Learning about and learning from students in poverty

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Introductions
Suburbs are not what they once were

- GI Bill
- White flight
- Highways and cars
- Racial covenants
Today, suburbs are home to the largest and fastest growing poor population.
MAP 8-4

Melting Pot Suburbs*

Largest non-white minority

- Blacks
- Hispanics
- Asians

Source: 2010 U.S. census.

*Map displays 36 suburbs with at least 35 percent minority populations in 2010 among the 100 largest metropolitan areas
People of color and poor people are pursuing the promises of suburban life.
Suburbs do not have the infrastructure and services needed, exacerbating the impact of poverty on families and children.
Increasing poverty is having a huge impact on schools across the country: Over 50% of children attending public schools are entitled to free and reduced priced meals.

What percentage is it in Howard County?
How does poverty impact learning in school?

- Brain development
- School attendance and focus while in school
- Limited access to healthcare, enrichment, nutrition
- Mobility
- Social stigma/social access
What does this mean for you?

Describe a student that you have encountered who is living in poverty. How does this show up in your classroom? Give an example. How did you work with that student?
Debunking old approaches to students in poverty: Rejecting the culture of poverty thesis

* Much has been written about addressing the needs of students in poverty; It has been centered around the idea of a “culture of poverty” (Moynihan, 1968)

* The culture of poverty thesis has stereotyped children/families or has communicated that they do not value education (i.e. Ruby Payne’s work)

* An equity lens, on the other hand, sees the assets, resilience, and diversity of students in poverty (Gorski, 2013).
An equity lens

- Recognition of inequity
- Redistribution of resources to support those who need
- Awareness of the assets and resilience that all students bring to the classroom
- Resistance to stereotyping whole groups on every level
- High expectations for everyone

**EQUALITY**

Equality = Sameness

Equality promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing. In this example, equality only works if everyone is the same height.

**EQUITY**

Equity = Fairness

Equity is about making sure people get access to the same opportunities. Sometimes our differences of history can create barriers to participation, so we must **fill the gap** to ensure EQUITY before we can enjoy equality.

Equity literacy (Gorski, 2013)

(1) The ability to recognize even the subtlest forms of inequity, such as subtle ways in which students’ home languages might be denigrated in a school environment;

(2) The ability to respond in the immediate term to inequity, such as by skillfully challenging colleagues or students who denigrate students’ home culture/languages;

(3) The ability to redress inequity in the long term, such as by effectively and equitably attending to the deeper cultural dynamics of the institution that make people believe it is acceptable to denigrate students’ culture/home languages;

(4) The ability to sustain equity efforts—even in the face of resistance to such efforts.
Strategies for equity

- Incorporating the arts
- Communicating high expectations
- Adopt higher order, learner-centered, rigorous pedagogies
- Making curriculum relevant
- Teaching about class and race bias
One example: Teaching Jacob Riis/Progressive Era
What does this mean for social studies?: Making curriculum relevant and teaching about class bias

* How could you use the Riis photographs to unpack our stereotypes about social class?

* Think about a lesson/unit you are planning to teach: What could make it more relevant or how could you incorporate teaching about class bias?
Sharing one last strategy: Listening to and learning from students in poverty

* Building relationships with families in poverty: Persistent family outreach efforts
* Making time and building trust: Listening to their stories, concerns, and sharing yours
* Choose a resilience view rather than a deficit view
Resources to build equity literacy

* A people’s history of poverty by Stephen Pimpare (2011)
* Savage Inequalities by Jonathan Kozol (1992)
* The travels of a t-shirt in the global economy by Pietra Rivoli (2009)
* Evicted by Matthew Desmond (2016)
* Where we stand: Class Matters by bell hooks (2000)
THE NEW REALITY
for SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

How Suburban Schools Are Struggling
with Low Income Students and Students
of Color in Their Schools

Jessica T. Shiller
Classroom resources

* https://www.tolerance.org/topics/class
* https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/engagement
* https://www.tolerance.org/learning-plan/not-one-but-multiple-understanding-our-intersecting-identities