

This is a paper presentation

Biography of presenter

I became a teacher in 2001 Northern Ireland as a mature student with a History and Politics degree. After three years working as a primary school teacher despite being high school qualified I migrated to Australia with my family. In 2005 I began teaching at a Special Education Unit in a Gold Coast High School school while I undertook a Master's degree at Griffith University. In 2009 I obtained a new post at a Lutheran school and felt I had gone to teacher heaven! I am currently the Head of Learning (Learning Enhancement P-12). While studying for my Master's Degree I undertook research on student resilience. Currently studying for a Doctorate in Education I am researching the role of resilience in teachers as they teach resilience to students.

Title: Fill your own bucket first!

The Problem

Teacher retention is a thorny problem and a research paper entitled "Plugging the leaky bucket: The need to develop resilience in novice middle years teachers." (Keogh, Garvis & Pendergast, 2010) sparked my interest. I fully accept that teachers require resilience in order to do the actual job of teaching. However as more and more is asked of teachers, in particular, the teaching of resilience to students, I questioned whether the resilience of teachers is explicitly addressed or just an expectation. While I do not want to directly address the issue of teacher retention I wish to look at the role of resilience in teachers as they teach resilience to students. Programs such as Mind Matter, YOU CAN DO IT! Education, Bounce Back and others are in vogue and with sparse professional development teachers are being expected to teach a concept that, despite over thirty years of research, has no clear definition and only a rudimentary understanding. One of the main questions I wish to investigate is if teachers believe that faith has a role in their resilience.

Why the audience should care for this issue.

In an age of increasing accountability, reduced government funding and publically available data on student achievement teachers are being judged in a way never seen before. They are being judged not only with regard to student academic performance but on the general readiness of students to be capable global citizens. Teachers are being expected to teach scripted social and emotional programs with a view to improving academic success without first having the opportunity to hold a mirror to their own resilience. Are you consciously aware of your resilience skills? If not how can you model them for students?

How can this be solved?

I propose to conduct research into teachers' perceptions of their own resilience as they actually undertake to teach a scripted social and emotional program to students. Through this research I hope to achieve a greater understanding of the role of resilience in teachers.

Possible outcomes

Through this research I hope to use this deep understanding of the role or teacher resilience in order to assist and encourage teachers to fill their own social and emotional bucket before they begin to fill the buckets of others.

Theme

The term 'pastoral care' has been in education since the 1950s and is a professional expectation of teachers (Carroll, 2010). Teachers are responsible for aspects of student education that fall into the pastoral care role. This involves, for example, developing students social and emotional well-being (Swinson, 2010), an aspect that, at times, can border on mental health issues such as stress (Carroll, 2010). The pastoral care of teachers is increasingly important with the level of stress and burnout being experienced in education.

Abstract:

Educational research suggests if teachers are not resilient they may be ineffective or so stressed that they leave the profession (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). Students who are not resilient may be at risk of failing or dropping out of school (Hess & Copeland, 2001; Luthar & Barkin, 2012). Studies have not inquired whether a teacher must consciously possess resilience when teaching resilience skills.

This study will investigate how teachers perceive their resilience as they teach a social and emotional program. This qualitative study uses a narrative informed case study approach. It will be undertaken at an independent faith-based school in Queensland and consist of ten teachers. Data will consist of three interviews, field notes and a journal.

The use of narrative inquiry will engage with the teachers lived experiences to gain a deeper understanding of their views and perceptions. Data will be analysed by deconstructing and reconstructing each story of the organisation in the form of a story constellation.

The desirable outcome of the study will lead to a better understanding of, and provide the basis for, small generalisations that can be applied to policy and practice for social and emotional education with a view to improving academic performance.

Angela Vance

Trinity Lutheran College

Ashmore Road, QLD 4214

angela.vance@tlc.qld.edu.au