

Revised Edition

# under. resourced learners

8

**strategies to boost  
student achievement**

RUBY K. PAYNE, Ph.D.

Other Selected Titles by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.

*A Framework for Understanding Poverty: A Cognitive Approach*

*Research-Based Strategies: Narrowing the Achievement Gap  
for Under-Resourced Learners*

*How Much of Yourself Do You Own?*  
(Payne & O'Neill-Baker)

*Bridges to Health and Healthcare*  
(Dreussi-Smith, Payne, Shaw, Young)

*From Understanding Poverty to Developing Human Capacity*

*Working with Parents: Building Relationships for Student Success*

*Working with Students: Discipline Strategies  
for the 21st-Century Classroom*

*Crossing the Tracks for Love: What to Do When You and Your  
Partner Grew Up in Different Worlds*

*Removing the Mask: How to Identify and Develop Giftedness  
in Students from Poverty* (Slocumb & Payne)

*Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*  
(Payne, DeVol, & Dreussi Smith)

*What Every Church Member Should Know About Poverty* (Ehlig & Payne)

*Hidden Rules of Class at Work* (Payne & Krabill)

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# Dedication

## Children’s Bill of Rights

“The true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children—their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in families and societies into which they are born.”

—UNICEF, “Child Poverty in Perspective”

This is my Bill of Rights for Children.

### Every Child Has the Right ...

- To be safe and reside in a violence-free environment
- To be nurtured and loved by at least one caring adult
- To have appropriate healthcare
- To have nutritious food every day
- To have stable shelter every night
- To have an education

Unqualified support for these rights is imperative to a healthy, safe society—indeed, to the future of our nation. Children are our future.



# Introduction

The purpose of *Under-Resourced Learners: 8 Strategies to Boost Student Achievement* is to provide practical tools to educators to address the needs of under-resourced learners.

The first book I wrote, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, looked at resources as they related to the three economic classes: poverty, middle class, and wealth. Since that time, many individuals have said to me, “I know students who have so many things, but they aren’t doing well in school.” In this book I elaborate on that frame of reference and say that students can be resourced or under-resourced, regardless of money.

*Under-Resourced Learners* is intended to give some tangible tools to individuals who teach students in schools of the United States. UNICEF (an arm of the United Nations) uses resources as a measurement to determine stability, and it is legitimate. In the UNICEF report “An Overview of Child Well-Being in Rich Countries,” the concept of resources is used to identify well-being. I would note that “under-resourced” is terminology directly from the United Nations and is a way to talk about students who don’t have access to a number of the resources necessary for school success.

At the end of each chapter I present a series of practical steps you can take in relation to the strategies outlined in that chapter. You may wish to integrate them with techniques and strategies already working for you and your colleagues.

This book does not presume that schools can fix everything, so the focus necessarily is on the resources that can be developed in schools.

In the UNICEF report “Child Poverty in Perspective,” the concept of resources is used to identify well-being. In the report, the European Union offers this definition of poverty: “The poor are those whose resources (material, cultural, and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member States in which they live” (page 6).

In this revised edition you will now find an *Under-Resourced Learners* study guide in Appendix A, and in Appendix D there are PowerPoint slides to use in teacher training. A number of the training strategies (charts, diagrams, and forms) are referenced earlier in the text of the book.



## Strategy 1

### Assess Resources of Individual Students to Determine Interventions

*“When I did my resources self-assessment, I realized that money was not my only problem. I always knew money wasn’t going to solve all of my problems, but I thought it would solve most of the big ones. I realized that was not going to be true. It really hit me hard. I even had to step away from it for a few minutes because the reality of my situation hit me square in the face. It was one of those ‘aha’ moments—you know, the ones where you go ‘Aha, **that’s** why I’ve been doing that.’ It was great and scary and heartbreaking and exhilarating and everything all at one moment. It was one of the hardest things I had to do but definitely the most beneficial. I now try to do a self-assessment about every six months to see what progress I’ve made.”*

—Mary Gruza, Getting Ahead Graduate

*“I’ve always believed that the Ruby Payne model explained why it was so important to examine the different resources that children and families have or don’t have. The model also suggests various ways you can embed other resources to help children be more successful.”*

—Kelly Sharp, Sixth-Grade Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher

## **Why Look at Resources?**

It isn't possible to educate well just by teaching the "group" and not knowing about the individual students in the classroom. Many students get identified as "at risk" when the issue is one of resources. When you know the resources of an individual, then you can determine the intervention(s) that will work best. Interventions that are successful work with the individual's strengths to enhance underdeveloped resources.

## **What Does It Mean to Be Under-Resourced? Is It a Personal Issue or a Situational Issue?**

It is both. All individuals have an area or areas in their life where they would like to have more resources, i.e., more athletic abilities and better eyesight or be taller, shorter, smarter, quicker, etc.

For the purposes of this book, under-resourced is going to be defined as not having the resources to address a particular situation or negotiate a particular environment.

All resources are relative to the comparison group in which one finds oneself.

The good news is that resources can be developed—at any stage in life. *Under-Resourced Learners: 8 Strategies to Boost Student Achievement* is about how to do that.

For the purposes of this book, the following nine resources are going to be examined:

## What Does It Look Like to Be Resourced? A Resourced Student Has Most or All of the Following Resources:

### **Financial**

Having the money to purchase goods and services.

### **Language**

Being able to speak and use formal register in writing and in speech.

### **Emotional**

Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. This is an internal resource and shows itself through stamina, perseverance, and choices.

### **Mental**

Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.

### **Spiritual**

Believing in divine purpose and guidance.

### **Physical**

Having physical health and mobility.

### **Support Systems**

Having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources.

### **Relationships/Role Models**

Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate, who are nurturing to the child, and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior.

### **Knowledge of Hidden Rules**

Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

## Financial

▪ has the necessary school supplies	Yes	No
▪ has money for field trips	Yes	No
▪ has money for projects	Yes	No
▪ has food every evening and twice a day on weekends/holidays	Yes	No
▪ wears different clothing at least five days a week	Yes	No
▪ has more than one pair of shoes	Yes	No
▪ has a stable place to live (not a car, not a shelter, does not move every three months, is not moved from relative to relative)	Yes	No
▪ has own books	Yes	No
▪ has a place to study at home (includes good lighting and a table/desk)	Yes	No
▪ has had opportunities to participate in educational activities outside of school (e.g., museums, travel, camp)	Yes	No
▪ has access to transportation outside of school (e.g., subway, bus, household vehicle)	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *A school had students in the fourth grade who were twins. One came to school one day and the other the next day. Everyone was convinced they were rotating days to take care of younger children. When it was finally investigated, the reality was that there was only one pair of shoes in the house. So they took turns wearing the shoes.*
- *A principal told me that when he was growing up, his family was so poor they only had one light bulb in the house. Each sibling got 15 minutes under the light to do homework every evening. If you didn't get your homework done in 15 minutes, then it didn't get finished at home because there was no light.*
- *One of the schools in the Houston area had to make a rule that parents could not come and feed the student's breakfast to themselves or a younger sibling. Parents were coming in to the school in the morning when students got free breakfast to feed themselves and another child.*
- *A young man I know in the United States has been to Europe four times, lived in Germany for three months, traveled to Australia and Tasmania, and has been to Mexico three times. He turned down a trip to China and Japan saying he had traveled enough. He had done all of this by the time he was 23 years old.*

## Language

▪ can use the formal register of the language of the dominant culture	Yes	No
▪ can tell a story in chronological order	Yes	No
▪ can get to the point in a discussion	Yes	No
▪ can resolve a conflict using formal register	Yes	No
▪ can ask questions syntactically	Yes	No
▪ can write using formal organizational patterns for writing	Yes	No
▪ can use specific vocabulary in speech and writing	Yes	No
▪ can sort what is and is not important in nonfiction text	Yes	No
▪ can write a persuasive argument using support and logic	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *A librarian was reading a story to a group of students about a young woman who was pretty, arrogant, and self-important. When she asked the students to tell her about the young woman, one of the boys said, “She thinks she’s all that!” The librarian was upset with the student. Actually, he understood the character very well, but he could relay his understanding only in casual register.*
- *A student was in repeated trouble with the office for his behavior; the principal felt that the student was being evasive. Each time she would ask him for information, he would respond with one or two words: “It was nuthin’” or “I don’t know.” The principal was going to give strong consequences for the behavior, then learned it was simply about having very little vocabulary.*
- *One of the elementary schools in the Houston area has kindergarten students who have never seen a spoon and have no word for it.*

## Emotional

▪ controls impulsivity most of the time	Yes	No
▪ can plan for behavior and assignments	Yes	No
▪ controls anger	Yes	No
▪ has positive self-talk	Yes	No
▪ sees the relationship between choice and consequence	Yes	No
▪ can resolve a problem with words (does not hit or become verbally abusive)	Yes	No
▪ can stay in formal register during an argument	Yes	No
▪ can predict outcomes based on cause and effect	Yes	No
▪ can separate the behavior (criticism) from the person (contempt)	Yes	No
▪ has the words to name feelings	Yes	No
▪ can use the adult voice	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *I tutored three high school seniors who had failed the state exit exam several times and had only one more opportunity to pass it. When I gave them the skills test, they had the skills. They could read, understood the vocabulary, etc. Then I asked them if they had quit in the middle of the test, and all of them said yes. I asked them what they said to themselves and they replied:*

*“This test is stupid.”*

*“I’m cold.”*

*“I missed too many already.”*

*“I’m hungry.”*

*In other words, they had no positive self-talk, which is what people use to finish difficult tasks. I said to them, “Do you have a driver’s license?” They all did. I told them, “When you get in that room and start the test, and you want to quit, say to yourself, ‘If I can get a driver’s license, then I can finish this test.’” Internal positive self-talk is a major tool and a key emotional resource.*

- *When I was a principal, I had a student named Mary. She was in the office because she'd had a choke hold on another girl, Casandra, and was trying to bash her head into a brick wall. Mary explained that her mother had "paged her to her suite via intercom in their home on the golf course" the night before. Casandra had been angry with Mary the day before, so she had called Mary's mother and said that she (Casandra) was with Weight Watchers and that she (Mary's mother) had been recommended to them as a possible client because of her weight. Mary had been grounded by her mother because Mary's mother believed that Mary had instigated the call.*

## Mental

▪ can read at a rate that doesn't interfere with meaning	Yes	No
▪ can read the material required for that grade level or task	Yes	No
▪ can write for the task as required by school or work	Yes	No
▪ can add, subtract, multiply, and divide	Yes	No
▪ can do the math as required by the grade level/course	Yes	No
▪ understands money as represented on paper—checkbooks, bank statements, etc.	Yes	No
▪ can operate in the paper world of school and work	Yes	No
▪ can use specific vocabulary related to the content or the job	Yes	No
▪ is test-savvy—knows how to take a test	Yes	No
▪ can develop questions over content or tasks on the job	Yes	No
▪ is organized and can find papers when they're needed (paper representation of space)	Yes	No
▪ can read a map	Yes	No
▪ has procedural self-talk	Yes	No
▪ can follow written directions	Yes	No
▪ can sequence a task or make a plan	Yes	No
▪ can represent an idea in a visual or a story (mental models)	Yes	No
▪ can prioritize tasks	Yes	No
▪ can sort what is and is not important in a task or a text (summarization)	Yes	No
▪ can divide tasks into parts	Yes	No
▪ can get tasks or projects done on time (paper representation of time)	Yes	No
▪ can make to-do lists or use a planner to get things done	Yes	No
▪ can use a calendar	Yes	No
▪ can tell how things are alike and different	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *A parent was sent a form to be signed. The parent said she hadn't gotten the form. So the school sent it again by certified mail. The parent got angry and insisted that it had never come, even though she had signed for it. It turned out that the parent couldn't read.*
- *A 24-year-old man, college-educated, who had grown up in a home with few resources, was driving from Indiana to Ohio but suddenly turned north toward Michigan. When the passenger in the car asked him what he was doing, he said there was a road there, and he was using it. When the passenger explained that he was going north and not east, the young man said he had never used a map before because the household didn't have money for gas in order to travel. So there had never been a need for a map.*

### Spiritual (Optimism and Hope)

▪ has a future story for oneself personally	Yes	No
▪ has hope for the future, i.e., believes that the future will work out in a positive way	Yes	No
▪ believes in the personal ability to impact own life, i.e., does not believe future is fated	Yes	No
▪ believes that there is extra support to help one with life, e.g., divine guidance, a set of beliefs, prayer, meditation, etc.	Yes	No
▪ has a strong personal belief system about own positive value as a human being	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *I was talking with an 18-year-old in alternative school and I asked him what his life would be like when he was 25. He said, "I will be dead." I asked him how he knew that, and he said everyone like him was dead.*
- *I knew a young lady who grew up in a very closed religious group. She counted down days from the time she was 13 years old until she was 18 years old and had graduated from high school. She knew that if she ran away she would never be able to have her future story.*



- *A woman who became a teacher did so for this reason: Her fifth-grade teacher brought her family a turkey at Thanksgiving because he realized they didn't have food. She decided then that she would be a teacher because she would be able to help other students as this teacher did. Her teacher unknowingly gave her hope and a model for her future story.*

## Physical

▪ has protein in diet on a daily basis (helps with memory and physical strength)	Yes	No
▪ is healthy (usually free of illness)	Yes	No
▪ gets sufficient sleep (6–8 hours of sleep per night)	Yes	No
▪ brushes teeth on a daily basis (high correlation between dental health and general health)	Yes	No
▪ has health insurance and/or access to preventive healthcare	Yes	No
▪ can see and hear well	Yes	No
▪ can move own body without help	Yes	No
▪ has high levels of energy and stamina	Yes	No
▪ can focus the energy on a task	Yes	No
▪ if a biochemical issue is present, it is addressed with either medication or a series of interventions	Yes	No
▪ does not use illegal drugs or alcohol	Yes	No
▪ engages in daily exercise	Yes	No
▪ has unstructured time each day to play/relax	Yes	No
▪ is physically fit	Yes	No
▪ is within the healthy weight/height range for age	Yes	No
▪ is free from physical and sexual abuse	Yes	No
▪ appearance is acceptable (clothes, hair, body are clean and presentable)	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *As principal, we had a first-grade girl who was in four activities every night (tennis, gymnastics, horse riding, cheerleading). The little girl was exhausted when she came to school in the morning. When we asked the mother if it would be possible to drop one activity, the mother said no—that her daughter needed these skills now.*

- *One of the schools I worked in had a first-grade girl who came to school filthy every day. The social worker did a home visit and found there was a dirt floor and no running water. The school aide walked the girl over to the middle school every morning, let her take a shower in the girls' locker room, and had clean clothes for her to change into. At the end of the day, the girl put the clothes on she had come to school in. This same girl was asked for a math assignment to bring 100 of anything into school (100 beans, 100 stones, whatever). She brought in 100 scratched-off lottery tickets.*

## Support Systems

▪ has parents who have at least five of the nine resources	Yes	No
▪ has parents who are supportive of school	Yes	No
▪ has at least caring and nurturing two adults	Yes	No
▪ has at least two friends (peers) who are nurturing and not destructive	Yes	No
▪ belongs to a peer group; can be racial, cultural, religious, activity-based, e.g., sports, music, academics	Yes	No
▪ is involved in one or more school activities (sports, music, theater, chess club, etc.)	Yes	No
▪ can make new friends (social capital)	Yes	No
▪ has at least two friends who are different from self (by race, culture, interest, academics, religion, etc.)	Yes	No
▪ is a mentor or a friend others come to for advice	Yes	No
▪ has at least two people who will be advocates	Yes	No
▪ is connected to a larger social network (bridging social capital—e.g., church, 4-H, Boys and Girls Club, soccer league, country club)	Yes	No
▪ can identify as a member of at least one group	Yes	No
▪ has at least one teacher or coach who knows the student personally and will be an advocate	Yes	No
▪ has at least one adult who is the support system for the household and not the child/student	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *A college professor told me that she grew up in a household where she was the support system for the household. Her father left the family, and she was the oldest child. Her mother worked two jobs. She became the mother and the caretaker of four younger siblings. She said it created a difficult relationship between her and her mother and robbed her of her childhood. When the child is the support system for the household, the time to develop a support system for oneself, the time to learn, the time to have friends are severely limited.*
- *A high school teacher told me that his father was a drug addict and physically abusive. His father beat him badly in January, left him in the freezing rain injured and bleeding, and told his mother that if she helped her son, he (the father) would blow her brains out. He left home at 15 and lived on his own. He joined the military. When he retired from the military, he became a teacher. He married at 17 and said his wife became his main support system.*
- *A young Vietnamese immigrant told me that he left home at age 10 alone in a small boat with some other people. He lived in a refugee camp for years.*

## Relationships/Role Models

▪ has at least two friends own age	Yes	No
▪ has at least one adult on the staff who knows the student	Yes	No
▪ has at least two adults outside of school who care about the student	Yes	No
▪ admires at least one person	Yes	No
▪ admires at least one person who is not a sports figure or an entertainment celebrity	Yes	No
▪ can identify the admirable traits in a role model	Yes	No
▪ can identify negative role models	Yes	No
▪ knows how to make friendships and relationships that are positive and not destructive	Yes	No
▪ can give and accept a compliment	Yes	No

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**Relationships/Role Models** (continued from previous page)

▪ has access to individuals who have positive and non-destructive success in the dominant culture but also have retained their cultural/ racial roots	Yes	No
▪ knows the history and examples of successful individuals in own family or racial/cultural past	Yes	No
▪ has role identity	Yes	No
▪ has an individual who can be trusted	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *A young minority man changed his life at 19 because he met a lawyer who looked like him and was a member of his race. The lawyer was very successful, and the young man was invited to the lawyer's home. He loved the home and decided he would have one just like it. He went on to college and is now quite successful.*
- *A highly successful CEO, Al, who grew up very poor, told me that he had a high school coach who became his college coach in basketball. His junior year of college, Al went out one night and played basketball with a local league when he should have been studying. That night when he got back to his dorm, there was a sign on his door that said, "Come see me." He went to the coach's office, but it was midnight, and the coach wasn't there. The next morning at 6 a.m. Al was waiting for the coach at his office. When the coach came, he asked Al where he had been the night before. Al told him. Then the coach asked who was there. He told him. The coach said, "All of those men have incredible talent. All of those men are pumping gas or flipping burgers because they did what you did. They played ball instead of studying. If you don't want to pump gas or flip burgers, it's not enough to have talent, you also must be educated." At first Al was furious. But as he thought about what the coach said, he realized it was true. And so, along with his basketball, he also studied.*

## Knowledge of Hidden Rules

▪ can identify and avoid the “pet peeves” of the person in charge, i.e., boss, teacher, et al.	Yes	No
▪ can identify at school or work what will actually get you into trouble versus what the rules say will get you into trouble	Yes	No
▪ is successful with different teachers, students, bosses	Yes	No
▪ can work/learn from someone who is not liked	Yes	No
▪ can assess a situation for what behaviors can be used and which ones cannot for success in that situation or with that person	Yes	No
▪ can articulate what the hidden rules are in a given situation or with a given person	Yes	No
▪ can differentiate between the “real” authority and the stated authority in a given situation	Yes	No
▪ knows the hidden rules of the school environment	Yes	No
▪ knows the hidden rules of the work environment	Yes	No
▪ can assess the unspoken cueing mechanisms in a given situation or with a given person and use that information advantageously	Yes	No

In the following true stories, what is the resource(s) available to the student? How could you intervene to develop additional resources and strengthen existing resources? Or is no intervention necessary?

- *A young man in college realized that one of his professors looked at only the students in the first three rows of the auditorium. The professor’s eyes never went beyond that third row. So the student moved into one of the first three rows so that the professor would see him and know that he was there.*
- *A middle school teacher told me he teaches his students “how to get the teacher to do whatever they want.” He then teaches them the hidden rules of cooperation and working with the teacher—instead of against them—in order to get what they want. In other words, he teaches them the hidden rules of working with authority.*

## **Do We Assess the Resources of the Individual or the Household?**

When working with children, we look at the resources of the household. When working with adolescents and adults, we look at the individual and the larger support system to which the individual has access.

### **Why look at resources?**

Because they tell us where to make interventions.

### **Where do we start with interventions?**

We work from strengths.

### **Why look at relationships first?**

Because they are a primary motivation for learning.

### **How do we know what the resources are?**

One of the big questions is how do we find out the resources that an individual has without being intrusive. There are several ways to do this.

## **Techniques for Elementary Students**

### **1. Draw a picture.**

After drawing a picture of their household, students orally tell you a story about the picture. What is not in the picture is as important as what is in the picture.

### **2. Tell stories.**

Elementary students often like to tell stories.

### **3. Do journal writing.**

Have them do a journal entry—e.g., My favorite adult is \_\_\_\_\_ and why. My favorite teacher is \_\_\_\_\_ and why. My favorite book is \_\_\_\_\_ and why. You might add favorite food, TV show, video game, story, etc.

## Techniques for Secondary Students

### 1. Share experiences.

At the beginning of the year, tell students about yourself, your credentials, and what you hope they learn during the year. Then ask them to write back to you and tell you things that would help you teach them. Do they work after school? What do they like about school? What do they hate? What helps them learn? Etc.

### 2. Have individual conferences.

One high school teacher gave an independent assignment every Friday. He called students up to his desk one at a time, went over their grades with them, asked if there was anything he could do to help them with the class. Behavior improved tremendously; grades also went up.

### 3. Write about oneself.

Use this fill-in-the-blanks exercise to help students with self-disclosure.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Title**

I have always liked/disliked my name, \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_. I was born on \_\_\_\_\_  
and am currently \_\_\_\_\_ years old. Some people may think my life is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, but I feel that I have \_\_\_\_\_ to share with others.

I have a \_\_\_\_\_ family. Counting me, there are \_\_\_\_\_  
people living in my house. The adults' names are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, and the children's names are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

At home, I would consider \_\_\_\_\_  
my confidant(s) because I can trust them and know that no matter what, they will  
always be there for me.

I have several interests and hobbies (for example, I keep myself busy \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_).

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I also like to watch sports like \_\_\_\_\_, but I really like playing \_\_\_\_\_. These are my favorites because \_\_\_\_\_. After school and on weekends, I work at \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. This is a good/not so good job because \_\_\_\_\_. I participate in extracurricular activities/clubs at school; my favorite one is \_\_\_\_\_, and I have been a member for \_\_\_\_\_. I attend/do not attend church at \_\_\_\_\_. All of these activities have helped me become a better person in my community.

School makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_. My best subject is \_\_\_\_\_, and my least-favorite subject would have to be \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. In math I usually make \_\_\_\_\_ grades, and in language arts I make \_\_\_\_\_ grades. I like/do not like to read, but/and my favorite book I ever read is titled \_\_\_\_\_. Additionally, I am/am not a good writer. If I have a choice between writing fiction or non-fiction, I choose \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. School is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the day for me.

My personality is best described by the word \_\_\_\_\_. It's obvious that I am/am not a hard worker because \_\_\_\_\_. When I get angry, I \_\_\_\_\_, but you'll know when I'm happy because \_\_\_\_\_. Most of the time, I make \_\_\_\_\_ decisions because I base them on \_\_\_\_\_. If I were to get angry at school and needed to "cool down," I would go to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

When I have good news to share, \_\_\_\_\_ is the first

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person I call. I know I can always get help with my homework or help to study for a test from \_\_\_\_\_. These people have helped me in the past and will continue to help me grow.

I would describe a role model as a person who \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_. The person or people I respect the most are \_\_\_\_\_ because they treat me \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (for example, \_\_\_\_\_). I think they might be honored to know that I admire them as much as I do; one way I could let them know is by \_\_\_\_\_.

My plans for the future will depend on \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_. My objective after high school is to \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_.

When I graduate, I want to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_. I would like to leave behind the legacy of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (for example, \_\_\_\_\_).  
\_\_\_\_\_).

I know that I can eventually contribute to my community and society if I work hard now; the uphill struggles and difficulties I encounter along the way will pay off in the end.

Adapted from materials developed by JuDee Hancock, educational consultant.

## **Do You Assess the Resources of Every Student?**

No. You assess the resources of the students who are having difficulty with achievement or success in school.

## **Steps to Follow**

1. Identify students for whom concerns exist or achievement is lagging.
2. Assess the resources of the student based on the information that you have. You may solicit the assistance of a counselor, assistant principal, social worker, et al., to determine the resource base. Some schools use a team approach.
3. Determine the strengths of the student, i.e., what resources are available? Also determine what resources are not available or could be developed.
4. Start with the strongest resource and identify an intervention that will work. For example, if the student has a strong parental resource base, then that is a support system that can help the student. But if a student doesn't have a strong support system, then telling the parent to help with homework will not occur. If this same student has a strong emotional resource base, then the student could be given tools to be able to get the homework done.

## Strategy 2

### Build Relationships of Mutual Respect with Students

#### Utilize relational learning in the classroom

*“Building relationships with the students is probably the most important piece for me of the whole Ruby Payne Model. The students who are typically at our school may not have any other positive relationships in their lives, and they may not trust anyone else. That’s not necessarily true of everyone, but many times students who are low-performing have not trusted a teacher and therefore they wouldn’t perform. Maybe they had it up there all along, but they didn’t want to give that part up.*

*“The relationship-building piece of what Ruby Payne has taught me is critical. I think that’s the bottom line. I don’t think you can move on without it. I think you have to do that, first and foremost, and if that takes a year to do, then that’s sometimes what you have to work on with some of these kids. For a year maybe you just build those relationships, and then you can move on.*

*“We had this one girl who was tough as nails. When she came to us, she was rotten. She was just tough; she fought on the street all the time, because at home she was the parent of her household. And she fought her way through seventh grade (our team had her in seventh and eighth grades), but our team kept building relationships unconditionally. We (our team) unconditionally loved her. We said, ‘You can’t do this, we are going to punish you, write you up on a long form, you’re punished, and here are the consequences.’ But we didn’t give up on her, and we continued to do that. She came back to us in eighth grade, and she still had that attitude, but it was changing, slowly but surely.*

*“And, oh, in October of that second year she told me a story. Now I am not typically very sensitive, I mean, I am, but I don’t cry easily. So she started telling me the story, and my team teacher and I were talking to her, and the student started crying, and it was really sad, and it made me cry. So I grabbed a tissue, dabbed my eyes, we hugged, and it was all good. We got a letter back from her, a little note (the little contraband notes we get from time to time). And she’s in high school doing well, and the last line of it—it almost makes me cry again—and it said, ‘Miss Murdaugh, do you remember when I told you the story, and it made you cry? I have the tissue hanging in my locker in high school.’ So that’s what we do. That’s not what I do, that’s what we do; that’s what Ruby’s taught us to do. So it’s working.*

*“It was very different from what I had been doing, from the way I had taught in the past. I think in the past I had good days and bad days, and it was very hit or miss really. Sometimes I had very good years and connected with some students, and sometimes I didn’t. But it wasn’t consistent, and I could never really figure out what I was doing right or what I was doing wrong. The Ruby Payne models have really made it concrete to me. It’s clear. I’ve taught 27 years now, and I don’t want to stop yet; I’m just getting good. My girls are grown now. They’re saying, ‘OK, Mom, come on home,’ but, oh no ... I wish I would’ve learned all this years ago. It’s making a big difference. I think I’m doing more now for students than I’ve ever done.”*

—Dottie Murdaugh, Middle School Teacher