



## Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind

### Engage to Build Cognitive Capacity

#### #2 Teach Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

Teaching problem solving and critical thinking builds students' cognitive capacity and has a strong influence on student achievement.

Students with strong problem solving skills are able to identify the real problem in a question posed and then prioritize and select steps for a path to a solution. Students with critical thinking skills are able to look at a problem from multiple perspectives, design a potential intervention, and then evaluate the outcome.

Most kids who grow up in poverty don't have experience solving the kinds of academic problems offered up in class, and this process of teaching the brain to think critically and analytically requires support and practice.

Providing opportunities to practice at least two or three times a week, you can help students become proficient problem solvers.

#### "Short Term" Solutions you can use (p. 58):

1. Model and scaffold the process
2. Promote collaborative problem solving
3. Teach transferable models for problem solving
4. Create competition