Viewing Poverty Though The Eyes Of Those Who Live It
Dr. Donna Beegle

An Insider Perspective On What Works

Dr. Donna M. Beegle
Guiding Questions

1. What have you been taught to believe about poverty, its causes and people who live in it?

2. What does poverty mean? What do the different life experiences of poverty teach?

3. What are the intersections of poverty and race?

4. What can we do to create communities where all our neighbors thrive?
A New Paradigm

• A Deeper Understanding Of Poverty And Families Who Live In It

• A Strength’s Perspective Approach: Stand In Awe

• A NASA Attitude: Failure Is Not An Option

• Stronger Partnerships: Within and Without
1. What was spent on pets for Valentine's Day 2014?
   - 1 million
   - 815 million
   - 10 million

2. What was spent on Hannah Montana, High School Musical, and Disney Princess merchandise in the height of the recession?
   - 20 million
   - 12 billion
   - 26 billion

3. What is the amount spent in October on Halloween costumes?
   - 1 million
   - 900 million
   - 80 million

4. What is the average spent on a person for one year in prison?
   - 9000
   - 18,000
   - 40,000

5. How much money was spent on video games in one month last year?
   - 35 million
   - 1.9 billion
   - 25.3 billion
What Does Poverty Teach?

- No one cares.
- Everyone seems smarter.
- They must be better than me.
- We don’t belong.
- People like us don’t get educated.
- We don’t have what we need.
- There is no one to help.
What Does Poverty Teach?

FAMILY LOYALTY...
-I love my family.
-They love me.

“He's my brother.”
What Does Poverty Teach?

Poverty pulls are strong.

*Ensure solutions are relevant and applicable to students/families living in different contexts of poverty.*
What Does Poverty Teach?

Constant Crisis: People are sick more and in survival mode.

Two Strategies:
1. Examine policies/practices to ensure they are serving students/families in the crisis of poverty.
2. Make it a priority to know about local resources and opportunities for breaking poverty barriers.
Danny Born Healthy!

Thanks to people mentoring and bringing resources into our lives: St. Vincent DePaul, Community Action, Head Start, WIC and stable housing.

Work to understand and build in supports for students/families who live in the war zone of poverty.
Poverty Impacts

• Hopelessness

• Purpose of education or job unclear

• Not knowing subjects/norms/vocabulary

• Stereotypes, myths, and judgements

• Internalized personal deficiency

• Poverty realities pull and demand attention

• Trained Incapacity: expectations diminished by poverty conditions
Defining Poverty (context)

**GENERATIONAL**

- Family work the land, rarely own it
- Never knew anyone who benefited from education
- Never knew anyone who moved up or who was respected in a job
- Highly mobile
- High family illiteracy
- Negative experiences with legal system
- Focus is on making it through the day
Defining Poverty
(context)

Working, But Still In Poverty
• Working, but rarely have money for any extras
• Most do not own property
• Live pay check to pay check
• Few have health care
• Negative experiences with legal system
• Focus on making it two weeks or through the month
• Poverty seen as personal deficiency
Defining Poverty (context)

**Immigrant Poverty**

- Have little or no resources
- Language and culture barriers
- Seem to do better than those born into poverty in America
- Poverty viewed as a system problem
- May fear they are not “smart” enough to succeed in school
Defining Poverty (context)

Situational Poverty

- Grow up surrounded by people who are educated or able to earn a living wage
- Attends school regularly and expects to do well
- Divorce or other crisis causes income drop
- Becomes isolated
- Shame and silence
- Understands what they need to be successful, but can not access needed resources/opportunities
Advanced Tools

1. Strengths Perspective--Potential is unknown
2. Resiliency Theory--Find ways to ensure people shine
3. Social Capital Theory--Build address books and access who are not in poverty
4. Understand internal and external capacities
5. Ensure shared communication and communicate in multiple ways.
6. Build a connected, whole family approach with a focus on both RESOURCES and OPPORTUNITIES
Actions:

1. What is in your hands?
2. What can your team/organization do?
3. What can we do as a community that cares?
4. Sign up to take our efforts to the next level.
Advanced Tools

Opportunity Community model:

1. Rebuild hope stolen by poverty
2. Remove shame/judgement
3. Reduce the isolation by connecting people to Navigators, Specialty Navigators
4. Build a Poverty Informed Community
POSSIBILITIES:
Jennifer ~
Goes to France...twice
Dan and Austin

It's "who you know."

No one breaks poverty barriers without assistance!

It's in your hands. What can you do? If not you, then who?
To Break Poverty Barriers: Mentor and Navigate

1. Believe people can learn and make it out of poverty.
2. Recognize that people in the crisis of poverty know a lot.
3. Remove judgment by gaining poverty competencies.
4. Take a comprehensive, connected approach.
Next Steps

For Improving Outcomes

1. Conduct poverty competency assessments to develop measurable, doable actions.
2. Assess professional development levels of poverty competencies of all staff and provide education/training.
3. Bring Poverty Institute and Coaching Institute and create a poverty informed community-wide approach...Embed a minimum of three Poverty Coaches in every organization.
4. Implement Adult and Youth Opportunity Community Model to remove shame, rebuild hope, reduce isolation and connect people to a poverty informed community.
Get Informed:

Read See Poverty...Be The Difference

Poverty is a complex issue. Its solutions come from individuals—like you—who are willing to learn, understand and work together. **See Poverty...Be the Difference** is designed to inform, inspire, and motivate you to make a difference for children and families from poverty backgrounds. It will provide some tools and activities for educating, communicating, and working more effectively with people of all ages who live in poverty and, hopefully, inspire you to want to learn and do more!

**See Poverty...Be The Difference**

*Price $25.* Discounts on bulk quantities of this book are available.

Available on Communication Across Barriers Website

[www.combarriers.com](http://www.combarriers.com)
Stay in touch.

www.facebook/donna.m.beegle
For latest research, updates, reflections

twitter.com/donnabeegle
For Donna’s microblogs
Get Informed: Action Approach to Educating Students in Poverty Curriculum Kit

Be The Difference...

If not me, Then Who?