



Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind

Engage for Motivation and Effort

#1 Make It Their Idea

When a person is confronted with an adverse situation or person and feels limited control to manage it, his or her brain feels stress. It makes sense that students who are accustomed to poverty have developed certain coping skills to strengthen their locus of control: if they sense their world getting out of control, they may show anger, helplessness, or both.

To increase your students' locus of control and, by extension, their engagement and learning, let them make more choices. When you give students a choice, they are more likely to give something a try.

It's essential to "sell" a choice so that students are aware of the power they're being given.

Every time I visit or read about high-performing teachers, the pattern is the same: they engage with ownership, purpose, and collaboration.

"Short Term" Solutions you can use (p. 75):

1. Provide content choice
2. Let students run a "Classroom City"
3. Hold regular "drumroll drawings"
4. Delegate tasks with classroom jobs
5. Have students write the rules
6. Encourage students to become mentors
7. Engage students in project learning
8. Have students self-access