

Fostering Educator Resilience: For New Teachers

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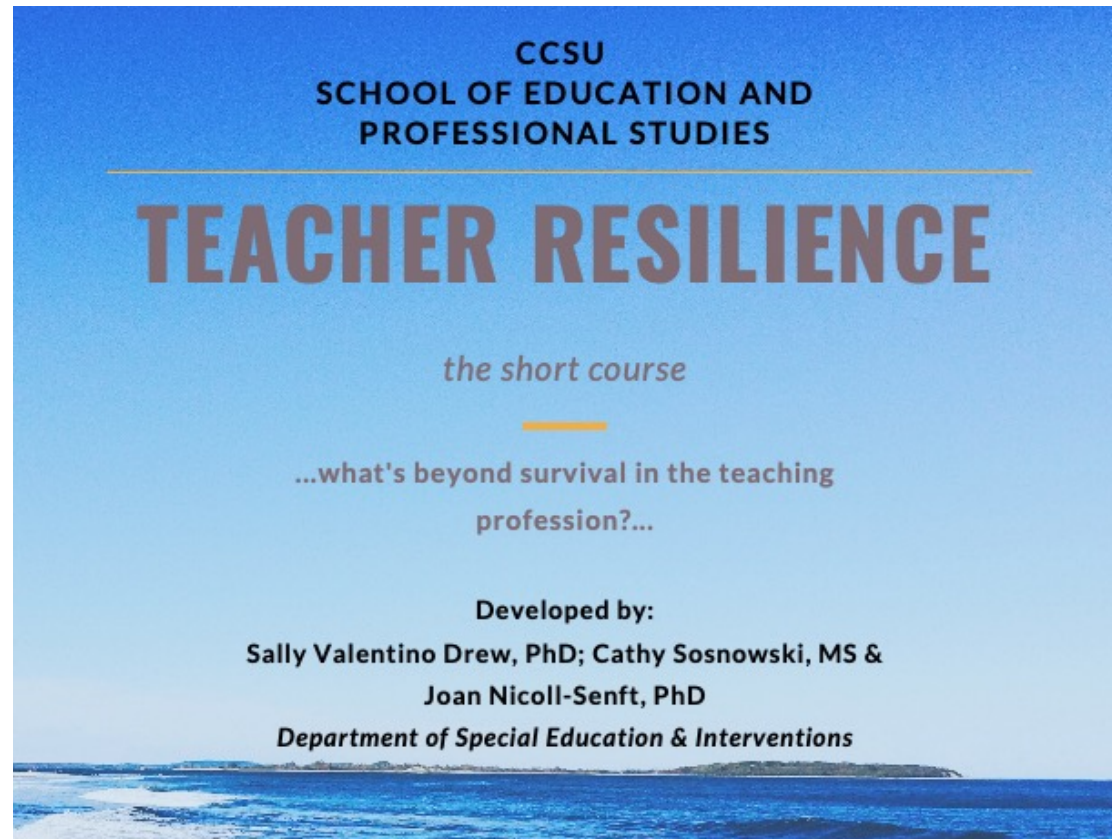
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CT Council for Exceptional Children Conference 12.4.20



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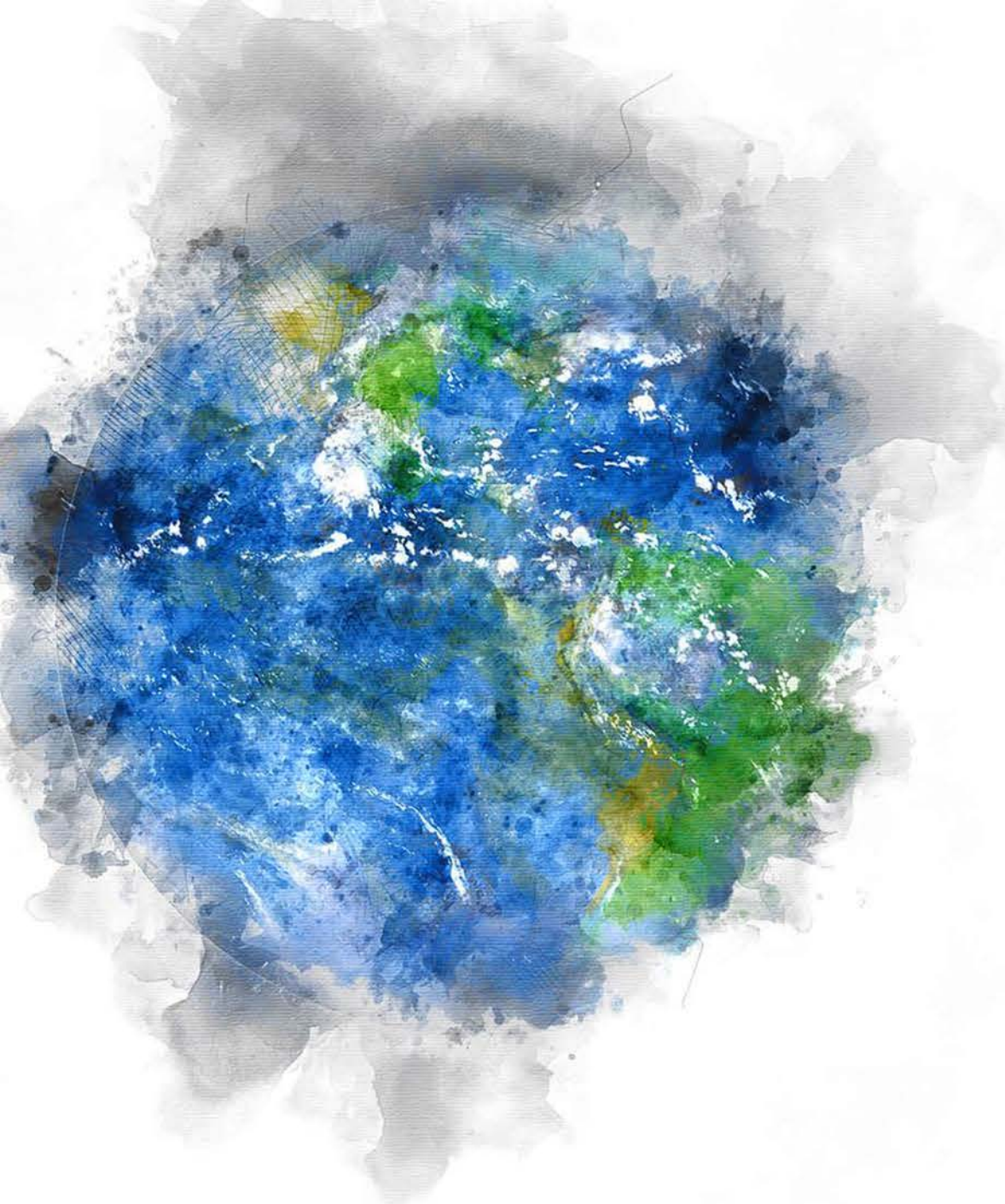
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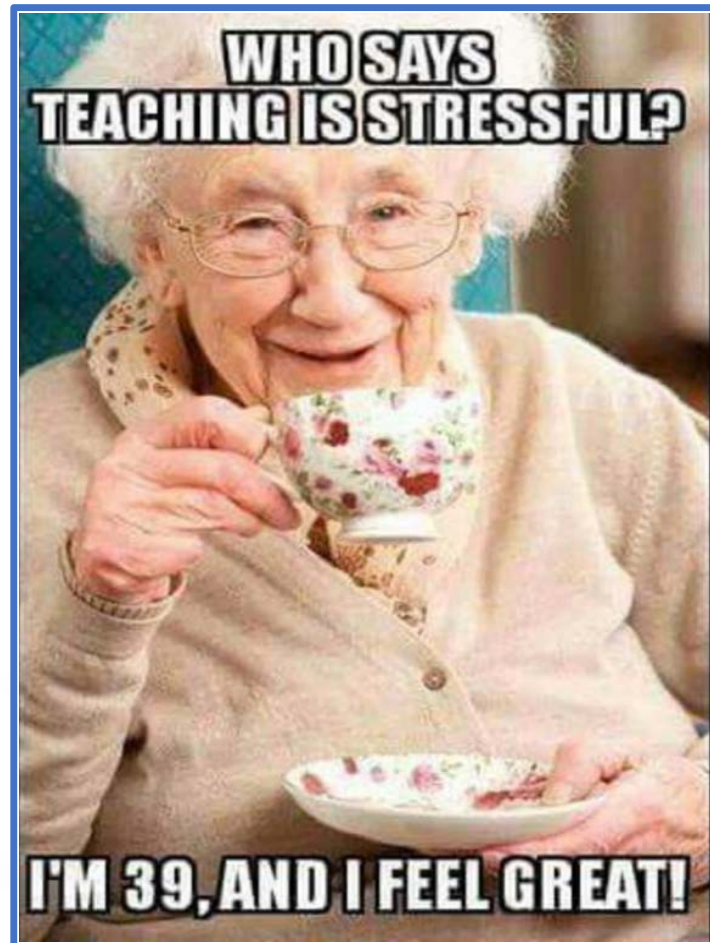


Learning intentions

- ✓ I am learning about teacher resilience, its many components, and specific strategies to foster resilience as a beginning teacher.



Why are we
talking about
teacher
resilience?

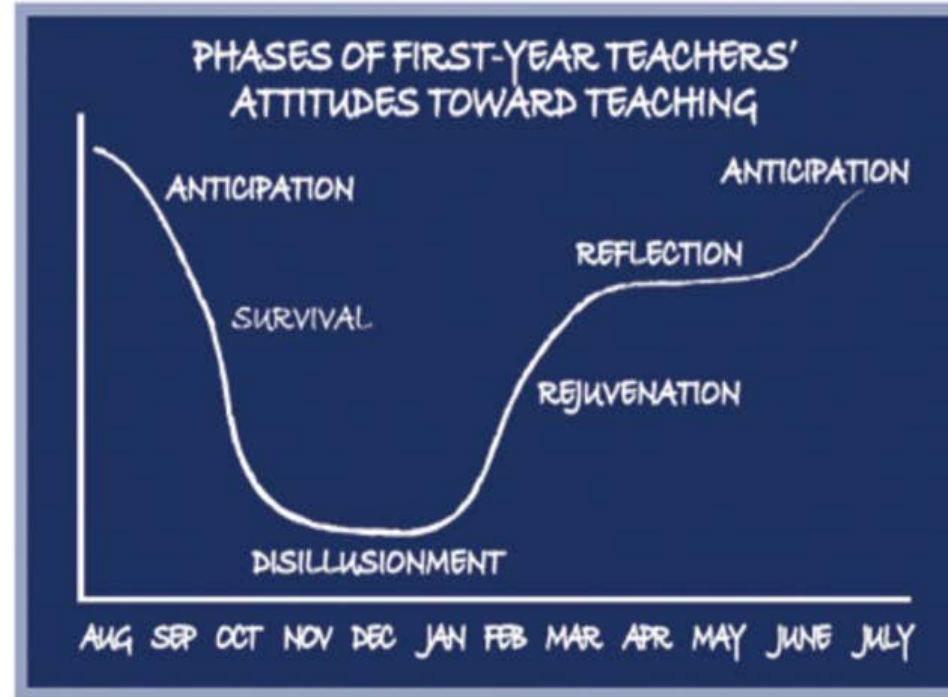


It was bad pre-COVID

- Teacher attrition
- Teacher burnout
- Lack of effective mentoring
- Scrutiny from parents and administrators

Did you know that many refer to education as the profession that eats its young? Based on recent studies, we still have nearly 50 percent of teachers entering the profession and leaving in the first five years. This has major implications on the already increasing teacher shortage. When asked, many teachers who have left explain that the stress of their working conditions are the major reason why. Examples of these stressful conditions include lack of support from colleagues and administrators, excessive workloads, inadequate resources, and the increasing difficulty of students' behavior. One group of teacher educators in Australia explain, "We have known for many years that teaching can be stressful, particularly for new teachers, but little appears to have changed."

-Excerpt from Module 1 Drew, Sosnowski, Nicoll-Senft, 2019



It's alarming but true: studies have shown that 35% of teachers leave the profession during the first year. By the end of the fifth year, 50% of teachers have left the field! — From Teachers Helping Teachers, Springfield Public Schools, Springfield, MA



[New York Times Article, Natasha Singer, 11.30.20](#)

Teaching in the Pandemic: 'This Is Not Sustainable'

Teacher burnout could erode instructional quality, stymie working parents and hinder the reopening of the economy.



“Parents blaming me because their kids chose to stay in bed, on phones, on video games instead of doing work...”

“Teachers are not okay right now”

“We’re seeing an extreme level of teacher burnout”

“Teachers singled out hybrid programs requiring them to instruct in-person and remote students simultaneously as being particularly taxing”

“If we keep this up, you’re going to lose an entire generation of not only students but also teachers”



*How you manage stress
will determine your
ability to stay in the
profession and thrive.*



What is
teacher
resilience?



Teacher resilience is the “capacity to manage the unavoidable uncertainties inherent in the realities of teaching” and to “maintain equilibrium and a sense of commitment and agency” ... Arguably, teachers who have left teaching have done so in part due to a lack of resilience (Gu & Day, 2013).

It is NOT merely the ability to bounce back...



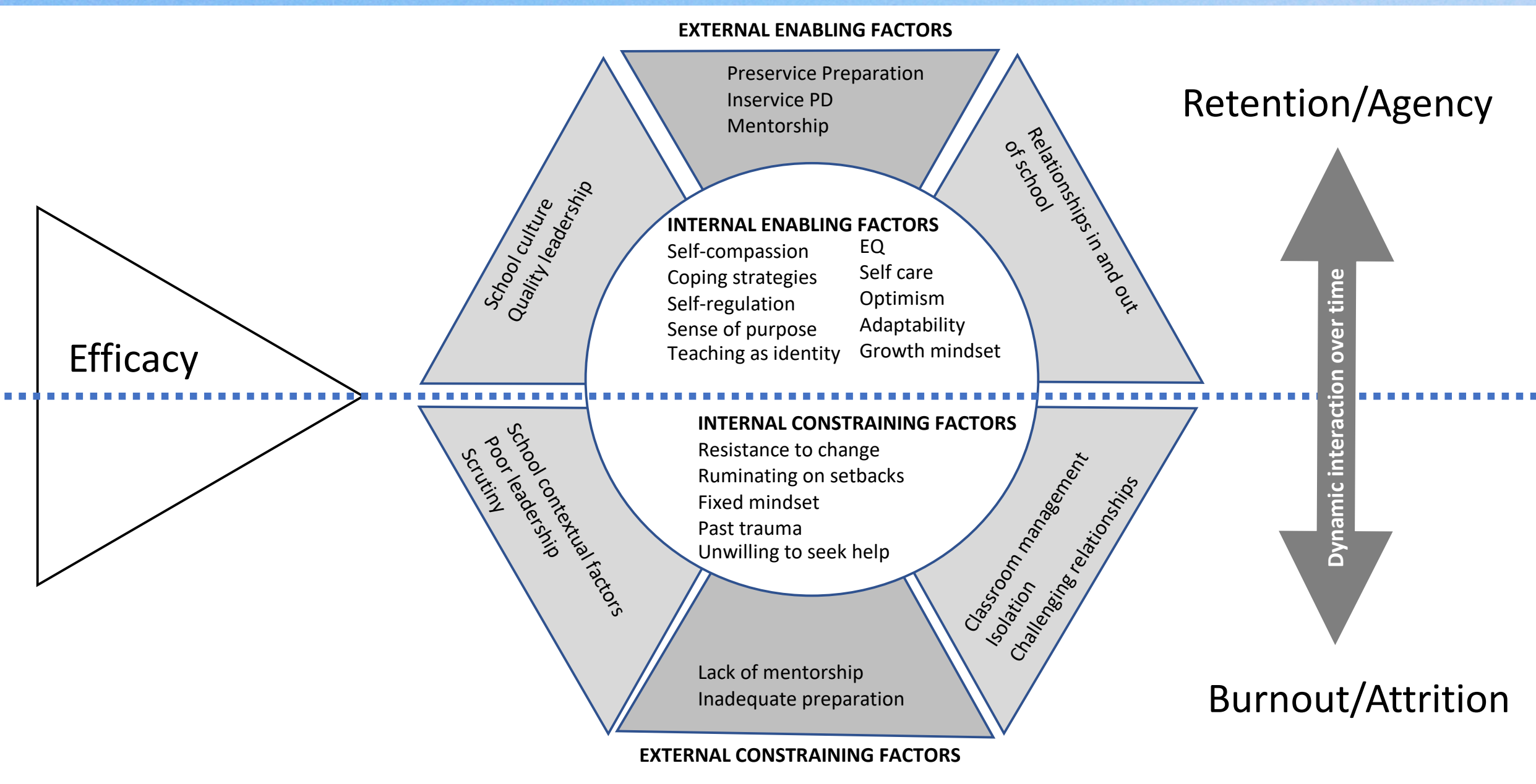
- Ongoing outcome of human adaptation to the environment and not a fixed trait ([Masten and Reed, 2005](#))
- Develops through dynamic and interactive process with unique stage goals of **survival**, **recovery** and **thriving** ([Ledesma, 2014](#))
- Rather than merely bouncing back, goals of teacher resilience are:
 - ✓ to overcome past obstacles
 - ✓ steer through everyday adversity
 - ✓ bounce back after setbacks
 - ✓ reach beyond challenges toward thriving and teacher agency
 - ✓ retaining the idea that you can positively influence your environment and overall experience of teaching



- Teacher resilience can boost
 - ✓ teacher effectiveness
 - ✓ job satisfaction
 - ✓ motivation
 - ✓ teacher self-efficacy
- Resilient teachers are more self-efficacious, make fewer excuses, procrastinate less and take care of themselves
- Number of years teaching does not positively influence resilience
- Day-to-day job satisfaction is a strong driver of resilience
- Teachers often change schools, not to advance their careers, but because of dissatisfaction
- Finding a supportive environment is essential to developing resilience early in your career



What are the
components
of teacher
resilience?



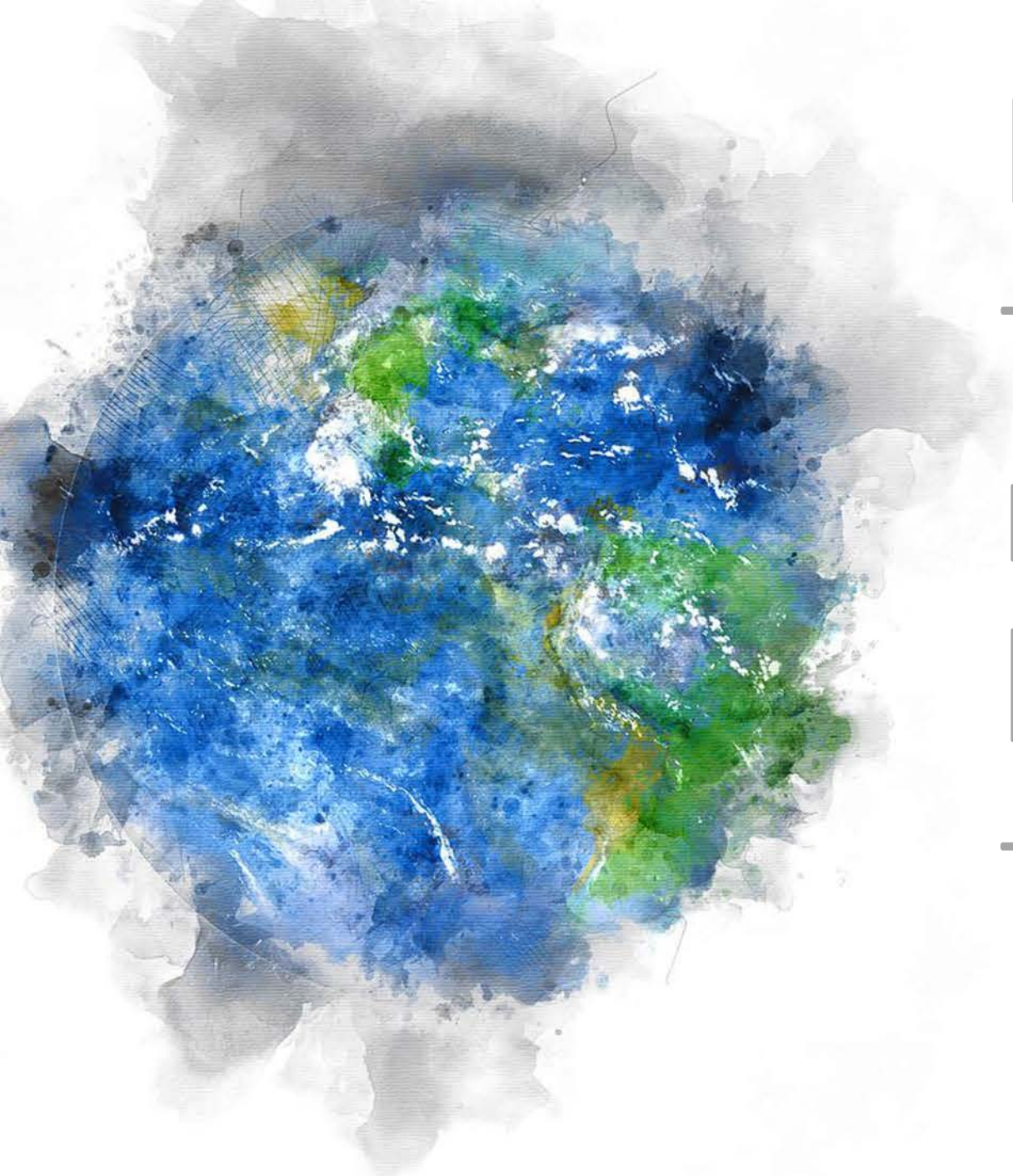
(Drew & Sosnowski, 2019)



MODULES

1. Introduction
2. The model
3. Self-care
4. Community
5. Purpose
6. Emotional regulation
7. Self-compassion
8. Self-management
9. Mindset
10. Conclusion

Each module is a self-contained learning experience designed for a group setting. Accompanying handouts and podcast episode provided.



How can I
foster
resilience as a
beginning
teacher?



Self-care

» *To build routines that help you to regulate*

○ *To build a sense of certainty within yourself*

1. Routines for self-care (e.g., sleep, nourishing food, water, exercise, gratitude, time outside, journaling, meditation, etc.)... pick one additional and/or non-negotiable—**necessity and not**

indulgence

2. Routines for creating boundaries to the work day (e.g., morning routine and close of day routine)



To use proactively outside of school to build space between stimulus and response, decrease reactivity:

Cognitive-behavioral methods focus on healthy thought processes, emotions, and behaviors that promote well-being by reframing your mindset and adopting new mental habits and behaviors.

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/abc.htm>

Mindfulness training is a type of cognitive-based training that will help you achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgement.

<https://www.copperbeechinstitute.org/guided-meditations>

Relaxation training includes techniques typically led by a facilitator that guide you to control your breathing, visualize soothing conditions, or otherwise invoke a state of increased calmness.

<https://students.dartmouth.edu/wellness-center/wellness-mindfulness/mindfulness-meditation/guided-audio-recordings>



To use within the school day to deescalate stressful situations in the moment:

This simple **Take 5 Breathing Exercise** can be done any time you need to deescalate or center yourself. It's also a powerful breathing exercise that you can easily share with your students.

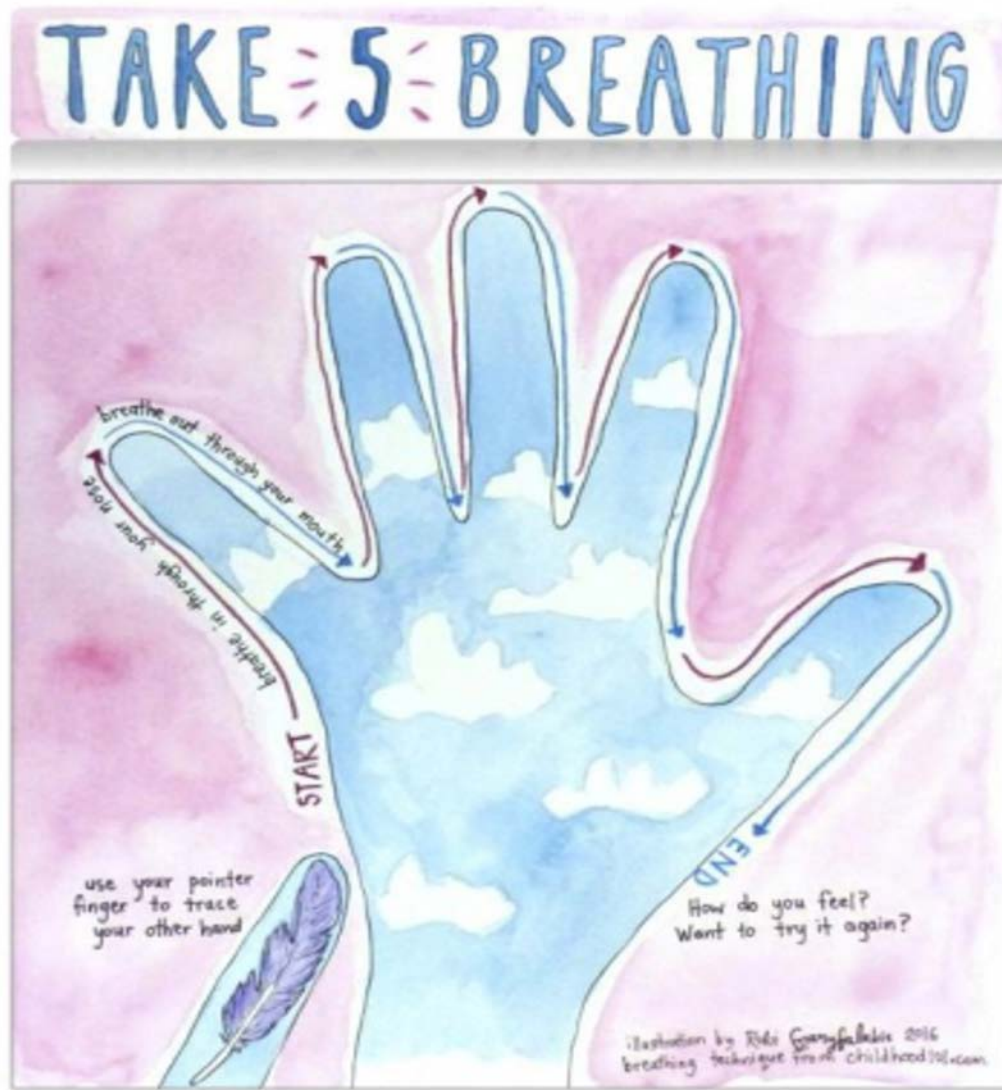
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqariSXiSvs>

This **Compassion with Equanimity** exercise is intended for use in actual situations where de-escalation is required in the moment. It is a way of being compassionate with ourselves while maintaining connection to others. Equanimity is balanced awareness in the midst of pleasant or unpleasant emotions.

<https://mindfulnessnorthwest.com/Compassion-with-Equanimity>

Active listening is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, the **complete message** being communicated. In order to do this you must pay attention to the other person very carefully.

<https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>



- Spread out the fingers of one hand into a star shape.
- Bring this hand to eye level with the palm facing you.
- Gently place the pointy (index) finger of the other hand onto one side of the open hand.
- Breathe in slowly through the nose as the pointy finger gently moves up and traces along the edge of the first finger or thumb of the open hand.
- Breathe out slowly through the nose as the pointy finger traces down the inside edge of the first finger or thumb.
- Continue to breathe in every time the pointy finger traces and moves up the side of a finger, and breathe out every time the pointy finger moves down.
- When the finger reaches the other side of the wrist, pause for a moment to notice how you are feeling, and if any emotions come up.
- Continue to deeply breathe in and out, then change direction with the pointy finger going back the other way.
- After a few breathing rounds feel free to practice exhaling through the mouth each time (optional).

A watercolor illustration of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a small, clear blue lake sits in a valley. A path winds through green, grassy slopes. In the background, rugged mountains rise under a sky with soft, grey and blue watercolor washes, suggesting mist or clouds. The overall style is soft and artistic.

Community: Relational Resilience

➤ *To foster opportunities to connect*

Individual Resilience	Relational Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• individual “control over” dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• supported vulnerability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• one-directional need for support from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mutual empathic involvement in the well-being of each person and of the relationship itself
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• separate self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• relational confidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the exercise of “power over” dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• empowerment by encouraging mutual growth and constructive conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• finding meaning in self-centered self-consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• creating meaning in a more expansive relational awareness



Community Inventory

➤ *To foster opportunities to connect*

Personal	Social	Community	Professional	Spiritual

Website/Newsletter	Workshops	Webinars	Conferences	Mentorship Opportunities
School/district				
State				
Regional				
National				

Re-establish your sense of purpose

- *To focus on opportunities to reflect and refine*



A watercolor illustration of a mountain landscape. The scene features a prominent mountain peak in the background, a winding path leading up a hillside, and a small lake in the foreground. The colors are soft and blended, with shades of blue, green, and grey. The style is artistic and painterly.

Educator Mission Statement

➤ *To develop and establish your identity as a teacher*

If you know who you are as a teacher and what your non-negotiables are, it will help you stay grounded when hard times come.

1. What do you love about teaching?
2. Why did you choose this profession?
3. Why do you continue to go to work each day?
4. Who do you seek out as collaborators in your work life?
5. What is your inspiration behind teaching?
6. Where do you lead others?
7. What would you like to accomplish in your career/life?
8. What do you believe about students?
9. What are three core values that are important to you?
10. What three words would you like others to use to describe you at your retirement dinner?

Based on your responses – craft a mission statement that encapsulates what drives you.

My educator mission statement





Emotional regulation

- *To build in space between stimulus and response- retrain stress response*

“Between stimulus and response there is a space and in our response lies our growth and freedom.” Viktor Frankl

R	recognizing
A	acknowledging
I	investigating
N	noting/ nurturing

Cement Shoes.

Mental imagery helps bring this metaphor to life. Imagine that you're walking on the beach toward the ocean. When you are up to your ankles in the water and a wave hits, what happens? What about when you are up to your knees, waist, chest? The farther you go out, the more likely you are to be toppled by the waves that crash upon you.

Now I would like you to imagine that you have on a pair of cement shoes. If you were firmly grounded where you stood, you would be less likely to be toppled by the waves that hit you, no matter how big. Although I would never recommend that anyone stand in the ocean wearing cement shoes, I want you to envision this as a way of staying true- to your ideals, integrity, vision, beliefs, and self – in your classroom or other professional setting.”

(Souers & Hall, 2016, p. 45)

Self-compassion

[Watch *The power of self-compassion* \(Dr. Kristen Neff, Youtube\)](#)



"Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others."

-Christopher Vermer



Self-compassion

- *To treat yourself with the kindness, care, and compassion that you would treat those you care about—your students, family, and friends.*

In her research on self-compassion (2003), Dr. Neff further identified the following components of self-compassion:

1. *Self-kindness vs. self-judgement*: treating oneself with care and understanding rather than harsh judgement; actively soothing and comforting, supporting, and protecting oneself; and processing a desire to alleviate suffering (any larger or small pain or emotional discomfort).
2. *Common humanity vs isolation*: seeing one's own experience as part of a larger human experience and not as something that is isolating or abnormal; recognizing that life is imperfect.
3. *Mindfulness vs over-identification*: allows us to “be with painful feelings as they are and avoid extremes of suppressing or running away with painful feelings.

A watercolor painting of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a path leads down a grassy slope towards a small, clear blue lake. The middle ground shows rolling green hills and a winding path. In the background, a range of mountains is depicted with various shades of blue and green, suggesting mist or different vegetation. The sky is a mix of light and dark blue washes, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The overall style is soft and artistic, with visible brushstrokes and blended colors.

Self-compassion

Here are two of Dr. Neff's "in-the-moment" exercises for teachers:

Self-squeeze. Wrap your arms around yourself or fold your arms in a non-obvious way that mirrors a hug. Just as you would hug a friend who's having a rough day, this physical gesture of self-compassion is an easy way to soothe and comfort yourself.

Breathe-in, breathe-out compassion. Based on a Buddhist meditation method, this practice can easily be done when faced with a challenging student or situation. Very simply, you breathe-in compassion for yourself and breathe-out compassion for the other.



Empowering educator mindset

- To develop a mindset of *realistic optimism* that will allow you to embrace struggle as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Pessimists see negative events as **permanent, pervasive, and personal**. So, you can develop a more realistic and optimistic mindset by focusing specifically on this one instance as an opportunity to learn.

Positive self-talk may help in this case. You can tell yourself:

- *This won't last forever.*
- *I can handle this particular situation; I have handled worse in the past.*
- *All teachers have to deal with these types of struggles.*
- *I can do better next time.*
- *I didn't handle this well this time, but I will keep working on my response, and do better next time.*

As humans, we are hard wired toward a *negativity bias*, which means that we focus more on what is wrong than what is right about our daily events or our lives in general. However, we can cultivate a positive mindset, and then model that for our students.



Success criteria

- ✓ I can set a goal for one (additional and/or non-negotiable) self-care and one self-compassion routine to integrate this academic year.
- ✓ I can write my educator mission statement and revisit it at least monthly.
- ✓ I can identify personal and professional communities with plans to regularly connect.
- ✓ I can reframe a persistently negative thought to a more realistic and less permanent, pervasive, and personal thought.



If you want
more...
start small and
simple

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>
Greater Good Education Newsletter

<https://self-compassion.org/>
Dr. Kristin Neff, Self Compassion

<https://www.copperbeechinstitute.org/>
Copper Beach Institute (local)



For a full
reading list
and study
results

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available on Emerald Insight at:
www.emeraldinsight.com/1175-8708.htm

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Emerging theory of teacher resilience: a situational analysis

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore the construct of teacher resilience. Researchers examined the relationship among complex risk (constraining) factors leading to burnout and attrition, as well as protective (enabling) factors that allow teachers to adapt and thrive within stressful school settings.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper presents results from three focus groups comprised of 33 English language arts teachers across diverse school districts. Utilizing situational analysis, developed from grounded theory, the research plan included six stages: development of initial situational map honoring theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, data collection, coding, memoing, sorting, revising of the initial map based on analysis and literature review to develop the relational map.

Findings – Three propositions emerged beginning to comprise a theory of teacher resilience. (1) Resilient teachers embed roots in their school communities to withstand challenges, pulling from a sense of purpose to navigate constraining factors and benefit from enabling factors. (2) Resilient teachers embrace uncertainty, reframing negative experiences into learning experiences. Reframing helps teachers retain power, not cede it to situations, which helps balance constraining and enabling factors. (3) Teachers use relationships with colleagues, students and school leaders to endure challenges. The dynamic interaction between internal and external enabling and constraining factors is depicted on the situational map illustrating how factors counterbalance to either predict positive outcomes such as resilience and agency or negative outcomes such as burnout or attrition.

Originality/value – Despite a robust international evidence base, there is a dearth of US studies exploring teacher resilience. This study proposes a theory of teacher resilience relevant to US schools and recommends practical applications and future research.

Keywords Risk factors, Agency, Protective factors, Resilience, Relational resilience

Paper type Research paper

Many refer to education as the profession that eats its young (Halford, 1998). Nearly 50 per cent of teachers entering the profession leave in the first five years (Ingersoll and Merrill, 2012). Attrition comprises 90 per cent of the national annual demand for teachers, leading to a persistent shortage (Castro *et al.*, 2018). Working conditions are cited as the primary reason teachers leave (Sutcher *et al.*, 2016). Teachers generally attribute stress to conditions such as lacking support from colleagues and administrators, excessive work demands, inadequate resources and students' behavior (Chang, 2009). "We have known for many years that teaching can be stressful, particularly for new teachers, but little appears to have changed" (Beltman *et al.*, 2011, p. 185). Teacher stress is only exacerbated by recent trends such as testing pressure, school violence, and student trauma. Patterson and colleagues (2004) explain that "[...] each new wave of reform exacerbates teacher burnout" (p. 4).



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If you want even
more...

FOSTERING EDUCATOR RESILIENCE: SPED 595

Now more than ever... The additional demands of and uncertainty of pandemic teaching this academic year have put many educators under extraordinary pressure. This course will teach you how to foster a resilient educator's mindset regardless of your external circumstances.

topics: model of teacher resilience, self-care, relational resilience, teacher identity, emotional regulation, self-compassion, self-management, mindset

...what's beyond survival in the teaching profession?...



Instructor: Sally V. Drew, PhD
CCSU's Department of
Special Education &
Interventions

Spring 2021 Online
Monday evenings
@ 4:30 p.m.

contact drewsav@ccsu.edu