

# Major Conclusions of Educational Research of the Last Decade

## All Children Will Learn

All children and youth, even those who are poor, non-English speaking, and learning disabled, will learn and achieve acceptable standards of academic excellence.

## Schools Make a Difference

A good school can overcome the debilitating effects of poverty and dysfunctional family life.

## Teachers Make a Difference

Teacher quality is the single most influential factor in student achievement. It takes 2 years for those students with ineffective teachers to regain the resulting loss in achievement. If a student has an ineffective teacher for 2 years in a row, she or he is unlikely to ever catch up.

## Immediate Gains Are Possible

With appropriate action, schools and classrooms can expect immediate, dramatic results.

## Best Practices Work for At-Risk Students

Research has identified very specific classroom strategies that will significantly increase student achievement when used correctly.

<b>Less teacher-controlled instruction such as "drill and practice"</b>	
Marzano's meta-analysis: High-yield instructional strategies Building background knowledge and vocabulary work	Identifying similarities and differences Summarizing and note-taking Cues, questions, and advance organizers (include Bloom's Taxonomy) Non-linguistic representations
Increase student engagement	Kagan Structures
Target reading - also provide "accessible" text resources	
<b>Focus on what is learned rather than on what is taught</b>	
Checking for Understanding	Oral language Questioning Writing Projects Tests
Create a culture of data and assessment literacy	Focus on common assessments Instructional walkthroughs Professional learning communities

Adapted from Barr and Parrett, *The Kids Left Behind*, 2007, p. 9.

# Teachability Index

14 factors that help identify students  
who pose the greatest learning challenges

**Readiness** – the amount of academic preparation and support students receive before or outside school

- Preschool enrollment – lack of preprimary education at ages 3 and 4 (Students who attend preschool enter the K-12 system more academically prepared.)
- Language other than English – students 5-17 who speak another language at home (Students whose first language is not English will have greater difficulty reaching the same level of achievement in reading and writing English as native speakers and may have greater difficulty learning other subjects as well.)
- Parent's education – parents have less than a bachelor's degree (Children of better-educated parents are more likely to receive early mental stimulation and ongoing academic support at home.)

**Economics** – material well-being of students

- Income – income below the median family income
- Poverty – income in the lowest quintile of income

**Community** – presence of helpful and harmful social influences in children's lives

- Crime victimization – children victimized by violent crime
- Drug use – student use of illicit drugs
- Religious observance – lack of exposure to religious services almost every week (regular exposure to social influences such as supportive communities and positive behavioral norms)
- Residential mobility – change of residence in previous year

**Health** – physical and mental well-being of students

- Disabilities – placement in special education program with disability diagnosis other than specific learning disabilities
- Low birth weight – babies born with birth weight below 2500 grams (5.5 pounds)

**Race** – changing racial composition of the student population

- Racial minority

**Family** – family structures that impose educational challenges on children

- Teenage birth – born to a mother under age 18
- Single parenthood – child not living with both parents

Other factors listed in the original study under Health include:

- Mortality –When mortality rates rise, this indicates that child health has worsened and students will have more difficulty learning.
- Suicide - When suicide rates go up, this indicates that mental health has worsened and students will have more difficulty learning.

Adapted from Greene, J. P. & Forster, M. A. (2004). The teachability index: Can disadvantaged students learn? *Education Working Paper*, 6.

# The Pedagogy of Poverty

instructional practices that are not effective  
for poor and culturally diverse students

- Teacher-controlled discussions and decision making.
  - Students need hands-on, involved learning in order to learn effectively.
  - If a teacher holds low expectations for poor and minority students and controls the discussions and decision-making in the classroom, poor and minority students are destined for low achievement.
- Lecture, drill, and practice techniques
  - Documented as some of the techniques most frequently used with poor and minority students.
  - Documented as some of the most ineffective strategies used with any student.
- Worksheets
  - Tend to be upgrades of questions typically found in textbooks at the end of chapters.
- Cultural aberration
  - Most schools reflect middle-class values creating a “collision of cultures” with the value structures of poor and minority students
- Low-quality of education
  - Lessons and assignments are significantly less demanding in classrooms of predominately poor and minority students
  - Poor and minority students are often tracked into low-level general education classes
- Low expectations
  - A poor student is five times more likely to have an inexperienced or inadequately trained teacher
  - Teachers often do not believe poor and minority students can achieve high academic proficiency so instruction and assignments are watered down
- Classroom practices that are unresponsive to students
  - Classroom energy is focused on what is taught and not what is learned

Adapted from *The Kids Left Behind* by Barr and Parrett, 2007. p. 31.(from the research of Haberman, 1991; Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002; Jagers & Carroll, 2002; Barr & Parrett, 2001, 2003)