Building Resiliency in the Classroom

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Building Resiliency in the Classroom

By

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Each year, thousands of students will drop out of schools across the United States. These students will drop out of school for many different reasons, or so it might seem. One major reason that students drop out of school is a lack of resiliency. No matter what the reason, or issue a student is facing in schools, if the student has high resiliency the student should be able to conquer the problem and move on to the next issue. Meaning, that resiliency is one of the most important qualities a student can have. However, there are little to few academic curriculum plans that enrich student’s life with resiliency. There are two major reasons for this: reason one, there is a general lack of understanding when it comes to resilience and how it affects student learning and achievement by educators. Reason two, resilience is something that many students learn innately from their external surroundings while maturing.

Paul Tough, in his book, How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character claims that grit, curiosity, and character are the three main ingredients to having high resilience. Having high resilience will enable students to overcome almost any obstacle facing them (Paul, 2012). Building resiliency in students is something that must take place in every aspect of the student’s life. If a student who has low resiliency is to succeed, then their community must change, the students’ school must change, even the parenting practices of that child must change (Tough, 2009).
Problem Statement

Each year the number of students who drop out of school increases at an alarming rate. It varies by state, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. However, each school population has a handful and in many cases more than half of the school will not graduate from high school or earn a diploma. In fact, it has been estimated that over one third of the population of young people going to school in the United States will drop out of the educational system. This means that 1.3 million students are not graduating with diplomas and therefore are entering the world crippled from a failing education system (Barton, 2005). Clearly the issue of students dropping out of the school system is something that must be addressed.

There are many different reasons for students to drop out of school. Students unfortunately often face issues with drugs and alcohol, teen pregnancy, lack of engagement with content, even the difficulty of content can cause students to drop out of school (“At-risk students and resiliency,” 1994). Although these are all reasons why a student might drop out of high school, the one common thread that holds all of these issues together is a lack of resiliency. According to Paul Tough in his book, How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character, many issues face teens everyday and it is the innate grit or resiliency of each individual that pushes the student through those issues and results in meaningful learning and achievement. Students who do not have resilience will most likely not succeed in school and are the most susceptible to dropping out of school before they graduate.
Significance of the Problem

With over one third of all high school students dropping out before they reach graduation, the lack of resiliency is a huge issue facing the educational community at this time. The short-term and long-term effects of dropping out of school are astounding. The estimated tax revenue loss from every male between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four years of age who did not complete high school would be approximately $944 billion, with cost increases to public welfare and crime at $24 billion. 75% of America's state prison inmates are high school dropouts and 59% of America's federal prison inmates did not complete high school ("Economic Impacts of Dropouts | National Dropout Prevention Center/Network," n.d.). The data is very clear that on average, students who do not finish high school are less than successful after dropping out.

Another issue facing students that drop out is that they continue the cycle that enables others to also drop out. This mainly affects their children and people living in their communities. When young children see others dropping out of schools or are raised to be aware that this is a viable option in life, it increases the risk that they too will drop out ("At-risk students and resiliency," 1994). The cycle of people who are constantly failing in their lives result in communities and schools filled with students who have developed low resilience against hardships.

Rationale

Researchers and experts in resilience theory present the theory as three waves of resiliency inquiry. The identification of resilient qualities was the first
wave characterized through phenomenological identification of developmental assets and protective factors. This first wave aims to give students, many different forms of assessments. These assessments range anywhere from simple puzzles and math equations to more complicated theory and problem solving assessments. These assessments always started out easy for the students based on baseline data and then progressively got more difficult with each success. Each of these students was then monitored by brain scanners and made to complete these tests until failure. The object here was to bring the students to frustration and failure. With each success and failure the researchers could see specific brain patterns emerging from two groups. The first group to emerge was those who gained success very quickly and easily when doing the easier tasks, but quickly shut down and could not persevere through the more challenging exercises. The second group were those who had moderately easy success with the easier puzzles, but when faced with the more difficult puzzles worked through each problem systematically without getting so frustrated that they could no longer complete the puzzle. To eliminate the notion that intelligence was playing a large factor in these assessments the researchers pulled a group that scored relatively close to one another on intelligence tests and aptitude assessments before administering the resiliency model assessments (Richardson, 2002). The implications of such an assessment can easily be applied to the field of educational research. Especially, when one thinks about the way teachers teach and students are set up to learn in the classroom. Curriculum across all disciplines is set up in a similar way to that of the resiliency frustration assessments. Students master the most basic principals first and then are asked to
increase the challenge and breadth of each discipline each year. Much like the resiliency model assessments, many students find the first few waves of learning to be easy and unchallenging. Whereas, the last few waves of mastery learning often frustrate students and lead to poor or even failing grades.

The second wave described resilience as a disruptive and integrative process for accessing resilient qualities (Richardson, 2002). Simply put, this means that resiliency is not something that people are born with. Resiliency is something that must be learned and in many communities, learning resiliency can be a very challenging feat. Paul Tough outlines in his book, How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character how many students from low socioeconomic communities such as urban and rural impoverished communities often cannot build up their resiliency. Tough also explains that for different reasons, persons of extreme wealth also have issues building up their resiliency and toughness. Students from lower socioeconomic climates are constantly being beaten down by their external influences and largely without family or community help. These students never have the opportunity to succeed, which in turn means that their failures can never turn into successes. Students must have successes in order to become resilient because without successes the students learn that there is no reason to continue on with their education (Paul, 2012). These particular groups of students do not posses the skills to persevere through tough curriculum in schools, because they have learned through life experiences that no matter whether they succeed or fail, there are no better opportunities for students like them. The other extreme are those students who come extraordinary wealth and opportunity.
Everything in their lives has been easy and safe. Students who come from these environments have never had to try hard at anything because their external factors have made sure of that. This means they too have never been allowed to develop resiliency skills (Paul, 2012). Many educators know a truth about learning, which is much like exercise and strength training. In order for new muscle to grow, old muscle must first be torn so that the body strengthens itself. Learning happens in much the same way. The student must constantly be faced with challenges so that they can learn to overcome these challenges through failure and perseverance. It is a difficult lesson for students to master, but it is imperative to their learning in, and out of school. Learning to succeed and learning to fail are the most important pieces of the resiliency model.

The third wave exemplified the postmodern and multidisciplinary view of resilience, which is the force that drives a person to grow through adversity and disruptions (Richardson, 2002). The third wave to the resiliency model is arguably the most simple to define and yet the most complex to fully understand. The word, force, makes understanding the third wave of the resilience theory difficult to fully understand. The word, force, is something intrinsic in all people, however, it is something different in all people. For example, one student might think of their mother as a spot of inspiration for getting through tough times during life. While, other students might be thinking about their scholarship to college while taking a high-stakes state assessment. The third wave sets out to help explain that within each person there lies a power of toughness which Tough calls “Character” that helps us deal with the everyday stresses of everyday life and even challenging math
equations while in school. It has been built up for many years over the span of our lifetime. Each person has the potential pool of toughness or character within him or her. Although, each person contains the pool of toughness within, not every person’s pool is the same depth. Some people have very shallow pools of toughness like many of those from low and extremely high socioeconomic communities. Whereas, the majority of society has average pools of toughness that help them persevere through the day. But as mentioned above, the resiliency model wants to study those students who exist within the danger zones of low pools of toughness. The students who have beaten the odds and developed sufficient amounts of resiliency to finish school and have not dropped out of high school. The resiliency model seeks out those students, and aims to figure out what defining characteristics they possess, that their peers do not. At the core of the research lies untapped potential of students across the country.

My interest with the resiliency model and theory started several years ago when I was just exploring education as a career. I was observing and student teaching in the Rochester City School District when I came across a program called Read 180. This program was being implemented for students who were refugees from Nepal. During this time, Nepal was undergoing a terrible civil war and many of these students had lost their families and friends. If they had not lost friends and family, they had most certainly lost their native homes. What amazed me most about this group of students was their amazing ability to just attend school everyday. For many people the loss of their friends, families, and homes would be enough to keep them from attending school for months. But instead of this keeping the students
from learning, their experiences pushed them to learn and acquire knowledge like hungry sharks.

I wanted to understand what about these students who had faced so much hardship in their lives could allow them to become so successful in such a little amount of time. Studying the resilience model has helped me understand this group of students a little better. Through research and data collection it is clear that these students have built up strong resilience, which took place in their home countries where hardship married with equal amounts of success must have been present.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to create a better understanding of how teachers like myself could encourage and even help students build resilience in the classroom. Tough argues that it can be done when the students are young and in pre-school. However, other research indicates that students can build resilience at younger ages and even through terrible hardships. (Baum, Rotter, Reidler, & Brom, 2009). Ultimately, then, the goal for this project is not to create one lesson or even one unit plan that emphasizes building resiliency in students. Resiliency is something that should permeate every aspect of the classroom. Meaning, everything needs to be geared toward building resiliency in students and the school as a whole. The way teachers teach in regards to resiliency is more important than what they teach. The goal for this project is to exam how adapting a new teaching style and pedagogical philosophy can be adopted in a classroom and an entire school so that students are building resiliency while still learning and achieving more than ever before. Understanding what areas students lack resiliency in and creating a
“handbook” or “strategy tool-kit” to help build up these areas is essential. This means students must learn how to fail forward, overcome academic hardships, and work through things they find difficult in an English Literature classroom.

**Definition of Terms**

**Intrinsic Motivation:** Something is done for its own sake, rather than to achieve some external reward or avoid a punishment.

**Resilience:** The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

**Positive Psychology:** A branch of psychology that attempts to define human strengths, as opposed to pathologizing weakness.

**Summary**

So many students are dropping out of schools each year because of low resilience that we as educators can no longer ignore the Resiliency Model as a key contributor to achieving. Curriculums must be set in place around the country in every school so that students who were not afforded the proper resilience levels have the opportunity to safely build up their resiliency. Nearly every student is going to face a hardship during their educational career and without toughness, grit, and character they will not surpass that hardship and will not reach the end goal of graduation.
Chapter 2

Background and Review of Literature

Resiliency and How it Effects Student Achievement

Resiliency has everything to do with learning and more importantly, student achievement (Ginsburg, 2011). Knowing this information, it would seem imperative and even natural that the pedagogical community would focus on creating more resilient students. However, this is not the case. Resiliency is not a new study by any means, but instead, a new study in regards to students and its link to achievement. Resiliency has been brought to the forefront of pedagogy only as recently as the 1980’s and even still it has not caught traction with many schools of teacher education. Resiliency has been jailed in humanities courses: African American History, Women’s Studies, Gender Studies, Abnormal Psychology and so forth. However, as educators, we are at the forefront of teaching students who fit into all types of molds and roles in society. It is critical that the educational community starts realizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of resiliency and how it affects student learning and achievement. If educators could understand the many roadblocks that interrupt learning for students, they could then give students the proper tools to overcome such obstacles. With these tools, the learning that any student; any person could achieve would be immense (Paul, 2012).

Building Character

Every person is born with what psychologists call “character.” Character is the innate born personality or temperament deeply rooted within each person’s genetic code. All mammals possess character and temperament; but how does this
affect learning and what does it have to do with achievement? According to Paul Tough, author of How Children Succeed: Grit Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character, resiliency or as Tough puts it: grit, is a characteristic trait that has everything to do with achievement and successful students. In this excellent study of neuroscience and socioeconomic factors, Tough explains that learning, as all psychologists understand, is the ability to intake new information and put it to good use and make practice of the new information. This notion really exemplifies the thought that success can be attributed to high I.Q. Scores and robust cognitive abilities (Paul, 2012). However, this is not the case for many successful people, and may very well be the case for most students aiming to be successful.

Students who are high achieving generally come from affluent families with high-socioeconomic backgrounds and lower achieving students generally come from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds (Smith & Prior, 1995). At least, this is the general assumption in the educational community. With plenty of data to back this up, many people would be right, but there is something missing from these statistics. It would only seem fair with the new era of no child left behind engulfing the educational landscape, that we do not simply leave out any children from this picture of high achieving students versus low achieving students. It would be safe to assume that not all children that come from higher socioeconomic status schools become high achieving adults once they left the school system. It would also be safe to assume that not all children that resided in lower-socioeconomic status schools become low achieving adults when they left their school system. So, Tough argues
that the key to understanding true failure and success in regards to student achievement lies in understanding these outlier students.

The offspring of affluent children is often insulated from adversity right from the beginning. Everything in the house is baby proof and these children are sent to private Universal Pre-Kindergarten universities for babies. These students are also helped along the way, well into young adulthood, with their parent’s pocket books, writing checks the entire way (Canada, 1998). These students, Geoffrey Canada argues, are denied the ability to build toughness and grit. Their walls are built so paper-thin, because everyone around them is making sure they do not have to struggle at anything. Often, nothing will come with struggle and hardship in these higher socioeconomic communities and schools. The argument then arises if students don’t have to struggle, should they at all? According to Tough, a close colleague of Canada, the answer is definitely yes. Tough argues, that children who grow up without learning how to struggle have missed a huge learning opportunity that should present itself to all living creatures on the planet. Take birds, for example. Birds are first kicked out of their nests to learn to fly; inevitably they will hit the ground a few times before they do eventually take to the sky. Normally, we would not want our students to fall and hit the ground and become damaged beyond repair. Which, is why the mother bird makes sure the distance will not harm her babies in the process of learning to fly. In fact, the baby bird is being made stronger each time it hits the ground before learning to fly. If the baby bird did not hit the ground before learning to fly, then eventually there would come a time when the bird did hit the ground and without prior experience of learning to get back up
and take to the skies, the bird would simply stay landed on the ground injured.

Canada and Tough both argue that in order to strengthen our students, much like the baby bird, students must be taught how to “fail forward.” They must build up grit and toughness to build up the natural resiliency they are lacking due to their pampered cushioned existences (Tough, 2009).

Resilient Outliers

So then what about the students who have too much adversity? If students need to learn how to fail forward through challenges, surely students who face an endless onslaught of adversity should be the most resilient beings on the planet. However, the research concludes different data. Students, who constantly face adversity from lower-socioeconomic status families and schools, are more likely to become lower achieving students who turn to drugs and alcohol (Lee, 2011). These students, who come from low achieving families result in low achieving neighborhoods, which in turn, result in low achieving schools. Students in these high stress school systems deal with adversity all the time and try to cope with the everyday stresses of life and school in the best ways they know how. The issue is many of these students do not know how to deal with these stresses appropriately. In our bird metaphor the mother bird is not dropping him or her from a safe distance. Instead, these baby birds are being thrown out of the nest almost immediately and left to smack the ground until they are so damaged, they can no longer fly. Students in lower achieving, poorer schools, are not given the proper tools to deal with such stresses. So, many of them develop grit and toughness to make it through the day, but do not learn resiliency or the ability to take failure and
turn it into success (Canada, 1998). Students from poor neighborhoods face adversity and will learn what it takes to develop grit and resiliency. However, often their perseverance will not get them ahead in their neighborhood and school system because there is no place to go. Conquering the daily grind just buys you another ticket back into the same grind you just conquered; there is no light at the end of the tunnel. This is vastly different than that of the affluent children, who can clearly see that hard work and college can help you achieve goals, which lead to happiness. The difference between students who come from affluent families and poor families is quite remarkable. In regards to resiliency, the main difference is their background experiences with adversity and the process of learning through struggles. One group of students can never learn how to develop resiliency, because they are far too shielded from reality, while the other group of students will receive far too much adversity to develop resiliency in a healthy way.

When analyzing data regarding toughness, grit, and resiliency, we must also examine those few students who are outliers in their communities. This would include: students coming from affluent backgrounds that overcame considerable adversity and still became successful, as well as students who have overcome adversity everyday in poorer neighborhoods and achieved success during and after school. These two groups of students are so drastically different. Therefore, it becomes important to think of the things they have in common. Tough brings this to the forefront and discusses the famous “Marshmallow Study.” The study was completed in the 1960’s and still influences modern psychology today. The study is simple, but has great implications of student achievement and information about
learning. It is a nearly perfect representation of how students can learn to achieve more by building up grit and resiliency. The “Marshmallow Study” simply offered children, two options. Option one was to choose one marshmallow now, or wait over a period of time to receive two marshmallows later. The test also conducted some variables such as, duration of time between each wait cycle of marshmallow distribution. What the study found, is the key to unlocking the similarities between each group.

About fourteen years later, when the children in the experiment graduated from high school, the marshmallow study revealed startling differences between the two groups: the children who waited and did not gobble up the single marshmallow, were more positive, self-motivating, persistent in the face of difficulties, and able to delay gratification in pursuit of their goals. They had developed the habits of successful adults. The habits, the centerpiece of which is delayed gratification, point to the more thriving marriages, greater career satisfaction which leads to higher incomes, and better health. The children who did not wait were more troubled, stubborn and indecisive, mistrustful, less confident. And, they were still unable to delay immediate gratification. Worse yet, the “one marshmallow” kids scored an average of 210 points less on SAT tests. Why? Distraction and the desire for instant gratification got in the way of good, focused study time. If not corrected, lack of impulse control will continue to trip these kids up throughout life, resulting in unsuccessful marriages,
low job satisfaction and as a result low income, bad health and all around frustration with life ("one marshmallow, or two - Google Scholar," n.d.).

The important implications of this study lead to an interesting idea about success and failure in schools. The building of toughness and grit are apparent in this study. For a student to be able to wait and work for something greater than what is in front of him or her, will help both groups of students achieve more.

The relationship between the Marshmallow test and modern academia are clear, when one starts to think about the issues facing students in the classroom. Many students resist learning because it is too difficult for them. It starts very young and is something that is pervasive for many people. When they have just finally mastered something, the teacher gives the student a task even harder to accomplish, making them find their grit and toughness to overcome yet another obstacle. For many students, this is simply too difficult, they give up on school because they did not have the grit to keep with it. However, learning through challenge and scaffolding is the very essence of learning. It is in this arena, that resiliency becomes critical in the areas of achievement and success. Students must be able to overcome many different obstacles and hurdles if they are going to graduate high school and lead successful lives. Those who cannot will inevitably fall by the wayside (N, 1991). Students will eventually keep failing because of frustration and will not be able to move forward with learning anything new while at school. Therefore, many students will inevitably drop out of school, or not continue into higher education. These students are the students that have low residency. These students are
considered to have low grit and low toughness. Developing a new model of building resiliency is something vital to the success of these students, if not all students. So, there has to be an alternative for the students that cannot find it within themselves to overcome the daily struggles in the classroom. The research has concluded that yes, there is an option for the students who have innately low resiliency due to external and internal forces.

Building curriculum that can help students build the natural resiliency they lack is a key component to helping students overcome obstacles that stand in the way of their education. But first, it is important to pinpoint exactly what factors could make a student more resilient than another student.

Despite the complex difficulties of experiencing acute and chronic risk, many at risk children develop competence nonetheless. A resilience perspective seeks to understand what distinguishes children who are at risk from those who just struggle. The protective factors identified in scientific studies of resilience during the past 40 years, two emerged consistently as especially positive influences in the lives of children who experience a wide range of risks. These factors are better cognitive functioning – such as higher IQ and cognitive or effortful self-regulation of emotions and behavior – and having a close relationship with a competent adult, especially a caregiver or educator (Cutuli & Herbers, 2014).

Students who were especially resilient when faced with challenges had two main factors in common with one another. The first was intelligence. The second was a
healthy relationship with an educator or caregiver. The first common factor, which was intelligence, is a tricky one. The study means raw cognitive power, rather than just the student’s ability to solve algebraic math equations. This means, that students need to be fully cognizant functioning and firing on all cylinders. For many students this might not be happening in the realm of academia. If the student is performing at the average cognitive level, that is great. However, there is something that can be done if the student is not on the average cognitive scale.

*Building Resiliency in Students Receiving Special Services*

Students who are learning with intellectual disabilities can still benefit from resiliency building models in schools. Because these students have less cognitive abilities than their counterparts, the same levels of failure might not be enough to build up resiliency. Learning to avoid making mistakes might also prove difficult. However, this does not mean that building resiliency in students with intellectual disabilities is impossible. In fact, the opposite is true. The scholarly article *Promoting Resilience in Children with Intellectual Disabilities*, found that building resiliency strategies is very possible for students with intellectual disabilities. The students must find that there is a positive and somewhat tangible object for their resiliency. They also found that the reward should be given quickly to the student after overcoming the obstacle. Like every child, the student might not be able to overcome each obstacle each time. The reward system might not be enough every time as well (Gilmore et al., 2014). It is important to note, because students with intellectual disabilities face many challenges and adversities, it is critical that these students receive services in schools while facing challenges. Using tools to overcome
challenges and understanding the benefits of toughness and grit in relation to achievement, is essential. Resilience models need to find a way into classrooms across the country to help students achieve more. By giving students tools to help improve toughness and grit educators are securing academic success. With the special education sector of the American educational system booming each year, it only makes logical sense that we give students receiving special services the proper tools to help overcome obstacles facing their academic challenge.

The other commonality shared between students who had high resiliency was a bond with a competent adult ("At-risk students and resiliency," 1994). This revelation probably isn’t something that many readers will find groundbreaking. Educators have known since the beginning of educational theory, that students and educators must be connected and bonded in order for learning to occur. However, many students are not bonded to their teachers for one reason or another. In fact, many students would say that they do not have any adults that they feel connected with in their lives. With no one to talk to, they don’t have someone helping them through their tumultuous youth (Ginsburg, 2011).

Overall, the lack of resiliency in students who are predisposed to low resilience is causing them to drop out of high schools across the United States ("What Are the Disadvantages of Dropping Out of High School? | Everyday Life - Global Post," n.d.). The massive drop out rates in this country may be attributed to many different things. However, low resiliency can be a primary cause of all high school dropouts. There are two main factors that can be attributed to helping reverse the effects of low resiliency on students. The first is building valuable long
lasting relationships with the students. The second is finding valuable uses of time for the students, whether it is in the classroom or during extracurricular activities. From these two key factors, smaller factors will help build resiliency among low resilient students. Giving the students plenty of encouragement, high expectations, support systems, recognition, and a sense of strong accomplishment will lead to higher resiliency among those students with low resiliency (Murray & Zvoch, 2011). According to Tough, these factors do matter. He states that it is possible to create a curriculum based around these principles, which could help students become more resilient and achieve more.
Chapter 3
Application

Building Resiliency: How to Care (The Right Way)

Before, a teacher can begin to learn strategies to help build resilience in students the teacher must first learn two things. The first being that, stress is an essential tool for motivation and learning to deal with stress is a key component to building resilience in students. The second is, how you help students is an essential thing to master while building resiliency within students as well. Teachers need to learn that stress is an important tool to be wielded in the classroom. Stress allows students the opportunity to work through difficult curriculum. Learning to fail forward can also be an outcome of overcoming stressful situations. Moments of stressful content with opportunities for scaffolding should be incorporated into each unit plan.

Building resiliency within students is something more than creating a unit plan filled with lessons that move toward a common goal. No state standard or common core standard directly ties to building resiliency in students. Which, is why resiliency has been overlooked for years in the domain of modern educational practices. However, when one really stops and looks at what the core essence of building resiliency in students can be, one can truly understand that the foundation of resiliency building and great teaching are one in the same. For example, when Kenneth R. Ginsburg, a great voice in the resiliency model landscape was asked what are the key elements to building resiliency in children and teens he said,
If I had to summarize the essence of resilience building I would say above all else care. Care so deeply about your students that they know you are absolutely in love with them. Care so fervently that you hold them to high expectations to be good people—because they will rise to the occasion. Care so intensely that you are willing to let them learn that they control their own world and that the solutions to most problems lie within their developing wisdom. Trust in their natural strengths and resilience to nurture their problem-solving capabilities rather than solve their problems for them. Care by teaching students to care for themselves. Teach them what to do to relieve stress and move beyond just telling them what not to do. Care enough about your students so that you really know who they are. Rather than hoping they fit into a pedagogical mold, know each student’s individualized temperate, limitations, and potential. And finally care so much about the your future that you work to make the future better for each one of your students. (Ginsburg, 2011).

It may seem redundant to talk about caring when it comes to teaching. However, it is important to note that, caring for students on a personal level is essential when building resilience in students. So many students who suffer from low resiliency have low self-esteem in many different areas. They also do not have a strong person in their life that shows them they care. As mentioned above, caring comes in many different avenues. Caring comes from not only truly caring and loving your students. It also comes from not giving students the easy way out. It is
very important that students understand that they are in control of mastering their own learning and solving their own problems. This distinction between helping students and giving students the answer is an important distinction, as it is an essential core element to building resilience. Giving students the tools to help him or herself helps build resilience. However, many educators are in the habit of helping students by giving them the solution to a problem rather than giving their students the tools to solve the problem. Even worse, many students have begun to expect this sort of help. Students often refuse to work towards fixing their own problems and have learned that if they struggle long enough someone will rescue them. This is a key problem when building resilience in students. As Ginsburg states, caring is at the core of resilience building. However, how an educator helps is just as important as helping in the first place.

*Building Resiliency: How Stress Can Be Helpful*

Stress is another key component to building resilience while at school. School is stressful. The school is also more stressful than it has ever been in the history of modern education. While standards are getting increasingly harder to meet for both teachers and students, American schools are becoming less interested in student well-being and more interested in student achievement scores (Patterson, Collins, & Abbott, 2004). Although stress can be crippling to almost anyone at times, stress can also be a great motivational tool. An appropriate level of stress may be the driving influence that leads us to positive achievement. A little stress, for example, pumps students up to perform well for presentations or on assessments. A little stress energizes a student to play the right notes during their big solo in the spring concert
or while training for the big swim meet. Without some occasional stress, students might become too passive, decreasing their ability to reach new heights. Problems will always arise in the classroom and learning will become challenging. If students are not able to manage this stress, then the stress will go from a positive motivational force of a crushing, paralyzing fear of failure. (Ginsburg, 2011).

**Resiliency Deficits**

There are four main areas of resiliency deficits that will affect students in the classroom. The first is low academic self-esteem; students who score low in this section feel like they are not proud of their work in general. Students with low academic self-esteem need to build resiliency so that they can overcome this low academic self-esteem and feel like they have mastery of the content they are learning. The second is alienation or non-affiliation; students who score low in this section feel left out of the classroom and feel that their voice does not exist during group discussions. Students who score low in this section need an opportunity to shine and show their peers what knowledge they do possess. The third is feeling unneeded or unwanted; students who score low in this section do not feel like they are useful or have a place among peers in the classroom. Students who score low in this section might need small achievable tasks to help build resilience. The fourth is a lack of external locus of control; students who score low in this section feel like they do not have control over their destiny in our out of the classroom. Traditionally, students who score lowest in the fourth section of the resiliency deficit model, often come from low socioeconomic neighborhoods and schools. All of these resiliency deficits can be more easily understood using a visual aid:
Using this visual aid as a reference, one can see that for each resiliency deficit that will affect students in the classroom, there are a few strategic interventions that can be used to achieve the desired outcome for the students in the classroom. The optimal goal is to implement these strategies into a classroom where students have tested low in some aspect of resiliency and have the students become no longer at risk or close to no longer at risk by the end of the year.

**Resiliency Deficits: Pre-Assessment**

Before, a teacher can begin to work on strategies to help students build resilience; the teacher must first understand what four areas of resiliency deficits affect students in the classroom. Much like a pre-assessment to know where students stand at the beginning of a unit, pre-assessments may be useful while
trying to understand where each student falls within the resiliency deficit model. This pre-assessment should be done within the first couple weeks of school because it will help tailor the instruction to help build resilience within students in all areas of deficiency. One simple way that a teacher may assess the student’s resiliency is by giving the students a survey that asks questions about the four areas of resiliency. This is a sample survey that could be given to students during the first week of classes. The survey is intended for students who are fluent in English and between the grades of nine and twelve. Each section of the survey is meant to pinpoint which of the four areas the student will need the most help in building their resilience in. Although it is possible for students to have a deficit in only one area, according to the survey, it is also possible and likely, that students will be deficient in more than one area.

*Resiliency Deficits: Data Collection*

Each section of the mental health assessment is geared at giving information to the teacher who collects the data. Each section is tied to a different resilience deficiency. The assessment can also give a general insight into the thoughts and feelings of your students. The first section of the assessment deals with students who feel alienation and non-affliction with others. A student who scores lower in this section will need help feeling like they belong in the classroom and school. The next two sections deal with students who are feeling like they don’t make a difference. If students score low in these two sections they need help building resilience so that they can feel more potent in and out of the classroom. The next section has data associated with low-academic self-esteem. Students who score
poorly in this section feel like they do not have the skills to do well in school. If students score lowly in this section they will need help building resiliency to achieve more in and out of the classroom. The final section deals with students who feel unwanted and un-needed. Students who score poorly in this section do not feel like they are useful in the classroom. Helping these students build resiliency will help them to achieve more and give them purpose.

After collecting the data on each student, I think it would be most beneficial to have a private conversation about their survey data. This would also be the opportune time to set goals for the student’s educational and social needs. During the meetings the teacher could even have SLO’s or student learning objectives in mind. During the private meeting with the student it is also important to look at two key questions on the survey. These two questions are lying indicators and will help you have an honest and frank discussion about the legitimacy of the student’s survey score. The two lie indication questions are questions number 4: I always tell the truth. Also question number 6: everyone likes me. Both questions are included as small measures of legitimacy, which you could base the truthfulness of the student’s responses. Obviously, both of these questions could never be answered with a “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree” without some element of lying. If one or more lies have been made on the survey then the information is invalid and the survey might be given again after the meeting.
# Student Health Survey

Please mark on your answer sheet how you feel about each of the following statements. You may only choose, *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree* once for each numbered question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel close to people at this school.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am happy to be at this school.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The teachers at this school treat students fairly.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I always tell the truth.</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult …

| 1. Who really cares about me. | 1. |
| 2. Who tells me when I do a good job. | 2. |
| 3. Who listen to me when I have something to say. | 3. |

At school…

| 1. I learn interesting things. | 1. |
| 2. I help decide things like class activities or rules. | 2. |
| 3. I do things that really matter. | 3. |

Outside of my home and school, there is an adult…

| 1. Who really cares about me. | 1. |
| 2. Who tells me when I do a good job. | 2. |
| 3. Who notices when I am upset about something. | 3. |
| 4. Who believes that I will be a success. | 4. |
| 5. Who always wants me to try my best. | 5. |

Outside of my home and school, I do these things.

| 1. I am part of clubs, sports teams, church/temple, or other groups. | 1. |
| 2. I am involved in music, art, literature, sports or a hobby. | 2. |
| 3. I often help other people. | 3. |
| 4. I feel like I have a purpose in my community. | 4. |

How true do you feel these statements are about you?

| 1. I have goals and plans for the future. | 1. |
| 2. I plan to graduate from high school. | 2. |
| 3. I plan to go to college or some other school after high school. | 3. |
| 4. I know where to go for help with a problem. | 4. |
| 5. I can work out my problems myself. | 5. |
| 6. I am liked by everyone. | 6. |

My friends…

| Get into a lot of trouble. | 1. |
| Do well in school. | 2. |
Building Resiliency: Teacher Strategy Tool-Kit

Once all the data has been collected the teacher will have several results or options that they can focus on. If the classroom is full of students that are deficient in one specific area, then the teacher will want to make specific and deliberate usage of the strategies especially designed to help build that area of resiliency. However, if the teacher after collecting the data finds that many of the students are deficient in multiple areas, and then deliberately incorporating a wide variety of strategies is best when building resilience in the classroom.

When looking at figure 2 one can see that there are a couple of strategies presented for each area of deficiency. Each area of deficiency has two strategic intervention plans associated with it. Each strategic intervention plan also has a desired outcome aligned with that strategic intervention plan. It is important to note, that many of the strategic intervention plans are teaching strategies that many teachers implement everyday in their classrooms. I know that personally I have used several of these teaching methods while teaching in the classroom. However, before doing research on the topic of resiliency and its application in the classroom, I was unaware that these teaching strategies could actually improve a student’s resilience in and out of the classroom. The difference between just using good teaching practices versus deliberately implementing teaching strategies to improve resilience, is the teaching of specific skills related to resilience. Rather than holistically improving student academic self-esteem, alienation, feelings of being unwanted, and a lack of external locus of control, teaching resilience will help build character and grit (Pianta & Walsh, 1998). Once data has been collected that the
strategy put in place to improve the student’s specific resiliency deficiency has improved then it should be deliberately shared with the student. The strategy and data collection should be shared with the student so that they can see progress and learn exactly why their resiliency has been improved.

In the case that a group of students has scored deficient in the *Low Academic Self-Esteem* category the two strategies that should be implemented would be Mastery Learning and Authentic Assessment.

Mastery Learning:

Benjamin S. Bloom is thought of the founder of the mastery learning method. Most current applications of the strategy can be traced back to his work. Bloom observed that teachers traditionally organize curriculum content into units and then check on student progress at the end of each unit. These learning checks, he reasoned, would be more valuable if they were used as part of the teaching and learning process to provide feedback on students’ individual learning difficulties and then to prescribe specific remediation activities. Bloom outlined a strategy to incorporate this feedback and corrective procedures, which he labeled mastery learning.

When using this strategy a teacher will organize the important concepts and skills they want the students to acquire into learning units, each requiring about two weeks of instructional time. Teachers will administer formative assessments that identify precisely what students have learned well and where they still need additional work. Once data has been collected from these formative assessments the teacher will then make specific and direct corrections for the student to complete.
After completing the correctives the student will then take a parallel formative assessment that addresses the same learning goals of the unit, but includes somewhat different problems, questions, or prompts. The second formative assessment will determine whether the correctives were successful in helping the student remedy their individual learning difficulties. It also serves as a powerful motivational tool by offering students a second chance to succeed.

Along with the corrective activities, Bloom recommended that the teacher plan enrichment or extension activities for students who demonstrate their proficiency on the first formative assessment. Enrichment activities give the student exciting opportunities to broaden and expand his or her learning ("http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/lessons-of-mastery-learning.aspx - Google Search," n.d.).
We know that students who have low resiliency also feel low academic self-esteem about their work and their knowledge. Using the mastery learning strategy to improve the student’s academic self-esteem is great because it allows for second chances and constant improvement. It is important for students with low academic self-esteem to have the opportunity to work closely with a teacher that will help teach the student skills that help him or her arrive at the solution to an issue on their own, rather than giving the student the answer (N, 1991). Mastery learning is also great for building resiliency in students with low academic self-esteem because it allows these students to prove their understanding of the content. Once the student has made correctives and proven their mastery of the content the self-esteem of the student will rise because the student feels like they have truly learned a subject or skill in the classroom. Furthermore, the student will have the opportunity to share any of their previous or learned knowledge during the enrichment activities, which will also boost the student’s self-esteem in the classroom. According to Tough, students who exhibit high academic self-esteem are more likely to be resilient because they will inherently have the tools necessary for pushing through more difficult content when it arises. Whereas students with low resiliency will have a more difficult time pushing through more difficult content. They do not have any previous encounters of being correct to encourage them through the hard content and easily give up.
Mastery Learning Resources:

http://sarahperkinsclassroom.weebly.com/mastery-learning.html

(“Mastery Learning,” n.d.)

This is a master teacher created cite, created specifically for helping teachers implement mastery learning in their classroom. This site has links to lesson plans that include many activities and engaging learning opportunities that will help build resilience in students. More importantly, however, are the behavioral outcomes associated with the lesson plan. The behavioral objectives include:

- Students working together to write alliteration poetry
- Students brainstorming together
- Students will finish name alliteration poem
- Students will understand where punctuation goes
- Students will behave as scholars and cooperative students

Much of resilience building is behavioral and it is important to change the behaviors of the students in the class. This model will help students build resiliency because it provides them with experiences and chances to work together. They can also learn to fail and succeed as a team so the risk of failure is low.


(“Madeline Hunter Lesson Plan Model,” n.d.)

Madeline Hunter a PhD in educational studies, created this model. This model is specially designed to work with students who are struggling in schools. As stated previously students with low resiliency, especially those with low academic self-
Esteem tend to struggle in school. This model is useful because it lists the steps in an easy to follow format. After following the steps in this format it will be easier to implement the mastery-learning model in the classroom.


This website is created by ASCD a trusted educational resource and organization. At this site teachers can learn more about the mastery-learning model, including history and resources as to help them incorporate the mastery learning method in their classrooms and existing lesson plans. This site also includes many books, articles, and scholarly references for teachers to read and implement. The ASCD organization always backs up its online resources with tons of research and citations that are useful to educators. This site is a generally good resource for any educator who is trying to learn more about mastery learning.

https://k12teacherstaffdevelopment.com/tlb/what-are-flipped-classrooms/

(“mastery learning enrichment activities - Google Search,” n.d.)

This resource is a collection of enrichment activities that can be used in the classroom to help build resiliency. Specifically, using the idea of flipping classrooms to building resilience in students. This model has students’ in-charge of their own learning at times and provides the students an opportunity to show off to the class their knowledge of the content. This opportunity to shine in the classroom will help build student academic self-esteem.
Authentic Assessment:

Another strategy used to improve a student’s academic self-esteem is authentic assessment. Authentic assessments should be used as frequently in the classroom as possible. Authentic assessments are a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills ("Grant Wiggins," n.d.).

An example of using authentic assessment in an English Language Arts middle school classroom would be, creating a pamphlet persuading the class to visit a specific vacation spot after completing a persuasive writing unit. According to Wiggins, assessments should be the first item a teacher plans during the planning phase of a unit plan. Instead of planning activities first educators should be figuring out exactly what the students should be able to do by the end of the unit. Educators understand this to be true as well. Which is why using authentic assessment to purposely improve student resiliency by improving student academic self-esteem is an important part of planning a unit. By using authentic assessments, students will begin to build resiliency because it will improve the student's academic self-esteem. Authentic assessments improve student academic self-esteem by allowing the student a meaningful and useful way to shine in the classroom. Students with low resiliency have historically been cast aside in classroom settings and have usually not been given the chance to prove their understanding or mastery of content (Paul, 2012).
**Authentic Assessment Resources:**

http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/

(“authentic assessment toolbox - Google Search,” n.d.)

This resource is a good general website for educators wanting to learn more about authentic assessment. This resource has information about what authentic assessment is, why it works, how you can implement it, and the standards it fulfills. This site also helps educators create tasks, rubrics, portfolios, and constructing tests. The site also has many different examples of authentic assessments that are appropriate for use in classroom settings.

http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/57730.htm

(Nast, Teacher, & Writer, n.d.)

The National Education Association has created this resource, which is a well-trusted nationally acclaimed organization. This resource is helpful because it quickly lists why it is beneficial to using authentic assessment in the classroom:

- It provides direct measures
- Captures constructive nature of learning
- Integrates teaching, learning and assessment
- Provides multiple paths to demonstration

The multiple paths of demonstration are the most important part of this technique in regards to building resilience. Students that have low academic self-esteem need an avenue to prove their mastery over the content. Using authentic assessment is an ideal way of doing this.

http://jolt.merlot.org/documents/vol1_no1_mueller_001.pdf
This resource was created by the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching to help educators create authentic assessment opportunities for their students. This resource is useful because not only does it include many different ideas of authentic assessments, but allows you to create your own authentic assessments. It also includes many academic citations and resources. This resource also includes many different links to more resources about authentic assessment, which mirror the idea of building resilience while using authentic assessment.

http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/specialty/alt/keepkids.pdf

(Services, 2000)

This is a book created by the board of education in Oregon. This book is fully available online as a pdf in the link above. The book has many different ideas about building resilience among students. Among those, are authentic assessment opportunities to help build resilience. The key take away from this book in regards to authentic assessment, is to give students an opportunity to shine in the classroom. The central idea is for students to master a skill and then, prove their mastery of the skill. Giving students this opportunity will help boost resilience by boosting academic self-esteem.

Mastery learning and authentic assessment are both effective strategies in aiding the building of resiliency among students. By continually allowing students to have opportunities that showcase a student’s understanding of content it will slowly increase the student’s academic self-esteem. When students have higher academic self-esteem they are more willing to push through tough content. They are also
more likely to be able persevere stressful high-stakes assessments such as statewide assessments. Mastery learning and authentic assessments also align with the Common Core Curriculum and can be used to meet many different standards while still making a direct and powerful impact in building resiliency among students.

If students have scored deficient in the area of *Alienation/Non-affliction* two strategic interventions could be teacher advisory programs and learner style-friendly instruction.

Teacher advisory programs:

For many students with low resiliency they feel like they do not have anyone who will guide them towards working on graduating and after graduation goals. Often, the difference between a student graduating and going to college and a student not finishing school or going to college is the relationship that the student has with just one adult at school who knows him or her well, believes in the student’s ability to succeed, and will not let him or her fail (“Sessions for Success,” n.d.).

Teacher advisory programs could look like independent studies for each individual student in the school and for many schools this model is exactly what teacher advisory programs do look like. One example teacher advisory program could have students demonstrating twenty-first century leadership skills in critical thinking, project management, problem solving, collaboration, communication, and creative expression activities. Advisers will meet their students at least once a week and work on the project with each student. Setting short-term goals that will
ultimately meet the long-term goal of either graduation or something more after graduation.

For many students who feel unconnected to a role model in their schools, graduating just doesn't seem like an option. Many students claim that they do not feel supported enough by a teacher or mentor in the school. Students also state that if they had a teacher or mentor that cared about them while in school many of them think they would have been able to graduate or move on to college (Barton, 2005).

Many students with low resiliency do not know how to set short-term or long-term goals because they have never been taught the advantages of setting goals. Their life experiences have taught them that there is no point in setting goals because no matter the circumstances the result will be the same. This is why deliberately building resiliency in students with alienation issues is important to build resiliency in at risk students (Baum et al., 2009).

Teacher Advisory Program Resources:


(“Advisory Activities,” n.d.)

This surprisingly is a Pinterest resource, which, is very helpful in listing different activities associated with teacher led advisory activities. Some of the activities include “minute-to-win-it” themed activities that are designed to help students feel like they are part of a team. This will help with students who feel alienated from their classmates. This resource also has ideas for “Team Talk” cards. Team Talk cards help students communicate with each other, so that students can feel like they belong to a larger group.
http://ozpk.tripod.com/advisory

(“teacher advisory activities - Google Search,” n.d.)

This resource also has many different activities that fit many different students and situations in the classroom. The website includes 31 different resources that help educators figure out which activities are best for specific students. This website also includes an email link that is available to use if you have questions about any of the links or resources included.

http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED364536

(Allen & Sheppard, 1992)

This resource is a peer-reviewed article located on ERIC. The resource includes answering questions like, why should schools have TA programs, what are the goals of TA programs, how are TA groups formed, and overall do’s and Don’ts of TA groups. This resource is a great beginner resource that helps educators who do not know what TA programs are or how they function.

Learning style-friendly instruction:

For many students living with low resiliency learning in the classroom can be challenging because they have very low-affliction with their instructor. Meaning they often find it challenging to learn while a teacher is using a learning style that does not best suit them. This lack of learning style-friendly instruction can make a student feel un-wanted in the classroom. (“Educational Leadership:Creating a Climate for Learning:Building Resiliency in Students,” n.d.). Using learning styles that are friendly towards the students is a great way to build a trusting relationship with students so that they can feel affliction towards their teacher or mentor.
Building resiliency through creating genuine connections is important to creating students that feel like they belong.

While much of modern educational research indicates that students are much more likely to make meaningful connections to learning while learning in a learning style that best fits them, it may actually be beneficial to try learning through learning styles that are not their strongest learning style ("Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences," n.d.). In fact, many students will benefit from trying to master a skill or specific content while learning it in a learning style they find difficult because it will in time strengthen their resiliency towards learning in new environments.

This strategy is strongly connected to the helping section of chapter three. When trying to help a student learn it would be more beneficial to just teach the student in a learning style that is best suited that student. However, when trying to strengthen resiliency in students it would be most beneficial to target a specific learning style that a student is weak in and try teaching that student a specific skill. Slowly introducing something difficult and providing support and allowing a healthy amount of struggle is essential to building up resiliency (Tough, 2012). Many of the strategies will be effective in both lower-socioeconomic classes and higher-socioeconomic classes, however, using this strategy of increasing challenge by shifting learning styles will be especially effective in higher-socioeconomic classes where the challenge is hard to come by, resulting in lower resiliency and grit (Tough, 2012).
Learner Friendly Learning Style Resources:

http://www.personal.psu.edu/bxb11/LSI/LSI.htm

(“learning styles inventory - Google Search,” n.d.)

This resource is actually a learning style index. Using this website can help determine which learning style a student is or which learning style they believe they are. Using this learning style index quiz can be used during the first couple days of school so that an educator may better inform their lesson and unit plans. Some of the questions are:

- I prefer information to be presented in the form of visual aids
- I like to write things down or to take notes for visual review
- I require explanations of diagrams, graphs, or visual directions
- I enjoy working with my hands or making things
- I am skillful with an enjoy developing and making graphs
- Etc....

Once students have taken the learning style index, educators will be able to establish which learning style should work best for them. Using learner friendly learning styles will help build resiliency in students who feel like they have low-affliction.

http://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/

(“learning styles inventory - Google Search,” n.d.)

This resource is a great beginner resource for any educator. Of course, all educators will have at some point learned about the seven different learning styles. However, for many educators it would have been a long time since
reviewing them and many teachers need to review. This resource gives brief definitions of each and gives examples for each of them.

- Visual- (spatial) you prefer using pictures images, and spatial understanding.
- Aural- (auditory-musical) you prefer using sound and music.
- Verbal (linguistic) you prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- Physical (kinesthetic) you prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
- Logical (mathematical) you prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.
- Social- (interpersonal) you prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- Solitary- (intrapersonal) you prefer to work alone and use self-study.

It also gives a brief explanation of how to differentiate lessons and why educators should be using different learning styles in their classrooms. Although, it is important to also realize that using a learner’s most friendly learning style will help the learner learn it may be beneficial to use more difficult learning styles as well to help build resiliency.

http://www.duarte.com/blog/do-learning-styles-teach-us-anything/

(“Do Learning Styles Teach Us Anything?,” n.d.)

This is an excellent resource because not only does it provide great explanations of each learning style and whom it works for, but it also provides interesting information about brain activity and how that can affect the learner and
preferred learning style. It also provides a great visual representation of learning styles, which, could be used as a quick reference guide for teachers and students in the room.


(“learning styles inventory - Google Search,” n.d.)

This website is a great resource associated with learning styles because it provides different tangible products. Unfortunately, this site requires a subscription
fee of around $125 a teacher can have access to different books, PDF downloads, worksheets, and other resources.

http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-learning-styles-research

(“Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences,” n.d.)

In the education universe, there is an ongoing debate about whether learning styles actually matter in the classroom. Essentially, this resource provides research-based data that can be implemented in the classroom. The website states that, there is not a lot of research that indicates that learning styles are essential for learning. However, the site does state that multiple intelligences are scientifically proven which, do influence learning styles quite strongly. Overall, this resource is well made and full of factual data that can be used to inform teachers and supervisors about the importance of using learning styles in the classroom.

Using both a combination of teacher advisory programs and learning style-friendly instruction will help to move students towards the goal of feeling like they belong. When students feel like they belong it can help build up resiliency by giving them a safety net sensation. Students with high affliction are students with strong resilience against stresses such as difficult tasks and content. By creating a lasting, caring relationship students are more likely to make meaningful connections to, content, set meaningful short-term and long-term goals, which will lead many more students to graduate.

Students who scored as deficient in the areas of Feeling needed and wanted should be targeted by the strategic interventions of cooperative learning and service learning strategies. Skills and understanding in social and emotional learning are
not things that people are inherently born with. Ultimately the goal of the Common Core Curriculum standards is to move students towards college and career readiness. Students who are college and career ready are those students who can work together and problem solve in creative ways while feeling useful as part or a creative team or workforce ("Cooperative Learning Fits into the Calculation," n.d.). Cooperative learning and service learning strategic interventions not only deliberately target deficiencies in resiliency, but they also, help teachers and students move towards meeting the new Common Core standards.

Cooperative Learning:

In simplest terms cooperative learning is a teaching strategy in which small groups of students with different levels of ability and mastery will use a variety of learning activities to best improve their understanding of a subject. For many English language arts classrooms this may look like a “jigsaw” learning activity.

For example, while teaching Cyrano De Bergerac a teacher might arrange several different stations around the room which hold different documents and artifacts relating to the specific themes of beauty, heroism, masculinity, and femininity, which all relate to the overall themes in Cyrano De Bergerac. Students will be placed into pre-arranged groups to allow for differentiation of ability and mastery. Students will then read the articles or interact with the artifacts and come to a group conclusion about the article or artifact. These groups, then split off and teach another group made up of entirely different members about their home article or artifact and their home groups central findings. Not only does cooperative learning, increase student meaningful mastery of the content, but it also helps
increase student usefulness ("Cooperative Learning Fits into the Calculation," n.d.).

When students feel more useful in the classroom their resiliency is raised because they feel like they have a team of people who are relying on them. The option of failure is no longer an option and when the team is supportive failure is not as terrifying as well ("Educational Leadership: Creating a Climate for Learning: Building Resiliency in Students," n.d.).

**Co-operative Learning Resources:**

[http://www.co-operation.org/home/introduction-to-cooperative-learning/](http://www.co-operation.org/home/introduction-to-cooperative-learning/)

("Introduction to Cooperative Learning -," n.d.)

This website is actually an organization that focuses on the benefits of cooperative learning in the classroom. This resource also gives an in-depth look into what cooperative learning is all about. It gives the history of cooperative learning and who invented the idea model of cooperative learning. Not only does this website provide online resources for teachers, but it also can be used to order books that can be used to help students and teachers master cooperative learning.

[https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/cooplear.html](https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/cooplear.html)

("cooperative learning - Google Search," n.d.)

The governmental office of research created this site: education consumer guide. It gives a brief definition of cooperative learning and what it is, why it works, and how it looks in the classroom. It also gives a few instructional tools that can be used in the classroom:
• Group Investigation: structured to emphasize higher-order thinking skill such as analysis and evaluation. Students work to produce a group project, which they may have a hand in selecting.

• STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Division) is used in grades 2-12. Students with varying academic abilities are assigned to 4 -5 member teams in order to study what the teacher has initially taught and help each reach his or her highest level of achievement. Students are then tested individually. Teams earn certificates or other recognition based on the degree to which all team member have progressed over their past records.

• Jigsaw II: is used with narrative material in grades 3-12. Each team member is responsible for learning a specific part of a topic. After meeting with members of other groups, who are expert in the same part, the experts return to their own groups and present their findings. Team members then are quizzed on all topics.

The website also provides links to many other websites and specific program examples where this model has been proven to work.


(“cooperative learning roles - Google Search,” n.d.)

The government created this source and the readwritethink organization is funded by the government and can help fulfill standards. The website provides many different cooperative learning strategies that can be used in the classroom. Cooperative Group Role Cards are one great example. The
cards are passed out to the students so that they will know what their role is during cooperative learning in the classroom.

- **Leader:** Makes sure that every voice is heard and focuses work around the learning task. *Sound Bites:* lets hear from ____ next. That's interesting, but let's get back to our task.

- **Recorder:** Compiles groups member's ideas on collaborative graphic organizer and writes on the board for the whole class to see during the presentation. *Sound Bites:* I think I heard you say ____: is that right? How would you like me to write this?

- **Time Keeper:** Encourages the group to stay on task and announces when time is halfway through and when time is nearly up. *Sound Bite:* we only have five minutes left. Let's see if we can wrap up by then.

- **Presenter:** Presents the group’s finished work to the class. *Sound Bite:* how would you like this to sound?

- **Errand Monitor:** Briefly leaves the group to get supplies and to request help from the teacher when the group members agree that they do not have the resources to solve the problem. *Sound Bites:* Do you think it's time to ask the teacher for help? I'll get an extra graphic organizer from the shelf.

This resource is great because it provides many different activities and useful worksheets that will assist students in cooperative learning. Many students that have low resilience will have trouble working in groups and feeling useful in a group of students.
This is a book that is entirely available online for educators to get more information about cooperative learning. I especially like the section of this book that specifies what the teacher should be doing during cooperative learning opportunities in the classroom.

- Ensure that interaction through activity, interdependence, individual accountability; interpersonal communication and interaction through reflection are built into the activity in a positive and promotive way and present in all structures and activities.
- Facilitate the setting of group guidelines for communication
- Form heterogeneous groups of participants that match the learning objectives.
- Negotiate project groups with other instructors in similar areas
- Monitor group activities.
- Identify suitable readings for activities.
- Encourage participation.
Service Learning:

Service learning pedagogies are ones that combine the learning goals and the community service in ways that enhance both student and communal growth. It can be described as a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Typically, community engagement is incorporated into a course or series of courses by way of a unit project that has both learning and community action goals. Because students who lack resilience need a place in the community to feel welcomed and safe service learning is a perfect fit to improving a student's feeling of value (Baum et al., 2009). Many students who do not feel needed in their community will often suffer from low resilience and make poor choices that will negatively impact their academic achievement and graduation rates (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011). This is why implementing service learning into at least one, if not more units is essential to producing resilient students.

Service Learning Resources:

http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-through-community-engagement/

(“service learning - Google Search,” n.d.)

This resource is a good starting point for any professional looking to get a background history of service learning, as well as some general information about the pedagogy behind service learning. This source also has plenty of links to
different websites and articles that are worth reading if a teacher is looking into using service learning in the classroom.

http://www.generationon.org/educators/lessons-resources/learning-to-give

(lauraip, 2010)

This website is called Learning to Give created by the Generation On organization. This resource is a great starting place for teachers looking to get ideas about how to initially incorporate service learning into their classroom. The website has several different important categories that would be useful in building resiliency in students through service learning. The resource provides over 1,600 different k-12 service-learning lessons, many different educational resources, search engines, themed units, moments of service, and a philanthropy framework to use while working with students.


This is a great tool for any teacher that is in the planning stages of incorporating service learning into the classroom. It provides many different activities and themed units to help give ideas. However, the most valuable piece of information that this website provides are the key essentials that a service learning unit plan must have:

- Investigation
- Planning and Preparation
- Action
- Reflection
- Demonstration of results and Celebration
The random acts of kindness website is an absolute gem when looking for lesson planning resources that incorporate service learning and resilience building. The objective of the organization is actually to build resilience in students through the use of service learning activities. This resource is great because it gives the teacher a step-by-step process on how to build a unit around service learning, while still meeting academic goals and standards. The website gives objectives, goals, grade levels, content areas, character traits, time needed, where it fits in the year as a whole, materials needed, procedures and activities, closing, and assessments. Overall, this is a great addition to the service learning toolkit because it directly focuses on increasing student resilience and pushing academics in the classroom.

When students feel like they are not in control of their surroundings, they feel like they no longer have to try. Tough in his book, How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character writes about a little girl growing up in the projects of New York City. This little girl Tough wrote would see hundreds of people from her neighborhood, try and try to get out of the projects, but no matter how hard they tried they could never get out. This was as Tough describes because they had a lack of external control over their environment. If people do not feel like there is a light at the end of the tunnel they will simply stop trying to get out of the
tunnel, which, is exactly what happens to so many students living in low socioeconomic areas and going to poor schools.

The students Tough was describing would score low in the category of external locus of control, resulting in students who feel powerless in their school and community. Using the strategies of goal planning and cause/effect curriculum to target students who need help feeling like they can control their future, will help students who do not feel in control to build resilience, and achieve more in and out of the classroom.

Goal Planning:

Planning may seem simple to teachers because teachers plan all the time. However, it is important to note that as any teacher will tell you, planning is an essential step in producing master lessons which create master unit plans, which, create high achieving students. The planning comes easy to teachers because it is something they must do at all times. However, planning does not come so easily to students with low resilience. Students scoring low in resilience will not be able to set long term or even short term goals (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011). Low resilient students have been taught repeatedly by their external environment that, going against the stream will never result in a change of lifestyle or outcomes (Tough, 2012). So teaching students how to set goals is something that should be connected into every lesson and unit plan a teacher makes. If teachers want students to create meaningful artifacts from learning and make long lasting connections to learning, they should be planning on how to accomplish these goals.
Planning can be broken down into four major categories. The first is defining the goal. The second is outlining the steps needed to achieve it. The third is considering possible blocks and ways of dealing with them. And the fourth is setting deadlines is essential to goal setting and planning. It is also important to note that in order for something to be a goal, it has to be important to you, personally. It has to be within your power to make it happen through hard work and perseverance. It has to be something you have a reasonable chance of accomplishing within a reasonable amount of time. And lastly, it must be clearly defined and have a specific plan of action that will help you to accomplish the goal.

Specific goals can be derived from using the data results of the mental health quiz. In the last section if the student has answered no to any of the questions it could be a good starting point for the teacher to begin making plans and setting goals with the students about meeting some of these deficient areas.

Goal Planning Resources:

http://www.goodcharacter.com/BCBC/Goals.html

The good character resource is another website that is helpful for teachers just starting off to build goals and plans with students. It gives brief descriptions about what a goal must be and how to attain particular goals as outlined above. However, it also includes specific lesson plans and activities for boosting specific character traits. For example, it includes a series of writing exercises for building responsibility:

- What responsibilities do you believe you personally have for yourself, your family, your community, and the world?
• Think of an instance when you were impressed by the way a teenager took responsibility for something. Write a news story or letter to the editor about this person.

• Write a letter to someone in the news who did something that you think was irresponsible. Be specific about why you don’t think it was right and why you think this action sets a bad example. Mail the letter!

The website has many different writing prompts for ten different character traits that could be used to set goals and help students plan out their actions to achieving the goals.

http://www.edutopia.org/research-made-relevant-grit-smart-goals-video

(“Grit Curriculum Lesson,” n.d.)

This is actually a video made for teachers that will help inspire them to create goal-setting lessons with students. Specifically targeting grit and resilience. The idea behind the video is that if students can learn to set long term goals with short term results, then they will better be able to handle road blocks ahead in life.

http://www.relaxfocusenjoy.com/5-fun-goal-setting-activities/

(Khan, n.d.)

This is a great resource for bringing planning and fun into the classroom. Many times teaching strategies seem clinical and forced to students. This website has created five fun activities that will help build resilience and planning skills while having fun!

• You’ve just won the lottery!

  o Write a plan about how your life will change
• Is it a bird, is it a plane, no its …you
  o You have just received super powers plan your next steps.
• You’ve only got 6 months left to live...
  o Plan out what you want to do with your life?

It includes much more fun and engaging language than listed, but it gives a general sense of what a teacher can expect using this resource.

http://www.goal-setting-for-success.com/goal-setting-activity.html

This resource is different from the rest because it does not require a lot of writing. This website created a goal setting plan of action that revolves around drawing and relaxing meditation. For example, it asks the student to take out a piece of paper and draw a picture of what your life looks like ten years from now. Using their imagination and visualizing their future will help build resiliency.

Cause/Effect Curriculum:

Implementing cause/effect curriculum is not so much about teaching students the basics of traditional cause and effect. Using cause and effect curriculums in the realm of building resiliency among resilient deficient students focuses on showing students that hard work and persistence does pay off in the long run. Many students who are resilient deficient do not believe that they are masters of their own future. When thinking about students in low socioeconomic neighborhoods, traditionally these students see poverty every day of their lives. Many of them cannot imagine a world that exists beyond the ghetto, and therefore, they will never attain a life outside the ghetto (Canada, 1998).
In the classroom cause and effect curriculum may not look like a specific lesson built around the central goals of building resilience and teaching that hard work does pay off. But, in many cases it may also not be so easily apparent to the untrained eye. Using cause and effect curriculum should be an ongoing (yearly) practice that infiltrates every aspect of the classroom and daily student life. Cause and effect curriculum is more about classroom management and pedagogy philosophy. It can be broken down into five essential pillars:

- **Setting a good example**: The first step that we need to take to teach our kids to value working hard is to set a good example in our own lives. Show your children that hard work pays off, and that you should always give your best effort when you’re at work, in school, or at home. Leading by example is the best way to lay the foundation for a good work ethic.

- **Not giving your child everything they want**: It’s OK and even necessary to say no to your kids sometimes. By always giving your kids what they ask for without any second thought we teach them that they deserve to have anything and everything no matter what. What we should be teaching them is that it is through hard work that you achieve the things you want.

- **Having them work**: Start giving your children chores when they’re young and encourage them to get a part-time job as they get older so that they learn the importance of having responsibility and learning to juggle their time and their money. The earlier they learn this, the better.

- **Reinforce hard work positively**: Sometimes your children will fail, even when they put in the work. Maintain a positive attitude during these times,
and encourage them to keep trying. It’s easy to let failure negatively affect you, and kids need to learn that they should use failure to propel them forward and try harder, not persuade them to give up.

- **Reward a job well done:** To doubly reinforce a good work ethic be sure to reward kids when they do a job well done. Maybe it’s an extra allowance, maybe they get to go out for ice cream, or maybe they are able to have a friend spend the night; whatever the case, by rewarding them for working hard they will quickly associate the connection between hard work and rewards and continue that path.

("teaching kids that hard work pays off - Google Search," n.d.)

*Not all of these elements are directly connected to classroom life. However, all of them can be easily adapted to classroom daily routine.*

*Cause/Effect Resources:*


("teaching kids that hard work pays off - Google Search," n.d.)

This resource is useful because many resources online are about teaching students the basics of cause and effect. This online resource is more about teaching students about hard work and persistence. It gives great details about the five essentials to building potency in students who are deficient in resiliency. It’s a great beginners guide to implementing the strategies not only with students in your classroom, but also students throughout the school that you will come in contact with.

http://www.cis.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/2000/2/00.02.05.x.html
This is an online unit plan that surrounds the key elements of cause and effect. The unit plan is about how actions that students make can have a negative or positive effect on their lives. The unit plan delves deep into the choices we make as students and then eventually into adulthood. It touches on the essential pillars of potency building through cause and effect.

http://www.greatschools.org/parenting/motivation-confidence/4302-teach-your-child-to-be-persistent-video.gs

This online resource is a great tool to use with younger students. The website greatschools.org includes many different videos that pertain to cause/effect curriculum in the classroom. The video in this link is about persistence and sticking to something until you reach your goals. This online resource also includes videos that students can watch and interact with.

http://www.usca.edu/essays/vol32002/wheatley.pdf

This resource is a guide for teachers who want to build persistence. According to this resource teacher persistence helps foster effective teaching and learning. Specifically, teacher persistence may promote high expectations for students and development of teaching skills, teacher reflectiveness, and responsiveness to diversity, teaching efficacy, effective response to setbacks, and successful use of reformed reaching methods. Overall, this resource should be used as a handy guide on how to build potency in one’s self and therefore, building potency and resilience among ones’ students.
Chapter 4
Conclusions and Recommendations

For years, school has been a place where children go to learn about math and science. Schools have become a place where students must read and then respond to several formal questions. Our society is obsessed with testing student’s fixed IQ scores and trying desperately to increase that student’s IQ score, by the time they leave high school. But, what if this model is not working any longer?

The conventional wisdom about the key to success has been misguided. Rather than focus on promoting cognitive abilities, our focus should be on developing such things as gratitude, curiosity, self-control and grit, all of which is distilled into the word “character” (Cartini, 1997). The resilience model does not put emphasis on raising student’s IQ scores, but instead, instills students with the distilled definition of “character.” Students who have higher levels or resilience will inherently score better on assessments while in schools. Students with higher levels of grit and character will perform better during math class and during ELA (Tough, 2012). When students feel needed, potent, included, and loved, they will begin to gain resilience.

The opponents of incorporating resilience into the classroom are those who do not think that teaching “social” skills in an academic setting are important to students. Certain people do not think that teaching students how to overcome stress and become resilient is a useful usage of classroom time. However, educators know that each year the number of students who drop out of schools across the country is rising. Educators also understand that, many students are turning to drugs and
alcohol as coping mechanisms during stressful times at school (Barton, 2005). The needs of many different students from many different communities across the country are not being met. With over one third of the student population dropping out of high school each year, it is obvious that just teaching students academic skills is no longer an option. Our students deserve better, it is imperative to the success of our educational framework in this country that we, as educators, stop just teaching academic skills and start teaching resiliency in the classroom. The key to helping these students is by building character and grit. Building resilient students is the key to producing great results during and after middle and high school.

Interestingly enough, there are some schools in the United States of America that have begun to emphasize the importance of “character.” Many private and charter schools have recently been created, and specifically designed to help build resiliency among its student bodies. For example, locally there are two schools, which emphasize building resiliency into their everyday curriculum. The first school is Hope Hall and the second is Bishop Kearney High School, both are located in Rochester, New York. Both of these schools are private schools, which incorporate high academic standards, paired with daily social lessons geared at creating more resilient students. These schools have both been functioning successfully, for at least a decade apiece and can be seen as shining examples of how local schools can incorporate the resilience model on a daily basis. The resilience model has not only been a success locally in the Rochester area schools, but also, on a more national scale. The huge organization of charter schools, which, is sweeping the nation, is the Kipp organization of schools. The Kipp organization of schools has five pillars, of
which, they use to help students achieve the most they can. The first pillar is
something imperative to building resilient students: the belief in all students. The
second pillar is a goal setting pillar, which, is also very important in building
resilient students: college graduation as the goal. The third pillar is also essential to
building resilience, academic and character focusing curriculum. The fourth,
creating visionary leadership through student engagement. This fourth pillar is very
similar to creating students that feel potent and needed in their school community,
two essential qualities of a resilient student. The fifth and final pillar, excellent
teachers. Excellent teachers understand how important it is to create a classroom
culture that habitats resilient students (Tough, 2009). The Kipp organization of
schools is a charter school organization, and like all charter school organizations, it
threatens the very idea of public school education. This thesis does not intend to
argue against public schools. However, this thesis does intend to pinpoint schools
that have a better than the average graduation rate, analyze what they are doing
differently, and attempt to understand why. When looking at the five pillars, I would
argue that almost all public schools claim to include the same core beliefs in their
school mission statements. The key missing element in many public schools, are the
character building aspects. Schools need to start incorporating resiliency building
curriculum strategies.

Resiliency building curriculum is more than just caring about your students.
It starts with building a genuine relationship with students, but it grows into
something much more important than that. The relationship turns into one of a true
mentor and student. Over time the mentor must learn what is best for each student
individually. It will not always be easy to see someone you care about struggle. However, if students are to be successful during and after your class, then, they must learn to become resilient. Teaching resilience means directly targeting resilient deficient students and behaviors. A master teacher will be able to marry the two worlds of resiliency building and academic learning. When combined the student is reaching his or her full potential. It is time that we stop ignoring the real issues in our school systems and start focusing on the real issues. Issues like poverty, race, gender inequality, and student self worth are the true hindrances to student success (Canada, 1998). The “real” issues as Canada puts it, are those that breed resilient deficient students. Teachers must learn to combat these spawning points by creating a resilient breeding ground within their classrooms. My recommendation for the future would be, to include resiliency based curriculum, teacher education in every academic system for teachers. I believe that every teacher, whether they be a first year teacher, or a master teacher should be trained in resiliency building curriculum.

Teaching students to become stronger is difficult. Teachers must understand that working with resilient deficient students is tough, slow moving work. The students are resiliency deficient to begin with and learning to become resilient means learning to deal with strife. Learning to deal with challenges is something that every person struggles with on a daily basis. However, one quote has stuck with me while researching for this project, “Life doesn’t get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient” (“Life, the Truth, and Being Free,” n.d.). I believe this quote is true in every aspect of life, for every person who is living life. The
reason why teachers must help students to become more resilient is not so that they can score higher on an assessment. Teachers must help students gain resiliency because it is the right thing to do.
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