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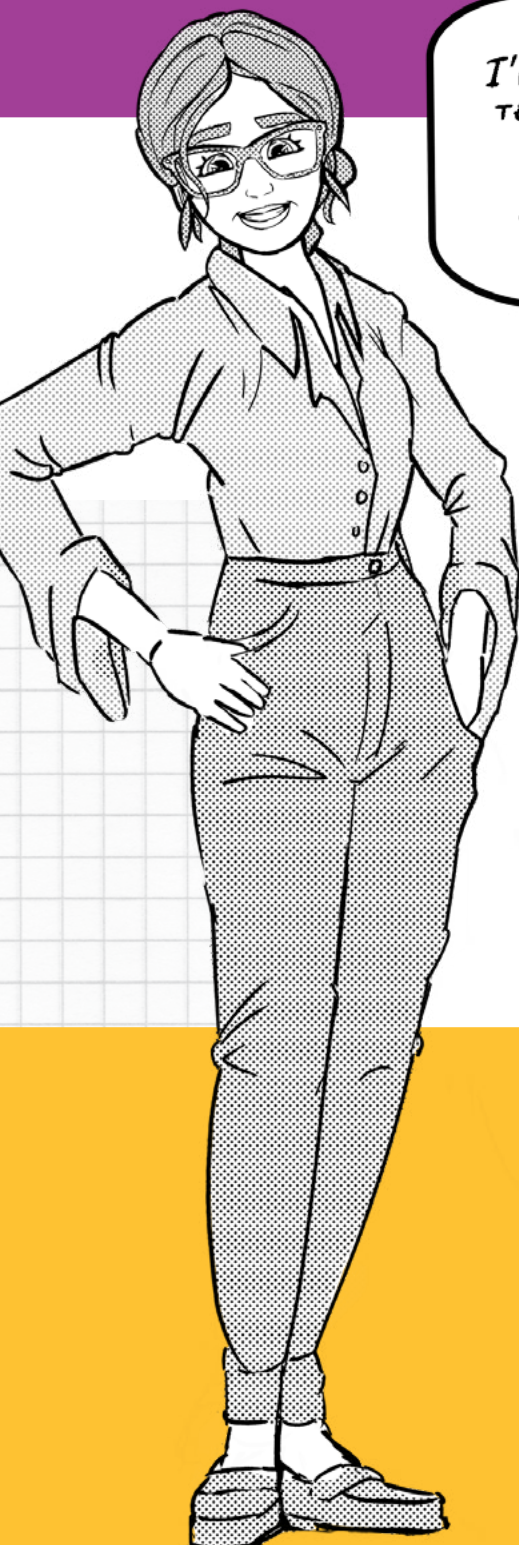
FOSTERING STUDENT

# AUTONOMY AND EMPOWERMENT



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Hi!  
I'M JOLY, A VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION  
TEACHER. IN ADDITION TO THIS WORKBOOK, YOU CAN  
FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RELATIONSHIP  
MANAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM AT  
[OBSERVATOIREFP.ORG/EN/RELATIONSHIP-MANAGEMENT](http://OBSERVATOIREFP.ORG/EN/RELATIONSHIP-MANAGEMENT)  
HAPPY READING!

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# INTRODUCTION

In professional and technical training, we teach people in the field. This is why it is important that teachers aim for autonomy and responsibility in the classroom to help students better experience their reality as VT learners, and to prepare them for the reality of the labour market. This workbook discusses strategies to implement in order to support these two principles.

## AUTONOMY AND EMPOWERMENT

### DEFINITION

Autonomy and empowerment in the classroom reflect the students' involvement in their learning, considering the "space" given to them by teachers to develop on their own. Autonomy-supportive teaching meets the needs of students by allowing them to progress at their own pace, according to their own unique path. In addition, an autonomy-supportive approach promotes student self-determination, i.e., the desire to move forward and a feeling of control over the learning process. Students thus have the power to learn and to make their own choices.

Let's allow students to take their place, all their place, but only their place!

### RELEVANCE

It has been shown that student autonomy significantly increases their motivation to learn. The more students are involved in the process of developing their skills, the more they feel responsible for their learning, and, consequently, their successes.

## IMPLEMENTATION

**Here are some strategies to help you promote student autonomy and empowerment in the classroom.**

Use individual strengths, showcase them :

- Encourage students to demonstrate to the group
- Encourage tutoring, peer coaching

Plan group exchanges and discussions, much like a team meeting in the workplace

Discuss what is working well or not so well, find solutions together, etc.

Explain the importance and the usefulness of completing a task, an exercise or a workshop; make tasks meaningful.

Ensure a balance between structure and autonomy.

- In the beginning of the semester, set clear boundaries.
- At first, guidance of students should be very tight, very structured (list of procedures, checklist, precise guidance for practice, etc.). Over the weeks, students should be given more independence during workshops, letting them explore and use their judgment, their creativity, etc.

Encourage students to take initiatives

- Get students to come up with ideas and proposals; encourage them to implement them, to dive in.
- Allow students to complete tasks as they see fit, without having to constantly consult you. For example, if students realize that they're missing material for a task, they go and get the material themselves, without needing permission.

Encourage experimentation. Accept mistakes and use them as a springboard for learning.

Have high but achievable expectations, challenge students while being realistic (avoid lowering requirements).

Provide continual feedback through concrete actions, for example:

- Provide continual feedback through concrete actions, for example:
- Coach students by asking questions about their accomplishments.
- Encourage and praise students by being descriptive.
- Point out what is less successful and where improvement is needed
- Show students their progress (what they were not able to do before that they do now).
- Provide verbal, written, or symbolic feedback (e.g., red, yellow, green).
- Ask peers to provide feedback.

Encourage students to find solutions on their own and to develop critical thinking skills, for example:

- Ask them open-ended questions
- Guide them in their thinking, push them to go further (show them the other side of the coin, suggest different situations, etc.)
- Relay the question from one student to another, to the group, or to the student themselves (e.g., what do you think? what would you do? etc.).
- Lead students to think by drawing on their previous experience and knowledge.
- Help students find the answers to their questions, give them clues, but avoid putting words in their mouth.

Involve students in different tasks in the trade, for example:

- Ask them to maintain the space (hair salon, garage, kitchen, etc.), to confirm appointments, etc.

Suggest a roadmap to allow students to follow their progress on learning a skill.



Arrange the room to allow for individual work in a quiet area, and teamwork for those who prefer it.

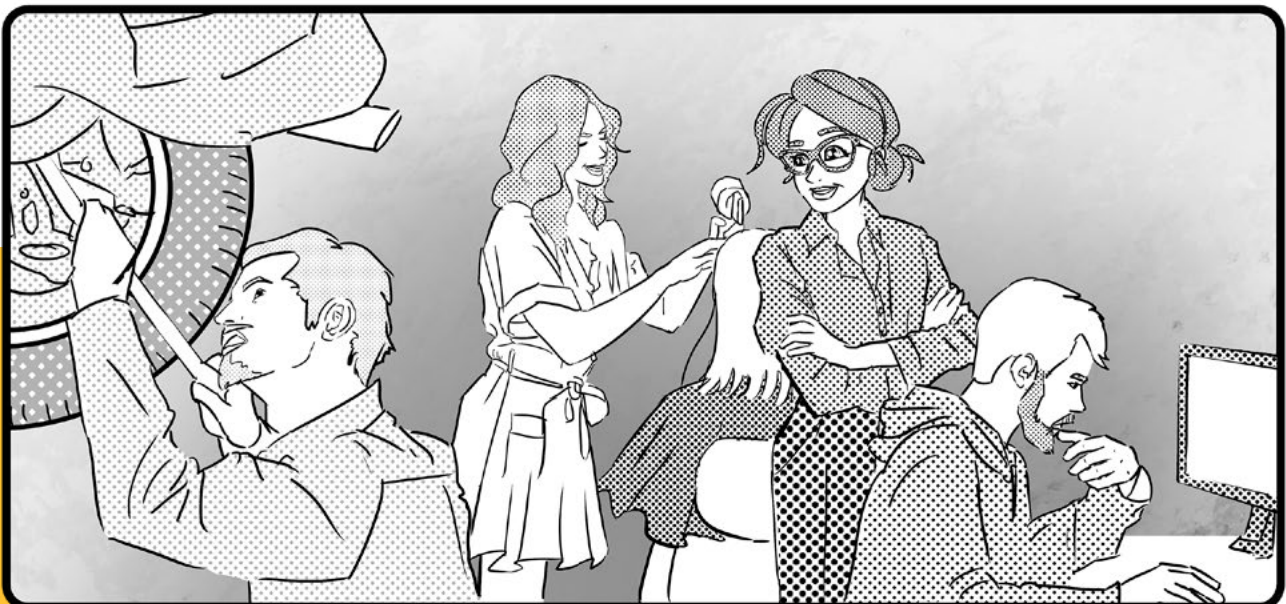
Provide students with the opportunity to make choices when possible.

- Teach students different techniques, approaches and ways of doing things so that they can choose what works best for them.
- Allow students to choose the order of the course activities (experimentation before theory or vice versa)
- Let students choose the method of correction (group discussion, answer key, teacher-corrected, etc.).
- Let students choose the method of evaluation (written work, video, project, etc.)
- Give students the choice of working individually or in teams.

Engage students as much as possible and choose teaching methods where they are in control of their learnings, using a variety of strategies:

- Hands-on workshops
- Case studies (paper, video, etc.)
- Projects
- Collaborative groups
- Flipped classroom
- Role play

**TO CHOOSE  
IS TO BE ENGAGED!**



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## SOURCES

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