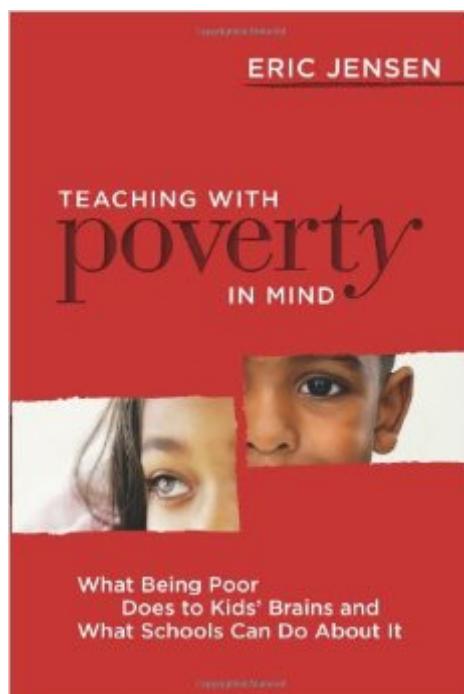


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# Teaching With Poverty In Mind: What Being Poor Does To Kids' Brains And What Schools Can Do About It



## Synopsis

In *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It*, veteran educator and brain expert Eric Jensen takes an unflinching look at how poverty hurts children, families, and communities across the United States and demonstrates how schools can improve the academic achievement and life readiness of economically disadvantaged students. Jensen argues that although chronic exposure to poverty can result in detrimental changes to the brain, the brain's very ability to adapt from experience means that poor children can also experience emotional, social, and academic success. A brain that is susceptible to adverse environmental effects is equally susceptible to the positive effects of rich, balanced learning environments and caring relationships that build students' resilience, self-esteem, and character. Drawing from research, experience, and real school success stories, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind* reveals:<sup>\*</sup> What poverty is and how it affects students in school;<sup>\*</sup> What drives change both at the macro level (within schools and districts) and at the micro level (inside a student's brain);<sup>\*</sup> Effective strategies from those who have succeeded and ways to replicate those best practices at your own school; and<sup>\*</sup> How to engage the resources necessary to make change happen. Too often, we talk about change while maintaining a culture of excuses. We can do better. Although no magic bullet can offset the grave challenges faced daily by disadvantaged children, this timely resource shines a spotlight on what matters most, providing an inspiring and practical guide for enriching the minds and lives of all your students.

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## Customer Reviews

In *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It*, veteran educator and brain expert Eric Jensen takes an unflinching look at how poverty hurts children, families, and communities across the United States and demonstrates how schools can improve the academic achievement and life readiness of economically disadvantaged students. Jensen argues that although chronic exposure to poverty can result in detrimental changes to the brain, the brain's very ability to adapt from experience means that poor children can also experience emotional, social, and academic success. A brain that is susceptible to adverse environmental effects is equally susceptible to the positive effects of rich, balanced learning environments and caring relationships that build students' resilience, self-esteem, and character. Drawing from research, experience, and real school success stories, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind* reveals \*

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\* How to engage the resources necessary to make change happen. Too often, we talk about change while maintaining a culture of excuses. We can do better. Although no magic bullet can offset the grave challenges faced daily by disadvantaged children, this timely resource shines a spotlight on what matters most, providing an inspiring and practical guide for enriching the minds and lives of all your students.

Eric Jensen is an internationally recognized educator known for his translation of neuroscience into practical classroom applications. A former teacher, he is the author of over twenty books, including the widely acclaimed *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*. He is a longtime member of the Society for Neuroscience and the New York Academy of Sciences. Jensen is currently a staff developer and is completing his Ph.D. in psychology.

"Until your school finds ways to address the social, emotional, and health-related challenges that your kids face every day, academic excellence is just a politically correct but highly unlikely goal." Eric Jensen *Teaching with Poverty in Mind* is perhaps the most important book I've read since I began teaching in a Title 1 middle school 11 years ago. Children reared in generational poverty have special needs. Eric Jensen identifies those needs, explains the science behind them, and offers practical strategies for addressing them. I appreciate the value of this book so much, I gave copies of it to my principal, assistant principal, and the school district's superintendent. I heartily

recommend this book for any educator who serves the needs of Title 1 students.

Brain research is somewhat new and fascinating. Eric Jenssen made it understandable for someone who has no interest nor aptitude in the sciences. As a person who grew up in poverty, I could relate to much of what he said. Because of this book, I am going to change the way I do some things in the classroom. I was running things in much too an authoritative style, but that's not surprising, considering I was brought up in an authoritative household. While the first couple of chapters are kind of depressing, because it tells of the deficits children of poverty will have, the hopeful parts come next. There are things we can do to help these kids be successful. I'm going to make a presentation to my principal about this book and I'm hoping we'll do a study on it. Too many of our staff members don't seem to know how to deal with these kids and tend to marginalize them. Times have changed and they can't continue to do this. I am going to be these children's advocate. I couldn't do that without this book. :)

I have done a lot of self reflecting on my teaching philosophy after reading this text. We often think of children of poverty as being "those kids" or incapable of completing certain tasks, when in reality we have to provide additional nurturing for them, even as they reach their teenage years, because they are lacking that from a young age. I hadn't thought deeply before reading this text about the psychological development of children of poverty but this was the first of many texts on children of poverty that I will read I think.

Eric Jensen makes brain research accessible to educators who may not have the level of scholarly training necessary to understand more complex texts. That's not to say this is a simple-minded book, but one written for practitioners not academics. In addition to information about effects poverty has on brain development, Eric also shares strategies to overcome the gap that exists between various economic student groups. If you work with low-income students or families - this is worth the read!

Eric Jensen provides a very good balance of theory and practical examples with case studies to support the reader and his work. I have shared this practical work with my whole of staff in our staff development time. My staff could relate well to the descriptions and strategies provided. A very helpful piece of work for our staff and our community.

As described

This book is a great read for any educator. I have been working in school where there are many different students of different social economic statuses. This book doesn't blame students or their families. It puts perspective causes of behaviors and dispositions and effective solutions. All students can learn, this book gives you the blueprint. A colleague recommended a framework for understanding poverty but that doesn't even come close to *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*. This book is also supported by so many studies that have been referenced and cited within this book. This is the kind of book that should be used in school wide/district wide book studies. Enjoy this wonderful must have book.

*Teaching with Poverty in Mind* is not just for educators teaching in low performing or low SES schools... It has very effective strategies that will work for ANY student! Many strategies contained in this book can be found in Kagan workshops or Quantum Learning Network/Whole Brain Teaching, but this book really highlights what exactly students from poverty need and why. The key in helping student succeed is understanding where they are coming from.

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