

## **Five Competence-Supportive Behaviors for the Classroom Teacher**

a = what teachers do to make the behavior part of classroom practice

b = a sample statement or activity that encompasses the behavior

c = what the behavior does for students

### **1. Provide optimal challenges**

a) Offer students more challenging tasks when work is easy, or easier tasks when it's too hard

b) "You did all those others correctly. Do you want to try starting on number 12?"

c) The right level of challenge helps maintain interest, enhances motivation

### **2. Provide feedback that suggests a specific strategy you believe will help the student reach a desired goal**

a) Focus feedback on strategies that lead to improvement (focus on positive feedback)

b) "Your argument might be stronger if you used a quote from a primary source"

"I could see that you really wanted to contribute to the discussion, but did you see how Veronika shut down when you interrupted her?"

c) Shows the student a path toward achieving the goal

### **3. Praise improvement or effort, with specifics about what that effort or improvement was**

a) Provide positive support (and encouragement) for actions or efforts leading to improvement

b) "What you've done here is excellent, really improved over last time, especially in this area..."

c) Affirms students' progress and improvement, gives guidance toward future success

### **4. Set goals based on self-referenced standards**

a) Have students set their own goals for learning, to the extent possible.

b) "See if you can shave a little off your time this week. What do you want to aim for?"

"Which level on our rubric are you sure you can meet? Which one do you want to try for?"

c) Promotes achievable goals and allows students experience in calibrating their own possibilities for improvement.

### **5. Demonstrate using examples**

a) Model or provide examples for students

b) "When throwing, see how my other hand points at the target?"

"Watch what happens to the egg whites if I beat the yolks first, but I don't wash the beaters."

c) Provides a template, some structure for student to follow for greater success

#### ***About this list***

*In the early 2020s, an international panel of 34 experienced researchers with a primary focus on Self-Determination Theory combined efforts to identify the teacher behaviors most likely to affect positively students' motivation and their internalization of motivation (making motivation more intrinsic, less extrinsic). They identified a large list of behaviors in psychological and educational literature, refined and sharpened definitions, reduced overlapping and redundant behaviors, and rated each of the remaining behaviors for its relevance to autonomy, relatedness, or competence. Then they rated each behavior based on their views of how important/effective the behavior was in fostering motivation and internalization. The list here is the panel's strongest recommendations for fostering Competence.*

Ahmadi et al., 2023. A Classification System for Teachers' Motivational Behaviors Recommended in Self-Determination Theory Interventions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000783>. (Adapted here by D. Streight)