

### Study Guide

#### *A Framework for Understanding Poverty: A Cognitive Approach 5th Revised Edition*

### Introduction

1. What are four reasons people leave poverty? What *examples* of one or more of these points come to mind for you?

### Chapter 1—Resources, ‘Reality,’ and Interventions: How They Impact ‘Situated Learning’

1. What are the nine resources that play a vital role in the success of an individual?
2. Poverty is more about other resources than it is about financial resources. Why? In what ways does the presence and/or absence of other resources impact a person’s life? Use examples from your own life or from the lives of those you know.
3. Which resources can an educator influence the most?
4. In which case study in this chapter are the most resources found? The fewest?
5. Which case study affected you most deeply? Why?

### Chapter 2—Language and Story: How They Impact Thinking, School, and Work

1. What are the five registers of language? Which one has to be direct-taught in order to be successful in school and the workplace?
2. Which register do most students from poverty not have? What areas of their lives are most influenced by the absence of this register?
3. What did you find the most striking about the Hart/Risley study of early language acquisition by young children in various classes? Why?
4. What usually has to be present in order for the acquisition of language to occur? Why does this present a problem at times?
5. What are the differences between casual and formal story structure?
6. Related to both the Hart/Risley study and “Specificity of Vocabulary,” why is a good vocabulary an important contributing factor to success in school and in other settings?

7. What can schools and other organizations do to address casual register, discourse patterns, and story structure?

### **Chapter 3—Hidden Rules Among Classes: How They Impact Relationships with People Different from You**

1. What are hidden rules? And why is understanding them important for individuals in all classes?
2. Did the three mental models “ring true” for you in terms of time priorities? Why or why not? Please respond especially in terms of your own economic class.
3. What were some of your most memorable “aha!” moments as you took the quizzes?
4. What are some of the hidden rules for each class surrounding money, language, possessions, food, and education?
5. What are some of the biggest challenges in getting out of poverty?
6. Why should students be taught the hidden rules of middle class?
7. What was most eye-opening to you about the 10 additional hidden rules of wealth? Why?
8. What reaction or reactions usually occur when a hidden rule is broken?
9. Why will an understanding of the culture and values of poverty lessen the frustration, even anger, that educators periodically feel when working with students and families from poverty?

### **Chapter 4—The ‘Situated Learning’ Reality of Generational Poverty: How It Impacts Navigation of One’s Life**

1. What are the main differences between generational poverty and situational poverty?
2. Regarding the listing early in the chapter, what do you consider the most difficult aspects of generational poverty for the person caught in that life—and why?
3. What characteristics of generational poverty are present in the “Walter” case study?
4. What makes understanding and dealing with generational poverty so challenging, especially for middle-class people? Why?
5. What makes the family patterns in generational poverty different from the middle class?

6. What emotions were evoked in you from reading Sandy’s story? Why?
7. Why is the culture of poverty so often matriarchal (“the mother is invariably at the center”)?
8. Why is education the key to getting out of, and staying out of, generational poverty?

### **Chapter 5—Role Models and Emotional Resources: How They Provide for Stability and Success**

1. What are the differences between functional and dysfunctional systems?
2. Why would emotional resources have great importance in school and at work?
3. To move from poverty to middle class or from middle class to wealth, one must trade off \_\_\_\_\_ for achievement at least for a period of time. Why?
4. How, specifically, do you help provide emotional resources when the student has not had access to appropriate role models?
5. Explain why positive self-talk is a key factor in developing and maintaining strong emotional resources.
6. Why are boundaries important in healthy relationships?
7. What is the greatest free resource available to schools? Why?

### **Chapter 6—Support Systems and Parents: How They Impact the Ability to Do Homework and to Navigate School and Work**

1. What are support systems?
2. In the “Lakeitha” case study, what types of steps would be beneficial for her—and other students in similar circumstances—to enhance their chances for success?
3. Discuss the nine support systems that schools and other organizations can use to help students. Are there others not listed? If so, what might they be?
4. Why is it important to recognize the role of *grief* as students and their families cope with the effects of the long-term recession in the United States?
5. What does the insight of Greenspan and Benderly—that all learning is double-coded, both cognitively *and* emotionally—mean to you?
6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Lareau’s comparative analysis of parenting styles in middle-class versus working-class and poor households?

## **Chapter 7—Creating Relationships: How and Why One Is Motivated to Learn and Change**

1. What is the key to achievement for students from poverty? Why?
2. How does a formal institution create relationships?
3. What is the first step in creating relationships with students and adults?
4. Reflect on the concept of deposits and withdrawals with regard to students from poverty. As you relate to individuals in poverty, do you find yourself more on the left side or the right side of the chart? Why do you think you gravitate in the direction you do?

## **Chapter 8—Discipline: How to Manage Personal Behavior So One Can ‘Win’ in a Given Environment**

1. How does the description of the penance-forgiveness cycle in poverty compare with your understanding of effective discipline?
2. The two anchors of any effective discipline program that moves students to self-governance are structure and choice. Why are these considered anchors?
3. This chapter describes certain behaviors that are related to poverty. Name some of the key interventions for these behaviors. Which interventions do you think are the most effective? Why?
4. What do you consider the most effective part of the “Participation of the Student” exercise? Why?
5. What are the three internal voices that guide an individual, and what are the characteristics and functions of each? Why should students be taught to use the adult voice?
6. What is a metaphor story, and why can it often be effective?
7. What is the most important benefit of reframing? Why?
8. Why do students need to have at least two sets of rules/behaviors from which to choose—one for home and the street and one for school and work settings?
9. Do you agree that discipline should be seen and used as a form of instruction? Why or why not?

## **Chapter 9—Instruction and Improving Achievement: How to Live in the Abstract Representational World of School and Work**

1. What kind of information is generally tested on IQ tests? Why is this important to know?

2. Complete these statements: Teaching is what occurs \_\_\_\_\_ the head.  
Learning is what occurs \_\_\_\_\_ the head.

Why is this important to know?

3. What is mediation, and why is it so essential, especially when working with children from poverty and with children from middle-class households that are struggling to make ends meet?
4. What tends to happen—both short term and long term—if an individual cannot plan?
5. Why should instruction in cognitive strategies be part of the curriculum?
6. Why is it important for students and workers to understand abstract representational systems?
7. Which of the eight key instructional issues do you think include the most helpful information for dealing with the students from poverty in your classroom—or the individuals from poverty with whom you relate in non-educational settings?
8. Why should staff development focus on a diagnostic approach rather than a programmatic approach?

## Appendixes

### Appendix A: Resources and Interventions

1. What is your response to the assessments of resources in the case studies? How did these assessments compare with yours?
2. A number of possible interventions are listed for each of the eight case studies. How practical or effective do you think these interventions might be?

### Appendix B: What Are the Causes of Poverty? Excerpt from *Understanding and Engaging Under-Resourced College Students*

1. What do you consider the two biggest factors in causing poverty?
2. Why do race and gender need to be part of the discussion when reflecting on the causes of poverty?
3. How can the emphasis on economic *class* be a helpful prism for looking at issues of poverty, along with those of middle class and wealth?
4. How do you understand the phrase “tyranny of the moment,” as used by Phil DeVol in the quote box?

### **Appendix C: What Information Does *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* Have That Cannot Be Obtained Easily from Other Sources? Why Do Critics Love to Hate It and Practitioners Love to Use It?**

1. It is pointed out that not everyone wants to change. If you think it strange that some people in poverty choose to stay there (even when they could leave), consider what it might mean for middle-class people to move into wealth—and all that goes with it (see quizzes in Chapter 3). If you're middle class and could join the wealthy class, would you? Why or why not?
2. Think of illustrations in your own life of *bonding* social capital and *bridging* social capital. List a few examples of each.
3. Why is a healthy combination of theory *and* practice needed in addressing issues surrounding poverty? And why do you think a “both/and” approach is favored instead of an “either/or” approach?
4. What to you is the most significant finding in answer to the question “Does it work?”

### **Appendix D: Poverty Statistics (also available on aha! Process website)**

1. What factors exist in the United States that would contribute to poverty being so much higher (4 to 10 times) when a household is headed by a single female compared with a married couple? What do you think the numbers would be for households headed by a single male?
2. Does it surprise you that the 2011 U.S. median income was \$50,500? Is that higher or lower than you would have thought? Why?
3. What does it say to you that the U.S. poverty rate (all races) was the same (15%) in 2011 as it was in 1982?

### **Appendix E: Where Do We Go from Here? How Do Communities Develop Intellectual Capital and Sustainability?**

1. Why is a strong foundation of intellectual capital essential to the sustainability of communities in particular and society in general?
2. How might the conversion centuries ago from a nomadic existence to a farming one compare with ways that technology affects us today?
3. What do you think about the six-step process for long-term sustainability outlined here? What do you see as its strengths and weaknesses?