

The Important Work: Teaching Children of Poverty
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President George H.W Bush once said “education is the key to opportunity, it's a ticket out of poverty.” The first step to coming out of poverty is being able to see what is beyond it. Poverty encompasses not only the financial wellbeing of the student, but it affects the way student views the world and how they respond to what they are receiving in the classroom. When living in an impoverished area it is quite difficult for students to learn about the greater scale of the world outside of the classroom because they do not have any prior knowledge of the things that connect to it. According to researcher, Rebecca Swanson Gehrke, two-thirds or more of the students who are poor fail to reach the basic level of academic goals on national tests (Gehrke 1). Coming from a small town where over half the people live below the poverty line, I can relate to this. The educators worked really hard to help students see the bigger picture outside of what they were used to, but students just could not grasp it because it did not match what they were used to at home.

The biggest challenge of teaching at schools in poverty is parental lifestyles. For students that live in poverty, the harsh reality is education is not a priority. There are things to worry about such as work hours, other siblings, and even trying to scrape a meal together. Students have no control over the circumstances they come from. There are different factors that affect how students learn. They may not tell the teacher what is going on, therefore it is the educators responsibility to work through the unspoken challenges. Students who have no lunch and breakfast because their parents can't afford them multiple times a day, their brain capacity is decreased below the average student causing them to struggle in school. According to Kevin Johnston, contributor of MoneyWise, “ Students from impoverished households tend to have lower levels of verbal and reasoning skills than their peers because their parents are less likely to

read to them.” Because their parents may not be able to spend as much time with them, the challenge in this not only for the student, but the instructor as well. The teacher has to try to figure out why that particular student is not participating as much and is struggling with lessons. When dealing with this situation, the educator is required to step outside the box. Another challenge that coincides with that dilemma is students who have parents that are on drugs. According to The National Survey on Drugs Use and Health, one in eight (8 million) students live in a household where at one parent is suffering from substance abuse. Living in these conditions can take a heavy toll on the student because they are practically watching their parent’s demise in front of them and once again education is no longer the priority. This allows for the opportunity of teaching in an impoverished school to arise. The teacher is allowed the opportunity to become a resource to that student. They are able to supply them with the educational tools to catch up with their classmates and learn just as well as the average middle class-student. The opportunity of teaching impoverished children is the educator gets to create a connection that they normally would not have had. The educator gets to see who that student is beyond their struggle and condition, they get to see the student for the gift they offer to the world.

As a future educator, another big challenge I will face is the demographic of the school. Many schools are not set up to favor impoverished children. The schools I attended growing lacked the certain technologies we needed to access more into the outside world and interact more with the curriculum. Many students struggle with literacy and comprehension, therefore just teaching out of a textbook and a whiteboard does not tap into their learning style. With this disadvantage, the teachers and schools are isolating a portion of their students. This allows for the teacher to create the opportunity. My teachers used to get creative and allow us to create

things, write things, give presentations or whatever appealed to our style of learning and it worked. The students who typically were not engaged in the lesson were now conscious and aware of their learning. Of course, not having the best technology or STEM lab in the state is disadvantage but it allows for the teacher to interact more with the student and engage them. The best way to teach students is allow for them to have some control and say in what they are learning. It forces them to dissect and interact with it. Doing so, gives them something that no one can take away and that is knowledge. As an educator, meeting students on their level and helping them climb up is what education is all about. Once they are able to take control of their education, they can take control of the rest of their life and the door out of poverty is open.

Works Cited Page

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*	Essay has a proper title page which includes the following:
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Title: <i>Important Work: Teaching Children of Poverty</i>
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*	The title of the essay also appears on the top of the first page of the essay text.
-	Essay contains a minimum of two current research references.
*	All references, quotations, and copyrighted material used in the essay are identified properly, using either MLA or APA format.
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