

Position Statement on Resilience

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Overview

- Resilience as good adaptation
- A CHAT view of adaptation
- Implications for discussing resilience
- Implications for the work of professionals

Resilience as good adaptation

- Resilience is a two-dimensional construct defined by the constellations of exposure to adversity and the manifestation of successful adaptation in the face of that riskThe very definition of resilience is therefore based on an expectation of successful or problematic adjustment in response to risk factors

(Schoon 2006:7)

'Risk' and 'Protection'

- Risk factors are relative and situational i.e. may not be **experienced** as risk factors
- Protective factors include: individual attributes, family characteristics, aspects of the wider social context i.e. 'psychosocial forces that support or promote adaptive development' (Schoon 2006: 15)

Adaptation and learning

- Dominant view of learning and development is to see learning as successful adaptation (e.g. Piaget)
- A CHAT view of learning is based on the work of Vygotsky and focuses on individual and systemic learning – learning is not just adaptation but also involves shaping our worlds

A CHAT view of mutual adaptation

Individual learning involves:

- internalisation and **externalisation**
- a changing relationship between individuals and the practices they inhabit
- people being shaped by, but also shaping these practices as they act on them
- focusing on the social situations to see whether and how they too adapt

Implications for discussing resilience

- Resilience is not just a matter of personal adaptation or an ability to bounce back after adversity
- We need to also focus on whether the social situations/ the practices people inhabit are receptive to externalisation i.e. permit the exercise of agency in externalisation

A focus on practices

- Schools are what Dorothy Holland calls 'figured worlds' i.e. made up of practices which people learn to navigate and manipulate so they can propel themselves forward i.e. be intentional or agentic
- A key question is therefore the freedom of movement that teachers have to be able to work on their worlds to shape them so they can take forward their intentions.

Implications for the work of professionals

- Organizational professionalism and occupational professionalism (Evetts 2009)
- The former uses professionalism as a form of occupational control within hierarchical structures, and is a feature of NPM in public service sector work.
- The latter emphasises relationships over structures, and demonstrates an orientation to work where 'the needs and demands of audiences, patients, clients, students and children are paramount' (2009: 252).

Resilience in teaching

- Not simply a capacity for robust adaptation to difficult situations
- Needs to be examined in terms of the capacity of the social situation of the school to be responsive to the professional and agentic actions of teachers