



Choice Meets Academic Emotions¹

UDL CHECKPOINT 7.1: [Optimize individual choice and autonomy](#) — Provide learners with as much discretion and autonomy as possible by providing choices in such things as the level of perceived challenge, context or content used for practicing and assessing skills, and tools for information gathering.

What is it?

Self Determination Theory (SDT) supports autonomy as a student-centered learning environment that provides opportunities for student choice (Deci & Ryan, 2018). In multiple studies, participants given a choice were significantly more intrinsically motivated than those who did not have an opportunity for choice in a learning experience (Deci & Ryan, 2018).

Academic emotions (Ben-Eliyahu, 2019) are part of our learning process, with early experiences shaping our emotions for later life events. The **Integrated Self-Regulated Learning Model** (Ben-Eliyahu, 2019) considers learning in this regard, with positive academic emotion and engagement as the learning experience's target considers emotions equal to intellectual growth (Ben-Eliyahu, 2019).

Why do it?

Providing opportunities for student choice during instruction can promote curiosity and intrinsic motivation for some students. When successful, this may build self-autonomy. Everything we do as a species involves choice. "A long history of Western philosophy, psychological theory, and conventional wisdom suggests that choice is a principal component in peoples' lives" (Patall et al., 2014, p. 27). Adding choice to instruction and activities promotes autonomy.

How can I apply it?

Here are some suggestions for implementing student choice in your practice.

- Allow learners to participate in the design of classroom activities and academic tasks.
- Provide choice for tools used for information gathering or production.
- Provide choice for color, design, or graphics of layouts, etc.
- Involve learners, where and whenever possible, in setting their own personal academic and behavioral goals.

Summary

Instructional strategies matter, and educators should consider academic emotions in course design. Incorporating choice into course activities and assignments in this setting supports that these positive academic emotions are more likely to occur. When students have positive academic emotions, there is a better chance that students will be engaged and motivated to learn to survive and flourish.

¹ Developed using AI, peer-reviewed journal articles, and web-based resources.