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Introduction



The purpose of *Under-Resourced Learners: 8 Strategies to Boost Student Achievement* is to provide practical tools to educators to address the needs of under-resourced learners.

The first book I wrote, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, looked at resources as they related to the three economic classes: poverty, middle class, and wealth. Since that time, many individuals have said to me, “I know students who have so many things, but they aren’t doing well in school.” In this book I elaborate on that frame of reference and say that students can be resourced or under-resourced, regardless of money.

Under-Resourced Learners is intended to give some tangible tools to individuals who teach students in schools of the United States. I would note that “under-resourced” is terminology from the United Nations (as you can see in Appendix D) and is a way to talk about students who don’t have access to a number of the resources necessary for school success.

At the end of each chapter I present a series of practical steps you can take in relation to the strategies outlined in that chapter. You may wish to integrate them with techniques and strategies already working for you and your colleagues.

This book does not presume that schools can fix everything, so the focus necessarily is on the resources that can be developed in schools.

WHY LOOK AT RESOURCES?

It isn't possible to educate well just by teaching the "group" and not knowing about the individual students in the classroom. Many students get identified as "at risk" when the issue is one of resources. When you know the resources of an individual, then you can determine the intervention(s) that will work best. Interventions that are successful work with the individual's strengths to enhance his/her under-developed resources.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE UNDER-RESOURCED? IS IT A PERSONAL ISSUE OR A SITUATIONAL ISSUE?

It is both. All individuals have an area or areas in their life where they would like to have more resources, i.e., more athletic abilities and better eyesight or be taller, shorter, smarter, quicker, etc.

For the purposes of this book, under-resourced is going to be defined as not having the resources to address a particular situation or negotiate a particular environment.

All resources are relative to the comparison group in which one finds himself/herself.

The good news is that resources can be developed—at any stage in life. *Under-Resourced Learners: 8 Strategies to Boost Student Achievement* is about how to do that.

For the purposes of this book, the following nine resources are going to be examined:

FINANCIAL

Having the money to purchase goods and services.

LANGUAGE

Being able to speak and use formal register in writing and in speech.

EMOTIONAL

Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. This is an internal resource and shows itself through stamina, perseverance, and choices.

MENTAL

Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.

SPIRITUAL

Believing in divine purpose and guidance.

PHYSICAL

Having physical health and mobility.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources.

RELATIONSHIPS/ROLE MODELS

Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate, who are nurturing to the child, and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior.

KNOWLEDGE OF HIDDEN RULES

Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO BE RESOURCED? A RESOURCED STUDENT HAS MOST OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

FINANCIAL

▪ has the necessary school supplies	Yes	No
▪ has money for field trips	Yes	No
▪ has money for projects	Yes	No
▪ has food every evening and twice a day on weekends/holidays	Yes	No
▪ wears different clothing at least five days a week	Yes	No