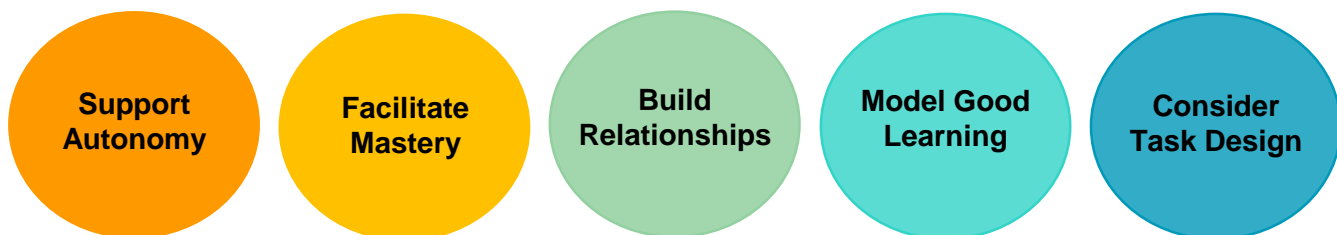# Design Principles to Support Student Motivation

Sometimes motivating students feels like a huge task, but these 5 design principles can help make the task more manageable. The Alberta Consortium for Motivation and Emotion (ACME) reached these recommendations by combining contemporary theory and the perspectives of Alberta teachers.

Support Autonomy | **Facilitate Mastery** | **Build Relationships** | **Model Good Learning** | **Consider Task Design**

Support Autonomy

What is it?

Involving students of all ages in the decision making process and taking their perspective

Why is it important?

Students who feel autonomous tend to:
- have better grades
- be more engaged
- be less disruptive
- have more positive emotions

How do I do it?

- ✓ take the student's perspective
- ✓ share decision making with students
- ✓ allow students to express their emotions
- ✓ give students choice in what, how, and when to work
- ✓ minimize "shoulds"
- ✓ be patient
- ✓ explain why the work is important
- ✓ let students pursue their own interests when possible

Facilitate Mastery

What is it?

Focusing on understanding and engagement with learning; encouraging students to see their strengths and progress rather than focusing on comparisons

Why is it important?

Students who pursue mastery goals tend to:
- have better understanding of the material
- desire more challenging work
- report more enjoyment and interest
- explore the topic outside of class time
- be more creative

How do I do it?

- ✓ set reasonable goals for each student
- ✓ praise student progress and effort more than outcome
- ✓ use formative assessments
- ✓ avoid comparisons
- ✓ have clear grading criteria/rubrics
- ✓ don't rush students, give them lots of time
- ✓ provide informational feedback on how to improve

Build Relationships

What is it?

Establishing and maintaining relationships across the different domains of a student's life by meaningfully connecting with students and building community across the whole school

Why is it important?

Students who feel connected to their teacher and peers tend to:
- be more intrinsically motivated
- be more interested
- feel more competent be more engaged

How do I do it?

- ✓ create a safe and respectful environment
- ✓ embrace mistakes
- ✓ focus on the school as a community
- ✓ build personal relationships with students
- ✓ collaborate and communicate with parents

Model Good Learning

What is it?

Demonstrating passion and love of learning; being engaged with material; using the self as an example of the learning behaviours desired from students

Why is it important?

There is evidence of contagion in the classroom! Enthusiastic teachers tend to have students who enjoy learning more. And when students enjoy learning they tend to:
- be more intrinsically motivated
- be more interested
- feel more competent
- be more engaged

How do I do it?

- ✓ teach with energy
- ✓ be enthusiastic about topics
- ✓ share your curiosity
- ✓ explain why you are interested in topics
- ✓ model self-regulated learning strategies
- ✓ stay positive when things get challenging

Consider Task Design

What is it?

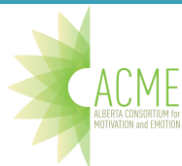Connecting subject learning to everyday life, designing interesting and enjoyable learning tasks

Why is it important?

When students understand how learning applies to their real lives they tend to:
- be more engaged
- learn more
- persist longer
- register for more advanced courses
- be more interested

How do I do it?

- ✓ provide opportunities for students to make connections between material and their lives
- ✓ build authentic assignments
- ✓ consider a utility-value assignment
- ✓ learn about student interests and use them in designing tasks
- ✓ involve students in the task design
- ✓ use designs such as problem based learning or hands-on activities to peak interest and curiosity