Student: Scenario and Rules

You are a student in a lab class. You generally like the labs and find them interesting, but you wish the lab period wasn’t so long. You try to leave early when possible so you can rest before your next class, but this is difficult because you feel crunched for time even on the best of days. You’ve used this equipment before, but you don’t have a formal physics background.

A few minutes ago, you flagged down a teaching assistant because your equipment was malfunctioning. It was a quick fix, and you think you’re all set for the rest of the experiment, but the teaching assistant is still hanging around. That’s fine. It’s their job, you guess.

Still, they keep interrupting you and asking about your reasoning behind things. You’re trying to learn by doing and a real scientist wouldn’t be stopping and explaining themselves at every step, would they? No. Of course not. They’d go right ahead and do the experiment, because they know what they’re doing.

Besides, even if it turns out you got something wrong along the way, it’s not like it’s the end of the world. All the teaching assistants carry around these sheets of paper with what the experiment is supposed to look like when you’re done. You’ll set everything up as well as you can, then check against the solution. The teaching assistant might not like it, so you’ll have to be persuasive.

With that in mind, here’s your plan:

* Focus on the experiment and don’t let the teaching assistant distract you.
* Complete the experiment following the steps in your ***lab protocol***, referencing your ***apparatus diagram*** as needed.
* Once you’re done, if your setup doesn’t match the ***answer key***, get the answers and fix it. You did the experiment, that’s what matters.
* Above all, keep the experiment moving forward, whatever it takes. You have a lot to get done today and you can’t afford to get sidetracked.