Ainm / *Name:* Kevin Treacy

Bliain / *Year group*: Master of Education 2019-2020

Uimhir mhic léinn / *Student number*: 19252108

Ábhar / *Subject*: Thesis

Léachtóir / Teagascóir:

***Lecturer / Tutor*:** Aoife Titley

Sprioclá / *Due date*: 25th September 2020

Teideal an tionscadail / *Assignment title*: Bouncing Back: Teaching Resilience in the Primary Classroom

Líon na bhfocal / *Word Count:* 21434

Líon leathanach / *Number of pages*: 123

Aon ábhar eile sa tionscadal / *Any other material in the assignment*: Photographs

Dearbhaím gur mise amháin / mise mar bhall grúpa (cuir ciorcal timpeall na rogha a bhaineann leis an tionscadal thuas) a rinne an saothar seo. Aithním go soiléir aon chabhair a fuair mé ó aon duine eile, baill fhoirne nó gaol clainne san áireamh. Mo chuid scríbhneoireachta féin atá sa tionscadal seo ach amháin nuair a úsáidtear ábhar ar bith as foinsí eile. Tugtar aitheantas do na foinsí seo sna fo-nótaí nó sna tagairtí.
Dearbhaím go bhfuil treoirlínte an choláiste do thionscadail léite agam agus go dtuigim iad. Tá cóip den tionscadal coinnithe agam dom féin.

I confirm that I alone / I as part of a group (please circle whichever applies in the case of the above assignment) produced this project. I clearly acknowledge any help I received from any other person, staff members or relatives included. This project is my own composition except for material of any kind taken from other sources. These sources are acknowledged in the footnotes or references.
I confirm that I have read and understand the Department assignment guidelines. I have also retained a copy of the assignment for myself.

Síniú / *Signature*: Kevin Treacy

Dáta / *Date 22/9/20*

OLLSCOIL NA HÉIREANN MÁ NUAD

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND
MAYNOOTH

Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education

M.Ed. (Research in Practice)
2019 - 2020

Bouncing Back: Teaching Resilience in The Primary Classroom

Kevin Treacy

A Research Dissertation submitted to the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, Maynooth University, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Research in Practice)

Date: 21st August 2020

Supervised by: Aoife Titley

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this chance to acknowledge all of the support and encouragement I received while completing this thesis. Without my family, work colleagues and the staff in Maynooth, I would not have made it this far.

To my wonderful fourth-class of 2019-2020. This was a unique year and one that we will remember for the rest of our lives. I have learned more from you than you could ever possibly know. Thank you for helping me to become a better teacher and more importantly, a better person.

This thesis owes a great debt to the wonderful advice of my supervisor, Aoife Titley. Thank you for always being there and encouraging me to reach my potential. You have inspired an interest in academia for me that I am extremely grateful for.

Finally, I would like to thank my father, Ray, who sadly passed during the writing of this thesis. A man with two master's degrees, I hope that my effort at a thesis is almost as good as yours. Your wisdom, love and support are something I hold dear and I hope, wherever you are, that you are proud.

Abstract

Bouncing Back: Teaching Resilience in the Primary Classroom, is a self-study action research project which outlines the journey of teaching resilience to my 4th class in a co-educational Dublin school. The decision to base my project around resilience was a result of my values of care and determination. I wanted to complete a project that not only had personal meaning to me, but also allowed me to teach in a way that was closer to my values. An understanding of how to implement resilience in the classroom also proved extremely valuable as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and schools look towards how to care for children when they are being re-integrated into schools.

I designed an intervention that had four key components: teacher designed lessons about resilience, resilience through drama, use of the *Weaving Well-Being* programme and resilience through literature. Action research was chosen as the methodology, as it allowed me to critically examine my own practice while also improving it. Throughout this process, I collected qualitative data using a reflective journal, surveys, observations, samples of children's work and feedback from a critical friend.

Through engaging with the reflective process, I was able to generate a living theory which allowed me to live in the direction of my values. Findings that emerged from the study were in relation to:

- The power of drama in exploring resilience
- The importance of teacher modelling
- The need for explicit teaching of resilience in schools

Stress and trauma are inevitable parts of life and I believe that schools are in a unique position to help children to learn effective coping strategies to deal with these difficulties. The findings from this research suggests strategies that are useful in teaching resilience and also highlight how teachers must be aware of their own wellbeing in the classroom to promote resilience effectively. This research also inspired a significant change in how I will teach and model resilience in my classroom for years to come. Schools and teachers owe it to their students to prepare them for adversity so they can achieve their true potential in life.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BERA	British Education Research Association
CRA	Children's Rights Alliance
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DOH	Department of Health
HSE	Health Service Executive
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NICE	National Institute for Health Care and Excellence
NSRF	National Suicide Research Foundation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SPHE	Social, Personal, Health Education
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
UN	United Nations
USI	Union of Students in Ireland
WHO	World Health Organisation

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ..... *iii*

Abstract ..... *iv*

Abbreviations and Acronyms ..... *vi*

Table of Contents ..... *vii*

List of Figures ..... *xii*

Declaration of Authenticity ..... *xiii*

Chapter One: Introduction *1*

1.2 Rationale *2*

1.3 Values Statement *3*

1.4 Purpose of the Research *5*

1.5 Thesis Structure *5*

Chapter Two: Literature Review *7*

2.1 Introduction *7*

2.2 Resilience *7*

2.2.1 What Happens Without Resilience? *9*

2.3 Early Intervention *10*

2.4 The Irish Context *11*

2.4.1 Irish Policy Context *11*

2.4.2 Curriculum Context *12*

2.4.3 Youth Mental health in Ireland *13*

2.5 Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience *14*

2.6 Protective and Risk Factors for Mental Health *15*

2.7 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and The Resilience Framework *16*

2.8 The Need for Teaching Wellbeing and Resilience in Modern Schools *18*

2.9 Whole School Wellbeing and Resilience Approaches *20*

2.10 Parents Role in Promoting Resilience *22*

2.11 Resilience Teaching Strategies *23*

2.11.1 Literature and Drama *23*

2.11.2 Positive Self Talk and Growth Mindset *25*

2.11.3 Mindfulness *26*

2.11.4 Teacher Modelling *28*

2.12 Conclusion *28*

Chapter Three: Methodology *30*

3.1 Introduction *30*

3.1.2 Research Context *31*

3.2 Methodological Approach *31*

3.3 Action Research *31*

3.3.1 What is Action Research? *32*

3.3.2 Critical Reflection in Action Research *33*

3.3.3 Self-Study Action Research *34*

3.4. Epistemological and Ontological Stance *35*

3.5 Methodological Choice *36*

3.6 Research Model and Framework *37*

3.7 Pedagogical Interventions *38*

3.8 Data Collection *38*

3.8.1 Observation *38*

3.8.2 Reflective Journal *39*

3.8.3 Content Analysis of Children's Work Samples *40*

3.8.4 Surveys *41*

3.9 Validity and Rigour in Action Research *41*

3.10 Ethical Issues *43*

3.11 Data Analysis *45*

3.12 Limitations *46*

3.13 Conclusion *46*

Chapter Four: Data Analysis *47*

4.1 Introduction *47*

4.2 Emerging Findings *47*

4.2.1 The Power of Drama in Teaching Resilience *49*

4.2.2 Teacher Modelling of Resilience *51*

4.2.3 The Need for Resilience Education in the Primary Classroom *54*

4.3 Conclusion *57*

Chapter Five: Proposed Structure for Cycle Two *58*

5.1 Introduction *58*

5.2 Steps Taken due to Suspension of Research *58*

5.3 Implications of the Collected Data for Cycle Two *59*

5.3.1 Increase of Fun Activities *59*

5.3.2 Introduction of Mindfulness *60*

5.4 Projected Steps of Research Project *61*

5.4.1 Introduction of Mindfulness Mini-Lessons *62*

5.4.2 New Teacher Designed Resilience Drama *63*

5.4.3 Exploration of Resilience Through Literature *63*

5.4.4 Completion of Post Intervention Concept Map and Survey *64*

5.5 Future Data Collection and Teaching Methods *64*

5.5.1 The Value of Observation *65*

5.5.2 The Reflective Journal *65*

5.6 Conclusion *66*

Chapter Six: The Messiness of the Action Research Process *67*

6.1 Introduction *67*

6.2 The Messiness of Action Research *67*

6.2.1 The Mess of the Reflective Process *68*

6.3 Challenges to Data Collection in Schools *69*

6.3.1 Time Constraints to Research *69*

6.3.2 Researching Sensitive Topics with Children *70*

6.4 Conclusion *71*

Chapter Seven: Conclusion *72*

7.1 Introduction *72*

7.2 Summary of the Research Process *72*

7.3 Embracing Values and Changing Practice *73*

7.3.1 The Emergence of Care and Living to It *74*

7.3.2 Promoting Determination in the Classroom *75*

7.4 Recommendations *77*

7.4.1 My Professional Practice *77*

7.4.2 The School's Role in Promoting Resilience *77*

7.4.3 Future Research *78*

7.5 Final Reflection *79*

Bibliography **81**

Appendices **105**

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Protective and Risk Factors 16

Figure 2.2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs 17

Figure 2.3: The Resilience Framework 18

Figure 3.1: Gibb's Reflective Cycle 34

Figure 3.2: Framework for Action Research 37

Figure 3.3: McNiff and Whitehead Research Model 43

Figure 3.4: Data Analysis Process 45

Figure 4.1: Research Instruments 48

Figure 4.2: Emerging Findings 48

Figure 4.3: Post Cycle One Anonymous Survey 49

Figure 4.4: Critical Friend Comment 1 50

Figure 4.5: Unstructured Observation 1 50

Figure 4.6: Critical Friend Comment 2 52

Figure 4.7: Unstructured Observation 2 53

Figure 4.8: Pre-Survey Concept Map 54

Figure 4.9: Critical Friend Comment 3 55

Figure 4.10: Unstructured Observation 3 56

Figure 5.1: Children's Response to Pre-Intervention Survey Question 3 61

Figure 5.2: Proposed Steps for Completion of Research 62

Figure 7.1: Emerging Findings from Data 73

Declaration of Authenticity

Declaration of Authenticity

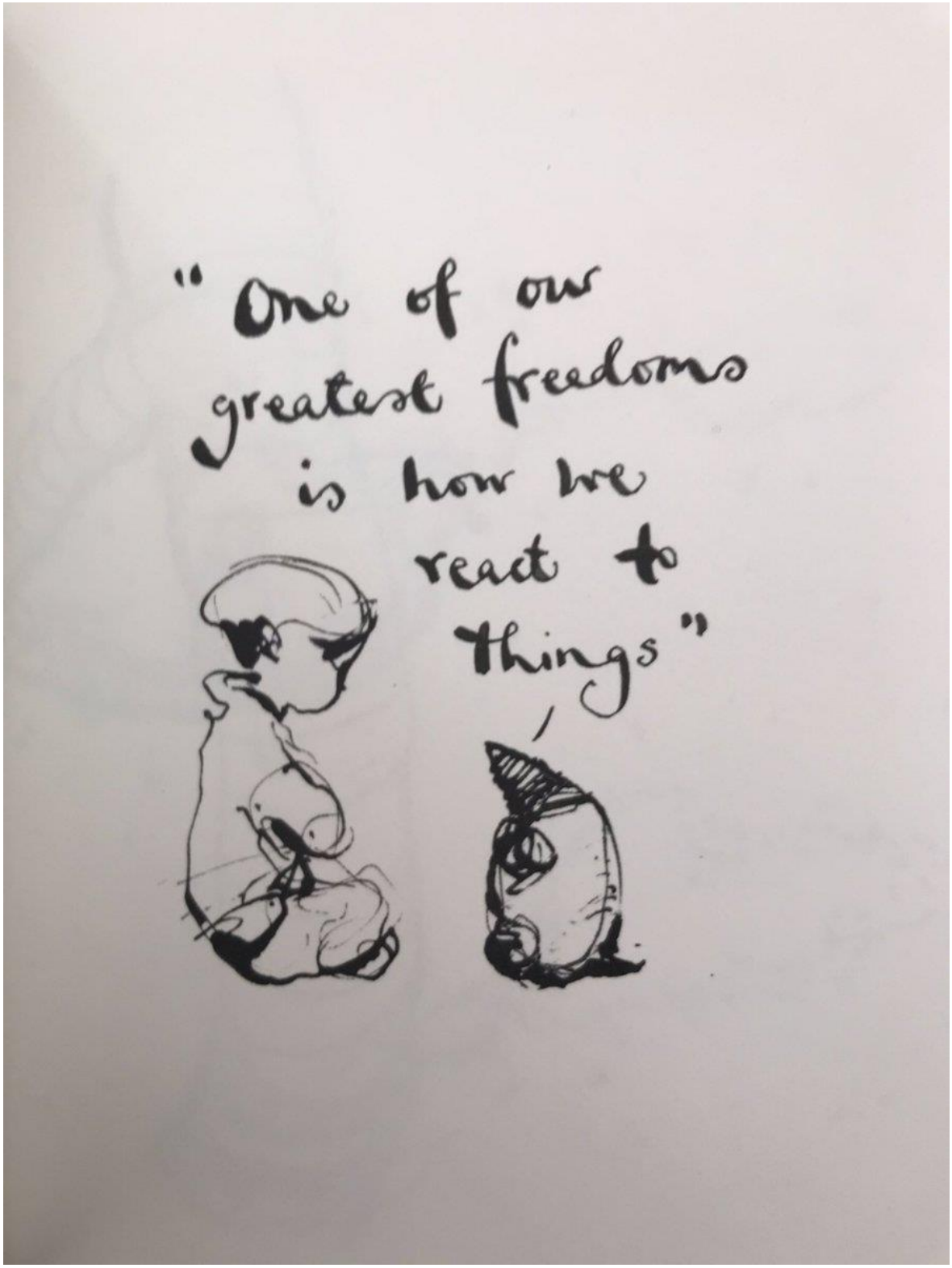
"Plagiarism involves an attempt to use an element of another person's work, without appropriate acknowledgement in order to gain academic credit. It may include the unacknowledged verbatim reproduction of material, unsanctioned collusion, but is not limited to these matters; it may also include the unacknowledged adoption of an argumentative structure, or the unacknowledged use of a source or of research materials, including computer code or elements of mathematical formulae in an inappropriate manner."

Maynooth University Plagiarism Policy

I hereby declare that this project, which I now submit in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Research in Practice) is entirely my own work; that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____

Date: _____



- The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse, by Charlie Mackesy

Chapter One: Introduction

Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2018). The *Health at a Glance* (2018) report showed that Ireland has one of the highest rates of mental illness in Europe, ranking third out of thirty-six countries. 18.5% of the Irish population were noted as having a mental health disorder, such as bipolar, anxiety, substance abuse and depression. Mental health issues are estimated to cost the Irish economy €8.2 billion annually. These figures are worrying and highlight the serious problem of mental health in Ireland.

While mental health disorders can arise at any time, international research shows that they frequently emerge during adolescence and the early adult years (Cohen, Caspi, Moffitt, Harrington, Milne & Poulton, 2003). There is also evidence that mental disorders are the leading cause of disability among young people aged 10-24 years around the world (Gore, Bloem, Patton, Ferguson, Joseph, Coffey, Sawyer & Mathers, 2011). The *Disability Act* (Government of Ireland, 2005: 6) defined a disability as a 'substantial restriction in the capacity of a person' to fully engage in a social, cultural or professional life as a result of physical, sensory or mental health difficulties.

While the 2019, *My World Survey 2*, has researched the mental health conditions for adolescents and young people in an Irish context, there is extremely limited research in terms of children. However, in *Concluding Observations Ireland* (2016) the United Nations [UN]

Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed their concern about access to mental health treatment in Ireland, the inadequate availability of age-appropriate mental health units, long waiting lists to access mental health supports and the lack of out of hours services. The Children's Rights Alliance [CRA] *Report Card* (2020) indicated that there were 1876 children waiting to access their first appointment with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services [CAMHS] in September 2019. My research was inspired by looking at these figures and wanting to discover effective teaching methods that could help to ensure better mental health outcomes for the children of Ireland.

1.2 Rationale

The goal of this research was to explore how resilience could be taught to the nine and ten-year-old children in my 4th class. At the outset of this process, we were asked to reflect on our teaching and explore areas of interest or even discomfort that arose. As I reflected on what area to focus on, I realised that this was a perfect opportunity to examine if I was truly encouraging positive mental health in my classroom. In the early experiences with my class, they were struggling to deal with failure, show positive self-esteem and lacked the ability to face a challenge with enthusiasm. I began to wonder what I could do to help them change their attitudes and have a healthier outlook on adversity.

Resilience is an extensively researched topic which has several different meanings depending on the lens and context you are applying it to. Broadly, resilience is defined as the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten the function, survival, or future development of the system (Masten & Barnes, 2018). Resilience theory is focused on strengths as opposed to deficits. It focuses on understanding healthy development and good outcomes despite exposure to risks (Masten, 2001). I wanted to

explore how I could develop the resilience of children in my class, which has been shown to be a key factor to healthy functioning in the school context. (Borman & Overman, 2004).

Throughout my own life, I have greatly benefited from the power of resilience and overcoming adversity. I have also seen how damaging poor mental health can be and the impact that it has on both the individual and their families. As a result, I have always had a strong interest in mental health promotion and strive to give children the tools to help themselves in ways that previous generations were not enabled to. Embarking on this self-study action research provided me with the perfect opportunity to not only improve my practice, but also enable me to live out my values in my teaching (Whitehead, 2015).

1.3 Values Statement

A key element of the action research process is engaging with reflection to identify your values. Naming your values helps with the 'framing of one's research question' and can also be used to formulate the criteria for assessing the research project' (Sullivan, Glenn, Roche & McDonagh, 2016: 3). Engaging with reflection and trying to identify my values was not something that came naturally at the outset of this process. Initially, my reflective diary rarely moved past the surface level of describing the basics of what was happening in my classroom. However, I now realise that I was was engaging in a process of identity development (Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008, cited in Beauchamp, 2015) which was allowing me to explore, not only the teacher that I have been, but also the teacher I want to become. Reflection became a safe space where I could explore my personal and professional identity. In this way, reflection allowed for a 'conversation with ourselves that leads to even deeper understanding of our own values and beliefs' (Lindsey, Lindsey, Hord & Frank, 2015: 13).

Through this reflection and reading the work of Nel Noddings, it became apparent to me that care and determination were the two underpinning values that were most important to me in education. I was drawn to Noddings because she values the whole wellbeing of the child and does not just view them from an academic perspective. Noddings (2013: 20) says, 'it is not enough to want one's students to master basic skills,' but it is also necessary to help the student become a 'loving human being' too. She also felt that 'time spent on building a relation of care and trust is not time wasted' (Noddings, 2012: 774). I agreed with this ideal and wanted to reflect true care in my own teaching.

Determination emerged because of my own experience in school and sporting background. When I began to research determination, I found that there was substantial literature in the area which had led to the formation of self-determination theory [SDT]. SDT argues that there two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, which shape who we are and also how we behave (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Encouraging self-determination in children is important, as it enables them to achieve their goals, appreciate their strengths and limitations and develop problem-solving skills (Pennell & Spencer, 2008). I have always enjoyed a challenge and believed in my own ability to achieve my goals. Yet, in my first few years of teaching, I was regularly encountering children that did not deal well with failure and preferred to opt out instead of trying and getting something wrong. Being able to believe in yourself and embrace adversity is a key skill the children will need throughout their lives. I wanted the children to feel like they could achieve whatever they wanted in their future. As I searched for a topic which was rooted in these values and had personal meaning to me, it became clear that resilience was the perfect topic which enabled me to conduct worthwhile research which was also in line with my values.

1.4 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to learn how I could promote resilience in my classroom, using a multi-faceted approach. I wanted to engage the children's critical thinking skills and let their potential shine through their weaknesses or vulnerabilities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The complex nature of resilience means that the children would be engaging with many different aspects that would benefit, not just their resilience, but also their wellbeing. By taking this approach, I wanted to teach in a way that was closer to my values, while also allowing the children to flourish and be ready to overcome the inevitable adversity in their own lives using healthy coping mechanisms.

1.5 Thesis Structure

Chapter One: is an introduction to the research which includes my values statement and gives an insight into the rationale that underpins the research project.

Chapter Two: contains a literature review of resilience research and an insight into other key elements of my research project. The literature review covers a number of different themes such as: resilience as a concept, the need for early intervention, the policy and context of Irish mental health, a background of protective and risk factors and how they relate to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the role of parents in promoting resilience, implementing resilience in schools, and finally, approaches for teaching resilience in the classroom.

Chapter Three: outlines the methodological approach that was chosen and the design of the research process. The decision to use self-study action research is both explained justified, while also highlighting the data collection instruments that were used.

Chapter Four: contains the analysis of my findings. The findings are explored and put in context with the relevant literature. The findings discussed are:

- The power of drama in teaching resilience

- The importance of teacher modelling
- The need for explicit teaching of resilience strategies to children

Chapter Five: outlines and justifies how cycle two would have proceeded if not for the outbreak of COVID-19.

Chapter Six: is a discussion around the messiness of conducting action research and outlines the challenges that I faced.

Chapter Seven: contains a conclusion of the learnings from the research process. How I am living to my values and the implications for my future practice is discussed. There are also recommendations for school policy and future resilience research. To finish, there is a personal reflection on the research process.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Bouncing Back: Teaching Resilience in the Primary Classroom, aims to find effective approaches of teaching resilience to children. This literature review looks at resilience from several different perspectives and how it applies to the school context. The review is structured into several key topics which are discussed in detail. Firstly, resilience as a concept and why it needs to be taught is explored. The current state of mental health in the youth of Ireland is outlined alongside the current Irish policy context towards wellbeing in schools. The vital link between wellbeing, mental health and resilience is also examined. Mental health protective and risk factors are discussed. The role of whole-school approaches to teaching resilience and the importance of parents is outlined. There is also an exploration of different strategies that are important in teaching resilience such as: using literature and drama, teacher modelling, encouraging a growth mindset and positive self-talk and mindfulness.

2.2 Resilience

Resilience research emerged in the 1970's as scientists studied children who were at risk for psychopathology (mental health difficulties) and wondered why children with similar backgrounds achieved different outcomes. Since then, resilience has been examined across several disciplines, such as psychology, psychiatry, and education, to understand how some children flourish in difficult circumstances. But what is resilience and what aspects are covered by the term? Masten (2014: 6) described resilience as, 'the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or

development.' However, it has also been noted that there is difficulty agreeing any definition for resilience (Herrmann, Stewart, Diaz-Granados, Berger, Jackson & Yuen, 2008). Resilience covers a scope of different definitions that range from limited understandings that centre on recovery from adversity, to extensive definitions that conceptualize it as an ongoing protective ability (Robertson & Cooper, 2013). In this way, resilience is seen as 'not only reactive recovery but also proactive learning and growth through conquering challenges' (Youssef & Luthans, 2007: 778). This is in line with Roisman, Padron, Sroufe and Egeland (2002: 31) who said that:

> resilience is an emergent property of a hierarchically organized set of protective systems that cumulatively buffer the effects of adversity and can therefore rarely, if ever, be regarded as an intrinsic property of individuals.

This definition suggests that resilience is not an intrinsic trait that we are born with, but a skill that can be learned and is influenced by societal systems.

A lot of the research around resilience is focused upon the impact of serious illness, children in war-torn countries, bereavement, and resilience in areas with socio-economic difficulties. While this may be somewhat relevant in a school context, it does not allow for Newman (2004) who explained that seemingly insignificant everyday problems effect a child's resilience more than acute issues. This is more relevant to us in schools as children face these mundane problems every day. For Masten (2004: 227) resilience develops from 'ordinary rather than extraordinary processes.' This includes things like guardians and family members that take care of the child and teachers who encourage children to focus their attention, problem solve and control of behaviour. Research both nationally and internationally has continually demonstrated that the class teacher is a primely situated professional who can work sensitively and consistently with students to improve their educational outcomes (Clarke & Barry, 2010; Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger & Pachan, 2008). A teacher then is crucial in developing resilience as a skill in the pupils.

However, there is also an issue in resilience where too much emphasis can be placed on the individual. This is an over-simplification which is in danger of what Bottrell (2013: 2) called 'responsibilising' the individual. In fact, building resilience should be seen as a collective and shared person-environment interaction, that is dramatically shaped by structural inequalities (Hart, Gagnon, Eryigit- Madzwamuse, Cameron, Aranda, Rathbone & Heaver, 2016). The individualised definition does not account for the structural barriers facing many young people (Boingbong, 2019). Bottrell (2013) describes how over reliance on resilience risks failing to recognise the societal obstacles that impact the wellbeing of people in poverty and holds them accountable for what are unfairly deemed to be their failings. It is crucial that understandings of resilience demonstrate the capability for marginalised children and young people to overcome adversity and change aspects of society, while not holding them accountable for the obstacles they are faced with (Hart et al., 2016). While resilience has been shown to be an extremely important skill, it is vital that it is not being used to mask the societal problems that people face and a way for policy makers to not address the structural and systemic issues that creates the need for resilience.

2.2.1 What Happens Without Resilience?

This literature review has covered what resilience is and how it positively impacts the lives of people who have developed and utilised it as a skill. However, what happens to people who lack resilience and why is it so important to emphasise it in schools? Men with poor resilience were found to be more likely to use substances such as alcohol and marijuana to cope with difficult life experiences (Burnett, Witzel, Allers & McBride, 2016). Brown (2006) discussed the negative effects of shame and how its links to violence, sexual assault, bullying and suicide. However, resilience acts as a defence to shame and helps those affected by it to experience, connection, empathy, freedom, and power (Brown, 2006). Denyer (2017)

spoke about the importance of resilience in an organizational sense. For him, a lack of knowledge and skills throughout the hierarchy of an organization impacted the health of the organization while also leaving them open to failure when faced with difficulty (Denyer, 2017). When we look at people who could be considered vulnerable for several reasons (economic, social, psychological) it appears that this can modify their response to adversity negatively (Rutter, 1990). For vulnerable people, working on their resilience becomes an imperative if they are to succeed when faced with challenges. A lack of resilience leaves people exposed to mental health difficulties and coping poorly in response to trauma. It also affects organizations as a whole and has the possibility to negatively impact businesses who cannot respond to setbacks effectively.

2.3 Early Intervention

Research carried out by the Oireachtas Library & Research Service (2012) demonstrated that the most effective mental health promotion takes place early in a person's life. It is acknowledged in research that adult-type mental disorders usually appear early in life and frequently have a long-duration with periods of relapse throughout (Burcusa & Iacono, 2007). There is evidence that this can be modified through early intervention (Correll, Galling, Pawar, Krivko, Bonetto, Ruggeri, Craig, Nordentoft, Srihari, Gulokusz, Hui, Chen, Valencia, Juarez, Robinson, Schooler, Brunette, Mueser, Rosenheck & Denyer, 2018). However, even though mental health disorders emerge in childhood, young people have been shown to be significantly less likely to access mental health services. There are several reasons for that such as stigma, poor mental health knowledge, deficient access to age-targeted services and unsuitable structure of health systems (Rickwood, Deane & Wilson, 2007). Young people have been shown to demonstrate signs of a need for care before reaching the traditional markers of a mental illness (Rickwood, Telford, Parker, Tanti &

McGorry, 2014). Schools are perfectly placed to provide appropriate interventions before children reach the stage of needing to access poorly funded services.

2.4 The Irish Context

2.4.1 Irish Policy Context

In response to this need for early intervention, the Department of Education and Skills [DES] has published several documents and strategies which will be implemented in schools. Most important of these is the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* (2018) which was published by the DES. This document recognises the key role that schools have in developing and enhancing young people's wellbeing and outlines what role the school and teachers have in creating a successful environment for their wellbeing to flourish. The school is described as a place which develops the whole child, who should leave school with a balanced set of cognitive, social, and emotional skills to face the challenges of the 21st century (Hewlett & Moran, 2014). The role of the teacher has also been described as crucial to children and young people's wellbeing (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017) and its significance goes beyond teaching and learning. It is no wonder then, that the DES have prioritised this area in their recent policy documents.

There is also significant investment and structures in place such as the *Action Plan for Education* (2019) and the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools [*DEIS*] *Plan* (2017). The *Action Plan* makes specific reference to resilience and describes the importance of, 'developing learners' resilience so that they are empowered to achieve their full potential' (DES, 2019: 8). The *DEIS Plan* also mentions resilience and says, 'we will actively support and develop wellbeing initiatives to ensure that mental resilience and personal wellbeing are integral parts of the education and training system,' (DES, 2017: 37). However, while this

undoubtedly shows that there is acknowledgement from the government of the need for early intervention and the importance of promoting resilience, training for teachers is not freely available in all schools and some programmes are exclusively used in DEIS schools only. Until there is equal access of training for all teachers, we will not be able to adequately deliver the recommended programmes for promoting mental health.

2.4.2 Curriculum Context

Currently, primary schools are still operating using the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA] (1999) *Primary School Curriculum.* This curriculum saw the introduction of Social, Personal and Health Education [SPHE] and placed a greater emphasis on parents' contribution to their child's learning both in school and at home (Conway, 2005). The introduction of SPHE was of particular importance, as prior programmes which had been developed to engage issues around child abuse, drug abuse, and health education, had been done in a haphazard way in response to emerging educational and social concerns (DES, 2009). It is also now acknowledged that implementing the SPHE curriculum is an important part of achieving whole-school wellbeing (DES, HSE & DOH, 2015). The SPHE curriculum is of particular interest to this research project, as it is where resilience education would be undertaken.

While this curriculum was cutting edge for its time (NCCA, 2020) it is now in the process of being replaced. The focus of the new curriculum has been published in the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* (NCCA, 2020). Acknowledged in the new curriculum, is the important role creativity and resilience play in the modern world. Resilience is contained within the new 'fostering wellbeing' competency, with a focus on empowering the children to see themselves as capable and able to cope with difficulties in life (NCCA,

2020). The arts are seen as a vital aspect of the new curriculum, which can, 'inspire and enrich all children, exciting the imagination and encouraging them to reach their creative and expressive potential,' (NCCA, 2020: 13). Conducting this research is not only relevant to the new curriculum, but also seeks to explore how resilience can be taught and explored using the key competencies which have been outlined within the curriculum framework.

2.4.3 Youth Mental health in Ireland

Figures from the OECD (2018) establish that €8.2 billion is the annual cost of mental health issues to the Irish economy. Ireland also ranks joint 3rd out of the 36 European countries surveyed in terms of the rate of mental health issues. While there is limited research around the mental health difficulties of children in Ireland, there is significant literature around youth mental health. Research shows that 75% of all mental health disorders that continue into adulthood emerge before the age of 25 years (Kessler, Amminger, Aguilar-Gaxiola, Alonso, Lee & Ustun, 2007). Yet, most remain undetected until later in life and many young people do not get adequate support at this critical time (Patel, Flisher, Hetrick & McGorry, 2007; WHO, 2019). Epidemiological studies (Cannon, Coughlan, Clarke, Harley & Kelleher, 2013; McMahon, Regan, Corcoran, Arensman, Cannon, Williamson & Keeley, 2017) alongside needs analyses (Illback & Bates, 2011; Illback, Bates, Hodges, Galligan, Smith, Sanders & Dooley, 2010) indicate that there is considerable mental ill-health within young people in Ireland, and consequently, a need for immediate and accessible support (O'Reilly, Illback, Peiper, O'Keefe & Clayton, 2015). Further, a 2017 study from the National Suicide Research Foundation [NSRF] showed that 7% of Irish adolescents had experienced suicidal thoughts and 3.6% reported having attempted suicide at some point in their lives, with rates of suicidal thoughts and behaviour very similar in boys and girls (McMahon et al., 2017). The Union of Students in Ireland [USI] also found that 38% of

students are experiencing severe levels of anxiety and that 30% are experiencing severe levels of depression (Price, Smith & Kavalidou, 2019). While these studies focus on youths and young adults older than the primary school context, it does highlight the necessity for early intervention of mental health programmes to take place. Teachers and schools need to be mindful of the current state of mental health problems if they want to make a significant impact (Weare, 2006).

2.5 Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience

The DES (2018: 12) acknowledge the importance of schools in 'preparing children and young people to develop wellbeing and positive mental health.' Resilience then, while important in its own right, is developed within the broader aims of mental health and wellbeing education in schools. The WHO describe mental health as:

> A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (WHO, 2013: 6).

Children with good mental health develop in a number of ways: emotionally, socially, and psychologically. They are able to resolve problems they face, while also learning from them (Alexander, 2002) and have mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships (Mental Health Foundation, 2002). Our focus on mental health promotion in schools aim to improve pupil's control, resilience, and their coping strategies for difficulties in life (DES, Health Service Executive [HSE] & Department of Health [DOH], 2013).

The concept of wellbeing has proven difficult to define. Presently there is no global or agreed upon definition of wellbeing (Baker, Green & Falecki, 2017; Diener & Seligman, 2004). However, the DES and NCCA (2017) acknowledge that wellbeing is comprised of many interrelated aspects including being active, responsible, connected, resilient, appreciated,

respected and aware. Surveys carried out by the DOH (2012) found that wellbeing in young people is significantly affected by their mental health. Resilience is also just one factor of the overall goal of having positive mental health and wellbeing. By placing an emphasis on wellbeing, alongside positive mental health, students are enabled to lead meaningful lives (DES, HSE & DOH, 2015).

2.6 Protective and Risk Factors for Mental Health

There are many protective and risk factors children can be exposed to during their lives which will impact their mental health and wellbeing. Mental health protective factors are categorised in a number of different domains: internal (e.g. temperament) or external (e.g. environmental) conditions that promote good mental health, improves the ability to deal with adversity and significantly decreases the probability of a mental health problem or disorder developing (DES, HSE & DOH, 2013). Protective factors construct and enhance resilience in children and are a better indicator of positive outcomes for children rather than experiencing risk factors (Cooper, Kakos & Jacobs, 2013). Risk factors represent an external or internal condition that raises the probability of a mental health problem occurring. Schools should emphasise increasing the protective factors experienced by children and limiting the frequency of risk factors to effectively build children's resilience (DES, HSE & DOH, 2015). They also highlight that 'the factors found to be protective of children's mental health are critical for helping to build resilience' (DES, HSE & DOH 2015: 12).

Protective factors	Risk factors		
	Belonging to a vulnerable group	Social and Cultural Factors	Interpersonal and Individual Risk factors
• Positive temperament • Intellectual ability • Positive and supportive family environment • Social support system • Caring relationship with at least one adult • In education/ employment/ training	• Looked after children • School non-attenders • Mental health problems • Drug misuse by parents • Abuse within the family • Homeless • Young offenders • Young sex workers	• High levels of neighbourhood poverty and decay • High levels of neighbourhood crime • Easy drug availability • Widespread social acceptance of alcohol and drug use • Lack of knowledge and perception of drug-related risks	• Physiological and psychological factors • Family dysfunction • Behavioural difficulties • Academic problems • Association with peers who use alcohol and drugs • Early onset of tobacco smoking • Early onset of alcohol and drug use

Table 1: Risk and protective factors

Figure 2.1: Protective and Risk Factors

2.7 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and The Resilience Framework

When designing a resilience intervention which aims to enhance positive protective factors, it is also important to be aware of the work of Maslow and *The Resilience Framework.* Maslow (1943) established the concept of a hierarchy of needs. The concept is that people are motivated to fulfil pre-determined basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced needs. It is composed of five tiers and is often represented as a pyramid. This model can be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs. The five levels from the bottom up are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. The first four levels are known as deficiency needs and the top level is known as a growth need. Maslow believed that everyone could move up the hierarchy and achieve self-actualization. However, progress is often impeded by failing to meet lower level needs. Here is Maslow's hierarchy in the traditional form:

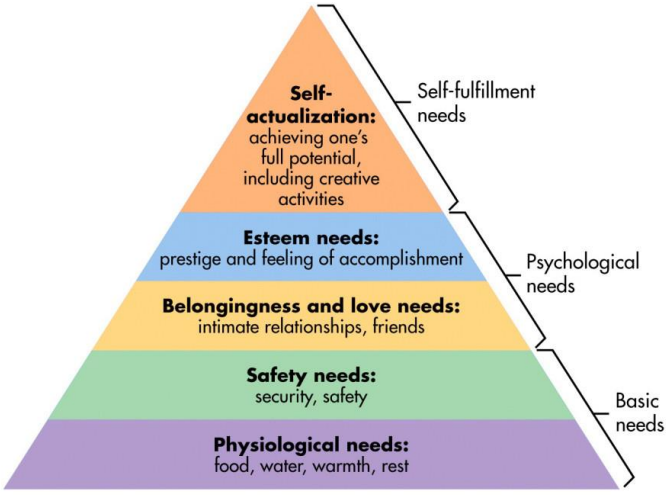


Figure 1.2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The Resilience Framework (adapted from Hart, Blincow & Thomas, 2007) is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It was established for those working with young people to give guidance around the best ways of helping them develop coping strategies for overcoming adversity. The most important aspect of this framework is that it links the theory to real life application which children and educators can use in their lives (Taylor, Hart & Hove Park School, 2017). This framework consists of five areas of a child's life that need to be satisfied if they are to become a resilient person. The categories are Basics, Belonging, Learning, Coping and Core Self. Within each of these sections, there is a series of activities designed to help the young person develop their resilience in stages. Any approach that aims to improve the resilience of young people needs to follow the guidelines that are established in this framework.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">Resilience Framework (Children & Young People) Oct 2012 – adapted from Hart & Blincow 2007 www.boingboing.org.uk</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>BASICS</th><th>BELONGING</th><th>LEARNING</th><th>COPING</th><th>CORE SELF</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="15">SPECIFIC APPROACHES</td><td rowspan="2">Good enough housing</td><td>Find somewhere for the child/YP to belong</td><td rowspan="3">Make school/college life work as well as possible</td><td rowspan="2">Understanding boundaries and keeping within them</td><td rowspan="3">Instil a sense of hope</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Help child/YP understand their place in the world</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Enough money to live</td><td rowspan="2">Being brave</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tap into good influences</td><td rowspan="3">Engage mentors for children/YP</td><td rowspan="3">Support the child/YP to understand other people's feelings</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Being safe</td><td>Keep relationships going</td><td rowspan="2">Solving problems</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">The more healthy relationships the better</td><td rowspan="3">Map out career or life plan</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Access & transport</td><td rowspan="2">Putting on rose-tinted glasses</td><td rowspan="3">Help the child/YP to know her/himself</td></tr>
<tr><td>Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Healthy diet</td><td rowspan="2">Get together people the child/YP can count on</td><td rowspan="3">Help the child/YP to organise her/himself</td><td rowspan="2">Fostering their interests</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Calming down & self-soothing</td><td rowspan="3">Help the child/YP take responsibility for her/himself</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Exercise and fresh air</td><td>Responsibilities & obligations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Focus on good times and places</td><td rowspan="2">Highlight achievements</td><td>Remember tomorrow is another day</td><td rowspan="2">Foster their talents</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Enough sleep</td><td rowspan="2">Make sense of where child/YP has come from</td><td rowspan="2">Lean on others when necessary</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Predict a good experience of someone or something new</td><td rowspan="3">Develop life skills</td><td rowspan="3">There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them</td></tr>
<tr><td>Play & leisure</td><td rowspan="2">Have a laugh</td></tr>
<tr><td>Being free from prejudice & discrimination</td><td>Make friends and mix with other children/YPs</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">NOBLE TRUTHS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">ACCEPTING</td><td>CONSERVING</td><td>COMMITMENT</td><td colspan="2">ENLISTING</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 2.3: The Resilience Framework

2.8 The Need for Teaching Wellbeing and Resilience in Modern Schools

In recent years, technology has rapidly developed and society in Ireland has become more open about discussing mental health. However, the prevalence of mental health difficulties is still notably high. The *My World Survey 2* (2019) indicates that there is increasing levels of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem amongst the youth of Ireland. The survey also indicates that 2 in every 5 young adults in Ireland have self-harmed. Evidence also shows that mental health conditions account for more economic costs than other diseases such as cancer or diabetes (Bloom, Cafiero, Jané, Abrahams-Gessel, Bloom, Fathima, Feigl, Gaziano, Mowafi, Pandya, Prettner, Rosenberg, Seligman, Stein & Weinstein, 2011; Trautmann, Rehm & Wittchen, 2016). This seems to be a paradox of sorts because as Easterbrook (2003) points out, compared to the 1950's, people are nearly three times wealthier; house sizes have increased, and cars are much more common. The improvement

is not just in physical goods, as there is higher rates of education, women's rights, a drop in incidents of racism, considerably stricter resolutions around pollution, democracy is more common across the world, and a higher availability of entertainment and books than ever before (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo & Krysan, 1997; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2006; Snyder, Dillow & Hoffman, 2008). Yet, the average American, Japanese or Australian citizen is still not more content than they were fifty years ago, and the average Briton or German is actually less satisfied (Inglehart, Foa, Peterson & Welzel, 2007).

Modern life is presenting challenges to young people that are leading to unhappiness in ways not seen before. One of the most significant challenges has come as a result of increasing internet activity. In Ireland, 91% of households have internet access (Central Statistics Office, 2019). In an Irish context Cybersafe Ireland (2019), reported that 92% of 8–13-year olds own their own smart device. This is worrying when you consider that Park and Park (2014) found that smartphone addiction during childhood leads to higher rates of depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It also opens children up to being on social media platforms, such as Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram which have been shown to increase feelings of anxiety (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017). Positive comments on a social networking site were found to increase wellbeing and self-esteem, while the converse was true for negative comments (Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006). The American Psychological Association (2011) also found that regular users of Facebook tended to show signs of narcissism and that social media use made children more susceptible to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders. Tiggemann and Slater (2013) established that there is a connection between use of social media sites and an increase of body image concerns for girls aged between 13 and 15 years.

Teaching wellbeing in the classroom offers schools a chance to not only educate children on the dangers of social media, but to increase their resilience which we have already seen is a vital aspect of any wellbeing programme. Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins (2009) argued for the connection between wellbeing with better learning. Teaching wellbeing encourages a positive mood which has also been found to produce better attention (Fredrickson, 1998; Bolte, Goschke & Kuhl, 2003), alongside creative and holistic thinking (Isen, Daubman & Nowicki, 1987; Estrada, Isen & Young 1994; Isen, Rosenzweig & Young 1991; Kuhl, 2000). Critically, Seligman et al. (2009) conclude that teaching wellbeing in school is an antidote to depression and can also be used as a vehicle to increase life satisfaction. Increasing life satisfaction is vital if we are to combat the rising trend of mental health difficulties that is presenting in young people.

2.9 Whole School Wellbeing and Resilience Approaches

The DES (2015) acknowledge that schools are a vital setting for the promotion of wellbeing and positive mental health in young people. They go on to say that that mental health should be omnipresent throughout the school and in the young person's learning. Caleon and King (2020) highlight that schools are an important domain where a child's resilience can be nurtured. Schools that wish to be efficient in promoting mental health need to put structures in place which support both their students and staff in becoming more resilient. The WHO (2005) emphasised that schools should focus on programmes that are based on looking at psychological strengths and abilities. However, the implementation of previously successful interventions in alternate settings commonly yields disappointing results (Balu, Zhu, Doolittle, Shiller, Jenkins & Gersten, 2015; Cordray, Pion, Brandt, Molefe & Toby, 2012). It has been suggested that this is due to a lack of assessing a school's unique individual needs across multiple fronts (academics, behaviour, emotion, and physical) to inform intervention

implementation (Cook, Dart, Collins, Restori, Daikos & Delport, 2012; Cook, Frye, Slemrod, Lyon, Renshaw & Zhang, 2015). There is also an issue with the voice of the child being ignored in school-based interventions. School or positive education interventions have often been unsuccessful, potentially due to disparities between experts' and adolescents' understanding of wellbeing (Bott, Escamilia, Kaufman, Kern, Krekel, Schlicht & White, 2017; Cook, Kilgus & Burns, 2018) A greater understanding of adolescents' conceptualizations of wellbeing, may also improve the efficacy of school interventions. It is important that both the 'contextual fit' (Horner, Blitz & Ross, 2014: 1) and the 'precision education' (Cook et al., 2018: 5) elements are considered in designing an intervention. Precision education supports the idea that the key components of interventions should be tailored to individuals' needs and perceptions (Cook et al., 2018). Horner et al. (2014) defined contextual fit as matching the elements of an intervention to the needs and conceptions of those who are taking part in the intervention. This raises an interesting question when it comes to whole school approaches to wellbeing. Do the government need to come up with radically different approaches in different areas? The research seems to suggest that an approach that works well in a traditionally middle-class area, might not be as effective in a working-class area where there may be risk factors that are not addressed by the programme. It is clear that there is further research needed about this issue as the 'one size fits all' approach in terms of whole-school interventions impedes their effectiveness.

The mandated positive mental health programmes that are carried out in my school are *Friends for Life* and *Weaving Well-Being*. I will be focussing on *Weaving Well-Being* as it is the programme that I use in my class. *Weaving Well-Being* was created in Ireland by Fiona Forman and Mick Rock who have both completed master's degrees in psychology. There are 10 lessons each year for children from 3rd to 6th class. The programme is designed with a focus on positive psychology. Positive psychology has been defined as the scientific study

of what makes life most worth living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology emphasises what is going well in life instead of focussing on the issues; it aims to not only help those who are struggling, but to enrich the lives of everyone who takes part (Peterson, 2008). The programme is carried out within the structure of the SPHE curriculum and strives to empower children to take control of and maintain positive mental health in their lives (Weaving Wellbeing, 2018). Each lesson presents the children with 'tools' that they can use both inside and outside school to help them with their mental health. These tools can also be posted around the school. This links with Clarke and Barry (2010) who emphasised the importance of wellbeing programmes being integrated into the participants lives, not just discarded after the lesson. The implementation of this programme is also highly relevant for this research as the focus of the 4th class programme is on resilience.

2.10 Parents Role in Promoting Resilience

While resilience has been shown to be an individual skill that we can all learn, a child's parent plays a vital role in resilience education. Jackson and Harbison (2014) highlighted that parental engagement in their child's education has a more significant impact on the child's learning than income, social class, or the parental level of education. Hoover-Dempsey, Battiano, Walker, Reed, DeJong and Jones (2001) found that parental modelling and reinforcement were important for reinforcing behaviours which encourage successful school performance. Acknowledging the role of parents is also in line with the Irish Constitution, *Bunreacht na hÉireann,* (1937) which recognised the right of parents as the primary educator of their child.

Resilience is present to either a larger or smaller degree in all individuals or families (Grotberg, 1995, 1997; Turner, 2001). This posits the understanding of resilience as being normal or natural, so there is an opportunity for positive outcomes for everyone (Oddone,

2002). Resilience education does not just take place in school, but also at home. Hill, Stafford, Seaman, Ross and Daniel (2007) found that parents can protect children from experiencing the damaging effects of environmental adversity, while also nurturing traits in children that help them to develop as adults who can cope with their problems. For families who find themselves exposed to a number of risk factors, Erickson and Henderson (1998) believe building resilience in parents is crucial to developing resilience in children. In fact, researchers of resilience advocate for a holistic approach, designing interventions with integrated service delivery including children, communities, and families (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Yates & Masten, 2004). The evidence seems to suggest that only a small number of children and parents are capable of being resilient while dealing with neglect and severe abuse, or multiple difficulties like a parent with mental illness, a life of poverty or having limited social support (Erickson & Henderson, 1998; Clarke & Clarke, 2003; Newman, 2004). Yet, overly focussing on the parent is not useful if socio-economic factors that are creating risk factors are not being addressed (Hill et al., 2007). While parents were not directly involved in my research study, they helped the children to carry out all the resilience activities at home and discussed it with them as a concept throughout the research process. As a result, their influence in the child's resilience cannot be understated.

2.11 Resilience Teaching Strategies

2.11.1 Literature and Drama

Key to the research project is finding curricular areas where resilience can be discussed and promoted. The research around both literature and drama indicate that they offer significant potential for children to explore resilience in a way that is unique to the child and age appropriate. Literature offers the teacher a unique opportunity to engage children in discussions about topics that they might have no experience with. Indeed Freire (1985) and

Greene (1980, 1995) described literacy as a method to explore and debate social issues of the day. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) described reading as a process which is not just decrypting symbols but as an immersive way of gaining understanding of our environment. Keen (2007) described our brains as being susceptible to the power of fiction, as it has a way of disarming our reservations. Literature and narrative novels offer a unique chance to develop the children's character and their conduct (Keen, 2007). This is also echoed by Hunte and Golembiewski (2014) who stated that our brains have evolved with an understanding of narrative as a biological advantage. However, it is important that reading is not bereft of emotion or has a lack of creativity. For Freire (1985) reading must be based on the world of the child with elements of society, history and culture woven into all aspects of the reading. Literature can also be used by the teacher to examine resilience in characters and the societal structures that cause the need for resilience. We can use literature to teach the children about resilience by relating it to their own lives and the perspectives of people they will not have considered before (Mills, Stephens, O'Keefe & Waugh, 2004).

There is a wealth of research which highlights the positive impact creative and imaginative play has for children. Phillips (1999) asserts that by taking on roles, children are able to escape from their everyday identity and lose their inhibitions. Fennessy (2000) went further to say that drama brings out the best in children as they interact, working towards the achievement of a common goal. By engaging in drama, students are placed in situations where they are required to think critically, discuss with their peers, use real-life materials, and explain their understanding as part of the decision-making process (Siks, 1983). Through drama, children are exploring their current knowledge in comparison with the issues presented by the teacher. Drama then, not only gives participants the chance to co-construct new knowledge, but it also provides them the chance to delve deeper into what they already know (Bolton, 1984). Specific techniques within the drama such as teacher in role, gives

children an opportunity to focus their attention and allows the teacher to challenge the opinions of the children in a safe way. By taking this approach it encourages children to collaborate and problem solve together (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982). Children are enabled to discuss issues, scenarios, and links to their lives throughout the drama. Philbin and Myers (1991) discussed the potential of drama to promote problem-solving and critical thinking as a result of the discussion between the teacher and students. The most important aspect of drama in the classroom is that the children are learning through their own actions and experience. This means that drama education has huge opportunities for the teacher. Drama offers the teacher a chance to not only explore resilience with the children, but also to model resilient behaviour and what it looks like.

2.11.2 Positive Self Talk and Growth Mindset

Self-talk is our internal dialogue and is thought to be a mix of both our conscious and unconscious beliefs that we hold about ourselves and the world. Our brains are hardwired to remember negative experiences over positive ones, so we recall the times we did not get it right more than the times we do. We then replay these messages in our minds, fuelling negative feelings (Jantz, 2016). Positive self-talk is not a focus on unsubstantiated beliefs about ourselves; it is more about showing yourself some self-compassion and understanding who you are and what you have been through (Jantz, 2019). Chopra (2012) found that providing students with effective strategies for turning negative self-talk into positive self-talk enabled them to successfully transform their negative thought processes and the value of doing so in their lives. Todd, Oliver, and Harvey (2011) found that positive self-talk interventions are effective in mediating cognitive and behavioural change.

Following on from positive self-talk, is the concept of the growth mindset. Dweck (2015) described the growth mindset as when people believe that they can develop their abilities through hard-work and dedication. By taking this viewpoint, a love of learning and resilience is inspired that is vital for a sense of accomplishment. In contrast to that is having a fixed mindset. Dweck (2015) described this as when people have very rigid views of their qualities, like intelligence or talent. Instead of spending time nurturing their intelligence or talent, they believe them to be fixed traits. The growth mindset is very valuable in education as it focuses on the process of learning as opposed to the results. For Dweck (2015) even if a child gets the wrong answer, it does not matter as the search was deeply meaningful. However, it is not enough to simply pay lip service to having a growth mindset. It must be developed through effort and meaningful activities (Dweck, 2016). It is also relevant that both positive-self talk and the growth mindset need to be modelled by the teacher if they are to be successful. Overcoming difficulties and being able to engage with a challenge are key aspects of resilient behaviour. They also are closely linked with the *Resilience Framework*. By engaging in a growth mindset, we are encouraging children to engage in a practice which will develop their overall resilience.

2.11.3 Mindfulness

In terms of developing children's resilience, I wanted to engage the class in mindfulness, as there is a plethora of research which shows the impact it can have on children's mental health and wellbeing. In recent years, mindfulness has grown exponentially in popularity and is being implemented in several different sectors such as education, business, and politics (New Economics Foundation, 2014). Mindfulness is a victim of both hype and public ire due to misunderstanding of the concept (Van Dam, Van Vugt, Vago, Schmalzl, Saron, Olendzki, Meissner, Lazar, Kerr, Gorchov, Fox, Field, Britton, Brefczynski-Lewis & Meyer, 2016). But what is mindfulness? Kabat-Zinn (1994: 4) described mindfulness as, 'paying attention

in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.' Through engaging with mindfulness, you develop in areas such as compassion, acceptance, openness, and creativity that have been shown to increase resilience (Fredrickson, 2001). Mindfulness has also been found to have a positive impact on stress, anxiety, depression, and perhaps most relevantly for teachers, focus and attention (Chiesa, Calati & Serretti, 2012; Khoury, Lecomte, Fortin, Masse, Therien, Bouchard, Chapleau, Paquin & Hofmann, 2013; Goyal, Singh, Sibinga, Gould, Rowland-Seymour, Sharma, Berger, Sleicher, Maron, Shihab, Ranasinghe, Linn, Saha, Bass & Haythornthwaite, 2014). Wellbeing in school staff has also been shown to be improved through mindfulness (Weare, 2015; Emerson, Leyland, Hudson, Rowse, Hanley & Hugh-Jones, 2017).

In terms of mindfulness's educational benefits, research shows that it is positive for teachers and students (Jennings, 2015; Greenberg & Harris, 2012). However, for mindfulness to be successful, teachers need to embody its core characteristics (Crane, Kuyken, Hastings, Rothwell & Williams, 2010). This has interesting implications for schools who wish to implement mindfulness programmes because the research seems to imply that teachers not only require adequate training, but also an intensive personal practice in daily life (Crane, Kuyken, Williams, Hastings, Cooper & Fennell, 2011). For students, mindfulness improves attention and also reduces anxiety and behavioural problems in the class (Semple, Lee, Rosa & Miller, 2009). Mindfulness also has significant benefits for teachers. School based mindfulness been shown to reduce stress and burnout (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus & Davidson, 2013), improve teacher efficacy (Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia & Greenberg, 2013), create more emotionally supportive classrooms (Jennings, Brown, Frank, Doyle, Oh, Davis, Rasheed, DeWeese, DeMauro, Cham & Greenberg, 2017) and improve classroom organisation (Flook et al., 2013). By engaging with mindfulness, you allow the

children to develop their mental health and wellbeing which has a direct impact on their resilience.

2.11.4 Teacher Modelling

A crucial part of this intervention will be based on teacher modelling of resilience. Bandura (1986) argued that modelling is one of the most efficient ways to learn new skills or knowledge. He also believes that the use of modelling as a teaching strategy is effective because individuals imitate the behaviour of people they respect and with whom they have a rapport (Bandura, 1977). Research also indicates that modelling is an effective instructional strategy in that it allows students to observe the teacher's thought processes (Salisu & Ransom, 2014). This is done through talking through your internal processes aloud and actively highlighting how you are doing something while teaching, which has been shown to engage students while also encouraging learning (Bandura, 1986). The NCCA (2017) also recognise the important role of the day-to-day interactions, both inside and outside of the classroom, in helping the children to develop their wellbeing and therefore their resilience. With this in mind, teachers need to be extremely conscious of how they ae reacting to adversity in their classroom and actively try to demonstrate techniques that the children can use to enhance their own resilience.

2.12 Conclusion

The literature was reviewed in the following themes: resilience as a concept, the importance of early intervention, the policy and context of Irish mental health, a background of protective and risk factors and how they relate to Maslow, implementing resilience in schools, a discussion of the important role played by parents and finally, approaches for teaching resilience.

It is clear that resilience is an extremely complex topic that is influenced by a number of factors in a person's life. However, the research indicates that there is a large scope of ideas and methods that can be applied in the primary school to promote it. Further still, schools and teachers have been shown to be in an ideal position to promote resilience, especially as they can represent a safe place with an adult that the child trusts. There is also a clear gap in the literature in relation to specific approaches which are effective in teaching resilience which I believe the rest of this research project addresses.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

> The 'classroom' is a curious and amorphous discursive space, therefore— expanding and contracting under the pressures of different discourses that police its boundaries and construct its interiority in disparate ways. Warm, womb-like, nurturing. Overheated, insular, stifling. Or the no nonsense heartland of education, where (real) teachers teach, children learn and researchers ought to, but don't, research (MacLure, 2003: 16).

The aim of this chapter is to explore and justify the methods that were used throughout the research process while also outlining the design of the research study. The relationship between the chosen research methodology (self-study action research) and the focus of the research (resilience) is also examined. A number of different data collection tools were selected for this research project: pupil questionnaires, reflective journal entries, comments from a critical friend and also samples of children's work. A variety of research instruments were used to establish both triangulation and validity (Sullivan et al., 2016). There is discussion around the topics of subjectivity, validity, reliability, and reflexivity. The ethical issues around the research will be explored along with an acknowledgement about the limitations of the research. The research seeks to explore how resilience can be taught in the primary classroom. Crucially, as I am at the centre of this research, it allows me to reflect critically on my present thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours in my practice. McNiff (2013) outlined how action research allows the practitioner to explore the relationship between their learning and their actions in the world. This process allowed me to improve the quality of my teaching while also fostering resilience in the children.

3.1.2 Research Context

The core aim of the research was to improve my practice. To carry out this study, the 30 children between the ages of 9 and 10, in my 4th class, were agreeable participants. The site of the research was a senior national mainstream school which accommodates children from 3rd to 6th class. There are 494 pupils in the school: 252 boys and 242 girls. It is a middle-class school where the majority of pupils would have a reasonably affluent socio-economic background. The study was planned to take place over a 12-week period; January 2020 to March 2020, with interventions planned for 1 hour 3-4 times a week. However, due to the early closure of schools as a result of COVID-19, the research was ended at 8 weeks. The implications of this will be further explored in chapter five.

3.2 Methodological Approach

McNiff (2013) described methodology as a way of generating new theory. However, there are many approaches to methodology that are used in a variety of different contexts depending on the scope and aims of the research. Swann and Pratt (2007) spoke about the importance of letting the research question dictate the methodology and not the other way around. As I read further, and examined the positivist, interpretivist, and action research models it became clear that action research was the ideal fit for what this research project aimed to achieve.

3.3 Action Research

As I learned more about action research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; McNiff, 2013) and its underlying tenets, it was clear to me that it offered a unique approach that matched the needs of my research question, while also being particularly useful for teachers. I wanted to engage in action research, as it can, ‘constitute a living, authentic form of continuing professional

development that has the potential to change both the practice and the practitioner irrevocably' (Sullivan et al., 2016: 25) This is a result of its values, ontological and epistemological views, and its methodological approach.

3.3.1 What is Action Research?

McNiff (2013: 23) described action research as, 'an enquiry by the self into the self, with others acting as co-researchers and critical learning partners.' What is important here is that while you are holding yourself accountable for your actions, you are recognising that you are always in relation to other people during the research (McNiff, 2013). Reason and Bradbury (2013) described how action research is contained within a family of approaches. Regardless of which action research approach is taken, the fundamentals underlying the approach are the same. This includes reflecting on a situation, identifying an area of improvement, taking action to stimulate improvement, gathering data, and reviewing the chosen situation (Sullivan et al., 2016). Cohen, Manion and Morisson (2018) described action research as particularly attractive to researchers in an educational setting because it is a combination of both action and research. The former is what a teacher does to enhance their practice (these are the actions taken) while the latter describes the learning process and an explanation of what they did to improve (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

However, there are several caveats when it comes to understanding action research and the differences between it and other methodologies. McNiff (2013) described how action research is too often discussed as an abstract construct or a process to be applied to one's practice. For McNiff (2013: 24) 'this perspective tends to distort the underpinning values of action researchers such as autonomy, independent thinking and accountability.' Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014) describes action research as a social practice which seeks to

redefine the relationship between the researcher and the research participants. Although some people carrying out research believe that there is a disadvantage in the researcher being considered an insider, there is an argument that insiders have a unique position which allows them to study practices which are ingrained within the research site (Kemmis et al., 2014). Carr and Kemmis (1986) criticised the ideal of the objective researcher who believes that their self-interests are not affected by the research which is being conducted.

3.3.2 Critical Reflection in Action Research

Sullivan et al. (2016) describe how vital the reflection process is when carrying out action research. It is important that it is not at a superficial level, instead based in the theoretical framework of people like Moon (2004) or Brookfield (2017). Stevens and Cooper (2009) describe reflection as a complex and intentional process which aims at generating learning from experience. For Greene (2001: 207) reflection involves being open, 'to come awake and find new visions, new ways of living in the fragile human world.' Reflection then becomes a vital part of understanding the effects of the action research project. In fact, Ebbutt (1985) believed the process of action research was incomplete without reflecting on the actions taken. This is congruent with the work of Schön (1983: 14) who described the practitioner as having, 'an interest in understanding the situation, but it is in the service of his interest in change.' This means that there is a learning opportunity created in the process of carrying out a change and is the basis for his reflection-in-action idea. This understanding suggests that action research is not limited to academic researchers only but is open to any practitioner who implements it in their practice. With this in mind, I used Gibbs (1988) model of reflection to both study my actions while enhancing my understanding of my practice.

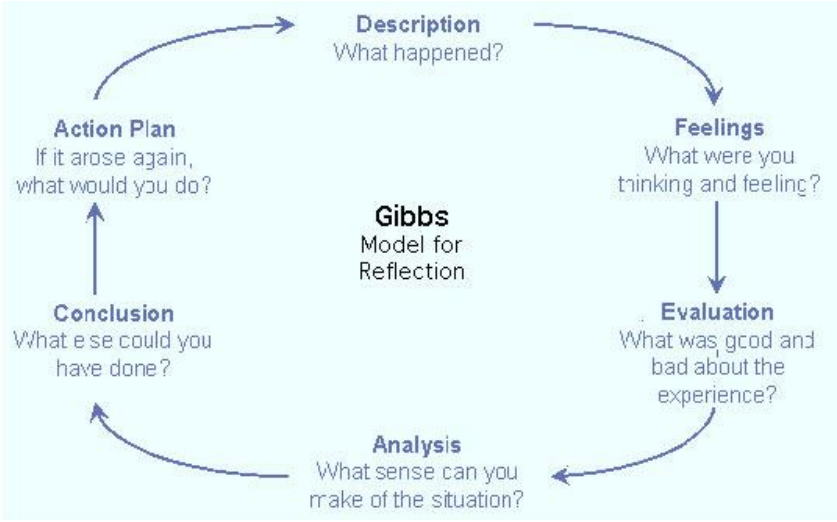


Figure 3.1: Gibb's Reflective Cycle

3.3.3 Self-Study Action Research

When deciding on the appropriate research methodology, it became clear that the self-study branch of action research would be the most beneficial for me. Self-study research (often called practitioner research) is unique in that it places the emphasis on the researcher studying the role they play within their own practice (Coia & Taylor, 2009). The core focus of the study is on the researcher improving their practice (Feldman, Paugh & Mills, 2004). Crucial to carrying out this style of research is that it is informed by relevant literature, open for validation (Whitehead, 2004) and the inclusion of critical and collaborative reflection (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Most pertinently, Zeichner (1999: 8) called self-study research as, 'the single most significant development ever in the field of teacher education research.' Self-study research is unique in that it empowers the researcher to examine and take ownership of their own practice as they generate knowledge which is also useful to others in the field (Manke, 2004). Self-study action research allowed me the perfect mix of carrying out research that was not only meaningful to me, but also put me at the centre of positive action in my classroom.

3.4. Epistemological and Ontological Stance

McNiff (2013) described epistemology as how we view knowledge and the process of acquiring this knowledge. Foucault and Gordon (1980) viewed knowledge as power, not as something that we impart on the children. Buber (1958) went further to say that knowledge is co-constructed and values the contribution of the children in the pursuit of learning. McAteer (2013) argues that while most positivist research views knowledge as defined by what can be proved by science, action research looks to challenge rationally held beliefs around the construction of knowledge. I view knowledge as co-created through dialogue and a pursuit in which you need to sometimes wrestle with and comeback to. This is linked with determination and resilience and not being put off by not initially grasping something. I want to inspire learners who are not only able to survive an educational challenge, but to embrace it and see it as something rewarding to engage with. By undertaking a self-study action research, I am challenging and developing my own understanding of knowledge as I use this research to generate my own living educational theory (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006).

Ontology is how we view ourselves or a theory of being (McNiff, 2013). It is concerned with how the researcher views other people and their own position within the research. For Whitehead and McNiff (2006) ontological values are crucial in educational action research as they can go on to be developed into an educational commitment. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001: 319) go even further to say that 'one's being in and towards the world should be a central feature of any discussion of the value of self-study research.' I deeply value care and have always been interested in the holistic wellbeing of the child. Wellbeing is considered to contain the following aspects: emotional (affect/feeling), psychological (positive functioning), social (relations with others in society), physical (physical health) and spiritual (sense of meaning and purpose in life) (Barry & Friedli, 2008). This focus on wellbeing is

closely connected to Noddings (2013: 186) who said, 'the student is infinitely more important than the subject matter.' By adopting a care-based approach, I am putting the child's holistic wellbeing at the centre of my classroom and facilitating human flourishing (Noddings, 1984). In terms of the importance of establishing these stances before research is carried out, Scott and Usher (1996: 13) say, 'no method is self-validating, separable from an epistemology and an ontology.'

3.5 Methodological Choice

For this project, I considered deeply what would be the best research method to take. As I read, it was apparent that there was what Gage (1989: 4) called 'paradigm wars' between qualitative and quantitative schools of thought. Qualitative research is understood to be underpinned by the use of words rather than numbers (Bryman, 2008). It focuses on the experiences and interpretations by humans towards the social world, and how to enquire about these (Sandelowski, 2001). Burell and Morgan (1979: 23) describe how qualitative research can capture the 'taken for granted' assumptions which are missed in quantitative research. I felt that taking a qualitative approach would most accurately capture what was happening in my classroom, while also allowing space for the voice of the child to be present in the study. However, I did also collect small amounts of numerical data through surveys to gauge the children's perceptions of their resilience at the end of the first cycle. In doing this, I was hoping to benefit from the ideas of Sullivan et al. (2016) who discussed the value of collecting many types of data in action research. This allowed for a combination of approaches to assess the effectiveness of interventions such as, a reflective journal, surveys, children's work samples and observations

3.6 Research Model and Framework

Outlined below was the proposed actions to be taken during the two cycles of planned research.

Date:	Action:
Week of January 6th	• Discuss concept of research with the class • Explain and distribute letters of consent • Meeting with critical friend to discuss planned actions in the research
Week of January 13th	• Resilience survey and concept map completed • Cycle 1-Teacher designed lessons around resilience and drama carried out • Observation by critical friend • Meet with critical friend to discuss early implementation
Week of January 20th	• Continuation of Cycle 1 lessons • Observation by critical friend • Share with critical friend
Week of January 27th	• Cycle 1 complete • Discussion with critical friend about end of Cycle 1 • Observations • Content analysis of children's work
Week of February 3rd	• Cycle 2- *Weaving Well-Being* programme starts and introduction of 10-minute mindfulness each day • Discussion with critical friend for implementation of cycle 2
Week of February 10th	• Continued *Weaving Well-Being* • Introduce novel with resilience focus • Mindfulness • Content analysis of children's work • Observations
Midterm Break	• Provisional Evaluation of Cycle 2
February 24th to March 27th	• Completion of Cycle 2 • Resilience survey and concept map completed • Content analysis of children's work • Critical friend evaluation of Cycle 2
April 2020	• Data Analysis • Validation Group

Figure 3.2: Framework for Action Research

3.7 Pedagogical Interventions

The pedagogical interventions focussed on four different areas. Firstly, I designed specific lessons around the concept of resilience and why it is important. This aimed to improve the children's understanding of resilience as a topic and make them aware of how resilience could be used in real life scenarios. There was then a teacher-designed drama around a child who needed to be resilient. This included several role-playing activities and games. After that, I began the *Weaving Well-Being* programme, which had overarching wellbeing aims, but a specific focus on resilience in 4th class. Finally, the first *Harry Potter* novel was read to the class and there was specific discussion and activities around resilience and how the characters exhibit resilient traits. This multi-faceted approach to teaching about resilience allowed children of all different skills and abilities to engage in a way that suits them.

3.8 Data Collection

As discussed earlier, triangulation is a key element of ensuring validity and authenticity of claims to new knowledge. For this reason, a variety of data collection methods were chosen. This includes observation, keeping a teacher reflective journal, surveys, and visual data.

3.8.1 Observation

Observation is a key tool used by teachers to assist in both the planning for and evaluation of the effectiveness of their lessons. However, as noted by Marshall and Rossman (2005) and Simpson and Tuson (2003) observation is not simply looking; it is systematically looking and noting the events, behaviours and artefacts that take place during the research. Cohen et al. (2018) speak about the advantage of observation to the researcher in that it allows them to collect live data from the social situations which are naturally occurring. In this way then, the researcher is not relying on second-hand accounts of what is taking place.

For Moyles (2002) data from observations is not only context sensitive, but also shows a strong ecological validity. Cohen et al. (2018) spoke of the importance of identifying the criteria of what you are observing for. This prevents you from becoming lost in your observation and taking unnecessary notes. However, I was highly aware of the work of Campbell, McNamara and Gilroy (2004: 94) who stated that 'simply noticing events can also provide insight into situations.' For this reason, it was decided that a combination of both semi-structured and unstructured observations would not only increase the reliability and validity of each, but also could be used to best capture what was happening in the classroom. I created a semi-structured observation template which was designed to track three specific children's resilience as the intervention progressed (see Appendix E). I also had an unstructured observation template (see Appendix F) that recorded interactions between myself and the children, interactions between the children, as well as any general observations I made in relation to the children's resilience. These observations played a significant factor in future planning of activities and formed the basis of the reflections within my journal.

3.8.2 Reflective Journal

Sullivan et al. (2016) explain that reflection is a critical part of the action research process. For Bolton (2014), reflection is a powerful tool which allows the researcher to explore what is important for them and empowers them to change their practice in light of their learning. The use of the journal allows for what Hocking, Haskell and Linds (2001: 18) called 'embodiment.' Embodiment allows for a movement away from views of knowledge as concrete and within us, to a view of it being created through our interactions with the world. This is particularly attractive in the classroom context as each day is rich with interactions with both colleagues and children. By being a reflective practitioner, we are moving away

from being a removed spectator or technician (Zeichner & Liston, 1996) towards a research account which includes the emotions, thoughts, and reactions of the researcher. Crucially, this in line with McNiff (2002) who stressed that the defining feature of action research is that the researcher is studying their own life, not the lives of others. By using the reflective journal, I hoped to be able to discover areas of my practice where I was perhaps afraid to digress from the traditional norms and not providing a rich learning experience hooks (2003). While I mainly used Gibbs (1988) model of reflection, I also engaged in some free writing and responded to stimulus questions set by my critical friend (see Appendix I). This ensured the reflection process stayed fresh and provided a variety of approaches for exploring issues as they arose.

3.8.3 Content Analysis of Children's Work Samples

Helm, Beneke and Steinheimer (1997) argue that children learn by engaging with hands- on, thought-provoking experiences which challenge them to think. These experiences then stimulate both growth and development. However, they also acknowledge that such experiences cannot be assessed easily by conventional methods. In addressing this issue, Helm et al. (1997: 201) go on to say that data which reveals, 'what the child is beginning to do, or what the child is trying to integrate are often the most helpful pieces of information.' Accessing this data and assessing the children's learning was a key goal which would help me to assess the effect the intervention was having. One way of trying to gain an understanding of this data, was through content analysis of the children's work. Content analysis is where text is broken down and examined through the use of pre-existing categories and emerging themes to generate or test a theory (Cohen et al., 2018). Essentially it involves 'coding raw data into conceptually congruent categories' (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014: 342). By analysing the children's work in this way, I aimed to gain an insight into how

their resilience was developing and what teaching strategies were proving most effective in their learning. This also helped with adjusting and re-structuring the planned interventions as the project progressed to match the needs of the children.

3.8.4 Surveys

There were two different types of surveys planned for use during the research process. A self-completed, paper-based survey about their resilience which was administered to the children at the beginning of the research (see Appendix G). This survey was a modified version of the Brief Resilience Scale (Bernard, Dalen, Smith & Wiggins, 2008). The questions were modified to be at the children's levels and to be appropriate to the social context of the children in the class. This survey was also intended to be given at the end of the research to gauge how the children's perception of their resilience had changed as a result of the intervention. I also used a teacher-designed, age appropriate survey at the end of the first cycle of research (see Appendix H). This survey collected data in relation to the most enjoyable part of the first cycle and had open ended questions for the children to answer about the research project.

3.9 Validity and Rigour in Action Research

With the view that the researcher is central to the research and that each context of self-study action research is different, how do you ensure that the research carried out is of a good quality? Especially when many schools of research emphasise the importance of replicability and generalisation in validating research. Sullivan et al. (2016) explain that cross-examining your work from a variety of viewpoints is an effective way to show both the accuracy and validity of your claim to knowledge. This is furthered by Cohen et al. (2018) who said triangulation offers an opportunity to comprehensively detail the changes that have been

made, while also presenting a more balanced and detailed picture (Altricher, Posch & Somekh, 2008). A key part of assessing the value of action research then, is not in the traditional view of replicability and generalisation but draws on authenticity (Winter, 2002). For Winter (2002: 145), an action research study had this authenticity when it had a 'genuine voice' which 'belongs to those whose life-worlds are being described.'

Drawing on these ideals, Habermas's (1979) theory of social validity becomes crucial. Sullivan et al. (2016: 103) go on to say, 'you will be able to have your research validated and the claims you make about improving your practice will be upheld.' A key part of this is having a critical friend and a validation group to share your research with throughout the process. By including these alternative views and interpretations of your work, it can add authenticity to the analysis by, 'seeing a situation through others' eyes" (LaBoskey, 2004: 847). I achieved this by meeting with my critical friend and my validation group throughout the research process. McNiff (2013: 136) also described how any researcher who is making a claim to new knowledge must, 'provide supporting evidence to show in what way the practice has improved and by what criteria the they are making the claim.' To establish this claim to knowledge, the research has been presented to my colleagues, peers, and the relevant academics at Maynooth University.

For this research, McNiff and Whitehead's (2006) research model was followed. While there are several different research models available, I felt this approach was the most suitable for my project and allowed for the cyclical nature of action research. This model was used as a basis for the planning, application, and reflexive process of my research, as seen in this figure:

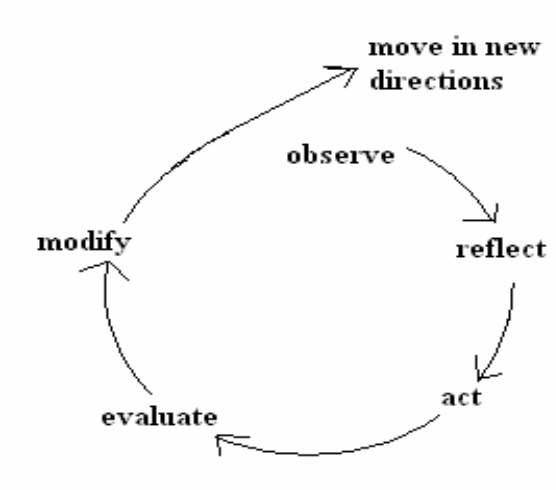


Figure 3.3: McNiff and Whitehead (2006) Research Model

3.10 Ethical Issues

Cohen et al. (2018: 234) frame discourse around ethical issues as not only being highly ambiguous but they are also, 'against a backdrop of personal, institutional and societal politics.' However, regardless of these issues, the British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2018: 5) state that, 'all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for: the person; knowledge; democratic values; the quality of educational research; and academic freedom.' Ethical approval was first sought from the University Ethics Committee (see Appendix D) and then the school's Board of Management (see Appendix C). Underpinning this process is respect for the participants at all levels of the research. Cohen et al. (2018) describe ethical behaviour as preserving the research participants dignity as human beings. Cavan (1997: 810) went even further to say, 'while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better.'

Howe and Moses (1999) consider consent to be a cornerstone issue when conducting research, as it respects the participants right to take control and ownership of their own lives. Diener and Crandall (1978) describe the four aspects of gaining consent: competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension. Competence is the concept that, when

given adequate information, reasonable adults should make the correct decision regarding consent (Cohen et al., 2018). While children were given age-appropriate material that explained the research, the respective parent or guardian received more detailed information (see Appendix A) to ensure full comprehension of the research project. The children were then able to give their assent to take part in the research (see Appenix B). Following these steps ensured that participants were able to give informed consent to take part in the research. Cohen et al. (2018) explain that voluntarism is the participants having a free choice to opt in or out of the research. This concept is further developed by the withdrawal aspect of research, where the participants are reminded that they can remove themselves from the research process at any time (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

Being aware of the power relationship between the children and researcher and ensuring both anonymity and confidentiality, are vital aspects of the research process. While there is obviously a power imbalance between me and the children, I strived to uphold the 'trust' element of our relationship (BERA, 2018). By discussing with children why I was doing the research and taking in their suggestions for changes where possible, I aimed to negate this issue. In terms of ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used throughout the research instead of names and all information regarding the research was stored in a locked cabinet which I only I have access to.

While designing my surveys, I was aware of the work of Davidson (1970) and ensured that they were piloted with a smaller group of children before the main survey was carried out. Acquiescence is also a major issue when conducting surveys, especially with a group of children. For Cohen et al. (2018) it is crucial to avoid the situation where the child will just say 'yes' to anything because it will be considered what the teacher wants. There is also the issue of resilience being a positive trait to have and that children will want to be perceived

as having it regardless of how they feel. To counteract this, I was conscious of moving away from yes/no style questions and reminded the children that their surveys were anonymous.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of applying statistical or logical techniques that accurately describe and evaluate the data that you have collected. Cohen et al. (2018) describe how the form of data analysis that is chosen must be appropriate to the types of data that have been gathered. Data was generated using the above methods throughout the duration of the research process. For dealing with relevant qualitative data, I used the six-step method which was devised by Braun and Clark (2006). This involved breaking the data down into smaller 'codes' which were then further divided into the relevant identified emerging themes. These themes were studied to identify patterns which were emerging from the data. The numerical data collected from the surveys was analysed using the process of exploratory data analysis. This is what Cohen et al. (2018) described as visual method of data analysis. This allowed me to use a tally chart, which indicated the frequency of responses, which was then portrayed through images like bar charts and bar-line graphs. These will be further dissected and discussed in the findings chapter.

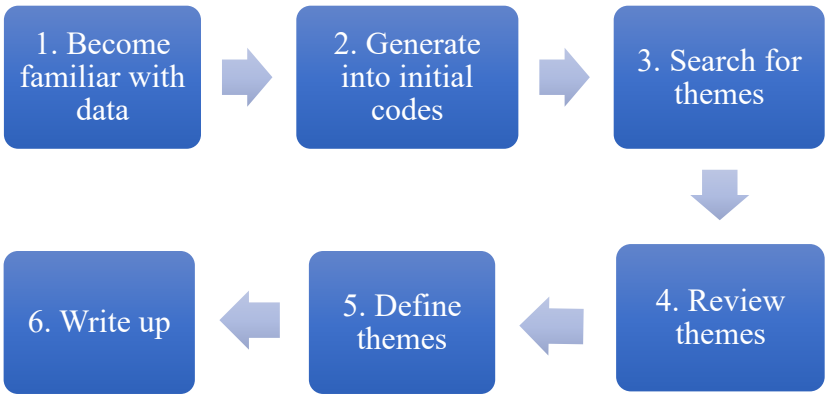


Figure 3.4: Data Analysis Process

3.12 Limitations

There were several limitations which influenced this study. Firstly, the time constraints of undertaking the research project while also teaching other curricular areas was extremely challenging. Resilience by its nature is a complex topic that we have already seen involves more than just the individual child. Unfortunately, it was outside the scope of this study to further investigate outside factors that influence a child's resilience, such as the parental factor. Finally, as identified by BERA (2018) there is a natural conflict when acting as both a teacher and a researcher. While I always strived to not let these roles become intertwined, it is likely that it occurred at some point during the research.

3.13 Conclusion

Establishing strategies that are effective in teaching resilience is the primary goal of this research. The above chapter has discussed the methodological considerations and eventual choice that was made for this research. There has also been an explanation of which data collection methods were used and why I felt that they were the most suitable ones for this research. Assuring quality in validity and rigour in self-study action research was outlined. The data analysis method has been given, alongside an in depth look at the ethics which are underpinning the research. Relevant limitations have also been acknowledged. The following chapter analyses the data that was collected and presents my findings.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This section seeks to analyse the data which was collected during the first cycle of research. As acknowledged in the last chapter, this research was significantly impacted by the worldwide outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The in-class element of the research was over two-thirds completed and it is possible that other findings might have emerged if the research cycles could have come to their natural conclusion. However, while there were unavoidable issues in the course of this research, both Huberman (2001) and Hattie (2003) agree that the teachers who are skilled at making adjustments are the most effective in engaging with systemic issues and are also the most satisfied from their work. These issues then, offer a chance for me to adjust and still produce a relevant claim to new knowledge.

The core focus of this research process is finding effective strategies for teaching resilience in the primary classroom. The use of drama in teaching about resilience, the importance of teacher modelling and the need for explicit teaching of resilience strategies to children were the findings that emerged from the data. These three areas will be explored further below.

4.2 Emerging Findings

The data was gathered over an eight-week period with one complete research cycle and was interrupted during its second research cycle. The research instruments used during the study were: An initial concept map and questionnaire about resilience, semi-structured and unstructured observations, teacher reflective journal, an anonymous survey after cycle one, and samples of the children's work. This is outlined in Figure 4.1:

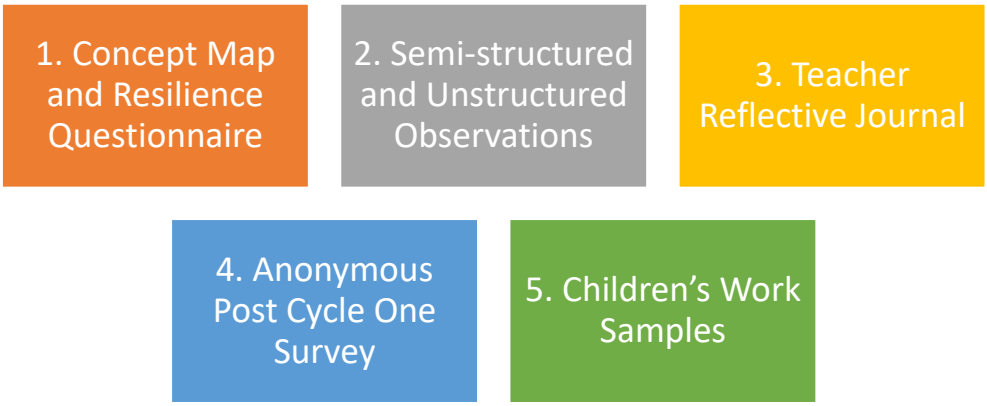


Figure 4.1: Research Instruments

After careful consideration of the collected data, three main findings emerged which are illustrated in Figure 4.2:

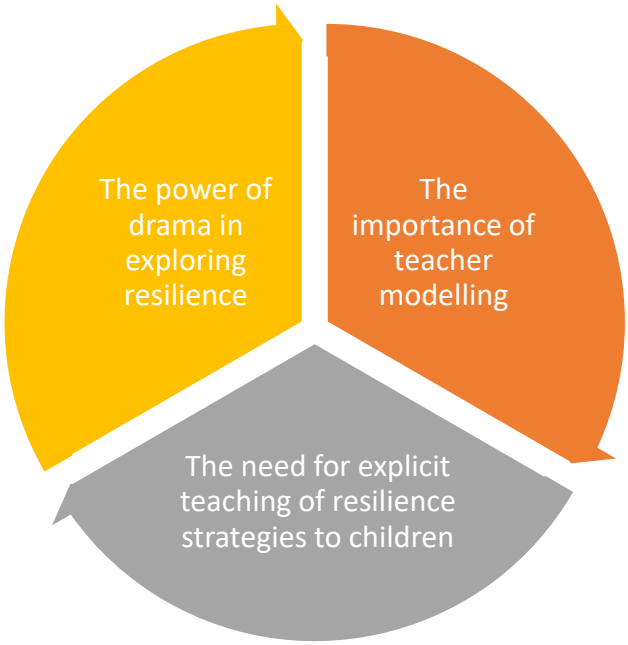


Figure 4.2: Emerging Findings

These findings will now be discussed in further detail.

4.2.1 The Power of Drama in Teaching Resilience

In the recent framework for the new primary curriculum published by the NCCA (2020), the valuable role of the arts in enriching, inspiring and engaging the children's lives is highlighted. More significantly, they also mention the role the arts play in helping children develop the skills to participate fully in society as a whole. When examining the data, it became clear that drama was the most enjoyable part of the research process for most of the children, as indicated by the anonymous survey.

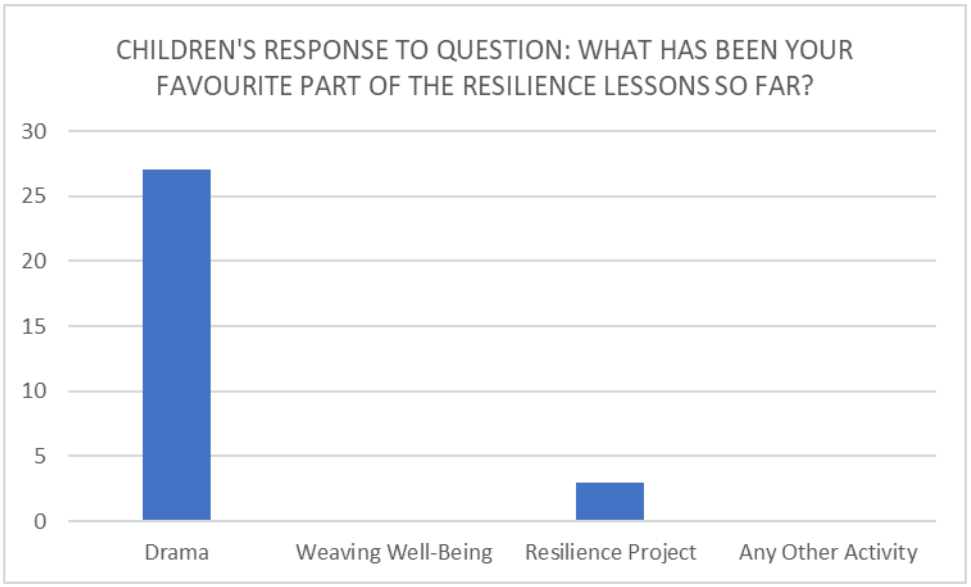


Figure 4.3: Post Cycle One Anonymous Survey

Moreover, the reflective journal is inundated with instances in which the power of the drama lessons is discussed:

> *We did some freeze frames of the drama character and I had a few of the children in role as different characters and I was really impressed with how they bought into the roles... I was really shocked by the quality of the questions they asked me and how into the story they are. Drama is offering them a chance to engage with it [resilience] as a concept in ways that direct teaching definitely couldn't (*Treacy, Reflective Journal: 21/1/2*).*

This is in line with Bolton (1999) who described how the use of drama promotes problem-solving opportunities and experience through discovery. In this way then, drama enables the

children to experience real life problems, in a protected environment where they can learn through experience at an age appropriate level (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995).

My critical friend also noticed how much the children enjoyed the drama lessons and the high level of both engagement and discussion that took place:

Critical Friend 24/1/20	The children really enjoyed the drama lesson and they all engaged well throughout. There was also interesting discussion around resilience and how the children related to the character.

Figure 4.4: Critical Friend Comment 1

Additionally, the reflective journal and observations also highlighted several times throughout the drama lessons where children who were usually quite reserved and passive during direct teaching, came to life during the drama activities:

> *It felt great that they enjoyed it [the drama activities] and it is wonderful to see children who maybe don't enjoy the individual writing activities as much shine here (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 20/1/20).*

Source	Evidence
Unstructured Observation 22/1/20	• Children have bought into this drama completely and are asking me regularly when we are doing it • The diary entries were excellently done, and the children have really connected to the character

Figure 4.5: Unstructured Observation 1

Drama was found to be a highly effective method that not only allowed the children to put themselves in the shoes of another person, but also gave them an opportunity to engage with

resilience as a concept through multiple approaches (freeze frames/diary entries/going in role as a character). In this way, the children were presented with a fun, age-appropriate drama scenario where they learned about resilience and the possible barriers to becoming resilient. This is in line with Nicholson (2014: 14) who said that drama education promotes learners, 'imagination, creativity, critical thinking, flexibility and expressivity.' Drama also achieves this without impeding or stifling the children's personalities (Kalogirou, 2016). With this is mind, I feel that it is clear in both the literature and the data from my own research, that drama offers a powerful and unique approach in resilience education.

4.2.2 Teacher Modelling of Resilience

The key role of the teacher in the lives of children is a well-researched area and is extremely relevant when it comes to resilience education. Through observing adults interact with other people and their general demeanour in school, children's beliefs about their own ability, capacity and identity are formed (Morrison & Allen, 2007; Roeser, Eccles & Sameroff, 2000; Sprott, Jenkins & Doob, 2005). Teacher modelling of resilience then becomes a key area in the success of any intervention. There is considerable evidence in my data of both my initial difficulties with modelling and development towards a teacher who embodies a resilient attitude.

This reflective journal entry shows the internal struggle of realising that perhaps, I had not been showing resilience in the way I thought I had:

> *I've also been feeling like perhaps I haven't been adequate in how I model resilience in children and have even been perpetuating a negative response. I often find myself saying 'don't be silly and 'come on now, just get over.' The more I think about it, the more I feel like this is not in line with my values and that I am not effectively modelling resilience in my class (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 16/10/19).*

I also had difficulty at times with my own resilience in dealing with a class that was more challenging than I had previously experienced:

> *I have been feeling quite frustrated in the classroom as I feel like I do not have the level of control that I have had in previous years (Treacy. Reflective Journal: 30/9/10).*

I realise now that my struggles to deal with misbehaviour in the class had been leaving me extremely frustrated and reacting in ways that were not congruent with my values. This is in line with Osher, Sprague, Weissberg, Axelrod, Keenan and Kendziora (2007) and Yoon (2002) who argued that emotionally exhausted teachers may use reactive and punitive responses which then contribute to a negative classroom climate and a poorer student-teacher relationship. In many ways, I was burnt-out from the constant misbehaviour that was taking place in the class. Weare (2013: 130) discussed how, 'burnt-out teachers are not in a good place themselves to embody mental health skills and values or care deeply much about the mental health of their student.' I was actively experiencing what it meant to be a 'living contradiction,' who wanted to embody a certain approach but realised that I was in fact doing the opposite (Whitehead, 2000: 93).

My critical friend also had an interesting insight into the difficulties of teaching resilience when you are not being resilient yourself:

Critical Friend 29/5/20	You need to start with teachers before you start with children. If I am a teacher and I don't really understand resilience or I don't have resilience myself, how am I going to teach it?

Figure 4.6: Critical Friend Comment 2

If I allowed these frustrations to fester and grow during the school year, I was in danger of allowing it to become a threat to both my own self-esteem and wellbeing (Kyriacou, 2001). I needed to become more calm, stable, and consistent to be a good role model for the pupils

(Weare, 2013). The DES (2018: 15) also specifically acknowledge the crucial role of teacher wellbeing and the role it plays in, 'ability to model resilience.'

I examined my own resilience and decided that I had to give the children examples of how resilience played a role in my life:

> *I will highlight with the children my own personal failures where possible… I hope this will bring home the significance and applicability of the topic to the children (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 14/4/20).*

Here, is a clear shift in my teaching which allowed for valuable discussion with the children and also provided them with modelling that they could learn from. The children even started to adapt some of the phrases we had been using about resilience, showing how they had learned from the teacher modelling:

Source	Evidence
Unstructured Observation 20/1/20	• 'Jesse' returned to school after a long absence (had missed the beginning of the resilience intervention) and was told to be a bit more resilient by the other children at his group when he was complaining!

Figure 4.7: Unstructured Observation 2

Teacher modelling was vital in how I was enabling the children to learn about resilience. My data agrees with Bandura (1986) who described how modelling engages students while also encouraging learning. Interestingly, I gained valuable insight into how I needed to be aware of my own wellbeing and emotions to ensure that I was not allowing my own frustrations or issues to negatively show through my interactions with the children.

4.2.3 The Need for Resilience Education in the Primary Classroom

Masten (2001) challenged the notion that resilient children have a special trait. For Masten, resilience comes from the effective operation of basic human adaptational systems. Resilience then, moves away from being a trait that you are born with, towards a skill that we can teach to children while also encouraging them to view hardships as learning experiences (Werner & Smith, 2001). However, while the NCCA's (2020) framework for the future curriculum does make specific mention of the need for resilience in the modern world, it is something the children in my class knew extremely little about. This is clear from the pre-intervention concept map, where none of children were able to give an adequate definition of what resilience was:

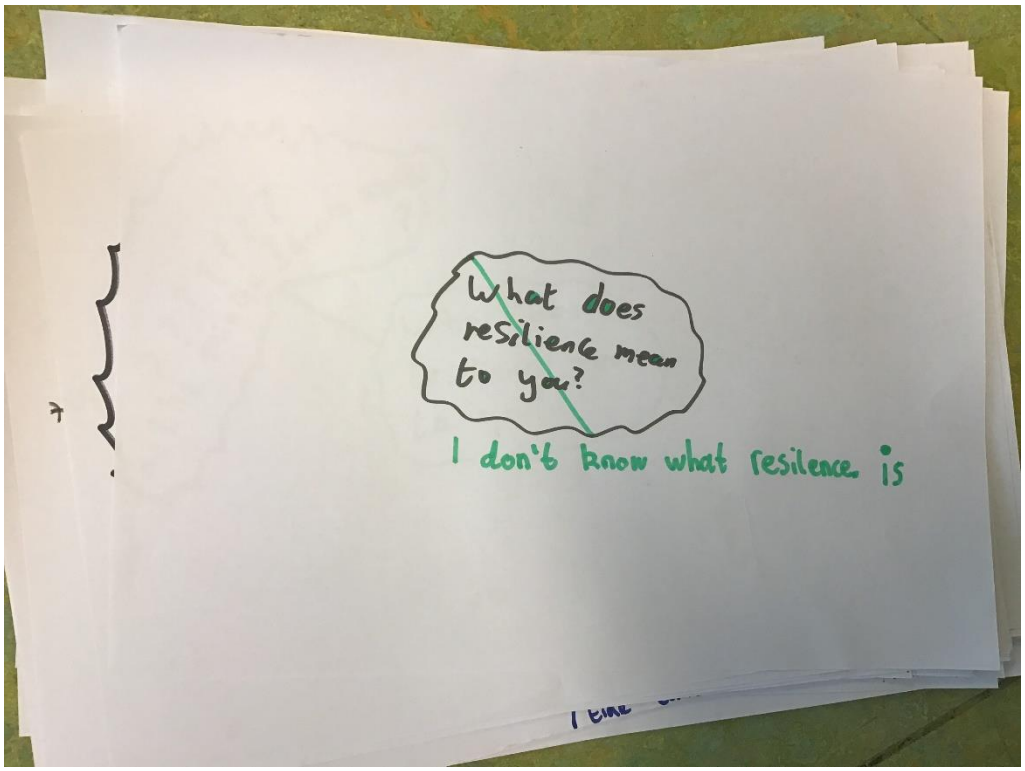


Figure 4.8: Pre-Survey Concept Map

The lack of awareness around resilience is particularly concerning when you consider that the *My World Survey 2* (2019) indicated the increasing levels of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem amongst the youth of Ireland.

In light of these findings, my critical friend described well the importance for teaching resilience in schools:

Critical Friend 29/5/20	It has to be valued. You have to shine a spotlight on it… We have a problem that children want everything right all the time. So, it's about when you get it wrong, when you keep trying, that's what we celebrate, rather than getting it right.

Figure 4.9: Critical Friend Comment 3

The anonymous survey completed at the end of cycle one gives an interesting insight into how the children's conception of resilience developed throughout the cycle:

> *I didn't know that I could have become resilient if I actually tried (Anonymous Survey 1, 14/2/20).*

> *Being able to cope with problems because I didn't know what resilience was (Anonymous Survey 2, 14/2/20).*

If we take the view of Alvord and Grados (2005) that resilience is a set of skills that can be taught and fostered in children, then the data from my study suggests that there is a lack of awareness around resilience in schools. And while the *Weaving Well-Being* has a specific focus on resilience in fourth class, this is not a compulsory programme in schools around the country.

Interestingly, as the research cycle progressed and children were asked to give examples of times in their own lives when they exhibited resilience, a lot of the examples related to extra-curricular activities such as sport or dancing.

> *I've used a growth mindset in all of my matches (Anonymous Survey 3, 14/2/20).*

> *I missed a penalty in Gaa and I was resilient and practiced when I got home (Anonymous Survey 4, 14/2/20).*

This shows that children will use the skills of resilience if they are being taught them and aware of the appropriate language. While these examples show the children applying the skills of resilience in a sporting context, it is important to acknowledge the role that resilience plays in helping children to overcome traumatic events in their lives. One of the children made a powerful statement during a lesson that she had to be resilient when her parent's split-up:

Source	Evidence
Unstructured Observation 31/1/20	'Lisa' during resilience lesson- I had to be resilient when my parents were splitting up.

Figure 4.10: Unstructured Observation 3

While Masten (2001: 227) described the importance of promoting resilience through 'ordinary magic,' a large number of children are going to experience significant adversity early in their lives. It is important that we equip children like 'Lisa' with the tools they need to recover from these traumatic life events. Without intervention, youth facing significant adversity have a greater likelihood of encountering problems as they navigate their developmental paths (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000).

Resilience is going to have a significant role in the modern primary curriculum. The data gathered here shows it is not enough to simply pay it lip service and hope it happens as a by-product of our teaching. Children need to openly discuss resilience in the classroom, while also being explicitly taught about the skills and concepts they can apply to their own lives as they move forward.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the findings that emerged from the data gathered during the research process. These findings have significant implications for resilience education in the primary classroom. Drama seems offers a unique opportunity for children to explore resilience; not only do teachers need to be aware of their own resilience, but how they are modelling it is vital in the children's learning; children need to be made aware of resilience and also given specific tools to help them to overcome adversity throughout their lives. While the research was suspended early, I feel it is clear from the above, that a very valid research process was carried out and that significant learning has emerged for me both personally and professionally. The next chapter outlines how cycle two of the research would have proceeded.

Chapter Five: Proposed Structure for Cycle Two

5.1 Introduction

As a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, the research process was halted before the completion of cycle two. This chapter provides an overview of the steps that were taken in the immediate aftermath of this occurring and also gives a proposed structure of the second cycle of research. Changes in my approach to conducting the research are also outlined and justified.

5.2 Steps Taken due to Suspension of Research

As my research was suspended early, I had to take a number of steps to ensure that I was able to write up the research in a rigorous way that was also a fair reflection of what had been completed up to that point.

1. When the schools were closed and we sent the children home, I stayed in school for some time and examined the data which I had collected. I had to decide what was of most importance, as I could not bring home everything and was unsure of when we would have access to the school grounds again to pick up any further data. I chose to bring home the surveys, questionnaires, observations, and my reflective journal, alongside some samples of the children's work in their copies. I then took photos of other research items around the room which I could not bring home but still thought might be useful.
2. I discussed with my supervisor the stage of the research cycle which I was at and the data that I had managed to bring home from school. When I looked at the amount of

data I had gathered, it became clear that I had enough to begin the coding and analysis process

3. I began coding and identified the emerging themes from my research.

While it would have been optimal to finish the research and have a fuller picture of how cycle two impacted the results, there was a significant amount of data already collected which ensured the research was still valid.

5.3 Implications of the Collected Data for Cycle Two

The data gathered provided significant information as to what was working well in the research study and what needed to be adjusted to achieve a deeper level of learning for both myself and the children. With this in mind, my goals for second research cycle would be, an increase emphasis on fun activities in all aspects of the research as well as a focus on mindfulness based activities to help the children to deal with the issues that they had identified as relevant to them.

5.3.1 Increase of Fun Activities

The most significant impact on my research came from the anonymous survey (Appendix H) which was completed at the end of cycle one. As already noted in Figure 4.3, a significant majority of children had stated that drama was the most enjoyable aspect of the first cycle for them. Upon further examination of these surveys where the children were asked for their suggestions for cycle two, it became clear that children identified most with the approaches that were considered ‘fun.’ This can be seen in these two extracts:

> *Not really but make it a bit more fun (Anonymous Survey 5, 14/2/20).*

> *I don't have any suggestions but every time we did something it was helpful and fun (Anonymous Survey 6, 14/2/20).*

This is in line with research that shows children's comfort level can influence the transmission of information and its storage in the brain (Thanos, Katana, Ashbyjr, Michaelides, Gardner, Heidbreder & Volkow, 1999). Children who are having fun and playing games are more likely to reach this comfort level, which does not happen in quiet classrooms with direct teaching, but is present in classrooms where the children and encouraged to explore and discover (Kohn, 2004). The positive impact that fun can have on learning, whether that is through drama activities or other games, has significant implications for the second cycle of research.

5.3.2 Introduction of Mindfulness

The benefits of mindfulness are well researched and with the NCCA's (2020) framework for the new curriculum having a dedicated slot to wellbeing, it is sure to become even more prominent in schools around the country. Mindfulness has been shown to promote several emotional and social skills including, feeling more in control, making meaningful relationships, accepting experiences while acknowledging the facts, managing difficult feelings while also being resilient (Baer, 2003; Salmon, Sephton, Weissbecker, Hoover, Ulmer & Studts, 2004). I found this to be extremely interesting when I was looking over the pre-intervention surveys which indicated that there was a significant number of children who indicated that they did not know what to do when stressed.

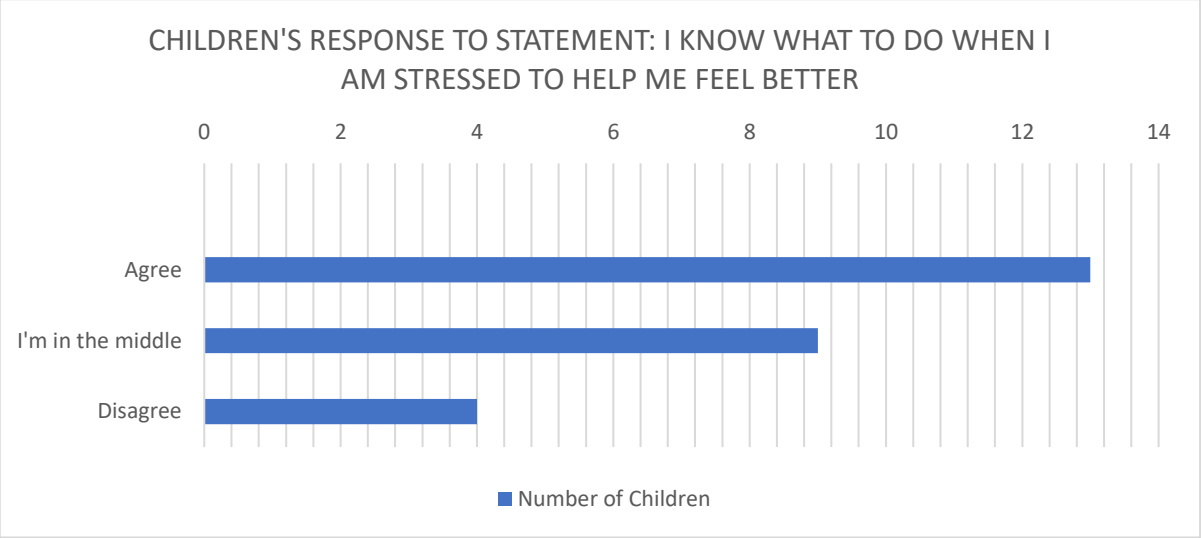


Figure 5.1: Children's Response to Pre-Intervention Survey Question 3

While there are thirteen children who agreed that they are adequately able to respond to stress, that is less than half of the class. More interesting to me, was that four children were willing to admit that they do not know what to do when they are stressed to help them feel better. In cycle two, I would have liked to have done a specific focus on mindfulness and meditation and see how it impacted the answers to this statement in the post intervention survey. It would have also been interesting to see how engaging with a mindfulness lens would have influenced the children's resilience.

5.4 Projected Steps of Research Project

These are the projected steps which I would have pursued if the research continued:

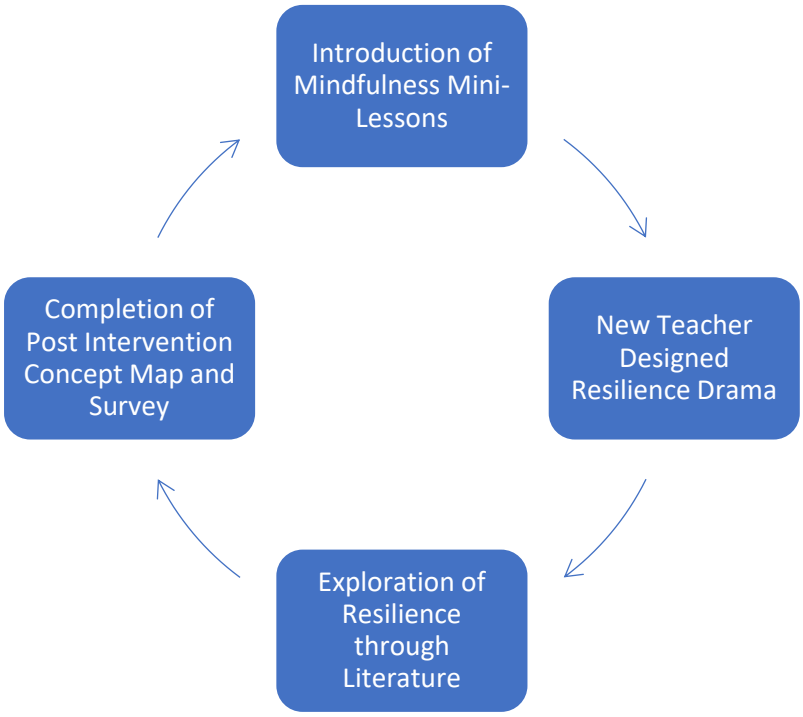


Figure 5.2: Proposed Steps for Completion of Research

I will now give details as to the structure of each of these components and how they fit into a timeline.

5.4.1 Introduction of Mindfulness Mini-Lessons

As I have already outlined, there are numerous benefits to implementing mindfulness in the classroom. I was planning to begin introducing mini lessons on mindfulness, three times a week, where I would do a mindfulness-based activity with the children and finish with an eight-minute guided meditation at the end of each of these lessons. The mindfulness-based activities would have taken place for four weeks, and the meditation aspect could have carried on until the research project was completed. I would have also used this time to introduce a 'mindfulness journal' to the children. This journal would have offered the children a chance to document how their mindfulness journey was going through the form of pictures or words. I think this journal would have provided a useful insight into how the children were dealing with stress and the impact it was having on their resilience.

5.4.2 New Teacher Designed Resilience Drama

The drama I did with the children in cycle one was an unmitigated success that provided the inspiration for another drama to be completed. I feel this is because it allowed the children to be creative and express themselves in a way which they were not used to doing. Hromek and Roffey (2009: 626) stated that there is a 'natural affiliation between children, play, and the desire to have fun' Creativity in children is sparked by fun and humour, when the brain relaxes and is less restricted by rules (Light, 2002). The teacher-designed drama takes one-week to complete, with a lesson each day. I would have altered this drama slightly to raise different aspects of resilience and would have given the children an opportunity to take control of the course of the drama, as I was impressed with their maturity and attitude towards the previous activities. The main character in the drama would have been a girl and the issues her character faced would have been outside the school context, which is the opposite of the issues in the first cycle's drama. The observations I made during these dramas in terms of how the children were acting and the comments they were making would have formed the basis of the data from this section.

5.4.3 Exploration of Resilience Through Literature

I had managed to make good progress through the *Harry Potter* novel which I had planned to use as a stimulus for exploring resilience before the research was suspended. The novel was providing a rich source of opportunity for resilience to be discussed and raised interesting issues around how people become resilient. By discussing the story with the children, they were able to develop their critical analysis, creative responses and discuss character motivations (Stan, 2015). This allowed them to explore resilience in an engaging way. I would have continued reading this novel for 15 minutes every day and completing

both written and drama activities until the novel was finished However, I would have altered my approach as to how I was generating data from this method. In the first cycle, I was placing too much emphasis on the written element of the activities and I think it was proving a barrier to some children being able to express themselves. While some written activities would have continued to ensure and check for comprehension of the text, I would have implemented much more fun activities and role-playing as the novel progressed. This is in line with striking a balance between the fun element that the children crave and using drama as a stimulus to explore complex concepts in a safe space.

5.4.4 Completion of Post Intervention Concept Map and Survey

Finally, the end of the research would have seen the children re-doing the concept map and resilience survey which they had completed at the beginning of the intervention. This would have allowed the children to give a clearer and comprehensive picture of what they learned about resilience over the course of the study. I also would have gotten a better understanding of what elements of the study specifically were the most enjoyable and beneficial for them and their learning. The survey would also have given some quantitative data in relation to if the children felt they had become more resilient over the course of the research.

5.5 Future Data Collection and Teaching Methods

My initial ideas around what would be most useful in terms of collecting data have changed significantly from the beginning of the research. I had a focus on the work the children were producing and the results of the end of intervention surveys as the key markers for establishing what learning had occurred. While these methods still have a valuable place within the research, I feel that both my observations and reflective journal offer a deeper insight into what was occurring in the classroom and allow for the voice of the child to be

heard. Sorin (2003: 31) argued that children's' "voices can be powerful and possibly richer than those adults acting on behalf of children"

5.5.1 The Value of Observation

I now realise that my observations provided a key insight into what DeMunck and Sobo (1998: 43) called 'backstage culture.' They go onto describe how observation allows deep insight into the social setting of the research, allows for unscheduled events to be included as data, improves your interpretation, and helps the researcher to form new questions to ask the informants. For the research I was doing, these insights are invaluable and, in many ways, form the basis for establishing what the children are learning and experiencing. Observation also allowed me to make note of when the children were using the tools, I had taught them, outside the targeted lessons about resilience. Future data collection in my research would value observation strongly.

5.5.2 The Reflective Journal

As noted earlier, the reflective journal is not something that I had ease engaging with. However, it allowed a space for me to examine my teaching and the core values at the centre of my beliefs. In this way, it is 'window into your own pedagogical thoughts and actions,' (Loughran, 2006: 85). By using the journal to reflect on my teaching, I was able to see the connections between my personal self and professional self (Schulte, 2002). The journal is the key method in both tracking and showing how your learning has progressed through the research. While it can be difficult to keep up with the demands of journaling, the data it provides is too valuable to ignore it.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how the research process would have continued if it were not impeded by the outbreak of COVID-19. Changes made to the research process were also described and justified. While there was a significant amount of data already collected, the completion of the second research cycle would have allowed for a fuller picture to emerge and possibly have added to my findings. The next chapter addresses the messiness of completing action research.

Chapter Six: The Messiness of the Action Research Process

6.1 Introduction

Donnelly, Yannis and Özkazanc-Pan (2013: 4) describe the importance of recognising the 'mess' when completing qualitative research. Presenting a narrative which suggests the research was straightforward and orderly has even been considered to be, 'highly misleading,' (Van Maanen, Sörensen & Mitchell, 2007: 1146). This chapter seeks to address the many challenges of conducting action research including: the messiness of action research itself, the messiness of the reflexive process during action research, data collection in schools, time constraints of working in schools and the nature of researching sensitive topics with children.

6.2 The Messiness of Action Research

Cook (2009) described how acknowledging the messiness of the research process is often overlooked and omitted from finished research pieces. Indeed, there is a preference for what Law (2004: 157) described as 'good' research where there is clarity, specificity and definite procedures which offer a sense of legitimacy to the research. Yet, Cook (2009) went on to describe how research which does not acknowledge the mess is not offering either a truthful or an honest account of the research practice. For Cook, a crucial part of the research process is engaging and acknowledging in what Schön (1983: 42) called the 'swampy lowlands.' I found myself engaging in this mess and even highly frustrated while I was engaging with the reflective process throughout my research.

6.2.1 The Mess of the Reflective Process

A vital part of self-study action research is engaging with critical reflection throughout the process. By engaging with the reflective process, teachers, 'will change the world of school by understanding it' (Stenhouse, 1981: 104). Bolton (2014) described how reflection allows teachers to go to the heart of what is significant to them, explore it and make changes to their practice based on their learning. However, I often found the process of this reflection extremely difficult and it left me questioning both how I was teaching and my own self-identity. This is congruent with Cook's (2009: 279) ideals about 'the messy area' and how it challenges our perceptions of ourselves. I now realise that my difficulties with reflection were not an indication of lack of effort, 'rather it is an indicator of serious critique taking place,' (Cook, 2009: 11). My difficulties with reflection can be seen in this entry:

> *I haven't found the reflective process to be as deeply rewarding or inspiring as some of the literature seems to suggest. While I think it is definitely a useful tool in terms of identifying areas for improvement and gaining a level of understanding of your current teaching abilities, I don't feel like it needs to anymore than that to be useful. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 11/2/20).*

Here, I was extremely frustrated with my reflections and where they were bringing me. I was not comfortable with how demanding the reflective process is and was unable to see how it was actually the negotiation of this tension or 'messy area' (Cook, 2009: 279) that was going to benefit me greatly in terms of generating my living theory. This realisation can be seen in the journal entry here at the end of the research process:

> *I now see that there is incredible value and learning which has taken place. The journal has provided me with a space to negotiate the issues I was having in class and how they were challenging my conception of how I was living out my values in the classroom. I now believe my difficulties with reflection show that I was trying to engage with it as deeply as I could, and I have gained significant insight into the process of my learning as the journal progressed. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 11/3/20).*

These entries not only highlight the 'messy area' (Cook, 2009: 279) that exists within action research, but it also is evidence of the 'difficult thinking' (Cook, 2009: 289) that took place

which has been invaluable in cementing my knowledge of resilience and the evolution of my values as a teacher.

6.3 Challenges to Data Collection in Schools

By conducting practitioner research, teachers are empowered to contribute their knowledge to the evidence-base of effective interventions, through their daily practice (Kratochwill, Hoagwood, & Kazak, 2012). Research conducted within the school setting also provides a valuable insight into what Brownson and Jones (2009: 313) called 'real world' contexts. However, this context is where the difficulties of school-based research emerge. As it is a school context and you are working with children, there is a myriad of other responsibilities you have as the class teacher which can come into conflict with your role as a researcher. I found that the time taken to complete research, alongside the difficulty of researching a sensitive topic, were challenges in my research.

6.3.1 Time Constraints to Research

I was extremely eager about my research and was looking forward to doing the lessons with the children. Yet, I had not considered the time pressure I would be under in both my curriculum requirements and the daily challenges of managing incidents in the classroom. Indeed, educational researchers have raised the increased working speed of teachers and the increased amount of work assignments which has resulted in less time for rest and recovery (Hargreaves, 2003; Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2006). This journal entry reflects some of the time difficulties which I was facing:

> *I am feeling quite frustrated today. There is a lot going on in school (musical) and I have fallen behind on the Weaving Well-Being lessons. There has also been a number of disciplinary incidents which I have had to deal with which have taken valuable teaching time. It is often a struggle to get any more than the three core subjects done, and I am left wondering how we are meant to take care of all our obligations as a teacher when schools are such a busy place. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 2/3/20).*

While I did manage to get quite a lot of my research finished before schools were closed, I experienced a lot of frustration along the way in how much time I was able to allocate to it. It also raises questions around the structure of our curriculum and how I often felt trapped by the constraints of getting the three core subjects done each day.

6.3.2 Researching Sensitive Topics with Children

While the concept of resilience by itself might not be considered a sensitive topic, the lessons I did with the children dealt with issues around self-esteem, self-image, negative thoughts, and negative emotions. I wanted to ensure that the voice of the children was heard and reflected in my research, in the knowledge that the children's experiences and opinions are central to developing effective health interventions and improved health (Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2012; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011). In this way, I was trying to achieve what Simovska (2007: 866) called 'genuine participation' where the children were empowered to take some ownership over the activities and lessons. This led to very interesting discussions like this with the children:

> *During the lesson today, Alan, who has had previous issues with anxiety before this year, told the class about how he used to lie in bed at night worrying about a variety of things. We were discussing the method of a lucky dip of distraction and also the jigsaw of perspective. He described how he doesn't let things bother him as much as they used to and has been applying these two tools in the last week. I also received a note from his mother recently to say that his anxiety had completely dropped and that she feels like he is a different child. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 7/2/20).*

While this was a powerful moment for the research and a testament to the relationship that I had with the children, an admission like this raises questions around the balance of power in research and how sensitive admissions are dealt with during the research process. This was something that I had to be mindful of anytime we were having a class discussion around what could be considered a sensitive topic and I found myself trying to balance myself between the role of researcher who was interested in discussions like these from a research

perspective and as a teacher who has a duty of care to the children. This is a fine line and one that I found to be a challenge during the research process.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has been reflection on the messiness of the research process and the challenges I encountered during data collection. The final chapter is a conclusion on the research process and contains a reflection on the learning journey I have been on.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The design of this self-study action research project sought to create opportunities to explore how resilience could be taught in the primary classroom. The goal was to discover specific teaching methods and activities that would enable the children to both learn about the concept of resilience and become more resilient themselves. The findings indicate that I can now make a claim to have moved towards being a teacher in line with my values and have successfully generated my living theory. This chapter will provide a summary of the research, examines how my values have evolved throughout the process, gives recommendations for my professional practice, school policy and also areas for future research. Finally, there is a reflection on the research process.

7.2 Summary of the Research Process

There was a substantial literature review carried out that covered a variety of key themes: Resilience and its importance, early intervention, the Irish policy and mental health context, the relationship between mental health, wellbeing, and resilience, using literature and drama to promote resilience, protective and risk factors, school based wellbeing and resilience interventions, the role of parents in promoting resilience, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the resilience framework and finally, teaching strategies to promote resilience. It became clear that the *Weaving Well-Being* programme, along with literature and drama, provided an opportunity to explore resilience in the classroom. Data was gathered using classroom observations, a reflective journal, samples of children's work and surveys. The findings that emerged from the data were:

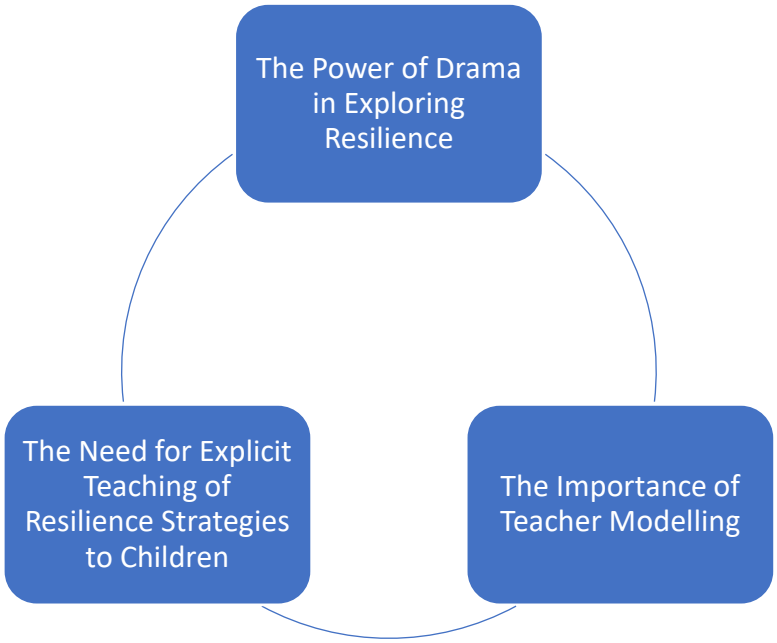


Figure 7.1: Emerging Findings from Data

Self-study action research was used as a methodology, as it is a value laden approach (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010) which empowered me to improve my practice and then explain how and why I had done so (McNiff, 2010). I then generated my living theory which was promoting resilience through drama, teaching the children resilience strategies and an improvement in how I generally interacted with the children. This approach means I am teaching in line closer to my values.

7.3 Embracing Values and Changing Practice

In my original values statement at the beginning of the research, I had identified that care and determination were the two core values that were underpinning my beliefs as a teacher. Establishing these values was vital, as it is values which are the 'kernel' of action research and provide the criteria for assessing the success of the research project (Sullivan et al., 2016: 3). Not only have my values become central to my beliefs around education, there has also been a significant impact on my practice.

7.3.1 The Emergence of Care and Living to It

As I searched for values that encapsulated who I was a teacher, I found the work of Nel Noddings to be invaluable. It was Noddings (1997: 166) who said that both her academic and professional life developed as a result of, 'various accidents and awareness of opportunity.' I felt that this was also the case with my own values, as it was a process of trial and error and examining my reflective journal to see what felt right. As I read further, I found that I agreed with Nodding's (1992) belief that there is no possibility of improvement without care being at the centre of experience for both pupils and teachers. Yet, care is a very complex concept and I often had difficulties with one child which left me wondering about my actions:

> *It has been quite an upsetting experience for me to reflect on as I not only am wondering about my relationship with this child, but also about how I interact with all the other children in my class. I wonder what their perception of me is and if I am actually as fair and demonstrating care as I pertain to be. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 28/10/19).*

I regularly questioned how it was possible to meet every child's needs. This can be seen in this reflection on the ability levels of my class:

> *This has made it very hard for me to adequately support children across the spectrum during lessons. While I am meeting my values in terms of my care when working with the weaker children, it is disheartening to see the lack of determination and resilience in these children when they are challenged. On the flip side, I feel like I am not meeting my care needs with the children at the top end when they are struggling because I have to spend so much time with the lower end. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 11/10/19).*

However, while I had doubts about whether I had care at the centre of experiences in my classroom, I realised that care is established at both an individual and group level. Schön (1983) described the individual as a universe of one and there are multiple incidents in my journal where I am providing the care that each universe needs. Here, the children are sharing personal stories about their mental health with me during lessons:

> *For me, the discussions and personal anecdotes which we are having in class have been such a valuable part of the research process. I feel like the children are actually leading the*

> *lessons at some points and that I am learning as much from them as they are from me. I feel like we are making really strong connections for the children between being open about discussing their problems and good mental health (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 7/2/20).*

I gave each child the time to speak and ensured they felt their contribution to the class was valued. Here is an extract from a meeting I had with a parent about their child who has displayed very defiant behaviour in school throughout the year

> *I had a meeting with Walter's mum to discuss the progress in terms of his behaviour and how he has been at home. He has shown a much better attitude at home and she appreciates the changes I've implemented in his homework and daily routine. She thanked me for all the work I have done and hopes he continues to progress. While Walter has been difficult to work with, I have learned that any solution must involve him and acknowledge the difficulties he faces, while encouraging him to push himself in school to his ability. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 5/3/20).*

These extracts are clear evidence that, while I was having doubts throughout the process, I was living to my value of care and have gained a valuable insight into how to place care at the centre of classroom relationships.

7.3.2 Promoting Determination in the Classroom

While I have already, identified drama as a significant factor of my practice that I am going to implement more of, it is not where I feel the most radical changes will be in terms of my daily practice. In fact, it is my general interactions with the children where I feel I have most developed and I believe these interactions are an opportunity to both live by and promote determination. Initially, I thought that I was embodying and sharing this value with the children. Yet, as time progressed and I reflected on incidents in my journal, I came to the realisation that I was not. In fact, I had been quite negative towards some of the children which had led to one child being afraid of saying he did not have his homework:

> *I actually began to wonder why Scott was afraid of telling me? I began to think about some of the interactions we have had and I came to the realisation I have actually been very harsh in some of my comments and reactions with this child… It is awful to think that a child was afraid to tell me something because of fear of my reaction. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 28/10/19).*

Indeed, this journal entry which was used to show how I was not modelling resilience effectively, also highlights the inadequacy of my approach in promoting determination

> *I've also been feeling like perhaps I haven't been adequate in how I model resilience in children and have perhaps even been perpetuating a negative response. I often find myself saying 'don't be silly and 'come on now, just get over.' The more I think about it, the more I feel like this is not in line with my values and that I am not effectively modelling resilience in my class (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 16/10/19).*

I began to realise that my standard lines of 'get over it' and 'don't be silly' were not helpful to the children, or indicative of me living to my values. Upon reflection I realised this and made a conscious effort to alter how I was speaking to the children and encouraging them to use the tools we had been discussing in our resilience lessons. This had notable results, particularly on two of the academically weaker children who go for support:

> *One of the support teachers who works with Aoife and Layla was having a conversation with me today about how she has noticed a marked improvement in both children's attitudes and the amount of work that they are getting done in class. They are also asking a lot more questions and generally participating in class much more. (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 25/2/20).*

This was a result of multiple individual conversations that I had with these two children, as I felt they particularly needed some extra help to see what they could achieve if they pushed themselves. I also did not leave it here, I made sure that I highlighted these girls with the rest of the class and started a discussion about the impact effort and attitude has on learning

> *I am planning on highlighting these two girls to the class and emphasising that they have made a marked improvement because of their effort and attitude. These are two things which everyone can control, regardless of ability and I think it is a great example for the children to see that they can take ownership of their learning (Treacy, Reflective Journal: 25/2/20).*

The difference between this approach and the 'get over it' approach is stark. It is clear evidence that I have moved from talking about valuing determination, to creating a classroom where determination is valued and encouraged.

7.4 Recommendations

7.4.1 My Professional Practice

The findings from the research support my claim that significant beneficial changes have been made in my practice. Through deep exploration of the literature and self-reflection through journaling, I was able to identify areas which I wanted to inspire a change. I designed and used a number of established interventions which were successful. The *Weaving Well-Being* programme was extremely useful in providing specific resilience-based activities and also equipping me with the language to promote resilience effectively. I hope to use this programme and further explore the different areas they have a focus on in the future. The emergence of drama as a powerful tool for exploring resilience was not something I had expected. The self-directed learning and exploration of complex topics facilitated by drama was something that I had not been adequately making use of in my classroom. Changing how I speak and interact with the children was a simple yet significant change that has had notable results in their classroom experience. Listening to the children describe the issues they face, established for me that there is a specific need for them to discuss and learn about resilience every year. I will strive to implicate all these positive changes and learnings in my classroom in the future.

7.4.2 The School's Role in Promoting Resilience

Both the literature and my findings indicate that there is an important need for schools to foster resilience in their pupils. While this research has discussed methods that can be used in individual classrooms, a whole school approach is also necessary for resilience to be sufficiently promoted. Using a whole school approach has numerous benefits like improved behaviour, increased inclusion, improved learning, and improvements to mental health (Weare & Gray, 2003). This approach allows for establishing of protective factors which

promote positive outcomes for children, even if they have been exposed to several risk factors (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011). Teachers need to be given the appropriate tools to promote resilience in their classroom. Schools should also look at establishing a wellbeing policy that complements the resilience of staff and can support them when they are experiencing difficulties. *The Resilience Framework* which was previously discussed provides an excellent starting point for schools as they explore how to foster resilience in the school.

Both organisational and management factors have been shown to be essential in implementing a wellbeing programme, as well as curricular and extra-curricular activities (National Institute for Health Care and Excellence [NICE], 2009). Efforts need to be made to build the professional capacity of teachers as this not only improves the wellbeing and autonomy of teachers themselves, but positively impacts systems which acknowledge the interaction of wellbeing and achievement (Hargreaves, Shirley, Wangia, Bacon & D'Angelo, 2018). Developing structures in schools such as, supportive consultation models, student support teams and the use of reflective practice will enable schools to engage with collaborative practice to consider all aspects of their school from the inside (DES, 2018). I believe schools should explicitly focus on the outcome of promoting resilience in their school, to ensure effective implementation of future school wellbeing policy (Weare & Nind, 2011). By establishing these structures and exploring the learning that emerges, schools will be equipped to promote resilience in an environment effective to their school within their broader wellbeing approach.

7.4.3 Future Research

If I had the opportunity to conduct further research in this area, it would include:

- Exploring other cross-curricular links to resilience which were not as prevalent here, e.g. PE/Art

- Investigating the link between children who are engaged in extra-curricular activities possibly being more resilient than those who are not
- A follow up study of 3 and 6 months to establish if the improvements made were sustained over time
- The impact of mindfulness on enhancing resilience
- Including the voice of the child more prevalently in the research process

7.5 Final Reflection

This research journey has been massively rewarding both personally and professionally. It has been a fascinating experience to engage with the works of Noddings, Greene and Giroux and open my mind to the role we play as teachers, who are situated to be agents of change in the world. In many ways, I feel as if Pandora's box has been opened and my horizons of what I want to achieve as a teacher have been expanded immeasurably. Most importantly, I feel like I have not only found my values, but I have made significant improvements to my classroom practice (Kemmis, 2009).

As I look back at my research, I am delighted that I have found an area that I am extremely interested in, that is also going to be a crucial element of wellbeing initiatives going forward. As we enter an unknown future with rapidly changing technologies and diverse social challenges, resilience is going to be a key skill that every child will need to learn so they can adapt and find their place in the world. I am proud to be a teacher that can now claim to be living by their values and striving to put care at the centre of my classroom relationships. I truly believe that teachers owe it to both themselves and their students, to go on a journey of self-exploration and get to the core of who they want to be as a teacher. It is this process that has so richly rewarded me and changed me as a teacher.

“A teacher in search of his/her own freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse young persons to go in search of their own” (Maxine Greene, 1917-2014).

Bibliography

Alexander, T. (2002) *A Bright Future for All: Promoting mental health in education* [online]. Available at: http://www.welllondon.org.uk/files/912/mental-wellbeing/8.%20A%20bright%20future%20for%20all.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Altrichter, H., Posch, P. & Somekh, B. (1993) *Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to the methods of action research*. London, UK: Routledge.

Alvord, M.K. & Grados, J.J. (2005) Enhancing Resilience in Children: A Proactive Approach. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 36(3), 238–245.

American Psychological Association (2011*) Social networking's good and bad impacts on kids* [online]. Available from: https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2011/08/social-kids (accessed 21 July 2020).

Baer, R.A. (2003) Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention. A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*. 10(2), 125-43.

Baker, L., Green, S., & Falecki, D. (2017) Positive early childhood education: Expanding the reach of positive psychology into early childhood. *European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, 1, 1–12.

Balu, R., Zhu, P., Doolittle, F., Shiller, E., Jenkins, J. & Gersten, R. (2015) *Evaluation of Response to Intervention Practices for Elementary School Reading* [online]. Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED560820.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Bandura, A. (1977) Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1986) *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

Barry, M.M. & Friedli, L. (2008) *The influence of social, demographic and physical factors on positive mental health in children, adults and older people* [online]. Available at:

https://aran.library.nuigalway.ie/bitstream/handle/10379/2684/03%202008_rep_foresight_review.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 20 July 2020).

Beauchamp, C. (2015) Reflection in teacher education: issues emerging from a review of current literature. *Reflective Practice,* 16(1), 123-141.

Bernard, J., Dalen, J., Smith, B. & Wiggins, K. (2008) The Brief Resilience Scale: Assessing the Ability to Bounce Back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine,* 15(3), 194-200.

British Educational Research Association (BERA), (2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* [online]. Available at: https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018-online (accessed 24 July 2020).

Brownson, R.C. & Jones, E. (2009) Bridging the gap: Translating research into policy and practice. *Preventive Medicine*, 49(4), 313–315.

Bloom, D.E., Cafiero, E.T., Jané-Llopis, E., Abrahams-Gessel, S., Bloom, L.R., Fathima, S., Feigl, A.B., Gaziano, T., Mowafi, M., Pandya, A., Prettner, K., Rosenberg, L., Seligman, B., Stein, A. & Weinstein, C. (2011) *The Global Economic Burden of Non-communicable Diseases* [online] Available at: https://www.world-heart-federation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/WEF_Harvard_HE_GlobalEconomicBurdenNonCommunicableDiseases_2011.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Boingboing (2019) *Co-ordinated Centre of Resilience for Social Justice and Boingboing response to the Department for Education consultation: Character and Resilience: Call for Evidence* [online]. Available at: https://www.boingboing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CRSJ-response-to-DfE-consultation.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Bolte, A., Goschke, T. & Kuhl, J. (2003) Emotion and Intuition: Effects of Positive and Negative Mood on Implicit Judgments of Semantic Coherence. *Psychological Science,* 14(5), 416-421.

Bolton, G. (1984) *Drama as education*. New York, NY: Longman.

Bolton, G.M (1999) *Acting in Classroom Drama: A Critical Analysis*. Portland, Me: Calendar Islands.

Bolton, G. (2014) *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Borman, G. D. & Overman, L. T. (2004) Academic Resilience in Mathematics among Poor and Minority Students. *The Elementary School Journal,* 104(3), 177–195.

Bott, D., Escamilia, H., Kaufman, S. B., Kern, M. L., Krekel, C., Schlicht-Schmälzle, R. & White, M. (2017) *The state of positive education* [online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324830281_The_State_of_Positive_Education (accessed 21 July 2020).

Bottrell, D. (2013) Responsibilised resilience? Reworking neoliberal social policy texts. *M/C Journal*, 16(5), 1-4.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Brookfield, S. (2017) *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. San Francisco, Ca: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, B. (2006) Shame resilience theory: A grounded theory study on women and shame. Families in Society. *The Journal of Contemporary Social Services,* 87(1), 43-52.

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social research methods*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Buber, M. (1958) *I and Thou*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

Bullough, R. & Pinnegar, S. (2001) Guidelines for Quality in Autobiographical Forms of Self-Study Research. *Educational Researcher,* 30(3), 13-21.

Burcusa, S.L. and Iacono, W.G. (2007) Risk for recurrence in depression. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 27(8), 959–985.

Burnett, H.J., Witzel, K., Allers, K. & McBride, D.C. (2016) Understanding the Relationship of Trauma, Substance Use, and Resilience Among Religiously Affiliated University Students. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 25(3), 317–334.

Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (2017) *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London, UK: Routledge.

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming critical: education, knowledge and action research*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Caleon, I.S. & King, R.B. (2020) Examining the Phenomenon of Resilience in Schools Development, Validation, and Application of the School Resilience Scale. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 1-13.

Campbell, A., Mcnamara, O. & Gilroy, P. (2004) *Practitioner Research and Professional Development in Education*. London: Paul Chapman.

Cannon, M., Coughlan, H., Clarke, M., Harley, M., & Kelleher, I. (2013) *The Mental Health of Young People in Ireland: A report of the Psychiatric Epidemology Research across the Lifespan (PERL) Group* [online]. Available at: https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/20687/1/perl-youth-mental-health-research-report.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Cavan, S. (1997) Reviewed Work: Investigative Social Research: Individual and Team Field. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(3), 809-811.

Central Statistics Office (CSO), (2019) *Information Society Statistics - Households 2019* [online]. Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-isshh/informationsocietystatistics-households2019/householdinternetconnectivity/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%2091%25%20of%20households,47%25%20using%20mobile%20broadband). (accessed 21 July 2020).

Chiesa, A., Calati, R. and Serretti, A. (2012) Does mindfulness training improve cognitive abilities? A systematic review of neuropsychological findings. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31(3), 449–464.

Children's Rights Alliance (CRA), (2020) *Report Card 2020* [online]. Available at: https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/Chpater%203%20Right%20to%20Health.pdf (accessed 17 July 2020).

Chopra, K. (2012) *Impact of Positive Self-Talk* [online]. Available at: https://opus.uleth.ca/bitstream/handle/10133/3202/Kamal%20Chopra.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 21 July 2020).

Clarke, A.M. & Barry, M.M. (2010) *An evaluation of the Zippy's Friends emotional wellbeing programme for primary schools in Ireland* [online]. Available at: https://aran.library.nuigalway.ie/bitstream/handle/10379/2174/05%20-%202010.rep.zippy.friend.summary.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 20 July 2020).

Clarke, A.M. & A D. B. Clarke (2003) *Human Resilience: A Fifty Year Quest*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Cohen-Kim, J., Caspi, A., Moffitt, T.E., Harrington, H., Milne, B.J. & Poulton, R. (2003) Prior Juvenile Diagnoses in Adults with Mental Disorder Developmental Follow-Back of a Prospective-Longitudinal Cohort. *Archives of General Psychiatry,* 60(7), 709-717.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2018) *Research methods in education*. 8th ed. New York, NY: Routledge.

Coia, L. & Taylor, M. (2009) Co/autoethnography: Exploring our teaching selves collaboratively In: Tidwell, D.L., Heston, M.L. & L. M. Fitzgerald., eds. *Research Methods for the Self-Study of Practice*. Dordrecht: Springer. 3-16.

Conway, P.F. (2005) The 1999 Primary School Curriculum and your child as a learner In: Gaire, E. & Mahon, O., eds. (2005) *Primary Options: How to Choose the Right School for Your Child … and Much More!* Raheny: Liffey Press. Ch. 6.

Cook, T. (2009) The purpose of mess in action research: building rigour though a messy turn. *Educational Action Research,* 17(2), 277–291.

Cook, C. R., Dart, E., Collins, T., Restori, A., Daikos, C. & Delport, J. (2012) Preliminary Study of the Confined, Collateral, and Combined Effects of Reading and Behavioral Interventions: Evidence for a Transactional Relationship. *Behavioral Disorders,* 38(1), 38–56.

Cook, C. R., Frye, M., Slemrod, T., Lyon, A. R., Renshaw, T. L. & Zhang, Y. (2015) An integrated approach to universal prevention: Independent and combined effects of PBIS and SEL on youths' mental health. *School Psychology Quarterly,* 30(2), 166–183.

Cook, C.R., Kilgus, S.P. & Burns, M.K. (2018) Advancing the science and practice of precision education to enhance student outcomes. *Journal of School Psychology*, 66, 4–10.

Cooper, P. & Jacobs, B. (2011) *Evidence of best practice models and outcomes in the education of children with emotional disturbance/behavioural difficulties: An International Review* [online]. Available at: https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Research_Report_7_EBD.pdf (accessed 24 July 2020).

Cooper, P., Kakos, M. & Jacobs, B. (2013) Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. *Inclusive and Special Education Review*, 1 (1). 20 - 39.

Cordray, D., Pion, G., Brandt, C., Molefe, A. & Toby, M. (2012) *The Impact of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Program on Student Reading Achievement* [online]. Available at: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/REL_20134000.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Correll, C.U., Galling, B., Pawar, A., Krivko, A., Bonetto, C., Ruggeri, M., Craig, T.J., Nordentoft, M., Srihari, V.H., Guloksuz, S., Hui, C.L.M., Chen, E.Y.H., Valencia, M., Juarez, F., Robinson, D.G., Schooler, N.R., Brunette, M.F., Mueser, K.T., Rosenheck, R.A. & Denyer, D. (2017) *Organizational Resilience: A summary of academic evidence, business insights and new thinking* [online]. Available at: file:///Users/busadmin/Desktop/Organisational%20Report%20David%20Denyer.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Crane, R.S., Kuyken, W., Hastings, R.P., Rothwell, N. & Williams, J.M.G. (2010) Training Teachers to Deliver Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Learning from the UK Experience. *Mindfulness*, 1(2), 74–86.

Crane, R.S., Kuyken, W., Williams, J.M.G., Hastings, R.P., Cooper, L. & Fennell, M.J.V. (2011) Competence in Teaching Mindfulness-Based Courses: Concepts, Development and Assessment. *Mindfulness*, 3(1), 76–84.

Cybersafe Ireland (2019) *Annual Report 2018* [online]. Available at: https://cybersafeireland.org/media/1300/csi_annual_report_2018_w.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Davidson, J. (1970) *Outdoor recreation surveys: the design and use of questionnaires for site surveys*. London: The Countryside Commission.

Deci, E.L. & Ryan, R.M. (2008) Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development and health. *Canadian Psychology*, 49(3), 182-185.

Department of Education and Skills (DES), Health Service Executive (HSE) & Department of Health Ireland (DOH), (2013) *Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools; Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention* [online]. Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Department of Education and Skills (DES), Health and Service Executive (HSE) & Department of Health (HSE), (2015), *Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion: Well-Being in Primary Schools* [online]. Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Well-Being-in-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Department of Education and Skills (DES) & National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), (2017) *Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle* [online]. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Department of Education and Skills (DES), (2017) *DEIS Plan 2017* [online]. Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/DEIS-Plan-2017.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Department of Education and Skills (DES), (2018) *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* [online]. Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Department of Education and Skills (DES), (2019) *Action Plan for Education 2019* [online]. Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Corporate-Reports/Strategy-Statement/action-plan-for-education-2019.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Department of Health, (DOH), (2012) *The Irish Health Behaviours in School Age Children Study 2010* [online]. Available at: http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/documents/nat_rep_hbsc_2010.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

DeMunck, V. & Sobo, E. J. (1998) *Using Methods in the Field: A Practical Introduction and Casebook.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Diener, E. & Crandall, R. (1978) *Ethics in social and behavioral research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Diener, E. & Seligman, M. (2004) Beyond money: Toward an economy of well-being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 5(1), 1–31.

Donnelly, P.F., Yannis, G. & Özkazanc-Pan, B. (2013) Guest editorial: untold stories of the field and beyond. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal,* 8(1), 4-15.

Dooley, B., and Fitzgerald, A., (2012) *My World Survey: National Study of Youth Mental Health in Ireland* [online]. Available at: http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/MyWorldSurvey.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Dooley, B., O'Connor, C., Fitzgerald, A. & O'Reilly, A. (2019) *My World Survey 2* [online]. Available at: https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/wpcontent/uploads/2020/03/My_World_Survey_2.pdf (accessed 17 July 2020).

Dweck, C. (2015) *Carol Dweck Revisits the "Growth Mindset"* [online]. Available at: https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/09/23/carol-dweck-revisits-the-growth-mindset.html (accessed 21 July 2020).

Dweck, C. (2016) *What Having a "Growth Mindset" Actually Means* [online]. Available at: https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-having-a-growth-mindset-actually-means (accessed 21 July 2020).

Easterbrook, G. (2003) *The Progress Paradox: how life gets better while people feel worse*. New York: Random House.

Ebbutt, D. (1985) Educational action research: some general concerns and specific quibbles In: Burgess, R.G. ed. (1985) *Issues in Educational Research*. London, UK: Falmer. 152-174.

Emerson, L., M, Leyland, A., Hudson, K., Rowse, G., Hanley, P. & Hugh-Jones, S. (2017) Teaching Mindfulness to Teachers: A Systematic Review and Narrative Sythesis. *Mindfulness,* 8(5), 1136-1149.

Erickson, J. & Henderson, A. (1998) Diverging realities: Abused women and their children In: Campbell, J. Ed. (1998) *Empowering survivors of abuse: Health care for battered women and their children.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 138-155.

Estrada, C.A., Isen, A.M. & Young, M.J. (1994) Positive affect improves creative problem solving and influences reported source of practice satisfaction in physicians. *Motivation and emotion,* 18(4), 285-299.

Fattore, T., Mason, J. & Watson, E. (2012) Locating the Child Centrally as Subject in Research: Towards a Child Interpretation of Well-Being. *Child Indicators Research,* 5(3), 423–435.

Feldman A., Paugh P. & Mills G. (2004) Self-Study Through Action Research In: Loughran J.J., Hamilton M.L., LaBoskey V.K. & Russell T., eds. (2004) *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*. Dordrecht: Springer. 943-977.

Fennessey, S (2000) *History in the Spotlight: Creative Drama and Theatre Practices for the Social Studies Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Finfgeld-Connett, D. (2014) Use of content analysis to conduct knowledge-building and theory-generating qualitative systematic reviews. *Qualitative Research*, 14(3), 341–352.

Flook, L., Goldberg, S.B., Pinger, L., Bonus, K. & Davidson, R.J. (2013) Mindfulness for Teachers: A Pilot Study to Assess Effects on Stress, Burnout, and Teaching Efficacy. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 7(3), 182–195.

Foucault, M. & Gordon, C. (1980) *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Fredrickson, B.L. (1998) What good are positive emotions? *Review of General Psychiatry*, 2(3), 300–319.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001) The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218–226.

Freire, P. (1985) Reading the World and Reading the Word: An Interview with Paolo Freire. *Language Arts*, 62(1), 15–21.

Gage, N. (1989) The Paradigm Wars and Their Aftermath A "Historical" Sketch of Research on Teaching Since 1989. *Educational Researcher*, 18(7), 4–10.

Gibbs, G. (1988) *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. London, UK: Further Education Unit.

Glenn, M., Roche, M., McDonagh, C. & Sullivan, B. (2017) Learning Communities in Educational Partnerships. *Action Research as Transformation*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.

Gore, F.M., Bloem, P.J.N., Patton, G.C., Ferguson, J., Joseph, V., Coffey, C., Sawyer, S.M. & Mathers, C.D. (2011) Global burden of disease in young people aged 10-24 years: A systematic analysis. *The Lancet*, 378(9790), 2093-2102.

Government of Ireland (1937) *Bunreacht na hÉireann* [online]. Available at: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/cons/en/html (accessed 21 July 2020).

Government of Ireland (2005) *Disability Act* [online]. Available at: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/14/enacted/en/pdf (accessed 5 July 2020).

Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E.M.S., Gould, N.F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., Berger, Z., Sleicher, D., Maron, D.D., Shihab, H.M., Ranasinghe, P.D., Linn, S., Saha, S., Bass, E.B. & Haythornthwaite, J.A. (2014) Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-being. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 174(3), p.357-368.

Graham, A. & Fitzgerald, R. (2011) Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Well-being: Does 'Having a Say' Matter? *Children & Society*, 25(6), 447–457.

Greene, M. (1980) Breaking through the Ordinary: The Arts and Future Possibility. *Journal of Education*, 162(3), 18–26.

Greene, M. (1995) Art and Imagination: Reclaiming the Sense of Possibility. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(5), 378-382.

Greene, M. (2001) *Variations on a Blue Guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on Aesthetic Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Greenberg, M.T. & Harris, A.R. (2012) Nurturing Mindfulness in Children and Youth: Current State of Research. *Child Development Perspectives* 6(2), 161-166.

Grotberg, E. (1995) *A guide to promoting resilience in children: strengthening the human spirit* [online]. Available at: https://bibalex.org/baifa/Attachment/Documents/115519.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Grotberg, E.H. (2019) *The International Resilience Project Findings from the Research and the Effectiveness of Interventions* [online]. Available at: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED419584 (accessed 21 July 2020).

Habermas, J. (1979) *Communication and the evolution of society*. London: Heinemann.

Hargreaves, A. (2003) *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*. Maidenhead, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Hargreaves, A., Shirley, A., Wangia, D., Bacon, S. & D'Angelo. (2018) *Leading from the Middle: Spreading Learning, Well-Being, and Identity Across Ontario* [online]. Available

at: http://ccsli.ca/downloads/2018-Leading_From_the_Middle_Summary_Final-EN.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Hart, A., Blincow, D. & Thomas, H. (2007) *Resilient therapy: Working with children and families.* London, UK: Routledge.

Hart, A., Gagnon, E., Eryigit-Madzwamuse, S., Cameron, J., Aranda, K., Rathbone, A. & Heaver, B. (2016) Uniting Resilience Research and Practice With an Inequalities Approach. *SAGE Open,* 6(4), 1-13.

Harvey, S. & Goudvis, A. (2007) *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension For Understanding And Engagement*. 2nd ed. Markham, Ont: Stenhouse Publishers.

Hattie, J. (2003) *Distinguishing Expert Teachers from Novice and Experienced Teachers. Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence?* [online]. Available at: https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/digital assets/qtlsmap/Resources/9/What%20is%20the%20research%20evidence.pdf (accessed 24 July 2020).

Heathcote, D. & Bolton, G.M. (1995) *Drama for learning Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education*. Portsmouth, Nh: Heinemann.

Helm, J.H., Beneke, S. & Steinheimer, K. (1997) Documenting Children's Learning. *Childhood Education,* 73(4), 200-205.

Herrman, H., Stewart, D.E., Diaz-Granados, N., Berger, E.L., Jackson, B. & Yuen, T. (2011) What is resilience? *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry.* 56(5), 258–265.

Hewlett, E. & Moran, V. (2014) *Making Mental Health Count: The Social and Economic Costs of Neglecting Mental Health Care, OECD Health Policy Studies* [online]. Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf (accessed July 2020).

Hill, M, Stafford, A, Seaman, P. Ross, N & Daniel, B. (2007) *Parenting and resilience* [online]. Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/parenting-resilience-children.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Hocking, B., Haskell, J. & Linds, W., eds. (2001) *Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility Through Education*. Brandon, Vt: Foundation For Educational Renewal.

hooks, b. (2003) *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Battiano, A. C., Walker, J. M. T., Reed, R. P., DeJong, J. M. & Jones, K. P. (2001) Parental involvement in homework. *Educational Psychologist*, 36(3), 195-209.

Horner, R., Blitz, C. & Ross, S. W. (2014) *The importance of contextual fit when implementing evidence-based interventions* [online]. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/77066/ib_Contextual.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Howe, K. & Moses, M. (1999) Ethics in educational research. *Review of Research in Education*, 24(1), 21-60.

Hromek, R. & Roffey, S. (2009) Promoting social and emotional learning with games: its fun and we learn things. *Simulation and Gaming*, 40(5), 626-644.

Huberman, M. (1995) Networks That Alter Teaching: conceptualizations, exchanges and experiments. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1(2), 193–211.

Hunte, B.L. & Golembiewski, J.A. (2016) Stories Have the Power to Save us: A Neurological Framework for the Imperative to Tell Stories. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, 5(2), 1-4.

Illback, R.J., Bates, T., Hodges, C., Galligan, K., Smith, P., Sanders, D. & Dooley, B. (2010) Jigsaw: Engaging communities in the development and implementation of youth mental health services and supports in the Republic of Ireland. *Journal of Mental Health*, 19(5), 422-435.

Illback, R.J. & Bates, T. (2011) Transforming youth mental health services and supports in Ireland. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*, 5(1), 22-27.

Inglehart, R., Foa, R., Peterson, C. & Welzel, C. (2007) Development, freedom, and rising happiness: a global perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(4), 264–285.

Isen, A.M., Daubman, K.A. & Nowicki, G. (1987) Positive affect facilitates creative problem solving. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 52(6), 1122-1131.

Isen, A. M., Rosenzweig, A. S. & Young, M. J. (1991) The Influence of Positive Affect on Clinical Problem solving. *Medical Decision Making*, 11(3), 221–227.

Jackson, J. & Harbison, L. (2014) An evaluation of the utility of homework in Irish primary school classrooms. *Irish Teachers' Journal*, 2(1), 47-62.

Jantz, G. L. (2016) *The Power of Positive Self-Talk* [online]. Available at: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hope-relationships/201605/the-power-positive-self-talk (accessed 21 July 2020).

Jantz, G.L. (2019) *Healing Depression for Life*: *The Personalized Approach that Offers New Hope.* Chicago, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Jennings, P.A., Frank, J.L., Snowberg, K.E., Coccia, M.A. & Greenberg, M.T. (2013) Improving classroom learning environments by Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE): Results of a randomized controlled trial. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 28(4), 374–390.

Jennings, P.A. (2015) *Seven Ways Mindfulness Can Help Teachers* [online]. Available at: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/seven_ways_mindfulness_can_help_teachers. (accessed 21 July 2020).

Jennings, P.A., Brown, J.L., Frank, J.L., Doyle, S., Oh, Y., Davis, R., Rasheed, D., DeWeese, A., DeMauro, A.A., Cham, H. & Greenberg, M.T. (2017) Impacts of the CARE for Teachers program on teachers' social and emotional competence and classroom interactions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 109(7), 1010–1028.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994) *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

Kalogirou, K. (2016) Step into drama and teach English affordably. *Scenario*, 10(1), 33–46.

Keen, S. (2007) *Empathy and the Novel*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Kemmis, S. (2009) *Action research as a practice- based practice* [online]. Available at: https://www-tandfonline-com.jproxy.nuim.ie/doi/full/10.1080/09650790903093284

(accessed: 17 April 20).

Kemmis, S., R. McTaggart. & R. Nixon. (2014) *The Action Research Planner.* Singapore: Springer.

Kessler, R.C., Amminger, G.P., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., Alonso, J., Lee, S. & Ustun, T.B. (2007) Age of onset of mental disorders: a review of recent literature. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 20(4), 359-364.

Khoury, B., Lecomte, T., Fortin, G., Masse, M., Therien P., Bouchard, V., Chapleau, M.A., Paquin, K. & Hofmann, S.G. (2013) Mindfulness based therapy: a comprehensive metaanalysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 33(6),763-771.

Kohn, A. (2004) Feel-bad education. *Education Week*, 24(3), 44–45.

Kratochwill, T.R., Hoagwood, K.E. & Kazak, A.E. (2012) Practice-based evidence for children and adolescents: Advancing the research agenda in schools. *School Psychology Review*, 41(2), 215–235.

Kuhl, J. (2000) A functional-design approach to motivation and self-regulation: the dynamics of personality systems interactions In: Boekaerts, M., Pintrich, P.R & Zeidner, M., eds. (2000) *A functional-design approach to motivation and self-regulation: the dynamics of personality systems interactions.* San Diego: Academic Press Ch. 5.

Kyriacou, C. (2001) Teacher Stress: Directions for future research. *Educational Review*, 53(1), 27–35.

LaBoskey, V.K. (2004) The Methodology of Self-Study and Its Theoretical Underpinnings In: Loughran J.J., Hamilton M.L., LaBoskey V.K. & Russell T., eds. (2004) *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*. Dordrecht: Springer. 817-869.

Law, J. (2004) *After Method: mess in social science research*. London, New York: Routledge.

Light, R. (2002) The social nature of games: Australian pre-service primary teachers' first experiences of teaching games for understanding. *European Physical Education Review,* 8(3), 286-304.

Lindsey, D.B., Lindsey, R.B., Hord, S.M. & Frank, V. (2016) *Reach the Highest Standard in Professional Learning: Outcomes.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corowin.

Lindqvist, P. and Nordänger, U.K. (2006) Who dares to disconnect in the age of uncertainty? Teachers' recesses and 'off-the-clock' work. *Teachers and Teaching*, 12(6), 623–637.

Loughran, J. (2006) *Developing a Pedagogy of Teacher Education: Understanding Teaching and Learning about Teaching*. London, UK: Routledge.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D. & Becker, B. (2000) The construct of resilience: a critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, 71(3), 543–62.

Marcy, P., Addington, J., Estroff, S.E., Robinson, J., Penn, D., Severe, J.B. & Kane, J.M. (2018) Comparison of Early Intervention Services vs Treatment as Usual for Early-Phase Psychosis. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 75(6), 555-565.

Maslow, A. (1943) A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.

Maclure, M. (2003) *Discourse in educational and social research*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Manke M.P. (2004) Administrators also do Self-Study: Issues of Power and Community, Social Justice and Teacher Education Reform In: Loughran J.J., Hamilton M.L., LaBoskey V.K., Russell T., eds. (2004) *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*. Dordrecht: Springer. 1367-1391.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (2006) *Designing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Masten, A.S. (2001) Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227-238.

Masten, A.S. (2014) Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth. *Child Development*, 85(1), 6-20.

Masten, A.S. & Barnes, A. (2018) Resilience in Children: Developmental Perspectives. *Children (Basel)*, 5(7), 98.

McAteer, M. (2013) *Research Methods in Education: Action research in education*. London, UK: SAGE.

McMahon, E., Regan, G. O., Corcoran, P., Arensman, E., Cannon, M., Williamson, E. & Keeley, H. (2017) *A school-based study of mental health and suicide prevention* [online]. Available at: https://nsrf.ie/wp-content/uploads/reports/NSRF%20SEYLE%20Report.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

McNiff, J. (2002) *Action research principles: principles and practices.* Routledge Falmer.

McNiff, J. (2010) *Action Research for Professional Development: Concise Advice for New Action Researchers*. Poole: September Books.

McNiff, J. (2013) *Action research: principles and practice*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Routledge.

McNiff, J. & Whitehead, J. (2006) *All You Need to Know About Action Research*. London, UK: Sage.

McNiff, J. & Whitehead, J. (2010) *You and Your Action Research Project*. 3rd ed. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Mental Health Foundation (2002) *The Mental Health Needs of Young People with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. Bright Futures: Working with Vulnerable Young People.* London: Mental Health Foundation.

Mills, H., Stephens, D., O'Keefe, T. & Waugh, J. R. (2004) Theory in Practice: The Legacy of Louise Rosenblatt. *Language Arts*, 82, 47-55.

Moon, J. A. (2004) *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: Theory and practice*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Morrison, G.M. & Allen, M.R. (2007) Promoting Student Resilience in School Contexts. *Theory into Practice*, 46(2), 162–169.

Moyles, J. (2002) Observation as a Research Tool In: Coleman, M. and Briggs, A. J., eds. (2002) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership.* London: Paul Chapman. 172-91.

Newman, T. (2004) *What Works in Building Resilience*. Barkingside, UK: Barnardos.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), (1999) *Primary School Curriculum* [online]. Available at: https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/93de2707-f25e-4bee-9035-92b00613492e/Introduction-to-primary-curriculum.pdf (accessed 5 September 2020).

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), (2020) *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* [online]. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/4456/ncca-primary-curriculum-framework-2020.pdf (accessed 24 July 2020).

New Economics Foundation (2014*). Wellbeing in Four Policy Areas: Report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group of Wellbeing Economics* [online]. Available at: https://b.3cdn.net/nefoundation/ccdf9782b6d8700f7c_lcm6i2ed7.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

National Institute for Health Care and Excellence (NICE), (2009) *Social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education* [online]. Available at: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph20 (accessed 24 July 2020).

Nicholson, H. (2009) *Theatre & Education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Noddings, N. (1984) *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Noddings, N. (1992) *The challenge to care in schools: an alternative approach to education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Noddings, N. (1997) Accident, Awareness and Actualization In: Newmann, A. & Peters, P.L., eds. (1997) *Learning From Our Lives: Women, Research and Autobiography in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Noddings, N. (2012) The Caring Relation in Teaching. *Oxford Review of Education,* 38(6), 771-781.

Noddings, N. (2013) *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education.* 2nd ed. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Oddone, A. (2002) Promoting resilience in an at risk world. *Childhood Education*, 78(5), 274–277.

Oireachtas Library & Research Service (2012) Spotlight, *Well-Being: promoting mental health in schools* [online]. Available at: https://webarchive.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/housesoftheoireachtas/libraryresearch/spotlights/spotwellbeing280212_101701.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

O'Neill, C. & Lambert, A. (1995) *Drama structures: a practical handbook for teachers*. Portsmouth, Nh: Heinemann.

O'Reilly, A., Illback, R., Peiper, N., O'Keeffe, L. & Clayton, R. (2015) Youth engagement with an emerging Irish mental health early intervention programme (Jigsaw): participant characteristics and implications for service delivery. *Journal of mental health*, 24(5), 283-288.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD), (2017) *PISA 2015 Results (Volume III) Students' Well-Being* [online]. Available at: https://read.oecd-

ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2015-results-volume-iii_9789264273856-en#page1 (accessed 20 July 2020).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD), (2018) *Health at a Glance: Europe 2018* [online]. Available at: https://www.google.com/search?q=oecd+health+at+a+glance+2018&oq=oecd+&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j69i59l3j69i60l4.3784j0j9&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 (accessed 21 July 2020).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2018) *Health at a Glance: Europe 2018* [online]. Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/health_glance_eur-2018-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/health_glance_eur-2018-en (accessed 17 July 2020).

Osher, D., Sprague, J., Weissberg, R. P., Axelrod, J., Keenan, S. & Kendziora, K. T. (2007) A comprehensive approach to promoting social, emotional, and academic growth in contemporary schools In: Thomas, A. & Grimes, J. eds. (2007) *Best practices in school psychology*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists. 1263–1278.

Park, C. & Park, Y. R. (2014) The conceptual model on smart phone addiction among early childhood. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 4(2), 147-150.

Patel, V., Flisher, A. J., Hetrick, S. & McGorry, P. D. (2007) Mental health of young people: a global public-health challenge. *Lancet*, 369(9569), 1302–1313.

Payton, J., Weissberg, R., Durlak, J., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., Schellinger, K. & Pachan, M. (2008) *The Positive Impact of Social and Emotional Learning for Kindergarten to Eighth-Grade Students: Findings from Three Scientific Reviews* [online]. Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED505370.pdf (accessed 20 July 2020).

Pennell, D. & Spencer, T. (2008) *Making It Happen: The Importance of Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities* [online]. Available at: https://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/resources/articles/familyinvolve/mih_disabilities/index.php#:~:text=Self%2Ddetermined%20children%20make%20positive,community%2C%20and%20in%20their%20families.&text=The%20more%20practice%20individuals%20receive,school%20and%20among%20their%20peers. (accessed 6 September 2020).

Peterson, C. (2008) *What Is Positive Psychology, and What Is It Not?* [online]. Available at: https://www.psychologytoday.com/ie/blog/the-good-life/200805/what-is-positive-psychology-and-what-is-it-not (accessed 21 July 2020).

Philbin, M. & Myers, J.S. (1991) Classroom Drama: Discourse as a Mode of Inquiry in Elementary School Social Studies. *The Social Studies*, 82(5), 179–182.

Phillips, S. (1999) *Drama with Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Price, A. Smith, H.A. And Kavalidou, K. (2019) *USI National Report on Student Mental Health in Third Level Education* [online]. Available at: http://usi.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WEB-USI-MH-report-1-edited.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (2013) *The SAGE handbook of action research: participative inquiry and practice*. London, UK: Sage.

Rickwood, D.J., Deane, F.P. & Wilson, C.J. (2007) When and how do young people seek professional help for mental health problems? *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 187(7), 35-39.

Rickwood, D.J., Telford, N.R., Parker, A.G., Tanti, C.J. & McGorry, P.D. (2014) headspace — Australia's innovation in youth mental health: who are the clients and why are they presenting? *Medical Journal of Australia*, 200(2), 108–111.

Robertson, I. & Cooper, C.L. (2013) Resilience. *Stress and Health*, 29(3), 175–176.

Roeser, R.W., Eccles, J.S. & Sameroff, A.J. (2000) School as a Context of Early Adolescents' Academic and Social-Emotional Development: A Summary of Research Findings. *The Elementary School Journal*, 100(5), 443–471.

Roisman, G.I., Padron, E., Sroufe, L.A. & Egeland, B. (2002) Earned-Secure Attachment Status in Retrospect and Prospect. *Child Development*, 73(4), 1204-1219.

Royal Society for Public Health (2017) *#StatusOfMind: Social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing* [online]. Available at: https://www.rsph.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/d125b27c-0b62-41c5-a2c0155a8887cd01.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Rutter, M. (1990) Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms In: Rolf, J., Masten, A.S., Cicchetti, D., Nüchterlein K.H. & Weintraub, S., eds. *Risk and Protective Factors in the Development of Psychopathology*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 181–214.

Salisu, A. & Ransom, E.N. (2014) The Role of Modeling towards Impacting Quality Education. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences,* 32, 54-61.

Salmon, P., Sephton, S., Weissbecker, I., Hoover, K., Ulmer, C. & Studts, J.L. (2004) Mindfulness meditation in clinical practice. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 11(4),.434–446.

Sandelowski, M. (2001) Real qualitative researchers do not count: The use of numbers in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health,* 24(3), 230-240.

Schön, D. A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Schulte, A. K. (2002) "Do as I say" In: Kosnik, C., Freese, A. & Samaras, A.P., eds. (2002) *Making a difference in teacher education through self-study. Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Self-study of Teacher Education Practices*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto.

Schuman, H., Steeh, C., Bobo, L. & Krysan, M. (1997) *Racial attitudes in America: trends and interpretations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Scott, D. & Usher, R. (1996) *Understanding educational research*. London, UK: Routledge.

Seligman, M.E.P & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000) Positive Psychology: An Introduction. *American Psychologist,* 55(1), 5-14.

Seligman, M.E.P., Ernst, R.M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K. & Linkins, M. (2009) Positive education: positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(3), pp.293–311.

Semple, R.J., Lee, J., Rosa, D. & Miller, L.F. (2009) A Randomized Trial of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Children: Promoting Mindful Attention to Enhance Social-Emotional Resiliency in Children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19(2), 218–229.

Siks, G.B. (1983) *Drama with children*. NY: Harper &Row.

Simovska, V. (2007) The changing meanings of participation in school-based health education and health promotion: the participants' voices. *Health Education Research*, 22(6), 864–878.

Simpson, M. & Tuson, J. (2003) *Using Observations in Small-Scale Research: A Beginner's Guide.* Glasgow: Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Snyder, T., Dillow, S. & Hoffman, C. (2008) *Digest of Education Statistics, 2007* [online]. Available at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008022.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Sorin, R. (2003) Research with children: A rich glimpse into the world of childhood. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 28(10), 31–35.

Sprott, J.B., Jenkins, J.M. & Doob, A.N. (2005) The Importance of School. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 3(1), 59–77.

Stan, R.V. (2015) *The importance of literature in primary school pupils' development and personal growth* [online]. Available at: https://cyberleninka.org/article/n/1080815 (accessed September 7 2020).

Stenhouse, L. (1981) What counts as research? *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 29(2), 103–114.

Stevens, D. D. & Cooper, J. E. (2009) *Journal keeping: How to use reflective writing for effective learning, teaching, professional insight, and positive change*. Sterling, Va: Stylus Pub.

Sullivan, B., Glenn, G., Roche, M. & McDonagh, C. (2016) *Introduction to Critical Reflection and Action for Teacher Researchers.* London: Routledge.

Swann, J. & Pratt, J. (2007) *Educational research in practice: making sense of methodology*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Taylor, S., Hart., A. & Hove Park School, (2017) *The Resilient Classroom: A Resource Pack for Tutor Groups and Pastoral School Staff* [online]. Available at: https://www.boingboing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/The_resilient_classroom.pdf (accessed: 20 July 2020).

Thanos, P., Katana, J., Ashbyjr, C., Michaelides, M., Gardner, E., Heidbreder, C. & Volkow, N. (1999) The selective dopamine D3 receptor antagonist SB-277011-A attenuates ethanol consumption in ethanol preferring (P) and non-preferring (NP) rats. *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior*, 81(1), 190–197.

Tiggemann, M. & Slater, A. (2013) NetGirls: The Internet, Facebook, and body image concern in adolescent girls. *The International journal of eating disorders*, 46(4), 630-633.

Trautmann, S., Rehm, J. & Wittchen, H. (2016) The economic costs of mental disorders. *EMBO Reports*, 17(9), 1245–1249.

Todd, D., Hardy, J. & Oliver, E. (2011) Effects of Self-Talk: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 33(5), 666–687.

Turner, S. G. (2001) Resilience and social work practice: Three case studies. *Families in Society*, 82(5), 441-448.

United Nations Committee on The Rights of The Child (UNCRC), (2016) *Concluding Observations: Ireland* [online]. Available at: https://www.childrensrights.ie/resources/un-committee-rights-child-concluding (accessed 17 July 2020).

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2006) *Latest Findings on National Air Quality* [online]. Available at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-11/documents/trends_brochure_2006.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Valkenburg, P.M., Peter, J. & Schouten, A.P. (2006) Friend networking sites and their relationship to adolescents' well-being and social self-esteem. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 9(5), 584–90.

Van Dam, N.T., van Vugt, M.K., Vago, D.R., Schmalzl, L., Saron, C.D., Olendzki, A., Meissner, T., Lazar, S.W., Kerr, C.E., Gorchov, J., Fox, K.C.R., Field, B.A., Britton, W.B., Brefczynski-Lewis, J.A. & Meyer, D.E. (2018) Mind the Hype: A Critical Evaluation and Prescriptive Agenda for Research on Mindfulness and Meditation. *Perspectives on Psychological Science: A Journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, 13(1), 36–61.

Van Maanen, J., Sörensen, J.B. & Mitchell, T.R. (2007) The interplay between theory and method. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1145-1154.

Weaving Well-Being (2018) *Weaving Well-Being Information for Parents/Guardians/Carers* [online]. Available at: https://www.otb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/WWB-Parent-Introductory-Letter-1.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

Weare, K. (2006) Taking a positive, holistic approach to the mental and emotional health and well-being of children and young people. In: Newnes, C. & Radcliffe, N., eds. (2006) *Making and Breaking Children's Lives.* Ross-on-Wye, UK: PCCS Books, 115-122.

Weare, K. (2013) Editorial: Child and adolescent mental health in schools. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 20(2), 6-8.

Weare, K. (2015) *Evidence for mindfulness: impacts on the wellbeing and performance of school staff* [online]. Available at: http://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Evidence-forMindfulness-Impact-on-school-staff.pdf (accessed 22 July 2020).

Weare, K. & Gray, G. (2003) *What works in developing children's emotional and social competence and wellbeing?* London, UK.: Department for Education and Skills.

Weare, K. & Nind, M. (2011) Mental health promotion and problem prevention in schools: What does the evidence say? *Health Promotion International*, 26(1), 29–69.

Werner, E.E. & Smith, R.S. (2001) *Journeys from Childhood to Midlife: Risk, Resilience, and Recovery*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

Whitehead, J. (2000) How Do I Improve My Practice? Creating and legitimating an epistemology of practice. *Reflective Practice*, 1(1), 91-104.

Whitehead, J. (2004) What counts as evidence in self-studies of teacher education practices? In: Loughran, J.J., Hamilton, M.L., LaBoskey, V.L. & T. L. Russell., eds. (2004) *The International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teaching Education.* Netherlands: Springer. 871-904.

Whitehead, J. (2005) *Living critical standards of judgment in educational theorising* [online] Available at: https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bera05all/jwbera05pap.htm (accessed 20 July 2020).

Whitehead, J. (2015) The Practice of Helping Students Find Their First Person Voice in Creating Living Theories for Education In: Bradbury, H., ed. (2015*) The Sage Handbook of Action Research*. 3rd edn. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. 246–254.

Whitehead, J. & McNiff, J. (2006) *Action research living theory*. London; Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Winter, R. (2002) Truth or fiction: problems of validity and authenticity in narratives of action research. *Educational Action Research*, 10(1), 143–154.

World Health Organisation (WHO), (2005) *Promoting Mental Health: Concepts, Emerging Evidence, Concepts* [online]. Available at: https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/promoting_mhh.pdf (accessed 21 July 2020).

World Health Organisation (WHO), (2013) *Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020* [online]. Available at: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/89966/9789241506021_eng.pdf;jsessionid=DC9EF0511340B9799D0478ACD2F523DF?sequence=1 (accessed 21 July 2020).

World Health Organisation, (WHO), (2018) *Mental Health: Strengthening Our Response* [online]. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response (accessed 17 July 2020).

World Health Organisation, (WHO), (2019) *Adolescent mental health* [online]. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health (accessed 21 July 2020).

Yates, T. M. & Masten, A. S. (2004) The promise of resilience research for practice and policy In: Newman, T. ed. (2004) *What works? Building resilience: Effective strategies for child care services*. Ilford, England: Barnardo's. 6–15.

Yoon, J. S. (2002) Teacher characteristics as predictors of teacher–student relationships: Stress, negative affect, and self-efficacy. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal*, 30(5), 485-494.

Youssef, C.M. & Luthans, F. (2007) Positive Organizational Behavior in the Workplace: The Impact of Hope, Optimism, and Resilience. *Journal of Management,* 33(5), 774-800.

Zeichner, K. (1999) The New Scholarship in Teacher Education. *Education Researcher,* 28(9), 4-15.

Zeichner, K. M. & Liston, D. P. (1996) *Reflective teaching: An introduction*. Mahwah, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Appendices

	Title of Appendix	**Page (s)**
A	Information Sheet	106
B	Letters of Consent and Assent	107-111
C	Letter to the Board of Management of the School	112
D	Ethical Approval	114-117
E	Semi-Structured Observation Template	118
F	Unstructured Observation Template	119
G	Pre-Intervention Survey	120
H	Anonymous Survey	121
I	Critical Friend Interview Questions	122
J	Critical Friend Stimulus Questions	123

Appendix A: Information Sheet

Information Sheet for Parents and Guardians

Who is this information sheet for?

This information sheet is for parents and guardians.

What is this Action Research Project about?

Teachers undertaking the Research in Practice Masters in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, Maynooth University are required to conduct an action research project, examining an area of their own practice as a teacher. This project will involve an analysis of the teacher's own practice. Data will be generated using observation, reflective notes and questionnaires. The teacher is then required to produce a thesis documenting this action research project.

What are the research questions?

- What strategies improve the resilience of children?
- How do you support children to become more resilient?

What sorts of methods will be used?

- Observation, Reflective Journal, Surveys, Questionnares, Focus Groups, Interviews and Analysis of Childrens' Work

Who else will be involved?

The study will be carried out by me, Kevin Treacy, as part of the Master of Education course in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education. XXXXX XXXXXXX, principal, will also act as a 'critical friend' to me who will look at my research and offer her thoughts on its progress. The thesis will be submitted for assessment to the module leader Dr. Bernadette Wrynn and will be examined by the Department staff. The external examiners will also access the final thesis.

What are you being asked to do?

You are being asked for your consent to permit me to undertake this study with my class. In all cases the data that is collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and the analysis will be reported anonymously. The data captured will only be used for the purpose of the research as part of the Master of Education in the Froebel Department, Maynooth University and will be destroyed in accordance with University guidelines.

Contact details: Student: Kevin Treacy **E:** kevin.treacy.2020@mumail.ie

Appendix B: Letters of Consent and Assent

Parental Letter of Consent

XXXXXXXXXXXX,

Dublin.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I am a student on the Master of Education programme at Maynooth University. As part of my degree I am doing an action research project. The focus of my research is resilience and how children learn resilience in school.

In order to do this, I intend to carry out research in the classroom by doing several lessons across the curriculum which focus on resilience. This will include a project based on a resilient person, reading literature with an emphasis on how the characters are resilient, presenting the children with questions they can use to foster their resilience and a focus on resilience in P.E.

The data will be collected using observations, examining the students' work, a daily teacher reflective journal, surveys and focus groups with the children. The children will be asked their opinions about resilience at the beginning and end of the research and what strategies they find most useful to be resilient in their day-to-day lives.

The child's name and the name of the school will not be included in the thesis that I will write at the end of the research. The research will be seen by my supervisor as it develops and by the examiners at the end of the process. Your child will be allowed withdraw from the research process at any stage.

All information will be confidential, and information will be destroyed in a stated timeframe in accordance with the University guidelines. The correct guidelines will be complied with when carrying out this research. The research will not be carried out until approval is granted by the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education.

I would like to invite you and your child to give permission for him/her to take part in this project.

If you have any queries on any part of this research project, feel free to contact me by email at kevin.treacy.2020@mumail.ie

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Treacy

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I have read the information provided in the attached letter and all my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to the participation of my child in this study. I am aware that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my information.

Parent / Guardian Signature_____

Parent / Guardian Signature_____

Date: _____

Name of Child _____

Child's signature: _____

Date: _____

Children's Consent Letter

Child's name …….

I am trying to find out how children learn about resilience in primary school. When things go wrong, resilience is what helps you to cope and get through hard times. Sometimes it makes you even stronger than you were before. I would like to look at my teaching of resilience and see what I can do to be a better teacher. To do this, I would like to watch you and listen to you when you are in school and to write down some notes about you. I will also be asking you some questions and getting you to fill in some surveys.

Would you be ok with that? Pick a box Yes No

I have asked your Mum or Dad or Guardian to talk to you about this. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. If you are happy with that could you sign the form that I have sent home?

If you change your mind after we start, that's ok too.

Child's Assent to Participate

My parent/guardian has read the information sheet with me and I agree to take part in this research.

Name of child (in block capitals):

_____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Letter to the Board of Management of the School

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear Chairperson

This year, I have decided to enrol in a Masters programme in Maynooth University. As a result, I will be completing a thesis and am requesting your permission to conduct research within the school.

This is a self-study action research which seeks to explore how I can improve my teaching of resilience. With self-study action research, the focus is not on the children or their progress. A self-study focuses on my teaching and allows me an opportunity to both explore and improve my practice I will be conducting lessons about resilience with the class, while also collecting data using observations, surveys, and samples of the children's work. The principal will also be acting as my 'critical friend,' observing lessons and offering advice on the progress of the research. I will be using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity amongst participants. The data collected throughout the research aims to show how the children's resilience has developed, as well as my teaching.

Participation in the research is not mandatory. There will be no extra rewards or benefits for the children to partake in the research. The information that is collected will be strictly confidential and stored by me in a locked cabinet. The names of the school, students or staff will not be present within the final project. School protocols will be followed in the case of a disclosure of abuse. There will be a copy of the study available should the Board of Management or any participants request it.

Lastly, if this study proceeds, I would like to apply for five study leave days. The INTO have advised that these days are available to teachers at the discretion of the Board of Management. This would be a massive help in completing the research process.

Thank you for everything you do to ensure the efficient running of our excellent school.

Regards,

Kevin Treacy

Appendix D: Ethical Approval

Ethics Approval for Master of Education (Research in Practice)
(*Please read the notes in the course handbook before completing this form)*

Student name:	Kevin Treacy
Student Number:	19252108
Supervisor:	Aoife Titley
Programme:	Master of Education (Research in Practice)
Thesis title:	How do I teach resilience strategies to the children in my class?
Research Question(s):	What strategies improve the resilience of children? How do you support children to become more resilient?
Intended start date of data collection:	6/1/20
Professional Ethical Codes or Guidelines used:	Maynooth University Guidelines

1(a) Research Participants: Who will be involved in this research? *(Tick all that apply)*

Early years / pre-school	
Primary school students	x
Secondary school students	
Young people (aged 16 – 18 years)	
Adults	x

Provide a brief description of the individuals and their proposed role in your research below [Max 50 words]:

Students- the students will be the children in my class of 30. I will be teaching this class about resilience and presenting them with strategies to use in their lives

Critical friend- My critical friend will be watching me teach some of these lessons over time and commenting on my development of teaching resilience

1(b) Recruitment and Participation/sampling approach: *How will these participants become involved in your research? What type of sampling is involved? Please describe the formal and informal recruitment processes? Please describe the type of participation and level of engagement of participants? Are there gatekeepers and what is their part of sampling process? [Max 100 words]*

The participants will receive letters which inform them of the purpose of the research. Convenience sampling will be used. This is a type of sampling where members of the target population meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity and availability (Dornyei, 2007). I will send a letter of information to the board of management in the school explaining the research and requesting permission to carry it out. Then, letters of information and consent forms will be sent to the parents of the children. I will explain the research to the children in class using appropriate language and that they can also withdraw at any time. Parents/children then give consent/assent to take part in the research.

2. Summary of Planned Research (*please indicate anonymised location type, purpose and aims of research, research questions and design, methods to be used and time frame, process of analysis) [250 words]*

The research will be taking place in a co-educational primary school in a middle-class urban area. The school is of a Catholic ethos and there are 30 students aged between 9-10 in the research site.

The research investigates how I am teaching resilience strategies to the children. It aims to give children the tools to become more resilient and offers me an opportunity to study my own teaching around resilience.

What strategies improve the resilience of children? How do you support children to become resilient?

This is a self-study action-research that will take place from January-March 2020. Action-research can go through numerous cycles as it develops. I will teach lessons across the curriculum with a focus on resilience and what it takes to be resilient. I will use a variety of teaching techniques such as, role-play and modelling. This allows me to teach the children about resilience in different ways and multiple subject contexts. My research methods include a variety of techniques. Semi-structured observation of children during lessons and tasks will be used. This method uses some explicit structure (Blandford, 2013) but allows participants freedom to express their views in their own terms. A reflective journal following Moon's (2004) framework will be kept. Moon's framework allows for a deep level of reflection. The journal facilitates teachers to reflect on their teaching and then generate feedback for the improvement of their classroom practices (Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2008). Surveys carried out before and after the research, focus groups with the children, visual methodologies like photovoice, interviews with colleagues about resilience, use of a critical friend to comment on research progress and content analysis of children's work.

After the research period (3 months) I will carry out data analysis. This will be done by examining the data and generating evidence from several sources which validate it. This includes the children's work, surveys completed at the end of the research, my reflective journal etc.

3. Ethical Issues: Please outline the main ethical issues which may arise in the course of undertaking this research. *Outline the nature of consent and assent pertaining to participants. (You should discuss these concerns and outline the responses/supports you will provide in the boxes below)*

Vulnerability *(minimising risk, discomfort, coping with unforeseen outcomes, can any aspect of the research give rise to any form of harm to participants, including the researcher)?) [Max 100 words]*

Minimising risk and discomfort will be achieved by choosing content for lessons that is at the children's level which should not upset them. There is a space in the school called 'Cloud 9' which is a sensory area. This will be used to withdraw any children who may become upset and we can discuss what has challenged them in the research. I will also have an anonymous 'help your teacher' box which the children can drop comments into if they don't want to discuss something as a whole class. Children will be reminded several times throughout the research that they can withdraw at any time if they are not feeling comfortable.

Power dynamics *(between researcher-participants, amongst participants, insider-research, reflexivity, gatekeepers, working with your colleagues, working with students, etc)*: *[Max 100 words]*

As I am an adult, working with children, there is an obvious power imbalance between us. I will be explaining the research to the children in the class using simple language that is at their level. I will also have given a plain language statement to the participants' parents which will also allow them to explain the research to the children. Parents can contact me if they further wish to discuss the research. I will be aware of acquiescence and ensure the children are comfortable participating. The principal, as a gatekeeper, is very open to research being conducted in the school. It is also important to note that as this is self-study action research, me and my teaching is the focus of the study.

Informed consent and assent *(for participants - and guardians where appropriate. Please also note* any *other approvals that may be required from other bodies (i.e. Board of Management.): [Max 100 words]* I will send the school's BOM an information letter about my research and ask them for permission to carry it out. Next, I will receive approval from the University which will allow me to begin my research. I will distribute the letters of information and consent to the parents of the research participants. This will allow me to receive the required assent for the children to take part in the research process. I also will use a plain language letter with the participants. This allows me to begin the data gathering process.

Sensitivity *(topics that may be potentially sensitive, intrusive or stressful, have you considered what to do in relation to dealing with the aftermath of a sensitive disclosure? how do you intend to deal with unexpected outcomes?) [Max 100 words]* In terms of any sensitive disclosures that could be made during the research, these will be dealt with by following the child protection policies in the school, which are based off the 2017, *"Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary School.".* The teacher will discuss the disclosure with the child respectfully and compassionately and pass on the relevant information to the Designated Liaison Person in the school.

Data storage *(where will the findings be stored; will they be published? And by whom?) [Max 100 words]*

The physical data that is gathered for this research will be stored in a locked cupboard in my classroom which only I have access to. I will also be using my laptop, which is encrypted, to store any of the digital data that is generated. In line with Maynooth's Research Integrity Policy, primary data will be stored for 10 years.

This research may be presented at a relevant teacher education conference.

'I confirm that to the best of my knowledge this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of undertaking this research.' If any of the conditions of this proposed research change, I confirm that I will re-negotiate ethical clearance with my supervisor.

Signed: Kevin Treacy Date: 18/11/19

References

Blandford, A. (2013) *Semi-structured qualitative studies UCL Discovery*. [online] Available at: https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1436174/ [Accessed 18 Nov. 2019].

Dörnyei, Z. (2007) *Research methods in applied linguistics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Moon, JA. (*2004) A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*, Routledge, London. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. [18 November 2019].

Zulfikar, T. & Mujiburrahman. (2018) "Understanding own teaching: becoming reflective teachers through reflective journals", *Reflective Practice,* vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 1-13.

Supervisor use only:

Date Considered: _____

Approved	
Approved with recommendations (see below)	
Referred back to applicant	
Referred to Department Research and Ethics Committee	

Recommendations:

Signature of supervisor: _____

Department use only: *(only where applicable)*

Date Considered: _____

Approved by Froebel Department Research and Ethics committee	
Approved with recommendations (see below)	
Referred back to applicant (changes to be approved by supervisor)	
Referred to Maynooth University Social Research Ethics Subcommittee	

Recommendations:

Signature of Dept. Ethics Committee Chair: _____

Maynooth University Social Research Ethics Subcommittee use only *(only where applicable)*

Date Considered: _____

Approved	
Referred back to applicant and supervisor	

Signed:

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Observation Template

Date:

	Child A	Child B	Child C
• Demonstrates a genuine interest in school • Empathetic toward others • Adaptability (having persistence, confidence, and flexibility; accepting what can't be controlled; using creative problem-solving skills and active coping strategies) • Displays an optimistic attitude • Autonomous-acted independently and showed initiative • Asks for support when needed			

Appendix F: Unstructured Observation Template

Date:

Subject and Content	Observation
Normal School Time	
Resilience Intervention Lessons	

Appendix G: Pre-Intervention Survey

1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= I'm in the middle, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Please mark one box per row	1	2	3	4	5
I find it easy to bounce back when something I don't like happens to me					
It takes me a long time to get over things that upset me					
I know what to do when I am stressed to help me feel better					
I think mistakes in school are helpful for my learning					
I find it easy to ask for help when I'm stuck					

Appendix H: Anonymous Survey

Can you name one thing you have learned about resilience that you didn't know before we started our lessons?
What has been your favourite part of the resilience lessons so far? (the drama about Sam/Weaving Well-Being lessons/Resilience Project/Anything we did in Lessons)
Do you feel like you have become more resilient in the last few weeks? Mark your answer on the scale: 1=not at all 2=a little bit 3=I'm not really sure 4=I feel more resilient 5=I have definitely become much more resilient 1_____2_____3_____4_____5
Tell me about a time you have used something we have learned inside or outside school?
Have you any suggestions or ideas of things you'd like us to do in our resilience lessons after the midterm?

Appendix I: Critical Friend Interview Questions

Q1 Resilience is a buzz word that has gained popularity in the last number of years. As a school leader, what role do you see resilience having in the lives of children in 2020?

Q2 The DES (2015) claim that implementing a resilience building programme in school is highly beneficial in creating positive outcomes for children. Do you feel our school currently does enough to promote resilience?

Q3 'Helicopter Parenting' where children are not exposed to failure has become more common in both schools and homes in modern times. What are your thoughts on the impact of the 'everybody gets a trophy' culture in children's lives as they move forward?

Q4 In terms of implementing resilience programmes in schools, research shows that these programmes are often only as effective as the teacher who is implementing it. Does the school then have a responsibility in nurturing a teachers' resilience? Where does a school's duty of care stop when it comes to staff?

Q5 Finally, what are your thoughts on the resilience programme that I have been implementing?

Appendix J: Critical Friend Stimulus Questions

1. What were your reasons for selecting the different scenarios for the freezeframes? Are there other scenarios you could add?

2. How much of your understanding and personal experiences of resilience and success
influence the scenarios you present to the class?

3. Why did you include in the teacher's letter the suggestion that Sam's parents should give him a treat? What is your thinking about rewards for resilience?

4. Why did you choose a boy for your example to teach resilience. Do you think gender matters when using this methodology? Do you think the girls in the class could relate to Sam's experiences?

5. Sam got new shoes. Do you think that this presents a solution to the class if they are bullied about their shoes? What alternative answer might be given?

6. What do you think the children understand by the phrase 'anger issues'?