

POVERTY IN THE CLASSROOM: ADVOCACY AND EQUITY

by

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This Project for the Master in Teaching Degree

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon Davies". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

Jon Davies, Ed.D, Member of the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

The present literature review asked the question: How can teachers create classrooms that provide equitable learning contexts for children in poverty and become advocates for children in poverty? This question is important to those in the educational community because approximately one out of every five children in the United States lives in poverty. Charity school reformers were some of the first advocates. Current research suggests educators focus on building resiliency and community and trusting in students. Research is needed that utilizes measures other than free/reduced lunch enrollment as indicators of poverty.

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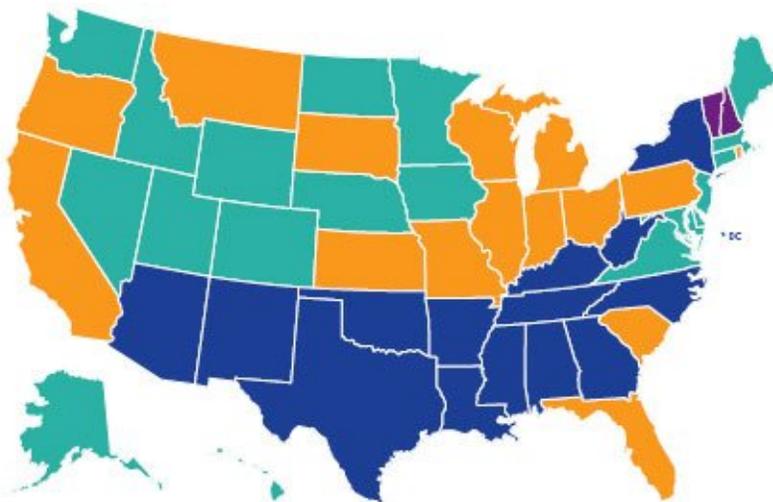
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nearly 20% of children in America, 13.2 million, officially live in poverty (Fass and Cauthen, 2008; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005).

With approximately one-fifth of American children living in poverty, teachers need solid strategies for supporting children in poverty in the classroom.

Child poverty rates across the states, 2007



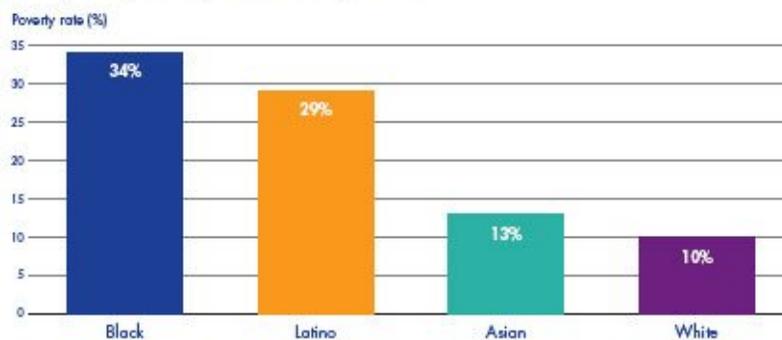
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 Who Are America's Poor Children: The Official Story

Statistics are not a holistic measure of how many children are affected by poverty because the nation's indicators for poverty are limited, but they provide a snapshot. It is easy to assume that since child poverty remains fairly stable over time, the population affected is also stable. In reality, there is substantial turnover among the poor and 35% of children will live in poverty at some point during their childhood. Given that so many children's lives are affected by poverty, this literature review asks the questions: How can

teachers create classrooms that provide equitable learning contexts for children in poverty and become advocates for children in poverty?

Exploring ways that teachers can better support children in poverty is important to the educational community because it is well established in the professional literature that poverty affects student achievement (Foster et al., 2005; Rathbun et al., 2005; Stipek and Ryan, 1997; Terwillige and Magnuson, 2005). Poverty has an effect in part because it affects students' perceptions of themselves and their world (Hare, 1977; Malecki and Demaray, 2006; McLoyd 1990; Yasgur, B. and Carner, E., 1973). In this era where inclusive classrooms and culturally relevant pedagogy are an aim for many teachers, much attention is given to the achievement gap between White and minority students. Poverty is also a major player in the achievement gaps between students of different races because, as the diagram below indicates, not all children are equally likely to live in poverty.

Child poverty rates by race/ethnicity, 2007



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There is a pervasive idealized belief that school is a safe haven for children, yet the grassroots practices within schools sometimes perpetuate the marginalization of children in poverty. It is well accepted in the professional literature that “Socio-economic

and ethnic-racial characteristics of neighborhoods or communities can be correlated with the level of success in educating children and youth living in the community” (Tutwiler, 2005, p.88). An aim of this literature review is to highlight that the average classroom teacher can help children become resilient to “a world that does not value bilingualism or biculturalism [or differences in general]”. Otherwise, youth may fall prey to what Valenzuela calls “the subtle yet unrelenting message of the worthlessness of their communities” (1999, p.264). Learning how poverty affects students is important to the educational community because all children deserve to feel safe and loved at school and it is in part up to classroom teachers to make sure children’s experiences are valued. Students in Wilson and Corbett’s study of urban youth reiterate again and again that, “Kids want teachers who believe in them” and that, “Teachers need to have compassion” (2001, p86-87). Part of believing in students and having compassion means teachers need to find ways to support children in poverty in the classroom and learn more about the experiences of children in poverty. The present literature review analyzes the role of teacher as advocate and shares specific strategies that guide teachers in crafting more equitable classrooms.

Rationale

Reviewing literature on strategies for supporting students in poverty helps educators become better advocates for such children because it will develop understandings of what structures are most effective. Advocating for children is being willing to do everything I can to support the learning of each individual. For me, advocacy is part of the job description as a teacher. All children deserve a quality education, period. Yet, there are so many political forces at play in schools that it takes a

lot of work to be anything other than a pawn for the system. For instance, Brown, 2007, found that the three biggest districts in the United States distribute Title 1 funds inequitably in part because it is easier to show growth in student achievement of students at low poverty schools regardless of individual background. I do not know how much change I will be able to affect through the lessons I teach because they are often very scripted by district curriculum mandates and pacing guides, but if I stop there, then I have given in to those very forces.

I have the privilege of remaining silent about politics that perpetuate the status quo, but many others do not and I cannot ethically distance my needs from theirs. It is easy to become aware of tribulations educators face in the trenches of inner city classrooms where resources and support are often meager and I imagine it will be difficult to use this awareness to inform my actions and thoughts, but I must. I hope to develop a synergistic relationship with researchers delving into issues of poverty where I combine their conclusions with the grassroots understandings I develop as a teacher so that together, we can make a difference in children's lives.

When teachers make a concerted effort to address inequalities in education brought about by poverty, education can attack poverty at its roots. This is especially relevant information for elementary school teachers because "initial socioeconomic achievement gaps widen over the first few years of school" (Rathbun et al., 2005, p.2). If early elementary school teachers are able to minimize the gap in their classrooms while helping students develop the foundational understandings needed for later school success then the playing field will begin leveling. The current unequal likelihoods of success within the education system for children in poverty when compared to children not living

in poverty is a problematic component of democracy in the United States today because it undermines Americans' ability to have faith in meritocracy.

Teachers and schools are charged with helping children make connections and respect diverse perspectives so they can develop into active members of American society. What it all boils down to is the belief that, "Whatever our reason for entering the profession, we must also consider our commitment to supporting a democracy- a democracy whose Constitution inspires us to provide equal educational opportunity for all. Through teaching, we hope to demonstrate to all of our students that they are equally valued, and thus, they must be equally taught" (Huerta, 2007, p.62). American ideals hold individualism, capitalism, and equality in high esteem, but these values often contradict one another. This is evident in tracking systems with the admirable aim of challenging all students, but which in practice actually perpetuate inequalities. Mindfulness and continued research on inequalities in education prepares one to resist passing them on. It seems that most people want equality, but differences lie in peoples' perceptions of what the inequalities are. Teachers must work to build bridges of communication; must open their eyes and ears to practices that marginalize some and favor others in order to change such inequities.

Meeting the needs of children in poverty will be a top priority for members of the educational community working for a just world. Systemized educational outcome expectations create a one-size educational system in which many children's academic potential is left unchallenged. This disparity, known as the achievement gap, challenges educators to influence change and narrow the gap, but there is little extrinsic motivation for doing so. According to Haycock, a few of the political forces that discourage highly

qualified teachers from choosing to work with low SES populations are things like, inter-district salary differences, district policies that reward senior teachers by allowing them the right to transfer to “easier” schools or work exclusively with advanced children, and the absence of incentives for teachers to work with poor and minority children (1998). Instead, children in poverty are often taught by teachers who cannot find viable employment elsewhere. But, are extrinsic rewards brought about through district policy and legislation necessary to bring about change?

Equity does not result exclusively from legislative structures. One’s everyday lived experiences, known as substantive equality, are also key because “[t]he goal of the rule of law and the right to justice is fair outcomes for everyone” (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2007, par.4). In the United States, there are not equitable educational outcomes for everyone so finding strategies that increase the fairness of the system is crucial for the educational community. A prime example is emergency hiring. Haycock notes that high poverty under-funded schools have such a high staff turnover that they do not always have the luxury of selecting qualified applicants. This means “many poor and minority students are taught throughout their entire school careers by a steady stream of the least qualified and experienced teachers” (1998, p.12). The United States’ general obliviousness to the detrimental effects of allowing the schooling system to continue operating this way is a violation of human rights.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights drafted by the United Nations in 1948,

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote

understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace” (Article 26).

America’s belief in freedom and justice for all coupled with the fact that the United States signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates that America supports these goals. The existence of programs such as Head Start, Title 1, and free/reduced price lunch also show that equity is important to Americans. The importance of all of this to the education community is that it is the obligation of public educators to further the progression of American ideals, the ideals of freedom and justice for all. Advocating for children in poverty and creating a classroom context that values and supports children in poverty is a critical component of fostering an education system that models respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Description of Controversies

Whose Responsibility is it?

Some believe that though poverty is an important social issue, it is not educators’ responsibility to advocate for children in poverty. Proponents of this position often argue that “the real problem rests within the social context in which schools operate- namely, the family, neighborhood and peer environments that low-income children experience” (Jacob and Ludwig, 2008, p.2). From this perspective, origins of poverty such as unemployment and unequal distribution of resources must be addressed before schools can begin to make large scale impacts in the lives of students. The general consensus is that, “Because of poverty and other neighborhood conditions, these students enter school behind other students. As they progress through the grades, the deficits accumulate,

leaving them further and further behind other students nothing schools do makes a very big difference” (Haycock, 1998, p.3) Research suggests that even before entering school, students from limited SES backgrounds are set on a lower developmental trajectory (America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2005, p.50-57). Others feel that the education system in the US is one of the social ills that beget poverty.

Schools shape peer environments and children’s perceptions of their roles within a community so others feel that the belief that schools do not affect societal inequities is naïve. Ghandi taught that,

“[I]f we look at society as a whole, [we] aren’t going to change it in a lifetime. But if changing the entire system through our own efforts is the standard against which we measure the ability to do something, then we’ve set ourselves up to feel powerless” (Johnson, 2006, p131).

Advocates of this position argue that giving up on a big problem does not make it smaller. Teachers affect students’ lives during their time in the classroom which constitutes a large part of a child’s week. Schooling is society’s institution for teaching children the rules of citizenry and for instilling the desire to want to contribute to society. If educators approach their profession with the belief that societal norms are fixed, it becomes difficult to teach students how to grow into active citizens.

Politics of Caring

The belief that teachers and administrators simply do not care enough to close the achievement gap between students experiencing poverty and students not experiencing poverty is relatively common (Jacob and Ludwig 2008; Haycock 2007). From this perspective, if teachers really cared about children, they would not choose prosperous

communities over poorer areas. Title 1 and Head Start even out the resource gap between students. Teachers simply need to pick up the slack and work as hard as everyone else. The logic behind this position is somewhat overly simplistic because although caring about students is important, so is funding.

Conflict exists because programs like Title 1 and Head Start are not enough to close the resource gap on their own. In addition, schools are funded in large part through property taxes which inherently creates regional resource inequities because affluent property owners pay more in taxes (Sacks, 2004). Head Start has never been fully funded and reporting requirements lead some districts to distribute Title 1 funds inequitably (saveheadstart.org). For instance Brown's study (2007) comparing Title 1 distribution indicated that the Los Angeles Unified School District, one of the three biggest districts in the US, allocated over \$1,000 per student to two schools with 20% and 17% poverty when the district average was approximately \$250 for schools with 40-90% eligibility (p137). The critical review of the literature explored in Chapter three suggested that individual teachers, communities, and policy makers must work together.

Should it be a social priority to create equitable classrooms?

Classrooms experiences for children in poverty in the United States are not equitable overall (Foster et al., 2005; Rathbun et al., 2005; Stipek and Ryan, 1997; Terwillige and Magnuson, 2005). In order to increase the degree of equity, support from the government in the form of funding is necessary. Without funding, it is difficult for high poverty schools to attract highly qualified teachers and to support students' learning where the students are at (Borman and Rachuba, 2001; Clotfelter, Vigdor, and Wheeler, 2007). Conflict arises because it is expensive for the government to fund initiatives that

increase equity such as Title 1 and Head Start and because tax payers want to see that their tax dollars are making a difference in their lives.

Some say that programs like Perry Preschool and Head Start are expensive and have the attitude that *I* should not have to pay for them when *my* children cannot even enroll. The argument is often that parents are responsible for taking care of their children and society should not have to pick up the slack for those who are lazy and unable to do so. People viewing equity from this lens may note that since 77 percent of Head Start centers are reporting that they are "at or near the breaking point" in terms of paying for operating costs then the program is obviously not sustainable (saveheadstart). The belief that Head Start is not sustainable is extremely circular because that ideology keeps Head Start from being fully funded in the first place. Though it is not operating at its full potential, Head Start has had a big impact on the lives of millions of children in poverty. Chapter three of this literature review explores studies by Stipek and Ryan (2007) and Abbot-Shim et al. (2005) about the effectiveness of Head Start. Understanding Head Start as a program and understanding how effective it is in terms of serving the needs of children in poverty is important for the classroom teacher as an advocate for children in poverty.

Is advocacy the role of the teacher and does advocating for children in poverty positively impact the day-to-day goings on of one's classroom? There is conflict in assuming advocacy is teachers' responsibility because perhaps advocacy turns a teachers' attention away from her or his students and lesson planning toward societal issues. However, if teachers do not consider themselves advocates, they run the risk of unintentionally buying in to societal structures that perpetuate inequities in American

society. Not assuming the role of advocate also puts one at risk for supporting structures that claim to promote equity, but actually foster the development of inequities such as tracking. It is difficult to find studies where the researchers take a stance on what the role of the teacher is, but Milne and Plourde 2006 do note that, “Today the job of the teacher is not simply to facilitate learning, but often includes being a nurse, social worker, parent, referee, advocate, and much, much, much more” (p183).

Is tracking the answer?

Some schools still support tracking, the process of grouping students into classes based on test scores) and retention (forcing students to repeat a grade) though research continually disproves the effectiveness of such practices. Retention provides short term gains because of increased familiarity with the course material, but those benefits quickly fade (Legters and McDill, 1995). A primary source of justification for maintaining tracking stems from the fact that it does not immediately change school norms so improvements are not directly apparent. In her study of newly de-tracked classrooms, Rubin (2007) describes “how the racially and socioeconomically polarized nature of the overall school context framed and permeated students’ interactions in the detracked class, leading, at times, to a reiteration of the very inequalities which detracking was designed to address” (p.3). One may ask why not track if detracking does not help students anyway.

Tracking children into courses based upon their perceived subject mastery if they do not meet standards denies them equal access to quality education and perpetuates societal inequities. In the US, English language proficiency is often seen as a prerequisite for academic success so ELL students are regularly tracked into remedial classes

regardless of aptitude (Huerta, 2007). During her time at Clavey High School, Perry (2004) observed that these students rarely ever had opportunities to interact with other students and that, “What all of this boiled down to was a tracking system presumably about intellectual achievement but through which racial [and SES] differences were constituted” (p.59). Valenzuela (1999) makes a similar conclusion from her experience studying the Houston school district. She finds that, “The separation encourages and legitimates [...] a status hierarchy” (1999, p.31). Tracking has a low monetary cost, but learning is forfeit when not all students are equitably prepared to enroll in rigorous classes.

Definitions

Poverty

The United States Census Bureau measures poverty using the original formula developed in 1950. A family is in poverty if their income is less than three times the average cost of food. Cauthen and Fass (2008) point out that this is an inadequate measure because housing, transportation, childcare, and healthcare costs have risen disproportionately to food costs. They note that families need approximate twice the set poverty line to make ends meet. America’s poverty measure does not capture the millions of American families that struggle to make ends meet, but are not officially in poverty. Even so, Milne and Plourde (2006) note that, “The U.S. Bureau of Census reports that the poverty rates of children are currently higher than they have ever been” (p.183).

Poverty is defined in this literature review more broadly than it is by the Bureau of Census because the Bureau of Census uses an outdated measure. Children in poverty as discussed herein refers to children who are affected by stresses and challenges that often

accompany living in an environment that lacks resources necessary to provide the everyday comforts necessary for a child to feel ready to learn. Such comforts include adequate nutrition, clean clothing, being read to regularly, early childhood education, and support with school work. Indicators used to define poverty by specific studies are included in the literature review whenever available. There are children struggling with the stresses of poverty in nearly every educational community.

Nearly all teachers work with children in poverty and from low income families every year. This literature review intends to find out what strategies teachers can utilize to reduce disparities in academic achievement between children in poverty and children not in poverty. It is imperative that those in the educational community know how to best work with this population because children in poverty are often already at an academic disadvantage before stepping foot in a classroom (Stipek and Ryan, 1997; Abbot-Shim et al., 2005)

Success and Achievement

Of course, there are countless ways to measure success. In this review, success and achievement refer to a student's ability to meet school/state/federal standards as well as students' perception of their abilities.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to cope with adversity or stress in a positive way. Children who are resilient to living in poverty bounce back when disruptions occur. They feel valued and empowered to take charge of their own lives.

Social Economic Status (SES) and Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)

The most common gauge of poverty used by the researchers reviewed herein is Social Economic Status (SES) as determined by free and reduced price lunch (FRPL) enrollment. This is commonly used as an indicator of poverty because FRPL enrollment data is easily obtained from students' schools and provides a base-line measure of poverty. SES is not a holistic measure of poverty because one can lack basic resources at home and feel stresses of poverty without it resulting from economics. For instance, a child whose home burns down will likely experience a lack of resources for a while even if that child's family has a solid economic base. In the professional literature, this is called situational poverty (Danielle, 1999). None of the research reviewed differentiated between situational, economic, and generational poverty because such data was not widely available.

Achievement Gap

The achievement gap is commonly referenced in educational literature, but is rarely well defined. The achievement gap is the difference between the test scores and educational outcomes of two or more student populations. Achievement gap is used herein as a term to describe the difference between the educational experiences of children in poverty and children not in poverty. Educational experiences are shaped by a combination of factors of which test scores are but one part. According to the professional research, perceived support, resilience, and anxiety also contribute to ones educational experience (Cefai, 2007; Dolan and McCaslin, 2008; Yasgur and Carner, 1973).

Advocate

Advocacy as defined in this literature review refers to the act of learning more about how poverty affects children's lives and working to promote equitable practices in education. The subtopics of chapter three entitled "Learning about the Home Environment" and "Learning about Systemic Strategies that Promote Equity" equip educators with starting places for advocacy. For instance, if affordable pre-school options are not available in one's district, the elementary teacher may include a note in each week's newsletter or homework packet about how to support the learning of younger siblings or may begin working with a local organization to make preschool more accessible. An advocate for children in poverty does what they can to make their own classroom more equitable and works to make the education system more equitable as a whole. By working at both the micro and macro levels, educators have a positive impact on more children than they alone teach.

Limitations

There are many social issues that overlay with poverty and variables that affect the experiences of children in poverty so it is difficult to measure the affect poverty has on one's education . For instance, children designated as minorities because of skin tone and cultural backgrounds are more likely to have limited socioeconomic means (Fass and Cauthen 2008; Johnson, 2006). They are also less likely to achieve success within America's schooling system (Hare, 1977; Lewis, 2006; Terwilliger and Magnuson, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999; Yagur and Carner, 1973). Full exploration of what is needed to create equitable classrooms and become advocates for children in poverty is a life's work because of the many variables in play. Variables include gender, race, substance/alcohol/domestic abuse, parenting skill, indigenous

peoples' attendance rates, home environment, and teacher expectations. Researchers often rely on RRPL enrollment as an indicator of poverty, but that is not an inclusive measure because it does not take the aforementioned variables into account.

Free/reduced lunch (FRPL) enrollment provides researchers with information about parental income, but it is only one measure of poverty and not all eligible families enroll. Having a moderate home income does not necessarily mean that a child's lived experience is outside the realm of those in poverty. For instance, students that have parents with substance addictions may share many of the same struggles as children from impoverished homes regardless of actual family income. Conversely, some may have grandparents or other relatives who supplement parents' income and lessen the effects of poverty. In addition, pride and ignorance may prevent some eligible families from applying. The assumption is made that those who qualify for free/reduced lunch live in poverty and thus come from similar backgrounds. These children likely have similarities in experience, but all come from different situations; situations that one cannot adequately measure with a single tool.

Poverty is not synonymous with low achieving. It is difficult to avoid generalizing the experiences of children in poverty because of the presence of strong themes, but everyone's situations are unique. Not all schools with a high percentage of students living in poverty are struggling with students' level of academic scholarship. At Lincoln elementary in New York, 66% of the students identify as minorities and 55% of students live below the poverty line. Yet, 99% of fourth graders meet or exceed state standards in English, math, and science (Fanning, 2007, p.26). Anomalies like this are not unheard of. In this literature review, the focus is on how teachers can support the learning of children in poverty by building resiliency, helping children feel supported, trusting in students' abilities, and becoming more of an advocate for children in

poverty. Research shows students in poverty often need additional support in order for schools to create equitable learning communities (Abbot-Shim et al., 2005; Borman and Rachuba, 2001; Cefai, 2007; Malecki and Demaray, 2006; Wenglinsky, 2002). Putting additional supports in place and remaining vigilant about the accessibility of learning for all students helps create environments where all students are more likely to succeed within America's public education system.

This literature review is written with the American education system in mind. All of the laws referenced, the historical context, and indicators for poverty used are from the United States. Achievement gaps in some other countries are much more severe than in the United States. For instance, Tibetans in China report that they receive inferior facilities and the Roma people in Europe are discriminated against in many European countries (Fanning, 2007, p.31). Some form of discrimination, be it based on SES or another measure, is likely present in most schools around the globe. The meager research base in some countries makes it difficult to conduct comprehensive international comparisons. Fanning's review of the global achievement gap is a good introductory resource for finding out more about global trends. The United States potentially has a lot to gain by looking into strategies for increasing equity used in other parts of the world. Finding international studies researching strategies for supporting children in poverty is difficult. International studies by Cefai (2007), Green (2007), and Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) are included in this literature review because they provide a window into what educators are doing to increase equity in their classrooms in other parts of the world.

Summary

Poverty affects the lives of children across the United States. This literature review explores how those in the educational community can support children in poverty by asking

how teachers can become advocates for children in poverty and how teachers can create an equitable classroom experience for such children. This first chapter introduced the notion that twenty percent of America's children currently live in poverty and that thirty-five percent will at some point in their childhood. Chapter one provided the rationale that the issue of poverty in education is worth considering because of how many children are affected and the consensus among scholars that classrooms are not equitable for children in poverty.

Even with consensus that poverty is an issue, there is conflict about whether it is the role of the classroom teacher to spend time and energy on social change, whether it is the government's and taxpayer's obligation to provide additional funding and support, and whether equitable classrooms are a reasonable aim. After reading this chapter, one should walk away with a working understanding of the basic controversies and conflicts that surround the ideas of the themes of advocacy and equity as they relate to poverty and education. Tracking students by perceived ability level is discussed as a conflict because some schools use it under the guise of promoting learning, but research does not support the practice. This chapter clearly stated what is meant by key terms such as poverty, equity, and advocacy. This review is limited by the fact that poverty overlaps with many social issues and is difficult to study in an isolated context. Regardless, trends arose from the research.

Several themes arose in the research about what teachers can do to promote equity within their classrooms for children in poverty and areas to explore to become better advocates. The themes are discussed at length in chapter three along with the research findings and chapter four synthesizes the findings into concrete suggestions for classroom teachers and those interested in the education of children in poverty. Chapter four also suggests areas for future research. The

following chapter historically contextualizes advocacy for children in poverty and of making classrooms more equitable for children in poverty.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY

Introduction

Advocating for children experiencing poverty and crafting equitable learning experiences has a long history in the United States. Tracking the evolution of the thinking about the two aforementioned issues is useful to those in the educational community because it provides one with a more holistic understanding of the legislation, movements, and ideologies that affect children in poverty and the socio-political climates of which they emerged. In order to facilitate seeing the connections between these historical bases, chapter two is organized chronologically starting with the early 20th century and before. Understanding the historical context helps contextualize the controversies explained in chapter one and the research reviewed in chapter three.

Early 20th Century and Before

Educators have known that poverty impacts education since the early years of public education in America. Most educators did not concern themselves with thinking about how to create more equitable classrooms at the inception of schooling in America because it was seen as natural that only White male protestant children from affluent families were afforded formal schooling opportunities (Spring, 2005). After all, men from affluent families were the ones who may run the country because women were viewed as caretakers of the home and immigrants were looked down upon. Elwood Cubberly summarizes the general public perception of immigrants when he describes them as, “largely illiterate, docile, often lacking in initiative, and almost wholly without the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, liberty, law, order, public decency, and government” (Spring, 2005, p.264). However, there were individuals who did not

support the socio-political milieu of the time. During the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, some began to develop a vision of schooling as a great social equalizer with the ability to eliminate poverty and decided to advocate for those in poverty.

Charity schools of the early 18th century headed by John Locke, and the Lancasterian system of the early 19th century attempted to reduce crime and poverty through education (Spring, 2005). The charity school movement is important because it was the first large scale attempt to socialize children of from the general population into industrious workers. Charity schools introduced the idea of education as an agent of reform. According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2009), Charity schools were instituted as an attempt to cope with poverty and were usually operated by religious organizations.

Charity schools were unique because they taught and educated students free of charge (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2009). The Lancasterian system, also referred to as the New York Free School Society, took the trend of making classrooms more equitable for children in poverty a step further by advocating for children in poverty in a petition to the public. Spring (2005) cites the Lancasterian system's petition as stating that the condition of poor children "is deplorable indeed; reared by parents who...become either indifferent to the best interests of their offspring, or, through intemperate lives, are rendered unable to defray the expense of their instruction" (2005, p56). Believers in the Lancasterian system and the Common school movement challenged educators to create more inclusive classrooms and find ways to better accommodate children in poverty. Common school reformers were the next in line to continue this work.

The Common school movement of the 1830's and 1840's purported the ideology that schooling can "reduce tensions between social classes, eliminate crime and poverty,

stabilize the political system, and form patriotic citizens (Spring, 2005, p73). The Common school movement was grounded in the belief that providing all children with access to school would serve as a panacea for poverty. Not everyone was excited about the idea because if education was provided free of charge to students, taxpayers would bear the burden of operation costs. Regardless, Common schools spread throughout the United States. According to the Educational Encyclopedia (2009), Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence, attempted to change the minds of cost conscious taxpayers and welcome Common schools to Pennsylvania by expounding that the long term benefits of education actually save taxpayers money. Rush argued that,

But, shall the estates of orphans, bachelors, and persons who have no children be taxed to pay for the support of schools from which they can derive no benefit? I answer in the affirmative to the first part of the objection, and I deny the truth of the latter part of it.... The bachelor will in time save his tax for this purpose by being able to sleep with fewer bolts and locks on his doors, the estates of orphans will in time be benefited by being protected from the vantages of unprincipled and idle boys, and the children of wealthy parents will be less tempted, by bad company, to extravagance. Fewer pillories and whipping posts and smaller jails, with their usual expenses and taxes, will be necessary when our youth are more properly educated than at present. (Educational Encyclopedia, 2009, citing Rudolph, p. 6–7).

The unwillingness of taxpayers to support Common schools intermixed with class, race, ethnic tensions, demands for local control of schools was—and remains—a hotly contested issue. The Common school movement represented a victory for political liberals of the mid-nineteenth century and set the stage for government intervention in

education. Spring (2005) notes that most supporters of the Common school “believed that the government should play an active role in ensuring the success of the economic and social system and that this was best achieved by centralizing and standardizing governmental processes” (98). The major oppositional position was that the government governed best by interfering as little as possible and that, “The free actions of the marketplace guaranteed the most equitable distribution of economic benefits” (Spring, 2005, p.98). A resurgence in governmental intervention in education occurred in the mid 20th century.

Mid 20th Century

The post WWII era marked renewed governmental and social interest in using education as a means of increasing access to education. One of the primary pieces of education legislation during this time was the G.I. Bill. The G.I. Bill is a significant piece of legislation in terms of making education more equitable for children in poverty because it symbolized the federal government taking on poverty as a national issue. According to the Veterans Administration, college and homeownership were unattainable dreams for the average American before the GI Bill was signed into law on June 22, 1944 by Franklin D. Roosevelt (United States Department of Veterans Affairs, 2009). With college more accessible, millions of veterans who would have otherwise joined the workforce returned to school.

The G.I. Bill marked the beginning of a larger civil rights movement focused on improving access to K-12 education by increasing availability of resources that had previously only been available the middle and upper class Whites. The social milieu of the time was one of relative economic prosperity and optimism according to Schumann

(2003). As a result, people may have felt better prepared to take on poverty as a national issue. In addition, the negative social perceptions of using tax dollars to make classrooms more equitable for children in poverty may have lessened when individuals saw the difference the GI Bill made in the lives of so many individuals and in local economies throughout the United States. The federal and legislative emphasis was placed upon providing additional resources to children in poverty who were seen as lacking necessary supports to succeed. Two of the key pieces of legislation were the Economic Opportunity Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. However, it was not until Lynden B. Johnson's presidency that federal legislation directed specifically at making classrooms more equitable for children in poverty came into fruition.

Lynden B. Johnson first coined the term War on Poverty during his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964 in response to a rise in national poverty rates. John F. Kennedy was also a strong civil rights advocate and began laying the groundwork for Johnson's War on Poverty by vehemently supporting desegregation and services to impoverished Blacks. Kennedy drew public attention to the fact that, "The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the State in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby born in the same place...and the prospects of earning only half as much" (John F. Kennedy Civil Rights Address 11 June 1963). Johnson focused on poverty rather than race, but it is not realistic to think of the two as separate because race statistically influences how likely a child is to live in poverty.

Johnson was a vehement advocate for children in poverty and passed an unprecedented amount of legislation meant to reduce it. By April 1965, the Economic

Opportunity Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) had become law and have long reaching ramifications for teachers and schools working with students in poverty today. Some commonly known programs such as Title 1, Head Start, and Job Corps originate in these two acts. The goals of the War on Poverty were reminiscent of those of 19th century common school reformers such as Horace Mann, but with the political agenda of creating a globally competitive workforce. The War on Poverty waned after the 1960's, but the emphasis on developing human capital continued to pervade policy making.

Nixon supported educating students for specific careers through vocational training and emphasized the power of the educational expert (Spring, 2005). This is where one begins to see the idea of accountability take a firmer hold and an increased emphasis on testing as a means to prove whether schools are creating equitable learning contexts for all children. Harris and Herrington note that Nixon's educational policies came under attack towards the end of his presidency when average SAT scores were dropping and the widespread public opinion was that schools had become less rigorous (2006). Schools had not necessarily lowered their standards, but it was up to Reagan to recapture the public's trust.

Reagan appealed to conservatives by promising to limit federal involvement in education (Spring, 2005). He cut funding for many of the remaining War on Poverty programs initiated by Johnson under the guise of this promise, worked to abolish the Department of Education, cut federal funding for free/reduced price lunch, increased military spending, and blamed schools for not being rigorous enough in *A Nation at Risk* (Spring, 2005). The biggest funding cut he made was for low-income housing subsidies

and by the end of his time in office, federal funding for local governments was reduced by 60% (Dreier, 2004). Reagan's funding cuts of public welfare initiatives were coupled with a 25% increase in poverty, especially for inner city children who relied on government services (Lily, 2004). As extant research indicates, children in poverty struggle more in school. The changes Reagan made may not have seemed dramatic at the time because he followed Nixon's lead in replacing federal accountability for schools with local accountability. Local because *A Nation at Risk* would later inspire George H.W. Bush's Goals 2000 and George W. Bush's enactment of No Child Left Behind. Overall, subsequent presidents have continued this curtailing trend.

Local accountability for educational outcomes is problematic because it pressures teachers to teach basic knowledge needed for standardized tests rather than critical thinking skills needed to participate fully in democracy and because schools are not equally funded. It is sometimes an attractive option for the federal government because it shifts accountability from the government to individual districts. Johnson and Johnson (2006) spent a year working at a high poverty school in Louisiana to gain firsthand experience with working in a high stakes testing environment because Louisiana is one of twenty-one states where students must pass achievement tests to progress to the next grade.

Johnson and Johnson (2006) concluded from their experience that, if every child in a state is expected to take the same test, every school should have the same proportionate quantity and quality of certified teachers, the same quantity and quality of instructional materials and resources, the same school environment in terms of building repair, cleanliness, and absence of vermin, the same playground and recreational equipment, and

the same support personnel such as counselors and school nurses. The experiences of Johnson and Johnson are noteworthy because children in poverty are those most likely to attend high poverty schools. Such children are likely to face the dual challenges of lack of resources at home associated with living in poverty and lack of resources at school from lack of funding. Taking a closer look at the forerunners in poverty legislation such as the Economic Opportunity Act and Elementary and Secondary Education Act helps develop the background for the critique of implications of recent initiatives such as Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind.

The Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) was one of the cornerstones of President Johnson's War on Poverty. It was based in Johnson's belief that if all children are provided with equal opportunities in school, all children are equipped to succeed through their own initiative and hard work. One of the most long standing initiatives of this act is Head Start. In addition, Incentives were provided to rural and urban areas to create community action teams to combat poverty locally. The logic was that doing so made good economic sense because if local communities had the resources to create equitable learning contexts for children in poverty, the government could focus its attention elsewhere.

The end goal of the Economic Opportunity Act was to fortify the American economy. Imagine how much GDP would increase if all of the people in poverty made enough money to sustain themselves and their families! Better yet, imagine how much more formidable a nation with a strong economic base is to competing nations. Being perceived as a strong nation was likely especially important at this time because the United States was already racing the Russians to a lunar landing. This is not to downplay

the importance of the EOA on the lives of children in poverty. It is simply to show that the government had reasons other than the altruistic motive of reducing poverty through bettering education in mind. If more thought had gone into strategies for reducing poverty than into maximizing on human capital, the EOA may have had more long reaching ramifications.

Johnson ideas quoted below about equality of opportunity ending poverty may seem simplistic to contemporary readers as equality of opportunity does not necessarily signify that all individuals have equitable access to such prospects.

The United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society. It is, therefore, the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity (Lily, 2004).

In the mid 1960's, even the idea of providing equal opportunities to everyone via government intervention was a novel concept. Desegregation was still a hot topic even though the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling was ten years old, and poverty had only been considered a federal issue since the years following WWII.

Johnson's goals reflected society's perception that the United States government should guarantee civil rights to everyone and the government's goals to strengthen the economy. However, not all supported Johnson's aspirations. According to Harris and Herrington, for instance, some schools poured money in schools with high African

Americans enrollment to perpetuate segregation (2006). This had the unintended effect of creating a more equitable learning environment for poor minority students attending these schools, and also perpetuated segregation. The Head Start program is an anomaly of the legislative initiatives from the EOA in that it greatly improved the resources available to families in poverty and many of these families were minorities.

Despite pockets of success and longevity for some programs such as Job Corps and Head Start, funding was never sufficient (saveheadstart.org, 2008). The escalation of the war in Vietnam further depleted funds that might have been available. Early in his presidency, Richard Nixon halted funding entirely for the community action programs. Frustration soon replaced early optimism and this movement never regained the high ground it enjoyed with the law's inception. If this dedication to serving children in poverty had continued, the current achievement gap between students in poverty and students from more affluent families might be smaller. The other foundational piece of the War on Poverty was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which is currently authorized as No Child Left Behind.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) created for the first time a partnership between federal, state, and local governments to address part of the larger national agenda of confronting poverty by targeting federal aid to poor students and schools. The two pieces of ESEA legislation that most directly provided support to children in poverty were Title 1 and Head Start. Historical reformers such as John Locke from the Charity school movement and Horace Mann from the common school movement had a lot of ideas and passion, but little capital. Federal support is part of what made Head Start and Title 1 unique. Head Start provided children in poverty with a

tuition free pre-school option and Title 1 provided schools with targeted funding for children in poverty on the grounds of civic duty.

Johnson decided to respond to civil rights pressures and religious conflicts over education by linking educational legislation to his War on Poverty. According to Schugurensky (2001), Francis Keppel, the Commissioner of Education and a proponent of creating equitable learning opportunities for children in poverty outlined three options. The first was to provide general aid to public schools, but he argued that this may result in a negative reaction from Catholic schools. The second was to provide general aid all schools both public and private, but this would likely get a negative reaction from the National Education Association (NEA) and large sectors of the Democratic Party who objected to federal aid to religious schools. The option eventually chosen was to emphasize the educational aid to poor children, because this could endorse the support of most groups (2001). The political incentives for supporting children in poverty do not diminish the fact that the ESEA was, and remains, a largely supported key strategy for creating more equitable educational experiences for children in poverty. The findings of the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study (EEOS), also called the Coleman Report, suggested that the ESEA's approach was inadequate.

The Coleman Report is one of the largest counterarguments against Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The report, released in less than a year after passing the ESEA into law, is among the most extensive and best-known studies of American education. At a cost of \$1.5 million in 1966 dollars, the project drew on data for 570,000 students, 60,000 teachers, and 4,000 elementary and secondary schools across the country. It concluded that directing additional resources to disadvantaged student

populations such as minority youth and those in poverty is an ineffective way to close achievement gaps because such gaps result from larger social issues. This is one of the most popular contemporary arguments against educators advocating against societal structures that perpetuate poverty. Jacob and Ludwig (2008) note that proponents of this ideology often claim that family, peers, and social structures are more influential than schools. Thus, in their minds, inequities in these realms must be addressed before schools can hope to make a difference. It may seem that this is also what the Coleman Report concluded, but the study was considerably more complex than that.

The Coleman Report's conclusion on schools' relative ineffectiveness at overcoming the academic disparities that children bring with them was just one of many findings in the study (Coleman, 1966). It found, for instance, that the next-most important determinant of academic achievement after family characteristics was a student's sense of control over his or her own destiny (Coleman, 1966). This sense of having control over one's life is a foundational component of resiliency literature and studies about fostering equitable learning experiences for children in poverty. According to Coleman, most people took away from the report the notion that schools do not matter. Some politicians, in fact, later used that argument in opposing increased funding for education.

Late 20th Century and Beyond

The late 20th century marked a continued focus on accountability and a social milieu that valued work to create equitable classrooms and advocate for children in poverty. "In the United States, we continue to lament the lack of social progress on seemingly intractable issues such as poverty, inequitable educational opportunity, and a deepening racial life gap, and we continue to revisit and attempt to explain causality

while turning to the same interventions over and over” (Lapp et al., 2004). No Child Left Behind and Goals 2000 are over-holds from Reagan’s initial accountability movement with A Nation at Risk. Making teachers and districts display student learning partly comes from taxpayers’ desire to see that their money is making a difference and partly from a desire to hold all children to high standards. The fact that one cannot show all student learning on a one-size-fits-all test adds complexity because “passing a high-stakes test does not mean that students are well educated any more than passing a written or behind-the-wheel driver’s text means that someone is a good driver” (Johnson and Johnson, 2006). Aside from federal legislation, there are also grassroots non-profit organizations working to promote equity and advocate for children in poverty. One such organization is the National Urban Alliance.

The National Urban Alliance, NUA, is an organization formed by the College Board in 1989 to increase equity in education (Lapp et al., 2004). One aim of the NUA is to promote a world free of barriers to education for children in poverty. The NUA advocates for children living in poverty by partnering with districts and organizations to provide tailored support in the form of things such as mentor relationships, instructional interventions, political advocacy, support for teachers, and community engagement. The NUA formed a partnership with the International Reading Association, IRA, to further the work of creating equitable classrooms. One of the three core principals guiding this partnership was the belief that the impact of poverty on children's learning is not mediated by single year or a single focus program (National Urban Alliance, 2008). There is no one initiative that will make classrooms equitable for children living in poverty, but the combined effect of adequate funding, support from non-profit organizations, and dedicated members of the education community will help create more equitable learning

contexts. The knowledge that one child's experience with poverty may be very different from that of another child adds yet another layer to the mix because it means educators need to find ways to help children develop resiliency to the adversity they face.

The International Resiliency Project and Project Resilience are organizations dedicated to learning about how to best support children in growing into resilient individuals. According to Grotberg (n.d.), promoting resilience is difficult to define and is about celebrating the strengths individuals possess that help them cope with stressful and adverse situations. Wolin and Wolin (1999) note that operating from a strengths-based paradigm rather than looking for deficits areas that need teaching is useful because it helps children see that they have assets. From a teacher's perspective, looking for the assets that each student brings to the classroom helps to connect what one is teaching to students' prior knowledge and create a student centered learning environment. As an advocate for children experiencing poverty, staying current on resilience research is useful because researchers are beginning to look for ways that educators can help students develop resilience. This is a new avenue for resilience research which has historically been limited to the field of psychology.

Summary

Chapter two presented the significant social and political history of creating equitable learning environments for children in poverty and advocacy for children experiencing poverty. The history stems from the rationale provided in chapter one that advocating for children in poverty and working to create equitable classrooms are worthwhile aims for those in the education community. Implications of key legislation such as the Economic Opportunity Act and Elementary and Secondary Education Act are also discussed and linked to the social milieus of the time. The history begins by exploring what Charity schools and the Common school

movement meant in terms of the education of children experiencing poverty and advocacy. The history concludes by looking at the late 20th century and beyond. In conclusion, fostering resilience, a concerted effort by non-profits, the federal government, and individual teachers is necessary to create equitable learning experiences. The following chapter categorizes the major themes revealed in the research and discusses what the research reveals about advocating for children in poverty and creating equitable learning experiences for children experiencing poverty. Chapter four concludes the exploration by summarizing the research findings, suggesting classroom implications, and areas for future research.

CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

What is the importance of advocating for children in poverty and striving toward the creation of equitable classrooms for such children to the everyday experiences of the classroom teacher? Chapter one provided that statistic that approximately 20% of American youth live in poverty. This statistic indicates that several children in the average classroom live in poverty. As public educators, teachers are charged with educating all of the nation's children to the best of their abilities. Teaching all the children means that educators actively work at learning more about the children they teach and more about how to best support them in the classroom. In regards to children in poverty, working to best support one's students requires active pursuance of an equitable learning environment and advocacy to help make education in general more equitable for children in poverty. The expression, children in poverty, refers to children who are affected by stresses and challenges that often accompany living in an environment that lacks resources necessary to provide the everyday comforts necessary for a child to feel ready to learn.

Chapter one also defined some common terms and explained the social and political controversies that affect the education of children in poverty. Most of the controversies and conflicts arise from differing viewpoints on whose responsibility it is to advocate for children experiencing poverty and create equitable learning contexts for them. Some feel that poverty is a social issue that does not concern educators, that tax money should not be targeted to children in poverty specifically, or that increased accountability on the part of the teacher is the answer. Chapter two follows the historical

thinking of working with children in poverty. Chapter two also discussed the movements that started people thinking about the education of children in poverty and about government interventions to better serve this student population.

Formal concern for the education of children in poverty began in the 18th century with the Charity school movement headed by John Locke (Spring, 2005). Charity schools mark the beginning of the idea of providing free schooling and paved the way for advocates for children in poverty to come during the common school movement. There was a resurgence in advocacy for children in poverty during the post WWII and civil rights eras. The mid 20th century was a time of increased legislation targeted at providing equitable learning experiences for children in poverty and the education of children in poverty was, for the first time in America's history, considered a federal concern. In the 21st century, there are controversies about how to hold educators accountable for creating equitable classrooms and there are organizations such as Project Resilience and the National Resilience Project advocating for children in poverty. Teachers must learn about both about how to support the learning of children experiencing poverty because classrooms as a whole are not equitable. This requires research and advocacy on the part of the teacher. Chapter three presents several major themes that arose in the research that help teachers develop strategies for becoming better advocates and creating more equitable classrooms.

The themes that arose were the importance of learning about the home environment, learning about systemic strategies that promote equity, the potential of leadership and trust, promoting resiliency, student anxiety and perceived support, homelessness, and pedagogical decisions. The first two themes help illuminate issues for

educators as advocates to pay attention to such as curriculum, the impact of pre-school, and Title 1 distribution. Homelessness is included as a theme because of the importance of considering the needs of homeless children when thinking about advocacy and creating equitable classrooms. All the remaining themes include studies that explore how educators can make their classrooms more equitable for children in poverty by being supportive, trusting in students, and promoting resiliency.

Learning about the Home Environment

“There has been a tremendous amount of research done that shows that a child’s socioeconomic status (SES) affects his/her overall cognitive ability and academic achievement” (Milne and Plourde, 2006, p183). Children’s academic and social successes in school are in part dependant on the child’s home learning environment and their family’s income (Dahl and Lochner, 2009; Stipek and Ryan, 1997). Much of the research in this arena focuses on the presence and affect of risk factors. Particularly pertinent to the focus of this literature review is Rathbun, West, and Walton’s (2005) finding that poverty is the most common home risk factor children experience at home. Abbot-Shim, Foster, Franz, Lambert, and McCarty (2005) as well as Milne and Plourde found that although poverty is a risk factor, there are several factors of low socio economic status (SES) households that can act as protective factors and aid achievement. All six of these studies are connected in that they delve into issues of the significance of the home environment on children in poverty.

There is no consistent measure of poverty in the studies reviewed, but most utilize SES measures such as free/reduced lunch enrollment or family income. Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) argues that standard SES measures such as those mentioned above

underestimate the affects of family background on achievement because they are not inclusive of home-based cultural practices and resources. Children's home environments are important variables to be aware for teachers of children in poverty because they are strongly correlated with school success. Research thus far shows that this is particularly true for early literacy development and math (Abbot-Shim et al., 2005; Dahl and Lochner, 2009; Nonoyama-Tarumi; Rathbun, West, and Walton, 2005). This is not to suggest that literacy and math are more affected by poverty than other facets of education, simply that the research focuses on these subjects. In order to work to change this negative correlation, teachers must strive to find patterns about how one's home environment traditionally impacts academic and social success in school.

The following two studies were specifically interested in examining the affects of income on achievement. An awareness of how income tends to affect achievement is important for educators because in order to advocate for children in poverty, educators need to be able to show that poverty affects children's educational experiences. By isolating income as a variable, the researchers attempt to see if there is a monetary correlation with achievement or if income simply affects other household variables that influence achievement. Dahl and Lochner (2005) estimate the effects of income on children based on major changes in the Earned Income Tax Credit. Stipek and Ryan (1997) look specifically at whether economically disadvantaged preschoolers start out school less motivated and at a cognitive disadvantage when compared to peers from more affluent families. The two studies differ in that Dahl and Lochner use exclusively quantitative methods whereas Stipek and Ryan also use qualitative measures to compare the achievement of advantaged and disadvantaged children in early elementary.

Stipek and Ryan's (1997) research systematically examined the extent and nature of cognitive and motivational differences between children from disadvantaged and advantaged homes. The two define disadvantaged as children whose families receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children, free lunch, or made less than \$25,000 a year. This is in contrast to Dahn and Lochner (2005) who use total net income (including EITC payments and taxes) as the measure of family income. Stipek and Ryan assess cognitive competencies and motivation for children entering their last year of preschool or entering kindergarten. Breaking achievement into subjects (e.g. puzzle solving, verbal fluency, ect.) allowed the researchers to take a closer look at the whether SES effected achievement overall or in specific subject areas. Differences between preschoolers and kindergarteners are compared to see if SES differences are greater at kindergarten or preschool entry. Data is then used to see if SES differences increase or diminish during the school year.

Children completed assessments at the beginning and end of the school year. A subsample of children completed the cognitive skills assessments at the end of their next grade which allowed the Stipek and Ryan (1997) to gather longitudinal data. The use of a subsample increases the generalizability of this study, but one must use caution because Stipek and Ryan are unclear about how the subsample was selected. A second strength for generalizability is the diversity of participants. Stipek and Ryan's final sample includes 262 students from 46 different classrooms. Girls and boys are comparably represented and the ethnic makeup of participants as a whole is 47% Latina/o, 27% African American, 1% Asian, 24% White, and 1% other. As one may expect, minority students in the participant population are overrepresented in the disadvantaged group.

Instead of comparing disadvantaged and advantaged students, Dahl and Lochner (2005) use data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to make predictions about the impact of family income on test scores. Test scores are not a holistic measure of achievement, but statistics are an important tool for the advocate.

4,720 children and their mothers (2,527 total mothers) participated in Dahl and Lochner's (2005) study. Minorities and poor whites are overrepresented in the study because of the intentional over-sampling of these groups in the NLSY. The NLYS sample represents a random selection of US five-fifteen year olds and the children in Dahl and Lochner's study are randomly selected from within it. Only children whose mothers also participated in the NLSY study are included, but some share the same mother.

It is possible that unobservable factors affecting a child's development are correlated with changes in family income. To account for this problem, Dahl and Lochner (2005) use instrumental variable estimation strategies to predict the effects of income on children based on major changes in the EITC. Potential factors that correlate with family income are addressed later by Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) and Milne and Plourde (2006). Stipek and Ryan (1997) account for potential unobservable factors through their qualitative measures of collecting self-reported teaching behaviors from parents and tracking emotional and behavioral displays of a sub-sample of children while in class. Stipek and Ryan go on to note that their findings support past research regarding cognitive competencies in kindergarten predicting later academic performance.

Overall, kindergarteners scored higher than preschoolers and advantaged kids scored higher than disadvantaged for all eight cognitive variables measured (Stipek and Ryan, 1997). The basic skills measured were numbers/math and letters/reading.

McCarthy subscale measures were puzzle solving, word knowledge, verbal fluency, counting/sorting, conceptual grouping, and number memory. In word knowledge, number memory, conceptual grouping, and letters-reading achievement, the advantaged preschoolers (at the beginning of the year) scored higher than the disadvantaged kindergarteners suggesting a one year delay. Disadvantaged children also tended to choose a lower level of difficulty after successfully completing a math task suggesting more of a desire to feel successful. Disadvantaged kindergarteners made steep gains in verbal fluency and letters/reading achievement during the school year and almost caught up with advantaged kindergarteners. However, a big gap remained between disadvantaged and advantages students' numbers/math achievement. This knowledge is critical for the educator because it indicates that additional bridging in math for children experiencing poverty may be required to create an equitable learning environment. There was one statistically significant motivation variable.

Based on a one-day classroom observation, Stipek and Ryan (1997) noticed that disadvantaged students were more likely to call attention to their accomplishments, and less likely to compare themselves negatively in relation to others or seem bored. This is important if it supports a trend in similar research, but it is not reliable to generalize from one observation. In regards to the study as a whole, Stipek and Ryan claim that "The results of this study paint a clear picture of children from relatively low-income homes beginning school at a considerable academic disadvantage" (p720). Dahl and Lochner's (2005) findings support this assertion on the grounds that they too found indicators that students from low income homes were at a cognitive disadvantage.

Income affects achievement in math and reading independent of other family and home-life variables according to the results of Dahl and Lochner (2005). The findings suggest that increasing family income by \$1,000 increases math and reading test scores by approximately 6% of a standard deviation in the short term, but benefits often deteriorate within a year unless the increased income level is maintained. Citing that income increases have concrete effects on students' achievement provides the educator with specific data to advocate for increased funding for children experiencing poverty which in turn helps create equitable education experiences.

Children from EITC eligible families were more likely to be minorities and have unmarried mothers with low education levels, so children from these backgrounds are most affected by changes in EITC payments. Thus, minorities are more likely to be affected by federal public service program decisions. There is more about current federal programs and interventions in theme 2: Federal strategies for increasing equity.

Currently, there is more to discuss about additional ways home environments sometimes affects children living in poverty and the ways in which these affects are measured.

Diversifying how Family Background is Measured

Family background is often measured in terms of SES. For instance, Dahl and Lochner (2005) examine whether an increase in income increases test scores and Stipek and Ryan (1997) gather information about SES to see if there are correlations between economic disadvantage and cognition or motivation. Similarly, Rathbun, West, and Walton (2005) look at academic risks associated with living below the poverty line. It is important to look for correlations like these because if we as teachers are aware of some of the trends about ways poverty affects children in school, we are better able to develop

promising practices for working with this population. Rathbun, West, and Walton's study helps provide scope by looking closer at whether poverty alone, as measured by SES, is a strong predictor of achievement.

Rathbun, West, and Walton (2005) assess whether kindergartener's math and reading gains over their first four years of school associated more with a single risk factor or a combination of them. This is important to the educator because knowing trends in how risk factors affect students experiencing poverty helps one get to know students. Knowing one's students is a prerequisite to creating an equitable classroom. The risk factors assessed include living in a single parent household, living below the poverty line, primarily speaking a language other than English at home, and having a mother who did not complete high school. 10,345 children who entered kindergarten in 1998, completed the English version of the cognitive assessments in '98, '99, '00, and '02, and returned complete data on their sex, race/ethnicity, and four family risk factors.

Use of a large nationally representative sample of kindergarteners makes Rathbun, West, and Walton's (2005) study conducive to generalizations and controlling for common risk factors allowed the researchers to view the affects of each risk factor individually and combined. A limiting factor of Rathbun, West, and Walton's study is that students with the highest family risks for school achievement may include those who are not proficient in English and who did not return assessment information to the schools. Since these children are not represented in the study, its findings may understate the impact of family risks.

Rathbun, West, and Walton's (2005) study is mainly quantitative and utilizes two-level hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) in relation to data from the Early Childhood

Longitudinal Study (ECLS) kindergarten class of 1998-1999. In terms of qualitative measures, interviews were conducted with parents in kindergarten and repeated yearly each spring. The researchers also completed one-on-one child assessments in the fall and spring of kindergarten and the spring of 1st-3rd grade. Race/ethnicity and gender are control variables because although they are related to the number of risk factors present in the home, they are also independently related to student achievement. Nonoyama-Tarumi's (2008) cross-national study looking at the effects of family background suggests that additional home factors must be included because of the multidimensional nature of family background.

Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) hypothesize that family background composite measures of SES have a stronger effect on academic achievement than the standard SES measure because of the role home resources play in achievement outcomes. Nonoyama-Tarumi tests her hypothesis by comparing the combined effects of the multidimensional SES index with the standard index. She constructs an index comparable to Baker, Goesling, and Letendre's (2002), in order to compare her results using Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000 data with their results using TIMSS 2002 data. Triangulation with this 2002 study helps foster internal validity because it allows Nonoyama-Tarumi to compare her findings with those of a similar study.

Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) incorporates several indicators to create an internally valid generalizable study. Measuring the effects of wealth as an independent variable is a strength to the internal validity because it measures if wealth contributes to achievement above and beyond parental education and occupation. However, Nonoyama-Tarumi is unclear about how the income component of SES was weighted. The cost of living varies

from nation to nation so one would have to account for income in relation to cost of living rather than simply comparing incomes. The primary threat to internal validity is that Nonoyama-Tarumi is unclear about how she weights income, because as a reader, one cannot critique the methods used. Nonoyama-Tarumi also created a sub-file of students living in rural areas to see if the theory of wealth and cultural capital only applies to urban settings. Creating a sub-file of rural participants is useful because it provides a control to test for generalizability. The extremely large sample size of PISA also strengthens the generalizability.

Per data from the 2000 PISA, 196,000 15 year old students from 40 different countries participated in Nonoyama-Tarumi's (2008) study. In each country, a two-stage stratified sample was selected. In the first stage, schools were sampled using Probability Proportional to Size. In the second stage, 35 students were selected from each school. Nonoyama-Tarumi is unclear about how these 35 students are selected, but weighted sampling is used to account for disproportionate sampling of sub-groups and participant non-response. One cannot assume that the students were selected at random. It helps that Nonoyama-Tarumi uses weighted sampling because it helps create a more representative sample, but it generalizes from a smaller pool than if the actual participants were representative of the student populations being tested. This being said, her hypothesis was supported by the findings.

The effect size of the multidimensional SES measure is larger than the standard measure in all countries except Peru and Indonesia. These findings are consistent in rural areas as well except in Hong Kong and Indonesia. This means that the effect of SES is larger when additional cultural capital resources such as books, culture possessions, and

home educational resources are taken into account. These items are linked because those with fewer economic resources are likely to have fewer cultural resources. In addition, the estimated error in measuring the effects of SES is reduced when using the multidimensional SES measure in over half of the participating countries. Though Rathbun, West, and Walton (2005) do not account for cultural capital resources, their research is similar in that they are looking to see if there is a correlation between the number of risk factors present in the home and students' achievement.

Rathbun, West, and Walton (2005) state that a previous study done by the national center for education statistics found that 46% of all first time kindergarteners had at least one family risk factor present. Triangulating the results of their study to those of another provides strength to the study's internal validity and hints that there may be a theme. Of the children that participated in the present study, 39% had at least one of the four aforementioned home risk factors and 18% lived below the poverty line.

Poverty was the most common single risk factor and poverty plus living in a single parent household was most common in children with two risk factors. Only 24% of the children living in poverty had no other risk factors and 60% lived in a single parent household. According to Nonoyama-Tarumi's (2008) findings, poverty alone as an indicator is less predictive of achievement than more holistic measures, but the finding that poverty is the most common risk factor may be part of why researchers sometimes rely so heavily on using SES as a gauge. Kindergarteners in poverty scored 3.8 points lower in reading and 3 points lower in math on average (Nonoyama-Tarumi). Rathbun, West, and Walton (2005) conclude that poverty and having a mother who did not complete high school were the two risk factors with the largest negative effect on

achievement. They notice that “not only did children with one or more risk factors start kindergarten demonstrating fewer achievement skills and knowledge, the achievement gap between themselves and their peers with no risk factors widened about 4 points in reading and 2 points in mathematics over the first 4 years of school for each risk factor present” (p12). Though tentative because one cannot assume a causal relationship based on the findings of one study, this suggests that schools are not adequately reaching students in poverty.

Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) suggests that “schools need to consider that students of low-status families may lack educational environment outside of schools, and that this may be a critical factor in the educational opportunity available to middle-class children” (2008, 79). This finding reveals that part of creating equitable classrooms for children living in poverty is bridging students learning outside the classroom with learning at school. The findings of Abbot-Shim et al. (2005) support the finding that the home learning environment is critical. Nonoyama-Tarumi notes that there is a mismatch between the cultural practices of the school and the home of many families in poverty and suggests that promoting parent involvement may need reconsideration.

Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) claims that, “If such policies [parental involvement] are promoted without consideration for the different cultural resources and strategies that low- and high-status families possess, they may, in spite of their best intentions, exacerbate the inequality that exists among families of different social backgrounds, allowing the voices of high-status parents to dominate the schools” (p80). Taken with Malecki and Demaray’s (2006) finding that parental involvement may be especially beneficial to low-status students, this is important information for educators working to

create equitable classrooms. It means that teachers need to find ways to bridge school and family. Nonoyama-Tarumi recommends that schools work to provide additional learning opportunities such as out-of-school tutoring and educational trips to help bridge the gap. Intentionally providing students with additional learning opportunities might sound essentialist given the multifaceted nature of the home environment, but it is simply something to keep in mind in terms of employing multiple strategies to increase equity. Milne and Plourde (2006) and Abbot-Shim et al. (2005) look more specifically into how families can act as protective factors and mediate the effects of poverty.

Multidimensional Nature of Family Background

The impact of living in poverty on children is very difficult to measure because of the plethora of variables. In fact, Abbot-Shim et al. (2005) mention that the results of their study should be interpreted with caution because of the existence of so many immeasurable variables. One way of minimizing the inevitable influence of variable is by looking for themes as Milne and Plourde (2006) and Abbot-Shim et al. do. Categorization into themes makes it easier for researchers to triangulate their findings and makes trends more apparent. Not all researchers that divide their findings into themes use the same approach. For instance, Milne and Plourde code interview data for themes that emerge whereas Abbot-Shim et al. instead measure latent constructs by grouping data into predetermined themes. Milne and Plourde's study is specifically interested in looking for patterns in the home lives of academically successful students and Abbot-Shim et al. focuses on relationships between SES, social risk factors, and home learning variables in relation to emerging literacy and social development. Both are useful because both help educators see trends in what children experiencing poverty need to succeed which in turn

informs educators ideas about what such children need to have an equitable classroom experience.

Abbot-Shim et al.'s (2005) study had a fairly high ecological validity and there were also parts of the study that could be stronger. Utilizing multiple forms of data (observation, interview, reported income stats, and several kinds of assessments), having the study span the full length of the Head Start school year (Aug-May), and collecting data from multiple centers in two states are all components that lend internal validity to the researcher's testing of their hypothesis. These are noteworthy in that they help combat things like the Hawthorne effect, novelty and disruption effects, and experimenter effects. The research did not account for school attendance which may play a larger role in achievement than SES, but may interweave issues of poverty. It is also possible that families who participated in the study may not face the stresses of poverty to the extent of Head Start families who did not participate so the findings may not represent Head Start families as a whole. However, the average income of families in the study is well below the poverty line (\$1,164.4 per/month) so it seems that these families likely face at least some challenges of poverty. Once again, this is based on an economic measure which is not an inclusive measure of poverty, but no one study can measure everything.

To test their hypothesis, the Abbot-Shim et al. (2005) randomly selected 48 Head Start classrooms out of a universe of 190 in Alabama and Georgia. Five girls and five boys were randomly selected from each class. 421 child assessments and 362 parent interviews were conducted in the spring out of 480 initial participants. Researchers gathered both child and parent info from 325 families and this data inform the findings. The average age of the children was 59.1 months with a range from 42-76 months. 50%

were four years old. The racial composition of the participants was 64.3% African American, 29.8% White, and 5.9% other. The researchers observed and attempted to measure the following latent constructs: SES, social risk, home learning environment, child emergent literacy, and child social functioning using tools such as income data, behavior inventories, assessments, and a modified family support scale. For each construct, observable variables were tested and data was analyzed using the LISREL software program to help code the findings.

The findings of Abbot-Shim et al. (2005) reveal a significant correlation between SES and home literacy activities of .43. Similarly significant is the correlation of .42 between SES and home literacy environment (reading to child, enrichment activities, home literacy activities, and books/reading materials). A correlation of .35 was revealed between home literacy activities and emerging literacy and one between home literacy and social development of .22. However, the direct effect of SES on emerging literacy was not significant (.06). The finding that SES affects home literacy environment and home literacy activities, but not emerging literacy suggests that there is more to figure out about the complex relationship of poverty with SES and home learning. While interpreting these findings, it is important to keep in mind that this is only one study so one is cautioned against making generalizations. The findings are significant to educators because learning about ways that poverty impacts home learning environment and how that in turn affects literacy can help inform the types of literacy activities teachers ask children to complete at home. Milne and Plourde's (2006) case study relates to Abbot-Shim et al.'s by having the similar focus of looking for specific home practices of students in poverty that affect how well they do in school.

Milne and Plourde (2006) are specifically interested in learning some of the home factors that contribute to low SES second graders' academic success in a central Washington school. The researchers worked to synthesize common factors from home lives of children experiencing poverty that help children succeed and whether or not some children would succeed no matter what their home environment because they are resilient. This ethnography uses interviews with the children's primary caretaker/s as the primary mode of data collection. The purpose of the interviews is to ascertain home factors that may or may not contribute to the academic success of the student participants.

A sample of six seven-to-eight year old second grade students from one class in a school in central Washington and their parents participate in this study. The school served approximately 450 students total of which 52% lived in poverty. All caretakers had at least completed 10th grade and all expressed the belief that education is very important. The study included three girls, three boys, and one student for whom English was not the primary language at home. The student who did not primarily speak English at home had high achievement in English in all academic areas and since the researcher was bilingual, Milne and Plourde (2006) claim that communication difficulties with the primary caretaker were averted. The small sample size means the findings are not generalizable, but themes emerged as a result of coding the interviews.

Themes were divided into the following categories: educational resources and influences, mother's education, relationships, and causes of child's success. All of the participants spoke of having time allotted each day for children to work on homework and academic activities. All also mentioned that they made themselves available to participate in the activities their children were doing. Every household limited their

child's television time to somewhere between 30-60 minutes daily and some monitored what their child viewed. All of the children attended preschool for at least a year and 5/6 attended for two years. Several participants described themselves and their child as a team and all seemed to work hard to spend time with their children. In addition, all expressed the importance of seeming approachable to their child, having a support system, and two spoke of having parenting mentors. What does this mean for educators working to create equitable classrooms? It means that dialogue with parents about making education a priority and supporting parent in creating structures at home to support their children's learning is paramount. Overall, all of the caretakers worked to keep their kids on track and led by example. The themes that arose through the interviews support this claim, but there may have been a high experimenter effect.

The primary researcher used by Milne and Plourde (2006) is the student's teacher so there may be a high experimenter effect. The Hawthorne effect may also be at work because caretakers know of their participation in the study and also choose the interview location; simply receiving this special attention may affect their actions and interactions with the researcher. It is also unreliable to assume that children's home lives were in fact the variable that led them to succeed despite poverty. As a result, multiple-treatment inference may be a threat to reliability. In addition, Milne and Plourde do not really attend to their initial question about whether some children are simply resilient and would succeed no matter what their home environment. That being said, there is still value in the themes Milne and Plourde highlight because they provide a springboard for new research and ideas about the ways one's home environment affects the educational experience of children in poverty.

Milne and Plourde (2006) suggest that looking at capital may be a better measure of poverty than SES. Within the category of capital, Milne and Plourde include things like household income, occupation, and parent education. The research of Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) supports that occupation and parent education alone are inadequate measures. But, even if data were gathered in the aforementioned additional areas, the measure would still be inadequate because poverty interacts with and affects nearly every aspect of life for those in poverty. There is no one holistic measure.

Summary

Learning ways children are affected by experiencing poverty requires those in the educational community to consider other resources children have available to them. For instance, Rathbun, West, and Walton (2005) found that children who live in poverty and a single parent home, speak a language other than English at home, or have a mother who did not complete high school tend to demonstrate fewer concrete skills in kindergarten and that the gap widens over the first four years of school. Stipek and Ryan's (1997) finding that preschoolers who live in poverty start out school at an academic supports Rathbun, West, and Walton. Similarly, Nonoyama-Tarumi's (2008), Abbot-Shim et al. (2005), and Milne and Plourde (2006) found that the effect of poverty is more accurately gauged when other indicators are used in addition to Children all internalize the experience of poverty income such as number of books in the home, time dedicated to academics at home, and educational resources at home.

As a teacher, it is important that one not assume that since a child lives in poverty, that child has a specific set of resources. The findings suggest that teachers need to work to learn about the resources their students have available at home in order to know how to

create an equitable environment. For instance, if a teacher learns that one of her or his students does not have books available at home, that teacher can help make the child's experience more equitable by helping the family gain access to books and support their child's learning at home. The findings also suggest that teacher decisions in the early years of schooling such as ability grouping and retention may be partially to blame for the inequitable classroom experiences of many children in poverty because, according to Rathbun, West, and Walton (2005), gaps in achievement between children experiencing poverty and children not experiencing tend to widen.

Learning about Systemic Strategies that Promote Equity

The War on Poverty of the early 1960's threw poverty into the public eye and made it a federal issue. Over the past half century, the government and individual districts have introduced strategies targeted at making schools more equitable learning environments for children in poverty and providing additional resources to that specific population. There is a lot of diversity within such initiatives and the aim of this theme is to represent a small sampling of programs by first reviewing a study on funding, then one on the effectiveness of literacy initiatives, and then one on the use of different curriculums.

It is important for teachers to develop an awareness of such programs so they can advocate for those which are most successful in fostering equitable learning environments for children in poverty. The first study in this theme conducted by Brown (2007), explores the relative effectiveness of one such government initiative: Title 1. A much more in depth review is necessary to fully explore the subject, but this study paints an emerging picture of potential inequities to look out for. Heidemann, Rewey,

Rodriguez, and Zimmerman (2008) examine tangible academic differences made by three popular literacy initiatives: Head Start, Words Works, and Reading First. Crowe, Connor, and Petscher (2009) also examine the effects of different curriculums for equity. There is a vast body of studies on the aforementioned programs for anyone interested in further research. There is also considerable overlap between Head Start, Reading First, and Words Works eligibility and Title 1 student eligibility so the effects of one program may interact with and affect another.

Where the Money is Going

All students in New York Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Chicago Public Schools enrolled during the 2003-04 school year participated in a quantitative study conducted by Brown (2007) about the equity of Title 1 funding. These specific districts were selected because they are the three largest in the United States. Brown asked whether schools with the most children living in poverty are getting the most Title 1 funds and distributing it equitably. Equitable distribution would indicate that teachers of children experiencing poverty in the three largest districts are receiving federal support, this cannot be assumed because “since the inception of Title 1 in 1966, it has never been fully funded.” (p. 141). Brown defines equity as schools with higher percentages of poor children receiving more Title 1 funds per child. Percentages are categorized as follows: above 75%, above/below the district cut off point for free and reduced price lunch (FRPL), and below 35%. If it is equitable, Title 1 funds should increase systematically along a 45-degree regression line.

Quantitative data on how much state, federal, and local Title 1 monies were given to the three districts studied in the 2003-2004 school year was collected from the

districts' budget directors. The number of poor children in each district was determined by the number of children eligible for FRPL. Keep in mind that FRPL eligibility can only be calculated for students who apply which is not an inclusive measure and the district determines what percentage of FRPL eligible students a school within the district must have to be eligible for Title 1 funds. Brown took the information from each school to compare equity within and between districts.

Intradistrict equity was measured as per student Title 1 allocations for all schools compared to the percentage of eligible children according to district criteria. The correlation coefficient r was used to measure consistencies/variances in funding from school to school within a district. A slope statistic was calculated to approximate the monetary increase per student for every 10% jump in poverty level. The number of students eligible for FRPL was measured to compare the distribution of poverty between districts. A ratio was used to compare the differences between funding to low-poverty (35%-75%) and high-poverty schools (75%+). Brown (2007) found that "In the three largest districts in the United States, 23% of poor children are not receiving federal Title 1 funds." (141). This tells those in the educational community that further advocacy is needed to foster equitable classroom contexts for children experiencing poverty. Chicago was more focused on providing a larger share of funding to schools with the highest poverty whereas LA and New York were more focused on providing funding to as many children as possible.

In Chicago, high poverty schools were funded an average of 21.4 times higher than less poor schools. School eligibility was determined by the following equation: 60% of students eligible for FRPL + 40% of students from families eligible for TANF =

Poverty measure. Poverty measure/total school enrollment = percentage eligible for Title 1 funds. Schools with more than 50% eligibility received an average of 19.5 times more Title 1 funding than schools below 50% eligibility. A lot of students may potentially fall through the cracks because of weighting poverty (FRPL) with extreme poverty (TANF). 85% of all students qualified for FRPL, but only 66% were deemed eligible for Title 1 funds. In Los Angeles on the other hand, high poverty schools were only funded an average of 1.3 times higher than less poor schools.

Schools in Los Angeles were eligible if more than 40% of students qualified for FRPL so 86% of schools qualified. As opposed to Chicago, most schools receiving Title 1 funds received close to the same amount per child (~\$245.90). However, some striking exceptions were found. The two schools funded with the lowest percentage of students in poverty received more funding than any other schools in the district. One of the schools had 20% eligibility within the student population and received \$1,498 per child. The other school had 17% poverty and received \$1,249 per child. Title 1 evaluations indicate that it is easier to raise the test scores of children in poverty at low-poverty schools so by focusing monies on students at these schools, Title 1 funds are likely to have a bigger impact and thus the district is likely to look better and get more funding. New York also focused on providing funds to as many students as possible and some striking funding inequities were uncovered.

Like in LA, most schools receiving funds in New York received approximately the same amount per child which was usually \$700-\$1,000 and the amount did not increase with increased percentages of eligibility. However, there were many exceptions and one school in Staten Island received \$4,864 per student even though the mean eligibility in

most places was 60%, but on Staten Island it was 35%. For a New York school to be eligible for funds, a higher percentage of the student population had to be eligible for free lunch (reduced price lunch did not count for anything) than the mean in other schools in the borough or district.

Brown (2007) does a good job of creating a portrait of Title 1 funding distribution in large school districts in the US. The researcher sheds light on the fact that not all schools distribute Title 1 funds equally by highlighting how individual districts determine eligibility criteria. However, she also notes that since Title 1 has never been fully funded, districts will inevitably spread funds thinly. Plotting Title 1 distribution on a graph makes it very easy for the reader to get a quick overview of how the three districts distribute their funds and funding outliers.

There may be reasons that some schools in New York Public Schools and LA Unified School District receive way more funds than other schools in the district even though they have a lower percentage of poverty. As a reader, one might infer that the reason such schools receive more money is because it is easier to raise the scores of students in poverty at low poverty schools as is mentioned in Brown's (2007) intro, but the researcher does not explore other potential causes for the disparity. In addition, large districts like those in the study may distribute Title 1 funds differently than smaller districts so the finding might not be generalizable to rural schools.

How Curriculum Matters

Crowe et al. (2009) and Heidemann et al. (2008) both study the degrees to which specific curriculums benefit children in poverty. Crowe et al. utilized quantitative hierarchical linear modeling and multivariate analysis as well as qualitative interview

measures to assess the effects of reading curricula on first through third grade achievement in Reading First Schools in Florida. A subset of schools was randomly selected to participate in site visits and serve as indicators of fidelity. Heidemann et al. compared the performance of Head Start students receiving Words Works (WW) instruction with Head Start (HS) students not receiving this supplement, children on the head start waitlist (WL), and a random sample of same grade students from the school district. Heinemann et al. asked what the relationship between early literacy instruction and academic performance in 2nd grade is and what the relation between early literacy experiences and academic growth from 2nd-5th grade within the comparison groups is. Crowe et al. ask what the effects of different core curricula on children's reading fluency growth are? Do the effects of curriculum on oral reading fluency vary by grade level? Does growth in achievement for students in poverty vary depending on curriculum and grade level? Both groups of researchers use random sampling to select participants and those in Crowe et al.'s study were required to take part as a requirement of Florida's Reading First Initiative.

To ensure compliance with the Reading First initiative, 10% of Florida Reading First schools (38 total) were randomly selected to participate in site visits to monitor the implementation of Reading First in either fall or spring of the 2005/06 school year. 10% of students attending Reading First schools in Florida during the 2005/06 school year were also randomly selected for participation. In total, there were 9,993 1st grade students representing 942 classrooms, 9,869 2nd grade students representing 962 classrooms, and 10,141 third grade students from 954 classrooms.

Crowe et al. (2009) selected Oral reading fluency (ORF) to represent reading achievement on the grounds that past researchers have concluded that it is the best overall indicator of reading proficiency in the early stages of learning to read. All assessments were administered by reading coaches trained by Florida Reading First assessment teams. Schools in this study used one of six core reading curricula, including, Open Court, Reading Mastery, Harcourt, Houghton Mifflin, Scott Foresman, and Success for All. All six curriculums used leveled readers so teachers could provide students with reading material at their assessed skill level.

Oral reading fluency (ORF) was measured as the number of correct words a student read from a passage in a one minute reading assessment. The median score for three randomly selected passages was used to compute an ORF score. Passages were selected from Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) progress monitoring materials. Hierarchical Linear Modeling was used to estimate mean growth trajectories for low-SES (as measured by FRPL enrollment) and grade level. Multivariate analysis was used to account for random variance across students and classrooms since ORF randomly varied across both. At each grade level, growth across curricula was examined using four ORF scores. Principals, teacher focus groups, and reading coaches from the subsample were interviewed to assess the level to which the core reading curriculum was part of reading instruction. Heidemann et al. (2008) also investigated the affect of specific curriculums, but does so strictly through tracking longitudinal student achievement.

Some of the children participating in Heidemann et al.'s (2008) study received Words Works literacy instruction at ~ 4yrs old. All of the children's performance on

standardized tests was tracked from first through fifth grade. The tests were the SAT10 and the Metropolitan Achievement Test 7th edition, both of which have relatively high score reliability (.88-.96). If students' NCE score remained constant, they were considered to be making normal progress. The random sample included 300 students (10% of the 1st grade pop in St. Paul public schools) and the HS/WW/WL groups were comprised of 750 children total. 691 students were included in the initial first grade sample and 413 remained through the length of the study.

Heidemann et al. (2008) found that second graders who were WW participants scored 3.6 NCE points above Head Start participants in reading (4.1 points above NHS/5.9 points above WL) and 2.8 points higher in math (4.3 points above NHS/7.1 points above WL) according to the Stanford Achievement Test. Since all groups progressed at approximately the same rate, WW students maintained their academic lead over all of the other groups (including NHS) from second through fifth grade in reading and math. Thus, it seems that the WW curriculum made a positive difference on students' achievement per the Stanford Achievement Test and is a viable tool for increasing equity in America's classroom for children experiencing poverty. Crowe et al. (2009) identified several additional curriculums that promote equitable educational experiences for students in poverty.

Crowe et al. (2009) found that all students who were taught using Success for All and Houghton Mifflin curricula both scored lower on correct words read per minute and ORF than with the other curricula. Score differences between children experiencing poverty and children not experiencing poverty were most pronounced in first grade

regardless of curricula as there was a gap for all six curricula used. Despite these differences, most 1st graders met the ORF benchmark upon final assessment.

In second grade, differences between lower and higher SES students were detected among those using Open Court. Only those taught using Reading Mastering reached benchmark on the final ORF assessment. On average, second graders progressed at the same rate within a given curricula regardless of whether or not they lived in poverty. In third grade, students experiencing poverty who were taught using Scott Foresman actually scored slightly higher than peers not experiencing poverty taught using the same curricula. On average, students from both backgrounds did not meet benchmark on the final assessment.

Overall, students in the Reading Mastery curriculum demonstrated greater ORF growth and more frequently met or exceeded benchmarks. This was particularly apparent in 1st grade where the effect sizes were .44 for using Reading Mastery compared to other reading curricula. Reading Mastery lessons are scripted and characterized by direct instruction. They begin with a phonics/phonemic awareness review, next teach regular/irregular sight words, and then students are guided through reading a story several times with specific focuses such as practicing decoding skills or comprehension. Expansion activities are provided as an option for teachers to integrate reading with other subjects.

Internal Validity

Both Crowe et al.'s (2009) and Heinemann et al.'s (2008) studies are highly internally valid. Developing a subset control group is a strength to the internal validity of Crowe et al.'s (2009) study because it provides a group to compare the findings of the

study with. In doing this, the researchers have a stronger indicator of whether their findings are representative of Reading First schools in Florida overall. In the latter stage of Crowe et al.'s (2009) analysis, the intercept was removed to examine individual growth curves for each of the six curricula. This removes the need for a reference group because it allows researchers to examine whether model coefficients for each curriculum are significantly different than a particular comparison group. The linear set-up lessened the risk of multiple comparisons and the false depiction of significant effects. Both of these items strengthen the validity of this study because they minimize the risk of outside influences on data depiction. Heidemann et al. minimize the risk of outside influences by tracking achievement over time.

Heidemann et al.'s (2008) main strength to internal validity is that they tracked children's performance over 6 years. Measuring outcomes based on student growth may help minimize the effects of attrition and bias because it does not rely upon absolute scores. Scores of WW students who left the study were compared with students who remained and there were no significant differences which suggests that one can generalize the results to other students. However, there are always limitations when studying achievement because no one measure is enough to create an accurate picture.

As Heinemann et al. (2008) note, curricula were not randomly assigned so one is cautioned about inferring a causal relationship between reading curricula and achievement. Bias associated with curriculum could also exist. Schools may select a given curriculum because it supports their wider philosophy. For instance, it is possible that students in schools that use Reading Mastery are more likely to be exposed to print

rich environments or participate in interdisciplinary reading instruction. Thus, there are potential extraneous variables left unmeasured.

Crowe et al. (2009) do not collect data from parents or the students' schools; the study relied exclusively on anonymous student data and standardized scores. This is a potential weakness because standardized scores alone do not fully capture student achievement. In addition, the sustained advantage of WW students may have resulted from good teaching within the St. Paul public schools because all groups progressed at approximately the same rate.

Summary

How do Crow et al.'s (2009), Heinemann et al.'s (2008), and Brown's (2007) findings relate? Even though the three studies compared did not study the same things, the findings illustrate a trend when taken together. The findings convey the trend that some curriculums and districts are more equitable than others for children experiencing poverty. According to Brown, one cannot assume that one's district distributes Title 1 funds equitably. According to Heinemann et al. and Crow et al., there are specific curriculums such as Words Works and Reading Mastery that a more equitable for students experiencing poverty. This is a controversial finding because Zull (2002) noted that teaching characterized by direct instruction, as is the norm with Words Works, is an inferior strategy when one takes brain biology into account. The studies provide educators with a base for critiquing equity in one's own school and district and in that sense, help educators make informed decisions about where advocacy is needed in order make classrooms more equitable overall.

The Potential of Leadership and Trust

Strong leadership and trust in parents and students are two practices that have helped students in high poverty schools become more equitable (Beecher and Sweeny, 2008; Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky, 2009; Horst and Martin, 2007; Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson, and Ylimaki, 2007). In terms of finding ways for teachers to foster equity for students experiencing poverty within their classrooms and schools, this is an important finding because it suggests that two strategies for increasing equity are trusting parents and students and demonstrating strong leadership. If one works at a school with a culture of trust and quality leadership, then incorporating them at higher levels in one's own classroom is the next step. The present studies explore the impact of principals' leadership styles and how some struggling schools have managed to help students succeed academically by changing the remedial instruction paradigm and having more trust in students' abilities.

Creating a Sense of Common Purpose

Principals and teachers in the schools studied reversed negative school cultures that impeded learning by creating a sense of common purpose and putting the needs of students first (Beecher and Sweeny, 2008; Horst and Martin, 2007; Jacobson et al., 2007). Specifically, Jacobson et al. asks how principals at three high-poverty urban elementary schools in New York succeed in increasing student achievement during their tenure. Horst and Martin are particularly interested in finding out more about how some small, rural Missouri K-8 schools with a high incidence of poverty consistently achieve the Distinction of Performance designation. Beecher and Sweeny ask the following several questions: what must the school community believe about kids and what helps them learn

and grow? How does a struggling school become successful (kids are actively engaged, a community, and invested in their learning)? What are the essential elements of curriculum that make such an environment possible? How do educators change the remedial instruction paradigm and close the achievement gap? Beecher and Sweeny's questions are very relevant to those of Horst and Martin and Jacobson et al. because they link overall school success and the reversal of outdated paradigms in part to the leadership of teachers and principals. Each group of researchers designed their study slightly differently and has unique measures for student achievement.

Jacobson et al. (2007) utilize a mixed-methods collective case study that uses students' achievement scores on standardized tests as documented on the school report cards from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) from 1998/99- 2002/03 for its quantitative measure of student achievement. Qualitative data is obtained by interviewing the principals, 20% of the teachers, and 20% of the support staff. Interviews are semi-structured and follow the protocol developed for the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP). In addition, focus group interviews are conducted with two groups of parents and two groups of students (typically 3-5) from each school. All interviews except for the student focus groups (because of confidentiality) are tape-recorded and then transcribed. For the purpose of triangulation, data was also collected from NYSED, official school documents, meeting minutes, press releases, historical sources, and ethnographic notes made during visits by the research team. For a high poverty school in New York to participate in this study, it had to have improved academic achievement under the current principal's leadership. These gains must have begun subsequent to the arrival of the principal.

Three African American women principals participate in Jacobson et al.'s (2007) study. No racial or gender selection criteria was applied as a selection constraint so the race/gender of participants is a coincidence. The first interview at each school was conducted with the principal. The interviewer asked 11 open-ended questions to get an idea of the principal's beliefs about the challenges facing the school and her beliefs about whether the school is successful. Teachers and support staff were then interviewed using the same set of questions, but with more emphasis placed on the principal's role in promoting school improvement. Individual participants interviewed and those who participated in the focus groups were selected based on opportunity. That is, anyone who volunteered could participate as long as the researchers had not already met their interview quota. All three schools had high percentages of African American students and students receiving FRPL. The researchers provide 2002/03 demographics for each of the participating schools and a summary of the principals' specific leadership strategies.

Costello's principal's first initiatives focused on making the school a safe place for students and staff. She created a reception area for visitors to check in and kept the school doors locked so there were not as many people roaming the building. She made it a point that school staff not disrupt teachers unless needed to minimize disrupting instruction. 81% of Costello's (PreK-5) 800+ students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch and there was a 4% transient rate. The racial make-up of the student population was 56% African American, 30% Caucasian, 9% Native American/Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5% Hispanic. Costello serves all 70 of the districts ESL students. The average class size was 19. Interviewees cited the principal's high expectations, awareness of who was in the building, and belief that all school personnel have a role in children's education. A

teacher noted that the biggest factor was the principal's "expectation that every student here can learn and every student will learn no matter what" which highlights the principal's trust in students' abilities (Jacobson et al., 2007, p.300).

Hamilton's principal stated that she believed in clearly defined rules, procedures, and consequences. When she took her position, the school had recently entered registration review so there were strong accountability pressures. 100% of Hamilton's (PreK-8) 350+ students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch and there was a 22% transient rate. The racial make-up of the student population was 98% African American, 1% Caucasian, and 1% Hispanic. The average class size was 17. Hamilton's principal's philosophy also centered on trust in students and leadership, she believed that students would learn and that the adults were accountable for making this happen in measurable terms. She believed in leading by example and did not ask people to do things she would not be willing to do herself such as staying after with a student or coming in on a Saturday. She believed in educating the whole child, approached negative situations as learning opportunities, and encouraged teachers to experiment in their classroom.

Fraser's principal was hired by a bank rather than the district and began her tenure when the school was one of the lowest performing in the district. The bank offered to contribute \$500,000/yr for five years in exchange for having a hand in the school's operations by hiring the principal, giving the principal more autonomy from the district than most received, and operating within an independent management board. 83% of Fraser's (K-8) 500+ students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch and there was a 0% transient rate. The racial make-up of the student population was 97% African American, 1% Caucasian, 1% Native American/Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Hispanic.

The average class size was 23. With the new principal, Fraser turned around from being notorious as a place parents do not want their kids to go to one with an enrollment waitlist. The principal was a strong leader; she modeled her expectations and a few teachers claimed they went on to become administrators because of her modeling. She created a Parent Patrol of volunteers who roamed the playground before and after school to make sure students were safe and encouraged parent involvement in the building.

Each of the three principals set a clear course that encouraged a sense of common purpose within the school community. The first step each principal took was creating a safe environment for children to learn. They all made themselves available and were present throughout the building. All three worked to create a family-like culture by being respectful, kind, quick to praise appropriate behavior but not afraid to discipline, and encouraging of dialogue. Jacobson and his colleagues (2007) suggest that each of the three principals studied turned their school around with successful leadership and Jacobson et al. do a comprehensive job of listing out the specific leadership strategies used by each. A potential weakness in the design of this study is that schools were not initially selected for the principal's leadership.

Schools were selected based on school success. The design of Jacobson et al.'s (2007) study implies that school success is the result of positive leadership which may not always be true. The selection criteria that achievement gains had to begin after the principal's arrival minimizes the chance that the principal's leadership was not a factor, but there may have been others at play. The risk of this is minimal because the researchers do a great job of triangulating their findings by comparing them with data collected from NYSED, official school documents, meeting minutes, press releases,

historical sources, and ethnographic notes made during visits by the research team. Horst and Martin's (2007) study compliments Jacobson et al.'s study well because it also looks at successful principal leadership in a high poverty context, but focuses instead on a small rural school.

The subject of Horst and Martin's (2007) study is the principal/superintendent of a K-8 school in Missouri with 187 students plus 35 preschool students. The researchers visited the school at least three times to conduct individual interviews, focus groups, analyze school data, audiotapes, and field notes. Like those in Jacobson et al.'s (2007) study, this principal provided high expectations, kept up on educational research, aligned everything with the state assessment, and provided professional development, extra-curricular activities, and a Placement Alternative Classroom rather than suspension. It is difficult to generalize the researchers' suggestions to other schools because the results are based exclusively on one school's experience, but the fact that that the results support the findings of Jacobson et al. helps increase the ecological validity.

Horst and Martin (2007) do not explicate what they mean when they state that the entire curriculum was aligned with the state standards. This is a potential threat to the validity of their study because it is possible that the curriculum was simply teaching students to do well on the state test. If so, the purported success of this school may simply represent success at teaching to the test and not be indicative of well-rounded student achievement. Regardless, the principal/superintendent is at least helping students perform well in on the state assessment. Like the principals studied by Jacobson et al. (2007), Horst and Martin, and Beecher and Sweeny (2008) focused on figuring out how a new principal turned around a school that was labeled as failing.

The principal of Central Elementary was new and the district expected him to reverse the failing culture of the school according to Beecher and Sweeny's (2008) 8 year longitudinal qualitative case study of the school. Central Elementary was one of eleven schools in a high performing suburban district. However, the school was considered failing and its population mirrored that of its urban neighbor. Students were performing in the 30th percentile on state tests and 45% of students received FRPL. During the study, the school philosophy was based on the School-wide Enrichment Model and the Enrichment Triad Model. The two gathered information from staff meetings, lesson preparation, and professional development materials such as those used to execute the principal's new strategic plan for success. This study was conducted with a strength-based child-centered lens.

Student centered learning is defined by Beecher and Sweeny (2008) as teachers supporting students' decision making and problem solving skills. For instance, students generated their own project ideas and assignments were tiered. Writing instruction was conducted using the writer's workshop model and there was no official math text. All of students' experiences were categorized as type I, type II, or type III depending on the degree that they were interdisciplinary, promoted thinking and feeling processes, and invited students to play the role of firsthand inquirer. The process included the creation of a strategic plan for reform, an enrichment team, differentiated curriculum, extended learning opportunities, and staff development. Teachers who chose to participate were provided a stipend to write units for the global studies program which. The stipend was paid for with grant money that also paid for students' after school enrichment activities.

Test score data was taken and recorded for students in fourth grade. Student learning was also assessed. The first phase of the study consisted of a year-long review of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Then, a group of teachers, staff, parents, and community members called the School Improvement Planning Team worked together to create a multiyear plan for school improvement. As part of this process, they reviewed school data and researched strategies for differentiation and enrichment learning. The group developed a school mission that included integrating strategies usually reserved for gifted and talented education and programs were interdisciplinary. Teachers met with the principal regularly to review individual student progress and formulate plans to improve achievement.

According to state assessment results, there was improved achievement for students of all races regardless of free and reduced lunch eligibility. The gaps in achievement between students with differing socioeconomic backgrounds narrowed from 62% to 10%. There was dramatic improvement in scores of students from the lowest test score bracket. The percentage of Hispanic students in the remedial band dropped from 22% to 7% and the percentage of White students in this band decreased from 13% to 4%. Like the principals in Jacobson et al.'s (2007) study and Horst and Martin's (2007) study, this principal turned around a failing school through believing in the potential of every student and creating a more equitable learning environment.

Beecher and Sweeny (2007) do a fairly comprehensive job of providing readers with an explicit description of the experimental treatment by including a copy of the differentiating matrix used by teachers as well as the pyramid used for differentiating curriculum. Potential threats to generalizability such as the Hawthorne, novelty, and

experimenter effects are minimized because the length of this study (8 years) is long enough to provide an average. However, all of the intervention strategies were instituted simultaneously. The multiple-treatment inference indicates that this makes it impossible to tell the effect of each intervention independent of one another. However, the researchers note that the goal was for all of the treatments to work together synergistically. The inability to measure them independently was inherent in that aim.

The Role of Trust

Trust in students' abilities was a trademark of each of the aforementioned principals' strategies for school improvement. All believed that if teachers, administrators, and students worked collaboratively with the primary aim of increasing student learning, then students would succeed, and in each case, the strategy worked. Goddard et al.'s (2009) study builds off of this inclination by specifically studying ways in which trust in students and students' families is critical for mediating the relationship between poverty, racial composition, and academic achievement. Goddard et al. begin by posing two questions about trust in students.

Goddard et al. (2009) ask to what degree are organizational features such as a school's racial composition, SES, and size predicative of the level of trust schools have? Is the level of trust in schools related to school achievement on state tests mandated under NCLB? The researchers are interested in these questions because they are working within the ideology of past research on trust that when schools have high levels of trust, teachers tend to feel more responsibility for students and thus invest more of themselves in their work. They are particularly interested in the relation between teachers' trust in parents and students and student achievement. The researchers hypothesize that after accounting

for characteristics of school context, trust in students and parents would be positively statistically significantly related to school achievement. They also hypothesize that school SES, racial composition, and size would be negatively statistically significant predictors of teacher trust in parents and students.

The researches in Goddard et al.'s (2009) quantitative study used path analysis to examine whether school disadvantage was indirectly connected to academic achievement via a direct relationship with trust in schools. Trust is defined as a multifaceted construct involving a willingness to accept risk on the basis that a trusted party is benevolent, honest, open, and competent. In relation to teachers, this includes trust in colleagues, principals, students, and parents of students. Goddard et al. developed four linear regression models- two to predict trust and two to predict school achievement. Their measures also included two proportional variables representing demographic characteristics of the entire student body, the percentage of students passing the state math and reading assessments the previous year, and school size. Goddard and his colleagues used principal-axis factor analysis to understand how trust varied within and between Michigan schools with additional assistance from hierarchical linear modeling to produce intraclass correlation coefficients.

All public elementary schools in Michigan with at least 15 students in fourth grade and no students above sixth grade are included in Goddard et al.'s (2009) study via a stratified random sample of all fourth and fifth grade students in the state. The sample was divided into strata based on geographic location, number of students in fourth and fifth grade, SES as measured as the percentage of students receiving FRPL, and previous academic achievement as measured as the percentage of students passing the Michigan

Educational Assessment. Public charter schools were not included in the sample. 1,659 schools were in the eligible population pool, of these, 150 were selected and then randomly divided into 15 replicates (samples representative of the state) of 10 schools each to allow for flexibility in the number of schools solicited. A total of 130 schools, 13 of 15 replicates, were contacted and 78 completed the surveys and are included in the findings.

Approximately half of the teachers in each school were randomly selected to complete a Likert-type 14-item survey to measure trust. To categorize the results, all variables were standardized and cross-sectional path-analysis was used as the primary analytic method. The researchers point out that the aforementioned methods make it possible to measure indirect effects without implying causal direction and reduce the possibility that trust and current achievement were artifacts of prior status. Two schools had extremely large weights because of being outliers so Goddard et al. (2009) trimmed them down to the next highest school weight.

The variance in trust associated with school membership was approximately 3-4 times larger than the standardized achievement measures used to gauge school effectiveness under NCLB. Thus, the correlation between trust and achievement is very large compared to differentiating schools based on traditional measures such as achievement. Consistent with the researchers' hypothesis, a strong positive relationship between trust and school achievement was found. This relationship was especially significant in mathematics and marginally so in reading. Just as Goddard et al. (2009) predicted, trust was significantly associated with school size, the proportion of students receiving FRPL, the proportion of students of color, and prior content area achievement.

Since the correlation between students in poverty and students of color was quite high (.573) so Goddard et al. (2009) entered them in separate models to guard against their multicollinearity obscuring that both were related to math and reading achievement even without controlling for trust. The results indicated that experiencing poverty was significantly and negatively associated with math and reading on its own, but that when combined with students of color, the SES measure was only marginally significant. In the final stage of this analysis, trust was included as a predictor of achievement. Even after controlling for poverty and students from non-European descent, trust still significantly and positively predicted math achievement and marginally predictive of reading achievement. “Thus, the negative relationship between school disadvantage and mathematics and reading achievement seems to be mediated by the level of trust in schools” (Goddard et al., 2009, p.306). This is so because although race and poverty were not directly linked to achievement on their own, they were directly related to trust which is a strong predictor of achievement. Though the results are specific to Michigan schools, there is high generalizability to other schools with similar populations.

Goddard et al.’s (2009) study has strong ecological validity because of the large sample size. Fourth graders from 78 non-charter Michigan public schools were included in the study based on student data from schools and districts collected by the state. The study also has strong internal validity. Goddard and his colleagues use several linear regression models to test for overlap between variables and make predictions about trust while controlling for math and reading. As is fairly common, the researchers gauge student SES and achievement based on FRPL enrollment and standardized test scores.

With only one measure each for poverty and achievement, Goddard et al. (2009) are not able to fully capture how trust impacts the achievement of all students. Simply excelling or struggling on a standardized test does not indicate a holistic measure of achievement. Horst and Martin (2007) run into this same limitation. Similarly, there are inevitably students who are eligible for FRPL, but do not enroll which makes FRPL enrollment an inadequate measure of SES. Even if all eligible students were enrolled at a given school, the measure would still be inadequate because the government poverty line does not match up with the actual cost of living in most areas of the country.

Summary

The discussion of leadership and trust begins with three studies about principals who increased equity within the schools in which they worked (Beecher and Sweeny, 2008; Horst and Martin's, 2007; Jacobson et al. 2007). Why include studies about principals in a research review dedicated to exploring how educators can increase equity within their own classrooms for children experiencing poverty and become better advocates? The studies are useful because the strategies the principals used successfully made the schools more equitable for children experiencing poverty. As Beecher and Sweeny note, things such as student generated projects, tiered assignments, and writers workshop are directly linked to classroom practice. Extra-curricular opportunities were a part of each principal's vision and teachers at schools where this is not the norm could advocate for increased opportunities or learn more about grant writing and get the process started themselves. Goddard et al.'s (2009) findings support the notion that when teachers model a high level of trust in students it mediates the effects of poverty and thus makes the classroom experience more equitable. The large sample sized used by Goddard et al.

helps make the results more generalizable though one should still use caution because three of the studies focused on principals.

Promoting Resiliency

Resilience is generally defined as “good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development” (Abelev, 2009, p.121). Poverty is one such potential threat to children’s academic development in school. Promoting resilience in students is a tool suggested by the studies herein that helps create a learning environment where children experiencing poverty have equitable access. In order for classroom teachers to promote resiliency, they must first determine their role and what strategies to incorporate. The research questions of Green, Oswald, and Spears (2007) were directly connected to such quandaries. Green et al. asked what teachers perceived their roles to be in fostering resilience and what teachers’ understandings of factors that contribute to students being at-risk were. Cefai (2007) is also interested in finding out more about how the presence of resilience affects equity within the classroom. Cefai investigated some of the strategies that teachers utilized in Maltese classrooms that seemed to foster academic resilience in students not experiencing poverty as well as those who were experiencing poverty.

In considering questions like those of Green et al. (2007) and Cefai (2007), it is important to consider whether individual student characteristics and school characteristics of resilient and non-resilient children differ. Part of considering such differences required looking at White, African American, and Latino/a students to see which individual and school characteristics were the largest predictors of resilience among certain racial subgroups because minorities are more likely to live in poverty. Borman and Rachuba (2001) take on the task of asking those exact questions about resilience and look for

patterns among predictors of resilience within and between racial subgroups. The present emphasis on the importance of fostering resiliency begs one to ask what determines whether an individual is resilient or not.

Resilience

Abelev (2009) works to quantify the experiences of a sample of resilient adults by highlighting factors that contributed to respondents' social mobility as measured through participants' first generation college student status and their responses during an interview. Interviewing first generation college students is a useful design because it provides another perspective on how teachers can create equitable classrooms and areas in need of advocacy. Eligibility constraints necessitated that neither of participants' parents completed college and that participants were either enrolled in a baccalaureate program or, if graduated, making at least 34K annually. Abelev uses Masten's definition that resilience is "good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development" (p. 121). The resilience outcome in her present study is based upon academic resilience as exemplified by enrollment in, or graduation from, a baccalaureate program. Abelev concurs that there is an extensive body of research on resilience and that there are generally four social-psychological protective factors present in those with resilient outcomes. The four are social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose. She notes that the domains of families, communities, and schools can potentially act as environmental protective factors.

Each participant was asked the same set of research questions using the lifeline model. The lifeline is an organizational tool used in counseling in which the order questions are asked varies depending on the natural flow of the conversation. The digital

recordings of the interviews were then transcribed and coded using the Atlas.ti open-coding software system. Life history interviews were conducted with 48 people who were first generation college students. Half of the participants were students and the other half had graduated and was making at least 34K annually. The median age of professionals was 41 and the median age for students was 18-21. Most of the participants were African American which is an artifact of study location, a mid-sized city in the south with a Black majority population, and the snowball sampling methodology. Current students were recruited presentations about the study in courses and club meetings as well as through e-mail. Snowball sampling of respondents expanded that sample size. Snowball sampling through colleagues was the predominant means of recruiting graduated professionals.

A weakness in using the snowballing sampling methodology is that participants are likely within the same social networks. This is problematic because it limits the scope of Abelev's (2009) study and reduces the generalizability of the results even within the specific geographical region in which the study takes place. Another potential weakness arises from the fact that Abelev does not include the research questions participants are asked in the interview. This is a weakness because the questions themselves may have shaped the participants' responses, and in turn, the coded themes that arose. Even if the questions did shape responses, Abelev succeeds in gathering a lot of information about each participant.

Abelev (2009) effectively paints a picture of several of the participants' academic histories. Using the lifeline questioning structure during the interviews likely helped facilitate this because using it as an organizational tool allows for interviews to flow more naturally. Using the lifeline questioning structure does not threaten the internal or

ecological validity of Abelev's study because all participants were asked the same questions throughout the course of the interview, just not in the same order. A second strength in this study's design arises from the participant selection structure because exactly half of the participants were enrolled in a baccalaureate program and half had already graduated with a baccalaureate degree and were working professionals. This strengthens the study because it tests for long term resilience rather than exclusively testing for academic resilience.

A key theme in Abelev's (2009) data was that many participants were pulled out of a low performing public school and placed into a higher performing public or private school. The existence of this trend suggests that additional advocacy is needed on the part of those in the education community to improve equity in resource distribution. Students were generally pulled out by a mentor outside of the family who was part of the middle class. 27 of the 48 participants were pulled out of their neighborhood school to attend a higher achieving school in another neighborhood. The material resources coded were attending a non-neighborhood school, financial assistance, and having a customized educational plan. All but two of the participants had at least one of these resources going through school. According to Abelev, the two who did not have strong mentoring relationships outside of their family and one participated in a number of extracurricular activities that helped her develop a rich social network that she used to access resources such as scholarships and recommendations.

Abelev's (2009) conclusions support the findings of the others in that she concludes mentor relationships and school environments are of high importance. Cefai's (2007) study highlights ways in which teachers create protective classroom contexts and

Abelev finds that the academically resilient participants generally had an adult in their lives as children who supported their scholastic achievement. In some cases this was a teacher, in others it was a tutor, parent, or other concerned adult. Regardless of whom the adult was, the trend emerged that resilient children had adults in their lives that help support them by advocating for their education or providing another form of support. For instance, one participant in Abelev's study had a teacher who petitioned the school district to keep her class for an extra year so she could teach them both 4th and 5th grade. At the end of 5th grade, the teacher petitioned again and got her entire class enrolled in a magnet school on the other side of town for middle school instead of the middle school next to the housing project where the majority of the students lived. The experience of this teacher shows that advocacy is an important component of teaching and does make a difference. Borman and Rachuba (2001) also find that positive school learning environments are an important component of promoting resiliency in youth.

Significance of the School Environment on Resilience

Borman and Rachuba (2001) conducted a 4 year quantitative longitudinal study beginning in 1991 designed to track the progress of children experiencing poverty from 3rd-6th grade. Data was obtained from: *Prospects: The Congressionally Mandated Study of Growth and Opportunity*. The study utilized least squares regression analysis and Bonferroni post hoc comparisons. Standardized residual scores were obtained for each student. Students with a standardized residual score of .33 or greater were defined as resilient. Those at or below -.33 were defined as non-resilient. The following four characteristic categories were set as indicators of resilience: peer group composition variables, school resource variables, effective school measures, supportive school

environment measures. Rather than use school-level measures of resources, the three variables derived from the teacher questionnaire measured classroom resources.

Similarly, most student data was gathered directly from the students themselves.

Different self-report data was gathered by Borman and Rachuba (2001) from students to measure students' resilience. Resilient and non resilient children performed the same on the math pretest in 3rd grade (39 vs.39), but a huge gap in schools favoring resilient students developed by 6th grade (59 vs.11).The researchers measured locus of control with a four-item scale adapted from Rotter completed by the student and self esteem with a similarly created ten-item scale. Students' dispositions toward school were inventoried on a six-item scale completed by the student. The only measure of student resilience not completed by the student themselves was student engagement which was based on ten items reported by the student's teacher. Borman and Rachuba performed a series of multivariate analyses of variance with SES and race as labels of classification and administered a pre-test in 3rd grade and a post test in 6th to all participants.

Borman and Rachuba's (2001) original sample size was 3,981, but after selection criteria were applied (aka including only the below three racial categories and only children experiencing poverty), it dropped to 925 students. The final sample consisted of 26% African Americans, 32% Latino/a, and 43% White. During the first year, the participants enrolled in a total of 146 different schools. Due to students moving, participants attended a cumulative total of 249 schools over the 4 year period. Borman and Rachuba found that themes for participants emerged based on race. Latino/a students were more likely to attend larger classes. African American participants were more likely to attend schools that did not follow the effective schools model. White students were

more likely to attend schools where teachers closely monitored student progress, more likely to attend orderly schools supportive of family involvement, and have a self-perceived greater sense of control over their lives. This finding suggests that educators need to advocate for a more equitable distribution of resources at the district, state, and federal levels.

Non-resilient children scored lower than resilient on student engagement, locus of control, self-efficacy in math, positive attitude toward school, and self esteem. The Bonferroni results “indicated that low SES White students tended to have a greater sense of control over their lives than their African American counterparts and have stronger feelings of efficacy in math than their Latino counterparts” (Borman and Rachuba, 2001, p.14). The greatest difference in resilience scores was that African American students in the study scored considerably lower (-.22 vs. -.09 and -.03) on student engagement and locus of control (-.14 vs. -.01 and -.07). According to Borman and Rachuba, the most powerful school model for promoting resiliency is actively shielding children from adversity. Since White participants were more likely to have more favorable learning conditions, Borman and Rachuba note that, “Our results suggest...the ‘double jeopardy’ of being poor and a minority student exposes students to greater risks and fewer resilience promoting conditions.” The large sample size and longitudinal nature of Borman and Rachuba’s study lend high generalizability to their results.

Overall, Borman and Rachuba’s (2001) findings have strong validity and their conclusion that resilient children perform better academically in math supports research conducted by Coladarci (2006) on school size and achievement. Keep in mind however that since Borman and Rachuba’s data is based on national data from another study, the

validity of their information is partially dependent the other study. The high generalizability results from Borman and Rachuba monitoring students' resilience over a span of four years which makes the results less likely to be skewed by yearly fluctuations. It also increases generalizability that participants represent students at a large number of schools around the United States, so the results are not specific to one geographic region. Coladarci's design of comparing small schools with large ones accounts for differential selection variables and statistical regression and thus helps create high internal validity. History and maturation variables are unlikely to pose significant threats to validity because the there are over 200 schools in the Coladarci's sample and there is no experimental mortality. Coladarci's findings build on Borman and Rachuba's by looking at how poverty and school size correlate with math and reading scores.

Coladarci's (2006) quantitative study uses regression analysis to interpret 8th grade math and reading data from the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 Maine Educational Assessments. Coladarci followed a statistical-artifact hypothesis. He predicted that the lower poverty-achievement correlation in small schools results from the lower year-to-year achievement stability. There is greater variance in small schools from one year to another because there are fewer students to measure. Coladarci explains that this phenomenon is similar to that of short tests generally having lower test reliability than longer tests. Coladarci defines the power rating of poverty as the percentage of variance in achievement that is explained by poverty. Poverty is measured by FRPL enrollment. His study has relatively high generalizability because his sample is state-wide.

Participating Maine public schools taught 8th grade during both 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 and had data on all variables for both years. No schools in the study changed

their grade span during 2002-2003 or 2003-2004 or absorbed students from schools that closed in the spring of 2003. In addition, schools that did not have at least two eighth graders at all points during the study were not included. 216 schools participated out of a universe of 233 public schools that taught 8th grade. A state where 96% of the population is white and 10% of the total population lives below the poverty line compared to the national average of 12.5%. Approximately 32.34% of elementary and secondary students in Maine enroll in free or reduced price lunch which is about 5% lower than the national average.

For each Maine public school with an 8th grade, Coladarci (2006) created a weighted mean for reading and math achievement using 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school year standardized test data. He also figured a weighted two year percentage of students in poverty as measured by free and reduced price lunch eligibility. To further quantify poverty's power rating, Coladarci fitted statistical regression line for schools falling above and below the median per-grade enrollment. Coladarci found that reading and math scores were highly correlated and each correlates with poverty. Small schools in the study tended to be located in communities with higher poverty.

For schools of average size, an increase in poverty by one standard deviation resulted in a decrease in reading achievement by approximately half of a standard deviation. This trend suggests that teachers need to find ways to connect reading to students' existing schema more concretely to foster equitable classrooms. For each increase in school size, there was an overall math and reading drop in achievement by 16% of a standard deviation. With regard to reading, poverty's power rating differential in the study was 16% in small schools and 42% in larger schools which was almost

indistinguishable from the differential for all schools which was 15% and 41% respectively. Thus, the statistical analysis hypothesis is not consistent with the reading achievement data. The math achievement hypothesis was supported by the findings. Though the power rating showed some differential in math between smaller and larger schools, it was statistically insignificant. The hypothesis was confirmed because the effects could equally be due to poverty, not school size. Keep in mind that some schools had as few as 3% of their students receiving free or reduced price lunch whereas others had as many as 84%. Such a wide variance makes it difficult to draw general conclusions about achievement.

Promoting Resiliency in the Classroom

Cefai (2007) and Green et al. (2007) zoom in from the school level to study specific classroom ideologies and practices regarding resilience. Green et al. focuses on teachers' perceived roles in promoting resilience in Australia and Cefai on classroom practices Maltese teachers utilize to promote achievement. Additional research is needed on promoting resiliency in American classrooms. Cefai takes a generalist, universal perspective in her qualitative study that utilizes extended observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students. Teachers and students were 'relatively unknown' to the researcher who assumed the role of limited participant (observer during teaching and active role during student work time by helping students with their work). Teachers, principals, and school support staff from the independent Catholic education sector in Adelaide, a metropolitan area in South Australia had the opportunity to participate in Green et al.'s study. The questionnaire used for the quantitative portion of the study used a "What do you do to foster resilience" Likert scale ranging from 1(never) to 5 (once per

week). The Teachers' responses were coded using ANOVA's to test for significant gender variance.

Green et al. (2007) used both a quantitative questionnaire and qualitative one to gather data from teachers. In the quantitative portion of the study, the 57 teachers filled out a "What do you do to foster resilience?" questionnaire about how often they encouraged students to use coping strategies in times of adversity. 14 teachers participated in the qualitative portion. Data was collected using an open-ended six-question questionnaire. The questions were as follows: 1. what characteristics do children considered to be at risk display? 2. What do you understand resilience to be? 3. How do you identify resilient children? 4. How do you identify non-resilient children? 5. In your experience, is it possible to foster resilience in the classroom? If so, how can this be achieve? If not, why? 6. Please comment on your understanding of the stability of resilience over time. The questions were designed to gather information about teachers' beliefs about differentiating resilient/non-resilient children and their understanding of children considered to be at risk. Responses were summarized and categorized into the two prominent themes of emotional characteristics and relationship styles. Both Cefai (2007) and Green et al. focused on a specific geographic region and primarily collected data from their observations and teach questionnaires.

57 teachers participated in Green et al.'s (2007) study and 22 teachers participated in Cefai's (2007) study. The teacher demographics in Green et al.'s study were 14 male/43 female and 16 taught junior primary, 24 taught middle or upper primary, and 17 were either specialist teachers or support staff. 14 teachers, 10 female/4 male, participated in the qualitative portion. The quantitative phase of Green et al.'s study was

comprised of 57 participants, 2 principals, 46 teachers, and 9 support staff. 57 teachers took the “What do you do to foster resilience?” questionnaire from 5 different schools. Teachers and students in year 2-4 (ages 6-9) classes that appeared to have the highest level of student educational resilience as determined by teachers’ responses on a questionnaire administered 6-8 weeks after the start of the school year participated in Cefai’s study. There were 22 teachers and approximately 20 students in each class with a roughly even mix of boys and girls.

Nine classrooms from three different schools with a diverse SES makeup around the island of Maltese in the Mediterranean Sea participated in Cefai’s (2007) study. Her study focuses on the classroom environment, not on individual students. Maltese is part of the EU and has a very high population density of 1,282 per/sq.mi. The official languages are Maltese and English and there is a strong Italian influence . Year 2-4 classes were included in the Cefai’s study (ages 6-9) and there was a 22% rate of attrition (started with 28, ended with 22) of teachers in the study. This age group was selected because students had already been in school for a year and thus had some time to adjust, but were not yet being streamed by ability level. Teachers completed a questionnaire on each of their students to measure students’ educational resilience, namely student pro-social behavior, motivation, and problem solving skills. Cefai defines educational resilience as a combination of socio-emotional competence and educational engagement. As used by Cefai, socio-emotional competence refers to developmentally appropriate social and communication skills used to create relationships that help one succeed (e.g. collaboration, problem solving skills ect.). During her observations, Cefai took detailed notes.

Cefai (2007) kept a field observation journal with a description of the activities observed and reflective comments on things such as pedagogy, expectations, participation, classroom activities, classroom management, and promotion of pro-social behavior. Interviews with all the teachers were conducted during the final phase of the study to explore their views on classroom relationships, beliefs, practices, activities and behaviors. The interviews also asked about collaboration with other staff and staff involvement in planning and problem solving. Interviews were also conducted with student focus groups (does not provide details about these) to explore students' "thoughts and feelings about the classroom atmosphere, relationships, work, autonomy and influence" (p.123). Data was regularly analyzed so the research methods could be adjusted if needed. Data was categorized by emerging themes and method of collection (interview/observation). The categories developed were as follows: sense of classroom belonging and connectedness, inclusion, active engagement and collaboration in learning, positive beliefs and expectations, and recognition.

Cefai (2007) does an excellent job of listing out specific strategies used by teachers that promote resilience. According to Cefai, teachers encouraged students to share their experiences while working and validated their responses. They try to get to know students and create a child-centered environment. She cites one teacher as claiming that,

"On my part I try to create an atmosphere like home...I give priority to respect towards teacher, but not to the distance between us...I joke with the kids as if they were my brothers and sisters of my cousins...we share some aspects of our lives..." (p. 125).

Teachers also worked to provide individual attention and peer tutoring opportunities while including students with challenging behaviors by giving them roles and responsibilities. Cefai found that in each of the classrooms she observed, students “had frequent opportunities to learn through active, enjoyable and collaborative activities, feeding into a virtual cycle of enthusiasm, engagement, and accomplishment” (p. 126). Some teachers used puppets to crack jokes and lighten the atmosphere and all were highly collaborative with other teachers. Cefai summarizes her observations by stating that, “Praise, exhibition of work, reading work to others, notes to administrators and parents, and tangible rewards, were frequently observed in the classrooms” (p. 128).

Green et al. (2007) found that participants placed more importance on “working hard and achieving” than any other protective mechanism and that they emphasized this strategy frequently. Green and his colleagues hypothesized that by encouraging students to work hard and achieve, they may have been helping students develop an internal locus of control which past researchers have identified as a protective mechanism. On the other hand, “encouraging children to investigate and use various professional help organizations” was considered the least important strategy. However, it is important to note that 28% of the participants in this study taught junior primary which is generally 5-7 year olds. Teachers may have felt it inappropriate to direct children of this age to professional organizations.

All of the characteristics teachers identified in resilient children were positive- the most common were good communication skills/openness, being independent/confident/high self esteem, and taking responsibility for one’s action/making sensible choices. The researchers explicitly list all of the questions asked in the

quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. This explicit description of the experimental treatment provides strength to ecological validity because future researchers could easily duplicate this study. The only significant gender variance in the quantitative teacher responses was that the men were more likely to encourage students to get involved in sports or social actions as coping strategies. 12/14 participants felt that resilience had to do with coping, bouncing back, or moving on despite perceived adversities. Green et al. (2007) focus heavily on the use of coping skills, but the researchers mention themselves the resiliency is multifaceted and not just about coping.

Teachers' responses for non-resilient children fell into the two main categories of impersonal characteristics and attitudinal characteristics (Green et al., 2007). Teachers considered friendship problems, social issues, particular emotional traits, and disruptive behavior as the main indicators of non-resilient children. 12/14 felt that non-resilient children were more likely to experience friendship problems. Teachers did not seem to consider that well-behaved children may also be at risk or that at risk children could be coping.

Summary

Given that resilient children are better equipped to deal with adversity such as experiencing poverty, creating equitable classrooms entails finding ways to help students develop resilient traits. Abelev (2009) cites strong mentoring relationships outside the family as a consistent theme among resilient interviewees. She also found that adults had helped several participants by advocating for the children's education. This finding provides those in the education community with the potential strategy for increasing equity for children experiencing poverty of mentor relationships. Mentor relationships

could take the form of community and parent volunteer support or developing mentor relationships with students in other classrooms. Making this happen may require advocacy on the teacher's part because the structures may not be in place at one's school.

Other strategies for promoting equity within one's classroom for children experiencing poverty include those found by Cefai (2007). Cefai found that getting to know students, creating a child-centered environment, encouraging students to share their experiences, providing space for collaborative activities, collaborating with other teachers, and validating students' responses were all strategies used by the educators studied to help their students become more resilient. Possible additional strategies include finding ways to connect reading to students' existing schema more concretely because as Coladarci (2006) points out, for schools of average size, an increase in poverty by one standard deviation resulted in a decrease in reading achievement by approximately half of a standard deviation. Strategies used to increase resilience are useful to those in the educational community because they help children develop an internal locus of control over their lives and increase equity by valuing the strengths of every student. Green et al. (2007) references that developing an internal locus of control is Promoting an equitable environment for minority children experiencing poverty may prove especially important because, as Borman and Rachuba (2001) note, "The 'double jeopardy' of being poor and a minority student exposes students to greater risks and fewer resilience promoting conditions."

Student Anxiety and Perceived Support

The theme of student anxiety and perceived support is important for those in the education community to consider because students in poverty need to feel supported and

at ease before being biologically able to actively engage in learning (Zull, 2002). The studies reviewed in this theme pose questions and hypotheses about the nature of student perceptions of social support and anxiety in learners. Yasgur and Carner (1973) and Malecki and Demaray (2006) consider SES an independent variable on anxiety and perceptions of support to test whether students experiencing poverty feel different levels of anxiety and social support than their peers . SES is gauged by FRPL enrollment. Dolan and McCaslin (2008) and Elias and Haynes (2008) look more generally at how students perceive their learning environments in Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) schools and urban schools respectively.

Over the past half century, the degree of anxiety in children from different race, sex, and SES groups has been widely researched and shown that the degree and quality of anxiety varies between different racial and SES groups. Past research by Hawkes and Furst found that pre and in-service teachers tended to believe that children in poverty were better able to adapt to environmental stress because they live in more stressful environments (Yasgur and Carner, 1973). Yasgur and Carner pose three questions in relation to the aforementioned findings about environmental stress and anxiety. One objective is to explore the existence, nature, and causes of anxiety in elementary school children from different economic and racial backgrounds. The second goal is to explore ways of providing educators, and those concerned with the education process, with orientations toward their students that are supported by empirical findings. Yasgur and Carner also examine the relationship between a child's degree of anxiety and her or his perception of negative environmental stimuli. Malecki and Demaray (2006) ask a very

similar question: Is the relationship between one's perceived level of social support and one's academic achievement affected by the experience of living in poverty?

Support and Anxiety

Malecki and Demaray's (2006) quantitative study measures social support by analyzing students' transcripts and FRPL status from data obtained through school records. The four types of support represented in Tardy's model are utilized as the standards: emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental as well as the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS) as measures of perceived support. The CASSS assessment divides support into the following categories: parent, teacher, classmate, close friend, and school support. Five simultaneous multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine whether there was a correlation between SES and GPA. For all five, total GPA was used as the dependent variable with SES and social support measured as independent variables.

164 students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade all attending the same urban middle school in Illinois participated in Malecki and Demaray's (2006) study. Participants' parents signed a release at parent conference night allowing researchers access to the students' school records and permission to administer the CASSS. 203 (36%) students' parents signed the consent form, but 39 were later removed because of incomplete data resulting in a total of 164 students. The racial make-up of participants does not mirror that of the school at large, but it is very close, and there is a fairly equal representation of boys and girls.

All participants in Yasgur and Carner's (1973) study were sixth grade students from four Philadelphia schools and three classes from each school participated creating a

total sample size of 351 students. This is a strength in terms of triangulating Yasgur and Carner's findings with Malecki and Demaray's (2006) because the participants are close in age. The schools were selected based on race and the percentage of students experiencing poverty. Two schools had a primarily black student body. Of these two schools, students at one were predominantly from families experiencing poverty, and students at the other were largely from middle class families. The other two schools had primarily White students. Just like the two schools with mostly black students from families experiencing poverty, the students at one of the schools with mainly White students were predominantly from families experiencing poverty, and students at the other were largely from middle class families. SES was used as a gauge for poverty, but Yasgur and Carner are unclear about how SES is measured. Malecki and Demaray also used SES as a gauge for poverty and they used FRPL enrollment as their indicator for SES.

Malecki and Demaray (2006) first divided students into two categories based on whether they were enrolled in FRPL or not. Participants receiving free lunch (n=93) combined with participants receiving reduced price lunch (n=17) account for two-thirds of the universe. The remaining third is comprised of participating students who do not receive FRPL (N=110). Malecki and Demaray note that the school is located in a community where most of the citizens are lower middle class or in poverty, so even students not eligible for FRPL are likely from lower middle class families. In terms of creating more equitable classrooms, this is an important context to consider because it means that the results may be more generalizable to students experiencing poverty than they otherwise would have been. Nearly half of the participants were in seventh grade

(45.7%), approximately one-third were in sixth grade (34.8%), and just under twenty-percent were in eighth grade (19.5%). Every Student's grades in reading, language, social studies, math and science as noted on their quarterly report cards were compiled and organized into classroom data. Students' perceived support is measured through the CASSS 60 question assessment. Students rated questions like 'my parent(s) help me make decisions' from 1=never to 6=always. Yagur and Carner (1973) use a similar assessment tool to gauge students' perceptions of support and anxiety.

Yagur and Carner (1973) Use the General Anxiety Questionnaire (GAQ) which incorporates items from the General Anxiety Scale and the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale in their mixed methods case study. A self-report checklist and individual interview are used as means of assessment. The GAQ and self-report checklist were administered to each class individually in one sitting. Interviews were conducted three-four weeks later using a stratified random sample that included equal numbers of girls and boys. 71 students, 20% of the sample, were interviewed in all. The GAQ was divided into a lie scale and an anxiety scale for statistical analysis. The scores for each subsample on the anxiety scale, lie scale, and checklist were analyzed using three-way (SES, sex, race) univariate analysis. Pearson product-moment coefficients were computed to examine correlations between anxiety and lie scores, anxiety and checklist scores, and lie and checklist scores using an alpha of .05 to test for statistical significance. Unlike the inferential statistics used for the above measures, interviews were categorized using descriptive statistics to help the researchers spot qualitative differences. The inferential statistical significance was not measured because individual categories were not independent of one another and responses were categorized arbitrarily after the data was

collected. Elias and Haynes (2008) administer a questionnaire similar to the ones used by Yasgur and Carner and Malecki and Demaray (2006) to gauge student perceptions.

Elias and Haynes (2008) utilized a shortened version of the Survey of Children's Social Support (SOCSS) which is a multidimensional measure of perceived social support that has historically been used with urban third through fifth graders. The shortened version was developed using the three teacher and peer support items with the highest correlations in the full version. According to the researchers, the Social Skills Rating Scale has been well researched and has high reliability and validity. In all, 28 subscale items were used to obtain kids' mean score. If more than three items were missing, the participant was excluded from the analysis. Several statistical tools are utilized to depict the data such as a chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio, a comparative fit index of 1.000, and a Tucker-Lewis of 1.017.

Elias and Haynes' (2008) study is exclusively quantitative with a pretest/posttest (oxo) design. They hypothesized that relationships exist between school outcomes and social-emotional competence and perceived teacher/peer support among urban minority third graders. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to test the researchers' hypotheses about relations between observed and latent variables. The data for this study was collected as part of a longitudinal project focused on preventing youth violence via the integration of social decision making/problem solving curriculum. The researchers who collected the data were trained undergraduate research assistants. Participating teachers were paid their prevailing hourly rate to compensate them for time spent completing demographic information sheets and social-emotional competence measures for students.

The 262 participating students attended one of six schools in the northeastern United States. 60% of these children received FRPL. Over half resided in single female headed households. The participant demographics are as follows and are representative of the school populations: 172 Black/African American, 27 Hispanic/Latino, 1 Native American, 2 Caucasian, 3 other, and 77 chose not to report a race. According to the Elias and Haynes' (2008) reports of their interactions with the communities, those who did not report a race were likely of mixed racial background.

Elias and Haynes' (2008) research assistants asked students "Do your teachers make you feel important?" and "Do you think your teachers care about you?" to gauge their perceived teacher support. To measure perceived peer support, students were asked "Do you get picked on and teased by your friends?" and "Do you feel left out by your friends?" All questions used Likert-type responses ranging from *never* (1) to *always* (5). Each subscale item was added to form a mean perceived social support score. In May of the following year (9 months later), the research assistants returned to the schools and administered the assessments to participants a second time. The data was then coded for trends. Elias and Haynes (2008), Yasgur and Carner (1973), and Malecki and Demaray (2006) all ask a series of questions similar to those described by Elias and Haynes (2008) above as one of their primary modes of data collection. Dolan and McCaslin (2008) use a different strategy to get at student perceptions.

Dolan and McCaslin's (2008) case study consists of a collection of student stories generated in response to a picture of student-teacher interaction. They ask, how do students in Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) schools think about learning? How do student stories portray student-teacher interaction? What interpersonal supports,

opportunities, and motivational systems do they describe? The analysis instruments are adapted from the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and target implicit non-conscious motives such as goal related activities. Student story data is assessed for congruence with classroom observation data. 174 students participated. All participants were from three of five comprehensive school reform (CSR) schools in another 2008 study McCaslin participated in. This study is designed to supplement and build upon the observations from her previous study. The greatest weakness of this study is that Dolan and McCaslin were unclear about how participants were selected which limited the generalizability of their findings. There were 101 females and 73 males of which 48 were in third grade, 63 were in fourth grade, and 63 in fifth. The picture-story task was administered outside of students' classroom in group settings comparable in size to that of their classrooms and students were given up to five minutes to write about each of the two pictures.

The stories were coded by Dolan and McCaslin (2008) for motivational context and motivated behaviors using a single coding system. Coders first determined the motive system(s), achievement, and/or affiliation depicted in the story. For example, if coders pulled out achievement motivation then they ascertained what achievement meant in the story. For coding purposes, motivational context included potential supports for characters in the student stories, magnitude of challenges characters faced, and imagined threats represented by optimism/pessimism for future orientation. Motivational behavior included the apparent motive system, goals, engagement processes, and affect of story characters. The coding system included 11 variables derived from working theories on motivation, competence, and the participant observation case study project mentioned above. Both coders took turns reading student stories aloud, coded them independently,

discussed disagreements, and reached an agreement. Coding stories independently and then comparing results before reaching a consensus was a strength of the ecological validity of Dolan and McCaslin's study because it helped minimize potential experimenter effects and researcher bias in the interpretation of the student stories.

The student stories primarily depicted students who were engaged in school tasks and felt good about their participation. Teacher involvement was not usually an indicator of student difficulty, but when it was, most ascribed teacher-helping behavior. These patterns suggest that positive student-teacher interaction is the norm for the participants Dolan and McCaslin (2008) studied. However, 30% of the stories depicted negative emotions, struggles, or problems. In half of these 30%, the characters were able to overcome the obstacle.

Dolan and McCaslin (2008) conclude that student perceptions affect what it means for students to know something in the first place and their motivation to do so. They note that in high poverty schools and ones that are under pressure to improve test performance such as CSR schools, "knowing" likely means "getting it right." They found that 83 participants cited this as their primary achievement goal which is considerably more than the next most mentioned goal of doing the work which 50 mentioned. Fewer students mentioned items such as doing their best and understanding. It is possible that the students in Dolan and McCaslin's study felt pressured to get the right answers because they attended a CSR school or because of their grade level or background. If so, the trend may not be generalizable to high poverty schools in general. Malecki and Demaray (2006) lend credibility to Dolan and McCaslin's findings because they also found a

correlation between perceived social support and grade point average (GPA) for participants receiving FRPL, but not for other participants.

As expected, there was a significant main effect of poverty on achievement with students receiving FRPL having lower GPA's overall in Malecki and Demaray's (2006) study. For students with lower parent or classmate support, they had a higher GPA if they were not experiencing poverty and a lower GPA if they were experiencing poverty. Total support scores overall related to total, reading, and language GPA. Parent support related to the aforementioned three categories and science. Teacher support related to the aforementioned three and social studies. Classmate, close friend, and school support related only to reading GPA. Malecki and Demaray note that their findings are consistent with other researchers that teacher support is the most likely to be related to GPA. It may help children in poverty succeed if they perceive their teachers as supportive because, "For students with higher support, GPA scores were stable regardless of their SES status" (Malecki and Demaray, p.390).

Malecki and Demaray (2006) suggest that the following interventions may be particularly helpful for students experiencing poverty: 1.) increasing parental involvement in schools 2.) Training teachers on the types of support they can provide 3.) Implementing peer tutoring programs 4.) Working to increase the adult and peer social networks for children experiencing poverty. Though such strategies may be particularly beneficial to students experiencing poverty, it is likely that nearly all children would benefit from increased parental involvement and peer tutoring options.

The participants in the Malecki and Demaray's (2006) study are ethnically diverse so it is easier to generalize the findings to all American children than if the school were

primarily composed of White middle class children. Students could opt to take the CASSS assessment in Spanish so it is more likely to adequately reflect the opinions of ELL participants (5% took the assessment in this format). In addition, the CASSS was read out loud so students reading skills did not affect the responses. Even so, The CASSS assessment used to measure social support may be biased toward a westernized perception of support and thus may not be an adequate measure for all of the children. Only children whose parents attended parent conference night had the potential to be included in the study. These children may have had more social support overall than those from families where parents did not come to the conference or where parents were unwilling to let their children participate in the study. Thus, Malecki and Demaray's (2006) data may not represent the student body as a whole. This risk is considerable because Elias and Haynes (2008) reached different conclusions about perceived support and academics.

Elias and Haynes (2008) found that perceived teacher support did not usually affect students' end of the year academic performance unless there was a change in perceived support, but it was influential in third graders later degree of absence from school. The results of Elias and Haynes are partially validated in that social-emotional competence and perceived support were important factors of school success. The fact that teacher support specifically was not influential on its own may be a result of Elias and Haynes' assessment tool.

Contrary to Elias and Haynes' (2008) hypothesis, it was found that the number of absences did not affect social competencies and achievement. For instance, African American participants were found to have lower levels of social-emotional competence

and fewer absences than others in the study. The researchers suggest that this may be because third graders may not have very much control over their attendance. It was also found that initial perceptions of peer threat were not important indicators of end of the year performance. This finding is in opposition to previous research conducted with older students. Elias and Haynes suggest that this discrepancy may be the result of younger students (e.g. 3rd graders) not feeling that their peers are able to help them succeed in school. From a resiliency lens, the findings suggest that perceived support and social-emotional skills serve as protective processes, but not in ways that are uniform across racial groups or sources of support. Yasgur and Carner (1973) also found differences between Black children and White children in their study on childhood anxiety and implications for schools.

The absolute difference in mean anxiety scores of African American students living in poverty and White students from middle class backgrounds indicates that African American students from poverty had considerably higher anxiety according to the findings of Yasgur and Carner (1973). There was an even greater absolute difference between mean anxiety scores of African American girls from poverty and White boys from middle SES backgrounds. The latter comparison was near statistical significance at $p < .054$. Differences between subsamples were considerably smaller for lying. None were statistically significant, but the trends were the same as the other indicators with students experiencing poverty tending to score slightly higher (lie slightly more).

Students from middle class families tended to score slightly higher on the self-report checklist for stressful environmental stimuli, but the interactions were not statistically significant. A potential explanation given by the Yasgur and Carner (1973) is

that the checklist asked students to mark items based on relative frequency rather than severity. This means that although children from all subsamples tended to perceive stressful stimuli with similar frequency, the specific stimuli may have varied in its adverse dimensions. Yasgur and Carner also note that different language norms may exist within subcultures so “sometimes” may mean something different to one student than it does to another.

Oddly Yasgur and Carner (1973) found a negative correlation of $-.31$ with students who reported higher anxiety reporting fewer negative environmental stimuli. This means that there was less than 10% of shared variance between the anxiety scale and the checklist. Yasgur and Carner did not anticipate this happening and conclude that the checklist was inadequate for revealing differences within and between subgroups. They propose that perhaps the GAQ measures different constructs in different groups. This finding indicates that the GAQ may be more of an assessment of anxiety in middle SES children and more of an assessment of fear in children experiencing poverty. Another possibility is that children from high stress backgrounds are more accustomed to being in a stressful environment and thus ignore situations which are perceived as stressful by children from middle class homes. The fact that the findings of the GAQ and the student self-report checklist do not support one another significantly limits the generalizability of the researchers' findings. Additional studies using measures other than the GAQ and checklist are necessary to confirm the Yasgur and Carner's tentative conclusions. Yasgur and Carner also interviewed participants.

Several trends arose from Yasgur and Carner's (1973) interviews. Namely, children experiencing poverty and African American children were anxious about

environmental stimuli that the researchers considered more fear provoking than the negative stimuli reported by White peers and peers not experiencing poverty. Inner-city, particularly Black, children were far more concerned about their physical well being which supports the notion that anxiety and fear are closely related in children.

Conversely, middle class children interviewed expressed more concerns about academic success rather than safety. Overall, boys expressed greater concern about their physical well being than girls which stands in apparent contrast to the higher anxiety and checklist scores of girls. The researchers hypothesized that girls may have more general anxiety than boys and that perhaps parents treated girls more restrictively which potentially increased anxiety.

Summary

The studies on anxiety and perceived support by Malecki and Demaray (2006), Yasgur and Carner (1973), and Dolan and McCaslin (2008) help answer the question: how can teachers create classrooms that provide equitable learning contexts for children in poverty and become advocates for children in poverty? The conclusion by all three researchers that students' perceived anxiety and support impacts their academic success suggests that educators need to strive to create an environment where children feel at ease and supported. Advocacy may be necessary to make this happen because some structures such as a prescribed curriculum or lack of community supports for children may inhibit a child's ability to feel supported. Similarly, structures such as ability grouping and retention may unnecessarily illicit anxiety in children experiencing poverty. Additional research is needed that builds off the findings of Malecki and Demaray, Yasgur and

Carner, and Dolan and McCaslin and looks more specifically into viable strategies designed for teachers.

Malecki and Demaray (2006) suggested four specific strategies for teachers and one can infer strategies from the findings of Yasgur and Carner (1973) and Dolan and McCaslin (2008). Malecki and Demaray suggest that the following interventions are useful in helping reduce the anxiety of students experiencing poverty and increase their level of perceived support: 1.) Increasing parental involvement in schools 2.) Training teachers on the types of support they can provide 3.) Implementing peer tutoring programs 4.) Assisting children experiencing poverty with increasing their social networks. Teachers could advocate for increased professional development on how to best support students and could integrate the remaining three strategies into classroom structures. The findings of Yasgur and Carner suggest that the aforementioned strategies may also benefit African American students, but one should interpret the findings with caution because the study was not conducted recently and the different indicators used suggested conflicted results. Dolan and McCaslin's conclusion that student perceptions affect what it means for students to know something in the first place and their motivation to do so adds yet another layer to consider.

Dolan and McCaslin (2008) note that in the high poverty schools studied, most students equated learning with providing the right answer. The desire to gauge one's success by whether or not one provides an accurate answer likely stems from federal trends towards standardized testing and increased accountability for educators. Dolan and McCaslin go on to note that students in poverty are more likely to learn in environments where success is heavily gauged in this way because they are more likely to attend

schools under restructuring or comprehensive school reform. What does all this mean for the educator working to better advocate for children in poverty and create an equitable classroom experience for this population? It means that educators have the large task of advocating for macro level equity at the federal level (eg. restructuring and comprehensive school reform) while simultaneously integrating structures in one's own classroom that help children feel supported and at ease with their anxieties.

Homelessness

When considering practices that promote equitable classroom learning environments for children in poverty and areas in need of advocacy, one must consider homeless youth because they face the unique challenge of not having reliable shelter. This is a difficult population to study in part because homeless families are often hard to maintain contact with and often, homelessness is a temporary or intermittent condition. As a result, it is extremely difficult to find studies on homelessness and education. As discussed in a previous theme, promoting resilience is one way teachers can help students in poverty succeed academically.

Prescott Sekendur, and Hoshino (2008) conducted a study specifically focused on promoting resilience in homeless youth. Prescott et al.'s research was guided by the question, what is the role of creativity in promoting resiliency in homeless youth? The answer to this question is important to educators because it may provide an additional strategy for increasing equity within the classroom. Prescott et al. focus specifically on a drop-in art center for homeless youth in Seattle, WA. The studies by these two groups of researchers have different focuses, but are included together here because the universe of scholarly studies is extremely small. The work of Prescott et al. was connected to that of

Masten, Sesma, Si-Asar, Lawrence, and Dionne (1997) because both focused exclusively on homeless youth. Masten et al. took a slightly more macro perspective in examining working with homeless youth by asking whether children who had recently lived in a shelter experienced substantial academic delays when assessed from multiple perspectives. The answer to this question provides educators with guidance on where advocacy is needed on the part of the educator in order to make the academic experience of children in poverty more equitable. Masten et al. also worked to find out whether academic achievement was related to behavior problems and adaptive functioning in the classroom.

Homelessness

Families were initially recruited in the winter of 1993 from the largest shelter in the Minneapolis region for Masten et al.'s (1997) mixed methods study. According to the researchers, previous studies indicated that families living in this shelter were representative of shelters in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The average stay for a family in this shelter was three weeks. Researchers recruited with signs, written invitations in mailboxes, and by word of mouth. During the first two weeks, families with children of the appropriate age were randomly selected for invitation. The next month, every family with children in the appropriate age group was invited to attend.

A representative sample of families living in a Minneapolis shelter participated in Masten et al.'s (1997) case study. 73 children ages 6-11 years old participated including 37 boys and 36 girls. The racial make-up was as follows: 60 African American, 11 American Indian, and 2 European American. One African American child was excluded from the study for having autism and what the researchers called "invalid test data". The

researchers do not go into detail about what made this child's test data invalid. This study focuses primarily on the African American participants and secondarily on the American Indian children because there appeared to be marked differences between these two subsamples. African American and American Indian families participated at rates of over 90%, and the researchers did not include data on European American participants. 48% of participating African American families and 73% of American Indian families had been homeless before. The majority of families had one parent who was dependent on public assistance as their primary source of income. This trend supports the finding of Rathbun, West, and Walston (2005) that living in a single parent household is common amongst children experiencing poverty.

Masten et al. (1997) use several methods of obtaining data including individual tests, school records, teacher and parent ratings, and parent interviews. 52 of the 73 children took the *Wechsler Individual Achievement Test Screener* (WIAT-S) after leaving the shelter. The WIAT-S was used to estimate academic achievement in Basic Reading, Mathematical Reasoning, and Spelling. Two other tests, the Raven Coloured Progressive and the Vocabulary subtest of the *WISC-III* were administered to the children to estimate intellectual functioning during the shelter stay. These tests specifically looked at nonverbal reasoning, general mental ability, and verbal ability. Approximately two months after recruitment and testing at the shelter, schools and families were contacted for additional information. At least some information such as school records, teacher ratings, parent interviews, or child assessments was obtained for 69 of the 73 children.

The achievement ratings based on school records were assigned by two researchers blind to other information about the children such as race. The researchers

independently rated student records using a 5-point scale. The researchers had judged records from a previous study with high reliability and settled disagreements through consensus. The fact that they had worked together before with high reliability lends reliability to the present study. Classroom teachers completed the *Teacher's Report Form of the Child Behavior Checklist* to gauge the children's behavioral/emotional problems as well as general classroom adaptation. Teachers were asked: "Based on your observations, how would you rate the academic potential of this child?" and "How much academic progress has this child made over the past month?" to assess the teachers' ratings of students' academic achievement. Similarly, parents were interviewed about how well their child usually does in school. Parents were also asked if their child had any learning disabilities or potential barriers to school access. Masten et al. (1997) obtained valid achievement test scores from 59 African American children and 10 out of 11 American Indian children. The subsample of African American children with valid test data did not differ significantly from the remaining children who only participated in the initial assessment conducted at the shelter. The six children for whom researchers were unable to locate school records all had significantly lower school performance than the other 53 children in this group, but did not differ on other variables.

Masten et al. (1997) rely on a relatively small sample size from a single geographic region and it was difficult for researchers to gather data for some of the participants. In addition, the time of year (winter) or interview locations may have affected the results. The experimenter effect may have also been at work because some of the families may have placed greater importance on their child's education as a result of being involved in this study. Between the American Indian and African American

subsamples, American Indian children scored significantly lower on the academic risk indicator.

The small American Indian group sample were relatively lower in risk with only one child having repeated a grade, none receiving special education, and three receiving chapter one. Of the ten children, seven scored at age and grade level on the WIAT. The correlation of WIAT scores and school records was .75 which is significant even for a sample of eight according to the researchers. Conversely, 44% of the children had scores in the clinical range for Total, Externalizing, and Internalizing problems. In addition, very few parents of American Indian participants answered “yes” to any of the items on the list of potential barriers such as problems related to transportation of school records. This was not the case for African American children.

Scores for African American participants were considerably below developmental norms with 80% falling in the bottom quartile. 20% of the African American children had already repeated at least one grade. According to Masten et al.'s (1997) data from the school, 17% of African American participants received special education services and 44% received chapter 1 services. Average scores for all behavioral and adaptive functioning scores were significantly lower than the standardized WIAT norms. Classroom behavior problems were significantly related to the number of independent achievement indicators. To explore the relation of resilience to classroom behavior and academic achievement, the researchers also compared children who had satisfactory versus low levels of achievement per standardized grade norms on the WIAT-S. There was a striking contrast in TRF Total Problem scores as rated by teachers between these two groups of children with those labeled as successful having over a standard deviation

less risk on average. Prescott et al. (2008) also looked at the development of resilience in homeless youth.

Prescott et al. (2008) conducted a primarily quantitative mixed-methods study that examined resiliency as a function of creativity among homeless youth attending a drop-in art center designed specifically for this population. Homeless youth ages 13-25 who attended a drop-in art studio in Seattle at least four times from 1999-2004 were included in the study. Of the 212 participants, 64% were male and 36% were female which closely resembles the demographics of the homeless youth population in Seattle which is 76% male and 24% female. Participants' race was not formally tallied due to the drop-in nature of the center, but the youth were of various ethnicities including African American, Asian, Latina/o, Native American, and Caucasian. The relatively large sample size, fairly accurate demographic representation of the homeless youth population in the Seattle area, and the longitudinal data collection all contribute positively to the internal validity of this study. Prescott et al. define homelessness as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Art center attendance and progress logs from 1999-2004 were reviewed to identify life achievements made by attendees. The achievements noted were securing housing, substance cessation, returning to school, employment, pro-social skill development, taking initiative, and art sales.

Data from the center logs was obtained primarily from a host of volunteers so there may have been some omissions or errors in the data recorded. The fact that the researchers only included some of the questions listed on the questionnaire administered to participants makes it difficult for future researchers to duplicate this study and thus reduces its ecological validity. In addition, the questions asked may not have been

culturally relevant for all participants because things like belonging to a community, feeling proud, and planning the future are more highly valued in some cultures than others. Even if the data was not completely culturally relevant, it still provides a good starting place for identifying trends because of the way Prescott et al. (2008) categorize it.

Quantitative data from the attendance and progress logs was tabulated for total attendance and life achievements and then graphed in a scatter plot. Each section of the log was read by two researchers and points in question were discussed by the entire team. Mean, median, and mode were then calculated and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were performed to examine the correlation between center attendance and life achievements. Prescott et al. (2008) also focused heavily on qualitative methods.

Qualitative data consisted of a convenience sample of 3 art center attendees who agreed to tell their stories of homelessness, resiliency, and the role of creativity in their lives to Prescott et al. (2008). The participants each drew a bridge, answered a questionnaire, and participated in a recorded interview. The bridge drawing was used to learn more about participants' ideas about goal setting. When the individual had finished the drawing, s/he was asked to place an arrow showing the direction of travel and a dot to represent where s/he was. When finished, s/he was asked to tell about the drawing. The questionnaire was created to explore the seven components of the mandala of resiliency developed by Wolin and Wolin (1993). Participants had the option to either write or verbalize their responses. Several themes arose.

A quantitative correlation was uncovered that as attendance at the art center increased so did the average number of a youth's life achievements. However, Prescott et al. (2008) caution against measuring success simply through the number of life

achievements because some of them such as finding housing or getting a job may end a youth's homelessness or reduce the time they have available to visit the center. Four themes emerged from the qualitative analysis, personal exploration and growth, making connections, the role of art, and experiential knowledge. Several sub themes regarding the role of creativity in developing resiliency were also created. Art as a friend, art as a safe place, art as reflection, art as a means for maintaining self-esteem, and art as a conduit to belong to a community are important sub-themes given the focus of this literature review. Each sub-theme provided strategies children in poverty used to increase their feelings of support, reduce anxiety, and help them develop resilience. The array of sub-themes coded illustrates that understanding the experience of homeless children and developing the ability to advocate for them and create equitable learning spaces entails much more than simply understanding challenges pertaining to lack of a permanent residence.

Overall, Masten et al. (1997) found that the “results of this study add to the growing evidence that children faced with homelessness often have serious educational problems that extend beyond the barriers to education that can derive from residential instability” (40). Masten et al.'s study has relatively high generalizability because they regularly triangulate their findings with those of other researchers and because the findings support those of Prescott et al. (2008). Masten et al.'s findings suggest that teachers perceive substantial adjustment problems among homeless children and that academic and psychological problems covary even when assessed through independent methods. However, there were children from both samples who were doing reasonably well. Masten et al. suggest that this may be in part because some children have more

resources in terms of involved adults who support educational attainment. They go on to note that in addition to developing relationships with caring, competent adults, intellectual skills are probably the most widely reported protective factor in resilience literature.

Summary

There is a large body of research available on resilience literature and considerably less available of homeless youth. Both Masten et al. (1997) and Prescott et al. (2008) tie their research on homelessness into the larger body of resilience literature which suggests that resiliency literature may be the most pertinent of available research. Masten et al. (1997) and Prescott et al. (2008) focus on different aspects of homelessness, but both are similar in that both consider the role of resiliency in the lives of homeless children. Prescott et al. (2008) found that art is a conduit to resiliency for some homeless youth and Masten et al. (1997) found that caring relationships with adults is another. Teachers can easily integrate both of these facilitators of resiliency by working to create authentic relationships with students and integrating art into lessons. Activating students' prior knowledge is another potential way to help create positive student-teacher relationships because it shows that the educator authentically cares about students and about creating a classroom context that is equitable for children experiencing poverty.

Pedagogical Decisions

In thinking about creating equitable classroom experiences and advocating for children in poverty, one must consider the role that individual teachers play because teachers form the backbone of students' classroom experiences. With the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001 came extensive scrutiny of teachers' abilities to teach

effectively. However, this increased pressure on teachers is not coupled with increased funding for professional development or incentives for working at high poverty schools which Johnson and Johnson (2006) note are often stressful working environments. In addition, teachers at high poverty schools are more likely to experience pressures to get their students to perform well on standardized tests (Johnson and Johnson, 2006).

Clotfelter Ladd, Vigdor, and Wheeler (2006), Wenglinsky (2002), Ross, Howie, Halsall, and Vescio, (2007), and Howley, Howley, Howley, and Howley (2006) examined exactly how teachers matter and what classroom practices most benefit learners. Within the umbrella of how teachers matter and classroom practices, each study had a unique focus. Clotfelter et al. was specifically interested in finding out more about how the quality of teachers in high poverty schools compares to those in low poverty schools whereas Wenglinsky's study looked at which measures of teacher quality have the greatest influence on student learning. Howley et al.'s study asked what ways the middle class' aspiration to "save" the children of poor families plays out in the context of community. Ross et al. focus specifically on pre-service teachers' classroom experiences and what they are learning about working with low-income minority children in terms of culturally relevant pedagogy.

How Teachers Matter

There is a relatively large body of research on the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in preparing teachers to work in largely low-income urban areas. Ross and her colleagues (2007) cite Corbett, Wilson, and Williams as stating that effective urban teachers believe that "There is a way to reach (every student) and it is my responsibility to find it" (p.396 citing Corbett et al. p.18). Ross et al. extends this body of research by

examining pre-service teachers' perspectives about teaching during an internship in a school with primarily minority students from low-income backgrounds. The researchers used inductive reasoning to analyze the data by asking "What is this intern learning about how to teach low-income minority children?" (p.398).

18 female master's level interns in Florida were invited to participate in Ross et al.'s (2007) study by taking part in a retrospective interview about their experiences during the internship and granting approval for researchers to analyze their discussion forum postings. 10 middle class females agreed to participate. 7 of the women were non-Hispanic White, 2 Hispanic, and 1 African American. The researchers are unclear as to whether the women self-identified or were labeled with the aforementioned races so their races of the women may or may not be accurate.

Participants in Ross et al.'s (2007) study came from a very small universe and were not randomly selected. All participants were enrolled in the same course on culturally relevant pedagogy and self-selected to participate. Of the 18 students in the course, only 10 chose to participate. Thus, the generalizations made by Ross et al. about the effectiveness of the course may not apply to the 8 students who chose not to participate. In addition, generalizability is minimal because all 10 participants interned in Florida schools and were in the same course together. Really, there were only 8 participants for most purposes because the researchers do not include the experiences of the two participants who had unsupportive mentor teachers. Regardless, Ross et al.'s study adds to the conversation of teachers' perceptions of working in high poverty schools and paints at least an emerging picture of teachers' experiences in such environments.

Students contributed to the online discussion forum 1-2 times weekly with an average of 17 postings total. The online forum served as a venue for asking questions about one's internship experience such as questions about classroom management and as a space to give others in the course advice. At the end of the internship, all participants engaged in a 40-50 minute interview with Ross et al. To code the interview data, the researchers identified statements from participants that reflected their philosophies of teaching and generated a set of possible codes to identify (non)examples of a no excuses ideology about one's ability foster an equitable environment for all students, instructional and management strategies used, the interns challenges and successes, and their conclusions drawn about teaching children from low-income families. After coding the data, researchers wrote case studies that conveyed the perspectives and practices of interns. To help ensure that there were no discrepancies between what an intern said and actually did, Ross et al. (2007) met to critique one another's case studies and compare them to the professor's observation notes of each participant.

Participants also engaged in lesson studies, and inquiry project, and a child study, but Ross et al. (2007) do not explicate the details of each assignment. For the first five weeks of the course, interns conducted readings, observed classrooms, reflected, and developed ideas to apply. For the remainder of the course, interns helped one another solve instructional and management problems within a community of learners as is described above. Two of the five emerging teachers are showcased as case studies in Ross and her colleagues' findings. They stressed the importance of active pedagogy, rap, games, and hands on activities to make curriculum relevant to students' lives. All ten interns stated that they would be willing to work in a high poverty school, but five

qualified their responses by making statements about things like wanting to work at a more economically heterogeneous school first or that the school administration would have to be supportive.

All of the interns in Ross et al.'s (2007) study were rated as effective or highly effective by their mentor teachers and all said that they would be willing to accept a teaching position at a high poverty school upon graduation. That being said, all of them faced challenges in the areas of high stakes testing, classroom management, and family involvement. Three of the interns were in the process of developing a no excuses educational philosophy and were always in problem solving mode rather than blaming mode. Five demonstrated an emerging perspective because they made occasional blame statements, and two faced unanticipated challenges that made it difficult to judge their philosophy. The researchers state that one unexpected challenge for these two interns was ineffective classroom mentor teachers.

Ross et al. (2007) concluded that it is possible for teacher education programs to provide pre-service teachers with a strong foundation for success in high poverty schools, but that new teachers need better preparation for working with families and strong induction programs. Interns began slightly fearful of students' families and worried about instability in families, but overcame this fear through problem-solving together on the online discussion forum. Use of the discussion forum is a strength of Ross et al.'s study because it allowed the researchers to receive ongoing data throughout the course of the study about participants' experiences. Ross and her colleagues suggest the establishment of professional learning communities for new teachers as a strategy to help them cope with the demands of teaching in a high poverty environment. Ross et al.'s findings couple

well with those of Clotfelter et al. (2006) who found that high poverty schools tend to have a much higher percentage of new teachers than low poverty schools. The combination of being a new teacher and working at a high poverty school may make having professional learning communities even more important because mentor teachers are likely harder to find at schools with primarily new teachers.

Clotfelter et al. (2006) ask how the quality of teachers and principals in high poverty schools compare to those in low poverty schools. The empirical analysis in Clotfelter et al.'s (2006) quantitative study uses administrative data on teachers and principals in North Carolina collected by the Department of Public Instruction through the North Carolina Education Research Center at Duke University. All identifying information was removed from the teacher and principal files before the researchers received them, and it is assumed that data for all teachers in North Carolina was provided. The researchers use data for the entire state of North Carolina and triangulate their findings with those of researchers in New York and California. Clotfelter et al. conclude that their findings about teacher and principal distribution across schools support the findings of other researchers. This strengthens the internal and ecological validity of the study because it makes their results more generalizable and indicates that others have found similar trends. In addition, since the research data is was gathered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction rather than by the researchers themselves, potential experimenter effects and bias are reduced. Credentials are studied for teachers and principals because the Clotfelter et al.'s past research found credentials to be statistically significant determinants of students/ achievement according to the researchers.

The teacher credentials included in Clotfelter et al.'s (2006) study are experience, competitiveness of undergraduate institution, licensure test scores, and whether or not participants were national board certified. Whether or not a teacher has a master's degree was not included as a variable because the researchers state that their past research indicates that it is not associated with student achievement in North Carolina. Experience was measured as percentage of teachers with less than three years of experience because the researchers' past research indicated that an additional year of teaching in the early years had a much greater effect on the quality of one's teaching than the effect of an additional year for someone who has been teaching longer. Quality of undergraduate institution is measured based on how competitive the admissions process is. This is specifically measured as the percentage of teachers who graduated from uncompetitive institutions. Licensure type is measured as the percentage of teachers teaching at a given school who hold something other than a regular teaching license such as a lateral entry, provisional, temporary, or emergency license. Licensure test scores are required for all teachers in North Carolina. Clotfelter et al. measure this variable by normalizing test scores for each of the major tests and setting them to a mean of zero and standard deviation of one. The principal credentials used are similar, but not identical.

The proxies Clotfelter et al. (2006) used for principal quality were principal test scores, competitiveness of undergraduate institution, administrative experience, and principal leadership rating. Competitiveness of undergraduate institution was measured in the same way as it was for teachers. The principal test scores were normalized in the same way as teacher licensure tests. Clotfelter et al. did not have data from when principals first became principals so data from when they were first licensed as assistant

principals is used to calculate the numbers of years a given principal has been a school administrator. Factor analysis from a 2002 governor's office survey of teacher working conditions is used to gauge principals' leadership skills. In the survey, teachers assessed the principal's vision for the school, their responsiveness to concerns about leadership, and the general strength of leadership. Since the governor's office only administered this survey once, data is only available for principals who were working as principals in North Carolina in 2002. Clotfelter et al. use the variables to label teachers and principals as well qualified or poorly qualified.

The primary weakness of Clotfelter et al.'s (2006) study is that they describe causal relationships for each of the variables measured. For instance, they regularly say things such as "a higher percentage indicates a lower quality teaching force" in relation to variables like licensure type, competitiveness of undergraduate institution, and experience (p.9). These variables contribute to the quality of a given teaching force, but it is unlikely that they are a reliable gauge of quality on their own. Similarly, the researchers determine the quality of a teacher's undergraduate education based on how competitive the university was. This is an oversimplified measure because it is possible that some great schools simply have more stringent admissions requirements and the application process itself is not very competitive since those who would not meet the requirements do not apply. Regardless, there were very strong trends that arose.

In every case, the high poverty schools had the highest percentage of teachers with less than three years experience, who graduated from less competitive graduate institutions, and who held non-regular licenses relative to schools with less poverty (Clotfelter et al. 2006). Clotfelter et al. also contend that high poverty schools were less

likely to have National Board certified teachers and average teacher licensure test scores were lowest in high poverty schools. In many cases, the differences are sizeable as is the case with National Board certification: 3.9% of teachers at high poverty schools held this certification on average compared to 9.7% at the low poverty schools. In terms of teacher turnover, differences were particularly large at the middle school level where turnover was ~25% per year which exceeds that of low poverty schools by more than 40%. However, turnover was higher at high poverty schools studied at all levels. The findings about principals also show that lower qualified principals are more likely to work at higher poverty schools.

Despite differences in sample sizes and data availability, the patterns Clotfelter et al. (2006) found for principals were very consistent across poverty quartiles. The only variable that was not statistically significant was the principal's tenure at the school in which s/he worked. Overall, principals at high poverty schools received lower leadership ratings from the teachers that worked with them in 2002, attended less competitive undergraduate institutions, and had lower Praxis and accreditation scores than their colleagues at lower poverty schools in North Carolina.

Clotfelter et al. (2006) suggest that part of the reason high poverty schools had less qualified teachers was that teachers care about salary and working conditions. North Carolina has an ABCs accountability system which further pressures teachers in low performing schools and provides financial bonuses to those working in successful schools. Clotfelter et al. do not explain what it takes for a school to be labeled successful, but they suggest that high poverty schools are more likely to be labeled as failing.

Students in poverty may come to school less ready to learn and have less education support at home and Clotfelter et al. (2006) note that this may cause teachers to feel that the working conditions in high poverty schools are harsher. Since salaries are usually uniform within districts, there is a trend of more experienced, higher qualified, teachers to “trading-up” to lower poverty schools within their district. In most cases, teachers within a district are offered teaching positions that open before the public is invited to apply so new teachers are likely to end up at higher poverty schools. Clotfelter et al. note that “To the extent that new hires are novice teachers, the effect is to put the least experienced teaches in the schools with the harshest working conditions” (p.18). This quote is evidence of another oversimplification on Clotfelter et al.’s part because it is unlikely that all high poverty schools are harsh to work in. It also highlights that teacher quality matters and that children in poverty are most likely to have inexperienced teachers. Wenglinsky (2002) also found that teacher quality matters.

Wenglinsky (2002) tested two hypotheses about teacher quality. Wenglinsky’s first hypothesis was that of the three measures of teacher quality (classroom practices, pro-devel, and ed attainment/teacher input), classroom practices would have the greatest influence on student performance. Wenglinsky’s second hypothesis was that the three measures of teacher quality combined would have approximately the same influence on achievement as background. Wenglinsky relies upon quantitative multilevel structural equation modeling that utilizes cross-sectional data from a large participant base.

7,146 eighth graders in the United States who took the NAEP in 1996 and their teachers who took a background questionnaire participated in Wenglinsky’s (2002) study. According to Wenglinsky, NAEP is a national test administered every year or two to

nationally representative samples of fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders. The subjects it tests vary and a background questionnaire is included. NAEP was a reliable tool because it provided nationally representative data for eighth graders. A representative sample helped establish generalizability as did the large sample size. The indicators used and the quantitative method format make it easy for Wenglinsky to control for and compare the effects of different variables such as poverty (as measured by FRPL enrollment) and class size.

As is a problem with any standardized assessment tool, the wording and presentation of NAEP may have affected participant responses. If the subject area questions were biased then the achievement scores may be unreliable. In addition, there are many indicator measures at the school level that are assessed in relation to achievement, but at the student level, the only indicator measured is SES. SES was measured in terms of free/reduced lunch enrollment which is a weak measure because it assumes that all students living in low income households will apply. Wenglinsky (2002) uses 21 classroom measures, but only 10 pro development and 3 teacher inputs so the findings may have different levels of validity. Wenglinsky stated the following limitations: data is cross-sectional, only covers one grade in one subject, better indicators of constructs are needed, and it is not possible to measure how receptive teachers are to professional development. Wenglinsky measured student performance based on students' NAEP test score.

Student background was measured through the following four measures from the background questionnaire: Father's level of education, mother's level of education, whether there are 25+ books in the home, whether there is an encyclopedia, and whether

the family subscribes to a newspaper or magazine. The teacher background questionnaire measured teachers' education level, whether the teacher majored/minored in the subject s/he was teaching, and years of experience. Overall, the data strongly supported Wenglinsky's (2002) initial inclinations.

Both of Wenglinsky's (2002) hypotheses were confirmed. Teacher quality was correlated with student achievement when class size and SES were taken into account. Wenglinsky found that teacher's major, professional development in higher order thinking, professional development in diversity, hands on learning, and higher order thinking skills were most associated with achievement. The hypothesis that the impact of teacher quality would approximately equal the impact of a student experiencing poverty was also confirmed. In fact, the impact of teaching was somewhat greater than that of poverty according to Wenglinsky. The hypothesis that classroom practices would have the greatest effect of the teacher quality measures was also confirmed by Wenglinsky.

Wenglinsky's (2002) finding that teachers matter at least as much as poverty is extremely important given the findings of Clotfelter et al. (2006) that lower qualified teachers are more likely to teach at high poverty schools and of Ross et al. (2007) that teacher education programs are not doing an adequate job of preparing teachers to work in high poverty schools. The findings of all three groups of researchers indicated that students in poverty regularly face challenges in the classroom resulting from inferior learning environments beyond challenges and stresses that result from living in poverty. As is mentioned above, Ross et al. found that some pre-service teachers and mentor teachers felt a desire to blame students and their families for struggling in school. It is unfortunate that students facing the challenge of living in poverty are also more likely to

face the challenge of having second rate teachers. This issue is discussed further in chapter four. Upon reading studies like Wenglinsky's, Ross et al.'s, and Clotfelter et al.'s, it is easy to get into the mindset of wanting to save the children experiencing poverty by working in a high poverty school or getting involved with students' home lives.

Howley et al. (2006) examine how the middle class' aspiration to save children from poverty plays out in the context of community and how mathematics is taught at six rural high achieving schools. The primary weakness of Howley et al.'s study is that they do not explore their research question about math education at length at all. As a reader, I am not walking away with any ideas about how math was taught at these schools or best teaching practices for math. This study is still very valuable in the context of working with students in poverty because Howley et al. explore their question of how the middle class' aspiration to save the poor plays out in schools at length. The six schools represented were all honored by the State Education Agency for their high achievement in mathematics during the 2002-2003 school year and all had 40-60% economically disadvantaged student populations. The six schools represented four rural districts from one state and included one 9th-12th high school, two 7th-12th high schools, one 5th-8th middle school, one K-8th elementary school, and one K-4th elementary school. Howley et al. coded the data to identify salient themes that explained the character of social class relations. All of Howley et al.'s interviews were transcribed and the transcripts were coded using Atlas-Ti software.

Howley et al. (2006) spent approximately five days in each of the six schools, conducted classroom observations, and approximately twenty-four 30-90 minute semi-structured interviews. Howley et al.'s use of approximation (e.g. approximately five days

of observation per school) increased the probability of researcher bias because some schools may have gotten more attention than others. Interviews consisted of individual conversations with teachers, parents and community members, and focus-group discussions with students. A major strength of this study is that Howley and his colleagues provide a plethora of descriptions for each school by identifying how the themes play out in each setting. Such explicit narration makes it easier to contextualize Howley et al.'s findings. However, it would be difficult for future researchers to replicate Howley et al.'s study because they do not go into detail about the type of questions asked. Coding of the interviews resulted in 54 themes, of which 21 explicitly related to social class.

Howley et al. (2006) found that the following were salient themes: *in loco parentis*, teaching middle class behavior, extolling the value of a college degree, and othering the poor. *In loco parentis*, the belief that teachers must fill in for poor parents' limited capacities, came up in several interviews. Four schools representing two districts were identified as attempting to save the poor. The researchers mentioned that all four assumed civic responsibility in various ways. This is in contrast to one of the other schools where impoverished adult lives for high school students coming from poverty was accepted as something outside the realm of the schools control. Accepting poverty as outside the realm of the school supports the notion purported in the history portion of this review that some feel poverty is a social issue and is not the responsibility of educators. The researchers found that engagement with poverty in the four identified schools studied was complex and that teachers were seen by some parents as adult role models with

whom kids could talk- something some kids might not get at home. The most nuanced theme in these schools was teaching middle class behavior.

Howley et al. (2006) found that teaching middle class behavior was especially true in terms of classroom management as “the social norms in all of these schools centered on cordiality, respect, and deference to adults” (p.14). Howley and his colleagues note that they felt the emphasis on respect for authority and obedience were oppressive, but when they asked community members and educators about it, the consensus was that they felt proud of their students’ ability to be quiet and respectful. Howley et al. draws an inference between this ideal and the belief that the participants interviewed did not want the future of their community left to chance. Schools were seen as both a place of community action and character development.

In reference to the theme of extolling the value of a college degree, Howley et al. (2006) found that, in both communities, the alleged failure to support education stemmed from parental inexperience or the punitive benefits of higher education. One of the principals mentioned that: “I think a lot of students in the district have not had the model set for them that education is something that can benefit them, that it’s something that’s important, that it’s something they should look at. Sometimes, even, that they should look at it as anything more than just as an inconvenience on their lives or something” (p.19). Howley et al. do not appear surprised by the observation that many students come from homes that do not appear to value education considering the ways families in poverty have been treated in American schools. Howley et al. note that, “The legacy of skepticism among impoverished families has a solid justification in the history and culture of schooling” (p.19). Historically, schools have approached working with children

in poverty with the mentality that such children are an inconvenience and require extra support to make up for unsuitable home lives. This mentality was alive in most of the schools Howley et al. observed.

Howley et al. (2006) conclude that five of the six schools appeared to support the condescending aspiration to essentially save the poor through reforming or redeeming children of the poor. Teachers in both districts cited Ruby Payne as helping them understand poverty, but Howley et al. postulate that this may be partially because she appeals to the middle-class myopia of saving the poor.

Willemsburg Elementary was the only school not setting out to rescue the poor or push a middle class agenda. Howley et al. (2006) note that this may have been because there was a 40% Amish student body and there may have been unstated prevailing middle class ideologies. In addition, the Amish, not those in poverty, were otherized within the Willemsburg's social hierarchy. In Howley et al.'s eyes, it was the most inclusive in that there were hardly any condescending attitudes about those in poverty and there was a huge emphasis on community.

Summary

The importance of community building is a theme that connects all four studies about pedagogical decisions. Howley et al. (2006) discussed the importance of community in relation to students' social perceptions and achievement. Ross et al. (2007) conclude that professional learning communities are one way to help beginning teachers manage the demands of working in a high poverty school. Clotfelter et al. (2006) and Wenglinsky (2002) do not directly talk about community, but Wenglinsky discussed the importance of teachers' classroom practices greatly affecting student achievement and

Clotfelter et al. found that high poverty schools generally had lower quality teachers. Both of these findings relate to community because a thriving professional community would give teachers more support at high poverty schools and make such work environments seem less daunting. Wenglinsky also found that teacher's major, professional development in higher order thinking, professional development in diversity, hands on learning, and higher order thinking skills were most associated with achievement. In relation to Wenglinsky's study, teachers are generally much more adept at engaging students when students feel like they are part of a learning community.

Summary

A critical review of the professional literature was conducted to explore the question posed in chapter one; how can teachers create classrooms that provide equitable learning contexts for children in poverty and become advocates for children experiencing poverty? The following seven themes emerged as a result of exploring the available research; learning about the home environment, learning about systemic strategies that promote equity, the potential of leadership and trust, promoting resiliency, student anxiety and perceived support, homelessness, and pedagogical decisions. The themes were selected because they provide a representation of the types of research available that explore the impact of living in poverty on children's educations. Not every theme is directly linked to classroom practice and most of the studies were conducted within the last five years which highlights that additional research is needed and that studying the interplay between equity and poverty in relation to K-12 education is a relatively new phenomenon. The themes that are not as directly related to classroom experiences such as learning about the home environment and learning about systemic strategies that

promote equity are still useful to classroom teachers because they provide teachers with information that will help them become better advocates and promote equity at a more macro level. Ideally, every study would examine the effectiveness of a particular strategy for fostering an equitable learning environment for children experiencing poverty, but the research base simply is not there. The key findings from each theme are restated below.

Learning about the Home Environment Summary

Rathbun et al. (2005) found that children who live in poverty and a single parent home, speak a language other than English at home, or have a mother who did not complete high school tend to demonstrate fewer concrete skills in kindergarten and that the gap widens over the first four years of school. Stipek and Ryan's (1997) finding that preschoolers who live in poverty start out school at an academic supports Rathbun, West, and Walton. Similarly, Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008), Abbot-Shim et al. (2005), and Milne and Plourde (2006) all concluded that one must consider home variables other than income such as time allotted to academic activities, time spent watching television, and number of books in the home to determine what strategies are most useful. The findings also suggest that teacher decisions in the early years of schooling such as ability grouping and retention may be partially to blame for the inequitable classroom experiences of many children in poverty because, according to Rathbun, et al., gaps in achievement between children experiencing poverty and children not experiencing tend to widen.

Learning about Systemic Strategies that Promote Equity Summary

The findings of Crow et al. (2009), Heinemann et al. (2008), and Brown (2007) convey the trend that some curriculums and districts are more equitable than others for

children experiencing poverty. According to Brown, one cannot assume that one's district distributes Title 1 funds equitably. According to Heinemann et al. and Crow et al., there are specific curriculums such as Words Works and Reading Mastery that are more equitable for students experiencing poverty. This is a controversial finding because Zull (2002) noted that teaching characterized by direct instruction, as is the norm with Words Works, is an inferior strategy when one takes brain biology into account. The studies prepare educators to critique the curriculum and distribution of Title 1 funding within their own district which helps educators determine where advocacy is needed in order to make classrooms more equitable.

The Potential of Leadership and Trust Summary

Strong leadership by educators and trust in students' abilities are important components of promoting equity. Goddard et al.'s (2009) found that when teachers exhibit a high level of trust in students, it mediates the effects of poverty and thus makes the classroom experience more equitable. Goddard et al. noted that the impact of trust is most pronounced in reading and math and that teachers at high poverty schools tend to exhibit less trust than those teaching in low poverty environments. Trust from principals is more widely studied. Beecher and Sweeny (2008), Horst and Martin (2007), and Jacobson et al. (2007) explore how several principals at high poverty schools increased equity through trusting and providing solid leadership. The findings support Goddard et al.'s finding that trust is important and link it to leadership. The studies are useful because they affected classroom practice and one could integrate others into the classroom. As Beecher and Sweeny note, things such as student generated projects, tiered assignments, and writers workshop were all directly linked to increases in equity. Extra-

curricular opportunities were a part of each principal's vision and correlated with increased equity for children experiencing poverty as measured by state assessments. Teachers at schools where this is not the norm could advocate for increased opportunities or learn more about grant writing and get the process started themselves.

Promoting Resiliency Summary

Given that resilient children are better equipped to deal with adversity such as experiencing poverty, creating equitable classrooms entails finding ways to help students develop resilient traits. Abelev (2009) cited strong mentoring relationships outside the family as a consistent theme among resilient interviewees. She also found that adults had helped several participants by advocating for the children's educations. The findings provide those in the education community with the potential strategy for increasing equity for children experiencing poverty of mentor relationships. Mentor relationships could take the form of community and parent volunteer support or developing mentor relationships with students in other classrooms. Making this happen may require advocacy on the teacher's part because not all school cultures are supportive.

Other strategies for promoting equity within one's classroom for children experiencing poverty include those found by Cefai (2007). Cefai found that getting to know students, creating a child-centered environment, encouraging students to share their experiences, providing space for collaborative activities, collaborating with other teachers, and validating students' responses were all strategies used by the educators studied to help their students become more resilient. Possible additional strategies include finding ways to connect reading to students' existing schema more concretely because as Coladarci (2006) points out, for schools of average size, an increase in poverty

by one standard deviation resulted in a decrease in reading achievement by approximately half of a standard deviation. Strategies used to increase resilience are useful to those in the educational community because they help children develop an internal locus of control over their lives and increase equity by valuing the strengths of every student. Promoting an equitable environment for minority children experiencing poverty may prove especially important because, as Borman and Rachuba (2001) note, “The ‘double jeopardy’ of being poor and a minority student exposes students to greater risks and fewer resilience promoting conditions.”

Student Anxiety and Perceived Support Summary

The studies on anxiety and perceived support by Malecki and Demaray (2006), Yasgur and Carner (1973), and Dolan and McCaslin (2008) suggest that solid support is necessary to foster equitable learning environments for children experiencing poverty. The conclusion by all three researchers that students’ perceived anxiety and support impacts their academic success suggests that educators need to strive to create an environment where children feel at ease and supported. Advocacy may be necessary to make this happen because some structures such as a prescribed curriculum or lack of community supports for children may inhibit a child’s ability to feel supported. Similarly, structures such as ability grouping and retention may unnecessarily illicit anxiety in children experiencing poverty. Additional research is needed that builds off the findings of Malecki and Demaray, Yasgur and Carner, and Dolan and McCaslin and looks more specifically into viable strategies designed for teachers.

Malecki and Demaray (2006) suggested four specific strategies for teachers and one can infer strategies from the findings of Yasgur and Carner (1973) and Dolan and

McCaslin (2008). Malecki and Demaray suggest that the following interventions are useful in helping reduce the anxiety of students experiencing poverty and increase their level of perceived support: 1.) Increasing parental involvement in schools 2.) Training teachers on the types of support they can provide 3.) Implementing peer tutoring programs 4.) Assisting children experiencing poverty in increasing their social networks. Teachers could advocate for increased professional development on how to best support students and could integrate the remaining three strategies into classroom structures. The findings of Yasgur and Carner suggest that the aforementioned strategies may also benefit African American students, but one should interpret the findings with caution because the study was not conducted recently and the different indicators used suggested conflicted results. Dolan and McCaslin's conclusion that student perceptions affect what it means for students to know something in the first place and their motivation to do so adds yet another layer to consider.

Dolan and McCaslin (2008) note that in the high poverty schools studied, most students equated learning with providing the right answer. The desire to gauge one's success by whether or not one provides an accurate answer likely stems from federal trends towards standardized testing and increased accountability for educators. Dolan and McCaslin go on to note that students in poverty are more likely to learn in environments where success is heavily gauged in this way because they are more likely to attend schools under restructuring or comprehensive school reform. What does all this mean for the educator working to better advocate for children in poverty and create an equitable classroom experience for this population? It means that educators have the large task of advocating for macro level equity at the federal level (eg. restructuring and

comprehensive school reform) while simultaneously integrating structures in one's own classroom that help children feel supported and at ease with their anxieties.

Homelessness Summary

There is a large body of research available on resilience literature and considerably less available of homeless youth. Both Masten et al. (1997) and Prescott et al. (2008) tie their research on homelessness into the larger body of resilience literature which suggests that resiliency literature may be the most pertinent of available research. Masten et al. and Prescott et al. focus on different aspects of homelessness, but both are similar in that both consider the role of resiliency in the lives of homeless children. Prescott et al. found that art is a conduit to resiliency for some homeless youth and Masten et al. found that caring relationships with adults is another. Teachers can easily integrate both of these facilitators of resiliency by working to create authentic relationships with students and integrating art into lessons. Activating students' prior knowledge is another potential way to help create positive student-teacher relationships because it shows that the educator authentically cares about students and about creating a classroom context that is equitable for children experiencing poverty.

Pedagogical Decisions Summary

The importance of community building is a theme that connects all four studies about pedagogical decisions. Howley et al. (2006) discussed the importance of community in relation to students' social perceptions and achievement. Ross et al. (2007) conclude that professional learning communities are one way to help beginning teachers manage the demands of working in a high poverty school. Clotfelter et al. (2006) and Wenglinsky (2002) do not directly talk about community, but Wenglinsky discussed the

importance of teachers' classroom practices greatly affecting student achievement and Clotfelter et al. found that high poverty schools generally had lower quality teachers. The finding that high poverty schools tend to have less qualified teachers may relate to Goddard et al.'s (2009) finding that teachers at high poverty schools tend to trust students' abilities less. Both of these findings relate to community because a thriving professional community would give teachers more support at high poverty schools and make such work environments seem less daunting. Wenglinsky noted that teacher's major, professional development in higher order thinking, professional development in diversity, hands on learning, and higher order thinking skills were most associated with achievement. In relation to Wenglinsky's study, teachers are generally much more adept at engaging students when students feel like they are part of a learning community.

In Conclusion

Chapter three explored the professional literature regarding how teachers can best advocate and create equitable classroom learning environments for children experiencing poverty. The methods were explained and findings synthesized. The fourth and final chapter begins by revisiting the main ideas from the argument in chapters one and two then discusses the research findings in relation to their relative merit, strengths and weaknesses, and provides some definitive conclusions about the body of research. Specific classroom implications grounded in the findings are provided as are suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

Introduction

Chapters one through three worked to answer the question of how teachers can create equitable learning environments for children experiencing poverty and become more affective advocates for this population. Chapter one explained that this question deserves attention in the educational community by providing the rationale that 20% of children in America live in poverty and it is well accepted that poverty tends to negatively impact student learning. As public educators, it is teachers' responsibility to strive for equity in their classrooms. Chapter two provided a brief history of advocating for equitable educational opportunities for children experiencing poverty beginning with the Charity school movement and ending with an overview of a couple contemporary organizations designed to foster resilience and a description of the trend toward increased accountability for educators.

Federal aid intended to make schools a more equitable place for all students led to the government's desire to prove that the funds were making a difference and being used effectively. This was and is important to the government because candidates must justify spending to the public in order to be reelected and have public support. Forcing schools to show that the federal dollars are making a difference also helps the government uphold the public perception that it is helping take care of the people. This desire to have tangible proof helped birth the accountability movement in schools and the increased emphasis on standardized testing over the past few decades.

However, Federal programs designed to assist children in poverty have never been fully funded. There have always been a lot of children eligible for federal services such as

Head Start who do not receive services. This partial lack of funding undermines America's dream of being the land of equal opportunity because children are provided with inequitable chances to succeed. Funding disparities also contribute to the inequitable distribution of teachers and principals discussed by Clotfelter et al. (2006). An in depth review of current research is provided in chapter three. The key findings from chapter three are again outlined in chapter four as are implications for classroom practice and suggestions for future research.

Summary of Findings

Learning about the Home Environment

Studies about the home environment focused on identifying additive factors in the home that help make the educative experience of children experiencing poverty more equitable and on measuring the impact of risk factors. The findings suggest that having a home environment where time is regularly dedicated to academics, having books available in the home, minimizing television viewing, and having attended preschool all positively impact children's educative experience (Milne and Plourde, 2006; Stipek and Ryan, 1997). The trend emerged that in addition to the availability of books in the home, having a strong home literacy environment in general characterized by reading to one's child and engaging in enrichment activities that promote literacy help children experiencing poverty have equal footing (Abbot-Shim et al., 2005). Teachers need to work with parents to ensure that the home literacy environment is supportive of learning and that time is regularly dedicated to academic activities.

All of the research reviewed focused on young children because that is what was available. The home environment is likely studied more for young children because,

“SES...tends to be most detrimental in the earliest years of development” (Milne and Plourde, 2006, p.183). The findings in this sub-section are highly reliable and generalizable because most of the researchers used large sample sizes and the findings support one another. It is particularly noteworthy that the findings support one another because this subsection contains a combination of domestic and international studies.

Learning about Systemic Strategies that Promote Equity

The findings of Crow et al. (2009), Heinemann et al. (2008), and Brown (2007) convey the trend that some curriculums and districts are more equitable than others for children experiencing poverty. All three use FRPL enrollment as the indicator for poverty and focus on children in elementary school. The research represents a combination of longitudinal and short-term studies as well as qualitative and quantitative. The strongest finding is that early literacy instruction such as is provided through Words Works increased equity (Heinemann et al.). This finding is strong because Heinemann et al. track students' progress over a six year span and used a large random sample of 750 participants. Crowe et al.'s finding that the Reading Mastery curriculum is most equitable is not as strong because the high risk of interaction with unmeasured variables resulting from the fact that the curricula were not randomly assigned.

The Potential of Leadership and Trust

The major finding about leadership and trust was that when teachers model a high level of trust in students it mediates the effects of poverty and thus makes the classroom experience more equitable. In fact, this finding has the support of every research in this subsection (Beecher and Sweeny, Goddard et al. 2009; 2008; Horst and Martin's, 2007; Jacobson et al. 2007). The trend that the findings of all four studies support one another

adds considerable validity and makes it easier to transfer the findings to other contexts. Three of the studies focused on the particular demographic of principals at high poverty schools and the fourth focused on classroom practices. Ideally, all four studies would have focused on classroom practices, but the research base was limited. The fact that one study focused on classroom practices and that the practices supported those unveiled in the studies on principals strengthens the generalizability. Beecher and Sweeny specifically recommend integrating student generated projects, tiered assignments, opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities, and writer's workshops.

Promoting Resiliency

According to the research, promoting resiliency is about teaching children how to face adversity and challenge with an optimistic attitude and internal locus of control. Borman and Rachuba (2001) add that the aforementioned strategies are particularly important for minorities because "The 'double jeopardy' of being poor and a minority student exposes students to greater risks and fewer resilience promoting conditions." The professional literature suggests that getting to know students, creating a child-centered environment encouraging students to share their experiences, providing space for collaborative activities, collaborating with other teachers, validating students' responses, finding ways to connect reading to students' existing schema concretely, strong mentoring relationships outside the family, and advocating for children's educations are strategies for classroom teachers to promote equitable learning environments for children experiencing poverty (Abelev, 2009; Cefai, 2007; Coladarci, 2006; Green et al., 2007) found that most of the teachers studied claimed they promoted resilience most by helping children develop an internal locus of control through encouraging hard work and

determination. Overall, the results are highly reliable. The snowball sampling methodology used by Abelev and Cefai's involved classroom presence slightly weakens their findings, but the risks are minimal because their findings are supported by those of other researchers.

Student Anxiety and Perceived Support

The conclusion by Malecki and Demaray (2006), Yasgur and Carner (1973), and Dolan and McCaslin (2008), and Elias and Haynes (2008) that students' perceived anxiety and support impacts their academic success suggests that educators need to strive to create an environment where children feel at ease and supported. Yasgur and Carner's finding that African American children experiencing poverty tended to have fewer supports and experience greater anxiety was weak because the two indicators used concluded different results. However, the fact that Yasgur and Carner's finding was supported by Borman and Rachuba (2001) increased the validity. Dolan and McCaslin's study is the only one that utilized qualitative methodology, and they obtained findings similar to those who used quantitative methods.

Homelessness

The theme of homelessness was comprised of only two studies because despite an abundance of demographic statistical information, it was difficult to locate research. Both Masten et al. (1997) and Prescott et al. (2008) tie their research on homelessness into the larger body of resilience literature which suggests that resiliency literature may be the most pertinent of available research. Prescott et al. found that art is a conduit to resiliency for some homeless youth and Masten et al. found that caring relationships with adults is another. Prescott et al.'s findings triangulate well with those of Elias and Haynes (2008)

as well as Malecki and Demaray (2006) who found that supportive relationships with adults is Both researchers rely upon qualitative interview-based methods in addition to quantitative methods. It is difficult to compare the findings of Prescott et al. and Masten et al. even though they both studied homeless children because those studied by Masten et al. were younger, lived on the opposite side of the country, and lived in a short-term shelter.

Pedagogical Decisions

The importance of community building is a theme that connected all four studies about pedagogical decisions. Two of the studies were quantitative and two were qualitative. The researcher in this subsection supports Ross et al.'s (2007) notion that teachers who are effective and work in high poverty schools generally believe that there is a way for them to reach every student and that it is their responsibility as educators to find it. Goddard et al.'s (2009) finding that teachers in high poverty schools generally had less trust in their students and students' guardians than teachers at schools with predominately middle and upper class student bodies strongly reinforces Ross et al.'s work with pre-service teachers. Ross et al.'s study found a tendency for teachers in high poverty schools to blame students /families and experience self-doubt because of things like high stakes testing, classroom management, and family involvement. The pattern arose that teachers at high poverty schools need to work with districts, state governments, and the federal government to advocate for changes in the structures that perpetuate a system that makes high poverty schools the least desirable to work at in terms of working conditions and salary (Clotfelter et al., 2006; Wenglinsky, 2002).

Classroom Implications

Micro Level Advocacy

There are many specific and simple strategies classroom teachers can employ to make their rooms more equitable for students in poverty. Though, the recommendations are beneficial tools to engage all learners. All too often students in poverty are unnecessarily otherized when viewed through the middle class' paradigm of success. It is as though children in poverty are somehow inherently different from their peers which is not true; they simply tend to face challenges that are not commonplace for their peers. As Valerie Polakow describes it,

“Poverty talk is always a discourse about *them*...When we turn and look at *their children*, we feel concern about this future citizenry, this growing young population ‘at risk’, whom we call ‘at risk’ less out of outrage and compassion than because their condition threatens our security and comfort, our children, our schools, our neighborhoods, our property values” (1987, p.55 cited in Greene, 1995, p.33).

It is the aspiration of the strategies outlined here not to further otherize children in poverty, but to outline ways to meet some of the needs of this population that are often overlooked in American schools from a proactive strengths-based lens with an emphasis on both macro and micro level methodology.

Micro level strategies relate to things such as teachers' attitudes towards students' ability and desire to learn, engaging all learners, and making one's classroom a welcoming and inviting learning space Individual classroom practices of teachers are extremely important because teachers often form the backbone of students' classroom

experiences. One must also learn to advocate at the macro level for equitable school and district policies, funding distribution, and home learning environments as all work together to construct students' overall classroom experiences and learning opportunities.

Helping Parents Foster Positive Home Learning Environments

Home learning environment is unique because it directly influences how students do in school (Abbot-Shim et al., 2005; Milne and Plourde, 2006; Nanoyama-Tarumi, 2008; Stipek and Ryan, 1997), but is not a variable that teachers control or that is directly impacted through systemic advocacy on the part of the teacher. It is difficult to generalize the home environments of children in poverty to make specific recommendations about how to help parents foster supportive home learning environments because all families are unique, but one important component is literacy.

Home literacy (valuing literacy and reading with children regularly at home) is one area where teachers can help parents support their children's academic development, and in doing so, promote equity within the classroom. As Milne and Plourde (2006) note, home literacy is significantly correlated with emergent literacy development and social development in children. Ways to support literacy in the home include explaining to students and parents why reading is important, modeling that one values literacy, having library card application forms available in the classroom, and inviting parents to participate in classroom literacy activities regularly.

The assisted reading model used by the national Institute of Reading Development is another tool teachers could share with parents to help make supporting one's child's reading at home less frustrating and more successful. To begin, the parent reads the book in full to the child. In assisted reading with substantial support, the parent then reads one

to three lines before having the child reads those same lines back. This reinforces the child's association between spoken language and text as well as their understanding of story structures. In assisted reading with less support, the parent reads a full page or two facing pages to the child before the child reads those same pages aloud to the parent. Finally, in assisted independent reading, the child reads to the parent before hearing the text and the parent provides support by helping with difficult words, pacing, and providing encouragement. Sharing assisted reading strategies with parents may help them feel more confident when reading with their child at home and help make reading an enjoyable regular routine.

Encouraging parents to extol literacy at home is especially necessary given that federal programs aimed at reducing the achievement gap between students in poverty and their peers from upper or middle class families are only moderately successful. Stipek and Ryan (1997) note that the results of their study “paint a clear picture of children from relatively low-income homes beginning school at a considerable academic disadvantage. A large SES gap was found even among the sample of children who had attended at least a year of preschool” (p.720). Thus, parents cannot exclusively rely upon federal programs such as Head Start and Word Works to prepare their children for school and must actively work with children at home.

This is not discount the benefit of pre-school, in fact, Heidemann et al. (2008) found that children who received early literacy instruction through Words Works or Head Start performed higher on standardized tests than waitlisted children not receiving these supplements several years after exiting pre-school. These trends indicate that children benefit most from attending pre-school and having a supportive home learning

environment. However, funding limitations on for Head Start and Words Works programs often mean that only children from the poorest of homes are accepted into the program even though many more are eligible. Eligible children who are not from extreme poverty homes are likely to slip through the funding cracks so it is especially important that the children's parents know how to support learning at home and create literacy rich home environments.

Both Stipek and Ryan (1997) and Abbot-Shim et al. (2005) found that SES alone was not a strong predictor of achievement- parents and teachers are also important factors. This finding implies that through actively helping parents create positive learning environments at home and creating inclusive learning environments within the classroom, it is possible to help children have an equitable school experience. Beyond the classroom and working with parents lie macro level issues that affect how equitable teachers are able to make their classrooms.

Macro Level Advocacy

Curriculum

Macro level advocacy may seem outside of the classroom teacher's realm because it deals with issues outside of the classroom, but it is important and manageable.

Learning more about how one's specific district distributes federal funds and about the curriculums used is a good place to start because it provides a general overview of what the districts priorities are and the degree to which the district is impacted by Reading First legislation.

Reading First mandates that schools use scientifically based reading curricula per the National Reading Panel (NRP) guidelines. This requires the inclusion of phonemic

awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary instruction. However, researchers have pointed out that the NRP's findings were likely skewed by special interests and that the sole emphasis of the NRP report is on technical aspects of reading rather than developing absorption or a love of reading (Yatvin, Weaver, and Garan, 2003). Not a single elementary teacher was represented on the panel and though the United States government asked for a diverse panel, it was relatively homogenous. In considering the effectiveness of the Reading First curriculums, one must realize that the question of whether or not the curriculum's reviewed represent the best practices for teaching children in poverty to read is a matter of some debate. Some argue that a whole language approach to reading is more natural and effective than the phonics-based approach supported by the NRP.

The best way to ensure curricula are equitable for all learners is to stay current on educational research and critique the curriculums one is using. This way, if a curriculum favors a particular group of learners, the teacher can discuss the shortfall with her or his principal and work together to find a solution. Having educational research to back up one's position will add validity to one's argument and make principals more receptive to the information. It is also possible in some districts for teachers to join curriculum selection panels and critique curriculums even before they are instituted in the classroom. Districts spend a lot of time and money selecting curriculums so some principals may experience dissonance upon hearing about pitfalls of a curriculum. Tavis and Aaronson (2007) explain that dissonance often leads one to self-justify and tune out new ideas so teachers should point out positive attributes in addition to their concerns.

In most cases, supplementing the curriculum is enough to make it more inclusive of students experiencing poverty. The type of supplements needed depend on the relative strengths and weaknesses of one's curriculum. For instance, Crowe et al. (2009) found that most students taught using the Reading Mastery curriculum demonstrated gains in Oral Reading Fluency and met benchmark regardless of background whereas students taught using Open Court scored differently along SES lines. Similarly, Crowe et al. found that students taught using Success for All or Houghton-Mifflin both scored lower on correct words per minute and oral reading fluency than with other curriculums studied. Knowing possible pitfalls of one's curriculum make it easier for teachers to know where they may need to supplement with additional learning activities.

Funding

According to Brown (2007), 92% of all public schools in America receive some Title 1 funding. Title 1 is intended to make schools more equitable learning for children in poverty and children from low-income homes. Yet, with nearly all schools receiving at least some funds, it appears that Title 1 is not necessarily reaching the students who need it most. If working within a district that receives Title 1, research whether schools with the most children in poverty are receiving the most Title 1 money per student or whether each school receives the same amount regardless of student population. Brown (2007) found that "In the three largest districts in the United States, 23% of poor children are not receiving federal Title 1 funds" (p.141). Teachers should take action to see if this is also the norm in their given district. As Tavis and Aaronson (2007) note, individuals often self justify upon encountering dissonance. Thus, the best way to approach administrators about funding inequities is likely with an authentic attitude of curiosity as accusatory tone

will likely result in the administrator becoming defensive. The important thing to keep in mind is the end goal of creating equitable learning environments for all children, and teachers and administrators need to work together to make this happen.

Advocacy and Leadership

Highly qualified teachers need to work with districts, state governments, and the federal government to work to change the structures that perpetuate a system that makes high poverty schools the least desirable to work at in terms of working conditions and salary. In addition, highly qualified teachers need to think ethically about the impact they hope to have on America's children and where they can make the biggest impact. As Clotfelter et al. (2006) note, this in an era where teachers at high poverty schools are under the most public scrutiny, teachers who are competent and qualified are who we need in high poverty schools, but just working there is not enough. Teachers need to go in expecting to work harder than they would have to elsewhere and to receive less recognition and to work to make changes so all kids have access to a quality education. Teachers need to see themselves as leaders.

Principals are generally perceived as the leaders of schools, but teachers hold leadership roles too. Many of the strategies used by principals who successfully foster equitable school learning contexts are directly applicable to teachers. In order to successfully advocate for children in poverty, teachers must have strong leadership skills. Looking at leadership strategies that are affective in high poverty schools helps teachers in similar contexts triangulate what they know about positive leadership in general with leadership in this particular context.

Jacobson et al.'s (2007) case study of successful leadership in three high poverty elementary schools identified several useful strategies used by principals that teachers could integrate into their practice. The beneficial traits identified in principals that teachers could integrate were minimizing disruptions during instruction time, belief in students' ability/desire to learn, leading by example, educating the whole child, approaching negative situations as learning opportunities, valuing experimenting with new classroom strategies, recruiting parent volunteers, creating a sense of community, and creating a respectful and kind family-like school culture. The principals all believed that every child can and will learn at school (Jacobson et al.). Horst and Martin (2007) found some similar strategies being used at a rural Missouri school. Teachers will also benefit from believing that every child can learn.

Meeting with one's principal regularly is helpful for teachers developing leadership characteristics and creating inclusive learning environments because it allows teachers and principals to work together to meet the needs of the children. The teachers of Central Elementary reported to Beecher and Sweeny (2008) that this helped teachers and administrators work together in supporting student success. One can infer from Beecher and Sweeny's work that creating an inclusive learning community through the use of curriculum enrichment and differentiation is a useful way to increase the success of all students, but is an especially important support for students in poverty. It is possible to make this inference even though Beecher and Sweeny only catalog one school's experience because the developmental theories of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget also indicate that children learn best when they are actively engaged in their learning. Trusting

that students can and want to learn is a prerequisite leadership trait teachers need to create equitable classroom experiences for children in poverty.

With the attitude that one cannot reach particular children, one will never succeed in creating an equitable classroom learning context for children in poverty. Goddard et al.'s (2009) finding that teachers in high poverty schools generally had less trust in their students and students' guardians than teachers at schools with predominantly middle and upper class student bodies strongly reinforces Ross et al.'s (2007) work with pre-service teachers. Ross et al.'s study of pre-service teachers in a course on culturally relevant pedagogy finds that there is a tendency for teachers in high poverty schools to blame students/families and to experience self-doubt because of things like high stakes testing, classroom management, and family involvement.

It is extremely important that teachers trust in their ability to teach and in students' ability/desire to learn. It is also critical that teachers trust students' families and their desire to support their children's learning. Teachers may question whether they hold the same values and students' families when they come from different racial and economic backgrounds, but teachers cannot let this get in the way of supporting student learning. If teachers are uncertain about how to identify or communicate with students and families, it is the obligation of the teachers to continue learning and actively seek out a better understanding of the students they teach.

Building Community

Community with Colleagues

As a new teacher, networking with colleagues is an important first step in professional community building. It is easy for new teachers in high poverty schools to

become overwhelmed by things such as inadequate funding and students coming to school unprepared to learn (i.e. have not had breakfast, uncompleted homework assignments, untreated dental needs, without a good night's rest et cetera). Johnson and Johnson (2006) note, students coming to school without their basic needs met is commonplace at high poverty schools. As Ross et al. (2007) found, building community with colleagues helps teachers overcome such obstacles by providing them with support and encouragement. Having colleagues to rely on for support is helpful for thinking of additional strategies to employ within the classroom because different teachers have had different experiences and thus bring different lenses to issues.

Networking with other teachers helps one avoid the pitfall Ross et al. (2007) mention of blaming students and their families through encouraging one another to envision other perspectives. Greene (1995) writes extensively on this issue in her work, *Releasing the Imagination*. Greene reminds us as teachers that each person's reality is interpreted experience; a blend of the past and present and that using imagination to see the world from another's perspective helps one become more reflective about experience in general. Reflecting on experience gets to the heart of the function teaching. What is teaching if not the art of creating meaningful experiences for children? The networking mechanism used by the pre-service teachers in Ross et al.'s study was a blog where teachers posed questions to other practitioners and received practical advice. In-service teachers could easily set up a similar system though online blogging databases such as Moodle. Additional ideas for networking with colleagues include planning lessons together, organizing potluck lunches, and developing activities where students from various classes work together such as buddy reading, community garden projects, or pen

pal writing. Activities that require students to collaborate serve the additional function of helping students build community with one another and with their teachers.

Community and Support with Students

Building community with students is an important aspect of helping students build social capital and makes it easier for teachers to integrate students' funds of knowledge. Dolan and McCaslin (2008), Malecki and Demaray (2006), and Elias and Haynes (2008) all found that students were more successful academically when they perceived support from peers and teachers. This may seem like a self-evident truth, but many teachers can do a better job of fostering a supportive learning community for their students by integrating simple practices like providing positive feedback, providing peer tutoring opportunities, and recruiting parent volunteers.

Additional strategies for building community include funds of knowledge projects where students share what they are knowledgeable about and integrating students' prior knowledge into one's teaching. Integrating prior knowledge may take the form of rap, games, and hands on activities like it did for one of the pre-service teachers in Ross et al.'s (2007) or some other form depending on the experiences of one's students. Advocating against the middle class notion of children in poverty needing to be saved that Howley et al. (2006) discusses is also an important part of integrating students' funds of knowledge because it values them as individuals with unique backgrounds and situations.

Books are a useful tool for creating windows into the varied experiences of those in poverty and can help students currently living in poverty see that others have experienced similar situations. The following children's and young adult titles provide a

starting place for developing a repertoire of books that address issues of poverty: *The Watsons go to Birmingham* (systemic poverty), *Number the Stars* (situational poverty), *The Family Under the Bridge* (homelessness), *Fly Away Home* (homelessness), *The Settlement Houses* (children's nonfiction- generational poverty). In developing one's library, critique the books being mindful of biases and cultural specificity. The books available in one's room should provide a mirror of the faces and experiences of the children one teaches and a window into the experiences and faces of others. Making sure all children are represented in one's book collection models that they are valued pieces of the learning community. All children want to learn and it is up to teachers to create learning environments where children thrive.

In my experience, many teachers have a couple of students whom they have labeled as trouble makers and whom they are quick to correct. Implicitly or explicitly, such students are regularly sent the message that they are a hassle to teach. The findings of Dolan and McCaslin (2008), Malecki and Demaray (2006), and Elias and Haynes (2008) found that supporting students helps build community and engage them as learners. This is likely particularly important for students who teachers are inclined to perceive as trouble makers. Potential reasons such students feel difficult to teach are because they have other things on their mind or because they feel singled out and unsupported rather than because they simply do not want to learn. Incorporating peer tutoring opportunities, art making, and providing students with specific classroom jobs are some ways teachers connect with such students and are also ways to help students in poverty increase their educational resilience.

Resilience

Teachers cannot eradicate poverty in the lives of students, but they can help students develop positive ways of meeting adversity through helping students develop educational resilience. One must be careful to not assume that simply because a child is living in poverty, that child faces adversity at home, but children in poverty are more likely to face adversity than their middle/high SES peers. According to Green et al. (2007), many teachers view all the characteristics of students labeled as at risk as negative and all of the characteristics of resiliency as positive. I am inferring from this bias that since students in poverty are often labeled as at risk, teachers are regularly more likely to view them through a deficit model and see them as lacking positive attributes to contribute to the classroom community. If students in poverty get used to bumping up against this wall, some will likely internalize a negative self perception and a negative connotation to schooling in general. The strengths-based lens of resiliency provides a way to move away from deficit-based models.

Looking for students' individual strengths makes for a more rewarding teaching experience and a more enjoyable classroom experience for students. The findings of Borman and Rachuba (2001) suggest that resilient children are more confident than non-resilient children in the areas of locus of control, self-efficacy in math, positive attitude toward school, and self esteem. They also note that resilient children generally have better relationships with their teachers. Since Borman and Rachuba monitor students' progress over a span of four years, it is unlikely that their resiliency measures are skewed by yearly fluctuations. Fostering resilience is similar to fostering community because both rely heavily on integrating students' experiences, funds of knowledge, and learning preferences into their learning experiences in the classroom.

A classroom context that focuses on helping students develop resiliency is one where students' individual strengths are valued and teachers are supportive. Art is sometimes a useful tool. Promoting resiliency will take different forms depending on the specific interests and strengths of one's students. Look to the aforementioned community building strategies for assistance in finding out more about one's specific students. Art is a conduit for helping students develop resiliency not discussed with the strategies for building community.

Art making as a facilitator of resiliency may prove particularly useful with students who have experienced traumatic life experiences (associated with poverty or more generally) or have thus far had negative experiences in school. "Most research in this area approaches the problem using a damage model that focuses on pathology and attempts to rescue the youth from their plight rather than exploring ways to strengthen and encourage them. This emphasis on risk factors may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies for youth, especially because 'only a minority of such children actually experience unusual difficulty'" (Prescott et al., 2008, p156).

Prescott et al. (2008) cite Wolin and Wolin as having identified seven strengths associated with resiliency, insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, and morality. Many children in poverty have likely developed some of these traits. One potential strategy for teachers is to focus on identifying the resilient traits children are already exhibiting and incorporate those funds of knowledge into classroom experiences while simultaneously helping the children develop additional resilient characteristics. Utilizing this approach will help boost children's self esteem and efficacy

by showing students that they are valuable parts of the learning community and that everyone is learning together.

Extant research indicates that mentor relationships are extremely important for helping students build resiliency and they also support community building (Abelev's, 2009; Malecki and Demaray, 2006; Dolan and McCaslin, 2008; Elias and Haynes, 2008; and Cefai, 2007) Specifically, Abelev found that academically resilient participants generally had an adult in their lives as children who supported their scholastic achievement. In some cases this was a teacher, in others it was a tutor, parent, or other concerned adult. Regardless of whom the adult was, the trend developed that resilient children have adults in their lives that help support them by advocating for their education or providing another form of support. For instance, one participant in Abelev's study had a teacher who petitioned the school district to keep her class for an extra year so she could teach them both 4th and 5th grade. At the end of 5th grade, the teacher petitioned again and got her entire class enrolled in a magnet school on the other side of town for middle school instead of the middle school next to the housing project where the majority of the students lived. Teachers can develop mentor relationships with students through getting to know them individually and expressing support. Teachers can help students develop mentor relationships with one another by creating space for things like peer tutoring opportunities integrating peer revisions of writing.

Further Research

The majority of the studies reviewed measured poverty and academic achievement through free/reduced lunch enrollment and standardized test scores. However, neither of these measures provides a holistic portray of the classroom experiences of children in

poverty and additional research is needed that utilizes different measures. This is a difficult task because the experiences of those in poverty are extremely varied and not contingent upon set variables. In addition, many attributes of poverty are difficult to measure.

Funding sources such as the United States government generally want standardized measures so funding distribution is more generalizable and so it is easier to compare the impact of funds received. The current accountability paradigm where the government regularly demands increases in standardized test scores in exchange for funding likely needs to change in order for the ways poverty and achievement are measured to change.

Teachers' Experiences

It was surprisingly difficult to find information on teachers' experiences in high poverty schools. Additional studies in this area would foster a more comprehensive literature review and would provide additional strategies or cautions about working with this particular population. Similarly, I was only able to find studies on principals' leadership skills and styles. Much of this information is translatable to teachers' leadership, but studies specifically on teachers are needed to truly identify similarities and differences. Since poverty is primarily a social issue, studies on teachers' attempts at community outreach are also needed. There are schools in the country such as First Place in Seattle, WA that use a community models for educating students, but I was unable to locate any studies of the effectiveness of such programs. First Place is a social service that provides schooling, housing, counseling, nutrition, health screenings, et cetera to

families who struggle with the risks or experiences of homelessness. Their vision is “Hope, home, and education for every child, one family at a time” (Cato, D, 2003).

Middle Class Habitus

While Abelev (2009) confirms that protective characteristics are important, she also reveals the critical interaction effects between the differing habitus of social classes. All of the participants in Abelev’s study benefited from access to the middle class habitus either through attending a non-neighborhood school, a mentor relationship with a middle class adult, or through university as a result of financial assistance. There is a need for additional research into the interactional styles of lower and working classes. Teachers could use such research to help bridge potential communication style differences between students’ families and school personnel.

Conclusion

Rationale

Meeting the educational needs of children experiencing poverty will be a top priority for members of the educational community working for a just world because equity does not result exclusively from legislative structures. The present critical review of the literature asked the question: How can teachers create classrooms that provide equitable learning contexts for children in poverty and become advocates for children in poverty? This is an important question to those in the educational community because one in five children lives in poverty according to the United States census (Fass and Cauthen, 2008; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005). As public educators, teachers are responsible for teaching all of America’s children regardless of their family’s economic background. Teachers are also charged with

helping children make connections and respect diverse perspectives so they can develop into active members of American society. In order for educators to achieve this aim, they must value all children's knowledge and experiences and work to foster an environment conducive of learning for all children. Reviewing literature on strategies for supporting students experiencing poverty helps educators become better advocates for such children because it develops their understandings of what structures are most effective and their understanding of how to integrate those structures into their own classrooms.

Controversies and Conflicts

The topic of promoting equitable classrooms for children experiencing poverty is enmeshed in controversy. Though, the fact that most classrooms experiences for children in poverty in the United States are not equitable is irrefutable (Foster et al., 2005; Rathbun et al., 2005; Stipek and Ryan, 1997; Terwilliger and Magnuson, 2005). Some ask whether it should even be a social priority to create equitable classrooms. Others believe that though poverty is an important social issue, it is not educators' responsibility to assume the role of advocate. There is conflict in assuming advocacy is teachers' responsibility because advocacy has potential to turn a teachers' attention away from her or his students and lesson planning toward societal issues. The belief that teachers and administrators simply do not care enough to close the achievement gap between students experiencing poverty and students not experiencing poverty is also relatively common (Jacob and Ludwig 2008; Haycock 2007). Another piece of the conflict regarding whose role it is to foster equitable classrooms and advocate for children in poverty is that large scale government initiatives are expensive.

Some say that programs like Perry Preschool and Head Start are expensive and have the attitude that *I* should not have to pay for them when *my* children cannot even enroll. Conflict exists because programs like Title 1 and Head Start are not enough to close the resource gap on their own. In addition, schools are funded in large part through property taxes which inherently creates regional resource inequities because affluent property owners pay more in taxes (Sacks, 2004). Regardless, children spend much of their time at school. Schools shape peer environments and children's perceptions of their roles within a community so some argue the belief that schools do not affect societal inequities is naïve.

Limitations

It is difficult to avoid generalizing the experiences of children in poverty because of the presence of strong themes, but everyone's situations are unique. It is also difficult to study poverty in an isolated context. There are many social issues that overlay with poverty and variables that affect the experiences of children in poverty so it is difficult to measure the affect poverty has on one's education. One cannot assume that the experience of poverty affects every child the same way or that poverty is synonymous with low achieving. Not all schools with a high percentage of students living in poverty are struggling with students' level of academic scholarship. Holistic measures of poverty are needed before educators and lawmakers can hope to learn how create a completely equitable environments. It is extremely limiting that nearly every study relied up free/reduced lunch (FRPL) enrollment as the sole indicator of poverty because it is only one measure of poverty and not all eligible families enroll. The last limitation to keep in mind it that the present review of the literature is written with the American education system in mind. All of the laws referenced, the historical context, and indicators for poverty used

are from the United States so one should transfer findings to contexts in other countries with caution.

History Highlights

Educators have known that poverty impacts education since the early years of public education in America. Charity schools of the early 18th century headed by John Locke, and the Lancasterian system of the early 19th century attempted to reduce crime and poverty through education (Spring, 2005). The charity school movement is important because it was the first large scale attempt to teach and educate students free of charge and because it laid the groundwork for the Common school (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2009). The Common school movement of the 1830's and 1840's purported the ideology that schooling could "reduce tensions between social classes, eliminate crime and poverty, stabilize the political system, and form patriotic citizens (Spring, 2005, p.73). The Common school movement was grounded in the belief that providing all children with access to school would serve as a panacea for poverty. The Common school movement represented a victory for political liberals of the mid-nineteenth century and set the stage for later government intervention in education. The post WWII era marked renewed governmental and social interest in using education as a means of increasing access to education.

Lynden B. Johnson first coined the term War on Poverty during his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964 in response to a rise in national poverty rates. Johnson was a vehement advocate for children in poverty and passed an unprecedented amount of legislation meant to reduce it. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) created for the first time a partnership between federal, state, and local

governments to address part of the larger national agenda of confronting poverty by targeting federal aid to poor students and schools. The two pieces of ESEA legislation that most directly provided support to children in poverty were Title 1 and Head Start. The presidents immediately following Johnson did not share his spirit of advocacy.

Nixon and Reagan veered away from promoting equitable classrooms for children experiencing poverty. Nixon supported educating students for specific careers through vocational training and emphasized the power of the educational expert (Spring, 2005). This is where one begins to see the idea of accountability take a firmer hold and an increased emphasis on testing as a means to prove whether schools are creating equitable learning contexts for all children. Reagan appealed to conservatives by promising to limit federal involvement in education (Spring, 2005). He cut funding for many of the remaining War on Poverty programs initiated by Johnson under the guise of this promise, worked to abolish the Department of Education, cut federal funding for free/reduced price lunch (FRPL), increased military spending, and blamed schools for not being rigorous enough in *A Nation at Risk* (Spring, 2005).

The late 20th century marked a continued focus on accountability and a social milieu that valued working to create equitable classrooms and advocate for children in poverty. Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind are contemporary examples of legislation inspired by the accountability movement. There is also a growing non-governmental push for equity of which The National Urban Alliance and the International Resiliency Project are a part.

Findings

The research indicated that trusting in students' desire to succeed in school and being supportive of students are important components of helping children in poverty develop resiliency. Resilient children are more likely to succeed in school because they are better prepared to navigate challenges they face and deal with adversity. The ability to deal with adversity positively is particularly important for children in poverty because such children often encounter challenges associated with poverty. It is also important for teachers to learn about children's home environments because some of the studies reviewed found correlations between family income and students' success. Knowing how many of one's students live in poverty helps one determine the importance of creating classroom structures supportive of children in poverty.

In the process of learning about students' home environments, one may find that some of one's students are homeless. The body of research on supporting homeless students in the classroom is small. It suggests that incorporating creativity may be particularly important when working with homeless children and that some standardized test scores of homeless children tend to be lower than non-homeless peers. The trend of lower standardized test scores is also present in children in poverty when compared to peers not in poverty. The following strategies suggested for creating equitable classroom contexts for children in poverty are likely applicable to students who are in poverty and homeless, but more research is needed to verify this hypothesis. Aside from simply working to create an equitable environment in one's own classroom, teachers can help make the entire school context more supportive for children in poverty.

Learning about how systemic structures such as curriculum, federal funds, and school leadership affect children in poverty at one's school provides one with a context

for working to make such structures more equitable. The literature reviewed provides a general overview of how children in poverty tend to perform in several commonly used curriculums and lays the groundwork for helping teachers analyze how federal dollars for children in poverty are distributed within one's district. Thinking critically about how funds are distributed and curriculum helps teachers find avenues to increasing equity at a school or district level. Several of the studies reviewed found a correlation between strong leadership on the part of the principal and high academic performance in high poverty schools. Teachers can implement some of the leadership qualities found to be important for principals in supporting children in poverty, and teachers can also work with their principals to help develop a school culture that is supportive of children in poverty.

Implications for Educators

Home literacy (valuing literacy and reading with children regularly at home) is one area where teachers can help parents support their children's academic development, and in doing so, promote equity within the classroom. Encouraging parents to extol literacy at home is especially necessary given that federal programs aimed at reducing the achievement gap between students in poverty and their peers from upper or middle class families such as Head Start and Title 1 are only moderately successful. If working within a district that receives Title 1, research whether schools with the most children in poverty are receiving the most Title 1 money per student or whether each school receives the same amount regardless of student population.

In order to successfully advocate for children in poverty, teachers must have strong leadership skills. Teachers need to work with districts, state governments, and the

federal government to work to change the structures that perpetuate a system that makes high poverty schools the least desirable to work at in terms of working conditions and salary. As leaders, teachers also need to develop a critical lens for analyzing curricula. The best way to ensure curricula are equitable for all learners is to stay current on educational research and critique the curriculum one is using. This way, if a curriculum favors a particular group of learners, the teacher can discuss the shortfall with her or his principal and work together to find a solution.

As a new teacher, networking with colleagues is an important first step in professional community building. Networking with other teachers helps one avoid the pitfall Ross et al. (2007) mention of blaming students and their families through encouraging one another to envision other perspectives. If it is difficult to meet with other teachers and the principal before or after school, online blogging databases such as Moodle could help teachers support one another and share strategies for teaching and building community. The beneficial traits identified in principals that teachers could integrate were minimizing disruptions during instruction time, belief in students' ability/desire to learn, leading by example, educating the whole child, approaching negative situations as learning opportunities, valuing experimenting with new classroom strategies, recruiting parent volunteers, creating a sense of community, and creating a respectful and kind family-like school culture. Meeting with one's principal regularly is helpful for teachers in developing leadership characteristics and creating inclusive learning environments because it allows teachers and principals to work together to meet the needs of the children.

Building community with students is an important aspect of helping students build social capital and makes it easier for teachers to integrate students' funds of knowledge. Strategies for building community include funds of knowledge projects where students share what they are knowledgeable about and integrating students' prior knowledge into one's teaching. Incorporating peer tutoring opportunities, developing mentoring opportunities, art making, and providing students with specific classroom jobs are some ways teachers can build community and are also ways to help students in poverty increase their educational resilience. Fostering resilience is similar to fostering community because both rely heavily on integrating students' experiences, funds of knowledge, and learning preferences into their learning experiences in the classroom. A classroom context that focuses on helping students develop resiliency is one where students' individual strengths are valued and teachers are supportive. Art is sometimes a useful tool. Promoting resiliency will take different forms depending on the specific interests and strengths of one's students.

Looking Ahead

As those in the educational community look ahead to schooling in the 21st century and beyond, have hope that America's education system is continuing to become more equitable for children experiencing poverty. Inclusive child-centered classrooms where teachers work diligently to ensure that learning is culturally and experientially relevant to all students are becoming increasingly common. The professional research regarding how teachers and lawmakers can create equitable learning environments for children experiencing poverty through dedication and advocacy is also rapidly expanding. One challenge for educators remains that funding is inequitable and the stress of working in

high poverty schools is sometimes exacerbated by accountability mandates and high stakes testing. However, there are many committed advocates working to change the structures that perpetuate funding inequalities and more support from teachers is always welcome.

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