INTRODUCTION

Not all of our students have the same starting point. It is our responsibility as teachers to understand the environmental factors in our student’s lives that contribute to their educational experience, and develop and implement our teaching accordingly. I often explain it in simple terms using this simple situation.

This is an exaggerated Day 1 scenario that is intended to make you think. Understand that similar situations happen all of the time in classrooms, throughout student’s educational experiences. Try to understand the metaphor.

Student A says:

“I know my A, B, Cs. I know my 1, 2, and 3’s. I know all of my planets and all the dinosaurs. I have been to the zoo, museum, and aquarium. I went to Alaska and Mexico over the summer!!!!

Ms. F then says:

Wow! Student A you are so smart. You are the best kind of student. I love you. You are so special.
Student A leaves Ms. F's classroom. She is ready to conquer the world!

For the next 12 years of school Student A hears:

She knows that she can become:
Student B says:

Ms. F, I don’t know my A, B, Cs. I don’t know how to write my name. What is 2+2? I want to go to the beach.

Ms. F then says:

Nobody ever taught you. You have never been anywhere. This is school; we don’t go to the beach. You don’t know anything. You’re going to be a lot of work. Be quiet and pay attention. Why can’t you be more like student A?
Student B leaves Ms. F's classroom in the following state:

Not stoked on school.

For the next 12 years, Student B hears:

You're stupid. You're wrong! Give up

Student B starts to think (not that these things are bad):