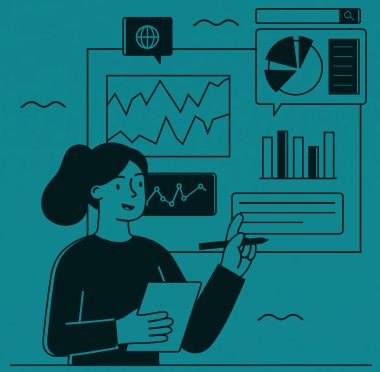# What to do when a student is struggling?

A guide for educators

Step 0: Identify the struggling student

Tips: Look for these things -
- poor grades on assessments
- negative attitude
- History of low achievement

Step 1: What is the student struggling with?

Look at their assignment and see what skills/topics the student is having a hard time with. Most times the issue is multifaceted, but realizing root causes is important.
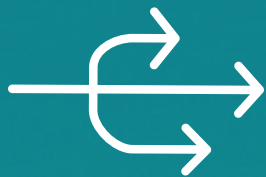

Guiding questions:
1. Is there a motivation issue?
2. Is there a prerequisite skill that the student is missing?
3. Is the student able to communicate ideas and core information?

Motivation Issue: This could be caused by a lack of understanding or something outside of the classroom.

Prerequisite skill: Student's grasp of prerequisite skills significantly impacts their performance.

Ability to communicate basic ideas: this shows the student has a solid base of knowledge. If they are still struggling, this indicates a mental block.

Step 2: Look at what can change

Addressing motivation by looking into various factors:

- Are there troubles at home?
-> Help parents provide support
-> Provide a safe place

- Does the student have good relationships with peers?
-> Promote good relationships in the classroom
-> Encourage peer-to-peer tutoring and mentoring
-> Establish collaborative group activities

- Do students have accountability for their own learning?
-> Employ the jigsaw method for teaching
-> Help the students set realistic goals
-> Provide differentiated materials for total engagement
-> Give service learning oriented projects

Knowledge issue:

- Is the information presented in a appropriate way?
-> Practice Cognitive Task Analysis
-> Challenge the students to reflect and elaborate
-> Emphasize other knowledge and how it fits in.

- Is the language appropriate for the student? (For ESLs/ELLs)
-> Allow peer-to-peer translation
-> Give materials that engage with multiple senses
-> Activate prior knowledge
-> (If relevant) Use Phonics based instruction

- Are the senses engaged during instruction (tactile, visual, audio, etc...)?
-> Give students opportunities to discuss and express their ideas in various formats
-> Encourage creative expression