


Teaching with Poverty in Mind

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Teaching with Poverty in Mind: Eric Jensen

What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It.

What is poverty?

Brainstorm with Group/Partner
3 minutes → Share out



Poverty is...

a chronic and debilitating condition that results from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul.

Eric Jensen, p. (6)

Six types of poverty:

- 1. **Situational poverty:** (temporary) Sudden crisis: divorce, health problems, environmental disasters.
- 2. **Generational poverty:** (Occurs in families where at least two generations have been born into poverty.) (Families living in this type of poverty are not equipped with the tools to move out of their situation.)
- 3. **Absolute poverty:** Which is rare in the U.S. , involves a scarcity of such necessities as running water, food, and shelter. (Families in absolute poverty tend to focus on day to day survival.)

Polk School Student DATA

See handout

Six types of poverty:

- 4. **Relative poverty:** The economic status of a family income is insufficient to meet society's average standard of living.
- 5. **Urban poverty:** (metropolitan areas)
Population at least 50,000
Stressors include:
 - a. crowding
 - b. violence
 - c. noise
 - d. inadequate large-city services
- 6. **Rural poverty:** (nonmetropolitan areas)
Population below 50,000
Stressors include:
 - a. more single guardian households
 - b. less access to services
 - c. job opportunities are few

Common Behaviors of Children Living in Poverty:

- Chronic tardiness
- Lack of motivation
- Inappropriate behavior
- Use of profanity
- Disrespect to others



See Ruby Discipline Handout

Understanding Cultural Difference with Regard to Rules

Ruby Payne

HIDDEN RULES AMONG CLASSES / FROM RUBY PAYNE'S "UNDERSTANDING POVERTY"

	POVERTY	MIDDLE CLASS	WEALTH
POSSESSIONS	People	Things	Things
MONEY	To be used, spent.	To be managed.	Or not at all (tips, repairs, repairs, repairs).
PERSONALITY	To be unexcused. Sense of humor is highly valued.	If for acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued.	To be controlled, reserved.
SOCIAL EMPHASIS	Social inclusion of people her/his/its.	Emphasis is on self-governance and self-sufficiency.	Emphasis is on social exclusion.
FOOD	Key question: Did you have enough? Quantify important.	Key question: Did you like it? Quality important.	Key question: Was it presented well? Presentation important.
CLOTHING	Clothing valued for individual style and expression of personality.	Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into norm of middle class. Label important.	Clothing valued for its artistic sense and expression. Designer important.
TIME	Present most important. Decisions made for present based on feelings or survival.	Future most important. Decisions made against future manifestations.	Traditions and history most important. Decisions made partially on basis of tradition and decorum.
EDUCATION	Valued and revered as abstract but not as reality.	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections.
DESTINY	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate effects.	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	Believes in obligation.
LANGUAGE	Crust register. Language is about survival.	Formal register. Language is about negotiation.	Formal register. Language is about networking.
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Tends to be matriarchal.	Tends to be patriarchal.	Depends on who has money.
WORLD VIEW	Sees world in terms of local setting.	Sees world in terms of national setting.	Sees world in terms of international scope.
LOVE	Love and acceptance conditional, based upon whether individual is liked.	Love and acceptance conditional and based largely upon achievement.	Love and acceptance conditional and related to social standing and connections.
DRIVING FORCES	Survival, relationships, entertainment.	Work, achievement.	Financial, political, social connections.
HUMOR	About people and sex.	About situations.	About social flux play.

Change the School Culture from pity to empathy.

- When staff members work with children raised in poverty, a common observation is "Bless their hearts, they come from such terrible circumstances."
 Note: The problem with this mind set is that it leads to lowered expectations.

Establish a school culture of:

- Caring
- Not giving up
- Speaking respectfully
- Using positive affirmation

How to Create Challenging Classrooms for Students living in Poverty:

<p style="text-align: center;">Less</p> <p>Memorization Rote Drill & Practice Teacher Lecture One chance To Learn Recall of old knowledge</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">More</p> <p>Curiosity Encouragement Choice Effort (Try, Try, again) Problem Solving Build NEW knowledge</p>
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Academic Enrichment

- Academic Enrichment activities:**
- expand on students' learning in ways that differ from the methods used during the school day,
 - often are interactive and project focused,
 - enhance a student's education by bringing new concepts to light, and
 - are fun for the student, but also impart knowledge.

- Benefits of Academic Enrichment for Children from Poverty:**
 "Kindergarten to 21 Years Old"
- | <u>Increased</u> | <u>Decreased</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Intelligence (IQ) | • Grade Repetition |
| • Reading and Math Skills | • Special Education Placement |
| • Academic Locus of Control | • Teen Pregnancy |
| • Social Competence | • Smoking and Drug Use |
| • Years in School, including College | |
| • Full-time Employment | |
- Source: Adapted from The Development of Cognitive and Academic Abilities: Growth Curves Early Childhood Educational Experiment.

Table Talk Academic Enrichment



Classroom Engagement?

How Poverty Affects Classroom Engagement:
Students from low-income households are more likely to struggle with engagement - for seven reasons:

	Reason:	What we can do:
Reason 1: Health and Nutrition	Poor students are less likely to exercise , get proper diagnosis , receive appropriate and prompt medical attention.	Recess and physical education contribute to greater oxygen intake and better learning (Winter et al., 2007)

	Reason:	What we can do:
Reason 2: Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who grow up in low socioeconomic conditions typically have a smaller vocabulary than middle-class children. Children from low-income families hear, on the average, 13 million words by age four (4). Middle-class families' children hear about 26 million words during the same time period. In upper income families, they hear a staggering 46 million words by age four (4) - three times as many as their lower income counterparts (Hart & Risley, 1995). A child's vocabulary is a part of the brain's tool kit for learning, memory, and cognition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include vocabulary building in engagement activities. Teachers must be relentless about introducing and using new words.

	Reason:	What we can do:
Reason 3: Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One reason many students from low income families seem unmotivated is because of the lack of hope and optimism. Efforts can be taught and strong teachers do this everyday! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen your relationship with your students. Reveal more of yourself and learn more about them. Make connections to students' worlds in ways that help them see a viable reason to play the academic game. Affirm effort everyday in class! Let them know how much good you see in them. Set high goals and sell students on their chances to reach them. Show them real-world success stories of adults who came from the same circumstances and achieved their goals.

	Reason:	What we can do:
Reason 4: Hope and the Growth Mind Set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hope is a powerful thing! Research suggests that lower socioeconomic status is often associated with viewing the future as containing more negative events than positive ones (Robb, Simon & Wardie, 2009). If students think failure or low performance is likely, they'll probably not bother to try. Similarly, if they think they aren't smart enough and can't succeed, they'll probably not put out any effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach students that their brain can change and grow, that they can even raise their IQs. Focus on affirming and reinforcing efforts. Guide students in making smarter strategy choices and cultivating a positive attitude.

Reason 5: Cognition	<p>Reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonly, low-SES children show <u>cognitive problems</u> including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Short attention spans</u> • <u>High levels of distractibility</u> • <u>Difficulty monitoring the quality of their work</u> • <u>Difficulty generating new solutions to problems</u> <p>(Alloway, Gathercole, Kirkland, & Elliott, 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many children who struggle cognitively either <u>act out</u> (exhibit problem behavior) or <u>shut down</u> (show learned helplessness). <u>But cognitive capacity, as well as intelligence, is a teachable skill</u> (Busch Kuehl & Jaeggi, 2010) 	<p>What we can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the core academic skills that students need the most: <p>Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to organize • Study • Take notes • Prioritize • Remember key ideas <p>Level 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Processing • Working-memory skills
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Reason 6: Relationships	<p>Reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When children's <u>early</u> experiences are <u>chaotic</u> and one or both of the parents are absent, the developing brain often becomes <u>insecure</u> and <u>stressed</u>. • Three quarters of <u>all children</u> from poverty have a <u>single-parent caregiver</u>. • If caregivers are <u>stressed</u> about health care, housing, and food, <u>they're more likely to be grumpy</u> and less likely to offer <u>positive comments</u> to their children. 	<p>What we can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <u>more you care, the better the foundation for interventions.</u> • Learn <u>every student's name</u>. • Ask about their family, their hobbies, and what's important to them.
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Reason 7: Distress	<p>Reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children living in <u>poverty</u> experience greater <u>chronic stress</u> than do their more <u>affluent</u> counterparts. • Distress affects <u>brain development</u>, <u>academic success</u>, and <u>social competence</u> (Evans, Kim, Ting, Tether, & Shannis, 2007). • Students may appear to be either <u>out of control</u>, <u>showing an attitude</u>, or <u>lazy</u>. But these behaviors are actually <u>symptoms of stress disorders</u> – and distress influences many behaviors that <u>influence engagement</u>. 	<p>What we can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Build stronger relationships with students</u>; this <u>alleviates</u> students' stress. • Reduce stress by embedding more <u>classroom fun</u> in academics. • <u>Help students get the extra glucose and oxygen they need</u> by having them engage <u>sensory motor</u> activities.
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