

Quietly sharing the load? The role of school psychologists in enabling teacher resilience

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Abstract

Teacher resilience is associated with positive student outcomes and plays an important role in teacher retention and wellbeing. School ecologies can enable the resilience of teachers, with prior research illustrating the importance of supportive colleagues, strong leadership, and positive school culture. There is limited research, however, exploring the role of school psychologists in supporting or enabling teacher resilience. Using data from experienced Australian school psychologists and teachers, this exploratory qualitative study examines the role of school psychologists in enabling teacher resilience. Findings show that school psychologists directly and indirectly support teacher resilience, although teachers perceive school psychologists' main role to work with individual students. Issues pertaining to variations in access and particular roles of school psychologists are discussed. Although further research is needed to clarify and promote the role of school psychologists, this study points to them potentially playing an important role in school ecologies that enable teacher resilience.

Keywords

Teacher resilience, school psychologist, school ecology, Australia

Teacher resilience has become an important field of research as schools and education systems endeavour to attract and retain teachers who maintain their commitment, engagement, motivation and sense of wellbeing, particularly in challenging school contexts. Teachers who demonstrate resilience have the capacity to positively negotiate adverse situations, manage the stressors of the profession, and provide high quality teaching (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Day & Gu, 2014). Early research in the field identified characteristics of resilient teachers (e.g. Bobek, 2002); however more recently, teacher resilience has been investigated from an ecological perspective to better understand how colleagues, friends, and family (Le Cornu, 2013), school leaders and administrators (Day, 2014), and the broader school community support teacher resilience. This wider social ecological view has highlighted the importance of both personal and contextual resources that support or enable teacher resilience, and the multidimensional and dynamic nature of the resilience process.

A review of 50 empirical studies regarding teacher resilience identified many contextual factors that could enable teacher resilience (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). However, mention of the role played by professionals such as school psychologists, was rare. Similarly, data from Australian teachers regarding their own resilience lacked reference to school psychologists (see Mansfield, Beltman, & Price, 2014; Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012). So what role, if any, do school psychologists play in enabling teacher resilience? The purpose of this article is to examine this question in light of the perspectives of experienced school psychologists and teachers from schools in disadvantaged areas in Western Australia. Implications for the practice of school psychologists are discussed.

Teacher resilience

Resilience may be ‘inferred’ when adversity is present yet positive outcomes can be observed (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013, p. 475). From a social ecological approach, resilience is regarded

as a ‘contextually and culturally embedded construct’ (Ungar, 2012, p. 3). Related to this understanding, teacher resilience has three components. First, it includes the *capacity* of an individual teacher to harness not only personal or psychological resources but also physical, social and cultural resources (see Resilience Research Centre, 2014). Second, resilience is the *process* whereby characteristics of individual teachers and of their personal and professional contexts interact over time (Mansfield et al., 2014). Furthermore, this process is dynamic and fluctuates over time, varying with situation and context. Finally, teacher resilience is evident in the *outcome* of a teacher who, despite facing challenges, experiences professional commitment, growth, wellbeing, and a ‘strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy and motivation to teach’ (Sammons et al., 2007, p. 694).

School ecologies: Challenging and enabling teacher resilience

As resilience is a contextually embedded construct, school ecologies play an important role in the resilience process. Research has revealed a range of challenges that may constrain teacher resilience (Beltman et al., 2011). In classrooms, for example, teachers may need to cater for students with difficult behaviour or individual learning needs. School leaders may be unsupportive or resources scarce and relationships with students’ parents can be problematic. In addition, heavy workloads and externally imposed regulations can add to the challenges. Some schools have added issues if they are located in disadvantaged communities with limited resources (Ebersöhn, 2012). For example, schools in low socio-economic status (SES) areas can be demanding and difficult to staff due to the presence of students with behavioural problems, low achievement, and multilingual backgrounds (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010). Due to such multiple challenges, teachers may work in low SES schools for shorter periods of time and such schools are more likely to be staffed by less experienced teachers (Riddell, 2013).

School ecologies can also enable teacher resilience in a number of ways. For example, school leaders play a critical role in supporting teacher resilience through developing collaborative and supportive school communities (Day & Gu, 2014). Such communities can have a positive impact on teachers' efficacy and satisfaction (Hong, 2012). Where administrators enable teachers to exercise autonomy, teachers' enthusiasm and persistence improve (Taylor, 2013). Similarly, teachers need recognition and affirmation (Day & Gu, 2014) which facilitate the development of resilience 'that is essential if teachers are to thrive in the profession' (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, & Burke, 2013, p. 126). Positive relationships with teaching colleagues and both formal and informal mentors can also support teachers (Cameron & Lovett, 2014).

School psychologists and support for teacher resilience. Although school psychologists are part of the school ecology, there is limited literature referring to a *direct* role for school psychologists in enabling teacher resilience. In Davison's (2006) US doctoral study, four groups of university education students, including pre-service and employed teachers, took part in a resilience-building workshop. This pilot study indicated that, although perceived positively, school psychologist-led workshops based on 'resilience skills' played a limited role in building teacher resilience as they did not address important 'systemic and environmental issues' that led to stress (Davison, 2006, p. 83). Nevertheless, Gibbs, and Miller (2014), reviewed research indicating that with regard to student misbehaviour, consultation between school psychologists and individual teachers provided opportunity to build teacher confidence and resilience, leading to more effective teaching. Dialogue regarding disruptive behaviour enabled teachers to reframe thinking, regaining a 'sense of professional purpose, resilience and belief' (Gibbs & Miller, 2014, p. 615).

School psychologists may have an *indirect* role in enabling teacher resilience by mitigating school-related challenges faced by teachers. Rather than working exclusively with

individual students, school psychologists 'are *part of* the ecology within which children, families and schools function' (Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000, p. 489). They have a role at the forefront of primary and secondary prevention programs which can reduce teacher burnout, such as those to improve student behaviour (Hastings & Bham, 2003). These programs have a positive impact for teachers who use them and who report less exhaustion and a greater sense of achievement (Covell, McNeil, & Howe, 2009). Despite such findings, in interviews with South African university students who had succeeded despite significant multiple challenges, teachers were seen to have played a major role, but school psychology services were not mentioned (Theron, 2013).

Western Australian schools: Conditions that challenge and enable teacher resilience

With an area of about 7.6 million square kilometres, Australia is the sixth largest country in the world and comprises six states and two territories (Australian Government, n.d.). It has a population of just over 22 million with most people living in coastal regions. Occupying one third of the continent, Western Australia is the largest state with about 75% of the 2.5 million population living in the metropolitan area of the state capital city of Perth (About Australia, 2015). The Australian Government is responsible for national educational policies and programs and provides supplementary funding to states for school education (Department of Education and Training, 2014). State and territory governments own and operate government schools and are responsible for providing services and reviewing performance. Australia achieves well in aspects of education compared with other countries. For example, on average in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, 39% of young people graduate with a bachelor's degree, whereas this figure is over 50% in Australia (OECD, 2012).

Challenging school contexts in Western Australia. Due to its size, geography, population demographics and distribution, Western Australia has government and non-government schools in metropolitan, rural, and remote locations. In 2011, 103 government schools were part of a funding partnerships program based on their low socio-economic status (Australian Government, 2011). Relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage are defined in terms of ‘people’s access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society’ (ABS, 2011, p. 6). Disadvantage can imply impoverished childhoods with fewer opportunities to acquire ‘dispositions, skills and understandings required for school success’ (Angus, Olney, & Ainley, 2007, p. 78). In particular areas in Western Australia, there are schools where the majority of students would be from disadvantaged backgrounds. Attracting and retaining teachers in such schools can be challenging (Castro et al., 2010). Difficulties associated with disadvantaged backgrounds can be challenging and may constrain teacher resilience. In Western Australia various measures are in place to enable teachers wanting to work in more challenging locations to be selected to do so (Department of Education, 2015a).

Supports for students and teachers in Western Australian schools. Schools in Western Australia have access to a range of services, including school psychologists, which provide support for students in a variety of ways. For example, the School Health Service (Department of Health, n.d.), provides ‘universal and targeted prevention, health promotion, early identification and intervention’, with nurses based in larger schools and visiting smaller schools. Schools may employ chaplains who are able to develop positive relationships with staff and directly provide pastoral care, while also providing indirect support through assisting students referred by teachers (Sawyer, 2013). Schools may also have Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers who provide ‘support to assist the teacher in the delivery of planned education programs’ for indigenous students (Department of Education, 2014). Some

schools access social workers to assist with home-based issues and link to community resources, as well as liaison officers who assist with particular groups of students such as refugees.

School psychologists in Western Australia. The main state-funded support service for government schools is the School Psychology Service (SPS). The SPS ‘provides a specialist psychological assessment, intervention and consultation service for schools’ where services are provided ‘for students, school staff, parents and inter-agency partners’, ‘directly and indirectly’, ‘at the individual, group, whole school and system levels’ (Department of Education, 2015b). Access to school psychologists is ‘driven by school needs’ and the nature of services is ‘negotiated with the school principal’ (Department of Education, 2015b). Some larger schools host a school psychologist who would also visit smaller schools in the local area and oversee and support programs across schools. The SPS provides support in the areas of behaviour, learning, and mental health and wellbeing (Department of Education, 2015b). The Competency Framework for School Psychologists (Department of Education, 2010), indicates that school psychologists are expected to be ‘committed to the learning, pro-social development and health and wellbeing of all members of the school community’ (p. 5). They are expected to be able to ‘assist teachers with preventative, developmental and learning strategies to address student diversity’ (Department of Education, 2010, p. 11), and ‘consult collaboratively with students, teachers, parents, administrators and agencies to develop effective strategies’ (Department of Education, 2010, p. 13). School psychologists are expected to assist teachers directly as well as perhaps more indirectly through strategies aimed at the whole school community.

Some research in Western Australia has examined the work of school psychologists. For example, they play a major role in providing mental health services to schools as members of case management teams that develop programs for students with high support

needs (De Jong & Griffiths, 2008). Programs such as Aussie Optimism (Curtin University, 2014) have been developed by psychologists to promote positive mental health outcomes for students, and when teachers were trained to implement such programs indirect positive influences on teachers' own wellbeing were also observed (Tyson, Roberts, & Kane, 2009). Anderson, Klassen, and Georgiou (2007) argued that school psychologists are ideally positioned to influence teacher beliefs and actions and to provide support regarding inclusion of students with disabilities. Similar to Theron's (2013) finding, however, when 162 primary school teachers across a school district were asked about their support structures for inclusion only about 10% mentioned school psychologists. Given the relatively long history of school psychology in Western Australia this finding was surprising. Anderson et al. (2007) went on to suggest that school psychologists can provide training, disseminate research, develop behaviour and learning plans, and advocate for teachers, but need to be more proactive in reaching out to teachers and ensure that resources provided are educationally relevant and meaningful.

The present study

While there is some evidence from the literature that school psychologists could support teacher resilience, there is a lack of research directly examining this; furthermore, no studies where school psychologists were asked about their role in relation to teacher resilience could be located. In schools where teachers experience a range of challenges related to disadvantage, school psychologists have the potential to play a critical role in enabling teacher resilience. This article aims to explore this issue by examining the perspectives of experienced school psychologists and teachers working in challenging schools in Western Australia.

Method

A small, exploratory, qualitative study was conducted to examine the role of school psychologists in enabling teacher resilience. Exploratory studies are appropriate to investigate a ‘little understood’ situation, ‘identify or discover important variables’, or create ideas for future research (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, p. 459). Qualitative research typically studies a few individuals (Creswell, 2012) and in this study the aim was to examine the views of experienced individuals (i.e., school psychologists and teachers working in challenging schools) to identify typical issues and areas for further investigation.

Sampling, participants, and recruitment procedure

Following Creswell (2012), typical purposeful sampling was used to select school psychologists and teachers, experienced in working in challenging school contexts, who could be expected to shed light on the research question (i.e., what role, if any, do school psychologists play in enabling teacher resilience?). University and Department of Education (for teachers) ethics approvals were obtained and all participants gave informed individual consent. Pseudonyms have been used to ensure anonymity. Researchers abided by the guidelines given in the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Australian Government, 2015).

School psychologists were recruited via personal contact. Author 1 previously worked as a school psychologist and approached six known, experienced school psychologists via email regarding their willingness to participate. Four female school psychologists (Glenda, Hannah, Mandy, and Nola) agreed. All had from 11 to over 30 years’ experience across primary and secondary school contexts; three had worked in leadership positions; all had run programs within or across schools.

Teachers' perceptions of support for resilience were obtained by re-analysing data from an existing phenomenological study of teacher resilience in primary schools in disadvantaged areas (Harris, 2014). Principals of nine primary schools eligible to apply for additional funding due to socio-economic disadvantage were contacted by phone regarding their willingness to be involved in the research. Principals of three schools agreed, were subsequently visited and asked to recommend experienced teachers they viewed as being able to successfully cope with challenging circumstances. In two schools the principals nominated a specific teacher – each agreed to participate. In the third school the principal gave the invitation to participate to all staff and two teachers responded. A fifth teacher from another school was recruited using snowball sampling, where participants recommend others who meet the criteria (Creswell, 2012). The four women (Kate, Linda, Clare, and Pam) and one man (Frank) had been teaching from six to thirty-nine years, with all teaching in their present schools for five years or more. At the time of the study, they were teaching children aged 5-8 years.

Data collection

Data were obtained through open-ended questions. Due to the varying work locations of the school psychologists, and because they were known already to Author 1, participants were contacted via email and invited to respond to an open-ended question: *'What, if any, role do school-based and/or school-affiliated professionals/practitioners/lay-persons such as School Psychologists, Social Workers, Chaplains, AIEWs etc. play in supporting teacher resilience?'* The question was intentionally broad to include the range of support services that may be part of the school ecology. Three participants responded by reply email and one replied with a phone call to the first author who made notes of the conversation. Text from the emails and notes were analysed.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews had been conducted with the teachers to explore perceived challenges, supports, and ways they sustained their commitment. These had been recorded, transcribed and coded using the steps outlined by Creswell (2012) and Groenewald (2004). The data were re-examined to understand what supports were available to teachers within the ecology of the school, explicitly focusing on professionals such as school psychologists. Responses to two specific questions were re-analysed: *‘What are your main sources of support? / Where do you draw support and strength?’* and *‘What do you believe assists or would assist teachers to not only cope but also thrive in challenging schools?’*

Data analysis and trustworthiness

Data were analysed for content with regard to the aim of the study and using the analysis process outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) and the ‘codes-to-theory model’ for qualitative inquiry (Saldaña, 2013, p. 13). First the data were organised according to participant group (school psychologists, teachers) and responses to question(s). The first and second authors carefully read through data from school psychologists and independently developed initial codes relating to the role of school psychologists in supporting resilience of teachers working in challenging schools (e.g. assisting with challenging student behaviour). These codes were discussed and categories developed (e.g. indirect support, direct support). The same process was used to analyse the relevant data from teacher responses. From the categories in each data set, common themes were then derived from the integrated data sets to reduce overlap and redundancy (Creswell, 2012).

Two main methods were used to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. Gathering data from two sources, collected in a different way, acts as a form of triangulation and increases the validity and reliability of a study (Slavin, 2007). Such multiple perspectives also aid in understanding the complexity of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Second, member

checking is the process of asking participants to review the accuracy of the data and confirm that the researcher has understood the social world correctly (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Teachers were sent a transcript of their interviews and summary of the original study which included an overview of their sources of support. School psychologists were sent a summary of their responses to check for accuracy and to allow further comments. No participants requested any changes.

Results

Analysis of the data revealed that school psychologists and teachers in challenging schools shared some views about the role school psychologists play in supporting teaching resilience. While participants agreed that school psychologists had an indirect role, supporting teacher resilience through one-on-one work with individual students and implementing programs, views about a direct role were divergent. Essentially, results showed that the school ecology – rather than specific stakeholders such as psychologists – enables teacher resilience.

School psychologists provide indirect support for teacher resilience

School psychologists and teachers shared the view that school psychologists provide indirect support for teacher resilience; however, views about the extent to which this occurred differed.

School psychologists explained that their role in supporting teachers involved intervening at the individual and program level. They saw the role of assisting teachers to cope well with challenging students as important, and explained how this would help teachers. For example, Nola said: *'We deal with all the "pointy end" kids ... these are the students who are stressful to teachers and can wear them down!'* Hannah mentioned that her

role of counselling students helped them *'develop better emotional regulation skills'*, which *'reduces their disruptive behaviour'* and *'therefore reduces the burden on the teacher.'*

In their descriptions of working with teachers to address issues with individual students school psychologists saw their roles – explicitly and implicitly – as indirectly supportive of teacher resilience. Glenda spoke about an *'indirect'* role through *'supporting teachers in behaviour management and wellbeing strategies for children'* which *'inevitably'* *'has a positive resilience effect on staff.'* When Nola described how school psychologists helped with the *'pointy end kids'*, she explained they *'are providing strategies, support, encouragement and reinforcement that they are doing really well under very difficult circumstances!'* Hannah's view was that *'providing information to staff about students' learning disabilities, and how best to manage them in a classroom'* helps teachers *'feel supported and gives them a sense that there is something they can do.'* These ideas echo views that professional conversations with school psychologists can enhance teacher self-efficacy (Gibbs & Miller, 2014).

Mandy and Hannah included implementing programs at a classroom or school level to address the needs of vulnerable children and families in their descriptions of how school psychologists support teacher resilience. Mandy led professional development for the PATHS® (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies – see PATHS® Education Worldwide, 2015) project and reported teachers as saying: *'These skills are so great I am using them in my personal life'*, reflecting research that learning to implement programs to enhance children's resilience can develop teachers' own knowledge and skills and thus support resilience (Tyson et al., 2009). When Hannah facilitated senior staff *'reflection sessions'* focused on strengths and areas for improvement, *'staff often commented that they found this process really helpful, and it reconnected them with what they enjoyed about teaching / their*

values around teaching.’ Such experiences may have a positive impact on motivation and commitment which are key aspects of resilient teachers (Day & Gu, 2014).

When teachers were asked about their sources of support, the only area where school psychologists were explicitly mentioned was helping with individual children having difficulties. Claire explained that her school accessed a number of people to help with such children, including a school psychologist. Frank also reported: *‘We have a school psych. if we have to deal with some really bad behaviour.’* This would seem to indicate that they considered school psychologists’ role exclusively to work with individual students (Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). In this way, they reinforced understandings that school psychologists provide indirect support for teacher resilience.

School psychologists are less instrumental in directly supporting teachers

School psychologists’ views on providing direct, personal assistance to teachers were varied. Glenda was clear that school psychologists in government schools *‘are not meant to give direct services to staff.’* Hannah, however explained that school psychologists can *‘provide counselling support to staff to help them manage their stress levels, or to better manage their own personal issues which are impacting on their ability to function effectively’*. Mandy gave the example of a student suicide where she was able to provide listening, support, information about ‘normal’ responses and resources to teachers who were *‘upset and traumatized, and felt they could have done more.’*

For teachers, school psychologists were not perceived to provide direct support with stress and emotional difficulties connected to working in challenging situations. Rather, teachers agreed that direct emotional support typically came from colleagues or external organisations. Linda, Kate and Clare spoke about discussions with supportive principals. Kate would regularly talk with the teacher in a neighbouring room and with a newly

graduated teacher at the school *'to debrief about what's happened during the day.'* Linda felt collegial support was important because *'you're down in the trenches together and you really form very close bonds.'* In Pam's school they tried to *'build a little bit of community amongst the teachers that we work with.'* Linda and Pam specifically mentioned free external counselling available for teachers and Pam reported accessing this for the *'first time in twenty four years because it was just too much actually - so that was good.'*

School ecologies are crucial to teacher resilience

School psychologists and teachers both described how teacher resilience is supported by the school ecology in which there are a variety of supports available. In doing so, school psychologists acknowledged their role as one part of a bigger system and recognised the roles others, such as school leaders, administrative staff, chaplains and social workers, could play in supporting teacher resilience. In Hannah's words:

Teachers are going to be most resilient when they feel they're doing the best they can in the classroom, when their teaching load is manageable, when they're acknowledged for doing a good job, and when they have support from senior staff if things are difficult.

School psychologists could, for example, assist in accessing additional funding for assistants which *'helps to ease the burden on teachers and helps them feel more supported.'* The issue of time within a school allowing the building of trust was raised in Hannah's comment that *'the ability of the school psych to offer support will depend on whether they're school based or district based.'* Those who were district-based would be seen as *'a consultant or visitor to the school'*, whereas if they were at a school every day they would be *'generally seen as offering a service to the students, staff and parents.'* Nola also suggested the roles individuals

would play in supporting teachers '*would obviously vary according to their personality, experience and skills!*' The extent to which school psychologists were viewed as an integral part of the school ecology seemed in part dependent on access and negotiated work patterns.

Teachers confirmed that their support for challenging situations came from a variety of people active within their school ecology. The nature of the challenge also influenced the support received. For example, when seeking assistance for a child with autism, Kate described her principal as '*supportive*' in enabling help from '*the intensive autism lady*', a '*behaviour teacher*' and a '*fulltime EA*' (Education Assistant). Support was also available from three Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers. Similarly, Clare mentioned EAs as well as English as a Second Language Assistants and her school's employment of a speech therapist. As already mentioned, Frank said school psychologists assisted in accessing additional assistance for students with challenging behaviour.

Professional learning opportunities also assisted teachers with challenges. Kate was trained in behavioural strategies which she thought was '*really important*', and attended a session on poverty '*that helps you to understand where these parents are coming from.*' Linda, however, believed networking with other teachers was the most valuable part of these events and wanted '*networking not structured agenda.*'

It is important to note, though, that teachers' comment on how their school ecologies supported and sustained their resilience were not idealistic. Frank and Pam described obtaining assistance through their regional office where there was a centre for children with challenging behaviour and other agencies, but Frank added '*most of the time here we deal with it ourselves.*' Linda noted a lot of support was available '*but there's a lot of barriers to accessing it*' and Pam explained there was little time to seek internal or external resources.

Discussion

While school psychologists described ways they indirectly, and to a lesser extent directly, support teacher resilience, teacher comments confirmed an understanding that school psychologists have a primary responsibility toward individual students with difficulties. In teachers' experience, it was the local school ecology – and not specifically school psychologists – that most supported and sustained their resilience, and then in apparently *ad hoc* ways. This contradicts studies that report school psychologists as instrumental to teacher resilience (e.g. Covell et al., 2009), but corroborates others from Western Australia (e.g., Anderson et al., 2007). A danger in school ecologies supporting teacher resilience in *ad hoc* ways is that attention to teacher resilience could be construed as nobody's responsibility. This could jeopardize teacher resilience in the long run and so prompts important questions: why might school psychologists not be perceived by teachers in this study as key supports for teacher resilience? And, how might school psychologists become a more active part of a resilience-enabling school ecology?

One possible reason why school psychologists are not considered by the teachers in this study to play a key role in supporting resilience is that they are not necessarily regularly present in schools (certainly this was the case in the current study). Given that access to school psychologists in Western Australia is needs-based and negotiated by the school principal (Department of Education, 2015b), school psychologists could only attend a school on one or two days each week, even in schools in disadvantaged areas. Teachers may tend to seek assistance for challenges from those who are immediately accessible, such as the teacher in the neighbouring class, or other support staff. Recent research argues that resilience is supported by everyday relationships, such as those experienced by teachers in their daily work (Gu & Day, 2013). Thus it is possible that the constant, everyday, readily accessible supports could have been those that came to the forefront of teachers' thinking about what supported their resilience, rather than a scarcer resource seen as external to the school.

The prescribed roles and work patterns of school psychologists in Western Australia may also limit their opportunities to become trusted members of a school community, which in turn may impact on the nature of support they may provide. As school psychologists indicated, being a trusted member of the school community is integral to being directly supportive, and time is needed to develop trusting relationships in schools (Day & Gu, 2014). Alternatively, the peripheral role of school psychologists could relate to the fluid nature of resilience: coping well with challenges is a dynamic process (see Ungar, 2012) and so it cannot be assumed that teachers would consistently require support. Accordingly, being directly supportive of teacher resilience may be ‘opportunistic’ and rely on school psychologists being present when adverse events occur that teachers experience as incapacitating.

The fact that teachers were disinclined to include school psychologists as pivotal to their resilience – particularly in direct ways – should not be interpreted as teacher resilience not needing to be the business of school psychologists. Rather, the findings of this exploratory study suggest that school psychologists – and those that prepare them – need to reconsider ways in which school psychologists could play a more active role in resilience-enabling and –sustaining school ecologies. As suggested by Anderson et al. (2007), one way to do this would be for school psychologists to proactively communicate how they can assist at the individual and program levels, and even what direct teacher supports they might be able to offer. In this way, teachers will be more aware of school psychologists as source of support. Another would be to reconsider the current student-focused interpretation of school psychologist roles. Teachers in the study mentioned accessing professional learning external to the school as a means of improving their own skills in managing challenging students. Improving skills and seeking help is certainly important for teacher resilience (Mansfield et al., 2012). School psychologists could assist in this regard. They can facilitate teacher up-

skilling, in ways that are attuned to teachers' specific contexts and needs, providing immediately relevant and authentic professional learning. The potential value of in-situ approaches is highlighted by Gibbs and Miller (2014) who argued that 'psychologists can support and challenge teachers to generate new knowledge, new skills and a greater belief in their own self-efficacy' for managing behaviour and consequently 'they may gain in resilience and provide better outcomes for children' (p. 8).

Even so, as Sheridan and Gutkin (2000) and Anderson et al. (2007) indicated, school psychologists may still also need to self-advocate to promote the services they can offer to teachers. This should include reminding teachers to be more proactive in seeking assistance from school psychologists to assist, not only with individual children, but also at a broader program level. As many teachers working in schools in disadvantaged areas are recent graduates, teacher education and induction programs should also highlight the important support role of school psychologists.

Conclusion

Although this study is limited by a small sample size and single points of data collection, it does indicate some practical implications for both school psychologists and teachers. School psychologists potentially have a valuable role in supporting teacher resilience in schools where they become regular, trusted members of the wider school community. They need to enact this role in direct and indirect ways that ensure that enabling and supporting teacher resilience does not remain an *ad hoc* response. Being proactive in their role, building relationships, and engaging with staff to provide support at the individual and program level will likely increase opportunities to enable teacher resilience directly and indirectly. This should not translate into school psychologists taking the place of resilience-enabling local school ecologies, where teachers, leaders and other staff support each other, but rather that

school psychologists purposefully enable teacher resilience in partnership with the broader school ecology. In this way, teacher resilience will receive the attention it needs.

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Caroline Mansfield, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in learning processes, teaching, and motivation in the School of Education, Murdoch University, Western Australia. Her research broadly focuses on students and teachers in learning contexts, with current national and international projects regarding teacher motivation, instruction, and resilience. Caroline has been leader of two funded projects on teacher resilience, Keeping Cool: Building Teachers' Resilience (2009-2012) and BRiTE: Building Resilience in Teacher Education (2013-2015), and has received awards of excellence for research, teaching and service to the community.

Annabelle Harris is an early career teacher who has begun teaching in a regional area of Western Australia. She successfully completed her Honours project in the Early Childhood course in the School of Education at Curtin University examining teacher resilience in challenging schools. Her primary interests include working with students with disadvantaged backgrounds and the resilience of teachers in these schools. She currently teaches in a challenging school and, despite being early childhood trained, is teaching in upper primary which has broadened her teaching passion.