Teaching and Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind

Eric Jensen
Thursday, October 13, 2016
Session Overview

#1 - Brains Change (for the worse and for the better)
#2 - Achievement Factors (learn which factors really matter)
#3 - Our Next Steps (it’s time for real change)

Common (and Effective) Paths
- Staff as Learners
- Collaboration
- Instructional Rigor
- Relationships
- Data Driven
- Classroom Climate
- Mindsets
- Enriching school culture

Poverty is… not a cul_____, but a ch______ condition affecting the mind, body and s__ resulting from multiple adverse r___ f___.

From 2006 to 2015 was the first time in U.S. history that our economy went 10 years without a single year of 3% growth. This shatters the 80 yr. record of a four-year stretch, during the Great Depression from 1929–1933.

The New “Normal”

The “New Normal” is this: 51% of All Students in U.S. Public Schools are Poor

SOURCE: USDOC http://www.bea.gov/national/index.htm#gdp

Current Cohort of K-12 Students in U.S. (in Poverty) is 25 Million; This is the Next Generation (poor)

What do you already know about the effects of poverty on your students?

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Poverty Quiz (true or false)
1. Poor people value education about the same as middle class.
2. Most poor are lazy and lack ambition.
3. If you gave the poor money, everything would change.
4. The parents must do more for our kids to learn better.
5. Our schools already do their part; it’s now up to the kids to do more.


Bottom Line
• Kids from poverty are often different
• Brains adapt to suboptimal conditions
• But, brains can and do change everyday
• You can facilitate that change
• Students can change if you change first
• You’ll have to let go of every single excuse you’ve ever heard of
• You can ensure your kids graduate
• Today, you’ll find out how to do it

Brains Can Change for the Better or for the Worse

Premise

#1

3 Common Differences
(in students from low SES vs. kids from higher SES)

Acute/Chronic Stress
Cognitive Skills
Emotional Support

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3 Common Differences
(in students from low SES vs. kids from higher SES)

Acute/Chronic Stress
Cognitive Skills
Emotional Support
✓ **Stress** (on/off) is healthy for us!
✓ **Distress** (chronic) is toxic to our brain and body!
✓ **Reality:** Poor children are exposed to: 1) more intense and longer lasting stressors and 2) have fewer coping skills than their higher SES counterparts.

**Chronic Stress Effects… T or F?**
1. Are much worse in the poor (T or F) (Evans GW, Kim P. 2012)
2. Fosters emotional issues (T or F) (Burgess et al. 1995)
3. Can suppress IQ & reading scores (T or F) (Delaney-Black, et al. 2002)
4. Memory losses (T or F) (Lupien, et al. 2001)
5. Causes neuron death (T or F) (De Bellis, et al. 2001)
6. Fosters inappropriate attachments (T or F) (Schore, A. 2002)

**Aliostasis** occurs when we re-set our brain’s thermostat (our “set point”) for metabolic functions

**Two Paths of Maladaptive Response to Chronic or Acute Stress in Your Students**

- **Healthy Brain Stress Response**
  - Repeated “Hits”
  - Trauma
- **Unhealthy Brain Stress Response**
  - Prolonged Response
  - Inadequate Response

**How Your Brain’s 2 Filters Choose Stress**

- Greater Stress
- Challenged or Excited
The Stress We Experience Is Our Reaction To a Perceived Loss of Control Over an Adverse Situation

Increase the control and our stress goes down

Decrease the control and our stress goes up

Effects of Chronic Stress on Your Students Include:

☐ Greater impulsivity (blurs, talking back, less reflection, more scattered)
☐ Confusion with AD/HD symptoms (poor memory, impulsivity & achronica)
☐ Might be either angry or argumentative
☐ Apathy: less effort put out in class and seemingly disinterested in achievement

Manage Your Brain Better

☐ Take Action (do something!)
☐ Write it Down for Later
☐ 1 Week Rule
☐ Redirect Your Attention
☐ Burn off Energy (play/exercise)
☐ Reframe the Experience
☐ Let it Go / Meditation / Hug

Greater Student Control

✔ Give choice (then “sell” the choices; who, when, where, how, etc.)
✔ Encourage input (voice, vision, 1-on-1 time, suggestion box or ask for it!)
✔ Provide leadership (team, class, project or group leader or job roles)
✔ Student self-assessment control

Relationships Can Lower Stress; How Well Do You Connect?

Of all the things researchers have discovered about the value of quality relationships, one of the most surprising is that they are strong mediators of stress. Good relationships diffuse stress and make your life easier.

✔ Making Changes

Here’s how you help more students graduate:

1) relationship-building
2) giving students more control
3) teach stronger coping skills
4) learn stress managing skills
5) develop effective PLCs
How are kids from low SES different than those from middle or upper class SES?

Acute/Chronic Stress
Cognitive Skills
Emotional Support

Understanding the Effects of Poverty on Thinking
- Researchers from Harvard and Princeton found that pressing financial worries had an immediate impact on the ability to perform well on cognitive tests.
- In experiments using induced money worries, the drop in cognitive function was comparable to a 13 point dip in IQ. Worrying about survival consumes excess “cognitive bandwidth”, researchers said.

Can Environment Influence IQ?

Greater number of risk factors is correlated with lower IQ

Brains of Lower SES are Different than those from Higher SES

Areas include those responsible for working memory, impulse regulation, visuospatial, language and cognitive conflict

Can Environment Influence IQ?

Greater number of risk factors is correlated with lower IQ

First Four Years of Language Exposure and Low SES

Cumulative Word Exposure

How are the brains from poverty different?

Cognitive Functions

Effect Size

SUMMARY: The Effects of Cognitive Under-stimulation

- Lack of vocabulary for school success
- Poor mood regulation (anger/apathy)
- Sub-grade level in language and memory
- Weaker executive functions (impulsivity, working memory, processing, sequencing and locus of control)

Making Changes

Here’s how you can help more students graduate:

1) Boost reading
2) Teach & vocabulary daily
3) Build thinking & memory

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

Acute/Chronic Stress
Cognitive Skills
Emotional Support

71% of Poor Families With Children are Unmarried

Over 1/3 of Single Moms are Poor


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

Acute/Chronic Stress
Cognitive Skills
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.

Stop Assuming that Your Students Already Know How to Behave; Most Don’t Know!
Teach the Blue Box Skills Daily

TAUGHT:
- Sadness
- Joy
- Disgust
- Anger
- Fear

HARD-WIRED
- Sympathy
- Patience
- Gratitude
- Compassion

SUMMARY: The Effects of Less Emotional Support

- Fewer hours of attunement leading to a narrow range of emotional responses
- Far fewer experiences with quality emotional punctuation that shape appropriate behaviors
- Less trust in adult relationships
- More classroom misbehaviors

✔️ Making Changes

Here’s how you help more students graduate:

1) relationship-building
2) teach emotional responses
3) foster positive emotions daily

Fight, Flight or Freeze?
Once the amygdala is activated in class, it takes at least 30 – 90 minutes to calm down for quality learning.

Threats, insults, put-downs and sarcasm activate the amygdala

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
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3. You get 2 FREE gifts as instant downloads 😊
   • “10 Best Student Achievement Boosters”
   AND
   • “How to Get 1% Better Every Week of the School Year in Just 3 minutes”

What Determines Our Destiny?

Neuroplasticity = Brain Changes

Unassisted (maladaptive)
Trauma, brain disorders, addictions of all types, aging, abuse, neglect, toxins, malnutrition and medications

Intentional (adaptive)
Cognitive training, pharmacology, skills training, non-invasive stimulation, nutrition, exercise, enrichment and neurofeedback

Smart Teaching Changes Brains

A: Children with autism
   Normal brain changes while deafening

B: Dyslexic children
   Normal brain changes while deafening

LSAT Test Prep Changes Brain Connectivity in Students

Instead of: Brain Damage (l. Frontal lobe, r. central sulcus) 
Instead of: Enlarged Amygdala (L > R) 
Instead of: Abnormal connectivity between regions of the brain. L. Frontal Lobe, R. Central Sulcus
Heritability of IQ Varies

Middle & Upper Income Parents

Lower Income Parents

60-80%

< 10%


Evidence of Anatomical Traces of Vocabulary Acquisition in the Typical Adolescent Brain

Vocabulary instruction and test scores are correlated with increased gray matter density


DNA is NOT Your Destiny!

Sometimes the apple DOES fall far from the tree!

Can an Enriching Change in Everyday Environment Raise IQ in Low SES Students?

65 low SES children were adopted between 4 and 6 years of age, all with an IQ <86 before adoption. After eight years, the average overall IQ gain was 13.9 points, and the gain was as high as 19.5 points in some children. (Dymre et al. 1999)

+19.5 IQ in Best cases

+13.9 overall

Baseline (<86 IQ)

Is Student Achievement Mostly Circumstances, Luck or Genes?
Title 1 Effect Sizes

Unless students make 1.5+ years of academic progress for every school year, they may drop out.

0.00 or less = Negative effect
0.00 – 0.20 = Mild, unclear effects
0.20 – 0.50 = Small-noticeable effects
0.50 – 0.75 = Mod. Effects (1.0-1.50)
0.75 – 2.00 = Strong Effects (1.50+)


What Research Tells Us About the Effects of Two Factors on Student Achievement

\[ \begin{array}{c|cc|cc|cc} \hline \text{SES} & 0.32 & 0.36 & 0.30 & 0.24 & 0.18 & 0.12 \ \hline \text{Effect Size} & 0.0 & 0.1 & 0.2 & 0.3 & 0.4 & 0.5 \ \hline \text{Teacher Effect Sizes} & 0.50 & 0.75 & 1.00 & 1.25 & 1.50 & 1.75 \ \hline \end{array} \]

What Would it Take for You to Close the Poverty Gap at School?

The mean is the average; an effect size of 1.0 = 34 point percentile change in scores.

A Secondary Teacher

WH was a 6-7th gr. Middle School English teacher at a Title 1 school in New Orleans (av. income is $15k/yr. in her zip code). Her students scored above both the district and state mean and they averaged 3+ years of growth per school year.

Does Strong Teaching Matter?

“If a student had a good teacher (one standard deviation of quality above the mean AYP) as opposed to an average teacher for five years in a row, the increased learning would be sufficient to close entirely the average gap between a typical low-income student and a higher-income student (i.e. one not on free or reduced lunch).”

Which Group of Kids Are the “Low Kids”?

Two Groups of Students in 1st - 3rd Grade, Each Group Over 1 Full SD From the Mean.
What % Of Graduating Seniors at This All Male Public Urban High School in Chicago Attend College?

a) 44%
b) 67%
c) 78%
d) 85%
e) 100%

MINDSET:
Teachers are the Single Greatest Difference-Maker

Talking Points So Far

_____________________________________

_____________________________________

_____________________________________

_____________________________________

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New research, with practical applications, every month. No charge.

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Eric Jensen's FREE Monthly Achievement Newsletter

Bonus booklet: Top 10 Brain-Based Teaching Strategies

Text ASAP: Eric to 96000
How Do the Teachers with High Scoring Students Teach Every Day?

These 4 “BACE” Traits are Teachable!

Cognitive Capacity

Behavior

Attitude

Effort

Which School Based Factor *(when tested at age 5)* is a Greater Predictor of Academic Success than IQ?

- a) Reading scores
- b) Motivation level
- c) Math scores
- d) Positive attitude
- e) Working memory

What Skills Matter Most for the Student’s Academic Success?

- ✓ Processing
- ✓ Attentional focus
- ✓ Locus of control
- ✓ Memory (working)
- ✓ Prioritization
- ✓ Ordering / sequencing
- ✓ Deferred gratification

BUILD COGNITIVE CAPACITY

What is in Our Working Memory?

*The content is...*

- sounds, called a “phonological loop”
  - OR
- pictures, or visual-spatial “sketchpad”
  - AND
- it is *held* for seconds or moments
  - AND
- it is *manipulated* or processed by our brain
Working Memory

✓ The driver of cognition
✓ It is required for every higher order thinking process
✓ Students in poverty have weaker working memory
✓ Is teachable and you can do it

Meta-Analysis on Working Memory Effect Sizes

- Elementary effect size = 1.41
- Secondary effect size = 0.72 – 1.18

How Do You Build This Skill?

1. Make it a Priority (8-12 wks.)
2. Buy-in & Relevance
3. Perfect Practice Over Time
4. Increase Challenge & Complexity

Temporary “Workarounds” for NOT Teaching Working Memory

1. Notes
2. Pause
3. Chunk
4. Prime
5. Do a quick, fun physical activity

Plan Working Memory Boosters

CHOOSE

AUDITORY

or

MATH

SCIENCE

or

VISUAL

or

LANGUAGE

ARTS

Heads-up! Here’s what you personally can do to improve student achievement…
Key Brain-Changing Factors

- Buy-in
- Meaningful Goals/Evidence of Learning
- Interdependency
- Quick Initial Learning Curve
- Increasing Challenge & Complexity
- Quality Feedback
- Apply 10-14 Min/day, 3-5x/Wk. for 8-12 Wks.

Buy-In Strategies

K-5 STUDENTS:
The "bigger kid" challenge, fun, teacher enthusiasm, curiosity, be gross, friendship-maker and mystery.

GRADE 6-12 STUDENTS:
Be edgy/risky, use peer pressure, create a big challenge, embed student interests, stair-step the activity or work with friends.

Example of Smart Technology Able to Help Students Read

Use FastForward®
This software builds cognitive skills like memory, attention and processing speed to build brain areas for better reading. It can also remediate the underlying difficulties that keep struggling readers and English language learners from making progress. Raise one grade level in 8-12 weeks. Check it out now at:
http://www.scilearn.com/products/fast-forward

Neuroplasticity is Remapping the Brain. Here are the Rules for Skill-Building:

1. Students absolutely must b_____ - i__ to it.
2. Skill must be coher__ to the student with increasingchal____and comp____.
3. Their brains need error-c________________.
4. Students need ____ min./day, 3-5/wk./2mos.
5. Once they get it right, they still need pr_____.
6. Skill-building can be strengthened in which subject areas? ____________

WM Lesson Planner

1. Content to use is planned
2. Objectives created
3. Evidence of learning listed
4. Buy-in established to use as “hook”
5. Interdependency created
6. Feedback set up
7. Rules of the activity & goals stated
8. Activity begins
9. Ending progress assessed
10. Debrief the learning

Predictors of Student Success

“I have spent over a decade leading several major projects to understand the link between brain function and education.

______________ is the #1 predictor of learning success.”

Dr. Tracy Alloway,

a) Attitude
b) IQ
c) Effort
d) Vocabulary
e) Working Memory
f) Prior Year’s Grades
g) Class Behaviorsh) SES of Parents
i) Motivation
**SUMMARY:** Executive Functions are Teachable

- Brains physically change every day
- Working memory is teachable as both sounds or pictures
- There are long-term strategies that build attentional focus
- Short term workarounds include buy-in with peer-driven goals

**Guess the % of Students That Graduate From This Public School and Go on to Attend College**

% from Poverty = 100%
% Hispanic = 59%
% African American, Asian and Anglo = 31%

**You Pick an Answer...**

a) 18%
b) 29%
c) 42%
d) 77%
e) 96%

“What % of the seniors of this 100% poverty school will go on to college?”

**BOOST HOPE & OPTIMISM**

these factors boost effort

**3 Great Climate Builders**

- **Hope, Optimism & Gratitude** fuels the pursuit of goals and reinforces positives
- **Mindset of Growth and Feedback** is the learner’s belief that he/she can change and grow with quality feedback to foster effort
- **Engagement** for active, relevant learning
Key Factors that Affirm Hope

1. Supportive Rel________
2. Repeated Suc_________
3. Pos____ R_____ models
4. Af_______ by Authorities
5. Setting and getting ______
6. Compelling personal vi____
7. Perception that it’s getting b_______
8. Faith and stories of those who’ve m____ i__
9. Having a vo_______ and sharing it
10. Do ser____ wo_____ as a class

Students Perform Better When Teacher is Empathic, Fosters Relationships and is Supportive

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Effect Sizes on Achievement</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>1.0</th>
<th>0.9</th>
<th>0.8</th>
<th>0.7</th>
<th>0.6</th>
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<td>Teacher Respects Students</td>
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FAST Relationship Builders

- Writing assignment #1 (from student to student)...
  "What my peers don’t know about my life away from school."

- Writing Assignment 2 (from student to teacher)...
  "What I wish my teacher knew about me…"

Fast-Track Relationship Builders to Jumpstart the Long-term Process

- **1 and Done**
  Do 1 favor or connection or show of empathy
  SO powerful, students remember it well

- **2’ for 10**
  Invest 2 min./day for 10 consecutive days
  with a student most “needing” a connection

- **3 in 30**
  Discover 3 things (other than a name)
  about every student you have in 1st 30 days
How Important are Expectations for Student Achievement?

Student expectations are MASSIVE \(1.44\) . Teacher expectations of student success are a staggering \(1.03\) effect size.

Raise the bar until you gasp for air! Set goals of 100% and stop being afraid to fail.

Example of Student Dreamers

- Dylan Mahalingam (at age 9) founded a nonprofit w/ 24K global volunteers and speaks at the UN on kids issues.
- At age 4, Alexandra 'Alex' Scott started Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation which raised over $1M for cancer research.
- Katie Stagliano, (at age 12) founded Katie's Krops which grows and donates 1000s of pounds of fresh vegetables to the homeless.

Use Classroom Jobs to Build Hope

List Existing Jobs

New Jobs


College Costs Have Dropped

How about a Tuition-Free, Accredited, Non-Profit, Online University?

Fixed Mindset: What is it?

✓ I am stuck the way I am now
✓ IQ is a fixed, permanent trait
✓ Looking smart is important
✓ Effort is negative and shows I do not “have it”

Growth Mindset: What is it?

✓ I can grow and change
✓ IQ is malleable and it can be developed
✓ Being a lifelong learner is important to me
✓ Effort is a positive, since it shows my commitment and passion

How Each Mindset Responds to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed/Stuck</th>
<th>Growth</th>
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<td>Av________</td>
<td>Em____</td>
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<td>G____ up easily</td>
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<td>Threa____ &lt; Others’ Success</td>
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Which of these two have a greater effect on student achievement?

1. “Good job.” ______
2. “I like that you refused to give up. That extra effort will help you succeed and you may get that job you wanted.” ______

“S-E-A” Feedback = 0.74

✓ Strategy:
“Did I use (or switch to) the best strategy to succeed?”

✓ Effort:
“Did I use enough effort?”

✓ Attitude:
“Have I used positive self-talk and the growth mindset for this task?”

Effect Sizes Made Practical

Attribution Says...
When you “attribute” cause and effect, the effect size is huge

➢ Link the behavior to something you have done in the past
➢ Link the behavior to a probable future outcome, so you have a strong reason for today’s effort

Attribution Training: Linking Success to Particular Factor

High-performing teachers engage this key strategy. The effect size, within a specific area, is a huge 1.42 (over 2 year’s worth of progress).
Add Attribution to “S-E-A” Feedback and Get 1.42

- “I loved how you tried many strategies on that problem until you got it. That may help you get the job you want.”
- “I like that you refused to give up. That extra effort may help you reach that goal of yours.”
- “Before you began, you thought you could succeed. Bet that positive attitude helps you get the job interview you want.”

3M Feedback = 1.13

- Milestone: “Where am I at right now?”
- Mission: “Where am I going?”
- Method: “What do I do next to reach my goal?”

3M Feedback


What K-3 Students Can Do to Close their Learning Gaps

- Ask the teacher more
- Work closer with a neighbor to get help
- Draw it out or use objects to help learn it

What 4th - 12th Graders Can Do to Boost their Learning

- Work closer with a study buddy
- Review work and talk it over
- Summarize the learning daily
- Preview learning before class
- Ask more Qs in class
- Create a mind map/graphic organizer of the content
- Ask teacher for specific help
- Look up difficult things
- Ask parents or go online

SUMMARY: Attitudes are Teachable

- Primary core attitudes are hope (optimism) and growth mindset
- Optimism says the future is bright
- Growth mindset says, “I can change”
- Focus on S-E-A (strategies, effort and attitude)
- You can embed attitudes every day

✔ Making Changes

Check the boxes where you are willing to change to help more students graduate:

1) Build hope & optimism
2) Better feedback
3) Teach growth mindset
CONSISTENT ENGAGEMENT

Why Student Engagement?
1. Out of all possible “states” (apathy, joy, suspicion, sadness, etc.), only a few support quality learning.
2. Kids are usually not very good at managing their own states in class.
3. The only way you’ll have enough time for your content is to manage your student states.
4. Better student states mean better behaviors, greater buy-in and more engagement from your learners. In fact, engagement is a top 10 factor for student achievement.

Let’s brainstorm!

Strategies

Take the Challenge of the 7 min. Rule

“I can and will engage my students in SOMETHING every 7 minutes, every day of the school year. Boredom is NOT an option - NOT on my watch.”

Session Review

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(learn which factors really matter)

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(it’s time for real change)

MINDSET:
“No Excuses” for Failure

Anyone Can Blame Others and Point Fingers…
even a 4 yr. old. can do that!
**Reality of Your Career**

- Most teachers are caring and want to do a good job.
- But their home lives may be stressed with their own children, bills to pay, health issues, lack of a supportive partner at home and issues at work.
- When life is packed with stressors, many shrink with shame and guilt over what they have not done. They feel “less than” for not being at their best every day.

**Some Emotions Impair Your Health and Hurt Productivity**

- **Chronic stress** impairs behavior change (play, hug, do yoga, eat well & meditate)
- **Guilt** over what you failed to do is TOXIC (forgive yourself; start each new day… FRESH)
- **Shame** for not being your best is TOXIC (be vulnerable with friends and share 😊)
- **Forgiveness** may be our greatest trait (we are all imperfect... and in this together)

**Transfer Time!**

Take what you have learned and ask yourself how it might apply to your own job. Which area of your work, in particular, can you apply this to and how would you do it?

**Review & Commit**

Go back to earlier boxes you have checked and select one or two changes that, in retrospect, you are most willing to begin to help more students graduate:

1) ___________________ ✓
2) ___________________ ✓

**CONSISTENCY: ARE THESE DAILY PRACTICES?**

- EMPATHY • BUILD CAPACITY • HOPE • BUILD RELATIONSHIPS • CONSISTENT ENGAGEMENT • BETTER MINDSETS • RAISE • STUDENT EXPECTATIONS • BETTER FEEDBACK •

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