

[Recording starts 0:00:00]

Show Notes: [www.coolcatteacher.com/e84](http://www.coolcatteacher.com/e84)

Today on Episode 84, we're going to talk about how to help kids in poverty succeed.

*The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.*

VICKI: Today we're talking to Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach @snbeach about future-proofing kids who live in poverty. So Sheryl, what do you even mean by that title?

SHERYL: I think it's really important to think about the circumstances that conspire against children and what they bring with them to the classroom. And I think that if we really want to create a bridge to that culture of despair or to the future of hope that kids have the secret sauce is going to be in what teachers do. And so by future-proofing children that are living in or impacted by poverty I'm hoping that educators will understand that they can be the difference in those kid's lives

VICKI: Bridge to the culture of despair and helping them into a future of promise. How can we be that bridge because so many teachers who work in high poverty situations are just worn out and they just feel like this is too much, I can't do this?

SHERYL: I think they really are. A lot of them com unprepared too, I don't think that we spend the time really helping educators understand the types of things that are impacting these kids so that they can understand what they need to do and also helping them to think about their teaching practice. But I do believe that educators who will be passionate and not settle for mediocrity or maybe educators that are willing to just do what it takes to help a particular child succeed, and sometimes that's what really, I think, wears people out.

Establishing supportive environments to help children thrive and to do that you have to really understand, okay, what does it mean to be a child that's impacted by poverty?

[00:02:00]

This is really a passionate topic for me because I come at it from two sides of the coin. One, I'm something that has had an opportunity to work with marginalized children and their parents quite a bit, especially children that are homeless. One of the schools that I taught at, Cooke Elementary, had a 98% free and reduced lunch and served most of the kids in the city that were homeless because it was a school on the beach.

But I also come at this as somebody who grew up in poverty. I was a child impacted by poverty. And so for these kids it's helping them – the best way to

give them a future of hope is to help them create that future and I just believe that so much of that lies in the hands of educators. Do you agree?

VICKI: I do. Actually, some of my work in college – I was a research assistant for a professor named [Dr. Danny Boston] who researched the underclass. And the thing that I struggled with about the underclass is there is a group of people that have had so many generations born in poverty that it is almost statistical impossible for that group to break out of poverty. And yet it happens. How can we be the end yet?

SHERYL: Yeah, I think it has to do with understanding the impact that these kids are going through and then trying to overcome that. And you're right, there are different kinds of poverty; there's generational poverty, working class poverty, immigrant poverty and then situational poverty. Generational poverty is the toughest one to help kids come out of. I think the secret lies in building self-efficacy.

I think one of the things that is really lacking in these kids when they come is that not only are they lots of physical kinds of things that you have to address but there's socio-emotional sorts of things. These kids, especially in my case didn't get a lot of schema building. It's kind of like formatting the disk – when you format the brain. Because in pre-school we do books and we do colors and blocks and we take them to field trips and we do things like that. And these kids come to school where they don't really have those connective tissues ready to absorb the kinds of learning that's going to take place.

[00:04:00]

And so I think that it requires us as educators, if we really want to help kids break that cycle is to change our teaching strategies over all. Education, Vicki, I think is mostly set up like a deficit based model where we say this is where you are, this is where I want you to be and so I'm going to teach to the gap. And when you have children of poverty that you're working with – and it's not a poverty curriculum, it's great for any child. You really want to do more of an appreciative-based approach where you look at what is it that these kids know how to do and do well and let's build on that strength and then let them fly where they can fly and then fill in the gaps and kind of help them understand. So that you're building that efficacy, you're helping them to have confidence. And then that confidence and that success tends to feed more success, I think.

So for me I think it's changing the teaching strategies.

VICKI: I just love that because I'm all about building on kid's strength. What do you think the biggest mistake is, Sheryl, that teachers make when teaching students that are poverty?

SHERYL: I think it's a couple of things. The biggest mistake I think, and I actually think it's like educational malpractice is when we treat poverty as a deficit and not an external factor that could be corrected if just put resources in there. But

somehow, it's a personal flaw. I think that a lot of teachers, just because of the myths and the prejudices and the stereotypes – and we all have them. You have them, I have them, right?

VICKI: Yes, absolutely.

SHERYL: But because of that they have a tendency to think that these kids are going to have low outcomes, low IQ even because they come and – I mean, think about it. The kids are hungry a lot of times. Often children that are being impacted by poverty will – if they do get several meals a day, it's usually the cheap food when you go to the grocery store.

[00:06:00]

Even with WIC Card, because the WIC doesn't last. It's only when the kids are little that they will get really non nutritional food. And a lot often, those kids are only getting on meal a day. And so that's why it's so important when they come to school that they get healthy food, really good food and good presentation. I think there's so much that we could be doing to build a moral warehouse to help them to understand social etiquette and how to operate that we're not doing.

I also think these kids are staying up late. A lot of times the parents are working several jobs –or parent. And so they're exhausted, they're taking care of siblings and then finally after the siblings are in bed that's when they do their homework. So teachers don't understand the kid's falling asleep in class not because he's turned off the school, the kid's falling asleep in class because they're exhausted and they're undernourished.

In fact, for most children of poverty school is cool. You don't think so because you think they have an attitude and all that. It's an oasis. It's a place where there's no substance abuse, there's food, it's comfortable, there's good temperature. I think probably the toughest part is that teachers just really need to be more knowledgeable about the impact that these kids are going through that they don't understand the [TASC] curriculum, they don't understand big picture kinds of concept.

And so by changing your classroom practice to where you can have lots of conversations and you can have kids that are heavily involved in not just differentiating the curriculum but have the authentic kids of curriculum where their co-owners and their co-teachers and you develop a community of learners. I think that's what's going to make a difference.

VICKI: Now, we could talk about this forever, but you have this course as part of a larger set of courses. Tell us about it because we're going to do a giveaway and this is a fantastic way for remarkable teachers to really learn from the best this summer. So Sheryl, tell us about this course and then the bundle of courses you have.

[00:08:00]

SHERYL: Sure. So Powerful Learning Practice has put together a bundle of courses, two of them I've created. <http://mailchi.mp/aimsmddc/summer-elearning-50-for-12-courses-2584586> One, this particular course on future-prepping kids that are living in poverty. Self-paced e-course, you can do it by the pool. The great thing about it is as you work through each one of the units there's things like try this and think-about's and there's tons of valuable resources. At the end of this course you actually build a toolkit so that you have a changed classroom practice based on what you're doing. You can put as much into the course as you want to get out of it – there's videos. So it's a really thick, very resource-rich course.

There's also graduate credit available for the course for those that want to do that through The University of North Dakota. So if people are looking at license renewal points it's part of a bundle of courses. There are 12 Google courses taught by a Google certified instructor. There's courses about digital citizenship, connected learning. Looking at the whole teacher, you know, how we tend to look at the whole child. Looking at the whole teacher. So there's actually a body-positive yoga course that's involved. There's a compassionate male educator course for male teachers really thinking about their role in the classroom.

So it's 12 different courses. And typically there's one by Kathy Cassidy that is connected from the start, that's how to work with kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade kids and help them be connected and really learn those strategies of [books] that goes with that. Normally the course is run anywhere from \$25 to \$49. And what we're doing is we're running a bundle of courses where you can get all 12 courses for \$50.

VICKI: Awesome. So remarkable teachers, you've gotten lots of ideas for summer but also ideas for how to reach students who are struggling and living in poverty. And I think it's important for us to remember – I actually had a student the other day admit to me, “Ms. Vicki, I hate summer. I like school, I like to be around my friends. I like to be around my teachers.” And it's hard to admit that there are students out there like that. So we need to realize that we are the safety for many of our students.

**[End of Audio 0:10:30]**

***[Transcription created by tranzify.com. Some additional editing has been done to add grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Every attempt has been made to correct spelling. For permissions, please email [lisa@coolcatteacher.com](mailto:lisa@coolcatteacher.com)]***