



Four Ways to Develop Student Problem Solving Skills

Encourage Curiosity

Students will be encountering new information all through the Process, and particularly in Steps 1 and 3. Encourage students to use their curiosity to ask WHY repeatedly as they start to identify issues and need to determine if something is a cause or an effect.

As they dig into policy and practice research have them ask a series of questions: Who is the decision-maker? Who is affected? What is another viewpoint on this? Is this policy or practice effective? Encourage students to explore other questions that occur to them.

They are not expected to know the answers going into these discovery steps, and curiosity and questions are encouraged.

Don't Rescue, Reframe

If students become stuck at a stage in the Process, help them clarify the problem, ask guiding questions, and brainstorm some approaches. Some prompts to try: "Tell me more about the situation." "What have you tried already and what did you learn from that?" "What information do you need that you don't have yet?"

Honor Tenacity

If students are facing a problem or task that is not easily resolved, encourage them to stick with it, and remind them to try to find a different perspective to look at the problem and to keep asking questions until they have a new approach. This builds strength to keep trying and the ability to stick with a problem until it is solved.

Look for Cues and Clues

Encourage your students to use their observation skills and investigative curiosity to look around them for cues or clues, especially when conducting inventories. It often helps to pause for a moment and then take another look at the situation - and often with a slightly different perspective.