**Equity Literacy for Practitioners Supporting Children Growing up in Poverty:**

**Advice from a Graduate Class Studying Relevant Concepts from a Developmental Perspective**

Mazen Alzarhani

Pamela Barker

Lindsay Beddes

Louise Benke

Kimberli Bontempo

Selani Flores

Amy Graefe

Chelsie Hess

Anna Johnson

Chynna McCall

Teresa McDevitt (Instructor)

Mackenzie Peake

Bridgette Shriver

University of Northern Colorado

PSY 695 Childhood and Poverty, Fall, 2014

As a graduate class, we—students and instructor—decided early in the semester that we would examine readings in a critical manner that typifies the critical analysis of higher education, but also with the objective of determining implications for equity literacy.

We read Gorski’s (2013) book, *Reaching and teaching students in poverty,* as one of our initial readings and applied its general approach with subsequent readings. Relevant excerpts follow:

*/6/ Equity Literacy asks us to focus on equity, on how to create and sustain equitable learning environments free of even the subtlest bias.*

/22/ Equity literacy abilities include:

* *ability to recognize biases and inequities, including those that are subtle.*
* *ability to respond to biases and inequities in the immediate term.*
* *ability to redress biases and inequities in the long term.*
* *ability to create and sustain a bias-free and equitable learning environment.*

/23-25/ The principles of equity literacy include:

1. *The right to equitable educational opportunity is universal.*
2. *Poverty and class are intersectional in nature.*
3. *Poor people are diverse.*
4. *What we believe, including our biases and prejudices, about people in poverty informs how we teach and relate to people in poverty.*
5. *We cannot understand the relationship between poverty and education without understanding biases and inequities experienced by people in poverty.*
6. *Test scores are inadequate measures of equity.*
7. *Class disparities in education are the result of inequities, not the result of cultures.*
8. *Equitable educators adopt a resiliency rather than a deficit view of low-income students and families.*
9. *Strategies for bolstering school engagement and learning must be based on evidence for what works.*
10. *The inalienable right to equitable educational opportunity includes the right to high expectations, higher-order pedagogies, and engaging curricula.*

Our class sessions included a range of formats, including lecture, presentations with Powerpoint slides, video analysis, and lots of discussion. Teresa (the instructor) developed a simple table whose cells were gradually filled in over the course of the semester. At the end of class sessions, we distilled the readings from that week as a means for solidifying the concepts we wanted to remember. The activity was a useful tool for identifying significant concepts from each session and reinforcing insights from the semester.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Concept** | **Strategy for Enhancing the Well-Being and Education of Children** | **Readings** |
| An understanding of intersectionality | Professional development in poverty diversityCreate own intersectionality diagram (with self-assessment)Small group other-assessmentDiversity chain or privilege chain (e.g., links with food stamps) | Gorski, P. C. (2013). *Reaching and teaching students in poverty*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. |
| Childhood stress | Caring adults (encouragement of students, warmth, acceptance)Secure attachmentKnowledge of how the stress system worksUnderstanding the adaptive purpose of hyper-vigilianceTeaching children how to copePositive reframing for parents; parent-teacher interventionInterventions for calming the child | Tough, P. (2012). *How children succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcout.Chapters 1 and 2: How to fail (and how not to); How to build characterNoble, K. G., & Farah, M. J. (2013). Neurocognitive consequences of socioeconomic disparities: The intersection of cognitive neuroscience and public health. *Developmental Science*, *16*(5), 639-640. doi:10.1111/desc.12076Miller, G. E., & Chen, E. (2013). The Biological Residue of Childhood Poverty. *Child Development Perspectives*, *7*(2), 67-73. doi:10.1111/cdep.12021Cicchetti, D., Doom, J. R., & Gunnar, M. R. (2013). Stress physiology and developmental psychopathology: Past, present, and future. *Development & Psychopathology*, *25*(4pt2), 1359-1373. doi:10.1017/S0954579413000667Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., Garner, A. S., & ... Wood, D. L. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics*, *129*(1), e232-e246. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-2663Frankenhuis, W. E., & de Weerth, C. (2013). Does early-life exposure to stress shape or impair cognition? *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22*(5), 407-412. |
| Childhood stress (continued) and trauma | Consistency ReliabilityAttunementModeling of emotions | Rossen, E., & Hull, R. (2013). *Supporting and educating traumatized students: A guide for school-based professionals*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5:Blaustein. Childhood trauma and a framework for intervention.Hertel and Johnson. How the traumatic experiences of students manifest in school settingsWiebler. Developmental differences in response to traumaMorland et al. Immigrant students.Bowman & Popp. Students experiencing homelessness |
| Emotional self-regulation as a universal intervention | Teachers and adult modeling and role playingTeaching calming strategiesTeaching conflict resolutionTeaching with scaffoldingAchievement needs to be considered more broadly to include social-emotional learningEssentials – stop, think, and acting after calm VideosNeighborhood nights (during intermission, etc.)Evidence-based programs for everyone (advantages of universal programs)Could be standardsTeacher and parent trainingStarting at young ageIt is empowering to self-regulate | Nisbett, R. E. (2013). Schooling makes you smarter: What teachers need to know about IQ. *American Educator*. Reiss, F. (2013). Socioeconomic inequalities and mental health problems in children and adolescents: A systematic review. *Social Science & Medicine*, *90*24-31. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.04.026McCabe, P. C., & Altamura, M. (2011). Empirically valid strategies to improve social and emotional competence of preschool children. *Psychology In The Schools*, *48*(5), 513-540. doi:10.1002/pits.20570Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students’ social and emotional learning: A meta‐analysis of school‐based universal interventions. *Child Development*, *82*(1), 405-432. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x |
| Early childhood intervention  | Identify children who need interventionStrive to close the gapFocus on whole childConnections with families; especially home visitsProfessional development for teachers – social emotional developmentCoaching teachers (Pianta’s work)Connection to policy and public opinion (evidence, case, cost benefit analysis | Reynolds, A. J., Rolnick, A. J., Englund, M. M., & Temple, J. A. (Eds., 2010). *Childhood programs and practices in the first decade of life: A human capital integration*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.These chapters:1. Reynolds et al. Early childhood development and human capital. 3. Olds. The Nurse-Family Partnership: From trials to practice. 4. Campbell & Ramey. Carolina Abecedarian Project.6. Resnik. Project Head Start: Quality and links to child outcomes. |
| Supporting school-age children and adolescents | Develop evidence-based trainings.Assign one person (at least) who looks for gifts and talents.Form professional communities (that are multidisciplinary) that infuse whole-child perspective into work.Training to identify giftedness and talents in children from low-income backgroundsSet standards that communicate faith in ability but scaffolding them sufficiently to help them reach the standardsCommunicate high expectations for all childrenUse classroom assessments that measure not-so-easily captured skill sets (e.g., might be inferential thinking, evaluation).Take a whole-child perspective on achievement.Support all learners, including teachers, parents, and other school staff.Create and sustain home-school-community relationships.Focus on the 3 E’s (engagement, enjoyment, and enthusiasm). | Haskins, R., Murnane, R., Sawhill, I. V., & Snow, C. (2012). Can academic standards boost literacy and close the achievement gap. *Paper. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, The Future of Children. Retrieved February*, *20*, 2013. Ladd, H. F. (2012). Education and Poverty: Confronting the Evidence. *Journal Of Policy Analysis & Management*, *31*(2), 203-227. doi:10.1002/pam.21615Hopson, L. M., & Lee, E. (2011). Mitigating the effect of family poverty on academic and behavioral outcomes: The role of school climate in middle and high school. *Children & Youth Services Review*, *33*(11), 2221-2229. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.07.006Gizir, C.A., & Aydin, G. I. (2009). Protective Factors Contributing to the Academic Resilience of Students Living in Poverty in Turkey. *Professional School Counseling*, *13*(1), 38-49. doi:10.5330/PSC.n.2010-13.38 |
| Risk and resilience for youth | Address self-determination needsGo slow to move fastFoster optimism with success experiences, internships, etc.Social-emotional learning and programming for allFoster self-efficacy in academic subjects | Richaud, M. (2013). Contributions to the study and promotion of resilience in socially vulnerable children. *American Psychologist*, *68*(8), 751-758. doi:10.1037/a0034327de Melo, A., & Alarcão, M. (2013). Transforming risks into opportunities in child protection cases: A case study with a multisystemic, in-home, strength-based model. *Journal Of Family Psychotherapy*, *24*(1), 17-37. doi:10.1080/08975353.2013.762865 Washington, B., Hughes, C., & Cosgriff, J. (2012). High-Poverty Youth: Self-Determination and Involvement in Educational Planning. *Career Development For Exceptional Individuals*, *35*(1), 14-28. doi:10.1177/0885728811420135 |
| International Perspectives on Poverty in Childhood | Share information about poverty in international settings.Invest in early childhood, nutrition, other interventions found to ameliorate the negative effects of poverty on children | Johnson, D. J., Agbényiga, D., & Hitchcock, R. K. (2013). *Vulnerable children: Global challenges in education, health, well-being, and child rights*. New York, NY US: Springer Science + Business Media. doi:10.1007/978-1-4614-6780-9Parsons, C. (2013). Challenged school – challenged society: stacking the odds against the poor. *Educational Review*, *65*(3), 267-283. doi:10.1080/00131911.2013.772127Annan, J., Green, E. P., & Brier, M. (2013). Promoting recovery after war in northern Uganda: Reducing daily stressors by alleviating poverty. *Journal Of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *22*(8), 849-868. doi:10.1080/10926771.2013.823636Pradhan, M., Brinkman, S. A., Beatty, A., Maika, A., Satriawan, E., Ree, J., & Hasan, A. (2013). Evaluating a community-based early childhood education and development program in Indonesia: study protocol for a pragmatic cluster randomized controlled trial with supplementary matched control group. *Trials*, *14*(1), 1-16. doi:10.1186/1745-6215-14-259Richter, L. M. (2010). Global perspectives on the well-being of children. In C. M. Worthman, P. M. Plotsky, D. S. Schechter, C. A. Cummings (Eds.), *Formative experiences: The interaction of caregiving, culture, and developmental psychobiology* (pp. 531-548). New York, NY US: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511711879 |