

**IB DP Psychology**  
**Higher level**  
**Paper 3 – resource booklet**

The sources in this examination have been collated to assess the claim that specific strategies can effectively motivate students to become independent learners.

**Source 2**

A study investigated whether autonomy-supportive teaching improves independent learning more than controlling teaching. 140 students aged 14–16 from two secondary schools were assigned for one academic term to either:

- an autonomy-supportive condition (choice, self-reflection, minimal external pressure), or
- a controlling condition (rigid deadlines, performance-contingent rewards, teacher-directed tasks)

Independent learning was measured using the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (0–60), administered pre- and post-programme. Mean change scores and standard deviations for each condition are shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Mean change in independent learning readiness scores by teaching condition**

Teaching condition	Mean change score	Standard deviation
Autonomy supportive	+8.7	4.3
Controlling	+2.1	5.6

### Source 3

A qualitative study explored students' perceptions of how different motivational strategies affected their willingness and ability to learn independently. Focus groups were conducted with 24 students aged 15–17 from two secondary schools. Discussions focused on the motivational strategies used by teachers, the effect of these strategies on learning habits, and students' confidence in learning without direct supervision.

Thematic analysis of the focus group data identified the following key themes:

- Choice over topics and methods increased interest and willingness to study independently
- Feedback focused on effort and improvement (rather than grades) boosted confidence and reduced fear of failure
- Deadlines and rewards kept students on track but did not foster genuine interest in learning or independent study planning
- Too much choice without clear guidance caused anxiety and reduced productivity, with some students preferring clearer teacher direction

#### Source 4

A quantitative study investigated whether the effectiveness of autonomy-supportive teaching on independent learning differs by age. 180 students were divided into two groups: younger (12–14) and older (16–18). All received an autonomy-supportive teaching programme for one academic term, with independent learning measured pre- and post-programme using the Self-Directed Learning Scale (0–60).

Mean change scores and standard deviations for each age group are shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: Mean change in independent learning scores by age group**

Age group	Mean change score	Standard deviation
12-14 years	+1.4	5.9
16-18 years	+9.6	4.1

## Source 5

A quantitative study investigated the relationship between teachers' motivational strategies and students' independent learning. Participants were 140 students aged 15–17 from four secondary schools. Teachers' approaches were assessed along three dimensions drawn from self-determination theory:

- autonomy support
- competence support (e.g. scaffolding, constructive feedback)
- relatedness support (e.g. warmth, interest in students' wellbeing)

A correlation coefficient was calculated for each dimension against students' independent learning scores. The findings are shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Correlation between teacher motivational strategy dimensions and independent learning**

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
Autonomy support × Independent learning	0.61
Competence support × Independent learning	0.53
Relatedness support × Independent learning	0.38