**Understandings and Applications of Resilience**

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This issue aims to explore current understandings of resilience and how these have been used to support learning and teaching within education. The articles included in this *JME* special issue arose from the 19th International Research Conference of the Education, Learning, Styles, Individual differences Network (ELSIN) on “*Individuality and resilience in learning and education”* held at the Faculty of Education, Health and Social Sciences, University of the West of Scotland, Glasgow, Scotland, UK in June 2014.

While resilience has been proven to impact learning and the development of individuals and groups (Nolan, Taket, and Stagnitti, 2014) it has been difficult to translate the concept into effective educational strategies (Sriskandarajah et al., 2010) given that resilience represents a complex family of constructs (Masten and Obradovic, 2006). Resilience has been variably described as inferential, dynamic, multidimensional, contextual, relational (Gu and Day, 2013; Walker et al., 2006). It can be a competence, skill, process, outcome (Miller and Daniel, 2007). Resilience can involve trait and state dimensions (Atkinson, Martin, and Rankin, 2009) and the concept can be applied to individual, social, and organizational levels (Howe, Smajdor, and Stockl, 2012; McAllister and McKinnon, 2009).

How resilience is conceptualised impacts learning and this is especially acute for severely challenged learners within the mainstream pedagogic discourse. As noted by *Martin* resilience is not always a “very positive attribute”. Narrow conceptions of resilience as a trait with a focus on perseverance rather than as a developmental and adaptive construct may disenfranchise individuals. It follows that for learners facing challenging conditions we need to engage with a broader conception of resilience as an adaptive construct in supporting an inclusive educational setting.

Incorporating an understanding of resilience and promoting it as an integral part of pedagogy is important given the established links between student academic engagement and resilience. A focus on resilience has potential in supporting student learning transitions and especially in assisting inclusivity for those students from minority and under-represented groups. A key feature of this special issue is the promotion of resilience pedagogy to support inclusion within school and higher education contexts.

In promoting a resilience pedagogy it is possible to highlight a number of key principles that are evidenced in this special issue:

* It is important to consider both endurance and adaptive understandings of resilience.
* Resilience is not the preserve of the few; all individuals have the capacity to develop resilience (McAllister and McKinnon, 2009).
* Resilience development can be assisted by explicit instruction in resilience and through supporting individuals in developing metacognitive understanding of how they learn; critical self-reflection; attendance to emotional regulation to support self-efficacy and competence development are important in supporting understanding of the self.
* The relational nature of resilience needs to be acknowledged. Acknowledging the nested nature of resilience to include individual; family; organisation; and wider social environmental levels is important in developing integrated pedagogical designs which support the learner to understand and develop their connectivity with others in order to support resilience building.

Much of the work on resilience has focused on the role of educational institutions in providing external support (Miller and Daniel, 2007). A key aim of resilience pedagogies must be to support individuals to develop resilience capability for themselves. As part of this it is essential for learners to explore the nature of their interrelationships with others and their capacity to maintain and enhance connections (Gu, 2014). For some learners this also involves being able to recognize, endure, and mediate the tension between inclusion and exclusion. A contextual approach to resilience is helpful in considering the interrelationship between the individual learner and their environment in managing and sustaining resilience (Jordan, 2012). A key priority within 21st century learning environments should be on developing connectivity with the self and others (McAllister and McKinnon, 2009). How can learners be supported to navigate resources within and beyond academic communities and to be valuable members within such communities in order to support and develop the resilience of self and others? Understanding one’s own learning and reactions to learning contexts is essential in developing metacognitive capacity as part of resilience. Denz-Penhey and Murdoch’s (2008) resilience framework exploring connectedness to the social environment, family, physical environment, inner wisdom, and a supportive personal psychology serves as a useful tool to explore the multidimensional nature of resilience. Finally in supporting resilience building, meaningful and authentic assessment is necessary to promote adaptive resilience; an important element of this is supporting learners to maximise feedback-seeking and using opportunities (Evans, 2014; 2015).

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