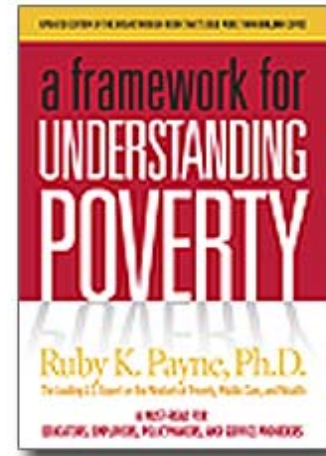


A Framework for Understanding Poverty

By: Dr. Ruby K. Payne

A Framework for Understanding Poverty was Dr. Ruby Payne's first book and the first book RFT Publishing Co. (now **aha!** Process, Inc.) published. It is fitting that the book and the company's history are intertwined. The central goal of the company is educating people about the differences that separate economic classes and then teaching them skills to bridge those gulfs. *Framework* is the method that delivers that message.



Ruby's thesis for *Framework* is simple. Individuals accustomed to personal poverty think and act differently from people in the middle and upper economic classes. Most teachers today come from middle-class backgrounds. Economic class differences, in an educational setting, often make both teaching and learning challenging. Too often, teachers don't understand why a student from poverty is chronically acting out or is not grasping a concept even after repeated explanations. At the same time, the student doesn't understand what he/she is expected to produce and why. Ruby discusses at length the social cues or "hidden rules" that govern how we think and interact in society – and the significance of those rules in a classroom.

Framework also illuminates differences between generational poverty and situational poverty. Ruby explains the "voices" that all of us use to project ourselves to the outside world and how poverty can affect those voices. Through the use of realistic teaching scenarios, Ruby focuses attention on sources of support, or resources, which might or might not be present in a student's life. Resources are important assets – things like mental stability, emotional support, and physical health – and the more resources students have in their lives, the better able they'll be to achieve their goals.

Framework is a teacher's book. It draws on years of experience in multiple school systems, along with a wide range of academic positions. In this groundbreaking work Ruby Payne matter-of-factly presents the issues central to teaching students from poverty, then takes a pivotal next step by offering proven tools educators can use immediately to improve the quality of instruction in their classrooms.