

WHY YOUR TITLE I STUDENTS AREN'T SUCCEEDING

AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE:

Quiz

on poverty and the brain

5 WAYS TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS

learn more efficiently

8 ideas for using technology to reach kids who are struggling



How Much Do You Know About Poverty and the Brain?

Here's a great activity to help start a discussion with your staff about the impact of poverty on the brain.



Print this 10-question quiz and hand it out at a staff meeting. Once you share the correct answers, ask teachers to develop one way they can counteract each quiz fact during their classroom day.

1. **T F** Children living in poverty are just as likely as their peers to be exposed to environmental toxins.
2. **T F** By age 4, children in poverty hear 32 thousand fewer words than those in professional families.
3. **T F** Children experiencing unstable housing have trouble with impulse control.
4. **T F** Low-income kids learn just the same as their peers.
5. **T F** Poverty can deplete parents' cognitive resources, leaving less capacity for making everyday decisions.
6. **T F** Teachers should focus on early literacy tasks as soon as a child living in poverty enters school.
7. **T F** Memory, attention, processing, and sequencing are innate qualities that cannot be improved.
8. **T F** "All students can learn" is a generalization. Some kids don't have the capability.
9. **T F** Body movement and brain growth are inversely proportional. When one goes up, the other goes down.
10. **T F** The less time kids spend with other people, the less able they are to make connections.

To learn more

To learn more about the impact of poverty on the brain, view our full infographic:

www.scilearn.com/why-learning-is-harder-when-you-are-poor-infographic

Answer key: 1) False: They are more likely. 2) False: 32 million fewer words are heard. 3) True 4) False: They need different lessons to help them catch up and grow. 5) True 6) False: They should first focus on social and emotional skills. 7) False: These are all teachable skills. 8) False: All students can learn. 9) False: They support each other. 10) True



5

Ways to Help Students in Poverty Retain What They Learn

Working memory is the number one predictor of a child's learning success, but research on children living in poverty shows significant weaknesses in this area as compared to higher income peers. Contrary to popular belief, however, cognitive skills can improve. Here are some ways you can work on developing students' working memory so they can retain their learning.

Find what they like.

Behaviorally relevant input is more likely to be learned or retained. The best way to get “buy-in” from students is to link learning to something they already like.



Have students find learning partners with whom they can share their moments of discovery and points of confusion. Divide the learning task into parts, and have them take turns being teacher and pupil. Explaining what they're learning will help them understand and retain it better.

Teach it in a new way.

High novelty is far more likely to be learned or retained than the same old boring input. A guest speaker, a powerful download video, or student skit can work magic.



Create a game that uses the new information. Apps like Kahoot! can help engage kids because they make learning necessary to win.



Make them feel good.

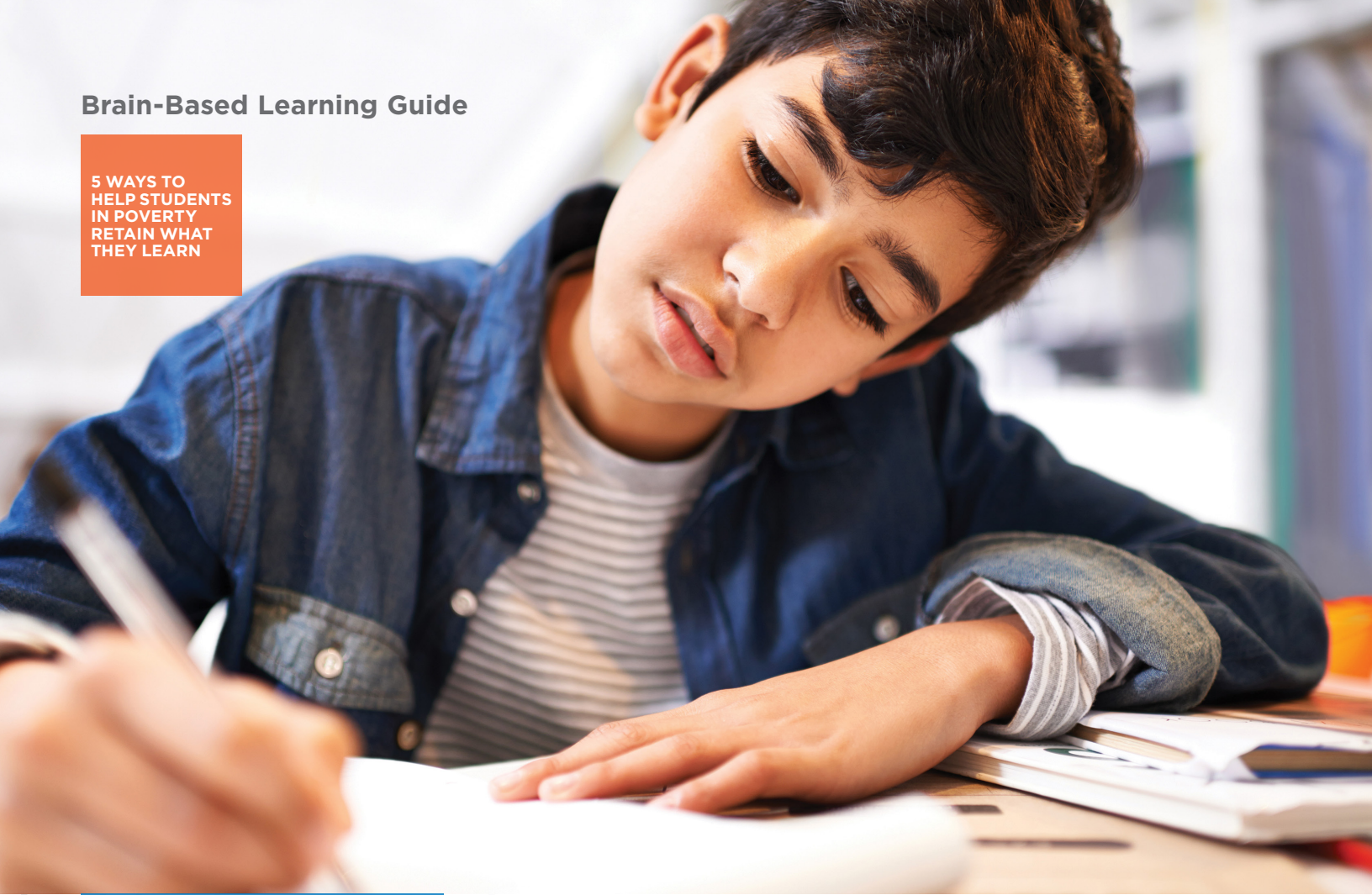
Input that also provides a reward (such as a smile, good feeling, affirmation, or applause) is far more likely to be learned or retained.



Show students how to clap using sign language. Put two hands up and wave them back and forth. Every time students solve problems correctly or ask questions to dig deeper, have students clap silently. This quiet vote of approval can go a long way to help kids feel great about learning.



5 WAYS TO HELP STUDENTS IN POVERTY RETAIN WHAT THEY LEARN



“A strong sensory input such as emotions, smell, tactile or noise is far more likely to be learned or retained.”

Incorporate the senses.

Input that is intense (such as emotions, smell, tactile or noise), is far more likely to be learned or retained. You can do this with suspense, experiments, role play, noisemakers, drama, movement-based learning, or certain foods.

TRY THIS

When teaching a personal-narrative writing lesson, incorporate the five senses into the development of personal story. Have kids smell the cookies your mother baked for you. Let them feel the heat to represent an oven door. Ring a timer to indicate they are finished. Then give them a cookie to taste. Watch their writing explode with details!

Test their recall.

Input that is repeated often is more likely to be learned or retained. Teachers can build retrieval and connection into daily learning.

TRY THIS

When you teach something new, ask students if they can identify five or more things they already know that connect to this new knowledge. The more connections they make, the better the retention.



8

Ideas for Using Technology to Reverse the Impact of Poverty

Our brains have a property called neuroplasticity, which means they can change for the better or for the worse. The following 8 ideas for using technology can be used to reverse the impact of poverty by changing how the brain works.

Virtual Field Trips

Kids living in poverty don't have as many ways to experience and connect to the world. Sharing [virtual field trips](#) can help them fill in their knowledge gaps.

1

Use Skype

Use Skype to let them meet the authors of the books they read. Many authors are available free of charge, or charge a nominal fee, to Skype with classrooms. Authors might read to your students online or talk about their writing process.

2

Spin and Crawl

Use sites and apps like [Go Noodle](#) so students living in poverty can move their bodies as they learn. When kids spin and crawl, they activate the part of the brain that regulates incoming sensory data. This interaction helps us keep our balance, turn thoughts into actions, and coordinate movements.

3

Reading Intervention

Children from poverty show specific areas of weakness in brain scans (think: pre-reading/ language skills, sustained attention, working memory). Implement [evidence-based intervention programs](#) that improve these exact areas. Fast ForWord uses a 3-step approach to directly address the language, reading, and cognitive skills (memory, attention, processing speed) that children living in poverty need most in order to catch up to peers.

4

Use Google Docs

Use Google Docs to help kids feel connected and a part of learning teams. When students work together in groups to write papers or build presentations, they build soft skills. This helps kids living in poverty learn how relationships work and about social norms.

5

Take Digital Pictures

Have students take digital pictures of the work they do so they can refer and connect to it later. When kids know what they did before can help them learn something new, they start to look for connections.

6

Enter a Math Challenge

Enter kids in [math challenges](#) to give them structure and goals in authentic ways. These challenges can provide the impetus that excites kids to wake up in the morning and get to school.

7

Podcasts

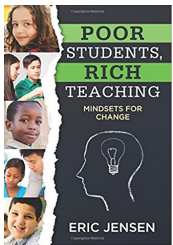
Bring podcasts into students' lives so they can learn more by listening. There are some great podcasts out there that will help kids engage with their learning and retain more information. Check out [Wow in the World](#), [Brains On](#), and [Story Time](#).

8

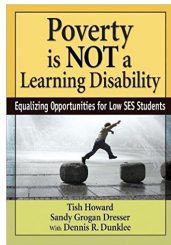
RESOURCES

to Help You Build Your Understanding of What Title I Kids Need

Books



Poor Students, Rich Teaching
by Eric Jensen (2016).



Poverty Is NOT a Learning Disability
by Tish Howard and Sandy Grogan Dresser (2015).

Websites

Cognitive Capacity. Is it true that ALL students can learn and get better? Yes. The human brain is genetically designed to respond to environmental input. That's how you survive every day. That capacity is called neuroplasticity. Learn more: <http://www.jensenlearning.com/about-cognitive-capacity/>.



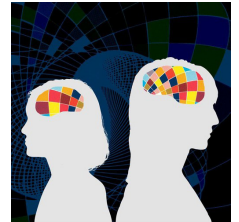
Parental Involvement. We know that parental involvement is crucial to success in school. Let us remember our role as educators in garnering that involvement and take a look at 5 ways to encourage parental involvement at our schools. <http://www.scilearn.com/blog/ways-to-boost-parental-involvement-low-income-schools>.

Compassionate Classroom Management. Learn how defaulting to compassion helps build relationships with kids living in poverty. <https://www.wereachers.com/classroom-management-title-i/>.

Statistics About Kids Living in Poverty. Find out more about the students you teach by knowing where they line up statistically. <https://www.the74million.org/article/8-important-numbers-from-new-report-on-childrens-well-being-progress-on-poverty-hunger-rise-in-depression>.

Podcasts

The complexity of memory. The mind is a diligent recorder, taking note of all that happens and storing data on it for retrieval later, right? Well actually, no. Enjoy these 7 illuminating talks on the science—and oddities—of our memory. https://www.ted.com/playlists/196/the_complexity_of_memory.



Free Samples

Our sponsor is providing readers with free access to interactive Fast ForWord reading and language intervention sample exercises. Request instant access here: <http://pages.scilearn.com/Samples.html>.

