UNDERSTANDING AND EXPECTING GREATNESS FROM CHILDREN IN POVERTY

ELIZABETH A. SKINNER, PHD
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
ESKINNE@ILSTU.EDU
“The United States not only has the highest poverty rates for children among industrialized nations, but it also provides fewer social supports for their well-being and fewer resources for them at school. In 2007 23% of U.S. children were living in poverty, more than twice the rate of most European nations, and a higher rate than was true in the early 1970’s, when poverty rates for children had been reduced to 15% as a result of the War on Poverty (p. 31).

Segregated urban schools often have a high concentration of poor students, minority students, and English learners.
UNDERSTANDING

...and undoing deficit-based thinking

- “These kids don’t care about learning.”
- “The parents don’t care about education.”
- “Parents aren’t involved.”

...and challenging the myth of the culture of poverty (Gorski, 2008).

...and believing in the opportunity gap as opposed to the achievement gap (Milner, 2010).
Bilingual Educators believe:

The home or native language of students is valued and deserves to be maintained and developed academically.

What assets do your students (poor or not) bring to school?
EXPECTING GREATNESS
EXAMPLE #1
ILLINOIS DISTRICT U46

“No child has to lose a language to learn another language.”

2nd largest district in Illinois, 2nd largest number of English Learners

40,352 students
• 50.4% Hispanic
• 31.3% White
• 8.5% Asian
• 6.8% Black

61% Low Income
25% English learners
BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

U46 began implementing Dual Language district-wide in 2011.

Gradual transition from TBE (Transitional Bilingual Education) to Dual Language in all schools serving bilingual students.

Implementing team teaching and encouraging all teachers to earn their ESL endorsement. Partnerships with universities, including ISU, make this possible.

Preparing qualified bilingual paraprofessionals to be teachers as well. Growing their own.
EXPECTING GREATNESS
EXAMPLE #2
LSNA PARENT MENTORS

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association in Chicago views parents and community members as assets in local schools

- Began the Parent Mentor Program in 1998 in Logan Square
- 582 parents (throughout state) graduated from the program this spring
- Expanded opportunity in 2000 with the GYO teachers program
EXPECTING GREATNESS
EXAMPLE #3
ISU/CPS URBAN TEACHER PREP

Collaboration between ISU College of Education, CPS and Community Based Organizations

ISU COE works in three distinct Chicago communities: Little Village, Auburn Gresham and Albany Park.

Partner with schools AND CBOs in the community

• Summer internship (STEP UP)
• Year long PDS
• Students live in communities and work in schools
• Course redesigns with an urban focus for faculty
OUTCOMES

More ISU graduates are choosing to work in CPS

Those graduates are better prepared for urban schools

CPS guarantees positions for hard to fill positions such as bilingual and special education
REFERENCES & RESOURCES


Milner, R. (2010). *Start where you are, but don’t stay there*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.


http://www.lsna.net/index.html

http://www.u-46.org/pages/SDU46/Departments_Programs/English_Language_Learners__ELL/ELL_Programs/80_20_Dual_Language