

I have had such a humbling experience taking this course. I have found I had many assumptions about students living in poverty that were not at all true, some that were true, and other notions I never even considered. My eyes were opened to how students living in poverty cope with daily stressors and family situations in ways I can't even imagine.

I will take away a better understanding of what students coming from poverty most likely need to help them succeed. I was not aware so many emotional responses are not inherently learned, but rather require direct teaching. I know now if I notice a child lacking a certain desired behavior, I will not automatically assume there is a lack of respect, but rather a lack of knowing the appropriate response. I will simply take the time to teach what is desired and expected.

As this course concludes, I am excited to be part of a team working on a final project that will carry further than the close of this course. In starting a Facebook page dedicated to reaching out to all families in our community, our hope is to post informative information that can be used to guide and enrich children's experiences and educational background. The page has already received positive response and I am proud to be part of a team dedicated to such a positive force.

Finally, I am most aware of what I am able to influence. It was a natural response of my colleagues and I during this course to feel heartbroken and want to scoop up all of the children living in poverty we discussed and take them home and feed them, love them, and provide for them. We see students every day enter our

buildings wearing scruffy clothes, having disheveled hair, and carrying tattered backpacks. Unfortunately, we have learned that no matter what we may attempt to do, we cannot change the amount of money in their families' bank account, but we can help make deposits in their emotional accounts. I am reminded once again how important the Serenity prayer is... *"Lord, help me accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference"*. This prayer has helped me in many areas in life, and this is no exception. I will do what I can every day for all students to ensure I am meeting their needs, enriching their lives, and simply letting them know how much I care about them. That is my job, and I love it! And I couldn't end this course without adding one final statement. I will strive to be my students' ACE in the hole, as I work effortlessly to Affirm, Challenge, and encourage my students to work harder. I will not let what has been set before them serve as an obstacle that blocks their path in life, but rather an obstacle that can be surmounted with determination and grit!