

## **Combating the Effects of Poverty in the Classroom**

### **Course Outline**

#### **Course Description**

Children are coming to schools from homes that suffer poverty in increasing numbers. The effects of poverty impact their performance in class. Educators can level the playing field and give children from poverty the skills they need to be successful students by understanding the relationship between academic achievement and low socio-economic status.

The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that twenty one percent of American children, or over fifteen million children come from households that are poor. In reality, we know that this number is quite low and that families making significantly more than that are still struggling. With unemployment and under-employment still effecting a great number of Americans the number of children coming to school enduring deprivation is continues to rise.

This course will explore the nature of poverty and its effects on child development and learning. It provides teachers with an understanding of poverty, but more importantly gives them the strategies and tools they need to create an educational framework to meet the needs of impoverished children and help them succeed in school.

#### **Objectives**

- Develop working definitions for poor and low-income families.
- Identify the criterion that characterizes poor from low-income families.
- Examine the impact poverty has on the whole child.
- Explore the various types of poverty and the different influences each presents when working with these students in the school setting.
- Identify the ways in which the culture of poverty can influence relationships.
- Investigate the relationship between academic and socio-economic status.
- Explore the theory and research of how poverty effects the brain development of children enduring deprivation.
- Acquire a basic knowledge of how the culture of poverty impacts values, communication and one's ability to successfully interact with society norms.
- Critique the different sets of rules that govern behavior within the social classes and analyze how those rules impact student learning.
- Evaluate and create an action plan that addresses the need for students to be able to identify when which set of rules is acceptable.
- Explore strategies that can have a positive impact on the neuroplasticity of the brains of children living in deprivation.
- Explore and evaluate the different ways of measuring IQ.
- Create a thematic unit that addresses specific strategies for intellectual growth.
- Research current educational policies and research based educational programs that have displayed a positive effect on student learning.

- Analyze how data can drive meaningful instruction.
- Recognize and define the obstacles that prevent low socio-economic students from achieving and design strategies to bridge the gaps.
- Explore and evaluate improvement possibilities for teacher professional development and community building.
- Design a plan of action to lesson or remove the obstacles created by poverty to insure all students achieve to their highest ability.

### **Curriculum Design & Time Requirements**

*Combating the Effects of Poverty in the Classroom* is a three credit graduate level course or forty-five professional development hours taught on weekends or over five full days. This course will be presented systematically, by the instructor, using the Instructional Conversation method, in which there a conversation where ideas are explored and evaluated, rather than direct answers to teachers' provided test questions (Cazden 1988). Each concept will act as a foundation or building block to create a framework for understanding and combating the effects of poverty on the education of children.

Sessions One, Two, and Three will define poverty and identify the effects on child development, and compare situational and generational poverty. Sessions Four and Five will explore the culture and values of poverty as compared to middle class values and identify societal rules. Session Six focuses on how poverty effects brain development and how scientific research points to the brain's neuroplasticity and its ability to change for the better. Sessions Seven and Eight will investigate policy, review data, and evaluate which programs fit best. Session Nine addresses building relationships amongst faculty, staff, students, family and community. Lastly, Session Ten ties it all together through the development of an action plan that encompasses all of the concepts presented in the course.

### **Course Materials**

The required text for this course is "Poor Students, Rich Students" by Eric Jensen.

### **Session Outline**

#### **Session 1: What Do Educators Need to Know to Understand the Nature of Poverty?**

##### **Contents:**

1. Define Poverty
2. Examine current statistical data pertaining to poverty in America
3. Identify the criteria families must meet to be considered poor in America
4. Explore how poverty affects children emotionally, socially, cognitively, and developmentally

#### **Session 2: How Does Generational Poverty Differ from Situational Poverty?**

##### **Contents:**

1. Define types of poverty
2. Identify the different types of poverty in terms of the following factors: home life, importance of personality, ability to entertain, importance of relationships, matriarchal structure, survival, discipline, and fate

#### **Session 3: Why is There Such a Stark Disparity in Academic Achievement Between Socio-**

## **Economic Groups**

### **Contents:**

1. Investigate the effects of poverty on the brain
2. Differentiate between emotional and social challenges
3. Demonstrate how to build respect and social skills

## **Session 4: What are the Culture and Values of Poverty?**

### **Contents:**

1. Appraise the role of family members living in poverty
2. Explore language and story telling among families in poverty
3. Investigate the resources available to people living in poverty
4. Explore group expectations with the impoverished community

## **Session 5: What are the Hidden Rules of Social Classes and How Do They Impact Students at School?**

### **Contents:**

1. Identify the hidden rules of each social class
2. Express how the rules define school behavior and performance

## **Session 6: How Can We Change the Negative Effects that Poverty has on Children's Brains?**

### **Contents:**

1. Investigate the relationship between neuroplasticity and gene expression
2. Evaluate changing IQ
3. Research fluidity of intelligence
4. Create an educational intervention plan and long term enrichment

## **Session 7: Which Policies have the Greatest Positive Affect on the Brains of Students Raised in Poverty?**

### **Contents:**

1. Examine how to support of the whole child
2. Investigate how data influences instruction
3. Explore ways to increase educational accountability
4. Develop strategies for building relationships
5. Create an enriched mind-set

## **Session 8: What Does Improvement Look Like from the Classroom Perspective?**

### **Contents:**

1. Explore standards based curriculum and instruction
2. Examine ways of building hope among children living in poverty
3. Evaluate arts, athletics, and advanced placement programs
4. Analyze best teaching practices that creates engaging instruction

## **Session 9: How Can We Create School Wide Success?**

### **Contents:**

1. Explore relationship building among staff
2. Define and redesigning staff roles in schools
3. Create a staff wide enrichment program

## **Session 10: Tying it All Together**

### **Contents:**

1. Complete Action Research/Integration Project

2. Complete Personal Position Paper
3. Complete Student Survey

### Grading

Assignment	Points	Grading Scale	
Group and Classroom Participation	28	171-160	<b>A</b>
Written Assignments	103	159-145	<b>B</b>
Action Plan	20	144-130	<b>C</b>
Position Paper	20		
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>171</b>		

### Student Requirements

**Participation:** Attend all class sessions for the requisite number of hours (45) and

1. actively participate in all class activities.

**Reading & Written Assignments:** Complete all reading assignments in the textbook

2. and all written assignments.

**Action Plan:** Complete a plan of action for supporting teaching impoverished children

3. in your own classroom.

**Position Paper:** Create a personal position paper on strategies for working with

4. students living in poverty.

### Student Academic Integrity

Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and is subject to academic disciplinary action.