

Book Review



Hungarian Educational Research
Journal

2019, Vol. 9(2) 369–373

© The Author(s) 2019

<https://akademiai.com/loi/063>

Akadémiák Kiadó

DOI:10.1556/063.9.2019.1.34

Wosnitza, M., Peixoto, F., Beltman, S., & Mansfield, C. F. (Eds.). (2018). Resilience in education: Concepts, contexts and connections. Cham, Switzerland, Springer International Publishing

Reviewed by Ioana Darjan¹

This book presents an impressive collection of theoretic reflections, empirical studies, and practical models of conceptualizing, fostering, and improving resilience in educational contexts, offered by broad, yet, homogenous, categories of international scholars. In the light of increased focus on people's well-being and mental health, and their impact on the quality of life and functionality, resilience proved to be an important individual factor, which helps overcome life's adversity. In an educational context, resilience might explain the modalities in which educators and students overcome everyday challenges, in order to continue to learn, develop, and thrive.

This volume emerged from the international collaboration (Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Malta, Czech Republic, and Australia) in the European Union-funded project Enhancing Teacher Resilience in Europe (ENTREE), which aimed to develop and support preservice and practicing teachers' resilience, through face-to-face and online trainings.

The book is harmoniously and logically structured in five main parts: Part I: Introduction (Chapter 1), Part II: Conceptualisation of resilience (Chapters 2–5), Part III: Researching resilience in educational contexts (Chapters 6–12), Part IV: Connecting with practice (Chapters 13–18), and Part V: Conclusions (Chapter 19).

¹ Department of Educational Sciences, West University of Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania, Email address: ioana.darjan@e-uvt.ro, ORCID: [0000-0001-8099-679X](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8099-679X)

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial purposes, provided the original author and source are credited, a link to the CC License is provided, and changes – if any – are indicated.

This book discusses teachers' resilience, its risk, and protective factors; internal and external resources, in different educational milieus (from primary to higher education); and in various developmental stages of the teachers' career (from preservice to debutant and senior status). The proposed theoretical framework is an ecological and interactionist perspective on resilience, viewing resilience as "*a dynamic and developmental process*" (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, as cited by Galea, 2018, p. 149).

Part I: Introduction (Chapter 1) presents the philosophy agreed upon and assumed by the authors and the structure of the book. All the contributions and the theoretical and practical aspects presented in the book are formulated and investigated according to this specific perspective on resilience, as a collective and interactionist process. Consequently, the teachers' resilience is viewed as a constructed variable, depending, simultaneously, on personal characteristics and life trajectory and environmental and relational factors.

Part II (Conceptualisation of resilience) contains theories and models of teachers' resilience in different contexts and in different moments of their professional development.

Chapter 2 begins with an extensive review of main educational policies and reforms, highlighting the shifted focus from provision and process to outcomes in assessing the efficacy of educational systems (from grades and scores to acknowledging and respecting the difference between teaching and learning). This chapter investigates teachers' resilience from the social-ecological perspective, as a "Process-orientated and person × Environment" model. This model could explain how teachers' professional work (currently characterized with increased changes and challenges) influences and is influenced by the teacher's capacity to work.

Chapter 3 presents a study from a German vocational setting, using the model of resilience as a generic process, influenced by internal and external factors, and context characteristics.

In Chapter 4, the social-ecological perspective defines resilience as a dynamic process who involves many systems, containing ever-changing risks and resources. Using the asset-based approach, Chapter 4 presents two interesting studies regarding teachers' resilience in adverse situations. The first one is a longitudinal study conducted during a long-term collaborative partnership project Supportive Teachers Assets and Resilience in South Africa, which aimed to explore school-based resilience processes in high-risk, low-resource school settings. The second study, from Australia, consists of two studies: one investigating the resilience during early career years, and the other assessing resilience in the context of challenging schools. The two studies, the South African and the Australian, were combined and undergone to a secondary cross-country analysis of data, offering the

opportunity to identify the common and specific risks and resources that could shape teachers' resilience.

In addition, a trans-national study is presented in Chapter 5. Conducted in the project ENTREE, this study assesses the relationship between a global dimension of resilience and its related dimensions, as perceived by preservice teachers from Germany, Ireland, Malta, and Portugal.

PART III (Researching resilience in educational contexts) presents a collection of researches investigating the stability or the specificity of teachers' resilience along various moment of the career path and taking into account different amount of experience in teaching (from preservice teachers, university students to debutants, and senior), at different educational levels (from primary to higher education level), in diverse educational routes (theoretical or vocational), cultural, political, and social contexts, normal or challenging situations (rural and/or disadvantaged contexts, social, political, and legislative inconsistencies or frequent changes.)

The methodologies of these researches are adequate and varied and both quantitative and qualitative methods were used (investigative designs, longitudinal studies, questionnaires, study cases, semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews, narratives, exploratory interviews, focus groups, etc.), requesting quantitative and qualitative statistical analyses.

Chapter 6 assesses the relation between motivation to teach and resilience of student teachers and debutant teachers, whereas Chapters 7 and 8 present the findings of longitudinal studies exploring the developmental process of resilience as perceived by Canadian early career teachers, or by three Australian early career teachers who begin their career in rural and/or remote schools. The conclusions of these researches could be relevant for improving teachers' initial training, to ease the transition from learning to teaching and to adjust the induction period.

In Chapters 9 and 10, the studies conducted in Malta and Portugal analyze resilience in correlation with challenging situations (e.g., working with students presenting challenging behaviors, facing massive legislation, or the deterioration of working conditions). The conclusions support the idea that positive personal characteristics, such as positive attitudes, as well as positive contextual factors, like support within the school system, contribute to the building of resilience.

Chapter 11 presents interesting findings of a two-stage analysis of the results of an exploratory interview carried out on 26 university teachers from Germany and Australia. The university teachers were invited to share the encountered challenges, the coping

strategies they use, the most frequent work-related emotions, and their perspective on work-related resilience.

Chapter 12 approaches a very insightful, inspiring and, yet, provoking: the teachers are not responsible only for building and strengthening their own resilience, but also that of their students. In this chapter, they are viewed as champions of resilience. As part of 5 years, five country study (The Pathway to Resilience), this study from South Africa revealed that teachers as champions of resilience are those teachers who support students to beat and overcome the structural injustice and odds who prevent them to succeed. In spite of this “proximal caring” (the direct connection between a teacher and struggling students), in this study, there were no evident proves of “distal caring” (actions aimed at undoing social injustice). In the case of chronic adversity, positive and sustainable outcomes require both types of care.

An extremely valuable and interesting part of this book is Part IV: Connecting to practice. After the conceptualizing and investigating the specificity and the impact of resilience in educational contexts, this part advocates for teaching and learning resilience (assisted resilience) in school (Chapter 13), by including related topics in the curriculum. In this part, the authors present and propose clear and detailed training models, encouraging specialists in education and trainers to access and use in their practice helpful resources (modules and platforms) developed through different projects.

Chapter 14 proposed the online modules for teaching resilience, whereas Chapter 15 describes the face-to-face training proposal (developed in the project ENTREE), for teaching and enhancing teachers’ resilience. Chapter 16 presents the Teacher Resilience Self-Reflection (TRSR), a web-based instrument that permits teachers to assess their personal risk and protective factors affecting their resilience, offering them feedback regarding efficient modalities to enhance their resilience through online or face-to-face courses. This chapter discusses the utility of this instrument, TRSR, for self-reflection, its relevance for education, and guide for the teachers and trainers in using it.

As the authors constantly argued in this book, teachers’ resilience is an important factor in job persistence and job efficacy, acting like a buffer against risk factors for exhaustion, burnout, and mental illness. However, teachers’ resilience has also impact on classroom effective climate and on students’ well-being. For these reasons, in Chapter 17, the authors advocate for implementing whole-school resilience program and for prioritizing the preoccupation for the development of students’ well-being and of their social and emotional learning.

A strong argumentation for the opportunity and advantages of this type of shift in the educational system is presented in Chapter 18. This chapter is presented with a European

curriculum for promoting resilience in schools called RESCUR. The findings and recommendations of the pilot implementation of this curriculum in Italy are also presented.

The final chapter summarizes the contributions of the book and investigates future trends and developments of this topic in the educational field. In addition, Chapter 19 not only reaffirms the developmental and personal, but also relational, contextual, and circumstantial dimensions of resilience and its learnable nature. The authors discuss the two main dimensions of resilience: the declarative and the procedural dimension, explaining the relationship between resilience and coping. In this light, coping is an integral dynamic part of the resilience process, transforming potential (declarative dimension) into action (procedural dimension).

The authors consider that further researches should focus on assessing the impact and effectiveness of the trainings promoting resilience in education, should focus on longitudinal studies, and should involve more complex experimental designs.

In conclusion, this book is a rich, comprehensible, valuable, and helpful resource for a large range of specialists and agents from the educational system. It offers a coherent theoretical framework in understanding and assessing teachers' resilience, presents interesting and relevant researches on this topic, with helpful and applicable conclusions, and proposes clear and detailed training programs for promoting and supporting resilience in educational field.

References

- Galea, K. (2018). Teachers' narratives of resilience: Responding effectively to challenging behaviour. In M. Wosnitza, F. Peixoto, S. Beltman, & C. F. Mansfield (Eds.), *Resilience in education: Concepts, contexts and connections* (pp. 147–167). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Luthar, S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, *71*(3), 543–562. doi:[10.1111/1467-8624.00164](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00164)