

Solution Tree | Press

Building the Resilient School: Overcoming the Effects of Poverty with a Culture of Hope

By Robert D. Barr and Emily L. Gibson

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Building the Resilient School: Overcoming the Effects of Poverty with a Culture of Hope*. *Building the Resilient School* seeks to combat the advent of poverty in public schools through embracing students' educational, social-emotional, and basic human needs.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

Copyright © 2020 by Solution Tree Press

Chapter 1

Poverty: On the Outskirts of Hope

1. Define the three main types of poverty. What types of poverty do you interact with daily?
2. Who are the main demographics who make up the poor population?
3. Why has poverty in the United States increased over the years?
4. What are your thoughts on the Children’s Defense Fund’s nine-point plan? What are the positive aspects of it? The negative?
5. What do you feel would help improve poverty in your area?
6. What was your understanding of student poverty before reading this chapter? How has that understanding changed?

Chapter 2

An Invisible Barrier: The Impacts of Poverty on Teaching and Learning

1. How have you experienced poverty in your classroom? What has it altered about your teaching?
2. When have you encountered fight, flight, and/or freeze in the classroom? How did you respond?
3. Describe learned helplessness. Do you agree that it is the most debilitating of the negative impacts of poverty?
4. What are executive function skills, and how do they influence the path out of poverty?
5. List some of the *corrosive cruelties* mentioned in this chapter. Which ones do you see in your classroom on a day-to-day basis?
6. How do you currently go about helping poor students? How will the information in this chapter affect your approach?

Chapter 3

An Unanticipated Challenge: The Detrimental Impacts of Poverty on School

Staff

1. Have you ever experienced *secondary traumatic stress*? How have you dealt with it in the past?
2. Have the effects of a high-poverty environment ever caused a negative emotional response from you? Has it affected your love of teaching?
3. What are your thoughts on the teacher-turnover statistics presented in this chapter?
4. Examine the symptoms of secondary traumatic stress. Do you feel any of these specific symptoms? How does it affect you daily?
5. Complete one of the tools for measuring secondary traumatic stress. What do your results say about your current teaching experience? How can you improve it?
6. What is a *disrupted learning environment*? Have you ever feared for your or your students' safety?

Chapter 4

The Research: Studying Resilient Students and Resilient Schools

1. Define *resilience* in the context of education.
2. Do you feel you can make a difference in students' lives? How can you use knowledge of protective factors to help in that mission?
3. List the five attributes of resilience. Do you see deficiencies of these attributes in your classroom?
4. Take a moment to examine figure 4.1 (pages 75-77). Do you feel you, as a teacher, have these five attributes? Which ones do you thrive in? Which do you struggle with?
5. Figure 4.2 (pages 79-80) lists external protective factors for resilience. Which of these stand out to you and why?
6. How does the framework of a resilient school represented in figure 4.3 (page 90) address the primary concerns of a high-poverty school?

Chapter 5

The First Cornerstone of the Resilient School: Addressing Students’

Academic Needs

1. What are the ten essentials of a student’s academic needs? In your current position, which do you think you could improve on?
2. What are the benefits of a PLC?
3. How can effective assessment be used to improve classroom learning and build toward a resilient school?
4. What are a few different ways to incorporate extra time for instruction and support?
5. How can the ten benefits of growing up poor benefit a student’s academic journey?
6. How does trauma impact students’ learning?

Chapter 6

The Second Cornerstone of the Resilient School: Addressing Students' Social- Emotional Needs

1. Define a *culture of hope* and explain how a hopeful mindset and environment can benefit struggling students.
2. Describe the importance of a school-wide, unified effort in creating a culture of hope.
3. What does it mean to *teach hope*?
4. What are the five essential seeds of hope? How do they interact with Maslow's hierarchy of needs?
5. How can a school act as a surrogate family for students? Why is this especially important for impoverished students?
6. What is the ultimate goal of the seeds of hope? How can a sense of purpose help a student find the pathway out of poverty?

Chapter 7

The Third Cornerstone of the Resilient School: Addressing Students' and Their Families' Human Needs

1. What does the *third wave of research* entail? Why is it important?
2. Examine figure 7.1 (page 161). What outreach programs stand out to you? Why?
3. What are the five steps necessary for setting up and maintaining a community outreach center?
4. What are some methods of identifying student and family needs?
5. What sort of long-term impacts can community outreach have? Do any of the success stories stand out to you as particularly powerful?
6. What are some of the best ways to evaluate outreach outcomes and results?

Chapter 8

The Fourth Cornerstone of the Resilient School: Addressing Staff’s Relational and Professional Needs

1. How can hope, and specifically the five seeds of hope, help teachers overcome secondary trauma and compassion fatigue?
2. What methods of building a sense of optimism and hope are most appealing to you? Are there any additional methods you can think of?
3. What are some ways of strengthening teachers’ bonds to their school and classroom?
How can they feel like they belong?
4. How do you self-regulate? Use figure 8.1 (page 198) to learn about yourself and discover new ways to regulate.
5. What seed of hope do you most struggle with? How can you work to improve that area?
6. What do you feel is your purpose in education? Has that purpose changed over the course of your career? What do you love about what you do?