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Closing the Gap

Students from all walks of life are wondering the halls of schools in America. This is a truly beautiful thing however; this is where teachers work begins. Teachers must cater to every student from every background and that can be hard, especially for the students living in poverty. There are two different types of poverty, generational and situational. Generational poverty occurs when at least two generations have been in poverty and situational poverty is caused by something (loss of job, illness, separation, etc.). Those in generational poverty tend to not value education and those in situational poverty do. For this paper I will be about talking generational poverty.

There are ways that teachers can improve student achievement in students living in poverty: teach students the appropriate language registry, teach the hidden rules of the middle class, remind the students of the resources they have and be a positive role model for them. If all of these things are done then students living in poverty will begin to succeed!

The language registry that is used in schools and workplaces is called the formal registry. It is formal, poised and consists of no slang. Most of the students living in poverty have no access to the formal registry at home so when they come to school they talk in the casual registry (used between friends and family) or the intimate registry (swearing and harassment). These language registries are inappropriate for school and the workplace but it is all the students know. If

students do not have access to the formal registry at home then teachers cannot expect students to talk in the formal registry. It is something that needs to be taught to them. When teachers teach the formal registry then it helps the student become more successful in school and then later when they begin working. A really good strategy for teaching the formal registry is having students write in the casual registry and then have them translate it into the formal registry.

Just like the formal registry, most students living in poverty do not know the hidden rules of the middle class. For students to be successful they need to know these rules. They consist of: being clean, talking in the formal registry, being polite, on time, prepared, etc. If students are not taught these rules then it can become hard for them later on. These are rules students need for life and if they do not know them, then it will be hard for them to succeed.

Every student has a resource that can help them succeed but sometimes they need to be reminded about it. It is good for the teacher to remind students living in poverty that they do have resources that will help them succeed. These resources could be mental stability, emotional stability, faith, positive role model, or someone who cares. Even if a student has just one of these, remind them and build off of it.

Lastly, teachers need to be a positive role model for students. Students need to have someone they can turn to and someone that they trust. If that student does not have that at home then I believe that it is the teacher's duty to be that person. They should be that person for students even if they have ten other role models to look up to. Teachers should be passionate about being in the classroom and show the students how excited they are to be in the classroom. Teachers should be caring and understanding to individuals. If the teacher shows these qualities then students pick up on them. It shows them what it means to be happy with accomplishments

and to be kind to others. That seems like such a trivial thing to teach but it is something every student needs to learn and something they need to see put into action.