Quit your mumbling:

Understanding oral versus print culture as it relates to students in poverty

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Types of Poverty

- Generational
  - Focus is on making it through each day.
- Working Class
  - Poverty seen as personal deficiency.
- Immigrant
  - Poverty viewed as a systemic problem.
- Situational
  - Hard to identify
Types of Poverty

- Generational Poverty
  - Workers of the land, as opposed to owners of the land.
  - Never knew anyone who benefited from education.
  - Never knew anyone who moved up or was respected in a job.
  - Highly mobile, move frequently looking for work.
  - High family illiteracy.
  - Focus is on making it through each day.
Types of Poverty

- Working-Class Poverty
  - Working, but barely able to pay for basic needs (no money for any extras).
  - Renters as opposed to home owners.
  - Live pay-check to pay-check.
  - Few have health care.
  - Focus on making it two weeks or through the month.
  - Poverty seen as personal deficiency.
Types of Poverty

- **Immigrant Poverty**
  - Have little or no resources.
  - Face language and culture barriers.
  - Seem to have a stronger sense of self than working and generational poverty.
  - Often do better than those born into poverty in America.
  - Poverty viewed as a systemic problem.
Types of Poverty

➤ Situational Poverty
  ➤ Grows up in a stable environment with basic needs met.
  ➤ Attends school regularly, has health care, family vacations, etc.
  ➤ Surrounded by educated people with living wage jobs.
  ➤ As adult, has crisis (health, divorce, job loss, etc.) and income drops.
  ➤ Generally able to make it back to middle-class.
  ➤ Has not internalized poverty as personal deficiency.
  ➤ Does not recognize advantages of growing up middle-class.
  ➤ Can be hard judge of those in poverty.
Understanding the difference between oral and print culture

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEIn3T6nDAo
Oral Culture Defined

- Natural way to communicate with others
  - Talking
  - Touch
  - Smell
  - Sight
  - Sound
  - Taste
Print Culture Defined

- Learned communication
  - Literacy
  - Reading
  - Analyze
  - Classify information
  - Advanced reasoning skills
Oral & Print Culture Side-by-Side

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Communicators:</th>
<th>Print Communicators:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Relationship Oriented</td>
<td>✓ Linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Spontaneous</td>
<td>✓ Time Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Repetitive</td>
<td>✓ Analytic/Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Holistic</td>
<td>✓ Self-Disciplined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Emotional</td>
<td>✓ Able to Delay Gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ “Present” Oriented</td>
<td>✓ Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Physical</td>
<td>✓ Future Oriented</td>
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</tbody>
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Neither is “more right” than the other, but can be dynamic when used together to communicate with students affected by poverty.
5 Powerful Communication Strategies

- Telling stories – using vivid examples to allow people to feel the impact of what they are doing
- Modeling appropriate behavior in supportive ways
- Developing relationships while sharing information
- Using simple, familiar words and examples that people can relate to
- Giving information verbally and repeating it frequently while maintaining good eye contact
Essential Communication Strategies: Let’s Connect!!

- Essential to Oral Culture
- Descriptive, Real Experiences connect the listener
- It personalizes the information
- If I can “Feel” it, I’ll get it.
Modeling Appropriate Behavior

- The ideal communication style is one of BALANCE (Ong, 1982).

- It is possible, even necessary, to honor oral culture while teaching print culture.

- BOTH oral & print communicators will benefit from broadening their repertoire because it will assist with breaking down the walls between us and our students.
Developing Relationships While Sharing Information

- Building a **trusting relationship** with professionals allows a student to step out of their comfort zone.

- We have a **responsibility** to educate in a form that people affected by poverty can understand & relate to.

- Oral culture is steeped in **non-verbal’s** & **freely expressed emotions**
  - It’s a genuine attempt to communicate, not an outburst.

- Practice **empathetic listening** in an attempt to understand the reality of situations. Use a mixture of more relevant examples along with personal “class-driven” ones will help students to identify & connect.
K.I.S.S: Keep It Simple Seriously

- Use terms that an oral communicator can understand, & connect those terms to the terms, words, or concepts you want to introduce.

- Use benchmarks, examples, step-by-step instructions, & demonstrations to help create a sense of relatability with your students affected by poverty.

- This will help students gain print culture skills while being able to still utilize & appreciate oral culture.
“Say it Again, Sam!”

REPETITION: This is how many cultures maintained their history: Through repeated stories! This is how oral communicators transfer knowledge from short – term to long term memory.

People remember 10% of what they hear, 50% of what they see & listen to, but 90% of what they verbally repeat then apply!

Building in repetition helps to create shared meaning.

This is where that “Connection piece” becomes extremely relevant. If the students deem it “relevant”, it may be retained. Repetition helps to concrete the concepts you want them to keep!
References

Beegle, D. (2007). *See poverty...Be the difference!: Discover the missing pieces for helping people move out of poverty*. Tigard, OR: Communication Across Barriers.

Communication Across Barriers (n.d.) *Breaking the Iron Cage: Educating Students Living in Poverty*. Tigard, OR.