Poor Students, Rich Teaching: Mindsets for Change
by Eric Jensen

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Introduction:

• “To change students lives, you will have to change before any worthwhile change shows up in your students” (pg. 2).

• **The Four Mindsets:**
  
  * The Relational Mindset
  * The Achievement Mindset
  * The Rich Classroom Mindset
  * The Engagement Mindset
Why should you care about poverty? (Chapter 1)

• “Our jobs have changed.” You’re right. “The world has changed” (pg. 5).
  • Poverty is far more prevalent and the effects are accelerating.
  • It affects both you and your students in multiple ways.
  • Because brains can change, you can reverse the academic effects of poverty. Help students graduate college or become career ready.
What is poverty?

- “Poverty is a chronic experience from an aggregate of adverse social and economic risk factors (3-8)” (pg. 6).

- Percentage wise we have the same number of poor than in 1964.

- In 2015, 51% of all U.S. students in public schools come from homes that met the federal standards of poverty.

- Odds are 1 in 4 will be poor within 10 years (lost job, wrecked car, in hospital for treatments).
How Does Poverty Affect Your Students?

• **Stress:** When the amygdala responds at a normal rate (homeostasis)
  *Hypervigilance (triggers safety alarm to often): anxiety, PTSD
  *Hyporesponse (not enough): helplessness, depression

• **Cognitive Gaps:** Language (25 vs. 40 million), memory, cognitive control

• **Less Emotional Support:** No one teaches them how to respond (social skills).

“Students care more about whether their teachers care than what their teachers know” (pg. 11).
Why Should You Embrace Change? (Chapter 2)

- **You are More Important Than Ever!**
  - You = Most significant contributor to student achievement (> parents, peers, entire schools, or poverty)

- Above average teachers (1.0 effect size = 2 years student growth) can erase the academic effects of poverty in five years.

- “You **have** to believe you can connect, inspire, and energize every student” (pg. 17). If there’s doubt, students **will** lose faith and know that you don’t have faith in them either” (pg. 17).
Which Mindset Are You?

• Parents, schools, policies, and laws are all changing. Why can’t things be like they used to be?

• Change is a constant, especially in education, and it’s only going to accelerate. I will grow and change myself.
Which Mindset Are **You**?

- I was hired for the content I know, I don’t have enough time to teach social skills! I wasn’t hired to be their parent!

- We are all connected in this life together. Always connect first as a person (an an ally) and as a teacher second.
Chapters 3-7: Why the Relational Mindset?

• Good relationships have a 0.72-0.89 effect size:
  • There is no us (teachers) and them (students).
  • If you lose your students by not giving respect, listening, or showing empathy they will look for it elsewhere (sports, peers, drugs, gangs).
  • Your students will care for academics as soon as you care about them.
  • When students feel more connected, they stay in school, achieve more, and are more likely to graduate.
To Achieve a Relational Mindset:

• Stop the Stereotyping:
  • When teachers offer strong instructional and emotional support, students from low-income families perform EQUAL to their higher-income peers (pg. 28).
  • A positive teacher-student relationship enhances students’ sense of classroom security and increases their willingness to engage in the classroom.
  • Students’ positive or negative classroom relationships are equal to IQ or school achievement test scores in predicting if a student will drop out (pg. 29).
How to Get Students on Board:

• How do I get my students on board emotionally and socially?
  • Personalize the Learning (Chpt. 4)
    • Both the teachers and students learn everyone’s names, create a me bag, share an everyday problem, and share progress on goals (pgs. 32-34).
  
• Connect Everyone for Success (Chpt. 5)
  • The Fifty-Fifty Rule (1/2 social and 1/2 individual)
  • Collaborative Activities: Cooperative groups and teams, study buddies or partners, temporary partners.
Empathy is not the same as sympathy.

- Empathy can be taught!
  - Use Empathy Tools (pg. 47)
  - Use Quick Connect Tools: One and Done, Two for Ten, Three in Thirty (pgs. 48, 49)
- Connect Early (during first few minutes, before class starts)
- Connect with Students’ Home Lives
- Connect Late (leaving class, after school)
Which Mindset Are You?

- It’s not my fault. Parents should motivate their own kids, not me.
- I can build student effort, motivation, and attitudes to succeed. They are all teachable skills.
Chapters 8-13: Why the Achievement Mindset?

• To develop student drive, effort, and intention (motivation = 0.48). Ask yourself:
  • When students from higher-risk backgrounds achieve, what did I do to make that happen?
  • When students from the higher-risk backgrounds fail, how can I respond differently to help them succeed next time?
  • How can I increase the effect size of my motivators?
Motivators Based on Evidence (Effect Size)

- Using rewards, adverse consequences, vaguely praising student work
  - These statements have an effect size between 0.11 and .30 (low).
- Learn the Invisible Motivators (pg. 63)
  - Invisible motivators have an effect size of .41 to 1.44 (almost 1.0-2.5 year(s) growth).
- You need to foster a growth mindset.
- It is necessary to drop the labels.
  - Minority students, Low achievers/low students, disadvantaged/disabled students
Four of the Most Effective Achievement Boosters of All Time:

• **Set gutsy goals (Chapter 9). Effect size 1.44**
  - Set goals “crazy high”, quantify them, and keep them simple. Then, set micro goals and give feedback on the way to reaching the gutsy goals.

• **Have the right attitude (Chapter 10). Effect size 1.42**
  - Model the achievement mindset, model high-achievement thinking, sow the seeds of success, and attribute connections.

• **Give fabulous feedback (Chapter 11). Effect size 0.65**
  - More positives than negatives (3:1), and be specific enough to focus on key things students can change.

• **Persist with grit (Chapter 12). Effect size 0.8-1.0**
  - The tenacity to pursue a longer term goal in the face of obstacles...for something worthwhile.
Set Gutsy Goals (Chapter 9)

• Whether a student works hard or not is a choice, not genetic.
  • It is based on 4 host factors: The prediction on a success possibility, perception about their teacher’s capacity to help them succeed, students’ self assessment, and their overall self concept.

• Creating Gutsy Goals for Mastery (a new SMART goal)
  • Specific or strategic, Measurable, AMAZING (rather than attainable), Relevant, and Time bound

• Setting Gutsy Goals
  • A process goal, a relational goal, and a result goal

• Giving a Reason to Believe (in the teacher/in themselves)

• Using Micro Goals to Close the Gaps (Effect size 1.21)
  • Reaffirm, Give Measurable Progress, Provide Affirmation
Have the Right Attitude (Chapter 10)

• **Model the Achievement Mindset**
  • The discovery of mirror neurons and the transmission of affect

• **Model High-Achievement Thinking**
  • Start with a smile and positive greeting, show you are happy with student progress, and smile more than you think you need to. Their perspective IS right, and what matters.

• **Sow the Seeds of Success** (pgs. 82, 83)

• **Attribute Connections** (pgs. 83, 84)
  • When connections are made: student effort goes up, intrinsic motivation is built, and they see their future.
Give Fabulous Feedback (Chapter 11)

• **Ongoing Formative Assessment (Effect size of 0.90)**
  - It means using the evidence of learning (or lack of it) to adjust instruction toward a goal during the process, not just at the end.
  - Having clear/shared goals, establishing progress, providing actionable feedback that moves learning forward, and activating students as owners of their own learning, tracking

• **Classroom Activities that Can Serve as Powerful Formative Assessments (pg. 87):**
  - Relevant recall questions (effect size 0.93)
  - “I Decide, You Decide” (effect size 0.89)
  - Graphic organizers and mind maps (effect size 1.24)
Give Fabulous Feedback (Chapter 11)

• SEA for Quality Feedback (pg. 88):
  • Strategy, Effort, and Attitude
• Understand and Teach 3M for Quality Feedback (pgs. 88, 89):
  • Milestone (“Where am I?”), Mission (“What is my goal?”), and Method (“How do I get there?”)
• Ask Students to Track their Progress
• Guide Students to Improvement
• MIC Feedback (Micro-Index Card Feedback) (pgs. 91, 92)
• Student Feedback Strategies (pgs. 93, 94):
  • Nonverbal information, yesterday’s learning, one-minute summary, and suggestions box
Persist with Grit (Chapter 12)

• 10 Ways to Develop Grit (pgs. 96, 97):
  • Help, Show, Model, Teach abilities, Create vocabulary, Assess grit, Foster conditions, Make reality, Reinforce grit, Give grit a chance

• Tools for When Grit Drops
  • Listen, Reactivate, and Choose Again
  • Your role is to find a variety of ways to make the same gutsy goal interesting.

  “There are no unmotivated students, only students in unmotivated classrooms” (pg. 105).
  “When you change, your students will change” (pg. 103).
Which Mindset Are You?

- My job is teaching content. You want all fun and warm fuzzies for students? Tell them to wake up and get with the real world. Class is not supposed to feel good!

- I focus on what students need to succeed and build it into the learning and social environment everyday.
Secrets of the Rich Classroom Mindset (Chapter 14)

• Class Culture vs. Class Climate (pg. 110):
  • Culture is what we do (behaviors and characters), climate is how we feel.
  • Culture takes purpose to change; climate can change in moments.

• A teacher’s classroom climate has an effect size of 0.80.

• The rich classroom climate mindset says (pg. 111):
  • “I focus on what students need to succeed and build it into the learning and social environment every day.”

• High Positivity vs. Low Positivity (pg. 113)
  • “Managing student stress levels is critical because students from poverty typically experience chronic stress, which impairs cognitive flexibility, behavioral change, working memory, and thinking skills.”
Three Factors that Promote Rich Classroom Climate Mindset:

• Engage Voice and Vision (Chapter 15):
  • Show students who they are, what they care about, and how they feel about things. Otherwise, students will feel like it’s “your class” and not “our class.”

• Set Safe Classroom Norms (Chapter 16):
  • If the classroom feels safe, students will drop their guard, become less oppositional, and take learning risks.

• Foster Academic Optimism (Chapter 17):
  • If you fail to raise the mental and academic bar (with enthusiasm and gutsy goals), you’ll allow students to expect and live out low expectations, and that action changes your climate (for the worse). But, provide guidance and support along the way.
Engage Voice and Vision (Chapter 15)
Three Elements that Make All the Difference to Students:

• Relevance (“What’s in it for me?”, “Why should I learn this?”)
  • Are you affirming? Is your teaching diverse? Are you empowering? Are you life changing? If you don’t help them, the cycle of poverty will continue. If their brain does not buy into classroom learning, it is not changing.

• Student Voice (To feel heard and validated, which strengthens self-confidence in learning) (pgs, 118, 119)
  • Invite, Validate, Encourage, and Inspire
  • Be aware, and invite student culture and history.

• Student Vision
  • Start with asking students for their long-term dreams (their visions), help students refine their dreams using the new SMART goals criteria, and help set the goals.
Set Safe Classroom Goals (Chapter 16)

- **Physical Safety**
  - Take a moment before the first day of school and visualize what you would do if there were any of the five most common emergencies (fire, shooting, flooding, storm, or bodily injury)

- **Emotional Safety:**
  - Ensure that students’ voices are respected. Value everyone’s opinion. Stop focusing on the answer only (make it a class norm that making mistakes to learn and grow is a wonderful thing).

- **Cool Rules (pgs. 128-132):**
The Climate of Academic Optimism:

- Cognitive success and positive affect has an effect size of 0.54.
- Having an expectation of success has an effect size of 1.44.
- Change the roles, show the evidence, change the game, make mastery the endgame, and create a sense of ownership.

Change Class Job Titles (pg. 137)

Show Past Peer Work (Evidence)

Give students a sense of control over their daily experiences.

- It has to become “our class” and be an optimistic one.
Which Mindset Are You?

• We have a ton of content to cover and usually lecture is the best way to do it. Besides, the engagement strategies are all a bunch of fluff.

• I can and will engage with purpose every student, every day, every nine minutes or less guaranteed.
Secrets of the Engagement Mindset

• Engage for Maintenance and Stress. (Chapter 20)
  • The truth is, in your class, nothing will work unless students are alert, focused, and in a receptive frame of mind. Without these states re-teaching and bored students will occur.

• Engage for Setup and Buy-In. (Chapter 21)
  • Relevance is everything to students’ brains. With it, students will remember what you teach.

• Engage to Build Community (Chapter 22)
  • Class rituals must: solve a recurring problem, include and engage all students, be simple and easy to do, be predictable, and end on a positive emotional state.
Secrets of the Engagement Mindset

• What is Learning?
  • “Learning is something that students should feel, make, build, talk about, collaborate with others on, and write about” (pg. 148).

• Looking at Evidence
  • Secondary students spend over 25% of their day in disconnected learning states.
  • Elementary students spend the majority of their time sitting solo, without activities or socialization (91%).
  • Classroom engagement has been cited as the top reason for student dropouts.
  • The more quality minutes per day of learning, the more productive class time is, the higher the achievement.
Engage for Maintenance and Stress (Chapter 20)

• Engage to Maintain:
  • Using basic state-management tools elicits appropriate levels of serotonin, noradrenaline, dopamine, and cortisol.
  • Incorporating a simple activity every 10-15 minutes (or less) will keep students engaged. Strategies on pg. 155.

• Engage to Manage Stress:
  • Our thoughts, words, and actions enact consistent and clear changes in the genes.
  • Epigenetic changes: suppress or activate
  • There is a difference between good stress and bad stress.
  • Strategies are on pgs. 157-159.
Engage for Setup and Buy-In
(Chapter 21)

• **Setup vs. Buy-In**
  • Setups are attention-getters (creates curiosity, hooks, incites excitement)
  • Buy-ins say to the learner “This is worth learning, pay attention, and save it!” (pg. 162)

• **Asking Questions for Buy-In:**
  • Great questions can change class climate and even student lives if done well (effect size of 0.81).
  • Questions should involve: discovery, essential, summarizing the content, elaborative questions, and evidence-gathering questions (pg.165).
Engage to Build Community (Chapter 22)

• Solving Common Problems (pg. 167):
  • Class routines, or rituals, must meet the criteria (five) to be, truly, influential. Examples: callbacks, end-of-class discussions, attention-getters.

• Use Reciprocal Teaching (pgs. 168-170)
  • Reciprocal Teaching Involves teaching students specific comprehension-fostering strategies: asking questions about the text, summarizing what was read, predicting what might happen next, and attempting to clarify words and phrases that were not understood.

• Celebrating Small Whole-Class Victories (pg. 170):
  • Set class goals and milestones (attendance, % of turned in papers, or participation, etc.)
  • Micro goals keep morale high, and a team activity.
Which Mindset Are You?

- It’s not my fault. We teachers get kicked around, plus the parents and students don’t care. No wonder everybody is stressed and students drop out.

- My greatest power is the power of choice. I have a great deal of influence over how I run my own brain. I remember this everyday: I have a choice.
Review of the Four Mindsets:

• **The Relational Mindset:**
  “We are all connected in this life together. Always connect first as a person (and an ally) and then as a teacher second.”

• **The Achievement Mindset:**
  “I can build student effort, motivation, and attitudes to succeed. They are all teachable skills.”

• **The Rich Classroom Climate Mindset:**
  “I focus on what students need to succeed and build it into the learning and social environment every day.”

• **The Engagement Mindset:**
  “I can and will engage with purpose every student, every nine minutes or less, guaranteed.”
Questions to Ask Yourself:

• Answering Final Questions to Elicit Change (pgs. 178, 179)
• Questions to Ask at the End of a Lesson or Day of Teaching:
  • Did I do my best to foster optimism and gratitude today?
  • Did I do my best to make this work relevant to both me and my students?
  • Did I do my best to foster stronger personal relationships?
  • Did I do my best to fully engage and help others?
  • Did I do my best to grow personally and professionally today?

**Did I do my best?**