

Caroline F. Mansfield *Editor*

# Cultivating Teacher Resilience

International Approaches, Applications  
and Impact

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Caroline F. Mansfield 

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*This volume is dedicated to the memory of my father, Kevin Barry, with whom I would love to have been able to share this work. The book is a testament to qualities I learnt from him, including collegial collaboration, a strong work ethic, persistence and most importantly, an enduring commitment to the teaching profession.*

# Foreword

The important role of a high-quality teaching profession in raising standards and transforming educational outcomes continues to be emphasised in research and policy papers nationally and internationally. Research on teacher effectiveness consistently reports that teachers' classroom practices have the largest effects on student learning and achievement (e.g. Leithwood et al., 2018). However, the question of how to attract *qualified* candidates into teaching and nurture them to become *great* teachers in an intellectually, emotionally and physically challenging place called 'school' (Goodlad, 2004) has been contemplated for many years in many countries.

Research shows that how teachers feel about their lives and the extent to which they are satisfied with the quality of their day-to-day experience can have profound implications for their practices, their retention decisions and perhaps most importantly, the learning and achievement of their pupils (OECD, 2017; Pyhältö, Soini, & Pietarinen, 2010). Although much has been written about teacher resilience over the last decade (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Day & Gu, 2014; Gu & Day, 2007 & 2013; Johnson et al., 2016; Mansfield, Beltman, & Price, 2014; Wosnitza et al., 2018), rich narratives and systematic knowledge that explicate the important role that teacher education plays in promoting resilience in early career teachers remain, surprisingly, scarce.

There are many reasons that we should know more about *why* teacher resilience is important, *what* it means and *how* universities and schools can work together to build a bright start for many early career teachers who are 'called' to make a difference.

The most fundamental reason for the '*why*' has to be the learning entitlements of every student in every school in every country of the world. Each child has an entitlement not only to the provision of educational opportunities, but also to be taught by teachers who, as well as being knowledgeable about curriculum and pedagogically adept, are constant and persistent in their commitment to encouraging their students to learn and achieve and who are themselves demonstrably passionate about their own learning. On entry, most teachers have a strong sense of vocation and commitment (Day et al., 2007; OECD, 2016). However, sustaining

their vocational commitment and resilience over time has been an area of challenge for policy makers for quite a few decades. Shortage, turnover and attrition are persisting problems—all of which have a profoundly disruptive and detrimental impact on pupils' learning and achievement.

Drawing upon a comprehensive review of national and international literature and their decade-long empirical research on teacher resilience, Prof. Caroline Mansfield and her *BRiTE (Building Resilience in Teacher Education)* project colleagues engage us in an insightful and authoritative discussion of how this concept has evolved over time (i.e. the '*what*') and *how* teacher education programmes can nurture early career teachers in ways that enable them to grow, sustain and renew their capacities to be resilient.

In many ways, this volume of collections deserves full attention from anyone who is interested in raising standards and quality in education, and teacher education in particular. The value of its research-informed and evidence-based approach to exploring the key meanings of teacher resilience should, first and foremost, be celebrated. In this volume, the authors connect theories and practices of teacher resilience in comprehensive and robust ways and demonstrate how various disciplinary approaches, traditional cultures and educational contexts and systems shape, deeply and powerfully, how resilience in teachers is conceptualised over time.

It is no longer new knowledge that teaching is a culturally embedded conception and practice. We know from research that context matters in education. However, a deep dive into the existing literature on teacher resilience will probably reveal that it has told us little about the *what* (in terms of what the contexts and conditions are) and importantly, the *how* (in terms of how the meaning of teacher resilience is applied in context). It is commendable that the authors in this volume have addressed these important matters through the systematic synthesis of the research insights, well-constructed first-hand research and evidence and well-grounded lessons gained from the first-hand experience of leading two most influential projects in the current landscape of teacher education in Australia: *BRiTE* and *Staying BRiTE*.

As we read the book, we understand that a *resilient early career teacher* is not a homogeneous concept. Different schools in different contexts and in different countries may require their teachers to possess different skills, qualities and capabilities to teach well. What adds further to the complexity of the teaching profession is that the conception of 'teach well' can also mean quite different things to different teachers. For example, for schools serving socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, combatting basic dropout and/or disruptive emotional and behavioural issues of pupils is the day-to-day reality. In contrast, managing parental pressure and expectations can be thorny challenges for teachers whose pupils have more advantaged backgrounds.

Using narrative stories of real teachers and teacher educators, the authors in this volume remind us how resilience *can* be nurtured in early career teachers through collaborative partnerships between university teacher education programmes and schools. Through synthesising research and analysing examples from their own work,

they invite us to explore deeper into the inner worlds and dynamic work environments of many early career teachers and make a substantial case for understanding the complexity of the reality of teaching in today's changing times. This scholarly volume reinforces that building and sustaining the capacity for resilience is more than an individual responsibility. Promoting and cultivating healthy individual and collective learning opportunities and cultures are the necessary conditions that enable many early career teachers to become great teachers in the pursuit of their career-long moral commitment and fulfil their original call to teach.

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# **Part I**

## **Foundations**

### **It bends, but does not break**

Sharon McDonough

It is young and learning how to be  
The sapling bends,  
but, it does not break.

In high winds  
it is buffeted and bowed,  
but, not beaten.  
The wind stills  
Calm returns

Hot weather arrives  
The sapling wilts,  
Its leaves downturned towards the earth  
Sinking in, and onto, itself.  
The day ends and dusk arrives  
With it comes moisture in the air  
The sapling soaks in water,  
It strengthens and grows.

The first frost arrives  
The sapling shrivels  
Looking inward for strength  
Its roots cling to shallow earth  
It tries to hold on.

The days start and finish  
The seasons turn  
The deep, brown earth provides  
And the sapling reaches forward  
Its roots stretch out and connect.

Soon, it will be a tree  
The battles inscribed in its wood,  
The pattern of our story,  
Pain, survival, growth.

# Chapter 1

## Cultivating Teacher Resilience: Introduction



Caroline F. Mansfield

**Abstract** This volume brings together a programme of research focused on teacher resilience and includes chapters from conceptual, empirical and applied perspectives. The inspiration for this volume stems from two Australian projects: *Building Resilience in Teacher Education (BRiTE)* and the subsequent Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship, *Staying BRiTE: Promoting Resilience in Higher Education*. The chapters follow the journey of interrelated research that has grown across Australia and internationally, highlighting a range of approaches, applications and impact. Each chapter draws on particular aspects of teacher resilience and emphasises the importance of context in cultivating resilience at a range of teacher career stages. Future directions broadening the programme of research are also explored.

**Keywords** Teacher resilience · Teacher education · Teacher wellbeing · Pre-service teachers

### 1.1 Overview

The programme of research that has inspired this volume stems from two unique Australian projects — “*BRiTE: Building Resilience in Teacher Education*” (Mansfield et al. 2016a) and the following Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship, “*Staying BRiTE: Promoting Resilience in Higher Education*” (Mansfield 2016). Both projects involved teams of teacher educators across Australia and shared the aim of supporting pre-service teachers’ development of resilience-related skills and strategies, through experiential and online learning.

There were two main outcomes of the BRiTE project: (a) a conceptual framework of teacher resilience (Mansfield et al. 2016b), which informed (b) the creation of five online learning modules to support teacher resilience (Building resilience, Relationships, Wellbeing, Taking initiative and Emotions) (see Chap. 3). The initial uptake of the modules across Australia was significant and the widespread interest in

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the work was the basis for the *Staying BRiTE* Fellowship, involving a collaborative team of teacher educators from five universities who worked to embed resilience skills and strategies in their respective teacher education programmes (see Chap. 3).

Since the dissemination of outcomes from both projects, the work has broadened its impact and this can be seen through the consistently increasing number of BRiTE module users and interest from teacher educators in Australia and internationally. For example, the BRiTE modules are embedded in teacher education programmes in Australia (Chaps. 4 and 5), have inspired studies in the United States (Chap. 6), The Netherlands (Chap. 9) and together with the related European project (ENTREE: Enhancing Teacher Resilience in Europe, <http://www.entre-online.eu>) studies in Portugal (Chap. 7) and Spain (Chap. 8). The work has also been integrated with augmented reality experiences for pre-service teachers (Chap. 15) and inspired an online mindfulness module (Chap. 10). Further, the theme of teacher resilience has also been addressed in studies concerning school principals (Chap. 12), early career casual teachers (Chap. 13) and teacher educators (Chap. 17). The increased emphasis on teacher and principal wellbeing in the profession (e.g. Riley 2014; Schleicher 2018; Turner and Theilking 2019) is reflected in the work presented in Chaps. 11 and 14.

The three sections of the book follow the development of this programme of research, first by laying the foundations, then illustrating approaches to implementing and applying resilience learning in a range of contexts, and finally presenting chapters that may hold potential directions for future research. The volume also includes three poems, written by Sharon McDonough. Each poem illustrates aspects of resilience and provides thoughtful reflection on the experience of resilience and the ensuing growth. The chapters report empirical work using a range of methodologies, conceptual discussions drawing on useful theories for understanding resilience, and applications of resilience learning into pre-service teacher education and in-service professional learning.

## 1.2 Section 1: Foundations

The current section begins with the poem “*It bends, but does not break*” which reflects on the journey of a sapling becoming a tree, and its resilience through the Australian seasons that shape the tree and contribute to its uniqueness. So too, the current section presents the foundations of our journey in teacher resilience research – our roots that “*stretch out and connect*”.

In Chap. 2, Susan Beltman discusses the various ways resilience has been conceptualised in the literature, emphasising the advantages afforded by multiple perspectives. Starting with our early work (Beltman et al. 2011; Mansfield et al. 2012b) which began with exploration of personal risks and resources (Mansfield et al. 2012a), moving to investigating the teacher resilience process (Mansfield et al. 2014) and then context and system perspectives (Mansfield et al. 2016b, c, 2018), this chapter

illustrates how the multiple perspectives enable unique insights and move the field forward.

Chapter 3 presents the journey of the BRiTE projects, starting in 2013. This chapter provides context for our work and explains the development of the BRiTE modules with regard to content and also the design principles that informed the online learning pathway. Each of the various features of the modules (personalization, interactivity, connections to the profession and the literature) are illustrated and examples provided. Evidence of impact through evaluation and website data is reported. This chapter also overviews the Staying BRiTE project which extended the work through collaboration with project partners and development of national and international networks.

### 1.3 Section 2: Implementation and Applications

This section is introduced by the poem “*Tether lines*” which reflects on the journey where there are uncertainties and uncharted waters ahead. The tether lines provide connection to others, but yet do not bind or constrain. In the same way, the chapters in this section are connected to the foundations by “tether lines” which have guided and supported subsequent work.

This section, Implementation and Applications, includes chapters illustrating the range of ways the BRiTE modules have inspired other work in the field. The range of applications show the possibilities of using the modules as a resource upon which to build programmes or learning experience that are attuned with the needs of particular participants. Starting with work from *Staying BRiTE* project partners, this section shows implementation and applications from related studies in Australia, the United States, Portugal and Spain.

Chapters 4 and 5 have been developed from the authentic cases which were outcomes from *Staying BRiTE*. Both these chapters illustrate two different ways resilience may be embedded in teacher education, with differing cohorts of students in differing contexts. In Chap. 4 Noelene Weatherby-Fell and colleagues share their work with pre-service teachers studying to become early years (birth to age 5) teachers. Their approach carefully scaffolds resilience learning using the BRiTE modules across the four years of the Bachelor’s degree and connects this to the broader professional context through national standards, frameworks and accreditation requirements. A unique feature of the approach described is by revisiting the modules in years 3 and 4, and pre-service teachers can see their growth over time and reflect on their development of personal resilience skills and strategies. Pre-service teacher blog posts are used to better understand the impact of the implementation.

Chapter 5 illustrates an approach to building resilience for postgraduate students completing a secondary initial teacher education degree (Master of Teaching). Sharon McDonough and Amanda McGraw integrated the BRiTE topic themes alongside their existing work on thinking dispositions for teaching (McGraw and McDonough 2019) and contextualised this within a site-based programme. Findings highlight the

importance of a people-centred disposition as a personal resource for resilience and that the dispositions and resilience are interconnected in various ways.

Moving internationally, Chap. 6 explores the potential for the BRiTE modules to contribute to beginning teachers' resilience in the United States of America. In this study, Lynn Sikma developed a series of professional learning workshops, underpinned by the BRiTE modules, for beginning teachers. An overview of the workshops and evaluation from participants is presented. The findings in this chapter suggest that the topics of the modules were useful and appropriate for the audience; the explicit reference to pre-service teachers in the modules was off-putting for teachers. This emphasises the importance of context, targeting resilience professional learning closely to participants' needs and situation.

Chapter 7 also focuses on professional learning for teachers. Luisa Fernandes and colleagues in Portugal report on their "Positive Education" programme, adapted from the ENhancing Teachers REsilience in Europe (ENTREE) project (Wosnitza et al. 2013). This project ran alongside the BRiTE project, with Susan Beltman and myself involved as third country partners. Hence there are some synergies between the two projects. This chapter presents an overview of the professional learning programme and qualitative evaluation of the programme impact for participants. Implications for teacher educators and policy makers are discussed.

Chapter 8 presents a study from Spain, where the ENTREE project and BRiTE modules inspired a Professional Assessment and Development (PAD) Induction Program for beginning teachers and their mentors. The inclusion of mentors into the project design is unique, yet potentially critical, given the emphasis on the importance of mentors for early career teacher resilience. Gloria Gratacós and colleagues report that participation in the programme had a positive effect on confidence and stress control for beginning teachers and that survey results showed resilience as being important for commitment.

Chapter 9 explores the potential of the BRiTE modules in a project by Marjon Fokkens-Bruinsma and colleagues in the Netherlands. The chapter explains the contexts that have informed the project, the rationale for the approach and the plan for implementation. As noted in Chap. 6, country and participant context are important considerations and with that in mind, there is planned translation and adaptation of the BRiTE modules so they are better suited to the Dutch context. This project provides some insights for future projects drawing on the BRiTE modules.

A further extension of the BRiTE modules has been the development of a sixth module, *BRiTE Mind*. This module explores mindfulness as a resilience resource for teachers. In Chap. 10, Helen Correia provides a rationale for the module, drawing on recent research regarding mindfulness and teachers and discussing the relationship between resilience and mindfulness. Referring to the BRiTE modules, the chapter explains specific mindfulness practices that support the themes of the five BRiTE modules. The approach taken in development of *BRiTE Mind* is explained along with examples consideration for how the module should be used.

Chapter 11 concludes this section by discussing practical implications for building teacher wellbeing in education. Resilience and wellbeing are related constructs, and Daniela Falecki and Elizabeth Mann use a positive psychology lens to investigate

a range of strategies for supporting teacher wellbeing. Arguing that hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism (HERO) are important psychological resources to support wellbeing, the authors describe some of the practical ways wellbeing can be supported and some of the challenges of supporting professional learning focused on wellbeing in school.

## 1.4 Section 3: Future Directions

*“Time and transformation”* introduces this section by describing the gentle way the art of Sashiko enables the old and the new to join together in the process of transformation. This final section also brings together the old and the new and in doing so poses important questions and possibilities for moving forward. Future directions include other theoretical frameworks for understanding teacher resilience and drawing attention to possibilities of augmented reality, cross-cultural applications and teacher educator resilience.

In Chap. 12, Johanne Klap and colleagues present findings from a mixed method longitudinal mindfulness study conducted with 30 school principals in Western Australia. Since school leaders have a strong influence on school culture and the wellbeing of their staff, Principals themselves need to take care of their wellbeing. Experiencing a 10-week mindfulness program these Principals showed increased self-compassion and self-care and greater resilience. The chapter includes reflections from Principals to illustrate the impact on the program and how it had influenced their leadership. Future research should more closely examine the role of school leaders own self-care and the resilience of their staff.

There has been very less research concerning the resilience of early career casual teachers, and in Western Australia, many graduates start their career in casual positions. In Chap. 13 Helen Dempsey and colleagues report a longitudinal study using multiple methods of data collection and exploring early career casual teachers’ development of teacher identity. This study supports the view that teacher identity and teacher resilience are related constructs (Pearce and Morrison 2011; Flores 2018) especially with the finding that relationships are critical for early career casual teachers. Future research should consider resilience development of casual teachers, especially in the early career years.

Although socio-ecological approaches to understanding resilience have become prevalent, as noted by Susan Beltman (Chap. 2) multiple perspectives are useful for gaining new insights and asking different questions. In Chap. 14, Helena Granziera and colleagues make a case for using Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker and Demerouti 2017) to understand teacher resilience and to provide insights into how teachers overcome adversity at work. Through explanation of JD-R and how it has been used to understand how individuals manage workplace demands and resources, they argue that this theory provides useful directions for future research.

Chapter 15 returns to the BRiTE modules, but this time with an innovative future possibility. Susan Ledger explains how she has developed a programme using the

BRiTE modules in conjunction with Simlab™ (human in the loop synchronous simulation). Pre-service teachers draw on the content from the BRiTE modules and practice their skills in a micro-teaching context with a group of five avatars. This chapter explains how this approach is developed over a four-year programme and using pre-service teacher evaluation to describe the impact.

In Chap. 16 Helen Boon critiques existing teacher resilience research and poses some questions and challenges for future research. Arguing that due to a heavy reliance on self-report measures, the literature to date has reported on teachers' perceived psychological resilience. A conceptual framework of teachers' "*lived in*" resilience is proposed and arguments made for more objective indicators of teacher resilience to be considered in future research.

Although the focus of much research on teacher resilience has been on teachers at a range of career stages, a neglected group for whom resilience is also important is teacher educators. In Chap. 17, Sharon McDonough and colleagues describe a study conducted with teacher educators in Australia to understand what sustains and challenges teacher educators in their work. Using a social ecological model they explore resilience supports and constraints on multiple levels and make recommendations for higher education contexts.

The final chapter in this volume is written by Judith MacCallum. Judith was the Evaluator for both the BRiTE and Staying BRiTE projects and has watched this programme of work develop since its inception. The chapter draws together key themes and makes recommendations for future directions.

## 1.5 Concluding Thoughts

The programme of research at the heart of this book continues to grow both nationally and internationally. It is heartening to see at the same time, a rise in concern about teacher wellbeing and resilience from employers, policy makers and accrediting bodies, and we are optimistic about this translating into specific workplace practices. Throughout our journey of researching and supporting resilience of teachers, we have made a positive contribution to each others' resilience, contributing to our shared resilience as a network of teachers and researchers.

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# Chapter 2

## Understanding and Examining Teacher Resilience from Multiple Perspectives



Susan Beltman

**Abstract** In this chapter, I argue that differing conceptualisations of the construct of resilience shape and enrich the research questions and methodology used to examine it. In addition, the conceptual focus has implications for questions such as whose responsibility it is for the development of resilience. Research conducted within two Australian projects, *Keeping Cool* and *BRiTE* (Building Resilience in Teacher Education) is used as an illustration of the impact of a changing conceptual focus. For example, beginning with a psychological perspective led to an examination of risk and protective factors for individuals. More contextual approaches involved a comparison of countries. Recent systemic views support a model that encompasses both personal and contextual characteristics, as well as strategies used and outcomes achieved. It is argued that taking multiple perspectives in this programme of work has enabled the incorporation of a broad range of research methods and findings, and contributed to a deeper understanding of the construct of teacher resilience.

**Keywords** Teacher resilience · Resilience theories · Resilience concepts · Review

### 2.1 Background

In this chapter, I will outline four perspectives on teacher resilience that have guided a programme of research that has contributed to theory and practice. When we think of resilience and teachers, we generally think about “what sustains teachers and enables them to thrive rather than just survive in the profession” (Beltman et al. 2011). I have been fortunate to have worked with colleagues over the past ten years on a number of research projects related to teacher resilience, including *Keeping Cool* (Mansfield et al. 2012a), *ENTREE* (Wosnitza et al. 2013) and *BRiTE* (Mansfield et al. 2015) (see Chap. 3). In our work, we have adopted different lenses to ask different kinds of research questions and used the findings from others’ research using different perspectives to guide our thinking and interventions.

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Different perspectives, foci, lenses or worldviews, guide our sometimes taken-for-granted perspectives on the world and various phenomena. The underlying assumptions of our perspectives guide our research questions, activities and interpretations and so need unpacking and clarifying (Crotty 1998, p. 17). As Pring (2000) points out, researchers must be eclectic, with different kinds of questions requiring different research methods. Being aware of the underlying assumptions of our preferred worldview in relation to teacher resilience, for example, raises issues such as where the responsibility for supporting teacher resilience lies, and directs the nature of interventions that are put in place (Beltman and Mansfield 2017).

One example of differing worldviews is the debate in psychological research around the relationship between the individual person and the environment in which the individual develops and acts. Focus on the individual or person and their understandings and other characteristics is seen as the “traditional view”, with the person considered as separate from the environment in which they exist. Other, more social views are seen to be in opposition to this and suggest that the person and their environment cannot be considered separately (Valsiner and Van Der Veer 2000). From the perspective of these authors, the crucial challenge is: “How to construe persons as being social without abandoning their obvious personal autonomy, separateness from any social unit (group, crowd, community), while being members of such units” (p. 6). A more sociocultural viewpoint suggests that individuals exist within multiple, dynamic levels of context and so necessitates paying attention to three “interweaving levels of analysis”—the individual, the interpersonal and the cultural (Tudge and Putnam, 1997, p. 254). Such differing worldviews have influenced the way resilience is conceptualised and examined.

In this chapter, I will briefly outline four different perspectives that focus on person, process, context or system, and consider how these informed our programme of research. I raise some issues that depend on the worldview adopted, and argue that taking multiple perspectives contributes to a deeper understanding of the construct of teacher resilience. Rather than working with one view or approach to the construct, we have drawn from, and built upon our own and others’ work, to move the field forward.

## 2.2 Person-Focused Perspectives

The first conceptualisation that I will address is person-focused. Resilience research originally aimed to understand how children overcame the impact of traumatic or high-risk backgrounds to achieve positive psychological outcomes (Masten et al. 1990). Although recognising the importance of family and community as contributing both risk and protective factors, research focused on “the life stories of individuals and on the individual variation within particular high-risk groups” (Benard 1999, p. 270). When thinking of teacher resilience, researchers with a person-focused perspective have concerns such as the negative impact on educators of stress and

emotional labour (Ghanizadeh and Royaei 2015; Woolfolk Hoy 2013). When individual teachers experience stress and burnout, it can lead to a loss of satisfaction with their chosen career or a reduced sense of wellbeing (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2016). Pretsch and colleagues suggest that resilience is “a trait that actively fosters well-being” (Pretzsch et al. 2012, p. 322) or a “personal resource” (p. 323). Other definitions that focus on personal capacity suggest that resilience is “the capacity to continue to ‘bounce back’, to recover strengths or spirit quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity” and it is linked closely to “a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy and motivation to teach” (Sammons et al. 2007, p. 694). One example of interventions based on a person-focused view are those that aim to build the psychological capacity of individuals in areas such as emotional awareness and regulation (Schussler et al. 2018).

At the commencement of our research into teacher resilience, our aim was to discover how to build the capacity of preservice teachers to enable them to be resilient as they moved into teaching. We used the framework of risk and protective factors to analyse the literature in the field (Beltman et al. 2011). Both personal and contextual risk and protective factors were identified and illustrated in Table 2.1, where the most frequent factors are provided. At the time, research on teacher resilience was in its infancy and the 50 selected papers were related to teacher resilience as they examined factors that enabled teachers to remain in the profession, even though they may not have explicitly used the term resilience. The paper also noted that there was an overall consensus that multiple factors operated in dynamic ways. Despite seeing the importance of contextual risk and protective factors, our research at that time took a person-focused approach as our concern was with individual teacher capacities and skills.

**Table 2.1** Risk and protective factors for teacher resilience (Beltman et al. 2011)

	Individual	Contextual
Risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative self-beliefs and confidence</li> <li>• Reluctance to seek help</li> <li>• Conflict between personal beliefs and practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour management</li> <li>• Meeting needs of disadvantaged students</li> <li>• Heavy workloads and time required for non-teaching duties</li> <li>• Lack of resources</li> <li>• Relations with students' parents</li> <li>• Difficult schools or classes</li> </ul>
Protective factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altruistic motives</li> <li>• Sense of competence and pride</li> <li>• Strong intrinsic motivation</li> <li>• Tenacity and perseverance</li> <li>• Internal locus of control</li> <li>• Proactive, problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Self-insight and reflection</li> <li>• Professional aspirations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School administrative support</li> <li>• Mentor relationships</li> <li>• Support from peers and colleagues</li> <li>• Working with the students</li> </ul>

As part of the Keeping Cool project, we surveyed 98 final-year preservice teachers and 161 new graduates (Mansfield et al. 2012b). Although we understood the complexity of resilience, we outlined our person-focused thinking as follows (p. 359):

Given that teaching does present challenges, what does a resilient teacher look like from the perspective of those at different points in the early stages of their career? What skills, attributes or characteristics would a resilient teacher possess or be able to demonstrate? Our research aimed to address these questions.

Data analysis revealed 23 categories of what we called “aspects” that were grouped into four dimensions of resilience: profession-related, emotional, motivational and social. Table 2.2 provides examples of aspects of resilience within each dimension. The first three dimensions included personal skills and capacities such as a sense of humour, liking challenge and effective teaching skills. The social dimension also included personal capacities such as communication skills, but additionally incorporated context in that aspects such as building relationships and seeking help were identified. The question that participants responded to was: “How would you describe a resilient teacher?” The questions guiding our study and the wording of this question and, perhaps inevitably, the subsequent responses of participants reflected our person-focus. Realising this, we wrote:

... although it was apparent from the responses that early career and graduating teachers interpreted our question to focus on personal aspects of teacher resilience, given that our understanding of resilience is that it includes the relationships between individuals and their contexts, the data were also examined for references to contexts (Mansfield et al. 2012b, p. 360).

When we explicitly examined responses for references to context, we found that “66% of respondents included some reference to context, such as an event, an interaction, a place, school or organisation, when describing a resilient teacher” (Mansfield et al. 2012b, p. 364). We interpreted this as meaning that although we may have aligned our question to participants with a person-focused approach, nevertheless what was made clear in our data was the “key role of context in providing supports or challenges for the development of resilience” (p. 364). Recognising the crucial role of context, our next focus was not on contexts themselves, but on the

**Table 2.2** Dimensions and aspects of teacher resilience

Dimension	Aspects of resilience examples
<i>Emotional</i>	not taking things personally, sense of humour, ability to bounce back, emotion regulation
<i>Motivational</i>	self-belief and confidence, persistence and perseverance, having realistic expectations, being positive and optimistic
<i>Profession-related</i>	teaching competence and skills, classroom management, facilitating effective learning, being flexible and adaptable
<i>Social</i>	asking others for assistance, interpersonal skills, ability to take advice from others, professional and personal support networks

person–context interface. We were concerned that a trait or person focus, while illuminating important skills and capacities could indicate that the responsibility for developing teachers who are resilient lies with the individual teacher. Masten and Powell (2003, p. 4) cautioned against talking about “a resilient person” and argued “resilience is not a trait of an individual, though individuals manifest resilience in their behaviour and life patterns”. Similarly, Gu and Li (2013) maintained that “the nature and sustainability of resilience in teachers is not innate, but influenced by individual qualities in interaction with contextual influences in which teachers’ work and lives are embedded” (p. 300). The nature of this interaction became our next area of investigation.

## 2.3 Process-Focused Perspectives

If resilience does not lie within an individual, where does it lie? If personal and contextual factors are both important, what are the processes by which they work to sustain teachers? We answered such questions by adopting a person–context perspective in which individuals are regarded as complex and are understood to live and act within multiple, complex, dynamic contexts (Volet 1999). In this view, resilience lies at the interface of person and context, where individuals use strategies to enable them to overcome challenges and sustain their commitment and sense of wellbeing. Castro et al. (2010, p. 623) viewed resilience as a process where teachers used “a variety of resilience strategies”, and rather than focus on teacher attributes or environmental resources, they argued that these strategies need to be the focus of study. Therefore, in our next paper (Mansfield et al. 2014) our focus was on the resilience process. We analysed interviews with 13 Australian early career teachers and asked the research question: “How is early career resilience shaped by personal and contextual challenges and resources?” (Mansfield et al. 2014, p. 551).

As resilience is evident in the face of challenge or adversity (Doney 2013), we first analysed the interviews to look for challenges experienced by the beginning teachers (see Table 2.3). The 101 different challenges identified were ongoing, “everyday” ones (Gu and Day 2013) rather than reflecting incidents of severe adversity found in the resilience studies working with at-risk young people (Masten and Powell 2003). In the paper related to this data (Mansfield et al. 2014), we focused on the individual participants and their overall experiences so we could examine the processes for each person, but we also grouped the challenges as in Table 2.3 for conference presentations (e.g. Mansfield and Beltman 2012).

After identifying the large range of challenges that reflected person and context, the next key step was to determine what resilience processes or strategies the early career teachers used when faced with these challenges. Building on our previous work, we used the four dimensions of teacher resilience (Mansfield et al. 2012b) as an analytic frame. Table 2.4 provides examples of the strategies reported for each dimension. Participants also used physical strategies such as going for a run that had not appeared in our previous study.

**Table 2.3** Challenges of early career teachers

Personal	Interpersonal	Infrastructure
<i>Work-life balance</i> e.g. no time for hobbies	<i>Family and friends</i> e.g. less contact	<i>Policies and practices</i> e.g. poor housing
<i>Personal attributes</i> e.g. perfectionist	<i>Teachers and admin</i> e.g. lack of recognition or support	<i>School organisation</i> e.g. moving rooms; lots of meetings
<i>Knowledge</i> e.g. lack of reporting	<i>Students</i> e.g. challenging behaviour; multiple needs	<i>Classroom resources</i> e.g. lack of teaching materials and resources
<i>Feel overwhelmed</i> e.g. “trying to juggle fifteen thousand balls”; “it’s like a roller coaster”	<i>Parents</i> e.g. parent complaints	<i>Preservice preparation</i> e.g. teaching in different area; lack of admin experience; 1-year course

**Table 2.4** Early career teacher responses to challenges by dimension of resilience

Emotional	Motivational	Profession-related	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep calm</li> <li>• Focus on what you love about the job</li> <li>• Enjoy the kids</li> <li>• Manage emotions</li> <li>• Positive self-talk</li> <li>• Have fun</li> <li>• Use coping skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe in yourself</li> <li>• Have realistic expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the students</li> <li>• Use problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Reflect</li> <li>• Get organised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debrief with partner</li> <li>• Ask for help rather than pretend it’s okay</li> <li>• Talk to your mentor</li> <li>• Talk to other staff</li> <li>• Seek counselling</li> </ul>

An emphasis on the resilience process highlights the agency of teachers. Rather than being passively affected by challenges, they actively use a variety of strategies to overcome challenges, with the potential to also “change the ability of an at-risk environment to enable resilience” (Ebersöhn 2012, p. 30). Teachers are the key drivers of developing positive classrooms that facilitate children’s learning (Jennings and Greenberg 2009), and interventions based on this view tend to focus on personal and social skills needed by individual teachers in classrooms and educational settings. This was indeed the focus of our BRiTE modules that were in development at this time (Mansfield et al. 2015). While it is positive to acknowledge teacher agency, focusing on capacities of teachers or strategies they use again raises the possibility of a deficit view of teacher resilience (Day 2014). Are teachers to blame if they are not “resilient” as they lack the required skills or strategies? We then turned our focus to examine context more explicitly.

## 2.4 Context-Focused Perspectives

While recognising the importance of personal capacities and agency, as well as the strategies used by individual teachers, we were also aware of the importance of context. Numerous challenges (the term we began using to replace “risk factors”) faced by individual teachers were identified, by our research as well as in the literature, as arising from the context. Unreasonable parental expectations or unsupportive school administration are some examples (Beltman et al. 2011). In addition, contexts vary in terms of specific situations and over time with Bobek (2002, p. 202), suggesting that resilience involves “the ability to adjust to varied situations and increase one’s competence in the face of adverse conditions”. Resilience can develop over time and “manifests itself as a result of a dynamic process within a given context” (Gu and Day 2007, p. 1305). Concerns about broader policies and a competitive work climate that increase the administrative load for teachers, sometimes known as the performativity agenda, can influence commitment and wellbeing (Day et al. 2005). From an employers’ perspective, subsequent teacher attrition is wasteful financially, as well as leading to a loss of social capital and further disadvantaging some school communities (Gallant and Riley 2014; House of Commons Education Committee 2012). A focus on context also shifts the notion of where the responsibility for resilience lies, as it “directs our attention away from the ‘here-and-now’ specifics of individual teachers’ lives and contextualizes their experiences within broader social, cultural, and political arenas” (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 533). Interventions based on this view might focus on context-specific resources. For example, Thrive at Work is a recent Australian initiative where work design is the starting point and the vision explicitly states that “well-being interventions must be focussed on the design of work and not solely on individualistic strategies” (<https://www.thriveatwork.org.au/vision/>).

What was also evident from our and others’ research was that context could provide important sources of support for resilience—a term increasingly replacing “protective factors”. Resilience involves personal agency and the ability to use not only one’s own personal resources but also those in various contexts (Ebersöhn 2012; Gu and Li 2013). Michael Ungar and his colleagues explain that resilience involves “both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways” (Ungar 2012, p. 17). A social ecological lens is used to consider the individual person and multiple layers or levels of context. Such a perspective enables consideration of, for example, complex workplaces of early childhood educators (Beltman et al. 2019), or how resilience is manifested in resource-poor contexts (Theron 2018). With Australian colleagues, we proposed that being aware “of both the individual and their environment allows for a transactional approach” and the adoption of a “place-based perspective of resilience”—in this case situated in the “social ecology of central Australia” (Papatraianou et al. 2018, p. 894).

From this wider perspective, we undertook a cross-national study with colleagues from South Africa (Mansfield et al. 2018). Liesel Ebersöhn, working in a global south country, explores resilience in contexts where teachers and education communities are faced with what could be described as extensive, continuing and serious challenges or “a procession of risks” (Ebersöhn 2014, p. 569). Our research had been conducted in Australia, a relatively affluent country. Michael Ungar (2012), also working in areas of high adversity, suggests that it is important to identify shared aspects of resilience as well as those that are unique to a particular social or cultural context. We began by comparing the two national contexts which are both postcolonial countries located in the southern hemisphere. Although students in rural areas could experience disadvantage in both countries, the proportion of children living in rural South Africa was much greater. In Australia, the main challenge was attracting and retaining teachers to more remote locations. Education in South Africa, however, was impacted by inefficient government bureaucracy, corruption, inadequate infrastructure (e.g. lack of buildings or water), poverty, unemployment, crime and poor public health (Mansfield et al. 2018).

Our aim was to investigate the challenges and resources in each context, as well as to understand “how teacher resilience is experienced in each context” (Mansfield et al. 2018, p. 55). At this point little research existed that explicitly compared resilience of teachers in different countries. Our chapter was published alongside one from the ENTREE project relating to four European countries (Peixoto et al. 2018). The key findings regarding challenges and resources in Australia and South Africa are illustrated in Table 2.5 according to the level of context derived from ecological models (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It may be seen in the table that the word “system” is used for each level and, in line with our collaborators’ preference, the word “risk” is used in place of “challenge”. This avoids confusion as “context” in the study refers to

**Table 2.5** Challenges and resources in Australia and South Africa (Mansfield et al. 2018)

System level	Key findings
Personal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both AUS and SA: very similar risks and resources e.g. common risk: feeling overwhelmed</li> <li>Similar resources and adaptive coping strategies used e.g. persistence, optimism, help-seeking and reflection</li> </ul>
Micro/mesosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similar origin of risks (students, parents, colleagues) but quality/quantity differed e.g. AUS managing student diversity; SA students had significant health/welfare needs</li> <li>Teachers in both contexts draw on similar resources e.g. collaboration with colleagues and local community</li> </ul>
Exo/macrosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No common resources</li> <li>AUS: range of resources available</li> <li>SA: widespread chronic poverty, unemployment, prolonged health risks</li> <li>SA: resilience required drawing on available and unique cultural and social resources, e.g. applying for social development grants</li> </ul>

Australia or South Africa, and also foreshadows the following section that outlines a system-focused perspective.

## 2.5 System-Focused Perspectives

The second part of our research comparing data from Australia and South Africa aimed to examine how resilience was experienced in each context or country, and from a social ecological perspective, each system. This question entailed a consideration of personal perspectives as well as multiple contexts and the relations between them. We found that, as illustrated in Table 2.5, personal challenges and resources were similar, irrespective of country (Mansfield et al. 2018). While collaboration and networking with family and colleagues were common across both countries, the “South African data suggests relationships had a collective power to meaningfully support community cohesion which in turn buffered against systemic risk to support resilience processes of teachers and students” (p. 66). This is similar to other findings that in South Africa, individuals are connected to each other in relationships, as well as to resources in their environments, and resilience occurs through the mobilisation of systemic relationships (Ebersöhn 2012). Individual agency was noted previously where individuals use specific strategies to overcome challenges, but using a different cultural lens, collective efficacy emerges as an important part of resilience. A further difference between the two nations was that at the most distal, macrosystem level, there were no common challenges and again unique, culturally relevant resources were needed to address the challenges unique to each context (Mansfield et al. 2018).

Ungar (2012, p. 15) highlighted the importance of the “social and physical environment as the locus of resource for personal growth”, also stating that “individual and ecological positions are neither mutually exclusive nor antagonistic. They simply emphasize different aspects of the processes associated with resilience …” Similarly, Masten (2014) concluded that the “processes that lead to resilience clearly involve many systems within the individual as well as many systems outside the individual” (p. 170). These systems are continually interacting with each other. So resilience involves individual characteristics, strategies or processes as well as multiple systems and contexts. In our research on teacher resilience, our definition developed to include these aspects as well as the outcomes—what we would see if a teacher was “resilient” and we proposed that “teacher resilience is

- the capacity of an individual to navigate through challenges and harness personal and contextual resources, as well as
- the process whereby characteristics of individual teachers and of their personal and professional contexts interact over time, to enable
- the outcome of a teacher who experiences professional commitment, growth and wellbeing” (Beltman 2015, p. 21).

An issue arising with the focus on capacity, process and context is the number of potential skills, strategies and settings that can be involved in teacher resilience.

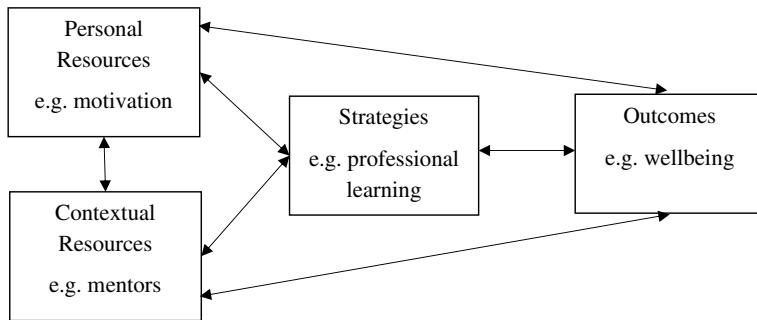
Yonezawa et al. (2011) write about “the conflation of resilient characteristics of teachers and the environmental supports” (p. 915). In the 13 interviews with beginning teachers, we found 101 separate challenges (Mansfield et al. 2014). Doney (2013) examined data from only four teachers and found “no two participants had the same combination of protective factors, nor the same degree with which they applied those protections to the stress” (p. 657). In order to make progress on this issue and understand some of the multiple constructs that relate to teacher resilience, we turned again to the literature, examining 71 peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters about teacher resilience published from 2000 to 2015 (Mansfield et al. 2016a).

We adapted a previously developed systems model related to the process of learning (Biggs and Moore 1993) to organise the 51 factors that emerged from this literature and categorised the constructs as relating to personal resources, contextual resources, strategies and outcomes (Mansfield et al. 2016b). Table 2.6 provides the five most frequent constructs or factors that were evident in the 71 papers. Rather than asking about the relationship of each factor to any or all other factors, adopting a systemic approach enables an understanding of the whole process of resilience, which can then vary for different individuals, different settings, and over time. Figure 2.1 illustrates this systemic view, based on Biggs and Moore’s (1993) model and expanded in more detail in our book chapter (Mansfield et al. 2016b). The bi-directional arrows between all components of the system indicate the dynamic, interactive nature of all the parts.

When viewed from a systemic perspective, where does the responsibility for resilience lie? What difference does this broader view make? Ann Masten has contributed prolifically to the field of resilience and her work shows the development of theory and research in this area. In her 2014 book she defines resilience as: “The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development” (Masten 2014, p. 10). A system could be an individual, but also “a family, a school, a community, an organization, and

**Table 2.6** Most frequent resilience constructs  
(#papers) (Mansfield et al. 2016a)

Personal resources	Contextual resources
Motivation (35) Efficacy (29) Sense of purpose (21) Optimism (19) Social-emotional competence (11)	School leaders (41) Colleagues (31) Relationships with students (26) Mentors (25) School culture (25)
Strategies	Outcomes
Work-life balance (28) Problem-solving (23) Professional learning (13) Goal setting (13) Setting boundaries (13) Reflection (13)	Wellbeing (42) Commitment (35) Job satisfaction (27) Agency (23) Enthusiasm (16)



**Fig. 2.1** A systemic view of resilience (Adapted by permission from Mansfield, C. F., Beltman, S., Weatherby-Fell, N., & Broadley, T. (2016b). Classroom ready?: Building resilience in teacher education (pp. 211–229). In R. Brandenburg, S. McDonough, J. Burke, & S. White (eds.). Teacher education: Innovation, interventions and impact. Singapore: Springer.)

economy; or an ecosystem” (p. 10). Elsewhere, Qing Gu has eloquently discussed different theoretical views of resilience and advocated a holistic, comprehensive view of teacher resilience (Day and Gu 2014; Gu 2014, 2018). Jordan’s (2005) discussion of “relational resilience” has also influenced recent thinking in the field. So how might we think about the responsibility for resilience when considering multiple lenses and constructs and the holistic systemic view?

One way forward for future research is to see resilience as a collective responsibility or as a collective construct. For example, Ebersöhn (2012) argues that “where communities are vulnerable over extended times and commonly lack resources, they experience stress collectively, appraise collectively and respond collectively” (p. 30). Resilience then occurs as a collective response. It is “the result of accessing, mobilising, networking and nurturing sustained resource use” (p. 35). Resilience is “the culmination of collective and collaborative endeavours” (Gu and Li 2013, p. 300). When resilience is viewed as a collective construct the responsibility for enhancing or supporting teacher resilience is also a collective one in the context of a school (Cameron and Lovett 2014), or in wider personal and professional relationships (Le Cornu 2013), or when “scattered individuals link with each other (support seeking, affiliation) and share existing resources” Ebersöhn (2012, p. 30). School leaders play a critical role in creating the organisational conditions that support resilience (Gu 2014), and broader employing body policies can play an important role in, for example, supporting early career teachers (Johnson et al. 2014). Interventions adopting a systemic perspective could focus on any system, on any aspect of a system, or on the interplay between or within different systems.

## 2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described four possible lenses that can be used to view the construct of teacher resilience, and thus create a deeper, more holistic notion of the construct. Pring (2000) suggested that researchers must be eclectic regarding research methods, and others support taking a broader view. Writing with regards to conducting multidisciplinary research, but also relevant to research from multiple conceptual perspectives, Lawrence and Dodds (1997) suggested that this can challenge theorists to look “beyond their comfortable conceptualizations” and adopt a “less myopic vision” (p. 294). There are also potential issues with taking such an approach. Even when concepts discussed and examined are very similar and come from a similar theoretical perspective, Matusov (1998) cautioned that they may not be merely slightly different points of view, but rather two very different worldviews. According to Branco (1997), even when researchers share the same basic assumption, such as that there is an interdependent relationship linking the individual and the environment, it cannot be assumed that there are further theoretical similarities. Nevertheless, in our research we have taken the potentially risky step of adopting different perspectives to examine teacher resilience.

In this chapter, I have shown how our work moved from a view of resilience that privileged individual characteristics, to one that encompassed multilayer, dynamic contexts and processes. As our research has developed and publications relating to teacher resilience have grown, there remain issues still to resolve such as how to reconcile these different perspectives, what methodologies best capture the dynamic complexity of resilience when more systemic views are adopted, and how can interventions be personalised or responsive to specific settings? Further work is needed to understand how resilience is different from, or overlaps with, other constructs such as wellbeing or adaptive coping. Is resilience in education settings qualitatively and quantitatively the same as resilience in high risk or adverse situations such as living in war zones or experiencing personal trauma? Does the notion of “adversity” need further interrogation? How do different countries and cultures understand the components of teacher resilience? Are there universal ones or must we take a culturally specific view? Is resilience even a concept used in languages other than English? Such questions provide directions for further research.

I have argued that the conceptual lens used will illuminate key areas needed for building capacities of whole education systems as well as of the individuals within those systems. The lens adopted also shapes the notion of where the responsibility lies for the resilience and wellbeing of those individuals within the system, and for resilience of the system as a whole. While personal capacities are important, focusing only on these may detract from considering the responsibilities of employers and administrators. Focusing only on wider systems may detract from the importance of individual agency where teachers can take responsibility for their own journeys. A systemic view is one that has the potential to reflect the real-world complexity of education systems and ensure that the capacities, processes and outcomes of each part of the system are harnessed to develop resilience.

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# Chapter 3

## A BRiTE Journey: 2013–2019



**Caroline F. Mansfield, Susan Beltman, Noelene Weatherby-Fell,  
Tania Broadley, and Claire Botman**

**Abstract** Resilience is widely acknowledged as important for teacher success, yet how to assist pre-service teachers build the skills and strategies for professional resilience is a question often asked by teacher educators. This chapter overviews the design, development and features of a series of five online learning modules designed to support pre-service teacher resilience. The BRiTE modules were informed by an analysis of the literature and content created to address the key themes. Five modules were developed: Building resilience, Relationships, Wellbeing, Taking initiative and Emotions. Each module was designed to be interactive and personalised, enabling users to build their personal toolkit to support their resilience. Since their launch in 2015, the modules have been widely used by pre-service teachers, teachers and a range of stakeholders with over 14,000 registered users at the beginning of 2020. Potential for future use in supporting teacher resilience is discussed.

**Keywords** Teacher resilience · Online learning · Teacher education

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### 3.1 Introduction

It is no secret that many teacher education graduates find the first few years of teaching particularly demanding. The literature frequently cites challenges of early career teachers in many countries and affirms reports of teacher stress and burnout (e.g. Harmsen et al. 2018; Schlichte et al. 2005). Common issues emerge, including excessive workloads, time demands, student behaviour, catering for diverse student needs and limited support (e.g. Fantilli and McDougall 2009; Kelly et al. 2018). Studies often make recommendations for teacher education programmes to better prepare graduates for the realities of the classroom, particularly with regard to managing stress, coping behaviours and resilience-building activities (see Beltman et al. 2011).

Related to these issues, there has also been concern about teacher attrition, particularly in the early career years. Although there are differing reports of attrition rates (Weldon 2018), employers still note concern about the number of early career teachers leaving the profession. Amongst contributing factors are teacher stress and burnout (Schlichte et al. 2005), high non-teaching workload (McGrath-Champ et al. 2018) and lack of administrative support (Peters and Pearce 2012). Earlier reviews (Beltman et al. 2011) and more recent studies (Schuck et al. 2017) indicate that there are ongoing multiple factors contributing to poor rates of early career teacher retention in many countries.

In Australia, concern about early career teacher attrition and teacher quality has led to a raft of reform measures in the teaching profession. Development of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) 2011) as a national framework for teacher development at graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teachers has led to further improvements in professional learning and career progression supports. Simultaneously teacher education programmes have been under increasing pressure to produce “classroom ready teachers” (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) 2014) and to show the impact of their programmes on graduate outcomes. Rigorous programme accreditation requirements have also been mandated, including the need for teacher education providers to demonstrate transparent and sophisticated selection processes for academic skills and non-academic qualities for teaching, including interpersonal and communication skills, motivation, self-efficacy and resilience (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) 2015).

Increasingly, the concept of resilience is noted as being important for teachers, and the research in this field has grown exponentially over the past 10 years (see Chap. 2). Individual and contextual risk and protective factors that influence teacher resilience have been explored (e.g. Fantilli and McDougall 2009; Mansfield et al. 2014) and recommendations made for improvements at the individual, school and system levels (e.g. Johnson et al. 2014). More systemic approaches also recognise the importance of individual capacities and skills as well as the nature of the various contexts in which individuals live and work (Mansfield et al. 2016c). Broader systemic supports for early career teachers are recommended such as rigorous pre-service preparation,

transition to the profession initiatives, and fair and responsive employment practices (Johnson et al. 2014).

Our early work in the field (Mansfield et al. 2012b) highlighted the need for specific resources to support teacher resilience and in response we developed five online learning modules, known as the BRiTE (Building Resilience in Teacher Education) modules (Mansfield et al. 2016a). This chapter overviews the journey of developing the BRiTE modules and how this body of work has developed since.

### **3.2 Preparing Resilient Pre-service Teachers for the Classroom**

In the context of teaching, early definitions of resilience focused on identifying the risk and protective factors that constrained or enabled resilience (Beltman et al. 2011). However, more recently, researchers such as Ungar (2012) have begun to conceptualise resilience from a socio-ecological perspective, whereby it is “defined as a set of behaviours over time that reflect the interactions between individuals and their environments, in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible” (p. 14). The literature reviewed in 2011 (Beltman et al.) highlighted a range of suggestions that could be implemented to enhance teacher resilience in pre-service programmes, many of which have been incorporated into the BRiTE modules. A key theme is that relationships of various kinds need to be supported. Peers in the pre-service course can become supportive future colleagues (Castro et al. 2010; Le Cornu 2009; Schlichte et al. 2005; Tait 2008). Discussions about professional workplace issues such as communicating with other staff and parents can be beneficial (Castro et al. 2010; Fantilli and McDougall 2009). Activities in pre-service (and induction programmes) should include systematically teaching social skills, assertiveness training, self-regulation, empathy and motivation (Tait 2008). In addition, pre-service teachers need to be prepared for the reality of school micro politics (Freedman and Appleman 2008). Hirschkorn (2009) stressed the importance of relationships with students in schools and suggested that pre-service teachers need to be reminded that they already possess many successful relationship skills and experiences that can transfer to the teaching situation. As reduced support occurs for new teachers compared with their pre-service situations in schools, Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero (2005) suggested that teacher educators prepare their students “to seek and create support for themselves in the early years of teaching” (p. 353).

Strong motivations, identity and self-efficacy are needed for beginning teachers and several authors emphasise the need for pre-service programmes to help prospective teachers build these, so they have the ability to handle new situations confidently, believing that they will make a difference (Day 2008). Coping and problem-solving skills need to be developed (Castro et al. 2010) and Chong and Low (2009) recommended extensive reflection relating to the complexity of the work of teachers and

ways of coping with this. Reflective and problem-solving processes learnt during pre-service programmes can assist pre-service teachers in resolving challenges encountered in their teaching (Yost 2006). The practicum experience is significant as a window into the work of a teacher, and Kaldi (2009) pointed to research indicating that pre-service teachers see their practicum as the most significant aspect of their course in terms of affecting their personal and professional development. Watt and Richardson (2008) suggested that pre-service programmes needed to pay attention to difficult practicum experiences and provide an earlier understanding of the complex realities of teacher work. In addition, working on case studies and illustrating the rewards of teaching may assist those who were considering leaving.

Chan (2008) suggested that, as emotional intelligence involves the ability to identify, manage and regulate one's own emotions and to appraise others' emotions, enhancing emotional intelligence could be used in a preventive way in teacher education programmes. When challenges arise within classroom situations, teachers need to realise that they are not alone the cause of these, they need not shoulder unnecessary responsibilities (such as being allocated extremely difficult classes), they need to balance school and home life and be reflective but not over-reflective to the detriment of their personal lives (Demetriou et al. 2009). The reality of teaching may be very different to what they expect and need to be emotionally equipped for this. Assisting pre-service teachers with self-regulation and coping behaviours could enhance their job satisfaction and resilience as well as the quality of their classroom instruction. As Tait (2008) recommended, opportunities to learn about the social nature of teaching and to recognise their own resilient responses should be given. "Working with scenarios, videos, or actual classroom observations of the kinds of challenging situations teachers encounter, teacher candidates could identify and practice coping strategies, emotional competence, reframing skills, and other resilient behaviors and ways of thinking" (p. 71). The BRiTE modules drew on the above literature to determine the key themes and learning experiences.

### 3.3 The BRiTE Project: 2013–2016

The BRiTE project was underpinned by our previous work in the field of teacher resilience (Beltman et al. 2011; Mansfield et al. 2012a, b) and our work as teacher educators. We were acutely aware of the socio-emotional challenges faced by pre-service teachers (often when on professional experience) and the increasingly limited space in teacher education programmes to provide specific learning focused on resilience skills and strategies for the profession. At the time this project was developed, we also noted a considerable gap in available resilience resources for teachers, despite the need expressed by the literature, teacher educators, pre-service teacher mentors and pre-service teachers themselves. The aim of the BRiTE project therefore was to develop an online learning resource to assist pre-service teachers build the personal and social capabilities associated with professional resilience. The project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education.

### **3.3.1 Building the BRiTE Framework**

As an initial step we conducted a 15-year review of the literature and based on those findings developed the conceptual framework for the modules, the BRiTE framework (Mansfield et al. 2016b). The review of the literature identified 51 concepts and constructs that were associated with teacher resilience. In line with our conceptualisation of resilience as the capacity of a teacher to draw on personal and contextual resources, and use adaptive strategies to navigate through challenges, resulting in positive outcomes (Beltman 2015; Mansfield et al. 2016b), these were grouped according to *personal resources* (e.g. efficacy; initiative); *contextual resources* (e.g. support networks, positive relationships); *strategies* (e.g. problem-solving, reflection); and *outcomes* (e.g. wellbeing, job satisfaction). Next, we grouped the factors thematically, which resulted in groups of themes focused on social, emotional, motivational and professional aspects of resilience. These themes determined the focus of each module, with an additional first module to explain how we conceptualise resilience in the teaching profession. Table 3.1 shows the theme of each module and the topics within.

### **3.3.2 Designing the Online Learning Experience**

Following development of the BRiTE framework, the next phase was to conceptualise the learning environment that would deliver well-designed modules in an actively engaging online learning experience. While a design-based research methodology (Anderson and Shattuck 2012) provided the catalyst for translating our research into improving practice, the key components of online learning were applied to inform the design of the modules. Consideration of the pedagogical model, instructional and learning strategies and online learning technologies were key to the overall design of the online learning environment (Dabbagh and Bannan-Ritland 2005). To increase accessibility and globalisation of the modules, the goal was to provide a flexible, asynchronous experience that provided opportunities for learner engagement with the research and meaningful reflection.

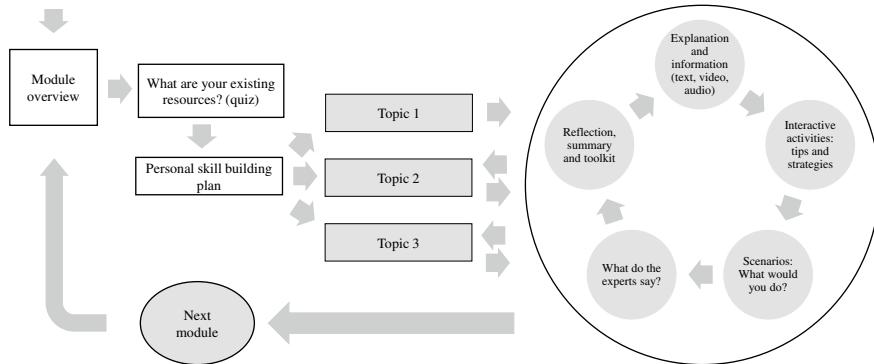
#### **3.3.2.1 Designing the Learning Pathway**

Taking into account our design principles and knowledge of online learning, we then developed an overview of learning pathway that would be consistent in each module, as shown in Fig. 3.1. A strengths-based approach was important as well, so that users would first identify their existing strengths and this would form a basis with which to engage in the rest of the module.

The process of module development was iterative and collaborative, and involved stakeholder groups at various design and implementation stages as well as innovative

**Table 3.1** BRiTE module themes, topics and sub-topics

	Module title	Topics	Sub-topics
B	Building resilience	What is resilience? Why is it important in schools? Why is resilience important for teachers? The resilience process	What is resilience and why does it matter? How is resilience defined? Resilience in schools Resilience for teachers What contributes to teacher resilience? Why BRiTE?
R	Relationships	Maintaining support networks	Friends and family University colleagues Support networks and social media
		Building relationships in new environments	Relationships with new colleagues Working with your mentor teachers Getting along with others—teamwork Positive communication with parents Being in a new community
i	Wellbeing	Personal wellbeing	Personal wellbeing and mental health Responding to stress Healthy living
		Work-life balance	Maintaining other interests Time management
		Maintaining motivation	Reasons for becoming a teacher Optimistic thinking Persistence and self-efficacy
T	Taking initiative	Problem-solving	Thinking on your feet Problem-solving processes Help seeking
		Ongoing professional learning	On a professional journey ... Connecting with the profession Goal setting
		Communicating effectively	Effective listening Communicating assertively Getting involved and setting boundaries
E	Emotions	Developing optimism	Optimism Humour
		Emotional awareness	Enhancing emotional awareness Responding to emotions
		Managing emotions	Practical ways to manage emotions Managing emotions The classroom emotional climate Don't take it personally ...



**Fig. 3.1** BRiTE modules learning pathway

web design (see Mansfield et al. 2016c for a more detailed discussion of the design process).

### 3.3.2.2 Module Design Principles

An important aspect of this project was the critical role the web design team played in delivering the desired outcomes. The team was regularly engaged in collaboration with the researchers and as a result this produced a high-quality product for the project. We agreed upon four main design principles that would guide us in the module design. Modules should be (1) personalised, (2) interactive, (3) authentically connected to the profession and (4) informed by the literature. Working with our web designer, we determined the particular online experiences that would support each principle. In our trial, participants indicated it took around one hour to complete each module. Each principle is explained below with examples of how it was operationalised in the work-life balance topic of the Wellbeing module.

#### Personalisation

In essence, personalised learning affords the learner a degree of choice about what is learned and at what pace that occurs (Chen 2008). Our aim was that users should be able to reflect on their existing strengths, note their learning and make plans for the future. The online experiences to support this principle included:

- **Self-quiz** at the start of each module. The quiz items are validated by scales related to each topic. Users respond on a 7-point Likert scale (from disagree strongly to agree strongly). Based on their responses, users are provided with a personal skill building plan, which shows the order of topics they should engage with as they progress through the module.
- **Reflection questions** focused on existing skills and strategies. For example, “What strategies do you have for maintaining your work-life balance?” as shown in

**Work-life balance**

When job demands are high and you have to do lots of planning and develop and gather resources, it can be easy to only focus on work. In the short term you might think that things will ease up after you've achieved the next 5 tasks on your list, but chances are during that time, you will have added more. While it is important to do your work well, a balance between work and other aspects of your life should be maintained.

What strategies do you use for maintaining your work-life balance?

Type a strategy & press enter...

Exercise every day, no matter what Jan '20

Make time on the weekend for hobbies Jan '20

Keep regular contact with friends and family Jan '20

You might have noted some of the following strategies:

- Taking some regular time for a hobby or interest.
- Managing your time effectively.

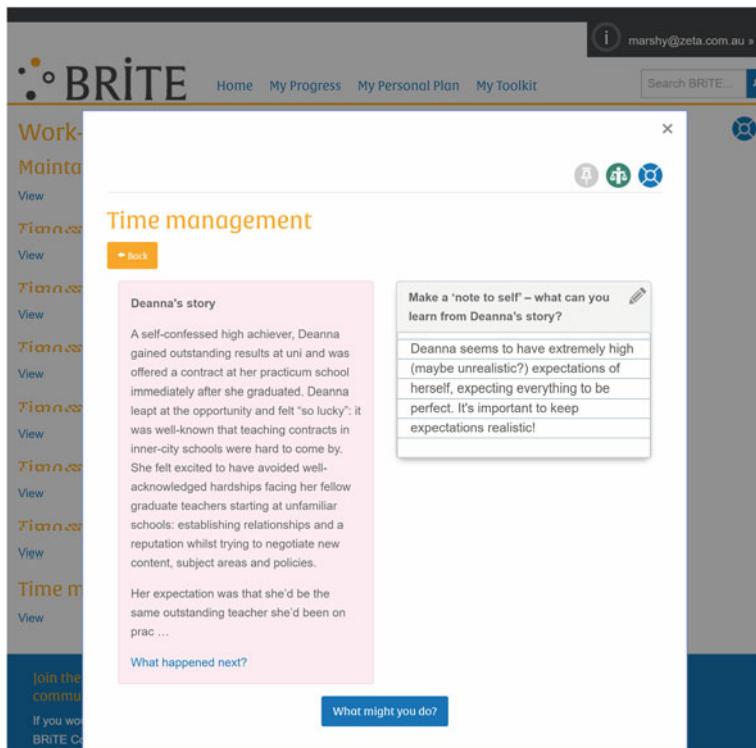
Click on the next button for more strategies.

Next

**Fig. 3.2** Illustration of reflection questions from the Wellbeing module

Fig. 3.2. Previous responses are included, so users can add to their list of strategies when revisiting a module. Once the user submits a response, the text circled appears in order to provide some additional ideas.

- **Notepad** for summarising ideas and noting thoughts for future reference. The notepad appears with a question as a prompt and often accompanies specific learning activities. Figure 3.3 shows how the notepad “make a note to self” section is used to record thoughts about what can be learnt from Deanna’s story (Constantine 2017).
- **Personal resilience toolkit**. An important output for users is the creation of their own BRiTE toolkit. The toolkit contains user responses to reflection questions, notes taken (in the notepad) throughout the modules and items pinned. Figure 3.4 shows an example of the toolkit for the first sub-topic in Module i—Wellbeing. The text in “My Strategies” is the text that has been submitted in response to reflection questions in the module, including strategies for maintaining work–life balance, a response to a scenario (“All I seem to do is work”) and top time management strategies. The “My Notepad”, note to self, is a response to “Deanna’s story”, a vignette of a graduate teacher. “My pinned items” contains tips that have been pinned and a “what do the experts say” section. Each entry also is “stamped” with a month and year. The icons above the heading work–life balance, give the user options to return to the i module, download the toolkit to PDF, redo the module (this will clear all entries) and reveal everything since the beginning (will show entries submitted prior to re-doing the module). The toolkit is also interactive and can be updated and edited as users see appropriate. For example, pinned items can be unpinned and strategies can be edited by returning to the module and adding or deleting at the relevant section.



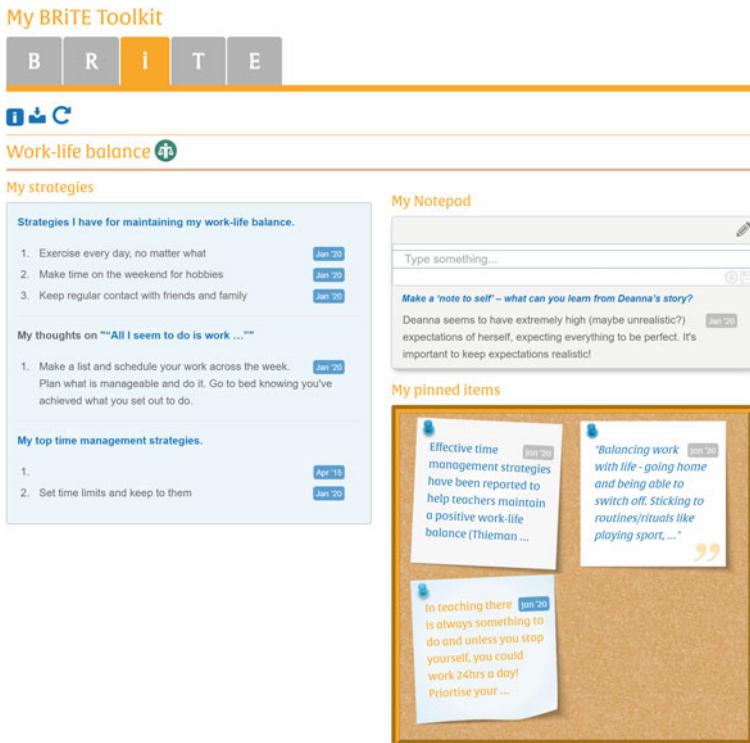
**Fig. 3.3** Illustration of notepad from the Wellbeing module

An additional feature of the toolkit is that a date (month and year) is added to each item appearing in the toolkit, so that the users can see the progression in their thinking and ideas over time.

### Interactivity

The goal of interactivity in online learning is predominantly to create a specific method of supporting the learner to interact with the subject-matter and achieve the learning goals through that interaction (Unneberg 2008). We wanted the learning experience to be highly interactive, varied and engaging. In part, this was supported by the strategies for personalisation; however, there were other features we added to support the interactivity.

- ***Text that can be “pinned”*** to the toolkit for future reference by clicking on the drawing pin icon, as shown in the pin board in Fig. 3.4.
- ***“Little wisdoms”***—these are quotes that appear when users click on an owl. The owls appear at irregular intervals and the quotes can be pinned to the toolkit. In Fig. 3.4, the owl below the heading “work–life balance” indicates the quote



**Fig. 3.4** Illustration of the BRiTE toolkit from the Wellbeing module

“Remember Parkinson’s Law: work expands to fill the time you make available to it” has been pinned.

- **Real-world scenarios** to respond to, with example responses and feedback for each. Figure 3.5 shows an example scenario, the reflection question and how users may respond.

As well as providing an option for users to consider strategies they might use, we also provided some strategies where users could indicate the degree to which they might adopt them. Figure 3.6 shows some example responses to this scenario. With each idea there are three options—definitely, maybe and not really—and for each of these there is additional feedback given. For example, in the first suggestion “*Work out what has to be done and prioritise it. Then you delegate, delete or defer other things on your list*”, when users click “definitely”, a pop-up box appears with the text—“*This sounds like you are using some effective time management strategies - can you also ask for help or advice from a mentor or colleague?*” If the users click “maybe”, the text is “*Although this takes some time to do, the long term benefits are worth the time you spend prioritising*”. If the users click “not really”, the text is “*You*

**What would you do?**

**"All I seem to do is work ..."**

As you approach end of term, you are feeling that all you do is work. Besides the time you are actually teaching, you are at school early and stay until late. After dinner there's still work to do and the planning you do on weekends is all consuming. Your leisure time is minimal and your family and friends want you back. You have been advised to remember to have a life outside work but there is so much to do.



What strategies can you use to help in this situation?

Type something here & press enter...

Make a list and schedule your work across the week. Plan what is manageable and do it. Go to bed knowing you've achieved what you set out to do.

**Next**

**Fig. 3.5** Illustration of scenario from the Wellbeing module

### Scenario - "All I seem to do is work ..."

Might you ...

Work out what has to be done and prioritise it. Then you delegate, defer or delete other things on your list.

Definitely  Maybe  Not Really

Decide to withdraw from your sporting team and weekly trip to the movies with your friends until you get on top of things.

Definitely  Maybe  Not Really

Spend a week of your school holidays developing an exciting thematic program for the next term, collecting the resources and creating draft lesson plans.

Definitely  Maybe  Not Really

Spend some time a week online planning an enjoyable holiday now you finally have a job!

Definitely  Maybe  Not Really

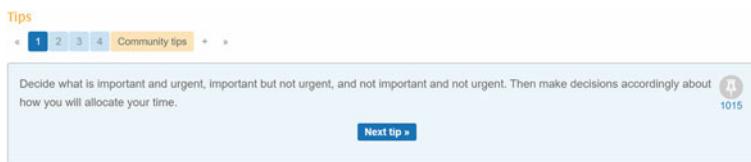
**Where to now?**

**Fig. 3.6** Illustration of example responses to scenario from the Wellbeing module

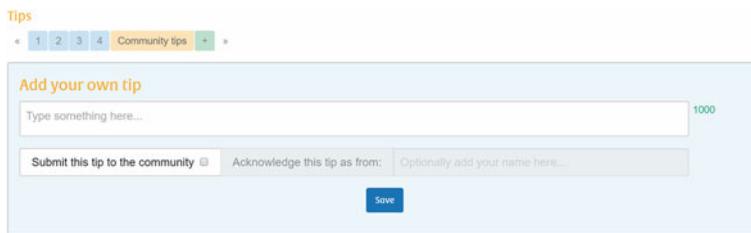
*might like to try this – once you learn how to prioritise effectively, it will be a useful strategy in lots of situations”.*

- **Tips** are also provided for users as shown in Fig. 3.7. Users can click through the tips and pin those that they'd like to remember. The numbers appearing under the pin icon show the number of times that tip has been pinned by other users.

As well as pinning tips created by others, users can also add their own tips, and if they wish, submit these to the BRiTE community. Figure 3.8 shows how users can create their own tip and Fig. 3.9 shows an example of tips submitted to the BRiTE



**Fig. 3.7** Illustration of tips from the Wellbeing module



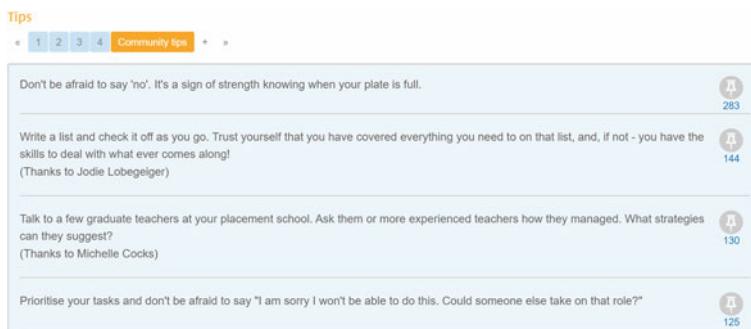
**Fig. 3.8** Illustration of creating own tip in the Wellbeing module

community.

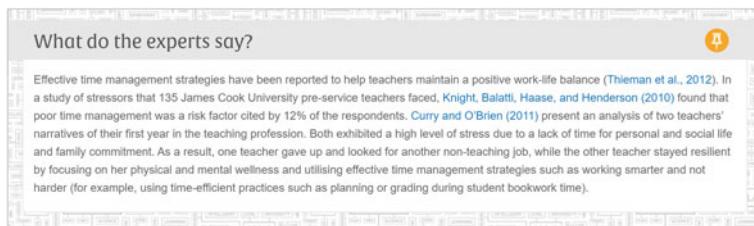
#### Connected to the profession

The preparation of beginning teachers has been built on a strong foundation of linking theoretical and professional practice (Korthagen et al. 2001), including an integral component of professional experience based in schools and early learning centres. We wanted the modules to be authentically connected to the profession and to this end included content and resources that were aligned with the teaching profession in Australia. We included, for example:

- **Explicit alignment with standards:** The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)



**Fig. 3.9** Illustration of BRiTE community tips for time management



**Fig. 3.10** Illustration of “What do the experts say” section from the Wellbeing module

2011), the Personal and Social Capabilities from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority 2012), the Principles from the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2009) and National Quality Standards (NQS) for Australian Early Childhood Education and Care (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 2018) at the beginning of each module.

- **Videos** where teachers and educational experts talk about resilience-related strategies and skills.
- **Downloadables:** Factsheets and further resources developed for the profession.

In addition, the scenarios described above were all derived from our experience as teacher educators, knowing the challenges often experienced by pre-service and early career teachers.

#### Informed by the literature

Finally, we sought to illustrate how the key ideas in each module were informed by research and to provide opportunity for users to appreciate and engage with that research, if they desired. To this end we developed “What do the experts say?” sections summarising relevant research and with links to references and original articles, as shown in Fig. 3.10.

### 3.4 Module Evaluation

The modules were evaluated by pre-service teachers and stakeholders (teacher educators, teachers) according to content and online design (as reported in Mansfield et al. 2016c) with the overall mean for all participants across all modules being 4.17 out of 5. Strengths of the content were identified, such as use of practical examples, resources and tips, useful information and videos and well-organised information. In terms of the online design, strengths included use of a variety of different media to present topics, opportunities for reflection, creation of personalised toolbox, ability to “pin” ideas and add to personal toolbox, and ease of navigation. Pre-service

teachers also commented that they would refer to the modules in the future. Education professionals noted the importance of the resource for pre-service teachers, the engaging and well-presented learning design, effective use of the AITSL standards and resources, good balance of theory and practice and the many possibilities to use the modules across initial teacher education programmes.

In addition, a small quantitative study was conducted to understand the impact of the modules (Beltman et al. 2018). In this study, 49 Australian pre-service teachers completed questionnaires before and after completing the BRiTE modules and finishing their final professional experience placement. Measures included scales of resilience (general measure as well as separate scales relating to professional, emotional, motivational and social aspects of resilience), teacher self-efficacy, commitment to teaching and coping (appraisal, social, challenge and avoidance subscales). Participants who reported using the BRiTE modules during their school placement scored significantly higher (with medium effect sizes) in the post-test measurements on the differentiated resilience scales and teacher commitment. As the BRiTE modules specifically targeted these aspects of resilience, it was promising to see this finding. Coping and self-efficacy measures could have been more affected by specific experiences during the practicum and interviews were also conducted to help understand these experiences and the role of the BRiTE modules.

An exploratory qualitative study (Mansfield et al. 2020) was also conducted to determine how the modules influenced pre-service teachers when on professional experience. The findings showed that the modules reminded and affirmed pre-service teachers of their existing skills and knowledge, enabled reflection and contributed to the feelings of increased confidence. Learning from the modules was applied on professional experience and has influenced future plans.

### **3.5 Module Implementation: Options for Teacher Educators**

To maximise uptake of the modules by teacher educators, we also developed a series of implementation guidelines, showing how the modules may be used in teacher education. In developing implementation guidelines, we drew on our collective expertise as teacher educators and feedback obtained through discussions with colleagues and at dissemination points. Consideration was given to the range of teacher preparation courses available in Australia and careful thought given to possible approaches. The guidelines are accompanied by suggestions as to when may be the best time to introduce or refer to the modules, how to encourage student engagement and also how to maximise learning outcomes from module engagement. To allow flexibility in implementation, it was decided that four possible approaches to implementation might be suggested, as in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2** Implementation possibilities for BRiTE modules in teacher education programmes

<i>Raising awareness</i>	Introduce pre-service teachers to the modules within class or online resources Provide the web address to the modules Encourage students to participate as an optional learning experience
<i>Blended Learning</i>	Ask students to BYOD (bring your own device) or schedule a classroom with designated computers Provide an integrated learning experience by designing your learning activity, tutorial or workshop to connect the online modules to your collaborative learning activities in the classroom Personalise the student experience by leveraging the personal skill-building plan within the modules
<i>Pick and Mix</i>	Select one or more modules for inclusion in a course; e.g. preparation for professional experience, health & PE, integrating technology/ICT Select a specific topic within a module that might complement a learning experience in one week of a course
<i>Holistic Approach</i>	Embed the modules into a learning management system and structure as a compulsory component of a course Students work through personalised plan within or outside of classes Printed toolkit can be used to bring to class for peer-to-peer discussions Responses to scenarios in the modules can form the basis of a learning activity and encourage the creation of more scenarios

A section on the website specifically for teacher educators includes: Implementation Guidelines; a BRiTE Quick Reference Guide; FAQs page; a widget for embedding the BRiTE modules in Learning Management Systems, such as Blackboard and Moodle, and instructions showing how to embed the widget.

### 3.6 Website Usage 2015–2020

Since the BRiTE modules were launched in 2015, their usage has steadily increased each year. Google Analytics data retrieved on 1 January 2020, showed there had been 59,676 visitors to the site, identified through a unique IP address and visit to one page, and of these visitors, 26.2% were returning visitors. A bounce rate of 28% indicated the percentage of visitors who viewed a single page and did not engage further. The main country visitors came from was Australia (79.83%), followed by the United States (6.93%), the United Kingdom (2.56%) and Canada (1.3%). Other visitors originated from New Zealand, France, India, the Philippines, China and Japan.

The total number of sessions during the same timeframe was 148,137. Although the average session duration was 11.13 min, this average has been calculated including the 69,424 sessions that were between 0 and 10 s, and were from visitors, rather than engaged visitors (from here on referred to as “users”). There were 16,442 sessions lasting from 3.01 to 10 min, 18,728 sessions lasting between 10.01 and 30 min, and 84,292 sessions lasting beyond 30.01 min. These sessions can be

considered a more accurate indication of user engagement, as would indicate visits of multiple pages and engagement with the modules. Visits of less than 3 min would include users finding the site and having a reasonably quick look rather than engaging with content.

Although Google Analytics provides some useful overviews of information regarding BRiTE users, we can also draw upon data from the website, to better understand who users are and their behaviour. Up until 1 January 2020, there were 14,407 users who had created an account and completed some or all of the modules. Of these 10,912 identified their role as pre-service teachers or teacher education students, 1,049 as practicing teachers and 652 as teacher educators. Other user roles included psychologists, school leaders, educational consultants, social workers, educational assistants, Ph.D. candidates, teacher programme managers and web designers.

### 3.7 Staying BRiTE: 2016–2018

The BRiTE modules have generated much interest from teacher educators in Australia and overseas, prompting discussion about how the modules could be embedded into teacher education programmes in ways that respond to a range of teacher education contexts. Because the modules provide a resource-rich online learning environment, there are many possibilities for supporting and elaborating on this learning through specific teacher education experiences. This extension of the BRiTE project, known as *Staying BRiTE*, was supported by an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship (Mansfield 2016).

The aim of the Fellowship was to lead strategic change in teacher education curriculum by embedding contextually responsive approaches to building pre-service teachers' capacity for resilience. Using a collaborative approach, and working with colleagues at six universities (Murdoch University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Wollongong, Federation University, Charles Darwin University and University of Tasmania) a series of authentic cases were created that illustrate approaches to embedding resilience in teacher education programmes in higher education contexts (<https://www.stayingbrite.edu.au/authentic-cases>). Two of these authentic cases are presented in Chaps. 4 and 5.

A unique feature of this work lies in the differing approaches taken by colleagues and the way in which they contextualised resilience learning in teacher education, being responsive to university, educational and preservice teacher contexts. For example, Strangeways and Papatraianou (Charles Darwin University) ran workshops where arts-based methodology was used to enable pre-service teachers to reflect on the resilience knowledge and what that means for their career as teachers. Figure 3.11 shows how drawing was used to generate multiple perspectives about what resilience means for teachers.

A further module exploring how mindfulness can support teacher resilience, “BRiTE Mind”, (see Chap. 10) has also been developed.

### Can't all be made of brick because then you can't grow

#### Generating Alternate Perspectives

*Need pants made of bricks to have a stable and strong bottom half. They can be heavy to walk in, so with strength comes difficulty.*

*You also need a barrier of self-protection on the chest, but not brick Armor because you can't cover all of you because then you can't be open to change and growth (so you need vulnerability) – the capacity to take risks.*

*You also have the sun, which is a source of support and allows trees and flowers to grow on the top half all the while the brick pants are keeping you stable.*



**Fig. 3.11** Arts-based approaches to generate multiple perspectives

An ongoing outcome of Staying BRiTE has been the development of a national and international network of researchers, teacher educators and consultants. Work undertaken by members of these networks is reported in Sects. 3.2 and 3.3 of this volume.

## 3.8 A BRiTE Future?

As we move forward into 2020 and beyond, the modules are still attracting increasing numbers of users. Not only have BRiTE users increased, there has been increased interest in the BRiTE modules from teacher educators, teachers, pre-service teachers, employers and national accrediting bodies. The modules have been embedded in teacher education programmes across Australia and have influenced other research, as described in the chapters of this volume. The modules have also been used to support professional learning of practicing teachers through whole school initiatives. The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has adopted some aspects of the modules in their “My induction” app for early career teachers.

Although the modules were designed specifically for pre-service and beginning teachers, more experienced teachers have also engaged with and completed the modules. Another initiative, informally evaluated as helpful for practising teachers of differing levels of experience, is to run workshops in conjunction with online module completion. Such face-to-face workshops, much like the way teacher educators can use the modules, incorporate research findings and activities into tailored professional learning events lasting for two or three half-day or after work sessions,

spaced so that the online modules can be completed in between. Preliminary feedback indicates that participants value, for example, “*Interaction with colleagues from education and take away skills to reflect on and use*” as well as “*Sharing different viewpoints and experiences*”.

In addition to the exploration of the information available and analysed through Google Analytics, exploratory studies have examined qualitative data entered by participants as they engage with the modules. For example, one study has examined the strategies teachers report using to manage their heightened emotions (Beltman and Poulton 2019). Further work is underway to analyse further strategies endorsed by practicing teachers as these have the potential to provide useful information not just for in-service but also for pre-service teachers.

We continue to receive unsolicited feedback from module users, most recently:

This is a fantastic program. It is full of practical tips and knowledge grounded in evidence-based research and on the ground teacher tips. I love the way it is so accessible, broken down into clear manageable modules and the variety of interactive methods used. Video, expert text inserts, quiz's, range of techniques to appeal to a range of personalities made it engaging and enjoyable. I love the way we build a toolkit because in the busy day to day, it allows a refresh of what aspects are important personally. A terrific initiative. Thank you. (August 2019)

A fantastic resource that is almost like a mini counselling session. It really helps to reframe thinking and have a plan of attack ahead of graduate year. (August 2019)

Thank you for designing this course. This is the first resource I believe has comprehensively spoken on how to talk with parents/carers of students and given practical steps for self-care. (August 2018)

What a powerful program! It embraces so many aspects and allows so much personal reflection throughout all the modules. This has been a great experience. (October, 2019)

As the teaching profession in Australia continues to be challenged by increasing societal expectations, the need for building resilience in pre-service teachers, beginning teachers and in-service teachers continues to be a priority for the sector. The programme standards for initial teacher education programmes in Australia do not currently require wellbeing or resilience to be developed in graduate teachers, however, the BRiTE modules are well regarded across Australia and even some international locations with similar contexts. These modules are contributing to the increasing attention on teacher wellbeing and resilience.

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## **Part II**

# **Implementation and Applications**

### **Tether lines**

Sharon McDonough

I am an ocean of uncertainties  
An ever expanding horizon of doubt  
The point at which sea and sky meet  
Is the point at which my confidence and caution coalesce.

How to stay afloat?  
How do I not become set adrift?  
If I swim into these unchartered waters, will I be lost?

To grow, I need to venture here  
Into the depths of my doubt, and  
The seas of my inexperience  
But, what life jacket is there for me to wear?

When I look closely though, I see others  
Shapes on the shore  
Those who have swum these waters before.  
In their hands,  
Small, imperceptible tether lines  
Ready to bring me back should I drift too far.

The tether lines flex and spin  
I swim further out  
Held, yet  
Free,  
Growing.

# Chapter 4

## Building Resilience for Early Years Teachers



Noelene Weatherby-Fell, Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett, and Susan Duchesne

**Abstract** Working in Early Childhood Education and Care presents particular demands for teachers' resilience. Helping pre-service teachers to explore strategies to respond to challenges in the supportive learning environment of pre-service learning is important to building strength and resilience for teachers' careers. In this endeavour, the BRiTE (Building Resilience in Teacher Education) online modules have been integrated across an Early Years degree at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Students complete one or more modules in relevant subjects, with the full suite of modules completed twice in the course of their degree. Integration in subjects includes activities responding to, or building on knowledge from a module. Ongoing research has involved interviewing students about challenges in their progress, and ways the BRiTE modules have assisted them in responding to these challenges. This has shown the value our students see in BRiTE, and has helped us to regularly monitor and make changes to the links between the modules and subjects in the degree.

**Keywords** Resilience · Early years/early childhood education and care · Professional learning

### 4.1 Quality Early Childhood Education and Care and the Role of the Educator

The role of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) has shifted from a focus on 'care' as a means to support female or maternal workforce participation to the role of 'early education' in supporting children's short- and long-term development

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(Baker et al. 2008; Yoshikawa et al. 2013). The national and international evidence for the impact of high-quality ECEC is compelling. Participation in high-quality ECEC programmes has been shown repeatedly to be beneficial for children's current and future learning potential, promoting a lifelong solid and broad foundation for learning and wellbeing (Melhuish et al. 2015; O'Connell et al. 2016; Siraj et al. 2017). This is particularly the case for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Ruhm and Waldfogel 2012; Siraj-Blatchford 2004), with research strongly indicating that ECEC has the potential to ameliorate the effects of poverty in the short term and improve children's future prospects in the long term (Melhuish et al. 2015; Siraj and Kingston 2015).

A setting's quality depends on many process and structural variables, and the relationships between these and a well-educated high-quality workforce are not straightforward (Siraj and Kingston 2015). Despite the complexity in these relationships, the educator's role (with reference to all staff, that is, certificate, diploma and degree qualified) is the one factor which remains fundamental to quality practice. When it comes to quality practice, educators matter! Improving the quality of ECEC and learning outcomes for children demands a highly skilled educator—one who is capable of sound decision-making, while engaging in reflective and responsive practice and instruction (Cooke and Lawton 2008; Siraj and Kingston 2015). Positive and secure adult-child relationships are central to high-quality pedagogy (Howes et al. 2008; O'Connell et al. 2016; Pianta et al. 2007) and underpin educators' capacity to engage young children in meaningful learning experiences (Siraj et al. 2017).

Despite this growing awareness around educator effectiveness, many large-scale studies of ECEC suggest that too few educators have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide optimal environments to support young children's development (see Siraj et al. 2018). Strengthening the early childhood workforce is now a priority in many countries (Hamre et al. 2017; Ishimine et al. 2010; Siraj and Kingston 2015). High staff turnover is a strong indicator of reduced quality in ECEC (OECD 2013; Siraj et al. 2017). Low wages coupled with the low status of early childhood practitioners is a major contributor to this high turnover, which, in turn, has significant impact on ECEC quality (O'Connell et al. 2016). High staff turnover mitigates against the development of stable, secure attachments between children and educators (Whitebook et al. 2014). It also leads to repetitive loss of 'in-house' knowledge that hinders relationships on many levels. For example, high staff turnover causes disconnect between home and the educational context, which is associated with children's language, self-help and social, motor, adaptive and basic skills (Marcon 1999). This lack of consistency impacts negatively on children's social, emotional and language development.

Although there is wide recognition that a qualified workforce is key to ensuring high-quality ECEC, educators continue to experience instances of being underpaid, having low status, a lack of career options and inadequate professional learning opportunities. Working conditions affect quality as educators who find their work environments pleasant, supportive and a place where they are valued, are more likely to engage in stimulating interactions with children, and to perform better in

various roles and responsibilities that are everyday responsibilities for ECEC educators (Burchinal et al. 2002; Huntsman 2008). For example, Whitebook et al. (2014) and Goelman et al. (2006) found that wages influence all aspects of quality, including retention, the value placed on the educator's role, commitment to increasing qualifications and access to professional development. The OECD (2013) reinforces that the context and conditions in which staff work are strongly related to stable, sensitive and stimulating interactions with children. Yet research continues to document that the profession experiences burnout (Barford and Whelton 2010), a dissonance between job description and actual practices (Lee and Brotheridge 2011), issues related to relationships with colleagues (Cumming 2016) and working alongside professionals from other disciplines, including intervention services.

## 4.2 Fostering Resilience and Growth in the Early Childhood Profession

A key factor contributing to the quality of ECEC to strengthening educator pre-service and in-service professional learning is the quality of its workforce, including levels of qualification and education (ACECQA 2012; Lee and Brotheridge 2011; Nolan et al. 2014; Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2006; Sumsion et al. 2015; Temple and Emmett 2013). More specifically, variations in educator pedagogy and practice have been linked to the quality of professional learning to which educators are exposed, with professional learning encompassing both pre-service and in-service education platforms (Siraj and Kingston 2015). Professional learning impacts directly on pedagogy and practice within the classroom, and, specifically, on the learning opportunities and experiences offered to the children (Blau 2000; de Kruif et al. 2000; Phillipsen et al. 1997). The growing body of research around educator wellbeing and the ensuing impact on educator effectiveness underscores the need for a broader view of teacher preparation and the provision of professional learning, one that extends beyond a curriculum and content focus to include wellness promotion for teachers (Hall-Kenyon et al. 2014; Whitaker et al. 2013).

For the individual ECEC educator, there is evidence of poor physical and mental health (Corr et al. 2014, 2015; Faulkner et al. 2016; Laletas et al. 2017; Tansey 2008) and risk of burnout (Ammendolia et al. 2016; Ben-Zur and Michael 2007; Seti 2007). In her early work, Sumsion (2003; 2004) focused on individual resilience and career commitment, and the importance of personal qualities, contextual features and the interplay between them. The works of Gu and Day (2013) and Gu and Li (2013) attended to the ways in which teachers can be supported in terms of resilience, as individuals interact with the contexts in which they live. In Australia, a national initiative, KidsMatter Early Childhood, focused on and promoted children's mental health and wellbeing aiming to provide a continuous service development framework to promote protective factors, provide extra support where required and, when appropriate, facilitate early referral to external agencies. This was integrated into

the programme *Be You* in 2018 together with KidsMatter Primary and MindMatters and has drawn attention to the importance of professional resilience for early years educators. A study as part of the Start Well Project likewise identified resilience as important to maximise the social and emotional wellbeing of early childhood educators (Bennett et al. 2016).

In alignment with the intention of the BRiTE (Building Resilience in Teacher Education) project (Mansfield et al. 2016) (see also Chap. 3), we believe teacher education programmes have a role in assisting beginning teachers to develop their capacity for resilience. The following sections describe one approach to improving educator resilience within the context of an integrated pre-service professional learning platform.

### 4.3 The Early Years at the University of Wollongong

The Bachelor of Education—The Early Years degree focuses on the significance of early education (from birth to five years) to foster children’s health, development and wellbeing, giving them the opportunity to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for lifelong learning. Course content is designed to support pre-service teachers’ understanding of the role of high-quality early childhood education and care within local and global contexts, along with the role of effective pedagogy and practice to improve the lives of young children and their families. Students are supported to understand children as learners within and beyond the early educational context, and to understand their role as reflective practitioners with expert knowledge and the ability to impact children, families and the broader community.

The course learning outcomes acknowledge the diverse and dynamic nature of contemporary education and are aligned with Australian Curriculum specifications, incorporating appropriate content within subjects that are aligned with the Australian Quality Framework (AQF). Subjects within the programme are sequenced to build early childhood pre-service teachers’ knowledge, expertise and understanding, as well as their capacity to facilitate effective learning experiences that generate evidence of student learning. Professional development subjects form the ‘spine’ of the degree, integrated with diverse curriculum subjects that systematically build students’ knowledge, teaching capabilities and professional identities.

The degree structure also incorporates the Professional Partners in Practice (PPP) programme, a uniquely designed mentoring programme that complements the academic and professional experience components of the degree. The PPP programme supports pre-service teachers to build connections, professional capacity and resilience, and promotes the development of mentoring relationships at all levels.

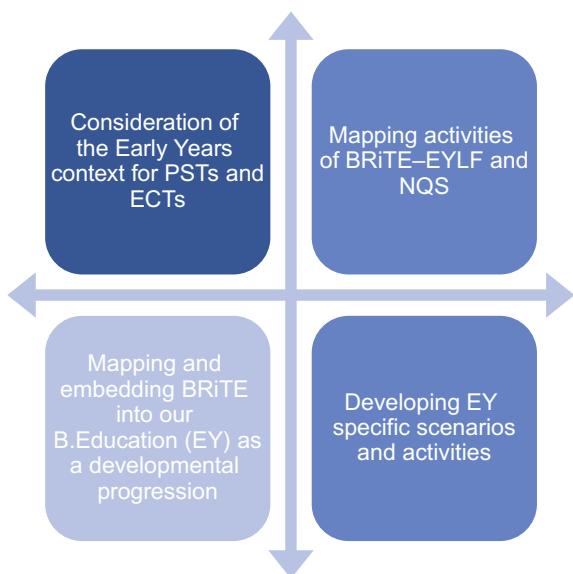
Common to many pre-service early childhood teaching degrees, the University of Wollongong (UOW) cohort is diverse, consisting of school leavers, diploma-qualified students (working in Early Childhood Education and Care [ECEC] services), mature age, rural, remote and international students. Students’ understanding and expectations are equally diverse, with many entering the degree with a romanticised view of

early childhood education and who may be challenged by the myths versus realistic expectations of the role. Upon graduation, individuals may enter into a leadership role, assuming responsibility for their team as the highest qualified but not necessarily the most experienced member. The appointment of graduates into leadership roles early within their career trajectory presents unique challenges, with research showing many graduates feel ill-equipped for these demanding roles (Irvine et al. 2016).

#### 4.4 Contextualising BRiTE to the Early Childhood Educational Context

In order to bring BRiTE to the early childhood context, the authors, working alongside and including the early childhood academic team, determined a priority to ensure their students felt their voices, needs and practices were embedded within the modules. In contextualising the content, the following aspects, as shown in Fig. 4.1, were considered for our pre-service teachers (PSTs) as they enter the profession as early career teachers (ECTs).

**Fig. 4.1** Our approach to contextualisation of BRiTE content for early childhood pre-service teachers



#### 4.4.1 Mapping Against the EYLF

A mapping of the BRiTE content against Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) (Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (DEEWR) 2009) had been undertaken during the development of the BRiTE modules as a means of providing a connection to the ECEC context. The five principles within the EYLF reflect contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children's learning and early childhood pedagogy, and underpin the practices that focus on assisting all children to make progress in relation to learning outcomes, including their transition to school.

- **Principle 1:** Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- **Principle 2:** Partnerships (focus on families and support professionals)
- **Principle 3:** High expectations and equity
- **Principle 4:** Respect for diversity
- **Principle 5:** Ongoing learning and reflective practice (build professional knowledge and develop learning communities).

The EYLF emphasises that all children are born '*belonging*' to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities—developing their '*being*' and '*becoming*'. The EYLF recognises children's right to '*be*' (connected to their sense of identity, agency and resilience) which assists children to '*belong*' (share values, ideas, culture, feel safe and secure, contribute to their world) and then to '*become*' (which recognises children's natural inclination to wonder, create and be curious) (DEEWR 2009). All these principles of quality programmes make personal demands on early childhood educators contributing to their need for resilience.

#### 4.4.2 Mapping Against the NQS

In 2009, the Australian state governments established a National Quality Framework (NQF) for all ECEC. The NQF took effect in 2012 alongside the establishment of the Australian Children's Education and Care Authority<sup>1</sup> (ACECQA) and was designed to support greater unification across state and territory educational systems (birth to 5-year settings), while at the same time implementing both an Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF; DEEWR 2009) and a new National Quality Standard (NQS) assessment and rating system (ACECQA 2017). The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education and the introduction of the NQF for ECEC (ACECQA 2017) signify a direct response to the research evidence about the importance of

<sup>1</sup>The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority is an independent statutory authority that assists governments in implementing the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care throughout Australia.

**Table 4.1** Mapping of module building resilience against the National Quality Standards

Module B topics	National Quality Standards (NQS)
What do you know about resilience?	<b>QA5. Relationships with Children</b> Standard 5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child
Resilience in schools	
What makes a resilient teacher?	Standard 5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships
The resilience process	
Bouncing back/bouncing forward	
Why BRiTE?	

quality ECEC. While such policy initiatives may suggest a shift away from the provision of ECEC as a workforce productivity measure towards a focus on ECEC as a significant social and educational investment in children's future, many ECEC services struggle to achieve minimum quality standards, particularly regarding the provision of quality, play-based learning environments which have been shown to positively influence the effect of disadvantage and vulnerability on child development (O'Connell et al. 2016). This variance in quality is in part attributed to variability in educator knowledge, skills and practices and more recently to variances in educator wellbeing and staff instability (Ammendolia et al. 2016).

The Revised NQS (from 1 February 2018) brings together the seven key quality areas (QA) that are important to outcomes for children, with 15 standards including aspects of educational programmes and practices children are exposed to (QA1), as well as health and safety (QA2), aspects of the physical environment (QA3), staffing (QA4), relationships with children (QA5), partnerships with families and communities (QA6), and the manner in which services are managed and led (QA7). Under each standard, 40 elements in total describe the outcomes that contribute to the standards being achieved. The BRiTE modules were mapped against the NQS to assist early childhood educators in contextualising the BRiTE content to their practice. This mapping is represented in the following section including Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, which accompany a description of how BRiTE content is integrated across the degree.

#### **4.4.3 Mapping BRiTE to the Bachelor of Education: The Early Years Degree**

Integration of the BRiTE modules across the degree structure involved a collaborative and iterative process, whereby the early childhood academic staff met with the BRiTE research team to identify key focus areas embedded within the BRiTE programme and cross-referenced these to subject learning outcomes. In order to support and contextualise pre-service teachers' learning, clear links were made throughout the core degree content with the mapping of modules to both curriculum and practicum subjects.

**Table 4.2** Mapping of Module R relationships against the National Quality Standards

Module R	National Quality Standards (NQS)
Maintaining support networks	<b>QA4. Staffing Arrangements</b> Standard 4.2 Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical
Building relationships in new environments	<b>QA5. Relationships with Children</b> Standard 5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child <b>QA6. Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities</b> Standard 5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships <b>QA6. Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities</b> Standard 6.1 Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role

**Table 4.3** Mapping of Module i Wellbeing against the National Quality Standards

Module i Topics	National Quality Standards
Personal wellbeing	<b>QA2. Children's Health and Safety</b> Standard 2.1 Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
Work-life balance	Standard 2.2 Each child is protected
Maintaining motivation	<b>QA4. Staffing Arrangements</b> Standard 4.1 Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development

**Table 4.4** Mapping of Module T taking initiative against the National Quality Standards

Topic	National Quality Standards (NQS)
Problem-solving Ongoing professional learning Communicating effectively	<b>QA6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</b> Standard 6.1 Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role Standard 6.2 Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing <b>QA7. Governance and Leadership</b> Standard 7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service Standard 7.2 Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community

**Table 4.5** Mapping of Module E emotions against the National Quality Standards

Topics	National Quality Standards (NQS)
Problem-solving	<b>QA4. Staffing Arrangements</b> Standard 4.1 Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development
Ongoing professional learning	
Communicating effectively	<b>QA5 Relationships with Children</b> Standard 5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child Standard 5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships <b>QA7. Leadership and Service Management</b> Standard 7.2 Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community

Fukkink and Lont (2007) posit educator competence or ‘efficacy’ as being determined by three separate yet complementary domains: skills, attitudes and knowledge. One of the greatest determinants of educator efficacy involves the disparity between task difficulty and perceived competence (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). As such, Bandura (1977) suggested the accumulation of mastery experiences (i.e. experiences viewed as successful in a given context) is one way of enhancing perceived competencies. Witnessing or being informed of the successes of others in a similar position (i.e. vicarious experiences), along with verbal persuasion from others can boost self-efficacy, especially where the person’s level of experience in a given context is considerably low, as is often the case with pre-service educators (Bandura 1977). In addition, providing strategies for managing physiological and affective states construed as negative can promote educator efficacy, as these responses can be considered as a reflection of personal performance. While this model is designed for enhancing self-efficacy, the integration of knowledge with perceptions of educator effectiveness was seen to be integral to supporting the development of educator resilience and effectiveness (i.e. knowledge, attitudes and skills; Fukkink and Lont 2007).

A *knowledge, skills and attitudes* paradigm drove the design process whereby every effort was made to marry the *affective* components of BRiTE with the knowledge and skills addressed throughout the Early Years’ degree structure. As all subjects within the Bachelor of Education—The Early Years degree are linked to the NQS, the intention was for pre-service teachers to see the relevance of BRiTE to their learning and their work. In this way, the BRiTE modules were integrated into coursework to support reflective engagement and contextual understanding. As such, support strategies for resilience were provided within the subject content, embedding resilience into pre-service teacher thinking.

### **Module B: Building Resilience and the NQS**

Module B focuses on the concept of resilience, providing pre-service teachers with the skills, knowledge and coping strategies necessary for dealing with challenging work environments. Common challenges such as how best to respond to or manage trauma-related or challenging behaviours are specifically addressed. The purpose of

this module is to contextualise pre-service teachers' learning to real-life challenges while preparing them for some of the 'real-world' experiences they are likely to face upon graduation. This module is initially embedded in a first-year subject exploring early childhood contexts and then is revisited in third year in a subject exploring familial and community diversity which addresses contemporary issues of cultural and familial diversity, parental separation, familial isolation, abuse and neglect along with out-of-home care. BRiTE-related activities focus on taking responsibility for self and actions, drawing on the lived experience for children and teachers with both the promotion and modelling of strategies. Table 4.1 shows the topics within Module B and the relevant NQS.

### **Module R: Relationships and the NQS**

This module includes a focus on the inherent challenges of developing relationships with staff, and developing confidence as a peer/colleague with their mentors. At times, this may include coping with factors including intimidation. This module sits alongside our Professional Partners in Practice (PPP) programme, where pre-service teachers are placed with an Early Childhood Centre for the duration of their degree. The BRiTE modules are integral for supporting pre-service teachers to explore collegial relationships and teamwork, essential components of their professional practice. Relationships with families are central to the early childhood educational context. This module is also designed to support pre-service teachers in their interactions with families, a common challenge cited by many. Module R has been integrated within the first-year practicum subject and is designed to prepare and empower pre-service teachers for potential instances of conflict and imbalances of power that often occur within practicum placements. Common scenarios are explored and enacted during tutorial exercises. For example, in the situation where one is feeling bullied or intimidated by a parent or staff member, individuals are encouraged to identify options for responding to the aggressor other than moving to a defensive stance. As with all modules, 'Relationships' is revisited in the third-year practicum in which pre-service teachers are supported to engage with and navigate the challenges of working in multidisciplinary contexts. Table 4.2 shows the topics within Module R and the relevant NQS.

### **Module i: Wellbeing and NQS**

This module focuses on the importance of planning ahead in relation to pre-service teacher wellbeing and initiatives to support their own mental health. This is achieved by unpacking the 'Circle of Security' and building on the relationship-based early intervention programme designed to enhance attachment security between parents/caregivers and children. The teamwork environment provides added challenges and therefore, the need for resilience, in navigating situations such as the following scenario which is presented to pre-service teachers:

In a team situation, the pre-service teacher may be given a directive that goes against their own philosophy, against a particular Standard, or against what another staff member has said to do.

Examples might be forcing a child to sleep; not allowing them to leave the table unless they have finished food; or insisting on building curriculum around school readiness rather than the individual needs of the child. Pre-service teachers initially complete the Wellbeing (i) module in the second year of their degree, following the completion of Modules B and R. To support engagement pre-service teachers are required to post blog entries to the subject Moodle site about lessons they had learned from this module. Posts reveal both renewed awareness of the needs they have to be supported in wellbeing, and some immediate benefits they have received from completing this module's activities;

I have an issue of isolating myself when I am under stress or not feeling like talking to people. Seeing the importance of relationships and keeping in contact has changed the way I think in that matter. Trying to view all outlooks in my career as positive and having meaning, I can tend to try and get things done and not think about the value in the process or be pessimistic about others who work hard. I can also become quite stuck in ways of doing things, so being more flexible and teachable is important for me. Also asking for help when I need it and not being proud in that matter. Lastly is also knowing when I need and rest mentally, emotionally and physically. I can tend to over work myself and I get overwhelmed. So taking this time is important and is very valued through leisurely activities I take part in. (2nd year pre-service teacher)

Table 4.3 shows the topics within Module i and the relevant NQS.

#### **Module T: Taking Initiative and the NQS**

This module supports our early years pre-service teachers to focus on the importance of resilience and functionality, and problem-solving strategies. The module is initially introduced in second year and is linked to the second-year practicum subject. Class forum discussion topics include: (a) reflection on one child's needs and behaviour and having multiple solutions versus being reactionary and having no Plan B. This involves pre-service teachers reflecting on their own self-regulatory abilities; (b) consideration of how early childhood teachers engage with families when lacking confidence, including the conversations with parents at drop-off and pick-up, and respectful dialogue with mentors and families; and (c) exploration of conflict resolution skills which include problem-solving ability, identifying solutions and alternatives, being able to plan, being proactive rather than reactive, and being flexible rather than having a fixed response. This topic is revisited again in a third-year subject that focuses on management and leadership within early childhood contexts. Table 4.4 shows the topics within Module T and the relevant NQS.

#### **Module E: Emotions and the NQS**

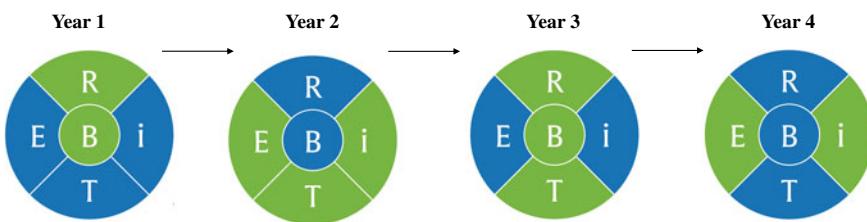
Module E is the final module introduced and addresses issues such as working with children with challenging behaviours, and forming relationships with families that are essential in the early childhood context are discussed. These situations bring emotions—those of the pre-service teacher, practicing educators and mentors, the child, the parents or caregivers and colleagues—into the forefront of tutorial and forum discussions and thinkings. The module is embedded in a second-year subject that focuses on effective partnerships in early childhood and is revisited in the final

session in a subject that focuses on transition to school with a particular focus on building collegial relationships across the prior-to-school and school contexts. Pre-service teachers are encouraged to consider quality reflective practice, where they are seeing this in practice and actively ‘doing it’. This may further link with effective leadership modelling and strategies. Table 4.5 shows the topics within Module E and the relevant NQS.

#### **4.4.4 Embedding BRiTE as a Developmental Progression**

During the course of the four-year degree, as shown in Fig. 4.2, the intention is for our pre-service teachers to undertake each module twice. Within the first two years of their study they complete the five modules, each embedded into core subjects. Within each module they engage with material with specific focus areas and points linked to subject content, and work through the cycle of knowledge, consideration of their professional practice and then reflection activities. These same modules are then repeated during Years 3 and 4 of the degree.

Moreover, there is an intent across the degree for pre-service teachers to consider their growth over time, with an associated link to professional identity. To support this activity, the pre-service teachers’ responses in the online modules are date/time stamped. Four criteria are presented to the pre-service teachers regarding effective reflective practice, noting that reflection is a process of ‘meaning-making’ (Rodgers 2002, p. 845) where the movement from one experience to another is considered in terms of relationships and connections; a way of thinking that is systematic, rigorous and disciplined; occurs in community and within interactions; and values the personal and intellectual growth in self and others (Rodgers 2002). In this way, the practice of reflection is both prompted and supported, as stated by Dewey (1933): ‘We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience’ (p. 8).



**Fig. 4.2** Pattern of module engagement across the four-year degree (green shading denotes module offering)

Links between content knowledge and application, and then the process of reflection, drawing on learnings and prior experiences, are ongoing during tutorial discussions and associated activities, building on content provided in lectures and pre-readings. The value of providing opportunities for student reflection is best illustrated by the following pre-service teacher's blog entry:

Upon completing all 5 modules I have had a reflective process about my thoughts and actions as an educator. I found that I lacked in developing relationships with people I did not know and have no thought about ways I could develop and engage in these opportunities including being open and reflective on how other people see me as an educator or as an individual. I found that my health and diet was not the best when it came to emotional times as I would drink coffee and rely on chocolate in times of need. After completing the wellbeing module I realised that I should be thinking about myself more and respecting my body by exercising. Through developing expectations and goals can help develop understandings of children's emotions and can help to further planning in the future. (3rd year pre-service teacher)

## 4.5 Feedback and Findings on Impact of BRiTE

Our research has shown how integrating the BRiTE modules into the Bachelor of Education—The Early Years has built pre-service teachers' knowledge and strategies to support their resilience. Pre-service teachers identified benefits for their practice in completing the BRiTE modules, and further commented on the integration and relevance of BRiTE content within their studies:

I didn't really see the relevance as much when I first did them, I felt they were a burden, but having completed them I understood how really relevant they were. They are really practical for an educator in the field. They helped me to become aware and think about the issues. (3rd year pre-service teacher)

And,

My confidence has definitely grown, just having all these good relationships and knowing I can do that, you know these were strangers to begin with and now it's worked out so well. So just sort of knowing that moving forward and that I guess I'm capable, things like that. (3rd year pre-service teacher)

One of the goals for embedding BRiTE into our degree was to emphasise the importance of relationships as a core element of achieving success as an early childhood educator, and to guide pre-service teacher reflection and development of a portfolio within their subject learnings. Given the current workforce challenges concerning educator attrition and mental wellbeing of staff, initiatives that support educator reflection, problem-solving and resilience while engaging with real-world scenarios and challenges can only benefit the sector as a whole and should become a compulsory component of teacher education.

Findings from this study attest to the need for a stronger focus on pre-service teacher resilience as a core component of university education. The meaningful integration of the BRiTE modules within course content serves as a potential model of practice that could be adopted more broadly. The wellbeing of university students

is a concern that extends beyond the pre-service teacher platform, as evidenced by recent findings from the 2019 Advance HE and HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey which showed university student mental wellbeing as being well below that of the general population of young people (Neves and Hillman 2019). The growing concerns around mental health, both nationally and internationally, highlight the value of course content and structures that are specifically designed to produce capable, competent, reflective and resilient graduates who are ready to take on the challenges of 'real-world' employment.

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# Chapter 5

## Thinking Dispositions for Teaching: Enabling and Supporting Resilience in Context



Sharon McDonough and Amanda McGraw

**Abstract** Preparing pre-teachers for an increasingly challenging teaching profession is a complex work and requires teacher educators to engage in the careful design of both programmes and professional learning opportunities. This chapter explores how an explicit focus on thinking dispositions that enable effective teaching are developed in a Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme. This programme, delivered on-site at a secondary school, included carefully constructed teaching opportunities to support development of thinking dispositions. Ways of thinking and the impact they have on feelings, actions and beliefs will be examined along with how the implementation of our thinking dispositions framework supports the development of resilience in challenging teaching and learning contexts.

**Keywords** Thinking dispositions · Initial teacher education · Resilience · Site-based teacher education

### 5.1 Introduction

Preparing pre-service teachers (PSTs) for an increasingly challenging teaching profession is a complex work and requires teacher educators to engage in the careful design of both programmes and professional learning opportunities. In our Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme, we have an explicit focus on thinking dispositions that enable teachers to activate relevant knowledge, understand situations and direct their strategic abilities (Ritchhart 2002). Through carefully constructed teaching opportunities in partnership schools, we illuminate certain ways of thinking and explore the ways they inform learning and teaching. In this chapter, we examine how the implementation of our thinking dispositions framework in conjunction with the use of the Building Resilience in Teacher Education (BRiTE) (<https://www.brite.edu.au>)

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[edu.au/](#)) modules (see Chap. 3) supports the development of resilience in challenging teaching and learning contexts. We discuss the features of university-led, site-based teacher education and explore how a focus on thinking dispositions and resilience in practical contexts can assist in preparing PSTs for navigating the complexity of their future careers.

## 5.2 Enabling and Supporting Resilience in Context: Dispositions and Learning to Teach

Learning to teach is a complex journey that requires PSTs develop both professional and personal skills that enable them to cope with the challenges that they will encounter. The 2014 report of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) identified that “beginning teachers have responsibility for student learning from their first day in the classroom” (p. 34), and therefore need to be “classroom ready”. Being classroom ready involves much more than having the technical skills to teach; however, with Brandenburg and Gervasoni (2016) contending that PSTs who are classroom ready “must also have a deep understanding of the contextual factors, personal discourses and emotions that shape their professional self” (p. 117). Developing understandings of pedagogical practices, the influence of contextual factors on teaching, and of the emotional skills and capacities that impact on professional practice is a highly complex work. It requires that teacher educators provide meaningful and authentic contexts in which PSTs can begin to develop their professional teaching selves and identities.

This complexity of learning to teach is widely recognised in the literature, with PSTs experiencing a range of challenges during their teacher education programme, including managing student and classroom behaviour and the demands of everyday classroom life (Mies and Knipe 2018); being evaluated and observed (Väisänen et al. 2018); managing employment, financial stress, and coping with the workload (Grant-Smith and Gillett-Swan 2017); and difficulties associated with navigating relational challenges and feelings of alienation (Buckworth 2017). There is a diverse range of skills, capacities and dispositions required to be effective teachers, with initial teacher education programmes providing a platform for the development of these skills. Through initial teacher education, PSTs can begin to develop proactive strategies and resources that will enable them to cope with, and be resilient in the face of multiple challenges.

### ***5.2.1 Developing Resilience Through Initial Teacher Education***

The notion of resilience has become prevalent in both academic and popular literature, yet despite this, there is contestation around the nature of resilience and the contexts in which resilience is demonstrated (Baggio et al. 2015; Hazel 2018; Mansfield et al. 2012; Pooley and Cohen 2010). While popular definitions of resilience might include the idea of “bouncing back” from a challenge or adversity, Pooley and Cohen (2010) propose a new definition of resilience as “the potential to exhibit resourcefulness by using available internal and external resources in response to different contextual and developmental challenges” (p. 34). Central to definitions of resilience is the concept of a challenge or adverse situation, along with successful coping, adaptation and learning (Baggio et al. 2015; Hazel 2018; Pooley and Cohen 2010). We, like Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, and Weatherby-Fell (2016), regard resilience as a process, as this framing acknowledges that resilience is not a static or fixed trait, but rather is fluid and dynamic.

We draw on a social-ecological model of resilience (Mansfield et al. 2016) that explores processes of resilience within social, relational and organisational contexts. Such views of resilience enable the identification of the personal and contextual resources (Mansfield et al. 2016) that support resilience. In considering the types of personal resources that might support resilient outcomes, Mansfield et al. (2012) argue that “a teacher working in a classroom may require a very different range of skills and dispositions and supporting factors” (p. 358) than someone working in other professions. Fostering resilience enables teachers to respond to the “everyday challenges of the profession, grow and thrive throughout their career” (Mansfield et al. 2016, p. 212), with resilience among teachers associated with commitment and enthusiasm in the profession (Day and Gu 2014). Despite the recognition of the important role that personal and contextual resources play in supporting resilience, there is less literature identifying how teacher education might take advantage of opportunities to build skills and strategies among PSTs that support resilient outcomes (Hazel 2018; Mansfield et al. 2016). In this work, we examine the way that thinking dispositions might both support effective teaching and become personal resources to support resilience in context.

### ***5.2.2 Dispositions for Thinking and Teaching***

There has been an increased focus, both in Australia and internationally, on the role of dispositions in effective teaching, with some countries, such as the United States, requiring that teacher educators formally assess dispositions as part of accreditation requirements. Despite the increased prevalence of discourses about the sorts of dispositions required for effective teaching, there is a lack of consensus in the literature about the nature of dispositions, and of how they are developed, demonstrated and

assessed (Diez 2007; McGraw et al. 2016). At times, the term disposition appears to be used interchangeably with terms like characteristics, attitudes or traits. This lack of specificity around the nature of dispositions contributes to the complexity of embedding them within teacher education programmes, and of examining how they might enable effective teaching. While some suggest that the term disposition implies a tendency towards particular actions or behaviours (Freeman 2007), we are interested in examining dispositions as tendencies towards certain ways of thinking.

Costa and Kallick (2000) view dispositions as intellectual resources, arguing that they assist in addressing complex challenges and problems. In an era where there is increasing uncertainty, ambiguity, stress and complexity, Costa and Kallick (2014) argue dispositions that can act as mental and emotional resources, are essential. Others suggest that dispositions are linked to the quality of students' learning and argue that the development of dispositions ought to be the key focus in educational contexts (Perkins and Ritchhart 2004; Riveros et al. 2012). Ritchhart (2002) advocates the notion that intellectual character "can be understood only in terms of the thinking dispositions that give it shape and meaning" (p. 19). Thinking dispositions, such as reflective and critical thinking and having an open mind, are seen as examples that enable greater understanding of self, the contexts we inhabit, and which also activate strategic action in challenging situations (Entwistle 2012). Rather than drawing on work which positions dispositions as "internal attributes or psychological characteristics" (Bair 2017, p. 223), we hold that "dispositions have cognitive, emotional, social and moral dimensions" (McGraw and McDonough 2019, p. 519). We are interested in how an explicit focus on thinking dispositions might enable effective teaching, and act as a resource for supporting resilience in the context of learning to teach. In order to explore this, we have embedded a thinking dispositions framework into our Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme, and we introduce the key features of both the framework and the programme in the following section of the chapter.

### **5.3 Our Context: University-Led, Site-Based Teacher Education**

Our 18-month accelerated Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme has a focus on university-led, site-based teacher education. Site-based teacher education programmes are those in which PSTs have sustained engagement, exposure and immersion in sites of practice, with university courses delivered on-site in schools for on-campus students (McGraw et al. 2017; Zeichner 2012). Within the literature, there is also a focus on, and use of the term, practice-based teacher education, with Jensen (2018) arguing that practice-based teacher education is conceptualised in a variety of ways including those models that have increased fieldwork, periods of internship, and connections between fieldwork and coursework. Vartuli, Snider

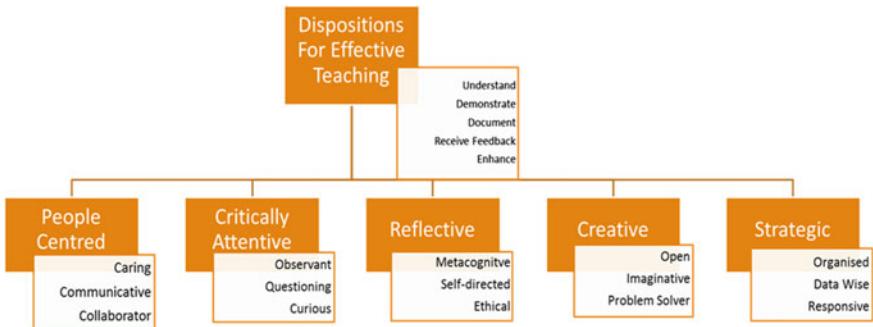
and Holley (2016) argue that teacher education that is practice-based, “offers experiences for candidates to begin to understand the complexities of teaching and integrate knowledge from learning and developmental theories into practice” (p. 503). As a key element of some practice-based approaches to teacher education, being immersed in school sites is a key way for PSTs to gain insight into the complexities that Vartuli et al. (2016) describe and to experiment with applying theoretical understandings to practice.

Site-based teacher education requires the establishment of on-going partnerships with schools. As an integral aspect of our partnership with a large local secondary college in our regional setting, we have a designated teaching space for teacher education classes in the school. Being located in the school setting means that we can strategically integrate opportunities for teaching, professional inquiry and reflective practice into university classes and assessment. Our site-based context enables us to be responsive in our teaching as we observe PSTs in action and engage with them in reflective dialogue prior to, in the midst of, and immediately after, teaching experiences. It also offers us a unique opportunity to investigate the impact of our focus on thinking dispositions on PSTs’ practice—and on their capacity to be resilient—which is the focus of this chapter. Before examining our research project, we describe the thinking dispositions framework and explain why we wonder about its connection to teacher resilience.

### ***5.3.1 A Key Feature of the Programme: The Thinking Dispositions Framework***

As a key feature of our Master of Teaching programme, we have developed and embedded a framework of thinking of dispositions that we see as “essential in the discipline of education and for learning in higher education contexts” (McGraw et al. 2016, p. 195), and that inform effective teaching and learning. Based on a review of research as well as discussions between school partners and teacher educators, the framework was developed, trialled and finally embedded in the Master of Teaching programme. Each disposition includes descriptors which highlight what the disposition can look like in teaching and learning contexts. We aim to explicitly examine the dispositions in classes; explore, model and reflect upon them in contexts; enable PSTs to demonstrate them in assessment contexts; and to enhance the dispositions through feedback. Francis et al. (2018) argue that “functional conceptual incoherence” (p. 121) is found across teacher education programmes when staff have differing agendas or enact conceptual visions in diverse ways. The thinking dispositions framework (Fig. 5.1) enables the programme team to have a shared vision and language for modelling, discussing and assessing thinking dispositions and provides a sense of coherence across the programme.

We have become increasingly interested in how site-based teaching and learning experiences provide opportunities to activate and purposefully build the key thinking



**Fig. 5.1** The dispositions for effective teaching framework (Reprinted by permission from Springer, *Teacher education: Innovation, intervention and impact* by Brandenburg, R., McDonough, S., Burke, J., and S. White (Eds.), 2016)

dispositions identified in our framework. Our fortuitous involvement in the Staying BRiTE project (<https://www.stayingbrite.edu.au/>) led us to considering the connection between dispositions and resilience and so we developed a research project focused on PSTs' first teaching experience in order to see whether the dispositions acted as a resource for resilience.

### 5.3.2 *Teaching Values in Action*

As part of the site-based nature of our programme, we have a number of carefully constructed teaching and learning experiences that are designed to provide PSTs with the opportunity to understand the complexity of teaching and learning, and to apply theory in practice. One of these opportunities involved PSTs teaching in the *Values in Action* (VIA) (<https://www.viacharacter.org/>) programme in the partnership school where we teach site-based university classes. This was the first teaching experience for PSTs and they worked in co-teaching partnerships to plan, teach and evaluate three VIA lessons. The VIA programme was a new initiative within the school and all teachers taught lessons that had an explicit focus on understanding and using character strengths to foster learning and build growth mindsets. Like the school students, the PSTs completed the character strengths survey as a way of understanding their personal values.

This first teaching experience provided PSTs with an insight into the complexity of learning and teaching in an authentic school context and was challenging for a number of reasons. A key challenge was that the VIA programme was new to the school and there were varying levels of understanding about its nature and its value held by school leaders, teachers and students. The PSTs were in a co-teaching situation where they were working out-of-field teaching values, and where they have not established relationships with the school students. In their teaching, the PSTs

were required to make theory-practice connections and to plan each session with a focus on differentiation. PSTs also dealt with organisational challenges in the school context such as rooms being changed, staff and students being absent, and interruptions to the planned programme. Our involvement in the Staying BRiTE (<https://www.stayingbrite.edu.au/>) project led us to embedding the BRiTE modules into a core course within the Master of Teaching programme and PSTs completed the modules during the weeks when this first teaching experience occurred. As we became more interested in the explicit teaching of resilience in teacher education, we wondered whether the dispositions in our framework could also act as a resource for building resilience. This teaching experience provided a good opportunity to examine this connection through research. Our guiding research question became: Does a focus on thinking dispositions enable resilience in challenging teaching and learning contexts? Being on-site with the students as they planned, taught and evaluated the VIA sessions enabled us to create opportunities for PSTs to use writing and dialogue to reflect in and on practice in order to surface what underlies judgements, the choice of strategies, feelings in certain situations, how problems are framed and resolved and so on (Schon 1983).

## 5.4 Prompting Reflection on the Thinking Dispositions and Resilience

As part of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) course that PSTs complete in the programme, they create a reflective journal where they examine their learning and development across the first semester. Along with embedding the BRiTE modules throughout different weeks of the PLC course, we also provided students with journal prompts to encourage explicit reflection on the modules and their own developing understandings of resilience and the dispositions. In constructing the journal prompts, we were encouraging PSTs to look for the connections between the ways that the dispositions and their completion of the BRiTE modules might support their resilience in context. In Fig. 5.2, we provide an overview of these prompts and indicate when they occurred within the teaching and learning sequence of the PLC course.

## 5.5 Our Research Approach

While we developed a teaching and learning approach for embedding the BRiTE modules in the PLC course, we were also keen to research the process and to use that research to assist us in identifying how the dispositions and BRiTE modules might act as a resource for enabling the development of resilience in context. While all 21 students in the on-campus cohort participated in the VIA teaching sessions,

**Pre VIA teaching stage (having done the first BRiTE module)**

Draw resilience in the context of teaching.

What personal resources/ capacities/dispositions do you think resilient teachers draw on in teaching?

What sorts of challenges do you think you will face as you prepare for, teach and evaluate your involvement in the VIA sessions?

What personal resources/capacities do you think you will need to draw upon during this experience?

**During the teaching phase of the VIA**

Reflect upon some of the challenges you are experiencing, how you are feeling during this experience and what is enabling you to cope.

**Post VIA teaching experience (having completed the BRiTE modules)**

Draw resilience in the context of teaching. Compare and contrast your two drawings.

What do you think the capacities /personal resources/dispositions of resilient teachers are?

What are you learning through this experience about teaching/student learning/school improvement/yourself?

Reflect on the Teaching Dispositions framework and which dispositions enabled you to learn during this experience.

Reflect on the connections between your experience and the BRiTE modules.

**Fig. 5.2** Journal prompts for the VIA/Resilience project

participation in the research element of the project was voluntary. Ethics approval was granted and PSTs were invited to participate in the research by an independent researcher who was not teaching the PSTs for the PLC course. The research approach drew on a primarily qualitative approach and used a range of data collection methods, with PSTs having the option to participate in some, or all, of the data collection methods.

### **5.5.1 Data Collection Methods**

Data collected as part of the research included:

- Field notes taken by one researcher who observed the PLC classes during the VIA teaching experience.
- On-the-spot semi-structured interviews conducted before and after the VIA teaching experience ( $n = 11$ ).
- PSTs' journal entries related to the VIA teaching experiences and to the BRiTE modules ( $n = 10$ ).
- BRiTE user survey ( $n = 14$ ).

While we collected a range of data as part of our research approach, for this chapter, we are drawing on the data from the interviews, the journals and the BRiTE user survey. The first source is data collected from the on-the-spot interviews, with 11 of the PSTs volunteering to participate in the interview phases of the research. These interviews occurred directly after the PSTs taught their VIA sessions and were

intended to capture their immediate thoughts about the resources and strategies that were enabling them to cope with the challenge of learning to teach. Question prompts for the interviews included questions such as “What is helping you to stay positive?” and “What are you finding challenging?” There were two interviews each conducted after the VIA teaching experiences and these interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The second data source we examine in this chapter is the BRiTE user survey, with 14 PSTs opting to complete this online survey. The survey contained 22 questions that included demographic information and Likert scale response items and open-ended questions. PSTs were asked to rate (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) the modules (e.g. The modules have made me think about ways I can support my own resilience) and possible future uses (e.g. I will use the content from the modules in my teaching career). Open-ended questions prompted students to write about how they had applied their learning from the modules and encouraged them to articulate how they had made connections between the learning in the modules and experiences they had encountered.

The third data source we examine is the journal entries, completed by 10 of the PSTs. As outlined in Fig. 5.2, the prompts encouraged explicit reflection on the connections between the dispositions framework, the BRiTE modules and resilience.

### 5.5.2 *Data Analysis*

In analysing the interviews, we used narrative inquiry methods in order to construct narratives of the PSTs experiences as described in their interviews. We, each of us, independently coded the data looking for evidence of the thinking dispositions and for evidence of processes and outcomes related to resilience. We then came together to compare our analysis and to identify sentences from the interviews that were representative of the codes. In the next stage, we assembled narrative vignettes for each interview in order to highlight the complexity of the PSTs’ experience. Further details about the analysis process and examples of these vignettes can be found in McGraw and McDonough (2019).

The journal entries were coded using an open coding process to identify evidence of the dispositions and of processes and outcomes related to resilience.

Analysis of the survey data was completed by separating the quantitative Likert scale data from the open-ended responses. Given the small sample ( $n = 14$ ), percentages were calculated for the Likert scale survey items, and the open-ended questions, as per the interviews, were coded for evidence of the thinking dispositions.

## 5.6 Analysis and Discussion

### 5.6.1 *The People-Centred Disposition as a Foundational Aspect Supporting Resilience*

On analysing the interview, survey and journal data, we identified the central role a people-centred thinking disposition played in enabling PSTs to be resilient in context (McGraw and McDonough 2019). Despite being faced with the challenge of teaching out-of-field, with a peer and with students they did not know, the PSTs demonstrated an orientation towards the students and the peer they were working with, that enabled them to be resilient despite the complexity of the work. Jordan's (2006) model of relational resilience suggests that mutual empathy, empowerment and courage are the "building blocks of resilience" (p. 79), and in the experiences of the PSTs we see the ways that a people-centred way of thinking enables relational resilience, as demonstrated by Penny who described an interaction with a student saying, "I tried to give him a bit of space and not harass him". In the analysis of the interview data we identified the ways that this people-centred disposition interconnects with the other thinking dispositions in order to enable PSTs to demonstrate resilience and problem-solving in challenging contexts (McGraw and McDonough 2019).

Similarly, there was evidence in the open-ended responses from the BRiTE user survey of PSTs engaging in people-centred thinking as they considered the role they would play in supporting the resilience of others, with one PST commenting that, "The modules made me aware that I'm good at judging other peoples' emotions and I can empathise strongly with other people" (#4). The PST went on to state, "The modules have made me recognise that I need to be a contributor to this network too, so I will be mindful in the future to be supportive and caring to my colleagues and friends" (#4).

This people-centred focus was also identified in the journal responses, with a focus on relationships with others enabling PSTs to consider the connection to wellbeing and resilience as illustrated in the following quote:

I have had some difficulties and have been amazed at the support I have received. My friends and family mean the world to me and it is important that I help my future students build their own resilience ... Community builds relationships and I hope students can be encouraged to become part of their own community. Wellbeing is connected to resilience and relationships. If you have these two you have wellbeing (#1).

This focus on building relationships to support resilience was reflected throughout the journal entries, with PSTs drawing connections between this way of thinking and the ways that they can build resilience in the context of schooling:

The BRiTE modules have demonstrated strong connections to the VIA sessions. Building resilience does not come easy, and sometimes, you really do need to have that positive mindset in the tough challenges that teachers face daily. However, the environment and the context that we work and live in can play a huge role in facilitating resilience. Building relationships with students is something that was really important in the VIA sessions (#5).

PSTs reflected on their motivations for teaching in the journals, and the people-centred nature of their motivations are identified by PSTs as something that enables them to remain optimistic despite the challenges they face in learning to teach. PST #8 describes that ‘I think the students will keep me going, some days will be good but you have to expect the bad days as well. The people around me will also motivate me to keep going’.

### ***5.6.2 The Interconnected Nature of the Dispositions in Supporting Resilience***

While we identified the foundational nature of people-centred thinking to the resilience process, we also identified that PSTs also place a focus on engaging in reflective and strategic thinking in responding to the challenge of learning to teach. This interconnection between ways of thinking is identified in the interviews, survey and journal responses, and enables PSTs to be purposeful, optimistic and to solve problems in the context of learning to teach.

Analysis of the open-ended survey responses indicated that completion of the modules provided PSTs with the ability to activate the reflective thinking disposition, through which they became more self-aware. This is illustrated by the PST who commented that, “I have been able to reflect on my past experiences in instances where I haven’t been resilient and learnt from these in conjunction with the modules” (#10). Similarly, another PST remarked, “The modules reminded me to stand back and see the bigger picture and to take time off. When I am stressed it affects my mood and behaviour so it is important to take time out” (#13). The use of reflective thinking enabled PSTs to be aware of the ways that they use strategies and resources that contribute to the development of resilience, as described by this PST, “It has been interesting to notice how many of the strategies I can apply to situations that I currently experience, and also think about how I could have applied them in past situations” (#4).

The journal entries too, demonstrate evidence of the ways that PSTs are reflecting on, and identifying strategies that enable them to navigate the challenges of teaching. For one PST, “Learning about how to build relationships with colleagues, students and parents through a range of strategies and ways to look after yourself on placements and when you are a teacher were really important” (#6). Another PST described being strategic in order to maintain a balance between work and university saying “I think it’s very important to have a work life balance all throughout life. I complete most of my uni work during the week so I have the weekend to work and see my friends and family” (#7). In reflecting on the strategies that they used to maintain a positive wellbeing, the PST identified the strategies they plan to use into their future career as a teacher.

### **5.6.3 PST Perceptions and Understandings of Resilience**

In analysing both the survey and journal data, we were interested to discover the ways that completion of the modules might work in conjunction with the dispositions framework to build PST perceptions and understandings of resilience.

The PSTs identified that completion of the modules had enabled them to develop and deepen their understandings of resilience with 79% of PSTs agreeing or strongly agreeing to the prompt “The modules helped me develop my knowledge and skills”. Most (84%) participants agreed or strongly agreed that “The modules helped raise awareness about the skills I already have”, with one PST commenting in the open-ended response that, “I know that I have a good combination of skills to be resilient—it is something I am very conscious of. I feel great after doing the modules” (#6). The deepening of understandings of resilience after the completion of the modules was also reflected in the journals, with one PST describing the ways that considering resilience in the context of the VIA teaching experience was valuable:

It was one of those cases for me that I had heard of resilience before and thought about it a little, but not really as a teacher, more just from a self role. I liked that there was the acknowledgement that we can be resilient in different parts of our lives, with different things. I think we have the tendency to think we either are or not. It was knowing the theory, but doing the practice (#1).

While 70% of the PSTs agreed or strongly agreed that the modules helped them “understand things I hadn’t really thought about before”, only 64% agreed or strongly agreed to the prompt “The modules have made me think about ways I can support my own resilience”. In response to this prompt, however, some identified being “already confident” (#10) or that “I already had strategies and learnt nothing new” (#1) that they could draw from to support their resilience. We identified that the completion of the BRiTE modules provided an opportunity for PSTs to reflect on their skills, capacities and their support networks. In similar ways to Mansfield et al. (2016), we also identified that some PSTs described the modules and the content as “common sense”. This view was expressed despite “an acknowledgement that a review and reinforcement of the learnings and wisdoms was both timely and valuable” (Mansfield et al. 2016, p. 225).

PST #1 aged in the 45–49-year-old bracket identified that the modules did not teach them anything that they had not gained through their past life experiences, however, for PSTs in the 20–24-year-old age bracket ( $n = 8$ ), there was a greater recognition that the content of the modules was useful in developing their understandings. There were some small age-related differences between PSTs perceptions of the modules, and this suggests the need to consider how we might work with diverse PST cohorts to build their understandings of resilience, by enabling them to make connections between both their current and their past life experiences.

## 5.7 Conclusions and Future Directions

Mansfield, Papatraianou, McDonough and King (2018) argue that “teacher educators require opportunities to engage in collective, shared professional learning about the resilience process and contextual approaches within teacher education programs that foster and support the development of pre-service teacher resilience” (p. 94). Through participation in the Staying BRiTE project, we have had the opportunity to engage in a collective network focused on exploring these contextual approaches to resilience in teacher education.

Through our research examining this work, we have been provided with an opportunity to explore how resilience might be supported in authentic teaching contexts through a focus on the thinking dispositions. The findings from the interview, survey and journal data indicated that the people-centred thinking disposition was foundational for PSTs and enabled them to demonstrate resilience in context, despite a challenging first teaching experience (McGraw and McDonough 2019). In the different forms of data, we were able to identify the ways that the dispositions framework and the completion of the BRiTE modules provided an opportunity for the PSTs to examine and reflect on their resilience process as they undertook the VIA teaching experience. The data suggest that the interconnection between the dispositions in the framework and the completion of the BRiTE modules supported the PSTs ability to be resilient in context.

While the data indicates that a focus on the thinking dispositions may act as a personal resource to support resilient outcomes in teaching, we need to continue to explore ways to make these thinking dispositions visible and to evaluate and explore the ways that they contribute to the resilience process. Coming to deeper understandings of the dispositions and of the ways that they support resilience processes and outcomes will provide those in teacher education with the opportunity to create meaningful and authentic learning opportunities for PSTs.

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# Chapter 6

## Building Resilience: Using BRiTE with Beginning Teachers in the United States



Lynn Sikma

**Abstract** The most recent data available on beginning teacher attrition in the United States estimates that 17.3% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years teaching. Most efforts to improve this focus on implementing mentoring and induction programs. However, improving beginning teachers' resilience may be an additional strategy, as it develops individual protective factors independent of working conditions. This chapter describes a series of professional development workshops, rooted in the BRiTE modules, presented to two groups of beginning teachers in the southeastern United States during the 2017–2018 school year. All teacher participants were K-12 teachers in their first three years teaching, most teaching in a rural setting. Strategies that have been successfully implemented will be shared along with participant feedback that demonstrates value of the modules for supporting beginning teachers.

**Keywords** Beginning teachers · Professional development · Induction

### 6.1 Introduction

Teaching is a complex work, as it is both intellectual and emotional in nature. Teachers need to thoroughly understand the content they teach and how to teach it, but also how to cope when they feel inadequate or under-supported. In the United States, the focus of most teacher preparation programs is on the intellectual aspect of the job, with little explicit focus on the socio-emotional coping strategies necessary to succeed. Thus, teachers enter the profession with the capacity to teach effective lessons, but not necessarily with the tools to help them cope with the emotional stressors of the work. This can lead to negative outcomes, like attrition, early in their career. This chapter discusses the features of a university-led professional development series rooted in the BRiTE modules implemented in the southeastern United States with beginning teachers. The program was chosen because of its socio-emotional focus,

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with the belief that, although designed for pre-service teachers in Australia, the key underpinnings of the program would make it equally relevant for beginning teachers in the United States. In addition to a description of the professional development program, the chapter also discusses participants' feedback about the relevancy of the program and suggestions for others who want to use it in a similar context.

## 6.2 Teaching in the United States

In the United States there are three main levels of school. Elementary school (grades PK–5) houses the early years of school for students. Children under the age of five attend pre-school or pre-kindergarten (PK) in a private or public school. Children usually enter public schools via kindergarten at age 5 or 6 and complete fifth grade at age 11. During the elementary school years, students generally have one main teacher for all core subject areas (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies), though some schools may have teachers specialize in an area. Middle school houses grades 6–8 with students aged 11–14. During middle school, students begin rotating teachers, with each teacher generally specializing in one or two core subject areas. Students usually have elective courses (e.g., technology, foreign language); they can choose as part of their coursework and can also choose to engage in extracurricular activities (e.g., basketball, orchestra) during this phase of schooling. High school, which houses grades 9–12, is the last phase of public schooling prior to entering university. During high school, students have different teachers for each subject area and have some level of flexibility in their coursework choices. Students are required to take certain core coursework (e.g., two years of a laboratory science) but may choose to take additional, more advanced coursework in areas of their choosing (e.g., four years of a laboratory science).

Teachers have different experiences across those levels. For example, at the elementary level, a teacher is expected to have a broad knowledge base, as they are required to prepare daily lessons in four core subject areas, each meeting the needs of all students in the classroom. At the high school level, teachers specialize in one subject area (e.g., science) and are expected to have a depth of knowledge in their content area. They may teach different sections of the same course several times throughout the day, they may teach completely different levels of the same subject (e.g., general biology and advanced biology), or they may teach different content courses under the umbrella of their specialty (e.g., chemistry and physics). At the elementary level, teachers are generally required to do extra duties like help unload/load buses at the beginning/end of the day or supervise students during lunch or recess. At the high school level, teachers may not have this duty, but they may be asked to coach a sport, run a club, or some other type of extracurricular activity. Middle school teachers may be asked to do lunch duty and coach a sport. Ultimately, teaching at any level comes with its own unique set of challenges in addition to the universal challenges faced by teachers (e.g., testing pressures) (von der Embse et al. 2016).

In the United States, the teaching profession has a national attrition rate of 8%, and less of a third of those leaving the profession are doing so due to retirement (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond 2017; Goldring et al. 2014). The rate of attrition for new teachers is the highest, with between approximately a third and a half of teachers either leaving the profession or their school within the first five years (Alliance for Excellent Education 2005; Curren and Goldrick 2002; Darling-Hammond 2003; DeAngelis and Presley 2011; Herbert and Ramsay 2004; Ingersoll 2012; Ingersoll and Kralik 2004; Smith and Ingersoll 2004). The most current reported attrition rate for beginning teachers in the United States is 17.3%, with 80% of those leaving voluntarily (Gray and Taie 2015). In addition to this, 10% of new teachers move schools, 60% voluntarily, resulting in an overall turnover rate of 27% (Gray and Taie 2015).

The most cited reason for teacher departure is testing and accountability pressures, followed by a lack of administrative support, dissatisfaction with working conditions, and dissatisfaction with the teaching career (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond 2017). Salary has been found to be a key contributor to attrition (Darling-Hammond 2010; Gonzales et al. 2008; Hanushek et al. 2004; Kang and Berliner 2012).

North Carolina is geographically located in the southeastern region of the United States. The geography of the state creates large expanses somewhat removed from others, resulting in a large amount of rural areas in the state. Teacher attrition trends in North Carolina follow those of the United States, with similar rates and rationale (Department of Public Instruction 2019). Rural schools have higher turnover rates than non-rural schools; 25 of the 30 districts ranked highest in turnover are rural districts (Public Schools First 2019).

Another key variable that seems to impact teacher turnover is teacher preparation. Teachers who have gone through alternative certification (which does not require methods coursework or student teaching), called lateral entry teachers, are two to three times more likely to leave the profession than their formally prepared peers (Ingersoll and Merrill 2012). These teachers enter the profession with a bachelor's degree in the area in which they teach, but little to no formal education training. Lateral entry teachers obtain their teaching certification(s) after they begin their jobs, between years 1 and 3. Formal programs like Teach for America are highly structured and designed to recruit recent college graduates to teach hard-to-staff schools (usually urban settings) for two years while providing intensive workshops and training prior to and while teaching. Other alternative pathways are less formalized, but still require teachers to attend training in the form of workshops or university coursework (Mayer et al. 2003).

In North Carolina, due to high teacher turnover and hard to staff areas, there has been a recent increase in lateral entry teachers. There was a 21.4% increase in lateral entry teachers in the state from the 2016–2017 to 2017–2018. There has been a general trend upward in the number of lateral entry teachers employed by the state in recent years, reflecting both a shortage of qualified teaching candidates in the state and an increased need to better understand the needs of this subgroup of teachers. During 2017–2018, 15.1% of employed lateral entry teachers quit compared to 7.62%

of non-lateral entry teachers, giving them a 104% higher rate of attrition than their non-lateral entry counterparts (DPI 2019).

One way attrition has been addressed in the United States is through the implementation of induction and mentoring programs. Though participation in intensive induction and mentoring programs has been found to have a positive correlation with retention (Andrews and Quinn 2005; Gray and Tait 2015; Ingersoll and Strong 2011; Smith and Ingersoll 2004), so has improving teachers' resilience (Bowles and Arnup 2016; Tait 2008). Often, there is little that can be done to change the working conditions (e.g., salary), but teachers' responses to those conditions can be addressed through building resilience.

### 6.3 Why BRiTE?

Teacher education programs in the United States focus on preparing teacher candidates for classroom-based instructional practice. This includes coursework on child development (developmental psychology), content, and methods/field courses covering assessment, planning, instructional, and student engagement strategies (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation 2019). Generally missing from these programs is work pertaining to the social, emotional, and motivational needs of teachers once they enter the field. Researchers have argued that teachers' capacity to deal with the challenges related to these areas requires resilience, which is particularly important for novice teachers (Gu and Day 2013; Johnson et al. 2014; Peters and LeCornu 2007; Tait 2005). According to Gu and Day (2013), "To teach, and to teach at one's best over time, has always required resilience" (p. 22).

Differing definitions of teacher resilience exist throughout the literature, with some agreement that it is a complex, dynamic process consisting of the interplay of personal and contextual factors that allows teachers to bounce back (or forward) from stressors and adversity (Beltman et al. 2011; Benard 2004; Gu and Day 2007, 2013; Mansfield et al. 2012; Tait 2008). Resilience is not something innate, but rather, something that can be developed (Bobek 2002; Howard and Johnson 2014; Johnson et al. 2014; Tait 2008). Resilience can help with feelings of stress and burnout (Howard and Johnson 2004; Richards et al. 2016), help teachers sustain commitment and overall job satisfaction (Brunetti 2006), and improving resilience may lead to better teacher retention (Bobek 2002; Doney 2013; Gu and Day 2007; Peters and LeCornu 2007; Tait 2008). Given the benefits to individual teachers and the profession, teacher educators need to consider ways to improve resilience in pre-service and in-service teachers.

The Building Resilience in Teacher Education, or BRiTE, program (Mansfield et al. 2016) (see Chap. 3) is a practical way to address resilience with teachers. Similar programs do not currently exist in the United States and conditions in the southeastern region of North Carolina (e.g., rural, poverty, high beginning teacher turnover) suggest teachers could benefit from explicit experiences related to building resilience. This chapter outlines the use of the online modules as part of a hybrid

professional development series implemented with beginning teachers (career years 1–3) in southeastern North Carolina. Though developed to build resilience in pre-service teachers in Australia, the content and skills addressed seem to be equally applicable to both pre-service and in-service teachers in the United States. In implementing the program, I wanted to see if and how it was, in fact, applicable to in-service, beginning teachers in a U.S. context.

## 6.4 Context and Participants

Two cohorts of teachers participated in a series of BRiTE-focused professional development during the 2017–2018 school year. The professional development started in November and occurred monthly. I designed and facilitated each session and the college’s assistant PDS director joined me at each session. Both cohorts were instructed to complete the BRiTE online modules ([www.brite.edu.au](http://www.brite.edu.au)), attend a series of five workshops inspired by the information within the modules, and complete an exit survey at the end of the program. One was a large group of K-12 teachers in a rural county approximately 50 miles from the university. The other group was a small group of K-12 teachers from across the southeastern region of the state that were selected as award recipients based on their leadership and innovation in the classroom. Additional information about implementation specificities for each group is found below.

### 6.4.1 *Group One: Franklin County*

Franklin County is located in southeastern North Carolina approximately 50 miles from the university. During the 2017–2018 school year, it served 5,598 students in grades PK–12. The public school district comprised six elementary schools (PK–5), five middle schools (6–8), three high schools (9–12), and one cooperative innovative high school split between two campus sites. It employs roughly 560 teachers across these schools and during the 2017–2018 school year, 67 new teachers (teachers in career years 1–3) participated in the district’s Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP). The breakdown of the new teachers can be found in Table 6.1.

Franklin County’s Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) is a three-year program mandated for all teachers who have taught for less than three years. This includes two groups of teachers. Beginning teachers (BTs) are fully licensed because they have completed a formal approved teacher preparation program and have obtained at least a minimum score on state-mandated content-based exams in their main teaching field. Lateral entry, or provisionally licensed teachers (LEs), hold a lateral license to teach because they have not completed a formal teacher training program or passed the state-mandated content-based examinations but hold a bachelor’s degree in the area they are assigned to teach. A facet of the BTSP is to help LE

**Table 6.1** Franklin County new teachers, 2017–2018 school year

Type of teacher/Years of experience	Elementary (K–5)	Middle (6–8)	High (9–12)	Total
BT1	3	4	1	<b>8</b>
BT2	5	1	3	<b>9</b>
BT3	5	3	3	<b>11</b>
LE1	3	8	6	<b>17</b>
LE2	7	2	3	<b>12</b>
LE3	1	2	7	<b>10</b>
Total	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>67</b>

*BT* Beginning teacher (formal teacher preparation program), *LE* lateral entry (no teacher preparation program; degree in area assigned to teach)

teachers gain full licensure by the end of their third year by supporting them through required coursework and testing.

The BTSP provides new teachers with support from the district's beginning teacher coordinator, mentors, lead teachers, principals, assistant principals, and central office staff with the goal of growing and retaining effective instructional leaders. The program begins with a new teacher orientation before the start of the school year that covers district and state expectations and resources. All new teachers are formally assigned a trained mentor, with attempts made to match the subject area/grade level of the new teachers as much as possible. Throughout the year, mentor/mentee pairs complete and submit logs and documentation of their one-hour weekly meetings on assigned topics. New teachers in the BTSP also are required to attend professional development meetings throughout the year. These include school-based professional learning community (PLC) meetings and formal district level professional development workshops. Because of their strong partnership with the university, Franklin County often reaches out for university run, yearlong professional development series.

Prior to the 2017–2018 school year, the beginning teacher coordinator reached out and requested a professional development series from the university's professional development system's (PDS) office. Several of her beginning teachers had attended a series of sessions I presented on social networking and relationship building during two on-campus professional learning days the year before and expressed to her how beneficial they found it. She asked the PDS office if I could do a longer series as part of the year's BTSP. When I spoke to her about what she was looking for, she explained that she had a very high needs district; most students in the district faced some level of poverty, test performance levels were low, and the rural (and thus, far removed) nature of the district coupled with low salaries made it hard to recruit and retain teachers. Because of this, she had an inordinately high amount of lateral entry teachers and they were experiencing difficulty coping with and adjusting to the work of teaching beyond just instruction. She wanted professional development that would address this aspect of the job, in hopes that it would help with retention

and motivation. I spoke to her about the BRiTE program and offered to develop workshops that would align to the content of the online modules and would include the social networking sessions that she originally requested. After reviewing the program, she agreed it would be a good fit for the needs of her beginning teachers.

The 67 new teachers in Franklin County attended a series of five workshops derived from the BRiTE modules over the course of the school year and each teacher successfully completed all of the online modules, as they were required to submit their certification of completion to the beginning teacher coordinator at the end of the last workshop. Though teachers were required to attend the workshops, several teachers managed or coached extracurricular activities that occurred at the same time as the workshops, so although every teacher attended some of the workshops, not every teacher attended all of the workshops.

At the end of each workshop, the teachers were asked to complete an anonymous session exit survey (required by the PDS office for any school-based professional development sessions). The survey asked them to rate the session in various categories (e.g., relevancy of content, engagement level, clarity, presenter, length of session) from 1 to 5 and to answer two open-ended short answer questions at the end (What was the best part of today's session? What part of today's session would you change?). At the end of the program in May, the beginning teacher coordinator sent the teachers a link to a longer online evaluative survey to complete. Unlike the modules, she did not set a requirement for completion of the survey. This survey included questions about both the BRiTE modules and the workshop experiences. Questions included Likert scale questions and open-ended short answer questions.

#### ***6.4.2 Group Two: Promise of Leadership Award Recipients***

The Promise of Leadership (POL) Award is a two-year program hosted by the university's PDS office honoring exemplary beginning teachers that work within the university's PDS. In the fall of each school year, the office sends out an invitation to participate to all PDS schools. Beginning teachers (PK–12) in their second career year are nominated by their school system for the award due to their display of leadership and innovation in the classroom. A panel comprised faculty and staff at the university reviews nominations and ten teachers are selected as award recipients. In addition to gaining recognition, award recipients participate in university-led professional development, work with a faculty member and designated *Master Teacher*<sup>1</sup> on a project of their choosing, and present a related professional development session to other beginning teachers at an end of the year event hosted by the PDS office.

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<sup>1</sup>This three-year program is hosted by the university's PDS office and recognizes ten veteran teachers for their leadership in the field. During the program, Master Teachers are paired with a university faculty mentor who collaborates with them on one or more mutually beneficial professional growth opportunities.

**Table 6.2** Promise of leadership participants, 2017–2018

Type of teacher/Years of experience	Elementary (K–5)	Middle (6–8)	High (9–12)	Total
BT2	3	3	3	<b>9</b>
LE2	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Total	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

The 2017–2018 cohort included three elementary teachers, three middle school teachers, and four high school teachers (see Table 6.2). Five of the ten teachers taught in rural counties and five taught in the district adjacent to the university. Only one of the high school POLs was a lateral entry teacher, the rest were BTs in year two. The assistant PDS director recruited me to lead the professional development for these teachers during the program. She was in charge of the program and had planned a book study for them on growth mindset. She felt that the series I was developing for Franklin County would be useful for these teachers since they were facing similar challenges in their districts and that it would align well with the book study. Like the Franklin County teachers, the POLs attended five workshops derived from the BRiTE modules, and nine of the ten teachers attended all five sessions. The teachers were asked to complete the BRiTE modules prior to each workshop, though only a few completed or somewhat consistently (3 or more) completed the modules. Teachers were not held accountable for the completion of the modules the way the Franklin County teachers were (by district personnel), which may have contributed to their inconsistent completion.

The POLs were given the same end of program evaluation survey as the Franklin County teachers, and the assistant PDS director sent it out to the teachers in May. In addition to this survey, the POLs were also asked to complete a college-generated survey about the POL program. This survey included rating scale questions about their experience and open-ended short answer questions.

## 6.5 The Workshops

Each workshop was designed to complement one of the BRiTE modules and was delivered identically to both the Franklin County and POL groups. With the exception of the opening workshop session, participants were asked to complete the modules prior to each workshop, since content from the modules was discussed during each meeting. The workshops lasted about an hour-and-a-half each and Table 6.3 aligns the BRiTE topic with each workshop's topic. There were two workshops relating to the Relationships BRiTE module and the workshop on Managing Stress and Wellbeing covered information found in both the Wellbeing and Emotions modules.

In designing the workshops, I began with the two existing workshops I had already developed on social networking and relationships, since those were specifically

**Table 6.3** BRiTE modules and corresponding workshop titles

BRiTE module	Workshop title
Building Resilience	Introduction to Teacher Resilience
Relationships	Making Connections: Using Your Social Network to Your Advantage
Relationships	Developing and Strengthening Your Support Network
Taking Initiative	Taking Initiative
Wellbeing Emotions	Managing Stress and Wellbeing

requested by Franklin County. These workshops focused on mapping out participants' egocentric social support networks, examining the networks, and discussing ways to expand their networks. The content of these workshops aligned well with the Relationships module, so I modified the workshops to purposefully include information regarding building and maintaining relationships found within the BRiTE modules so the content would align seamlessly. I approached the Managing Stress and Wellbeing workshop similarly; I had an existing workshop on mindfulness that I had been developing that I modified to better align with the BRiTE modules on Emotions and Wellbeing. For example, I added several discussion prompts relating to managing stress and mental health, two topics directly derived from the Wellbeing module. Since the content of these modules complemented one another, I felt I could combine these into one workshop since I only had five sessions and had already committed to doing two sessions on Relationships. The other two workshops were derived directly from module content; they followed the same basic structure (e.g., the Taking Initiative workshop focused on problem-solving, professional development, and communication) and utilized some content from the modules. Additional content was added to enhance these workshops so they were not just mere presentations about the modules (e.g., student resilience was discussed in the first workshop, boundary setting was added to the Taking Initiative workshop).

Each workshop provided participants with information related to the topic, opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and the module content, and an activity/discussion related to the topic. At the end of each workshop, the participants had homework; this included completing the next module and some sort of reflection/action based on the content from the workshop. Table 6.4 provides an overview of the information covered, the activity/discussion topic, and the participants' homework (in addition to completing the module).

## 6.6 Feedback

At the completion of the workshops in May 2018, each participant was asked to complete an online end of program evaluative survey about their opinions of the modules and the workshops. Though the workshops were directly aligned to the

**Table 6.4** Workshop overview

Workshop	Information covered	Activity/Discussion	Homework
Introduction to Teacher Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is resilience?</li> <li>• What impacts resilience?</li> <li>• Teacher resilience</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>	Reflection: What does resilience look like in your life? Activity: Introduction to BRiTE modules	Reflect on moments of resilience
Making Connections: Using Your Social Network to Your Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a social network</li> <li>• What do social network maps look like</li> <li>• What do social network maps tell us?</li> </ul>	Reflection: Who is in your support network? Activity: Draw out your support network Discussion: Patterns of networks	Consider your network in action and what you have to offer others
Developing and Strengthening Your Support Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of support sought by new teachers</li> <li>• Building relationships with colleagues, parents, and students</li> <li>• How to expand your network and be a strategic extrovert</li> <li>• Maintaining relationships</li> </ul>	Activity: Map analysis Reflection and Discussion: What are your needs as they compare to what other new teachers need? What are you an expert at?	Make an additional network connection
Taking Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem-solving</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Communicating effectively and assertively</li> <li>• Setting boundaries</li> </ul>	Activity/Discussion: School-based scenarios	Say no to something (set a boundary)
Managing Stress and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress and mental health</li> <li>• Maintaining wellbeing</li> <li>• Dealing with stress</li> <li>• Mindfulness</li> <li>• Summation of workshop series</li> </ul>	Discussion: How do you manage stress? Activity: mindfulness activities (e.g., breathing exercises, focus/teambuilding, slow eating)	Apply what you've learned through this program

module content, I wanted to see (a) if the teachers' experiences differed between the two modalities and (b) how relevant they found the modules and the workshops. Franklin County teachers were also asked to complete individual workshop evaluations after each meeting that included rating scale questions and two short answer questions. The Promise of Leadership Award recipients were asked to complete an

additional program exit survey from the college, sent out at the same time as the evaluative survey, and half responded.

There was a low response rate (22%) with the end of program evaluation survey, most likely due to the timing of dispersal aligning with the end of the school year. The initial email with the survey link was sent out the week before state testing began and only one teacher completed it. A reminder email was sent out after testing ended, but this corresponded with the last week of school. A third email was sent out a few weeks after school ended. Of the 17 responses, 15 were from Franklin County teachers and a third of them were incomplete. The low response rate from the POLs on this survey could be due to their requirement to complete two surveys, which were sent out from the PDS office together. These teachers may have thought if they completed one, they need not complete the other. If I were to implement this again, I would try to embed it as part of the final workshop to improve the response rate.

### ***6.6.1 Relevance of Program***

Though the response rate to the end of program survey was low, there were trends across the surveys. There was not a marked difference in responses between lateral entry and beginning teachers. Given that the lateral entry teachers lacked any formal teacher training, it was expected that these teachers would find the modules and workshops to be more helpful than their beginning teacher counterparts, but this was not the case, as both groups had similar responses.

Overall, the teachers had a positive (ratings 8–10) to somewhat positive (ratings 5–7) response regarding the BRiTE modules. Teachers found the content of the modules interesting and relevant and all reported feeling that the content of the modules was appropriate for beginning teachers. All respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that the modules promoted resilience. Only one respondent felt negatively toward the modules, which she suggested was because she had 11 years of experience prior to hire in the district and didn't feel like a new teacher. Critiques of the modules mentioned included feeling that the modules took too long to complete (2) and that they should include U.S. experiences (1). The module most teachers identified as being the most useful to them was the module on Wellbeing.

All of the teachers who completed the end of program survey reported a positive response regarding the workshops. They felt strongly that the content was relevant, organized, and appropriate for beginning teachers. All respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that the workshops have helped increase their awareness and understanding of their own resilience and helped them feel more confident as a teacher. The only critiques of the workshops were related to timing, not content. The workshops occurred at the end of the school day, and this is something the Franklin County teachers mentioned consistently throughout the series in their end-of-workshop evaluations. The workshops the teachers found most useful were the workshops related to relationships/social networks and managing wellbeing and stress. This was not

surprising, as these sessions were particularly activity-heavy and hands on. These sessions also aligned to the participants' preferred online modules.

Within the survey, there was an open-ended question asking participants if they had anything they wanted to add about their experience. Since only a few chose to respond, all of their quotes are found below:

- I thought all the workshops were useful in more ways than one. It allowed for so much collaboration that I normally would not have and to make connections with other teachers across the area—that was awesome! (BT3)
- Thought they were very helpful for BT teachers. I thought they applied to how I felt and what I was experiencing as a teacher (BT2).
- Great information and activities for sharing experiences (LE3).
- As a result of this workshop, I have been working harder to strengthen relationships (LE2).
- I thought everything we covered was informative and helpful. It helped to know that other teachers were feeling the same way as me (BT2).
- I learned how to maintain a better work-life balance (LE1).

Overall, the teachers who completed the end of program survey felt the modules and workshops were relevant for both their context and level of experience and it seemed like the workshops were important to enhance the module content.

### ***6.6.2 Community Building***

Typically, new teachers in southeastern North Carolina receive professional development related to instructional practices as part of their induction experience (e.g., differentiation, digital literacy, visual learning strategies). These workshops were atypical because they focused more on socio-emotional topics and on the teachers as individuals. Throughout the year, participants consistently described the meetings as “refreshing” and a source of much needed community. This was particularly true for the smaller group of POLs. They formed a tight bond relatively quickly, in part because they were discussing very personal topics beginning in the first meeting. Since they were such a small group, everyone was inherently forced to share their thoughts, often about vulnerable topics. For example, the first workshop opened with a discussion about what resilience looks like in their students. After a few people shared stories about their students, one of the middle school teachers got very emotional as he described one of his students who was undergoing cancer treatment for the third time. He shared how inspired he was every day by this student, who, despite having a huge obstacle to overcome, maintained the most positive outlook on life. At the end of the second meeting, one teacher remarked, “I love coming to these meetings because they feel like therapy. They are so focused on *me*, as in the person, not just the teacher.” They felt heard, as the message I consciously expressed during every workshop was one of empathy and support. One POL noted in her exit survey from the college, “It felt like a community very quickly, and I was always just

excited to get together to talk about problems and successes.” Another noted, “Part of the reason this program worked so well is because you can tell you genuinely care about us as people and teachers, and I really appreciated that.”

Another facet of the workshop series the teachers appreciated was the ability to network with other new teachers. In their post-workshop evaluations, the Franklin County teachers would consistently mention “talking to and hearing from other new teachers in the district” as one of the most beneficial aspects of the workshop, regardless of topic. When asked to share a piece of the POL program that had the strongest impact on them as a beginning teacher, every teacher mentioned networking with other beginning teachers. One teacher shared, “I loved every part of this experience, the most impactful was the meetings with other POLs and having meaningful discussions with the group.” This is consistent with the induction literature related to the relational needs of new teachers; the workshops provided a catalyst for relationships to form between the new teachers (Ingersoll and Strong 2011; Ronfeldt and McQueen 2017; Smith and Ingersoll 2004).

Part of the success of this professional development series was due to the fact that the participants considered the presenters to be outsiders. That is, each meeting was a safe space independent of anyone who was in an evaluative or administrative position over the teachers. In Franklin County, during a session in which the mentor/mentee relationship was going to be discussed, the beginning teacher coordinator suggested that mentors be invited to partake in the session. This offer was declined as it was important that the new teachers felt comfortable sharing any struggle they might be facing in that relationship. One POL expressed in the exit survey, “We had the freedom to discuss issues and receive feedback from those who were not directly involved in the situation.” This safety allowed the teachers to discuss delicate topics like struggles with colleagues or administrators.

It was evident in their exit surveys that the POL group embraced and applied the resilience material. One teacher noted, “The teacher resilience [material] has helped me be mindful when I am having trying times.” Several mentioned sharing the material and information with other teachers at their schools. One said, “I try everyday to at least get one person to try something we tried during the sessions.” Another said, “I always keep in mind the resiliency training and try to help out other stressed out teachers.”

## 6.7 Conclusion

In the United States, teacher preparation programs are primarily focused on preparing teachers for instructional practice, often ignoring or overlooking preparation related to the socio-emotional aspects of teaching (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation 2019). As a result, many teachers enter the profession and feel overwhelmed and underprepared for the demands of the job and end up leaving early in their careers (Alliance for Excellent Education 2005; Gray and Taie 2015; Smith and

Ingersoll 2004). The BRiTE program addresses this lack of preparation by providing teachers with the tools needed to deal with difficult situations.

Though no generalizable conclusions can be made from this one example, the new teachers involved in the professional development recognized the impact the program made on their own resilience, particularly relating to work–life balance and relationships. Although the end of program survey response rate was low, this message was reflected consistently in the feedback following each workshop. An unexpected outcome was the development of a strong professional learning community that developed with the smaller POL group as a result of the reflections, discussions, and activities derived from the BRiTE materials. This PLC formation may further contribute to the teachers’ resilience (Waddel 2007). A year following implementation, the group is still actively engaged in regular discussions about their classroom practice and contexts and some of them are providing professional development to other new teachers in their schools regarding what they learned in the program.

The following suggestions are offered for those interested in implementing a similar program in a U.S. context:

- Provide teachers with a document explaining how each module aligns to the state professional teaching standards prior to completion. Despite explanation that the program was aligned to the Australian professional teaching standards but that these standards were very similar to the U.S. state teaching standards, teachers were critical of the fact that it was an Australian program.
- Similarly, despite prompting at the beginning of the series to ignore them, some teachers (particularly those in career year 3) were offended by the use of the pre-service label throughout the modules. Therefore, it is of particular importance to deliberately align examples to the in-service experience.
- Though the online modules could certainly be used a standalone experience, part of the strength of this professional development experience seemed to be the hybrid nature of implementation. Providing teachers time to complete the modules before the face-to-face meetings allowed more time for activities, reflections, and discussion at a deeper level.
- If possible, implement with a small group. Though the Franklin County teachers reported satisfaction with their experiences, the group of 67 people did not form the same tight-knit community and PLC as the 10-person POL group.

Overall, this was a successful professional development series and one that is now regularly requested by school partners. Though the BRiTE online modules were developed for and are used with teachers in an Australian context, the content and skills addressed as part of the program are equally applicable to a U.S. context (and perhaps other international contexts, as well) (see Chaps. 8 and 9). It could certainly fit into teacher education programs, but it could also be part of the induction experience for new teachers, similar to the program implementation described here.

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## Chapter 7

# ‘Positive Education’: A Professional Learning Programme to Foster Teachers’ Resilience and Well-Being



**Luísa Fernandes, Maria João Gouveia** , **José Castro Silva** ,  
and **Francisco Peixoto** 

**Abstract** Professional learning can make a significant contribution to teachers’ resilience and well-being. This chapter reports the implementation of a professional learning programme focused on resilience and well-being, targeting 35 in-service Portuguese teachers, mostly working in middle and secondary education. The ‘Positive Education’ programme was adapted from the European project ENTREE (ENhancing Teachers REsilience in Europe) and encompasses six training modules: 1—Resilience; 2—Building Relationships; 3—Emotional Well-Being; 4—Stress Management; 5—Effective Teaching; 6—Classroom Management, and an additional module named ‘Education for Well-Being’. The concepts and topics for each module will be discussed, along with the design and implementation of the strategies followed to promote a positive, collaborative and reflexive environment (e.g. wellness activities, stress relief and work–life balance). This chapter also describes the main effects of the training programme on participants, gathered through interviews at the end of the training sessions.

**Keywords** Resilience · Teacher professional learning · Teacher well-being · Resilience programme

## 7.1 Introduction

A number of studies have shown that resilience correlates positively with teachers’ well-being (Brouskeli et al. 2018; Pretsch et al. 2012; Svence and Majors 2015). Resilience is a predictor of job satisfaction and well-being among teachers and can

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act as a protective factor against the negative costs of the teaching profession (Pretsch et al. 2012), such as teacher stress, burnout and teacher intention to leave the profession (Flores 2018; Patrão et al. 2012; Pocinho and Perestrelo 2011). Resilience is conceptualised as a process (Mansfield et al. 2016), in the sense that it can be fostered amongst teachers in order to sustain their well-being and commitment to teaching profession and quality in educational settings (Day et al. 2007). Moreover, it can be nurtured through initial and in-service professional learning. The most widely recognised formal procedures that have been found to foster teacher resilience incorporate teacher learning and development workshops and coaching by experienced and senior teachers (Richter et al. 2013; Smith and Ingersoll 2004).

Resilience is seen as a construct that can be nurtured and developed (e.g. Beltman et al. 2018; Mansfield et al. 2016). To foster teachers' resilience, Benard (2003) suggests that they need professional development opportunities, resources and materials, caring collegial relationships and opportunities for shared decision-making and planning. Teachers' resilience should be nurtured and supported within the school, and the school administration plays an important role in building and sustaining resilience (e.g. Day and Hong 2016; Leroux 2018). Many studies suggest that teacher education programmes have a key role to play in preparing teachers for the challenges they face—for example, by developing their skills in collaboration, problem-solving, managing stress and efficacy-building experiences (Durksen et al. 2017; Mansfield et al. 2014; Silva et al. 2018). Developing a broader range of skills and strategies, along with curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, enables teachers to feel better equipped to meet the challenges of their work. Opportunities for professional development (Greenfield 2015) can be both formal (e.g. training workshops) and informal (e.g. seeking advice from a more experienced colleague). The relevance of teacher professional learning programmes and the existence of communities of practice is emphasised in some studies, highlighting its contribution to teachers' resilience and well-being (Clarà 2017; Raider-Roth et al. 2012).

Contributing to the existing research on teacher's professional development and learning, this chapter reports the results of the implementation of a teacher training programme on resilience and well-being. This programme, called 'Positive Education', is a face-to-face training aiming to enhance teachers' resilience and well-being. The programme comprised seven modules and activities intended to help in-service teachers to apply and adapt strategies to promote resilience and well-being in their own specific pedagogical context. Teacher educators may find the modules' description particularly useful in informing their own teacher training programmes. Professionals engaged in in-service teacher professional learning may choose to focus on the more practical, in-class applications.

## 7.2 Rationale and Goals of the ‘Positive Education’ Programme

The professional learning programme ‘Positive Education’ was adapted from the European programme ENTREE (ENhancing Teachers REsilience in Europe; <http://entree-project.eu/en/>; Silva et al. 2018) (see also Chap. 1) and aimed to foster resilience and well-being among middle and secondary school teachers. The training programme consisted of six training modules from ENTREE: Resilience, Building Relationships, Emotional Well-Being, Stress Management, Effective Teaching, Classroom Management and a new module called Education for Well-Being.

One of the main focuses of the Education for Well-Being module was to develop the ability to foster positive emotions in oneself and others. This objective is based on Barbara Fredrickson’s broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson 1998, 2004). The theory posits that through broadening attention and thinking, positive emotions can create opportunities to build new, or reinforce existing, mental, psychological and social resources. These new resources and repertoires of action emerge as a result of patterns of thinking that are more open to information, more integrative and more flexible, created by the experience of positive emotions. Longitudinal research based on the broaden-and-build theory shows that daily experiences of positive emotions predict broadened coping resources and greater trait resiliency, self-efficacy beliefs, more self-control and future-oriented time-thinking, interpersonal trust and social connectedness (see Fredrickson 2013 for a review of evidence). Following the theory, all these increments of psychological functioning increase opportunities for future experience of positive emotions, giving way to positive emotion’s reciprocal and sequential effects (Garland et al. 2010).

The education for well-being module was operationalised based on different dimensions of the concept of well-being, following the Positive Education perspective and Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model, which emphasises P—Positive Emotion (feeling good, positive emotions, optimism, pleasure and enjoyment); E—Engagement (fulfilling work, interesting hobbies, flow); R—Relationships (social connections, love, intimacy, emotional and physical interaction); M—Meaning (having a purpose, finding a meaning in life); A—Accomplishments (ambition, realistic goals, important achievements, pride in yourself). The well-being module allows an emphasis on the well-being construct and associated variables. This module was the initial one, introducing the whole formation. It had an interactive nature that allowed for adaptation of the other modules of the training, the schedule, the time load and associated dynamics, aiming to bring the specific training needs of teachers to the reality of the training program. Moreover, the theme of ‘Education for Well-Being’ can contextualise the promotion of resilience skills, which makes this module the core module of the training programme, structuring the formative dynamics. On the other hand, all of the modules included topics linked to the central module. Thus, there was a constant synergy and interconnection between the different modules and the core, ‘Education for Well-Being’. The objective was to make the programme

coherent, aiming to improve the professional practices of the participating teachers through a joint, consistent and interconnected reflection.

While conceptualising the training programme, the elements of three subsystems (the teacher, the school and the learning activities) were taken into account (Opfer and Pedder 2011), attending to the reciprocal influences of these three subsystems on the professional learning of each trainee. The methodological approach followed in the Positive Education programme sought to find strategies and content that took into account the interactions of these three subsystems. There was thus a logic of systemic approach between the subject (the teacher, with all of their present and past experiences and beliefs), the process (learning activities that take into account the subject and its context), the context (the school, with the different experiences it provides) and the product (teacher learning). Thus, trainees took their experiences and beliefs into their learning and this ecological view of promoting resilience in teachers was the guiding principle when designing the module content and activities.

The methodology used in the Positive Education programme brings together the key points of a teacher training programme (Avalos 2011; Darling-Hammond 2006; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995; Engeström and Kerosuo 2007; Kim and Hannafin 2008; Korthagen 2001; Lave 1993; Lave and Wenger 1991; Turunen and Tuovila 2012), namely:

1. Teacher learning conceived as the product of the learner's interaction with contexts, and professional learning is anchored in sociocultural contexts of collegial work and professional growth which occurs through social interaction;
2. Coherence between theory and practice, focusing on practice as a source of learning;
3. A grounded curriculum whereby the training was structured in a dynamic modular organisation, in which the nuclear module (Education for Well-Being) was the framework of all the others and with which all interrelated;
4. Training based on and adjusted to the real experiences and needs of the trainees, through interactive dynamics;
5. A training approach based on case studies. The sessions provide situational and authentic learning possibilities and promote the application of conceptual tools to real-world situations, through an individual or joint reflection, contextualised to their practices and beliefs;
6. Partnerships between universities and schools that enabled the participation of teachers from various schools of the municipality and of various levels of education, given the credibility that this partnership brings to the training programme.

### **7.3 Design and Implementation of the Training Modules**

Six modules (resilience, relationships, well-being, stress and coping, effective teaching and classroom management) and education for well-being as a nuclear module were developed to reflect the whole spectrum of 'teacher resilience' as

outlined in the theoretical framework. Teachers were enrolled in the programme in two sessions presenting the programme to the teachers’ community of schools in one municipality of the Lisbon region. In these sessions, a general overview of the programme and the main goals were presented. Afterwards, teachers who were interested in attending the training programme filled out a form and were contacted to participate in the programme by being included in the first group of training ( $n = 17$ ). A second group ( $n = 18$ ) was organised with some of the participants who were not able to participate in the first group, and some other teachers invited by participants in the first group. Both groups participated in the 18-h professional learning programme, consisting of nine sessions of 2 h each, once a week.

The training programme is structured in a dynamic modular way, in which the nuclear module (education for well-being) frames all the others, acting as a centraliser and maintaining relationships with all modules (Fig. 7.1). Education for Well-Being thus contextualises the promotion of teachers’ resilience skills.

This training model allows a curricular flexibility in the management of the different modules, adapting them to the actual needs and practices of the participating teachers. The training sessions fit the Positive Education paradigm (e.g. Norrish et al. 2013; White 2016) and the Realistic Teacher Training Model (e.g. Korthagen 2001; Korthagen et al. 2013) in a collaborative, participatory and reflective context, with the prevalence of theoretical-practical activities promoting well-being competences (e.g. flourishing, increased potential and human virtues) and resilience (e.g. emotional, social, relational, motivational and professional). Grounded in the Positive Education paradigm, the several methodological strategies used seek to enhance the well-being of participating teachers, focusing on the development of positive emotions, good

**Fig. 7.1** Dynamic modular model of “Positive Education” teacher training programme



relationships, satisfaction, hope, optimism, flow and happiness. The proposed activities lead to dynamic workshops where teachers recognise their main virtues and the importance of developing them to achieve holistic well-being. Some of the personal strengths developed are empathy, creativity, kindness and resilience, among others.

The realistic model of teacher education is also directly related to Positive Education, taking into account that what Korthagen (2001) designates as core qualities are the character strengths of positive psychology, which were developed in this training. We thus focused on constantly valuing the human educational potential (reinforcing the best in each participant) and investing in their psychological capital. In addition, we intended that these positive traits would lead teachers to face life in a more positive, resilient and balanced way.

The choice of delivering the training through workshops was framed by the Realistic Model characteristics, namely focusing on school contexts and teachers' practices, and on a problem-solving orientation in schools. The workshop sessions took place using concrete examples from the participant teachers, and the joint reflections allowed participants to achieve conclusive solutions based on the experiential reality of each one.

One of the researchers, who is a teacher and has experience in teacher training, acted as a learning facilitator. During the sessions, teachers were encouraged to work and discuss their own experiences through individual or joint reflection, contextualised to their beliefs and practices, with the specific goals of developing relationships between peers, and collaborative and teamwork skills. The workshops started with a brief motivation activity facilitated by the trainer or by a guest. This methodology allowed the training to play as an open system, with the participation of several well-being dynamics facilitators (e.g. meditation, relaxation, mindfulness), whose practical approaches helped participants regain their vitality as the sessions took place in the post-work period, between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. These activities not only aimed to stimulate and motivate the trainees at the beginning of the training sessions, allowing for a broader understanding of the later theoretical content, but also served as examples of motivation strategies that could be applied later to their students. Throughout the sessions, there was also a concern to adapt the verbal communication of the trainer to the target audience, using a 'language of education' and not only of psychology. At the end of the activities and discussion/reflection, a theoretical systematisation of ideas and concepts was made, mainly through presentations based on the theoretical framework underlying ENTREE and using the materials previously developed in this European project (Silva et al. 2018).

The training modules were presented in a sequence that sought to follow the personal and professional needs/motivations of the participating teachers, namely:

1. Nuclear Module: Education for Well-Being (2 sessions);
2. Emotional Well-Being (2 sessions);
3. Resilience (2 sessions);
4. Building Relationships (1 session);
5. Stress Management (1 session);
6. Effective Teaching and Classroom Management (1 session).

Participants were informed that they would not get any credit units for participating in the training and that if they had attended the training sessions, they would get a certificate of participation. The participating teachers were very experienced, and therefore the ‘Effective Teaching’ and ‘Classroom Management’ modules were merged and addressed in a single session. The following tables describe the contents covered in the training sessions.

## 7.4 Overview of the Training Modules

See Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6.

**Table 7.1** Overview of the module ‘Education for well-being’

Module	Education for well-being
Duration	4 h (2 sessions)
Goals	<p>Framed by the Positive Education theoretical framework, the main objectives of this module were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become aware of a more adaptive way of life with the presence of emotions such as positive mood, hope, resilience and optimism;</li> <li>• Know and apply positive education tools, operationalising behaviours in this sense;</li> <li>• Act as positive transforming educators from the perspective of an integrative well-being (physical, mental, social and spiritual);</li> <li>• Know the main character strengths and human virtues, emphasising personal skills in these domains and applying them to teaching</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive (trans)formation: Teachers as Educational Transformers by Positive Education;</li> <li>• Holistic perspective of well-being;</li> <li>• Teacher flourishing: Promotion of virtues and character strengths</li> </ul>

**Table 7.2** Overview of the module ‘Resilience’

Module	Resilience
Duration	4 h (2 sessions)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on teachers’ knowledge about resilience;</li> <li>• Define the concept of teacher resilience as a multidimensional construct, comprising its micro, meso and macro levels;</li> <li>• Establish the relationship between resilience and quality of teaching and learning;</li> <li>• Know the factors that contribute to teacher resilience (risk and protective factors) and their impact on an individual level;</li> <li>• Explore how teachers can become more resilient</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting teacher resilience;</li> <li>• Risk and protective factors</li> </ul>

**Table 7.3** Overview of the module ‘Building Relationships’

Module	Building relationships
Duration	2 h (1 session)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on the importance of school climate as a risk and protective factor of teacher resilience;</li> <li>Identify ways to promote a positive school climate;</li> <li>Understand the importance of support networks (personal and professional) and the construction of educational communities in the school;</li> <li>Foster collaboration and teamwork as a support factor at school;</li> <li>Promote effective communication and relationships through the development of relational skills and teacher resilience</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School climate and teacher resilience;</li> <li>Communication for effective relationships and resilience;</li> <li>Teacher support networks, relationships and resilience</li> </ul>

**Table 7.4** Overview of the module ‘Emotional well-being’

Module	Emotional well-being
Duration	4 h (2 sessions)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse the importance of positive emotions in teacher resilience and well-being and use some strategies to promote them;</li> <li>Understand and identify emotions in others and demonstrate empathy;</li> <li>Assertively communicate one’s thoughts and emotions;</li> <li>Use effective communication tools such as reflective listening;</li> <li>Identify and understand emotions, feelings, strengths and personal challenges;</li> <li>Use different emotion management strategies to deal with different situations in the school context</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotions; self-awareness and regulation of emotions;</li> <li>Management and regulation of emotions;</li> <li>Positive emotions, empathy and assertiveness</li> </ul>

**Table 7.5** Overview of the module ‘Stress management’

Module	Stress management
Duration	2 h (1 session)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on the definition of stress and associated concepts;</li> <li>Know coping strategies (theoretical and practical support) to deal with stress before, during and after classes;</li> <li>Understand stress-related aspects of corporeality and how to maintain a good work-life balance;</li> <li>Learn to deal with stress symptoms associated with teaching (teacher) and learning (students)</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stress management: health, stress and coping</li> </ul>

**Table 7.6** Overview of the modules ‘Effective teaching’ and ‘Classroom management’

Modules	Effective teaching and classroom management
Duration	2 h (1 session)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the efficacy of planning, teaching and learning;</li> <li>• Develop communicational skills that can contribute to a positive education;</li> <li>• Distinguish between summative and formative assessment, and analyse the importance of formative assessment for learning;</li> <li>• Diagnose and reflect on the personal profile of classroom management;</li> <li>• Know proactive and positive techniques of classroom management (organisation, production of materials, rules and procedures selection) and management of student behaviour/work</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective teaching and learning;</li> <li>• Student work management;</li> <li>• Proactive and positive classroom management strategies</li> </ul>

## 7.5 Evaluation of the Training Modules

### 7.5.1 Participants

The participants were 23 of the 35 teachers from nine different schools who participated in the training, ranging from preschool education (one teacher) to secondary education (nine teachers). Most of them were women (78%) with 26.7 years of teaching (on average) and taught in elementary schools (52%). The 35 teachers were distributed into two groups.

### 7.5.2 Procedure

To evaluate the training programme, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 23 participants from both groups (15 from group 1 and 8 from group 2)<sup>1</sup> who volunteered to be interviewed. They answered questions about (a) the perceived usefulness and applications of the programme; (b) the contributions to their personal and professional lives; (c) the perceived impact on relationships with colleagues, students and others; (d) the impact on resilience and conflict management skills; (e) the pros and cons of the programme and suggested improvements for the programme contents and implementation. Teachers were also asked to evaluate the programme. Each interview lasted between 7 and 20 min. All interviews were transcribed and fully analysed to identify the different ideas proposed by the participants within each question.

<sup>1</sup>Besides this evaluation, the programme was evaluated through the use of measures collected at the beginning and the end of the program and compared to a control group. More information about it can be found in Fernandes et al. (2019).

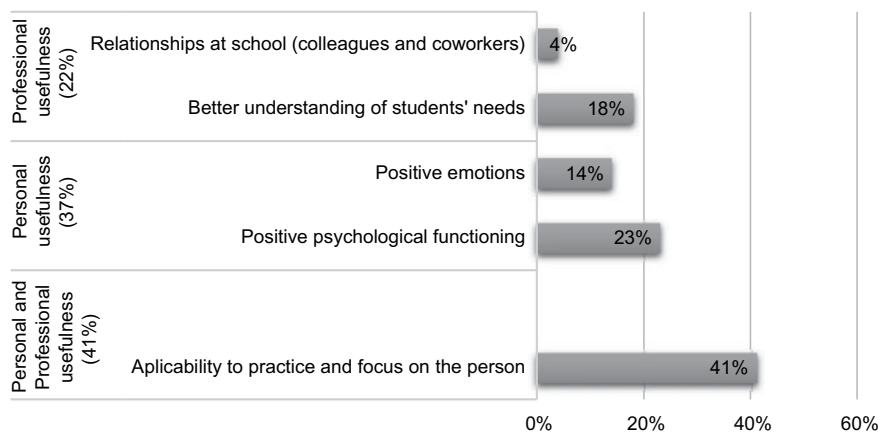
### 7.5.3 Data Analysis

Interview data were analysed following each major interview question, guided by the procedures usually taken in content analysis to create a coding scheme (Creswell 2012; Krippendorff 2004). Thus, two independent researchers read the interviews iteratively to create categories and sub-categories, discussed and refined them until the final coding scheme was achieved. The different responses were then aggregated into major categories or themes and sub-categories. For each question, the percentages of answers obtained in each category or subcategory were computed, considering the total number of ideas proposed in that category or question. About 25% of the interviews were independently coded by a third rater, and Cohen's kappa was computed to assure the validity of the coding system ( $\kappa = 0.91$ ).

## 7.6 Results

### 7.6.1 Perceived Usefulness and Application of the Programme

The perceived usefulness of the training was shown by the evaluation of the programme and the question focusing on its perceived usefulness. Regarding the global evaluation of the programme, teachers considered it useful from both a professional and a personal point of view, with applicability to practice and focus on the person being the most referred categories (9 out of 22, 41%, Fig. 7.2). The majority of answers emphasised the programme's focus on the self and the promotion of positive psychological functioning and balanced emotions:



**Fig. 7.2** Perceived usefulness of the training programme

- ‘In personal and professional terms I thought it was very fruitful because it gave me a new perspective of me as a person’;
- ‘I’m a little bit stressed, it helped me to pause, to keep calm, to reflect...’.

A better understanding of students’ needs was also perceived as a major contribution to the training for the professional learning of participants:

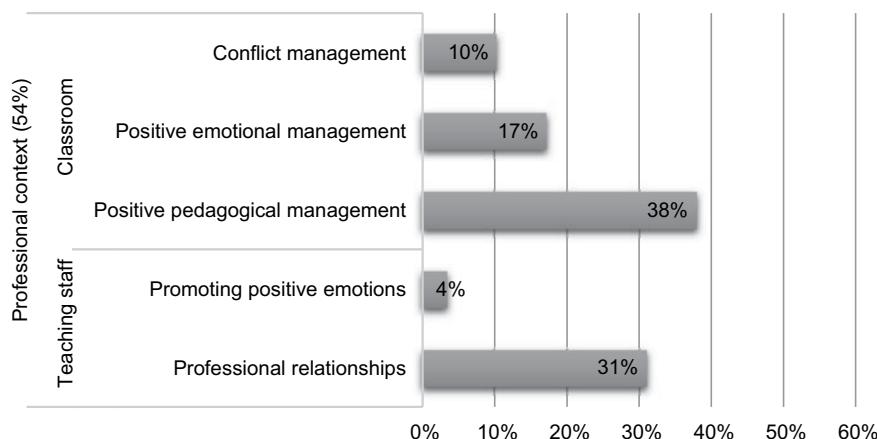
- ‘I think I’ve learned to look a little bit more at their (students’) individuality, to worry a little bit more if I’m a good teacher at the emotional level as well. To give them more than that part also. To hear them more...’.

Teachers perceived that they have applied some of the trained skills both at the professional (54%, 29 of the 54 responses) and personal levels (46%, 25 out of 54 answers). At the professional level (Fig. 7.3), the majority of answers focused on more positive pedagogical management skills and professional relationships with colleagues and students:

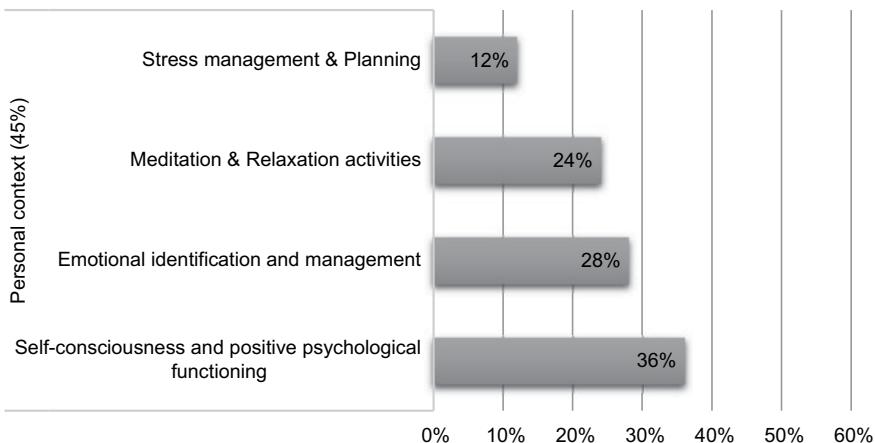
- ‘In the relationship with the students, when there were less pleasant situations, I always tried to devalue a little what could be a bad influence, what could be negative to achieve a certain goal’.
- ‘There are always problems that come up, especially in relationships, and I think about what I learned in training and things have been overcome better’.

At the personal level (Fig. 7.4), teachers said they have applied skills mainly to gain greater consciousness about self and emotions:

- ‘I have more consciousness of things...I start thinking about it more, where before I just acted without thinking of what I was doing’.
- ‘Emotionally, it helped me’.



**Fig. 7.3** Perceived application of the training programme at the professional level



**Fig. 7.4** Application of the training programme at the personal level

They thought they acted better in difficult situations:

- ‘(...) my ability to stop and not be impulsive in more difficult interaction situations, I recognise this as benefits of this action’.

The data analysis also points out to the introduction of some relaxation or meditation routines onto their daily living

- ‘In the morning I meditate and use those techniques (that we have learned) to carry the energy by visualising a positive thing’.

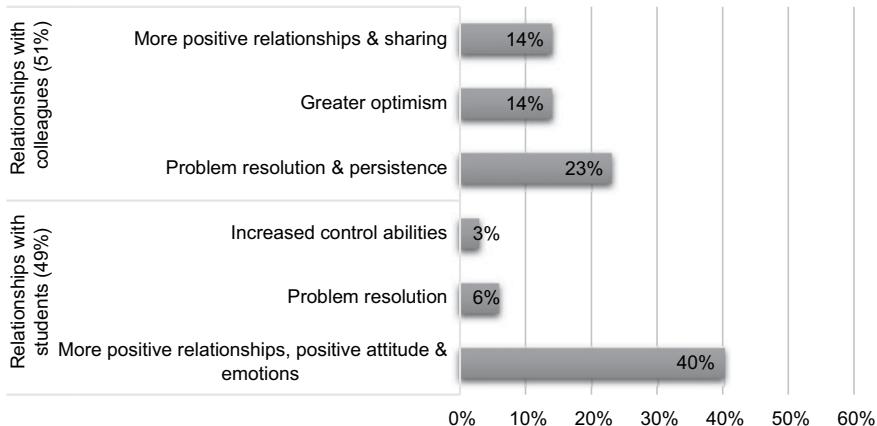
### 7.6.2 *Perceived Impact on Relationships*

The large majority of teachers recognised the positive impact of the programme on relationships with colleagues and students (Fig. 7.5). In fact, only one teacher said he did not notice any change in his relationships with his students; six teachers answered the same about their relationships with co-workers.

The greater impact on students was perceived to be on more positive attitudes towards them (14 answers, 40%), which improved pedagogical relationships:

- ‘I think it interfered more with the kids. (...) I am more loving, calmer with them...’
- ‘(...) I think I started complimenting them a lot more, having a lot more patience, thinking at least about that’.

Relationships with co-workers were also perceived to have been improved (Fig. 7.5). The majority of the 19 answers to this question focused on a greater willingness to



**Fig. 7.5** Perceived impact of the training programme on relationships

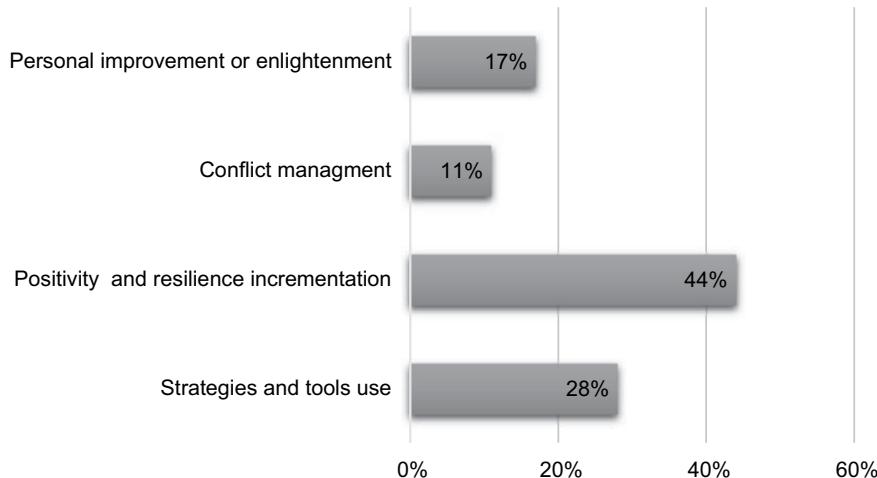
understand others’ perspectives and to solve problems, and an increased sense of sharing with colleagues (13 answers, 37%). The following quotes illustrate these gains in relationships:

- ‘...There are situations when we are down and we have to understand how we can overcome them’.
- ‘...Gave us a greater awareness of what is happening to others’.
- ‘I shared immediately that I was having this training and that it was good for them to do it also’, or even reframing situations.
- ‘I think it helped me to deconstruct some prejudices, prejudices that I had inside me....’.

### 7.6.3 *Perceived Impact on Resilience and Conflict Management Skills*

Teachers stressed that the programme helped them to foster their resilience and conflict management skills (Fig. 7.6). They expressed 18 different ways in which the programme produced this impact. In summary, the experience of positive feelings, of personal empowerment through learning new tools and better conflict management skills, all contributed to resilience improvement:

- ‘We are so fortunate, dealing with children, we also learn a lot with them... This course helped me a lot on this too!’
- ‘There were complicated times, but the tools (to deal with it) were there’.
- ‘My resilience in the school context clearly improved!’



**Fig. 7.6** Perceived impact of the programme on resilience and conflict management skills

#### **7.6.4 Pros and Cons of the Training Programme**

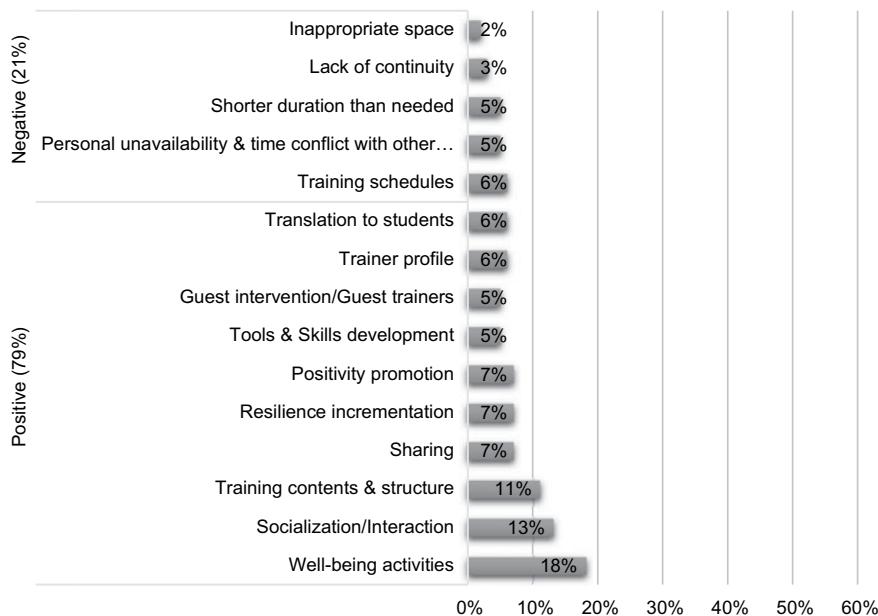
We also asked teachers to point out the pros and cons of the training programme. Figure 7.7 shows the different categories of answers provided for this question. As expected, a large majority of the 61 answers were about the pros of participating in the course (48 responses, 79%). Additionally, positive well-being activities (meditation, relaxation) and positive interactions, sharing ideas with colleagues, and the personal focus contents or the practical approach of the sessions were the most frequently mentioned themes valued by teachers. Examples of these are:

- ‘The more positive... I really enjoyed the relaxation sessions we did’.
- ‘For me it was my therapeutic moment of relaxation’.
- ‘We really experienced things...’.
- ‘I liked having other colleagues sharing experiences’.
- ‘[The programme content was] focused on the person and not on what the person has to know in terms of their scientific field’.

The scheduling of the training sessions at the end of the workday, lack of time available or personal factors which inhibited participants from being present at sessions, comprising 7 of the 13 answers about the course’s least positive features:

- ‘The least positive, clearly, is that it was at the end of a working day’.
- ‘The only thing I noticed is that sometimes I was extremely tired...’.

Five of the remaining replies on the more negative side of the programme mentioned the need for longer sessions and the importance of continuing similar training:



**Fig. 7.7** Pros and cons of the training programme

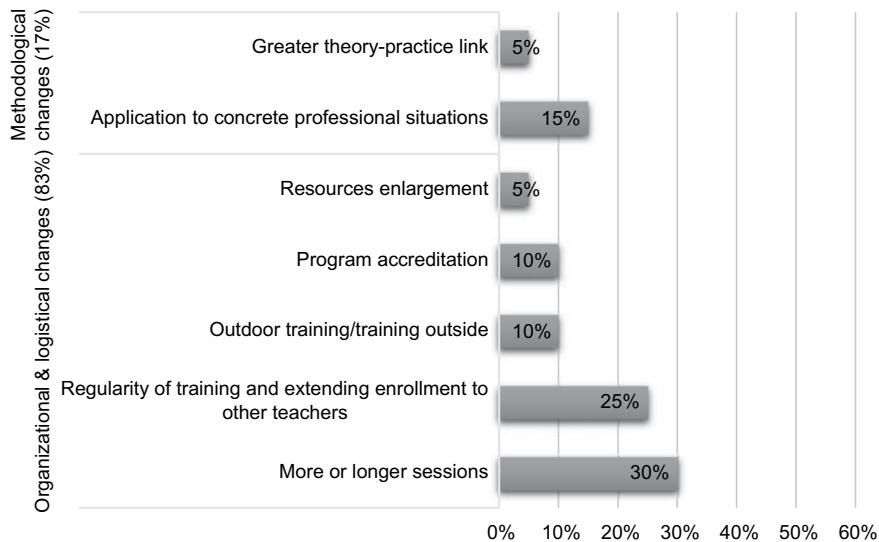
- ‘Sometimes we even needed more time to learn to look deeper into ourselves and our resilience and (to learn) meditation...’
- ‘Lack of continuity (of the course)’.

These last quotes may not be seen as negative in themselves, and they fuelled the suggestions teachers made for the improvement of the programme.

### 7.6.5 *Suggested Improvements for the Training Programme*

Despite 5 of the 25 responses (18%) indicating that no change will be needed, the majority of responses suggested organisational or logistic changes to improve the programme. Figure 7.8 shows the other improvement suggestions made by the teachers interviewed.

As a final question, we also asked if they will recommend the programme, for whom and why. All 23 teachers interviewed recognised that they have or will recommend the programme to other teachers, mainly to ‘those who I find less positive and more closed up’, ‘people very stressed and pessimist’ or ‘I will recommend for some persons that I think the course is “tailor-made” for’. Reasons for recommending the programme include the ‘novelty and freshness of contents’ not connected to



**Fig. 7.8** Suggested improvements for the training programme

the curricula, the ‘active involvement of the trainees’ in the proposed activities and opportunities for personal as well as professional improvement:

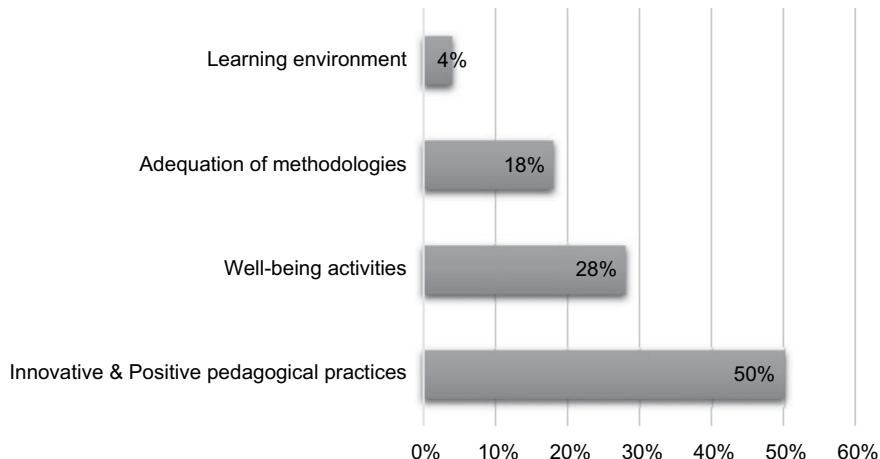
- ‘I would say (to do the course) to improve their performance as a teacher as well as a person... the professional part and the emotional part...’
- ‘I would say it is an action focused towards us as persons, that helps us to overcome difficulties, to control emotions, to be more aware of what we feel, and to sometimes control emotions as well.’

### 7.6.6 *Global Evaluation of the Programme*

All 23 teachers interviewed offered a very positive (17 of 23 responses, 74%): ‘I loved it! It was an excellent course’, or positive (6 responses, 26%) evaluation of the training programme: ‘I have liked to be a part of it, because people felt good with the activities that have been done’.

Positive and innovative pedagogical practices were the most mentioned positive characteristic of the programme (14 references, 50%) which contributed to the positive evaluations (Fig. 7.9).

- ‘First and foremost, it was a very different training from the usual, I mean, positively different!’
- ‘It was completely new. Very different (course) from what I was used to’.
- ‘...It was more focused on a lot of hands-on activities, but it always provided us with the theoretical content, and I think it was quite interesting’.



**Fig. 7.9** Perceived positive characteristics of the training programme

Eight other answers, out of the 28 total responses that characterised the positive evaluation of the programme (29%), pointed out to the kind of activities performed during the training:

- ‘There were sessions... like meditation activities, which help me a lot’.
- ‘I liked it because I had fun and relaxed quite a bit’.

Another five responses (18%) refer the adequacy of the methodologies:

- ‘I liked the way the course was set up’.

## 7.7 Concluding Remarks

In this age of accountability and higher academic standards, schools are increasingly under pressure to respond effectively to student needs and being pushed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching (Day et al. 2007). This is an issue burdening teachers and contributing to their stress and burnout. Consequently, teacher professional development focused on resilience and well-being is a key issue when designing both pre- and in-service teacher training (Dweck 2014; Le Cornu 2009; Leroux and Théorêt 2014). Through a thematic analysis approach, this chapter examined the professional journeys of teachers who have undertaken a training programme aiming to foster resilience and well-being. The major goal of the chapter was to illustrate how change, through professional transitions and transformations and, notably, through training, has shaped the attitudes and beliefs of teachers regarding their resilience, well-being and practices. The content analysis of teachers’ discourse about the learning experiences in terms of learning activities

and learning outcomes highlighted the importance of professional learning in three different contexts or domains: a theoretical domain, a social domain and a personal practice domain.

As stated previously, partnerships between universities and schools played a key role in the implementation of this positive education programme. Teachers often experience a gap between research and practice, and shared knowledge between scholars and practitioners may act as a source for teachers' professional learning and innovation of practices. The learning activities proposed in the training programme allowed teachers to be exposed to new input, forcing teachers to rethink their routines based on the theory-practice linkage (Snoek et al. 2018). Moreover, the programme helped teachers to foster their resilience and conflict management skills, experience of positive feelings, personal empowerment and improved conflict management skills. In short, theory and research-based evidence provided teachers with new concepts and new tools to look at daily practice through a different lens.

Regarding the social domain, a major goal of this training programme was to bring teachers together and reply to one of the biggest obstacles to teacher professionalism: isolation (Hargreaves 2000). Social learning through the training activities offered a context in which teachers improved relationships with colleagues and students, as well as relationships with co-workers (e.g. teaching assistants, psychologists, administrative staff, etc.). Collaborative activities also provided a context for exchanging ideas and experiences with colleagues, developing positive interactions and highlighting the critical role of relationships, ensuring that teachers will remain resilient across their teaching career (Mansfield and Gu 2019). As an example of exchange and collaboration, teachers recognised the role of the facilitator as an important operational feature in this professional learning programme. This role, in terms of actions, became essential in all training sessions, and the facilitator actions actively positioned teachers as self-directed learners, enabling them to explore the learning experiences proposed at workshops. These actions were essential for programme acceptability and success, requiring the facilitator to break out of habitual behaviours and critically analyse, in action and retrospectively, the most appropriate actions to support teacher learning. Additionally, the reflection activities also permitted teachers to move beyond actions and began to encourage teachers to consider and engage with potential drivers of action.

A key message emerging from literature in the area of teacher education is that professional learning must be personal (Smith 2017). This means that teaching is not merely a technical procedure, but a complex set of personal and social processes and practices. Taking time to think about personal practice may assist teachers in building a stronger sense of professional identity. Teachers who participated in this training programme reported changes in knowledge and beliefs and the use of knowledge to gain greater consciousness about self and emotions. Furthermore, the personal practice domain is reflected in the use of more positive pedagogical management strategies as well as on a better understanding of students' needs. Such findings provide indicative evidence of awareness in action as a result of taking time to think about the professional behaviour and practice. These outcomes may be conceptualised as increased or changed knowledge, intentions, practices and emotions, and

call for the need to apply positive psychology constructs like strengths and hope in school settings to empower teachers. Besides, we suggest that learning is central to being and becoming within the personal professional development of teaching expertise and call for the importance of teachers to actively shape (e.g. Greenfield 2015) their ongoing personal professional development by sharing (Pearce and Morrison 2011; Sprott 2019) different approaches to personal professional learning.

Some limitations should be acknowledged in this study. First, the teachers interviewed were all volunteers, which means that the most enthusiastic teachers of those who participated in the training probably participated in this part of the study. Second, the interviews were conducted by a psychologist who was neither related to the training nor was known to the participants, which may have inhibited greater participation by teachers during the interviews. Despite these limitations, this study provides evidence for how teachers perceived the training and the changes that it produced both at the personal and professional levels. Furthermore, and taking into account that another evaluation of the programme (Fernandes et al. 2019) showed increases in self-efficacy beliefs, resilience, emotions, motivation and well-being, this study provides additional evidence for how teachers became aware of these changes.

Finally, and at a more global level, we summarise policy implications arising from the findings of this programme that support teacher professionalism. Teacher educators and policymakers must commit to enhancing teacher professionalism through concrete and targeted policies and to create conditions that enable teacher development as a result of the exchange of experiences. The structure of the programme, based on the sharing of experiences and the interactions between colleagues, was an aspect especially valued by the teachers interviewed. Along these lines, opportunities need to be provided that allow teachers themselves to value their personal–professional knowledge and feel comfortable enough to share their professional expertise with colleagues.

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# Chapter 8

## Professional Assessment and Development Induction Program: An Application of the BRiTE Project to the Spanish Context



Gloria Gratacós, Montse Giménez, Juanjo Mena, and Monika Ciesielkiewicz

**Abstract** Research has highlighted the importance of the first years of teaching as they have a great impact on teachers' career longevity. Therefore, inspired by the BRiTE project, we developed the Professional Assessment and Development (PAD) Induction Program with the objective of helping novice teachers develop resilience strategies for successfully navigating the difficult situations they may face in their first years of teaching. The PAD Induction Program also offers training for mentors in schools to assist them to guide and support new teachers. The program consisted of online content and activities aimed at encouraging novice teachers to reflect on their current situation and possibilities for improvement. There were also face-to-face seminars, distributed throughout the program, as well as specific seminars where novice teachers and mentors worked together. A total of 112 participants participated in the PAD program. To assess novice teachers' resilience and commitment to teaching, participants were invited to complete the Multidimensional Teacher Resilience Scale (MTRS) and the Teacher Commitment Scale. Results showed that the PAD program had helped them in their integration, confidence, and stress control through the development of teacher resilience dimensions.

**Keywords** Novice teachers · Teacher resilience · Induction plans · Mentoring

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## 8.1 Introduction

In recent years, the demands placed on educational institutions and teachers have increased considerably (Day and Gu 2007; Mansfield et al. 2016). Teachers are pressured to improve academic outcomes of their students and to overcome the shortcomings of family environments, school administrations, and society in general. They are expected to respond more effectively to social and economic demands and help transform education, often under conditions of great difficulty. Teachers have to teach students with very diverse needs and to be up to date on curricular, pedagogical, evaluation, and digital learning innovations (TALIS 2013). This can be a significant source of stress for more experienced teachers and even more so for those who join the teaching profession, who are usually expected to assume almost the same responsibilities than more experienced teachers causing them “high level of stress, emotional distress, professional burnout and even attrition” (Leroux 2018 p. 107).

Different studies have found that the attrition rate of teachers is relatively higher when compared to other professions (Ingersoll and Strong 2011). In case of novice teachers, lack of well-being can lead to departure from the teaching profession (Ávalos and Valenzuela 2016; Kessels 2010; Kyriacou 2010). In fact, the attrition rate of recently graduated teachers is even higher, reaching between 30% and 50% of teachers leaving the education sector during the first five years (Ingersoll and Strong 2011).

The challenges caused by working conditions (i.e., salary or insufficient resources in the classroom), classroom characteristics (i.e., excessive ratio or student’s misbehavior), or organizational factors of the school environment (i.e., lack of support or low participation in decision making) may explain some teacher attrition (Stromquist 2018). Moreover, Rots et al. (2007, p. 544) state that “the roots of teacher attrition can be found in initial teaching commitment and the quality of early teaching experiences.” Commitment to teaching can be understood as a “degree of psychological attachment to the teaching profession” (Coladarci 1992, p. 323). These studies confirm the importance of improving the experiences of early career teachers transitioning to the profession (European Commission 2010).

Induction programs aim to ease the transition into the profession and provide necessary professional learning for teachers in the early career stages. The term induction can be conceptualized as “the process of formal assistance for the beginning teacher” (Greenlee and Dedeugd 2002) consisting of “activities designed to support new teachers” (OECD 2017). Induction includes “a range of diverse initiatives such as mentoring, instructional coaching, teaching residency, and school-university partnerships” (Paniagua and Sánchez-Martí 2018, p. 31). The fact that induction involves different activities may explain how these programs vary considerably between countries (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018). Strategies dealing with feelings and attitudes are necessary for novice teachers to emerge reinforced from each challenging situation and to grow professionally. In this regard, it is crucial that novice teachers participate in induction programs that allow increased support as they integrate into the classroom and into the school organization (European Commission

2010; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018) and undoubtedly, to have the emotional and personal support necessary for their well-being (Gold 1996, cited in Kessels 2010).

The research has found significant support on the effectiveness of these programs in three fundamental aspects: commitment and retention of the teaching staff, teaching practices, and student performance (Ingersoll and Strong 2011). Additionally, induction programs contribute to the well-being of novice teachers (Kessels 2010), reducing loneliness (Chubbuck et al. 2001), and offering support which is highly valued by the program's participants (Kelley 2004), even when it is only provided online (DeWert et al. 2003). Among the key elements of induction programs, Ingersoll and Smith (2004) distinguish the most significant forms of support for novice teachers, such as having a mentor from the same area of knowledge, establishing common study programs with other teachers of the same subject, maintaining regular collaboration with other teachers and being part of an external network of teachers.

Although no data on teacher attrition in Spain is currently available, there is considerable concern about teacher burnout since research highlights rates higher than 30% (Aris Redó 2009). Evidence also shows that the number of teachers who suffer from anxiety in recent years has been increasing (Asociación Nacional de Profesionales de la Enseñanza 2018).

As in other contexts, novice teachers in Spain find it difficult to respond to the demands of the classroom and school environment, which can lead to low self-efficacy, stress, and sometimes burnout (Aris Redó 2009; Leroux 2018; Skaalvick and Skaalvick 2011). It is also worthwhile to mention other difficulties inherent to the teaching profession in the Spanish context such as the loss of authority, bullying, and lack of family involvement (Pedró et al. 2008).

According to Borman and Dowling (2008, p. 399), “discovering the ways in which pre-service, internship, and professional development experiences can be structured to help teachers during the crucial first five years is a critical research, policy, and program development initiative for the future.”

## 8.2 Teacher Induction in Spain

The Spanish education system is comprised of pre-primary, primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Basic education is compulsory and tuition-free from 6 to 16 years (6 years in the primary level and 4 years in the lower secondary education). At the end of the fourth secondary year, students may choose to continue with secondary education, to enter into university degrees programs, or take a basic vocational training. Students can attend a public school (67.3% of the total population of pre-primary, primary, and secondary education), a partially government-funded independent school (25.9% of the total), or a private school (6.9% of the total) (MECD 2018).

In the Spanish context, it is necessary to distinguish between the access to the teaching profession in public schools from the private or partially government-funded independent schools. In public schools, teachers who pass professional entrance exams have access to the teaching profession, and usually have specific training of varied duration and content. These exams cover teacher training, equality, and prevention of gender violence. The duration of the training is usually no less than 20 h, although there is a lack of consistency in approaches to induction. In fact, some communities do not offer any type of training (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018). Theoretically, during this first phase of training, teachers have a teacher–tutor who advises, informs, and guides the novice teacher in the process of transition into the educational institution and in the performance of their teaching practice. They can also participate in any classes taught by the mentor teacher with a frequency that varies in each community. Based on the information collected, the mentor teacher prepares a report assessing his or her novice teachers' teaching skills.

Although there is no systematic and consistent data, some institutions in the private sector develop host programs, or at least, undertake some actions with the aim of facilitating the integration of novice teachers (e.g., interviews with the director, assignment of a fellow tutor). The contents covered have a merely informative character and serve to convey the mission and character of the educational center, as well as organizational and operational aspects.

According to the TALIS 2018 report, in Spain, 75% of primary school teachers and 74% of secondary teachers did not participate in any induction program in their first school. Only one out of every three schools offer a formal induction program for novice teachers and no more than 50% were engaged in informal initiation activities. The activities reported in induction programs and the grade of teachers' participation is reported in Table 8.1.

It is interesting to note that the activities below the OECD-30 average offered in Spain are mainly focused on teacher reflection, whether through interaction with others (principal, mentor, other teachers) or using activities such as portfolios and/or work diaries. Reduction of teaching load is very rarely considered in the Spanish context.

Therefore, it seems important that induction programs include initiatives designed to increase resilience, since it would allow teachers to develop personal characteristics related to a positive attitude and self-confidence when dealing with a wide range of changes, pressures, and demands in their daily work as teachers (Kyriacou 2010).

### 8.3 Induction, Resilience, and Mentoring

The underpinning literature of this study is drawn from the fields of teacher resilience and early career teacher mentoring. The study aims at easing the transition into the profession for novice teachers, providing them with the necessary professional learning through induction programs.

**Table 8.1** Percentage of Primary and Secondary teachers who report being offered the following activities as a part of a professional initiation program

	Primary school	Secondary school
In-person courses or seminars	79	68
Courses or seminars online	34	23
Online activities	27	31
Scheduled meetings with the principals and/or experienced teachers	76 <sup>a</sup>	71 <sup>a</sup>
Monitoring by the director and/or experienced teachers	68 <sup>a</sup>	61 <sup>a</sup>
Networking or collaboration with other novice teachers	50	50
Co-teaching with experienced teachers	67 <sup>a</sup>	40 <sup>a</sup>
Portfolios and work diaries	40 <sup>a</sup>	28 <sup>a</sup>
Reduction of teaching load	11 <sup>a</sup>	9 <sup>a</sup>
General or administrative initiation	26 <sup>a</sup>	36 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Data below the UE-23 y OCDE-30 average

Source Prepared by the authors based on TALIS report (2018)

Teaching experiences at the initial stages have a great impact on the rest of a career (Day and Gu 2007). Nevertheless, studies on resilience of pre-service and novice teachers are limited (Morgan 2011; Mansfield et al. 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to study early career teacher resilience as it is an instrumental and decisive career phase.

Resilience is described in current literature as a complex, multifaceted, idiosyncratic, and dynamic construct (Beltman et al. 2011; Mansfield et al. 2012). Ungar (2012) defines resilience as “a set of behaviours over time that reflect the interactions between individuals and their environments, in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible” (p. 14). Moreover, Boldrini et al. (2018) state that resilience refers to positive and functional adaptation and that the main indicators are a sense of positive engagement with the profession and a sense of perceived effectiveness. Day and Gu (2014) oppose limiting resilience to just bouncing back from adverse and challenging circumstances and emphasize the importance of developing strategies to sustain teacher commitment and effectiveness in their daily activities.

Being aware and enhancing protective factors, both individual (personal attributes, self-efficacy, coping skills, teaching skills, professional reflection and growth, and self-care) and contextual (school/administrative support, mentor support, support of peers and colleagues, working with the students, characteristics of pre-service program, and support of family and friends) can help to develop teacher resilience (Beltman et al. 2011). Also, several researchers discern various risk factors for teacher resilience, among which the most frequent are personal risk factors such as negative feelings, low self-efficacy or self-confidence, difficulty to balance professional and personal life, low professional competences and abilities, as well as certain environmental risk factors, for example, stress conditions such as heavy workload, difficult

relationships with students or parents (Beltman et al. 2011; Leroux and Théorêt 2014; Mansfield et al. 2012). Regarding Spain, some additional factors should be added such as the loss of teachers' authority not only with parents but also with students as well as the lack of teacher assistants in the classrooms (Vicente de Vera 2017).

It is important that novice teachers are aware of the protective factors that could help them develop strategies to enhance their resilience. It may also be useful to build strategies that take into consideration different dimensions of resilience. Mansfield et al. (2012) propose a four-dimensional framework of teacher resilience which is comprised of emotional, motivational, social, and profession-related dimensions of resilience. The emotional dimension focuses on the affective aspects of teaching, emotion management, taking care of one's own well-being, and handling stress. The motivational dimension encompasses motivation, enthusiasm, confidence, persistence, and establishing clear and attainable goals. The social dimension is comprised of building a support network, strong interpersonal and communication skills, seeking assistance, and problem-solving. The profession-related dimension involves various aspects of teaching practice such as preparation, organization, self-reflection, engagement in student's learning, and effective teaching skills.

Some education programs include professional training of novice teachers with the help of a mentor chosen from the most experienced teachers (Marcelo García 2009) as a useful way of enhancing teaching and learning (Bressman et al. 2018). According to the data from the TALIS report (2018), only 15% of novice Primary school teachers and 16% novice Secondary school teachers in Spain were assigned a mentor, compared to 26% in the OECD average or 34% in the EU average. The majority of school principals consider that tutoring with teachers (both Primary and Secondary) helps to improve pedagogical competence, collaboration with teachers, strengthens professional identity, supports teachers with less experience, and improves overall student performance. Despite the general perception that mentors are key figures in induction programs, mentor training is still an under-researched topic. However, literature clearly highlights the importance of mentor preparation as a priority in the area of policymaking (TALIS 2018).

## 8.4 The Intervention Program

Research not only highlights the importance of induction programs that include activities to support new teachers transition into the profession (TALIS 2018) but also includes mentoring assistance, as well as the need to develop resilience with novice teachers in the first years of their teaching experience. These studies drew our attention and interest to programs developed in different countries that could be useful for novice teachers in Spain. Therefore, the *Professional Assessment and Development (PAD) Induction Program* presented below, originates from the need to support novice teachers in the beginning of their professional career. The PAD program offered a complete training with diverse and interconnected training strategies, which allowed flexibility to adapt it to the needs of each novice teacher. It

also included training for mentors who were willing to help novice teachers in their educational institutions. The training took into account their professional experience and offered them new tools and resources. The PAD program is based on the materials developed by another program called *ENhancing Teacher REsilience in Europe* (ENTREE),<sup>1</sup> an EU-funded project and the BRITE<sup>2</sup> Project, an Australian inter-university project (see Chap. 3). Both programs aim to develop teachers' resilience as a response to the growing demands of rapidly changing school environments.

This Spanish program emerged as an initiative of Villanueva University Center, later joined by Cardenal Cisneros University Center (CCUC). The objectives of the program were the following:

- Facilitating the integration of novice teachers in educational institutions.
- Offering support and advice to assist novice teachers in their training and teaching activities to increase their confidence as teachers.
- Mentoring of novice teachers in their transition to the profession.
- Developing effective learning strategies for the acquisition of skills that can be transferred to the different areas of personal, social, and professional development.
- Offering resources to teacher's mentors to help them successfully carry out their task.

The PAD program began in the 2016–17 academic year and was offered to several educational institutions with which Villanueva has been collaborating. Potential participants could have a maximum of two years of teaching experience in those schools. The program provided online theoretical and practical modules, face-to-face sessions in which practical cases were worked on in joint groups of novice teachers and mentors, as well as a face-to-face training for mentors. Thus, the PAD program was composed of–

- a. Seven online modules. The first six modules were adapted from the ENTREE program and inspired by the BRITE program with the permission of all authors. We also incorporated a new module on relationship with students' families since it is a challenging issue for novice teachers. The seven thematic blocks were
  1. Resilience
  2. Building relationships
  3. Aspects of effective teaching
  4. Classroom management skills
  5. Emotional well-being
  6. Stress management
  7. Relationship with students' families.

The modules contained a theoretical part, as well as self-reflection activities. These activities were shared with and corrected by university professors who coordinate the PAD program. Each month participants engaged with a different

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<sup>1</sup>ENTREE (n.d.). *Enhancing teacher resilience in Europe*. <http://entree-project.eu/en/>. Accessed 25 November 2018. See: Silva et al. (2018).

<sup>2</sup>BRITE (n.d.). *Building resilience in teacher education*. <https://www.brite.edu.au/>. Accessed 25 November 2018. See: Beltman et al. (2018).

module, and a face-to-face meeting was held to carry out a series of practical activities, such as cases, workshops, role-plays, and simulations. The participants were organized into heterogeneous groups that included teachers and mentors from different schools. Sharing their experiences and concerns in these groups was considered a great asset for the program participants.

- b. In-person training for mentors who would be assisting novice teachers. An advisory board was created to support the mentors. It consisted of four university professors who were experts in practicum and three professors from different educational institutions who were chosen from among the best practicum tutors who regularly collaborate with Villanueva University Center. They advised on the design of a series of semi-structured interviews, and a series of training seminars was designed and taught throughout the whole school year with a total of 24 h training. The contents were:

Resilience and Wellbeing. The goal was to train teachers to overcome adversity, emerge strengthened, believe in oneself and, consequently, increase protective factors.

Intelligent communication. The goal was for participants to become more assertive, and for mentors to use coaching tools for constructive feedback.

Participants committed to complete the online course with all the required activities and to attend in-person sessions held every month. They also committed to two interviews with a mentor during the course period. Their mentor also observed their teaching and provided constructive feedback.

## 8.5 Method

A total of 112 novice teachers participated in the PAD program, 73 females (65.2%) and 39 males (34.8%). Participants taught in four educational levels: 20 (17.9%) were in early childhood education; 48 (42.9%) in Elementary Education; 55 (49.1%) in Lower Secondary school; and 11 (9.8%) in Upper Secondary school. Ethics permission for the study was granted by Villanueva University and all participants were volunteers.

In order to assess novice teachers' resilience and commitment to teaching, participants were invited to complete the Multidimensional Teacher Resilience Scale (MTRS) and the Teacher Commitment Scale before starting the program, providing them an online link to the questionnaire. Both scales are part of the Teacher Resilience Self-Reflection (TRSR) questionnaire developed and empirically tested by Wosnitza et al. (2018). The MTRS consists of 26 items that assess the four dimensions of teacher resilience (Mansfield et al. 2012): (a) Professional (4 items; e.g., I am well organized in my school work); (b) Motivational (12 items; e.g., When I make mistakes at school, I see these as learning opportunities); (c) Social (4 items; e.g., When I am unsure of something I seek help from colleagues); and (d) Emotional (4 items; e.g.,

When something goes wrong at school, I don't take it too personally). The Teacher Commitment is a 5-item scale (e.g., "I feel pleased that I decided to be a teacher"). Both of them use a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

At the end of the program, participants were invited to answer an online questionnaire where they could evaluate their satisfaction with the program (5-point Likert scale) as well as provide comments about the usefulness of the induction program and how it had helped their integration, confidence, and stress management.

## 8.6 Results

### ***8.6.1 Novice Teachers' Resilience and Commitment to Teaching***

All the participants of the PAD program implemented the MTRS and Teacher Commitment questionnaires. Main results of both questionnaires are shown in Table 8.2.

The mean scores in all scales are around 4 (out of 5), with the exception of commitment, with a mean that is close to the maximum (4.705). The emotional dimension had the lowest mean score. The Standard Deviations (SD) are low, indicating that there is little variability within the sample.

The statistical relationship between teacher resilience and commitment was tested as shown in Table 8.3. Commitment, understood as the capacity of dedicating time and effort for the profession, can be a relevant aspect for teachers to better cope with the profession. As explained above, resilience was divided into four dimensions: (a) professional; (b) emotional; (c) motivational; and (d) social.

Results show that teacher commitment is significantly related with the professional dimension of teacher resilience ( $r = 0.252$ ;  $p = 0.005$ ) which focuses on self-reflection in their teaching practice. The same applies to the social aspects of

**Table 8.2** Descriptive statistics and reliability of the TRSR questionnaire: resilience dimensions and commitment

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Variance	Cronbach alpha
TR PROF	3.00	5.00	4.41	0.458	0.210	0.651
TR EMOT	2.75	5.00	4.08	0.531	0.283	0.616
TR MOT	3.42	5.00	4.38	0.372	0.139	0.815
TR SOC	3.17	5.00	4.25	0.464	0.216	0.781
COMMITMENT	3.00	5.00	4.70	0.461	0.213	0.856

TR PROF: Teacher Resilience. Professional dimension

TR EMOT: Teacher Resilience. Emotional dimension

TR MOT: Teacher Resilience. Motivational dimension

TR SOC: Teacher Resilience. Social dimension

**Table 8.3** Pearson correlation scores on the TRSR questionnaire resilience dimensions and commitment

	TR_PROF	TR_EMOT	TR_MOT	TR_SOC	COMMIT
TR_PROF	1	0.605	0.653	0.574	0.252
		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005
TR_EMOT		1	0.536	0.544	0.165
			0.000	0.000	0.068
TR_MOT			1	0.744	0.305
				0.000	0.001
TR_SOC				1	0.179
					0.048
COMMIT					1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

resilience, when coping with colleagues' interactions at the school ( $r = 0.179; p = 0.048$ ). Moreover, commitment strongly correlates with the motivational level of resilience ( $r = 0.305; p = 0.001$ ), but it is not significantly linked to the emotional side ( $r = 0.165; p = 0.068$ ).

### 8.6.2 Participants' Satisfaction with the PAD Program

At the end of the program, 70% of the total of the participants completed the satisfaction questionnaire. The average degree of satisfaction of the modules was as follows:

- Satisfaction with the contents: 3.97
- Satisfaction with the face-to-face seminars: 3.98
- Satisfaction with the mentor: 4.49.

Participants were also invited to provide comments about the mentoring process such as the usefulness of the interviews with their mentors, the classroom observations, and the feedback from them as well as the utility of the contents and activities they had worked.

Regarding the program content, novice teachers remarked on the opportunity to reflect on their own performance. They also pointed out the practical nature of the program. They valued very positively certain activities, such as feedback from class observations, the diary in which they registered emotions, simulations, and case studies.

- *"The face-to-face sessions have been very motivating since they lead to sharing experiences among all the teachers who participated in the program. This helps to*

*establish relationships between the previous PAD sessions and their application in the classroom.”*

Regarding mentoring, the PAD participants valued positively the support provided by mentors:

- *“It helped me get positive feedback and critically analyze my way of teaching classes. I outlined those aspects that I had to polish and set a series of objectives to meet.”*

The frequency of meetings was very diverse depending on the availability of the mentor and conducted with different strategies, such as interviews or feedback on class observations in person or recorded which took place in 81% of cases.

Ninety-one percent of the respondents expressed that they would recommend the PAD program to other novice teachers and even to those with more professional experience since it allows for continued learning and improved relationships with other professionals.

- *“Yes. I would recommend it to all teachers since it addresses very current topics in Education. In addition, it fosters opening to other perspectives and promotes reflection, which I consider fundamental to improve our teaching.”*

In order to assess the degree of integration and well-being of the participants, the following questions were asked: (1) To what extent has the PAD program helped you to be more integrated in the school? (2) To what extent has the PAD program helped you to be more confident as a novice teacher? (3) To what extent has the PAD program contributed to increase or decrease your stress as a novice teacher?

The first analysis was regarding whether the PAD program had or not helped with those three aspects. Results showed that 77% reported that the program had helped them in their degree of integration in the school. From the participants that reported the program not to be of any help (23%), 70% stated that they were already integrated in the school since it was their second year working there, or they were school alumni. Eighty-six percent reported that the PAD program had helped them to be more confident as a teacher, and 79% reported that the program had helped them manage their stress.

The open-ended questions were initially inductively and independently manually coded by two researchers (one from each institution). The results were compared for consistency, and the analysis was refined going back to the research framework on protective factors and teacher resilience dimensions in order to clearly define and combine the codes. Categories and frequency counts were organized within and across each group’s set of responses. The analysis of these responses was used to establish the aspects that participants highlighted when reporting on how the PAD program had helped them with their integration, confidence, and stress control as described in Table 8.4.

Results in Table 8.4 show how the PAD program helped novice teachers’ integration in the school through strategies focused on the social and professional teacher resilience dimensions. Professional, social, and motivational dimensions were found

**Table 8.4** Novice teachers' declarations about the usefulness of the PAD program in helping them with school integration, confidence, and stress control

Categories	Codes	PAD program objectives	Frequency (%)	Verbatim (Respondents' examples)
Protective factors	Teacher resilience dimensions	Aspects coded		
Personal attributes		Self-knowledge		
		Integration	0	"It has helped me to learn the steps I have to take to lower my stress levels and to see things differently."
		Confidence	0	
		Stress management	10	
Teaching and coping skills	Professional (Effective teaching skills)	Tools and resources		
		Integration	21	"It was helpful in proving me with tools to develop my work."
		Confidence	23	
		Stress management	18	
Professional reflection	Professional (Self-reflection)	Reflection initiative		
		Integration	25	"I have learned to relativize things that are not important or vital, and to put students into perspective."
		Confidence	18	
		Stress management	36	"It has helped me to see that my problems are not different from those of others, to focus on possible problems and to reflect on my teaching."

(continued)

**Table 8.4** (continued)

Categories	Codes	PAD program objectives	Frequency (%)	Verbatim (Respondents' examples)
Self-care	Emotional (Self-care)	Managing emotions well-being	Integration Confidence Stress management	"It has helped me to be calm and enjoy more every moment and every day." "It has helped me with emotional well-being and being aware that all teachers face difficult situations."
Mentor support	Social (Seeking assistance)	Relationship with mentors	Integration Confidence Stress management	"It has helped me a lot, especially the conversations I have had about my work with my mentor."
Support of peers	Social (Support network/Seeking assistance)	Sharing experiences with other teachers Seeking assistance	Integration Confidence Stress management	"It has helped me to interact with classmates from other educational stages and exchange experiences, which has allowed me to feel fully integrated into the school."
	Motivational (confidence)	Increase of self-confidence	Integration Confidence Stress management	"It has helped me a lot. I had some fears since it was my first year of practicing this profession."

to be critical in enhancing their confidence as teachers. Professional and emotional dimensions were reported to be more useful to manage stress among the novice teachers.

## 8.7 Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the PAD Induction Program based on the work of the ENTRÉE and BRITE programs that are aimed at developing resilience in new teachers, with the support of mentors as a unique aspect of the program and assess the possible influence of resilience on teacher commitment. The PAD program also comprises many of the activities highlighted by the TALIS report (2018) such as in-person courses or seminars, courses and activities online, scheduled meetings with experienced teachers (mentors), networking with other novice teachers, portfolios, and work diaries. It also includes school–university partnerships to assist novice teachers. In sum, it is a holistic program that focuses on the novice teachers' well-being and stresses the importance of protective factors for the development of teacher resilience such as support seeking, social links, motivational and emotional development, and professional reflection.

Results from the participants' responses showed that the PAD program had helped them in their integration, confidence, and stress control through the development of personal and contextual protective factors as well as teacher resilience dimensions. They especially highlighted the chance to reflect on critical situations, recognizing both progress and mistakes that needed correction, as well as to experience working collaboratively with other teachers, which according to Avalos and Valenzuela (2016) seem to protect novice teachers from frustration, excessive stress, and lack of capacity to search for solutions. Novice teachers also appreciated the tools and resources provided to enhance their teaching and coping skills. It is interesting to pinpoint how different teacher resilience dimensions interact with the PAD program's objectives.

The results of this study indicate that professional, social, and motivational dimensions of teacher resilience are significantly correlated with commitment. Being a correlational study, causality cannot be inferred. Nevertheless, results support the idea that resilience could be a possible indicator of commitment to the profession (Gu and Day 2013; Tait 2008). Therefore, taking into account resilience development in Teacher Education programs and induction plans could be helpful in addressing teacher retention. Also mentoring could play an important role in the early teaching career to enhance teacher resilience. Moreover, it seems necessary to work on the four dimensions of teacher resilience in order to promote novice teachers' school integration, confidence, stress control and, as a result of these, commitment. Providing opportunities for teachers' collaborative work, professional reflection, and making them aware of their crucial and unique role in education could be determining factors in teacher retention.

Some limitations of the study are its small sample size (112 participants) and limited generalizability beyond the Spanish context. The fact that qualitative data was

based on open-ended question evaluation might also be limiting. For further research, it would be useful to include interviews in order to better understand the process and impact of induction on their resilience competences development. Additionally, it would be interesting to collect data on MTRS and Teacher Commitment scales after the program and analyze the differences to evaluate the PAD program; as well as to explore whether the frequency of meetings with mentors influences in some way novice teachers' degree of integration in and/or satisfaction with the teaching experience. Since the PAD program offers resources to teacher's mentors, it would be of interest to include mentors' evaluation of the program and program's mentoring resources. Given the complexity of the dimensions under study in novice teacher resilience, future lines of research could also examine not only including them in induction plans and describing the relations between them, but also unlocking the intermediate variables that mediate in the professional identity construction at early stages of their teaching career.

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# Chapter 9

## Staying BRiTE in the Dutch Teacher Education Context



Marjon Fokkens-Bruinsma, Michelle M. Gemmink, and Els C. M. Van Rooij

**Abstract** Preservice teachers face the complex challenge of balancing the requirements of teacher education programmes and schools and developing a professional identity as a teacher. Developing the knowledge and skills to manage working as a teacher is important to prevent emotional exhaustion during teacher education and later in the teaching career. Therefore, it is important to begin building resilience during the teacher education programme. Dutch policymakers and teacher educators recognize this need; however, there are currently no structural practices in teacher education programmes to help preservice teachers build resilience. Thus, introducing the BRiTE framework and modules could be a beneficial opportunity for Dutch teacher education. This chapter focuses on describing the Dutch teacher education context and teacher educators' perceptions of resilience. We also discuss how the BRiTE modules can be implemented in Dutch teacher education programmes.

**Keywords** Resilience · Preservice teachers · BRiTE · Dutch teacher education programmes · Implementation

### 9.1 Introduction

By sending you this email I want to express that I am not doing so well at the moment. Last week I was feeling ill, but mainly stressed out. I also noticed that I have been feeling down. Since Christmas holidays, I noticed that the pressure from school and my field experience made me push myself to the limit. This made me dislike education, which made me feel bad, especially since I was very enthusiastic in the beginning.

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This quote comes from one of our pre-service teachers (PSTs) who contacted the main author in February 2017. It illustrates the problem of well-being and its potentially detrimental consequences for teacher outcomes. It also underscores the importance of conducting more research on PSTs' well-being and resilience. Policymakers and teacher educators acknowledge the importance of undertaking more research and giving more attention to PSTs resilience and well-being. However, little is known about the prevalence of mental health problems among PSTs and the well-being and resilience of PSTs (Zimmerman et al. 2018). Even less is known about how to help PSTs become more resilient, and no structural measures have been taken in the Netherlands to build PSTs' resilience. For this reason, the BRiTE framework (see Chap. 3) and related modules could be valuable for Dutch teacher education.

The main goal of this chapter is to provide more insight into the process of developing and adapting the BRiTE modules to a different international context. In particular, we focus on Dutch PSTs' well-being, a description of the Dutch teacher education context, Dutch teacher educators' perspectives of resilience, and our first experiences with the BRiTE modules. In this chapter, we discuss the problem of well-being and resilience among PSTs, followed by a short description of our research project. We then describe the Dutch teacher education context, including the education system, and compare the institutes involved in the project. In Sect. 3, we discuss teacher educators' views and current practices that enhance resilience. Sections 4 and 5 discuss how we plan on implementing the BRiTE modules in our context and offer recommendations to others who want to adapt the modules to their contexts.

### ***9.1.1 Dutch PSTs' Mental Health and Well-Being***

Higher education students experience challenges that might worsen their well-being and can even result in attrition (Baik et al. 2017; Fernandez et al. 2016). Furthermore, many higher education students in the Netherlands experience problems related to their well-being (Dopmeijer 2016). For example, Statistics Netherlands (2018) reported in its National Health Survey that 11% of 18 to 24 year olds reported poor mental health, and the Dutch Student Union (LSVB, 2017) reported that 75% of students were emotionally exhausted.

The problem might be even worse for PSTs because they face three distinct challenges. First, the teaching profession is complex, is emotionally demanding (Day et al. 2011), and can be considered 'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983). This implies that teachers experience tension because the core of teaching involves continuous interactions between teachers and students and teachers are expected to regulate their emotions during these interactions. As Day et al. (2011, p. 27) state, "It is the ongoing demands on their intellectual energy, competence and capacity to connect self and subject and students that distinguishes the teaching self from the selves of other professionals". PSTs need to learn how to deal with these tensions, emotions and demands. Second, they must develop a professional identity as a teacher, which might evoke different tensions (Pillen et al. 2013) but might also be positively related

to the development of resilience (Pearce and Morrison 2011). Third, PSTs' professional development takes place in at least two learning environments simultaneously: courses at a teacher education institute and field experience at a school. These environments have different cultures and different expectations of PSTs' learning goals (Leeferink et al. 2015). PSTs must learn to balance the requirements from both environments.

However, the exact number of PSTs experiencing mental health and well-being problems is relatively unknown, which makes research into these aspects important. Furthermore, Den Brok et al. (2017) found that attrition among new Dutch teachers is close to 15%. They also found that attrition was lower for qualified teachers than unqualified teachers<sup>1</sup> and suggested that teacher education can play a vital role in reducing stress and attrition. Turner and Braine (2016) also suggested that knowledge and skills on managing working life are important to prevent emotional exhaustion during teacher education and later in life.

So, how can we improve PSTs' mental health and well-being? Building PSTs' resilience provides a valuable perspective. Research into teachers' resilience asks why certain teachers, despite the challenges of the profession, remain in the profession and how well-being, in terms of flourishing, flow and thriving, can be enhanced (Beltman et al. 2011; Mansfield et al. 2012). However, research on resilience is rather scarce in the Netherlands. It would, therefore, be worthwhile for the Dutch teacher education context to obtain more insight into PSTs' resilience and determine how teacher educators can build resilience.

### **9.1.2 Project 'Life Is Tough but so Are You'**

Given the need to train more resilient PSTs and a general interest in the topic of resilience and well-being, a group of Dutch researchers and teachers of four teacher education institutes (Katholieke Pabo Zwolle [KPZ], Leiden University [LU], Utrecht University [UU], and the University of Groningen [UG]) are collaborating on the project *Life is tough but so are you: Enhancing preservice teachers' resilience* (LITBSAY) in May 2019. The main goal of this project is to gain more insight into Dutch PSTs' resilience and how teacher educators can help PSTs build resilience. Ethical approval for the project was obtained through the ethical committee of the Department of Teacher Education at UG.

For this project, we define mental well-being as a multidimensional concept that involves a subjective component (i.e. feelings of pleasure, life satisfaction or satisfaction of the basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness) and an objective component (i.e. blossoming, flourishing and living a 'meaningful' life) (Ryan and Deci 2000). We assume that mental well-being as a teacher outcome can be enhanced by teaching PSTs strategies to become resilient.

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<sup>1</sup>In the Netherlands, because of a shortage of qualified teachers, both schools for primary and secondary education can appoint unqualified teachers to classrooms on a temporary basis.

To gain more understanding on the concept of resilience, we took the BRiTE framework developed by Mansfield et al. (2016) as a starting point and used the findings from the ENhancing Teacher REsilience project in Europe (ENTREE).<sup>2</sup> The ENTREE project defines resilience as “the process of, capacity for and outcome of positive adaptation as well as ongoing professional commitment and growth in the face of challenging circumstances”.<sup>3</sup> These researchers conceive of resilience as a dynamic interplay of individual, situational and contextual characteristics that can be both risk and protective factors. Resilient teachers, therefore, not only bounce back after challenging or adverse situations but also thrive professionally and personally, resulting in job satisfaction, positive self-beliefs, well-being and commitment to the profession. In line with the review study of Mansfield et al. (2016) on factors that enhance resilience in teachers, we measure resilience in terms of the following factors:

- Personal resources, such as motivation and efficacy;
- Contextual resources, such as support from colleagues;
- Strategies, such as problem-solving;
- Professional outcomes, such as well-being and job satisfaction; and
- Academic outcomes, such as persistence and achievement in teacher education.

We formulated three aims and research questions (Fig. 9.1). First, we aim to identify PSTs’ resilience during teacher education. Our focus here is to identify where, when and how resilience development takes place. Our research questions are, “How do PSTs experience resilience in terms of personal resources, contextual resources, strategies and outcomes?” and “What strategies can PSTs use to enhance their own resilience?”

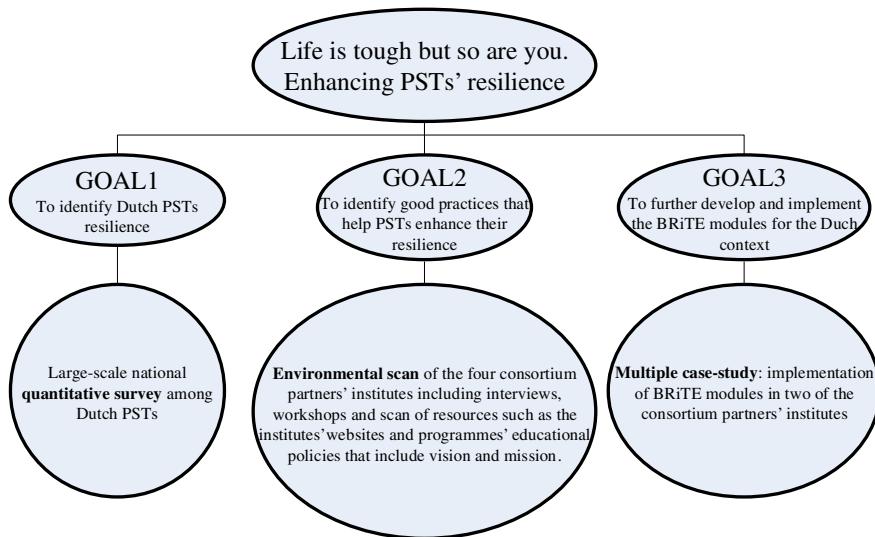
Second, having identified PSTs’ resilience and the activities they undertake to enhance their resilience, we evaluate what institutes and schools do to enhance PSTs’ resilience. Therefore, our second goal is to identify practices in teacher education programmes and schools that help PSTs develop resilience. These practices might be, for example, a specific course dedicated to enhancing resilience, information about enhancing resilience or informal conversations about resilience in institutes and schools. The main research question related to this part of the project is, “What strategies do teacher education institutes and schools use to support PSTs’ resilience?”

Third, using the information gathered in these first parts of the project, we aim to adapt the BRiTE modules to the Dutch context to enhance PSTs’ resilience during teacher education. We plan to implement the modules in two teacher education institutes, the KPZ and UG, where both PSTs and educators from the institutes and schools will be involved in small academic learning communities. The modules will be based on the BRiTE framework and the existing online modules. Our research questions during this stage focus on PSTs and teacher educators by asking the following:

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<sup>2</sup>More information on this project is available at <http://entree-project.eu/en/>.

<sup>3</sup>The theoretical framework concept paper is available on the project website at <http://entree-project.eu/en/>.



**Fig. 9.1** Project goals and related data collection

“How does a learning module focused on resilience affect preservice teacher personal resources, contextual resources, strategies and outcomes?” and “How does a learning module focused on resilience help teacher educators build resilience in preservice teachers?”

## 9.2 The Dutch Teacher Education Context

### 9.2.1 *Dutch Education System and Teacher Education*

The three goals to enhance<sup>4</sup> PSTs’ resilience are identified for both university-based teacher education programmes and professional teacher education programmes. In this chapter, we explain the structure of the Dutch education system and teacher education.

In the Netherlands, children enter primary education at the age of four. After primary education, at the age of 11 or 12, students enter secondary education, which is ability-tracked. The lowest level is called vocational education, the intermediate level is called general secondary education and the highest level is called pre-university education. There are many different types of teacher education programmes following the different tracks and levels in the education system that

<sup>4</sup>The two examples are based on general descriptions of the Dutch Teacher Education Context (<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/hoger-onderwijs> and <https://www.nuffic.nl/onderwerpen/hoger-onderwijs/>).

focus on training teachers in primary or secondary education. In our study, two types of teacher education programmes are involved (Table 9.1). The first is a teacher education programme for primary school teachers, which is a four-year undergraduate bachelor's programme taught at universities of applied sciences. The second type of programme is a teacher education programme at the master's level offered at research-based universities. Completing such a programme leads to a qualification to teach a certain subject in all years of general secondary education and pre-university education. A master's degree in teaching can be obtained in two ways: (1) through a one-year postmaster's programme in teacher education (i.e. Post-Master Teacher Education) for PSTs who have already obtained a master's degree in a specific subject domain (e.g. English Language and Culture, Science) and (2) through an Educational Master programme, which consists of subject domain courses in the first year and teacher education in the second year, including a school-based field experience.

### ***9.2.2 The Two Contexts Involved***

The Katholieke Pabo Zwolle University of Applied Science is a small university of applied sciences that offers teacher education for future primary school teachers. The KPZ emphasizes interpersonal relationships between PSTs and lecturers and among PSTs. PSTs are assigned a tutor (teacher educator) who meets with them weekly in groups, varying from 25 PSTs in the lower years to a maximum of 10 in the upper year, to discuss the development of professional identity and provide support and advice. PSTs have field experiences during all four years of the programme. In the first three years, they spend one day per week in the school in addition to a whole week four times per year. In the fourth year of the programme, PSTs are assigned to a workplace and are responsible for their own classes for two days per week.

Research-based universities, such as Utrecht University (UU), Leiden University (LU), and University of Groningen (UG) have a one-year, Post-Master Teacher Education programme with an inflow of approximately 30 to 40 PSTs each year. In addition, they offer a two-year Educational Master with an inflow of approximately 80 to 130 PSTs each year. In both programmes, PSTs have school-based field experiences during the whole year in which they spend two to three days a week in the schools (usually with a requirement to teach four to eight lessons). In total, these PSTs teach for 140 hours. The master programmes start with foundation courses in pedagogy, pedagogical content knowledge and didactics, followed by more in-depth courses.

**Table 9.1** Comparing the two contexts and four institutes involved in the project

Teaching qualification	Higher education institute (consortium member)	Name programme	Academic degree	Entry requirement	Approximate annual student enrolment	Length of the programme (credits)	Minimal number of teaching hours required in field experience	Workload traineeship in credits
Primary education	Universities of applied sciences (e.g. KPZ)	Higher professional education	Professional Bachelor	Senior general education (five years) or higher vocational education (four years)	175	Four years (240 ECTS <sup>a</sup> )	600	80 ECTS
Secondary education (all years)	Research-based universities (e.g. LU, UU, UG)	Post-Master programme	Master of Education	Master's degree in a school subject or a bachelor's degree in a school subject and an unrelated master	150 (UL), 100 (UU, UG)	One year (60 ECTS)	140	30 ECTS
Secondary education (all years)	Research-based universities (e.g. LU, UU, UG)	Educational Master	Master of Education	Bachelor's degree in a school subject	100 (LU, UU, UG)	Two years (120 ECTS)	140	30 ECTS

<sup>a</sup>Dutch institutes for higher education work with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which indicates the workload in credits and related hours. This system is a standard means for comparing credits across the European Union and collaborating countries, which enables students to more easily study internationally. Whenever students have successfully completed a module/course they earn ECTS credits; one year usually consists of 60 ECTS, and one ECTS equals 28 ha.

### 9.3 Teacher Educators' Views on Enhancing Resilience

As a starting point for the second goal, which is to identify practices on how institutes and schools help PSTs enhance resilience, we carried out a small-scale environmental scan. The goals of this scan were:

1. To obtain an overview of current resilience-enhancing practices in Dutch teacher education;
2. To gain insight into teacher educators' views on resilience; and
3. To identify issues in relation to implementing resilience-enhancing practices in teacher education programmes.

We focused on four key themes of the BRiTE framework (Mansfield et al. 2016) that are important to consider in building PSTs' resilience during teacher education: relationships, well-being, taking initiative and emotions. Awareness of the importance of resilience and building resilience underpins these four themes as a fifth theme.

During a workshop for teacher educators at the UG, the BRiTE framework and its specific themes were briefly introduced. We developed a form to describe the different BRiTE themes, including a brief description of what these themes entailed. Using this form, we asked 15 teacher educators to indicate where in the programme they addressed these topics, to give examples of good practices and whether they felt they needed more professional development on a given theme. Next, we discussed their answers with the group. Of the 15 teacher educators, one did not give permission to use answers and three were researchers who did not have an active role in teaching or coaching PSTs. Next, we summarize the 11 remaining teacher educators' views and practices regarding building resilience in teacher education.

#### 9.3.1 *Views on BRiTE Dimensions*

##### 9.3.1.1 Building Resilience

Most teacher educators indicated that they talked to their PSTs about resilience and why resilience matters. However, when prompted to describe how they do this, teacher educators rarely used the term 'resilience'. Instead, they talked about '(physically and mentally) taking care of oneself', 'keeping all balls in the air', 'dealing with receiving feedback', 'time management', 'setting realistic goals' and 'learning to say "no"'. Furthermore, addressing the topic of resilience did not happen structurally or in a pre-planned manner, but mostly in a reactive way, as a response to issues PSTs brought in. The majority of teacher educators described talking about building resilience when necessary during personal coaching sessions or in informal talks with PSTs and during a pedagogics or didactics course if the topic came up, such as when PSTs brought in a problem they were experiencing that touched on the topic of their well-being.

### **9.3.1.2 Relationships**

Regarding relationships, all teacher educators indicated that at some point and in some way, they talked about the importance of building relationships as a (preservice) teacher. They did this both during courses and during one-to-one talks with PSTs. Teacher educators' emphasis when talking to their PSTs about relationships was on the important role of colleagues and fellow PSTs as a support system. Furthermore, almost half the teacher educators offered their PSTs strategies that would help them build relationships at the school where they were doing their school-based field experience. These strategies were mainly tips and tricks about how to introduce themselves, how to get to know their colleagues and how to gain the most from their colleagues' expertise.

### **9.3.1.3 Well-Being**

All teacher educators discussed well-being topics with their PSTs, and the majority also offered specific strategies on how to take care of their mental health. As with the relationships theme, well-being was a theme that arose every now and then during courses and during individual coaching. Well-being strategies that many teacher educators advised their PSTs included setting realistic goals for themselves, protecting their boundaries, sharing success experiences, planning 'fun' activities and taking time for self-care.

### **9.3.1.4 Taking Initiative**

As part of the 'taking initiative' theme, focusing on problem-solving and communication was common among the teacher educators. Problem-solving was mainly discussed during individual coaching and group coaching sessions, in which each PST brought in a case from his or her practicum experience. In general, teacher educators pressed their PSTs to talk about their challenges, not only with them, but also with teachers at the school where they did their field experience and with fellow PSTs. Regarding communication, teacher educators mainly referred to the course 'Communication in the classroom', which is a mandatory course within the teacher education programme at the UG. This course, however, focuses on communicating (verbally and nonverbally) with students, not with fellow teachers and other significant people in the PSTs' environment. Ongoing professional development is also a topic within the 'taking initiative' theme, but there were hardly any teacher educators who paid explicit attention to this; two indicated that during their course they mentioned how PSTs could keep learning after graduation.

### **9.3.1.5 Emotions**

Teacher educators also addressed the theme of ‘emotions’, again mainly in an implicit and reactive way, both during courses and individual coaching. Many teacher educators contributed to their PSTs’ optimism by focusing on positive things (e.g. what the PST is already good at) and by emphasizing the importance of putting experiences in perspective. Regarding the role of teachers’ emotions during teaching, teacher educators paid attention to the importance of being aware of their own emotions as a teacher and not taking negative pupil behaviour personally.

## ***9.3.2 Summarizing Teachers’ Perceptions of Resilience Building in the Programme***

This brief exploration of teacher educators’ current practices confirms that many teacher educators talk about topics related to resilience and the four themes (i.e. relationships, wellbeing, taking initiative and emotions) and that the majority also offer their PSTs strategies (e.g. giving advice, providing ‘tips and tricks’) on building relationships in school, taking care of one’s own mental health, dealing with problems and handling their emotions. However, it is also clear that teacher educators do these things in a rather ad hoc manner, that is, mainly in response to topics, cases or problems their PSTs bring in and not in a systematic, planned way. Nonetheless, most teacher educators felt that building resilience was important, as all could mention many examples of former or current PSTs who were struggling and could benefit from developing resilience.

An important issue mentioned by multiple teacher educators with regard to implementing resilience-enhancing practices in the teacher education programme was that the programme is already full and demanding and that there is no space for extra topics, such as resilience, to be included. A second problem that teacher educators mentioned is that they, too, lacked knowledge about resilience and resilience-building strategies. Finally, because the workshop in which we collected the views and practices of teacher educators on building resilience was voluntary, the sample might have been biased towards a group of teacher educators who are already working on supporting PSTs to become resilient teachers.

## 9.4 BRiTE Modules in Dutch Teacher Education Programmes

### 9.4.1 *BRiTE and LITBSAY*

The main goal of the LITBSAY project is to gain more insight into PSTs' resilience and how teacher educators can help PSTs build resilience. In the first two parts of the project, we focus on identifying PSTs' resilience and the activities they undertake to enhance resilience. In the final part of the project, we adapt the BRiTE modules to the Dutch context as a tool to enhance PSTs' resilience. Tools for enhancing PSTs' resilience are uncommon in Dutch teacher education programmes, and there are no instructional methods that enable teacher educators to incorporate resilience building in their courses or programmes. Therefore, using a learning module based on the BRiTE modules is an important step. Our study used a blended learning module (e.g. Alammay et al. 2014). Building such a module for Dutch teacher education programmes includes developing an online environment, translating the BRiTE modules, testing and piloting the online environment with teachers and PSTs, and instructing the teacher educators involved in the implementation of the modules. These activities are included in the LITBSAY project planned from September 2019 to April 2022.

We plan on implementing the modules in two teacher education institutes, the KPZ and the UG, where both PSTs and educators from the institutes and schools are involved in learning communities.<sup>5</sup> At the KPZ, the online modules will be implemented in the fourth year of the curriculum when PSTs are instructed in small groups supervised by a tutor. The blended learning module is implemented in two or three tutor groups and consists of 10 sessions. In each session, topics of the BRiTE modules will be discussed. At the university-based programme for teacher education, one or two small learning communities will be created in which PSTs, teacher educators from the institute and teacher educators from the school are invited to participate in five blended learning sessions. Each session will discuss the topics of the BRiTE modules. Because one of the goals of the study is to help teacher educators support their PSTs, the information will also be provided to teacher educators (in the institute and the schools) who are not involved in the implementation.

### 9.4.2 *BRiTE Modules: First Impressions and Suggestions*

The BRiTE modules offer a promising intervention to adapt to the Dutch teacher education context. As part of the project, we examined how best to adapt the modules. We decided to focus on two aspects: the development and design of the module and the implementation of the module. In the overall project, we included an advisory

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<sup>5</sup>Le Cornu and Ewing (2008) suggested that learning communities can help PSTs develop resilience.

role for members of the BRiTE team (Caroline Mansfield and Susan Beltman) to discuss these aspects. Building on discussions with the developers, the data from the teacher educators, the exploration of the BRiTE modules, the conversations with our advisory board and the BRiTE project leaders, we recommend that the following topics be considered when adapting and implementing the modules to a different context.

#### **9.4.2.1 Development and Design of the Modules**

##### *Content*

The BRiTE modules enable participants to obtain a great amount of knowledge on resilience and related strategies. All information and materials are grounded in the literature and in practice. Some of the sections on “what the experts say” might be difficult for younger PSTs in terms of language or familiarity with academic writing. This implies that these sections may need some adaptations. Furthermore, to make the modules more suitable for younger PSTs, it might be valuable to write the modules in a less formal language. It would also be helpful to be more explicit about why it is important to include perspectives from experts. The section on Emotions tends to focus on positive emotions, which is desirable and follows literature on positive psychology. An important addition, in our view, would be to note explicitly that it is also natural to have negative emotions and that these emotions can be both beneficial and detrimental to functioning. The BRiTE modules end with a reflection. We hope to determine whether adding a reflection or feedback moment after finishing each of the sections would be beneficial. The self-quizzes were functional; they organized ideas, cognitions and beliefs in advance. Some of the self-quizzes might be perceived as rather long and somewhat repetitive. It would be helpful to spread out these questions to keep them manageable.

##### *Conditions: GDPR, Collaboration, Costs*

When considering implementing the BRiTE modules in a different context, we believe, from our first explorations, that it is important to discuss issues related to the content of the learning modules, the design of the learning modules, the ethical issues surrounding working with the modules and the related costs. We recommend adding these issues in a license of agreement.

##### *Native Language*

For our study, we considered it important to translate the modules to the Dutch language, especially because we are working with younger age groups. In addition, mental health, well-being and resilience can be sensitive topics that might raise emotions. As such, working with the modules in one’s native language decreases the cognitive load (Roussel et al. 2017). Relatedly, it is important to focus on the content of the modules and their suitability for different groups.

### *Teaching Standards*

Section 3.1.4 on taking initiative uses Australian standards. It is imperative to connect the modules with the Dutch teaching standards,<sup>6</sup> which would also help stakeholders assess the importance of focusing on resilience and resilience strategies. Although the consortium members compared the Australian and Dutch teaching standards globally, more information is required on the key differences and similarities.

#### **9.4.2.2 Implementation of the Modules**

##### *Workload*

Another concern regards determining how to incorporate this blended learning module in teacher education programmes that already have a high workload. This is important from both PSTs' and teacher educators' perspectives. Both groups expressed concerns about the workload in our first discussion. Furthermore, studies have discussed the high workload of higher education staff (e.g. [https://www.vsmu.nl/en\\_GB/workloads](https://www.vsmu.nl/en_GB/workloads)) and PSTs (e.g. Klassen et al. 2013).

##### *Stakeholders*

Before implementing the BRiTE modules, it is important to think about the people who need to be involved and how to keep them involved. We, therefore, discussed which stakeholders might be involved in our intervention and how to implement the BRiTE modules. During the process, we mainly talked to teacher educators and school leaders who were interested in and enthusiastic about enhancing resilience. We also talked to a few teacher educators who were less enthusiastic and had different beliefs about the question of addressing resilience in the teacher education programme. For our project, we decided to start with teacher educators who are interested in and enthusiastic about resilience in the hope that they would influence others during the course of our project.

##### *Types and Levels of Implementation*

One concern a student expressed after testing the modules was whether a person could obtain resilience strategies or become more resilient using only the online version of the module. The student recommended incorporating the modules in teacher education practice and supporting PSTs going through the module using the “Blended Learning” (dine-in or takeaway) or “Pick and Mix” (buffet) method, as described in the implementation guidelines.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is important to think about how to implement the BRiTE modules in a teacher education programme. Price et al. (2012) also discussed the implications for enhancing resilience within teacher education. They

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<sup>6</sup>More information on Dutch teaching standards is available at <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stb-2017-148.html>.

<sup>7</sup><https://www.brite.edu.au/Media/Default/Instructions/BRiTE%20Implementation%20Guidelines%202015.pdf>.

emphasized thinking carefully about the constructs of resilience and how they can be embedded in the programme. When thinking about a large-scale implementation of the programme, it might also be helpful to examine the literature related to curriculum change and changing beliefs to identify how best to implement it on a broader scale and how to convince stakeholders of the importance of doing so. Thus, the transfer to teacher education practice needs to be kept in mind, and different types and levels of implementation can be considered.

The types and levels of implementation also need to be considered in relation to PST and teacher educator workloads. Because PSTs mentioned that they find it challenging to balance the requirements of the teacher education programme and the school, it would be worthwhile to involve teachers in the schools who work closely together with PSTs during the implementation of the BRiTE modules (Blume et al. 2010).

## 9.5 Conclusion

Enhancing PSTs' well-being and resilience is beginning to gain more attention in Dutch policy and teacher education programmes. However, information on well-being and resilience, and methods of enhancing this in teacher education, is still uncommon. Therefore, raising awareness about these topics by implementing the BRiTE modules in Dutch teacher education is an important step forward. In this exploratory chapter, we elaborated on the process of developing and adapting the BRiTE modules to a different national context.

Having talked to 11 teacher educators about this topic, we found that most of them consciously or unconsciously pay attention to the themes and topics in the BRiTE framework, either in their courses or in individual sessions with PSTs. The teacher educators tended to offer PSTs strategies and provide tips and tricks, mainly in response to PSTs' questions, cases or problems. There was no structural attention to resilience and resilience strategies in the programme, though all teacher educators were aware of its importance.

Two concerns the teacher educators mentioned were that (a) the programme is already full, and extra topics might come at the cost of other topics, and (b) there is a general lack of knowledge among teacher educators on resilience and resilience-building strategies. This implies that careful consideration of how to implement the blended learning module in the Dutch context and to professionalize teacher educators is important.

To conclude, the theoretical framework (Mansfield et al. 2016) and the BRiTE modules are promising tools to enhance Dutch PSTs' resilience. Increasing attention to enhancing PSTs' resilience is important, which is why it is encouraging that Dutch policymakers and teacher educators have begun acknowledging this topic. We are excited to work towards the goal of making PSTs more resilient and that, while doing so, we have the opportunity to work together with the BRiTE team to use the BRiTE modules in our teacher education programmes.

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# Chapter 10

## BRiTE Mind: Introducing Mindfulness to Cultivate Personal and Professional Resilience in Teachers



Helen Correia

**Abstract** Mindfulness in education has gained increasing focus over the last decade. Various programmes have been developed for students, teachers and principals, in efforts to improve well-being and resilience in the face of increasing demands and stressors. With teachers often at the forefront of these demands, mindfulness offers the potential to support personal and professional resilience, through enhanced self-awareness, supporting well-being and developing mindful relationships. This chapter describes the development of an online module introducing mindfulness to pre-service teachers, specifically integrating concepts underpinning resilience as outlined in the BRiTE programme. Key elements of mindfulness are explored including mindful attention in the present moment, awareness of emotion and cultivating mindful attitudes, such as compassion. These are applied specifically to teacher experiences to support conscious and mindful action, for personal well-being, and in the classroom.

**Keywords** Mindfulness · Resilience · Teachers · Emotion · Well-being

### 10.1 Introduction

The past decade has seen growing interest in the development and implementation of mindfulness related programmes in education. Mindfulness is increasingly being adopted in classrooms around the world with hopes to improve socio-emotional learning and student well-being (Semple et al. 2017). This growth parallels the increasing popularity of mindfulness and meditation in contemporary secular culture more generally, with an exponential growth in media and scientific articles over the past two decades (Van Dam et al. 2018). Consumerisation of mindfulness tools such as smartphone apps is now being evaluated empirically (e.g. Flett et al. 2019).

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The concept of “mindfulness” historically, has its roots in Eastern traditions, defined in many ways. One commonly used definition highlights paying attention, intentionally and on purpose, with awareness of the present moment, in a non-judgemental way (Kabat-Zinn 1994). Similarly, others have identified common elements that include, firstly, present moment awareness, and secondly, the quality or orientation of that awareness (Bishop et al. 2004). These qualities include, for example, non-judgemental acceptance and non-reactivity (e.g. Baer et al. 2006; Blanke and Brose 2017) or care and discernment (e.g. Shapiro 2009). Mindfulness has also been described as a set of meditation practices, a type of skill, a mode of knowing and a way of being (Alper 2016), which are especially supported by formal mindfulness practices. Siegel et al. (2016) distinguish between being in a *mindful state*, in which we experience moment to moment awareness in a way that allow us to practice openness, acceptance, kindness, *mindful traits*, which are more enduring characteristic ways of being.

Typically, mindfulness-based interventions include various types of practices, such as meditations, which are intended to consciously induce mindful states. Underpinning these practices are emotional and attentional regulation strategies, aimed to support physical well-being and emotional balance (Lutz et al. 2008). Mindfulness-based interventions such as *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* (MBSR), rather than meditation practice alone, typically include additional psychoeducation and contemplative enquiry to support awareness and insight as the basis for change. Within educational contexts the term *mindfulness training* is also used to describe more general programmes. Mindfulness training is used here to encompass the broad range of interventions and general programmes that purport to use mindfulness as a foundation.

In school environments, the experience of educator stress and burnout in teachers is recognised with the potential for mindfulness to support resilience in these contexts (Jennings and DeMauro 2017). Here, mindfulness training may lead to several key areas of integration for teachers including self-care, professional reflexivity and transforming student learning (Shapiro et al. 2016). The rise in awareness and popularity of mindfulness tools also suggests the need for accessible information about mindfulness and its relevance and application for teachers. Importantly, mindfulness principles support trans-contextual ways of being, equally applicable and meaningful in cultivating resilience in both professional environments and in personal life. The development of an online module as part of the *Building Resilience in Teacher Education* (BRiTE) (Mansfield et al. 2016; see Chap. 3) programme is described here as an example. This chapter will begin by exploring the empirical literature on mindfulness interventions in school environments and its relevance to developing resilience for teachers. It will also provide an overview of BRiTE Mind, an online module introducing mindfulness through the BRiTE programme, and the ways in which it is intended to support key BRiTE concepts.

## 10.2 The Impact of Mindfulness Training on Students and Teachers

In educational contexts, the major focus of potential benefits has been student programmes. The expansion of contemporary mindfulness follows earlier research in medicine and psychology demonstrating positive outcomes of mindfulness-based interventions such as MBSR (Van Dam et al. 2018), initially developed for pain conditions, and subsequently adapted to support mental health and well-being more broadly. For students, the increased implementation of programmes and empirical research in the area have prompted several reviews and meta-analyses over the last decade (e.g. Meiklejohn et al. 2012; Zenner et al. 2014; Maynard et al. 2017; McKeering and Hwang 2019; Šouláková et al. 2019). While these reviews have been mixed in finding support for improved academic outcomes, there is more consistent support for potential benefits for elementary and high-school-aged students in socio-emotional processes and well-being.

Despite the potential benefits, a range of authors recognise the limitations in the research, such as absence of school-collected academic or behavioural outcome data (Felver et al. 2016), or the cultural context in which mindfulness is implemented (Long et al. 2018). All reviews recognise the need for higher quality, appropriately powered studies, that explore longer term outcomes, consistent with more recent critiques of mindfulness-based intervention research more generally (Van Dam et al. 2018). Considerable work is needed empirically to evaluate specific programmes (Semple et al. 2017) and establish consistent findings to inform evidence-based practice (McKeering and Hwang 2019). Further, some authors have also recognised the limitations of programme implementation focused solely on students, instead advocating for multilevel integrated interventions that support both students and teachers (Meiklejohn et al. 2012).

With teachers often at the forefront of increasing demands and stressors, the potential benefits of mindfulness have been promoted by a range of authors for teachers and teacher resilience (e.g. Jennings 2015a) as well as in teacher education (e.g. Zimmerman 2018). Even prior to mindfulness training, increased levels of trait mindfulness in teachers have been associated with reduced symptoms of distress, occupational stress and burnout (Braun et al. 2019) and classroom quality such as emotional support (see e.g. Jennings 2015b; Molloy Elreda et al. 2019). In addition to teacher resilience, Siegel et al. (2016) also suggest that mindful teachers facilitate student resilience through mindful relationships founded in Presence, Attunement, Resonance, and Trust (PART). This potential has resulted in the development of tailored mindfulness-based teacher professional development programmes such *Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) for Teachers* (Jennings et al. 2013) as well as mindfulness training more generally. A recent review also suggested potential benefits with pre-service teachers (Birchinall et al. 2019). Empirical research of mindfulness training has evaluated impact on both personal and professional outcomes.

In terms of personal outcomes for teachers, positive benefits of mindfulness training have included reduced self-reported symptoms of psychological stress and improved well-being (e.g. Benn et al. 2012; Hwang et al. 2017; Roeser et al. 2013; Todd et al. 2019). Studies with pre-service teachers have found mixed results, reporting that mindfulness training compared to control group showed improvements in well-being (Hue and Lau 2015) and emotional clarity and emotion regulation (Kerr et al. 2017) but neither found significant reductions in stress, although mindfulness was predictive of symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety (Hue and Lau 2015). Another study by Garner et al. (2018) found that breathing awareness meditation infused with social-emotional learning demonstrated improved emotional competence compared with a control group of breathing awareness meditation only. The range of mixed findings may in part be due to methodological and programme variations.

In an evaluation of the *Community Approach to Learning Mindfully* (CALM) programme for teachers, improvements were demonstrated in both self-report and physiological measures such as blood pressure compared to control condition (Harris et al. 2016; cf. Roeser et al. 2013). Reductions in anxiety were also found in mindfulness training through MBSR and the Foundations programme, with MBSR alone showing benefits in depression symptoms (Todd et al. 2019). Mindfulness training has also shown increases in self-compassion (e.g. Roeser et al. 2013; Hwang et al. 2017), benefits to self-regulation (Frank et al. 2015), as well as reduced symptoms of burnout and improved cognitive functioning (Roeser et al. 2013). Other studies have explored impact on sleep, identifying positive benefits to quality and reduced sleep difficulties (e.g. Crain et al. 2017; Frank et al. 2015; Hwang et al. 2017).

These findings are generally echoed in a review of nineteen studies evaluating mindfulness interventions for educators, identifying positive outcomes across most measures of psychological distress, burnout and well-being (Lomas et al. 2017). Similarly, Jennings and DeMauro (2017) summarised and reviewed a range of mindfulness-based training programmes used with teachers such as CARE for Teachers (e.g. Jennings et al. 2013), and *Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques* (SMART) in Education (see e.g. Benn et al. 2012) demonstrating improvements in stress and well-being, as well as the acceptability and feasibility of use with teachers. The CARE programme in particular has shown positive effects across measures of emotion regulation, stress, burnout and mindfulness (Jennings et al. 2017). While initial results are promising, as with the literature for student mindfulness programmes, it is acknowledged that there is heterogeneity in programme characteristics, as well as empirical studies, with higher quality studies needed with longer term evaluations (Jennings and DeMauro 2017; Lomas et al. 2017). Similar suggestions were noted in a review of the state of research on mindfulness interventions for in-service teachers (Hwang et al. 2017).

Other studies have evaluated the impact of mindfulness training on teacher effectiveness, classroom quality and students. An early review identified potential benefits in teaching self-efficacy, managing classroom behaviour and maintaining supportive student-teacher relationships (Meiklejohn et al. 2012). Others have found a reduction in challenging behaviours in students with a mild intellectual disability following

teacher attendance at an 8-week mindfulness training programme applying mindfulness to the classroom (Singh et al. 2013). It may also improve beliefs about challenging child behaviour in pre-service teachers (Garner et al. 2018). Evaluation of the *CARE for Teachers* programme compared to waitlist control (Jennings et al. 2013) and a cluster randomised trial (Jennings et al. 2017) identified improved classroom quality interactions through the domain of emotional support. In contrast, another cluster randomised trial (Hwang et al. 2017) found benefits to personal well-being (e.g. perceived stress, sleep) and students' sense of connectedness to teachers, but not in teaching efficacy or student–teacher relationships. Again, however, differences in outcomes may reflect differences in programme components, implementation or measurement.

Overall, despite the relatively small pool of studies, mindfulness training for teachers as reported in the literature seems to support personal resilience and well-being, and in some cases may also generate flow-on benefits to classroom environments and student behaviour. While there is limited literature with mixed findings for pre-service teachers, given the potential impact for teachers more broadly, some authors have suggested there may be potential benefit (Birchinall et al. 2019). There is clearly a need for more high-quality studies and a need to explore how differences in programme design, implementation and measurement may impact on outcomes (Lomas et al. 2017). This may be facilitated by further exploring potential processes and mediational factors that help us understand why mindfulness training, or what aspects of mindfulness, help to make a difference to well-being and resilience.

In particular, improvements in some aspects of mindfulness skills, such as observing, non-judgement and non-reactivity may be of importance and worth emphasising (e.g. Todd et al. 2019). A qualitative synthesis by Hwang et al. (2017) suggests the importance of awareness, and changing relationship to experience, potentially through non-reactivity, in supporting improved relationships and mindful coping to manage difficult emotions. This may highlight the importance of self-compassion as an important mediator in improved well-being and reduced distress (Roeser et al. 2013). Further, a review by Emerson et al. (2017) suggests that mindfulness and self-compassion may lead to more effective emotion regulation processes and improved teacher efficacy, which together reduce stress. In combination, there is an emerging literature that may help to identify key facets worth highlighting, such as awareness of experience, orientations to experience such as non-reactivity and compassion, and factors related to emotion regulation to manage emotions.

In sum, the empirical research base evaluating the impact of mindfulness training and mindfulness-based programmes in education is heterogeneous and complex, mirroring the diverse range of programmes offered in educational settings, and similarly mindfulness training tools, such as mobile phone apps, currently available worldwide. Given the paucity of high-quality studies to contribute to evidence-based practice, reviews of the empirical literature are understandably cautious (e.g. Hwang et al. 2017; Lomas et al. 2017; McKeering and Hwang 2019; Semple et al. 2017). Nevertheless, the potential for mindfulness to contribute to improved resilience, personal well-being and interpersonal relationships in educational contexts remains promising (e.g. Jennings and DeMauro 2017). Importantly, given the frequency of

reports in the media, educators may be interested in pursuing mindfulness practice independent (or unaware) of any concerns highlighted in the scientific literature.

In the current climate, it seems particularly important to develop easily accessible educational resources that introduce teachers to mindfulness related concepts, to support them in how they may use mindfulness to cultivate personal and professional resilience. BRiTE Mind is an online module introducing mindfulness developed for pre-service teachers, linked conceptually to resilience and embedded within the established online *Building Resilience in Teacher Education* (BRiTE) programme. Yet pre-service teachers in contemporary education settings are likely to have already heard about mindfulness, may have experience with mindfulness practice, and may be exposed to an accessible range of mindfulness programmes and tools. As such, BRiTE Mind attempts to take account of the complexities in the available literature, recognise existing experience, tools and programmes, and seek to translate these in a way that supports pre-service teachers to navigate how they may apply mindfulness practices and principles, to cultivate resilience in personal and professional contexts.

### **10.3 BRiTE Mind: Supporting the BRiTE Programme in Cultivating Mindful Resilience**

The potential for mindfulness to support resilience in teachers is a growing area of academic and professional interest. The core principles of mindfulness, such as being present oriented, with openness, acceptance, clarity and flexibility, may contribute to adaptive appraisals and action regulation that support coping for everyday resilience (Skinner and Beer 2016). The online BRiTE programme provides a framework for understanding and developing resilience in teachers, centred around key concepts in BRiTE: **B**uilding resilience, **R**elationships, **W**ellbeing, **T**aking initiative, and **E**motions. An overview of how mindfulness may be linked to these concepts is described later.

There are several key aims and intentions in the development of BRiTE Mind. First, it aims to provide an introductory overview of mindfulness related concepts, to support developing resilience as explored through the BRiTE programme. Second, given the availability of mindfulness programmes and tools, the purpose of BRiTE Mind was not to replicate or create another mindfulness training programme, but rather to build and extend knowledge about mindfulness, clarifying common understandings and misconceptions that have been perpetuated in the media (e.g. Van Dam et al. 2018). The intention here was to strengthen a balanced understanding of mindfulness as a concept and a practice rather than setting expectations that it is a quick fix, panacea, designed to encourage individual coping with systemic problems (see Correia and Strehlow 2018; Walsh 2016). With this in mind, a third key aim was to support knowledge translation, with opportunities to scaffold application of mindfulness to personal and professional situations.

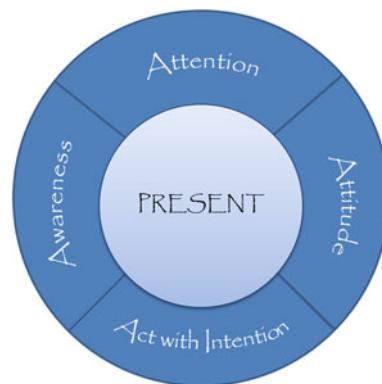
## 10.4 Key Elements of Mindfulness and Mindful Practice

Introducing mindfulness through BRiTE Mind required a framework that could help pre-service teachers translate mindfulness concepts and practice into personal and professional contexts. Given the historical roots of mindfulness, as well as the diverse literature on its secular and empirical development, the semantic ambiguity makes distilling broad perspectives into key concepts challenging (Van Dam et al. 2018). However, while the literature varies, a range of authors have attempted to identify core features and key components, from both contemporary and traditional perspectives. Distinguishing between core features may be helpful given some research identifying that different meditation practices that emphasise different qualities can have different effects (see e.g. Lippelt et al. 2014). In BRiTE Mind, key elements are brought together in a broad framework (see Fig. 10.1).

While other mindfulness practice models are available, the model here is necessarily simplified in order to enhance accessibility and orient introductory understanding about mindfulness. It captures key definitional qualities, is applied to a range of mindfulness meditation practices, and supports application of such qualities to specific personal and professional situations as described in BRiTE. These qualities are obviously interconnected and integrated in practice but are distinguished below.

- **Present:** Mindfulness practice is present oriented, and the emphasis is typically on immediate experience, as described in definitions (e.g. Bishop 2004). This promotes learning that experiences are impermanent and transient, and practicing letting go, rather than getting caught in the past or the future (Kabat-Zinn 1994). The model also recognises the importance of being fully present and connected with purpose.
- **Attention:** The gathering of attention in a purposeful way is included in most definitions, considered by some a primary feature of practice (Van Dam et al.

**Fig. 10.1** BRiTE Mind framework for demonstrating key features of mindfulness practice, with permissions granted by the Australian Government Department of Education



2018). Mindfulness approaches recognise the automatic alerting nature of attention towards salient stimuli and practices attempt to train attention towards intentionality. This includes directing and orienting attention to a chosen object, shifting attention away from distractors back to the selected object of attention and sustaining or maintaining attention (see Jennings 2015a; Lutz et al. 2008).

- **Awareness:** Attending to present moment experience allows us to tune in and become aware, observing with clarity the stimuli or reactions in our internal and external environments. Open monitoring allows us to observe different stimuli without necessarily becoming attached to any one of them (Lutz et al. 2008). This may include describing through noting or labelling sensations, thoughts, feelings and impulses without acting on them (non-reactivity).
- **Attitude:** This is intended to capture the attitudes and qualities that provide a context for how we relate to attentional and awareness processes. This includes emotional tone and intentions (e.g. Van Dam et al. 2018), and encompasses ethical values, which are key in teaching practices, especially around reducing harm and suffering, and promoting helpful ways of being. Attitudes of openness, curiosity, non-judgemental acceptance, patience, respect, dignity, compassion and kindness help us to gently observe and act without harmful reactivity, and generate helpful actions.
- **Act with Intention:** In addition to attention and attitude, some authors emphasise intention (Shapiro et al. 2016), and others suggest that action regulation facilitates coping in teacher resilience (Skinner and Beers 2016). Being mindful, consciously intentional in our actions allows us to respond with conscious intention, choice and flexibility, rather than just acting based on habits and automatic reactions learned from past experience (e.g. attachments and aversions). This reinforces non-reactivity, allowing thoughts, feelings, sensations to come and go, rather than subsuming to automatic or conditioned processes.

In BRiTE Mind, these are applied to typical practices and experiences such as breathing. For example, if experiencing distress and rumination about a difficult classroom experience, bringing *attention* to the breath in the *present* moment, tuning in with *awareness* to observe different sensations, bringing an *attitude* of non-judgemental acceptance to those experiences, as well as compassion and care (rather than self criticism) when we become *aware* our mind has wandered, then *acting with intention* to redirect attention back to the breath, gently and kindly, time and again. Similarly, it is applied to interpersonal situations such as working with students: we can bring our *attention* to be truly *present* with full *awareness*—we notice, observe, and tune in to what the student is saying with an *attitude* of openness and curiosity, slowing ourselves down to listen deeply rather than through our own agenda. If we notice our mind has wandered, we bring our *attention* back to the present interaction, with an *attitude* of curiosity, kindness and compassion, with conscious *intention* in how we respond. The combination of these aspects are key in linking to resilience as explored through the BRiTE programme, and are relevant to cultivating resilience in both personal and professional contexts. For example, being mindfully present in family relationships is beneficial both to “switch off from work” to support work-life

balance, and also in staying present in personal relationships. Examples that highlight these aspects are explored in BRiTE Mind.

## 10.5 Links Between Resilience Concepts in BRiTE and Mindfulness Approaches

Bringing together key concepts in BRiTE Mind provides an underlying framework to support key concepts of resilience outlined in the BRiTE program. Examples with links to teacher applications are provided in Table 10.1. The Emotion module in BRiTE is of key relevance to many resilience concepts in BRiTE, and support awareness of and management of emotions, which is similarly a core feature of mindfulness-based interventions. Shapiro et al. (2016) suggest that mindfulness may promote coping in everyday resilience by reducing reactivity and impulsivity, promoting openness, flexibility and action regulation in response to emotions and adaptive post-event processing of emotions for learning. Empirically, research suggests that mindfulness may improve emotion regulation (Roemer et al. 2015), including for teachers (Emerson et al. 2017). This may be through reducing avoidance (e.g. Prakash et al. 2017) and improving non-reactivity (e.g. Curtiss et al. 2017; Iani et al. 2019). Mindfulness training may also help to reduce reactivity, as well as reduce worry and rumination, which may lead to improved mental health and well-being (Gu et al. 2015). The mindfulness-based CARE programme for teachers specifically found positive benefits for adaptive emotion regulation (Jennings et al. 2017).

To support emotion awareness in particular, BRiTE Mind refers to work by Gilbert (2013) describing a model of emotion regulation systems including *threat*, emphasising protection from perceived danger, *drive* (incentive and resource seeking) and *affiliative soothing* (calming and affiliative focused). The model is part of Gilbert's compassion-based approaches (e.g. Compassionate Mind Training) and is based on research and models in affective neuroscience. Some authors describe a range of other systems (e.g. Panksepp 2005) but the simplified model is intuitive in practice, and facilitates naming, labelling, and exploring the nature of emotional systems, with a recognition of how they may need to change. Gilbert (2013) emphasises the important role of all systems in adaptive emotion regulation, such that underactivity of the soothing system (and/or overactivity of the threat/drive systems) may lead to experiences of chronic stress, highlighting how change might be needed. Further, with the soothing system potentially playing a key role in care, the balance of these systems is argued to be crucial in supporting compassion and developing a compassionate mind (Gilbert 2013).

**Table 10.1** Links between example concepts of resilience in BRiTE and Mindfulness approaches

Example BRiTE concepts	Example links to mindfulness
<b>Building Resilience:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptive responding to challenges, stressors and demands (both personally and systemically) with sufficient resources in a way that sustains wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mindful practices (e.g. mindful breathing) to help calm and reduce personal threat reactivity</li> <li>Awareness of automatic habits and reactions (personally and systemically)</li> <li>Attitudes (e.g. care and discernment, compassion) to acknowledge struggle and motivate changes</li> <li>Act with intentions through action regulation to reduce harm and promote adaptive flexible responding (personally and systemically)</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and maintenance of positive relationships</li> <li>Adapting to new communities</li> <li>Working together in teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present and connected through attention and awareness in relationships with students and staff</li> <li>Act with intention to bring mindful awareness, attitudes (including ethical values) of non-judgmental acceptance of differences, kindness, compassion to ourselves and others to work together effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Wellbeing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing work-life balance</li> <li>Maintaining motivation through persistence and self-efficacy</li> <li>Recognising and responding to (dis)stress to support personal well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of balance/imbalance of demands and resources and the nature of related habits</li> <li>Remembering to bring attention to experiences (including distress) with care and discernment, and responding to distress with kindness, compassion and seeking support when needed</li> <li>Act with intention around time management to support self-care, maintain attentional presence in non-work activities, and healthy living</li> </ul>
<b>Taking Initiative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem-solving</li> <li>Help-seeking</li> <li>Communicating effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mindful practices to slow down, observe with non-reactivity, to understand problem situations as they are, and be flexible and adaptive to make choices with intention in response</li> <li>Attitudes (e.g. care, compassion) to support making changes to reduce struggle and seek support</li> <li>Directing attention with gentle patience and non-judgemental acceptance, kindness, compassion to listen and communicate effectively</li> </ul>

(continued)

**Table 10.1** (continued)

Example BRiTE concepts	Example links to mindfulness
<b>Emotions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of and managing emotions</li> <li>• Developing optimism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of thoughts, physical responses, impulses, habits, with non-reactivity; act with intention to make choices about our behaviour</li> <li>• Act with intention through breathing, with mindful attitudes of openness, curiosity, non-judgemental acceptance, patience, compassion</li> </ul>

## 10.6 Application to Teacher Experiences—Examples of Mindful Responding in Practice

One of the key aims was to support knowledge translation of mindfulness approaches into personal and professional experiences. Some examples of mindful responding in practice and application to teacher experiences are provided in Table 10.2. The BRiTE Mind module attempts to bring these kinds of applications to experiences to life through an interactive module, where participants are invited to engage with online activities that promote clarification, observation, reflection and enquiry. For example, in recognising that many individuals may already have experienced mindful moments, participants are invited to share a “mindful moment” to the community, prompted to provide a description that emphasizes awareness and observations of experience rather than a narrative.

In particular, however, participants are invited to explore six case scenarios of typical teacher experiences in personal and professional contexts (developed by Mansfield). These case scenarios are similar to those presented in Table 10.2. Using an interactive web-based tool, participants can generate the likely relative intensity of different emotion regulation systems (threat, drive, soothing), adapted from Gilbert’s (2013) model. Participants are also invited to generate examples of possible changes that could be made to improve adaptive responses. For each of the cases, participants are also invited to differentiate between responses that may be more reflective of autopilot/automatic reactivity as compared to the application of mindful approaches to responding, highlighting a key concept from mindfulness-based interventions such as MBSR (e.g. Kabat-Zinn 1994). Participants can also interact with the framework in Fig. 10.1 to generate how each aspect might support the development of mindful responding similar to the examples in Table 10.2, and linked to concepts of resilience in BRiTE.

While BRiTE Mind should be considered an educational resource to support the application of mindfulness rather than a mindfulness-based programme per se, the module does provide links to sample practices, whilst recognising that the development of sustained personal practice is best supported by a mindfulness teacher. In addition, at the end of the module, participants are provided with a range of resources, highlighting empirically evaluated programmes, interventions and tools.

**Table 10.2** Example applications of mindful responses in practice

Example case and BRiTE concepts	Example of mindful approach to teacher experiences
<p><b>Case example:</b> Teacher–student conflict: student seems oppositional and seems to encourage other students to act the same</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Resilience: adaptive responding to challenges, stressors and demands</li> <li>• Relationships: Development and maintenance of positive relationships</li> <li>• Emotions: Awareness of and managing emotions</li> </ul>	<p><i>"In the moment, I am aware that my threat system becomes activated—I notice my own self criticism and worry about losing control of the class. I pause to bring mindful attention to my breathing, whilst remaining present in class. This slowing down helps me to "step back", to bring an attitude of acceptance and compassion to the situation, seeing it for what is really is: two human beings feeling threatened, struggling—trying to cope and maintain control over the situation. I remind myself of my ethical values and intentions to play my PART: responding through Presence, Attunement, Resonance, and Trust to respond warmly to the student rather than defensively. An attitude of acceptance also helps me to recognise my difficulties with the situation and act with intention to seek consultation with senior staff."</i></p>
<p><b>Case example:</b> Teacher is out at a social event and is distracted and pre-occupied with thoughts and about difficulties with a class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellbeing: e.g. Developing work-life balance, recognising and responding to (dis)stress</li> <li>• Taking initiative: e.g. Problem solving, Help seeking</li> </ul>	<p><i>"While I am out with friends, I notice that my mind keeps wandering to thoughts of work. Rather than get caught up with judging myself about being distracted, I bring warm acceptance and compassionate understanding to recognising that this is because I have high standards and want to solve problems quickly—but I also acknowledge that right now what is helpful for self-care is switching off from work and being present to my relationships. I bring attention to listening, following the conversation. Each time my attention wanders I bring it back to the sounds of others, opening up to the joy around me with an attitude of appreciation. This helps me to feel a sense of safeness and soothing to feel recharged. At work the next day, I use mindful practices to slow down and assess the difficulties with non-reactivity, so I can more easily brainstorm different options that I can raise in the next staff meeting and be open to feedback."</i></p>

This is intended to support those interested in mindfulness to engage in a more structured process for mindfulness training.

## 10.7 Limitations and Conclusions

As an introductory module to mindfulness as linked to BRiTE, there are clear limits of what can be included. Given the historical roots of mindfulness, as well as the diverse literature on its secular and empirical development, there is semantic ambiguity in the field, and distilling broad perspectives into key concepts can be challenging (Van Dam et al. 2018). This is especially the case given that mindfulness practices historically have been embedded within years of intense experiential and contemplative training to facilitate insight and understanding. Even as an introductory module, the capacity for BRiTE Mind to improve and clarify understandings of mindfulness related concepts as related to resilience in BRiTE will need to be evaluated through future research. Nevertheless, BRiTE Mind does make an attempt to clarify common understandings, with explicit discussion about misconceptions, whilst balancing this with the potential benefits in application, and supporting the existing empirical literature linking mindfulness training and resilience. One of the strengths of BRiTE Mind is the inclusion of a framework that supports generalisable application of mindfulness qualities and translation of this into personal and professional teacher contexts, which may optimise mindful responding and cultivate resilience in pre-service teachers.

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# Chapter 11

## Practical Applications for Building Teacher WellBeing in Education



Daniela Falecki and Elizabeth Mann

**Abstract** UNESCO states the world must recruit 69 million new teachers to reach the 2030 educational goals, but unfortunately, 80% of the current teachers are considering leaving the profession. Teachers are the greatest resource in education and therefore, must be given opportunities to learn skills in resilience to ensure the profession's sustainability. This chapter will highlight the threats to teacher wellbeing and resilience and suggest skills, strategies and practices to support the wellbeing of teachers in schools. Given the increasing burnout and attrition rates of teachers, it seems reasonable to suggest that the same careful planning that goes into developing student wellbeing programmes should be applied in the development of teacher wellbeing programmes. Through the research of Positive Psychology, this chapter explores evidence-based interventions teachers can learn to develop protective factors to buffer against excessive stress. We explore the application of positive psychology in the workplace and the need for professional learning to focus on the development of the Psychological Capital of our teachers. This includes building their inner HERO with hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism.

**Keywords** Teacher wellbeing · Positive education · Psychological capital · Professional development

### 11.1 Introduction

Globally, teachers have the highest levels of work-related stress and burnout compared to other professions (Stoeber and Rennert, 2008). Teacher stress has shown to impair health, decrease self-confidence and self-esteem and fragment personal

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relationships. As well as feeling burned out and exhausted, teachers can experience a sense of powerlessness and isolation, perceiving their work as meaningless (Howard and Johnson 2004). High-stress levels have been linked with feelings of reduced confidence, emotional exhaustion, low motivation and poor job satisfaction and is a prominent factor in teacher attrition (McCarthy et al. 2014). Exhaustion and the social and emotional stresses from the daily pressures of teaching affect teachers' abilities to cope, their wellbeing and their potential to flourish (Parker and Martin 2009). This has been strongly correlated with a poor work–life balance due to the expectations of working long hours and the inability to switch off after work (Education Support Partnership 2019). If teachers' emotional, physical and mental exhaustion from excessive and prolonged stress is not managed, teachers can become burned out. Student achievement suffers when teachers become burned out because their focus is on their survival (Hattie and Yates 2014). Teacher wellbeing can affect both student wellbeing and achievement, because “well teachers promote well students” (McCallum and Price 2010, p. 20). Teachers positively impact students' learning, engagement, achievement, sense of belonging and flourishing (Hattie and Yates 2014). When experiencing stress or burnout, teachers may request support from colleagues, blame others for their inability to cope effectively or take time off (Howard and Johnson 2004). While it is widely acknowledged the wellbeing of teachers is in crisis, teacher wellbeing research has focused more on the individual teacher's deficit and their ability to cope with stress and burnout, rather than how to better develop wellbeing (Roffey 2012). Teacher wellbeing is not just an individual's responsibility, but it is a shared organisational, community and worldwide concern.

Defining wellbeing for teachers can be complicated and a range of theoretical perspectives have addressed the issue (see also Chap. 14). The glaring imbalance in psychological research on teacher wellbeing has resulted in a few evidence-based frameworks describing “what works” to develop the wellbeing of teachers in education. Positive and negative influences on teachers' wellbeing are resilience, self-efficacy, social-emotional capabilities and teachers' reactions to their work (McCallum et al. 2017). Positive wellbeing is a stable emotional state and balances between the teacher and the school context and its demands. Given student learning is the core business of schools, for students to be well, teachers themselves must be well (McCallum and Price 2010). Teachers need better ways to manage the increasing stressors of the role. This includes regular opportunities to develop hope, build efficacy, learn resilience and practice optimism as protective factors to the impacts of stress on their wellbeing.

## 11.2 Positive Psychology and Teacher Wellbeing

Most research into teacher wellbeing has concentrated on the deficit model and the “unwell” teacher, rather than how to foster a teacher's wellness. This is changing due to the rise of evidence-based interventions from Positive Psychology, a field of

inquiry concerned with what makes communities and individuals thrive (Waters and White 2015).

Maslow (1954) created the phrase “positive psychology” to mean increasing research into areas of what made a good, happy, compassionate individual and understanding one’s innate tendency to strive towards excellence, peak experience and self-actualisation. Critics had argued that Maslow’s explicit focus on the self and self-improvement was narcissistic, seeking individual gratification ignoring any meaningful, wellness-enhancing collective or institutional dynamics (Seligman 2002). This has also been a criticism of positive psychology despite Seligman (2002) advocating for development of not only individual but collective wellbeing, extending into society.

A challenge for the positive psychology movement was defining what positive meant, by differentiating “between describing something as ‘good’ and prescribing it as ‘good’” (Gable et al. 2004, p. 107), as well as differentiating a pleasurable experience, which fostered personal growth, from an enjoyable experience. Channelling attention on only what was good and positive may lead to a loss of overall perspective. If previous psychology focused more on the negative, which Seligman had censured, perhaps likewise may be said for positive psychology’s focus on only the positive. In essence, Positive Psychology aims to be the study of virtue, human flourishing, resilience and wellbeing, endeavouring to understand and nurture the lives of individuals and institutions through evidence-based practice and sound inquiry (Pawelski 2016).

Seligman’s goal for positive psychology was to develop a science of positive, subjective experience and to change how one prevented mental illness, by what he termed as ‘buffering’ by developing hope, courage, perseverance, interpersonal skill, honesty, capacity for insight and pleasure, future-mindedness, (Seligman 2002). However, little is known about the long-term costs and benefits of positive psychology.

Positive Psychology interventions that increase wellbeing and reduce depressive symptoms include developing gratitude, identifying character strengths, exploring explanatory style, setting goals, savouring positive emotions, forming positive relationships and celebrating achievements (Seligman 2002). These are typically expressed in a popular model known as the PERMA pillars. These pillars identify the importance of developing:

- *Positive emotion*—Plan and participate in healthy positive experiences.
- *Engagement*—Become immersed in worthwhile pursuits, including the application of strengths.
- *Relationships*—Develop social and emotional skills to better connect and share with others.
- *Meaning*—Reflect and plan for ways to act with purpose, to think beyond themselves and contribute to higher pursuits.
- *Accomplishment*—Set and strive for meaningful goals, manage setbacks, maintain mental toughness and embody a growth mindset (Falecki et al. 2018).

These pillars can also act as ways to develop hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism to buffer the impact of excessive stress due to work demands. One challenge is that prior research into Positive Psychology has focused on short interventions with post-treatment follow-ups meaning immediate benefits seem apparent, yet long-term effects of positive psychology traits and processes still need to be established.

Geelong Grammar, Australia, is globally recognised as a leader in the application for Positive Psychology in education. For 2 years, Seligman and his team worked with all levels of the school community to help teachers ‘Learn’ and ‘Live’ wellbeing before they began to ‘Teach’ and ‘Embed’ wellbeing into the curriculum (Seligman et al. 2009). The fundamental goal was to promote flourishing, which is “the presence of emotional wellbeing or the presence of positive feelings about one’s self and life; social wellbeing or feeling connected to others and valued by the community, and physical wellbeing that focuses on functioning well” (Norrish et al. 2013, p. 149). Comprehensive programmes were implemented for both teaching and non-teaching staff with opportunities to reflect, discuss and plan for ways to support wellbeing (Norrish et al. 2013). However, the validity of Positive Psychology’s interventions is a concern as often intervention success had been determined by self-report measurements, cross-sectional studies and correlation studies; conclusions cannot be drawn about the effectiveness of the intervention as these measures do not imply causality (Diener 2009).

One branch of Positive Psychology that has recently emerged specifically in the workplace is Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB), with the core concept of developing Psychological Capital (PsyCap) of employees. Positive organisational behaviour is the study and application of positive human resource strengths and psychological resource capacities, which are measured, developed and effectively managed for improved workplace performance. Luthans et al. (2015) argues that a focus on the positives is necessary because a focus on negativity moves organisations into fight-or-flight mode. When organisations focus on what needs ‘fixing’, people move to a narrow mindset of wanting to limit the negative impact on their energy and resources, instead of growing what was already working. This perspective also highlights the scarcity of time, resulting in more pressure on employees to solve problems in short time frames. He argues this deficit lens does not promote positive growth within organisations, but only aims to reduce negative impact.

However, it is essential to note that “POB does not discount the value of negativity and negative constructs. Similar to positive psychology and other positive perspectives, POB acknowledges that positivity and negativity serve unique and different functions” (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan 2017, p. 17). Luthans has researched POB by drawing on existing empirical research within the field of Positive Psychology to identify valid measures of positive psychological states that are open to development, have an impact on desired employee attitudes, behaviours and improve performance (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan 2017). The four psychological constructs that meet the POB scientific inclusion criteria are Hope, Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism (HERO).

### 11.3 Developing the Psychological Capital of Teachers

The fundamental role of schools is the education of students. Teachers are what make this happen. The quality of a school system rests on the quality of its teachers, yet if the wellbeing of teachers is languishing, what does this mean about the quality of our organisations? High level of wellbeing in organisations is associated with high engagement, productivity, citizenship and presenteeism (Keyes 2005). Psychological Capital (PsyCap) has been empirically linked to workplace improvements in psychological wellbeing (Avey et al. 2011); organisational commitment and employee performance, presenteeism and job satisfaction (Abbas et al. 2014). High levels of PsyCap also positively influence wellbeing, health outcomes such as lower BMI and cholesterol levels and satisfaction with one's relationships (Abbas et al. 2014). Strong significant positive relationships were found between PsyCap and desirable outcomes such as satisfaction and commitment; increased performance and a reduction in undesirable attitudes such as cynicism, stress, anxiety and staff turnover (Avey et al. 2011).

While there is limited research regarding the relationships between PsyCap and teacher wellbeing, PsyCap has been shown to have benefits for teacher motivation, which influences the quality of teaching and student motivation, as well as reducing illness factors and turnover rates in schools (Viseu et al. 2016). What we do know is that individually the four elements of PsyCap, Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, Optimism, have been extensively researched when it comes to education and the relationship to wellbeing. In this next section, we will unpack the four constructs of PsyCap and the implications for teachers.

Resilience in education has a strong focus on student wellbeing programmes. Developing psychological, cognitive, emotional and social resources can impact one's ability to not only rebound from adversity but also bounce forward towards growth and development (Masten 2001). However, schools are also looking for teachers to thrive in chaos and to learn and grow in tough times. PsyCap resilience is more than just bouncing back; it involves proactively bouncing forward. Teachers can benefit from learning how to better manage their thoughts, emotions, interactions, everyday changes and the setbacks they may experience on an average school day.

One programme that is effective in supporting teachers to be resilient is the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) professional development programme. Three areas of this programme include teacher training in 'emotion skills instruction', teaching 'mindfulness-based interventions' and promoting empathy and compassion through 'listening and caring practices'. Results showed increases in wellbeing, reductions in time-related stress, but little change in motivation and efficacy. Jennings et al. (2011) recognised the significance time plays in teacher professional and personal development and how prioritising time is crucial for teacher self-development. If schools were to improve the academic, social and emotional outcomes of students, then teachers must be given time and choices for their development. The recently released CASEL (Collaborative Academic Social Emotional

Learning) Guide to Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning (2019) highlights that when teachers learn, collaborate and model social and emotional competencies, they are more effective at teaching this to students. Research shows that teachers trained to implement a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum at their school reported greater efficacy for managing student behaviour, higher levels of personal accomplishment, lower job-related anxiety and depression, higher quality classroom interactions with students, greater teacher engagement and greater perceived job control (Greenberg et al. 2016). This means training teachers to deliver student SEL programmes may serve as a dual approach, building resilience not only in students but also in teachers.

Seligman's (2002) work on optimism highlights how an explanatory style can alter how individual's interpret experiences and change their thinking patterns, resulting in greater resilience. Optimists exhibit fundamentally different coping mechanisms from pessimists, especially in turbulent times in organisations (Luthans et al. 2015). In an education context, pessimistic teachers may view events at work as personal (where they blame themselves), permanent (they don't see anything changing) or pervasive (where they use previous experiences to assume outcomes of future experiences). When optimists are faced with adversity, they keep trying and become flexible in their thinking as they move towards goals. Pessimists, on the other hand, are quick to blame either themselves or the system which can breed negativity when shared in peer groups. Duckworth et al. (2009) surveyed teachers in terms of their optimistic explanatory style, grit and life satisfaction, against student's academic gains; results showed teachers could learn positive interventions that make a difference to student outcomes. Given that explanatory style is subjective, when teachers learn to reflect on their explanatory style, they learn to reframe perspectives that can help them move from a position of perceived helplessness to optimism. Learning to be optimistic can also help people receive positive feedback as they can take credit for their excellent work, building efficacy.

Snyder et al.'s (2002) Hope Theory explains hope as a positive motivational state that involves successful agency (will power) and pathways (way power) towards goal attainment, associated with positive emotions. Hope involves encouraging teachers to set their own meaningful goals and multiple pathways for actioning goals that include scaffolding and flexibility. When examining the drivers of behaviour, teachers who operate from a goal-mastery perspective tend to experience greater work satisfaction, whereas those who function from a failure-avoidance perspective tend to become withdrawn, less engaged and at risk of burnout (Parker and Martin 2009). An Australian study of 430 teachers across the Catholic and Independent sectors found that goal orientation was a significant predictor in coping strategies of teacher stress (Parker and Martin 2009). When teachers have the cognitive resources to set clear and practical goals of what they want, as opposed to what they do not want, they regain a sense of autonomy which builds self-efficacy (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2014). Sometimes, the endless demands of the job can result in teachers feeling a sense of hopelessness, which can result in disengagement. As hope is a developmental state (Snyder et al. 2002), using strategies such as visualising goal attainment, scaffolding learning and celebrating success, teachers can learn to become hopeful about the

future. Hopeful employees are more creative in their thinking and operate from an internal locus of control (Luthans et al. 2015).

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory highlights efficacy as a significant predictor of achieving mastery. A strong correlation has occurred between efficacy and work-related performance at the individual level as well as the collective level (Luthans et al. 2015). Efficacy can be developed through modelling, vicarious learning, social persuasion, positive feedback and experiencing mastery. When teachers gain positive feedback or reflect on mastery experiences, they believe in their ability and grow in confidence. Creating a positive sense of connectedness, where teachers' achievements are celebrated, has been highlighted as an opportunity for them to engage their protective factors and strengthen wellbeing (Howard and Johnson 2004). However, given the nature of schools as a performance arena, teachers can feel vulnerable, having to measure and rate their performance (Parker and Martin 2009). The external pressures of accountability can directly impact self-efficacy and self-worth, known as determinants of resilience and wellbeing (Parker and Martin 2009). What we do know is that when teachers are given opportunities to observe and positively reflect on their actions, they build their confidence and collective teacher efficacy (Hattie and Yates 2014). Mentoring has been highlighted as one avenue to support this process.

Although the individual components of PsyCap have been individually researched, collectively PsyCap as HERO becomes more significant than the sum of their parts (Luthans et al. 2015). Despite initial studies showing the development of PsyCap having a positive impact on organisational behaviour, the field of POB is still in its infancy. Further research is needed, especially concerning teachers and educational organisations.

## 11.4 Interventions for Developing Teacher Wellbeing

Positive Psychology interventions are not just efficacious but of significant value in an individual's real lives and have been shown to support one's wellbeing both in the workplace and in education (Parks and Schueller 2014). Many models exist to explain how Positive Psychology interventions work best with individuals. One of the most used models is PERMA described by Seligman. While Psychological Capital (PsyCap) focuses on positive organisational behaviour and is more related to workplace engagement and performance, PERMA offers a simple model to identify key interventions for developing wellbeing. In this chapter, we suggest using interventions within PERMA with a lens of developing PsyCap of teachers. Table 11.1 gives an overview of the strategies discussed here. This section will explore each of the PERMA pillars with strategies for teachers through individual pursuits, whole staff initiatives or other avenues of professional learning.

**Table 11.1** Interventions to develop teacher well-being

PERMA pillar	Intervention
<b>Positive emotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count your blessings</li> <li>• Keep a gratitude journal</li> <li>• Identify ‘three good things’ and why they happened</li> <li>• Identify what works well</li> <li>• Establish a gratitude wall</li> <li>• Encourage emotional literacy</li> <li>• Mindfulness exercises</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the VIA Character Profile to identify Signature strengths</li> <li>• Have character strengths conversations with colleagues</li> <li>• Identify strengths overplayed and underplayed</li> <li>• Reflect on Explanatory style</li> <li>• Practice Optimistic Thinking (ABCDE)</li> <li>• Set meaningful goals</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Active Constructive Responding</li> <li>• Issue Thank you Cards or Gratitude cards</li> <li>• Establish “Caught you doing well” moments</li> <li>• Establish a Random Acts of Kindness week</li> <li>• Participate in Mentoring programmes</li> <li>• Learn Coaching Psychology skills</li> <li>• Encourage positive social events</li> <li>• Provide access to who and how to seek support</li> </ul>
<b>Meaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on core values and how we live them</li> <li>• Write about our best self at work</li> <li>• Visualise success and positive impact</li> <li>• Job Crafting</li> <li>• Track your progress</li> <li>• Scaffold milestones</li> </ul>
<b>Accomplishment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an “Achievement List” instead of a “To-Do” list each day</li> <li>• Peer Observations to track what is working well</li> <li>• Goal setting with multiple pathways</li> <li>• Engage in solution-focused conversations</li> <li>• Celebrate moments of positive impact</li> </ul>

### ***11.4.1 Positive Emotions***

Teaching can be tough and stressful, but it is also a highly rewarding vocation where they can experience a myriad of emotions daily (Hargreaves 2000). Teachers must be given opportunities to track positive emotions, especially as negative emotions can overpower positivity because of one's negativity bias (Fredrickson 2006). Positive emotions include feelings of joy, love, gratitude, hope, pride, inspiration, curiosity, amusement, serenity and awe. Characteristics of people who experience frequent positive emotions are confidence, optimism and self-efficacious; these are three critical elements of building Psychological Capital and the hallmark of effective teachers.

Positive emotions have been shown to positively impact workplaces, leading to increased creativity, innovation, transformational cooperation and organisational capacity (Fredrickson 2006). Positive emotions increase levels of hope (Snyder et al. 2002), increasing positive emotions significantly impacts employee wellbeing and work-related outcomes, as opposed to decreasing levels of employee negative emotions. Mindfulness has been highlighted as a key strategy for regulating emotions. Mindfulness is needed in order to reflect on explanatory style, to practice optimistic thinking, and is a key strategy for regulating emotions, a necessary skill for resilience. An eight-week mindfulness professional development programme showed it reduced stress and increased self-compassion (Flook et al. 2013). Mindfulness can reduce teacher burnout, negative affect, sleep-related impairment and daily physical symptoms of stress (Abenavoli et al. 2013).

### ***11.4.2 Engagement***

Engagement is being fully immersed in an activity that is both intrinsically motivating and a balance of challenge and skill, resulting in an experience of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi et al. 1990). When engaged, individuals tend to be more curious, passionate and persevere in attaining goals (Csikszentmihalyi et al. 1990). Reflecting on engagement helps identify, use and develop strengths in ourselves and others. These strengths can be identified using the Values in Action Character Strengths Survey ([www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org)), a self-report measure which "describes and classifies strengths and virtues that enable human thriving" (Park et al. 2004, p. 411).

Identifying and applying character strengths at work can increase job satisfaction, productivity and organisational relationships as well as reduce work-related stress (Lavy and Littman-Ovadia 2017). Character strength literacy can help share positive feedback with colleagues as a means for reflecting, which can contribute to efficacy. A discourse in character strengths gives staff opportunities to reflect on their strengths and recognise strengths in others. This is an affirming activity for staff who desire opportunities to be acknowledged and valued for their work. Through a shared

language of understanding similarities and differences, teachers can form more positive relationships with a greater appreciation of themselves and others, one of the enabling factors of collective efficacy (Donohoo 2017). Strength-based interventions can also increase engagement through setting meaningful goals with multiple pathways to achieving these goals, a key component of hope theory. Strengths can be used when reflecting on explanatory style (optimism) and planning for ways to rebound from adversity (resilience).

### ***11.4.3 Relationships***

Relationships are a psychological need and an essential factor for life satisfaction, mental health and wellbeing. Positive psychology's focus is not solely on improving personal wellbeing but on how we can better connect, give and contribute to the lives of others. Positive relationships help develop our core internal resources and social and emotional skills (Roffey 2012). "Other people are the best antidote to the downs in life and the single most reliable up" (Seligman 2011, p. 20); schools and teachers are no exception. Teaching is a collaboration that requires open, honest and trustworthy relationships, free of judgment yet stable enough to manage challenging conversations. Positive relationships are also needed to encourage us to seek support, making way for opportunities to be resilient.

A collaborative relationship for teachers involves a positive connection and effective communication skills, such as active listening, reflecting, clarifying, empathy, questioning techniques and rapport building strategies (Van Nieuwerburgh 2012). One such emerging methodology to foster these skills is Coaching Psychology. Coaching in education is a relatively new field, offering an action research model to learning, and can be closely linked with mentoring; however, experts are clear in differentiating the two. Coaching is defined as

"a solution-focused, results-orientated systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of the coachee's life experience and performance in various domains, and fosters the self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee" (Grant 2001, p. 148).

In an educational setting, coached groups, when compared to non-coached groups, "reported reduced stress, increased resilience, and improved workplace wellbeing" (Grant et al. 2010, p. 165). Teachers who have participated in a coaching programme reported increases in goal attainment and better relationships with others, both of which are protective factors for building resilience (Grant et al. 2010).

Gable et al. (2004) suggested a strategy for building positive relationships called Active Constructive Responding (ACR), where she identified that how you celebrate is more predictive of strong relationships than how you fight. ACR elicits sincere enthusiasm, genuine interest and excitement for the other person's event, which is vital in building relationships and psychological capital and increasing positive emotions and wellbeing (Gable et al. 2004).

### ***11.4.4 Meaning***

People with purposeful lives have greater longevity, life satisfaction and greater overall wellbeing (Bonebright et al. 2000). In PERMA, meaning refers to the intrinsic value and joy a person feels towards contributing to society and is strongly linked to one's sense of purpose, efficacy and self-worth (Baumeister and Vohs 2005). Having meaning at work can increase wellbeing but also decrease feelings of hostility, stress and depression (Steger et al. 2006). Engagement in meaningful work can increase commitment, connection, happiness, satisfaction and fulfilment (Wrzesniewski et al. 2013).

The 'Best Self Exercise' is one strategy to reconnect to one's meaning and purpose. When individuals imagine working hard and accomplishing their goals, then write about their future self who has achieved desired goals, they show a significant increase in a positive mood (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2006). The act of writing helps to organise an individual's thoughts in a systematic analytical manner and builds meaning (Lyubomirsky 2008). Giving teachers opportunities to reflect on their impact, whether individually or in teams, can contribute to self-efficacy as confidence grows through seeing improvements.

Goal setting is another useful strategy for building meaning and is closely linked to Hope Theory. Authentic goals aligned with a teacher's core life values can assist in creating intrinsic and meaningful goals. This is also linked to Job Crafting (Wrzesniewski et al. 2013); the actions employees take to redesign their work to foster engagement, satisfaction, resilience and thriving. Job Crafting in education can involve task crafting (changing the what and how of teachers' work, e.g. work-related commitments), relational crafting (e.g. formal or informal mentoring) and cognitive crafting (reframing perceptions of the how and why of teachers' work). Employees who connect their work to the school's vision and mission are more likely to generate more meaning at work (Berg et al. 2007). Job crafting allows teachers to take an instant action to invest in oneself, to become active crafters of their work and to increase their work effectiveness and happiness (Berg et al. 2007).

### ***11.4.5 Accomplishment***

Accomplishment refers to the application of personal skills and effort as an individual moves towards the desired goal (Seligman 2011). For teachers to thrive in the profession, they would benefit from recognising and affirming their achievements on a regular basis. Unfortunately, teachers are not in the habit of stopping to celebrate their achievements. This is evidenced by one of the authors (Falecki) when asking teachers to complete a 'teacher wellbeing audit' to identify which of the PERMA pillars they do best and least. Having conducted this with over 500 schools across Australia (over 25,000 teachers) during professional development workshops, the pillar of accomplishment was always the lowest score. Given the busyness of any

given day, teachers would benefit greatly from stopping to notice the positive impact they have on the students and their learning. Turning a “To-Do” list into an “Accomplishment” list is a simple way to do this. This list becomes a set of goals in which teachers call upon their will, agency and efficacy to complete the items on the list. Resilience is required to overcome possible challenges and to remain flexible along the path to achievement.

Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2006) believe that specific positive psychology interventions play a role in enhancing and maintaining positive wellbeing, primarily if they are delivered with consistent effort and commitment. A summary of the interventions discussed is listed in Table 11.1.

When teachers have opportunities to learn and live evidence-based wellbeing interventions, they are better able to build Psychological Capital. By doing so, teachers can cope better, are more productive and can make positive contributions to the growth and development of others. For this reason, Falecki and Mann, define teacher wellbeing as

The psychological capacity for teachers to manage normal stressors within the profession, including awareness of positive emotional states. This includes setting authentic goals, celebrating accomplishments, maintaining positive connections with others, and reflecting on meaning and impact.

## 11.5 Professional Development Considerations for Teacher Wellbeing

Schools are learning institutions for students and teachers, yet how children and adults learn are very different. Pedagogy is known as the art and science of teaching children. Andragogy principles are used to teach adults, which includes acknowledging adult learners as autonomous and self-directed (Knowles 1978). Having accumulated life experience, work-related and personal responsibilities, adult learners want relevance and a focus on what is most useful to them in their context (Knowles 1978). These learning factors must be considered when facilitating professional development for adult learners, such as teachers.

AITSL (2017) highlighted the most common forms of professional learning by teachers as specific courses, professional reading, online learning and professional conversations. These professional development opportunities are typically focussed on students, curriculum or processes with little time given to the development of PsyCap. An AITSL survey (2017) indicated that 33% of professional learning activities focused on student learning and teaching, 34% on content and subject knowledge 15% on assessment (15%). Professional learning that concentrates on developing intellectual capital and social capital alone is not enough to help employees navigate the rapid pace of change in organisations (Luthans et al. 2015). PsyCap offers “a higher-order conceptual framework for understanding and capitalising upon human positive psychological resources in today’s organisations and those being formed for tomorrow” (Luthans et al. 2015, p. 6). The reality in education is that any professional

learning that focuses on developing the psychological capacity of teachers is considered a luxury or an add-on instead of part of a strategic whole-school wellbeing plan (Street 2018).

For teachers to develop the psychological resources of hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism as protective factors for their wellbeing, they must have opportunities to reflect on positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. One principal challenge teachers face is the one-off staff development day, when new initiatives, resources and updated requirements are concentrated into a full day of training, leaving teachers to absorb and implement change on their own (Knight 2007). With the daily demands of their job, these new initiatives are delivered in lecture-style presentations and tend to fall by the wayside, with only a minimal impact on learning. This is due to the ‘pressing immediacy’ teachers feel with tackling their immediate tasks rather than prioritising the implementation of new ideas (Fullan and Hargreaves 1996). Ironically, teachers who feel overwhelmed may pursue new strategies to support their wellbeing (Roffey 2012) yet lack the capacity or skills to change current habits (Knight 2007). Any change of behaviour requires insight into the automatic processes of thoughts and action supported with ongoing reflection. Effective professional learning needs to engage with the day-to-day work of teachers, supported by the school leaders and involve peer collaboration (Street 2018).

One of the main challenges of developing teacher wellbeing is supporting the psychological capital of teachers within a complex system. School systems can be full of contradictions by teaching individual wellbeing strategies yet overcrowding the curriculum and placing excessive demands on people that numb any possibility of impact (Street 2018). Teacher workload, demanding students and parents and excessive administration requirements that create high-stress situations for teachers must be reviewed. Wellbeing needs to be contextual not only by developing its people but also reviewing the physical space, policy and practice and social norms within schools (Street 2018). The interventions discussed in this chapter are merely the beginning of a bigger conversation about more strategic and whole-school wellbeing initiatives.

## 11.6 Conclusion

Teacher stress is higher and their wellbeing is lower than that of general populations (Education Support Partnership 2019). Teachers make learning happen and, therefore, are the greatest asset that exists within schools. If we want well students, we must have well teachers (Roffey 2012). Teachers learning practical strategies to enhance wellbeing can have a positive effect on one’s self-confidence, the sense of personal agency and resilience (Le Cornu 2013). Providing high-quality learning opportunities that develop wellbeing and address teacher stress and attrition is essential. One challenge is the competitive demand for professional learning time. The research of Positive Psychology offers a collection of interventions that people can experience the elements of PERMA in many ways. PsyCap goes further to provide

a higher order framework for building on the positive psychological resources of employees. While there is still much to learn and measure about effective development of teacher wellbeing in schools, what we do know is that the same strategic and evidence-based lens used to develop student wellbeing programmes must be used in the development of teacher wellbeing programmes. Whether this is one-off professional learning opportunities or more holistic action-research models of continuous learning, teachers need regular opportunities to learn, discuss and reflect on protective factors that develop their inner HERO, hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism.

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## **Part III**

# **Future Directions**

### **Time and transformation**

Sharon McDonough

Sashiko

The art of visible stitches  
Of mending what was torn,  
But not destroyed

The stiches run across the fabric  
A present, visible scar  
A story of renewal and resilience  
That speaks of experience and hope  
Of the changing of times  
The old and the new

There is beauty in this mending  
Use, wear and repair  
Of time taken to pause,  
To see where the warp and the weft are fraying

Once identified, the stitcher waits  
Looks at the fabric again  
Thinks about where the stitches should lie  
What pattern will give both strength and beauty?  
How will the needle passing through the fabric bind it back together again?

And then,  
The stitcher begins  
With care and attention  
The fabric is bound,  
The stitches hold firm  
The piece is the same,  
And yet,  
Transformed.

# Chapter 12

## ‘Head’ First: Principal Self-care to Promote Teacher Resilience



Johanne Klap, Judith MacCallum, and Caroline F. Mansfield

**Abstract** As leaders of school communities, principals have a significant impact on school culture and teachers’ well-being at work. A school principal’s positive or negative emotions can influence the mood of their teaching staff and can enhance or hinder a teacher’s resilience. Unfortunately, though, many school principals suffer from their own high levels of stress, emotional exhaustion and fatigue-related issues, whilst concurrently being tasked with the responsibility and management of the well-being of their staff. In this chapter, we explore the role of mindfulness and self-care in promoting resilience as a way for school principals to meet the challenges of their role. Principals who are mindful and employ self-compassion are better placed and more resilient to positively impact others and flourish in their role. Leadership does matter and ensuring that we address leaders’ well-being and resilience will mean they will be better equipped to engender resilience in their staff.

**Keywords** School principals · Leadership · Mindfulness · Resilience · Stress · Self-compassion

### 12.1 Introduction

*If I'm not looking after myself, I'm not looking after my staff. If I'm not looking after the staff you're not looking after the kids. For three years I've been looking at what I can do for the kids. What this has taught me is that unless I engage in me first I can't... I really can't. It's that whole chicken and egg thing. I just wish I'd known about Mindfulness when I was*

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*21 and started the game. Now I have been able to integrate it into my whole life. That's just how it is. It is a gift to me. Probably the most important one I've ever given myself. (Louise<sup>1</sup>)*

Louise is an experienced Western Australian school principal who participated in the *Mindful Leaders* programme, a mindfulness programme for school leaders made possible by the Education Department's Leadership Institute (LI) in 2016. Supporting school leaders has become a priority policy agenda in education systems (Darmody and Smyth 2016; Schleicher 2015) due to their impact on school communities. At that time, the programme was the first of its kind to bring mindfulness training to school principals as an innovative approach to supporting well-being and leadership. The training programme informing *Mindful Leaders* was the Potential Project's *Corporate Based Mindfulness Training* (CBMT®) programme. CBMT® has been developed specifically for the 'at work' environment and is used in organisations around the world. It is designed to provide secular mind training, mindful work applications (how to integrate mindfulness into work activities, for example, communication and meetings) and mental strategy training (or habits of mind training, for example, kindness, patience, presence, acceptance) to enhance well-being and performance. The programme was tailored to school leaders' needs and aligned with the Western Australian Education Department's focus on a "High Performance–High Care" mandate.

Thirty school principals from primary, secondary and special education schools participated in the first *Mindful Leaders* programme. Seventy per cent of participants were female. They attended ten weekly 2 hour sessions and 10 minutes daily mind training (supported by a smartphone app). Even though principals are notoriously time-poor, the attendance rate was outstanding (92%). Alongside the programme, we designed a longitudinal mixed-method study utilising standardised questionnaires of mindfulness, self-compassion and burnout, completed at three time points (time 1, pre-programme; time 2, post-programme; and time 3, 6+ months post-programme), together with in-depth interviews before and after the programme. The conversational 45 to 60-minute interviews focused on mindfulness, well-being, leadership and exploring programme impact.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter, we present key findings, highlighting school leaders' use of mindfulness strategies to train and build resilience, by bringing awareness to their inner dialogue and the importance of nurturing self-compassion. Further, we demonstrate the 'ripple effect' principal resilience has on staff and argue for more attention to be paid to school leaders. The following sections set the scene with the school principals' own words, supported by the quantitative data that reveal trends across the cohort and qualitative data revealing the more nuanced experiences for school leaders.

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<sup>1</sup>Pseudonyms used for all participants.

<sup>2</sup>Quantitative analysis involved a series of time (3) x gender (2)-repeated measures MANOVAs and ANOVAs using SPSS software to examine changes in principals' leadership, work and well-being over the school year. Where a significant main effect was found between time 1 and time 3, time 1 versus time 2 and time 2 versus time 3 contrasts were carried out (where violations to sphericity occurred, the Greenhouse–Geisser correction was used). Qualitative analysis using NVIVO software focused on identifying common and emerging themes.

## 12.2 Mindfulness: Training for Resilience

*We have always given people breaks, but it's only ever been at that critical stress time because of the nature of our work. It's not a preventative thing. It's a dealing with 'it' thing. With mindfulness, the different shift for me, is that if we can build up that resilience beforehand. Resilience is really important. Giving ourselves the strategies to not necessarily hit the bottom every time... (Janet)*

Recent research has shown that mindfulness training can positively influence the resilience, well-being and performance of teachers (Hwang et al. 2019). In the United States, interventions based on the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) (Jennings et al. 2017) programme consistently demonstrate the benefits of mindfulness training on teachers' social and emotional competence and the quality of classroom interactions. Specifically, teachers described how the training increased their ability to reappraise situations and change perspectives, increased awareness of emotions focusing on the present and integrated their experience into CARE metaphors (Sharp and Jennings 2015). Since the process of resilience involves drawing on personal resources, to successfully navigate challenges, building personal resources through mindfulness training has been shown to positively influence resilience for teachers (Birchinall et al. 2019), provide a protective mechanism against stress (Shapiro et al. 1998) and shield from burnout (Abenavoli et al. 2013).

Mindfulness is a way to be in the world. Mindfulness practices can enable people to develop the capacity to be more focused, calm and clear in their daily lives (Hougaard and Carter 2018). It is also a way to observe self and to choose a considered response, rather than a reaction towards another person or event, or towards one's own internal dialogue, emotions and feelings. More specifically, it is to “gain a deeper understanding of the changing nature of one's own body and mental states” so as to “free one's mind from the habits and tendencies” that can get us stuck and the cognitive discernment to “recognise wholesome from unwholesome mental states” (Dreyfus 2011, p. 51) and focus on what matters. Mindfulness, in other words, is the ability to pay attention to the task at hand, become observant of thoughts and respond from a place of calmness and consideration (instead of knee jerk, or habitual reactions), resulting in better actions, choices and decisions (Ruedy and Schweitzer 2011). It can be conceptualised as both a trait and state (Brown et al. 2007) and can be purposefully trained and harnessed by practicing meditation-based mindfulness (Hart et al. 2013).

Although mindfulness training has been shown to support resilience in a range of professions and in the corporate sector, with the exception of Mahfouz (2018), there is limited research exploring the influence of mindfulness training on school leaders. This study is unique in the field and offers insights about how mindfulness can support school principals to adopt a mindful approach to leadership, their self-care and their resilience.

## 12.3 Mindfulness: Managing My Inner Dialogue

*Most significantly the Mindfulness course has provided me with a level of looking after me, like being kind to myself. I've tried that several times before... But this course has been demonstrably effective in me really looking after myself and my mental wellbeing. The level of negative self-talk, as in 'I haven't done this', and 'I'm not good enough at that', and 'I need to get better at this', has rapidly declined. So, I'm really much better at saying, 'well, that's not done yet' - thought out of my head, leave it, park it, don't hold it so tightly. So those things have made a big impact on me. So that's very significant. (Jenny)*

To better understand how the programme may have influenced participants' development of mindfulness skills such as observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging and non-reactivity, we administered the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (Baer et al. 2006) at time 1, time 2 and time 3. The FFMQ provided a standardised measure, comprising 39 items developed from five independently validated mindfulness surveys. Subscale scores and a total score were calculated with a higher score indicative of greater mindfulness. We also examined the open-ended interview transcripts, as one part of the qualitative analysis, to identify responses related to aspects of mindfulness. Examples of these responses are shown in Table 12.1 together with the results of quantitative analysis. There was a significant increase in each aspect of mindfulness which was sustained for 6 months (time 3) after the programme, with responses from the interviews revealing how the principals explained these positive changes.

One of the most basic mindfulness meditative practices (mind training) involves sitting quietly and bringing one's awareness to the breath, thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations. Neuroscience researchers have found that this kind of practice heightens the activity in the regions of the brain that regulate attention (Goldin and Gross 2010) and emotion (Hulsheger et al. 2013). Participants were introduced to a 10-minute mindfulness practice in week 1 of the programme which was developed over the next 4 weeks to include the elements of relaxation, focus and clarity. At week 5, awareness training was introduced, including using the insights of impermanence, genuine happiness and potential. Daily practice was encouraged and supported by a smartphone app. For our participants, practice was a very important part of maintaining their levels of mindfulness. In the time 3 questionnaire, 22 of the 23 participants who responded reported still practicing their mindfulness training. Five were practicing a few times a month, 11 were practicing a few times a week, 4 were practicing most days and 2 were practicing every day. The challenge of maintaining practice was acknowledged: "*Easy to return to default position and not give myself the gift of a practice, although (I am) aware of so much more and less critical of myself*" (Barry), whereas when the practice had become a daily habit it was because: "*Knowing that it makes me feel better, I am much calmer and know that I control the level of stress I may be presented with*" (Stella).

Alongside the practice are a series of behaviours and attitudes that help bring mindfulness to the every day (Kabat-Zinn 2013). This can also be understood as 'habit of mind' or 'mental strategies'. These habits of mind are critical to bridging the

**Table 12.1** Principals’ mindfulness trends, item and interview examples

Trend line time 1, time 2, time 3	Subscale and example of item and main effect for time (F)	Examples of time 2 (post-programme) interview responses
	<i>Observing</i> (e.g., “I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face”) F(2,42) = 11.469, p < 0.001	<i>I actually can walk and stay and look at the lake, and I've seen trees rustling for the first time. I can have a shower and actually think, ‘God, this water feels so good’. (Sue)</i>
	<i>Describing</i> (e.g., “I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words”) F(2,42) = 3.957 p < 0.05	<i>Because you have to be clued into notice. What does that mean? What does that look like? What do you have to do? And when you start noticing, you just get calm. Well, I do. (Lydia)</i>
	<i>Acting with Awareness</i> (e.g., “When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted”) F(2,42) = 10.334, p < 0.001	<i>It's being more aware, consciously aware of what you say, how you act and actually what you're doing - when I'm here, I'm here, wherever I am, I'm actually there. (Sonya)</i>
	<i>Non-Judging to inner experiences</i> (e.g., “I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions”) F(2,42) = 10.182, p < 0.001	<i>I've had key issues and key things happening that day, and I've been overthinking getting ready for them, and I've been annoyed telling myself. ‘Why are you being so unkind to yourself?’ So, the self-talk has changed and I'm making myself more accountable for my self-talk. I'm being kinder to myself but I'm not there yet, I'm still on the journey. (Karen)</i>
	<i>Non reactivity to inner experiences</i> (e.g., “When I have distressing thoughts or images, I am able just to notice them without reacting”) F(2,42) = 8.132, p < 0.01	<i>A big powerful thing is the whole thing about observing and noticing. What calmly, powerful little words they are. Because we don't notice, we just do. And we don't observe, we just do. We just act. And so even just stepping back and observing how I was going with things, and observing me being frustrated meant, and that valuable second to observe and chat with myself, ‘Come on. You're not going to engage in this nonsense anymore. You've moved on from here.’ (Lydia)</i>

(continued)

**Table 12.1** (continued)

Trend line time 1, time 2, time 3	Subscale and example of item and main effect for time (F)	Examples of time 2 (post-programme) interview responses
	<i>Overall FFMQ</i> Sum of subscales $F(2,42) = 19.61, p < 0.001$	<i>There's something around the mindfulness training that changes your mind. How can it be so simple? (Beth)</i>

practice of mindfulness with everyday life, and the “more these habits are cultivated the faster they become part of your default mode of behaving and the calmer and clearer your mind will be” (Hougaard et al. 2016, p. 123). Carrying the practice into daily life can facilitate adaptive stress responses (Donald et al. 2016) which in turn may have positive implications for personal well-being and leaders’ work.

## 12.4 Mindfulness: Nurturing My Self-care

*This course has given me permission to look after me. It has given me the opportunity to recognise that for me to be effective, I need ‘me time’, and not feel that inner critic constantly nagging at me. The inner critic is losing her voice, she has almost got laryngitis, because I have a greater sense of peace about who I am, what I can and what I can’t control. (Kate)*

One of the mental strategies’ principals recognised as having an impact was nurturing the habit of kindness and in particular kindness to self, by bringing awareness to their inner dialogue and inner critic. By soothing or sending themselves caring and helpful messages when things were challenging, they were more likely to cope with stress. This kinder self-talk stimulates part of the brain that responds to kindness (Gilbert 2009). For Jenny, the importance of how she related to herself and her capacity to show kindness and care to self and others even in tough conversations is captured here:

*My son said to me last week, ‘You’re different, mum, you’re acting different’ and I said, ‘Well, all I can say is it’s probably the mindfulness training that I’m doing, and I’ve come to terms with the fact that I need to accept some things, and be kinder to myself.’*

*I can go home and not beat myself up on the way home in the car, thinking I haven’t done this, or that. I’m much more patient with myself and realize that there’s more to life than worrying about what you haven’t finished at work. That, I think, is probably the nature of a lot of educators. So now I feel better and more comfortable about what I’m doing, the level of, how hard I’m working, and how I’m balancing that. I still feel very successful. It’s more my own self-talk. We’re only here once. I’m not getting any younger, I don’t want to be defined by my work. I want to work harder at my relationships with people, particularly my family and partner, and myself, my relationship with myself, I think needs to be better. It is, already. So that’s really a good thing. (Jenny)*

Self-compassion or relating to self with kindness is a healthy form of self-acceptance and has three components: being gentle and understanding perceived inadequacy and then to engage within soothing and positive ‘self-talk’ (Neely et al. 2009); the ability to recognise that others struggle; and to be able to place personal struggles into context (Neff 2003). In order to give oneself compassion, one must be able to turn toward, acknowledge and accept that one is suffering, meaning that mindful awareness is a core component of self-compassion as “sometimes we first need to hold ourselves before we hold our experience in tender awareness” (Germer and Neff 2019, p. 2).

To measure changes in self-care, we used the Self Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff 2003) which comprises of 26 items with five subscales. Subscale scores and a total self-compassion score were calculated. As shown in Table 12.2, self-compassion increased from time 1 to time 2 and was sustained at time 3. Over half of the participants (52%) spoke directly about how they had given themselves permission to take care of themselves by employing self-kindness strategies.

If principals are able to be kinder to themselves and purposefully look after themselves, this could impact their performance and personal well-being. Self-compassion has been found in other studies to promote recovery and replenishment of mental and emotional energy (Abenavoli et al. 2013), have positive effects on psychological and physical well-being, happiness and contribute to the ability to be more compassionate to others (Campos et al. 2016). Being kind to self can have positive impacts on fatigue and stress levels (Heffernan et al. 2010) and negate burnout (Barnard and Curry 2012). Research with teachers suggests that practicing mindfulness and self-compassion may also have positive implications for performance (Jennings 2015). Self-compassion provides a stable footing for principals to resiliently traverse their challenging leadership work landscapes.

## 12.5 Mindfulness: Reducing My Stress and Burnout

*I think the levels of stress and the pressure that we put ourselves under is enormous in the role that we have. We’re a vulnerable lot. I couldn’t help thinking that there’s so many people sitting here that are really struggling internally. That’s what we do. We have to present this calm, knowledgeable, capacity to solve situations, and manage things for such extended periods of time, and deal with really complex issues. It just eats away at you internally, and makes you a very vulnerable person, because you just get to saturation point. For a lot of us, we just lose sight of what’s really important, which is ourselves. That’s pretty sad. (Jenny)*

Jenny’s experience and insights into how other principals were feeling are mirrored in the literature where it is widely acknowledged that being a principal is fraught with high rates of stress, competing demands, work overload and burnout (Beausaert et al. 2016). Principals also have the added pressure of working under the scrutiny, expectations and pressure of parents, community and the media (Barr and Saltmarsh 2014). This can cause an afflictive relationship between the ‘harsh reality’ of the job, their own and others high expectations and may manifest in burnout or simply

**Table 12.2** Principals' self-compassion trends, item and interview examples

Trend line time 1, time 2, time 3	Subscale and example of item and main effect for time (F)	Examples of time 2 (post-programme) interview responses
	<i>Self-Kindness</i> (e.g., "I am tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies") $F(2,42) = 9.299, p < 0.001$	<i>I used to go through this cycle for years where I would beat myself up in the holidays for not doing enough work while also beating myself up for not relaxing. I would talk to myself and I would never get rid of that. Now I do nothing on holidays, I don't feel guilty, and I don't even have to rationalize it. I think that's being kinder to myself. (Ruth)</i>
	<i>Self-Judgement (reverse scored)</i> (e.g., "When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself") $F(2,42) = 5.389, p < 0.01$	<i>That's what I want to be able to do is to be able to recognise that and say, 'Good choice,' or, 'Well done.' To celebrate myself when I have managed a situation. (Dave)</i>
	<i>Common Humanity</i> (e.g., "I try to see my failings as part of the human condition") No significant change over 3 times	<i>Listening to other principals who I've known very well and they said they were ready to give up. So, my story is their story. I've been part of those conversations with them for years. (Louise)</i>
	<i>Isolation (reverse scored)</i> (e.g., "When I fail at something that is important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure") $F(2,42) = 7.343, p < 0.01$	<i>I felt like a mouse on a treadmill. I felt isolated and concerned about whether I was making a difference. I felt my confidence was being eroded... This has given me the confidence back. Not only in my professional life, but in my personal life. (Simone)</i>
	<i>Mindfulness</i> (e.g., "When something upsets me, I try and keep my emotions in balance") $F(2,42) = 3.399, p < 0.05$	<i>It probably highlighted for me how much I do react to people; and some of that is a good thing, but some of it can be detrimental. I've probably seen it with fresh eyes - just how much that can impact (Bella).</i>
	<i>Over Identify</i> (e.g., "When I am feeling down, I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong") $F(2,42) = 7.878, p < 0.01$	<i>I've got to step back and say, 'You can do it easily if you look after yourself and if you don't take yourself so seriously.' (Kate)</i>

(continued)

**Table 12.2** (continued)

Trend line time 1, time 2, time 3	Subscale and example of item and main effect for time (F)	Examples of time 2 (post-programme) interview responses
	<i>Overall Self-Compassion</i> Sum of subscales $F(2,42) = 9.01, p < 0.01$	<i>I just want to know more. To become a better person, not for any other reason but for me. It's the first time in my life I've ever thought like that. In life we're not taught to be 'self', we're taught to think about everyone else all the time. (Dave)</i>

exiting the profession. However, some principals stay and just continue, weighed down with the burden of their predicament. For example, Oakley’s (2012) study of eight principals in remote schools, one principal described the level of stress and exhaustion being akin to the aftereffect of war, the sense of being ‘shell shocked’. This ‘soldiering on’ or in Jenny’s case “*losing sight of what was important*” can exacerbate emotional and mental exhaustion, which can then manifest in the emotional labour required to suppress internal emotions and construct external expressions of coping to appear as one who is managing (Diefendorff and Gosserand 2003).

In our research, principals’ stress and burnout were measured with the Maslach’s Burnout Inventory (MBI) I-GS (Leiter and Maslach 2003). The MBI has 16 items with three subscales (professional efficacy, mental exhaustion and cynicism). Each subscale is calculated without calculation of a total score. From Table 12.3, it can be seen that principal’s mental exhaustion was significantly reduced, and their professional efficacy was improved after the programme (time 2) and this continued for 6 months (time 3).

These changes provide evidence of the potential of mindfulness training to reduce stress and burnout of school principals. This is an important finding as Maxwell and Riley’s (2017) research of 1320 full-time school principals found that principals displayed significantly higher scores than the general population on emotional demands at work and burnout and significantly lower well-being scores.

In the time 2 interviews, it became apparent participants had previously used ineffective ways to cope with their levels of stress and dealing with the pressures and emotions of being a principal. One way of coping reported by 70% of participants was ‘surface acting’. Jenny explained: “*most people would find me a very calm person. But internally, that doesn’t mean there’s not a lot of stuff going on. I’m pretty good at keeping it internal.*” The tendency of principals to hide emotions, artificially suppress or amplify emotions depending on the context was also noted by Maxwell and Riley (2017), where it was framed as a ‘display rule’ of presenting their most rational response. This constant ‘modelling’ leads to physical and emotional fatigue (Roffey 2007). In the leadership literature, ‘surface acting’ and ‘impression management’ are noted as the most “important and most frequently studied depleting self-regulatory behaviours” resulting in a less authentic leadership style, as mental resources are

**Table 12.3** Principals stress and burnout trends, item and interview examples

Trend line time 1, time 2, time 3	Subscale and example of item and main effect for time (F)	Examples of time 2 (post programme) interview responses
	<i>Professional efficacy</i> (e.g., "In my opinion I am good at my job") $F(1,19) = 10.254, p < 0.05$	<i>I am more effective, (it) helps me work with my work problems more easily, but it's been a bit more than that, I think. It's discovering the joy.</i> (Robert)
	<i>Mental Exhaustion</i> (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained at the end of the workday") $F(2,38) = 6.246, p < 0.01$	<i>I'm conscious of not letting things drag me down and make me feel as though there's no way out. So, when people are coming in, talking to me, I'm not being weighed down by their concerns or their worries.</i> (Dave)
	<i>Cynicism</i> (e.g., "I doubt the significance of my work") No change over time	<i>I'm pretty critical of myself ... I never realized that I was doing things well, now I can step back and go, "I know that that's good, that I'm doing okay.</i> (Sonya)

absorbed with the energy required to portray a self that may be inconsistent with the inner self, contributing to less engagement and higher stress (Weiss et al. 2018, p. 311).

When a school principal's well-being is continually compromised by lack of self-care and attention to their personal needs, as they try and cope with the exhausting demands and pressures of their role, stress can become chronic (Leiter and Maslach 2003). Under such conditions, it can become increasingly challenging for principals to be resilient and sustain leadership effectiveness when their personal well-being resources are depleted (Boyatzis and McKee 2005). It is quite ironic then, that principals are also tasked with managing and taking care of their staff's well-being. How they manage that can at best build, or at worst, hinder teachers' resilience (Gu and Day 2013). The *Mindful Leaders* programme supported principals to develop new ways of approaching their work to reduce exhaustion and improve professional efficacy and for participants such as Susan, the experience was transformative.

*I was heading for burnout at the beginning of this year. I was at a stage where I thought, 'I can't keep doing this'. I'm working as I hard as I did before. But now my whole world in myself has completely changed. Completely! I'm not letting this go. It really has transformed how I think. Absolutely.* (Susan)

## 12.6 Principals Impact on Teachers’ Resilience

*To me, leaders must be calm and resilient. A principal, more than anyone, has to be resilient, and I wasn’t being resilient. Prior to the program, I wasn’t sleeping. I was physically exhausted. The cortisol, I could feel it through my body all the time. (Beth)*

Beth was aware that she needed to be resilient and hadn’t been prior to participation in the *Mindful Leaders* programme. The literature supports the view that school leaders can have an impact on teachers’ resilience and in “sustaining a sense of resilience, commitment and effectiveness” amongst their staff (Gu and Day 2013, p. 39). For example, Gu and Day (2007) found that school leaders’ capacity to respond sympathetically to pressures in teachers’ personal lives had a direct effect of teachers remaining resilient. However, if they displayed unsympathetic responses this resulted in a decrease in the teacher’s resilience. Similarly, Peters and Pearce (2012, p. 260) noted how challenging it is for principals to manage their own and teachers’ emotions and called for “increased support for principals in recognition of the important role they can play in enhancing the resilience of early career teachers”. As Andrea recognised:

*Putting myself in the centre of being well and open about it, allowed that freedom to talk about things that you don’t normally talk about. People come and stand in the doorway and chat. They didn’t do that before. It’s allowing the humanity to come into the space, whereas it didn’t before, so that’s magnificent. (Andrea)*

In the organisational literature, favourable leader behaviours have been correlated with followers’ positive emotions; and adverse leader behaviours correlated with followers’ negative emotions (Berkovich and Eyal 2015). Compounding this, research suggests that burned out leaders can be in effect contagious, making their followers feel more burned out too (Ten Brummelhuis et al. 2014). In this study, it was evident that school leaders’ mindfulness has positively impacted themselves and also how they were leading. For example, Robert discussed how his mindfulness practice has allowed for improved relationships with his staff and his approach to leadership:

*It’s helping me structure my day to be a more effective principal,... I am beginning to develop more genuine relationships with staff. It’s increased my awareness. I’ve been able to accept different points of view, I suppose there’s a beginner’s mind in that to resolve issues. I do listen, but it’s consciously being aware of what you’re doing. So that makes you become a better leader. (Robert)*

Simone had a sense of renewal, a “fresh vision” as to her leadership purpose, “*I just love my job. Stresses and all. I feel like I’ve got a breath of fresh air as a consequence of this and getting off that treadmill, being able to look at the world with different lenses has made me think, I do have something to contribute*”.

## 12.7 Who Cares for School Leaders?

*We have been told for so long to ‘work smarter not harder’ – without the ‘how to’ manual. Mindfulness training has taught me these skills. It is a very powerful program that I wish I had found many years ago. (Lydia)*

Supporting this crucial leadership role and determining how best to approach school principals' continued learning and development has become a priority policy agenda in education systems, as it is becoming increasingly more difficult to attract, recruit and retain quality school principals (Darmody and Smyth 2016; Schleicher 2015). To date, most discussions have generally been limited to how principals should be spending their time, what influences or limits their practice, and best-suited leadership approaches or styles (Gumus et al. 2018). Robbins (2013) argued that there were limited supports to help school leaders manage stress and called for explicit and mandatory stress management training. The article sought to determine “who cares for school leaders?” and noted that ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders) had programmes that were directed at leaders to “manage the stress in their teams, rather than giving them tools to manage the stresses of their own role” (Robbins 2013, p. 53).

In Australia, since 2011, there have been significant reforms in education in Australia, led by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to address school principals' roles and responsibilities. The Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles (2015) is “a public statement setting out what school principals are expected to know, understand and do to succeed in their work” (p. 3). However, similarly to the UK ASCL, in the AITSL leadership guidelines, the only mention of addressing ‘stress’ in the Developing Self and Others pathway is also for leaders to “model the importance of health and well-being and to watch for signs of stress in self and others and take action to address it” (p. 16).

There have been some moves to address this. For example, in the Australian state of Victoria, the need for systemic support has been recognised and a \$5 million Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been implemented (Department of Education and Training, Victoria 2018). This strategy was informed by workforce consultation and the mandatory costs of stress (in the form of workers' compensation claims relating to mental health injury from principals). Between January 2011 and October 2016, principals had made 4.6% of these claims (when they constitute only 2% of the workforce), and that the average days lost for principals' mental health injury claims was 55% greater than their department average, and the average cost of a mental health injury claim, for a principal, over a 3-year period was \$103,000 per claim.

Research published during our study proposed that mindfulness may be an effective way not only to help reduce stress but also as an “inoculation against burnout” and to improve well-being to support principals to manage the high levels of emotional demands and stress (Maxwell and Riley 2017, p. 496). This can be witnessed in the positive findings regarding the impact of mindfulness on stress and exhaustion in

the educational literature for teachers and other professionals (Lomas et al. 2017). Reduction in mental exhaustion may also have a positive flow on effects for leadership, as individuals may be less impulsive and more able to self-regulate behaviours and emotions (Fetterman et al. 2010). An additional benefit of mindfulness training is that it provided this group of school leaders with a *personal* experience and a discerning insight into the potential and value of a mindful approach. This is especially pertinent as more schools are looking towards incorporating mindfulness in their student educational and well-being offerings.

## 12.8 Conclusion

The *Mindful Leaders* programme has been completed by 350 school leaders in Western Australia (up until December 2019), with very positive feedback. This chapter explored how mindfulness training can significantly support principals to take care of themselves so that they are better equipped to take care of others. The mindfulness training in the *Mindful Leader* programme had a significantly positive effect on the group of school principals’ stress levels and their ability to be kind to self. The training provided preventative stress strategies that focused on the principal’s personal well-being such that they could build new habits and routines that promoted their resilience.

This has exciting potential applications for the profession, as leadership does matter and ensuring that we address leaders’ resilience will mean school principals will be better placed to engender resilience in their staff. It would seem that not only do mindfulness programmes for school leaders offer a resilient buffer against stress they could also be a helpful precursor to improving teacher resilience.

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# Chapter 13

## Early Career Casual Teachers: The Role of Relationships with Colleagues in Negotiating a Teacher Identity and Developing Resilience



Helen Dempsey, Caroline F. Mansfield, and Judith MacCallum

**Abstract** Developing relationships with colleagues has been identified as one way to enhance teacher resilience and assists in negotiating a professional identity. For early career teachers, opportunities to participate in induction and mentoring programmes and engage in professional learning can assist in developing these relationships. However, for early career teachers who can only obtain casual work and work intermittently often in many different schools, these opportunities may be limited. This chapter presents longitudinal, qualitative research that explores how early career casual teachers negotiated their teacher identity. Drawing on data from focus groups, semi-structured interviews and reflective tasks, the chapter shares insights into how relationships are pivotal in the development of a strong teacher identity.

**Keywords** Early career casual teachers · Teacher identity · Resilience

### 13.1 Introduction

Negotiation and construction of a professional identity is a complex and ongoing process, and incorporates both how a person sees themselves and how others perceive them (Alsup 2006). Opportunities to develop relationships with colleagues, school administrators, students and parents is an important component of negotiation and construction process (Barkhuizen 2016; Pearce and Morrison 2011). As developing relationships with colleagues has been identified as one way to enhance teacher resilience (Le Cornu 2013; Mansfield et al. 2014; Mansfield et al. 2016)

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this chapter explores the experiences of early career casual teachers in developing these relationships whilst negotiating a professional identity.

Early career teachers are increasingly finding their initial employment as a casual teacher, which can influence their development of a professional identity (Preston 2019). Developing a strong professional identity plays an important role in teachers' commitment and engagement with the profession, along with their capacity to sustain motivation (Day and Gu 2010). However, professional identity for early career casual teachers is particularly complex as they are negotiating and constructing their professional identity as teachers as well as casual workers (Charteris et al. 2015).

Despite the challenges faced by early career casual teachers, resilience may be considered a factor in their ongoing commitment to the profession and effectiveness in their teaching (Gu and Day 2007). Gu and Day (2007) identified sustaining a strong sense of vocation and the development of self-efficacy were key characteristics of resilience. Resilience is more than just "bouncing back" from adversity and one of the key protective factors which contribute to resilience is the opportunity to develop relationships with colleagues (Mansfield et al. 2014) and therefore understanding how early career casual teachers develop supportive relationships with colleagues needs to be explored.

## 13.2 Literature Review

In order to understand how resilience, casual teaching and professional identity are linked literature which ties these ideas together has been reviewed. This review starts by considering one aspect of resilience, building relationships, which appears to act as a protective factor. As relationship building is considered important for resilience literature regarding challenges faced by early career casual teachers may give some insights into their ability to develop relationships with colleagues. Following on from this the literature linking relationships and professional identity is explored. In particular the links between opportunities to develop relationships with students and colleagues and the impact on professional identity negotiation and construction.

Building effective relationships can be seen as important for developing a strong professional identity but relationship building is also a protective factor of developing resilience (Beltman et al. 2011; Le Cornu 2013). It appears that despite challenges faced by early career teachers, when they have built strong relationships with not only students but colleagues and leadership then resilience is enhanced. For early career casual teachers though, opportunities to develop strong relationships can be compromised as they may teach at a school infrequently and even if returning to a school may be in different classes therefore making it difficult to develop relationships with students and teaching teams. Research suggests that both colleagues and students grant a different status to casual teachers, with a common terminology used being *babysitter* (Ewing 2001; McCormack 2005; Pietsch and Williamson 2007). There may be a perception of casual teachers as being transitory, potentially further impacting their opportunities to develop relationships with students and colleagues.

Casual teaching can be challenging but for early career teachers these challenges can be exacerbated due to difficulties finding work, limited support and opportunities to engage with others, in part due to the casual nature of their work (Preston 2019). The first concern for early career casual teachers is finding employment (Bamberry 2011; Brock and Ryan 2016) and lack of employment appears to be linked to early career teacher attrition. Dupriez et al. (2015) study of 19,196 early career teachers in Belgium showed that those working for less than 3 months of the year were 8.5 times more likely to leave the profession than those working for the whole year.

Another challenge for early career casual teachers is access to support as it appears that they are rarely offered opportunities to participate in professional learning or have access to mentors (Bamberry 2011; Colcott 2009; Jenkins 2015; Nicholas and Wells 2016). Participation in professional learning is considered a necessary support for all early career teachers (Larsen and Allen 2016; Le Cornu 2013, Mansfield and Gu 2019) as without access to professional learning early career casual teachers may regress in relation to skills and knowledge (Pietsch 2011). Besides formal professional learning opportunities, access to mentors as a form of professional learning is rarely provided to early career casual teachers (Jenkins 2015; McCormack and Thomas 2005). Research suggests that lack of support for early career teachers leads to dissatisfaction which is then linked to intentions to leave the profession (Kelly et al. 2018). It could be inferred then that early career casual teachers are at particular risk of dissatisfaction and attrition due to lack of support available to them. Therefore, developing relationships is a particularly important protective factor in order to develop resilience in early career casual teachers.

It may be argued that development of a strong professional identity is important (Day 2008) given the risk of attrition of early career casual teachers (Dupriez et al. 2015). Not only has a strong professional identity contributed to developing resilience (Gu and Day 2007) it has helped teachers remain committed to the profession (Avalos and Aylwin 2007; Day 2011; Day and Gu 2010; Morrison 2013). Professional identity also contributes to teacher effectiveness by enhancing teachers' self-efficacy and motivation (Alsup 2006; Chong 2011) and can be seen as "how teachers regard themselves in relation to the community of teachers to which they belong" (Day and Gu 2014, p. 55). For early career teachers, professional identity is negotiated and constructed through social interactions between themselves and colleagues, students and other members of the school community (Barkhuizen 2016; Pearce and Morrison 2011). Such interactions are crucial for teachers attempting to find a way to fit in with the culture of the school (Anderson and Cohen 2015; Chong 2011; Wilkins et al. 2012). However due to the fragmented nature of casual teaching, professional identity of early career casual teachers may be constrained (Pietsch and Williamson 2007).

As teacher professional identity is negotiated and constructed through interactions with significant others, it is important to discuss the different sites where interactions occur for teachers. Firstly, the key site of these influential interactions is the classroom. For early career teachers, managing student abilities, engaging students in their learning and motivating their students have been reported as key influences on professional identity construction (Avalos and Aylwin 2007) as well as students

affording them the status of *teacher* (McNally and Blake 2012). Although the relational component of teachers' work contributed to a sense of success and satisfaction (Schuck et al. 2012), student-teacher relationships are recognised as dynamic and regularly change (Le Cornu 2013). However, for early career casual teachers fragmented employment means that there are limited opportunities to develop these relationships (Trotter and Wragg 1990). Fragmented employment may then impact on their opportunities to be afforded the status of teacher.

The next key site of professional identity construction and negotiation is the school community. Research suggests that discourses between early career teachers and more experienced teachers provide affordances or constraints in the conceptualisation and negotiation of roles and identities (Haddy 2009; Hsieh 2010; Morrison 2013). Teacher identity literature also affirms the important role of mentors in assisting early career teachers' negotiation and construction of a professional identity (Pillen and Beijaard 2009; Urzua and Vasquez 2008), however as noted early career casual teachers have limited access to mentors. Considering the limited opportunities to interact with colleagues or mentors, this may lead to challenges constructing a professional identity.

The final site of professional identity negotiation and construction is the broader professional community. Gee (2008) suggested that labels and titles were a way of identifying people and groups of people and assigning them roles, although these labels might constrain identity negotiation and construction. Early career teachers are often assigned titles such as probationary teacher (Rippon and Martin 2006), provisional teacher (Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia 2019a) or novice teacher (Saka et al. 2013), which suggest the teacher is "not quite" a teacher. Whilst all early career teachers are given these labels, for those employed as casual teachers they are likely to spend a longer period of time with this label as the transition from provisional to fully registered can be challenging for casual teachers due to the regulatory requirements (Teacher Registration Board Western Australia 2019b).

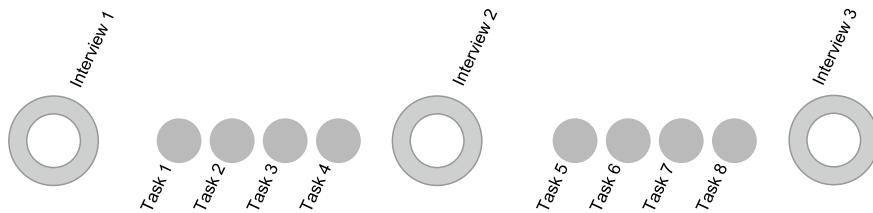
### 13.3 Methodology

A qualitative, longitudinal research project was undertaken using a case study approach. All participants were early career casual teachers in Western Australia, with no more than three years' teaching experience and participants were both primary and secondary teachers (see Table 13.1).

The research was conducted in two phases, with Phase One being a series of focus groups, with findings from this phase informing the task topics and the statements for sorting for interview two in Phase Two. In Phase Two, five participants were interviewed three times over the course of several months with reflective tasks being completed between interviews, as outlined in Fig. 13.1. Phase Two provided an opportunity for professional identity to be explored in more depth. In both phases participants completed a questionnaire including demographic information as well as details of the amount of professional learning, access to mentor, numbers of days

**Table 13.1** Participant gender and school setting by phase

Phase	School setting	Male	Female
1	Primary	1	9
	Secondary	2	6
2	Primary	1	2
	Middle years (4–9)		1
	Secondary		1



**Fig. 13.1** Design of phase two

generally worked in a week and how they obtained employment in order to gain an insight into this detail without impacting on the time participants could share their experiences.

Themes explored during both phases are outlined in Table 13.2. Phase 1 and Interview 1 of Phase Two focussed mainly on understanding the experiences of the participants related to their work, and opportunities for developing relationships with colleagues and students. In the second interview of Phase Two, the focus was on understanding the aspects of ‘teachers’ work’ they engaged with as well as their perception of their professional identity. Participants were asked to arrange teaching activities (such as preparing meaningful work, interacting with colleagues, planning and assessing student work) and then discussed their placement of each activity within their arrangement, which afforded them the opportunity to discuss their perceptions of the work they engaged with as a casual teacher. The same technique was used when identity was explored, using words such as babysitter, teacher, ‘just a relief teacher’, isolated, as these were statements found in the literature. Identity was further explored in Interview Three when participants were presented with a variety of images of teachers, including teachers working with small groups, overwhelmed with paperwork, standing at the font of a class teaching, feeling frustrated with student behaviour and asked to talk about the images and reflect on whether the images related to their perception of themselves as teachers. In the final interview participants also discussed their reflective tasks and how their experiences, ideas or feelings had changed over time. This was particularly relevant for the concept of identity, as identity is perceived in the literature as fluid and negotiated through experiences (Day and Gu 2007; Hong 2010).

An initial coding trial used descriptive coding (Saldaña 2013), with words or short phrases used to identify the topic of the selected data from individual questions

**Table 13.2** Themes explored in each Phase

Focus of questions	Phase two component
Experiences of work, professional learning, relationships	Interview 1 + Phase 1
Experiences of work (choose a day and record what happens on that day)	Task 1
People who give support (support in both personal and professional life)	Task 2
Professional learning (what they had access to and the relevance for their teaching context)	Task 3
People discuss teaching (who they talk to about teaching, what did they talk about)	Task 4
Tasks teachers do, perceptions of casual teachers (sorting activity, then discussing placement of statements)	Interview 2
Perceptions of community (asked to define a community of practice and whether they were part of a COP)	Task 5
Perceptions of self as teacher (what did they do as a teacher, whether they thought they were a teacher)	Task 6
Perceptions of casual teachers (by parents, students and colleagues)	Task 7
Future as teacher (what they would be doing in 5 years and why)	Task 8
Perceptions of self as teacher, journey as teacher (viewing images and discussing their view of themselves as teacher, reviewing their journey so far)	Interview 3

asked in the focus groups (see Table 13.2 for question topics). An initial coding trial used descriptive coding (Saldaña 2013), with words or short phrases used to identify the topic of the selected data from individual questions asked in the focus groups. Data analysis in Phase Two utilised similar strategies to Phase One, although the process differed slightly as an inductive approach was also utilised to ensure any new themes that emerged were included. The impact of regulatory requirements on both emotions and sense of being part of the teacher community emerge through this process. Data from Phase Two were obtained from six individual participants and the data from each participant were coded separately, including interviews, questionnaire and reflective tasks.

This study received ethics approval from the relevant university and all identifying information was anonymised. Participants chose their own pseudonyms which have been used in this chapter.

## 13.4 Findings

The relational aspects of finding employment, working with students and developing relationships with colleagues were key themes throughout this study. These concepts

**Table 13.3** Summary of Strategies used to obtain employment

Strategies used to obtain employment	Number of participants ( <i>n</i> = 18)
Providing curriculum vitae (CV)	15
Through professional experience school	6
Personal recommendations	5
Employment agencies	2
Graduate teacher employment pool from the department of education	1

will be discussed from the findings in Phase One, focus group, before a more in-depth discussion of relationships is presented through a case study from Phase Two.

### ***13.4.1 Role of Relationships in Finding Employment***

There were five key strategies used to gain employment as shown in Table 13.3, however the most common strategy did not necessarily lead to employment.

Although the main strategy used to obtain employment was approaching schools and leaving contact details and a curriculum vitae, participants suggested personal connections were a more successful strategy. These personal connections included prior connections made during professional placements or personal contacts at a school. This is evident from the following statements made during the focus groups.

Teachers are actually responsible for getting their own relief [casual teacher] and they normally get relief [casuals] from people they know (Fran)

I have found schools like to have a number of relief [casual teachers] that they get to know well and the kids get to know (Amy)

Without the interaction with others generated by employment as a teacher it is difficult to develop a professional teacher identity.

### ***13.4.2 Student–Teacher Relationships***

Developing relationships with students was identified as critical by all participants and many commented that developing relationships with students improved student behaviour. Several strategies were utilised to develop positive relationships with students, including talking to students during supervision:

Especially when you do yard duty [student supervision], you watch them play and then you can say hello again and talk to them. [Jaz]

Furthermore, exploring common interests and finding methods to connect with individual students was helpful in establishing strong relationships with students:

If they can engage with someone who is interested in them and their interests more importantly, it gives them a reason to want to be in that classroom. [Alex]

Participants specifically mentioned the importance of learning students' names in order to begin developing relationships.

Regular employment contributed positively to relationship building, underpinned by such fundamental strategies as learning students' names, as students were then likely to treat them as a teacher rather than "just a casual teacher". Although building relationships was deemed important it was recognised that it was a product of a daily relationship with students, and for some casual teachers developing relationships was particularly difficult.

I think it is quite hard to build relationships with them. You spend most of the day trying to figure out who is who and their names and everything. [Jane]

Moreover, developing relationships with students was more challenging with sporadic employment.

Progressing student learning and developing relationships with students also contributed to an identity as teacher. When participants sensed they had continued the students' learning rather than handing out worksheets, they identified as being a "teacher ... not there as a babysitter" [Lexi]. These opportunities became more likely when employed regularly. For secondary teachers, working within their curriculum area meant, they felt their curriculum knowledge helped them "continue their [the students'] education" [Michelle], rather than just manage student behaviour. Opportunities to develop relationships with students contributed to "a sense of belonging [Alex] and legitimized their role as a teacher". Furthermore, participant's concepts of a legitimate teacher were of the regular classroom teacher. Teaching experiences that replicated the regular roles and experiences of classroom teachers reinforced their developing teacher identities. For example:

I treat it like my own class. [Alexis]

I expect[ed] them to work even though their usual teacher [was] not there. [Olivia]

### ***13.4.3 Building Relationships with Colleagues***

Consistent with challenges faced in comprehending tacit practices, sporadic employment resulted in difficulties developing relationships with colleagues. For instance, initiating conversations was challenging, as "it is a bit intimidating when you don't know anybody" [Jade]. At times casual teachers were required to "do duty or had to get things prepared" [Lulu], therefore, had limited "time to go and talk to teachers" [Jaz]. Furthermore, casual employment meant that they were not in one location "long enough to feel part of the community" [Trixie]. Developing relationships began with being acknowledged; however, this varied between schools. Participants discovered that sometimes "every single staff member smiled at me and said hello" [Catherine],

whereas at other schools, “they don’t want to know you” [Alexis]. Whilst opportunities to engage with colleagues varied, participants developed an understanding of “how different schools work and the culture of the schools” [Jane].

By comparison, regular employment or prior connections to a school provided opportunities to develop relationships. Participants stated that employment at professional placement schools, felt “like going home” [Betsie] as they “knew all the teachers and knew [their] way around the school, [and] felt comfortable” [Lexi]. Additionally, regular employment resulted in “know[ing] all [of the teachers] reasonably well to talk to and ask things” [Chloe] and assisted with relationship development. Opportunities existed for conversations to change from a “personal level” to professional discussions. Developing relationships resulted in chances to share resources and collaborate. In particular, participation in professional learning contributed to a sense of efficacy, as:

You feel like you are contributing as well, instead of being the graduate who needs help.  
[Jade]

### 13.5 Case Study: Chloe

A case study from Phase Two demonstrates in more detail some of the complexities faced by early career casual teachers. This case was chosen as it presents the experiences of Chloe who by her third year of casual teaching had encountered sufficient opportunities to develop relationships with students and colleagues. This case study was reviewed by Chloe to ensure the analysis of her data accurately reflected her contributions and captured her intent.

Chloe completed a one-year Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) after spending several years employed as a scientist. She was a mature-age graduate who had changed careers after the birth of her first child and at the time of the study had just had her second child. She was in a financially stable position and tutored high school Mathematics and Science in addition to casual teaching. She had made a choice to work as a casual teacher as she perceived this as “family friendly” as she did not have to do any preparation or marking. At the time of this study Chloe was in her third year after graduation.

As a Mathematics and Science teacher, Chloe had been employed regularly since graduation, initially working at four different schools. After taking a break for maternity leave, Chloe decided to only approach two schools where she worked most often. She found that schools preferred employing “Maths and Science teachers to cover Maths and Science” (Interview 1). So, for Chloe at the point of this study it was a combination of relationships she had developed with schools as well as subject specialisation which contributed to regular employment.

Developing relationships with students was considered a core activity for Chloe and regular employment at one school afforded Chloe opportunities to begin to develop relationships with students and have students regard her as a “teacher”. She commented that:

In terms of relief ... I have now learnt that a big part of [managing the class] is engaging with the students and because I have been at the same school for quite a while, it is forming relationships with students. (Interview 2)

For Chloe engaging students and attempting to develop relationships was particularly important when teaching *out of field* as she was “less able to assess whether [the students] were able to go ahead with the task they had been set” (Interview 2). Despite her sense of competence, she still considered that opportunities to develop relationships with students and therefore student behaviour was different for casual teachers due to her intermittent participation with individual classes.

Chloe considered collaborating with colleagues and developing relationships with colleagues depended mainly on gaining regular employment at a school. She found that early in her teaching she had not developed any relationships with other teachers, which led to feelings of isolation.

Early on ... I didn't have any close relationships to teachers at the school and was really feeling isolated and on the periphery and really didn't know how to progress. (Interview 2)

Regular employment, however, assisted Chloe in developing relationships with colleagues, which contributed to her decision to continue seeking employment at one particular school. Although she felt valued by the school community, she did not have a sense that she had the same connection as a permanent teacher.

When you are there you are there and when you are not there it is not necessarily going to be noticed. (Interview 2)

Once employed regularly at a school, Chloe discovered that her colleagues in the Maths and Science departments treated her as a teacher and she was able to collaborate with them in teaching the Maths and Science content.

I am quite close with the maths and the science teachers at the school ... they know it is not just relief or babysitting. So they will give you content to, actually real content to teach and move on with. (Interview 2)

Continued regular employment then deepened the collaboration between Chloe and her regular colleagues.

You talk about how the class is going with them, so you have that real content conversation and pedagogy but linked to the content ... you get that change in thinking how they are looking at you (Interview 3).

She found that she had started to feel a sense of belonging and felt valued by her colleagues, which contributed greatly to her sense of competence as a teacher and consolidated her identity as one.

Interestingly, it was the relationships that Chloe had developed at one school that assisted in making connections in the broader teaching community. She was able to access the Graduate Teacher Professional Learning Program developed by the Department of Education. This programme provided her with a department email which then unlocked additional resources only available on the secure section of the Department of Education website. Chloe noted prior to this she “*felt quite separate*

*from the teaching community*" (Task 5). This access to resources and connection with the employer beyond the school level also consolidated her developing identity. As a result, Chloe had a strong sense of self-efficacy and was developing a strong sense of vocation, both key characteristics of resilience.

## 13.6 Discussion

The relational aspect associated with gaining access to both school and professional communities was a new insight that emerged from this study. Previous research on casual teaching has suggested that casual teachers, and particularly early career casual teachers, experience difficulties accessing work (Bamberry 2011; Brock and Ryan 2016; Jenkins et al. 2009) managing student behaviour (Jenkins et al. 2009; Pietsch and Williamson 2007) and accessing professional learning (Bamberry 2011; Colcott 2009; Lunay and Lock 2006). Whilst this was affirmed by this study, results also suggested that relationships assisted in gaining access to both school and professional communities.

It appears that early career casual teachers were more successful in gaining employment if they had developed relationships with members of a school community, however this did not always result in regular or sustained employment. This research found that relationships developed during professional experience assisted early career casual teachers to gain access to school communities as teachers, as was the case for several of the participants. Although the importance of relationships in gaining employment has not been emphasised in previous research regarding early career casual teachers, this was similar to the findings that principals preferred to employ casual teachers already known to the school (Crittenden 1994). It might be that opportunities to demonstrate competency during professional experience assisted early career teachers in their pursuit of employment as literature suggests that schools value competency and flexibility in their casual teachers (Charteris et al. 2015; Junor 2000). Without access to employment as a teacher, a professional identity as teacher is unlikely. Therefore, with the increasing number of early career teachers beginning their professional working lives as casual teachers, initial teacher education providers could highlight the importance of developing relationships with colleagues and administrators in schools for pre-service teachers during their final professional experience and emphasise the range of benefits associated with them.

In both phases of this study, participants indicated that they placed great emphasis on developing relationships with students. Participants mentioned a variety of strategies used to develop these relationships including learning students' names, finding out about their interests and talking to students during break times. Fielder's (1991) findings indicate that casual teachers who experience less challenging student behaviour personalised their interactions with students by using names, and it is important to note that this strategy was used by several participants. These relationship-building strategies provide opportunities for engagement between students and early career casual teachers in a socialising manner that supports and

complements their teaching. In Phase Two, participants perceived engaging with students, controlling the class and developing relationships with students as their core activities, although this may be related to their limited opportunities to participate in other teacher work. The importance placed on developing relationships with students contrasts to other research regarding casual teachers, including early career casual teachers. When considering student-teacher interactions, a majority of research suggests that managing student behaviour was a key concern for early career casual teachers (Jenkins et al. 2009; McCormack and Thomas 2005; Pietsch and Williamson 2007), which is a similar finding for all early career teachers (Friedman 2000). However, it has been noted that early career teachers find developing relationships with students assist in managing challenging behaviour (Hirschhorn 2009), but this has not been noted in the literature related to early career casual teachers. In addition, opportunities to develop relationships with students may contribute to early career casual teachers being given the status of teacher by the students and thereby contributing to the early career casual teachers' perception of themselves as teacher rather than babysitter.

Developing relationships with colleagues was dependent on opportunities to engage with staff in both informal and professional contexts. Participants found interacting with colleagues challenging, in part due to lack of time to interact with colleagues which they felt was needed in order to develop relationships. These findings are supported by Jenkins et al.'s (2009) study which shows a link between irregular and sporadic employment and difficulties forming relationships with colleagues for early career teachers. In contrast regular employment provided repeat opportunities to engage in informal conversations as well as professional discussions regarding pedagogy. This finding is unsurprising as research suggests that it is regular employment which affords opportunities to develop relationships with colleagues (Jenkins et al. 2009; McCormack and Thomas 2005). However, when considering that part of the process of professional identity construction is negotiating how they view themselves and how they are viewed by others (Horn et al. 2008), lack of opportunity to interact with colleagues may limit early career casual teachers' ability to develop a strong professional identity. When considering the link between professional identity development and commitment to the profession (Day and Gu 2010; Morrison 2013) as well as developing resilience (Beltman et al. 2011; Le Cornu 2013) schools and colleagues should consider processes which encourage relationship-building opportunities with and for early career casual teachers.

Providing casual teachers access to professional learning opportunities could enhance opportunities for relationship building. Access to professional learning has been consistently noted as a challenge for casual teachers (Bamberry 2011; Bourke 1993; Jenkins 2015; Lunay and Lock 2006; Nicholas and Wells 2016). This research appears to support this finding as access to professional learning was limited and seemed to rely on early career teachers developing a strong relationship with a school. Whilst some professional learning has been specifically developed for early career teachers by the Department of Education (Department of Education and Training Western Australia 2016) at the time of the study access to this programme required a department email which was not provided to casual teachers. Schools

could provide casual teachers with access, but it appears that regular employment in one school was needed for this to occur, as in the case of Chloe. The Graduate Teacher Professional Learning Program (GTPLP) enabled early career teachers to engage with colleagues and develop professional judgement and assisted with early career teachers being able to fulfil the regulatory requirement of full registration. Mockler and Sachs (2007) suggest that these types of collegiate incidents might contribute to professional identity negotiation and construction and provide opportunities to improve teaching and learning. Chloe attended the GTPLP and considered this an important factor in improving her teaching. She was reminded of teaching skills explored during her pre-service teacher education and became aware that other early career teachers were struggling with classroom management, even those with full-time teaching employment. This affirms similar findings of Patrick (2008) who discusses the importance of teachers being part of and contributing to a professional community in order to establish their place in the professional and their self-identity as teacher. However, some elements which contribute to teacher identity construction do not appear to be available to casual teachers such as mentoring, peer reviewing of their teaching and performance management (Fraser et al. 2017).

### 13.7 Conclusion

Although this study has provided some key insights into the experiences of early career casual teachers, the findings must be situated within the limitations of this research. Nevertheless, the importance of relationships between early career casual teachers and students and colleagues appears to be an important aspect of their early teaching experience. When considering the link between developing relationships and professional identity negotiation and construction as well as resilience, initial teacher education courses should highlight the importance of developing relationships both at their institution and on the pre-service placements. In addition, schools should be encouraged to provide early career casual teachers with opportunities to interact with colleagues in both formal and informal ways. It is pleasing to note that since this study was undertaken access to professional learning at the Department of Education in Western Australia has been provided to all casual teachers, which is a positive initiative.

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# Chapter 14

## Understanding Teacher Wellbeing Through Job Demands-Resources Theory



Helena Granziera, Rebecca Collie, and Andrew Martin

**Abstract** Job demands-resources (JD-R) theory has emerged as one of the most influential conceptual frameworks for interpreting and explaining factors affecting employees' wellbeing in the workplace. The present chapter provides a broad overview of JD-R theory, and discusses how the theory can be harnessed to further understand the factors influencing teachers' wellbeing. The chapter also reviews prior research employing JD-R theory in teaching populations, and explores the job demands (e.g., workload, disciplinary issues, time pressure) and job resources (e.g. perceived autonomy support, opportunities for professional learning, and relationships with colleagues) that influence teacher engagement, burnout, and organisational outcomes. Theoretical extensions of the model, such as the inclusion of personal resources (e.g. adaptability, cognitive and behavioural coping, self-efficacy), are further considered to extend knowledge of how teacher wellbeing can be promoted at both an individual and broader organisational level. Finally, the chapter considers the practical implications of how JD-R theory can guide interventions, comprising whole-school efforts, as well as approaches that support individual teachers to maximise their wellbeing.

**Keywords** Job Demands-Resources · Teachers · Wellbeing · Engagement · Burnout · Resilience

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## 14.1 Introduction

Since its introduction in 2001, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker and Demerouti 2017; Demerouti et al. 2001) has come to be one of the most popular and widely published frameworks for understanding employee health and performance. In more recent times, the framework has been shown to be useful in further understanding the occupational experiences of teachers, and in shedding light on the nature of attrition and retention in the teaching profession. The present chapter introduces JD-R theory, and reviews prior research employing the model in teaching populations, with a focus on teacher wellbeing. In addition, we propose that although JD-R theory is predominantly relevant to wellbeing, it also holds relevance for understanding resilience. Justification of this stance is presented. The chapter then demonstrates how the theory can be applied in teaching contexts to promote teacher wellbeing.

## 14.2 Operationalising Teacher Wellbeing and Resilience

Wellbeing is a broad and multi-dimensional concept. In the present article, we define wellbeing as teachers' positive evaluations of and healthy functioning in their work environment (Collie et al. 2016). Accordingly, wellbeing encompasses a range of outcomes, such as job satisfaction (teachers' affective responses to their work; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011), and organisational commitment (teachers' emotional attachment to their work; Meyer and Allen 1991). As noted above, our major focus in this chapter is on wellbeing as a desirable outcome among teachers. At the same time, we also highlight the role of resilience in helping teachers to overcome the day-to-day challenges that arise in teaching. This dual approach of harm reduction and wellness promotion is important because resilience is important for overcoming adversity, whereas wellbeing is important for helping individuals to further flourish (Collie and Perry 2019).

Resilience research originally stemmed from work examining how children and adolescents overcome major or chronic adversity (e.g., Masten 2007). Among teachers, work has evolved to focus on low levels of adversity common to teachers (e.g., competing deadlines) through research on, for example, 'everyday resilience' (Gu and Day 2014) and workplace buoyancy (Martin and Marsh 2008). For this chapter, we operationalise resilience as a process involving resource mobilisation by individuals and resource provision by the context that in concert help individuals to navigate adversity (Ungar 2008). Importantly, we focus on low-level adversity such as competing deadlines and high workload that are common to teachers, rather than major adversity (Martin and Marsh 2008).

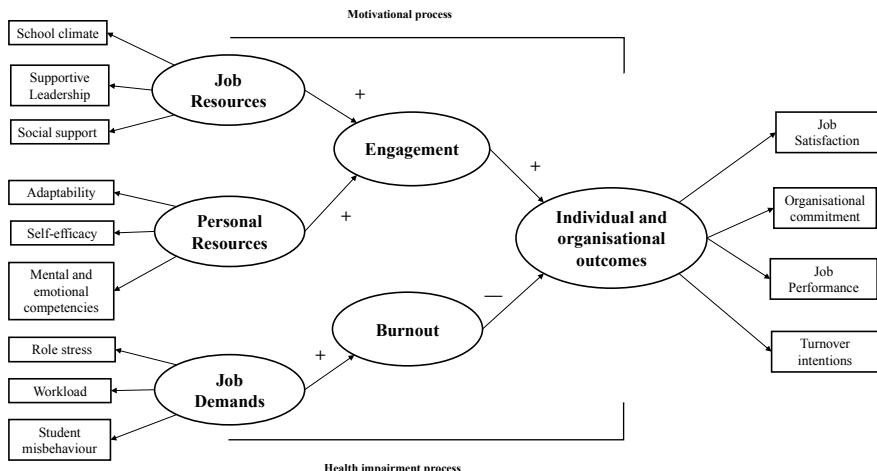
### 14.3 The Job Demands-Resources Theory

Job Demands-Resources theory adopts a positive psychology approach (Bakker and Demerouti 2008) to explaining employees' workplace experiences. The central premise of the theory is that the working conditions within all occupations can be broadly defined as either job demands or job resources (Demerouti et al. 2001). Job demands are the physical, social, organisational, or psychological aspects of work that require the investment of physical and/or psychological effort, and are associated with energy depletion and psychological and/or physiological costs (e.g., workload, disciplinary issues, time pressure; Demerouti et al. 2001). In contrast to job demands, job resources are those elements of work that enable employees to: achieve work goals; manage job demands, and the associated physical and psychological costs; and grow and develop in their position (e.g., perceived autonomy support, opportunities for professional learning, and relationships with colleagues).

In addition to job demands and job resources, more recent conceptualising in JD-R theory has acknowledged the role that personal resources play in shaping employees' workplace experiences (Xanthopoulou et al. 2007). Broadly defined as self-evaluations of one's ability to control and impact upon their environment (Hobfoll et al. 2003), personal resources can directly predict or indirectly influence how job demands and job resources affect employee outcomes. For example, self-efficacy (a personal resource) may influence a teacher's perception of the school climate (a job resource), which in turn may increase their feelings of commitment (an outcome; Collie et al. 2011). Alternatively, individuals working in a school with a positive school climate (a job resource) may be higher in self-efficacy (a personal resource), which may positively influence their job performance (an outcome; Klassen and Tze 2014). In studies of teachers, personal resources have been found to be important predictors of a range of outcomes. For instance, Lorente Prieto et al. (2008) found self-efficacy to be a predictor of higher engagement and lower burnout among Spanish teachers. Comparatively, Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) found that personal resources influence the way in which job resources relate to engagement among Finnish teachers. Importantly, because personal resources such as self-efficacy and adaptability are capacities that individuals may be able to develop or change, they provide a useful base from which interventions targeting teachers' wellbeing may be developed.

As can be seen in Fig. 14.1, the JD-R theory suggests that job demands and job/personal resources evince two independent psychological processes: the health impairment process in which job demands uniquely predict burnout, and the motivational process in which job/personal resources are inherently motivational and lead to higher work engagement and wellbeing (Bakker and Demerouti 2017). It is through these two processes that links with salient personal and occupational outcomes, such as organisational commitment, job performance, and turnover intentions can be understood (Collie et al. 2018; Esteves and Lopes 2017; Taris 2006).

In addition to the main associations between job demands and burnout (health impairment process) and those between job/personal resources and engagement



**Fig. 14.1** The job demands-resources model, annotated to include a range of the key demands, resources, and outcomes previously examined in teachers. Adapted from Bakker and Demerouti (2017)

(motivational process), JD-R theory also recognises two more nuanced processes: the ‘buffering’ and the ‘boosting’ effects. The ‘buffering’ effect refers to instances in which certain job resources buffer or lessen the effect of demands on job strain (Bakker et al. 2005). Job resources can reduce the likelihood that specific organisational aspects will be perceived as sources of stress and may enable individuals to control their emotions and thoughts in response to such job demands (Demerouti and Bakker 2011). For instance, Bakker et al. (2007) found that when Finnish school teachers reported high or positive ratings of supervisor support, organisational climate, and innovativeness (job resources), their perceptions of pupil misbehaviour had less of a harmful association with their work engagement. This suggests that job resources provide teachers with strategies to better manage demanding situations.

The ‘boosting’ effect refers to the way in which job resources become particularly important for employees—or ‘boost’ their engagement—when job demands are high. This notion is consistent with Hobfoll’s (2001) proposition that resources are of greatest use when they are needed most (i.e. during periods of high job demands). This effect was likewise demonstrated in the aforementioned study of Finnish teachers; when pupil misbehaviour was high, the job resources had an even stronger connection with teachers’ engagement (Bakker et al. 2007).

#### 14.4 JD-R Theory and Links with Resilience

As explained above, JD-R theory has provided important understanding about employee wellbeing. In the current chapter, we propose that it also holds relevance for

understanding ‘everyday’ resilience and workplace buoyancy—that is, how individuals overcome low-level adversity at work (e.g., Martin and Marsh 2008). As noted earlier, for this chapter we operationalise resilience in terms of a process involving both resource mobilisation by individuals and resource provision by the context (see Ungar 2008). We suggest that by way of personal and job resources, JD-R theory taps into the idea of resource mobilisation and provision. More precisely, resource provision refers to the job resources that a work context provides employees. Resource mobilisation refers to the personal and job resources that employees utilise in their work. These resources become particularly important in the face of adversity—which can be considered by way of job demands in the JD-R theory. For example, if an employee has a very high workload (a job demand), this can be considered an experience of adversity. The boosting hypothesis in JD-R theory then establishes that in the face of such challenges, resources become particularly important for positive psychological functioning at work. There are clear alignments with resilience here. If employees experience high workload, but do not have access to or are unable to mobilise resources, then their successful adaptation is threatened (e.g., see Howard 2000). In sum, we suggest that JD-R theory has relevance to ‘everyday’ resilience and buoyancy, and that it provides an alternative way of understanding how employees overcome adversity at work. Below, we turn our focus specifically to teachers and how the JD-R theory has been applied to understand teacher wellbeing.

## 14.5 Research Employing JD-R Theory in Teaching Populations

The flexibility of JD-R theory and its capacity to integrate both personal and organisational factors into one unified model have made the framework a popular choice for educational researchers. Such work has enabled researchers to glean considerable insights into the nature of the teaching profession and the factors and processes involved in teachers’ wellbeing. This section reviews prior research employing the JD-R theory and identifies key demands, resources, and processes involved in teachers’ occupational functioning. The present chapter also considers a range of methodological approaches to applying the JD-R theory in teaching populations.

- a. **Key demands and resources.** One of the strengths of the JD-R theory is its ability to link key contextual and personal factors to relevant outcomes in a process model. This has enabled identification of salient resources and demands, and how these differentially predict motivation, health, and organisational outcomes. In this section, key studies employing the JD-R theory are described, along with a summary of the key resources and demands that have been shown to influence teachers’ wellbeing. A conceptually and empirically informative test of the JD-R theory in a teaching population was undertaken by Hakanen et al. (2006) among a sample of 2038 Finnish teachers. Drawing on prior research addressing stress and motivation among teachers, the researchers collected data

via a paper survey, and examined job demands by way of three indicators (disruptive pupil behaviour, work overload, and a poor physical work environment) and job resources by way of five indicators (job control, access to information, supervisory support, innovative school climate, and social climate). Results of the study provided strong support for the core propositions of the theory: job demands were associated with greater ill-health via burnout, and job resources were related to greater organisational commitment via engagement. Notably, the strength of this study lies in the fact that the results were obtained in half of the sample (using random selection) and cross-validated in the other half, indicating the broad generalisability of the theory. Bakker et al. (2007) extended this research to shed light on the specific interactions between job resources, job demands, and outcomes in a sample of Finnish primary, secondary, and vocational teachers. More precisely, job demands were examined by way of misbehaviour, while job resources were examined in terms of job control (the ability to influence one's own work), supervisor support, information (pertinent issues are communicated with staff), school climate, innovativeness (the desire to continually improve), and appreciation (colleagues appreciate an individual's work). Using structural equation modelling, the authors revealed all six job resources and the job demand to be uniquely and positively related to the three dimensions of engagement under examination (absorption: being engrossed in one's work; dedication: strong involvement, enthusiasm, and pride in work; and vigor: the energy with which work is undertaken). These findings demonstrate that a variety of job resources and job demands are important for teachers, and each of these factors can predict teachers' outcomes in different ways.

More recently, teachers' perceptions of autonomy supportive leadership, or the degree to which teachers feel as though their autonomy and self-empowerment are supported by school leaders (Ryan and Deci 2017), has emerged as a particularly relevant job resource. Across samples of Australian and Finnish teachers, structural equation modelling has shown perceived autonomy support to be positively and directly associated with adaptability, engagement, and organisational commitment, and negatively associated with exhaustion and disengagement (Collie and Martin 2017; Collie et al. 2018; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2018). Other applications of JD-R theory have highlighted the importance of social support more broadly for teachers. In a study of 760 Norwegian teachers, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) demonstrated that support from colleagues was a key predictor of teacher wellbeing (measured by the following scales: emotional exhaustion, depressed mood, and psychosomatic responses). Notably, using a diary study which consisted of shortened versions of general engagement, satisfaction, and mental health scales, Simbula (2010) showed that even when existing levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and burnout were accounted for, social support was a unique predictor of these outcomes. Given that social support enables teachers to better deal with uncertainty and unanticipated challenges (Day and Gu 2010), building a positive social climate is thus an important consideration for school leaders.

Other applications of the JD-R have extended the theory by examining the role of personal resources. In a sample of 484 Spanish secondary school teachers, Lorente Prieto et al. (2008) examined personal resources in terms of mental and emotional competencies, which were considered in terms of teachers' abilities to process large amounts of information and to actively listen to and work with others. They also examined several job demands: quantitative overload (where teachers reported higher workloads than they could manage) and role stress (where individuals receive conflicting demands in their role, or where their role is poorly defined). The authors also examined two job resources: autonomy and support climate. The study found that the personal resources of mental and emotional competencies interacted differently with the engagement and burnout dimensions. Emotional competencies were significant negative predictors of burnout, while both mental and emotional competencies were important predictors of engagement dimensions, providing further evidence of the differential relationships between specific job and personal resources and outcomes.

Another personal resource that has been identified as an important resource for teachers, and especially for beginner teachers is self-efficacy (Dicke et al. 2018). Self-efficacy is defined as the degree to which individuals believe they are capable of succeeding in a specific situation or to attain particular goals (Bandura 1997). Self-efficacy has been examined as a personal resource in studies of Italian, German, and Spanish teachers (Dicke et al. 2018; Simbula et al. 2012; Vera et al. 2012), and has been directly associated with greater work engagement, a decrease in negative perceptions of job demands, and indirectly associated with outcomes such as satisfaction and commitment. In applications of the JD-R theory to Australian teachers, adaptability has been found to predict higher organisational commitment and subjective wellbeing, and lower disengagement (Collie and Martin 2017; Collie et al. 2018), indicating that this personal resource plays a significant role in teachers' personal and occupational outcomes.

Longitudinal studies have revealed important information about the specific roles of demands and resources over time. Lorente Prieto et al. (2008) were particularly interested in understanding how job demands at the beginning of the academic year predicted job demands and outcomes at the end of the academic year. Structural equation modelling revealed that higher initial levels of overload predicted greater exhaustion and lower dedication (a sense of significance or pride in one's work) at the end of the year. Moreover, the higher the level of role conflict reported at the beginning of the year, the greater the level of exhaustion reported by teachers at the end of the year. Further still, higher levels of role ambiguity at the beginning of the year were associated with lower levels of dedication at the end of the year.

- b. **Examinations of the buffering and boosting effects.** In addition to the work of Bakker et al. (2007), considerable evidence has been found for the 'buffering' and 'boosting' effects among teachers. De Carlo et al. (2019), for example, sought to examine how job resources buffered the relationship between demands and

strain in a sample of Italian secondary school teachers. Using regression analyses, the researchers found that the job resources of social support and participation in decision-making buffered the negative effect of workload on work-family conflict. Dicke et al. (2018) were similarly interested in the extent to which personal resources could buffer or boost the relationship between strain and demands. Self-efficacy (a personal resource) was found to buffer or reduce the negative association between classroom disturbances and emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, self-efficacy was found to 'boost' engagement when disturbances were high. Such findings underscore the important role that demands and resources play not only directly in relation to wellbeing, but also in protecting teachers from experiencing the negative effects of demands, as well as further boosting teachers' positive experiences at work.

- c. **Person centred approaches.** JD-R theory has likewise been used to inform the development of profiles and clusters that can be used to understand teachers' experiences and outcomes at work. Prior work in this area has primarily consisted of variable-centred analytic approaches (e.g., structural equation modelling). Although these approaches provide important information about associations among variables, they are focused at a sample-wide level and tend to ignore the existence of subpopulations (Morin et al. 2016). Moreover, they do not consider individual differences on the different variables simultaneously. Considering both variable- and person-centred approaches allows for a broader and simultaneously more nuanced understanding of how JD-R theory can be harnessed to yield important information relating to teachers' occupational functioning. Importantly, person-centred approaches provide the opportunity to identify profiles of teacher wellbeing. Simbula et al. (2012), for example, assessed several job demands (inequity and role ambiguity) and job resources (professional development and social support) among a sample of Italian secondary school teachers. They identified three behavioural and coping clusters: resourceful (high job demands, high job resources), stressed (high job demands, low job resources), and wealthy teachers (low job demands, high job resources). Resourceful teachers tended to evince higher levels of positive work outcomes (work engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and job satisfaction). The authors posited that such teachers were effective as they were able to draw on job resources, particularly during times of high stress. Comparatively, the stressed cluster of teachers tended to demonstrate poorer work outcomes due to the inability to cope with the challenges presented to them. Finally, because the wealthy cluster reported low levels of job demands and high job resources, this cluster found the management of pupil misbehaviour to be less challenging. More recently, Collie et al. (2019) used latent profile analysis to identify four profiles based on JD-R theory, and investigated how these are related to occupational commitment and job satisfaction. The authors considered profile membership in terms of two job demands (barriers to professional learning and student misbehaviour), two job resources (teacher collaboration and input in decision-making), and one personal resource (feeling prepared to teach). Four profiles were identified: the flourisher (low job demands, high job and personal resources), the persister (high

job demands, low job resources, high personal resource), the coper (above average job demands, below-average job resources, low personal resource), and the struggler (high job demands, low job and personal resource). Consistent with JD-R theory, the flourisher reported the highest levels of job satisfaction and occupational commitment. The persister and struggler tended to evince the lowest levels of outcomes. The authors further considered school-level profiles, and found that membership in a supportive school profile (largely characterised by high levels of flourishers) was positively associated with greater school-average job satisfaction and occupational commitment.

- d. **Summary.** A growing body of research has revealed salient resources and demands that influence teachers' work-related wellbeing. Quantitative overload, student misbehaviour, time pressure, role stress, and poor student motivation have been examined in several different countries (Bermejo-Toro et al. 2016; Dicke et al. 2018; Evers et al. 2016; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2018; Tonder and Fourie 2015). Collectively, these demands have been linked to poor wellbeing, such as higher levels of emotional exhaustion, greater stress, increased reports of depressive symptoms, lower organisational commitment, lower engagement, and higher motivation to quit the profession (e.g., Hakanen et al. 2006; Lee 2019; Leung and Lee 2006; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2018). Comparatively, job and personal resources such as social support, supervisory support, value consonance, job control, appreciation, innovativeness, self-efficacy, adaptability, autonomy, organisational climate, and participation in decision-making have been associated with greater subjective wellbeing, higher engagement, superior work-life balance, and greater organisational commitment (Collie et al. 2018; De Carlo et al. 2019; Dicke et al. 2018; Hakanen et al. 2006; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2018). Under specific circumstances these resources and demands can interact in unique ways to influence teachers' outcomes. Specifically, they can boost and buffer the impact of different resources and demands on teacher wellbeing. Further, it is possible to group individuals in terms of their levels of demands and resources and to establish wellbeing profiles based on this information. Taken together, this research highlights the personal and contextual factors and the processes that facilitate positive psychological functioning for teachers. It further provides important information that may inform the development of interventions targeting teachers' wellbeing. At the same time, further research is required to extend extant knowledge. For example, further research needs to consider the degree to which different types of job demands relate differentially to the motivational and health impairment process. Similarly, few studies have conceptualised teachers' wellbeing through a multi-level lens; future studies need to consider how individual demands and resources interact with organisational levels demands and resources. Finally, further longitudinal research is required to better understand causal relationships and the long-term impacts of demands and resources on salient outcomes.

## 14.6 JD-R Theory and Resilience Among Teachers

JD-R theory makes an important contribution to advancing conceptualisations of ‘everyday’ resilience and workplace buoyancy among teachers by illuminating the processes underpinning a teacher’s capacity to manage everyday adversity, as well as how these processes relate to wellbeing. Specifically, when teachers are able to access a wealth of resources, both from their environment and within themselves, they may be more capable of managing challenges and adversity in their work, thus enabling them to experience greater wellbeing. For instance, student misbehaviour (a job demand, and an example of a day-to-day challenge commonly faced by teachers; Bakker et al. 2007), may be emotionally and physically taxing; however, teachers who are able to draw on personal resources such as adaptability, and job resources such as social support may be better equipped to manage this experience of adversity. These teachers can adjust their thoughts and behaviours, and draw on guidance and reassurance from colleagues. Successful management of such situations may in turn boost teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and job satisfaction, improving their wellbeing. Thus, as per JD-R theory, teachers who are able to access greater personal and job resources may be better positioned to manage job demands, which in turn may decrease their likelihood of experiencing emotional exhaustion, and enhance their wellbeing at work. By understanding this process, teachers and schools may be able to design interventions and put in place strategies to maximise resource provision and mobilisation, which may strengthen teachers’ capacities to handle their experiences of ‘everyday’ resilience and workplace buoyancy.

## 14.7 Implications—Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice

Having introduced JD-R theory and summarised a range of studies applying the theory among teachers, an important question remains: How can JD-R theory be harnessed to shape interventions targeting teacher wellbeing? The final section of this chapter considers how the propositions espoused in JD-R theory can be translated into strategies to promote teacher wellbeing.

- e. **Job crafting.** Early conceptualisations of the JD-R theory assumed that employees had little control over working conditions, which were considered to be established by employers and organisations (Bakker and Demerouti 2017). However, longitudinal tests of JD-R theory have found that employees often make proactive changes to optimise their workplace experiences (e.g., by actively seeking challenges, mobilising job resources, and finding ways to manage their job demands; Alonso et al. 2019; Tims et al. 2013). This process, referred to as job crafting, is an example of the way in which JD-R theory can be practically applied to enhance teacher wellbeing. Teachers who are highly motivated are more likely to employ job-crafting behaviours. This leads to higher levels of

resources and, in turn, boosts motivation (van Wingerden et al. 2017a). This gain spiral not only enhances employees' job satisfaction, but has also been associated with increased job performance (Leana et al. 2009; van Wingerden et al. 2017b). Thus, in addition to professional learning dedicated to teaching staff about job crafting and how such behaviours can be enacted in the workplace, leaders can support staff by providing opportunities for choice, additional skills training, and mentorship.

- f. **Other individual efforts.** At the individual level, awareness of existing levels of wellbeing and specific triggers and support is important for teachers to understand which interventions may be most effective for them. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) designed the JD-R monitor for this purpose. The JD-R monitor is an online instrument that assesses employees' various demands, resources, well-being, and performance and provides immediate feedback to the employee about these outcomes and how their results compare with others in a similar type of organisation. Teachers may use the JD-R monitor to design their own personalised wellbeing plan or alternatively may choose to discuss the results with their supervisor to develop strategies to manage demands and maximise resources. It is worth noting that thus far, the JD-R monitor has only been used in samples of Dutch professionals (Schaufeli and Dijkstra 2010). Further empirical evidence is thus needed to validate the usefulness of this tool among teachers and in other countries. Another way of promoting self-awareness among employees, which may be effective for teachers is designing a personal demands/resources/tasks chart (van den Heuvel et al. 2015). This chart would require teachers to identify the demands and resources most relevant to them (e.g., writing reports, managing student misbehavior), and to reflect on the types of tasks involved with their job. Reflection on this chart helps employees to identify specific situations that they may craft and how to draw on available resources to achieve this goal. From this chart, a plan is established with specific job-crafting goals, and at the conclusion of each working week, teachers can reflect on their goals, and share this information with other staff or a supervisor as appropriate.
- g. **School-wide efforts.** At a school level, interventions described in prior studies provide promising directions for contemporary interventions involving teachers. Van Wingerden et al. (2013), for instance, designed an intervention to increase special education teachers' personal and job resources and stimulate job-crafting behaviours. The intervention consisted of targeted exercises and goal-setting activities, and took place over a four week period. At the conclusion of the intervention, participants' resources, crafting behaviours, work engagement, and job performance were significantly higher compared to pre-intervention scores. To cultivate their resources, participants practised giving and receiving feedback and identifying risk factors and how to manage requests. Such activities may form part of a school-wide intervention program. For example, teachers may focus on giving and receiving feedback on lesson plans, or feedback based on lesson observations. Similarly, teachers may be encouraged to develop their own wellbeing plan, in which they identify the greatest risks to their wellbeing (e.g., student misbehaviour), develop counter-strategies to manage these risks, and consider

the types and nature of requests they may encounter (e.g., a parent requesting extra work for a student) and how they can negotiate the nature of such requests to reduce the toll on wellbeing. The job-crafting intervention described by van Wingerden and colleagues (2017a) may also be beneficial as part of a whole-school wellbeing program. This intervention involved participants defining and categorising the types of job tasks they perform: tasks that require considerable time, tasks that had to be performed often, and tasks that had to be performed sometimes. Participants then labelled tasks in terms of urgency and importance, and matched these tasks to their personal strengths, motivations, and potential risk factors. From this analysis, participants considered ways they could draw on their strengths to increase resources and challenge demands and set goals to engage in crafting behaviour around this area.

**Summary.** JD-R theory provides an overarching framework through which interventions to promote teachers' wellbeing can be designed. Identification of salient resources and demands, and the implementation of strategies to cultivate resources and reduce demands have yielded promising results in teaching populations across a range of contexts. Although there is considerable evidence to support the implementation of JD-R theory-driven interventions as a means to enhance teachers' wellbeing, such programs must be implemented with caution. Participating in such interventions may increase teachers' stress, for example, as such interventions add to teachers' workloads (Van Wingerden et al. 2013). Additionally, some teachers may be resistant to participating in such interventions, given that they are often organised by the same administrators who may be seen as the source of teachers' initial high workloads. Thus, interventions need to be specific to teachers' needs and implemented in a way that allows teachers to see the direct benefits to both themselves and their students. Moreover, it is important to recognise that teachers should not be solely responsible for their wellbeing; instead, schools and educational systems have an important role to play in this process.

## 14.8 Limitations

Although JD-R theory provides a promising avenue for future research, a number of limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, the model proposed by JD-R theory is an open heuristic and highly flexible (Schaufeli and Taris 2014). Although this is also one of the theory's strengths, it also necessitates the use of other theories to explain why particular demands and resources relate to particular outcomes. For instance, the effect of job control on organisational commitment may be explained by autonomous motivation, as posited in Self Determination Theory (Fernet et al. 2012). A further limitation of JD-R theory is the nature of job demands and job resources. Not all job demands may be negative in nature, nor are all resources motivational. For example, while demands such as role conflict and ambiguity may be considered hindrances to teachers, problem-solving may be considered a positive

challenge (Albrecht et al. 2015). Thus, future research needs to acknowledge this distinction and examine the ways different types of demands may relate to burnout, engagement, and occupational outcomes.

## 14.9 Conclusion

Teacher wellbeing is not only an issue of considerable importance for teachers, but also for students, schools, and broader society. This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which organisations and individuals can harness relevant theory to become agents of change in their working context. Job demands-resources (JD-R) theory provides a framework through which teachers and schools can analyse policies and practices, and identify opportunities for growth and sources of potential stress. The flexibility and pragmatism of the JD-R theory, and its applicability for intervention development render it a useful and appropriate tool for both schools and teachers. Moreover, understanding the processes underpinning wellbeing through this framework provides a unique opportunity to empower teachers to gain greater control over their work-related wellbeing.

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# Chapter 15

## Resilience Building for Pre-service Teachers: BRiTE, Micro-Teaching and Augmented Reality/Simulation (BRiTE-AR)



Susan Ledger

**Abstract** Initial teacher education predominately spends time preparing student teachers to plan, teach and assess the cognitive and social development of children within the classroom. Yet, the role of a teacher expands well beyond classroom experiences and at times includes conflict and stressful situations. How do ITE programs cater for these critical learning incidences? Augmented realities such as 'human in the loop' simulation and virtual learning environments provide current ITE programs a solution to this contemporary need and context. This paper is underpinned conceptually by Pedagogies of Practice: representation, decomposition and approximations actualised through new technologies, reflective practice strategies and challenging learning experiences. The interconnectivity between BRiTE modules (*representations*), Microteaching 2.0 (*decomposition*) and Simlab™ experiences (*approximation*) provides a unique approach that supports the development of resilience for our future teacher educators. The findings reveal an increased self-efficacy amongst the cohort and personal confidence in their own resilience capabilities. The reflective practice strategies embedded in the BRiTE-AR pedagogy of practices are offered as a possible solution to ITE educators interested in developing resilience in our future teachers.

### 15.1 Introduction

Resilience is a dynamic, multidimensional construct which develops over time when individuals are faced with adversity and difficult experiences in particular contexts (see Mansfield et al. 2016b; Masten 2014; Ungar 2011). A range of typologies exist that highlight different types of resilience, skills, domains and protective factors including but not limited to: Kenneth Ginsburg's (2011) 7 Cs-control, competence, coping, confidence, connection, character, contribution; Genie Joseph's (2017) 3

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types of resilience—natural, adaptive, restored: and Mansfield et al.'s (2012) dimensions of protective factors—professional, emotional, social and motivational. These typologies position resilience within an environmental context impacted by internal and external factors. Ungar's (2011) social ecological view of resilience outlines the importance of the interactions between personal characteristics and environmental protectors as triggers to help mitigate against stressors and challenges within given contexts. Many psychometric measures exist to assess resilience including the Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA), Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CDRIs) and more recently the Teacher's Resilience Scale (Daniilidou and Platsidou 2018). In the context of the teaching profession, there has been a growing interest in resilience especially for teachers working in particularly challenging circumstances. Studies focused on practicing teachers' commitment, quality and effectiveness have also identified resilience as being a critical capability (Day and Gu 2014). Other studies have shown positive benefits for resilient teachers including teacher satisfaction, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (see Gu and Day 2007; Mansfield et al. 2016a). Many studies have examined the importance of teacher–student relationships and resilience (Spilt et al. 2011), explored the impact on resilience on the teacher profession (Hong 2012) and exposed the protective factors that affect the resilience levels in teachers (e.g. Froehlich-Gildhoff and Roennau-Boese 2012; Mansfield et al. 2012). Limited studies have explored ways that teacher resilience can be promoted through professional learning experience (Mansfield and Beltman 2019). Fewer studies have explored ways to develop resilience within initial teacher education. Although research on resilience continues to increase and provide a broader view and understanding of the need for resilience, the types of resilience, the environment to develop resilience and the skills required for resilience, there is still ambiguity about the definition of the term and how to teach it.

Resilience has been identified as a non-cognitive capability and desirable characteristic for potential teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2015). Yet, how is it defined and how can it be embedded in initial teacher education. Over time, resilience has been used in various disciplines and contexts to describe the adaptive capacities of individuals, communities and societies. More recently it has been conceptualised as positive adaptation after traumatic events (Day and Gu 2014). According to Daniilidou and Platsidou (2018), teachers' resilience refers to 'the extent to which teachers are capable to maintain positive attributes in face of a range of challenges, pressures and demands associated to their work' p. 17. They suggest that various protective and risk factors empower or disable teachers resilient behaviour. But how can we provide challenges, pressures and demands associated with building resilience within initial teacher education programs (ITE)?

This study acknowledges the need to build resilience into ITE programs. It builds on, and combines previous studies that focus on PST resilience, pedagogies of practices and simulation, to offer a unique approach to the development of resilience skills. It provides a scaffolded approach to developing resilience skills, experience and knowledge. Providing time and space for PSTs to be confronted with challenging and demanding incidences is unique in ITE programs. This study offers critical learning incidences and authentic simulated learning experiences as an approach to

develop the resilience and self-efficacy of PSTs for the changing and challenging contexts they face as graduates (Ledger and Fischetti 2020).

In Australia over 80% of teachers have experienced some form of student or parent bullying or harassment (Billet et al. 2019). Moreover, a recent increase in violence against teachers by parents adds to the adversity graduates may encounter. Yet, limited preparation and development of resilience to cater for these adversities are attended to within ITE programs. New technologies such as simulation and online learning modules may offer ITE programs with possible solutions and creative potentialities to address these graduate challenges.

Professions that engage in relational practices face many challenges. The difficult elements of teaching exist in the interactive dimension of practice in terms of relating to students, parents, teaching colleagues and principals (Grossman et al. 2009). This study draws on Grossman et al.'s (2009) pedagogies of practice: representations, decompositions, and approximations, to inform the structure involved in developing resilience in PSTs and utilises traditional practices (Micro-teaching), new technologies (BRiTE+ Augmented Reality) and reflective practice strategies (Critical Learning Incidences + Situation Action Outcome) to actualise practice.

Teaching is a complex practice and instructive failures are integral to the development of teachers (see Grossman et al. 2009). Yet teacher educators have few opportunities to engage in *approximations* of practice compared to other professions (Grossman et al. 2009). Micro-teaching and role-play strategies remain common approximation strategies embedded in ITE programs, PSTs plan, rehearse, revise and retry practice and over time, these processes become routinized (see Ericsson 2002). The combined pedagogies of reflective practice (BRiTE, micro-teaching, simulation) enable decomposition of complex practices and challenging scenarios and replicates these experiences within a controlled AR learning environment. This allows authentic approximations of practice, opportunity for instructive failure and professional feedback to occur.

This chapter explains how and why Murdoch University embeds resilience development within its ITE program. It explores the conceptualisation and conditions of combining a resilience program (BRiTE), a traditional teaching method (Micro-teaching 2.0), and augmented reality (simulation) within a 4 year ITE program and problematises it within a theory of practice and pedagogies of practice paradigm. This chapter notes the need for building resilience in PSTs and offers simulation as a pedagogical solution to address the need.

## 15.2 Teacher Education—Building Resilience of PSTs by Making It Visible, Immersive and Reflective

Pre-service teachers (PSTs) are faced with a range of rapidly changing school environments impacted by politically driven mandates, professional driven standards and community driven expectations. ITE programs remain under constant scrutiny and

criticism which lack evidence or substance (Louden 2008). Over time there has been a corresponding rise in issues relating to principal, teacher and student well-being and resilience (McCallum et al. 2017). Resilience to cope with these ongoing demands and associated changes within the profession is essential for teacher educators and ITE programs. Bahr and Mellor (2016) offer a strident call for

teachers and teacher educators to reclaim their profession and build a future for this nation through the re-conceptualisation of schooling, teachers' work and teacher preparation. It is through action of this kind, not by regulation, that we will build and sustain excellent teacher preparation courses that enable quality teacher graduates who will guarantee that all students have access to meaningful learning experiences for now and in preparation for the future (p. iii).

In response to this call and desire to better prepare PSTs for the changing educational landscape and associated emerging educational ecologies, the professional and personal strength, resilience and courage of our graduates need addressing. Moreover, ongoing concerns about teacher attrition in the first five years, preparing teachers to better manage the challenges of the profession is important (see Weldon 2018). Not attending to this is costly both for a nation's budget and the social and academic outcomes of its citizens (Mason and Poyatos Matas 2015). For PSTs to successfully integrate within the ever-changing and considerably more demanding and diverse cultural contexts of schools they need to exit their programs with a suite of strategies that support resilience and enhance their confidence for managing challenges (see Mansfield et al. 2016b).

The growing need to attend to resilience and well-being of teachers is a global trend. Stress and burnout are psychological phenomena that develop over time within the profession. Teachers in Scotland experience tension between central government, local government and school (Forde and Torrance 2016). The prevalence of burnout in the Netherlands is higher in education than any other sector (Evers et al. 2002). UK stress levels of teachers are highest amongst the professions (Philips and Sen 2011). In Sweden, occupational stressors in combination with other variables account for teacher distress and burnout (López et al. 2008). A study of principals ( $n = 3572$ ) in Australia found reasons for stress and burnout can be linked to lack of social support within the school environment (Beausaert et al. 2016). Riley's (2019) follow up study saw the rise in violence against principals and teachers add further to the volatile mix of stressors within schools. The rising number of students, teachers and principals showing increased levels of anxiety, frustration and stress (Abeles 2015) highlight the important role ITE needs to play to address resilience in PSTs. Particularly with regards to coping with the 'universally stressed' state of schooling systems around the globe.

The rising number of violence and abuse cases against teachers and principals within Australia (Billett et al. 2019) further add to the stressors impacting teacher well-being. Over 560 teachers were surveyed by Billett et al. (2019) in which 1540 incidences of 'teacher targeted bullying and harassment' (TTBH) occurred, 80 percent of teachers had experienced TTBH the previous 12 months and 85.2% of teachers felt there was a problem with parent and student TTBH in Australian schools. By shedding light on teacher's lived experiences the study revealed the

detrimental effect TTBH has on a teacher's self-efficacy and well-being. They even suggest it may contribute to elements of an unsafe work environment. They revealed a paucity of research in the field.

Bahr and Mellor's (2016) recent call for reconceptualising teacher education provides a fertile ground for the creation of new models, theories and practices that focus on the development of our graduates from a 'holistic' perspective. By paying attention to PSTs social and emotional well-being and mental health as well as developing their cognitive knowledge it is hoped that they become better role-models and can manage life challenges with more confidence.

Traditionally, the antecedents for successful PST graduates relate to developing the attributes of high expectation, kindness and care, positive attitude to teaching, and a sense of humour (Bahr and Mellor 2016). Other views of teaching have evolved from teacher characteristics to teachers behaviour, decision-makers and reflective practitioners, and more recently well-being and resilience. Are the antecedents different now that the ecological landscape of schools is changing? Grossman et al. (2009) argue that ITE programs should 'move away from a curriculum focused on what teachers need to know to a curriculum organized around core practices, in which knowledge, skill and professional identity are developed in the process of learning to practice' (p. 274). Furthermore, Wideon et al. (1998) suggests

only when all players and landscapes that comprise the learning-to-teach environment are considered in concert will we gain a full appreciation of the inseparable web of relationships that constitutes the learning-to-teach ecosystem (p. 170)

A possible solution to addressing the interconnectivity of learning to teach approaches is offered by Grossman et al.'s (2009) Pedagogies of practice; *representations* of practice, *decompositions* of practice, and *approximations* of practice.

*Representations* of practice are activities that illustrate one or more facets of practice in particular ways and allow novices to develop images of professional practice and ways of participating in it. *Decompositions* of practice are activities in which teaching is parsed into components that get named and explicated. *Approximations* of practice are activities in which novice teachers engage in experiences akin to real practice that reproduce some of the complexity of teaching (Ghousseini and Herbst 2016 p. 80)

Resources and approaches that address these practices include; BRiTE, Micro-teaching and Simulation. BRiTE, a research-driven online resilience modules ([www.brite.edu.au](http://www.brite.edu.au)) provides PSTs with a wide range of scenarios, authentic images, examples of professional practice and reflective practice tools that build resilience (see Chap. 3). BRiTE offers *representations* of practices for PSTs to view, make-meaning and reflect on their resilience practice. Micro-teaching practices, originating in the 1960s' at Stanford University, allow PSTs opportunity to decode and break the process of teaching into component parts and cycles—lesson plans, delivery, reflection and re-enacting. The micro-teaching approach allows *decomposition* of practice to occur. Simulation offers a virtual learning environment and digital platform that approximates real classroom contexts and challenging scenarios evident in and beyond the classroom. Simulation immerses students into a virtual world where they can practice, make errors and reflect on their practice. It is a tool that

has the affordances of addressing the pedagogies to develop resilience by producing *approximations* of practice. Although in its infancy in ITE programs, virtual worlds combined with authentic scenarios have the potential and capacity to develop PSTs resilience, self-efficacy and performance (Dieker et al. 2014; Ledger et al. 2019).

### **15.3 Building BRiTE-AR Resilience in Teacher Education: BRiTE, Micro-Teaching and Simulation**

In order to be prepared for the ever-changing contexts of schooling, PSTs require attributes and conditions to develop their resilience and self-efficacy. These processes should be transparent and scaffolded. But how do current ITE programs address and develop resilience? Zeichner (1983) suggests that ITE programs are driven by four paradigms: behaviouristic, personalistic, traditional craft and inquiry orientated. A combination of these paradigms could transform current approaches and ‘bring maturity to teacher education, recognising the complexity of the field and resisting the temptation to resort to simplistic competency development approaches’ (see Bahr and Mellor 2016 p. 63). Grossman et al. (2009) argue that teacher educators should attend to clinical aspects of practice and experiment with how best to help novices develop skills by adding pedagogies of enactment to pedagogies of reflection and investigation. They also expressed concern that traditional approaches to teacher education emphasise knowledge and obscured the importance of instructional activities and relational work required in creating classroom community of practices and educational eco-systems.

Murdoch offers a solution to address and better prepare PSTs for the challenges they face as graduates. The BRiTE-AR model combines BRiTE modules (representation of practice), Micro-teaching (decomposition of practice) and AR simulation (approximations of practice). BRiTE-AR is embedded across ITE Bachelor of Education programs. BRiTE-AR addresses common identified graduate needs outlined in research (Bond 1951; Fry 2007; Goodwin 2012) and scaffolds them across the program duration. Four acknowledged areas of graduate need and concern include: effective lesson planning; appropriate feedback and assessment; classroom management; and working with parents/colleagues (Ledger and Fischetti 2020). Captured in the structure of BRiTE-AR are Grossman et al.’s (2009) three pedagogies of practice: representations, decompositions and approximations and Hamerness et al. (2005) proposed goals of teacher learning: A vision of practice, a knowledge of students and content, dispositions for using this knowledge and a repertoire of practices and tools.

Reflective practice strategies are embedded within each of the resources chosen to address the pedagogies of practice: BRiTE (representation of practice) includes a self-reflective resilience tool; micro-teaching (decomposition) requires reflective processes in the plan, teach, assess and replan, reteach cycle. This cyclic diagnostic

process promotes a continuous improvement model; and the augmented reality simulation (approximation of practice) uses video footage of the immersion interaction for in-depth reflective analysis including identification of a critical learning incident (CLI) and a process for attending to it (SAO+). Although these approaches and pedagogies of practice are introduced separately, they combine to form the Murdoch BRiTE-AR model. They are interlinked and underscore the connectivity and cohesion between theory, practice and pedagogical practices.

### ***15.3.1 Components of BRiTE-AR Model: BRiTE, Micro-Teaching, Simulation***

The *BRiTE* resource for teacher educators was developed as a result of an Australian Office of Learning and Teaching Grant (Mansfield et al. 2016a) that builds on a previous project entitled Keeping Cool (Mansfield et al. 2012) (see Chaps. 2 and 3). Informed by an extensive review of literature in the field, the *BRiTE* program consists of five online interactive modules: Building resilience - what it is and why it is important; how to build and maintain Relationships; Well-being self-care, motivation; Taking initiative by building a resilient classroom, reflective practice and ongoing learning; Emotions- awareness, management and optimism. *BRiTE* includes self-reflection quizzes, information about skills and strategies, tips, videos, scenarios where skills can be applied, and a ‘what to say’ section. The online component personalises the experience for the PST by building an individualised toolkit and record of learning that can be downloaded for future reference and reflection.

Micro-teaching originated in the 1960s from Stanford University is described as a ‘scaled down teaching encounter’ (Allen and Eve 1968, p. 181). Although the complexities of the normal teaching encounter was reduced, the level of feedback increased. The process involves a short 5–15 min lesson with a small group of participants and a predetermined outcome that targets improving practice, diagnostic evaluation, experimentation or innovation. The ability to focus on an inordinate amount of elements within a micro-teaching context eliminates the time, cost and unpredictability of real classroom contexts. Over time the participants and the processes have changed. In 1960 participants were small groups of children after school hours and on weekends, but this became problematic due to limited and unreliable access to children. In the 1970s participants were students from within the ITE programs, but inherent problems such as familiarity, diversity and unrealistic encounters occurred. However, peer micro-teaching lesson studies in the UK helped mitigate against these issues (Griffith 2016). Technology has recently allowed ‘observational rooms’ in schools where classrooms have two-way mirrors and small groups or cohorts operate. More recently, technology has afforded significant changes in the use of virtual learning environments. Micro-teaching participants are presented as avatars and PSTs are immersed within a new virtual learning environment. Although

the participants and technologies have changed over the years, the original principals of micro-teaching have not.

*Simlab™* is an augmented reality simulation technology originating from the University of Central Florida's *TeachlivE™* program. It differs from other simulation platforms because it includes a *human in the loop* component (professional improvisation actors skilled in puppetry and sound morphing). This *human in the loop* functionality allows for synchronous responses of the animated avatars within a virtual classroom context. The virtual classroom can be accessed from anywhere, anytime. External students enrolled in ITE programs simply access their computer and activate a Zoom weblink after which the virtual class will appear and interactions begin. Avatars represent classroom students and real-time responses are exchanged between the PST and the avatars, feedback is provided by a clinical practitioner (Ledger and Fischetti 2020). PSTs are able to hone their craft within a controlled, authentic scenario-based virtual classroom where they receive real-time responses and feedback. These transactions are videoed for latter reflective practice tasks and feedback provided of performance by a clinical practitioner.

## 15.4 Methods

This exploratory study is largely a theoretical paper underpinned conceptually by Grossman et al's (2009) *Pedagogies of practice*: representations, decomposition and approximation, supported by new technologies and reflective practice strategies. The study builds on the known benefits of each of the component parts that make up the structure of BRiTE-AR: BRiTE (Mansfield et al. 2016b); Microteaching 2.0 (Ledger and Fischetti 2020), and Simulation (Dieker et al. 2014). Previous findings from each of the component parts, provide evidence of successful approaches implemented within ITE programs and justification as to why this exploratory study was conceptualised. The study highlights the connectivity between the three component parts as reflective practice strategies and technologies. The findings are discussed in terms of three pedagogies of practice (Grossman et al. 2009) and the wider discourse surrounding practice theory or theory of practice (Green 2009; Kemmis 2012) where practice is a social phenomenon, relational and embodied.

### 15.4.1 Site, Participants and Program

ITE four year undergraduate degree and PSTs ( $n = 362$ ). The sequential structure of BRiTE-AR was designed vertically across the years to scaffold the skill and resilience development required of the PST using BRiTE modules aligned to the four areas of graduate need (see Table 15.1). It was also structured sequentially within the individual units so that each component built on the previous and allowed reflective practice thereafter. Micro-teaching elements of plan, teach, assess and

**Table 15.1** Overview of BRiTE-AR: 5 BRiTE modules + Micro-teaching + Simlab = 4 year B.Ed

B. Ed	Graduate need	BRiTE module	Simlab teaching focus	Micro-teaching scenario
On-entry	Disposition		Disposition	Introduce self; engage; teach; reflect
Year 1	Effective lessons	Building resilience By being explicit	Presence and Effective lessons	Formal lesson of choice—elements
Year 2	Effective feedback	Relationships and offering feedback	Assessment and Effective feedback	Feedback on specific English lesson
Year 3	Catering for diversity	Taking initiative and improvising	Diversity Classroom Management	Catering for diversity in Math lesson
Year 4	Working with parents	Emotions when working with others	Responding to Parents and Others	Verbal abuse by irate parent
On-exit	Reflective practice	BRiTE toolkit	Eportfolio videos	

replan, reteach and reassess were inbuilt across all pre-placement units. A clinical practitioner provided external feedback and value-added to the reflective practice loop.

PSTs were already familiar with each of the three approaches—BRiTE (Mansfield et al. 2016b), micro-teaching (Allen and Eve 1968), and simulation (Ledger and Fischetti 2020). They were also well versed in using *Critical learning Incidents* (Tripp 1993) in various formats within their program as a reflective practice tool. BRiTE-AR attempted to combine these elements in a structured and reflective manner.

Critical Learning Incidences (CLI) were considered an appropriate reflective practice tool to connect the three approaches (BRiTE, micro-teaching, simulation). Figure 15.1 outlines how CLI is conducted after each practicum. Students are asked to identify a *situation* encountered within their practicum, the *action* they put in place to address the situation and the *outcome* of their action (SAO). SAO is the reflective strategy that responds to their identified CLI. It is also a strategy used to reflect on their practice when addressing BRiTE online modules, preparing for micro-teaching and simulation experiences and TPA interviews. The identified CLI and subsequent SAO reflective practice strategy provides PSTs an explicit structured approach to be reflective. It also provides valuable insight for academics of the range and scope of CLIs faced by their students. These inform the design of future simulated scenarios, interventions and feedback.

## Reflective practice through Critical Learning Incidents

In the same 2nd year unit, students complete a reflective task drawing on their Professional Experience and the B and R modules. The reflection involves writing a Critical Learning Incident and is scaffolded through the SAO+ framework as below.

<b>End of unit task:</b>  Reflect on your experience, the APST (Graduate level) and the Murdoch Graduate Attributes for this task.  Your final task is to identify a Critical Learning Incident (CLI; Tripp, 2012 <sup>[1]</sup> ), that has been a memorable learning experience for you during this placement. It could be either a positive or negative experience that made you reflect on the situation, action and outcome. It could also have provided an opportunity for you to respond resiliently or use your knowledge about relationships from the BRiTE modules.  Present your CLI in a SAO+ and finish by linking it to an Australian Professional Standard for Teachers (APST).	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><b>S</b></td><td style="padding: 5px;">Situation – what was the situation?</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><b>A</b></td><td style="padding: 5px;">Action – What action was taken?</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><b>O</b></td><td style="padding: 5px;">Outcome – What was the outcome of the action?</td></tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><b>+</b></td><td style="padding: 5px;">Would you change/modify or implement again?</td></tr> </table>	<b>S</b>	Situation – what was the situation?	<b>A</b>	Action – What action was taken?	<b>O</b>	Outcome – What was the outcome of the action?	<b>+</b>	Would you change/modify or implement again?
<b>S</b>	Situation – what was the situation?								
<b>A</b>	Action – What action was taken?								
<b>O</b>	Outcome – What was the outcome of the action?								
<b>+</b>	Would you change/modify or implement again?								

**Fig. 15.1** Critical learning incidences using SAO+, with permissions granted by the Australian government department of education

### 15.4.2 Study Design

The design of the exploratory study aimed to capture and explore elements of BRiTE-AR from a student and academic perspective across the four year Bachelor of Education program using a range of data collection tools and reflective practice strategies. The pilot and exploratory study forms the first iteration of a longer-term research trajectory. It captured responses from the BRiTE modules, pre-post survey and simulation experience to check for suitability of the research design. It also explored and found variables important for analysis. This exploratory stage of a longer-term research trajectory was vital for developing suitable data collecting and analysis tools, identifying appropriate time points and selection of subjects for future implementation. Data from each of these elements were analysed and critiqued to see if each component was fit for purpose, had rigour, validity and transferability.

The first iteration of the exploratory study was conducted within the Bachelor of Education program. Students ( $n = 362$ ) across all four years of the Bachelor ITE program were provided opportunity to opt into the BRiTE-AR study which linked to each of the four simulation touch points (see Table 15.1). Further studies will capture the development of PSTs over a period of time and will allow the cumulative

data sets to provide valuable information about the combined integration of BRiTE, Micro-teaching, and Simulation.

The first pilot of the program was used to trial a range of data collection tools. Participants in this first study completed a BRiTE module specific to their practicum unit, a pre-simulation survey to capture the focus of their micro-teaching session, a simulated experience specific to the needs of that unit, a two week practicum, and reflected on the combination of the three in their CLI (see Table 15.1). Samples of these responses were collected and analysed in terms of their role in linking the core elements of pedagogies of practice. Feedback collected from this range of reflective practice tools including the CLI and SAO+ method. The findings from these were back mapped against the theoretical framework underpinning pedagogies of practice.

### **15.4.3 *Limitations***

This study is primarily theoretical and draws on exploratory data findings and reflective practice strategies. Although each of the three programs has considerable research outcomes and shown their individual benefit within ITE programs, only BRiTE shows direct linkage to developing resilience in PSTs. The limitation in the findings is the lack of ability to dis-aggregate the findings from across all three elements—BRiTE, micro-teaching or simulation or the impact of the reflective practice strategies such as CLI as a pedagogical link between the programs that support transference of knowledge into practice. Therefore, we present the combination of the three programs and reflective practice strategies as being a collective approach to building resilience in PSTs rather than individual elements.

## **15.5 Findings and Discussion**

A wide range of data was collected in the first iteration of the BRiTE-AR study from both students and academics employing the three programs and engaged in the structured reflective practice process. The data provides a snapshot of the resilience and reflective practice skills of the PSTs in terms of themes and issues. The following findings and feedback relate to the first iteration of BRiTE-AR in Semester 1, 2018. The reflective practice sample was collected after each PST undertook one BRiTE module, a micro-teaching process including simulation, and an assigned practicum placement. Reflections are extracted through the eyes of a PST and address issues impacting resilience, relationships, practicum, expectations and reflective practice. The findings and comments outline the interconnectivity of all component parts and are presented below to show the connectivity between programs, pedagogies and reflective practice.

After BRiTE, survey, and practicum experience, students were asked to choose a CLI explain it using the **SAO** method: **S**—Situation. Details for the context of the

experience, including the issues/barriers encountered. **A—Actions.** What did you or the mentor do in response to this situation that demonstrates your ability to be responsive? **O—Outcome.** What was the result that followed from your actions? How will you change it next time?

Using BRiTE-AR allowed me to make the most of my practicum. *Situation:* Over my teaching placement I had 3 different teachers mentoring me over the three weeks due to one of them being sick. I had an overwhelming amount of contradicting feedback for my lessons and teaching styles due to the teachers mentoring me having different styles and methods of teaching. *Action:* I respectfully responded to each of the teachers and didn't raise issue of contradictions. *Outcome:* I took so much information away from the placement and learnt that you just have to take it all in, and then when you become a teacher you can select the strategies, styles and pedagogy that suits you best (Erica 2018).

Erica's reflection was similar to many PSTs. The majority of CLIs identified times of conflict whilst on placement with less than half of the comments referring to relationships with their mentor and the remaining issues related to working with students ( $n = 160$ ). These critical learning incidences typically involved relational issues that required improvised and more often compromised solutions. Comments from PSTs highlighted their sense of powerlessness and need to be resilient within the context of placement. The PST responses also raised issues about the limited acceptance of error or making mistakes whilst on placement within their BRiTE personal plan. Many PSTs revealed that this was a common concern for them ( $n = 289$ ).

### **15.5.1 BRiTE (Representation of Practice)**

The online BRiTE modules and associated reflective practice plans attend to describing resilience and explaining its importance, building and maintaining relationships, self-care, motivation and managing work/life balance, building a resilient classroom, reflection, emotional awareness, management and optimism. The modules contain self-reflection quizzes, information about skills, videos, scenarios where they can be applied, words from the experts, and a toolkit to record their leaning and develop a personal plan. Many students chose to add their CLI to the toolkit and some sought solutions from the BRiTE modules to reflect on their CLIs. Language from the BRiTE modules was found in CLIs and vice versa. One student's CLI used the following quote drawn straight from BRiTE website—*what do the experts say* page,

I think my teacher was distressed because she was irritated, impatient and withdrawn at times. I tried hard to support her but ended up speaking to my colleagues (Jo 2018)

Another showed the link between micro-teaching and BRiTE,

Improved my confidence in presenting lessons as it was the first experience in writing a lesson plan and I was nervous. The micro-lesson and feedback were really useful, my BRiTE focus allowed me to learn from my mistakes without getting too upset (Jill 2018)

BRiTE offers scope for students and academics to map development and identify common areas of PST concern or strength across particular cohorts. BRiTE offers PSTs a wide range of *representations* of the teaching profession that are visual (videos), engaging (interactive responses with feedback, interactive responses based on scenarios), explicit orientations and reflections. BRiTE offers a range of *representations of practice* that comprise teacher resilience, the online resource makes teaching visible to novices (see Grossman et al. 2009).

### **15.5.2 Micro-Teaching (*Decomposition of Practice*)**

Findings related to micro-teaching revealed clarity of the task and a better understanding of the art and science of teaching. Micro-teaching reduces teaching to a range of smaller interconnected sub-skills, knowledges and practices. This *decomposition* of practice enables teaching to be broken down into its constituent components to aid teaching and learning (Grossman et al. 2009). In this case, micro-teaching occurs prior to placement across all four year B. Ed programs. Students plan, teach, assess, replan a 10-min micro-teaching session aligned to the identified area of graduate weakness in that particular year. The micro-teaching session is viewed by a clinical practitioner who provides direct feedback on the micro-teaching performance in negotiation with the PST. Time-management, lesson plans, motivational hooks, engagement with students, lesson sequence and expected learning outcomes are made explicit prior to the micro-teaching session and reviewed after the interaction. Students use the SAO+ as a reflective tool following their Micro-teaching experience.

The findings from PST feedback reveal micro-teaching as a powerful strategy embedded in the ITE program and one that promotes the self-efficacy of PSTs across the identified areas of graduate weaknesses: lesson effectiveness, accepting and giving feedback, classroom management and working with parents/colleagues. PSTs commented on:

- Great to practice behaviour management and time management of lessons (Sally 2018)
- The main benefit was being able to view the video and reflect on my performance, it was invaluable (Alice 2018)
- I thought timing would be easy but I totally over-talked and ran over-time (Ann 2018)
- Feedback straight away was really beneficial (Ben 2018)
- Micro-teaching certainly tells me what I am good and not so good at (Bea 2018)
- Good to learn from mistakes and practice different teaching styles (Mary 2018).

The ability for PSTs to understand the art and science of teaching and break it down to specific and explicit tasks including reflective practice strategies, benefit PSTs. This decomposition of practice allows and embeds reflective practice behaviours for ongoing and continuous improvement.

### 15.5.3 *Simulation (Approximation of Practice)*

Simulation augmented realities afford PSTs *approximation* of classroom practices involving avatars, context-based scenarios, synchronous responses and clinical practice feedback. The feedback from PSTs on their simulation experience revealed common themes: a safe learning environment, opportunity to build confidence in front of class, a place where mistakes were accepted and actions repeated to improve, no impact on others, and use of reflective practice for self-improvement.

- The controlled learning environment mitigates against the variability of mentors and contexts on practicum (clinical practitioner)
- I think it is a great ice breaker and helps to calm you down when teaching. It enabled me to relax in a safe environment. (Bea 2018)
- Nothing beats a real class but the experience helps build confidence in how to speak in front of a class in terms of conversation and questioning. A regular feature would make it even more beneficial. (Tom 2018)
- It is great because if you make mistakes it is not detrimental to a child's education. I think there are challenges in making it less confronting for people like myself who are completely overwhelmed by the experience. (Claire 2018)
- Throwing me in the deep end and putting me outside of my comfort zone was important because it made me learn to cope and build my confidence. (Rich 2018)
- I can't believe how 'real' it felt – I made real connections to the avatars (Aggie 2018)

Comments related to simulation highlight its ability to *approximate* classroom scenarios and contexts and offer PSTs opportunity to make mistakes. Simulation as a pedagogical tool to improve practice was acknowledged by the PSTs who immersed themselves within the AR virtual learning environment. It offers an alternative learning platform to prepare future generation of teachers. Recent studies have found that PSTs exit with increased levels of self-efficacy when engaged in micro-teaching and simulation (Ledger et al. 2019).

The findings and feedback drawn from BRiTE personal plans, reflections on micro-teaching, simulation and critical learning incidents (CLI and SAO+) provided a wealth of useful data for analysis. The personalised BRiTE plans offered scope for students and academics to map development and identify common areas of concern or strength within ITE cohorts. The reflections provided opportunity to highlight connectivity between simulation experience and transferability of skill development into the aligned practicum. The data collection tools within this exploratory phase proved to be useful in gaining insight into the PSTs lived experiences and perspectives of themselves, including their ability to identify and cope with difficult situations. The findings offer scope for future research endeavours and more nuanced attention to how pedagogies of practices combine to impact measurable change in practice.

In addition to confirming the usefulness of the range of research tools within this study, the initial findings from the first iteration provide insight into the structure of the BRiTE-AR program, and the combined benefits of BRiTE, micro-teaching and

simulation. An action learning process will be used to refine future iterations and include the validation of survey tools. Future studies will analyse the actual practices that took place within each of these pedagogies of practice.

## 15.6 Conclusion

This study offers BRiTE-AR: BRiTE resilience modules (see Chap. 3), micro-teaching (Allen and Eve 1968) and simulation (Dieker et al., 2016; Ledger and Fischetti 2020), as a unique combination of approaches that develop the resilience and self-efficacy of PSTs. These elements align to Grossman et al's. (2009) Pedagogies of practices: *representations of practice, decomposition of practice and assimilation of practice*. PSTs learn by doing, and to ‘do’ teaching PSTs currently complete a placement in a range of school contexts under the tutelage of mentors with varying experiences. This variance and diversity of experience impacts the preparation of future teachers particularly if critical or challenging. The combined BRiTE-AR approach prepares PSTs for the ever-changing and demanding roles and responsibilities of teachers by making the art and science of teaching visible and reflective using authentic scenarios, online modules and a controlled virtual learning environment.

Findings highlighted the need for pedagogical practices to be visible, immersive and reflective in order to build a better understanding of resilience or specifically target the attributes required to develop resilience in PSTs. The systematically embedded BRiTE-AR within the B.Ed program addressed identified areas of graduate weakness and proved beneficial for PSTs. Reflective practice strategies underpinning the BRiTE-AR model involved critical learning incidences (Tripp 1993) and critique of these within a process of reviewing situation, action, outcome (SAO+) enhanced and improved practice.

Teaching is a complex profession that requires resilience, reflection and change of practice. The affordances of combining BRiTE, micro-teaching and simulation acknowledges teaching as a social phenomenon, relational and embodied theory of practice. BRiTE-AR offers a structured solution to preparing and developing resilience skills for PSTs that do not naturally develop on their own (see Grossman et al. 2009). It uses representation, decomposition and approximations of practice to make learning visible, immersive and reflective for our future teachers.

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# Chapter 16

## Teachers' Resilience: Conceived, Perceived or Lived-in



Helen J. Boon

**Abstract** Schools in Western countries are places where work-related conditions lead to teacher disaffection and attrition. To mitigate this employers and scholars advocate fostering teacher resilience. This chapter presents a critical examination of teacher resilience. Originally *conceived* as a personal trait, later research showed human resilience is an attribute that can be developed. Resilience is one's ability to manage stressors and maintain adaptive functioning across all domains of life. Latterly, scholars investigated resilience in teachers, mainly through qualitative or quantitative self-report studies. This research constitutes *perceived* teacher resilience, because as formulated, teacher resilience is conceptually flawed, limited in scope, based on teachers' functioning within their professional lives. We do not know what constitutes long-serving teachers' actual, lived-in resilience: what enables teachers to maintain their wellbeing and effectiveness in the classroom, reflecting human resilience as originally conceived. For an accurate profile of teacher resilience we must study those still teaching, and teachers who have exited the profession to determine why they left. Perhaps exiting the profession signals a resilient person who does not accept working conditions that do not support wellbeing or teaching effectiveness. Perhaps 'teacher resilience' is inaccurately used in the context of teacher attrition and disaffection.

**Keywords** Teacher · Resilience · Wellbeing · Effectiveness

### 16.1 Background

There is global concern about teacher attrition, particularly in developed countries. In western OECD countries teacher retention and attrition are in crisis with a mass exodus occurring in most countries (OECD 2019). For example, a recent UK survey of over 4000 teachers documented that 79% of schools reported having difficulties in recruiting staff, with 43% of teachers in their employ planning to leave the

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profession within the next five years (Lightfoot 2016). More recently Australian media reported that 40% of Australian teaching graduates quit within the first five years of entering the profession (Molloy 2019) reflecting a persistent and apparently intractable problem of early career teachers in Australia (Gallant and Riley 2014).

Often cited reasons for wanting to leave teaching are punishing workloads, unsustainable pressure to meet targets, stress associated with excessive bureaucracy, work intensification, as well as issues related to disruptive pupil behaviour (Mansfield et al. 2016). Some of these factors can also lead to an exodus through demoralisation (Santoro 2018). Using stress, lack of wellbeing or other psychological process as reasons for teachers to quit the profession owing to dissatisfaction with working conditions suggests burnout or an inability to cope.

Burnout implies that a person has finite physical and emotional resources, that challenging work conditions consume these resources and that when they are exhausted the individual, the teacher in this case, is no longer able to work effectively. Since burnout is an individual's response, in order to remediate it, a person's capacity to cope and adapt to challenging work needs to be fostered. Thus a call has been made across a number of occupational fields, including teaching, to build employees' resilience (e.g. Blincoe and Grant 2019; Grant and Kinman 2014; Harrington 2018; Mansfield et al. 2018; Beltman et al. 2019; Castro et al. 2010; Gu, and Day 2007). The call essentially means that teachers must become resilient to increase their tolerance for difficult work conditions.

It is no surprise then that teacher resilience evolved as a research focus in the last 15 years in an attempt to understand and mitigate teacher attrition. Countless studies have been published linking self-reported resilience to positive professional outcomes, such as, occupational wellbeing, commitment, efficacy, engagement, motivation, or a positive sense of identity (Bowles and Arnup 2016; Brouskeli et al. 2018; Day and Gu 2014; Day and Hong 2016; Hong 2012; Mansfield et al. 2016; Papatetraianou and Le Cornu 2014).

However, to mitigate teacher attrition through increased teacher resilience as has been advocated it is important to look more critically and holistically at the resilience of those who are teachers. This raises a range of questions for consideration:

- Is teacher resilience as currently conceptualised equated with professional resilience?
- Does having teacher resilience erode a teacher's resilience in other areas of their lives, with attendant alcoholism, sleeplessness and anxiety, but a stalwart maintenance of their teaching duties?
- Can teachers be resilient but not be effective in the classroom?
- Are teachers deemed to be resilient if still teaching but on performance reviews?
- Exactly how do employers characterise resilient teachers?

By reflecting upon the questions above the term teacher resilience might need to be redefined, re-evaluated or re-operationalised.

## 16.2 Chapter Purpose and Organization

To respond to the issues presented in relation to teacher resilience this chapter will outline aspects of resilience currently acknowledged and derived from the body of literature. First, a review of human resilience as originally conceived and defined by scholars is outlined. That is followed by a brief distillation of research findings and conceptualisations of teacher resilience. Then, two case study vignettes are presented to illustrate some of the complexities of teachers' career trajectories, to enable the reader to consider resilience holistically. The final section of the chapter proposes and rationalises the formulation of a theoretical framework to examine and research teacher resilience *in situ*, or lived-in teacher resilience, a more comprehensive representation of teacher resilience.

## 16.3 Conceived, Theoretical Tenets of Resilience

### 16.3.1 Human Resilience

The concept of resilience was originally used in the 1640s, to mean 'springing back'. It had roots in the Latin verb 'resilire', but was not used figuratively about individuals till about 1830. In the twentieth century Werner and Smith (1992) and Rutter (1987) adopted the term to describe their findings in the context of research with children growing up in adverse conditions who demonstrated positive adaptation and coping. Resilience is conceived to be an interactive phenomenon inferred from longitudinal research that indicates that some individuals achieve relatively good outcomes despite having experienced serious and continuous stresses or adversities—their outcomes being better than those of other individuals who suffered the same experiences. Werner and Smith (1992) were pioneers, not only in highlighting the importance of resilience, but also in showing the role of social support. Definitions of resilience are many but they all distil to a similar meaning:

- Resilience is the capacity to maintain competent functioning in the face of major life stressors. (Kaplan et al. 1996, p. 158)
- [Resilience is] the capacity for successful adaptation, positive functioning or competence ... despite high-risk status, chronic stress, or following prolonged or severe trauma. (Egeland et al. 1993).

Resilience is said to be a trait that varies from person to person. The notion of resilience as a trait is based on multiple research explorations which suggest that "Persons who experience high degrees of stress without falling ill have a personality structure differentiating them from persons who become sick under stress" (Kobasa 1979, p. 3). And that resilience stems from "a personality dimension that is believed to confer resistance against the effects of psychological stress" (Contrada 1989, p. 896). Longitudinal developmental studies examining the incidence of disease and

psychopathology in developing children showed that even with prolonged severely negative experiences, there is a huge difference amongst children in their responses (Rutter et al. 1998). These differences were due to a lack of genetic vulnerability; a higher IQ and characteristic temperament and personality features (Rutter et al. 1998). More recently, the Dunedin longitudinal studies (e.g. Caspi et al. 2003, 2004; Evans and Kim 2013) confirmed that resilience is based on genetic factors that are involved in supporting wellbeing and protection against both depression and antisocial behaviour, making resilience a personal trait.

### **16.3.2 Teachers' Resilience**

Human resilience conceptions point to indicators of a person's adaptation to life, which perforce encompasses their work. Therefore conceptions of resilience have been extended to teachers based on the idea that resilience as an individual's trait or attribute may be manifest in teachers who remain in the profession because it is claimed that resilience is vital in dealing with the demands of complex organisations (Athota et al. 2019) such as schools (see also Chap. 2).

The various understandings (or conceptions) of resilience emphasise a return to original functioning after stressors have been applied, or bouncing forward to a new state of optimal functioning in response to a stressor (s). Since resilience is the capacity to cope by overcoming odds, to demonstrate the personal strength needed to withstand hardship or adversity (Bonwell and Ryan 2012), scholars assert resilience must be *developed* to help teachers cope with challenges in their work. This is because in addition to being deemed a personal trait resilience is considered to be “a process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events, in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that results from the event” (Richardson et al. 1990, p. 34). Resilience as a process is corroborated by Luthar et al. (2000) who cite studies which show resilience involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that anyone can learn and develop. These include mental features such as a ‘planning’ tendency, self-reflection to assess what has worked, a sense of agency or determination to deal with challenges and self-confidence in being able to do so successfully (Rutter 2013). Specifically, teacher resilience has been “conceptualised as a capacity, a process and also as an outcome” (Mansfield et al 2016, p. 80). Mansfield et al (2016) elaborate that a resilient teacher can use personal characteristics and contextual elements to support their management of challenges, to develop and achieve professional satisfaction over time coupled with wellbeing.

The development of resilience in teachers is rendered even more important in light of an emerging body of research that links developing resilience capability with increased levels of employees' subjective wellbeing, psychosocial outcomes, job satisfaction and performance (Grant and Burton 2009; Shepherd et al. 2009; Robertson et al. 2015). Based on the notion that resilience can be developed, explorations of teacher resilience have also looked at teacher resilience in relation to

contextual or ecological factors, both positive and negative—school support, family support, behaviour management policies, professional learning, socio-emotional competence and socioeconomic factors of school clientele and so on (Day et al. 2006).

In sum, teacher resilience is conceived as being characterised by job satisfaction, commitment, teaching efficacy, motivation, wellbeing and professional sense of identity (see for example, Day and Gu 2014; Day and Hong 2016; Hong 2012; Mansfield et al. 2016; Papatraianou and Le Cornu 2014). Personal factors thought to be important in developing teaching resilience include: emotional competence (Ee and Chang 2010), empathy (Jennings et al. 2011; Tait 2008), a sense of purpose (Day 2014), optimism (Day 2014; Tait 2008), intrinsic motivation (Kitching et al. 2009), and self-belief (Gu and Day 2007; Le Cornu 2009). At the same time, contextual or ecological influences on teacher adaptation and resilience have been deemed to be school culture (Day 2014; Peters and Pearce 2012), teacher involvement in decision-making processes (Johnson et al. 2014), positive relationships with management (Cameron and Lovett 2014), and supportive, mentoring relationships with colleagues (Brunetti 2006; O'Sullivan 2006). With the caveat that it is not known how each of these characteristics contribute to teacher resilience and by how much.

### ***16.3.3 Perceived Teacher Resilience***

As the name suggests perceived resilience is an evaluation of resilience that is made by teachers' own reflections of aspects of their resilience. Even the most rigorous attempts to determine teacher resilience are merely tapping into perceptions of clusters of factors thought to underpin resilience, determined by self-report. These are either surveys or interviews or, less frequently, reports from others—supervisors or colleagues. Much of the research centred on teacher resilience noted above derives from self-reported teacher perceptions.

That said, they are all subject to confirmation bias and cognitive dissonance (Williams et al. 2016) which are our unrequited mental heuristics employed subconsciously when we are responding to any questions. Self-reported questionnaires are often associated with the possibility of bias (especially recall bias) and thus may provide invalid answers (Demetriou et al. 2015). Another issue, socially desirable responding (SDR) is a serious confounding factor in studies which use self-report questionnaires. Van de Mortel (2008) who examined 14275 health-related surveys found that the tendency for people to present a favourable image of themselves on questionnaires (socially desirable responding (SDR)) contaminated 99% of studies' results. SDR confounds research results by creating false relationships or obscuring relationships between variables. In a study currently conducted by the author, the discrepancy between self-report and observations of behaviour is very strong. The study in question is examining self-reported culturally responsive behaviour management. The research used initial surveys for teachers to self-report the number of times they use certain behaviour management strategies. Subsequently these same teachers

were observed a number of times in situ with their students. Results showed that about a quarter of all teachers underestimated the number of behaviour strategies they used in the surveys, while another quarter, inflated them. Overall then, self-report surveys alone are unlikely to be reliable evidence of teacher resilience.

Despite the recognised limitations of self-report surveys, the vast majority of research around teacher resilience is based on them. Reviews of the literature which have documented large numbers of studies around teacher resilience (e.g. Beltman et al. 2011) show that these studies mostly comprise of survey or small scale qualitative perceptions of resilience; indeed most identified studies also rely on perceptions of resilience (e.g. Ainsworth and Oldfield 2019; Gu and Day 2007; Flores 2018; Hong 2012; Mansfield et al. 2012).

## 16.4 Case Study Vignettes

The vignettes below are derived from an ongoing qualitative research project undertaken in two schools, to explore teachers work and life histories to better understand their resilience. Participants were first identified by their Principals as potential contributors to the project. They were then approached and asked to volunteer in the study. They were informed that the study had been granted ethical clearance by the university. The methods employed in the study were teacher and Principal interviews.

The selected vignettes illustrate differences relating to teacher resilience, disaffection and possibly classroom effectiveness. According to advocates of teacher resilience for mitigating attrition, both teachers would be deemed resilient since they had not left the profession at the time of interview. However, in the professional domain strong disaffection, disengagement and sub-optimal pedagogy are evident in the vignettes. Chris, the Health and Physical Education (HPE) teacher relates strong disaffection with the profession and a desire to leave the Australian education system. Steph the History/Biology teacher's narrative coupled with the Principal's discussion around her performance, suggests disengagement. In relation to other aspects of their lives, neither teacher reported experiences of significant trauma in their upbringing, although each has been through a divorce, a potentially significant stressor, which could have impacted upon their functioning professionally over time, especially in the case of the history/biology teacher.

### 16.4.1 *Chris, 45 Years Old, HPE Teacher and Head of Sport*

Chris has been an HPE teacher for 22 years. He graduated with a Sports Science and Education degree and began his teaching in Queensland State High Schools. He then moved to teach in Catholic Schools where he rose to be Head of Sport in a large K-12 Catholic School. His passion for healthy living and sport has never abated and he

has always connected very well with his students. In fact, according to his Principal, his students speak very highly of him and observations of his classes show a positive classroom climate.

Raised in a middle-class family with one other sibling, Chris attended a prestigious boarding school in a metropolitan city. His family was united with close connections to each other and their very large extended family. Chris was married and had two sons, but that marriage dissolved. Over time, Chris developed a strong spiritual focus which has led him to travel to developing countries to volunteer as a teacher for short stints. His travel overseas and his experiences in Australia have recently led him to want to leave the teaching profession. His stated explanation for this is that he does not feel he is making a difference to his students in Australia. Because, he stated, students are not motivated, the work is intensified and he is under supported in the inclusive classes he has to teach. He feels that the students are not learning because his time is by necessity focused on the needs of the handful of students with disabilities in his class. As a result, he believes that all his students are underserved. The work intensification in relation to the new external exam system that Queensland is transitioning to, the administration load that teachers have to shoulder in relation to legislated requirements also take away from what Chris calls quality teaching. He also relayed that in the developing countries where he has volunteered, Cambodia, India and Thailand, teachers are paid a very small salary but have very high societal respect, while the converse he believes to be true in Australia. Teachers are highly paid in Australia but not valued by society. All these factors have influenced his decision to leave the profession in Australia and seek meaningful teaching employment overseas.

#### ***16.4.2 Steph: 45 Years Old, Secondary History and Biology Teacher***

Steph reported having experienced a happy childhood in a close nuclear family with two other sisters. She has been married twice and has three daughters from her current second marriage. She has maintained a continuous teaching career from the time she graduated with a B. Ed. degree. Her teaching has centred in state secondary schools, in regional Queensland. However, due to some interpersonal professional and personal issues, she has been relocated several times within the State Department of Education. Most recently, she has taken a post as science coordinator in a faith-based school serving K-12 students. She has never had classroom or behaviour management problems as in her own words, she is a strong disciplinarian, and she professes a strong Christian faith. Steph has not considered leaving the teaching profession at any stage of her career.

According to her Principal, observations of her teaching show that her classes are quiet and the students are generally task-focused. Steph's primary pedagogical approach involves written work based on a textbook chapter or worksheet for students to read and answer questions while she observes the class from her seat at the front

of the class. Little actual interaction or questioning takes place with the students; student results are generally mediocre.

## 16.5 Lived-in Teacher Resilience

Resilience as applied to those working in the teaching profession is complex, especially when proposed as a means of addressing teacher attrition and disaffection. The vignettes above illustrate this point. Recall that scholars characterised resilience by an individual's capacity to cope and adapt well across all areas of their lives both professional and personal. And teacher resilience was proposed by Mansfield et al (2016) to be "...a capacity, a process and also an outcome" (p. 80). Whether the vignettes indicate resilience, teaching resilience or overall resilience, is too difficult to determine accurately based on such limited data. But the vignettes certainly give rise to an imperative to further research the questions posed earlier around teacher resilience.

The imperative to examine teacher resilience more rigorously rests on findings which highlight the alarming trend of disaffection and attrition in the teaching profession: high rates of burnout, psychological distress and physical health problems (e.g. De Heus and Diekstra 1999; Kovess-Masfétty et al. 2006; Pretsch et al. 2012), suicide contemplation (Pietrzak et al. 2011) and anxiety disorders (Pollack et al. 2004). That imperative also stems from research that shows teacher resilience affects a teacher's students through their classroom effectiveness (e.g. Day et al. 2006; Gu and Day 2007). This is because research shows resilience supports teacher wellbeing which is associated with teacher effectiveness via students' increased wellbeing and decreased levels of mental health issues, such as depression.

For example, in a cross-sectional study of over 3000 Grade 8 students and over 1100 teachers examining teacher and student mental health outcomes, and the links between them, associations were found between teacher wellbeing and student wellbeing and psychological distress (Harding et al. 2019). Associations between teacher depression and student wellbeing have also been identified (Harding et al. 2019). Earlier research linked lower levels of teacher wellbeing with teachers' poorer longer-term mental health (Melchior et al. 2007). Indeed, poor wellbeing and depressive symptoms have been associated with teachers' self-rated underperformance while at work (Kidger et al. 2016). This underperformance can impact on student outcomes and their mental health through teachers' reduced ability to develop a supportive classroom environment and to manage classrooms effectively (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). Teachers experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing may also find it difficult to develop good quality relationships with students (Kidger et al. 2016; Jennings and Greenberg 2009). Unsurprisingly, low levels of teacher wellbeing can lead to higher rates of teacher absences, which in turn impact student outcomes and supportive teacher-student relationships (Jamal et al. 2013).

Motivated and enthusiastic teachers have long been considered to be vital for the provision of quality education (Keller et al. 2016); this requires that they have a

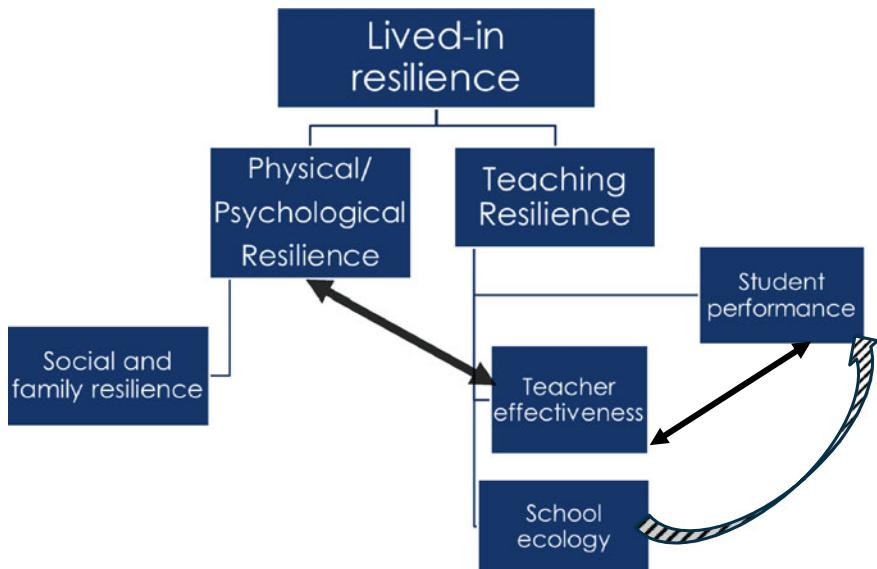
sense of wellbeing (Wessels and Wood 2019). Increased teacher wellbeing has dual benefits. First, it can positively impact teacher effectiveness and satisfaction (Luthans et al. 2008). Second, it can permeate to learners, leading to more satisfaction, which impacts upon academic results (Hansen et al. 2015).

It is important therefore to use better, more robust, indicators than self-reported perceptions to assess teachers' resilience and experience of physical and psychological wellbeing. To date none of the studies identified around teacher resilience have examined resilience holistically in Australian teachers who are effective in their work and who exhibit high levels of wellbeing and resilience to stressors. By holistically measuring resilience, the lived-in resilience of teachers is assessed. Lived-in resilience in teachers is conceptualised as demonstrating teaching effectiveness and physical and mental wellbeing as measured and indicated by the absence of physiological markers and psychopathology. A state of physical and mental health in the absence of medications, characterised by a lack of unexplained absenteeism from work and paucity of doctor's/counsellors visits. In other words, positive adaptation, coping and the ability to function effectively across all domains of life. Moreover, a resilient teacher should demonstrate adaptive functioning by meeting their professional obligations: demonstrating appropriate pedagogies and classroom management practices to support their students learning.

No research has been identified that has employed a multimethod design, including comprehensive information regarding teachers' beliefs and experiences, biomarkers, that is, rigorous psychological and physiological measures, teaching effectiveness measures using students' academic progress, as well as historical/longitudinal evaluations of teacher performance by school administrators. Such research would lead to a more accurate understanding of the lived-in resilience and experiences of those teachers who are committed to teaching, who flourish in the profession and provide quality education for their students.

The lived-in resilience framework proposed below is a more accurate way to measure resilience as it was originally conceived and validated by a range of longitudinal studies (e.g. Rutter 1987; Werner and Smith 1992). It measures functioning across professional (e.g. teaching) and personal (physical, psychological, social and family) domains of a person's life, by accounting for all factors that impact upon a person's wellbeing and adaptive functioning. Recall that to be deemed resilient an individual must demonstrate positive adaptation and functioning despite prolonged exposure to stressors/disadvantage (e.g. Egeland et al. 1993; Kaplan et al. 1996; Rutter et al. 1998). The framework takes into account the contextual social factors and support that impact upon an individual, which have been found to be determinants of the development of resilience (Werner and Smith 1992). The conceptual framework that comprises the above considerations is shown in Fig. 16.1.

It is proposed that measures of lived-in resilience in those who have remained in the profession for a substantial time will provide a better lens to examine teachers' adaptive functioning to help address disaffection and attrition. Figure 16.1 shows that lived-in resilience is the result of high measures of physical/psychological resilience and teaching resilience. The teaching resilience branch can be assessed using measures documented by, (see for example Mansfield et al., 2016), e.g. job



**Fig. 16.1** Lived-in resilience framework. Pathways and feedback loops from a range of factors contribute to the experience of lived-in resilience

satisfaction, commitment, teaching efficacy, motivation *and* through teacher effectiveness measures. These can be assessed through proxies such as student performance outcomes, student behaviour incidents, classroom climate, student motivational profiles. The school ecology or climate will impact on student performance outcomes through policies and procedures that are in place. School climate will also affect teacher resilience measures and so these factors also need to be accounted for.

Psychological/physical resilience has a long history, providing many instruments and means for assessment (e.g. medical histories, psychological resilience and distress instruments), including the more recently developed hair cortisol level tests to objectively measure stress. Since social, family and contextual ecological factors impact upon individuals resilience these must be assessed in the context of physical/psychological resilience. Critically, as shown in Fig. 16.1 teacher effectiveness has a bidirectional influence on psychological/physical resilience.

## 16.6 Implications and Future Directions

Research shows that there are complex links between psychological/physical resilience and teaching resilience. In turn, these links are likely influenced by contextual school factors and also impact upon student outcomes via a range of pathways not at present delineated. There appears to be a link between teacher self-reported

resilience and wellbeing and teacher effectiveness. However, the empirical source of this link is not sufficiently robust as it is based on self-report measures.

The contention that by raising resilience teacher attrition will be stemmed is one that does not fit well with the lived-in framework of resilience, as we do not have robust empirical data to support it. As illustrated by the case study vignettes, dedicated teachers leave the profession not only because they are burnt out, but for a range of reasons, including demoralisation. Or they might remain in the profession but be effectively disengaged and not catering well for their students' needs. Demoralised teachers, Santoro (2018) contends, abandon teaching because they feel unable to meet the professional expectations they impose on themselves. Demoralisation occurs when teachers know exactly what their professional values require of them but they cannot do what they believe needs to be done (p. 48). And if demoralization is due to institutional demands, then possible solutions are changing policies, practice or leadership context, or, quitting teaching altogether. Recent social media comments also decry the idea of building resilience. Specifically Twitter, documents a range of remarks by academics fed up with resilience being touted as a panacea for work difficulties. For example, "I was told to get resilience training as a response to raising ongoing concerns about problematic workplace issues. Now, I'd like to build a professional development workshop: 'F\*ck Resilience: How to know your rights in the workplace and effectively advocate for them'. Any takers?" (Mercer-Mapstone 9:13 AM Nov 14 2019 · Twitter Web App).

At present, we do not know what constitutes teachers' *lived-in* resilience. In future research we need to examine the actual, lived-in resilience of those teachers who, having remained in the profession for many years, continue to maintain stress-free mental and physical health, while performing their professional duties with zeal and excellence. In addition, and perhaps more critically, we need to study individuals who have exited the profession to determine why they left. Was it because of low resilience, as reflected by mental and physical health attributes, or because they were resistant and resilient to impositions of an external set of factors underpinning a system that they wanted to change?

Are we making the mistake of equating teacher resilience, as currently described, with acceptance of conditions in a system that must change? Perhaps exiting the profession signals a strong, healthy, resilient person who refuses to succumb to unacceptable demands of a system which does not lead to personal wellbeing or teaching effectiveness.

The foregoing leads to another possibility: is teacher resilience as currently required by employers a teacher's adaptation to professional demands and therefore better reframed and termed professional resilience? If this is the case, to appropriately use the term resilient, policy must stipulate a set of professional conditions that must be managed, along with a scale of their degree of possible challenge. In other words they must set a level of acceptable 'risk' to the teacher. Acceptable risk levels would have to be overcome over a certain period of time for a teacher to be deemed resilient. But herein lies the problem: are education organisations and education policy able to stipulate challenges and risks to be overcome, and assign a measure or level of particular challenges that teachers must be resilient to? And the period of

time that these challenges must be successfully managed? The overwhelming exodus from the profession suggests that policymakers are not observing closely teachers' disaffection and adjusting professional expectations for teachers accordingly.

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## Chapter 17

# Navigating Changing Times: Exploring Teacher Educator Experiences of Resilience



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Caroline F. Mansfield, and Denise Beutel

**Abstract** While there exists notable research in Australia and internationally on the ways pre-service and early career teachers develop and maintain resilience, there is a paucity of literature examining the resilience of teacher educators. The teacher education landscape has a dynamic nature, and in the Australian context, there have been multiple changes to policy and accreditation that have impacted on the work of teacher educators, including: the introduction of literacy and numeracy testing and a teaching performance assessment for teacher education students; and strict regulatory controls for providers. This context, combined with the intensification of academic work in higher education settings, has led us to investigate the personal and contextual factors that enable or constrain teacher educators' resilience. In this chapter, we draw on a social ecological model of resilience to explore the factors that sustain and challenge teacher educators in their work, and use the findings to highlight implications for the field of teacher education.

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## 17.1 Introduction

As academics in higher education contexts, teacher educators face multiple demands and an increasingly complex work environment. Neoliberal ideologies continue to dominate education policies and practices in many countries across the globe, including Australia. From a neoliberal perspective, teacher education is being held accountable for boosting the quality of teachers which, in turn, it is argued, will result in the prosperity of individuals as well as the long-term overall economic health of the nation (Cochran-Smith et al. 2018). As teachers are the “key performants who educate the nation’s workforce” (Ro 2018, p. 51), there are intense demands on teacher educators to produce high performing teachers capable of improving student outcomes. The initial teacher education landscape in Australia has also been subject to a raft of additional changes in response to policy reviews focused on improving the quality of teaching graduates (Mansfield et al. 2018). Policy changes including the introduction of additional requirements for graduating teachers in the form of a mandatory Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE) and the introduction of a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), as well as the establishment of minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores for entry to teacher education programmes, are intended to ensure the quality of teachers entering the profession (Knipe and Fitzgerald 2017). The pressures resulting from neoliberal agendas and these mandated changes have resulted in an intensification of work practices for teacher educators. However, while teacher education appears to be highly scrutinised, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding about the work of teacher educators (Brennan and Zippin 2016), and particularly, of their experiences of resilience.

There exists a significant body of literature examining teacher resilience (see Chap. 2), with this literature also identifying a strong connection between teacher resilience and young peoples’ resilience (Howard and Johnson 2004). In their work, teacher educators play an important role in promoting resilience among pre-service teachers (Mansfield et al. 2018; Mansfield et al. 2016a; Mansfield et al. 2016b), yet despite this there is a paucity of literature that explores teacher educator resilience. In this chapter, we explore teacher educators’ experiences of resilience and examine the enabling and constraining factors that mediate teacher educators’ capacity to thrive in contemporary academic contexts.

## 17.2 Literature Review

### 17.2.1 *The Higher Education Context*

The massification and corporatisation of higher education have led to an upsurge in quality assurance and performance measures, greater competition between universities as well as increased student-staff ratios (Helker et al. 2018). The growing intensification of the work of academics in higher education contexts (McNaughton and Billot 2016), has been linked to academics experiencing: a lack of time and increased workload; work-life balance difficulties; university funding cuts; and reduced job security. In an increasingly marketised sector Pitt and Mewburn (2016) argue that academics are positioned as “super-hero[s]” (p. 99) who must conform to university priorities, create excellent teaching and learning environments, and publish prolifically. The intensification of academic work has been accompanied by an increasing audit culture, with Lynch (2010) arguing that “when externally controlled performance indicators are the constant point of reference for one’s work, regardless of how meaningless they might be, this leads to feelings of personal inauthenticity” (p. 55). Billot (2010) argues that academics are constrained by institutional goals that “clash with values held by academics”, who focus on “student learning rather than student numbers” (p. 710).

This disconnect, alongside what Pereira (2016) describes as the “extensification and elasticisation of academic labour” (p. 104), is contributing to academic staff in higher education contexts struggling to manage workloads, mediate university demands and to “maintain their physical and psychological health and emotional wellbeing” (Pereira 2016 p. 100). Reports of high stress and burnout of academic staff in higher education settings are becoming increasingly common (Helker et al. 2018). In this context of intensified work, many universities have introduced health and wellbeing programmes, with a focus on the development of resilience. Gill and Donaghue (2016) argue that such resilience programmes in universities are problematic as, “these interventions systematically reframe academics’ experiences as problems of a psychological nature – a deficient in resilience quotient –rather than structural consequences of a system placing intolerable demands upon its staff” (p. 97). They argue that, within contemporary universities, resilience programmes become technologies of performativity where the individual is seen as responsible for their own destiny, and for their own success, or failure, at negotiating their intensified workload. It is within these intensified higher education landscapes that teacher educators operate, and as such, it is worth considering their experiences of resilience in these contexts.

### **17.2.2 Teacher Educators' Work**

As a field of study, Tuinamuana (2016) argues that teacher education lives “on the shifting, intangible border of academia and the professions. As it tries to respond to multiple practice-based and conceptual demands, it is at once criticized and applauded, derided and admired, disparaged and exalted” (p. 334), and by extension, so too are teacher educators. Ellis et al. (2012) argue that teacher educators constitute a distinctive population of academic worker. In an analysis of position descriptions and job advertisements for teacher educators, Tuinamuana (2016) identified that teacher educators are positioned as “super-beings”, who are “bright and glossy, able to do all things, and be all things to all people” (p. 338). For teacher educators, all people include the multiple stakeholders with whom they work—students, university colleagues, school-based colleagues, education departments, government and regulatory authorities.

The dynamic nature of the initial teacher education landscape also contributes to the complex, multifaceted nature of teacher educators’ work with Brennan and Zippin (2016) arguing that the work of teacher educators is hidden and not well understood. Ellis et al. (2014) provides insight into the nature of teacher educators’ work and examines the ways that teacher educators are impacted by the increasingly audit based culture of performance in universities. They contend that many teacher educators struggle to meet the benchmarks for research activity and are “particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of such audits” (Ellis et al. 2014, p. 35). In examining the nature of their work, Ellis et al. (2014) identified that the job dimension that comprised the bulk of teacher educators’ work was that of “relationship maintenance”, which they described as an activity aimed at “maintaining relationships with students, colleagues in schools and at the university” (p. 38). They identified the cultural and systemic forces that position teacher educators as a category of academic worker who is required to carry out this relationship maintenance work, alongside all the other functions of academic work, but who are not given the material support to do so. As the research evidence suggests that the demands being placed on teacher education academics have changed over time, we are interested in how such changes could impact on the effectiveness, satisfaction and resilience of teacher educators, and subsequently, how this might influence preservice teacher preparation. Ellis et al. (2014) identified that teacher educators described the rewards in their work as coming from “the personal and ‘socially transformative’ nature of their teaching” (p. 39), particularly in relation to the success of students in becoming teachers. In our own work we seek to provide a platform for considering the challenges/constraints and the sustaining/enabling elements associated with teacher educators’ work, and apply a resilience lens to explore the experiences of teacher educators.

### 17.3 Conceptual Framework

While there is contention in the literature about the nature of resilience (Baggio et al. 2015; Hazel 2018; Pooley and Cohen 2010), in this chapter, we conceptualise resilience from a social ecological perspective that moves beyond a focus solely on the individual. As Gill and Donaghue (2016) identify, approaches that focus solely on the individual do not take into account the systemic and social forces that impact upon individuals and their ability to be resilient in context. We have drawn from the work of Ungar (2012) who argues that “to understand resilience we must explore the context in which the individual experiences adversity, making resilience first a quality of the broader social and physical ecology and second a quality of the individual” (p. 27). The focus on the interaction between the context and the individual in social ecological models, highlights “the socially constructed nature of resilience and view[s] resilience as the harnessing of personal and contextual resources” (Papatraianou et al. 2018, p. 894). We acknowledge that the interaction between the capacity of the individual and the quality of the broader social and physical ecology in which they are situated is reciprocal, that is, the capacity of individuals to work and teach to their best *influences* and *is influenced* by their professional contexts (Gu 2018). In adopting a social ecological model and a strengths-based approach to resilience there is a focus on how individuals and groups can successfully adapt and overcome trying circumstances (Papatraianou 2012).

We use a social ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner 2005) to identify the personal and contextual factors that support resilience, and those which are challenging or constraining (Mansfield et al. 2014). Resilience, from a social ecological perspective, is based on the premise that a person’s resilience is influenced by their own personal factors, such as their biological and psychological makeup, and the interactions with the social contexts in which the person operates. Bronfenbrenner (2005) structures the social contexts into five interacting and overlapping systems: the microsystem; mesosystem; exosystem; macrosystem and chronosystem. Direct interactions between person and environment constitute the microsystem. In the context of our study, these interactions include teacher educators’ relationships with colleagues and with preservice teachers. The mesosystem comprises interactions and interrelations between two or more microsystems in which the person actively participates. In effect, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner 1981). For teacher educators, these interactions include relationships with colleagues in relation to workplace culture. Settings that do not directly involve the person as an active participant but impact on the person form the exosystem. These may include broader social and organisational structures that affect teacher educators such as accountability and reporting. The macrosystem includes broader sociocultural contexts that influence teacher educators such as values and attitudes of staff and funding/economic factors while the chronosystem represents changes over time, such as the intensification of workload and organisational restructure. This framework offers avenues through which to examine the varying levels and types of “enabling and sustaining” factors

that support teacher educators to thrive in academia, as well as the “constraining and challenging” factors that limit their effectiveness and satisfaction.

## 17.4 Methodology

This project reports on a questionnaire that was used to identify constraining and enabling factors associated with teacher educator resilience.

### 17.4.1 *Recruitment of Participants*

Invitations to participate in the project were disseminated via email through the following channels: Schools of Education in Australian universities; the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and the Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA). Ethics approval for the study was granted by Charles Darwin University and all participants were volunteers. All names and other specific identifiers have been changed to protect the participants’ anonymity.

### 17.4.2 *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire invited teacher educators to reflect on their work and to respond to two prompts: “*I feel sustained when*”; and “*I feel challenged when*”. Participants were invited to share five statements in response to each prompt. They were also invited to share a “*situation that has stayed with you*” either challenging or sustaining, the outcome, and the resources and strategies that they drew upon in the situation. The two questionnaire prompts were adapted from the Teachers’ Ten Statements Test (TST) that has been used to investigate pre-service teacher motivation across cultures (Klassen et al. 2011). Klassen et al. (2011) argue that as a structured qualitative measure the TST enables the elicitation of responses that are “not guided by the researcher’s assumptions in the data-gathering phase” (p. 583). By providing two structured prompts, we were not seeking to foreshadow or assume the factors that might prove to be sustaining or challenging for teacher educators, but rather to use the data to identify those factors as expressed by the participants. A total of 94 teacher educators responded to the questionnaire.

### **17.4.3 Analysis**

Initially, each of the five members of the research team analysed the data sets independently and employed an inductive approach that enabled the identification of initial codes and patterns within the data set (Patton 2002). Following the individual coding, the team then compared coding and worked to reach consensus on each of the codes. Using a social ecological lens for examining what sustains or challenges teacher educators, we collectively coded the data into personal factors (e.g. motivation, emotional competence, use of coping strategies such as problem-solving) and contextual factors (relationships, culture, workload). After identifying the personal and contextual codes, we then engaged collaboratively in a further phase of coding where we categorized these codes into sub-themes. For example, in personal factors, the codes of achieving goals, agency, control, encouraged, purpose and visible outcomes, were categorized under the sub-theme of “goal setting and achievement”. In establishing these sub-themes of categories, we then applied social ecological theory to the constraints and sustaining factors in terms of: the Individual and Personal factors related to the Microsystem and Mesosystem; the Contextual factors related to the Microsystem, Mesosystem and Exosystem; and the Contextual factors related to the Macrosystem and Chronosystem. In our presentation of the findings, we use n values to indicate the total number of participants from the sample who identified those factors in their response, along with illustrative quotes. In the following section, we examine the factors identified as constraining/challenging or sustaining/enabling teacher educators in their work.

## **17.5 Results**

Our analysis of the data enabled us to identify the constraining/challenging and supportive/enabling factors that mediate teacher educators’ experiences of resilience. Table 17.1 provides an overview of the levels of the social ecological framework, with the constraining/challenging and enabling/supportive factors. The number of responses from participants is shown in the table as n values. The enabling and supporting factors appear first in the table, followed by the constraining/challenging factors.

### **17.5.1 *What Constraints and Challenges Teacher Educators?***

In our analysis of the data we identified a number of factors that constrain and challenge teacher educators with the greatest level of challenge for teacher educators associated with contextual factors, particularly those at the meso, exo, macro and chronosystem levels.

**Table 17.1** Individual and systemic factors constraining and enabling teacher educator resilience

	Individual and personal factors (Microsystems and Mesosystems)	Contextual factors (Microsystems, Mesosystems and Exosystems)	Contextual factors (Macrosystems and Chronosystems)
Enabling/supporting factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of recognition and feeling valued (<math>n = 68</math>)</li> <li>• Maintaining a work–life balance (<math>n = 31</math>)</li> <li>• Goal setting and achievements (<math>n = 27</math>)</li> <li>• Engaging in research and professional learning (<math>n = 24</math>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging with students (<math>n = 76</math>)</li> <li>• Relationships with colleagues (<math>n = 70</math>)</li> <li>• Negotiated and manageable workload (<math>n = 21</math>)</li> <li>• Receiving positive feedback (<math>n = 13</math>)</li> </ul>	
Constraining/challenging factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of feeling undervalued and unacknowledged (<math>n = 27</math>)</li> <li>• Maintaining a work–life balance (<math>n = 20</math>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensification of workload (<math>n = 94</math>)</li> <li>• Engaging with students (<math>n = 55</math>)</li> <li>• Relationships with colleagues and workplace culture (<math>n = 70</math>)</li> <li>• Contending with leadership (<math>n = 40</math>)</li> <li>• Negotiating university structures (<math>n = 19</math>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability, compliance and change (<math>n = 20</math>)</li> <li>• National constraints and neoliberalist agendas (<math>n = 12</math>)</li> </ul>

As demonstrated in Table 17.1, there were two personal or individual challenges/constraining factors identified at the micro and mesosystem, including a sense of feeling undervalued or unacknowledged ( $n = 27$ ), with one teacher educator expressing the perception that they feel challenged when “my expertise is not acknowledged”. Similarly, another described that “my work goes unappreciated”, while another expressed that “my work/innovations/ideas are not acknowledged by my supervisors or higher”. Having the ability to maintain a sustainable work–life balance ( $n = 20$ ) was another personal challenge, with one participant describing that “work invades my home life and affects my relationships”.

In the layers of the micro, meso and exosystem, five contextual factors were identified as constraining teacher educators: intensification of workload; engaging with students; relationships with colleagues and workplace culture; contending with leadership; and, negotiating university structures. The intensification of the workload of

teacher educators was identified as challenging by all 94 participants. This intensification of workload was associated with time pressures, increased demands and administrative requirements, and inequitable workload allocations and calculations, with one teacher educator expressing that “my workload increases every year”. One participant described the intensification of workload as something that had stayed with them describing:

With the current agenda of reform and intensification of the work, the gap between what was previously possible and realistic has opened up as a chasm. Hearing advice and strategies from our leadership team around how to manage these competing demands and realising that they are about a decade out of touch with the current demands has really helped me get a fix on my own expectations of myself. I now acknowledge that the problem is not that I do not have the skill set to do the work - but that the workload and available resources to get the work done are no longer realistic or available.

Relationships and contending with leadership were identified as a key contextual challenge ( $n = 40$ ) with teacher educators describing a lack of vision and communication from leaders, along with a perception of poor decision-making processes from leaders, with one teacher educator noting that “leadership ignore advice and evidence from the field”. There was a concern from some participants that some leaders did not adequately understand the field of teacher education, with one saying, “Senior leaders do not understand initial teacher education work”, while another expressed concern that leaders did not consult, saying “leadership do not include staff in decision making that affects them”.

Relationships with colleagues and broader workplace culture were another key contextual factor that was challenging/constraining for teacher educators ( $n = 70$ ), with participants describing a lack of communication, limited opportunities for interaction and feelings of isolation. A perception of low morale and conflict between colleagues was also identified as a challenge, with participants describing workplace cultures where “certain colleagues engage in continuous workplace bullying and gossip”.

Within the microsystem, engaging with students ( $n = 55$ ) was identified as a key contextual challenge, with participants describing low engagement and low attendance from students as something that constrained their work. One participant described the challenge of classes with “too many students”, while another found it challenging that “students are disinterested and disengaged”.

Negotiating university structures ( $n = 19$ ), with continued restructures without consultation impacting on teacher educators, was also identified as a constraining and challenging factor. Teacher educators described a lack of consultation during restructure processes, with one reflecting:

Yesterday, sweeping job cuts at my institution were announced in forums that were held in three areas of the institution ... One of my colleagues ... stood up to speak on our collective behalf, concerning the deeper, social implications of these moves (which intend to transform our research-active School of Education into a ‘teaching only’ teacher training site). Several times, university management tried to silence him. But, he continued to speak. When he was finished, I clapped loudly and continued to do so until a critical mass of people, all affected by these job cuts, were also enthusiastically giving applause. This was a pivotal moment for

me as a teacher educator. None of our universities are immune from the spread of aggressive managerialism ... We must think seriously (and collaboratively) about what our work as teacher educators really means.

At the macro and chronosystem level, participants identified challenges associated with increased accountability and compliance demands, both from external stakeholders, and from universities as institutions driven by neoliberal agendas. While change is a constant in teacher education contexts, it was the pace of change and processes of change management that was identified as a key challenge, with one teacher educator describing that “Things are rushed at a national level prior to semester and not thought through”.

### **17.5.2 *What Sustains Teacher Educators?***

Along with the factors that challenge teacher educators, analysis of the data identified a number of factors that sustain teacher educators in their work. As illustrated in Table 17.1 both personal and contextual factors were identified as supporting teacher educators at the micro, meso and exosystem level. No contextual factors at the macro or exosystem level were reported by participants as sustaining or enabling.

Four supportive and enabling individual and personal factors were identified at the micro and mesosystem level: a sense of recognition and feeling valued; maintaining a work–life balance; goal setting and achievement; and engaging in research and professional learning. In contrast to the challenge of feeling underappreciated, one of the personal factors that sustained teacher educators was having a sense of recognition and feeling valued ( $n = 68$ ). This recognition and sense of appreciation was identified as coming from leadership, students and the broader university, with one participant describing a sustaining connection coming from being “included and valued”. The ability to maintain a work–life balance ( $n = 31$ ) was another sustaining/enabling factor, with this balance including the ability to maintain adequate levels of sleep, rest, health and exercise, with one participant describing that they feel sustained when “my health and wellbeing are good”.

Goal setting and achievement ( $n = 27$ ) was identified as a sustaining factor, that included the ability to set and achieve goals, have agency and control over work, to feel encouraged and have a purpose and visible outcomes. Having the time to engage in research and professional learning ( $n = 24$ ) was also identified as a sustaining factor for teacher educators, that contributed to a sense of purpose. One participant described that they feel sustained when “I am able to use the research to inform changes and effect change—in my own teaching and in the profession more broadly”.

At the micro, meso and ecosystem levels, four factors were identified as sustaining for teacher educators: engaging with students; relationships with colleagues; a negotiated and manageable workload; and receiving positive feedback. Relationships with colleagues ( $n = 70$ ) were a central sustaining factor, and were characterised by collaboration, collegiality, support, the ability to engage with critical friends and

a valuing of productive relationships. Participants described feeling sustained when “colleagues work together to problem solve”, and when “colleagues share the same philosophy, relax and enjoy each other’s company”.

While engaging with students was a constraining factor, it was also identified as a sustaining factor for 76 participants. Teacher educators described students as being sustaining when they felt appreciated by students or when they felt they were helping and making a difference, with one describing “I feel I have made a difference in a student’s life and work”. It was also identified as sustaining when they could see success and growth among students, and when students were engaged while working and when “students get excited about the content being taught”. Associated with this sense of recognition was receiving positive feedback ( $n = 13$ ), with participants describing it as sustaining when they received positive feedback from colleagues, students or leadership.

Having a negotiated and manageable workload ( $n = 21$ ) was another sustaining factor, with teacher educators describing having the “time and capacity to do my job to a high standard”. A manageable workload included being “given a work load that affords sufficient time to comprehensively engage with the key aspects of my role as an academic”.

### ***17.5.3 The Intersection of Constraining and Sustaining Factors***

In the longer reflective component of the questionnaire where participants were asked to describe a situation that had stayed with them, and the resources or strategies they used to cope, we were able to identify the intersection between the challenging/constraining and the sustaining/enabling factors. Participants described the way a challenge or constraint manifested in their work practices, but were able to identify those factors that acted as resources to support and sustain them despite the challenge they faced. One participant described facing the challenge of workplace bullying and the ways that supportive colleagues enabled them to navigate the situation:

I was bullied by a previous incumbent of a role I was interviewed for and won, not realising the previous staff member was in the College. I made formal complaints  $\times 3$ . I had never been previously bullied, it was very distressing over the first year of my employment. The bullying ended when the staff member took a package. The university management seemed unable to manage the behaviour on these occasions. It was the support and kindness of other colleagues that got me through.

Another participant described the impact of budget cuts, intensification of workload and feelings of being undervalued, but also identified the ways that supportive colleagues and students mediated the challenging experiences they faced:

My institution is in the process of a ‘management of change’ encouraging staff to take redundancy to try and cut budgets ... existing staff are required to ‘suck up’ a lot of the

remaining teaching and roles ... There has been lot of pressure put on staff to take on extra work, which makes us all feel undervalued. The challenge for me, is always, to articulate a rationale for not accepting yet more work, particularly when the institution insists we reach a target of hours of work every year. I feel my resilience takes a hit every time I have to advocate for the complexities of my work and the work of others and when this is not heard or valued. Every year I feel I have to 'go into battle' for my own job. However, what gets me through this challenge is the people (students and colleagues) I directly work with as we all support each other. Open, honest, and genuine relationships are critical to my overall well-being and being able to sustain challenges in my job.

## 17.6 Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the factors that mediate the resilience of teacher educators in contemporary Australian university contexts. The factors identified in the data as either constraining/challenging or sustaining/enabling for teacher educators highlight that resilience is much more than an individual trait, but is rather, a complex process related to the intersection between the person and their context (Ungar 2012). The changing nature of university contexts is highlighted in the contextual challenges that teacher educators describe as constraining their work and impacting on their resilience, and it is particularly interesting to note that there were no sustaining or enabling factors identified at the macro or chronosystems level. This finding is significant given the reciprocal influences of workplace contexts on an individual's capacity for resilience. For those working in the field of teacher education, this suggests that increased accountability demands from policy, governing bodies and the university as a broad institution are primarily constraining factors upon teacher educators, their work and resilience.

The findings of this study reflect similar findings to that of research examining the resilience process of teachers and the factors that act as supportive resources or constraints for resilient outcomes. The data also highlights the ways that teacher educators drew on the sustaining or enabling factors as resources to enable them to navigate challenging situations in their practice. Collegial support and connections functioned as a supportive resource to enable teacher educators to be resilient in the face of broader contextual challenges and adversity. Through employing these resources, teacher educators described having a sense of collective resilience where they could support each other to navigate challenging and changing times. Jordan (2006) argues that resistance, that is the capacity to resist harmful contextual influences impacting on an individual, is a key element of resilience processes, as is the building of connections with others. In drawing on collegial support, teacher educators describe feelings of empowerment to navigate the challenges they face. Receiving validation of their work as teacher educators and seeing student success and growth was a sustaining factor for teacher educators, reflecting Ellis et al.'s (2014) argument that teacher educators perceive the "rewards" of their work in the success of their students.

In ways similar to school contexts, the role of leadership is identified as a factor that can either support or constrain teacher educators' experiences of resilience. The findings speak to the challenge for leaders in teacher education in how to support the resilience of their workforce, particularly given the complex demands and the changing nature of the field. The findings also suggest that supporting resilient outcomes for teacher educators requires universities to employ much more than a Human Resources programme about supporting individual resilience, but rather requires that they engage in a careful consideration of the systemic forces impacting on the work of teacher educators and a recognition of the intense workloads they experience. Making the work of teacher educators explicit and visible is a starting point for being able to identify the multiple expectations and requirements that teacher educators face (Tuinamuana 2016), and that constrain their ability to be resilient in the everyday contexts in which they work.

## 17.7 Conclusions, Limitations and Future Directions

This study provides insight into a neglected area of research examining the resilience processes and outcomes of teacher educators. The findings from our online qualitative questionnaire shed light on some factors that constrain and challenge teacher educators, while also providing valuable insight into those factors that sustain them and enable them to be resilient in challenging and changing contexts.

However, the limitations of the study must be acknowledged. First, this study was limited to teacher educators in one national context alone. Second, we understand resilience to be a dynamic construct that changes over time. We acknowledge that the responses from participants in our study provide a snapshot of resilience at a particular point in time. In acknowledging this limitation, we suggest that future research might capture data longitudinally. Finally, while the teacher educators were invited to reflect on sustaining and challenging situations in their work-based settings and to identify the resources and strategies they drew upon, the use of a questionnaire may not have allowed the researchers to explore responses as deeply as they could have been through other data collection methods such as through interviews or focus groups. However, this study contributes to the extant body of literature around the resilience of teacher educators. The findings highlight that the resilience processes of teacher educators are not an individual responsibility, but rather, require that higher education providers consider the ways that contextual and systemic forces impact on the resilience of employees in ever intensifying contexts. Universities have a role to play in considering how they can support the resilience processes of teacher educators in meaningful ways, rather than isolated programmes that do not address the systemic causes and challenges to teacher educator resilience. While the findings identify the factors that impact on and mediate on the resilience of teacher educators, future research is required that examines the impact of this on the ways that teacher educators are then able to model and explicitly teach about resilience to pre-service teachers.

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# Chapter 18

## Looking Back and Moving Forward



Judith MacCallum

**Abstract** This chapter brings together the research on teacher resilience and approaches to supporting resilience and wellbeing discussed in this volume. As many of the approaches utilised aspects of the BRiTE and Staying BRiTE projects, I highlight common themes as well as the different ways the authors developed and implemented their work to reflect their specific contexts and participants. I also reflect on broader issues related to conceptualisation of resilience, consider where responsibility for resilience lies, and explore future directions. The chapter also provides some insights regarding the collegial collaboration that has made the body of work possible.

**Keywords** Teacher resilience · Wellbeing · Relationships · Networks · Future directions

### 18.1 Introduction

Resilience, as an everyday word, brings to mind ideas like rebounding and coping. When considered in the context of educational research, teacher resilience can be conceptualised in a range of different ways, each with the possibility of new insights into the nature of resilience and how to support resilience, as explained by Susan Beltman in Chap. 2 of this volume. The chapters in the volume address conceptual and implementation issues, with insights into researching resilience and resilience programmes. The poems that preface each section also provide insights into the nature of resilience and the experiences of the BRiTE and Staying BRiTE research teams.

This volume was initially inspired by two Australian research programmes, *BRiTE: Building Resilience in Teacher Education* (Mansfield et al. 2016a) and *Staying BRiTE: Promoting Resilience in Higher Education* (Mansfield 2016), that sought to support resilience in teacher education. The five BRiTE online

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learning modules (Building resilience, Relationships, Wellbeing, Taking initiative and Emotions) were designed as resources for pre-service teachers, with the design principles that the modules be personalised, interactive and adaptable to different contexts (see Chap. 3). This enabled BRiTE to be used in different ways in teacher education programmes, by individual teachers and pre-service teachers who became aware of the BRiTE website, and to be adopted as part of induction and professional learning programmes within and beyond Australia. Many of the chapters in this volume document the ways the researchers have interpreted and implemented BRiTE to support teacher resilience in their context. Chapter 3 documents the initial implementation as part of the BRiTE programme, four chapters relate to authentic cases from Staying BRiTE in Australia (Chaps. 4, 5, 10 and 15) and three to application or adaption outside Australia (Chaps. 6, 7 and 9). Chapters 7 and 8 refer to ENTREE (Enhancing Teacher Resilience in Europe), an online learning programme developed in Europe with input from the BRiTE team.

The remaining research in this volume (Chaps. 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17) does not explicitly address BRiTE (or ENTREE), but each offers a different perspective on teacher resilience and wellbeing to support our consideration of these important ideas and their relevance for future research and application in education. These chapters address alternative ways to support teacher wellbeing (Chap. 11) and support teacher resilience, through mindful school leaders (Chap. 12), the professional identity and resilience of early career casual teachers (Chap. 13), a different way to understand teacher wellbeing in the context of teachers' work (Chap. 14), an exploration of the lived-in resilience of experienced teachers (Chap. 16) and an exploration of resilience of teacher educators (Chap. 17).

So what do these chapters reveal about teacher resilience and cultivating teacher resilience? Firstly, I turn to how resilience and wellbeing are conceptualised by the various authors, then to applications and impacts of programmes supporting resilience and wellbeing, with particular emphasis on supportive relationships and networks. The final sections explore resilience and wellbeing in context and future directions for supporting resilience. Two conceptual themes introduced by Beltman, where is the individual and where is the context in conceptualisations of teacher resilience? and where does the responsibility for supporting teacher resilience lie? permeate the chapters, and as we read this volume help us, as a global education community, to reflect on our focus on teacher resilience and what might be possible in the future. Throughout I identify further questions from consideration of the different approaches.

## 18.2 Conceptualising Resilience and Wellbeing

A key message from this volume is that how we understand resilience is changing, and alongside changing conceptualisations the language of resilience is changing. Over the nearly decade of research presented in this volume, different terms have been used in relation to resilience and cultivating teacher resilience, and these are evident

in different chapters. At the time the BRiTE online modules were being developed in 2014, Mansfield and colleagues were moving from a focus on individual and contextual risk and protective factors (concepts which had dominated a psychological approach to resilience for decades) to a more process-focused approach and using the language of personal and contextual challenges and resources. From this person-context perspective, as Beltman (Chap. 2) explains, resilience lies “at the interface of person and context” which enables individuals to “use strategies to overcome challenges and sustain their commitment and wellbeing”. This perspective highlights teacher agency in the resilience process, with context incorporated as a source of resources as well as challenges.

Most of the chapters conceptualise teacher resilience as process-focused, and all authors refer to “strategies” to support resilience (or wellbeing). This reflects the view that resilience is dynamic and can be developed or cultivated. Surprisingly, authors referring to BRiTE (or ENTREE) do not fully utilise the language of the BRiTE framework and modules, such as personal resources, contextual resources, strategies and outcomes. McDonough and McGraw (Chap. 5) and Fokkens-Bruinsma et al. (Chap. 9) do use these terms, whereas some authors retain the language of protective and risk factors (e.g. Gratacos et al. Chap. 8) or use a mixture of terms (e.g. Fernandos et al. Chap. 7; Falecki and Mann Chap. 11). Besides strategies, the terms which appear in most chapters and with apparent common understandings are “challenges” and “demands”. These relate to the everyday challenges of teachers in their professional and personal lives, and the more institutional, workplace or societal demands related to teaching. The term “resources” is most often used in connection with material resources, such as the BRiTE modules or other educational materials, reflecting an everyday usage of the word.

A number of different forms of resilience are suggested in different chapters. While most authors refer to teacher resilience or resilience, some authors qualify resilience in a different way. For example, McDonough and McGraw (Chap. 5) refer to “resilience in context” as their work is specifically in relation to pre-service teachers’ first teaching experience. In Chap. 10, Correia considers “personal and professional resilience” in developing a mindful approach to supporting resilience which is applicable to both professional environments and personal life. Granziera et al. (Chap. 14) distinguish between resilience in response to adversity and “everyday resilience” which they characterise as response to low-level adversity, and in the context of the chapter, common to teachers in their everyday teaching activities. A quite different approach is taken by Boon (Chap. 16) who argues principally from a trait-based understanding of resilience that teacher resilience as commonly researched is “perceived resilience” and that a notion she refers to as “lived-in resilience”, incorporating both physical/psychological and teaching resilience, better explains an individual’s resilience and would provide a more objective basis for measuring resilience. These distinctions raise a number of questions: In conceptualising resilience do we need to consider levels of adversity (see Chap. 2 comparison of challenges in Australia and South Africa)?; and if resilience is bound up with context, how does resilience in one context support resilience in other contexts? Although most of the participant comments reported in chapters are specific to the teaching

context, a few comments reflect potentially broader applicability. For example, in Chap. 7 a participant commented, “in personal and professional terms I thought it was very fruitful because it gave me a new perspective of me as a person”. Similarly, in the BRiTE evaluation a participant commented, “the strategies are relevant coping mechanisms for life and relationships in general” (MacCallum 2016).

As conceptualisations of resilience evolve further it will be important to track changes in language use and try to negotiate a common language for teaching, research and conversation about teacher resilience. Beltman has commenced this work in Chap. 2.

### 18.3 Supporting Resilience and Wellbeing: Applications

Across these chapters we see evidence that the broad concept of teacher resilience is relevant to educators in different parts of the world and at different career stages. Further, intervening to support teacher resilience and wellbeing is appropriate at all stages of teacher learning and development: pre-service teachers in bachelors and masters programmes (Chaps. 3, 4, 5, 9 and 15); early career teachers in induction and support programmes (Chaps. 6 and 8); and experienced educators in professional learning activities (Chaps. 7, 11, 12 and 14). Throughout these chapters we see a range of different words used in relation to this support of resilience and wellbeing, for example “improving”, “building”, “enhancing”, “developing”, “nurturing”, “fostering” and “cultivating”. Are these interchangeable and reflect the slightly different perspectives and approaches of the authors, or are they subtly different and provide potentially different insights?

A common thread across the chapters describing implementation or application of resilience programmes is the explicit teaching of resilience or wellbeing. A strength of the design of BRiTE is its adaptability for use in different contexts and the chapters showcase how the online learning modules have been implemented using different approaches. BRiTE has been embedded as compulsory components in teacher education courses, and in induction programmes and professional learning activities to support resilience of the relevant groups. Another consistent thread is the incorporation in implementation programmes of discussion sessions or other activities following completion of each module by individuals, despite the online modules including interactive components and reflective activities. The different approaches to implementation are examined below to highlight the unique features of each and areas of commonality.

In relation to pre-service teachers, Weatherby et al. (Chap. 4) adopted a holistic approach to implementation by embedding BRiTE throughout the four years of a Bachelor of Education (Early Years) programme. Pre-service teachers complete the modules once in the first two years and complete them again over years three and four. The facility within the modules for participants to develop a personalised resilience toolkit and compare responses to scenarios over time provides an opportunity for

pre-service teachers to reflect on their personal growth and professional identity over their teacher education course.

McDonough and McGraw (Chap. 5) used a different approach by embedding BRiTE in a specific core course in the Master of Teaching programme with pre-service teachers in the study completing the modules during their first teaching experience. Additionally, the researchers linked BRiTE with the dispositions for effective teaching framework that underpinned the teaching course. Ledger (Chap. 15) explains how BRiTE can be both embedded within teacher education courses and integrated with other frameworks, in this case micro-teaching and augmented reality simulation, the latter providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in “approximations of practice” with avatars to support teacher resilience.

In Chap. 9, Fokken-Bruinsma et al. describe the process of adapting BRiTE for use in pre-service teacher education in a different country and language community. Following a review of current practices and the applicability of BRiTE modules for Dutch pre-service teachers they are building an online environment, translating the modules, incorporating Dutch teaching standards and modifying some of the sections. They plan to use a blended learning approach with discussion of module topics in 5 or 10 sessions (for masters or bachelors programmes, respectively) to which teacher educators from institutes and schools will be invited to broaden the support for pre-service teachers.

Two of the chapters address implementation of the online modules to support resilience of early career teachers. In Chap. 6 Sikma describes a professional development series (five workshops over a year) for new teachers in North Carolina, United States of America. Each workshop was aligned with one of the BRiTE modules and included activities and reflection on the module completed prior to the workshop, as well as “homework” follow-up action on what had been learned. There were two different groups of early career teachers, one group specifically chosen for innovation and leadership, yet the responses to the modules and workshops appear to have been similar and positive for both groups. Gratacós et al. (Chap. 8) report research on a comprehensive professional assessment and development (PAD) induction programme for early career teachers in Spain. The programme included mentoring and seven online modules from ENTREE (and BRiTE) and a monthly face-to-face meeting of teachers and mentors that included practical activities. The approach was carefully structured to incorporate the mentors and self-reflection activities from the modules being assessed by university professors who coordinated the programme.

Chapters 7, 11 and 14 focus on programmes for experienced teachers, and all three give prominence to wellbeing, based on notions of positive psychology. Fernandes et al. developed a “Positive Education” professional learning programme of 18 h for Portuguese teachers around the ENTREE modules (with the addition of a “nuclear” module on Education for Wellbeing). Two-hour interactive workshops were held weekly after work hours and teachers were encouraged to discuss their own experiences and engage in individual and joint reflection to achieve solutions. In Chap. 11, Falecki and Mann argue for professional learning experiences for building teacher wellbeing, and in Chap. 14, Granziera et al. use job demand-resource theory to

guide interventions to maximise teachers' wellbeing. Falecki and Mann present a range of interventions framed around Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment (PERMA), and from visual inspection many of the intervention activities resemble those within the BRiTE modules and workshops in this volume. Importantly, the authors point out that for teachers to develop psychological resources to support their wellbeing they need time to learn, reflect and collaborate in order to pursue new strategies and change habits. Taking a broader approach, Granziera et al.'s interventions address the organisational level as well as individual level.

This leads to an important question about the relation of wellbeing to resilience. They are frequently referred to together in the literature and teacher wellbeing is the most commonly linked outcome of resilience (Mansfield et al. 2016b). In the BRiTE framework incorporating personal resources, contextual resources, strategies and outcomes (see Beltman, Chap. 2; Mansfield et al. 2016b), wellbeing is positioned as one of the outcomes (with job satisfaction and commitment). Wellbeing is the name of one of the BRiTE modules, with a focus on personal wellbeing, work-life balance and maintaining motivation. In Chap. 11, Falecki and Mann define wellbeing as "the psychological capacity for teachers to manage normal stressors within the profession, including awareness of positive emotional states". They frame resilience as one of the positive and negative influences on wellbeing. Following a similar focus on wellbeing, Granziera et al. (Chap. 14) define wellbeing not as a capacity per se, but as "teachers' positive evaluations of and healthy functioning in their work environment". It encompasses a range of outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment, consistent with their focus on job demand-resources theory (Bakker and Demerouti 2017). They suggest a dual approach of harm reduction (more in terms of resilience) and wellness promotion (wellbeing). Taking these ideas together wellbeing could be considered both an integral part of teacher resilience and an expression of resilience in a particular context.

Klap et al. (Chap. 12) take an entirely different approach and argue that school leaders need support for their own wellbeing before they can support the wellbeing of their teaching staff. They describe a mindfulness programme for school principals, "Mindful Leaders", that enabled leaders to enhance self-awareness and engage in self-care and self-compassion, reducing their stress and improving their perceived effectiveness as leaders. In Chap. 10, Correia describes the development of a new BRiTE module, BRiTE Mind, which uses mindfulness concepts such as acting with intention and acting with awareness, to enhance self-awareness and support the development of mindful relationships and wellbeing. Correia argues that in applying mindfulness concepts to resilience processes, BRiTE Mind supports conscious and mindful action to promote personal wellbeing and resilience in the classroom. Although different in focus, both these chapters reveal the potential of a mindful approach for supporting the resilience and wellbeing of a wide range of educators.

## 18.4 Supporting Resilience and Wellbeing: Impact

Many of the chapters report research findings related to implementation and impact. The range of approaches and research tools (e.g. self-report surveys, interviews, journal entries) and generally small cohorts make it difficult to draw overall conclusions about impacts. Additionally, pre and post studies were not conducted (the initial BRiTE study in Chap. 3 is an exception), and a larger study (Chap. 8) collected self-report data on resilience and commitment only at the beginning of the research. Despite these limitations, there are a number of findings that cut across a majority of the implementation settings. Pre-service teachers and early career teachers are reported as feeling more confident and self-aware of their skills and knowledge, and all groups reported being more self-aware and reflective.

The building of relationships and networks also feature strongly. While supportive relationships and networks may be considered processes, I include them here as both process and impact. For example, McDonough and McGraw (Chap. 5) point to the central role of a people-centred disposition, oriented towards students and peers, that enabled pre-service teachers to be resilient in the context of their first teaching experience. In a number of chapters, participants are reported as finding the face-to-face workshops and discussions with colleagues particularly helpful, and work to extend these activities. In the context of professional learning for teachers, Fernandes et al. (Chap. 7) found that teacher participants appreciated sharing experiences with colleagues, suggested more and longer sessions and extending the sessions to other teachers. Likewise, Sikma (Chap. 6) reported open-ended survey responses of beginning teachers highlighting the connection with other teachers, and in one group the formation of a strong professional learning community which continued to meet and welcomed new teachers with whom they shared what they had learned. These examples point to the relational nature of teacher resilience (Gu 2014), with the possibility of teachers developing a form of “collective resilience” (a notion used to describe how a group of survivors coordinate and draw upon collective sources of support in the aftermath of emergencies and disasters; Drury et al. 2019). In Chap. 17 McDonough et al. report teacher educators describing a sense of collective resilience to navigate challenging and changing times. The centrality of relationships and networks also underlines the importance of a common language for conversation and action.

Although not in the context of professional learning, Dempsey et al. (Chap. 13) found that for early career casual teachers the building of relationships at all levels supported their work in schools and the formation of their professional identity. Pearce and Morrison (2011, p. 55) argue that for early career teachers to be resilient they need to be able to “author a new script” of themselves to capitalise on their investment in becoming a teacher. Interactions with colleagues, students and family are crucial to this construction of self. Development of professional identity was also considered a potential outcome of pre-service teachers’ consideration of their growth after completing BRiTE modules twice during their Bachelor of Education (Weatherby-Fell et al. Chap. 4). These studies point to an important link between resilience and professional identity.

The development of supportive relationships and networks was a key element in the creation of the BRiTE modules and the implementation projects that were part of Staying BRiTE (MacCallum 2016, 2018). The supportive and effective leadership of Caroline Mansfield facilitated collaboration amongst team members and created opportunities to try different strategies with constructive feedback from others. During the Staying BRiTE programme, team members described their roles in similar ways using words such as “contributing”, “communicating” and “collaborating” with colleagues within their own university and other universities. One team member explained their role as:

Working collaboratively within my own University as team leader, and achieving a common goal intended to enhance the existing BRiTE resource, and expand its impact in teacher education. Similarly, communicating with other teams to provide information about our activities, and drawing on the actions of others to ensure success in our goals. (Staying BRiTE team member, MacCallum 2018)

Another pointed to the importance of the particular people involved:

I've really appreciated the way that Caroline has led this project—she's generous with time and ideas and she has assembled a great team—it's a pleasure to be part of it. (Staying BRiTE team member, MacCallum 2018)

Together they supported and sustained each other's resilience, enabling the team to successfully translate BRiTE into a range of implementation approaches.

This didn't just happen but was the result of a deliberate and strategic approach (MacCallum 2016, 2018). The original BRiTE team members had varied connections contributing to the engagement of a wide range of people as they worked “in different areas”, belonged to “different groups” and “had contacts in different fields of education” (MacCallum 2016). These connections and networks enabled the BRiTE resources to be disseminated in multiple contexts, the formation of a wider team for Staying BRiTE and the resulting wide adoption of the modules. The research documented in this volume is an outcome of this process, and an important reminder of the factors necessary for translation of a development project like BRiTE: Careful planning, effective leadership, collaboration, networking, exchange and discussion of ideas, time and collective resilience.

## 18.5 Exploring Resilience and Wellbeing in Context

As pointed out in Chap. 2 by Susan Beltman, context is integral to research on resilience, as well as the relation of person to context. One particular context is teacher education. An important point that emerges from a range of chapters is the acknowledgement that social and emotional aspects of teaching are important but have been largely missing from teacher education and teacher professional learning programmes. When teacher education programmes are perceived as “full”, the inclusion of programmes around resilience can be seen as add-ons. The early work on

resilience by Mansfield and colleagues (see Chap. 3) highlighted the need for specific resources to support pre-service teacher resilience. This was also evident during the Staying BRiTE programme, with one team member commenting:

I've seen that it has allowed us to pay more explicit attention to aspects that perhaps we had taken for granted. It has allowed us to see how we can integrate this focus in ways that are powerful and meaningful for students rather than as something that might be seen as an add on. (Staying BRiTE team member, MacCallum 2018)

Other authors highlight the lack of focus on the social, emotional and motivational needs of pre-service teachers (Sikma Chap. 6) and teachers (Fernandes et al. Chap. 7; Falecki and Mann Chap. 11). Teacher education and teacher professional development tend to be focused on school students and the curriculum and not teachers themselves (see Chaps. 6 and 11). Sikma (Chap. 6) and Fokken-Bruinsma et al. (Chap. 9) were drawn to BRiTE as similar programmes were not available in the USA and the Netherlands respectively. Comments reported in these chapters show the appreciation of pre-service teachers, teachers and school leaders for the inclusion of professional activities that focus on them and their needs.

In a scan of teacher educators' current views on enhancing resilience, Fokken-Bruinsma et al. found the term resilience wasn't used but issues related to it were discussed in an ad hoc way. In a different but related context of "Bouncing Forward" activities following healthcare professional placements, Cardell and Bialocerkowski (2019) found debriefing opportunities focused on self-efficacy, resilience and professional identity made visible these aspects of the usually hidden curriculum that they argue are critical for professional success. Mapping professional standards to interventions like the BRiTE modules also makes the relevance of resilience visible to pre-service teachers and teacher educators, and potentially to policymakers. In addition, as pointed out by Fokken-Bruinsma et al. (Chap. 9) there is a general lack of knowledge about resilience and resilience-building strategies, but noted that teacher education and policymakers are beginning to pay attention. Published research, such as this volume, also bring wider attention to teacher resilience.

Boon (Chap. 16) questions the linking of resilience to teacher attrition. This has been a way for researchers to tap into policy agendas but does raise questions about the resilience of teachers who leave the profession. To highlight this issue Boon presents the cases of two teachers, one called Chris who left a teaching position in Australia, where he perceived the working conditions impacted quality teaching to seek a teaching position overseas, where he perceived teachers had societal respect. Boon asks whether Chris was resilient by leaving the context he thought needed to be changed. Chris's decision could be interpreted as an action to reduce job demands and maximise wellbeing. What we don't know is whether or not teaching overseas for more than short periods would support Chris's resilience and wellbeing.

Consideration of context raises the question of whose responsibility is supporting teacher resilience. A person-oriented approach would imply the responsibility lies with the individuals themselves. In most chapters in this volume, teacher educators have taken the responsibility to support pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. In Chap. 4, Weatherby-Fell et al. explain this role of teacher education programmes

in “assisting beginning teachers to develop their capacity for resilience”. Sikma (Chap. 6) explains this a little differently by arguing that it is possible to “improv[ing]e teachers’ resilience” and teachers’ responses to challenges in the workplace can be addressed through building resilience, whereas often “little that can be done to change working conditions”. Granziera et al. (Chap. 14) argue that job demand-resources theory provides guidance on ways to reduce job demands, such as job crafting and a range of school-level interventions. The use of avatars to provide approximations of practice (Ledger Chap. 15) also presents a strategy to change the context to support pre-service teacher resilience. Moving from a focus on the teachers is not simple, but these chapters show that it is possible.

As Falecki and Mann (Chap. 11) point out “teacher wellbeing is not just an individual’s responsibility, but it is a shared organisational, community, and worldwide concern”. The challenge, then, is to move the policy agenda to changing infrastructure and broader workplace and cultural systems. The agency of individuals and groups is necessary for these kinds of changes. Using a social ecological approach, McDonough et al. (Chap. 17) provide evidence of different levels of context that challenge teacher educators’ experiences of resilience, and the potential of harnessing a sense of collective resilience. This is a developing area of research.

## 18.6 Future Directions: Moving Forward

The many questions raised throughout this chapter suggest potential directions for future research. So do the key issues of context discussed in the previous section. The poems that introduce each section of this work provide insights into the nature of resilience, and also suggest some ways for moving forward.

In the first poem, “It bends, but does not break”, the young sapling and the environment are one, the young sapling “learning how to be” in the changing seasons. Bending in the wind and wilting in the heat, these strategies overcome challenges and together with resources of rain and the inner strength in its roots that soak up the moisture, the young sapling survives and grows. The metaphor of the growth of a tree is powerful. Translating to a person “learning how to be” in the changing environment, the person and environment are one, and drawing on personal and contextual resources the person is sustained and grows. Being aware of these resources and able to mobilise them is critical for this growth. These notions underpin the rationale for the BRiTE programme and development of the online modules and also the bringing together of person and environment (context). The social ecological approach that brings person together with different levels of context provides a promising avenue for research. But as the young sapling was learning how to be in changing environments, what approaches might present a different lens to provide new insights into resilience?

The second poem, “Tether lines”, uses an ocean metaphor to explore the multiple experiences of confidence and doubt in new and changing contexts, and the self-questioning of different strategies and support. Balancing venturing and risk with

the guiding support of others provides both safety and freedom to enable growth. This poem encapsulates the journeys of the BRiTE and Staying BRiTE researchers as they venture into the world of supporting teacher resilience and enabling agency. The tether lines are important for all. These connections with others, the building of supportive relationships and networks are prominent themes in the chapters. What kinds of tether lines might support educators at different points in their careers?

In the third poem, “Time and transformation”, the more tangible evidence of changing challenges and different adjustments are portrayed as stitches on fabric, some old and frayed, and others new with the possibility of renewal. The poem emphasises the importance of the stitcher pausing, becoming aware of what is needed and acting purposefully. The fabric with stitches remains but as the old and the new are woven together it is transformed. How are the old and new woven together for transformation?

One possibility for further conceptualising the person and context and beginning to explore some of these questions is cultural-historical theory. As I was writing this chapter, I took part in a cultural-historical theory reading group discussion on “*perezhivanie*” (Blunden 2016; Veresov 2016). *Perezhivanie* is a Russian word, meaning an experience in everyday Russian, but like the word “resilience” has been appropriated for specific purposes. Lev Vygotsky (1994, p. 340) used the word in a more elaborated sense to explain that it is not any of the factors in the environment in themselves (if taken without reference to the person) “which determines how they will influence the future course of [the person’s] development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of the [person’s] emotional experience (*perezhivanie*)”. Taken together with other explanations of *perezhivanie* in Vygotsky’s writing, Veresov (2016, p. 130) argues that *perezhivanie* is “not merely emotional attitude to environment, but rather a complex nexus of psychological processes that includes emotions, cognitive processes, memory and even volition”. These concepts, initially intended by Vygotsky for explaining child development, can be appropriated for considering adult development (Blunden 2016). It is not the environment per se that determines growth, but how we refract the environment through our experiences. The notion of refraction is important as it is more than reflection, which is reflected back unchanged, but refraction which incorporates moving through and changing direction. Further, Veresov (2016) argues that the social environment as a source of development does not exist outside the individual, but “exists only when the individual actively participates in this environment, by acting, interacting, interpreting, understanding, recreating and redesigning it” (p. 132).

Thinking about resilience, how does each of us refract the different factors in our environment at different times? Which experiences will influence our growth at particular points in time? How do we engage in transformation? These ideas provide a different way to think about the responses of teachers to everyday and more adverse situations (like the experiences of Boon’s two teachers), ways of engaging with programmes that aim to support resilience (like BRiTE modules and associated activities), and ways of exploring the tether lines and connections. And importantly, to ways to actively recreate and redesign the environments in which we participate.

## 18.7 Conclusions

The chapters provide a range of ways to think about teacher resilience and wellbeing, and the different approaches to cultivating or supporting teacher resilience. Overall the volume provides some answers to questions permeating the chapters: How do we, as an education community, support teacher resilience? Whose responsibility is teacher resilience? What is the impact and how do we know? and How do we usefully conceptualise teacher resilience? These and other questions raised by considering the volume as a whole body of work will frame research on teacher resilience for some years ahead.

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