

CHAPTER EIGHT: INSTRUCTION AND IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

One of the main purposes of the book is to improve the achievement of students from poverty. Harold Hodgkinson in his study of demographics and educational achievement substantiates the fact there is a direct correlation between low socioeconomic living conditions and student achievement. Most educators have known that for years but have not been able to develop processes or programs to effectively reduce the impact of living in poverty. With a growing number of children now living in poverty Ruby Payne suggestions for instructional practices in this chapter provide much greater support for children of poverty.

Ronald Goldman in his books on Emotional Intelligence talks about the need for providing children from non-middle class background with a scaffold of emotional strategies (cognitive process) to help children make the adjustment to their environment. The Art of Teaching Reading by Lucy Calkins, Strategies That Work by Stephanie Hervey, and Strategies That Work by Robert Marzano's all stress the importance of teaching children the cognitive process of reading as an essential for children of poverty because they typically did not receive the strategies in their home. Dr Payne specifically uses the work of Reuven Feuerstein to point out how classroom teachers can teach children of poverty to build cognitive strategies for the learning process as a way to improve achievement. This is one of the most essential changes needed in the classrooms today. If we are going to expect children to think and learn at a higher level they must be provided with instruction on how to think and be given opportunities in a safe learning environment to practice and use the strategies.

The chapter points out the missing links or cognitive deficiencies that must be built for children of poverty to be successful (pages 124-125). Sample ideas are provided for teachers on how to monitor from Bandler and Grinder on how to identify the non-verbal clues and cognitive processing. She goes in the chapter to provide specific examples classroom teachers can utilize to help children of poverty to close the gap.

What does the chapter mean to a school?

- The focus of the school should be on learning and not so much on teaching.
- Instruction in the cognitive strategies should be a part of the curriculum.
- Staff development should focus on a diagnostic approach rather than a programmatic approach.
- Efforts to promote learning should pay greater heed to what is in the student's head.
- Insistence, expectations, and support need to be guiding lights in our decisions about instruction.

This chapter provides educators with information necessary to change classroom practices that will empower students to become active learners.

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