

Connecting Career and Technical Education to



Economically Disadvantaged Students

Hawai'i defines economically disadvantaged in secondary schools as those who qualify for free and reduced lunch. At the postsecondary level this is defined as students who qualify for Pell grants.

Possibilities

Economically Disadvantaged Students can...

...gain exposure to the expectations and routine of regular employment in stable, family-wage occupations.

...connect the survival skills they have developed with the workplace.

...benefit from exposure to employability skills built into the curriculum such as appropriate social behavior and workplace expectations.

...benefit from seeing a direct connection between school subjects and how they link with occupational goals, earned income, and increased life options.

Other ways of looking at economically disadvantaged

When it comes to poverty, there are two kinds—

Situational poverty is what happens to some families when events such as divorce or unemployment occur, or when an immigrant family first arrives in this country.

Generational poverty is defined as being in poverty for two or more generations and comes with a different set of values and expectations.

*“When low-income kids
don’t graduate, we all fail.”*

Quickies

- All low income is not created equal.
- An individual brings to the school setting hidden rules of the class in which he or she was raised, even though the family income may rise or fall.
- Schools operate from middle class values, using the hidden rules of that class. These are not rules that are ever taught, or even consciously articulated.
- Assumptions about a student's intelligence may actually be related to their understanding of hidden rules, rather than their ability.
- To do well in school, students must in some way learn the rules of the middle class, not because they are superior, but as another set of rules to be used if one so chooses.

Examples of possible differences in class behaviors

	Generational Poverty	Middle Class	Generational Wealthy
Food	It is about quantity; having enough is what matters	The quality of the food is what is important	The presentation of the food, making it aesthetically appealing, is what is important
Fighting	Done physically with fists and bodies	Done verbally; issues are discussed	Done through social exclusion and lawyers
Destiny	Believes in fate; not much can be done to mitigate chance	Believes in choices; can change the future with well-made decisions	"Noblesse oblige"; the wealthy are bound by obligations that determine their destiny
Time	It is about the present – living in the moment and meeting immediate needs	The future is what matters; planning and preparing	Traditions and past history are what is important

Tips for CTE Success

- Caring relationships with teachers and school personnel are critical. A general feeling of belonging within overall school environment is necessary.
- Model respect and concern for *every individual in the school* and teach conflict resolution. Help support and expand the connections between adults and students, students and their peers, and students and their parents.
- Opportunities to develop and demonstrate forms of competency (besides academic) including work-study and technical skills are very important.
- Students must have a sense of “family” and “purpose.” Focus on a wide range of extracurricular community activities. Access and involvement in school activities, such as career and technical student organizations, need to be developed.
- Students must be encouraged to enter a career pathways to employment:

Core competencies represent what all students should know and be able to do in the world of work. They include employability skills, communication, math, work ethics, problem solving, etc. Examples include being able to work with people of both genders, showing respect for diversity, and eliminating harassment on the job.

Cluster competencies are those skills that are common to occupations within career clusters. For example, being able to read blueprints would be a cluster competency within the engineering and industrial career pathway.

Specialization competencies are tied to industry verified skill standards.

...Even Better

- Where possible, increase parent involvement, creating more opportunities to involve parents throughout the school day.
- Develop community collaborations to target multiple risk factors within the family, school, community agencies, and community at large. Involve local people in implementing classroom program of studies.
- Emphasize service learning programs, seeking to provide students with helping opportunities and personal reflection on the meaning of helping.

Resources

A Framework for Understanding Poverty, by Ruby Payne, Ph.D. A very practical resource for understanding the perspective of the student from poverty within the context of the middle class mindset of public education. Useful explanations of the role non-standard English plays in the ability of students to perform on standardized tests, suggestions for what barriers need to be addressed before progressing with curriculum, and many staff development activities. Useful for both a classroom teacher as well as administration.

<http://www.ahaprocess.com>

The site for “Ruby Payne on Poverty,” a collection of publications and staff development tools. Dr. Payne has developed materials for the understanding of the economically disadvantaged student, as well as ways to address such dynamics within the structure of the educational system. Website has information on staff development opportunities, publications, workbooks, and discussion forums.

www.uhfamily.hawaii.edu

This site provides a comprehensive overview of University of Hawai'i Center on the Family, including projects and activities, links to downloadable publications, databases on children, families, and the aging, and other relevant resources.

Misconceptions

Poor kids

- lack the information and intellectual facility to achieve successfully;
- cannot progress to higher order skills until they have mastered all the basics;
- need only teacher-directed or adult instruction or supervision;
- must be grouped by ability within classrooms.

Many successful programs have shown these commonly held views of disadvantaged learners are far too restrictive.

Concepts/Lessons

Taken from "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" by Dr. Ruby Payne

Survivor Quiz

Can you survive in poverty?

- ___ 1. I know which churches and sections of town have the best rummage sales.
- ___ 2. I know which rummage sales have "bag sales" and when.
- ___ 3. I know which grocery stores' garbage bins can be accessed for thrown-away food.
- ___ 4. I know how to get someone out of jail.
- ___ 5. I know how to physically fight and defend myself physically.
- ___ 6. I know how to get a gun, even if I have a police record.
- ___ 7. I know how to keep my clothes from being stolen at the laundromat.
- ___ 8. I know what problems to look for in a used car.
- ___ 9. I know how to live without a checking account.
- ___ 10. I know how to live without electricity and a phone.
- ___ 11. I know how to use a knife as scissors.
- ___ 12. I can entertain a group of friends with my personality and my stories.
- ___ 13. I know what to do when I don't have money to pay the bills.
- ___ 14. I know how to move in half a day.
- ___ 15. I know how to get and use food stamps or an electronic card for benefits.
- ___ 16. I know where the free medical clinics are.
- ___ 17. I am very good at trading and bartering.
- ___ 18. I can get by without a car.

Survivor Quiz

Can You Survive in the Middle Class?

- ___ 1. I know how to get my children into Little League, piano lessons, soccer, etc.
- ___ 2. I know how to properly set a table with plates, knives, forks, spoons, napkins, etc.
- ___ 3. I know which stores are most likely to carry the clothing brands my family wears.
- ___ 4. My children know the best name brands in clothing.
- ___ 5. I know how to order in a nice restaurant.
- ___ 6. I know how to use a credit card, checking account, and savings account and I understand an annuity.
- ___ 7. I understand term life insurance, disability insurance, and 20/80 medical insurance policy, as well as house insurance, flood insurance, and replacement insurance.
- ___ 8. I talk to my children about going to college
- ___ 9. I know how to get one of the best interest rates on my new car loan.

- ___ 10. I understand the difference between principal and interest on my house payment. I know what escrow is.
- ___ 11. I know how to help my children with their homework and do not hesitate to call the school if I need additional information.
- ___ 12. I know how to decorate the house for the different holidays.
- ___ 13. I know how to get a library card.
- ___ 14. I know how to use the different tools in the garage.
- ___ 15. I repair items in my house almost immediately when they break – or know a repair service and call it.

Survivor Quiz

Can you survive Wealth?

- ___ 1. I can read a menu in French, English, and another language.
- ___ 2. I have several favorite restaurants in different countries of the world.
- ___ 3. During the holidays, I know how to hire a decorator to identify the appropriate themes and items with which to decorate the house.
- ___ 4. I know who my preferred financial advisor, legal service, designer, domestic employment service and hairdresser are.
- ___ 5. I have at least two residences that are staffed and maintained.
- ___ 6. I know how to ensure confidentiality and loyalty from my domestic staff.
- ___ 7. I have at least two or three “screens” that keep people whom I do not wish to see away from me.
- ___ 8. I fly in my own plane, the company plane, or the Concorde.
- ___ 9. I know how to enroll my children in the preferred private schools.
- ___ 10. I know how to host the parties that “key” people attend.
- ___ 11. I am on the boards of at least two charities.
- ___ 12. I know the hidden rules of the Junior League.
- ___ 13. I support or buy the work of a particular artist.
- ___ 14. I know how to read a corporate financial statement and analyze my own financial statements.

The first point about this exercise is that if you fall mostly in the middle class, the assumption is that everyone knows these things. However, if you did not know many of the items for the other classes, the exercise points out how many of the hidden rules are taken for granted by a particular class, which assumes they are a given for everyone. What, then, are the hidden rules? The subsequent grid gives an overview of some of the major hidden rules among the classes of poverty, middle class, and wealth.

Other CTE Resources Available

Brochures

- Health Science Professions in Hawaii
- Career Pathway 3-Panel Brochure

DVD

- Hawaii's CTE Standards Performance-Based Assessment

Special Population Teaching Resources

- Economically Disadvantaged Students
- English Language Learners
- Nontraditional Occupations
- Single Parents/Displaced Homemakers
- Special Education/Students with Disabilities

Other Products

- Career Pathways Handbook (8.5" x 11" - 18 pages)

Dual Credit Articulated Program of Study Brochures

- Entrepreneurship
- Marketing
- Retailing

Core Standards Posters

- Business
- Health
- Industrial and Engineering

Posters

- Arts and Communication
- Business
- Health Services
- Industrial & Engineering
- Natural Resources
- Public & Human Resources
- Career Pathway System Poster

Resources are available by logging on to <http://www.hawaii.edu/cte/publications>



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