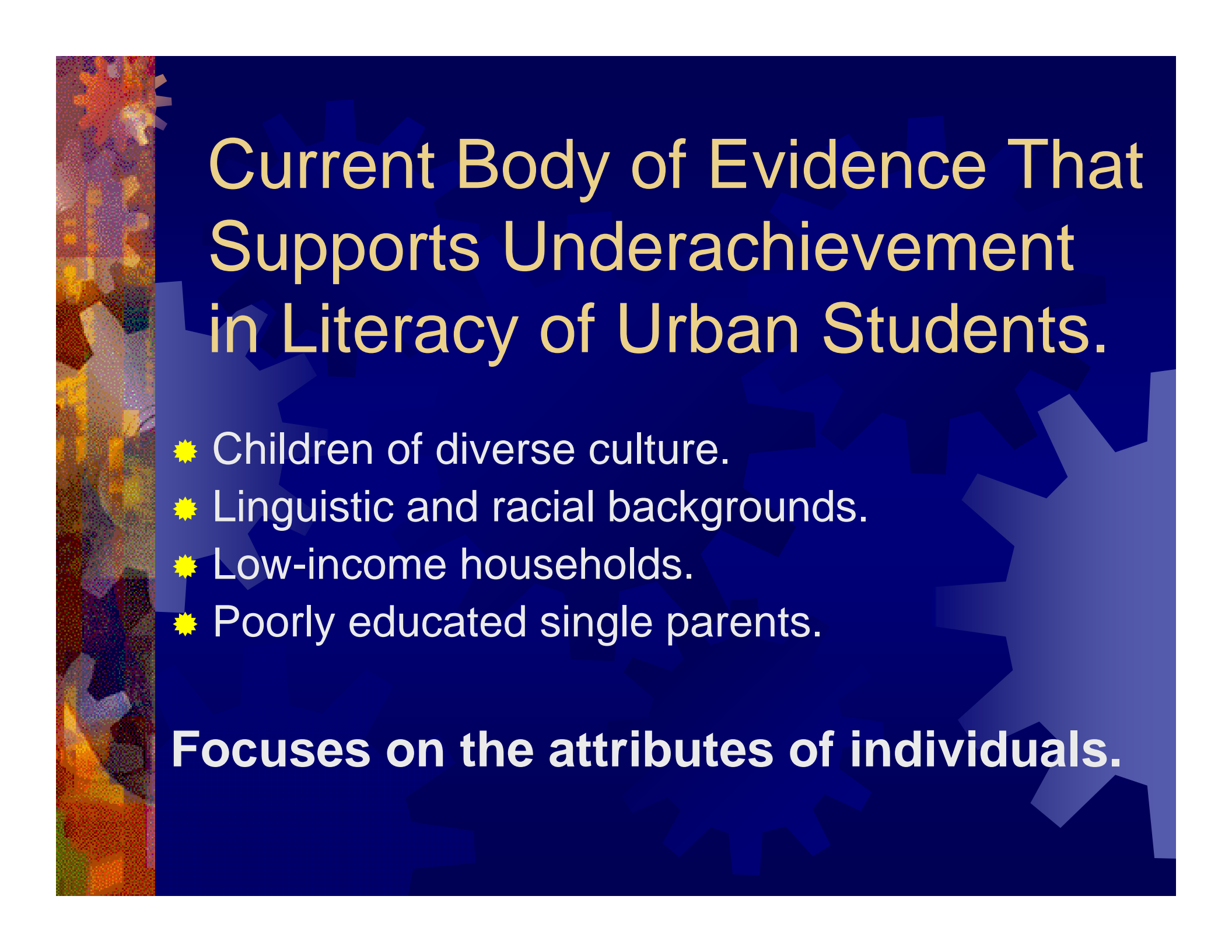


The background is a dark blue field filled with various shades of blue and grey gears of different sizes, some overlapping. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured pattern in shades of orange, yellow, and brown.

Access to Print in Low-income and Middle-income Communities:

An Ecological Study of Four
Neighborhoods.

Marilyn Miller



Current Body of Evidence That Supports Underachievement in Literacy of Urban Students.

- ✦ Children of diverse culture.
- ✦ Linguistic and racial backgrounds.
- ✦ Low-income households.
- ✦ Poorly educated single parents.

Focuses on the attributes of individuals.

Additional Possibilities?

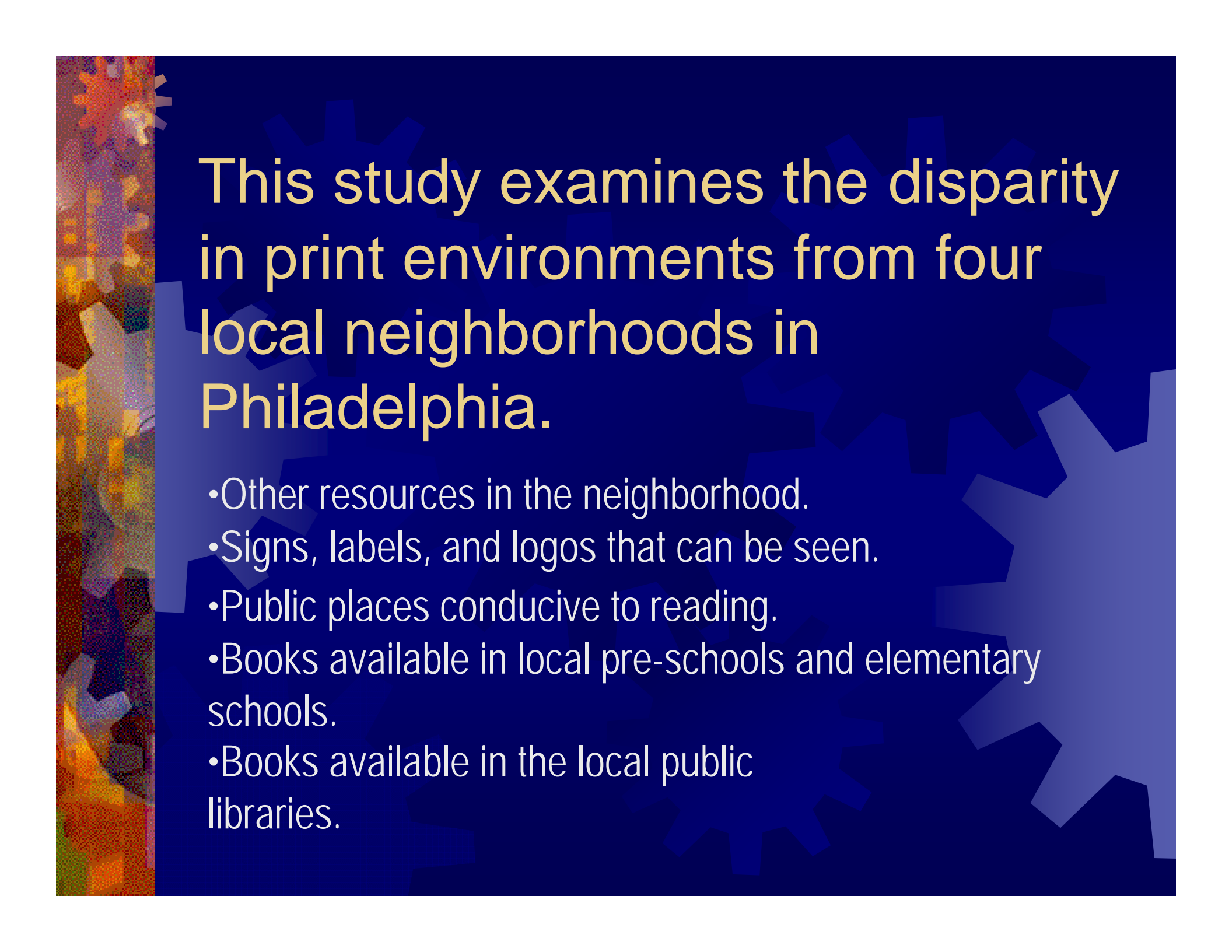


- ✦ In a study of parental involvement, parents in lower-class and middle-class communities varied little in their educational goals for their children.
- ✦ People absorb from their physical and social universe.
- ✦ Learning cannot be considered apart from the individual's social environment (ecocultural niche).

Prevailing Assumption...

Books and other literacy-related resources are easily and equally accessible to all children and their families.





This study examines the disparity in print environments from four local neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

- Other resources in the neighborhood.
- Signs, labels, and logos that can be seen.
- Public places conducive to reading.
- Books available in local pre-schools and elementary schools.
- Books available in the local public libraries.



The Four Neighborhoods

- ☀ Two low-income neighborhoods:

- ☀ Kensington

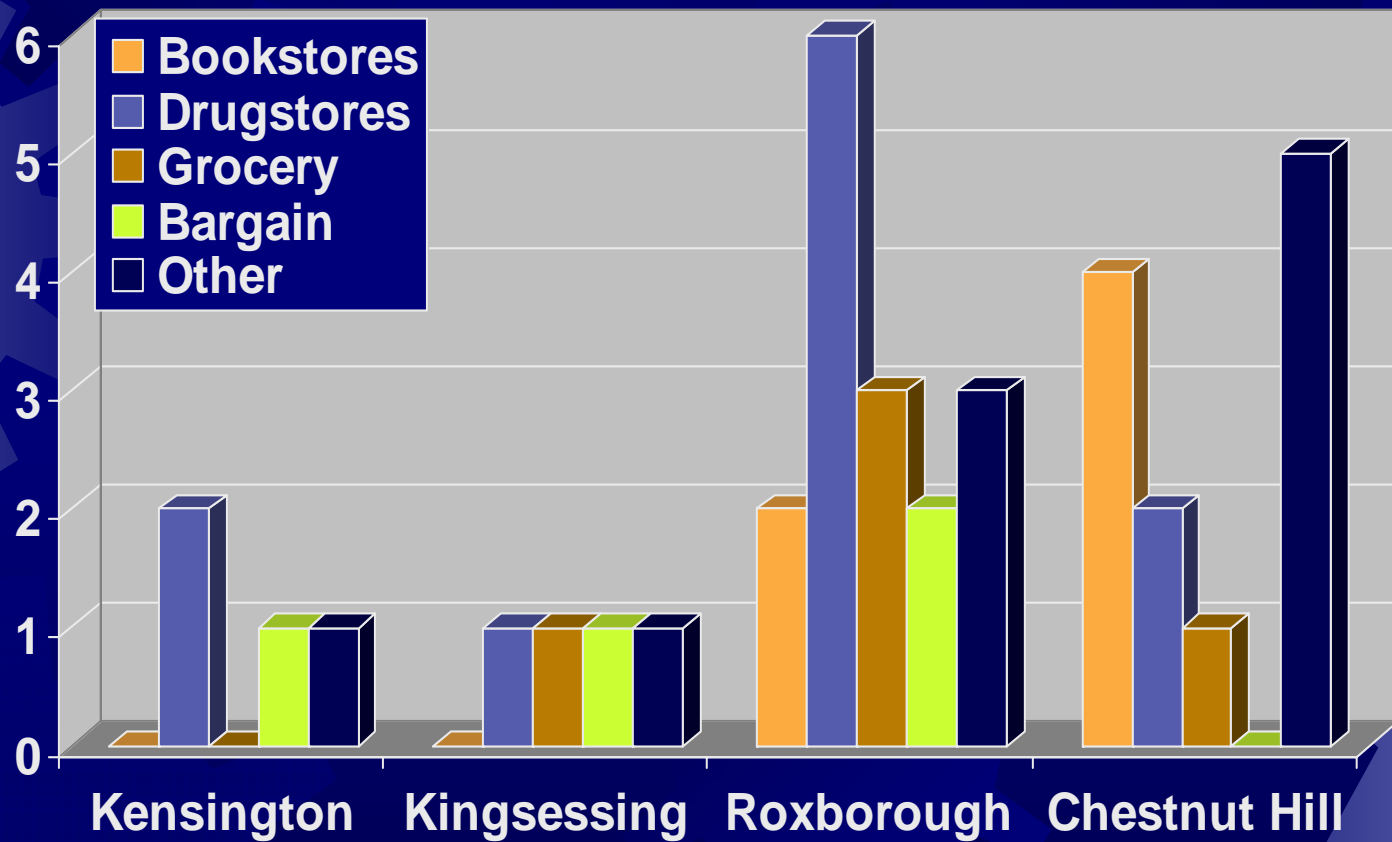
- ☀ Kingsessing

- ☀ Two middle-income neighborhoods:

- ☀ Roxborough

- ☀ Chestnut Hill

Places Selling Children's Resources.



Number and Condition of Signs in Four Neighborhoods



Neighborhoods	Business signs	Logos	% good condition	% poor condition
Kensington	209	42	66	34
Kingsessing	76	16	26	74
Roxborough	164	44	96	4
Chestnut Hill	77	28	99	1

Public Places for Reading

☀ Middle-income neighborhoods:

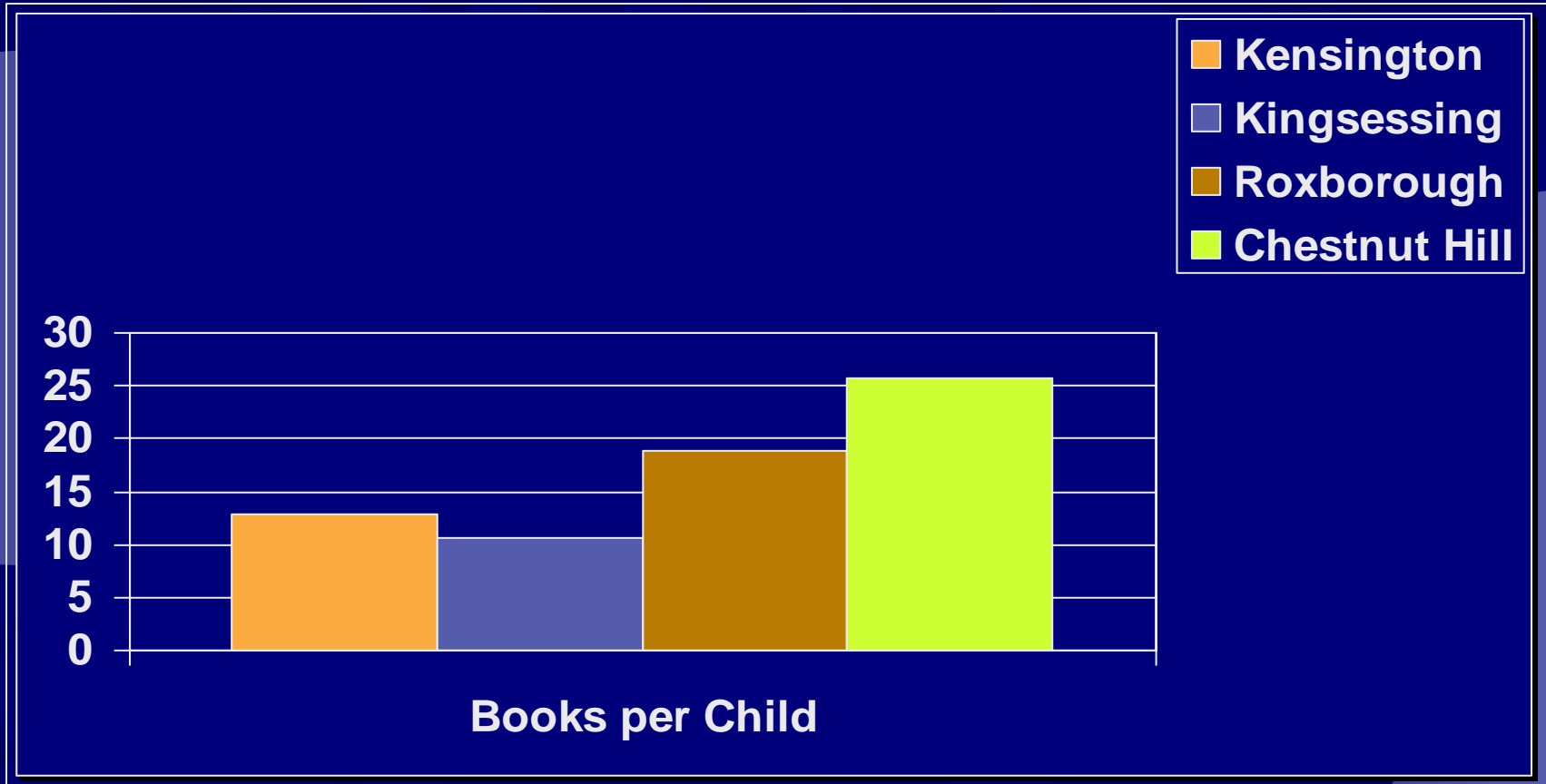
- ☀ Comfortable seating
- ☀ Friendly people
- ☀ Reading material available



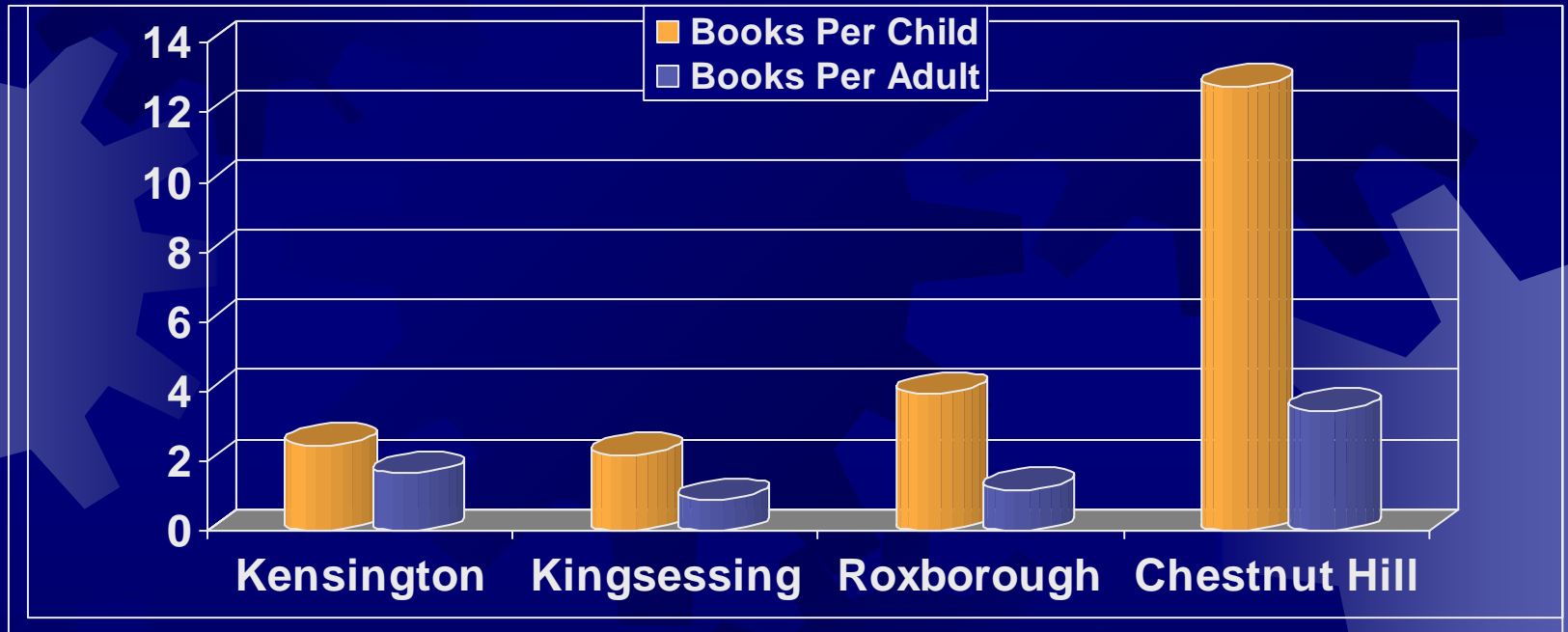
☀ Low-income neighborhoods:

- ☀ Uncomfortable seating
- ☀ Owners suspicious of loitering
- ☀ No reading material available

School Libraries



Public Libraries



Discussion

- ★ What might the consequences of differential access for children's literacy learning?
 - "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer."
 - Some children come to school better prepared for the ways of learning and thinking in school.
 - Some children come to school with a different set of thinking skills that run contrary to school learning or at the least are not acknowledged.
 - This leads to the need for accommodations to improve childrens' achievement.



Accommodations

- ✦ Redesigning classrooms to ensure better access to literacy.
 - ✦ Emphasizing the importance of physical and psychological proximity of literary resources.
- ✦ Redefining literacy to include school based and situation based learning.
 - ✦ Literacy needs to be tied to practical real life situations.
- ✦ Connections need to be built within the community.
 - ✦ Build upon community assets.
 - ✦ Ensure more equitable funding of resources for children.

Final Note

“We did not highlight the specialized funds of knowledge that low-income children bring to early childhood and school settings. In this respect, we perhaps unfairly privileged school-based learning in contrast to the learning experiences and ways of thinking that are nurtured in daily activities and homes of the specific communities in which these children lived.”

