

THE POWER OF STUDENT TEAMS

TABLE 2.1. Are students struggling productively or just struggling?

Nonstruggle	Productive struggle	Unproductive struggle
Students don't have to reach for the answer.	Students must work for the answer.	The answer is too far out of reach.
Students recall and repeat answers from memory.	Students debate, revise thinking, and generate hypotheses to find answers.	Despite reasonable time and effort, students cannot come to an answer.
Resources may be consulted, but no high-level thinking is involved (simple information retrieval).	Students must engage with resources (discuss with peers, interpret readings).	Resources are insufficient, unclear, or too complex.
Students feel bored and passive.	Students feel challenged, empowered, and engaged.	Students feel frustrated and give up or disengage completely.
Student teams are nonexistent or not being utilized to their full potential.	Student teams are functioning well—confident, interdependent.	Student teams experience interpersonal conflict due to frustration or become unmotivated.

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