



Making a Difference with Children of Poverty in Schooling

*Based on the Book- A Framework for Understanding Poverty,
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*Poverty knows no bounds,
neither race, gender, culture
nor language.*

Making a Difference with Children of Poverty in Schools

■ **What is poverty?**

- It is the extent to which an individual does without resources (Payne, 1998).

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- ***What are the resources to which persons in poverty may not have access?***
 - Financial
 - Emotional
 - Mental
 - Spiritual
 - Physical
 - Support Systems
 - Relationships/Role Models
 - Knowledge of Hidden “Class” Rules

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- ***What are your experiences with poverty?***
- ***How do we think about the poor?***
 - Cannot work – mental or physical impairments
 - Could work – with appropriate support/training
 - Do work – occasional need of assistance
 - Are employed – low paying jobs
- ***The poor who are employed must live in the same condition of dependency as all other poor.***

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Case Studies Inserted About Here -

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- ***What are the implications of this knowledge?***
 - Educators need to assess the resources available to a child before dispensing advice or offering solutions!
 - A major resource Educators can offer that costs nothing is appropriate and instructive role models.
 - No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship. Educators must seek ways to strengthen relationships with the child and her/his support system.

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- ***What is the power of language and narrative in the culture of poverty?***
 - Language Registers
 - Ritualistic
 - Formal
 - Conversational
 - Casual
 - Intimate

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- ***What is the power of language and narrative in the culture of poverty?***
 - Discourse Patterns
 - Related to Register
 - Mismatch due to “class”
 - Related to Purpose
 - Share Experiences and Emotions – Narrative
 - Share Information - Expository

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- ***What is the power of language and narrative in the culture of poverty?***
 - Narrative
 - Formal Register – Typical Plot Structure of Written Narratives – Setting, Problem, Episodes, Resolution
 - Casual Register – Begins with the most intense, interesting, or emotional part. The story is told in “snippets” with reactions from the audience expected throughout. Ends with comments about the value statements of the character(s),

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- ***What are the implications of this knowledge?***
 - Formal register needs to be taught directly – remember no significant relationship exists.
 - Discourse patterns need to be taught directly.
 - Both casual and formal registers for narrative texts need to be used as a part of classroom instruction.
 - Discipline should occur in the formal register even though student responses may occur in the casual.
 - Students need to be taught and shown how much difference using the formal register will affect their ability to obtain well paying employment.

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- ***What are the hidden rules among classes?***
 - **Possessions**
 - Poverty – People
 - Middle Class – Things
 - Wealthy – One-of-a-kind objects, antiques, rare objects, etc.
 - **Money**
 - Poverty – To use or spend
 - Middle Class – To manage
 - Wealthy – To conserve or invest
 - **Social Emphasis**
 - Poverty – Social inclusion of people they like
 - Middle Class - Self governance and self-reliance
 - Wealthy – Social exclusion

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- ***What are the hidden rules among classes?***
 - **Personality**
 - Poverty – Entertainment, Sense of Humor highly valued.
 - Middle Class – Acquisition/Stability, Achievement highly valued.
 - Wealthy – Social networking, financial, social, political connectedness
 - **Food**
 - Poverty – Quantity
 - Middle Class – Quality
 - Wealthy – Presentation
 - **Clothing**
 - Poverty – Valued for self expression of personality
 - Middle Class – Valued for labels, acceptance, and norms
 - Wealthy – Valued for its artistic sense – designer rather than labels

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- ***What are the hidden rules among classes?***
 - **Time**
 - Poverty – Present most important. No thought of ramification for the future.
 - Middle Class – Future most important. Ramifications for future considered carefully.
 - Wealthy – Decisions made based on tradition, history, and decorum.
 - **Education**
 - Poverty – Valued in the abstract but not a “reality.”
 - Middle Class – Means to an end – success, achievement, & money.
 - Wealthy – Necessary accouterment for maintaining status and social connections.
 - **Destiny/Opportunity**
 - Poverty – Belief in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate chance.
 - Middle Class – Believes in choice. Can change due to good choices.
 - Wealthy – Noblesse oblige

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- ***What are the hidden rules among classes?***
 - **Language**
 - Poverty – Casual Register. Language about survival.
 - Middle Class – Formal Register – Language about negotiation.
 - Wealthy – Formal – Language about networking.
 - **Family Structure**
 - Poverty – Matriarchal
 - Middle Class – Patriarchal
 - Wealthy – Depends on who has the \$\$
 - **World View**
 - Poverty – Local setting
 - Middle Class – Nationalistic
 - Wealthy – International

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- ***What are the hidden rules among classes?***
 - **Love and Acceptance**
 - Poverty – Conditional- Depends on how well you are liked.
 - Middle Class – Conditional - Based on achievement.
 - Wealthy – Conditional – social standing and connectedness.
 - **Driving Force**
 - Poverty – Survival, relationships, and entertainment.
 - Middle Class – Work and achievement.
 - Wealthy – Financial, social, and political connections.

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- ***What are the implications of this knowledge?***
 - Students need to be taught the “hidden” rules of the middle class not in denigration of their own but rather as another set of rules that can be used if they so choose.
 - Many of the attitudes and behaviors that students and parents bring with them are an integral part of their culture and belief systems.
 - Middle class solutions should not necessarily be imposed when other more workable solutions might be found for the circumstances of the individual.
 - An understanding of these cultural differences will help educators feel less anger and frustration when dealing with children of poverty.
 - Most children of poverty do not believe they are poor AND most children of wealth do not believe they are wealthy.

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- ***Characteristics of Generational Poverty***
 - *Generational* poverty is defined as having been in poverty for at least two generations.
 - *Situational* poverty is defined as a lack of resources due to a particular event, i.e., divorce, chronic illness, death, job loss, etc.

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○ ***Characteristics of Generational Poverty***

- Family patterns are very different in generational poverty.
- Many marital arrangements are common-law.
- Middle class families' lineage is traceable.
- Poverty families, mother is at the center, AND the family radiates from that center.
- Mother will often but not always have several sexual relationships having children who often replicate the pattern.

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- ***Characteristics of Generational Poverty***
 - Because violence is a part of poverty, death is a prominent part of family history.
 - The most important keys to understanding the story of a child's family life are often the omissions.
 - Who children stay with after school, who stays with whom when there is trouble, and who is available to deal with school issues are dependent upon the current alliances and relationships at THAT moment.
 - In poverty, the roles, the multiple relationships, the nature of the male identity, the ever-changing allegiances, the favoritism, and the matriarchal structure result in different patterns.

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- ***Characteristics of Generational Poverty***

The economic traits which are most characteristic of the culture of poverty include the constant struggle for survival, unemployment and underemployment, low wages, a miscellany of unskilled occupations, child labor, the absence of savings, a chronic shortage of cash, the absence of food reserves in the home, the pattern of frequent buying of small quantities of food many times a day as the need arises, the pawning of personal goods, borrowing from local money lenders at usurious rates of interest, spontaneous informal credit devices (tandas) organized by neighbors, and the use of second-hand clothing and furniture.

Oscar Lewis

Four Horsemen

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- *How Do These Characteristics Surface with Adults and Students from Poverty*
 - *Get mad and quit their job/work.*
 - *Working hard is based on their relationship with the boss.*
 - *Do not use conflict-resolution skills, settle issues in verbal or physical assaults.*
 - *Say exactly what is on their mind when angry, no reservations emotionally*
 - *Enjoy humor, use personality to entertain, love stories about people.*
 - *Are VERY independent.*
 - *Need time off periodically or are late due to family emergencies.*
 - *Need emotional warmth from colleagues, boss, or teacher to feel comfortable*
 - *They see organizations as basically dishonest.*
 - *Need greater amounts of personal space.*
 - *Show clear favoritism for certain people.*
 - *Men socialize with Men, Women with Women*
 - *Men socialize in bars and at work.*
 - *Women with children stay home and have only other female relatives as friends.*
 - *When men and women are together, it is usually about sexual relations.*
 - *A real man is ruggedly good looking, is a lover, can fight physically, works hard, and takes no crap.*
 - *A real woman takes care of her man by feeding him and downplaying his real shortcomings.*

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- *How Do These Characteristics Surface with Adults and Students from Poverty*
 - *A man in poverty because he is a fighter and a lover is typically unable to have a stable life. Compared with the middle class male identity which is to be the provider, the man of poverty must either fight or flee – there is no going along with the flow. When the heat dies down from his fighting and fleeing, usually to avoid the law, he returns to begin the cycle anew.*

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- *How Do These Characteristics Surface at School*
 - *Are very disorganized, frequently losing papers, don't have signatures, etc.*
 - *Always have many excuses for why papers are missing, lost, etc.*
 - *Don't do assigned homework.*
 - *Are physically aggressive.*
 - *Like to entertain classmates.*
 - *Only attend to part of what is on the page.*
 - *Only do part of an assignment.*
 - *Can't seem to get started – no procedural self-talk*
 - *Can't monitor their own behavior*
 - *Laugh when they are disciplined*
 - *Decide whether or not they will work in your class based on whether they like you or not*
 - *Tell stories in the casual register using episodic structures*
 - *Don't know or use middle class courtesies*
 - *Dislike all authority figures*
 - *Talk back and are extremely participatory*

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- *Why is it getting more difficult to conduct school as we used to conduct school?*
 - *The number of students who bring the middle-class culture with them are decreasing and the number of students who bring the poverty culture to school with them is increasing.*
 - *As in any demographic switch, the prevailing rules and policies eventually give way to the group with the largest numbers.*
 - *We must fundamentally rethink the traditional notions we have about relationships and achievement.*

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- *What does this information mean for schools and teachers?*
 - *Getting an education is the key to getting out and staying out of poverty.*
 - *People get out of poverty for one of four reasons:*
 - *A goal or vision of something they want to have or to become.*
 - *A situation that is so painful that anything would be an improvement.*
 - *Someone who “sponsors” them or shows them a different way or convinces them they could live differently.*
 - *A specific opportunity or talent that provides an opportunity for them.*

Making a Difference for Children of Poverty in Schools

- *What does this information mean for schools and teachers?*
 - *Being in poverty is not about ability or intelligence.*
 - *Many people stay in poverty because they do not know there are other choices, options, or opportunities.*
 - *They have no one to teach them the hidden rules or processes and provide them resources to exit poverty.*
 - *Schools are virtually THE ONLY places left where students of poverty can learn the choices and rules of the middle class.*

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- *Role Models and Accessing Emotional Resources to Move Out of Poverty*
 - *Many children come from families where there aren't appropriate role models and emotional resources available to move along the continuum from dependence to independence to interdependence.*
 - *To move out of poverty one must trade off some relationships for achievement at least for a period of time. To do this, one needs to have access to emotional resources and stamina.*
 - *Appropriate role models provide children of poverty access to different ways to cope emotionally with issues, conflicts, and problems. They provide an escape from the "emotional memory bank" of conditioned emotional responses.*

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- *How do you provide emotional resources to students when they have not experienced appropriate role models in a functional relationship rather than in dysfunctional relationships.*
 - *Provide support systems.*
 - *Use appropriate discipline strategies*
 - *Establish long-term relationships with adults who are appropriate role models.*
 - *Teaching children the hidden rules.*
 - *Identifying options for children.*
 - *Increasing student achievement through appropriate instruction.*
 - *Teaching children the practice of goal-setting.*
 - *Establish schedules and instructional organizations that allow students to stay with the same teacher(s) for two or more years if mutually agreed upon.*
 - *Teachers and administrators much be aware of their prominence as appropriate role models.*
 - *Emotional resources are available free through the appropriate role modeling of the teachers and other school personnel.*

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- *Building Support Systems*

- *Support systems are the friends, family, and backup resources that can be accessed in times of need.*

- *Coping strategies*

- *Options for solving problems*

- *Providing information and know-how*

- *Temporary relief from emotional, mental, and financial or time constraints.*

- *Connections to other people and resources*

- *Positive Self Talk*

- *Procedural Self Talk*

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- *What School-Based Support Systems Can Be Accessed to Help Children of Poverty ?*
 - *School wide homework support built into the daily school schedule*
 - *Supplemental school wide reading programs, i.e., Grey Power, Computer Programs, after school, Saturdays, summers, take home libraries on students' independent reading level, etc.*
 - *Looping students and teachers for more than one year.*
 - *Advisory Groups for conflict resolution, anticipating changes ahead, etc.*
 - *Schoolwide flexible grouping for reading/math*
 - *Parent training and contacts via Video Tapes*
 - *Direct teaching of study skills*
 - *Required daily goal-setting and procedural self talk*
 - *Team support for students among providers in the school*

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- *What About Discipline with Children of Poverty?*
 - *In poverty, discipline is about penance and forgiveness, not about change. Mothers dispense judgments, determine the amount and price of penance, and offer forgiveness.*
 - *Many of the behaviors students bring to school are necessary for them to survive outside of school.*
 - *If children of poverty don't know how to fight physically, they are going to be in danger back on the streets.*
 - *But if that is their only way of solving problems, they will be in trouble at school.*

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- *What About Discipline with Children of Poverty?*
 - *Discipline must provide structure and choice for it to be successful in moving students toward self-governance.*
 - *Explicitly spell out expected behaviors.*
 - *Explicitly communicate probable consequences of not choosing these behaviors.*
 - *Emphasize that every individual has a choice to make.*
 - *Clearly tell children that every choice has a consequence – either desirable or undesirable.*

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- *Student Behaviors – Interventions*
 - *Laughs when disciplined*
 - *Understand the reason for the behavior – face saving*
 - *Tell student 3 or 4 other behaviors that would be more appropriate.*
 - *Argue loudly with the teacher*
 - *Don't argue with the students.*
 - *Model respect for student.*
 - *Ask them to answer four questions:*
 - *What did you do?*
 - *When you did that, what did you want?*
 - *List four other things you could have done..*
 - *What will you do next time?*

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- *Student Behaviors – Interventions*
 - *Angry Response – Based on Fear*
 - *Respond in the adult voice.*
 - *After a cooling off period, discuss other options the child could have used.*
 - *Inappropriate or Vulgar Response*
 - *Teach students phrases that could be used to say the same thing.*
 - *Physically Fight*
 - *Stress that fighting is unacceptable in school.*
 - *Discuss other options children can live with at school – Maybe not settle this business at school!*

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- *Student Behaviors – Interventions*
 - *Hands always on someone else*
 - *Allow them to draw or doodle.*
 - *Have children hold their hands behind their backs when in line or standing.*
 - *Give them as much to do with their hands, e.g., manipulatives as you can.*
 - *Cannot follow directions*
 - *Write steps on the board, chart, poster, etc.*
 - *Have children write the steps on the top of their paper they need to finish the task.*
 - *Have them practice procedural self talk.*

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- *Student Behaviors – Interventions*
 - *Extremely disorganized*
 - *Teach a simple method of organization using colors, icons, etc.*
 - *Have students develop a plan for organization*
 - *Complete only part of a task*
 - *Write all the parts of a task to be completed on the board, chart, or poster.*
 - *Require that all parts of the task be checked off when finished.*
 - *Disrespectful to the teacher*
 - *Tell students that disrespect is not a choice.*
 - *Identify for children the correct voice tone and appropriate word choice for addressing the teacher.*

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- *Student Behaviors – Interventions*
 - *Harm other students, verbally or physically abusive*
 - *Aggression is not a choice.*
 - *Give children other phrases that can be used to replace those they are using.*
 - *Tell or have children generate other appropriate ways to respond.*
 - *Cheat or steal*
 - *The behavior is illegal and not a choice at school.*
 - *Use a metaphor story to find the reason or need.*
 - *Address the reason or need.*

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Learning About Voices to Be Used in Discipline

- *Child Voice (defensive, victimized, emotional, whining, strongly negative) – I hate you. Quit picking on me. You make me sick. You're ugly. You made me do it.*
- *Parent Voice (authoritative, directive, judgmental, evaluative, win-lose mentality, punitive, demanding, threatening) – You shouldn't do that. Life's not fair, get busy. You do as I say. Why can't you be like? That's stupid, immature, out of line, etc.*
- *Adult Voice (non-judgmental, free of negative non-verbal, factual, often in question format, attitude of win-win) – In what ways could this have been resolved? I would like to recommend.. What are choices in this situation? I am comfortable with... I need the following to be comfortable with...These are the consequences of that choice/action. We agree to disagree.*

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What is a metaphor story?

- *Do not use proper names – third person*
- *Uses a similar situation to the one requiring discipline*
- *Relates what has happened or keeps on happening*
- *Asks questions about “why” requiring a “because” response*

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What does this information mean for the school setting?

- *Students from poverty need to have at least two sets of behaviors from which to choose – one for the streets and one for school and work.*
- *The purpose of discipline is to promote successful behaviors at school.*
- *Teaching children to use the “adult voice” is an important ingredient in success at school and out of school as an alternative to violence and physical aggression.*
- *Structure and choice must be part of discipline.*
- *Discipline must be seen and taught as a form of instruction*
- *Teach the hidden rules – Do you use the same rules to play all Play Station Games? Why not? You’d loose. Same here.*

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Instruction and Improving Achievement

- *The overriding purpose of Early Reading First/Reading First is to improve the achievement of children from poverty. Low achievement is clearly correlated with lack of resources.*
- *Children of poverty have on average an IQ nine points lower than children in middle class.*
- *IQ tests measure acquired information:*
 - *What is gray tape and what is it used for?*
 - *What does dissed mean?*
 - *What is a roach?*
 - *What are the advantages and disadvantages of moving often?*
 - *Why is it important for a non U.S. citizen to have a green card?*
 - *What kind of work does a bondsman do?*

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Instruction and Improving Achievement

- *Children of poverty need cognitive strategies including acquisition of concepts, skills, and content.*
- *Children of poverty require adult mediation of the stimulus and the identification of a strategy by assigning meaning to the stimulus, e.g., “Don’t cross the street. You could get hit by a car. So if you must cross the street, look both ways twice.”*
- *Deficiencies that occur without mediation:*
 - *Blurred and sweeping perceptions*
 - *Lack of a systematic method of exploration*
 - *Impaired verbal tools*
 - *Impaired spatial orientation*
 - *Impaired observation of constancies*
 - *Lack of precision and accuracy in data gathering*
 - *Lack of ability to compare and contrast, predict, cause-effect, etc.*

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Instruction and Improving Achievement

- *Interventions to Increase Learning*
 - *Observe eye movements*
 - *Tell, explain, model, and demonstrate*
 - *Use displays, charts, reminders, poster, etc.*
 - *Use graphic organizers*
 - *Use rubrics*
 - *Establish goal setting*
 - *Use question generation about learning – KWL*
 - *Use cooperative learning approaches to complete a hands on task.*
 - *Reveal information/language organization and structure*
 - *Remember the five essential elements of reading instruction – phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, & comprehension strategies*
 - *Remember to focus on the “use of instructional time” as a precious resource to be used effectively and efficiently*

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Remember Relationships

- *The key to achievement for students of poverty is in creating relationships with them!*
- *Make deposits not withdrawals – S. Covey.*
 - *Appreciation for humor and entertainment*
 - *Acceptance of what an individual cannot say about a person or situation*
 - *Respect for outside relationship demands and priorities*
 - *Using the adult voice*
 - *Assist with goal setting*
 - *Identify options related to resources*
 - *Value personal freedom, speech, and personality*