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A framework for understanding poverty

Chapter 6:

There are 7 types of support systems these include:

1. Coping strategies(finding ways to deal with specific situations to produce the most positive outcome possible)
2. Attitudes (maintaining a stable state of mind and dealing with people professionally)
3. Self talk(maintaining the right perspective and rationalizing events to one’s own mind)
4. Strategies for resolving conflict (dealing with feelings/ego in a manner that is nonviolent and non confrontational)
5. Ways of approaching tasks(multiple strategies for the same type of problem that can be applied depending on the context of that specific problem)
6. Setting priorities(prioritizing )
7. Determining what one can and cannot live without(setting priorities in life rather than in finances or the workplace.

The chapter goes on to detail that specific combinations of these support systems work for different people depending on their needs. It also details what sources could potentially provide these resources.

Chapter 7:

The two main anchors to an effective disciplinary program are structure and choice.

In order to understand how to positively affect an impoverished child’s life you must preform a behavior analysis. Behavioral analysis includes considerations such as: what kind of behaviors does a child need to be successful? Are the resources that are needed to develop these behaviors in place? Can the parent help the child? How will behaviors be taught? What choices will the child have in the process? What will positively reinforce good behavior on the part of the child?

There are many types of behavior commonly associated with poor culture in America. These are as follows:

1. Laugh when disciplined
2. Argue loudly with the teacher
3. Anger
4. Inappropriate comments
5. Physical fighting
6. Physical contact
7. Trouble following directions
8. Disorganization
9. Incomplete work
10. Disrespect
11. Bullying
12. Cheating/theft
13. Disruptive

While these behaviors are not exclusive to impoverished children ,when caused by poverty the right response (as detailed in the book according to the behavior) is often far more effective than stalk dicipline.

Chapter 8:

An IQ test is a measure of acquired information and a somewhat subjective measure of one’s ability to gain and use knowledge (intelligence). The book outlines cognitive strategies that when taught and subsequently/hopefully learned can improve a student’s ability to solve problems and make inferences. These strategies can be broken down into 3 categories which include :

* Concepts(storing and recalling information)
* Skills(reading, writing, computing, language)
* Content(understanding what is learned and applying it to life)

Mediation is adult intervention in the learning process and consists of:

* The identification of stimulus
* Assignment of meaning
* Identification of a strategy

Teaching is external stimuli while learning is an internal cognitive process. Teaching impoverished children must establish good story structure for successful mediation.

Drawbacks of episodic story telling in the learning process:

* If an individual can not plan he can not predict
* If he can not predict he can not identify cause and effect
* If he can not identify cause and effect he can not identify consequences
* If an individual can not identify consequences, then he can not control impulsivity
* If he can not control impulses, he is far more inclined to conduct criminal behavior.

Metacognition is self-aware thinking

Feuerstein’s missing links (skills necessary for learning and perhaps metacognition)

1. Mediated focusing( ability to focus attention and see detail)
2. Mediated scheduling(ability to schedule, follow routine and plan ahead)
3. Mediation of positive anticipation(ability to control the present for a happy representation of the future)
4. Mediation of inhibitions and control(ability to defer gratification for the greater good)
5. Mediated representation of the future( ability to imagine the future based on facts)
6. Mediation of a verbal stimuli( use of precise language (formal register) for defining and categorizing)
7. Mediated precision(ability to precisely define situations, people, and things and apply those definitions to problem solving)

Chapter9:

The key to achievement for students in poverty is in creating relationships with them. Formal institutions must learn to create relationships by promoting support systems, caring for individual students, rewarding achievement, providing role models and insisting on success rather than providing the means to achieve it. Role models must create relationships by being understanding, keeping promises, kindness, clarification, loyalty, apologies and feedback. Evidence of successful relationships with impoverished students entails emotional deposits (appreciating the individuals sense of humor, and perspective on life). Emotional withdrawal (put downs and sarcasm, insistence on a full explanation, insisting on a middle class view of relationships, using the parent voice, telling an individual their goals, assigning pejorative character traits to the individual) must be avoided by being respectful of the student.

The book as a whole :

A Framework For Understanding Poverty is a multi faceted analysis and solution guide, aimed at understanding socioeconomic class and addressing the issues associated with impoverished culture. The book hones in on the mentalities and “hidden rules” associated with living in poverty. It touches on the subjects of responsibilities, interdependence, and the relationships between the poor, the middle class and the wealthy. Through a combination of statistics, charts and case studies, Ruby Payne establishes not only the need for, but the responsibility of people who are well off to help the poor overcome their shortcomings. She highlights the need for good educators to establish genuine relationships with impoverished students. The book presents numerous strategies for teaching cognitive skills to those who lack good role models and how to overcome socioeconomical social gaps like fractured family structures among the impoverished. While the lessons in this book are geared towards the educators of poor children, the content is very applicable to any person of any background. When I was young I was socially inept, I had no “filter” to prevent me from speaking my thoughts aloud. I did not understand nonverbal communication among my peers and subsequently failed to identify people’s reactions to my outlandish statements. It took many years, and a few great teachers for me to learn the social cues I needed to make and keep friends. In my case, because of my age learning “hidden rules” and formal vs casual register affected my social life rather than socioeconomic class. Had adults in my life not intervened and fostered the relationships I needed, my shortcomings would have compounded over time and affected me more along the lines of situations described in the book. While this book makes a lot of questionable assumptions and generalizations about impoverished life, it serves as a viable guide in the struggle to improve everyone’s lives.