

completing challenging tasks



Students want to do good work in class, but sometimes it can be difficult. Motivating and supporting students when they are having a hard time can feel like an overwhelming task. We asked a student what helps them when content and class are tough. Their ideas are below. Consider these support tips and add to the list with ideas from your students.

4 Things Every Teacher Can Do to Motivate Students When Learning Gets Tough



Use Affirmations

Affirm us and help us to learn to affirm ourselves. Our teacher taught us to say things like “I can do this” or “I got this” and sometimes we even say “It will be over soon” when things are really hard. It takes just a few moments and gets us back in the game.



Music helps

One of the many things that I love is when my teacher plays music. She does it every single day. She plays kids trap music or instrumentals that bring good vibes and get us into the thinking mood. Music is soothing too.



Give us breaks

My teacher has a calming corner that can be used at any time. If things get hard, someone gets angry, or just feels really irritated that they can't figure out the answer to something, we can always go there to calm down and come back to try again. There are fidgets, notebooks, affirmations, and plants that we brought in and make us feel better.



Help us make connections with friends

Sometimes some lessons are just boring or really hard. To keep us going, learning in groups can really help. It can be even better if it is with friends. Working with other students can be ok, but it is hard to do during your least favorite or a boring subject. Friends can be easier to talk to, bring energy and help with motivation.

Making Your Own Completing Challenging Tasks Tips



Get Together: Gather with students one on one, in small groups, or as a class to have a discussion about their experiences with getting work done in your class. Ask them what feels easy and what feels hard. Listen and affirm.

Guide: Let students know you would like to co-develop ways to motivate each other when lessons or work feel challenging. Share why this is important to you.

Generate: Give a few examples of strategies that can help with motivation (you can pull from the list above) then ask students to share their ideas. Focus on listening and clarifying to make sure you understand. Chart their responses.

Gratitude: Thank students for their input and share your next steps. Consider creating a visual for the tips that you can use when planning or supporting students throughout class. Try the tips out, reflect on the impact (with students), and go through the process again.