Teaching and Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind

Broome-Tioga BOCES
Professional Development & Resource Center
“Teaching matters more than any other factors in a student’s school years. In fact, research (Hanushek, 2005) tells us that quality teaching can completely offset the devastating effects poverty has on students’ academic performance (Jensen, 2013).”
Today’s Outcomes:

• Identify three typical differences of children in impoverished environments

• Explain how to build a growth mindset

• Describe actions to increase social and cognitive engagement and explain how they impact all learners
Our MINDSET Matters!

Mindset= the established set of attitudes/beliefs held by someone

In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort. They’re wrong.

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.

WE CAN CHANGE OUR MINDSET!
Find out how:
http://mindsetonline.com/changeyourmindset/natureofchange/index.html
Growth Mindset

how does my brain change?

how do I grow?

what am I saying?

Eduardo Briceño, Co-Founder & CEO Mindset Works
# Mindsets- After a Failure

**FIXED**
- ✓ Feel helpless and want to give up
- ✓ Avoid future tasks similar to this one
- ✓ Invest little or no effort since I will not likely succeed
- ✓ I might consider cheating, if need be

**GROWTH**
- ✓ Resilience; I feel renewed energy
- ✓ I will learn from my mistakes to improve
- ✓ Effort is a positive, since I can control how much I apply
- ✓ I can be better the next time I try this
Enrichment Mindsets

1. Fierce Urgency
2. Empathy
3. Brains are designed to change
4. Teachers are the single greatest difference maker
5. NO EXCUSES!
MINDSET DANGER

If there is just ONE MOLECULE of doubt in you that ALL of your students can succeed, they will sense it and start giving up on BOTH you and themselves.
Poverty is... not a cul______, but a *ch ______ condition* affecting the *m____, b____ and s __* resulting from multiple adverse *r____f____*. 
How are kids from low SES typically different than those from middle or upper class?

1. Acute/chronic stress
2. Executive function skills
3. Less emotional support
Stress - Two Situations

You felt like you were “frozen”, you had an inability to function in some way or ways.

You are “feeding off of your stress” i.e. achieving a goal, accomplishing a task.
✓ **Stress** (on/off) is healthy for us!

✓ **Distress** (Chronic) is toxic to our brain and body!

✓ **Reality**: Poor children are exposed to: 1) more stressors, 2) more intense and longer lasting stressors, and 3) have fewer coping skills than their higher SES counterparts.
Under high stress, brains engage in bottom-up decision-making for a more reflexive strategy.
Fight, Flight or Freeze?

Threats, insults, put-downs and sarcasm activate the amygdala.
"Great theory, but what do we do?"

For things to change, you must change. Start by managing your own stress much, much better.

What works for you? (Round Robin)
How are kids from low SES typically different than those from middle or upper class?

1. Acute/Chronic Stress
2. **Executive Function Skills**
3. Less emotional support
What is Executive Function?

- A set of mental processes shaped by physical changes in the brain and life experiences (schema)
- It is how we connect past or prior knowledge/experience to the present
- People use it to plan, organize, strategize, pay attention to and remember details, manage time and space, control impulses, store things in working memory

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efCq_vHUMqs
What is Executive Function?
Executive Function

Select an area of Executive Function. How do you support this area in your classroom?
Enrichment Mindsets

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How are kids from low SES typically different than those from middle or upper class?

1. Acute/Chronic Stress
2. Executive Function Skills
3. Less emotional support
Kids “download” the negatives of chaos, disharmony, poor relationships, foul language, poor manners and weak vocabulary just as quickly and just as automatically as they would any positive or enrichment input.
A mother in poverty is less likely to provide the emotional support needed for proper developmental growth when she's stressed about her own health, safety, bill-paying, hunger and housing prospects.
Caregiver Feedback and Emotional Affirmations Varies by Child’s SES

$$$ Upper income caregivers average a 6-1 ratio of 6 positives to 1 reprimand

$$ Middle income caregivers average 2-1

$ Lower income caregivers average 1-2
Discipline Problems Emerge When Teachers Expect *What They Cannot Get*

"Hey, show a little remorse about it!"

Many kids don’t have the full emotional range to respond well *UNLESS* they are taught *HOW* to respond in class.
If the Healthy Emotional Brain Was Represented by a Keyboard, Many Students Today Use Fewer “Keys”

**TAUGHT:**
- Humility
- Forgiveness
- Empathy
- Optimism
- Compassion

**HARD-WIRED**
- ✓ Sadness
- ✓ Joy
- ✓ Disgust
- ✓ Anger
- ✓ Surprise
- ✓ Fear

**TAUGHT:**
- Sympathy
- Patience
- Shame
- Cooperation
- Gratitude
So what?

Stress

Executive Function

Less Emotional Support
Influences and Effect Sizes Related to Student Achievement

- Feedback
- Formative Assessment
- Home Environment and SES
- Not Labeling Students
- Problem Solving
- Reciprocal Teaching
- Spaced vs. Massed Practice
- Student Self-Assessment
- Teacher Student Relationships
- Vocabulary

Rank from highest influence to lowest
Effect Sizes

Effect size is a standardized measure of the relative size of the gain (or loss) of an intervention.

0.00 or less = Negative effect
0.00 – 0.20 = Negligible, unclear effects
0.20 – 0.40 = Small-moderate effects
0.40 – 0.60 = Very strong effects
0.60 – 2.00 = Extreme effects

These are just one way of understanding the value of educational/classroom factors. There are others.

http://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/
Influences and Effect Sizes Related to Student Achievement

- Student Self-Assessment: 1.44
- Formative Assessment: .9
- Reciprocal Teaching: .74
- Feedback: .73
- Teacher Student Relationships: .72
- Spaced vs. Massed Practice: .71
- Vocabulary: .67
- Not Labeling Students: .61
- Problem Solving: .61
- Home Environment and SES: .57
These are teachable!

Teachers are the single greatest difference maker

- Behavior
- Attitude
- Cognitive Capacity
- Effort
- Fierce Urgency
- Empathy

Brains are designed to change

No excuses!
Behavior: Building a Positive Climate

How did Rafe build a positive climate?
Behavior: Building a Positive Climate

- Reduce lecture time
- Eliminate the “fight, flight or freeze response”
- Give students more control

Using your notes sheet, jot down a few ideas to build a positive classroom climate
Build Cognitive Capacity
Language Influences Cognition

Toddlers from middle and upper income families actually used more words *in talking to their parents* than low SES mothers used in talking to their own children.

(Bracey, 2006)
How do we build cognitive capacity?

Retool the Brain’s Operating System or the “Apps” that run the brain

What do we mean by “operating system” or “APPS”?

Our Memory Systems

Our learners impacted by poverty have disrupted memory systems.

Our memory systems are the root of all learning
Grab the brain’s attention!

- De-stress
- Ritual
- Surprise
- Interest or novelty
- Color
- Personal meaning
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Ways to Add Meaning

• Create purpose, use and value
• Link to past experiences, Build experience
• Provide clear organization
Workarounds for Working Memory Limitations in Kids

1. Every few minutes, pause to let content sink in
2. Chunk content into smaller chunks to aid understanding
3. Quick, fun energizer that can bump up dopamine
   - Math Moves – Common Core
   - Kinesthetics for voc./content
   - Kagan Classbuilders

4. Music can be used to activate high energy or lower energy for extended focus – depends on beats per minute)
Effort and Attitude

How does the growth mindset influence effort and attitude?

Think about one example to share with a colleague...
Actionable Steps for my classroom

- Stress
- Executive Function
- Less Emotional Support
Available Resources

• ASCD Education Collection
  • Teaching With Poverty in Mind

• School Library System Professional Book Collection Catalog
  • Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind

• Presentation Materials
  • www.btboces.org ---Effective Teaching ---Teaching with Poverty in Mind (1/2 Day)
Resources


