

THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON K-12 STUDENTS AND THE CORRELATION TO THEIR
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

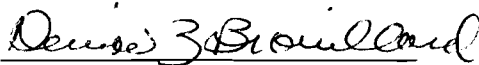
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to provide general information about the effects of living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment. This paper examined several aspects of living in poverty including: the effects of poverty on children, the effects of poverty on adolescent developments, information about the culture of poverty, and implications and interventions for educators. This paper also included a critical analysis of the research and provides recommendations for future research. One recommendation for future research includes examining the three different types of poverty: situation, generational, and rural. By exploring three different types of poverty it may be possible to isolate specific situations or setbacks that affect a specific type of impoverished experience. A second recommendation for future research is to focus on the perceptions of students living in poverty and how their schools can more effectively meet their needs. It would

be very beneficial to know from parents and students living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment what their needs are and how schools can benefit them.

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Chapter I: Introduction

According to the United States Census Bureau (2004), 12.7 percent of the United States' population was living in poverty equaling 37 million people. This number increased by 1.1 million from 2003. One out of every six children in America lives in poverty, and in Wisconsin 27.7% of all Wisconsin K-12 students qualified for free and reduced lunch (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2005). According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in 2003, 40% of Wisconsin students in grade four, and over 50% in grades eight and ten who were receiving free and reduced lunches were below proficiency in mathematics on the Wisconsin Knowledge Concepts Exam. Payne (2001) stated that "low achievement is correlated with lack of resources, and numerous studies have documented the correlation between low socioeconomic status and low achievement" (p. 116). This is a common problem in many schools throughout the country. School personnel are desperately trying to meet the federal standards set by *No Child Left Behind*, but have very limited resources to reach every child.

A common assumption in American society is that people living in poverty only lack the financial resources to get by, however, there are many more resources that contribute to an individual leaving poverty (Payne, 2001). Payne (2001) provided other examples of resources used by people living in poverty, which include: emotional resources, mental resources, spiritual resources, physical resources, support systems, relationships and role models, and knowledge of hidden rules between classes. A person needs these resources to be successful and healthy in life.

Payne (2001) further described eight resources starting with emotional resources, which provide endurance to survive difficult times including uncomfortable situations financially and emotionally. These resources allow for transitioning between classes from poverty to middle

class or from middle class to wealth. Mental resources allow a person to use reading, writing, language, and math skills to survive. These tools are used to become self-reliant by accessing sources and information as needed. Spiritual resources give a person faith that help can come from a higher power and provide a person hope. A physical resource refers to having an able body that gives a person the chance to be self-sufficient. A support system is the knowledge of where to go when help is needed with applying to college, on Algebra homework, buying a car, or when the baby is sick and needs medicine, but you are lacking financial resources. These are all examples of when a support system is a resource. Relationships and role models are considered to be resources because of the examples they set. Role models are key in giving a child in poverty hope of becoming independent, as the child gets older. The more appropriate and nurturing the role models are, the more effective they will be. The last resource is knowledge of hidden rules. There are hidden rules in poverty, middle, and upper classes and developing a knowledge base for the class you are striving to achieve is essential for survival in that particular class.

Today, education is considered the best route to successfully overcome living in poverty (Beegle, 2003). Beegle (2003) continued to describe, “although there has been some progress made in diminishing the educational barriers of race, gender, geography, and religion, poverty is the one barrier that has not been even partially overcome” (p. 12). While not a daunting task for someone living outside of poverty, however, there are many barriers that prevent continuing education. In a study conducted by Beegle (2003), results indicate that participants coming from generational poverty had low values based on education, lacked conversation about education, and set relatively no goals for success in education. Educators need to become aware of the barriers that students and families living in poverty face daily.

With regard to the school system, school counselors, teachers, and administrators can make modifications that benefit the students living in poverty. If school personnel are able to understand the language of poverty and the obstacles that impoverished student's experience, it will aid the district's school climate in supporting these students. Understanding families living in poverty and the culture they are living in will benefit the school's relationships with poverty stricken families and minimize behavioral problems and increase achievement (Payne, 2001).

This review of literature will look at how living in poverty affects children and adolescents, and the potential impact on their achievement in school. There are numerous studies that show students in poverty score lower on standard tests than students living in the middle and upper classes. The disadvantages that children face start very young, before birth. Infants born into poverty have the highest rates of infant mortality due to insufficient prenatal care (Huston, 1991). Living in poverty puts limits on the resources that children can access at school and at home. Impoverished families are unable to afford things such as stimulating toys, children's books, and quality day care (Sherman, 1994).

This literature review will conclude by taking a close look at the culture of poverty, and it also will provide suggestions and interventions that address the problem of underachievement. Payne (2001) gave suggestions of support systems that school districts have implemented, which yielded positive results. Examples of these support systems include scheduling a forty-five minute block of time to dedicate solely to homework. Other schools have used a looping program, when students stay with the same teacher for two or more years because it allows them the opportunity to create a stronger relationship with their teacher. Lastly, parent training and contact through video recordings has become popular in impoverished areas. By learning to

implement these strategies and more, educational professionals will be better prepared to provide an education to their students living in poverty.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to review significant literature regarding why school-aged children living in poverty are underachieving in the school setting.

Purpose of the Study

In this study, the author will review relevant literature about students living in poverty and their achievement rates. This document will include a review of literature on how living in poverty affects children and adolescents. It will also provide information describing the culture of poverty and interventions to assist the students from a low socioeconomic status. This document will provide school professionals insight into the world of poverty.

Research Questions

The review of literature presented seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What challenges and/or obstacles do school-aged children living in poverty face?
2. What are the effects of children, adolescents, and schools in poverty?
3. What information do schools need to know to better serve their student population

living in poverty?

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined for the purpose of this paper:

Poverty for the purpose of this literature is defined as the extent to which an individual does without resources (Payne, 2001).

Underachieving for the purpose of this study is defined as performing below state and national averages on standardized tests.

“At-risk students are defined to be those who are unlikely to succeed in school because they lack the experiences in their home, family, and community on which school success is based (Dominitz, Manski, & Fischhoff, 2001).”

Assumptions

Due to the fact that in this study information was used from many different sources, this researcher had to compile the information with assumptions. It was assumed by this researcher that although there are several different types of poverty including situational, generational, and rural, for the purpose of this study, these different types and degrees of poverty could be generalized to some extent. There are several different factors that contribute to poverty and for this research the author was assuming that the population affected by poverty face similar challenges academically and socially.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The Effects of Poverty on Children

In America, one in six children live in poverty. Unfortunately, in some states such as Wisconsin, the rate is as high as one in four children (United States Census Bureau, 2004). According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (2003), if a family of four earns an annual income of \$18,400 or less, they fall below the federal poverty level. Realistically, \$18,400 cannot adequately provide food, housing, and the basic needs for four people. According to the federal poverty level, a family income of \$18,400 to \$36,800 for four people is considered low income. Beverley Boals (1990) stated that children under the age of six are the age group with the largest population living in poverty. Gershoff (2003) described that 45% of children entering kindergarten fall in the poverty to low-income bracket. According to Rainwater and Smeeding (2003), many of our nation's poor children are also racial minorities. There appears to be a strong correlation between minority children and economic disadvantage in the United States: nearly 38% of African-Americans, 37% of Hispanics, 33% of Native Americans, and 21% of Asian-Americans live in poverty.

Gershoff (2003) explained a child's healthy development through three areas: cognitive development, social-emotional development, and physical development. Children living in poverty score well below the national average on their reading, math, and general knowledge test scores compared to children living in higher economic classes (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2003). Boals (1990) listed characteristics of children from impoverished backgrounds, which included: deficit in language skills, lack of language differentiation, lack of stimulation for responding to questions, lack of enriching experiences, and a lack of parental understanding of the education process. The enriching experiences that children in poverty lack exposure to

include, but are not limited to, visiting a children's museum, a family vacation, experiences outside of their community, and not having an opportunity to participate in clubs and other activities (Boals, 1990).

Many researchers on children's cognitive development emphasize how important environmental influences are in early childhood; living in poverty may influence cognitive development (Entwisle & Alexander, 1989). Entwisle and Alexander (1989) suggested that this critical period in child development occurs when children begin school, age five to eight, and poverty can adversely affect this age groups ability to perform cognitively. Poverty puts limits on the resources that children can access at school and at home. Parents are unable to afford things such as stimulating toys, children's books, and quality day care (Sherman, 1994). Rios (1987) described that when poverty is present in the home, it negatively affects the home environment, which also has a large impact on the child's educational achievement.

Healthy social-emotional development can be divided into four categories: social competence, self-regulation, externalizing problem behaviors, and internalizing problem behaviors (Gershoff, 2003). The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP, 2003) described each of the four categories. Social competence is described as facility at helping others, sharing materials, and complying with rules and directions. Self-regulation is the ability to control emotions or behavior, particularly in conflict situations. Externalizing problem behaviors is when children portray verbal or physical aggression and have difficulty controlling their temper and argues. Internalizing problem behaviors is when behaviors that indicate stress, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, or low self-esteem are displayed. As experts in the field of poverty, Knitzer and Lefkowitz (2005) described social-emotional development as how children feel about themselves, how they behave, and how they relate to others.

The NCCP (2003) documented that children living in poverty lag behind their peers in social-emotional development. Gershoff (2003) stated that as families' incomes increase, the children's social competence and their self-regulation increases as well, in addition as families' incomes increase, the levels of a child's externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors decrease.

Children living in poverty, who experience difficulties with internalizing emotions and behaviors often, demonstrate their feelings through externalizing the feelings through behaviors. Knitzer and Lefkowitz (2005) describe a child's need to develop specific social competencies to be successful in school. Some children living in poverty struggle with developing these competencies, such as dealing with difficult emotions like anger or sadness. When emotions are not expressed in healthy ways and are internalized, children's classroom performance may be affected in negative ways. For example, a child may have a very difficult time concentrating or they may feel out of control, thus creating a foundation for negative behaviors to occur. It is crucial for the success of these students to have school faculty, such as teachers and guidance counselors, teach and help the students learn to express their internalized feelings so their external behaviors stop as well.

It is important that school staff reach out to provide resources to parents for children in poverty to thrive socially and emotionally. According to Knitzer and Lefkowitz (2005), parents play the most influential role in a child's life, and this indicates that the most efficient way to reach young children is through their parents. School guidance counselors should have information available to parents regarding how they can enhance their child's social-emotional development.

This information supports the theory that children living in poverty have a lower sense of social-emotional health than children living in upper and middle classes. When children have distorted sense of whom they are and how to deal with feelings, they struggle in the classroom, and their achievement levels drop. These children have a very difficult time dealing with anger, sadness, teasing, and feelings of inadequacy, and this can lead to aggression and other negative behaviors. The children who struggle with developing necessary competencies for healthy development struggle academically because children who are not mentally healthy cannot function up to their potential in the classroom.

Children living in poverty are consistently facing issues related to their health (Huston, 1991). The poor experience these health issues from before birth and for the rest of their lives. Children in poverty have the highest rates of infant mortality because of insufficient prenatal care. According to Huston (1991), children in poverty are absent from school on more occasions due to illness than children in the middle and upper classes. Research shows that low-income parents report their children in fair to poor health on more occasions than children from higher income families. The health problems experienced by poor children go beyond the common cold, children in poverty experience more mental health problems as well. Gershoff (2003) described health factors such as weight, affecting children in poverty. It is important that the researcher notes regardless of income, 10% of all students are seriously overweight. Gershoff (2003) stated, “children living in low-income families are more likely than other children to be overweight” (p. 6). According to Huston (1991), these health problems result from social conditions and environmental conditions. Environmental conditions that children living in poverty experience include unhealthy lifestyles due to parents’ lack of knowledge about healthcare, access to appropriate medical care, and family stress.

Sherman (1994) identified disabilities and sensory impairments to be more likely diagnosed among children living in impoverished communities. Children from impoverished backgrounds are one to two times more likely to experience partial deafness or blindness. Sherman also indicated that families living below the poverty line have nearly a 2% higher chance of being diagnosed with a physical or mental disability compared to children living above the poverty line. Overall, Sherman (1994) suggests that children in poverty have an increased chance of becoming ill or being diagnosed with a disability. These children are also at a higher risk of being anemic, having frequent diarrhea, pneumonia, repeated tonsillitis, asthma, and decayed teeth. This also creates a larger problem; missed school days due to illness. Low-income children miss more days of school per year than their peers living above the poverty line (Sherman, 1994).

Sherman (1994) described how these health issues drastically affect children's functioning in a classroom. These children have an elevated level of family stress, lack of learning opportunities at home, hunger, stressful relationships, and impaired nutrition. These factors can affect a child's intelligence quotient and achievement scores. Sherman (1994) states that children who grow up in poverty for nine consecutive years will have their IQ score reduced by at least nine points. The researcher went on to explain that nationwide achievement scores on vocabulary, reading, and math for children ages three and older are affected by poverty as well. Children from generational poverty scored eleven to twenty-five percentile points below their upper class peers. These factors also propose that children from poverty are nearly ten times more likely to have a learning disability (Sherman, 1994).

Obviously, research suggests that growing up in poverty can raise a child's risk for health problems. These health problems can also increase their chances for lower academic achievement when compared to their peers from higher classes.

Rainwater and Smeeding (2003) discussed six problem areas that must be addressed by the federal government if our nation wants to commit to the reduction of childhood poverty. These six problem areas include: employment, parental leave, childcare, child-related tax policy, child support, and education. Employment is a key factor in reducing the number of children living below the poverty line. Working mothers have a higher self-esteem when they are earning wages, and in turn the children feel better about the stability of their parents and their families (Chase-Landsale et al., 2003). Rainwater and Smeeding (2003) further detailed that in America, single mothers work more hours than single parents in any other country. Employers can support single working parents and contribute to their success by attempting to understand the mother's need to not only be the provider, but the caretaker as well, which includes being more flexible with hours.

The second factor is parental leave, which allows parents to take parental leave from work and still earn wages. California is the first state in America to institute a paid family leave program for some workers. Third, Rainwater and Smeeding (2003) described childcare as essential to keep working mothers working. The higher the cost of childcare services in direct relation to the earning potential of a single parent, the less likely that parent will seek employment. The combination of high costs for childcare and low wages creates a pinch for any working parent. Beverly Boals (1990) illustrated that "quality preschool programs for poor children produce large benefits that in the long run will more than repay the public's investment" (p. 9). Boals (1990) went on to describe that for every one dollar invested into preschool

education will save \$5.73 in spending later on things such as special education, public assistance, and crime.

The fourth factor is child support. The problem area for child support is when one parent is absent, in many cases the father, and the lack of follow through when prosecuting parents who do not pay (Rainwater & Smeeding, 2003). The problem is that many parents not paying child support lack sufficient funds to do so, have low earning capacity, and there is little follow through by the government. The fifth factor is child-related income tax policy, which looks at the minimum wage and how insufficiently a family of three can live making that wage, far below the poverty line. Rainwater and Smeeding (2003) believed, “that the Earned Income Tax Credit does not fully close the gap, and additional child related tax benefits to ensure that working families with children are not poor” (p. 138). The last factor that can influence the reduction in child poverty is education. A quality education for children is pertinent, regardless of their socioeconomic status; this can reduce the likelihood that generational poverty would continue. Educational resources need to target the areas in dire need, such as low-income and poverty stricken schools that lack the resources needed to function.

The Effects of Poverty on Adolescents

Adolescence is a time period that is not clearly defined; people can interpret the definition and stages adolescents pass through differently. Steinberg (2005) described three fundamental features of adolescent development. The three fundamentals include the onset of puberty, the emergence of more advanced thinking abilities, and the transition into new roles in society. Steinberg (2005) also explained puberty as changes that take place in the young person's appearance. These physical changes include developing breasts, beginning a menstrual cycle, growing facial hair, and a dramatic increase in height. These changes can cause turmoil and

stress in an adolescent's life. It can be confusing and scary for many young men and women as well. Throughout this research adolescence will be defined by ages thirteen to seventeen.

Living in poverty can extremely hinder the transition into adolescence. Steinberg (2005) stated that "adolescents growing up in impoverished neighborhoods are more likely to bear children as teenagers, become involved in criminal activity, and to achieve less in, or even drop out of high school" (p. 125). Steinberg (2005) continues to explain that living in poverty can highly affect adolescent's problem behavior and psychological difficulties. The financial stress can negatively affect the adolescent because their parent's problems are often transferred to their own. The economic strain can produce more harsh, inconsistent, and less involved parents. As an adolescent they are seen as able to contribute to the family's livelihood. These characteristics add up to more problems for the adolescent, such as a heightened risk for anxiety, depression, and more visible conduct problems (Steinberg, 2005).

The effects of children living in poverty have been well researched and documented. These effects include lack of nutrition, low success in school, poor living conditions, and effects on social and emotional health. The immediate effects of living in poverty are well known, but what effects are not well documented are the long-term effects of growing up in poverty. The life transitions from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence into young adulthood lack extensive research correlated to poverty. Teachman (1999) conducted a study to determine what the long-term effects of living in poverty are on educational attainment. The study defined educational attainment as the completion of high school, college attendance, and the number of years of schooling attained. This research suggested that the more years spent in poverty decreases a student's chance of graduating from high school and their chances of attending college. They also completed less years of schooling. In fact, they found that a student had a

60% less chance of graduating from high school if they had lived at or below the poverty line for one to three years of high school (Teachman, 1999). Also, students who had spent four or more years living at or below the poverty line were 75% less likely to complete high school. It is quite obvious that what is known about poverty proves that long-term effects have a great deal of negative impact on adolescence. These long-term consequences are not only detrimental to our students, but America as well.

In America, for a majority of unmarried teenage parents, the birth of a child is unplanned or a mistake. The babies that are born to teenage mothers have a disadvantage at the start of their life. These children are more likely to live in a poor neighborhood or in a single parent home. Current statistics show an alarming rate of young pregnancies, one-fourth of American women become pregnant before their 18th birthday, and 45% more experience pregnancy before their 21st birthday (Steingberg, 2005). Although these numbers are alarming, only about one-half of teenage pregnancies result in the birth of a child; around 35% abort the child and about 10% miscarry. Steinberg (2005) continues to explain that of the children born to teenage mothers, 90% choose to keep and raise the infants themselves, and only 10% give their babies up for adoption. Teenage pregnancy is prevalent in all socioeconomic classes and ethnic backgrounds (Steinberg, 2005). However, teenagers living in the middle class are much more likely to abort their unborn children than teenagers living in poverty. This creates a problem in that the children carried to term are primarily born to teenage mothers living in poverty. This is a growing concern for Americans because at least half of welfare funding in the United States is spent on families that have experienced a teenage birth (Steinberg, 2005). Steinberg (2005) questioned why some young women choose to abort their pregnancies while others attempt to carry their baby to full term. He found that pregnant teenagers from upper and middle classes are much

more likely to abort their pregnancy than teens in poverty. It was found that the teens who choose to abort their baby had two things; approval from the baby's father and they viewed themselves as having too much to lose by having the baby. These young women felt they had too much to gain by having a baby, and it would deter their potential career choices and salary options later in life. Also, since teenage pregnancy is more prevalent in African-American communities and socioeconomic disadvantaged youth, it has become more accepted to be a teenage mother than in communities where it is less common (Steinberg, 2005).

According to Haveman et al. (1999), children born to unmarried teenage mothers have a higher risk for poor health and less potential for school achievement. The research continues to explain that not only the children are in danger after being born to teenage parents, but the mother as well. Teenage mothers have well over a 50% chance of starting on welfare soon after their baby is born (Haveman et al., 1999). These young women also have a relatively small likelihood of completing high school after their baby is born (Haveman et al., 1999). Since poverty and teenage childbearing coincide with one another, it is unknown if teenage pregnancy is caused by poverty or if poverty causes teenage pregnancy (Steinberg, 2005). It is also known that teenage mothers tend to believe that their children are difficult to handle due to their lack of experience with children (Steinberg, 2005). Once these babies are born to teenage mothers, another obstacle they must face includes where they will grow up. Since about 50% are growing up on welfare, that doesn't allow them much income to provide quality housing in a quality community.

One troublesome factor in the development of socioeconomic disadvantaged youth is the phenomenon of the culture of the impoverished neighborhood. Poor families have begun to cluster in specific communities where they can live and support each other (Steinberg, 2005).

These communities tend to be segregated by economically disadvantaged and racially divided families. Ninety percent of the adolescents living in these economically disadvantaged cluster communities are non-white residents from various minority groups (National Research Council, 1993). Evidence has been collected to demonstrate how living in these clustered poor communities have negative effects of adolescent's behavior and mental health (Steinberg, 2005). The adolescents in urban cluster, poverty-stricken communities are more likely to engage in or witness violence, be involved with illegal activity, have children out of wedlock, and to achieve less or fail to complete high school. These urban effects have been well documented, however, there is little research comparing the urban effects to youth living in rural poverty communities. It is speculated that the effects are relatively similar to rural youth when compared to urban living (Steinberg, 2005).

It has been difficult for researchers to demonstrate the developmental effects on adolescence due to living in impoverished communities. To effectively study how communities impact adolescents, it's crucial that researchers compare similar family structures living in different neighborhoods (Steinberg, 2005). A study compared the behavior and psychological development of adolescence before and after they moved from a poor neighborhood to a more advantaged one (Ludwig, Duncan, & Hirschfield, 2001). It was found that living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged community increased the rates of theft and violent crime (Ludwig, Duncan, & Hirschfield, 2001). Adolescents living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged community are more likely than their peers to produce children as teenagers, be involved with criminal activity, and to achieve less in or drop out of high school (Levanthal & Brooks-Gunn, 2004).

The disturbing pattern of school-aged children living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment is the repetitive cycle, from being born and raised by a teenage mother, to growing

up in a poverty cluster community, and the risk factors against the individual to then to repeating the pattern of poverty. These adolescence have many statistics and opportunities to succeed academically stacked against them, however, it is important that as educators we do what we can to make a difference in their lives. Knowing the effects of poverty is important but it is also important for us to understand the culture and life experiences that guide behavior in the school setting.

The Culture of Poverty

Research has documented that school aged students living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged family face many challenges in life and in school. The research that has been documented thus far describes the barriers that educators face when working with students living in poverty. Researchers suggest that people living in poverty have developed a unique culture that defines their existence (Payne, 2001). Since all educators take responsibility for serving and supporting every student's learning, it is important that educators understand the culture of poverty.

First, it is important to note that that people living in poverty do not only lack financial resources to survive. Many more resources contribute to an individual successfully working towards living in a higher class than poverty. Eight other resources that are necessary for survival are defined as follows: emotional resources, mental resources, spiritual resources, physical resources, the support system, relationships and role models, and knowledge of hidden rules between classes (Payne, 2001). A person must acquire several of these resources to be successful in life and to transition from one socioeconomic class to another.

To successfully work with students in poverty, it is essential to understand and label the resources that students have or are in need of. According to Payne (2001), emotional resources

provide endurance to survive difficult times, including uncomfortable situations financially and emotionally. Emotional resources have been labeled as the most important because it provides an individual with support to break old habits and strength to learn new behaviors. Emotional resources can often be gained by having a mentor or role model. Once emotional resources have been gained a person living in poverty can select and manage emotional responses (Payne, 2001).

Mental resources allow a person to use knowledge and acquired skills through education to survive. These tools are used to become self-reliant by accessing sources and information as needed (Payne, 2001). Knowledge, such as reading and writing, absorbed throughout school, gives a person in poverty tools to be successful in a job and in life. Statistics are stacked against students living in poverty in high school completion; therefore, educators can contribute to a student gaining this resource. Spiritual resources give a person faith that help comes from a higher power and provides a person hope. Spiritual resources can be found in many ways, such as through religion, which can take away the feeling that all hope is lost (Payne, 2001).

A physical resource refers to having an able body that gives a person the ability to be self-sufficient (Payne, 2001). Without this physical resource, a person must rely on others to get through a daily routine and to provide for a family. Using the resource of the support system is applying working knowledge of where to go when help is needed with applying to college, on Algebra homework, buying a car, or when the baby is sick and needs medicine, but the person is lacking financial resources. These are all examples of when a support system is a resource. As family and providers, it is essential that we know where to go to find answers to questions that are unknown (Payne, 2001). Role models are considered to be resources because of the examples they set in life. Role models are important to give any person in poverty hope of

becoming independent. Role models provide inspiration, especially for students “at risk”, and a goal in life to strive for. A nurturing role model, who shares common characteristics with the student such as interests, race, and goals, will create a more effective mentorship (Payne, 2001).

The last resource is knowledge of hidden rules. There are hidden rules that govern life in poverty, middle, and upper classes. Payne (2001) states, “hidden rules are the unspoken cues and habits of a group of people” (p. 52). Developing a knowledge base for the economical class you are living in is key for survival, however; if a person is working towards moving up a social class, it is essential to learn hidden rules for survival in that particular class (Payne, 2001).

Hidden rules are an unwritten understanding that is common knowledge to one class, but is not common knowledge to another class. These hidden rules involve food, eating out, shopping, dress codes, transportation, and housing, just to name a few.

Hidden rules between economical classes demonstrate understanding of each economical classes basic living needs differently. To understand this concept, it is essential to provide examples, for example, each of the three classes view possessions differently. Parents in poverty often view their children or family as possessions, the middle class views things as possessions, and the wealthy class sees one-of a kind objects or legacies as their important possessions. To create further understanding of differing views between economical classes, the following is an example; in many cases for economic disadvantaged people, money is used and viewed very differently than the middle and upper classes. Most often, people in poverty view money as something to be spent and to be used; living from paycheck to paycheck is very common (Payne, 2001). In the middle class, people are taught to budget and save money, while in more wealthy economical classes money is invested and often not a concern. The idea of saving money for bills or economic stability is a hidden rule of the middle class. For families living in the middle

economical class, this rule may simply seem like common sense, however, it is a foreign idea to the economically disadvantaged and wealthy classes. For more examples and a better understating of these concepts see table 1.

**Table 1: Examples of hidden rules and views based on economical class (Payne, 2001).
Take directly from Payne (p. 59).**

	Poverty	Middle Class	Wealth
POSSESSIONS	People	Things	One-of-a-kind objects, Legacies, pedigrees
MONEY	To be used or spent	To be managed	To be conserved or invested
PERSONALITY	Is for entertainment. Sense of humor is highly valued.	Is for acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued.	Is for connections. Financial, political, social connections are highly valued.
SOCIAL EMPHASIS	Social inclusion of people they like.	Emphasis is on self-governance and self-sufficiency.	Emphasis is on social exclusion.
FOOD	Key question: Did you have enough? Quantity important.	Key question: Did you like it? Quality important.	Key question: Was it presented well? Presentation is important.
CLOTHING	Clothing valued for individual expression of personality.	Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into norm of middle class. Label is important.	Clothing valued for its artistic sense of expression. Designer important.
TIME	Present most important. Decisions made for moment based on feelings of survival.	Future most important. Decisions made against future ramifications.	Traditions and history most important. Decisions made partially on basis of tradition and decorum.
EDUCATION	Valued and revered as abstracts but not as reality.	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections.
DESTINY	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate chance.	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	Noblesse oblige.
LANGUAGE	Casual register. Language is about survival.	Formal register. Language is about negotiation.	Formal register. Language is about networking.
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Tends to be mechanical.	Tends to be patriarchal.	Depends on who has money
WORLD VIEW	Sees world in terms of local setting.	Sees world in terms of national setting.	Sees world in terms of international setting.

LOVE	Love and acceptance conditional, based upon whether individual is liked.	Love and acceptance conditional and based largely upon achievement.	Love and acceptance conditional and related to social standing and connections.
DRIVING FORCE	Survival, relationships, and entertainment.	Work and achievement.	Financial, political, and social connections.

When community members and schools can create a strong knowledge base of how each economical class views the items in Table 1 differently, it will create more of an understanding about how students and families living in an economically disadvantaged environment function. When working with students and families in poverty, it's essential to understand their views towards each item in the table.

Personality is also highly valued to the economically disadvantaged class (Payne, 2001). People with outgoing and boisterous personalities that can entertain family and friends by telling good stories are extremely valued in the culture of poverty. Personality is a mode of entertainment that has no cost. In comparison, the middle class views personality as something to help you acquire stability and achieve success (Payne, 2001). Personality and proper language coincide with one another when discussing the differences between the culture of poverty and comparing it to higher economical classes. In poverty, there are three components of language that must be learned to understand the culture of poverty. The three components include: registers of language, discourse patterns, and story structure (Payne, 2001).

There are five different registers of language: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate (Joos, 1967). Frozen language is language that does not change. Every culture has different forms of frozen language that stays the same, for example, wedding vows or the Lord's Prayer. Formal language is the standard sentence structure and the choice of words that is used in school and most commonly in middle and wealthy classes (Joos, 1967). Consultative

language is when a person uses formal register in conversation (Joos, 1967). This language is not as formal, but still very respectable. Casual language is frequently used between friends, and sentence structure tends to be relaxed and sometimes incomplete. Finally, intimate language is only used between two people deeply in love or who share a very special relationship such as twins. When speaking in different registers, it has been documented that a person can speak down one register in a conversation and that is socially acceptable, however, if a person drops more than one register in a conversation it is not acceptable. People living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment most frequently use casual language. Casual language speakers frequently struggle to understand the formal register of language, which is used by the middle and upper class. Standardized testing such as the ACT, SAT, and WKCE are all written in formal register, which creates a barrier of success for the students who are casual register speaking. This barrier comes into play when applying for jobs as well. Good paying jobs most normally speak in formal register, when a person speaks in casual register during an interview it automatically takes them out of the running for the position. This is another example of the barriers between the culture of poverty and middle and wealthy classes.

Payne (2001) stated, “discourse patterns are the way that information is organized” (p. 43). People who are economically disadvantaged tend to speak in a casual register, and their discourse pattern tends to be more complex. Sentence structure and explanations are longer and more complex. In formal registers of speaking, discourse patterns are short and ideas are stated very quickly; higher economical classes more commonly use this discourse pattern (Payne, 2001). The more time spent living an economically disadvantaged lifestyle, the higher the chances are that a person will speak in casual register and use a complex discourse pattern that is more common. This type of speaking can be very frustrating for teachers due to the fact that

students who cannot properly organize their thoughts and have no practice speaking in formal register will have a very difficult time in school understanding how material is presented to them.

The role of entertainment and storytelling is so important in the culture of poverty the aspect of language is important to understand is story structure (Payne, 2001). Ruby Payne (2001) describes the way in which the stories are told, including content, participation, and language. Story structure is how a story is told, from forming a plot to developing the story's conclusion (Payne, 2001). Casual register and formal register speakers develop stories differently. In formal register, stories are told in a smooth chronological sequence, and the most important part of the story is forming the plot (Payne, 2001).

According to Payne (2001), casual register stories tell a tale differently. This type of story usually starts by revealing the conclusion, and from that point on, the story is told in segments with active audience participation between segments. The development of the characters is the most important part of the story compared to the conclusion in formal register. The story is concluded with comments about the characters' personality. The audience participation involves a lot of interruption and speaking loudly over one another. This trait can be transferable to the classroom setting, with students interrupting the teacher. The cultural characteristics of poverty vary based on the length of time children and families live in poverty. These cultural characteristics are stronger from people living in generational poverty compared to situational poverty.

Enhancing Student Achievement

Almost every public school in America has a population of students who are living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment. This population has specific needs that need to be addressed by schools to enhance student achievement. Previously in this chapter, all the risks

and statistics stacked against students growing up in poverty were examined. The suggestions provided are based on the culture of poverty and individual needs of students in poverty. For achievement to be improved our nations traditional instruction, methods need to be modified. Not every student living in poverty will benefit from every suggestion.

Low achievement is associated with lack of resources, and numerous studies have documented the correlation between low socioeconomic status and low achievement (Hodgkinson, 1995). For educators it is extremely important to assess the resources available to students. The assistance, advice, or homework given to students can all be analyzed differently according to the resources available to the students. It is important to remember that although a situation may seem very reasonable to a person living in middle class, due to lacking resources it can be a helpless situation to a family living in poverty (Payne, 2001). By assessing the resources available to students' educators can attempt to fill the void of the resources they may be lacking. Remember that financial resources are only one of eight resources that contribute to living in poverty. Resources that teachers can often help with include: role models, knowledge of hidden rules, support systems, and mental and emotional resources. Educators have many community connections, and could assign a student to meet with a community member who could serve as a very positive role model to their student. Teachers have the knowledge and ability to teach using hidden rules across socioeconomic classes. The knowledge of hidden rules is essential for moving up from one class to the next. Guidance counselors and teachers can be seen as a center for knowledge, and that knowledge can be used to refer and redirect families. Some families are not on public assistance or do not receive free and reduced lunch due to the fact that they don't know how to fill out the paperwork. Paperwork for public assistance can be

lengthy and complicated, the teachers and guidance counselors can help families with mental resources to find assistance to meet their family's needs.

Payne (2001) examines achievement through learning and teaching. There are four learning structures, which include cognitive strategies, concepts, skills, and content. Cognitive strategies describe how to process information, and they are more basic than concepts. Concepts are how a student stores information they have learned and the retrieving of the information from where it is stored. Skills are learning new information through reading and writing, and how to process the content learned. Finally, content is taking the information that has been learned and applying it. Children living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment often come to school lacking skills to use cognitive strategies and concepts.

Payne (2001) believes that there is a direct link between language and achievement, the public school system can improve their student's language by using several strategies. As stated earlier in the chapter, it is important to speak and understand the formal register of language to advance a socioeconomic class. In elementary school, students often write stories exactly how they speak, for those students who speak in casual register most likely will write in casual register as well, which can be difficult to understand. It would be beneficial for those students to rewrite their stories by making the translation from casual to formal register. In the classroom setting, teachers or counselors can use bibliotherapy to learn both formal and casual register. For example, there are several versions of the story Cinderella; it would be interesting for the class to hear both versions. It is important that people from all cultures feel their traditions are valued; the same exists for the culture of poverty. In the classroom, to honor the importance of personality and storytelling in the culture of poverty, the children could take turns sharing stories in front of the class. Stories can be used in every subject such as math, social studies, and

science to learn the main concepts (Payne, 2001). It is essential that schools try to honor the traditions of the culture of poverty by encouraging the participation of story telling.

Developing knowledge of the hidden rules inside the culture of poverty is important to begin to understand the students within a school. Hidden rules are consistently displayed through behavior and performance in school. Educators should never base their assumptions about students' intelligence or opinions of education until it is understood if they understand hidden rules (Payne, 2001). Assessments of the student's hidden rules should lead to education about the middle classes hidden rules. To be successful in the work force as well as school, the knowledge of hidden rules must be enhanced (Payne, 2001). Classroom teachers can use these rules as a reference point, not necessarily changing their students' thinking, but educating them on the differences. School counselors could organize small groups that would benefit their students in poverty. These groups could not only provide education for the students, but for the school staff as well.

It has been noted earlier in the chapter that education is the key factor in overcoming a socioeconomic disadvantaged life. Payne (2001) describes four reasons why individual are able to leave an impoverished life: a goal to have something better, a situation that is so difficult that anything else would be an improvement, a role model assists them, or a talent that is their ticket out of poverty. For students living in generational poverty, school is one of the few places where students can learn how to function in the middle class, by understanding language and hidden rules in that class.

Students in each school coming from a socioeconomic disadvantaged home need extra support from their teachers and school administration. The chances of these students successfully finishing their high school education without support from their school are lower

than the average student. There are several suggestions about different types of support that can be offered to these students. It is common that socioeconomic disadvantaged homes are very chaotic, and children take on a lot of responsibility; this decreased the amount of time available for homework completion. A successful middle school in Texas schedules the last forty-five minutes of the school day for homework (Anderson, 1993). The students that did not finish their homework throughout the school day must stay after school in the cafeteria and work with tutors until their homework is complete. The school has arranged and made funds available for a late bus to drive the students home. Several students in poverty do not have adults in their life that can help with their homework assignments, either the adults are not available or not capable, so this after school program gives the students the extra support they need. Also, this middle school has a two textbook policy (Anderson, 1993). Each student has two textbooks, one stays at school while the other one stays at home. This middle school has also eliminated several problems by removing lockers from the hallways (Anderson, 1993).

In order to instill the importance of homework completion, it is essential that support services are available to students. However, if a student lacks reading skills, homework in any subject will be more difficult to complete. Schools have been transitioning into a new reading program called the Accelerated Reader program (Payne, 2001). This program allows students to take tests on a computer after completing a book. This program is important to children living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment because students are not penalized for parents that are illiterate or do not have time to support their child's reading (Payne, 2001). Schools without the Accelerated Reading program often have incentives for children who read the most books at home, however, children in poverty often lack the resources to read at home. This program offers children living in impoverished homes the opportunity to stay on an equal playing field as

their peers, school is one of the few places that children have access to an equal amount of resources.

Students living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment experience difficulty forming relationships with new adults in their life (Payne, 2001). This occurs often times at school because students from poverty receive discipline from teachers who do not understand their culture. These students struggle to bond with their teachers, especially at the elementary school level. A tip that has been helpful in some school environments is looping students with their elementary school teachers (Payne, 2001). Looping is when students are assigned to the same teacher for more than one year, meaning they receive instruction from the teacher for two or three years. In this situation teachers are able to form bonds, understand their students, and have knowledge of the students performance levels. For students in poverty, not as much time is wasted at the beginning of the year attempting to form a relationship with their teacher, and the parents feel more welcome in the school because they get to know their child's teacher much better. This situation can be negative if the student and teacher's personalities clash, or the teaching strategies are not beneficial to the student. Many interventions can take place to help a child thriving academically; it is equally important for that child to learn how to thrive outside of the classroom as well.

Students need to learn coping skills to begin to deal with the chaotic issues that occur in their lives outside of school (Payne, 2001). The school counselor can take on this role by running small groups and teaching classroom lessons. The groups can consist of six to eight kids, and most often run once a week for 30 minutes to an hour. Groups can consist of information dealing with skills to be successful in school, working through aggression, anger management, effective communication skills, and much more. Looking at the group members

and what they would like to learn can assess the needs of the small group. Students benefit from the extra support that they receive in these small settings. It also gives the students from poverty the opportunity to form a meaningful relationship with another adult in their school.

Every student develops at a different pace, and some develop faster than others. Many students are passed on to the next grade even if their skills have not reached that grade level. This causes a problem because that student is learning new material in a more advanced setting than they belong in. Schools with high poverty rates often experience unbalanced skill levels in their classrooms. Some schools have switched to a school wide scheduling program, meaning that all grades 1-3 and 3-6 do schedule their subjects at the same time (Payne, 2001). Students in this school were given a pretest to assess their mathematics level and then assigned to the grade level accordingly. Once the skills at one level were mastered, then they were advanced to the next class. In this case children who were accelerating above their peers were able to advance to higher math, while students that were lower achieving were able to get extra instruction to understand the math concepts. At the elementary school that attempted the school wide scheduling, math scores in the building made significant improvements (Payne, 2001).

In a school district, student achievement is the number one priority, however, involving a parent in their child's education also a priority. Parents that are struggling to provide for their children in an impoverished lifestyle often do not have the time or resources to be involved with school. School staff and administrators appreciate seeing parents involved in their child's education and supporting the importance of it. Discussed earlier in the chapter, it was noted the importance of entertainment is very high for most families living in poverty. Several families living in an impoverished neighborhood do not have working phones, answering machines, struggle to read the letters sent home by parents, and lack time and transportation to get to the

school. This situation can be very difficult for teachers who are trying to reach parents to deliver important information. Due to the fact that socioeconomic disadvantaged families put a high emphasis on entertainment, almost all of them have a working television and VCR. In Illinois a principal that had 95% of families in his school on welfare started a video parent contact program (Payne, 2001). Teachers record themselves on several tapes and the children check the tapes out at night. The families view the tapes to get information from the teachers. In the beginning of the year, teachers gave a personal introduction about who they were and how to contact them, the instruction that would take place during the school year, the classroom expectations, and then they encouraged parents to get involved by calling or stopping by the school (Payne, 2001). Payne (2001) lists five reasons why this program was successful: first, illiterate parents understood the tapes, the parents became familiar with the teachers and their personality, the parent did not have to take off work or find transportation to meet the teacher, it opened the lines of communication and prevented miscommunication with parents, and it was very inexpensive for the school.

Goal setting with students, especially students from impoverished homes, is very beneficial. These students often lack high self-esteem and confidence in them. Teachers can assist these students in feeling as though they can make accomplishments. By setting weekly realistic goals every student in class has the opportunity to feel as though they accomplished something (Payne, 2001). Each student can put a goal in writing at the beginning of the week and on Friday it can be determined if the goal was accomplished. Schools have the ability to strongly impact the youth in their building by conducting small activities or interventions that can really affect each student's self-worth.

A survey that studied children who grew up in generational poverty and their perceptions of teachers in elementary and high school produced some alarming results. The students stated that they felt their teachers in elementary and high school did not care about them (Beegle, 2003). Only four out of twenty-four participants in the focus group responded that they had a positive relationship with their teacher. Beegle (2003) described the participants feeling as though their teachers did not understand their socioeconomic class and there was very little understanding or empathy of their impoverished lifestyle. The results of this study were alarming because school is meant to be a safe place, not a place for students to feel inferior to others. Payne (2001) strongly feels that if teachers and administrators understand the effects of poverty and the culture of poverty they will serve their impoverished student population much more effectively. Research conducted supports student's feelings that teachers lack understanding of social classes differences (Beegle, 2003).

Chapter III: Summary, Critical Analysis, Recommendations

Summary

Chapter II discussed the barriers experienced by people of all ages living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment, beginning with children. One in six children in the United States lives in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2004). Children living in poverty grow up with many situational problems that work against their achievement in school.

According to Huston (1991), children in poverty are absent from school more frequently than children in the upper and middle classes. Gershoff (2003) explained a child's healthy development through three areas: cognitive development, social-emotional development, and physical development. Living in poverty negatively affects their ability to perform cognitively by putting limits on things in life children are exposed to and the resources they lack outside of school. For example, parents in poverty are often not able to afford stimulating toys, children's books, and quality day care (Sherman, 1994). A child's social-emotional development is displayed by their coping mechanisms and their tendencies to externalize or internalize behaviors. The NCCP (2003) stated that children living in poverty lag behind their peers in social-emotional development. Physical development is also effected by socioeconomic status. Children who are born into impoverished homes face health problems as babies. Health problems are often due to insufficient prenatal care, lack of health insurance, parent's knowledge about healthcare, and an unhealthy lifestyle (Sherman, 1994). At school, children living in poverty have more stress in their lives outside of the classroom than their peers' experience. The classroom functioning of these children is affected dramatically by living in poverty (Sherman, 1994).

Rainwater and Smeeding (2003) discussed six problem areas that must be addressed by the federal government to reduce the rates of childhood poverty. The six problem areas include: employment, parental leave, childcare, child-related tax policy, child support, and education. Education is the key for anyone to increase his or her chances of leaving an impoverished lifestyle. This underlines the importance of the issue of poverty. The more school staff that is educated on poverty the more students can be reached. It was emphasized that providing early intervention to children and families living in poverty will save the government money in the long run (Rainwater & Smeeding, 2003).

Children in poverty have to overcome many barriers to be successful, however once they become adolescents life doesn't get any easier. The older the children get the more life obstacles they must face and more responsibility they must take on. A child's transition into adulthood can be very confusing and scary, but for adolescents living in poverty, it brings higher risks for negative behaviors. For example, adolescents in impoverished areas are more likely to drop out of high school, achieve less in school, develop a criminal background, and bear a child (Steinberg, 2005). Research has suggested that the more years spent living in poverty decreases a student's chance of graduating from high school, their chances of attending college, and completing less years of schooling than their peers (Teachman, 1999).

Research highlighted alarming rates of teenage pregnancy regardless of socioeconomic status; however, middle and upper class young women were much more likely to abort their pregnancy than young women in poverty (Steinberg, 2005). This creates a problem that most teenage pregnancies carried to term are born to mothers living in poverty. This statistic is concerning for Americans because at least half of welfare funding in the United States is spent on families that have experienced a teenage birth (Steinberg, 2005). After a baby is born to a

teenage mother, those students have a relatively small percent chance of completing high school (Haveman et al., 1999). These children are often raised in impoverished neighborhoods.

Many poor families are beginning to cluster into one community so they can attempt to live and support one another (Steinberg, 2005). These cluster communities produce adolescents who are more likely to engage in or witness violent acts, be involved with illegal activity, have children out of wedlock, and achieve less in or fail to complete high school (Steinberg, 2005). Research shows that living in an urban cluster community can produce teenagers that engage in more risky negative behaviors (Ludwig, Duncan, & Hirschfield, 2001). The disturbing aspect of the information presented is the repetitive cycle from being born and raised by a teenage mother, to growing up in a poverty cluster community, and the risk factors that against the child will again repeat the cycle.

The risk factors presented for children and adolescents demonstrate the challenges faced in school and life. For educators to properly work with students from socioeconomic disadvantaged backgrounds, they must first understand the culture of poverty. Families living in poverty do not only lack financial resources, but eight other resources contribute to their poverty as well. The eight resources that define survival include: emotional resources, mental resources, spiritual resources, physical resources, support system, relationships and role models, and knowledge of hidden rules between classes (Payne, 2001). Payne (2001) believes it is essential for educators to find their students missing resources and attempt to fill in their voids. Hidden rules between socioeconomic classes demonstrate differing view of basic living needs (Payne, 2001). People living an impoverished lifestyle often have different views about possessions, money, personality, entertainment, housing, and education, to name a few.

There are five different registers of language: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate (Joos, 1967). In the culture of poverty, particularly generational poverty, casual register is often used. This creates a predicament because the middle and wealthy classes speak in formal language. The effects of the language barriers are seen not only in the classroom, but in standardized testing as well. After the *No Child Left Behind Act*, it is important to public school districts funding to perform well on standardized tests. Standardized tests such as the ACT, the SAT, and the WKCE are all written in formal register, which is a barrier to success for students speaking in casual register. It is essential for a student in poverty to learn to communicate through speech and writing in the formal register of language (Payne, 2001). The formal register is what is used in the workforce and in education; understanding it will promote success and higher achievement for students.

Almost every employee working in a public school will interact with children living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment. This shows the importance that teachers, counselors, and school administrators understand these students and can implement interventions to improve their school achievement. The school staff can be used as centers of knowledge for parents and community members.

Teachers can enhance achievement through learning and teaching. The four learning structures that can be used include: cognitive strategies, concepts, skills, and content (Payne, 2001). It is essential that through these learning structures language is also taught. Students speaking in casual register must learn how to speak in formal register to be successful (Payne, 2001). It is important to implement lessons with these students to transfer their speech and writing style into the formal register. Students living in an impoverished lifestyle will need extra support from their school system to be successful and achieving. Support can be given in many

different capacities, and here are some suggestions to help enhance student achievement, for example a middle school in Texas schedule 45 minutes at the end of the school day solely for students to complete their homework (Anderson, 1993). Students that did not finish their homework during the school day were required to stay until their homework was complete. This middle school also had a two textbook policy, one textbook for school and one for home (Anderson, 1993). Other schools have implemented the Accelerated Reader Program, which allowed students to take tests about the books they read in school on a computer (Payne, 2001). There was less competition between the students who had more support with reading at home.

Other suggestions for aiding students living in socioeconomic disadvantaged environments included looping classrooms. Students could form more trusting relationships with teachers by having the same teacher for two or more years (Payne, 2001). Having time to get to know the teacher would be beneficial for students and parents, and their comfort level would be increased. These students would also benefit from small groups run by the school counselor that teach appropriate social skills, coping mechanisms, and study skills. It is important that students learn goal-setting skills. Payne (2001) suggests setting goals at the beginning of each week and then on Friday reviewing the goal and if they met their goal. It is a great way for students to begin to feel success and achievement. Finally, communication is often very complicated with families living in poverty due to chaotic lifestyles, different work shifts, and irresponsibility of bringing notes home. However, because families in poverty value entertainment so much, almost all of them have a VCR, or know someone who does. A successful intervention for opening the lines of communication from the school to families was video recording teachers (Payne, 2001). The teachers recorded a short tape at the beginning of the year that introduced them, and explained classroom expectations, rules and policy, and contact information. It was a

very encouraging for parents to get involved and contact their teacher or counselor if they had any concerns.

Critical Analysis

The literature reviewed in Chapter II provided strong evidence of negative implications for students living in poverty and the relationship to their achievement in the school setting. However, these implications cannot be generalized to all children living in poverty. As a result of the information provided, school personnel should be knowledgeable of the culture of poverty, the challenges the children face, and the effects of their achievement in the classroom. It is beneficial for school teachers, counselors, and administrators to understand the life that students living in poverty come to school with. According to Payne (2001), these children benefit from many different types of teaching methods. It is important that teachers are educated on these methods so modifications can be made for their classrooms. Describing to teachers and counselors how they can help students in poverty by implementing different teaching techniques is somewhat difficult. Teachers have to change and be flexible for many of their students who have difficult family and home situations, such as divorce, grieving, learning disabilities, and among others.

In research, “poverty” has been used as a very broad term, which causes confusion since there are three main types of poverty. The three main types of poverty include rural poverty, situational poverty, and generational poverty. These different kinds of poverty create very different situations for students as well as distinct problems. Many times participants and data were simply categorized as “poverty”, and this researcher often wondered how accurate or efficacious it was to use a term in such a general matter. Families living in a socioeconomic

disadvantaged environment face similar issues; however, it would be interesting to see research compare different types of poverty so there would be less assumptions and generalization.

Ruby Payne (2001) gave very practical and easy interventions for schools to use to help children living in poverty, although several of the interventions could be beneficial for all students. The interventions that seem to be the most effective include goal setting, video recorded messages, homework sessions after school, and working on developing language skills. It would be interesting to find more information regarding role models and their influence of students in poverty. It seems like a mentoring program would be very beneficial for students from an impoverished background, a program that most likely a school counselor could take on.

Children encounter negative outcomes when growing up in a low socioeconomic environment. It greatly affects how children develop into adolescents and how adolescents become adults. The cycle of behaviors that are learned from childhood affect what type of adults these students will become. There has to be a starting point in breaking the cycle of poverty. The cycle can start to be stopped in the school systems. As educators, if we provide the highest quality appropriate education for these students and prepare them to work in a world about the poverty level, public schools has done their best. Public schools are the only ones with the opportunity to reach every student; it is not possible for social services or the government to reach out to every student.

Recommendations

Future research should further explore the effects of living in poverty on students and their achievement in school. There is a dearth of literature to examining the three different types of poverty: situation, generational, and rural. By empirically exploring three different types of

poverty we may be able to isolate specific situations or setbacks associated with a specific type of poverty.

There has also been a great deal of research conducted on the effects of living in poverty on children, however, there is very little information describing ways to prevent the irregular achievement levels. More studies assessing current preventative programs implemented in schools to combat the effects of poverty are recommended. There is a lack of information on the longitudinal effects of poverty on adolescents as they enter adulthood.

It is also recommended that additional research focus on the perceptions of students living in poverty and how their schools can more effectively meet their needs. As an educator it would be very beneficial to know from parents and students living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment what their needs are and how schools can benefit them more.

The subject of poverty and how it correlates to academic achievement is a very broad topic. There are several possibilities for future research, but the most important point is that more research is conducted because the correlation between childhood poverty and poor achievement rates is becoming to be an epidemic in our nation. More research is needed to clarify the correlation between students and the types of poverty they are currently living in. A lot of the research found generalized the types of poverty, which creates many implications for interpreting the research. Overall, it would be beneficial for educators to receive more information about poverty and possible interventions to help their students be successful. In order to promote success in our schools more research is necessary to clarify the specific needs of the students living in a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment.

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