

Primary teachers' perceptions of poverty

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Why are teachers' perceptions of poverty important?

- Number of young people and families they interact with
- Amount of time spent with young people
- Dominant background of teachers

The Adastra Partnership

- Adastra means “To the stars”
- An informal group of likeminded schools
- Similar contexts
- Share good practice/moderation etc
- All interested in considering - What is ‘Poverty’? What does it look like in our schools? What are we doing to address these issues?

Study design

- 5 researchers
- 5 schools
- Ethnographic approach ('rapid ethnography'? 'time recurrent')
- Phase one: 5 days each, per school (June – August 2016)
- Generating data through observation, interviews (students, teachers, TAs, parents, governors), photographs, documentary analysis

The small amount of research that does exist suggests that teachers, including student teachers, do indeed hold stereotypical ideas about pupils and parents and consequently locate the causes of educational under-achievement due to poverty within the pupil or the home rather than within institutional structures and practices...

(Thompson, McNicholl & Menter, 2016, p.217)

The pervasiveness of such deficit thinking and stereotyping, even among those teachers and student teachers apparently committed to educational equality, can lead to low expectations of poor students

(Love, 2004)

Emerging findings...

Child Poverty

Supporting Disadvantaged Pupils in Foundation Stage

Material poverty

- Spare clothes from staff
- Basic equipment donated to families e.g. toys, clothes
- Signposting to Child & Family Support Worker for tenancy support, Freedom programme, 123 Magic
- Toast each morning
- Snacks for hungry children
- Nursery dinners
- Washing clothes in school
- Christmas presents
- Birthday cards and cake

Emotional poverty

- Friendly and supportive environment
- Individual parental support
- Meeting individual needs of children
- Daily parental support
- Parenting programmes
- Family days in and out of FS
- Family box time for every child

Poverty of experience

- Fortnightly drama and play sessions with Footprints Theatre
- Regular highly subsidised trips
- Visitors to school
- Range of experience based topics
- Annual live theatre company production
- Real life outdoor experiences e.g. ball pool, paddling pool
- Parties and events e.g. I Love You Day
- Birthday cake celebrations
- Muddy Footprints sessions with SureStart
- High quality two year old provision

Poverty of language

- Fortnightly drama and play sessions with Footprints Theatre
- Let's Interact intervention
- In-house TA SALT support
- Links with SureStart
- Links with Health visitor
- Book based FS curriculum
- Real life experiences to name fruit, animals, plants etc.
- Communication friendly spaces
- Library membership and visits
- Half termly or more frequent ELS book swaps

Poverty of aspiration

- Supporting parents' own reading and Literacy skills
- Library membership for all
- Family days out
- Health visitor and SureStart parent workshops

Child Poverty

Supporting Disadvantaged Pupils in KS 1 & 2

Material poverty

- Spare clothes from staff
- Spare P.E. kit
- Suitable clothes for trips and Forest Schools etc.
- Snacks for hungry children
- Washing clothes at school
- Bringing toys and books for school
- Individually chosen Christmas books
- Easter eggs for all
- Birthday cards
- Cheap Breakfast Club
- Filling the Hunger Gap holiday club
- Well-resourced, warm school

Emotional poverty

- Child & Family Support Worker group and individual nurture support
- Lunchtime nurture groups
- Individual staff support – “always there to listen”
- PHSE and R Time sessions
- Barnardos JYISP project
- Parenting courses
- Mike's gardening and art groups
- Movement Therapy sessions
- Nurture room toys and equipment
- Clear behaviour systems
- Relax Kids program
- Foxy's friendship club

Poverty of experience

- Half termly highly subsidised trips and visitors for all
- Visits to church
- Class and small group instrumental lessons
- Schools' concert with the Halle
- Outside sports providers
- Forest Schools
- Newsround sessions
- University visits
- Free pantomime trip for all
- Anti-bullying theatre group
- DARE and CASE
- KS2 residentials
- Polar Express holiday club

Poverty of language

- In-house TA SALT sessions
- TA Communication sessions
- Focus on spoken language in English lessons
- Word trees to develop wider vocabulary
- Word mats and level-up sheets
- Explaining key vocabulary as it appears in texts
- Using Google images to explain words
- Modelling good language and re-casting
- Inference groups
- Performances and assemblies
- Bought in drama

Poverty of aspiration

- Enterprise events linked to Learning Challenges
- Yes Programme – job of the week
- Secondary school subject visits
- Vocation Week
- Nottingham Trent University workshops
- Y6 day at Nottingham Trent University
- PCSO involvement in school
- Links with Cedar Wildlife Centre
- British Science week
- Switch On reading for parents

Child Poverty

Supporting Disadvantaged Pupils in Reading

Material poverty

- Increasing the number of books in pupils' homes through:
 - ✓ Books swaps
 - ✓ Books for Christmas
 - ✓ Books as prizes
- Giving World Book Day books instead of tokens
- Holding regular book sales of second hand and reduced price new books
- Providing intervention homework packs – pens, pencil, glue, felt-tip pens

Emotional poverty

- Sessions with Olly the school reading dog
- 1 to 1 attention
- A safe environment to talk and be
- Educational support and advice for parents (of pupils being taught and parents we are teaching)
- Confidence-building for pupils through the experience of success e.g. in the praise and prompt sequence, in accelerated progress through book bands, in the familiar book part of an ECaR lesson
- Weekly reading awards in assembly with Olly and Murs

Poverty of experience

- Author visits
- Story tellers' 6 week parent and child workshop
- Library membership for all pupils on enrolment to school
- Regular visits to the local library
- High quality books that support pupils' understanding of the world
- Opportunity to practise reading and build up reading mileage
- Pre-Switch On Y1 booster to make up summer holiday loss
- Books for 2 year olds in pre-school

Poverty of language

- Modelling of correct language, tenses etc.
- Re-casting language
- Experience of book language to extend vocabulary
- Explanation of new vocabulary
- Tapping strategy to indicate unknown vocabulary
- Oral rehearsal
- Pictowords
- Word trees to extend vocabulary (J. Wade)
- Visuals in comprehension sessions
- Close liaison with school's SALT TAs
- Daily story time
- Range of support for EAL pupils

Poverty of aspiration

- Supporting parents' own reading and Literacy skills
- Library membership for all
- Key focus on reading in transition meetings
- Parents' observation of ECaR lessons
- Individual advice to parents re their own children's reading development
- LAC multi modal Literacy project
- Role models from the locality in school

Dimensions of poverty

Emotional poverty believed to be the most significant...

Emotional poverty

- Friendly and supportive environment
- Individual parental support
- Meeting individual needs of children
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Suggestion of a complex, multi-layered conception of poverty

- Multiple, inter-related dimensions
- Not just the deficit model suggested in the literature
- Appreciation of structural issues

‘within ’t’estate...they’re either unemployed or they’re on a very low income so that...has links to drug misuse, alcohol abuse and mental health... Illiteracy is quite high in our parents which has a massive impact...’

(Family liaison teacher)

‘I know where she’s coming from. She’s got a mental health issue and she’s accessed mental health services so she’s on ESA – she’s now had to go on job seekers...but she’s got a toddler who is not yet entitled to our 2 year [old] provision, so in her right mind is she going to work 16hrs a week to have to pay for a childminder?...**So you’re forever in that vicious cycle...**’

(Family liaison teacher)

‘This little boy was due to go to the pediatric service – and **by the nature of how things work they sent him a letter** - which he couldn’t read – so he couldn’t go to the appointment, so they sent him another one...’

(Family liaison teacher)

‘I’ve had a battle trying to get that little boy back involved with the paediatric service, because his father ***supposedly*** failed to attend an appointment – non-attendance – but actually he couldn’t read the letter you sent him. Did anyone think to ring? Did anyone chase up something so simple?’

(Family liaison teacher)

School / home divides:
differences presenting challenges
to understandings of poverty





In or Out:

The EU Referendum

Questions raised through this first phase

- How to facilitate / enlarge the conversation across the quite different worldviews / cultures constructed in school and at home?
- Methodological challenges of working in a team of ethnographers
- Challenge of exploring perceptions of 'poverty' in ways other-than a direct question 'what do you think poverty is?'