



Book Review submitted by Maggie Doane: *Poor Students, Rich Teaching* by Eric Jensen

Teaching in a Title I, high percentage poverty school has definitely been eye-opening for me reflecting on myself as an effective teacher, as well as in the methods in which I teach concepts to students. This book is designed for those struggling with teaching students from poverty. I really liked Jensen's quote, "Nothing moves forward when we complain about what we don't have, how we are undervalued, and how we work with some who poisons our school culture. Things only move forward when you focus on the path of success for your students" (*Jensen, p. 1*). It's so easy to get wrapped up

in the "drama" of school or the "frustrations" of specific students, when really your job is to be an effective teacher for ALL students. Chapter 1 shows you what's really going on in the United States regarding poverty and how students from poverty may behave and learn differently. Chapter 2 informs you how to change your teaching to succeed with students from poverty. The book then breaks off into four different mindsets to reach students in poverty: relational mindset, achievement mindset, rich classroom climate mindset, and engagement mindset. One of my favorite mindsets is the achievement mindset, in which the topic of feedback lies. Feedback for students is imperative; especially those in poverty. In our school every classroom has a 4:1 ratio poster hanging on the wall. It's a reminder that we are to give 4 positive feedback remarks for every negative remark. The book lists multiple methods for feedback, but my personal favorite is SEA (strategy, effort, and attitude). Students have no control over their parents, their siblings, or their home lives. However, "students do have a huge amount of influence over the choices they make (strategy), how hard they work (effort), and the mindset (attitude) they bring to learning (*Jensen, p. 88*)." Using SEA, teachers can give specific feedback and replace the "Well done" or "Good job" rut we all get into. Strategy: "I love how you kept trying so many strategies to find the number of beats in that measure."

Effort: "I like that you refused to give up on your goal."

Attitude: "Your positive attitude helped you to succeed even faster on this problem."

I highly recommend this book to every teacher, but especially those teachers who have students who come from a rough home/situation. It's incredibly encouraging and helps you remember why you got into teaching in the first place!