Nancy Sellers January 2004 interview with Dr. Donna Beegle: Communicating with Children from Poverty

Nancy: Hello, I’m Nancy Sellers. Scott Adams and I welcome you to this month’s executive briefing. The key word for this month’s interview is “context.” What if you received a report from a fed-up teacher that a fourth grade student in your school was late frequently to school, usually came to school without supplies, and was not doing well academically, in fact, he was doing nothing at school.

Scott: Would you call the child in to your office to give him a warning notice to take to his parents? Would you give him a detention? Would you like him to disappear from the test scores that you will be evaluated on next month?

Nancy: Now, suppose that you want to investigate further. You are frustrated because you have never seen this child’s parents at a parent conference or open house. “Typical,” you mutter as you reach for the student file. “It’s kids and parents like this that will bring our test scores down”, you think to yourself. Where is Rod Paige now?

Scott: So. you decide to visit the parents. There, you then learn context of his behavior. No parents went to the conference because there were no parents around. You learn from the child that there is a father in jail, and a mother who left months ago. And the child is living with his grandmother who doesn’t speak or read English. And you learn
the context of coming to school without supplies. He and his grandmother are living in a small house trailer. The fourth grade student skipped yesterday’s dinner because his grandmother had to buy medicine and didn’t have money left over to buy food. Somehow, lower test scores don’t seem to have the impact it did yesterday.

Scott: Would a warning notice achieve anything? Would a detention stop the behavior? Of course not. It is indeed foolish to judge behavior without looking at “context” – where does the behavior come from? What are the circumstances that cause the behavior to happen? Somehow, learning the circumstances of that boy’s behavior and lack of motivation makes all the difference in the world. The reason we brought up the word “context” is to introduce this month’s topic – “teaching children from intergenerational poverty.”

Nancy: this month, we will discuss generational poverty in the context of school improvement. To better understand why children from generational poverty do not readily respond to warring notices or change because of failing grades. Only after we better understand the context, can we address the causes and work to find a conclusion.

Scott: Our interview this month is with Dr. Donna Beegle, the president of Communication Barriers, a Portland Oregon consulting firm dedicated to increasing educational success for students from poverty backgrounds. She has spoken extensively throughout Oregon, sponsored by the Confederation of School Administrators, explaining the context of poverty to the educational leaders. She has done graduate and post graduate work in generational poverty and currently will soon publish a book titled Poverty: the Unspoken Diversity issue: A Handbook for Educators. Donna’s personal history and her research have been featured in newspapers, local TV and PBS. Nancy reached her at her offices in Salem. Here is the interview:
Nancy: thank you for taking some time to visit with us, Dr. Beegle. Let me start with the context for this interview – What does it mean to be from generational poverty and go to school in America today?

Beegle: Well, Nancy, that’s a question that a lot of educators haven’t really had a chance to think about in some concrete detail. And the work that I do, is exactly about that. I was born into generational poverty. I come from a family where no one ever went to school beyond the 8th grade, and most of my family members are illiterate. My grandparents picked cotton for a living; did migrant type work; and my parents picked cotton and also followed the migrant season picking cherries and strawberries; and sometimes we would go into the woods if we were in the northwest and pull moss from the trees, bale it, sell it to nurseries. All of those kinds of jobs that you do for survival when you don’t have education or you don’t have skilled labor.

We don’t really talk about that in this country. We don’t talk about if you are unskilled and uneducated, what are you likely to earn? And what will that buy? So, what tends to happen if you are born into generational poverty is, you get these really strong messages that there’s something wrong with you.

And you get it from day one. The messages come from watching the way people talk to you family, every single one of my brothers, all five of them, have been in jail or prison. I’ve many, many times as a child watched my mom be at her wits end trying to find food for us and being told “no”. And, I remember as a child watching her trying to reach the hole in the plastic glass usually people wouldn’t talk to her face to face. There always had to be something between them and her, and my interpretation of that as a child was, she must be really bad, they won’t even talk to her face to face.

When my dad drove an ice cream truck, he worked in minimum wage labor jobs, and again, it was always those jobs that don’t pay enough to survive on. We don’t kind of recognize that and acknowledge it and we tend to say the people need to just work
harder. I have family members who have worked hard their entire lives and been homeless pretty much their entire lives. I’m from a world where evictions were normal. The only experience I ever had with police officers was when they had put an eviction notice on our door telling us to get out of our house, or they took away people that I love.

So, my response then to police officers is very different one than many middle class children might have had. So, being born into generational poverty in the United States, you get messages that really program you to internalize the poverty as your own deficiency. That’s a little bit different from a lot of other countries where there’s high concentrations of poverty and there’s a clear expectation of what you are likely to earn, what you are able to buy with what you are able to earn.

In Portland, Oregon, the average rent for a two bedroom is $700/month. A person on welfare with 2 children gets $468 a month. So you can see a huge discrepancy and lots of people piled up into one house. You do what you have to do to survive. You sort of develop a mentality of, “I’m going to do whatever it takes to survive”.

And when it comes to education, you go into the educational environment that’s set up for middle class people and treats all students and families as if they have the same lifestyle, the same life experiences, and the same resources to do what is expected of them. The students coming in from school from generational poverty tend to be made fun of for their clothing, their appearance. Their parents are not accepted. They feel it, they know it. And, they go into the classroom and there are words that are not used in their homes, so they do not have the vocabulary to really be a part of and feel like they belong.

It’s pretty hard to feel like you belong if, the lifestyle you live and the world you have is non-existent in that environment. And what I mean by that is that poverty is not discussed in the school setting. Very much like race didn’t used to be a topic of conversation in school classrooms. Poverty is silent. And, the structural causes of
poverty, the history about how we came to our current ideas about poverty are not
mentioned, which perpetuates that whole internalizing the poverty as “You are doing
something wrong”, “If you would just work harder, or make better choices, you wouldn’t
be in poverty”. When in fact, you could work extremely hard and if you are not educated
and skilled, you are not going to make enough money to survive in this country in a
middle class lifestyle.

Nancy: Can you tell us more about what it feels like to be born in poverty
your life experiences and self concept – or as we used the term several times
already, the context of poverty?

Beegle: Yes, Nancy, I will. There’s a huge difference in how you feel about yourself. Your self-
concept and what you believe is possible. Your life experiences shape your expectations, and a lot of
people who immigrate to America have been taught from very early on, that America is the land of
opportunity. And, because there’s such a clear expectation in many third-world countries where there’s
high concentrations of poverty - of what you’re likely to earn with your place in that society, or your status,
or your education, or your skills. The poverty is internalized as your own fault. And Father Paulo Freire,
who wrote the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, is a person who speaks so well of this issue. Students
immigrate to the United States and very often they seem to have nothing, but tend to do better than
students who are born into poverty in this country. That is directly related to that internalizing of the
poverty. There’s a belief that there’s hope. And Freire says for people born into poverty in this country,
where the wealth is right in your face. And, he talks about how people are socialized as to what it takes to
be normal in their society.

In America, we socialize people to believe you have to have a certain kind of
shoe, you have to have a certain kind of clothing, you have to have a certain kind of
house, you have to drive a certain kind of car, and you have to have a certain kind of job.
And, if you don’t have those things, you are not normal and you don’t belong. And this is
why you see a lot of families from generational poverty with a cell phone, or a big screen,
or cable, when we know they can’t even afford to pay their rent. What we tend to do is judge them and say well, “They’re irresponsible”. “I wouldn’t do that kind of thing!” But the reality is they are trying to belong, and if you picture that scenario of a parent with 2 children living on $468/month, they don’t have enough money anyways, and they want their kid to belong, so they will say, “Get your starter jacket” or “Get your Nike’s”, or whatever it is that would seem to help them to belong.

So that whole perception of what’s possible is where we really have to go to work on. The possibilities of what we have to help kids from generational poverty understand what education can do for them. Because they come to school and education has no meaning. They have never met anybody who benefited from education, and the stories they’ve heard about education are punitive stories where people are punished for their poverty. They are punished for being late. They are punished for not having their homework done. Well, what’s homework, if you don’t have a home? What do we call it then? And again, that’s that whole expectation that everyone arrives with the same resources to do what’s expected in the school environment.

Nancy: Obviously, of key importance to educators is how children of poverty access information. In your book and presentations you talk of two cultures – an oral and written. Can you tell us what that means and what context that has for learning?

Beegle: Certainly, Nancy. We don’t recognize that there are two distinct languages in America. And I’m not talking about languages like Hispanic, or Asian languages. I’m talking about within the English language. There are two distinct languages. I talk about my own experiences of being bilingual. I speak my home language, coming from generational poverty, and I speak the language of the middle class.

Now, within those languages, there are some very distinct characteristics and styles. For example, with oral culture, many people associate oral culture with Native American culture. When in fact, what it means is that you get most of your information for
your daily life experiences verbally. So, when you need to know something, you are more likely to go ask someone rather than to pick up a book and read about it.

Many Native Americans are "oral culture." Walter Ong was the scholar who first linked about 15 years ago, oral culture to poverty, and his research was conducted around the world. He found that people living in poverty tended to exhibit the characteristics of oral culture, and just quickly, to share those characteristics: The first characteristic which is so essential for educators to really capitalize on is that oral culture people are relationship focused. They will do things out of their comfort zone because of a relationship. And, we tend to teach educators in the university system to maintain their distance. Don’t get personal, and, I’m saying exactly the opposite is needed. These students from generational poverty need that connection. They need to be able to connect with someone in a meaningful way so that they can see why education is important and could be beneficial to them. The relationship base is the prime. Everything is around relationship.

The second characteristic is spontaneity. Spontaneity comes from the nature of verbal communication. If I’m saying something verbally, I can jump from subject, to subject, to subject. I can tell you that I finished my doctorate in educational leadership in August of 2000. I can tell you that I got my GED in 1986. I can go just about anywhere and your mind is trained to follow me. But in print culture, our brain is trying to focus in on one idea, and that’s a very different style of taking in information, and in the educational environment, tends to be set up to be welcoming to people who exhibit characteristics of print culture, which I will go into shortly.

The next characteristic or oral culture is that it is repetitive. This made a lot of sense before print. People would repeat the knowledge, so that knowledge would be
passed on. It doesn’t make a lot of sense in our technology world today; however, it’s still a part of oral culture. So students from oral culture need things to be repeated again, and again, and again. And, another part of that is, that oral culture people store the knowledge in their short term memory. And there’s only so much space, so knowledge not used on a daily basis is discarded, and very often you’d hear students that would say, “You didn’t say that to me”, “You didn’t tell me that”. And sometimes they might be trying to get around something. But very often it’s because they have discarded that knowledge from their short-term memory. Lots of repetition in the classroom. Lots of concept checking going back and making sure that they can repeat it and making sure that they can use it on a daily basis. Because you need to make the assumption that it’s not knowledge that they are using in their home life. That’s, who’s president? or whatever algebra problem, is not important in the life of survival of subsistence where your lights are being turned out, you’re being evicted, you’re wondering where you are going to sleep. Those things take “back seats”. You think of Maslow’s hierarchy here, it’s very, very, true. These students aren’t going home and having conversations about the issues that a lot of middle class families are discussing because they have their basic needs met.

Another characteristic of oral culture is that people tend to repeat the same stories. Story telling is really essential. You can teach kids abstract concept from oral culture by personalizing it. Tell them about people, not abstract concepts. Make them understand that this is a real person that came up with this idea. And tell them about that person. If you think about the “Enquirer” and “Star” which outsell the Washington Post? Why is that? And why is it that you see people from poverty as the readers of those newspapers? It’s because they are about relationships. And people focus in on that.

Another characteristic of oral culture is the holistic nature of world culture. Taking in everything that’s going on around you. 80% of communication is non-verbal, so you have to be paying attention to everything going on around you. Now contrast that with print culture and print culture comes from getting your primary
daily life experience from reading, so your brain is trained to think in a linear fashion, first this, then this, then this. If you think about the word *linear* itself, that doesn’t mean anything unless those little letters are in a particular order. So, our brains become trained to organize our lives and thought processes in a linear fashion.

The oral culture people are jumping all over the place from subject, to subject, to subject. If you ever want to know how much discomfort is there for oral culture students in a linear classroom, use the characteristics of oral culture and turn your classroom into an oral classroom structure where interrupting is okay. There are no periods in oral culture. It is okay for everybody to talk at once, and there are multiple subjects being talked about, so you jump from subject to subject, to subject, and you watch the print culture people who want things planned out - who want things in a linear fashion - start to squirm because that whole need is not being met for that structure. So that’s why you see a lot of kids kind of antsy and jumping around who come from oral culture environments.

Another characteristic of print culture is that abstract thinking, the knowledge in print culture is outside of you. It’s on the print page. Whereas in oral culture, I am the knowledge. Whatever I’m saying, is me. It has my tone, my gestures. And this is why you see a lot of people responding physically in oral culture. They are more likely to hug you, more likely to pat your leg, hold your hand, because they are responding in the moment. They are also more likely to hit you. There are more fist fights in oral culture, because whatever I’m saying again, the subject matter isn’t separate from me, it is me.

“Constructive criticism” is a middle class concept. A lot of times you see teachers writing information on students papers, feedback to them about how they are doing or whatever. And the oral culture students will say, “My teacher doesn’t notice if I do the work, and they don’t notice if I don’t do the work.” Because
that writing is not communicating to them. They need personal, “Sit down, go over it with me, and do it verbally”, and that’s how they get their information.

Now, you can help students from oral culture to gain the skills of print culture and it’s not like it’s a “teeter-totter” where you have to be all the way in the print culture world, but characteristics of being linear and abstract thinking, and distancing and separating yourself from your emotions, those are all part of print culture.

You model reading as a way of getting primary information. So, if a student needs to know something, instead of saying, “Go read over there in the encyclopedia,” or whatever book is available for that information, you go with them. Use the personal relationship and you say, “Oh, you know, I think that we can find that in this book here”. You open the book and show them how that information that they need, and it has to be something that they need, that information is in the book and the next time they need information, they will go back to that book. And it takes a lot of repetitive modeling that you can get primary information from print culture.

My professor at the University of Portland, who was a “guru” in this area, said to me, “You are the most oral cultured person I’ve ever met, and I want you to maintain that because our society is missing that ability to develop relationships. We are missing that ability to be spontaneous, to tell stories, and to connect with the world in the powerful way that world culture do.

But, in order to be successful in the education world, we need the skills of print culture. We need to be able to delay gratification, which reading teaches you to break things down into small parts and be able to put them back together again so that they come into a whole, so print culture people learn that things will happen,
they are just going to happen in a particular order; whereas, oral culture people, if it doesn’t happen now, it never will.

Again, that’s what a lot of times you’ll see students “shut down” because of an assignment. The teacher will ask them to write a page. Well, they are looking at that whole page, and it’s incredibly overwhelming. It’s real important to help the students gain the skills of breaking things down into parts. First, you write a word, then it becomes a sentence, then it becomes a paragraph, then pretty soon, you’ve got a page.

Print culture students are already able to do that. Whether you have the skills of print culture, or oral culture, whether you’re dumb in whichever area, it depends on how did your parents get their information for daily living. And if your parents ask other people, you are going to probably exhibit the characteristics of oral culture. If your parents were literate and they read for their information, you will be comfortable in the educational setting. So as educators, we really have to begin to think about, “What is the climate”? Is the climate welcoming? Is there spontaneity written into the curriculum? Are there opportunities for students to develop relationships with their peers and their teachers? And, once we begin to incorporate the characteristics of oral culture in the classroom, there’s richness for all students.

Nancy: So, we can take leadership roles in the schools to make sure that the children or poverty are not treated differently by other students but are educated differently by the teachers.

Beegle: That’s really important, Nancy. Administrators are the leaders of our schools and really set the tone for how students from generational poverty are welcomed. And if a school administrator has “zero tolerance” for students from generational poverty being made fun of, or ridiculed because of words
they don’t know, or clothing that they wear, or the wrong lunch box, it really sets a tone in the school that these students are valued and that they bring something in. It’s always fascinating to watch when an administrator takes the time to talk to a student from generational poverty, or parents from generational poverty. That is life changing for them!

Because they are in a world where they are taught that those people know the answers. My mom never, ever, went to a school conference. And, what we say about parents who don’t go to school conferences, and participate in school activities is, they must not care about their children. Well, I have the most caring mother on the planet. She would say, “Those people know what they are doing. I ain’t going in there and make a fool out of myself!”

And for administrators to take the time to be at the door to welcome parents, to welcome students, to notice the students. These are kids who have never been noticed. These are kids who’ve never been noticed. They need to be noticed, and they need to be “Stars”. Administrators can play a real role in making sure that the curriculum has some components where we explore the history of poverty in this country, and how did we come to our current ideas about poverty? And, what are some of the structural causes?

Those should be part of the curriculum. Whether it’s first grade or whatever grade. We wouldn’t not talk about race, and it’s a very sensitive subject. Poverty is a very sensitive subject and we need to talk about it because it helps the students to externalize the poverty and see that “Oh, the reason my hair doesn’t look like yours is because my cousin (who’s never cut hair in her life) is my hair stylist.” I didn’t just walk out of a salon. Because we don’t give people opportunities to externalize that poverty and see those kinds of things and also the administrator can play a huge role in making sure from day one, from whatever grade, the students are getting the language and the information they need to believe that higher education is possible.
We know that education makes a difference, but the difference in income between a college graduate and a high school dropout is enormous. I think it's about, according to the census, $43,000 is the national average for a bachelor’s degree, and it's somewhere around $17,000 if you are a high school dropout or less. And most high school dropout or less are actually earning around $6,000 to $8,000. So huge difference in life style and possibilities if they can get that education, but there isn't someone sitting around telling them about financial aid, there isn't someone telling them that if they get bad grades they can still go to college because there's developmental education. There isn't someone telling them what a freshman is and what a sophomore is. Again, they have no frame of reference, as to what is a doctorate; they had no frame of reference that education could be something good. Now, my family has a whole new meaning for education. I have a niece who wants to be a pediatrician. For my kids, my son, not too long ago, was counting and I said, “What are you doing, Daniel”? He said, “Mom, in 14 years I'll have my doctorate.”

We have the ability to make a difference in the lives of kids from generational poverty. And, the biggest thing that an administrator - or a teacher can do - is develop that relationship and show that child what's good about him, because we spend far too much time telling them what's wrong with them.

Nancy: Tell us more about the distinct language of poverty and how words have different meaning to a child from poverty and a child, say, from middle class.

Beegle: Yes, Nancy. It's all part of that when I was talking about there being a distinct language. The meanings of words are in people. Rooted in the context in which they grow up. So what a word means to a middle class student from a lifestyle where the focus is on self-development, could be very different from what it means to a child living in poverty where the focus is on subsistence.
For example, when I was 15 yrs old, I dropped out of Marshall High School in Portland, Oregon. I told the teacher that I was going to drop out to get married. The teacher said to me, “Don’t drop out because someday you are going to want to get a good job”. I remember looking at that teacher, thinking, “Job? Who the heck wants a job”? Because what does a job mean in the world of generational poverty? Well, it meant that people worked 14 to 16 hours a day. They weren't paid in any respect, there was no hope of ever moving up.

Nobody I ever knew moved up. And, they weren't paid enough to live on. We were still evicted; we still went hungry and struggled. So, is a job a good incentive to dangle in front of a child from generational poverty? They don’t have a frame of reference that a job could be a good thing. Just like education. What does education mean? Education means stress. Stress of trying to be there on time, have all the right supplies, be able to know the words that are used, knowing what subjects to talk about because the ones you talk about, people look at you like you’re an alien. So you really have distinct meanings.

What does “success” mean to a child from middle class? Well, usually it means reaching their potential, getting their college education. Most people I meet who grew up very middle class today, it was never a question of if I would go to college, it was just where? Well in the world I come from, I never heard the word “college”. It wasn’t even part of my consciousness. I never knew anybody that had a career, and if you don’t have those connections, then people say, “Well you knew your teachers”.

In my doctoral research where I interviewed people around the state of Oregon who grew up in three generations of poverty who now have bachelor's degrees, when I asked them questions about teachers, the answers that they gave were things like, “I never knew a teacher who cared about me. I can’t pull up one teacher who took the time to know me”. They talked about being silenced; being put in the back of the room; they
talked about being ridiculed and humiliated for not knowing certain knowledge. School was not a pleasant thing. And it's not from where you want to be.

They really talked heavily about those relationships with teachers and administrators still infecting their lives today. One student talked about being a really good speller, but the teacher wouldn't let him be in the spelling bee because the teacher had had his brothers before him, and knew their family and knew their struggles. So, the teacher made a decision that he wasn't very bright. And he talked about going to the spelling bee and knowing the winning word and how he never forgot that word, he never forgot that teacher.

So, the experiences, the meanings are in people, the meanings are in students and it's real important. You can redefine what education means by helping the students have small successes. By helping, show them what's good about them and what they can do that is good and they begin to get a new meaning for education. And a new meaning for higher education, and for career and jobs, and what all of those common terms in the middle class world where we assume that students from poverty are thinking the same kinds of thoughts and the same motivations will work for them.

And I'm sure there was probably a conversation in the lunchroom after I dropped out that, "You know that Donna Beegle, she's just not motivated". Well, in fact, every human being is motivated, but we have to know where they are coming from and what's important to them in order to motivate them. I want to be a good mom. That was my dream at 15, and every female that I ever knew had dropped out of high school, gotten married, and had babies, so it's no big surprise. The teacher could have said something to me like, "Donna, you want to be a good mom?" "Well, yes". "Well, what if one day your child comes home from school and needs help with homework? You want to be able to help your child?" See, at that point, the teacher and I would be having a conversation. How very different that is from, "You need to stay in school to get a good job".
Nancy: so, we need to remember that words and a language exist in a context, and they sometimes have very different meanings to a child from poverty and a middle class teacher...

Beegle. Well, Nancy, when I grew up, my language included “ain’t” every other word. And I didn’t know, when is it proper to say, gone, or went, or seen, or saw. I didn’t even know that I wasn’t speaking properly. But, what I did know was that people could not hear me. And nobody asked for my ideas, or my opinions, or how I would solve things, and I was very privileged to in my junior year of college at 28 years old, have a professor who said, “Would you like me to correct your grammar”?

Now, up to this point, no one had ever taken the time to teach me how to speak middle class language. And this professor did not send me off to learn about adjectives, nouns, and verbs. While this may be important, that is not how you learn a second language. And students coming from generational poverty, where grammar is an issue, they are truly learning another language, and they will have to translate words just as if you were learning a second language.

So, “dialogue” is how we learn another language. And, this professor would correct me every time I opened my mouth. He’d say, “No, don’t say ‘ain’t’, you meant gone, not went. You meant seen, not saw.” Then after a while, he wouldn’t tell me the word that I needed. He would just shake his head “No”. I’d be telling him a story, and he’d say, “No”. And I’d be “Yes, this really happened”. I’d be all excited, and then he’d say “Donna, you meant gone, not went, you meant, "seen", not "saw".

Eventually, and I think it was partially out of annoyance of being corrected so much, I began to hear the words in my mind, the correct words and speak them, so that I could finish my story. I did a survey of 500 businesses in Portland. In the top five reasons of who they hire and who they fire, was this constant, I’m not going to hire somebody who cannot speak properly. They are representing me. So, we ignored it, we don’t acknowledge it, we recognize it, ESL is a huge issue, a huge barrier for students to overcome in terms of
getting an education and good careers. But, we also need to put the emphasis on grammar. Students need to be fluent in middle class language, and that includes the styles and the topics that I talked about that are mentioned earlier.

Nancy: Donna, what is it that administrators must understand after this interview today?

Beegle: Nancy, I think it’s really important that administrators gain an understanding and a consciousness themselves about the realities of generational poverty. Know the world that these kids are going into with their families. How they are treated. Know what streets they are walking on, do they have sidewalks, are there curbs, what are their homes like? We need to know what is the context that they come into the school with. What’s their frame of reference?

Because if you don’t know where these students are coming from, then, you can’t help people use examples to teach concepts, we generally end up using middle class examples to illustrate concepts. And, again, these students don’t have a frame of reference for those examples.

When I entered college, there was this world of words that I had never heard before. A world of concepts that I didn’t know. And I was very fortunate that I had my brother in prison who spent his 12 years reading. Because I would write him a letter, and I would say, “We are studying this - What do you know about it?” And, he would respond in 25 pages in our language, using examples from our childhood, and our neighborhoods, and experiences that we had had that I could grab onto, and I would “ace” my test.

For my first 3 years of college, I did not read my textbooks. So, administrators really have to get a handle on, what are the realities that the students are walking in the door with? And then, structure a system that doesn’t penalize them for their poverty. Don’t take them out of athletics for being late. They live in a world of chaos and crisis. They are likely going to be late. So, we say we are trying to teach them responsibility by making them do homework; well, if they don’t have the space, and they don’t have
someone at home who is educated enough to support them and be able to help them
with their homework, we’re not teaching them responsibility, we are setting them up for
failure. These students are going to learn the education academic pieces in the building,
so create a climate where that can happen.

Nancy: thank you, Donna. Scott, you closing comments?

Scott: Nancy, No Child Left Behind has made it even more important that we learn how to reach
the poor, minority and disadvantaged child. And to teach them, we first have to reach them. For example,
we know now that whole language instruction may work for the middle class student, but it has been an
unmitigated disaster for the inner city student lacking basic decoding skills. They need a different way to
be reached than what works for the middle class student.

I want to invite the members of our electronic learning community to go online this month and
click on the wonderful resources from Donna that we have posted for them to share with the teachers,
including an excerpt from her book soon to be released. And yes, we will include the Ruby Payne
interview we did two years ago that continues to be one of the most requested interviews we ever did.