

Differentiation Troubleshooter

Reason for getting stuck	How to help 'unstuck' students
Grammar or vocabulary exercises	
Does not understand the task	<p>Check instructions with student. Explain in L1 if necessary. Do one or two questions with student.</p>
Does not understand the forms required	<p>Explain the forms required for those specific questions on a 1-1 basis. Make the forms required for the exercise available to student, either as a chart or as options. Complete the first two questions for the student, explaining why that form is used and what the sentence means. Allow student to see the answers then to complete exercise as memory task.</p>
Does not have the vocab needed	<p>Show student the vocabulary bank that corresponds to the exercise so they can access the language. Ask student to look over the corresponding vocabulary before continuing. Allow student to work through exercise with access to electronic dictionary. Allow student first to see the answers then to complete exercise as memory task.</p>
May know vocab or forms but does not understand keywords in the questions.	<p>Ask student what they do not understand in the input question and provide explanation or L1 translation.</p>
Reading comprehension or text	
Does not understand the text as a whole.	<p>Provide a short synopsis: <i>This is a text about...</i> . Repeat in L1 if needed. Provide a simple paraphrased version of title and first paragraph. Provide a line-by-line spoken translation of the title and first paragraph.</p>
Does not know a specific word/s	<p>Provide explanation or translation at the point of need. Allow access to dictionary. Allow students to scan text prior to task and ask you about unfamiliar items.</p>
Cannot understand key sentences	<p>Ask student to identify those sentences (underlining them). Paraphrase into graded language or L1.</p>
Does not understand any of the text	<p>This indicates serious decoding issues. Allow access to paper-based or online dictionary and ask them to work through just the first</p>

	<p>paragraph, translating it – then together look at the translation.</p> <p>Provide a line-by-line L1 translation spoken.</p> <p>Move student off task to vocabulary work, which will serve as the basis to understanding of the text.</p> <p>Then later: Provide a simplified text.</p> <p>Provide a version of the text double-spaced with interleaved L1 translation.</p>
Does not understand the wording of questions on the text	<p>Ask what it is the student does not understand.</p> <p>Provide paraphrasing or L1 translation.</p>
In-class writing	
Does not understand rubric to writing task	<p>Identify if it is because of individual words in the rubric that are unknown and if so, explain them.</p> <p>Where the level of unknown language is higher, paraphrase rubric into graded language or give L1 translation.</p> <p>Where the underlying basis for the genre is unknown, explain it. For example: <i>An 'article' is something you might read in a magazine or on a web page.</i></p> <p>Show student a model answer to the question to give them an idea about format and register.</p>
Does not know the word or phrase for something they want to say	<p>Provide word or phrase as teacher input or allow access to paper-based or electronic dictionary.</p>
Does not know how to express an idea in English	<p>Allow student to explain what they want to say.</p> <p>Reformulate utterance providing input language, adjusting word order or forms.</p> <p>Help by providing entire phrase or sentence.</p>
Cannot think of anything to write	<p>Explore with the student what the question prompts might mean for <i>them</i>.</p> <p>Provide some basic ideas.</p> <p>Allow student to look briefly at what classmates are writing.</p>
Struggles to write anything	<p>Provide entire model answer and allow student to study it. Follow up with a reconstruction activity or allow student to work through, translating the ideas into L1.</p>
Speaking activity	
Does not understand the question or prompt	<p>Reformulate or explain.</p> <p>Provide L1 translation where appropriate.</p>
Does not have the word to express their idea	<p>Provide word when and where needed.</p>
Does not have words, phrases and forms to express an idea	<p>Listen to student's utterance then reformulate.</p> <p>Provide student with required input language.</p>

Did not understand partner's last utterance	Ask partner to repeat, reformulate or explain. Paraphrase partner's utterance. Provide simplified question on the same topic.
Cannot think of anything to say in response to question or prompts	Provide additional prompts. Try to help student personalize answer by exploring what question might mean for that student. Give your own personalised responses as example: <i>If I was answering that, I'd say...</i>
Listening comprehension activity	
Does not understand general context, theme or dynamic of the audio	Explain. For example: <i>In this recording there is a mother and a daughter speaking etc.</i> Once recording is playing, pause and reorientate listener. For example: <i>That is the pop star and this... is the interviewer. Can you hear the different voices?</i>
Does not understand question because of unknown word items or phrasing	Explain unknown terms. Reformulate question or translate into L1.
Is unable to locate the answers that correspond to questions in a comprehension as has become 'lost'	Pause audio, class permitting, and orientate student: <i>Now you are about to hear the answer to N^o 4. Have you looked at that? Are you ready?</i>
Is unable to decide on the answer to a question because of one or more key words being unfamiliar	Identify what words might provide the answer. Provide clues or even answers in citation form then replay key stretches of audio to see if student can hear for themselves.
Is unable to decode the stream of speech because of accent, speaker speed or unfamiliarity with spoken words out of citation form	Employ a combination of the above strategies. Slow the recording if a digital audio. Provide answers in clear citation form yourself then allow students to try to hear these on the audio.