Living Poverty and Literacy Learning: Sanctioning Topics of Students’ Lives

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How teachers respond to stories of poverty can either silence or validate children’s experiences.

“I had a dream of my dad when he got out of jail. And he did get out of jail. When we went to get him and it looked like he was fighting rats in his hair because his hair was stickin’ up.”

—Cadence, first grade

Cadence wrote this story in September of first grade. Like many teachers and researchers, I’m rarely sure how to respond to stories like this—stories that reflect the “real” lives of the students with whom I work. I always aim to value and validate, but I do that in various ways (and not always successfully). Sometimes I say nothing, and just listen as more details pour out. Other times I focus on the craft of writing and negotiate with the writer about details that could be added and how those details would best be described for the author’s purpose. When Cadence read this story to me, I had barely begun to know her. She read the beginning of her story in a matter-of-fact way and did not respond to my silence and thoughtful gaze. So I asked about her original observation that his hair was sticking up, she responded, “It looked like he was fighting rats!” I suggested she might add that to the story—and she did.

Cadence, a young white girl, attends a K–8 elementary school in a predominantly white, high-poverty
urban neighborhood in the Midwest that has a dropout rate exceeding 65%. Out of the 18 students in her classroom, 14 are white and 4 are African American. Three of the four African American students are bussed to school from surrounding neighborhoods, and the fourth is currently living in a homeless shelter nearby. As a researcher in Cadence's first-grade classroom two days a week, her full-time teacher/researcher for eleven weeks at the beginning of second grade, and the leader/researcher of an after-school program throughout her second-grade year, I learned a great deal about Cadence. Her father is in jail on drug charges, and Cadence believes that he is working for the police to be granted a lighter sentence. I'm not sure if this is true, but I do know that he has been incarcerated and she hasn't seen him for years.

"I don't even recognize him now," she tells me.

"You don't recognize him?"

"Cuz I haven't seen him in awhile. He probably won't recognize us, like—what if we move and he don't know where we are? He saw us for when we was living over to—over with—oh, I don't know where he saw us at!"

Cadence's response ends with a sense of panic when she realizes that her father may not know where to look for her when he gets out of jail. She has moved at least once within the past year, with plans to move again soon. Without a phone at home or one at either of her grandparents' (where she often stays), Cadence depends on someone knowing where she is in order to get in touch with her. This is much different from the reality of most middle-class teachers who have consistent phone numbers at home as well as cell phone numbers, predictable shelter, and a much smaller incidence of incarcerated relatives.

**DISPARATE REALITIES: SOCIAL CLASS RECONSIDERED**

Cadence's life differs from the lives of most teachers and researchers from middle and upper classes. Cadence and her three sisters live in material conditions afforded to them under the income of their mother, a full-time service worker whose income falls below the federally established poverty level for a family of five. Inconsistent housing, no telephone communication, and the incarceration of a relative are common experiences for many families living in poverty.

President Lyndon Johnson declared "unconditional war on poverty" in 1964 and launched a series of initiatives designed to end poverty (The Civil Rights Project, 1995) in response to Michael Harrington's (1962) acclaimed book, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*. This movement focused on the exploitation and discrimination of the poor living in the richest nation of the world and aimed to empower families living in poverty in ways that would build their communities as well as their economic stability. Head Start, one of the programs created during this period, was designed to nurture the strong teaching-learning relationships between caretakers and children while diminishing barriers already known to exist between home and school. Caretakers and community members were to be employed to construct, operate, and facilitate local Head Start centers as directors, teachers, and classroom aides. Amidst the Civil Rights Movement, however, this war on poverty was soon to be overshadowed by grassroots movements that gave way to important issues such as equal schooling for African American children (Brown v. Board of Education) and equal opportunities for girls in schools (Title IX). These landmark decisions (along with long-standing organizing) blazed the trail for future scholarship in the fields of African American Studies, Women's Studies, and Multicultural Studies as universities legitimized these areas of study and created official spaces where research, learning, and teaching have continued to make the needs of African Americans and women well known. These fields, however, have been criticized for their reluctance to consider and include social class as a crucial piece for research, practice, and theory (books, 2000a, 2000b).

Meanwhile, the "war on poverty" has become the "War against the Poor" (Gans, 1995). In the early 1960s, 30 million people were living in poverty (The Civil Rights Project, 1995); in 2001, 32.9 million people were living in poverty, with children under 18 comprising 36% of this total (Pugh, 2002). Gans compares poverty-related pressures to wartime combat, which "almost no one survives without some after-effects" (p. 5), and develops a critique of the "irresponsible" behaviors and activities of people living in poverty. This critique includes the notion that "responsible" behaviors are constructed and judged by the mainstream society.
society that does not have its choices sharply restricted due to economic position. Gans argues that mainstream society believes that people living in poverty have chosen such a life, and therefore deserve the inequities and poor treatment that they face. When poverty-related pressures promote activity or behaviors that mainstream society would consider irresponsible, Gans reminds us that some people living in poverty are "irresponsible by mainstream standards because the conditions under which they live set different criteria for responsibility, which are imposed by the need to survive under conditions better-off Americans cannot even imagine" (p. 5).

Since the research on poverty and the aims to eradicate poverty in the early 60s, some researchers have continued to conduct cultural and critical studies that compare social class and educational achievement with an attempt to shed light on the inequities experienced by children from working-class and poor backgrounds when they enter school (Bernstein, 1975; Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Hicks, 2002; Finn, 1999; Rist, 2000; Walkerdine, 1998; Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001; Willis, 1977, Rist (2000) and Walkerdine (1998) not only studied the inequities faced in school based on social class, but also studied the ways in which teachers lived different lives than their poor and working-class students, and how teachers judged the cultural practices and behaviors of their students as problematic and deficient. All of these studies are grounded in the argument that educational institutions are closely aligned with white middle-class practices. Students coming from homes outside the middle class, then, are faced with language, expectations, practices, and identities that are distinctly different from theirs and their families'.

Though broad and informative, studies of social class and education have rarely attempted to document and understand the lived realities of children in poverty, how particular interactions within the classroom reflect social class differences, how these differences impact students' engagement with literacy practices in the classroom, and what classroom teachers can do to begin dismantling the systemic inequities poor children face in schools.

Some students may even take on perceived class-specific values of the teacher in a way that further silences themselves and their peers.

Through an ethnographic study over a two-year period, I explored the following questions:

- What does it really mean when students face social class differences in the classroom?
- Do these differences impact the ways in which children engage with literacy?
- What are the lived realities of children from poor families as they cross the threshold of a school that holds middle-class expectations and values of "responsibility"?

In this article, I use two situated accounts of classroom activities (a read-aloud and a writing workshop) to demonstrate how disparate social class experiences enter literacy practices in the classroom, and how teachers of poor students may respond to topics of poverty. One example illustrates that some students may even take on perceived class-specific values of the teacher in a way that further silences themselves and their peers. I argue for the sanctioning of class-specific topics in the classroom as a way to validate and value students' lives, rather than creating a disconnect through the silencing of these experiences. Learning to do this may take time, and it will certainly take a lot of listening—listening to the stories of children, their families, and others who have lived or are living a life under impoverished circumstances. Fabulous teachers across the country embrace reading and writing pedagogies that reflect the individual needs of literacy learners. Drawing from published practitioners, teach-
experiences have somehow slipped into the classroom activity. In the following example, Cadence is actively engaged in a read-aloud with her first-grade teacher. Her engagement turns to disengagement and disconnect when she attempts to respond to the literature by connecting her life in a meaningful way.

NEVER PLAY WITH A BULLY: A FIRST-GRADE READ-ALOUD

Cadence sits on the floor with the rest of her classmates preparing to listen to Ms. Lockhart’s read-aloud. Her gray cotton-weave shirt is inside out and the legs of her blue jeans creep up her shins revealing colored socks and untied, scuffed gym shoes. Ms. Lockhart begins to read aloud *Tyrone and the Swamp Gang* (Wilhelm, 1995) and the students attend closely to the story about a character considered to be a bully. The moral of the story is

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not to be a bully. Before the end of the book, Ms. Lockhart asks the students, “Do any of you know someone who is a bully?” The students respond with bubbling enthusiasm, mentioning names of bullies they come into contact with on the playground and in their neighborhood. Cadence raises her hand and says, “My dad is a bully.” Ms. Lockhart looks at Cadence, then moves on to the next person who raises their hand. Cadence’s eyes dart down to the floor and she scoots back about six inches. As Ms. Lockhart finishes the book, Cadence twists her jersey-knit gray sleeve around her hand and bites on it until it is soaked. After finishing the book, Ms. Lockhart asks the class: “Do we ever want to play with bullies?” In unison, the first graders answer their teacher: “Nooooooo.” Cadence sits quietly staring at the floor.

A Conflict of Class-specific Values

In this scene, Ms. Lockhart is engaged in a discursive practice that signifies her white, middle-class teacher identity as she presents a lesson about bullying to this group of children. This is a lesson that may occur in many classrooms by many well-meaning teachers. Ms. Lockhart is a well-meaning teacher. Her belief, which is intertwined with her social class positioning, seems to be that her job is to teach these children how to behave in a way that reflects her values; the values of the white middle class. The privileging of such values during literacy and character education is problematic, however, as students are placed in a position of choosing whether or not to judge their own family and community members from the perspective of their teacher and the school. When students are forced to judge their own families, the oppressed can be cast into the role of oppressors, a phenomenon articulately described by Paulo Freire (1970).

Cadence attempted to enter this academic practice of responding to literature and to her teacher when she said, “My dad is a bully.” She took the leap of faith by merging her two worlds—a girl in the “real world” and a girl in a classroom. When Ms. Lockhart responded with silence and moved on to another child, Cadence’s voice representing her everyday world was silenced, marginalized in the space of the classroom. At that moment, Cadence could recognize that Ms. Lockhart’s values (and those privileged at school) did not include hearing her lived reality. Cadence’s life connections to literature were not valued and her experiences were not validated.

This is the same disconnect that students from poor and working-class families have felt for generations in educational institutions (Finn, 1999; hooks, 1994, 1996, 2000b; Reay, 1998; Rist, 2000; Walker, 1998; Walker et al., 2001). Students feel they must “be somebody else” (Walker, 1998) as they enter an educational institution. In fact, several of Ms. Lockhart’s young first graders have already learned this lesson. Only two weeks after the read-aloud of *Tyrone and the Swamp Gang* (when every student said they would never play with bullies), a small group of students began talking about fighting and bullies. Following a discussion about uncles, sisters, uncles’ girlfriends, and classmates who fight, one student said, “It ain’t fair to call somebody a bully.”

“Are you a bully sometimes?” I ask.

“Yeah.”

This conversation was not sanctioned and occurred in the back of the room during reading workshop. I just happened to be nearby and pulled myself closer to cavespot. When the students noticed I was listening and not reprimanding them for the “fighting” conversation, they included me. These very young children—six and seven years of age—had already learned to be “somebody else” when they enter school and engage in literacy activities with people who have different values and lives. Cadence is just beginning to learn this hard lesson; she is still trying to merge her two class-specific worlds of home and school.
The Story behind “My dad’s a bully”

As a teacher-researcher in Cadence’s classroom since the first day of first grade, I have learned a lot about Cadence through our academic conferences (writing/reading workshop, math, etc.) and through our informal chats before school and walking in the halls. When she said, “My dad’s a bully,” I thought, “Which dad is she talking about?” Her biological father, whom she calls Dad, is in jail, and her mom has a long-standing boyfriend whom Cadence sometimes calls Dad. In a conference about Cadence’s writing, she talks about her dad and her “step-dad”:

Cadence: Because now we can’t see him and he can’t see us. And it’s not fair cuz our step dad is mean to us and our real dad is just nice. Cuz when they make a mess, they tell us to clean it up.

Stephanie: Who’s they?

Cadence: My step-dad.

Stephanie: What about your mom?

Cadence: She gets into a fight with my step-dad, with her boyfriend, because he told us that we have to move out when we’re 18 and my mom got mad and if my real dad got out of jail he’s gonna leave us.

Stephanie: Who’s gonna leave you?

Cadence: My mom’s boyfriend.

Stephanie: Oh, if your real dad is back at home?

Cadence: Uh-huh.

Cadence connects the actions of the “bully” in the story to her experiences with her step-dad. He tells people what to do and be-comes the boss around the house when it has to do with Cadence and her sisters—perhaps even her mother. However, I want to pursue the possibility that Cadence was also connecting the bully identity in this story to herself and others in her classroom. Perhaps for Cadence, offering her step-dad as a bully was safer than admitting to the teacher that she and/or her classmates are bullies.

Who’s a Bully?

It is well known and documented in this school that a lot of fighting takes place in the halls, on the playground, and around the community. Cadence and her first-grade classmates are no exceptions. Fighting is a daily occurrence and often a mode of survival or a call for respect in the neighborhood.

Fighting is a daily occurrence and often a mode of survival or a call for respect in the neighborhood. It is a topic that comes up quite often during conversations around literature. On an early spring day, Ms. Lockhart was reading books about heroes:

“How can you be someone’s hero?” she asked the class.

“You can fight for them,” calls out one of the boys.

“Not fight, well you can fight for someone without having a fist fight,” Ms. Lockhart answers.

Though Ms. Lockhart is aware of the school’s problem with fighting, she may not understand how this plays out in the lived realities of the children in her classroom. In an interview, Cadence reveals how fighting plays a part in her life and in her future aspirations:

Cadence: I’m gonna be a fighter when I grow up.

Stephanie: You’re gonna be a fighter?

Cadence: Yeah.

Stephanie: So, you gonna fight?

Cadence: Um, I don’t know.

Stephanie: Like, do you know people who are fighters?

Cadence: Yeah.

Stephanie: Who?

Cadence: My sisters, my cousins, my aunt, my friends, and um, I have . . . um . . . and I am.

Stephanie: And you are?

Cadence: Uh-huh.

Stephanie: When do you fight?

Cadence: Uh, I fight my sisters, they be mean to me. And, um . . . and, my uncle is a fighter.

Stephanie: Your uncle is a fighter? So what does your uncle do?

Cadence: He fights on the weekends when he doesn’t work; he’s in karate.

(Conversation continues about uncle fighting—it’s hard for me to tell if Cadence is talking about sparring in the karate class, or if she is talking about street fighting, or bar fighting, or fighting in the home. Conversation turns to her sisters and how they “fight for me.”)

Stephanie: Do they beat up people in the karate class or in other places?

Cadence: Like outside, the house, or like it can be done at the park. These two boys was arguing over a pop. Then they started arguing and got into a fight and everyone down at the park was watching. And they started
fighting and everyone was screaming and it was giving me a headache.

Stephanie: What were you feeling like?

Cadence: I was feeling like I was about to shout why? So I can make them stop if I screamed out loud.

Stephanie: Did it scare you?

Cadence: Uh-huh—cuz my sister was fighting.

Stephanie: At the same time?

Cadence: Yeah.

According to Cadence’s representation of fighting as ongoing in her life, many people in her family, including herself, could be considered bullies in the eyes of Ms. Lockhart and would be considered “irresponsible” by many people in mainstream society. Cadence hints at her questions about why fighting is such a way of life, but this doesn’t interfere with her determination to be a fighter when she grows up.

So, who’s the bully? From Ms. Lockhart’s perspective, a bully is one who acts in the same ways as the main character in the book—bossing people around and being aggressive.

People living in poverty may act in ways that seem irresponsible to mainstream society—survival is top priority.

This definition of a bully is extended as she opens up the conversation to the students and they talk about people pushing and fighting on the playground. This is easily incorporated into Ms. Lockhart’s view of a bully. From this perspective, any one of the children in this classroom (and many of their family members) could be considered a bully. At one time or another, almost all of them have engaged in physical fighting with another child to solve some kind of problem. From the perspective of at least one child in the classroom, however, “It ain’t fair to call somebody a bully.” Perhaps this view is one that reflects Gans’s (1995) work on the various reasons why people living in poverty may act in ways that seem irresponsible to mainstream society—survival is top priority.

CADENCE AND WRITING WORKSHOP

In September of first grade, Cadence wrote about her dad in jail, talked about him, and often fantasized about his being released and the reunion they would have. In April of first grade, Cadence informed me she had stopped writing about her dad.

“Because then everybody’s gonna know and they’re gonna know why he’s in jail and I didn’t want them to know.”

“You didn’t want them to know?” I ask.

“No. I think they will make fun of me. Like Octavia. Octavia’s making fun of me.”

“What did Octavia say?”

“He was saying that ‘your dad’s in jail’ and then he started laughing.”

“And what did you say back to him?”

“I didn’t say anything. I didn’t wanna get in trouble.”

“What would you have said back to him?” I probe.

Cadence replied, “I wanted to say, ‘Stop making fun of me!’”

Hearing this about Octavia surprised me. I was sure that Octavia knew people who were in jail, but I didn’t realize that his dad was also in jail until the beginning of second grade when I was their full-time teacher-researcher. Aiming to validate the lives of the students, I listened intently to their comments and discussions and foregrounded topics that had been ignored during their first grade-year. Jail was one of those topics.

On a warm September morning in second grade, I was talking with students about two girls in the class (cousins) who had lost their grandma and would be coming in after the funeral that same morning. Our morning meeting turned into a discussion about death and dying. Brian unknowingly invited the topic of jail when he mentioned his mother, “My real mom died because she got real sick.” Brian’s mom had died of an overdose when he was very young, and he lives with his grandma and grandpa because his biological father is in jail. Many of the children knew of Brian’s circumstance, and perhaps this is why Baker felt comfortable immediately adding his comment, “and my dad’s in jail.”

Derek, another boy in the classroom who lives near Brian said, “Brian’s dad’s in jail, too.”

“I knew that,” said Baker.

Suddenly our morning meeting circle was like popcorn popping with all the voices coming from around the circumference reporting that their fathers are in jail.

“My step-daddy’s in jail,” said Derek.

“My dad’s in jail,” Cadence added.

Sandra chimed in, “My mom was in jail.”

Octavia angrily adds, “My dad’s in jail,” then turns his body and looks away.

“Raise your hand if you just said your dad or step-dad is in jail,” I say to the class.

“My uncle’s in jail,” Sandra says as she raises her hand.

I watch the hands go up and am surprised by the sheer number. I knew about most of the students whose fathers were in jail—but some of them I didn’t know, like Octavia. He was the one who made fun of
Class-Sensitive Approaches to Literacy

- Establish a safe atmosphere in which students may share orally (as one facet of prewriting) and in writing the real events of their lives. Teachers and students can learn about roadblocks that derail such authenticity at http://para.unl.edu/para/Communication/lesson2.html.

- Although the entire school day may not be driven by children's lives, some of the day must be centered on their needs and interests or we risk losing them in a sea of irrelevancy. The Fall 2003 Rethinking Schools Online (http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/curriss.shtml) offers ideas for keeping curriculum child-centered.

- Read picture books that address social class differences and invite conversations adhering to a no roadblocks protocol. Consider these for starters:


- Learn more about children and poverty.


- Encourage children to exert some agency with the support of their teachers.

  - Children can act upon some of the conditions in their neighborhoods. See *Making Justice our Project: Teachers Working towards Critical Whole Language Practice*. Carole Edelsky (1999). NCTE.

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Cadence in first grade for having a father in jail, and his teasing resulted in Cadence's reluctance to talk or write about her dad.

Out of this class of 18, 7 students currently had a father or stepfather in jail and one (Sandra) had a mother who had recently been in jail. Nearly half of these children knew the topic of jail intimately. If I would have asked, "Who knows someone in jail?" the chances are good that every single child would have raised a hand. The topic of jail—one that is not typically discussed in primary-aged classrooms—is a concept that is woven throughout the lives of these children.

**SANCTIONING THE TOPIC OF "JAIL"**

Knowing that Cadence had been conflicted regarding writing about her dad, I decided to use her as an example to encourage others to write about their dads (or step-dads, or moms) being in jail, if they chose, during writing workshop. I continued our morning meeting:

"You know what you could do—and I know Cadence did this sometimes last year—you could write about it," I begin.

"I don't want to!" said Octavia shaking his head "no" vigorously.

"You don't have to if you don't want to, Octavia."

"Do what?" asks Derek.

"Write about your dad or step-dad being in jail," I answer.

Derek shakes his head no and looks down, scratching his leg.

"Do you ever think about it?"

I ask.

Derek nods his head yes.

"Then why don't you want to write about it?"

"Cuz. I feel like drawing a picture," he responds.

"Draw a picture, then. Artists do that all the time. Something makes them feel angry or sad inside, then they draw a picture or write to help them take care of their feelings. And you know what girls and boys? I know people in my family who have been in jail. I have an uncle who is in jail right now, and I don't get to see him." Several students who had been talking sat up tall and listen intently. They're surprised that I know someone in jail, so I add, "And you know, in writing workshop, you can write about anything you want."

Our entire conversation lasted less than three minutes. The effects of sanctioning this topic that is embedded in their lives, however, were long lasting.

The next week, Cadence published the following story about her dad:

I look at the stars at night because it reminds me of my dad. I cannot see...
my dad until fifteen years are over. I cannot wait until I can see my dad. I love my dad so much that I can’t wait until I see him again. He is in jail. He looks at the stars. I wonder if he is looking at the stars and thinking of me.

In October, Octavia wrote this story about his dad:

I remember when my dad was in jail for shooting people because they were trying to shoot him. He was in New York. I was there. They shot the glass and almost shot me. I was scared.

Other students also wrote about family members being in jail, and some never wrote a word about the topic. It isn’t important to me who wrote about jail and who didn’t. What is important is that I, the authority figure in the classroom, foregrounded a topic that is typically taboo in elementary school and used it to validate the children’s lives. I chose to share Cadence’s and Octavia’s stories because of their history around this topic in first grade. Octavia’s father was in jail during first grade too, but Octavia had already learned the tough lesson that the values privileged in school do not necessarily include having a family member incarcerated. He had learned to be “somebody else,” and had even internalized the values he perceived the school authorities to have, as he laughed at Cadence for her predicament without ever whispering a word about his own similar situation.

This all changed when the topic was sanctioned in second grade. Octavia realized he wouldn’t be ridiculed, and he shared his story about his child’s authentic connection to the literacy activity. Cadence and her classmates live in poverty. Families living in poverty must live differently because they simply don’t have the economic resources of the upper classes. Often a different way of living leads to offensive (according to authorities of institutions) or illegal activity (regardless of how petty it might be), which often leads some men and women living in poverty to jail (Irwin, 1985; Gans, 1995).

Teachers and researchers have choices to make when we hear these stories—either we ignore them, or we can hear and sanction them. I argue for sanctioning these topics. White (2001) writes of a girl in her classroom living in poverty:

If we silence Janice’s story, we do it to benefit ourselves, the privileged and the powerful, because we don’t have to change what we can’t see. We have to look hard and see. (p. 198)

We are often afraid of what we might hear, afraid of the guilt we may feel, the sadness we may experience, or the hopelessness that may overcome us. However, we must stop protecting ourselves, because protecting ourselves in this way is hurting children as they begin to disconnect from school. The silencing of children’s stories makes their lives seem worthless. No teacher says this explicitly, but perceptive students read teachers well, just as Octavia read that having a father in jail wasn’t something “normal,” but something to be ridiculed. Children are insightful; they will learn, and even internalize, the implicit (and perhaps unconscious) messages that teachers send.

So how does a teacher prepare for hearing and validating stories of poverty? Listening carefully to children and families would be a good place to start. Put judgment aside and imagine walking in their shoes. Read stories written by people who have lived (or are living) in poverty. And reflect on each day in the classroom, aiming to locate moment-to-moment interactions that may have been conflicts of class-specific understandings. We must become more sensitive to the

Children will reveal their lives—lives that are lived in class-specific ways—through their stories and their connections to literature.
contradictions children face when they come into a school largely filled with middle-class adults and expectations. This class-sensitive approach to teaching will not only benefit the children in our care, but will enrich our own lives.

Many middle-class teachers have not been faced with the challenging and contradictory task of living across the social class divide, specifically living in poverty and attending school with middle-class authorities and expectations. Their class status and ways of being are the same as those represented and privileged in institutional settings across the United States. For educators to understand these contradictions, and the emotional pain experienced by many students, they must learn about the lives of students outside school and understand their daily practices as culturally and class-specific. These practices should not be compared to middle-class practices and viewed as deficit, but understood as having strong cultural, historical, and familial ties connected to particular needs for survival within a pressure-filled position of poverty. Only through this type of engagement can teachers help students hold tightly to values and identities constructed within the home while taking on different identities as an academic success. Teachers, if they take on the challenge, are in a position to make this process less contradictory and more achievable.

bell hooks (2000b) wrote, “At all educational levels students from working-class backgrounds fear losing touch with peers and family. And that fear often leads to self-sabotage” (p. 153). Educators can work toward a class-sensitive pedagogy that promotes students in achieving academically while teaching them to hold on to the identities formed with their peers and families.

Though it is not an easy road to travel, helping students to do this is necessary if we are to break the cycle of poverty and “self-sabotage” in Cadence’s community and others like it.

References


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