

It's Not *Their* Fault: Systemic Inequities in Our Schools

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Decades of research has uncovered horrid inequities in the educational opportunities available to students in poverty as compared to those available to students from wealthy families. Nevertheless, many people, including some educators ostensibly committed to education equity, continue to buy into notions pushed by Ruby Payne and others who claim that we need to change the cultures and behaviors of students in poverty while ignoring the systemic classism that keeps them in poverty. This is a partial list of ways in which that systemic classism has been observed in U.S. schools.

Compared with schools with low percentages of students in poverty, those with high percentages of students in poverty are much more likely to:

- Have a greater number of teachers unlicensed in their subject areas;
- Have larger numbers of teacher vacancies and substitute teachers;
- Have more limited access to computers and the Internet;
- Have inadequate learning facilities such as science labs;
- Have evidence of vermin such as cockroaches or rats;
- Experience serious teacher turnover problems;
- Have inoperative or dirty student bathrooms;
- Have insufficient classroom materials;
- Have higher student-to-teacher ratios;
- Employ fewer experienced teachers;
- Implement un-rigorous curricula;
- Offer lower teacher salaries;
- Have larger class sizes; and
- Receive less funding.

So this begs the question:

Why doesn't Ruby Payne mention any of this in A Framework for Understanding Poverty or in her other books and essays?

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