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What Poverty Means for Student Achievement and the Best Practices for Teaching Students in Poverty.

An Honors Thesis
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by

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Introduction

In America today, there are approximately 103 million people living below the line of poverty (Edelman, p. 4). This means that 103 million people are supporting a family of three or more with less than \$36,000 (p. 4). Therefore, one-third of America today lives in poverty (p. 4). Within those 103 million, there are approximately 20.5 million people in America who fall into the category of “deep poverty,” making less than \$9,000 for a family of three or more (p. 5). These people make up about 6.7% of the population (p. 5). Finally, within these 20.5 million people, there are about 6 million who do not have any income at all (p. 5). Since one-third of America lives in poverty today, our future generations are likely to have even greater numbers of poverty according to the phenomenon of generational poverty.

Generational poverty occurs when “a parent’s poverty permanently affects the lives of his/her children” (Getting, p.2). Living in poverty causes children to gain cognitive, behavioral, and emotional deficits, putting them at a vast disadvantage in education and in professional attainment (p. 2). This is due to the fact these children have access to fewer resources, and live in a world of disadvantage (p. 3). The living environments of these children often involve limited access to food, higher pollution rates, overcrowded and overfunded schools, and higher crime rates (p. 3). Children from poverty also often develop the attributes their parents display and lack proper role models. Therefore, they often have poor nutritional habits, a lack of self-confidence, and little reading abilities (p. 5). Additionally, children from poverty also tend to move quite frequently, causing an increased amount of stress (p. 4). In fact, adults who were raised in poverty tend to continue to exhibit problems with stress and emotional processing (p. 4). Altogether, the deficits of poverty cause children raised in these

situations to be 72% more likely to raise their own children in poverty, and thus continuing the cycle of generational poverty (p. 5).

The effects of poverty affect all aspects of a child's life, but specifically cause deficits in their education. Although this puts students in poverty at a disadvantage as they begin their learning, there are many strategies and methods that teachers can use to help support these students in order to prevent them from falling behind due to reasons beyond their control. One of the best ways that educators can help students in poverty break the cycle of generational poverty is by unlocking their potential and ability to succeed in school (The Cycle, p. 16). Success in the world of education can unlock many opportunities for these students that will otherwise likely fall back into the cycle of generational poverty. This study evaluates the problems that children in poverty often face, and the strategies that teachers can use to combat these problems. In addition, this study evaluates the problems faced by students in an actual elementary setting and describes the strategies that would be effective in this setting. This research is an action research study designed to investigate what poverty means for student achievement and the best practices for teaching students in poverty.

Chapter One - Defining the Problem

Poverty in public education today has risen to numbers far greater than ever before. A recent report by the Southern Education Foundation shows that 51% of students in the national public school system are affected by poverty (Layton, p. 2). Although many think of financial aspects when thinking of poverty, the definition of poverty is "the extent to which an individual goes without resources" (Payne, "Framework for Understanding Poverty," 7). Although poverty can include an individual going without financial resources, this also

includes emotional, mental/cognitive, spiritual, and physical resources as well as a lack of support systems, relationships, knowledge of hidden rules, and language registers (8). In fact, Ruby Payne states that “The ability to leave poverty is more dependent on other resources than it is on financial resources” (8). The hardships faced by people who are lacking one or more of these resources are very extensive, specifically in the education system.

Barriers to Learning

The lack of emotional, mental/cognitive, spiritual, and physical resources as well as a lack of support systems, relationships, knowledge of hidden rules, and language registers faced by students in poverty creates barriers to learning that will cause children in poverty to greatly struggle in their education (Payne, “Framework for Understanding Poverty,” 8). When these barriers are unaddressed, and students begin to fall behind, they can cause students to get trapped in the cycle of intergenerational poverty (The Cycle, p. 16).

Physical and Mental Health Deficiencies

One of the hardships of poverty that causes a great impact on education is a lack of nutritional health. When students face nutritional deficiencies and poor health, it makes it extremely difficult for these students to concentrate and listen efficiently enough to learn (Jensen, “Poverty Affects Classroom,” p. 9). In addition, the hardships of poverty often cause additional cognitive problems for students, which includes short attention spans, extreme distractibility, difficulty generating new solutions to problems, and difficulty monitoring the quality of their work (Jensen, “Poverty Affects Classroom,” p. 31). These cognitive deficiencies are often caused by chronic stressors, which are developed from the lifestyle of those in poverty. “In conditions of poverty, those most likely to survive are those who have

an exaggerated stress response” (Jensen, “Teaching with Poverty,” 27). The responses and habits of students with chronic stressors are often considered misbehaviors, such as acting out or shutting down, when in reality they are the behaviors the child has learned as a means of survival (Jensen, “Poverty Affects Classroom,” p. 31). Between nutrition, health, and cognitive deficiencies caused by extreme levels of stress, students begin the school year already at a disadvantage and with a decreased opportunity to succeed.

Effects of the Home Environment

The home environment of students in poverty is another major factor that impacts the education of impoverished students. Often, the environment students live in contains unsafe and harsh conditions, and cause behaviors that students must learn in order to survive (Payne, “Modules 1-7 Workbook”, 47). These behaviors are often necessary for students to learn, but produce major problems in the school setting due to the fact that many of these learned behaviors are considered unacceptable in the school environment (47). This causes these students to be seen as behavior problems since they do not understand that these behaviors are not welcome in the school setting (47). This is because these students lack the cognitive ability to understand self-governance, which is a very necessary skill students in poverty must learn in order to succeed in the classroom. This is due to the fact that these “misbehaviors” in school cannot be abandoned because they are necessary for survival in their home environment (47). For example, students may need the ability to physically fight in order to protect themselves in the environment surrounding their home, but this behavior is not tolerated in the school system (47). Teachers may wish to convince students that this behavior should be abandoned for lack of understanding of the home environment of the

students, which will not be effective as a behavior intervention. Instead, teachers must be willing to help students learn how to self-govern their own behaviors (47).

Lack of Boundaries

In poverty-stricken environments, families often face crowded homes with little resources, and often learn the idea that you must give much in order to receive anything (Payne, "Framework for Understanding Poverty," 85). This causes these students to have a lack of boundaries, both physically and emotionally (85). As Ruby Payne states, "The closer you get to survival, the fewer the boundaries" (85). The lack of boundaries that these students face cause them to gain manipulative and controlling tendencies, as well as causing them to become extremely fixated (85). The development of this trait results in "black or white thinking," which means the students often have trouble considering their options when facing problems (85). Students often feel as if they can choose one option or the other, and cannot see past this limited decision they feel they are faced by (85). Since education today places such an emphasis on broadening the thinking of students, students in poverty often struggle to become high-level thinkers. The home environment also causes students to lack actual knowledge as well (Payne, "Framework for Understanding Poverty," 85). "...in welfare households, negative comments were 2 to 1. In other words, a child heard twice as many negative comments/prohibitions as positive comments. But in a professional household, a child heard five positives for every negative" (85). When a child has heard mostly negativity at home, and come to school and hear positive feedback, they do not know how to process the feedback and therefore act out (85). This causes learning deficits because teachers who do not understand and recognize this poverty issue will think the child is a behavior issue and

discipline accordingly (85). Therefore, the emotional problems the child is going through are not reconciled and will continue to cause them problems in the classroom (85).

Learned Helplessness

Many of the hardships of poverty altogether cause students to develop depressive symptoms and ultimately develop learned helplessness (Jensen, "Poverty Affects Classroom" p. 17). Learned helplessness occurs when one's "experience with uncontrollable events can lead to the expectation that no responses in one's repertoire will control future outcomes" (Nolen-Hoeksema, 435). This development leads students to expect to have no control over any situation, and therefore causes them to lack motivation, have a lowered self-esteem, and have an inability to see an opportunity to control one's outcomes (435). Gaining a sense of security and feeling in control of your environment is vital in order to develop personality traits that encourage success in life, such as self-worth, confidence, and independence (Jensen, "Teaching with Poverty," p. 17). Due to the learned helplessness that many students from poverty face, these children often have trouble creating secure attachments to their environment (p. 17). This causes the development of "psychiatric disturbances and maladaptive social functioning" (p. 17). Altogether, the hardships faced in impoverished homes cause students to face mental blocks - such as learned helplessness - that are developed through depressive tendencies that will further set them behind in education. When students fall behind, they often begin to develop a "fixed mindset," which causes them to believe that intelligence is fixed and cannot be changed even when maximum effort is put forth (Wright, 49). When students develop a fixed mindset, they believe that their failures are caused by a lack of natural ability and that there is no other option but to give up (49). This pushes students further into learned helplessness, and the cycle continues as students feel

they cannot succeed, fail, believe they can do nothing to succeed, and feel helpless again. In addition, the lack of motivation and self-confidence gained through this development may even be seen by educators as a misbehavior that the students are purposefully portraying, when in reality they do not know how to face life in another way and must be taught (Jensen, “Poverty Affects Classroom,” p. 18).

Deficiencies in Language

Vocabulary is also a major concern for students in poverty. Students in poverty tend to have a drastically lower range of vocabulary than those who have not faced poverty in their homes, which puts them at a further disadvantage in their education (Jensen, “Poverty Affects Classroom,” p. 12). “Children from low-income families hear, on average, 13 million words by age 4. In middle-class families, children hear about 26 million words during that same time period. In upper-income families, they hear a staggering 46 million words by age 4—three times as many as their lower-income counterparts” (p.12). In fact, toddlers from middle and upper-income families are often found to have and utilize a larger range of vocabulary than adults in lower-income families (p. 12). This extensive vocabulary barrier that these students face not only causes them to fall behind, but also causes them to lose interest and motivation in listening to the teacher, reading, and participating in the classroom due to their lack of understanding (p. 13). These vocabulary barriers also cause impoverished students to feel inferior, and as if they do not belong in an academic setting (p. 13).

Alongside the lack of actual vocabulary that is learned by impoverished students, these students also lack knowledge of language registers as well. Every language has five registers, frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate (Payne, “Framework for

Understanding Poverty,” 31). Frozen register refers to language that is always the same, formal register refers to the sentence syntax and word choice of school and work, consultative register refers to formal register that is used in regular conversation, casual register refers to language used between friends, and intimate register refers to language used towards those we love (31). The register that students from poverty often lack knowledge of is formal register (31). Although this is only one of the five registers, it is vitally important. Formal register is considered a hidden rule of the middle class, and shows up in multiple situations throughout education and life in general (32). All standardized tests taken throughout education are written in formal register, and this register is expected to be used during job interviews as well (32). According to Ruby Payne, “The inability to use [formal register] will knock one out of most interviews in two or three minutes” (32). Not only does a lack of formal register cause high achievement on tests and interviews to become increasingly impossible, but this is also the language that is used by the teacher, and is the language that the students are expected to use (31). Research has shown a huge relationship between academic success and early language experiences (33). Students who do not receive early language experiences with formal register are not likely to excel in verbal or spoken language, and therefore are not likely to excel in academics at all (33).

Overall, poverty-stricken children do not only face problems within their home environment, but they also face problems in education, in trying to find a career, and in their long-term health and stability as well. Due to the overwhelming amount of disadvantages and hardships these children go through, many end up caught in intergenerational poverty, and continue to live in this world of poverty. Educators must begin to see the effects poverty has

on students, and learn how to combat these effects in order to stop the vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty and help these students succeed in education and in the world.

Chapter Two - Researched methods for combating the problem

As mentioned above, poverty is impacting schools today in a big way, and educators should prepare themselves to combat the effects that it has on our students. Although the main problem is obviously poverty that is being combated, there is certainly not one solution that fixes every aspect of this intricate issue. There are multiple aspects of poverty and multiple problems and effects that children may have due to it. Children may only struggle with one effect of poverty, they may struggle with all the effects of poverty, or they may be somewhere in between. Regardless, we must prepare to combat each and every struggle that our students may face that is caused by poverty. "...every child that gains access to a better education has the chance to break the cycle" (The Cycle).

Teaching Students Behavior Skills

One way to combat poverty is to teach emotional skills in our classrooms and not expect our students to be emotionally mature (Jensen, "Teaching with Poverty," 19). Since children in poverty often gain many chronic stressors from the lack of nutrition and bad health that is faced in poverty, they often have many cognitive deficiencies, which cause behaviors that can be considered misbehaviors (27). As educators, when we see these problems, we need to teach the child the skills they need to behave correctly and feel emotionally sound instead of punishing the child for something that they do not understand how to control (19).

One strategy that can be used to help students teach children in poverty to behave correctly is to teach the idea of self-governance of behavior (Payne “Modules 1-7 Workbook,” 47). Often, the behaviors displayed in students from poverty that we consider misbehaviors are behaviors these students must have in order to survive in the world of poverty. Since these students must learn and utilize these behaviors in their home environment to survive, we must teach students the idea of self-governance of behavior instead of trying to erase the behavior altogether (47). In order to teach this cognitive skill, educators must utilize structure and choice (47). This means that teachers expectations, and consequences for choosing to disobey those expectations, must be clear to the students (47). If students do not understand what is expected of them, they are more likely to misbehave. Additionally, it must be made clear to students that they always have a choice (47). Students must understand that they always have the choice to either abide by the expectations, or not, and with each choice comes a consequence (47). The choice to follow expectations will result in good and desirable consequences for the students, whereas the choice to not follow expectations will result in undesirable consequences (47). This strategy of teaching self-governance of behaviors helps students to become independent and helps them to move away from the idea that someone must tell them how to behave at all times (47). This is especially important for students in poverty due to the fact that they may be encouraged to behave in ways at home that differ from the way they are asked to behave at school (47). In order to help students keep themselves accountable for developing self-governance, educators can utilize behavior checklists (Wright 85). Behavior checklists can be used by educators to help students keep track of their behavior during an activity as well as after an activity (85). When using a behavior checklist during an activity, teachers will create a specific checklist of

expectations that will be present during the activity students are about to engage in (85). As students participate in the activity, they will document the amount of behavioral compliance they are displaying throughout the activity for each expectation (85). If a checklist is used after the activity is over, students can also be given the opportunity to rate their behaviors throughout the activity on a checklist based on each expectation (85). These checklists can also be saved and used to help students see their growth in behavior and self-governance as they progress through the school year. By utilizing these strategies for creating self-governance, educators can help students understand how to determine which behaviors are welcome in what environment, and can help students begin to succeed in education instead of simply becoming behavior problems.

Another great way to combat these behaviors is to make the conditions of your classroom feel safe so that the students feel as if they can work on their emotional maturity in the ways you are teaching, and do not feel the need to fall back into the behaviors they have learned as defense mechanisms (Jensen, "Teaching with Poverty," 19). Educators should also positively affirm the behaviors we have taught when we see students attempting to use their emotional learning (Payne, "Framework for Understanding Poverty," 85). If we not only teach students how to gain emotional maturity, but also make our classroom a safe place to work on these skills, we can combat negative behaviors caused by poverty in a positive way for students.

Teaching Students Boundaries

Another major way to combat the effects of poverty in the classroom is to teach students boundaries. Since children in poverty often lack boundaries, they often gain

manipulative and controlling tendencies, and also tend to become extremely fixated (Payne, “Framework for Understanding Poverty,” 85). These traits cause students to gain a “black or white thinking,” which causes them to have trouble considering their options when faced with a decision or problem (85). These students often only think they have one or two options, and cannot see past this limited decision they feel they are faced with (85). In order to help students broaden their understanding of boundaries, educators should begin with teaching physical boundaries (86). This includes teaching students how much space in the room is theirs, how to keep someone else out of their space, and how to stay in their space (86). These physical boundaries set the precedent needed for students to understand emotional boundaries. When teaching emotional boundaries, educators must first teach students how to take ownership of their problems and help them to not put the blame on others (87). When we teach students to face their problems, then we can begin to show them the multitude of solutions that can be offered to the problem they are facing (87). By helping students take ownership of their problem and find multiple viable solutions, we will break apart the “black and white thinking,” and help some of the fixated tendencies to fade away (87).

Combating Learned Helplessness

Another aspect of poverty that teachers must work to overcome is the extremely damaging aspects of learned helplessness. As stated in chapter one, learned helplessness occurs when one’s “experience with uncontrollable events can lead to the expectation that no responses in one’s repertoire will control future outcomes” (Nolen-Hoeksema, 435). This creates a fixed mindset that causes students to believe that intelligence is fixed and that they cannot change their circumstances even if they put forth a large amount of effort (Wright,

48). In order to help our students overcome this mindset, we must help them begin to see the small things that they are able to control instead of focusing on all the things they can't control, or don't believe they can control (Rosenbaum, p. 19). If we can help students see the control that they do have, we can begin to help them see the bigger ways in which they can gain control of their circumstances. These strategies should be utilized with the goal of eventually helping students transition from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset (Wright, 48).

When we help students develop a growth mindset, they begin to believe that intelligence can be affected by effort, and that they are capable of increasing their intelligence (Wright, 49). Although we desire for students to believe that they are capable of increasing their intelligence, we must prevent students from believing the misconception that everyone is capable of learning anything with an equal amount of ease (48). On the contrary, we must help students to believe that anyone can learn and grow in their learning, but that this may look differently for everyone (48). This mindset also helps students to begin to believe that struggling is an opportunity for learning, and not a sign of incapability or lack of intelligence (48). Although helping students see the areas they are capable of controlling can help students develop this mindset, teachers must also model this kind of mindset for their students in order to encourage a growth mindset as well. For example, teachers may often mention to students who are not giving their maximum effort that they know they are smart enough to make a higher grade (54). Although this seems like a harmless comment, this is portraying a fixed mindset to students and suggesting that intelligence is fixed (54). In order to portray a growth mindset in the classroom, teachers utilize processes (55). This means that teachers provide students with the process they will be going through moving forward in order to succeed (Wright, 55). By providing a process, students can clearly see how putting

effort into the process can lead to success. Another way for teachers to provide a growth mindset for students is by presenting difficult tasks or assignments that students may struggle with as “challenges” (55). By portraying difficult ideas or activities as challenges, the educator can help students transform their thinking to begin seeing struggles as an opportunity to learn (55). Finally, educators can also help students create a growth mindset by showing confidence in the students that are struggling (55). Instead of becoming frustrated when students lack effort or do not feel they can complete an assignment, educators can explain that they have full confidence in the student’s ability to succeed if they put in the effort and follow the process provided for success (55).

Educators can create a growth mindset by giving the correct kinds of praise and encouragement to their students as well. Teachers can encourage growth mindset and reinforce positive behaviors by giving “process praise” to students when they successfully complete an assignment (Wright, 59). When educators give process praise, they include two elements, praise of the process, and a display of approval (59). This kind of praise helps educators to connect a student’s performance directly to their effort, which helps students to develop a growth mindset (59). For example, an educator can praise a student by telling them their writing has improved, or they can tell them their writing has improved because of the extra work they put into developing their outline, and that they can see how it really paid off (59). Telling students exactly why they have succeeded when you praise them will help reinforce those efforts for students, and help them realize they are capable of improving and growing in their learning.

Contrarily, when students do not succeed, educators can encourage students in a way that can promote growth mindset as well. Teachers can utilize this kind of encouragement by

expressing empathy, helping the student create steps to improvement, and expressing confidence in the students (Wright, 63). It is extremely important that educators utilize empathy for students who have not succeeded for one reason or another. If a child has not succeeded due to the feeling that they did not have the ability to succeed, an educator can acknowledge their disappointment and feelings of sadness in their inability to score what they truly desired (63). Once the student feels that they are understood and their feelings have been validated, educators can then work with this student to create steps, or a process, that will help the student succeed (63). This helps students avoid the idea of intelligence being fixed and encourages them to believe their effort can improve their achievement. Finally, educators can express confidence in their student's ability to improve if they are willing to display effort (63). By encouraging students who are discouraged and helpless in this way, educators can break the cycle of learned helplessness by preventing a fixed mindset and beginning to create a growth mindset for these students. Working to create this growth mindset can help impoverished students to improve in academics as well as in life in general due to the positive outlook that overcoming learned helplessness and developing a growth mindset can create.

Teaching Vocabulary and Formal Register

Vocabulary is also a deficit that is caused by poverty that educators can overcome with the correct strategies and teachings for these students. One of the most successful instructional strategies for helping students in poverty build vocabulary is simply reading with the child and stopping when vocabulary that the child does not know comes up (Graves, 20). This will help students to learn vocabulary as they listen and interact with a text. By using this strategy, students are not only encouraged to determine vocabulary based on

context clues they have heard in the story, but are also experiencing it within a real story, which can help them understand the relevance of learning this word. This strategy tremendously helps students from poverty increase their vocabulary due to the fact that “since most words are learned incidentally, students need to be immersed in rich reading, listening, discussion, and writing experiences throughout the whole day” (Graves, 69). Students need to have learned around fifty-thousand words by the time they have graduated high school, which means we cannot directly teach all vocabulary that is necessary for students to succeed (69). Therefore, immersing them in reading and discussion based on what they’re reading, as well as writing assignments that are geared towards their reading, can tremendously help students learn vocabulary without being directly taught (69).

One strategy that educators can use within their classroom involves word dangles (Payne, “Modules 8-13 Workbook,” 30). This is a strategy that helps students to take notice of new words as they read in a text, and helps them to make connections between vocabulary, reading, and writing (30). When students participate in a word dangle activity, they read a novel or story and pick out five words from the story that interest them that they did not previously know (30). Once they have picked the five words they will work with, students are asked to illustrate each word they have picked on five separate cards (31). On the back of these cards, students write the definition of the vocabulary word (31). The cards are then dangled from the bottom of a piece of construction paper, which students draw a picture and write a summary of the story they have read on (31). The construction paper helps students remember where they heard the vocabulary word they have learned, and in what way the vocabulary word was used. Fig. 1 shows a model for creating a vocabulary dangle.

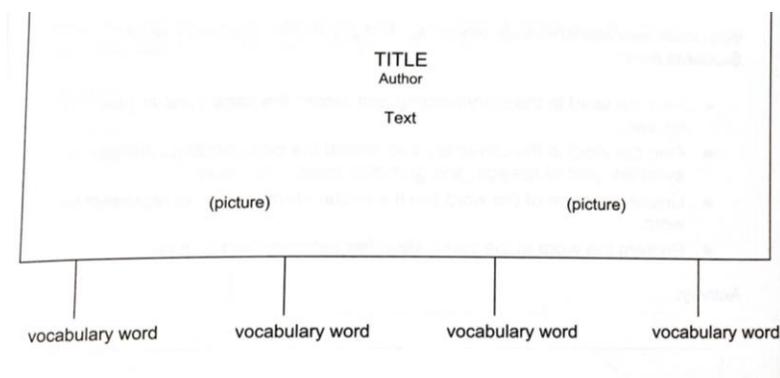


Fig. 1, Vocabulary Dangle Model (Payne, “Modules 8-13 Workbook,” 31)

Another strategy that can help students build vocabulary are word webs, as can be seen in fig. 2. Word webs help students to learn vocabulary words by making connections to ideas they already understand. When students create a word web, shown in fig. 2 below, students write the vocabulary word in the middle of a rectangle and draw four lines that attach to the rectangle. Students then find a synonym that they already understand for the vocabulary word. This helps students understand the vocabulary word by making connections to a word they already understand that has the same meaning. They then identify an antonym that they already understand for the vocabulary word. This helps students understand the vocabulary word by making connections to a word they already know that means the opposite of the new vocabulary word. Students then define the vocabulary word in their own words or use it in a sentence. This helps students to understand exactly what the vocabulary word means without asking them to write a formal definition that they likely will not understand. Finally, students relate the vocabulary word to an experience they have had that involves that vocabulary word. This helps students make real-world connections to the vocabulary word, and what it means.

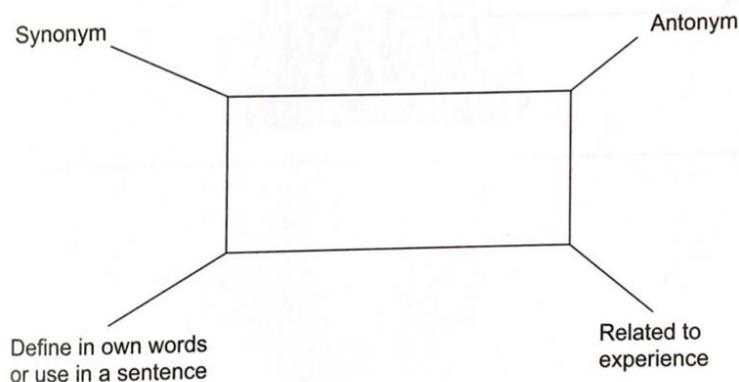


Fig. 2, Word Web Model (Payne, “Modules 8-13 Workbook,” 33)

Educators can also use the “picture it” strategy to help students build vocabulary when reading a story or novel (Payne, “Modules 8-13 Workbook,” 32). When using this strategy, a teacher assigns each student a different vocabulary word that is found in the story or novel that is being read (32). As students read, they are instructed to find the vocabulary word and document the page number that they found the word on. They are then asked to find the word in the dictionary and document the pronunciation of the word, number of syllables, parts of speech, and definition used in the story (33). Once students have become experts on the vocabulary word they were assigned, they are asked to create a picture that represents the word (33). Finally, students are given the opportunity to teach the new vocabulary word to the class utilizing their picture and information learned from the dictionary and story (33).

Another major part of vocabulary that educators must help students overcome is the lack of knowledge of formal register. The best way to combat the hardships caused by the lack of formal register is to simply find ways to teach formal register (Payne, “Framework for Understanding Poverty,” 41). When teaching this register, it is important to help students

see the difference between the casual register they are used to using and formal register. One of the strategies that can be used to teach this is by having students write in casual register when completing assignments, and then helping them translate their writing into formal register afterwards (41). By asking them to write in casual register first, or telling the child to write the way they speak, we take away one of the difficulties the children will have when completing the assignment. Once the assignment is finished, the student can then fully focus on the difference between casual and formal register. Educators can also teach formal register by telling stories in both casual and formal register (41). Once the two stories have been told, the students can work together to decide what the differences between the way each story was told (41).

Another strategy that helps students develop an understanding of formal register is mental models (Ellis, 80). Mental models help students take an abstract idea, formal register, and translate it into a concrete idea (80). By helping students make concrete connections to an idea that is abstract, students are able to learn at a faster pace due to the fact that their mind has a way to understand and contain that information (80). For example, students initially may struggle to understand that formal register requires them to speak or write about the point of the topic at hand. Since students from poverty tend to only utilize casual register, they generally include insignificant details and do not tend to get to the point of their topic quickly. This is a hard concept for students from poverty to grasp, but the mental model, shown in fig. 3 below, may help students have a visual idea of how they should write and speak in formal register. The formal register shows a straight arrow, directing students to go straight to the meaning of the topic, whereas casual register shows a circular arrow that circles for some time before getting to the end. This shows students how the register they

tend to use goes around the point for quite a while before finally explaining the main point of the topic. Without this mental model, students may have a very hard time grasping the difference between formal and casual register, whereas with this model, students have a concrete idea of how different these two registers truly are.

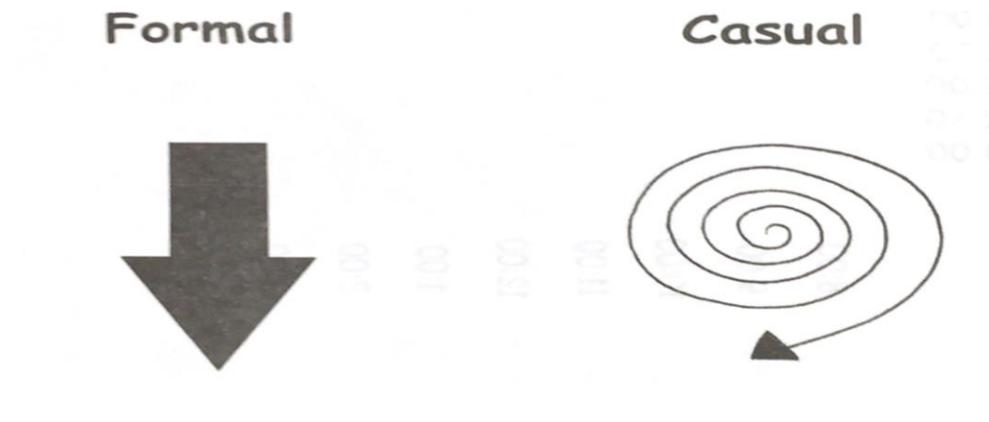


Fig. 3, Formal and Casual Register Mental Model (Ellis, 82)

Students can use mental models not only to understand the difference between formal and casual register, but they can also use it to understand how to write in formal register, and the sentence structure required to write formally. For example, fig. 4 shows a mental model for writing a sentence in formal register. In this model, students see a mental model of capital letters, represented by a tall triangle (Ellis, 82). They are also shown a rectangle to represent adjectives, a line to represent nouns, and a zig-zagged line to represent verbs (82). Finally, students are shown triangles which represent how the predicate can be expanded by explaining the how, when, where, or why of the action or verb (82).

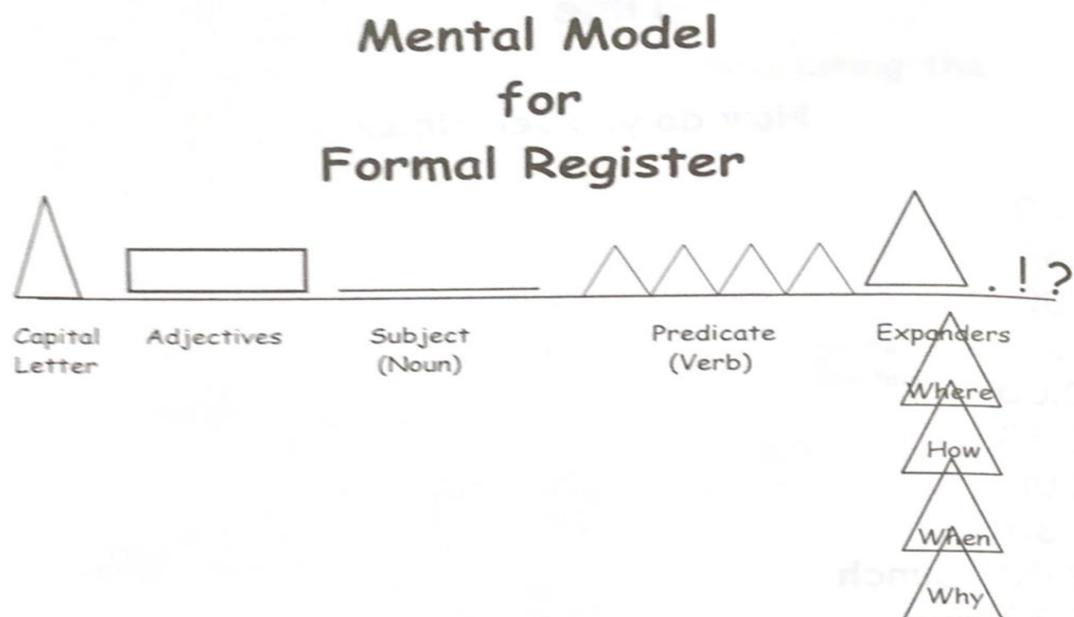


Fig. 4, Mental Model for Formal Register (Ellis, 82)

Once students have learned mental models for sentence structure, they can use this knowledge to help them write sentences that are formally correct. For example, in fig. 5 a student has written a sentence using the mental model for sentence structure to ensure that it is written correctly. They have underlined their verb, added the zig-zagged lines underneath their verb, and used their expansion triangles to expand on the predicate by including the how, where, why, and when of the predicate.

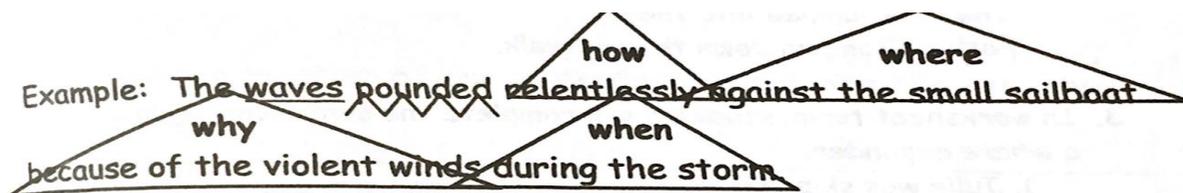


Fig. 5, Mental Model Example (Ellis, 83)

Once students have successfully written complete sentences in formal register, students can utilize the “paragraph hamburger,” shown in fig. 6 below, as a mental model to help them learn the structure of a paragraph. This mental model is utilized to help students understand the structure of a paragraph, and gives them a concrete item to compare the structure of a paragraph to (Paragraph). Similar to the way a hamburger is stacked, a paragraph is stacked on top of itself. The buns of the hamburger are compared to the topic sentence and concluding sentence because these sentences should be similar.

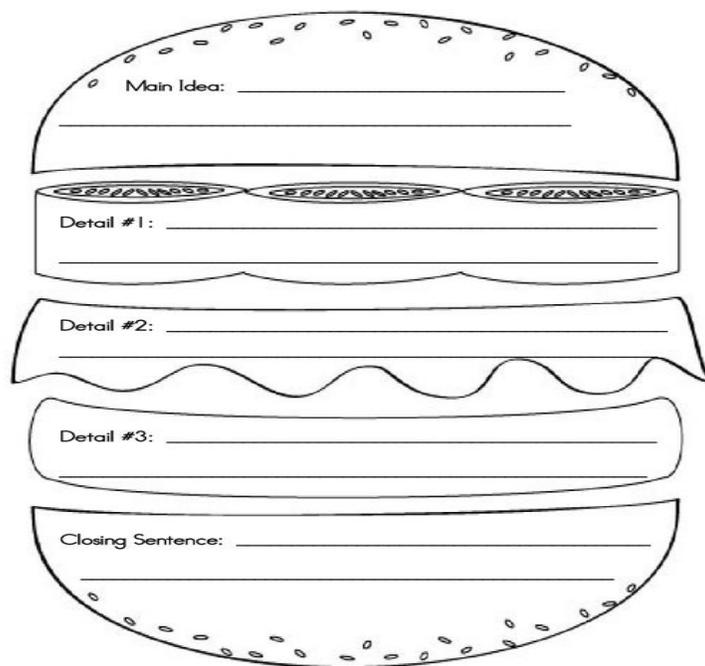


Fig. 6, Paragraph Mental Model Example (“Paragraph Hamburger | Classroom Strategy.” *Reading Rockets*, 19 Mar. 2013, [http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/paragraph_hamburger.](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/paragraph_hamburger))

In addition to directly teaching formal register, educators will also need to establish a requirement that students learn how to express their negative feelings in formal register (41). Although this requirement does need to be established, the discipline that occurs when

students do not use formal register should be geared towards creating a learning experience for the student on how to use the appropriate register and not just punishment (41). As educators, we must directly teach formal register to students while also utilizing their most familiar register, casual register, throughout the process (41).

Overall, as educators we must realize that students from poverty are not without hope, and can be successful even when facing all the negative aspects that are attached to poverty. In order to help them be successful, educators must work to educate themselves about the effects that students from poverty may experience and utilize researched strategies to help these students overcome the hardships they face in the education system. These students already face a great deal of hardships outside of the school system that educators cannot control. Therefore, teachers must make a difference for these students in the only area they can control, school. If we can help our students to learn how to deal with the hardships they are faced with in the school system, and help them be successful, we can build the foundation to a successful life for these children and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Chapter Three - Problems Faced Within The Researcher's Classroom

Utilizing the research conducted on the difficulties children in poverty face within education, the researcher has observed the difficulties faced by impoverished students within a second-grade classroom, and connected them with deficits that have been mentioned in chapter one. Within the researcher's classroom, there are many hardships faced by the students due to the effects of poverty. The school the researcher is currently serving in has an economically disadvantaged population of 57%. Within the classroom, from observations made by the researcher, seven out of the sixteen students within the researcher's classroom

are impoverished. Since poverty greatly impacts this classroom, the researcher has observed work samples and participation in the classroom setting in order to examine the needs of the impoverished children in this particular class, and to see the connections between the needs in a real classroom and the research that has been conducted on the difficulties poverty can cause in the classroom.

Learned Helplessness

One deficit that students in the researcher's classroom have faced is learned helplessness. As stated above, learned helplessness occurs when one's "experience with uncontrollable events can lead to the expectation that no responses in one's repertoire will control future outcomes" (Nolen-Hoeksema, 435). There are two students in the classroom that have been identified as impoverished that seem to display signs of developing learned helplessness that have also been identified as impoverished.

One of the most prevalent signs that have been observed is a lack of effort and a lack of confidence in the classroom. One of the major factors that displays this deficit in the classroom is an observation of answers given when probed throughout a learning segment. One of the students identified as displaying learned helplessness tends to shut down and not speak when asked a question about what is being taught to the class. When this occurs, this child refuses to speak, shake her head, or show acknowledgment of what we are saying to her in any way for some time. From observations, as well as speaking with the clinical educator, this child's living situation at home is very poor. One of the other students that has been identified as displaying learned helplessness tends to say she doesn't know the answer any time she is asked a question about what is being taught. This child may know the answer to

the question asked, but she will always say she doesn't know the answer regardless. By observing both students respond to being asked questions, the researcher was able to determine that both types of response were likely due to learned helplessness. Both responses display a lack of self-confidence, as well as a lack of effort.

In addition to responses during class, both of these students also display learned helplessness in their school work as well. These students tend to have little effort displayed in any work turned in, and from observing them within a group setting, they tend to stay in the background and let others take the lead during group assignments. Due to this, these two students' grades tend to suffer when given assignments that ask questions that require them to think deeply and give a thoughtful answer. This has caused both of these students to obtain grades that do not reflect the knowledge that they truly have.

Alongside the two students that show signs of completely developed learned helplessness, there are also two other students that have displayed signs of developing learned helplessness, such as a lack of effort and inability to care about the outcomes that occur due to the lack of effort. These students seem to have begun to develop a fixed mindset, which causes students to believe that intelligence is fixed and that they cannot change their circumstances even if they put forth a large amount of effort (Wright, 48). Although these students may perform decently on some assignments, their performance always depends on whether the teacher or researcher has the opportunity to sit with these students and constantly encourage them to focus and put forth effort. Without direct and constant encouragement, both of these students perform very poorly. Since both of these students are capable of performing well when an adult constantly asks them to put forth the

effort, without aiding them with the actual assignment, these students have proven that they do not feel putting forth the effort on their own will help or produce a better outcome.

Learned helplessness is a deficit in the classroom that must be addressed. The cycle of learned helplessness is one that will continue until an intervention is utilized. If a student obtains learned helplessness, they will feel as if there is no point in trying, and thus fail. Since they continue to fail, they will continue to feel helpless, and they cycle will continue until someone intentionally breaks it. Without intervention, these students would continue to experience failure and fall deeper into learned helplessness, causing them to be unsuccessful for the entirety of their academic career.

Effects of the Home Environment

Another deficit that is prevalent in this second-grade classroom is the effects of the home environment, and the lack of cognitive skills to utilize self-governance. Self-governance, as stated above, is a students' ability to determine which behaviors are acceptable in what environment (Payne, "Modules 1-7 Workbook," 47). Due to what we have learned about the home environments of the majority of the seven students that have been identified as impoverished, these children have developed habits and behaviors in their homes that are unacceptable in the school. This has caused many of these students to become behavior problems. Based on the data from classroom dojo, a tool used to track behavior in the classroom, four out of the seven students have scored below 85% on their behavior for the year so far. This means, throughout the year, these five children have become consistent behavior problems. As mentioned previously, one of the children struggles from learned helplessness and has become a constant behavior problem due to her habit of shutting down

and refusing to speak. She has gotten in trouble consistently for disrespecting her teacher due to this issue. Although this seems like disrespect in the classroom, this child has most likely learned this technique as a means of survival in her home.

Two of the other students that I suggested showed symptoms of developing learned helplessness tend to regularly get in trouble for laziness, and for not trying. These students have likely learned from their home environments that putting forth a great amount of effort does not change their situation, and therefore developed this fixed mindset. Although this is often identified as laziness in the classroom, a fixed mindset causes students to feel as if their effort is meaningless, and does not truly mean the child wants to intentionally fail. It simply means they feel there is no other option.

Another student that has become a behavior problem in the classroom has not shown signs of learned helplessness, but tends to get angry when her assignments are not correct, when rules are not followed and consequences follow, or when things simply do not go her way. This is a behavior that has caused a major amount of issues in the classroom and has likely been learned from her environment at home. Often, when any negative feedback from the teacher is sent to this child's parent, the reaction of this child's parent is anger towards the teacher as well. These behaviors that have caused this child to become a major discipline concern are simply mimicked from her home environment and is likely the only way she knows how to respond. Although this student does not understand other ways to respond, this is a behavior that is absolutely unacceptable in the classroom. Since this behavior has been combated with consequences instead of intervention strategies thus far, every failure faced by this child results in the same reaction, causing her to become a continual behavior problem.

For all of these students, the ability to self-governance is not cognitively available to them. These students are unable to understand how their behaviors from home differ from their behaviors at school and are likely going to continue to be behavior problems without the proper intervention. Since these behaviors are not always connected with poverty for many educators, these students have faced behavior consequences throughout their education so far. Although consequences may help a child understand that their behavior was not correct, it often does not help a child learn the way they are supposed to behave in certain situations, causing them to continue to misbehave, and causing them to further develop learned helplessness as well.

Lack of Language

Another majorly identifiable difficulties that many of the students in the researcher's classroom face is the inability to write in formal register. There are five students in the classroom that struggle greatly with formal register. These students often write using casual language, and do not regularly structure their sentences correctly. Based on a writing sample that has been thoroughly observed, ten out of the sixteen students in the classroom struggled to create a piece of writing that followed the proper structure of formal register. Out of these ten students, seven of them have been identified as impoverished. The other three students that struggled with this assignment are in either EC for writing, or tier two or three. Therefore, the majority of children that struggled with this assignment were impoverished students due to their lack of knowledge of formal register.

As stated above, this lack of knowledge of formal register occurs due to the fact that the main language used in impoverished homes is casual register, and formal register is

rarely, if ever, utilized. This causes the students in this classroom to fall behind not only in their writing, but in other areas as well. Since formal register is a hidden rule of the middle class, it becomes vitally important in many areas throughout education (Payne, "Framework for Understanding Poverty," 32). All standardized tests that the students in this classroom will begin taking next year will be written in formal register, and the researcher has also observed that many of the classroom tests, quizzes, and assignments that these students are currently taking are written in formal register as well. There is a strong connection between the students that have struggled to be able to write in formal register, and the general achievement of these students. Out of the seven students who are impoverished that struggled with formal register, five of the students are making a C or below as their overall grade in reading, four of the students are making a C or below as their overall grade in math, and none of the students are making a C or below as their overall grade in science/social studies. Although there are clearly other factors that are affecting the overall grades of these students, there is a clear connection between the struggles faced in reading and math and the lack of knowledge of formal register.

In this second-grade classroom, formal register is a difficulty that must be addressed with the use of specific interventions in order to help these students be successful. If this lack of knowledge continues without intervention, these students will continue to show depletion in their grades and may struggle to pass their standardized tests in the future, not due to a lack of academic knowledge, but due to a lack of understanding of formally written language. These students will not only suffer throughout their education, but in their careers as well. If these students are unable to utilize formal register, they will quickly be unconsidered for any jobs or careers that they wish to obtain (32). Altogether, a lack of intervention used to help

these students learn to utilize formal register will cause these students to struggle to show the knowledge they have gained from their classroom, as well as cause them to struggle after graduation as well.

Overall, the students in the researcher's second-grade classroom that have been identified as impoverished have been facing learned helplessness, have become behavior problems from a lack of self-governance, and have been unsuccessful due to a lack of knowledge of formal register. All three of these deficits caused by living in poverty can cause these students to fall behind in education, and push them further into the cycle of poverty. Intervention is absolutely necessary for these students in order to help these students break this cycle and have an opportunity to have a successful educational career and life afterward.

Chapter Four - Interventions To Be Used In The Researcher's Classroom

Throughout this semester, the researcher has been observing the deficits occurring in the classroom that can be linked to poverty. By observing the deficits, and researching the effects of these deficits as well as strategies to combat them, the researcher is prepared to implement effective strategies and interventions next semester throughout her student teaching experience. These interventions will be based on the researched strategies in chapter two, and the specific problems the students in this classroom are facing that were discussed in chapter three.

Combating Learned Helplessness

In order to help the four students that seem to be dealing with learned helplessness in the classroom, the researcher has decided that helping these students develop a growth mindset would help them with their specific difficulties the most (Wright, 49). All of the

students struggling with learned helplessness specifically struggle to have confidence in themselves, and often do not put forth effort due to this lack of confidence. One of the strategies that the researcher feels would help these students gain confidence is encouragement that promotes a growth mindset. This kind of encouragement, as stated above, involves expressing empathy, helping the student create steps to improvement, and expressing confidence in the students (Wright, 63). When these students feel they have failed, and especially when the students face learned helplessness and feel they will always fail, it is extremely important that educators utilize empathy. If a child does not feel they have the ability to succeed, acknowledging and validating their feelings of failure and disappointment can be the first step to changing a child's mindset. Once the students know that their feelings are valid and that their teacher understands their feelings, the educator can then help these students to create steps that they can follow to succeed (63). This helps these students to believe that putting forth effort can improve one's success, and helps the students move away from the idea of intelligence being fixed.

Additionally, from observations the researcher has noticed that when these students do succeed, they are often not praised due to the fact that the expectation is to perform to the best of one's ability, and praise is not often needed for other students when they have small victories. The act of giving praise to students with learned helplessness when they do succeed, even if the success is small, can help diminish this fixed mindset and help push students towards a growth mindset. The four students in this classroom often do not care about their successes, because they often did not put in much effort and did not expect to succeed. These students often act surprised when they succeed, and clearly do not believe that they will continue to succeed in the future. The researcher believes that these students

can be pushed towards a growth mindset by utilizing “process praise.” Process praise occurs when educators give process praise, they include two elements, praise of the process, and a display of approval (Wright, 59). When these students receive praise that helps them make a connection between their performance and their effort, they will understand that they did not accidentally succeed and that they can continue to succeed in the future if they continue to put forth the effort. By helping these students see the reasons for their success, process praise can help these students begin to develop a growth mindset and move out of the cycle of learned helplessness.

Learned helplessness is a deficit that greatly affects a student’s academic achievement, and causes all effort and hope of success to be lost (Nolen-Hoeksema, 435). This is a harsh cycle that children fall into due to their surroundings and experiences, and is a difficult cycle to break. Helping the students in this second-grade classroom break this cycle by creating a growth mindset is imperative in order to help them have a chance at success. Utilizing these strategies with these children will take time and resiliency, but over time these strategies will push these students to change their fixed mindset and begin to believe they are capable of success.

Teaching Students Behavior Skills

In order to help the four students struggling with a lack of cognitive ability to utilize self-governance, the researcher has decided that two behavioral strategies would be useful, structure and choice, and checklists. Teaching impoverished students to self-govern their own behavior is extremely important due to the fact that the behaviors students in poverty learn from their home environments may cause them to become behavior problems without

proper intervention. Building these students cognitive ability to choose which behaviors they display at school is vital in order to help these students succeed in education.

The first skill that the researcher believes the four students in this class would benefit from is the use of structure and choice (Payne “Modules 1-7 Workbook,” 47). Providing structure for students from poverty includes not only very clearly defining the expectations in the classroom, but also clearly defining the consequences of student choices. Students must understand that their choices have consequences, both good and bad. If they choose to follow expectations, they must understand that they will receive good consequences, such as success in the classroom and in their academics. If they choose to go against expectations and behave incorrectly, there will be negative consequences, such as being removed from the group, losing a behavior point from classroom dojo, and possibly causing their academics to suffer. If these students can clearly understand that they always have a choice for their behavior, and they also know the outcomes of both choices, they will be more likely to choose to behave correctly and follow expectations. If these students can feel as if they have control over their actions by realizing they always have a choice, they will begin to understand the idea of self-governance and make those choices for themselves.

In addition to teaching structure and choice, these four students can also build their ability to self-govern by utilizing checklists (Wright 85). Some of the areas that the students in this second-grade class struggle the most with behavior are during regular classroom instruction when the teacher is talking, group work, independent work, and testing. Since these are the areas that these students struggle in, the researcher found checklists that could help these students work on their ability to self-govern during these specific class times. The checklists will help the students to not only remind themselves of the expectation, but can

also be utilized by the researcher as a way for students to determine the choices they have made during instruction, and how their choices aligned with the expectations. When utilizing checklists, the students will be asked to rate their ability to follow instruction from 0 to 2, with 0 being not following expectations at all, and 2 being following expectations perfectly. This helps students decide for themselves how they have chosen to behave, and makes behavior extremely personal.

The first checklist, found in fig. 7, is in reference to the class time when the students will be expected to listen to the teacher's instruction. During this time, the four students struggling with behavior in this class often struggle with raising their hand, distractions, and talking to other students. The behaviors listed on this checklist are aligned with the expectations of the classroom as well as the specific struggles that these students have. Students will be expected to use this checklist to rate their compliance from 0 to 2.

Checklist Item
1. I am looking at the teacher.
2. I am not talking to other students.
3. I am sitting up straight.
4. I raise my hand and wait to be called on to comment or ask a question.
5. I ask questions if I don't understand what is being taught.
6. To avoid distracting myself or others, I do not play with objects at my desk.

Fig. 7, Checklist 1 (Self-Check Behavior Checklist Maker, *Intervention Central*, <https://www.interventioncentral.org/tools/self-check-behavior-checklist-maker>)

The second checklist, found in fig. 8, is in reference to the time during class when students will have the opportunity to work together. During this time, the students in this class often struggle with talking to those that are not in their group, being off topic, and not participating. The behaviors listed on this checklist are aligned with the expectations of the classroom as well as the specific struggles that these students have. Students will be expected

to use this checklist to rate their compliance from 0 to 2.

Checklist Item
1. I am talking only with my work partners.
2. I participate in discussion with my partners.
3. I do my share of the work when in pairs or groups.
4. I talk only about the topic(s) assigned by the teacher.
5. I keep my voice level down so that I don't distract other students.
6. I seek help from my partners if I don't understand something.
7. I ask the teacher for help if my partners cannot answer my question.

Fig. 8, Checklist 2 (Self-Check Behavior Checklist Maker, *Intervention Central*,
<https://www.interventioncentral.org/tools/self-check-behavior-checklist-maker>)

The third checklist, found in fig. 9, is in reference to the time during class when students will have the opportunity to work independently. During this time, the four students in this class often struggle with distracting themselves and talking to other students. The students also greatly struggle with sitting quietly and doing nothing if they become confused and do not know what to do. The behaviors listed on this checklist are aligned with the expectations of the classroom as well as the specific struggles that these students have. Students will be expected to use this checklist to rate their compliance from 0 to 2.

Checklist Item
1. I have cleared my desk of unneeded materials.
2. I am working on the assignment.
3. I am not talking to other students.
4. To avoid distracting myself or others, I do not play with objects at my desk.
5. I ask my neighbor if I have a question about the assignment.
6. I ask the teacher if I still have a question about the assignment.
7. I use any extra time when I have finished the assignment to check my work.

Fig. 9, Checklist 3 (Self-Check Behavior Checklist Maker, *Intervention Central*,
<https://www.interventioncentral.org/tools/self-check-behavior-checklist-maker>)

The fourth checklist, found in fig. 10, is in reference to the time during class when students will be testing. During this time, the four students in this class often struggle with distracting themselves and talking to others. These students also specifically struggle with finishing their test quickly and not looking over their answers before turning them in. When they are finished before others, they often become a distraction. The behaviors listed on this checklist are aligned with the expectations of the classroom as well as the specific struggles that these students have. Students will be expected to use this checklist to rate their compliance from 0 to 2.

Checklist Item
1. I look over the test at the start to decide how much time to spend on each section.
2. I am giving my full attention to working on the test.
3. I am not talking to other students.
4. I use any extra time when I have finished the test to check my answers.

Fig. 10, Checklist 4 (Self-Check Behavior Checklist Maker, *Intervention Central*, <https://www.interventioncentral.org/tools/self-check-behavior-checklist-maker>)

Altogether, if the four students struggling with behavior in this class are taught every expectation of the classroom, the fact that they have a choice, and the consequences for their choices, they will begin to develop self-governance and realize that they can control their own behaviors. In addition, if checklists are used alongside this strategy, they will be able to hold themselves accountable by rating their ability to behave during each learning experience they participate in. Utilizing both of these strategies will help students realize that they do not have to behave the way they have learned to behave at home, and that they can display successful behavior if they choose to do so (Wright 85).

In order to help the five students in the classroom struggling with a lack of knowledge of formal register, and the inability to write in formal register, the researcher has decided that mental models would help these students' specific deficits the most. In second-grade, according to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, students should be able to write a structurally correct paragraph with an introduction, conclusion, and transition words that create a sense of order within the paragraph as well. Within a sentence, students should be able to write using singular and plural nouns, verbs that agree with the nouns, use common, proper, and possessive nouns, use conjunctions, and use and choose between adverbs and adjectives. Additionally, students should be able to produce simple, compound, declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences. Based on the writing samples from the class, these students particularly struggle with structuring even simple sentences correctly, and are not able to structure their paragraphs correctly at all. In reference to both sentence and paragraph structure, the students struggle greatly with run-on sentences that do not have any organization throughout the paragraph. The mental model found in fig. 4 can help students with the idea of writing formally by showing them that formal writing is straight to the point, and does not share insignificant details or descriptions within the sentence and within the paragraph. Although it is important to teach students to be descriptive, this mental model helps remind them not to ramble, and shows them that they should only consider adding important and relevant details. This particular model will work well in the researcher's class in particular, because it helps give the students a concrete idea of a run-on sentence, and a sentence that is straight to the point.

In addition to run-on sentences, the five students in this classroom also struggle greatly with the syntax of a sentence. The students do not often begin their sentences with a

capital letter, do not end their sentences with correct punctuation, and do not understand where each part of speech should be placed within a sentence. In order to help these students develop a concrete idea of the actual syntax of a sentence, these students would greatly benefit from the mental model shown in fig. 3. This mental model shows students a shape to help them remember each element of a sentence. This model begins with a tall triangle to help students remember that sentences start off with “tall” letters, or capital letters. The model then shows a rectangle to represent adjectives, and an underline to represent the noun, or subject. Next, the model shows a zigzagged line to represent a verb, which may be helpful to students to remember that much like the zigzagged line, verbs represent movement. Finally, the mental model has triangles as expanders, which represent details that expand the sentence, such as the when, where, why, and how of the subject. This specific mental model will help the students in this class because it helps them have a physical representation of how a sentence should be structured, and is a model that can be given to them as an aid for their writing for some time to help them until they have memorized the model themselves. This will help the structure of writing make more sense to the students because it takes an abstract concept and makes it concrete for the students.

Aside from the ability to write sentences properly, the five students in this classroom struggle greatly with structuring a paragraph correctly. In order to help these students understand the structure of a paragraph, the researcher has decided to utilize the “paragraph hamburger,” shown below in fig. 6. This mental model is utilized to help students understand the structure of a paragraph, and gives them a concrete item to compare the structure of a paragraph to (Paragraph). Similar to the way a hamburger is stacked, a paragraph is stacked on top of itself. The buns of the hamburger are compared to the topic sentence and

concluding sentence because these sentences should be similar. The detail sentences are then placed in between the introductory sentence and concluding sentence, and should help support the topic of the paragraph, much like the pieces of a hamburger are still relevant to a hamburger, and are not random items. The main point of this mental model is to show students that their sentences should all fit together to make one cohesive paragraph, and to teach them how to open and close their paragraph in a similar way (Paragraph). In the researcher's classroom, the students are very good at opening their paragraphs correctly, but tend to get off topic in the middle, and do not know how to conclude their paragraph. Simply comparing a sentence to a hamburger can help students in this class understand how to correctly structure their paragraphs without having to think so abstractly about the idea of this structure.

Overall, mental models are a great strategy that can be used to help students who struggle with formal register, especially in writing. Mental models help students learn how to structure their sentences and paragraphs in a concrete way instead of pushing them to think abstractly about the structure of both sentences and paragraphs (Ellis, 80). Using mental models as an intervention for these students will help them to learn a skill that is going to help them immensely throughout their education. These models will also help these students break out of a deficit of poverty that would cause them difficulty and reduce their success not only in education, but in their careers (Payne, "Framework for Understanding Poverty," 33).

Although there are many struggles that the students in the researcher's classroom are facing due to poverty, with researched strategies these deficits can be reduced and completely erased from these students educational experiences. Through the use of teaching a growth

mindset, teaching self-governance, and utilizing mental models, these students can be taught how to be successful in the world of education.

Conclusion

Poverty is a problem in the United States that affects 51% of students in the national public school system (Layton, p. 2). Although many educators may be aware of many students today living in poverty, the difficulties faced by these students in education are not always easily connected to the impoverished environments these students are living in. If these deficits are not handled with intervention and researched strategies that are proven to help the struggles of poverty, students may fall further into the hardships that poverty causes them throughout their education as well as their career in the future. Therefore, educators must research the effects poverty has on students, as well as find researched strategies that will help diminish and erase these deficits so that these students will be successful. It is vitally important that educators help all students to learn, grow, and be successful. In order to give students faced with poverty a fair chance at success in education and in the world, educators must be prepared to connect the struggles students face in education to poverty, as well as be prepared to intervene when these deficits occur.

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