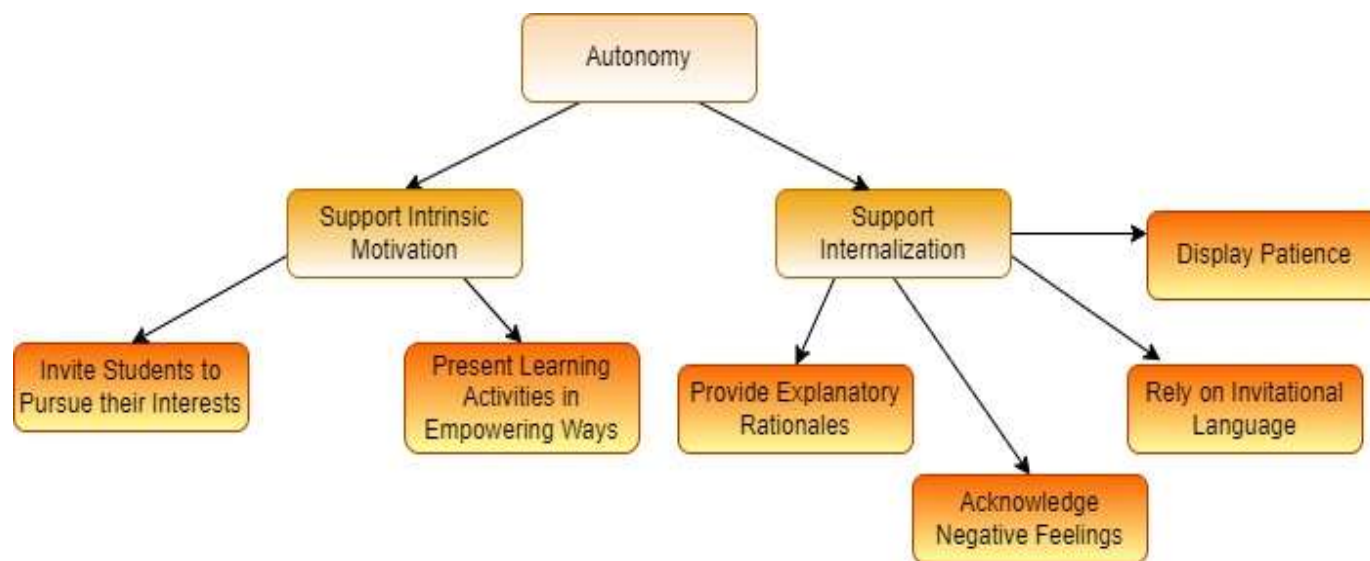


Autonomy Supportive Teaching Practices

OSU Motivation in Classrooms Lab – Motivation Minute. February 2022

How can I help my students find the value in their schoolwork?



Adapted from "Autonomy-Supportive Teaching: Its Malleability, Benefits, and Potential to Improve Educational Practice," by J. Reeve and H. Cheon, 2021, *Educational Psychologist*, 56(1), 54-77. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2020.1862657>. Copyright 2021 by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Intrinsic motivation and *internalization* help students flourish and achieve authentically (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Supporting autonomy is one way to increase students' intrinsic motivation and internalization of task value (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). Autonomy-supportive teachers embrace a student-focused attitude, employ an interpersonal tone of understanding, and take the students' perspective (Reeve & Cheon, 2021).

- **Intrinsic motivation:** engaging in an activity that one finds inherently interesting or enjoyable; characterized by playfulness and curiosity (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020)
- **Internalization:** accepting and embracing the beliefs, values, and behaviors of others; characterized as willingly engaging in an activity because one values and views the activity as worthwhile even if it is not enjoyable (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020).

Supporting internalization: when students are not intrinsically motivated, we can still support them in internalizing the value of tasks by employing autonomy-supportive teaching practices.

Example Situation	Instructional Behavior	Teacher Response
A student is not seeing the purpose of doing their daily assignments.	<i>Explanatory rationales</i> involve the teacher explaining why the material is personally useful to the student.	Help the student explore the value of the assignments with statements such as "What are some ways you could use this concept in your favorite sport? Can you use it to determine your batting average?"
A student consistently takes more time to complete their assignments than the other students.	<i>Displaying patience</i> means remaining calm and optimistic while allowing students to work at their own pace and without interference from the teacher.	Respect the student's autonomy by allowing them to work at their own pace. Wait for the child to signal you that they want help and guidance before offering to assist them.
A student is complaining about their assignment being boring and questioning why they must do the assignment.	<i>Acknowledging negative feelings</i> includes both recognizing and accepting these feelings as valid concerns that should be considered. Responses also involve the use of invitational language.	"I can understand why you might find them boring, we do a lot of these, don't we? But by practicing with these assignments, we improve our understanding of these topics. Do you have any ideas to help make them more exciting?"
A student is distracted and avoiding their assignment/work.	<i>Relying on invitational language</i> involves responding to students in a way that is non-controlling while preserving the students' personal agency for problem-solving and responsibility for their own behavior.	With a calm voice, ask the student what their goals are for that day/week/unit. Ask the student "How can you use your class time in a way that will help you achieve that goal?"

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Compiled by: Tiffney Winchester, Tameko Collins, Rachel Stroble, Alexis Sconyers, and Meredith Pierson

Recommendations for supporting intrinsic motivation and internalization:

- Keep a **student-focused attitude** by incorporating inclusive and responsive practices that are student-centered and personalized.
- Employ an **interpersonal tone of understanding** by relying upon invitational, engaging, and non-controlling informational language.
- **Take the students' perspective** by welcoming the students' perspectives, engaging students in the classroom, and learning more about the students' perspectives in the process.

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