Marold Wosnitza · Francisco Peixoto
Susan Beltman · Caroline F. Mansfield
Editors

Resilience in Education

Concepts, Contexts and Connections

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Part I
Introduction

Chapter 1
Resilience in Education: An Introduction

Susan Beltman and Caroline F. Mansfield

Abstract This volume has arisen from burgeoning international interest in the field of resilience in a variety of educational contexts. It gathers together current thinking, research and practice from international scholars. Over the past 10 years in particular, researchers have focused not only on resilience in significant adversity but also on how students and educators overcome everyday challenges to learn and thrive. The increasing interest in resilience in educational contexts has, in part, stemmed from an increased societal attention to issues of wellbeing and mental health and to broader concerns about issues such as teacher quality and retention in some countries. As a result, both individual researchers and research groups have emerged, making significant contributions to understanding resilience in educational contexts through theory development and empirical studies.

The catalyst for this volume was the European Union-funded project Enhancing Teacher Resilience in Europe (ENTREE) which responded to international concerns about teacher resilience and the 'need to safeguard and promote teachers' wellbeing' (http://www.entree-online.eu/). It aimed to support pre-service and practising teachers' capacity for resilience through the development of face-to-face training and online modules. Project members comprised researchers and practitioners from Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Malta and the Czech Republic, as well as third-country partners from Australia.

The original version of this chapter was revised: The original link to Enhancing Teacher Resilience in Europe (ENTREE) has been corrected on page 3. The correction to this chapter is available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76690-4_20

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This volume showcases the international body of work related to the ENTREE project and, in addition, includes invited contributors from Europe, Australia, South Africa, Canada and the United Kingdom, thus providing a picture of resilience from around the globe. The authors share their conceptualisations of resilience, their empirical research and interventions developed to support resilience in a variety of educational settings. The volume has five parts: Part 1, 'Introduction'; Part 2, 'Conceptualising resilience'; Part 3, 'Researching resilience in educational contexts'; Part 4, 'Connecting to practice'; and Part 5, 'Conclusion'.

Conceptualising Resilience

The ENTREE project was guided by a comprehensive definition of resilience developed from research associated with previous Australian projects (e.g. Beltman et al. 2011; Mansfield et al. 2016a, b) and a comprehensive annotated bibliography on teacher resilience (https://www.brite.edu.au/annotated-bibliography-of-teacher-resilience). Although the ENTREE project was concerned specifically with resilience for pre-service and in-service teachers, the definition is applicable to other settings as it incorporates the complexity and dynamic nature of resilience:

> In the ENTREE project, teacher resilience refers to the process of, capacity for, or outcome of positive adaptation and ongoing professional commitment and growth in the face of challenging circumstances. Resilience is shaped by individual, situational and broader contextual characteristics that interrelate in dynamic ways to provide risk (challenging) or protective (supportive) factors. Individuals, drawing on personal, professional and social resources, not only "bounce back" but are able to thrive professionally and personally, experiencing job satisfaction, positive self-beliefs, personal wellbeing and an ongoing commitment to the profession. (Wosnitza et al. 2014, p. 2)

The construct of resilience has been explored in different disciplines over time with similarities emerging in the way it has been conceptualised (e.g. Gu and Day 2013). There is agreement that resilience is a 'complex, dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon' (Mansfield et al. 2012, p. 364) or a 'composite construct' (Gu and Li 2013, p. 292). Individuals, their contexts and the process whereby they overcome challenges over time are all part of the complexity. Different theoretical lenses provide a focus on different aspects of this complexity. Some approaches prioritise the role of the individual, and Pretsch et al. (2012), for example, write about a 'resilient personality' and 'resilience as a personal resource' (p. 323). Where the resilience process is the focus, the researcher 'centres not on key attributes of the teacher or resources in the environment, but on strategies teachers employ' (Castro et al. 2010, p. 623). A more ecological or contextual focus 'directs our attention away from the "here-and-now" specifics of individual teachers' lives and contextualises their experiences within broader social, cultural, and political arenas' (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 533). When viewed as a collective construct, resilience is seen as 'the culmination of collective and collaborative endeavours' (Gu and Li 2013, p. 300).

Other writers have emphasised resilience as an outcome, incorporating aspects such as commitment, enjoyment, enthusiasm and passion (Day and Gu 2014). In all the chapters in this volume, the authors present the conceptualisation of resilience or specific lens that has guided their work.

The chapters in Part 2 focus more specifically on the theoretical viewpoint adopted, arguing for a particular conceptualisation and presenting illustrative research findings. Gu (Chap. 2) argues that a social ecological perspective on teacher resilience is required to best understand the 'contemporary landscape of teaching' in which teachers both influence and are influenced by their professional worlds. Drawing on a range of international research, she concludes with four propositions 'about teacher resilience and its implications for sustaining teacher quality in the complex and changing contexts in which teachers work and live'. Schwarze (Chap. 3) presents a comprehensive generic model of resilience that incorporates appraisal theory, internal and external resources, strategies and resilience outcomes. She then applies this model to apprentices in the German vocational education setting, presenting some illustrative data. In Chap. 4, Mansfield, Ebersöhn, Beltman and Loots adopt a systems approach to understand teacher resilience in South Africa and Australia. This cross-national study uses data from teachers in these countries to examine risks and resources for resilience at the personal level as well as the micro-, mesa-, exo- and macro-levels of context. In the final chapter of this section (Chap. 5), Peixoto, Wosnitza, Pipa, Morgan and Cefai also adopt a multilevel model of teacher resilience – the model guiding the ENTREE project. In this case, the model directed the collection of quantitative data from pre-service teachers across four countries: Germany, Malta, Ireland and Portugal.

Researching Resilience in Educational Contexts

Chapters in this volume illustrate the expansion of resilience research to a wider range of national contexts and specific educational settings. An earlier review (Beltman et al. 2011) reported that few studies on teacher resilience included pre-service teachers, and most studies were conducted in the USA. Part 3 of the volume illustrates how this scope has broadened and concentrates on studies of resilience in a range of educational settings in Germany, Canada, Australia, Malta, Portugal and South Africa. Whilst each context has its particular cultural, social and economic characteristics, there are some synergies in terms of the challenges educators experience and the ways in which they respond to challenges. With participants including practising teachers, pre-service teachers and university teachers, the chapters provide insights into the critical role that contexts play in supporting or challenging resilience for educators at various levels.

Research methodologies used to examine resilience have included quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Previous studies have included quantitative measures of factors such as emotion regulation and self-efficacy (Ee and Chang 2010), wellbeing and mindfulness (Jennings et al. 2011) and quality of working life (Leroux and Théorêt 2014). Qualitative data have been generated from open-ended

survey comments (Mansfield et al. 2012) and from comprehensive longitudinal case studies comprising focus groups, interviews, observations and visual methods (Ebersöhn 2012). A common issue across methodologies is 'the conflation of resilient characteristics of teachers and the environmental supports' (Yonezawa et al. 2011, p. 915), making it difficult to take into account the many relevant variables. The group of chapters in this section includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using a range of methodologies. Surveys are used to gather data about participants' resilience, motivation, psychological health and work experience. Interviews are used to provide more nuanced understandings about the interplay between person and contexts over time, and a digital tool is used in an innovative approach to gathering data.

The following brief overviews of each chapter in Part 3 indicate the variety of contexts and methodologies. Lohbeck (Chap. 6) presents a questionnaire study of German pre-service teachers (293 at the beginning of their degree; 126 transitioning to practice) which focuses on the interplay of motivation to teach and resilience of pre-service teachers. This study highlights the relationship between intrinsic motivation and resilience. In Chap. 7, Leroux reports a longitudinal, mixed-method study of early career Canadian teachers' resilience. Risk and protective factors during the first 2 years of induction are explored, using a survey of teachers' work experience and psychological health to identify indicators of psychological distress or positive adaptation and using semi-structured interviews to provide more nuanced understandings of positive adaptation and the developmental process of resilience during early career years.

Crosswell, Willis, Morrison, Gibson and Ryan (Chap. 8) present a longitudinal qualitative study of three Australian early career teachers working in rural settings. Using an innovative digital tool as the main method of data collection, plotlines of resilience over time are described. Use of the digital tool provided the impetus for regular reflections, and the data generated show the fluctuations of resilience over time. Galea (Chap. 9) focuses on how secondary school teachers in Malta respond to challenging behaviour in a boys' school. Using 'narrative exploration of teacher stories through in-depth interviews', this chapter highlights the individual and contextual factors that have helped strengthen their resilience. In Chap. 10, Flores draws on a large-scale study from Portugal and explores sources of teacher motivation and resilience in challenging school contexts using surveys, focus groups and interviews. The importance of relationships is emphasised, particularly with regard to their role in supporting teachers.

Moving away from school teachers, Helker, Mansfield, Wosnitza and Stiller (Chap. 11) present a mixed-method study that investigates the resilience of university teachers in Australia and Germany. Survey and interview data show the range of challenges in university teaching including maintaining a productive balance between research and teaching responsibilities. Although some challenges are consistent across contexts, different promotional structures and employment practices influence how these are managed. The authors present a model of university teacher resilience. The research by Theron in the final chapter in this section (Chap. 12) is located in the school context but focuses on how teachers support the resilience of

their students. As part of a large-scale phenomenological study and 'using the lens of Ungar's social ecology of resilience theory', this chapter addresses the question of how secondary school teachers in rural disadvantaged contexts in South Africa inform the resilience of their students. Resilience-supporting teacher actions and apathies are explored.

Connecting to Practice

The five chapters in the Part 4 of this volume focus on how conceptual understandings and research findings related to resilience can be applied in educational settings. It has been argued that classrooms, schools and teachers should all play a role in enhancing the resilience of a whole school community through broad general principles and practices (e.g. Cefai 2004, 2007; Cefai and Cavioni 2014). Teacher educators can assist in preparing classroom teachers for the future (e.g. Gardner 2011; Mansfield et al. 2016a, b). In addition to general principles, specific interventions have been developed in different countries to enhance resilience and wellbeing in school children and their families (Kennedy et al. 2015), in higher education students (Ryan et al. 2014) and in practising teachers (Jennings et al. 2011). The chapters in this part of the volume continue this call to connect what we know about connecting resilience to practice.

Two Australian-based works begin the section. In Chap. 13, Hazel argues that resilience is a 'bridging concept that links together the cognitive, emotional, social and physiological domains of wellbeing' and that teacher educators have a key role in preparing future teachers to enhance the resilience of their pupils. The Australian ResponseAbility project is used to illustrate the proposed strategies. Beltman, Mansfield, Wosnitza, Weatherby-Fell and Broadley (Chap. 14) share the findings of a study examining the impact of using the BRiTE online modules. In this study Australian teacher education students completed the modules before their final school placement and pre- and post-test data provide some indication that the modules helped pre-service teachers develop their capacity for resilience.

Chapter 15 is linked to the ENTREE project, and a team of researchers and practitioners (Castro Silva, Pipa, Renner and O'Donnell) from Portugal, Germany and Ireland provide an overview of the face-to-face training that was part of this project. The training modules' conceptual underpinning and practical implementation are presented. Also linked to the ENTREE project, in Chap. 16, Wosnitza, Delzepich, Schwarze, O'Donnell, Faust and Camilleri (from Germany, Ireland and Malta) explain the TRSR (Teacher Resilience Self-Reflection Tool). The chapter outlines this web-based instrument which is based on the project's theoretical framework of teacher resilience.

The final two chapters in Part 4 are related to specific programmes developed for use in schools. Noble and McGrath (Chap. 17) write about the contemporary challenges leading to the need for 'educational policy and school practices' that can 'help children and young people develop greater resilience'. They report on research

conducted over many years regarding a whole-school programme to develop resilience that they developed in Australia. Finally, in Chap. 18, a team from Italy (Cavioni, Zanetti, Beddia and Lupica Spagnolo) reports on the development of a school curriculum to promote resilience in schools in Europe. The underpinning conceptual framework of RESCUR and findings from a pilot implementation are presented.

In conclusion, it is the intention of the chapters in this volume to illustrate a current picture of resilience understanding, research and practice. Conceptualisations aim to incorporate the complexity of individuals and systems. The work presented illustrates multiple national contexts and educational settings, each with their own unique challenges and resources. Using a variety of methods, the chapters illustrate the breadth of research being conducted and its implications for practice, with specific interventions included.

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Part II
Conceptualising Resilience

Chapter 2
(Re)conceptualising Teacher Resilience: A Social-Ecological Approach to Understanding Teachers' Professional Worlds

Qing Gu

Abstract This chapter builds upon but extends current understanding of resilience in teachers by exploring the nature of teacher resilience from a social-ecological perspective. The social-ecological understanding of resilience as an environment-centred, process-oriented latent concept enables us to place teachers in their complex worlds of work and analyse the ways in which their capacity to teach to their best *influences* and *is influenced* by their professional worlds. It argues that at a time when the contemporary landscape of teaching has become increasingly complex and diverse and when teachers' professional worlds are populated with successive and persisting government policy reforms which have increased their external accountabilities, work complexity and emotional workload, understanding why and how many teachers are able to manage the complexity challenge, sustain their capacity to be resilient and continue to work for improvement is an important quality retention issue.

Although a considerable body of research has looked into teacher resilience over the last decade, compared to resilience research on children and young people, empirical and conceptual work on resilience in adults, and teachers in particular, is still in its infancy. Drawing upon resilience research across disciplines and empirical evidence on the work and lives of teachers internationally, this chapter contributes to understandings of the meaning and importance of resilience in teachers' work from a social-ecological perspective.

The chapter begins with a review of the wider policy and reform contexts for teachers and teaching. The purpose is to establish at the outset that at a time when teachers' professional worlds are populated with successive and persisting govern-

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ment policy reforms which have increased their external accountabilities, work complexity and emotional workload, understanding why and how many teachers are able to manage the complexity challenge, sustain their capacity to be resilient and continue to teach to their best is a relevant and important quality retention issue.

Following a synthesis of the research literature on what we already know about teacher resilience, this chapter focusses on exploring the conceptual and methodological relevance of using the social and ecological lens of human development to make sense of what teacher resilience is. The process-oriented and person x environment model of resilience reinforces the view that teacher resilience is a latent concept which is neither innate nor stable. Teachers' capacity to be resilient fluctuates as a result of the influence of personal conditions, school leadership and the relational and organisational conditions in which they work. Amongst these, relational trust in the work contexts is found to have a profound influence on teacher resilience.

Whilst acknowledging the significance of social and physical ecologies in shaping resilient qualities in both children and teachers, the chapter also points to two important differences. First, in contrast to the conceptualisation of resilience in children which presupposes the presence of significant adversity, resilience in teachers needs to be perceived as being closely allied to their everyday capacity to sustain their educational purposes and successfully manage the unavoidable uncertainties inherent in their world of work. Related to this is a second observation that the roles values play in childhood and in teachers' professional lives are profoundly different. One has to understand the integral role of teachers' vocational values and purposes in influencing what they do and why they do it in their everyday classrooms in order to understand what resilience in teachers really is:

> Over the years, the evidence from our work with outstanding teachers and outstanding schools in changing social, cultural and political landscapes of education nationally and internationally has led us to believe that, regardless of age, experience or gender or school context, teachers and schools can change the worlds of their students and that many of them do! They are not simply survivors but committed and competent professionals and organisations that are proud of being at the centre of a profession which is charged with making a difference to the learning, lives and achievement of all children and young people. (Day and Gu 2014, p. 140)

This chapter concludes with four propositions about teacher resilience. Taken together, they emphasise the importance of exploring teachers' inner and external professional worlds to understand why many are still committed and passionate about making a difference and continue to do so – despite the unpredictable nature of their every school day and the many physical, emotional and intellectual challenges that are associated with this. Drawing upon research evidence from teacher and school improvement, they also emphasise that the improvement in the quality of teachers and teaching must be understood within the social, cultural and organisational environments of the school – which are designed, nurtured and shaped by the educational architect who lives in the principal's office.

Teachers in a Complex World

Teachers' work is carried out in an era of testing times where the policy focus in many countries has shifted from provision and process to outcomes (OECD 2012). The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in particular, is having an unprecedented influence on national policies for improvement and standards across many nation states. The rapidly growing international interest in 'surpassing Shanghai' and outperforming the world's leading systems (Tucker 2011) has contributed to the intensification of national and international emphases upon standards, performativity and external accountability. In the latest *Global Education Monitoring Report*, UNESCO (2016) stated:

> Education systems have traditionally measured whether children go to school rather than whether learners benefit from their schooling experience, let alone what happens inside schools and classrooms. The focus has gradually shifted over the past 15 years, however, with the rapid increase in the use of national, regional and international learning assessments. (UNESCO 2016, p. 193)

For many schools in many countries, this means that their educational values and practices, particularly in relation to the progress and achievement of their students, are now under increased public scrutiny. Whether the use of high-stake test scores is achieving (or can achieve) the desired improvement in the *quality* and *relevance* of teaching, learning and educational performance continues to remain an open question in policy, education and academic debate (Anagnostopoulos et al. 2013; Berliner et al. 2014; Burns and Köster 2016; UNESCO 2016).

At the same time, widespread movement of population, especially sharp increase in permanent migration flows in many countries, has seen the makeup of the local communities which schools serve become more diversified (OECD 2010, 2016a). Coupled with this change in student populations are the additional language and academic support that schools are expected to provide for the children of immigrants (OECD 2016a) and the broader, more explicitly articulated social and societal responsibilities that they are also expected to have in supporting school communities, other schools and other public services (Gu et al. 2016; OECD 2008).

Moreover, in many countries the decentralisation of funding, resources and quality control functions to local authorities and schools has resulted in increasingly diversified and complex education systems. A profound change has been the relationship between the central, regional and local levels which moves away from top-down hierarchies to 'a division of labour and more mutual independence and self-regulation' (Burns and Köster 2016, p. 18). In England, for example, the national policy drive towards a school-led self-improving system has seen rapid emergence of teaching school alliances and multi-academy trusts across the country which are expected to take the place of local authorities by taking up the responsibility for school improvement within their localities (Gu et al. 2016; Hargreaves 2014). The challenge, however, in England and in many other countries, is that autonomy and accountability are not always intelligently combined. Increased local autonomy continues to be monitored by centralised high-stake accountability that is

regulated through standardised, measurable performance indicators (Baker and LeTendre 2005; Ball 2000, 2003; Burns and Köster 2016; OECD 2008, 2010). The rush to create autonomised schools and systems is often running ahead of the reform of the architects of the accountability system. Reflecting on the paradoxes of two generations of centralised accountability systems in the United States, Mintrop and Sunderman (2013) argue that:

> it is imperative to recognise that instructional excellence probably cannot emanate from the perch of the centre or the primacy of administration; it must be an internal striving of actively participating professional workers who are sensitive to articulated community needs. (Mintrop and Sunderman 2013, p. 39)

Put simply, it is not necessarily the school performance accountability but the commitment and quality of the teaching workforce that matters most to the learning and achievement of pupils. However, to teach to one's best over time in such a complex world is not easy. It requires teachers and their schools to be forward-thinking, outward-looking, optimistic, hopeful and, above all, resilient.

Teacher Resilience: What We Already Know

Over the past 20 years, a considerable body of research has established that resilience is a relative, multidimensional and developmental construct (e.g. Howard et al. 1999; Luthar et al. 2000; Rutter 1990). Although there are differences in how it is defined by scholars from multiple disciplines (e.g. psychology, trauma studies, social work and biology), there are also shared core considerations across the disciplines which suggest that resilience presupposes the presence of threat to the status quo and is thus a positive response to conditions of significant adversity (e.g. Gordon et al. 2000; Masten et al. 1999); that it is a dynamic process within a social system of interrelationships influenced by the interaction between the individual and the environment (Benard 1995; Garmezy and Rutter 1983; Luthar et al. 2000); and that it can be promoted, nurtured and enhanced (Cefai 2004).

However, advances in understandings about resilience are primarily built upon research on children. The empirical work on adults is still in its infancy. Emerging evidence reaffirms that resilience in adults, like that in children, is not associated with personal attributes only (Luthar and Brown 2007). Rather, it is 'a social construction' (Ungar 2004, p. 342) influenced by multidimensional factors that are unique to each context (Ungar 2004). In his work on cognitive-behaviour approach to resilience, Neenan (2009) adds that it is not a quality that is reserved for 'an extraordinary few'; rather, it can be learned and achieved by the 'ordinary many' (Neenan 2009, p. 7; see also 'ordinary magic' in Masten 2001). He advocated the concept of 'routine resilience' to emphasise that resilience comprises cognitive, behavioural and emotional responses to the vicissitudes of daily life. Through an 'active process of self-righting and growth' (O'Connell Higgins 1994, p. 1), it enables individuals to move forward towards their goals and pursue what is perceived