My work in this field

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Children growing up in poverty:

Are 6x as likely to leave schooling without qualifications

More likely to leave school early

Have lower educational aspirations

Maybe? Perhaps more nuanced than this…

As we go through today...

Try and keep track of…

1. What are we already doing?

2. What can we do better?

3. What can we start doing?

What's it all about?

- What is parental engagement – and why is it important?

- How do we go forward from here? What's right for us?

What is parental engagement?

Talk to each other for a few minutes ….

Why we need this research

28% of children in the UK live in poverty

Two-thirds (64%) of children growing up in poverty live in a family where at least one member works

9 CHILDREN IN POVERTY IN A CLASSROOM OF 30

Poverty and underachievement

Children growing up in poverty:

Are 6x as likely to leave schooling without qualifications
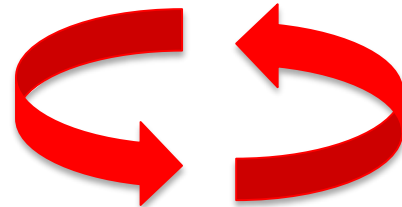
More likely to leave school early

Have lower educational aspirations

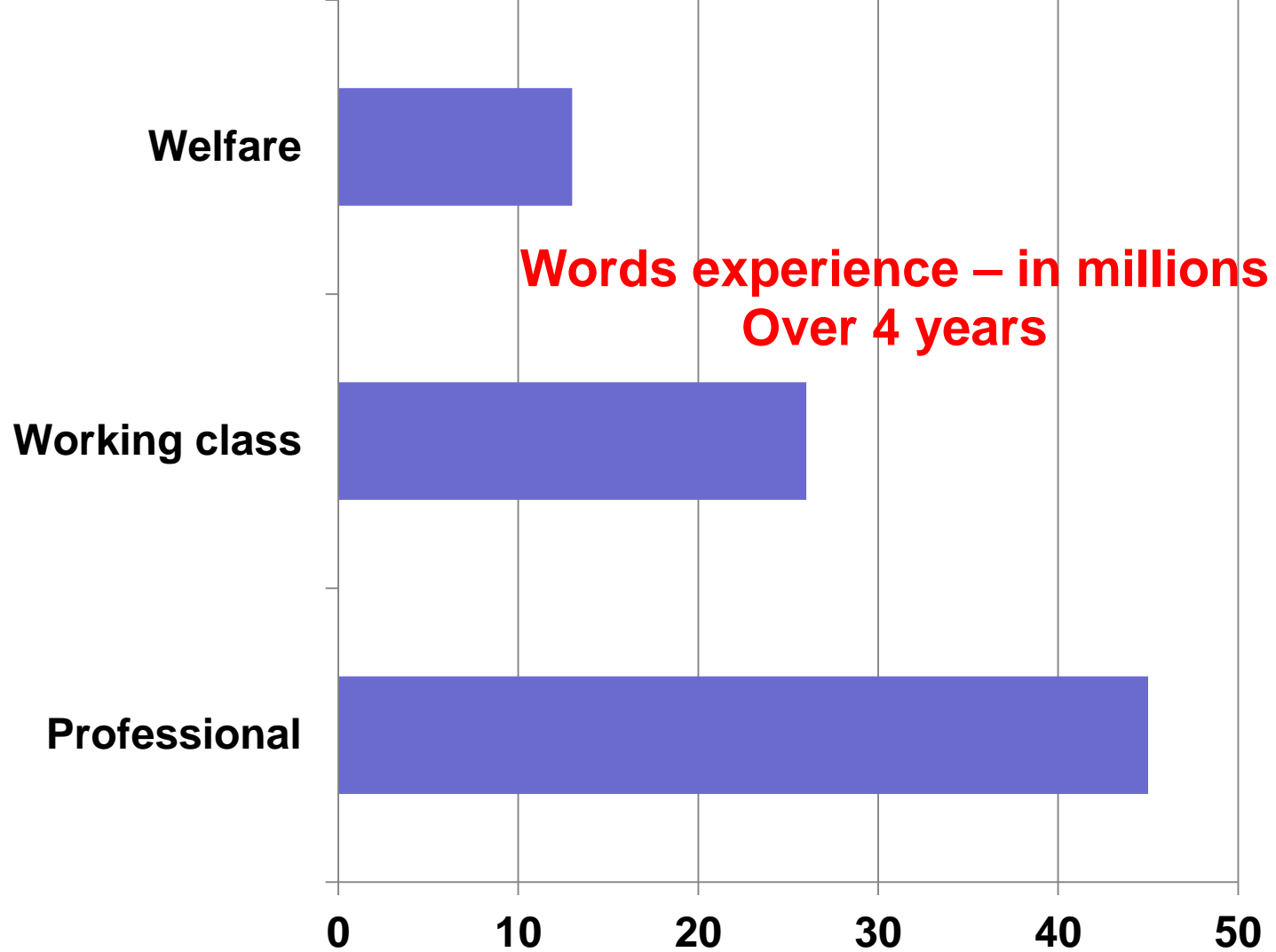Maybe? Perhaps more nuanced than this…

These risks are cyclic

- Children raised in poverty are much more likely to raise their own children in poverty

- Children who do not achieve at school are likely to raise children who also do not achieve

What do parents do?

Hart and Risley 2003

**Words experience – in millions
Over 4 years**

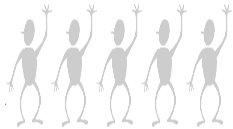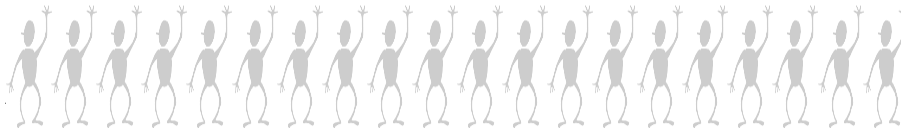|					
Welfare					
Working class					
Professional					
0	10	20	30	40	50

- It starts early
- The Millennium Cohort Study found that at the age of 5 children from the most advantaged groups were over a year ahead in vocabulary compared to those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- And the gap continues as children age….

This is not about parent-blaming

Or blaming schools

The problem is systemic

But the solution is local AND systemic

We need to be the local face of the solution

The problem….

Seems to be social and cultural capital

The schooling system is set up in a way that benefits children with certain types of capital….

haviour in the playground, they would ~~instead~~ ~~~~ ~~~~ the child – begin shouting at the teacher. But we understood our mothers a little better. We knew that they, in their own time, had feared school, just as we did now, feared the arbitrary rules and felt shamed by them, by the new uniforms they couldn't afford, the baffling obsession with quiet, the incessant correcting of their original patois or cockney, the sense that they could never do anything right anyway. A deep anxiety about 'being told off' – for who they were, for what they had or hadn't done, and now for the deeds of their children – this fear never really left our mothers, many of whom had become our mothers when they were not much more than children themselves. And so 'Parents' Evening' was, in their minds, not so distant from 'detention'. It remained a place where they might be shamed. The difference was now they were grown and could not be forced to attend.

From: Zadie Smith, Swing Time

Social & Cultural Capital

- Bourdieu's explanation for why children from different social backgrounds profit differently from the same education (Bourdieu 1997)
- The benefits that come from being a member of a group (family, community)

  - Form a lens through which all else is seen (aspirations….) – what "people like us" do

  - The ability to use the language of the dominant group – to use "educated" language

  - Not just in families – in schools as well

What comes next?

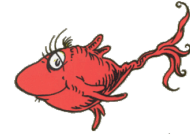Oh, the grand old Duke of York…..

Mary, Mary, quite contrary….

Little Jack Horner….

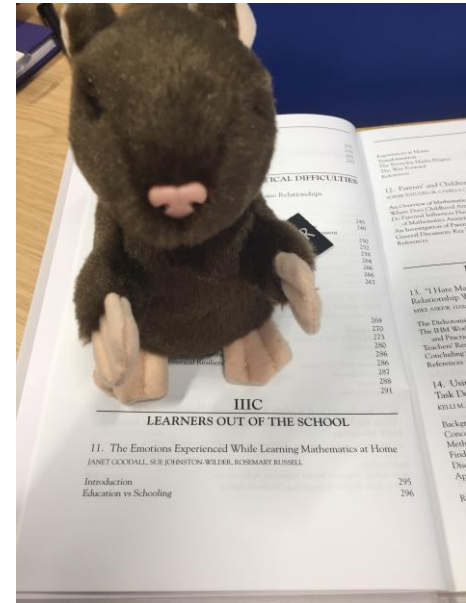One Fish

Two Fish

Red Fish

You Fish

Singing nursery rhymes, reading the same book over and over again – these are all related to literacy – but many parents may not realise their value

Many of the parents in this group may not have been brought up with these – but singing such rhymes can be linked to achievements in literacy…. (Sonnenschein and Munsterman 2002)

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Parental engagement <u>in children's learning</u>
In a major review of the literature:

"Parental involvement in their child's learning was the only area reviewed with sufficient evidence to meet the four criteria for a robust causal model...." (Gorard, See and Davies, 2012)

"For all children, the quality of the home learning environment is more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income"

"What parents do is more important than who parents are" (*Sylva et al, 2004)*

Parental engagement in 'supporting learning in the home' is the single most important changeable factor in student achievement.

Harris and Goodall, 2007

Parental engagement with learning

Can have positive impacts on
- Behaviour
- Engagement with school/schooling/school work
- Homework
- Outcomes and achievement

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Or engagement?

Involvement….

What's the difference?

What works

Parental involvement with schools

Reading in class	Going on Trips	Parents' Evenings

Parental involvement with schools		
Reading in class	Going on Trips	Parents' Evenings
Parental involvement with schooling		
Helping with homework		Keeping track of coursework

Parental involvement with schools		
Reading in class	Going on Trips	Parents' Evenings
Parental involvement with schooling		
Helping with homework		Keeping track of coursework
Parental engagement with children's learning		
Moral support	Interest in learning	Guidance

The research is clear

What makes a difference is the attitude toward learning in the home

So the question becomes – how can schools support that?

Go back to your wishlist

Can you mark the ones that are in the lower band – parental engagement *with children's learning*?

Concentrating on those is far more important – even if parents never come onto school grounds, they can still **support learning**

So much has been added to our existing model of schools that we've run out of attachment points for new ideas; we need to stop bolting things on to the outside of what we're already doing and go back and rethink - retool - regrow - the basics. We need to get radical. (Goodall, 2013)

Education is not bounded by the school fence….

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Schools are not the problem

But they can be part of the answer

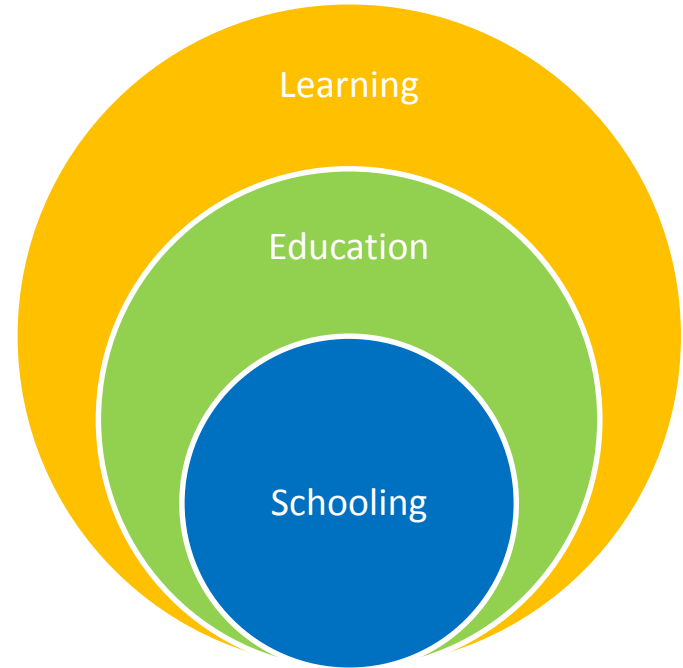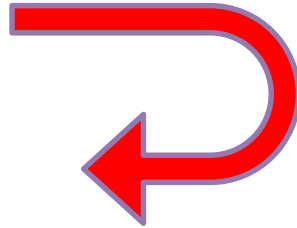# Learning is not bounded by the home walls....

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Parents are not the
problem

But they can be
part of the
answer

Change the emphasis

From schooling

To learning

Hard to Reach Parents

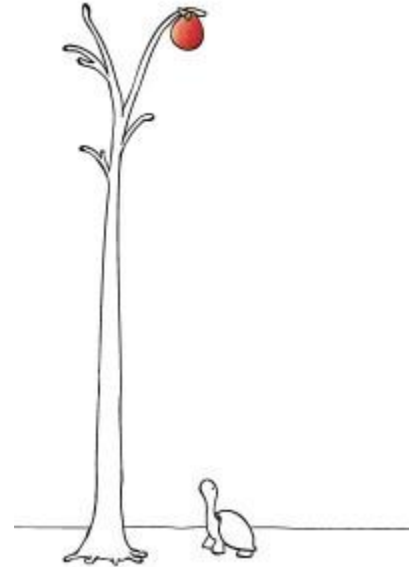On which of those levels are parents "hard to reach"?

Are they out of touch with the school or
with their children's learning?

What can we do about either?

Who is hard to reach – the parents or the school?

Creates a deficit model of parents

- Assumes that they are (always) the problem
- Is not a good basis for working in partnership

What are parents' evenings for?

Reporting to Support

📅 10th August 2016   👤 @TeacherToolkit   👁 2011 Views   💬 1 Comment   🏷 Janet Goodall, Parenting, Parents' Evening, Paul Ainsworth, Report

What is the meaning of parents' evenings?

❝ As both a parent and someone who works around the engagement of parents in children's learning, I'd like to respond to Paul Ainsworth's recent blog, 10 Tips for Parents' Evenings.

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What would parents' evenings be like if they were not about *reporting,* but rather about *learning*?

What if the event was focused around a partnership between parents and the teachers to support learning?

Barriers to engagement

- Parental expe...
  - Parental self eff...
- Practical issues
  - Time
  - Child care
  - Transport
  - Cost

- 15 minutes' conversation a week w/teenagers, about social media, movies, etc. has been found to be correlated to engagement in literacy
- Parents need to know that they make a difference, and how

Parents means Dads, too

- Too often, "Parent" mea[...]
- (Women's unpaid labour…)
- Paternal engagement very in[...]
- "Parent" in this sense can als[...] aunt, uncle….

- Have a look around school/setting – are there pictures of fathers, grandparents, with children?
- Be aware of language – fathers aren't "babysitting", they are parenting

What parents do…

Message to parents:

- What matters is that they care about their children and their learning

- They don't need to *know* the answers

- They need to *care that the answers get found*

Super Shoppers Project

Aim: increase conversations around learning in the home – the home learning environment

Why: research shows this is the best way to support learners, but parents often struggle to do so

Shopping as FB has it…

Process

- This term:
  - Creating questions and tips
  - Printing cards and stickers, delivery
  - Ethics and consent
- Next term (January to Easter)
  - Project in schools
- Summer term
  - Evaluation (visits to school, interviews with staff, parents) and report writing

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- Children to be given cards – one side, activities for family discussion/learning; other side, tips for parents
- Use the cards while shopping
- Receive a sticker (from shop or school) for completion/trying

Outcomes

- Increased parental confidence in supporting learning
- Increased conversations around learning in the home
- Increase student learning
- (More enjoyable shopping trips!)

Challenges to Engagement

- Parental perceptions of schools as obstacles – lack of encouragement, not communicating

- Barriers to engagement: time, costs, transportation, language, literacy, lack of confidence

- Schools' perceptions of parents as problems… "Hard to reach"

Most importantly

PEwCL can break the cycles of poverty and underachievement

But only when based on the foundations of respect and trust

    Between Schools & Parents

    Between Schools & Communities

Need to go beyond *giving information* to *working together, in partnership*

Will only happen when the emphasis shifts from the school to learning

Final Sheets

One thing I'm taking away from today

One thing I'm/we're going to start doing

Contact me

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