

6. Be Patient

This is the sixth in a series of Autonomy-Supportive Behaviours that teachers can use in the classroom. Remember: You're not responsible for creating motivated students; you're responsible for creating an environment where students can motivate themselves.

What?

Wait calmly for your students' input, initiative, and willingness. Give them the time and space they need during learning activities to:

- Overcome the inertia of inactivity,
- Explore and manipulate learning materials,
- Ask questions,
- Retrieve information,
- Make plans and set goals,
- Evaluate data and feedback,
- Formulate and test hypotheses,
- Monitor and revise their work,
- Recognize they are not making progress and start anew,
- Monitor their progress,
- Go in their own direction, and
- Work at their own pace and rhythm



Why?

Learning and understanding take time. The less students feel rushed or pressured, the more likely they will be able to put in the necessary effort for learning – keep this in mind when you feel you don't have enough class time for your students.

When?

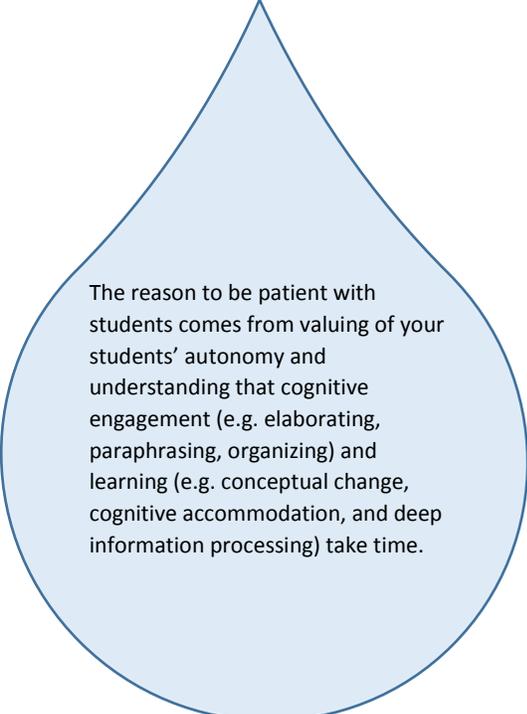
When students are trying to learn something new, unfamiliar, or complex, or trying to develop or refine a skill – being patient is vital.

How?

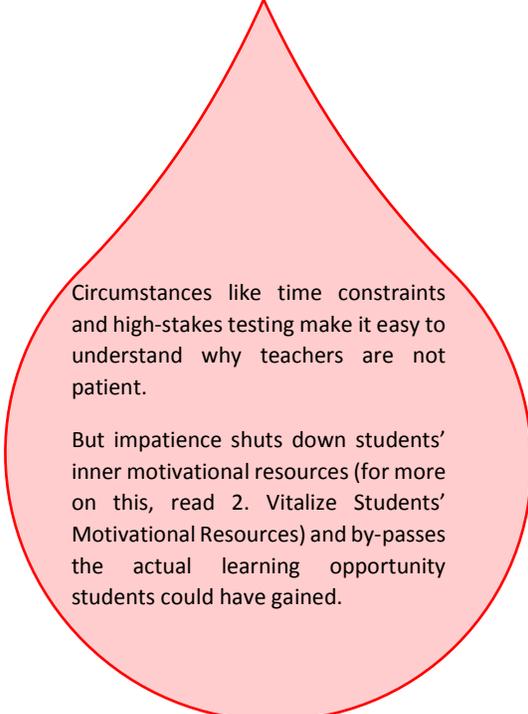
Show calmness to students who are struggling, understand and adjust to their behaviour.

To be patient:

DO	DON'T
Listen	Interfere
Watch and observe	Intrude
Be responsive	Intervene
Postpone your help and assistance until you understand what students are trying to do	Push and pressure students to go faster <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbally e.g. hurry up, let's go• Non-verbally e.g. clap clap, snap snap, standing over students to show time is up, turning page before students are ready
Wait for a signal from students to ask for your help, scaffolding, or feedback	Rush students to finish what they're doing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grabbing materials out of students' hands
Provide encouragement for effort and initiative Offer hints when students are stuck	End the learning activity quickly by showing or telling students the right answer



The reason to be patient with students comes from valuing of your students' autonomy and understanding that cognitive engagement (e.g. elaborating, paraphrasing, organizing) and learning (e.g. conceptual change, cognitive accommodation, and deep information processing) take time.



Circumstances like time constraints and high-stakes testing make it easy to understand why teachers are not patient.

But impatience shuts down students' inner motivational resources (for more on this, read 2. Vitalize Students' Motivational Resources) and by-passes the actual learning opportunity students could have gained.