

Contents

Twenty-three Solutions
for Difficult Behavior 2

Girls with ADD 2

Brain-based Strategies to
Increase Learning 3

Friends Who Care 4

Insights into Poverty
continued 5

Analogy Organizer 6



Insights into a Framework for Understanding Poverty

Second in a series, the first article can be found on our website at www.lsses.org.

In society there are three basic classes: poverty, middle class, and wealth. Each of these classes has their own idiosyncrasies and hidden rules. As an average middle class educator, it is important to understand the hidden rules of poverty if we are to effectively minister to those living in poverty. By understanding these hidden rules, educators may be less frustrated or angered by situations stemming from the inherent differences between classes.

It is important for the teacher to be aware of and teach hidden rules of the middle class, without being critical of the hidden rules of poverty. Teachers can also help students understand differences in classes.

There are two basic types of poverty: 1. Generational (having been in poverty for at least two generations) and 2. Situational (a lack of resources due to a particular event such as a death, divorce, chronic illness, etc.) (p. 47).

Most students that are in

poverty are in generational poverty which is much more difficult to rise above. There are many characteristics of generational poverty. Among them include: the importance of personality, relationships, and oral-language tradition; the significance of the matriarchal structure, identity for men as lover/fighter, and identity for women as rescuer/martyr; the tendency toward survival orientation and living in the moment, belief in des-



tiny and fate and disorganization. For them time is the present and the future does not exist. People of poverty consider entertainment important, background noise essential, and humor highly valued. They use touch to communicate and their body to attract

(Continued on page 5)

Twenty –Three Solutions for Difficult Behavior

1. Create physical space.
 2. Establish emotional boundaries (standards of behavior).
 3. Invite critical feedback.
 4. Consider your response to rights vs. needs vs. wants.
 5. Develop respectful responses to disrespectful behavior.
 6. Do not shoulder the blame for criticisms that are not yours to own.
 7. Listen with respect and respond with care.
 8. Stick to the issue and behaviors at hand.
 9. Choose and use a level of assertion; especially try empathy.
 10. Initiate contact with, "Specifically, how can I be helpful to you?"
 11. Maintain your focus on, "We can work this out."
 12. Expect respect (We can work this out when you stop yelling).
 13. Say what you mean in specific terms.
 14. Keep congruent words, tone and actions.
 15. Avoid debate.
 16. Use sure signals for confidence (Head up, face forward, eye contact, shoulders back, steady stance, posture straight, no leaning).
 17. Count to 10. Use silence to increase your calm. It's valuable to "leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."
 18. Speak from the "same side of the table."
 19. Have tangible reminders to respond appropriately (notes, cues from a colleague, etc.).
- Document facts of behaviors and situation.**
20. Build your credibility with your language and actions.
 21. Give people a way out. **Establish Choices.**
 22. Refuse the win-lose perspective.
 23. Breathe. Fully breathe for calmness and for conveying steadiness and confidence.



**Information taken from McPherson Class – Conflict Resolution (Summer 2008)*

Girls with ADD

Boys with ADD/ADHD stand out in the crowd. In addition to having problems paying attention and getting distracted, they often are hyperactive, impulsive, and disruptive.

Girls with ADD/ADHD, on the other hand, tend to act out less but have more attention problems, leading to academic problems and emotional issues.

Girls become more withdrawn and "spacey." Because they are not disrupting the rest of the class, it may take longer for them to get a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD and the help that they need.

In the book *Understanding Girls With AD/HD*, Kathleen Nadeau, Ph.D., states that "There are many girls left undiagnosed because their symptoms look different," because "girls

are less rebellious, less defiant, and generally less 'difficult' than boys." Socialized to please their teachers and parents, girls try hard to compensate for the disorder, making it much harder to spot. When teachers or parents do take note, says Nadeau, "[Girls'] behavior is often misunderstood as immaturity or lack of academic ability rather than as ADD/ADHD."

Source:www.4-adhd.com

Brain Based Strategies to Increase Learning

Many of us use games to vary learning activities. Good News! Using games now has a research base to validate their usefulness. One caution – some games, such as Around the World for math or a Spelling Bee for spelling, eliminate students who have weaker skills. The result is that the stronger student gets the most practice. The weaker students have less practice because they are soon eliminated and spend the rest of the time watching.

Research shows that the effectiveness of a game is enhanced when students actually help design or construct it, i.e., they write the questions and answers. Allowing students to redesign any game they already know, such as Wheel of Fortune, Simon Sez, Concentration, or Ball Toss, provides the brain connections necessary for better understanding of the alternative content.

Games use the most basic level of active processing, creative processing. The mechanisms involved when students are playing a game are just as cognitive as when doing math worksheets. Play speeds up the brain's maturation process since it involves the built-in processes of challenge, novelty, feedback, coherence, and time.



Jeopardy Format

Level: Elementary, Middle School, High School

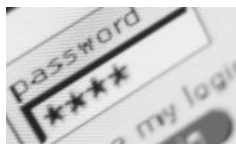
Objective: Recall information previously read or taught

Students construct a Jeopardy! game by selecting key points in a designated chapter that can serve as answers. Answers are placed on a class game board in categories of 100, 200, 300, 400, and 500 points. The easiest answers are worth 100 points and the most difficult, 500. Students form teams and take turns providing answers for questions for the designated answers. The game proceeds according to the rules of the game on TV.

Password Format

Level: All

Students compete in pairs and take turns being the first to get their partners to guess a designated word by providing them with a one word synonym or definition for the vocabulary word. The point value begins at 10 and decreases by one point each time the word is not guessed. Both students in the pair write the number of points for that round on a 3x5 card. Students exchange roles. To prevent hard feelings against less able students, teachers might rotate one member of each pair for the next round.



Wheel of Fortune Format

Level: All

Objective: Spells words correctly

Students play Wheel of Fortune with partners. One partner becomes “Vanna” and selects a vocabulary or spelling word from a list provided by the teacher. The other student(s) are the contestants and guess the word one letter at a time. “Vanna” prints the correct letters. The student to correctly guess the word is the winner of that round. Students take turns being “Vanna” or “Vince.”



Friends Who Care

Tips for helping children interact comfortably with those with disabilities

Say to the child(ren): "Learning to accept ourselves is one of the hardest jobs we have to do, especially when we want so much to fit in with our friends and our classmates.

Most of us are self-conscious about the way we look. Or we wish we could be better than we are at something. Many of us worry about things that are invisible to our friends and our families. But they are important to us. They influence the way we act, or walk, or what we hear.

When you have a disability, fitting in is even harder. A disability is the first thing other people see. Sometimes it's the only thing. And what happens is that people forget to look behind the wheelchair, or the hearing aid, or the prosthesis.

We don't see the person – only the person's disability. We forget that these are people who could be our friends. Kids with disabilities may seem different, at first. But they are people with many interests, ideas and feelings, just like everyone else!"

Tips to share with your students:

1. It's okay to offer your help to someone, but don't just go ahead. Ask first. Or wait for someone to ask you for your help.
2. It's okay to ask people about their disabilities and it's also okay for them not to talk about it.
3. Remember, just because people have a disability, it doesn't mean they are sick. Lots of people who have disabilities are healthy and strong.
4. When you're talking with people who use wheelchairs, sit down so their necks won't get sore looking up at you.
5. It's okay to use words like "see", "hear", "walk" and "run" when you're talking with friends who have disabilities.
6. It's okay to ask people who have speech problems to repeat what they said if you didn't understand the first time.
7. If an interpreter is helping you speak with a deaf person, make sure you talk to the deaf person, not the interpreter.
8. Don't speak loudly when talking to blind people. They hear as well as you do.
9. Never pet or play with Seeing Eye dogs. They can't be distracted from the job they are doing.
10. Invite friends with disabilities to sleep over, come to your house to play, or to your birthday party. Think about ways to make sure that they can be included in the things that you do.
11. Treat a person with a disability the way you like to be treated and you'll have a friend for life.



Taken From: http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl_friends_wwa_care

“Bring every man up to his full potential in Christ Jesus.”

Colossians 1:28

(Continued from page 1)

others; people may be thought of as possessions. For those living in poverty, failure is belittled and punishment is about penance and forgiveness instead of change; options aren't examined - "I can't do it. I quit." (p. 51-52). Knowing and understanding these characteristics will help educators when working with kids in poverty.



These characteristics surface in school often. Children are very disorganized, use many excuses, don't do homework, can be physically aggressive, like to entertain, only see and do in part, can't get started, can't monitor their own behavior, laugh when disciplined, will only work if they like the teacher, dislike authority, talk in casual-register, talk back and are extremely participatory (p. 60-61).

Another major characteristic of generational poverty is the family pattern. Generational poverty is a matriarchal society. The mother is the center and the family radiates from her. It is

more difficult to keep track of the relationships because most individuals in the family have multiple relationships, which may or may not produce children. Many teens have children out of wedlock. The mother or grandmothers will raise the children. Men have the role of "fighter/lover" instead of "provider" as found in the middle class.

Also, many families in poverty have multiple internal feuds. All of these characteristics make helping children in generational poverty more difficult. Schools tend to be where students see a way out; a choice. Schools can help provide instruction of the rules of the hidden class and provide resources.

Many teachers need to become a role model or emotional resource for students in poverty. Many times kids in poverty are thrown into adult roles, forcing them to miss out on their childhood. This then creates an emotional dependence. The teacher can provide emotional resources when the student has not had a good role model (example: Big Brothers and Big Sisters).

Other ways teachers can provide emotional resources is through appropriate support systems, by using appropriate discipline strategies and approaches, by establishing long term relationships, by teaching hidden rules, by identifying options, by increasing the student's achievement level through appropriate instruction, and by teaching goal setting (p. 66). A support system

needs to include teaching procedural self talk, positive self talk, planning and goal setting, coping strategies, appropriate relationships, options during problem solving, access to information and know-how, and connections to additional resources (p. 75).

In order to help teachers become a role model, schools should strive to have teachers stay with the child or class for at least two years. Teachers, administrators and others become important in the child's life. As a role model, it is crucial for teachers and administrators to provide support systems. Some examples of support systems that have worked in other schools are: school wide homework support, supplemental school wide reading programs, teachers keep same students for at least two years to develop relationships, teaching coping skills, school wide scheduling that puts students in subgroups by skill in reading and math, parent training and contact through video, directly teaching classroom survival or study skills, requiring daily goal setting and positive self-talk, and team interventions (p. 71-74). These support systems are vital to children in poverty in helping them toward finding a way out of poverty.

Payne, Ruby K., (2005), A Framework for Understanding Poverty. Aha Process Inc.: Highlands, TX.

**This issue and past issues of
ASSIST can be found at
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Analogy Organizer

