

HOW TEACHERS DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN RESILIENCE IN THEIR WORK

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Declaration and Word Count

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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ABSTRACT

Many studies on teachers' lives have concentrated on the stressful aspect of such lives, listing what makes them stressful. This case study prefers to concentrate on teachers' lives and explore what makes teachers' resilient in these stressful situations. Although resilience in children has been well researched, resilience in adults, and teachers in particular, remains under researched. This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the factors that enable teachers to develop and sustain resilience in their working lives. It includes reflecting on the school setting as well as outside it, in order to understand further the factors that develop and sustain resilience in teachers throughout their career. The study concentrates on the stressful lives of teachers in an inner city disadvantaged school. A multi-method approach was adopted. A questionnaire was first used to map the territory, followed by interviews with ten teachers who volunteered for the study and that the Principal identified as resilient. The role of recalling critical incidents in their teaching careers was also used in the data collection process. The findings show that while the role of colleagues, students, family and friends is important in developing and sustaining resilience, the role of the Principal is pivotal. Recommendations are identified for developing and sustaining resilience within the school organisation. The study adds to our understanding of the complex working lives of teachers and contributes to the debate on retention and teacher effectiveness.

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Reflection

The past eight years have seen many changes in my life. Looking back over those years I see that resilience and persistence as recurring themes as life presented many challenges. I am reminded of the words of Bertrand Russell when he says that 'no achievement is possible without persistent work'. It is my intention, in this statement, to reflect upon my journey through the Ed.D programme in the Institute of Education over the past eight years. Where did I begin? What happened along the way? Where I am now? Where do I intend to go? Mapping the journey in words will assist the telling of the journey and provide a signpost for the future. I intend to do this under four headings: The journey locally, the journey nationally, my own personal journey and journey to the future.

The journey locally

In 1981, I chose to go to a college that provided a four year concurrent education programme. Looking back now I can see that the college was forward thinking in its practice. It offered a vision of education that challenged the teaching and learning experience prevalent in Irish schools at that time. It provided training in teaching methodologies that are only now being introduced to school. It encouraged reflection on what we did and what we learned from our various teaching practice experiences.

After graduation I began my teaching career as a Religion and History Teacher in the Voluntary Education Committee (VEC) sector. It was a state run school. Most of my fellow graduates from the class of 1985 went to teach in religious run schools. I was offered positions in religious run schools shortly after my appointment to the VEC school but chose to remain in the State sector. I made this decision because, being a more challenging education environment, it provided me with a greater opportunity to make a difference to young people lives through education. Having the choice allowed me make a firm commitment to where and why I was teaching in the VEC sector. Looking back now, I realise it was I who had most to learn and those I taught who had most to teach me on my journey.

I quickly learnt that the curriculum we had worked on in college needed rewriting to provide meaningful learning opportunities that suited the students' educational and care needs. Religion was not an exam subject so there was space to be creative and develop programmes to suit the needs of students. The history syllabus was changed a few years after I began teaching and it made improvements in the teaching and learning of history.

I developed a relationships and sexuality education programme that included a whole school approach. This initiative required time, leadership and commitment from all the staff. It drew support and participation from all them. Looking back now, what strikes me is the freedom we were given to develop a programme relevant to students' lives. It was an

excellent experience of collaborative practice that permeated our teaching throughout the following years.

Leithwood, et al., from the National College of School Leadership, noted that 'school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning'. Reflecting back on my early teaching career, I realise that our Principal did give us freedom to develop programmes, and the Deputy Principal provided amazing logistical help and moral support. These experiences began to focus my thinking on leadership and where it exists in schools. How important leadership is in providing space to allow others to lead. Even in times of economic recession abundance can be found. The programme we developed was a grassroots lead initiative and leadership locally and nationally followed as we will see shortly.

I was appointed acting Deputy Principal for a year and I experienced the challenges involved in effecting change in teaching and learning. The experience as Acting Deputy Principal was a positive one. I had time to implement and lead change for the good of students and staff. I experienced first-hand a collaborative approach to teaching and learning. These were all local initiatives and policies. National initiatives and policies were to follow.

The journey nationally

In 1995 the Minister for Education announced a National programme for Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) Education for both Primary and Post Primary Schools. It was met with great opposition from many groups. I became a National RSE trainer in 1996. I worked with teaching staff from both Primary and Post Primary schools and the argument against the introduction of RSE was based on the professionalism of a teacher. And so the daily debate began on what is a professional? After a short time facilitating in-service around the country at Primary and Post Primary level, I could see emerging themes and patterns in what teachers found professionalism to be. For some professionalism was similar in status to the profession of medicine. Any change that challenged that status needed to be stopped. Others saw being professional as an expert. Teacher knowledge was paramount and students were there to learn this knowledge. Introducing SPHE and RSE challenged this. Fear that students had more knowledge than the teacher seemed possible and teachers, it seemed, worried that their knowledge was limited and therefore their status and teacher identity could be greatly diminished. The discourse around RSE and SPHE provided a forerunner to the discourse around child-centred curriculum and teaching and learning that was to come later.

In 1999 I joined the newly formed Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) Support Services that was made up of people from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Department of Health. Both Departments struggled to understand the other's way of working. It began to raise questions nationally and locally about professionalism, how schools implement national policy, and the process of curriculum development and implementation. I soon learnt that the Department of Health did not develop policy unless it

was based on research. The Department of Education Skills was not research driven. Opinion still drove policy, mostly opinions of civil servants and teacher unions, but I began to realise that research skills were also necessary and important in developing education policy. The Department of Education and Skills slowly moved in this direction.

The Doctor of Education programme opened up a whole new world of exploration. The foundations of professionalism allowed me to reflect on what it means to be a professional. What are the different ways of looking at professionalism? How was our understanding of professionalism changing due to new technology. It also highlighted the responsibilities that come with professionalism. I reflected on how this impacts on teachers in Ireland and my work with teachers. I began to wonder how national policy is implemented locally and how this implementation in turn informs national policy. I reflected on how professional were teachers in their responsibility to curriculum change? I saw the huge potential for the voice of the teacher to be heard in the national debate on changes to the curriculum. I felt that not all teachers' opinions were being listened to and that those in the union, were drowning out other teachers voices. Now I saw through research how they could be better heard and understood.

The aim of my second assignment was to explore the implementation of the SPHE programme in both Primary and Post Primary Schools. The assignment allowed space to reflect on my own experience also. The data found that at Primary level SPHE struggled to be implemented while it was succeeding at Post Primary level. The process provided an experience in the challenges of gathering data and capturing teachers' voices. I was amazed at the rich data I had collected from this small assignment. It highlighted the power and responsibility of asking the correct questions that allow others to speak.

The final assignment allowed for reflection on the policy process and my role in it. It looked at the introduction and implementation of RSE policy and the challenges for national policy locally. Reflecting on that assignment, I realise now, I did not establish clearly that this was not just a curriculum change but a national policy that was to support Child Protection Guidelines and inform child welfare policy in the future. With hindsight I see that it would have made for clearer thinking on my behalf had I put it in this context.

During this time I often reflected on why some teachers remained in their job especially those who seemed to complain all the time. It seemed that any change was met by some with negativity. I wondered why they remained in teaching. My IFS looked at factors that influenced teachers to remain in their jobs in a VEC school. The study showed that teachers were influenced by the learning communities in their school, the supports they offered, time for subject planning, and recognition of a job well done. They did lack recognition from the Principal for what they do in their job and lacked support when students with behavioural difficulties presented themselves. I was by now a Principal of a Voluntary Secondary School in a disadvantaged area. It highlighted the different needs of teachers and the many demands on a Principal to meet not just teachers' needs but also students' and

parents' needs. I wondered how teachers' survived so many years in such a stressful environment. I concluded they were a resilient lot. This led me to wonder how do teachers develop and sustain resilience during their career.

My own personal journey

I experienced many challenges on the journey. The greatest challenge was one of change. I changed jobs during the Ed. D from Regional Development Officer to Principal of a religious run school. I started in November and concentrated on nothing else but the job in order to survive. The IFS suffered as a result. There is no doubt, as I reflect back, that time (or the lack of it) was a missing link in my studies. Home life also presented challenges through elderly care commitments. This lack of time meant that developing my writing style suffered enormously. I needed time to read and write in order to develop my writing style. My supervisor for my thesis provided great guidance. Feedback encouraged me as a learner, writer and researcher.

This experience of receiving feedback has greatly encouraged me to develop Assessment For Learning (AFL) in my own school. I saw at a personal level the power of receiving feedback, including words of encouragement and pointers of where and how to improve. I have found that teachers in our school who have not attended courses in years are stuck in assessment *of* learning and do not fully appreciate the experience of assessment *for* learning. Since arriving at our school in 2006 I have encouraged others to embark on educational courses. They too have noticed the effect of feedback as a learner and have altered their teaching and assessment and have seen great results.

The opportunity to reflect on my practice and to engage with research enriches my work daily. The practice of researching and evaluating what we do informs practice in the school around curriculum change as well as policy development. Others now follow such practice in the school. I now realize the importance of the Ed. D in this journey of reflection. It broadens the horizon and provides more skills and reflection for problem solving and supports my leadership role now.

Journey to the future

All this experience brings me back to my sense of professionalism and the responsibility it brings. The Minister for Education and Skills has recently introduced changes to the Junior Certificate Examinations that includes greater continual assessment. He welcomed

the review of junior cycle and ... the need to provide for greater creativity and innovation, strengthening of key skills, providing for more relevant and flexible forms of assessment, and ensuring that the needs of those currently least served by the system are better addressed.

Minister for Education and Skills Thursday 3 November 2011

Our school has been chosen as a network school for this reform. It will be met with serious opposition from certain quarters, welcomed by others. Curriculum development will be new

territory for some and an exciting and familiar one for others. My role will be to lead this change and help teachers in our school to adapt to the new learning environment and contribute at national level to the discussion on Junior Cycle reform. Local, national and international research is essential to this development. Through the Ed. D I feel I am better equipped to lead such reforms.

I persisted at my Ed.D when life kept throwing me more and more challenges. Yet it was the anchor that I needed to stay afloat in turbulent times. It increased my resilience. Data from my thesis shows that teachers use many coping strategies that help them remain in teaching. I found through the Ed. D programme that my learning community was a great coping strategy which supported me at work and home and helped me survive my tough challenges. Now I look forward to new initiatives in school and contributing to further research and educational debate.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Advancement in technology has changed how we communicate, organize our daily lives, and engage in our work. Such change requires resilience to adapt to the new skills and experiences this demands. Teaching has always required resilience but never as much as the present time in Irish Education. Changing economic and social conditions, in particular the changes in family structures, have also brought increasing challenges for the teacher in the classroom in Ireland. Successive changes to the curriculum, the introduction of literacy and numeracy initiatives, accountability through subject and whole school evaluation, and the application of Information Technology in the classroom have all contributed to the teacher's workload and its complexity. Such changes have challenged a school culture that has mainly existed practically unchanged for decades.

Recently, moreover, the recession has brought serious social tensions to the community and the classroom, and has left the school with dwindling financial resources to cope with these challenges. Teachers have needed to be more resilient than ever before. Developing and sustaining resilience is essential for an experienced and competent teacher in order to support their educational development, including the developing of skills and competencies for teaching and learning. I argue that developing and sustaining resilience in schools will support the retention of teachers in the education system to deal with these changes more effectively. Fullan (2007, p.11) argues that it takes resilience in staying the course when changing and improving schools. Understanding what enables teachers to develop and sustain their resilience and what lessons there are for the school organisation can improve the support for teachers in day-to-day work. This understanding can assist those in leadership to challenge the culture in school, bringing about effective change to the teaching and learning experience in the school. Also, it will support leaders in sustaining and retaining effective teachers while they build a force for school improvement. This study will discuss how teachers manage the interactions between work and life over the course of their careers and seek to identify what strategies and experiences enable or inhibit their resilience including their 'hope, optimism and sense of effectiveness in the profession' (Day and Gu, 2010, p. 5).

Changing expectations about the work of schools and the increasing challenge in meeting not just students' educational needs but their emotional and care needs are creating a crisis of morale (Ingersoll, 2003, Mackenzie, p.2004) and increasing teacher stress. These are environmental factors that challenge teachers' sense of identity, effectiveness and wellbeing (Day and Kington, 2008, Henderson and Milstein, 2003). Kelchtermans (1996) points out that added to these factors is the emotional uncertainty and a sense of 'vulnerability'. Day and Gu (2010, p. 4) noted that Leithwood and Beatty (2008), drawing on a range of research, show us that 'teachers' sense of emotional wellbeing can affect their classroom performance'. They highlight the importance to success of schools which are managed by principals who lead with emotions in mind, emphasising the need to minimise stress, anxiety and burnout, and maximise teachers' job satisfaction, wellbeing, commitment and engagement' (Day and Gu, 2010). It is this complex reality that is being investigated in this research in order to help understand how teachers develop and sustain resilience in such situations. This study inquires into the effect leadership may have on developing and sustaining resilience. The roles of family and colleagues are also investigated to identify if they are influential. However, the study also seeks to identify other strategies or experiences that have existed that supported resilience in teachers' working lives.

When designing the research questions I wanted to capture teachers' experience of a critical incident during their career and the profile of their daily workload. The following are the key questions relevant to the research:

1. What makes these teachers resilient?
 - What is it about these teachers' that enables them to develop and sustain resilience?
 - What kinds of experiences and strategies contribute to the development of resilience in teachers?
2. What are the lessons for the school as an organisation?

The research questions were constructed to capture the story of teachers' professional and personal experience, how they had coped with these situations, and how they remained resilient.

Background to the research focus

Many studies have looked at teachers' coping and survival strategies. They have contributed to our understanding of stress in teachers' lives. Kyriacou (2001) when summarising a number of international studies found there were ten main stressors for teachers. These included maintaining discipline, time pressure and work load, teaching students who were not motivated, administration and management, and role conflict. These studies shed light on what happens when teachers experience stressful situations (Sinclair and Ryan 1987, Dinham 1993). Other initiatives studied the outcomes of interventions but not the processes involved. The process of developing and sustaining resilience is of interest to this research because a greater understanding of it will inform and sustain other policies and strategies in the Irish Education system. This study will not just concentrate on the individuals' strengths but will provide a focus supporting the teacher both at home and at work. Thus, it will provide for a richer understanding of a teacher's life and how it impacts on their developing resilience.

Resilience

There is no universal accepted definition of resilience. It is an unstable construct that involves psychological, behavioural and cognitive functioning in a variety of settings. These settings include the personal, professional and organisational. In the 1980's interest began to grow in what Rutter (1990, p.181) called the 'ubiquitous phenomenon of individual difference in people's responses to stress and adversity'. Woolin and Woolin (1993, p.5) defined resilience as 'the capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself'. Others suggested that it was the 'process of self-rightening and growth' (Higgins, 1994 p.1; and Werner and Smith, 1992; Egeland Carlson and Scroufe, 1993). The focus of these writers was on the individual and what he/she was doing to develop and sustain resilience.

In recent years the concept of resilience as a process has developed, and the idea that people can learn to bounce back from negative experience has begun to emerge and influence what people do. Although Masten (1994) warned that 'resilience' might be innate in the personality of the individual, suggesting that the person hasn't 'got what it takes' to overcome adversity, he stressed that current research indicated that 'resilience' was a

process through which people developed the ability to adapt successfully to changes, demands and disappointments despite concomitant risks.

Sillman (1998) suggests that with enough protection from significant others in one's life, for example, the individual adapts to 'adversity' without experiencing a significant disruption of his/her life. The strength of such resilience may grow or diminish as a result of the relative contributions of 'personality' characteristics and the levels of positive and negative relationships present in the environments in which individuals work and live. (Day and Gu, 2010, p.3). Luthar and Brown (2007), having critiqued the research on adult resilience and developmental theories for children's resilience, described resilience as a 'sustained positive adjustment following traumas and recovery displayed after initial maladjustment following negative life events' (p. 948).

In summary, recent research indicates that resilience may be due to learning and experience rather than an innate personality trait, although in considering individual cases the possible influence of both factors should be considered. Lewis and Donaldson-Feilder's research (2011) suggest that researching personal and organisational resilience 'overlaps with other constructs' especially in the context of reactions to disaster events or periods of dramatic change (p. 7). For this study, teacher resilience, whatever its origins, will be seen as a teacher's ability to recover from a difficult or negative event. I have chosen this definition because it helps explore teachers' actions and what they think and feel during these events. Using this definition this research will look at some challenging episodes in teachers' lives and examine how they reacted to the events and how their powers of resilience were affected subsequently.

My interest

Reflection on resilience began in the early stages of my teaching career when I noticed that some of my fellow graduates from my Teacher Education College had left teaching. I wondered why they left and why I remained in what was a very tough under resourced school. I am now a Principal in an inner city disadvantaged school. It is part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative, working with students from disadvantaged areas. Before I took up the role of Principal, I worked with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Support Services.

I supported 84 schools, mostly serving disadvantaged communities. This, plus my previous teaching and managing experiences, made me reflect again on the similarities and differences of teachers' experiences, how their stressful working lives and personal lives are managed, and what effect this has on their remaining in teaching. From this grew an interest pursuing further studies into the complexities of their lives. I wanted to look at what motivated them, what supported them in times of stress, and what encouraged them to introduce change of practice or attitude to their classroom or school culture. I wondered what was it that helped them develop and sustained them in their careers. This journey led me to identify, in the complexities of teachers' lives, the presence of resilience and thus how teachers develop and sustain resilience during their careers.

The School

This research is a case study that uses various methods to explore how teachers developed and sustained resilience in their working lives. Through this approach rich data were collected from teachers of more than eight years experience and in particular from teachers who were successfully coping with stress and are resilient. The study examines experiences from the past, provides evidence of stressful situations, and sheds light on how teachers remained resilient. The collection of data was from one inner city school that serves a community that is disadvantaged both economically and socially. It participates in the Department of Education and Skills' DEIS initiative and has implemented most of the programmes that support education in disadvantaged areas. These initiatives include the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) programme, the School Completion Programme (SCP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP). They have developed a DEIS plan that includes targeting such areas as literacy and numeracy, education attainment and education progression, attendance and retention, and partnership with parents/guardians, the community and outside agencies.

The research path

The Research was carried out from May to October 2010. The teachers were given a questionnaire during a very stressful time in the month of May. I chose this time in order to capture their thoughts and feelings while going through the stressful experience. This time of the year is stressful because in secondary school in Ireland, May is the end of the academic year where house exams occur and final preparation for state exams is nearing

completion. May finishes with graduation and award ceremonies for many programmes and activities of the year. I hoped to capture the lives of teachers coping in the present and to assist in their recollection of past experiences. The questionnaire explored experiences and strategies that they developed that supported resilience in their lives. From these data the process of analysis began. At the end of the questionnaire the 25 participants were invited to volunteer to be interviewed. Ten teachers volunteered to be interviewed. The Principal was asked to confirm if these teachers would be considered resilient. The Principal was given a check list on resilience to assist in confirming that the teachers were suitable for the research. I choose teachers to be interviewed who had more than seven years' teaching experience because as Day, et al. (2006) suggest teachers' identities has been established by this phase. The research included teachers from different stages of their professional life phase. I drew on the professional life phases presented in the VITAE research project (2006).

Asking teachers to return to a critical incident in their professional careers can be challenging for both interviewer and interviewee. Recalling past events did not just involve recalling how they felt about them personally, it was also bound up in how it affected their sense of identity as a teacher and their effectiveness as a teacher. I was mindful of Goodson and Sikes comment (2001, p. 41) that 'we tell stories about our life and our "self", as a sort of reflective interpretative device, with a view to understanding who and what we are and the things that happen to us'. It allowed me to gain more insight into what they did, how they felt, and what enabled them to develop and sustain resilience in such a situation. It provided data on the kinds of strategies and experiences that contributed to their developing and sustaining resilience.

The research was within the interpretative paradigm, focusing on participants in context, on the insights they had gained through their teaching careers and on how they developed and sustained resilience. I looked for themes across the data, for similarities and differences and for absences. The coding process in NVivo 8 was used in order to facilitate the analysis.

The structure of the thesis

Chapter two presents an overview of the relevant literature under a number of headings in order to develop an understanding of resilience. A discussion of the development of our understanding of resilience is then discussed. Coping strategies and risk modifiers are explored to examine their significance in developing resilience. The role of leadership and

how it has an impact on teachers' lives is examined. Teacher retention issues are also explored as part of the complexity of teachers' lives, including issues that support retaining teachers who are effective and leaders for change in their school community, and the role resilience has on retention.

Chapter three describes the methodology adopted for the study and the theoretical basis underpinning the research design. It outlines the challenges of researching resilience in teachers' lives. Various methods were used in the collection of data in order to capture the complexities in this case study. Particular reference is made to the ethical issues and dilemmas that arise when using memory and recall.

Chapter four presents the data collected over the course of the study. The social context of the school and the experience of the data collection process are presented. During the data collection it became apparent that recurring themes were emerging. Each of the themes from the research question was 'cross coded' to test their content across the other themes. From a very early stage in the data collection four themes emerged as significant. They were the school culture, teachers' work, policy and practice, and the role of emotions. Themes are presented outlining similarities and differences as well as noting absences also. Each theme has headings to assist the analysis. The case study is placed within the interpretative paradigm.

Chapter five presents the analysis of the research. It considers the data from the questionnaire, interviews and critical incidents. It returns to the questions set out in chapter one. Drawing on the data I consider critical and relevant to the findings of the research.

Chapter six considers the contribution to the field and lessons for leadership. It reflects not only on school life but on those in a supportive role and considers how the research may inform their future practice. Specific recommendations are made and further work on resilience in teachers' lives is also considered.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the relevant literature under a number of headings, beginning with teacher stress, and goes on to see how this relates to resilience. Also discussed are the development of our understanding of resilience, and the various theories concerned with how one develops resilience. I then go on to consider how the concepts of coping strategies and risk modifiers are significant in individuals developing qualities that aid resilience. The role of leadership and how it has an impact on teachers' lives is then examined. Teacher retention issues are also explored as part of the complexity of teachers' lives, and the relevance that leadership has in supporting the retention of teachers who are effective and leaders for change in their school community is addressed. In particular, I will consider the role resilience has on retention.

A growing literature on resilience has helped to increase our awareness and understanding of it in our lives (Howard and Johnson, 2004; Gu and Day, 2006; Johnson, et al., 2010). There has been a move from looking at developing and fostering resiliency amongst children (Bernard, 1991, 2004; Dryden, et al., 1998; Garmezy, 1985, 1991; Howard and Johnson et al., 1998; Rutter, et al., 1987; Werner and Smith, 1982) to a strengthening of adaptation systems that may offer an alternative to overcoming adverse events (Luthar, 2003). There is a large literature on resilience but this literature review will concentrate on

- a) understanding how resilience might develop
- b) teacher stress and resilience
- c) teachers' lives and career phases.

The focus of this research is on teacher resilience. There is a developing awareness of connections between teachers' private lives, the personal and biographical aspects of their careers, and how these intersect with and shape professional thoughts and actions (Day et al., 2006, p.7). In order to examine resilience in teachers, I drew on literature that first looks at the construct of resilience. I then looked at teacher stress because it highlights some of the complexity of teachers' lives. Exploring the literature on teacher stress helps us to

understand teachers' experience of how they feel about their work, and what they do to alleviate stress. Stress is very relevant in examining the concept of resilience in teachers' lives.

Teachers' lives can be examined in three different but interrelated contexts: individual, relational and organisational. This approach is particularly relevant in understanding the role of resilience in both teachers' work and in their general life experience. Literature on teacher identity, professional roles (including leadership), school culture and organisation, and teacher retention are explored.

Similar to other international education systems government policy in Ireland has increased teachers' workload and accountability, and made the job more complex (Kelly, Breen, Delaney, Kelly and Miller, 2011). At the same time society has changed economically and socially. This has resulted in teachers experiencing more stress in their jobs. It is relevant to this review that I begin to explore the literature by looking at teacher stress in order to understand the eventual shift from focusing on teacher stress and burn out to resilience.

Focusing on these three areas enables me to explore and answer the two main questions in this study which are:

1. What makes these teachers resilient?
2. What are the lessons for school as an organisation?

Teacher stress

Many studies over the last two decades have looked at teachers' coping and survival strategies. These studies (e.g. Travers and Copper, 1996; Huberman, 1989; Kyriacou, 2001) have contributed to the understanding of stress in teachers' lives by looking at the stressful impact of educational reform or by exploring why some teachers successfully manage stressful periods in their career while others do not. Research has also reflected on the effectiveness of particular intervention strategies to reduce teacher stress. The seminal work of Kyriacou (1977) used the term 'teacher stress'. His experience of teaching in a secondary school serving a disadvantaged community resulted in his getting interested in the notion that teachers in such schools may be facing particular difficulties that caused

them to experience high levels of stress. He saw stress as a negative feeling or emotional state resulting from working as a teacher, and that it is generally perceived as a threat to self-esteem or wellbeing, involving feelings of anger, tension and frustration.

It has been suggested that the greatest threat for teachers is disruptive students, challenging their control and threatening the boundaries teachers have established. (Boyle, et al., 1995; Toler and Feitler, 1986). Literature on teacher stress suggests that stress can be reduced by developing new skills or by diverting attention through humour or physical activity (Admiraal, Korthagen, and Wubbels, 2000; Chan, 1998; Lazarus and Folkman, 1994). Poor coping mechanisms were identified as a primary cause of stress (Head, 1996; Montgomery and Rupp, 2005). Salo (1995) found that stress clearly accumulates throughout a school term, although coping styles and subsequent stress levels varied widely among the participants. The literature also suggests that it is the continuous stream of daily stresses that can cause the biggest threat to a teacher's mood, rather than an occasional episode of major stress such as a critical incident. (Admiraal, Korthagen, and Wubbels, 2000; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Teachers require both personal and organisational support to cope under difficult conditions. Dunham (1995, p. 141) states that 'there is often an inverse relationship between management skills and staff stress; good management brings less stress but poor management results in more stress'. Day and Gu (2010, p.155) found that the importance of leadership support to teachers' wellbeing and continuing commitment suggest that success is an ongoing process and that the key to success 'is to be able to identify, diagnose and predict and respond to problems in a contextually appropriate manner'. This supports the teacher to teach to their best.

These studies shed light on what happens to a teacher when he/she experiences stressful situations. Bobek (2002, p. 202) argues that adverse conditions 'serve as catalysts for the creation of resilience' and suggests that one means of adjusting to negative conditions is through the development of key supportive adult relationships. She argues that fostering productive relationships can help a teacher to understand the trials and tribulations of teaching, reinforce the value of what teachers do, and offer insight into various options available for dealing with a variety of situations (ibid, p. 203). In a socioeconomic

disadvantaged educational setting this would, I suspect, be particularly significant for developing and sustaining resilience. Certainly there are trials and tribulations in teaching in these schools and the opportunity to look at a variety of options in different situations would be both useful and productive for developing and sustaining resilience. Bobek warns that, if stressful situations are not managed productively, conflict and stress can affect physical health and psychological well-being, possibly leading to changes in self-esteem, altered patterns of sleeping and eating, depression, declining job satisfaction, and increased vulnerability to illness (ibid, p. 202). Teacher resilience, she concludes, is a critical element in classroom success and teacher retention. Making this shift of focus away from teacher stress and burnout to resilience provides us with data to understand how teachers manage themselves in their jobs, emotionally and otherwise, and how others can support them.

How does resilience develop?

Traditionally, investigation of resilience has been amongst children (Benard 1991, 2004; Dryden, et al., 1998; Garmezy, 1985, 1991; Howard and Johnson, et al., 1998; Rutter, et al., 1987, Werner and Smith, 1982). Relationships and community in children's lives began to emerge as significant for resilience. Resilient characteristics help us understand the individual within the organisational setting. Wolin and Wolin (1993) proposed seven internal characteristics, termed 'resiliencies'. These are not to be confused with the personality traits that Masten warned against, as this would suggest the person has not got what it takes to overcome adversity. Nor should we think that resilience is a quality that is innate or fixed. It can be learned and acquired (Higgins, 1994). Rather, these seven characteristics are based on their research and observation of children and young people from alcoholic and other 'at risk' environments. The same characteristics were found in both resilient children and adults. These seven internal resiliencies are: insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humour and morality. Others in the field observed similar characteristics in children (Benard, 1991; Masten, Best and Garmezy, 1991; Werner and Smith, 1992) and in adults (Vandewater and Young, 1996).

Over time, other research into resilience has been influenced by other fields of inquiry, for example psychiatry, psychology and sociology. The early longitudinal studies of children in the 'at risk' group encountered many life stressors during their development from childhood through to adulthood. These studies (e.g. Werner and Smith, 1982; Silva and Stanton, 1996)

were essentially epidemiological studies of the incidence of disease and pathology. Later studies focused on specific populations of children and adolescents (Werner and Smith, 1982; Garmezy and Rutter, 1983). Benard (1995) drew attention to the fact that one half to two-thirds of children in the 'at risk' category overcame such disadvantages and successfully adapted and transformed their lives. She pointed out the need for certain environmental characteristics to exist for an individual to develop a range of personal skills and successful coping strategies to overcome risk and adversity. Studies began to focus on those who were classified as 'at risk' yet did not become casualties of their situation. They focused on what was going right in the individuals' lives. It focused on individual and community strengths. It began to emerge that there were certain characteristics that distinguished 'resilient' from 'non-resilient' young people.

Childhood and adolescent protective factors

Those characteristics that distinguish 'resilient' from 'non-resilient' young people are referred to as protective factors or protective processes. Rutter (1987) termed them as 'protective mechanisms'. These factors, processes or mechanisms can be either internal or external. They can be located in the social/environmental life of the child and internally, as personal attributes and qualities of the individual. *Internal protective factors* include individual skills and orientations such as social competence, problem-solving ability, mastery, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future (Waters and Sroufe, 1983; Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1980; Masten, Best and Garmezy, 1991). In relation to children and young people, *external protective factors* could be found in three main settings: home, school and community. It was found that what distinguished 'resilient' from 'non-resilient' young people were

- access to supportive family members (Werner and Smith, 1982)
- safe communities with opportunities for involvement (Pence, 1998)
- schools with good academic records and caring teachers (Rutter et al., 1979)

Oswald, Johnson and Howard (1999) noted that

... these main settings possess distinctive attributes which serve to counteract the potential negative outcomes on children's lives of deleterious circumstances and instead promote the development of resilient qualities (p. 1.)

Werner and Smith (1992) identified the role of family as important. It involved consistency in parenting role models, being supportive and available, providing harmonious living environment, having strong beliefs and standards of behaviour, and celebrating and valuing important life stages. Rutter, et al. (1979) and Werner and Smith (1982) both recognised the importance of the school and its teachers in offering external protective factors. These schools were seen to be caring, attentive and stable environments that were success oriented and acknowledged achievements. Teachers were either positive role models or mentors. These schools according to Benard (1991) provided opportunities for children to develop those internal assets for resilience such as problem-solving, effective communication, and relationship skills. This then links to the idea of teacher resilience. Day and Gu (2010, p.2) suggest that it is 'unrealistic to expect pupils to be resilient if their teachers, who constitute a primary source of their role models, do not demonstrate resilient qualities'. This highlights the importance of investigating resilience in teachers as it also has benefits for the students they teach. If teachers develop and sustain resilience in their own lives they can develop and sustain resilience in the students they teach. They can offer positive coping strategies for dealing with difficulties or model appropriate coping strategies during their working day. Teachers can also be mentors in time of difficulties. Thus, this enables the teacher to provide a caring supportive community necessary for developing and sustaining resilience in young people.

So it would seem that there are five key protective factors which are major influences in developing resilience in children for dealing with difficult life situations. They are: the family, the schools, the community, peers, and the individual child's characteristic predispositions. These can be of benefit to this study as they provide areas to be explored in the investigation of what influences teachers' lives when developing and sustaining resilience. The study will explore the role family and the school community have on providing protective factors that teachers can draw on to develop and sustain resilience. Drawing on research, Oswald et al., (2003) highlighted that the most important qualities or predispositions which are characteristic of children who are resilient are

1. stable relationships with peers
2. well-developed problem-solving skills

3. realistic future plans
4. a positive sense of being able to achieve and deal effectively with tasks
5. success in one or more areas of their life
6. being able to communicate effectively
7. strong attachment with at least one adult
8. responsibility for themselves and their behaviour.

Some of the same protective factors found in research of children's lives were also found in the lives of adults. The findings of the four-year research project on the variations in the work and lives of teachers (Day, et al. 2006) revealed a complex relationship between multiple levels of internal and external contributing factors and how they influenced the resilience process. I will draw on their findings later in this chapter when identifying teachers' career phases.

Adults and resiliency

Emerging research in the field suggests the process of resilience building for adults is similar to that for children (Richardson, et al., 1990). Higgins (1994) noted that he could characterise resilient adults in the same way as Benard (1991) had characterised resilient children. These effective adults had positive relationships, problem-solving skills and the motivation for self-improvement. Also they were often involved in social change. Malcom (2007, p. 28), based on the finding of Higgins, stated that 'these adults had a sense of faith and considered themselves to be religious or spiritual. They could take some meaning and usefulness from the stress, trauma and difficulties they had experienced'. Recently researchers are suggesting that the focus on resilience needs to move away from the list of 'protective' factors or processes and focus on risk modifiers such as developing quality relationships within the community. Luthar (2006) concludes that risk modifiers could have a greater impact not only on their own but in generating other protective process. This approach could inform leaders within the organisation of what best to do to support and sustain resilience.

Resilience and teachers

Most teachers who stay the course during the first four to five years in teaching tend to remain in it for another thirty. During this time they will need to manage and adapt to the various demands they will experience both in their personal and professional lives. Day and Gu (2010, p. 6) remind us that ‘personal characteristics, competences and positive influences of the social environment in which the individual works and lives, independently and together interact to contribute to the process of resilience building’.

Experiences of births, deaths and serious illness in their private lives will be managed at the same time as managing changing curriculum, student educational and care needs, and changing staff and leadership. Resilience is bound to vary during this period depending on the challenges they meet in the support they have, and their own capabilities managing the situation both at work and at home. Understanding how they manage this during their careers will help us to provide a better understanding of factors that enable them to continue in a positive and effective manner. This understanding will support leaders in retaining teachers who are effective, committed and motivated. As Luthar (2006) found, reviewing research on resilience over five decades, the phenomenon of resilience is influenced by the individual circumstance, situation and environment. It is more complex than internal traits alone. It is better understood as a dynamic within a system of social interrelationships and this is particularly relevant to understanding of resilience in the context of teachers’ life and work.

Pretsch, et al. (2012) results emphasize that resilience might be particularly important for the well-being of teachers. Workplace wellbeing and engagement are important constructs in studies of employee effectiveness and productivity. It connotes the extent to which employees are emotionally and cognitively committed to and satisfied with their organisational role (Parker and Martin, 2009, p. 68). Satisfaction, they noted, was not the only element of engaged employees. Workplace participation refers to ‘the degree to which employees participate in the life of the organisation or take on extra duties beyond their core responsibilities’ (ibid). This has been shown to be positively related to ‘commitment to learning while negatively related to emotional withdrawal and poor identification with the

workplace’ (ibid, 68). Research suggests that an engaged teacher is also likely to be characterised by high aspirations for career progression and more positive intentions to remain within education (Mayer, 2006; Smithers and Robinson, 2003).

Career cycle of a teacher

Essential to investigating resilience in teachers is to understand the career cycle of a teacher. There have been some important studies on teachers’ professional lives and careers (e.g. Ball and Goodson, 1985; Sikes, et al., 1985; and Nias, 1989). Day and Gu (2007, p. 433) noted that while there have been studies on teachers’ careers which focused on age they have not taken into account factors ‘independent of age and career and therefore, are limited in their ability to explain the complexity of teacher, professional life development’. Research in teachers’ lives, they suggested, ‘has ignored the impact of the interaction between professional and personal contexts’. This study wants to look at the influence of the interaction of professional and personal contexts on developing and sustaining of resilience in teachers. In doing so it will use the six professional life phases used by the VITAE research project (Day et. al 2006).

The VITAE research on the progression of teachers’ professional lives builds on Huberman’s (1993) seminal study of the lives of Swiss secondary school teachers. This was a non-linear based schematic model of a five-phase teaching cycle. The VITAE project examined teachers’ lives in both primary and secondary schools and found that teachers’ work and lives spanned six professional phases. Below are the VITAE research project provisional key themes and expected trajectories identified for teachers in each professional life phase. Key characteristics and sub-groups of the six professional life phases were:

Professional life phases

Professional life phase	Years	Characteristic	Subgroups
1	0–3	Commitment: Support and Challenge	a) Developing sense of efficacy; or b) Reduced sense of efficacy

2	4-7	Identity and Efficacy in Classroom	<p>a) Sustaining a strong sense of identity, self-efficacy and effectiveness;</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Sustaining identity, efficacy and effectiveness;</p> <p>or</p> <p>c) Identity, efficacy and effectiveness at risk</p>
3	8-15	Managing Changes in Role and Identity: Growing Tensions and Transitions.	<p>a) Sustained engagement</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Detachment/loss of motivation</p>
4	16-23	Work-life Tensions: Challenges to Motivation and Commitment	<p>a) Further career advancement and good pupil results have led to Increased motivation/commitment.</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Sustained motivation, commitment and effectiveness</p> <p>or</p> <p>c) Workload/managing competing tensions/career stagnation have led to decreased motivation, commitment and effectiveness.</p>
5	24-30	Challenges to Sustaining Motivation	<p>a) Sustained a strong sense of motivation and commitment</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Holding on but losing motivation</p>
6	31+	Sustaining/Declining Motivation, Ability to Cope with Change, Looking to Retire	<p>a) Maintaining commitment</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Tired and trapped</p>

'Professional life phase', according to the VITAE research project, refers to the number of years that a teacher has been teaching. Generally, years of experience relates closely to a teacher's age. Late entry to the teaching profession or taking a career break may account for some teachers having less teaching experience for their age. VITAE research project (2006, p. 85) showed that

it is possible to discern distinctive key influences, tensions, shared professional and personal concerns and 'effectiveness' pathways or trajectories relevant to most teachers in different phases of their careers.

The three key influences identified as shaping teachers' professional lives were

i) situated factors such as pupil characteristics, site-based leadership and staff collegiality; ii) professional factors such as teachers' roles and responsibilities and educational policies and government initiatives; iii) personal factors (personal level) such as health issues and family support and demands. p. xix

This professional life phase focus supports this investigation in understanding how resilience is developed and sustained in teachers throughout their career. My study is based in one school and is limited in establishing links between professional life phases and development of resilience. However, using this professional life phase focus to identify if it is an emerging influence is important.

The professional life phase trajectory provides a road map of a teacher's career in order to collect data and identify emerging themes in developing and sustaining resilience. The life phases also provide signposts for leadership to provide a climate in school that supports and develops this resilience in their schools.

Coping strategies

During their careers teachers' will adopt many coping strategies that provide a buffer against daily negative effects experienced by them. Luthar (2007, p. 947) called for pinpointing 'risk modifiers' that could have the most far-reaching impact not only on their own but also with the potential to generate other protective processes. This can be seen as the many ways in which to help build higher levels of wellbeing and engagement (Cooper, Dewe and O' Driscoll, 2001). Parker and Martin (2008, p. 69) conclude that

research tends to suggest that the use of 'direct' coping strategies contributes to greater levels of resilience and buoyancy, which lead to greater levels of engagement and well-being. 'Palliative' strategies, on the other hand, can ease pressures in the short term but do not directly deal with the sources of these pressures in the medium or longer term.

Martin (2006) suggests direct and palliative coping can be separated into cognitive and behavioural components. Direct behavioural coping includes factors such as planning that is focused on meeting the practical demands of teaching in an effective manner. Parker and Marin (2009, p. 69) tell us that direct cognitive coping includes factors such as orientation aimed at adaptive cognitive perspectives on effort, process, mastery, and development. Palliative behavioural coping, on the other hand, includes strategies such as self-handicapping, including procrastination before a particular event. Palliative cognitive coping includes strategies such as failure avoidance. Martin and Parker (ibid) inform us that

while such a strategy may help teachers maintain self-esteem in the short term, the use of such strategy is likely to increase the odds of failure in the medium and longer term ... but in the medium to longer term can lead to higher levels of anxiety, lower resilience and buoyancy, a decreased sense of control, and lower levels of workplace engagement and well-being.

Research on teachers finds that direct coping strategies such as planning and mastery tend to predict better workplace outcomes and less stress than do palliative coping strategies (Martin and Marsh, 2008; Mearns and Cain, 2003). It has been suggested that most frequently adopted direct action coping strategies used by teachers are

taking action to deal with problems, keeping feeling under control, seeking support from colleagues and/or the principal, having significant adult relationships outside work, organizing time and prioritising work tasks, being competent (i.e. thorough lesson preparation and understanding work to be taught) (Howard and Johnson, 2004, p. 401).

Kyriacou (2001) also noted teachers' palliative techniques did not deal with the source of the stress but was aimed, rather, at reducing the impact of the stressor. Drawing on research Howard and Johnson (2004) noted that palliative techniques involved behaviours that in the long run are dysfunctional. Such activities as

excessive drinking, smoking, and avoidance of behaviour, for example, are primarily designed to ease feeling of distress even though these behaviours are not necessarily in the interests of those with whom the individual teacher is interacting'. (p.401)

For those who did cope with stress through palliative techniques, their success was due to the use of such 'mental health' strategies as regular exercise, hobbies and relaxation

techniques. Finally, Howard and Johnson (2004) observed that the majority of studies focused on the coping actions that individual teachers take to reduce or deal with stress. This they say still left stress and burnout to be seen largely in terms of the coping with stress as an individual responsibility. Hence shifting the focus to how teachers sustain resilience in these situations broadens and shares the support and responsibility available to the teacher.

Teacher identity and relating to others

According to Flores and Day (2006, p. 220) teacher identity refers to 'the ongoing and dynamic process which entails making sense and (re) interpretation of one's own values and experience'. Negotiating teacher identity successfully is crucial to becoming a resilient teacher (Johnson, et al., 2010, p.5). A teacher's work entails complex interrelationships involving the individual, his/her colleagues, and the environment in which they work. How he/she manages these relationships and interacts with the wider social and cultural community may have a profound influence on his/her identity. As the VITAE (2006, p. xiii) project showed: 'Teacher identity comprises of the interactions between professional, situated and personal dimensions'. This project found that teacher identities were subject to varying degrees of fluctuation and displayed characteristics of stability and/or fragmentation at different times during a career, depending on how personal, professional and situated were the managed factors. So how teachers manage the tensions in different professional life phases is key to their effectiveness. Johnson, et al. (2010, p. 5) noted that early career teachers (ECTs) who demonstrated strong emerging identities and were therefore more resilient were those who had a high level of personal awareness, viewed themselves as learners, and were reflective. They were, in other words, more emotionally aware.

Studies have shown a strong link between teacher identities and emotions (Nias, p. 89; O'Connor, 2008; Crawford, 2009). Emotions are not the sole focus of this research but they can help to understand the place of resilience in teachers' lives. Hargreaves (2001) argues that 'emotions are bound up with individual experiences of the politics and power within the system'. Flores and Day (2006, p. 220) note emotions in teacher identity calling them a 'significant and on-going part of being a teacher'. Hargreaves also links, for example, emotional understanding to many aspects of teaching: frequent changes in educational policies, teachers' moral purpose, curriculum planning, working within school structure, and

relating to students. The concept of emotional labour is important in the context of teaching and teachers' lives. Teachers do exert emotional labour in their daily reality. Hochschild (1983) conceptualized that emotional labour is the management of feelings to create a publically observable facial and bodily display. The individual's emotional state is shaped by their position in the social system and in the power relations within that system. Workers can be required to suppress feeling in order to maintain a specific outward appearance that produce the required emotional state in others. Gronn (2003) wondered whether there is a particular kind of emotional labour that is particular to school. Considering the intensity of school life and the relationships within it, this may appear significant. Crawford agreed with Hochschild when she argued that the negative cost of emotional labour was the lost capacity to listen to our feelings, and sometimes even to feel at all (2006, p. 29).

This relates to teacher resiliency as teachers adopt strategies to deal with the working reality. Day and Gu, (2010, p. 6) suggest that 'personal characteristics, competences and positive influences of the social environment in which the individual works and lives, independently and together interact to contribute to the process of resilience building'. Sergiovanni (2000) reminds us that school relationships are at the heart of education. The organisation that the teachers' work in and the leadership they experience support these relationships. This has the ability to develop and sustain resilience. The values promoted by the Principal must be consistent with the values and vision of the school and this is important to establishing and sustaining relationships (Day and Gu, 2010, p.20). Relationships are significant. Professional relationships need to be based on mutual trust, respect, care and integrity. Personal relationships are also significant. Family and friends play a role in providing a social and/or support network (Johnson et al. (2010, p. 3). In this complex organisation, leaders need to be 'weavers of the fabric of resiliency initiatives' (Henry and Milstein, 2006). It allows for leaders to manage the culture within a changing organisation.

The school as an organisation

Change is happening all the time. The change in student's lives, the lives of teachers, and the school as an organisation is influenced by technology, society, globalisation, and the economic climate. School as an organisation needs to adapt to cope with these changes. The

role of the Principal is pivotal in this organisation in effecting significant change. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) discussion paper on Leading and Supporting Change in Schools (2008, p. 14) argues that education leaders in these organisations need to be mindful that in

achieving real change, education change that is deep and lasting, takes time... It involves building effective personal and institutional relationships for change, in encouraging innovative and creative thinking and action, in establishing effective services for change, in motivating the next person or network to be involved in change.

To introduce and sustain this change over a lengthy period of time requires good organisation and resilience. Inevitably there will be set backs along the way, tensions will mount, and relationships will fray. Those leading the way will need to find the balance between task and maintenance to allow those they lead to stay the course. Fullan (2006, p. 11) notes that it takes resilience 'to stay the course'. Essential to school success in this change is staff wellbeing. Briner and Dewberry (2007, p.4) found that how teachers feel on an everyday basis is likely to affect their performance and so, in turn, the performance of the pupils they teach. It is essential therefore that the school organisation is healthy and not toxic.

The school as an organisation is complex. Central to the running of the organisation is its culture. Culture is a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values and traditions that Barth (2002, p.6) suggests are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organisation. It is the historically transmitted 'pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act'. Some school cultures are hospitable while others are toxic. The culture can work for or against school improvement. Terry Dennis suggests that good or healthy organisations are identified as 'rewarding and motivating; supportive; a sense of belonging; things get done; quality, innovation and performance are high; arguments are resolved and constructive lessons learnt and decisions and responsibilities shared' (p.1). The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) in the UK report for the DfES (2005) noted what motivates teachers to work in a particular school. It specified the following:

- Good leadership and a strong, supportive senior leadership
- Support for learning and development, teaching assistants (TAs), learning mentors, etc.
- Effective systems for dealing with poor behaviour
- Support at the school level for teachers to learn how to deal with difficult behaviour
- Good atmosphere and supportive colleagues
- Opportunities for professional dialogue
- Teamworking and good departments
- Good working conditions, the physical state of the school, and resources (staff and equipment)
- Additional classroom support
- Class size
- Opportunities for professional development.

Organisations can go toxic for many reasons, but according to Terry (ibid, p.12), they can go toxic due to top-down initiatives, or hierarchical structures which limit individual professionalism and responsibility. Tackling toxicity is not easy but if you 'feel passionate about an issue and you have resilience and determination, you can try' (ibid, p.13). Bubb and Earley (2004, p.10) noted that there are a number of issues inherent in work organisations that are stressful. These include poor workplace environments, excessive working time and workload, lack of personal fulfillment and poor career prospects, internal politics, excessive bureaucracy, poor communication, low morale, resistance to change, or excessive change and blame culture. They also noted that teachers in the UK perceived additional pressures due to low public esteem, increasingly difficult parents and students, comparatively poor financial rewards, Ofsted inspections, and lack of control over their job. This is not perceived to the same extent in Ireland according to Professor Coolahan's report

on Retention of Teachers (2003). However, due to recent financial cutback to teachers' salaries in Ireland this may change.

School culture

There is substantial literature on the area of culture and congeniality. Jarzabkowski (2002, p.3) argues that teachers, in collaboration with their colleagues, negotiate and contest workplace culture throughout their working lives in the school. Cooper (1988, p.46) suggests 'cultures are not made; they are born and grow'. Each school, therefore, has a culture that is developing and is not static. What is important for this study is what type of culture exists in the school and if it has any effect on developing and sustaining resilience. I have observed in the schools where I have worked that the culture of collegiality is important to this development. Jarzabkowski (2002,) in her study on the social dimensions of teacher collegiality notes that 'collegial practices in schools are therefore activities in which culture is being developed. Culture evolves in a particular way when teachers spend time both socialising and working together'. I agree with her view that traditional notions of collegial school culture do not pay much heed to the social relationships that develop in schools, yet I believe they are of importance to its development. Her own research shows that this was a significant influence and that in the longer term it improved the quality of teaching and learning. It also improved the emotional health of the staff and reduced emotional stress and burnout.

Another factor linked to the area of collegial culture is the significance of school relationships. Nias (1998) took a strong position on positive staff relationships and stressed that the social and emotional dimensions of collaborative cultures are very important. She saw it as ultimately being bound up with the welfare of the child. She found in her research that teachers and colleagues greatly valued activities like talking and listening as a means of sharing emotional experiences, particularly during times of frustration or stress. They also gained a lot from talking and listening to colleagues whom they respected for their skills in teaching.

The school leader needs to be very mindful of this activity as it will have an effect on the school culture. Schein (2003) argued that leaders have to learn to notice changes in the organisation and find ways to address them before attempting to change the culture. He

viewed leaders as continuous learners who are required to meet the following expectations: new perceptions and insights, motivation, emotional strength, skills in analysing and changing assumptions, involving others, and learning the insights of the organisation. Such learning experience and supporting a healthy school organisation is characteristic of the role of the professional learning community.

Johnson, et al. (2010) found that schools that operated as professional learning communities provided conditions that promoted Early Career Teachers (ECTs') sense of belongingness and connectedness. In such professional learning communities teachers and leaders continually sought and shared learning and then acted on what they had learned. Johnson, et al., (ibid) suggests that professional learning communities enable teachers to provide support and challenge for each other to 'learn new practices and to unlearn old assumptions, beliefs and practices, and shape actively their own professional growth through reflective participation'. This highlights the need to draw on the social as well as the psychological and cognitive in developing and sustaining resilience.

A collegial environment assists individuals at different times of their professional careers because it gives them the help both emotionally and practically that enables them to survive (Little, 1990; Nias, 1998; Guarino, Santibanez and Daley, 2006). This support, I believe, is needed throughout a teacher's career to help them manage the complexities of the personal and professional life. Woods and Weasmer (2002) maintain that collegiality enhances job satisfaction for teachers and has a good effect on retention. Nias (1998) was surprised to find that collegial relationships became even more important in the later stages of a teacher's career. Perhaps, she suggests, it is their wish to make a mark or to influence others in a positive, professional manner. While mid-career teachers seek professional stimulation and extension from their colleagues, some also want to extend the professional growth of others. Interestingly, Jarzabkowski, (2003, p.140) found in her research with teachers in a remote area that collegiality was particularly significant. She suggest it provided the basis for

the resilience necessary for teachers' to work in such a setting. They developed a culture that discounted their geographical marginalisation. It posited that such a culture grew out of a need to overcome adverse conditions, but at the time this group of teachers held positive attitudes that helped create the culture of collegiality, which in turn may have increased their resilience (ibid, p. 143–144).

The staff of the school believed that their maturity and experience were important factors in their success in school. While the example was in a remote area, I suspect that those in a disadvantaged inner city school would find that the collegiality was significant to their work in such a setting. They too work in adverse conditions and, while in the heart of the city, can be marginalised in their job because of the socioeconomic conditions.

Supports and teachers' working condition

Successful factors in the recruitment and retention of teachers are, class sizes, mentoring and induction programmes, the level of autonomy granted to teachers, and the amount the administrative support the teachers receive (Guarino, Santibanez and Daley, 2006). While they argue that the research suggests that these factors are important for job satisfaction, I would suggest they are also significant in developing and sustaining resilience. The school in this research is a school in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. This means they will have a lower pupil teacher ratio, more Special Needs Assistants (SNA) and enhanced financial support in recent years. How these measures effect resilience or otherwise, is of significance to this research.

Coolahan (2003) argues that parental support is an important factor in sustaining teacher morale. He does acknowledge, and this would be my own experience as a teacher and Principal, that this would not necessarily be the case in socioeconomic disadvantaged areas. However, he did note that the addition of Home-School-Community-Liaison (HSCL) schemes and partnership schemes in disadvantaged areas have brought improvements to parental interest in school and with different community partnerships. Collegial support was identified by Coolahan (2003, p.64) as of importance to retaining teachers. Shen (1997) found that those teachers who remained in the same school perceived they had influence over school and its teaching policies and that leaders understood their problems. Also, schools with fewer disciplinary problems had lower levels of teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2001). While Kirby, et al. (1999) found that higher expenditures per pupil and increased professional support staff are associated with reduced attrition.

Large class sizes were associated with teacher dissatisfaction. Interestingly, Ireland has a high pupil teacher ratio by international standards (Coolahan, 2003), yet the rate of teacher satisfaction and retention is good (Coolahan, 2003, Morgan, et al., 2010). Morgan, et al

(2010) suggest that it is the absence of positive experiences that undermines commitment and efficacy and thus the 'positive events fortify motivation and intensity (p.1)'. This had an effect on developing their resilience.

Weiss (1999), using data from first-year teachers, found that perceived school leadership and culture along with teacher autonomy and discretion were the main factors predicting high teacher autonomy. Interestingly, these were also strong predictors of teachers' intention to remain in teaching. Coolahan (ibid), noted that the school principals have an obligation to promote the quality of education in the school. However, he submits, 'the syndrome of the teacher being "king or queen in the classroom" has been strong' (p.67). The values promoted by the Principal must be consistent with the values and vision of the school and is important to establishing and sustaining relationships (Day and Gu, 2010, p. 20). Relationships are significant. Professional relationships need to be based on mutual trust, respect, care, and integrity. Personal relationships are also significant. Family and friends play a role in providing a social and/or support network (Johnson, et al. 2010,). In this complex organisation, building leaders need to be 'weavers of the fabric of resiliency initiatives' (Henry and Milstein, 2006, P.8).

Role of leadership

The role of leadership is crucial in helping teachers manage their stress and become more resilient. Evidence for successful leadership practice in relation to workload and wellbeing in schools was found by Bubb and Earley (2004, p.112) drawing on an Ofsted report. This report stated that schools that manage their workforce effectively in order to raise standards are those that actively manage the culture, manage the staff, manage the working environment and manage change. They suggest that organisational stress is often related to the quality of leadership and management (ibid, p.114). This leadership can come from members of staff as well as those in management roles. Frost and Robinson (1999) identify workers in organisations that they call 'toxic handlers'. They are the people who save organisations from self-destructing. However, they caution that these people can suffer burn out and worse consequences such as heart attacks. There is a need to support toxic handlers before a crisis strikes. They are very important on a school staff in supporting change and school improvement. They can support transformation and bring others along,

and they can contribute to the wellbeing of the workforce. A key factor in the management of this is leadership from the Principal.

Crawford (2006, p.18) argues that educational leadership is a distinct form of leadership since it 'deals with the hearts and minds of young people and the wider community'. Day and Gu (2010, p.19) suggest research shows that strong leadership support provides 'strength, confidence and a sense of belonging which enable the participant to recover from her short-term setbacks and continue to make a difference to the learning and achievement of the pupils'. Helping others manage their feelings in short-term setbacks may be significant to the role of leadership and in developing and sustaining resilience. Giles (2006) research on resilience found that within two urban secondary schools the 'internal conditions and the ability of the principals to buffer the effects of external changes had created conditions for self renewal'. It would appear that committed and trustworthy leaders at all levels are at the heart of organisational resilience (Day and Gu, 2010).

Some studies have shown the important role good administration and management can play in reducing teacher stress by developing a supportive school culture. Howard and Johnsons (2004) showed that a strong caring leadership was a major source of personal support for teachers. These teachers had a strong connection with others and Howard and Johnson point out that what was particularly interesting in their group of teachers was 'their unanimous claim of strong support from colleagues and school leadership'. Kyriacou (2001, p. 31) noted that

teachers and senior managers in schools also need to give thought to the way in which they may be creating unnecessary sources of stress through poor management. Setting unrealistic targets for the completion of certain tasks or failing to communicate adequately with others.

Indeed, in his 'directions for the future' Kyriacou identified the need for more research on the way aspects of school leadership and school organisation impact on teachers. The call of Luthar, et al., 2007 to identify 'risk modifiers' supports this view. It has the potential to generate 'other protective processes'. Horne and Orr (1998) suggested seven 'Cs' to describe key features of resilient organisations: community, competence, connections, commitment, communication, co-ordination, and consideration. The emphasis today on building learning communities encourages the use of these seven 'Cs'. Teacher and student

co-operation in the learning experience and building better relationships can improve efficacy and commitment and increase job fulfillment (Stoll and Louis, 2007). Slater (2005) noted that collaboration is not a peaceful rational process it is fraught with discomfort, ambiguity and uncertainty. It is the role of leaders to develop an inclusive trusting relationship that Beatty (2007) suggests will be resilient enough to weather the inevitable turbulence.

Lipman-Blumen's (2005, p.6) concept of toxic leadership shows the limitations to positive, effective leadership by pointing out that humans are imperfect individuals and that good (or bad) leadership is influenced by followers. She also noted that a leader may be toxic in some situations but effective in others. Kellerman (2007, p. 3) categorised all followers on a continuum that ranges from 'feeling and doing absolutely nothing' to 'being passionately committed and deeply involved'. Leaders and followers, she concludes, are inseparable and indivisible. It is impossible to conceive the one without the other.

Mulford (2003, p. 2) noted that 'a skilled and well-supported leadership team in schools can help foster a sense of ownership and purpose in the way that teachers approach their job. He observed that 'teachers who work together in meaningful and purposeful ways have found to be more likely to remain in the profession because they feel valued and supported in their work' (ibid). Day and Gu (2010, p. 20) conclude that 'Principals' professional values and leadership practices were shown to have a profound influence upon the development of individual, relational and organisational capacity and trust in a group of effective and improved primary and secondary schools, which lead to the growth of confidence and self-efficacy in the staff and achievement of the students'. It will support the retention of effective teachers who are resilient and capable of adapting to change in their working world.

Teacher retention

Research on why teachers remain teaching may shed light on factors that may support developing and sustaining resilience in Ireland. The Harvard Graduate School of Education report (2005) reviewed who stays in teaching and why in US public schools. They argue that a range of factors needs to be considered. Teachers' age is highlighted as one reliable predictor of departure from teaching. They found in reviewing the literature on teacher

retention that there is a strong relationship between turnover and experience, with the least and the most experienced most likely to leave. Of significance was professional career development (PCD) in retaining teachers in their jobs. Interestingly, Coolahan (2003, p. 62.) noted that this had increased recently in Ireland and that it was in keeping with best practice principles. He also argued, drawing on research in the area, that there was a need of 'greater awareness of the continuing professional development needs of teachers at different stages of their career cycle' (ibid, 64) and that PCD programmes need to be reviewed to take account of this. It is also of interest for this research, set as it is in an inner city disadvantaged school, that international research shows that high-poverty schools experienced higher than average turnover rates than low poverty public schools (Johnson, Berg and Donaldson, 2005 Guarino, Santibanez and Daley, 2006).

International studies highlight a range of factors which affect teacher retention. It would appear that many of these factors operate in a benign manner. This may act as a safeguard in supporting teacher retention. Coolahan (ibid) noted that attitudes in government and business had a high degree of confidence in teachers. Although the present government is questioning some of the teaching practice, and in the present economic climate the business community is beginning to ask if teaching and learning and the curriculum are suitable for the needs of the twenty-first century. However, the teaching profession is still highly regarded by parents and the wider community as important and there is a public respect for the work of teachers. This may not be so in disadvantaged areas but I suspect it is related more to unresolved issues from their parents' own school days than belief in the importance of education and the work of teachers. The caring dimension of the teacher's role with regard to the welfare of young people is well recognized and I believe leads to the presence of important 'positive events' cited by Morgan et al. (ibid). Subject and whole school evaluation are based on best practice and are not overly identified as policing or inquisitorial. In recent years the roles of students and parents have been clearly defined and it will be interesting to see what effect this will have on developing and sustaining resilience in teachers.

Summary

The literature on resilience crosses many disciplines. In this chapter I have drawn on psychological, behavioural and cognitive factors to assist in developing an overall understanding of resilience. Literature on teacher stress and how it relates to resilience was explored. I looked at what research tells us about how resilience develops in children and then adults. Then I looked at how our understanding of the complexities of teachers' lives informs us about developing and sustaining resilience. A working definition of resilience for the study was presented, drawing on recent studies by Day and Gu (2006) and Luthar's 2006 evaluation of the research over five decades, concluding that the phenomenon of resilience is influenced by the individual circumstance, situation and environment. Teacher identity and relating to others was explored. The role of leadership and how it impacts on teachers' lives and the significance of school culture in teachers' lives were examined. Teacher retention issues were also explored and the relevance that leadership has in supporting the retention of effective teachers and leaders for change was addressed. The issue of school organisation and resilience was discussed, outlining a professional life phase focus that will be used for this study. Finally, the significance of collegiality in developing and sustaining resilience in the education setting was investigated.

The next chapter outlines the methodologies involved in this study and the challenges for the researcher.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the nature of the empirical research, its context, and my role in the research. I also outline the challenges of researching a concept like resilience in teachers' lives. This research involves people in 'real life' situations. I want, as Robson (2002, p. 3) suggests, to do research involving 'real life' situations, to draw attention to some of the issues and complexities involved, and to generate a degree of interest in resilience in the Irish context. Therefore, working with teachers in a disadvantaged inner city school allows me to investigate the phenomenon and to be able to draw attention to the issues and complexities involved in developing and sustaining resilience in teachers' lives. However, Robson warns about the challenges of carrying out investigations in the 'real world' and seeking to say something sensible about a complex, relatively poorly controlled and generally 'messy' situation (Robson, 2002, p. 4.). Certainly, dealing with resilience and leadership provides for 'messy' situations, but the learning from it for both teachers and leaders can inform our future decisions.

Fundamentally, research is a decision-making process. My focus for this research was on teachers' lives and trying to capture some of the complexities involved as teachers developed and sustained resilience in their professional lives. I agree with Day and Gu (2010) that resilience can be conceptualised as a multi-faceted and multidimensional concept which may be understood in three different, but interrelated ways: individual, relational and organisational. In order to capture these complexities certain methodologies and methods were chosen. In this chapter I will outline those methodologies and the rationale for their choice, and how they were the most effective in helping to answer the research question. I drew on different methods in this case study:

- An open questionnaire with the whole staff
- Interviews with 10 participants
- Critical Incident reports
- Emails.

This study is placed within the interpretative paradigm, focusing on participants in context, and on the insights they have developed through their teaching careers in developing and sustaining resilience.

Myself in the research

I am interested in the lived experience of teachers in an inner city disadvantaged school and the extent to which that experience contributed to the development of resilience. Their daily stories may reflect the other inner city schools. I myself have worked in disadvantaged schools for most of my teaching career, and this experience and the experience of observing others has made me reflect on what teachers do and what they experience that assists them to develop and sustain resilience. In my previous job I was a Regional Development Officer and I worked with eighty three schools. Through providing in-service education, staff days and involvement in research I began, like Crawford (2006, p. 52), to view people as social actors within differing but valid representations of reality. I am aware that there are many alternative ontological positions that could give similar or different outcomes. Yet this reflects my own epistemological assumptions as a practitioner and a researcher. Knowledge in this research is viewed as 'personal, subjective, and unique' (Cohen et al., 2003, p. 6). Therefore it influences how I collect and analyse data. It is, as Cohen, et al. (2006, p. 7) state, 'the alternative view of social reality which stresses the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of social world'. The use of a case study meant conducting an empirical investigation of 'a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence' (Yin, 2003). The researcher can ask 'how' and 'why' questions in order to understand the nature and complexity of the processes taking place.

Andrade (2009, p. 43) notes that 'interpretative research assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed'. He notes that the interpretative researcher's ontological assumption is that social reality is locally and specifically constructed 'by humans through their action and interaction' (ibid, p. 43). The interpretative researcher's epistemological assumption is that 'findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds' (Guba and Lincoln, p. 111). This case study facilitates this epistemological assumption because 'understanding social reality requires understanding how practices and meanings are formed and informed by the language and

tacit norms shared by humans working towards shared goal' (Andrade, 2009, p. 44). I acknowledge that the researcher's interpretations can play a role in this kind of study. In all my work for the study I have tried to attain an understandable and truthful account of the analysed phenomenon.

My intention through the use of qualitative methodologies was to be inductive. That is, as Tuli (2010, p. 100) suggests, to be 'orientated toward discovery and process ... less concerned with generalisability, and more concerned with deeper understanding of the research problem in its unique context'. Thus in order to understand and explore the development of resilience, I used a questionnaire, interviewed ten teachers, and asked them also to recall critical incidents. However, the limitations of this exploration is that, compared to quantitative studies, it 'lacks the use of reliability, objectivity, precision and generalisability in judging ... and verifying empirical relationships in relatively controlled settings' (Tuli, 2010, p. 101). I do not want to judge but rather understand resilience in teachers' lives. Thus it is hoped that, through a case study and the process of data collection and analysis a credible and authentic investigation into the development of resilience in teachers can be presented. A construct of resilience is presented that may inform other realities but not necessarily mirror them.

Life history

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2) remind us that qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, 'hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand'. Using aspects of life history as a method of getting a better fix on what enables teachers to develop and sustain resilience is a useful method for this research. It allows the participants to look back at what kind of experiences and strategies contributed to the development of resilience. Life history is an appropriate method of inquiry for this study because I am investigating how a phenomenon, such as resilience, is sustained and developed over time. It is a phenomenon, Day and Gu (2010, p. 7) suggest, which is influenced by 'individual circumstance, situation and environment that involves far more complex components than specific personal accounts of internal traits and assets alone claim'.

Accepting the complexity of the construct of resilience, life history offers a way to reflect over an extended period of time and offer insights into resilience in teachers' lives. This

research is in the tradition of life story research as it offers participants an opportunity in interviews to reflect on their life story. It is framed within biographical methodology, whilst not being pure life history research. It draws on it methodologically, in order to relate past experiences to teachers' lives today. While this research was not conducted over a long period of time, it does reflect on each teacher's career over a number of years, drawing on life experiences and events. It allows the teachers reflect upon their lives and careers within a clear but supportive framework. Sikes and Goodson (2001, p. 2) remind us that life history as a method recognises that lives are not 'hermetically compartmentalized' into the 'person we are at work and the person we are at home'. Consequently, anything that happens to us in one area of our lives potentially impacts upon and has implications for other areas too. This is precisely what is needed for this investigation as it is the managing of the professional and personal life that is being investigated. While the data collected is from a school setting, the experience of another environment, is also of influence. The supports or lack of supports in teachers' personal lives is also being reflected upon to identify if this has any influence in developing and sustaining resilience. It shows us the complexities of teachers' lives and how they negotiate their identities and make sense of their social context. This complexity reminds this researcher of the limitations of research in such a complex reality.

Teachers do not work in isolation but within an organisation dealing with students, staff and parents. The ontological assumption in this interpretive research is that the organisational reality is socially constructed. The organisation is not a homogeneous reality but a multi-faceted reality 'where common reality is constructed by intersubjectively shared meaning-making, the collective generation and transmission of meaning' (Blaikie, 2007, p. 22). Teachers form an interpretative community where they share experiences, practice and knowledge about one another and how to address new situations. Interpretation, then, rests on a community of meaning according to Hatch and Yanow, (2009, p. 68). Meanings and understandings are embedded in acts, minds, feelings and interactions.

Cohen, et al. (2003, p. 165), drawing on Goodson, notes that 'teachers continually, most often unsolicited, import life history data into their accounts of classroom events'. Therefore, the data collected for this research reflects both the experience of many years and also what is happening in their lives today. Through data collected by various methods,

a life history of developing and sustaining resilience was built up in order to conceptualise social activity, as Miller (1999) states. Crawford (2009), citing Gronn and Ribbins, reminds us that we can only ever be a portion of the truth. I tried, as far as possible, to prevent my own values or theories colouring my interpretation of the participants' responses. I needed to be mindful to allow participants to construct and give their own meaning to their own reality. The way people perceive an experience is reflected directly in how they talk about and behave in relation to the event (Dean, Smith and Payne, 2006). Reflection on teacher biography, therefore, can help collect data that shows how teachers experienced an event and how they negotiate their identities and make sense of their social context.

Symbolic Interactionism

To symbolic interactionists' socialisation is more a dynamic process that allows people to develop the ability to think, to develop in distinctively human ways (Ritzer, G. p. 349). Symbolic interactionists are interested not simply in socialisation but in interaction in general, which is of vital importance in its own right (ibid, p.349). Interactionists such as Mead (1934) believed that our behaviour stems from our interactions with others, and present a view of social reality as being dynamic, unfinished and pluralistic. Mead divides the self into the 'I' and the 'me' with the 'I' representing the reflective inner self and the 'me' referring to the more visible social self. It also stresses the processes by which the individual makes decisions and forms opinions. An important component of this theory examines the interaction between behaviour, the individual's thoughts, and the emotions, and perspective that he or she has on his or her own behaviour. Individuals are viewed as active constructors of their environment and conduct. They interpret and define their actions rather than being passive beings impinged on by social forces. In this research, exploring aspects of teachers' life histories was important in examining the strategies they employed in developing and sustaining resilience in their working lives.

The professional identity of the teacher is constructed within his or her personal and professional community through interactions with other members of the school community such as students, parents, family and friends. The qualitative interviews in this research allow for perceptions and meanings to be explored in teachers' lives. This reflects on the 'I' and 'me' in the narrative and how they interact. It allows for further interrogation of the interaction, its effect on developing teacher identity, and how this in turn contributes to the

development of resilience. Such interactions may include the conversations teachers have about teaching, what it is like to be a teacher in this school, the seeking of support from critical friends about their work practice or experience, or their exchanges with the Principal. Through the process of data collection and analysis these exchanges can be captured, casting light on the development of teacher identity and its relationship with resilience.

Symbolic interactionists note that people do not ascribe meanings to their own behaviour in a vacuum. Closely related to such meanings and behaviours is the individual's perceptions of societal expectations and how he or she perceives others perceive him or her. To Mead, the whole community acts toward the individual under certain circumstances in an identical way. We carry this organised set of attitudes around with us, and they serve to control our actions, largely through the 'me'. According to Mead, institutions should define what people 'ought to do only in a very broad and general sense and should allow plenty of room for individuality and creativity' (Ritzer, G., p.347). A healthy organisation, therefore, ought to reflect what Mead states about institutions: that they need not destroy individuality or stifle creativity. This research recalls teachers' pasts, reflects on their interactions during stressful times, and views processes involved in teacher identity that develops and sustains their resilience.

Symbolic interactionism goes hand-in-hand with qualitative research. Qualitative researchers seek to develop a theoretical framework that is grounded in the data rather than a theory validation that is common in quantitative studies. It allows for understanding of the meanings that participants give to their own experience rather than imposing an outsider's view. This suits the open-ended design of this qualitative research.

Day and Gu (2010, p. 7) remind us that resilience is a relative, multidimensional and developmental construct. It is influenced, they argue, by 'individual circumstance, situation and environment'. Using life history allows this research on resilience in teachers' lives to explore the influence of the many complex components involved developing and sustaining resilience in teachers. Crawford (2006, p. 64), drawing on Sikes and Goodson, suggests that any life history recognises that lives are not 'compartmentalised and that there is a critical interactive relationship between lives, experiences and perceptions'.

In the analysis, I looked for themes across the data, for similarities and differences, and for absences. Siedman (2006, p. 128) provides a useful guide for this research when he tells us that when interpreting the data the researcher needs to be 'mindful of the connective threads among the experiences of the participants they interviewed and how do the participants understand and explain these connections'. He goes on to say that we also need to be mindful of what new 'understanding do we have after the interview process and were there surprises or confirmations of previous instincts and how have the interviews been consistent with the literature or what it inconsistent and how?' The analysis will result in patterns, tendencies and categories in the experiences and strategies adopted by teachers to develop and sustain resilience. The coding in NVIVO will be used in order to facilitate analysis.

The School

The school is an inner city, all girls, Roman Catholic, voluntary secondary school. It participates in the Department of Education and Skills initiative for schools in disadvantaged areas called DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools). This means it has literacy and numeracy challenges and retention and attendance issues. It also has low educational progression and attainment and the involvement of parents and the community is limited. The three year DEIS plan for the school sets out targets and establishes measures to meet these challenges and improve the teaching and learning experience.

The school was originally run by a religious order and, as was traditional in this type of school, a nun was always appointed Principal. Over twenty years ago the school provided education for students outside its catchment area. Students travelled from the suburbs and would have come from more affluent backgrounds. In the past twenty years this has changed. Schools have been built in the suburbs and students no longer travel to this school for education. Furthermore, the local Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) had a second level school in the area that traditionally catered for inner city students. The VEC ceased providing education for second level students in the last twenty years. These students are now attending the school involved in the research. The school has had lay Principals appointed in recent years. The religious order, very recently, handed over the school to a new trustee that is made up of a number of religious orders. The school has between 300–400 students.

The Teachers

Abbie has taught in four other schools before teaching in this school. She is in the third stage of the professional life phase in her career (8–15 yrs). She has no post of responsibility and is single.

Angela has been teaching in this school all her teaching career. She is in the last professional life phase of her career (31+). She is presently a Year head and holds an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility. She is single.

Cathal has been teaching in this school all of his teaching career. He is in the third stage of the professional life phase in his career (8–15 yrs). He holds a Special Duties Teacher's post of responsibility. He is single.

Cynthia has taught in one other school before teaching in this school. She is in the final stage of her career (31+). She holds an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility. She is married and has children. She recently retired.

Elaine has taught in two other schools before teaching in this school. She is in the third professional life phase of her career (8–15). She holds a Special Duties Teacher's post of responsibility. She is single.

George has taught in six other schools before teaching in this school. He is in the fourth stage of the professional life phase in his career (16–23). He holds a Special Duties Teacher's post of responsibility. He is married and has children.

Grace has taught in two other schools before teaching in this school. She is in the third stage of the professional life phase of her career (8–15). She holds a Special Duties Teacher's post of responsibility. She is married and has children.

Joyce has taught in two other schools before teaching in this school. She is in the final stage of her professional life phase of her career (31+). She holds an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility. She is married and has children. She recently retired.

Mavis has taught in one other school before teaching in this school. She is in the final stage of her professional life phase of her career (31+). She holds an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility. She is married and has children. She recently retired.

Victoria has taught in one school before teaching in this school. She is in the last professional life phase of her career (31+). She is married with children.

Methods

To all the members of staff, I gave an open-ended questionnaire, to complete. This was not quantitative but was used to begin an exploration of the territory and identify some areas of questioning for the interviews. This was followed by interviewing ten teachers who volunteered to be interviewed and were identified by the school's Principal as resilient, using their biographies as a focus. I used emails as a method to follow up, seek clarification or further information. Before the data collection began, a sample critical incident was used and an interview was conducted in another school with a teacher in a similar setting. The data collected from it suggested that the questions and recall of the critical incident report would assist in collecting data that would support an investigation into developing and sustaining resilience. The main advantage of using different approaches was to allow for richness as well as triangulation of the data. I appreciate that the use of a quantitative methods could have allowed for a more robust triangulation of the data but the open-ended questionnaire and interviews did provide evidence, none the less, for triangulation.

An overview of empirical findings suggests that there is, what Day and Gu (2010) call 'shared core considerations' in the way resilience is conceptualised. First and foremost, resilience presupposes the presence of threat to the status quo. It presupposes the person experiences stress or trauma in his or her working life. I established if this were the case in this school in two ways. First, teachers were asked if they saw their work as stressful, to identify situations or experiences that made their work stressful, and to identify strategies and supports that helped them alleviate stress. The research drew on Kyriacou's (2001) ten main stressors to identify stress in teachers' lives during the questionnaire and interviews process. They identified stresses similar to Kyriacou's main stressors. The second way to establish the presence of a threat to the status quo and stress in teachers' lives was through the Principal. I requested the Principal to confirm that those who were being interviewed had indeed experienced stressful situations and had been resilient in their response. A check list on resilience was given to the Principal to help him to identify who was resilient in stressful situations.

Sampling was purposive for this research, in order to select respondents that might be informative in the field of resilience in teachers' lives. While it may satisfy the researcher's needs, this sampling does not pretend to represent a wider population. It is as Cohen et al. (2003, p. 104) noted 'deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased'. I selected teachers from one disadvantaged inner city school because I suspected, as Paton (2002, p. 41) reminds us, that they would be 'information rich and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling then is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalisation'.

I visited the school in May and the questionnaire¹ was given to all members of staff. Initially I did not intend to give it to those who had seven years or less teaching experience. The Principal requested it be distributed to all, as it was the easiest form of distribution for the school. Being a stressful time in the school and not wanting to add to their stress, I acceded to this request. As the questionnaire asked for years of teaching experience I could extract the teachers with suitable teaching experience required for this research. I explored experiences and strategies that developed and supported resilience in their lives. Mindful of ethical issues, teachers had a right not to participate and withdraw their participation at any time. At the end of the questionnaire process all participants were invited to be interviewed. Those filling in the questionnaire were informed on it that it was confidential and for the use of the researcher only.

Cohen, et al. (2003, p. 248) suggests that the semi-structured interview sets the agenda but does not presuppose the nature of the response. It allowed the researcher to begin to explore what developing and sustaining resilience looks like in this site. In the questionnaire I probed the teacher's life history as it allowed the participant to begin to recall past events. It was beginning to put the participant's life in context, as Seidman (2006) argues. They were asked to focus on early experiences and situations. The purpose was to begin to place the resilience construct within the context of their professional and personal lives and inform the shape of the questions in the semi-structured interviews.

¹ See appendix i

Memory and recall

A challenge in collecting these data is the role memory and emotions may play on recall. Recalling the experience of stressful situations and strategies that were supportive can be emotionally challenging. I asked the participants to go back to a situation that they might have found emotionally difficult. Crawford (2009, p. 41) notes in doing her interviews that 'they had to involve strong positive or negative emotion, so that it had lodged in their memory'. So with great sensitivity on behalf of the listener this journey can be made in a supportive way to the participant so that they can look at these incidents in more depth. Crawford (ibid, p. 42) advises that a skilled listener needs to be able to judge whether this retelling is 'causing the teller to engage in an unhelpful struggle with the past or a conscious discussion of events that have great personal meaning'. Participants recalled past events, and while memory in this situation may not be true in the conventional sense, it can illuminate the experience.

Gerrod Parrot and Spackman (2000, p. 477) suggest that memory is important 'not just as a phenomenon itself, but also as a component of virtually all thinking: perception, social judgement and problem solving all rely on the recall of stored information'. This is because such things as perception, judgement and problem solving rely on us being able to think back over what has happened in the past. Memory can be affected, Crawford (2009, p. 43) reminds us, by emotion and emotion by memory. Therefore, this researcher had to be attentive to providing a relaxed atmosphere for recalling events. This supported the participants' recall of their memories of incidents past. Crawford (2006, p. 48) suggests that 'psychological states affect memory both at the time of the incident (encoding) and when memories are being recalled (retrieval)'. While this research does not look at the pure emotional state it is none the less a concern, and great care was needed to provide a safe climate, in which to recall past events.

Recalling past events involves more than the simple recall of details of past experience; it is also bound up in teachers' sense of identity and their effectiveness as teachers. Personal narratives tend to be selective; they comprise those details that the narrator chooses to

reflect his/her personal identity. Therefore, choosing different methods for assisting the participants to recall past events was important. It was hoped it would encourage and build up trust so as to assist the participants in revealing as much of their personal and professional identities as possible.

Social identity is also of importance to this study. Vryan, Adler and Adler (2003, p. 367), citing Stone, offer a working definition of identity that includes establishing 'what and where the person is in social terms ... when one has identity, one is situated'. In this study teachers recalling past events, strategies and experiences placed them in a social context when trying to give them meaning. The role people held was important in the retelling of the story. Therefore, using different methods of collecting data assisted me in going deeper into situations or experiences, not just dwelling on emotions but providing a social context to give broader meaning. It allowed space to explore what meaning the participant gave to the experience or why they choose that strategy to deal with an issue. This space provided the researcher with a glimpse of how the personal and professional can interact when developing and sustaining resilience.

Interviewing

Interviews were semi-structured² and I used the opportunity to check out ideas, themes and thoughts as the data collection progressed. Josselson (1995) pointed out that 'narratives select the elements of the telling to confer meaning on prior events – events that may not have had such meaning at the time' (p.35). She stated that 'it is only from a hermeneutic position are we poised to study the genesis and revision of people making sense of themselves. The personal narrative can then describe the road to the present and point the way to the future' (ibid).

Plummer (1983) draws our attention to the frequent criticism of life history research, namely that its cases are atypical rather than representative. I concentrated on one inner city disadvantaged school setting for this research. One school was chosen in order to look

² See appendix ii

at the phenomena within one social context with shared structures and support. The teachers had a shared history yet an individual story.

Seidman (2006, p. 9) argues that the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. I was careful not to let my own professional background and experience interfere with the collection of data. This required me to listen to their accounts without identifying similar accounts from my own experience. It is a challenge for the researcher to allow the other participants voice to be heard without being diluted by one's own experienced and assumptions.

As Goodson and Sikes (2008, p. 41) tell us, we tell stories about our life and our 'self' as a sort of 'reflective interpretative device, with a view to understanding who and what we are and the things that happen to us'. Crawford (2006, p. 50) advises as a methodological way forward that these stories or narratives are not to be regarded as memories per se, but much more as stories that people use to make sense of situations. It is important to recognise that self is a contested area and when we talk about self we actually can be talking about, as Goodson and Sikes term it, 'multi-self beings'. Yet in this inquiry it was precisely the focus on 'multi-self beings' that allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the experiences of teachers and how they came to discover strategies that helped them develop sustained resilience.

The original intention was to collect the data during the last two months of the school year (May and June). I was not able to complete the collection of data in this period so I had to include the first two months of the new academic year (August and September). Both are stressful times in the school year. Teachers' lives at school are busy at the end of the year with practical and project work to be completed, summer examinations for non state examination students to be given and corrected, and various end of year activities, such as award ceremonies, transition year parent night, and information nights for incoming students to be organised. The beginning of the year is busy with getting to know new classes, introducing new topics, planning for the year, liaising with the Year Heads, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) co-ordinator and Transition Year Co-ordinator, and meeting their

demands for a scheme of work. Tutor duties are challenging at the beginning of the school year also and introducing students to school life again can add to the stress. For their part, students may be tired at the end of the academic year and/or stressed if they are doing examinations or projects; equally they may feel stress at having to return to school, and to school rules, routine and workload. I believe the beginning and end of the academic year provided a particularly helpful context for talking to teachers about resilience.

Three teachers who volunteered to be interviewed retired during the interviewing process. This sudden retirement was due to a government package that made it financially worthwhile for teachers nearing retirement to do so. I included them in the interview process as they had volunteered before retirement and the actual interviews took place just after they retired. It was decided to include these teachers following discussion with the Principal who felt their contribution would be invaluable to the research as they had been in teaching for over 31 years and most of it in the school

Significantly, taking part in the research had the potential of adding to the stress of teachers' day-to-day working lives. I made every effort to minimise this potential stress. Participants chose their own times to take part in the interview and to respond to the critical incident reports and blogs or emails. The principal allowed me access to the school for some interviews, while other participants chose to meet me in my own school when nobody was present. Furthermore, the reflective process involved in taking part in the research helped, of itself, to reduce or counteract stress.

Critical incident report

I invited the teachers who agreed to be interviewed to fill in about a critical incident report³ that occurred during their careers. Critical incidents were looked at during the interviews but the critical incident report also allowed for further individual in-depth reflection and it added to our understanding of a teacher's experience. Cohen, et al. (2003, p. 310) calls them 'frequently unusual events' that are particularly revealing of the subject being studied.

³ See appendix iii

Using a critical incident and its analysis, allowed for insights into teachers' lives and the school as an organisation, and how they develop and sustained resilience. Context is important to an experience or decision. Interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and to increase our understanding of it. Hence, asking the interviewees to fill in a critical incident report before the interview allowed for greater time to recall the detail of the incident and explore its context during the interview. I am also aware that in recalling a critical incident there can be limitations. Harris (2004) stated 'our ability to know and report on emotions that we feel is limited' (p.281). However, capturing some of the experience is important in shedding light on what happened during and after the experience. Reflecting on the emotional aspect was only one part of the recall. Who and how they were supported was part of the recollection as well.

I asked participants to fill in the report before the interviews so that we could discuss it in more detail during the interviews for the purpose of revealing further data. The critical incident form had probing questions to help them recall the experience. These included:

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- What support did they receive?
- How did they cope?
- How did the experience affect them?

Three of the interviewees did not fill in the critical incident report before the interview. Two of them forgot, the other did not receive the form from the Principal. The interviewer gave them time before the interview process to fill it in while she set up the room for the interview. The use of the critical incident report and its analysis provided an insight into both the person and the experience. As Scheluter, Seaton and Chaboyer (2008, p. 1) argue:

... rich contextual information can be obtained using this technique. It generates information and uncovers tacit knowledge through assisting participants to describe their thought processes and actions during the event. Use of probing questions that

determine how participants take part in certain events, or act in the ways they do, greatly enhances the outcome. A full interpretation of the event can only occur when all its aspects are provided.

I was mindful of Bradbury-Jones and Tranter's warning that using this method can risk becoming 'an interminable quagmire through which navigation will be impossible' (p.1). However, its use allowed me to gain more insight into what the interviewees did, how they felt, and what enabled them to develop and sustain resilience in such a situation. It provided data on the kinds of strategies and experiences that contributed to their developing and sustaining resilience. It assisted them in recalling the event and what they were thinking and feeling at the time. It reflected on the significance of the event and how they managed these moments in their teaching careers.

It allowed this researcher to find moments and experiences that have left a mark that gives us insight into how they sustained resilience in that moment. What strategies did they use to sustain it? What coping factors? Who was most helpful in sustaining their resilience? Who was least helpful? It provided the researcher with evidence of what happens and what is happening at that moment and what they learned from the experience.

Electronic data collection

Email offers researchers another form of data collection. After the interviews I emailed questions to the interviewees and invited responses to them. I allowed three weeks for email responses, to encourage continued reflection after the interviews. Furthermore, an area emerged during the interviews that required further examination and the email process facilitated aspects of this.

Written consent was sought before participants took part in the interview. Participation in the email process was optional but was not taken up by all the participants. Care was taken to preserve the confidentiality of all data gathered during the research process.

This new form of collecting data has great advantages but it also has its limitations. The challenging issue for collecting data electronically is the issue of time. Is it synchronous or asynchronous? Plainly put, is it in real time or not? I chose the latter. I did not expect an immediate response. Asynchronous time was selected as it gave the participant control of

his/her time schedule. I believe this was important for busy teachers and did not add to their stress by impinging further on their time. The advantages to using this method are many. It is more economical in terms of time and money, distance is not a problem, and data can be collected and collated quickly. However, the disadvantages include possible problems of access to the internet, the loss of the personal touch, and issues of confidentiality (Bryman, pp. 470, 240).

Through the interview stage I built up a working relationship with the participants. I informed them that emails would be stored safely but that I could not guarantee hackers not getting into them. I limited the collecting of data through email to three weeks to prevent the process becoming diffuse and directionless.

This researcher was disappointed with the email response. Only one participant answered the emails despite my sending several gentle reminders. It could be that pressure of work or some technical problem occurred or lack of time prevented them responding. My own experience in school of teachers' use of emails mirrors that of the participants in this research. They do not check or respond to emails frequently. I agree with Bryman (2004, p. 478) when he argues that there is less spontaneity of response in asynchronous interviews. Physical presence and contiguity in the interview encourages and promotes verbal interaction and spontaneity, and body language enriches it and adds immediacy to it. There tends to be less compulsion to interact through email, there is often a significant loss of spontaneity, and the loss of body language lessens the quality of the interaction. It was hoped that the use of emails would allow participants time to reflect on their answers maybe to a greater extent than is possible in a face-to-face situation. In retrospect, planning another face-to-face meeting with each interviewee would have achieved a better response with richer data.

Database design

The interviews and the email data were transcribed and imported into Nvivo. The coding framework involved seven stages. These were:

Phase 1: Broad coding – generating participant driven–categories ⁴ (free coding)
Phase 2: Grouping themes – introducing the research question and creating themes (tree codes). Some categories went to more than one theme while some were superfluous to the enquiry and were distilled at this stage.
Phase 3: Cross coding – ‘cross coded’ to test their content against other themes
Phase 4: Coding on – The major themes developed in phases two and three were ‘coded on’ into their constituent parts, for example ‘student support was coded on to its ‘children’ which included: student honesty and humour, student achievement, student loyalty, students with emotional or learning difficulties, student appreciation ⁵ .
Phase 5: Generating proposition statements involved the generating of memos.
Phase 6: Testing the proposition statements and distilling the data-testing and the proposition statements against the data for ‘supporting’ evidence which backs up the empirical finding recorded in the memos
Phase 7: Synthesising the Proposition Statements and generating an outcome statement – involving synthesising the data into a coherent, well supported outcome statements

The data were checked against five other classifications⁶. The classifications mainly reflected the key variations of a teacher’s career. They were: gender, teacher with an Assistant Principal’s post, a Special Duties Teacher post of responsibility or no post of responsibility, teachers with home responsibilities or no home responsibilities, teachers who changed schools, teachers’ professional life phases as set out in the VITAE project (2006).

⁴ Appendix iv

⁵ Appendix v

⁶ Appendix vi

Validity and reliability

This case study is a small study, so the challenge is to ensure validity and reliability from it. Cohen, et al. (2003, p. 104) make the point that validity and reliability as concepts are multi-faceted, and that is unwise for researchers to assume that threats to validity and reliability can be ever erased altogether. They suggest the research can ease the effects of this problem by attention to the concepts throughout the research. Hammersley (1992, p. 50–51) suggests that any qualitative account will only be a representation of reality, not a reproduction of it. This can be seen as ‘interpretive validity’. In my research I did triangulate the interview data with other methods of data collection, i.e. a questionnaire, a critical incident report and email. Cohen, et al. (ibid) suggest that ‘methodological triangulation’ uses different methods on the same object of study. Triangulation in the research was based on the assumption that internal validity would be increased by using these different methods. Themes or issues that emerged from the questionnaire and critical incident report were further explored in the interview. The interviews also allowed me to validate themes that emerged and to add to or correct any assumptions I may have made about the participants.

However, I was mindful of critics like Patton (cited in Cohen, 2003, p. 115) when he suggests that even having multiple data sources, particularly of qualitative data, does not ensure consistency or replication. Internal validity was found by using the interview and critical incident as a way of validating the researcher’s analysis and interpretations. It had been hoped that the use of emails would also provide another form of internal validity. These provided an opportunity for those who constructed the reality to see if the researcher’s construction was plausible. Multiple modes of data collection ensured that the results were consonant with the data collected. The data was collected on one site. This was to reduce the variables of other leadership styles or school issues. This research aimed at looking at teachers’ experience within one setting and to see what resilience looked like in that setting. Of course the research could have been made more robust if it had extended over many schools. Perhaps a further investigation can draw on the findings from this study and apply the same methodology across more than one school and identify similarities or differences. Time was a factor for this researcher and the decision about getting access to

and collecting the data from one school was based on time available to a working researcher and Principal of a school. In retrospect, given the time factor other methods such as a closed questionnaire could have proved more fruitful.

Ethics

The first step was to present the proposal to the Institute of Education's Ethical procedures for clearance. When this was given, voluntary, informed, written consent was secured from participants for the interviews, the critical incident report, and email interaction before research was conducted in keeping with British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004). Before consent was sought the area of research and the process involved was explained to the participants. It was at this stage that the participants were informed of how the data would be used and to whom it would be reported. It was also pointed out that participants would have a right to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, at any time. Also, participants were encouraged to seek clarification at any time during the process. This was in order to support the continued involvement of the participant and to answer any misconceptions developed during the process. It also built trust into the researcher and participant relationships.

A challenge for the researcher is providing confidentiality and anonymity. It was my aim to provide it although description of incidents might expose an individual. BERA (2004, p. 7) proposed that the participants' data should be treated in a confidential and anonymous manner, and this was done through the giving of pseudonyms and obscuring place details. I stored their data under their pseudonyms. The interviews were transcribed on the day and kept with the rest of the data locked in a safe in my school.

I believe that the use of data will not expose the identity of an individual outside the school setting. The challenge is to provide anonymity within the school setting. Exposure in the school setting may occur when using the data about an incident that may be familiar to others in the school, and thus may be able to identify the individual. I endeavoured as far as is possible to protect the participants from exposure. However, all participants needed to be clear before they signed the consent form that this scenario might occur. This is in keeping with what Cohen, et al. (2003) calls Voluntarism: participants must choose to take part, and

understand that any exposure to risk is taken knowingly. Concern for the researcher then was that this would limit their sharing of experiences or strategies or attitudes or beliefs about the environment? The building up of a relationship and using the various methods did indeed allow for their story to be heard and the researcher to collect significant data.

Finally, biographical research may have challenges on a personal level for the participant. Thompson, et al. (1994, p. 34) assert that while remembering the past can be rewarding it can also be 'disturbing or even damaging for the interviewee'. I took great care for this not to happen through asking questions sensitively. Also, I gave time to discuss issues if necessary and gave each participant the phone number of the confidential teacher support service provided free by the Department of Education and Skills through a main health care operator.

Summary

Positioning this research within an interpretative paradigm focused the data collection on participants in context, and on the insights they have developed through their teaching career on developing and sustaining resilience. The case study informed the development of a design based on a number of methods of collection: open ended questionnaires, a critical incident report, semi-structured interviews, and emails. The use of aspects of life history was discussed as a way of offering insights into resilience in teachers' lives. This research is framed within biographical methodology, whilst not being pure life history research. It draws on it methodologically, in order to relate past experiences to teachers lives today. The importance of symbolic interaction is discussed as a way of supporting this research in order to view the processes teachers employed to develop and sustain resilience in their working lives. The use of different methods is presented. A brief description of the school and teachers involved in the interviews is outlined. The challenge of memory and recall in the data collection process is discussed. The data design is provided and how it supports the research validity and reliability is presented. This interpretative paradigm supported the on-going explorations of themes and experiences and strategies. The analysis of the data shows that the interpretative frame of the research offered the participants the opportunity to

recall and explore and interpret their own experiences in representing them to the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION

Introduction

In this chapter I present the analysis process, the social context of the school, and the findings of the data collection. The themes are presented outlining similarities and differences, and I was mindful of absences also. This study was placed within the interpretative paradigm, focusing on participants in context and on the insights they developed through their teaching careers in developing and sustaining resilience. Qualitative data analysis is a 'continuous, iterative enterprise' according to Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 23) and, as such, it is difficult not to leave out something substantial in the account. Siedman (2006, p. 128) reminds us that when interpreting the data the researcher needs to be mindful of the connective threads among the experiences of the participants interviewed, and how the participants understand and explain these connections. The analysis began after the completion of the questionnaire and developed while the interviews were carried out and further literature was reviewed. I also, as Siedman (ibid) recommended, examined the data for surprises or confirmation of previous instincts. Thus patterns, tendencies and categories in experiences and strategies adopted by teachers to develop and sustain resilience emerged.

Reflecting on the data analysis process

I have tried to provide lucidity to the data analysis process by seeking themes identified in the data collected. Such topics as stress, coping strategies, and supports inside and outside school emerged from the beginning at the questionnaire stage. There was sufficient data collected to allow for an initial coding but more importantly it provided signposts for what needed further investigation in the interviews. Originally, I thought that I would present the questionnaire data separately. However, as I proceeded with the interviews and critical incidents, I noticed that the same themes, feelings and thoughts were emerging. Thus, I presented the data under themes and subheadings, since these were of significance to how these teachers developed and sustained resilience. Throughout the data analysis I wanted to present the voice of the teacher in the school. The use of the questionnaire presented

the initial introduction of that voice. The interviews provided confirmation of the areas identified in the questionnaire and provided further illumination. I was very aware of the need to be 'distanced' from the data. I am a Principal of a school in a very similar setting and I am familiar with the issues teachers presented. I needed to be careful not to project my own issues on the data analysis process. Therefore, there was a reflexive approach to the analysis of the data. The use of NVivo 8 allowed for reflexive distance to be established between my own school experience and that of the school being researched.

Although it was planned originally to hold the interviews during May and June, the period during which they took place was extended, for reasons already mentioned, to the end of the first month of the following school year. Participants were given a choice of venues: a) the school where they worked b) my own school c) a neutral venue, for example an Education Centre, d) any other venue of their choice. All options were used. Interviews held in their own school setting were very focused on the part of the interviewee. They appeared attentive and less likely to ramble in their answers compared to those who came to my own school. Interviews in my school were held outside school time to avoid the noise of a working school. This may have helped relax the interviewee. Nonetheless, while those in their own school may have completed the interviews quicker, rich data was collected and it offered insights into the lives of teachers. The duration of the interviews ranged from forty minutes to an hour and a half. Some interviewees were more talkative than others and this is reflected in the length of time of the interview.

The interviews were completed in September. From the start of the data collection process themes began to emerge that echoed the literature reviewed. I immediately began the process of mapping and interpreting the data. I kept a research log that helped refine my thoughts and identify links with the literature. I was also searching for data that might indicate something outside of the literature. The literature helped map out the territory on resilience but the data collected filled in the detail of what that looked like in this school setting.

The process of analysing and interpreting the data began as soon as data collection began. Exploring the data, however, is a slow and iterative process. In this chapter I present the

social context of the school and the findings of the data collection. The themes are presented outlining similarities and differences and I was mindful after reflection of absences also. The themes are presented as a way of mapping the territory. The same categories may occur within some of the themes but the relationship can be different. The four themes are:

- 1) School culture
- 2) Teachers' work and how they cope
- 3) Policies and practice
- 4) Emotions.

During the data collection it became apparent that recurring themes were emerging. Each of the themes from the research question were 'cross coded' to test their content against the other themes. For example, a person coded to 'coping strategies' may, in responding to a question on this theme, unintentionally demonstrate an awareness or lack of awareness about the emotional support of colleagues. Each response was therefore semantically checked and, if relevant, cross coded to other themes. The major themes developed and populated in phases two and three were 'coded on' into their constituents parts. The generating of memos were used to summarise what the researcher believed, at that point of the analytical process, were a true representation of the combined attitudes and beliefs of participants under each of the four major themes coded to date. To aid this process, and consistent with the interpretative paradigm, memos were written at a lower level within the coding tree against important codes and then synthesised into 'master' memos at the top of the tree or at theme level. This 'bottom up' approach ensured that a systematic graduated building of understanding was maintained throughout phase five. No one method of data collection presented a theme different to the other methods of data collection. The interviews and recalling the critical incident allowed for deeper recollection but the themes were the same. Hence, this study presents the findings under themes found from the total collection process rather than data gathered under any one data collection method.

SCHOOL CULTURE

Introduction

From a very early stage in the data collection school culture emerged as significant. The culture of support and space to deal with the day-to-day challenges or the occasional critical incident was important. School culture in this research refers to the beliefs, values, behaviours, attitudes and relationships that exist within the school (Johnson, et al., 2010). It reflected the views of Little, 1990; Nias, 1998; and Guarino, Santibanez and Daley, 2006 that a collegial environment in the school assisted individuals at different times of their professional careers because it helped them survive both emotionally and practically. The teachers in this research identified a school culture that was supportive of their daily reality and experience. In this school culture they identified coping strategies they used that supported them in dealing with this experience and reality. They made 132 references to coping strategies. The main sources of supportive school culture were the staff, the student body and leadership. Teachers, from the moment they joined the school, began integrating into this school's culture. All teachers made particular reference to their early teaching experience and the support they received. Most of their colleagues' support was positive, although a lack of colleague support was also identified, especially during the beginning years. As Cathal, with less than 10 years teaching experience states:

My biggest support would be members of staff who know you well and you chat about it with them, what is going on. That is my biggest support.

Cynthia after 35 years of teaching reflected :

Well we have a very open staff. The positive thing about the place is the staff. In places you may not be able to get support from home due to their troubles. You could go back to the staffroom. You never felt like you were on your own.

Positive colleague support

All teachers made reference to positive colleague support. This support included listening, providing strategies to solve problems, sharing a problem with someone, and having a laugh. The data shows it was gender neutral and that all professional life phases identified it as support. Those with home responsibilities made more reference to it slightly more than

those without home responsibilities. Those with an Assistant Principal's post referred to this positive colleague support more than those without Assistant Principal's duty posts.

All teachers were aware of the importance of this support. Key to it was its non-judgemental manner. Teachers reported not feeling they were being judged of 'losing control of the class' or needing to 'keep up a front'. As Victoria puts it:

I would bitch about it in the staffroom. That is the one thing we have always said and I always said about my colleagues just comparing to other schools, where there may be an element of you know, everybody else seems to be in total control, no problems and nobody would admit the fact that so and so would have been having difficulties as whereas here you would say Oh God ... nobody feels they have to keep up a front, it does mean you can cope and if you had to go in and pretend all is rosy having come out of a morning that would kill anybody... just it does mean you can make the next day.

This supports is given by all members of staff no matter where they were in the professional life phase. The distinction of junior and senior members of staff was mentioned by two respondents when they articulated their belief that all the staff were supportive. It seemed important enough to mention that both senior and junior members of staff were supportive. George noted that

One thing about this school is the staff is brilliant. You go in and say what happened and from the senior teacher down would support you.

Joyce observed of her 37 years of a teaching career, most of which was in the school being researched:

We had the same staff for a very long time. It was important, looking back on it. The younger staff that are coming in now are brilliant. The best of company, the best of fun. I see that socially. Certainly the staff being there the same time they knew exactly the same things, they had gone through the same things. It probably was a support and a help.

Support from colleagues was seen as positive support, yet six of the teachers interviewed also identified a lack of colleague support when they sought it.

Lack of colleague support

Six participants identified lack of colleague support. This sheds light on the challenges within school culture. They made reference to it fourteen times. One teacher's experience shows a struggle to conform to the school culture. School culture can be a positive support, it would appear, as long as you conform to the norms, attitudes and behaviours. Abbie, recalling her early years in the school, shows the struggle of fitting into the school culture and what can happen:

I would have ... you know the nature of how I do things would annoy people in school. I would be everyone's worst nightmare in some ways because I was spoken to about being over zealous. About rocking the boat. Other people would have seen me as 'this jumped up one coming in here, coming in bags of things, sending them down to me high as kites' You know I found was everyone not here for the greater cause of making a difference. Like not all motivated and enthusiastic and can't wait to get these young one out into the world.

This extract shows not only the struggles teachers can encounter in settling into a new school culture but also the effect it can have on school effectiveness. Her new methodologies seem to have challenged the school culture that was using more traditional methodologies. Abbie's story gives us an insight into how new teachers manage and negotiate relationships and begin to settle and integrate into the school culture. Her experience reflects what Hochschild (1983) suggested: that an individual's emotional state is influenced by the social system and in the power relations within it.

Abbie continues

So I thought that any difficulties I would come across would be the students, but it is with colleagues, not every day but in general. I would be someone who would say something to someone and deal with it but teaching is a highly emotional and sensitive profession. How you say something to someone and you have to be so careful and how you deal with something. Or someone might not be in the best of form or have something going on in their life. If you don't deal with that professionally, like in brackets 'sensitively', as you can and sometimes I can be a bit (clicks fingers to indicate quick action). I just want to get the job done.

The extract shows how a teacher conformed or created the illusion of conforming to the prevailing culture. She takes responsibility for her own character and the need to get the job done. Joyce, after thirty-seven years of teaching, recalls this frustration also. They both

succeeded in achieving their goals. The managing and negotiating of one's own beliefs, attitudes and values is important within the school culture. Joyce recalls taking upon herself to organise a book rental scheme:

Well I wasn't thinking of it as a role or a fulfilling job for myself. It just used to annoy me that in a school with such obvious needs that I would be getting the tea and the coffee and fighting with people and that was daft. And yet there were kids who had no books and there were kids who had no value for books. The books were thrown into a corner at home. Well at least this way some of them may have books in front of them if I do this.

It is important to note that both participants also reported their colleagues as a positive support in their daily working lives as well as during a critical incident.

School culture appears to be something that can support the feeling of belonging and integrating with the school for new teachers. This in turn supports developing and sustaining resilience. It also develops an environment for a professional learning community that also supports resilience. However, the same supportive culture and working environment can also limit teachers' views and experience. As Mavis, who moved school due to redeployment, explains:

Well yea, oh it was wonderful to get away from the politics of the staffrooms. It was wonderful to walk into the staffroom, you didn't know the politics, I always thought it was wonderful. Also, I did think it was great not to spend forty years with same group of people. We are still great friends but it was great to move out and change. It was an opportunity to see things differently but also to change your working environment, which teachers generally don't have an opportunity to do.

It would appear that what binds school culture and the working environment together has also the potential to be disruptive.

Students and school culture

Teachers do not just depend on colleagues for support. They find support from students. This also has an effect on their resilience. Therefore, significant in this school culture is the role students' play in supporting the teacher. There was no significant gender difference in the reference to student support – two from males compared with six from female participants. The data shows that those who have no home responsibilities made far more reference to support from students while those with home responsibilities made more reference to support from colleagues. All teachers except one identified student support in

the final professional phase. Those with an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility made reference to student support more than those with Special Duties Post. Those who more than once experienced change of school referred to student support far more than those who only changed school once.

Student support within this school culture was significant to all the participants in this research. They made thirty references to it. Seven out of ten teachers reported humour and honesty as important while three teachers reported student loyalty as important. This combination of humour, honesty and loyalty seems to support teachers in their jobs. It was gender neutral and there was no significant difference in either professional life phases or from teachers who had taught in different schools. Those with home responsibilities did make reference to humour more than did those with an Assistant Principal's post. This type of student support did provide a supportive school culture even in difficult circumstances.

As Joyce puts it:

They have a wonderful sense of humour. They might fight with you or whatever but you got into difficulty ... it happened outside school one day and they were saying the next day, 'Hey miss why didn't you get out and reef that one's hair, we were waiting for you to get out because we were going to go for her'. Or if you were genuinely not feeling well they would be terribly supportive of you. They would be.

Student achievement was also significant especially in the context of students' learning difficulties or emotional difficulties. Combining the references made to student achievement and to helping students with emotional and learning difficulty, the data shows that teachers found this supportive. Six teachers made thirteen references to the significance of student achievement or helping students with emotional or learning difficulties. The school culture of catering for students with various difficulties had a positive effect on teachers. They reported that most were not high achievers and showed little interest in learning, yet when they did succeed it was a source of motivation to carry on and made the job worthwhile. This is in keeping with Morgan, et al., 2010 who found that, teachers' positive experiences in school motivated them and negative experiences inhibited their sense of satisfaction. Participants reported a sense of achievement and this made the job worthwhile. As Abbie

recalls, the difficulties the students have seem to make the achievement more appreciated by the teacher:

And I remember, recently, if I was teaching I would teach a topic, do an exam question on it and look back and see and put it in to the exam question and see if it was 30 out of 40 or 40 out of 40 and see. Anyway we were there and I was giving this and someone said, 'what's the karst region' and I thought 'oh my God' and then information started coming out and then a particular girl said 'look how hard is it, nine points of information' and I thought 'what did you say' and she said 'like you keep saying, name what they are talking about, 30 points, and 9 points of information. Isn't that what it is?' And I was like ... I nearly had to hold on to the table. I know it is really very small but if she can remember that ... That is what will happen in the exam and that keeps you going in terms of your highpoints.

Students with issues such as learning difficulties or emotional difficulties were, significantly, identified more by female teachers than male teachers. Those with no home responsibilities referred to these students as support more than those with home responsibilities. All four teachers in the 8–15 professional life phase category made the most reference to these students in marked contrast to the other professional life phases who barely made reference to these students as a source of support. Teachers with posts of responsibility rarely identified these students as a source of support. Those who had changed schools twice were the largest group to refer to them as supportive. One teacher recalled the benefits of changing school while another teacher said that she would not change school as she perceived it to be difficult following her experience of integrating with the school she was in. She said: 'I am choosing to stay in it. I am choosing to stay because it is very difficult to go new into a school'. Among the difficulties she perceived in establishing herself in that school as a teacher was developing a working relationship with students.

The student relationship is significant in developing and sustaining resilience since the more familiar teachers are with students and vice versa the more a working relationship develops. This relationship is significant in developing a teachers' resilience but it is not enough on its own. It requires collegial culture as support in order to navigate, understand and develop the relationship. This in turn has an impact on the teacher remaining in the school which then helps to sustain their resilience.

Retention

All participants made reference to retention. Seven participants identified enjoying the job and the staff as a reason for remaining in the school. One participant, while happy to move school, did not do so out of choice but through redeployment. She also referred to making very good friends and keeping up those friendships with teachers from her old school. The school culture of collegiality and good relationships appear to influence those to remain. Grace, who has a long commute to the school and has thought of moving so as to be near home and her children, says:

I did think of other schools but I am so happy here I am afraid to move to a school I actually wouldn't like.

And George sums up school culture and its impact on retention as:

But when you go to a place like this, it's great and I think that is why teachers don't like to move because you have to re-establish yourself again.

Or as Elaine reminds us:

If you had a good class or there is a class that you particularly get along with, that make you laugh. Oh yea they are a support.

Honesty and being part of students' lives is important and gives an extra dimension to the teaching experience that in turn impacts on retention.

Teachers in this school compared their teaching experience with that of friends or siblings. Listening and comparing to these experiences increased the teachers' sense of being valued and appreciated by their students, thus making it worthwhile to remain. Abbie comparing her sister's teaching experience says:

My sister is a teacher as well. She taught in a VEC school in Dublin, then went to a private school. She said, she was trying to teach, it was so funny, she was trying to teach Johnny Maths for example, $2x + 3$ and he was just throwing a copy at her. He had his hand down his trousers and he wouldn't care if he threw a chair like ... So you are more appreciated, valued.

Overall, the sense of moral purpose in this school appears to support teachers to remain in the school. Victoria sums up the teaching experience and the balance of good and bad days that tips her in favour of remaining in the school when she says: 'Well you have days when

you say “that is good I got somewhere today” and there are other days when you say “that was a waste of time I should have stayed in bed’.

Principal and support

The support of the Principal is crucial in developing this culture in this school organisation. There is an expectation of support during good days and bad days. All teachers interviewed identified the support of the Principal as important. Nine teachers reported the Principal as someone who was supportive or responded favourably to an issue. Principal support referred to such things as ‘an open door’ policy to ‘a class off’ if required when necessary. Teachers needed to *feel* that the Principal was available at all times and had listened to them and supported their side of the story. As Grace says, she knows ‘the Principal’s door is open anytime. It is nice to know that support is there’. The Principal being approachable is important in order to build a school culture in which teachers feel supported.

More female teachers than males made reference to Principal support. Those in the 8–15 professional life phase made most reference to Principal support but the other categories did make sufficient reference for it to be of significance. There was no significant difference in reference to Principal support from teachers with home responsibilities compared to those with none. Those with an Assistant Principal’s post and who changed school made more reference to Principal support.

Half the teachers identified Principal support as helping to solve problems. The role of the Principal is also significant in this school culture where teachers learn to manage their working and private lives. In their response to support from the Principal, family issues were referred to by five participants. The Principal ‘giving them time’ to sort out family problems was important to them. Three teachers, unprompted, mentioned this specifically. The others agreed with this when prompted. The Principal’s role, therefore, was seen as supporting the teacher professionally and personally.

The professional supportive role of the Principal is summed up by Joyce when she says:

Efficiency, timetabling. Well organised from the top. It helps considerably. A clearly defined and transparent system of dealing with things. What to do with a critical incident. What to do with them. And a discipline that is fair and is transparent and easily accessed and

implemented. They are all wonderful supports. The things generally that you can't write down but you know if you have someone literally can give you five minutes to listen to you at the top it will stop a whole load of problems further down the line ... Can be difficult to get but terribly important.

The Principal's support for teachers during difficult times in their personal lives is also important. This could take the form of giving a class off, or listening to them, or the door being open, or 'always' being approachable when difficulties arose. Knowing they would receive a favourable response seemed important also. As George put it:

Well there is support if you really need it. The Principal has always been extremely approachable. Quite often it could be a family problem, and I know I can ring up and say look I can't come in and there never has been a problem. I can say I have been up all night, it happened to us two years ago, with my daughter, and my wife had been up the previous night and I said she took yesterday off work and I never do it so they know I have to. I couldn't ring pretending I was sick today. I couldn't do that, it would be hard. I know I could approach anyone in the office and any one of my colleagues and anyone in the staff and they would if they could. If you know that support is there, you know you can call on it. It makes you much happier, more comfortable about things.

The combination of supporting the personal and professional is important. The professional work of the teacher needs to be recognised by the Principal. Elaine states:

It is vital to have the management support and not to feel that they have gone against you. Like they do back you up. We work very hard here. The minute you go into the car park in the morning it is full at twenty past eight in the morning. I don't know how many other jobs have that. It is crucial to have. We have been lucky here but I have been in another school where there wasn't that support from management and you were on your own. You feel very isolated.

The teachers work hard but in return for this their expectation is that the Principal will not go against them in front of parents or colleagues as this would undermine them. So a school culture where the teacher is supported at all times is expected. As Joyce points out:

Principals who undermine you in front of parents. That is dreadful. Very, very, very definite incidents of that. I suppose Principals that undermine other teachers in front of colleagues and staff members. That kind of thing. It has to have a united front if the system is to work. If you have something to say to somebody take your couple of minutes but a united front in the face of a visitor.

This united front is required in front of students and parents. It is part of the school culture especially with difficult students and their parents who support the student. The Principal supporting the teacher in these cases seem to be significant for the teacher to sustain

his/her resilience in the face of challenges from students. This, together with the Principal's problem-solving capabilities, is supportive for the teacher. They have a sense the problem is being dealt with by the Principal and this lessens the teachers' stress. As Abbie states: 'The management is very good. I do think that. They are very hard working and appreciative of you and the work you do as a teacher'.

The data suggests, overall, that the Principal reassured teachers of their ability, recognised and appreciated their hard work and took their side in times of conflict with parents or students. Underlining all this was an open and honest relationship where they all identified the Principal as approachable. The teachers were appreciative that they had a supportive Principal. The presence of support both professionally and personally is part of building their resilience. It supports them in good days and bad. It provides a buffer against the trials and tribulations of the working day. It is important in order to develop relationships within the school organisation. These relationships in turn develop and sustain resilience.

Parent and family support

Parental relationships are part of this development. Nine participants identified most parents having a supportive role but not in a significant way. Their involvement was limited to parent-teacher meetings and responding to requests to attend the school about a behavioural issue. More females made reference to Parental support than males. There was no significant difference in attitudes of the the 8–15 and the 31+ professional life phases to parental support. Those in the 16–23 phase did not make reference to it. Those with posts of responsibility were not significantly different in their identification of parental support to those with no post of responsibility. Teachers with the experience of changing schools were more liable to mention parental support. Those with home responsibilities made more reference to it than those without home responsibilities.

Teachers saw parents who attended parent-teacher meetings as supportive. All teachers reported satisfaction and experienced support if parents did not disagree with them. All of them referred to unsupportive parents of difficult students who were uncooperative and argumentative. One teacher, while acknowledging supportive parents, reported that the

way to deal with difficult parents was to ignore them the next time an incident occurred and deal with the child only. As Grace puts it:

Yea the parents are supportive. Most are. If you have a problem child, the parents can be kind of like the child and willing to attack but once they see your side, if you show them respect and they see your side. And if you are dealing with a very difficult child and you are dealing with difficult parents sometimes you say 'will we leave it and just deal with the child'. Parents in the most part if you sit them down and explain in a step by step this is what happened, I know the child has gone home with a different story. Generally if you talk to the parent and explain they are supportive.

The data suggest that teachers' idea of support from parents was their willingness to attend parent- teacher meetings and to agree with the teacher.

Four teachers pointed out that the parents had changed, and they had no control over their daughters. Joyce with over thirty one years experience reflects:

Parenting has changed and in particular where we are now. Parents don't see having a role where they say no to their children. It's instant gratification both for their own lives and for their children.

This seemed to lessen their ability to support the school since they had no effect on the students' behaviour. All teachers when talking about lack of parental support referred to lack of support in relation to behaviours. Support for specific education work was mentioned twice by participants. The data suggest that parental support in this school culture occurs around parents backing up teachers when students misbehave. Otherwise teachers don't appear to require any further support from them other than to attend parent- teacher meetings.

Finally, teachers noted that the role of grandmothers was important in support of schools. In fact they identified them as a substitute figure for parents and quite often were the parent for children at home. This support was a positive thing for teachers in their work and for the culture of the school. One teacher wondered if the supportive presence of grandmothers was an inner city phenomenon, while another feared they were a dying breed and the school in the future would not be able to count on their support. As Cynthia put it:

Oh, grannies are wonderful. The grannies have played huge roles. Despite their age, their illnesses they have helped ... I don't know what will happen now. I don't think this generation will make the same sort of granny. It's a dying breed ... For support of school.

Interestingly at no point in the data collection process did the participants make reference to the supportive role of fathers or grandfathers. The experience of support from home was confined to that of the mother or grandmother.

Change in school culture

The role of parents and grandparents may have changed but some teachers also identified a change in the school culture over the years. Four teachers talked about how the school culture had changed. The change they referred to was how students' abilities and behaviours had changed for the worse. It would appear from one person's comment that the school did take students from areas outside their catchment area in the past and this may have led to a mix of more motivated students. The Principal, following clarification, agreed that in the past students travelled from many middle class areas plus the local inner city area. Also, there was a Vocational Education Committee School that catered for students from the inner city that included students from more problematic backgrounds and from a lower socioeconomic environment. This school closed down about twenty years ago. Since then a greater cohort of inner city students have attended the school.

Also of note was that the teachers who mentioned the change in culture came from the last professional life phase. None of the other teachers mentioned it. The teachers who mentioned this change did so unprompted. The change in school culture was identified as students who were now less motivated and behaviour that had deteriorated. They saw the cause of this was parenting and modern Irish society. They never once mentioned the Principal or how they did things in school as a cause for deterioration in behaviour. As Angela who has thirty four years' teaching experience says:

There are ... It's not discipline, it is the ... behaviour, that has changed particularly in the last ten years. There is more of the time spent correcting students and trying to get them back on task and, em, it depends on the size of the class group. You can have twenty or more sometimes and trying to keep them on task. You find one day you think you have it cracked and then you go in the next day and you find you have to go back to the beginning again.

While Joyce with thirty-seven years teaching, reflecting on the issue states:

First of all some of the children are very needy, attention wise, very needy. They want you and they want you now. They shout and they roar and say 'Look at mine, why are you looking at hers? Look at mine' And there would be that aspect to it. There would also be others whose lives have no routine. I suppose consistency of any kind and then they come into school then and are like ... to follow rules, to follow a structure, follow times in a day. It is very difficult for some of them. Certainly over the years, in the last fifteen years there has been huge substance abuse issues both children and parents. And we have quite a number of children whose parents are addicts ... and whose parents were addicts when they were born. It has learning consequences and behavioural consequences that you can identify with that. There is no cure for them. It is a damage limitation for them, it is maximising as much as possible ... Very difficult to get some of them to sit down, basically to even follow a command. We provide books, and copies and things there would be an awful lot of shouting and roaring and aggression. Loads of anger and aggression between themselves in the classroom. Parents, very often of difficult students are not contactable. If contactable they add to the problem rather than seek a solution. They see you are the problem rather than the student. I don't want to go down that path.

Three of these teachers made reference to the time the nuns were in charge. The culture of rules and procedures in the present day was compared to then.

Cynthia recalls:

Well looking back on it now, when the nuns had all the power and now where we have rules and regulations, was there different supports? You know when the nun could tell some student to leave.

This quotation displays the problem-solving powers of the earlier years when students could be suspended and moved to another school. The problem was moved on. Now things are different. Based on fairness and due process, the school's code of behaviour follows the new policy set out by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). As one teacher observed: 'It takes more time'. They did not call for a return to the previous era, just commented on their frustration at times about procedures.

The culture of Principal being so powerful in earlier years was recalled by one participant as it nearly saw her being sacked after her first year teaching. She challenged the sacking and ended up remaining teaching there until now.

First of all I was aware that the first year is probationary and that they had discretion ... well in those days. Nowadays, you would have all kinds of support and quite rightly so but in those

days you didn't. In the 1970's she objected to the fact that I had taken, well asked, for two days off to be married. And em ... I got married over the Easter Holidays.

She did laugh as she recalled the experience but it required a lot of strength on her part to challenge the Principal, as there was no union support at the time. As she pointed out: 'a mortgage, a recent marriage and the need for a job' was motivation enough to challenge the decision. Other teachers in the last professional life phase remembered positive experiences of Principal support in their earlier career.

It illustrates that culture in a school changes for many reasons. It can be due to leadership, while policy and procedure at national and local level can also influence it. The teachers new to the school in the last twenty years did not mention this change as this was the culture they found themselves teaching in when they started. What they shared with the last professional career phase group was the same need for support.

It is how teachers' cope with this that is important for this research. Staff, student, Principal, and parental support seems to have been important for these teachers in adapting to the changing society and the challenges it presented in the classroom. All of them provided supports that developed and sustained their resilience during challenging times and helped them adapt. We will now look at teachers' work and identify other ways they coped, adapted and developed resilience.

TEACHERS WORK AND HOW THEY COPE

Work and stress

The data from this group of teachers presents many references to support the view that teachers' work is indeed complex and varied. In 2001 Kyriacou, when summarising a number of international studies, identified ten main stressors for teachers. Both in the questionnaire and the interviews all the participants identified with Kyriacou's ten main stressors. These stressors were identified both during critical incidents and in daily challenges. This construct of teacher stress was of great help in examining the lives of teachers, in analysing how they managed stress, and in providing insights on how they developed and sustained resilience. It helped identify strategies used by teachers in coping

with their main stressors and the patterns that emerged in their developing and sustaining resilience.

All teachers identified as stressful the lack of time for getting things done. Top of their list was students' lack of motivation and maintaining discipline. Next was self-esteem and status, time pressure, and work load. This was followed by coping with change, dealing with colleagues, and role conflict and ambiguity. The combination of role ambiguity plus lack of time appears to present a stressful situation. Being evaluated by others was also identified. Least references were made to administration, management, and poor working conditions. More female than male teachers made reference to stressful situations. More in the third and final professional life phase than any other phases made reference to their work as stressful. Those with an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility identified stress in their work more often than those without a post. Those with home responsibilities, for example child minding or looking after an elderly person, identified stress in their school work less than those with no home responsibilities. Finally, those who changed school least referred to stress least, while those who changed school up to three times, referred to it most often.

Joyce highlighted the role of a teacher as a year head and the stresses it brings. She highlighted the stress of dealing with students with difficult backgrounds, the challenges involved, and the role conflict and the time constraints in dealing with them.

As Joyce stated:

Yea, as year head to begin with we would have had, we were allow an allocation of three classes. Of course that went by the wayside. You would literally have no time, frazzled at the end of the day. Found it hard to find time in the end. Time factor is a huge, huge thing. Sometimes to contact some parent you might make five phone calls. And still no joy. Or you make an arrangement to meet someone and they don't turn up and you are back to the phone calls again. Or else they would turn up and explode and then it would go beyond the forty minutes and then you are behind and you are trying to arrange for someone to go up and supervise ... and we had also, as sixth year head, we had three pregnancies and we would have had a group who were very seriously involved in drugs and the repercussions of that and you know all sorts of ... got different roles. I would be in contact with social workers, juvenile liaison officers, different agencies and Bernardos, on top of teaching. It is quite intensive.

Joyce also illustrates the role of ambiguity and stress from the administration side of the job as identified in the literature. The role of Year Head brought additional time pressures to her teaching role while she had not got enough time for her pastoral role as year head. These pressures were not confined to those with posts of responsibilities. The lack of time was identified by all teachers.

A lot of emotions were spent on stress. In referring to students and their work relationship with them, teachers had to deal with students' emotional issues as well as their own. As Abbie reflects:

Then I suppose the relationship you would develop with students. I would find like close professional relationship with many of my students. But you know many would tell me ... Well especially the ones who have great emotional difficulties, huge anger management issues. But I turn around and start doing things, like I have a class of fifth years this year and they are the class from hell, you know but you say oh my God. I have the academically weak, and their behaviour is bad and one of them would be very troublesome. At the beginning of the year, we thought she was on drugs because her behaviour was so volatile. She would drop in anything. Throw in a chair. You name it.

This example shows the emotionally demanding aspect of the teaching experience and the time and energy required to cope. It provides evidence of the very challenging behaviours they encounter. It illuminates the challenges they encounter in their work organisation.

Coping strategies

Having established the context, how they coped was more of interest in order to view further the development of resilience. The area of emotions itself will be looked at further later in this chapter. Coping strategies are significant for understanding teacher resilience. Participants made reference to it 203 times. These coping strategies were either positive or negative just as the literature suggested. From the start of the data collection the significance of different relationships in teachers' lives and how they impacted on their resilience became apparent. The coping strategies employed were either school-based or based outside of school on family relationships, friends, or other activities. Elaine's comment about coping strategies shows the challenges they present:

I suppose if it was a particular incident in the class I would talk to colleagues here, em, and I would get their support but at home they would be 'isn't that terrible, that awful' but they

really wouldn't understand, do you know what I mean? Or what to do in that situation? I suppose it's more colleagues that help.

The example shows how positive coping strategies can also be challenging if those listening may not have a shared experience in the classroom. Listening is important but not as important as that of colleagues.

Teachers, when they talk about this their work, refer to support as an important part of it. Some supports were identified more frequently than others. Colleague support and Principal support were the most significant. Family and friends were identified next. Females reported family and friends as supportive significantly more than males. Those in the 8–15 professional life phase category made most reference to family and friends, then those in the 31+ category while those in the 16–23 category made the least reference to family and friends.

Interestingly there was no significant difference in the relationship between positive colleague support and professional life phases. Those with home responsibilities made more reference to it more than those with no home responsibility. Those with an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility made reference to colleague support more than those with a special duty post. This may reflect the year head role that the Assistant Principal's post of responsibility carries and the level of negotiating he or she would do with teachers in their pastoral care work for students. Those who changed school the least identified positive colleague support the least, while those who changed schools twice, identified it the most.

Positive Coping Strategies

As outlined in the literature review chapter, coping strategies can be either positive or negative. The participants identified positive coping strategies a significant number of times. Positive coping strategies were sub-coded under three headings: reflection as a coping strategy, school-based positive coping strategies, and outside school activity.

The most significant positive coping strategy was reflection as a coping strategy. It involves reflecting and learning from the experience of resolving an issue or problem. Abbie illustrates this when she reflects over her years of teaching and how she learnt to cope. She

says: 'You have to forget the event. You have to let a huge amount go. That is difficult. Because I would find I play things in my head and wonder how could I have been better'.

School-based coping strategies were next. These were mentioned twice as often as outside school activity. Angela recalls a school based coping strategy when dealing with challenging students:

The two of us were side by side ... We are all the time tossing things backwards and forwards and if I felt I was having a bad day with a particular group and someone wasn't behaving I could put her in the back of her room or visa versa. Most people will do that as well.

Reflecting and school-based coping strategies appear to give teachers supports to adapt to adverse situations or daily hassles and thus develop and sustain resilience.

There was no major gender difference in the use of positive coping strategies. Those in the third professional life phase referred to positive coping strategies more than the others. Holding a post of responsibility had no significant impact on the data in relation to positive coping strategies. Those who had changed schools during their career saw positive coping strategies as important. There was no significant difference in referring to positive coping strategies between those who had commitments at home and those who did not.

Coping strategies outside of school and maintaining wellness

All the teachers identified coping strategies outside of school that supported them in their work. Three teachers reported having a sleep or snooze when they went home or going shopping or eating. Four teachers referred to pursuing pastimes as a way of coping. Two teachers identified going to the gym as a way of helping them leave school behind. Those who lived a distance from the school felt that the drive home and playing music on the way helped them to let go of school issues. Elaine states: 'Em , I have a little doze or something and then I go do a bit of sport, go for a walk, get outside. Because I live so far away it helps me get away from the job'.

All these coping strategies are in keeping with the literature on resilience and coping strategies. The only time negative coping strategies were mentioned was when they recalled how they coped with a critical incident. They all made reference to some negative

coping strategy. These ranged from over-eating to not seeking any help when the incident happened. Yet all the negative coping strategies were overcome later. They modified their reaction, reflected on what had happened, and learned from the experience in dealing with other incidents.

Family and friends as support in your work

Over half the participants identified friends who were teachers in other schools as helping them cope in their jobs. This help usually came in the form of sharing with them what happened during the day. Over half the teachers also identified talking to friends who were non-teachers, but they did not find this as helpful as they tended not to understand. However, two participants did identify friends who were not teachers as helpful because their lack of familiarity with school and its complexities helped the participants to switch off from school. The reason for not talking about work to non-teaching friends was because they would not understand the difficulties experienced by them in their type of school. As Joyce put it about her non-teaching friends, and at the same time identifying this as a strength for her also:

Oh yes sure the others wouldn't have a clue about it. It's like a different planet. It would be like describing something that is happening on Mars ... I suppose the socio-economic group. The friends I would be talking to would have absolutely no idea that there is another side to this city, there is another side to life. It does have its good point.

Three participants identified their mothers as a significant support during their careers, especially during difficult experiences. The support ranged from listening and sharing the day's experience to the knowledge of their always being there as a support. The mothers who were identified worked outside the home or had experience of school through roles on Boards of Management. Their pragmatic and balanced approach to work seemed helpful. As Abbie recalls:

My mum is great. She was a nurse by trade then went into the family business. She was also on the Board of Management of the secondary school I went to at home. She would be from the era if you came home and told a story and you got it twice back if you annoyed the teacher. So your side wasn't listened to and she would say what did the teacher have to say? She would be like that now. She would say what did you say to upset him. You must have upset him on some level. How are you going to fix that? She would be good at listening and perceptive and say you poor dear. She would be balance perspective.

Teachers work is also informed and supported by school and national policy. This has an impact on their work and what they do. The data suggests that it also has an impact on how they develop and sustain resilience in their working lives.

POLICY AND PRACTICE IN SCHOOL

The experience of policy and procedure

How teachers experienced both national or school policy and practice in this organisation was significant but not obvious. Teachers did not specifically mention these policies when asked a direct question about their daily challenges. Yet they began to make reference to national or school policies when they teased out issues. The policies of the school were either a positive or negative support. Either way, they impacted on the lives of teachers and their ability to develop and sustain resilience. The most significant figure in this process was the Principal. Participants made significant reference to the role of the Principal who they saw as important in implementing policy and practice. It was a source of both support and stress. When recalling critical incidents or stresses, females made more reference to policy and procedures. Those in the 8–15 professional life phase made reference to it more than those in the 31+ category. Generally, emotional reactions were important as participants recalled the significance of policy and practice in relation to particular incidents with students or parents.

The policy or practice needed to be realised fully to have a positive effect for the teacher. If the same policy did not have a positive effect for the teacher, then it had a negative effect on how he/she saw the Principal as a means of support. As Mavis with over thirty-one years experience says:

The leadership is important. It really is the thing. Once they take you seriously, it lessens the whole thing. Once you know the Principal is not ignoring the incident then you don't have a problem. Whereas if you had a Principal who didn't do anything it would make it a bigger issue for a teacher really.

This example illustrates the need teachers have for policy and practice to meet their needs and eliminate problems. Policy and practice add complexity to teachers' lives and can produce both positive and negative results. More females than males made reference to

this as part of the life of the school organisation. All except one of those in the 31+ professional life phase made reference to it while all those with home responsibilities made greater reference to it than those with none.

Cynthia informs us and hints at the different policies and procedures that were in vogue during her career:

Yes well at different times I did things differently. Different procedures and strategies depending on what procedures were in. Em, well if a student was particular difficult you tried to be talk to her. You know, sometimes they stormed out in some incidents. We might send for parents ... It depended on the situation, you dealt with it, I suppose.

Mavis recalled an incident where two girls were fighting. She also recalled how the other students were 'loyal' to her and saw her as 'their teacher' as she was co-ordinator of the programme. It would appear this policy of assigning teachers a co-ordination role was important for the relationship and had a positive effect on the teacher, especially during difficult or challenging times. She reflected:

They were sorry it happened I suppose. They were very loyal to you. They see you as the co-ordinator of it. They see you as 'our teacher' you are looking out for us. You are always fighting their corner. Which you are, you are always saying 'don't let me down'.

Grace recalled explaining an incident to parents 'step by step' and that they were supportive. This followed the practice of detailed explanation and acceptance on the part of the parents when the student was going home giving a different version of reality. Following this the procedures increased support. The policy of inviting parents in to help change behaviours or deal with difficulties seems to be a support. However, other participants reported bringing in parents and they being abusive in their meetings.

As Angela put it:

With some individual students some parents are great and would always back you and they would try to do their best to bring the student to account. While others wouldn't want to hear about it. So ... you are on a hiding to nothing there in lots of cases. There were a couple of them now in particular last year and you were constantly pulling your hair out but it wasn't working out the best of times.

Overall, the data suggests that the policy of including parents in school life was a supportive one and important in the development of teachers' resilience.

Critical incidents or stressful situations

Participants followed procedures and policies and found that challenging situations were dealt with more successfully through them. All saw these policies and procedures as supportive. They helped them cope. The time it takes to go through the procedure was a source of frustration for two teachers who wished they could be processed quicker. However, they appreciated, as Mavis said, 'where the administration was coming from' and that it took time for due process to prevail.

Angela recalled how a critical incident was handled well by the use of the school pastoral care structure policy and this she felt gave her support.

As she recalled:

They took action. The students were separated. The same procedures that are in place still. The Principal at the time would have stepped in as well. Class tutors were involved. Parents were brought in ... There was a bit of racism involved in it as well. She would have been one of the first international students as well in the school ... and unfortunately as she is the one who instigated it she got more punishment. So that is what happened.

Three participants recalled negative experiences when the Principal handled a situation badly. Yet these participants seem to have managed to overcome the negative experiences as also they had experienced positive Principal support from the same Principal or other Principals. One teacher recognised that the incident had happened during the Principal's first year in the role and that may have had a bearing on how the issue was handled. Perhaps with more experience the matter would not have gone to the Board of Management and therefore would not have had such a stressful affect on the teacher. The data suggests the teachers need the Principal to use policies and procedures to stop issues escalating or proceeding to a formal or legal setting, such as the Board of Management. Procedures are there to provide space and help resolve issues involving different combinations of teacher, student, tutor, Year Head, Principal, and parent. However, even the teacher who recalled an incident that reached the Board of Management reported it turning out positively. He became a member of the Board of Management in order to learn more about how it functioned and it seemed to have provided a balance to the experience.

Experience of other schools' policies and procedures

Eight of the participants had worked in other schools, seven of them at the beginning of their careers. They recalled other schools' procedures and practice. This recollection in turn helped them appreciate what was happening in the current school organisation. As Abbie recalled another school she taught in:

We never had staff meetings. He would extend break and there would be no one out supervising. And he would be saying we had an issue on the corridor and you there, one of the oldest teachers in the school and you sitting there on your fat posterior and didn't do anything. I used to tell people what had happened and they would say 'this is unbelievable, I can't know how you work in that class'. He looked like the ghost of Harry Potter, he talked to no one, he saw nothing. There was a huge painting of him up in the school ... broke all health and safety and if a WSE went in ... my God

Different schools had different pressures as another teacher observed from her experience of being in a different school. This seemed to help in appreciating the practice in the present school. None of the participants mentioned any education programme specifically when referring to their other schools, while all referred to the various programmes in their present school and the challenges and opportunities they provided.

Elaine's comment about the programmes illustrates the challenges:

We are a stream school here after first year, so generally the 2.1, the 3.1 class are quite good but there may be some weak students but you will always have that. Whereas the JCSP or the L.C.A. classes may be a little bit of hassle. One would generally always look forward to the good classes.

Participants mentioned the classes like JCSP (Junior Certificate Schools Programme) and LCA (Leaving Certificate Applied) as challenging classes and enjoying the other classes that followed the traditional programmes. The reported challenges were about behaviour and learning difficulties. Yet if the JCSP programme was not in the school those students would be doing the traditional programme and this would make these classes more challenging. It would appear that having the various programmes allows for the students' educational needs to be met more successfully even if the teachers found it difficult. What sustains the teachers is the knowledge that they will go to classes that are following the traditional programme and experience a less challenging class. What also supports their teaching of these new programmes is career professional development.

Career Professional Development

Reference to career professional development was gender neutral. Those in the 8–15 professional life phase made more reference to it followed by those in the 31+ category. Similar reference was made to it by those with home responsibilities and those without. Those with an Assistant Principal's post made more reference to it than those without.

Overall, participants' experience of subject-specific in-career professional development was positive. However, it could, in certain circumstances, add to the stresses and strains of day-to-day teaching. Angela recalled:

They were a help as going in I found new ways of doing things and that kind of thing creative. Like we had one colleague when we were doing something, she would have been older than me but had a lot of ideas of doing different things. The Department gave us in-service. It was not good for the day-to-day stresses. The course itself was the basic information. It added to the stress especially the first year because it was so different.

Elaine summing up the career professional development offered by the Department of Education and Skills and reflected the attitudes of other teachers: 'The in-service courses are no good for daily stresses or hassles. (She Laughs). It's pure information'.

In recalling the in-career professional development, four teachers highlighted the excellent in-service provided for programmes like LCA, JCSP, TY (Transition Year) by the Professional Department Service for Teachers (PDST). The data suggest that policies and practice around national in-service for special programmes are supportive for day-to-day stresses and help sustain resilience, while policy and practice around subjects only are not supportive and do not enhance resilience.

DES policy and programmes

All the participants referred to the major Department of Education and Skills policies and practice around supporting education for those who are disadvantaged. Some of these programmes were recalled as a source of stress. One teacher highlighted teaching JCSP students and the fact that her subject was limited to one class a week which was often timetabled as the last class in the afternoon. This led to dealing with students with particular difficulties who often exhibited behavioural problems. As Cynthia states:

Well I em, generally I had, em JCSP and they were smaller classes. Eh and they were often problematic and would eh have problems with family and so on but they were small classes.

It was decided from the beginning that history would not be main line subjects. So I had to construct something and it was problematic to teach because you also had them only once a week. Because it was not a main line subject it probably was the last class in the afternoon. There were stresses there.

Three other participants mentioned the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Programme specifically when describing the stress in their day. This was stress associated with students meeting deadlines for assignments, an anxiety the students didn't share. As Grace points out:

I suppose the difficult thing here is the challenging child, some of the classes can be quite challenging, you know, they can be quite challenging and you wonder to yourself what am I doing (laughing) they have learnt nothing, are they sitting in their seats are we all on the same page. An argument starts, someone else seems to join it and at the end of forty minutes you are going I have got nothing achieved at the end of this so that can be ... You know when you are trying to get them through and LCA exam or project and you know time is running out that can be very stressful. You end up doing more of the work than kids might do. Because I would worry more about the exam than they would do. I would worry about the exams even though some of them might want to do quite well. They know you are going to do the work for them. So they know that and they are very quick if you didn't to turn around and say she didn't do it with me or if you are actually out for an in-service or sick for a day, they are very quick to say you weren't here yesterday.

Two participants pointed out that students of LCA were better in the past and did not require such support for their learning. Participants recalled the success LCA students achieved as a source of motivation. Two participants identified having so-called good classes helping ease the challenges in teaching LCA or JCSP classes. A further two participants referred to the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) service as a support and an addition to the school experience.

I emailed the participants later to ask them specifically how useful and supportive were the programmes on offer in their DEIS school. Only one participant replied. I made another attempt at emailing and got no reply. The one participant who did reply stated, that in a general way, the initiatives were helpful.

HSCL was certainly a great help. It involved parents and gave them and their daughters an important connection with the school. Children whose parents were involved with HSCL coord. Parent's Association etc. were usually better motivated and better behaved in class! Everything helped!

All teachers mentioned they were in a DEIS school, illustrating their awareness of its existence as part of a National Policy. Yet not one participants mentioned targets or measures in relation to their DEIS plan and how that was supportive of them as teachers. Perhaps the programmes are embedded into the life of the school and the extent of their support for teaching and learning is taken for granted.

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS

Introduction

A further help to the teachers was managing their emotions in their working lives. From the beginning of the data collection phase it became apparent that the area of emotions could be significant. Participants made 151 references to emotional experiences in their work. The data suggest that, whether dealing with a critical incident or a day-to-day problem, emotions could be categorised in four ways:

- 1) Managing self
- 2) Managing others
- 3) Managing decision
- 4) Family, friends as support.

The biological view of emotions, as outlined by Crawford (2006, p. 117), is that it is 'as "best guesses" as to what is appropriate in a certain situation and that we learn to modify with experience, and that different emotional regulation strategies will have very different implications for mental well being'. As the data was collected it became evident that managing their emotions in the classroom, in the staffroom, during daily challenges, and in dealing with critical incidents was very significant in developing and sustaining resilience. Elaine reflects on her learning over the years: 'Well the main thing is not to rise to it. When a child makes a comment it is generally in order to get you to react to it ... I did a lot of reacting before I figured that out'.

Those with posts of responsibility made the most reference to emotions. Those with a higher post of responsibility made slightly more reference to emotions in relation to all

categories except managing of others. Those with a Special Duties Post made greater reference to managing of others. Those who changed school more than once in their careers, made more reference to emotions. Only in the category managing decisions was there a significant difference in the number of references by different groups.

Managing of self

Managing self and managing others were often recalled together. George talks about how he manages himself now compared to his first year of teaching:

If someone told you to 'fuck off' well it would rarely happen. It would be forgotten or over my head. I used to get upset when I started teaching. Well, I was only twenty-one and someone called you a prick and in a boys school, I thought it was a reflection of me and it actually has nothing to do with me, I am just the person there at the time. I think when I was starting teaching they were watching everything I did. If I moved this way or that way. I was doing my dip. They were constantly watching you.

George illustrates the journey teachers travel, managing situations and managing themselves. This incident led to the participant managing himself emotionally which in turn helped him to manage the situation and then helped to manage further challenges. This could be seen as a protective factor, as identified in the literature. Reflection on experiences, with support from others, allows the teacher to learn to let things go or go over his head. As Elaine reflects on her learning how she managed:

I leave it in one ear and out the other.

Q. When you started off teaching were you doing that?

A. Oh no

Q. So where did you learn that?

A. A few years ago (laughs) ... I don't know. I really don't know ... I couldn't tell, honestly ... a few years into it and you yourself feel more confident in the classroom. I suppose when you feel more confident and more situations arrive. I suppose it is like learning to drive, you go into the middle of the road, you know the rules and regulations but it's with practice comes not taking it to heart. Or you learn to go into the staffroom and say 'do you know what so and so said to me' And that's it, it is gone.

Managing emotions would appear to be a key element in problem-solving. Being more confident in the role of teacher was important, but support in the school was essential in building this confidence and developing resilience.

There were more females than males participants in this research. Therefore, identifying significant gender difference was limited. However, there was a difference in teachers talking about emotions when recalling or describing daily challenges or critical incidents. Overall, female teachers made more reference to emotions than males. More female teachers made references to managing of self than males. Females made more reference to managing of others and making decisions. Finally, females made much greater reference to support around emotions than males. Participants made these references unprompted. Perhaps, if a direct question had been put to the male participants they would have referred more to other emotions. Those with no home responsibilities made greater reference to emotions than those with home responsibilities. Those with no extra responsibilities made greater reference to managing of self than those with extra responsibilities at home. A similar difference can also be seen about making reference to emotional support. Those with no home responsibilities made more reference to it than those with home responsibilities.

Professional life phases showed that those in the 8–15 category made greater reference to emotions in all the areas. There was no significant difference in the amount of references to emotions between the 16–23 and 31+ professional life phases in all the categories except in the case of support. In this category of emotional support those in the 8–15 made the greatest reference to it. Those in the 31+ phase were next. When others in different categories recalled earlier experiences, they also included more reference to emotions. For them this recollection went right back to the beginning of their careers. One of the longest serving teachers recalls managing self in her earlier career. She recalled a very serious critical incident where her job was on the line and she confronted the Principal. Her feelings were recalled in the telling of the story:

I knew it was wrong. I was terribly upset. I knew if she fired me I would never work again. It was your survival instinct. What else would you do? ... We went to the cinema with my husband, my sister and her boyfriend at the time. It was very, you know, they were laughing away and I felt 'God' I wasn't grand about it.

While reflecting on the incident thirty years later she also observes:

I suppose in those days there wasn't any kind of information that people have now. Or that they can access about your feelings and so you didn't know there were other options.

Abbie, with eight years experience, recalls how she managed her feelings in an incident with the Principal. What is significant is her recall of the beginning of her teaching career and how it made her feel, and how she recalled managing herself in a school where she thought the Principal did not want to re-employ her after all she had done. She tells us:

I had been doing it according to that in terms of how I was taught, it probably was over the top ... I really worked hard, I stayed back ... none of that had been taken into consideration ... I think in hind-sight the objective was to bring me down a peg or two.

And when asked to reflect on how she was feeling at that time she said:

That feeling of the typical good student and oh no I am not good enough. My esteem. I remember saying to him that the stress is related to me worrying about it. I worried.

These examples illustrate that even in recalling incidents from the quite distance past the language of feelings is strongly evident. They recall the early phase of the early part of a teachers' career when developing confidence was important. The difference between those most experienced and least experienced was seen in their relative abilities to take time to reflect and deal with things. They all talked about learning to 'let things go' and recalled that this was learned early in their teaching careers. Both colleague support and the support of family and friends were important in this, although the data would suggest that colleague support was more helpful. This learning was important to their remaining in teaching as it helped them to cope and adjust to daily challenges. In other words, it helped develop their resilience.

Managing of others and supports

The managing of others is often bound up in the managing of self. An important aspect of managing of others is emotional regulation. On the one hand teachers talked about being honest with students. Yet when they recalled incidents, they seem to talk about using the teacher role and suggest that what was happening did not affect them. As Grace tells us:

Initially I would take them to heart and say 'Oh my God' but after twelve, thirteen years to be honest, you know what you can play them as good as ... I don't take them to heart. I don't come home in the evening and say 'Oh God!' I am very much a person when I leave here in the evening. I leave it here and I come back and deal with it tomorrow morning.

Elaine recalls an exceptionally sad and serious incident about a student and how she dealt with it:

Well how I was in the class? I was quite young. I had regrets that maybe I could have gone to someone. There were clues maybe that you know. Anyway I didn't go to anybody so I suppose you stop and think.

Joyce remembers and advises:

Ah sure I bawled, had a bit of a rant and you let yourself down and pick yourself up. You just keep going. I had plenty at home to distract me, children and what not. You can't show them that you are upset in any way.

These examples show that, in managing others, participants regulate their own emotions in order to deal with the situations. By doing this they dealt with the issue and were able to let it go and continue on to the next class or day. It required support from both home and school. This process appeared to support their resilience in the face of daily challenges or adverse situations.

Role of colleagues, community and leadership

Colleagues, community and leadership impacted on the emotions of the participants. All of them made reference to these three factors. The data show that female participants refer to colleagues and leadership more than male participants. However, there was no gender difference in reference to community. The data suggest that there is a continuum from negative to positive emotions. It ranges from 'I am hugely worried that I would be offending someone, a colleague or stuff' to 'The type of staff here you don't feel like "oh did you hear what happened to her"'. Some of the participants were more trustful than others. Not surprisingly, any element of distrust increased their negative feelings but this did not mean that their overall experience of being a teacher in the school was negative. Those who had more positive feelings about support had also a positive teaching experience.

The three professional phases all mention emotions in relation to leadership. The data show that the relationship with the Principal teacher is emotionally intense during stressful times. The participants required full support of the Principal without adding to their emotional anxiety. Overall, the participants had a positive experience of the support the Principal. Two identified situations that were a cause of stress. Both situations were resolved amicably but

not before a lot of emotional distress occurred. Five participants recalled, with feeling, previous Principals either in this school or in a school they previously taught in. The feelings ranged from warm affection for a Principal who supported a young teacher in the early stage of her career to dislike of a Principal who undermined you in front of students.

As Mavis's description of a Principal she met early in her career tells us:

Well my first Principal, she was a nun, a great educationalist, in a nice sort of way. She took care of us very well. She took in a lot of us who were twenty or twenty-two years of age. She certainly ... She minded us. She would bring us over for a cup of tea over to the convent if we were upset afterwards. We were only children really. She had a way of telling you that you were doing great. She had a nice way of telling you to correct something as well. It was good to meet her early. She was a wonderful woman, she was educationally sound about everything. It was a great foundation. I had her over a number of years.

Managing of others is also significant. This includes relationships with colleagues, the Principal and parents. Reference was made to keeping up appearances in front of colleagues, especially by some participants in the early phase of their careers, and yet there appeared to be a contradiction. On the one hand teachers identified their colleagues as open and supportive, yet they also report not revealing their true feelings or thoughts. This highlights the complexity of teachers work in negotiating working relationships in school.

Abbie best describes the dilemma when she says:

I used to have to make excuses for what I was doing. I used to say 'Ah, sure look it, maybe in thirty years' time I won't be doing it because I won't have the energy so I might as well do it now, that Irish way of putting yourself down to make someone else feel better about themselves ... I would be someone who would say something to someone and deal with it but teaching is a highly emotional and sensitive profession. How you say something to someone, you have to be so careful and how you deal with something ... I just want to get the job done. You know sometimes I might knock somebody down accidentally, you know because you know I would like to think I have good perception and can reflect and I can stand back from something. I can be a bit blinkered sometimes. Just because I want something done.

Decision making

Managing self and others leads the participants to make decisions with support. The group that made least reference to emotions and decision-making was the teachers in the last professional life phase. Most of their reference to emotions and decision-making was about remaining in the school or leaving a previous school or incidents in the school. The data

suggest that teachers reflect on their work as issues arise and then make their decisions.

This could include using emotions in making a decision not to follow procedures or policies.

George, who had a highly stressful experience around questioning a student leaving the classroom, describes why he does not now follow procedures now:

This year there was a query about a student in sixth year, a student who was not allowed out to the toilet because of the suspicion of drugs. I said I am not getting involved. That's it, I don't care, they know my feeling on it ... If you are suspicious of someone they are going to dispute it, so from that point of view I don't apply the rules, they know my feelings on the matter.

While Grace uses emotion as a basis for her decision to remain when she states: 'I did think of other schools but I am so happy here I am afraid to move to a school I actually wouldn't like'.

Words like 'afraid', 'happy', 'valued' and 'appreciated' are used by teachers describing either events in their work or reasons for remaining. Some teachers considered moving to a school nearer their home. It would reduce driving time and increase time at home. Yet the positive feelings for the school influenced their overall decision to remain. Deciding to remain in the same school in turn developed relationships that supported resilience.

Family and friends and emotions

References were made to family, friends and emotions by all participants. This illustrates the challenges for teachers in managing their professional and personal lives and the emotional energy involved. Emotions were managed either through the help of family or friends and it meant that the emotions generated at home came to school and were part of the school life. The source of managing these emotions in school included students and colleagues.

George recalls:

My youngest was about a week old and my fifth years were giving out to me and saying you were just narky because you didn't get any sleep. I was giving out, and giving out because they hadn't done any homework. I came into the staff room and I was chatting to the secretary and they were saying you were like that yesterday as well. And the next day I went into the class and said girls you were right I haven't really slept the last couple of days. The atmosphere changed. I like that they weren't afraid to say it to me and I wasn't afraid to reflect on it either. Try not to put yourself too high up because you will fall down at some stage.

This illustrates how the teacher can draw on students and staff in managing his/her professional and personal life. Honest relationships are important. Having support in managing relationships, either at home or at school, has an effect on developing and sustaining resilience.

Summary

This chapter has presented the main findings derived from the data collected. The questionnaire, interviews and critical incident assisted the researcher in understanding how participants in this case study negotiated their working lives and how this had an effect on developing and sustaining their resilience. The data collection process allowed the researcher to identify themes that supported teachers in their working lives in developing and sustaining resilience. During the data collection it became apparent that recurring themes were emerging. Each of the themes from the research question were 'cross coded' to test their content against the other themes.

From a very early stage in the data collection, school culture emerged as significant. A school culture that was supportive of their daily reality and experience was important. This included colleague and student support. Principal support was crucial in developing this culture in this school organisation. The research identified how colleagues, students and the Principal supported them. The role of parent and family was also found to be supportive but in a limited way. This culture appeared to support teachers to remain in the school. The data illustrate that culture in a school changes for many reasons but that within this school culture the supports helped the teachers develop and sustain their resilience during challenging times and helped them adapt.

The theme of teachers work and how they coped was identified also. The research supports the view that teachers' work is indeed complex and varied. The teachers in this research identified coping strategies that are of significance for understanding teacher resilience. Positive coping strategies were identified within the school as well as outside of the school. Family and friends were also a source of support for teachers in their work and thus helped teachers cope and develop and sustain their resilience. The third theme identified was that

of policy and practice. How teachers experienced both national and school policy and practice in this organisation was significant but not obvious. They impacted on the lives of teachers, and their ability to develop and sustain resilience. The most significant figure in this process was the Principal. The data suggest that policies and practice around national in-service for special programmes are supportive for day-to-day stresses and help sustain resilience more than subject specific in-service. Another factor that helped teachers develop and sustain resilience was their managing of emotions in their working lives. This involved managing self and others and making decisions. The role of the colleagues and leadership impacted on the emotions of participants and helped sustain resilience, and the role of family and friends was also identified. The challenges for teachers in managing emotions in their professional and personal lives helped develop and sustain resilience. The next chapter presents an analysis of the data, provides a discussion on how participants developed and sustained resilience in this school, and identifies lessons for leadership and the school as an organisation.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study has examined what develops and sustains teachers' resilience, the lessons that this can have for school organisation in one school, and perhaps its more general relevance. It is hoped that the data can contribute to the field of resilience and teachers' lives, by pointing to organisational issues and support structures that teachers need in their working lives in order to develop and sustain resilience. The research also deals with the way leaders in their leadership processes can understand better the process of developing and sustaining resilience in a school organisation. The extensive findings presented in the previous chapter will be discussed further here under various headings, and related back to the research questions, although I am mindful that these issues are not separate in the reality of teachers' lives. The literature review also influences the discussion of the findings as some themes from the data collection are also reflected in the literature reviewed in chapter two. First, I return to the research questions which were posed in chapter one. These were:

- 1) What makes a teacher resilient?
 - What is it about these teachers that enables them to develop and sustain resilience?
 - What kinds of experiences and strategies contribute to the development of resilience in teachers?
- 2) What are the lessons for school as an organization?

WHAT MAKES A TEACHER RESILIENT?

What is it about these teachers that enables them to develop and sustain resilience?

Learning from colleagues

The literature on resilience identifies its complexities and the influence of protective factors that help develop and sustain resilience. Benard (1995) pointed out the need for certain environmental characteristics to exist for an individual to develop a range of personal skills and successful strategies to overcome risk and adversity, while Day and Gu (2010, p. 6) suggested that 'personal characteristics, competences and positive influences of the social environment in which individual works and lives, independently and together interact to contribute to the process of resilience building'. This study found that teachers in this particular school organisation did develop a range of personal skills and strategies that helped them to adapt to everyday challenges and critical incidents. The main skills and strategies they developed included reflection on their challenges, development of coping strategies, and activities and discussions aimed at restoring their sense of moral purpose. This mirrors the findings of Malcom (2007, p. 28) that 'adults had a sense of faith and considered themselves to be religious or spiritual. They could take some meaning and usefulness from the stress, trauma and difficulties they had experienced'. While teachers in this study did not specially mention religion they had a sense of moral purpose about educating less advantaged students. They wanted to make a difference in their students' lives. Luthar (2006) noted that resilience is influenced by individual circumstance, situation and environment. Teachers in this study reported a supportive work culture and the way that this developed in them an ability to manage emotions. The managing of emotions was supported both by those in school and outside school. These teachers were open to learning from others. All this had in turn a positive effect on teacher effectiveness and retention. The role of the Principal was pivotal in developing and sustaining teacher resilience in the school organisation.

Time and learning from experience

The data suggest that it is through time and experience that teachers learn positive coping strategies. The motivation may be 'sanity' as Mavis suggested. All the teachers said that in time they learn to 'let go' of things or incidents or to not take them personally. As Mavis puts it: 'As time went on you learn to let go, you mellow'. You learn from teachers and as a teacher'.

Johnson, et al. (2010, p. 5) found that negotiating teacher identity successfully was crucial to becoming a resilient teacher. Teachers in this school developed a sense of teacher identity over time and this certainly had an impact on their decisions and actions. Several teachers identified that learning not to take things personally was important for continuing in teaching. Teachers also reported their sense that they are the 'boss' does not work as a coping strategy in this school. It appears they learned this in the first few years. As Cathal states:

Well em ... teachers' capacity to deal with difficult situations. It just doesn't come overnight. You have to develop some character but you have to develop a proper, meaningful relationship with the students. Instead of creating a dictatorial atmosphere where there is a sense of fear and anxiety you can create an atmosphere where kids know there is a reason that is why you give out, there is a reason why the teacher has to raise his voice or her voice. I don't on principle raise my voice in class because if you start trying to compete with thirty girls, you are going to lose. It's as simple as that. Thirty of anyone?

School culture in this organisation was also very important to the development of teacher identity. The role of Principal was central to this development. This school culture developed in the teachers coping strategies that allowed them to grow in confidence and learn from challenges over time.

WHAT KINDS OF EXPERIENCE AND STRATEGIES CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE IN TEACHERS?

Coping strategies

The teachers in this study developed positive coping strategies. While they may have employed negative coping strategies during very stressful times all reported the capacity to develop positive coping strategies. There was no major gender difference in the use of coping strategies. They had working relationships with colleagues who could be called upon

to support them in times of difficulty. Teachers mentioned the strategy of placing a troublesome student in another teachers' class or a teacher coming to their classroom to offer support if an incident occurred. They were not afraid to ask for help or to share with their colleagues the difficulties and challenges they encountered in the class. As George, referring to having a problem either at home or in school, says:

I know I could approach anyone in the office and any one of my colleagues and anyone in the staff and they would help if they could. If you know that support is there, you know you can call on it. It makes you much happier, more comfortable about things.

Briner and Dewberry (2007, p. 4) found that how teachers feel on an everyday basis is likely to affect their performance and so, in turn, the performance of the pupils they teach. The teachers in this study learned over time not to take things personally and to depend on the support of colleagues. Time spent sharing their difficulties is well spent because it helps in developing a school culture that supports a healthy environment in which resilience can be developed and sustained. From my research it would seem clear that experiencing a supportive school culture helps the teacher develop strategies that contribute to the development of resilience. The experience of managing themselves in their early years of teaching had a significant impact on teachers' ability to learn coping strategies that supported them in the later years. A supportive Principal and school culture was also necessary for teachers to reflect and explore suitable coping strategies for stressful situations. In time they trusted their colleagues, shared their experience, and helped others learn and develop appropriate coping strategies. The development of the positive relationships with colleagues and the support this gives in problem-solving also has an effect on other relationships within the school environment. The building of trustful relationships in this school, facilitated by school leadership, was the foundation of this school culture.

Teacher student relationships

The school culture also allowed teachers to develop their moral purpose. The pastoral care of students and their educational achievements were important to them. The teachers strove to attain achievements for these students, even in adverse conditions. The relationships teachers developed with their students were based on respect and honesty. The role humour played in building a professional relationship with the students was also

significant. Teachers identified students' sense of humour as important, just as it was identified in the literature. Teachers themselves seemed to interact and develop a relationship with the students based on humour. The research shows that humour is important for developing relationships and thus is a coping strategy that helps teachers to be resilient in challenging circumstances. Humour relieves tension while at the same time building trustful relationships that support teaching and learning in the school.

These trustful relationships and being comfortable enough to be honest with one's colleagues comes with time, and the experience of good leadership. The longer someone is teaching the more they can develop these types of relationships within a school environment. The teachers in the study all identified that this made their working day more manageable. Honesty and respect for students was significant to these teachers. They also talked about being honest with the students as important. As Grace puts it:

I just suppose I just know where they are coming from and where I am coming from, be respectful of that, you know, what I think is important is very different, you just kind of have to ... I find meeting them half way. I kind of go in and am respectful to them ... Kind of I will work with you and you work with me and let's see how we can go. I don't feel so bad going home even if you do lose it with them you kind of think ... I can be quick to say I am really sorry I had a bad day, you had a bad day and I suppose and you are the teacher.

Relationships and a sense of vocation also had an impact on teachers remaining in the school. The opportunity to support students not just in their learning but also in their day-to-day lives was important. It allowed teachers develop their moral purpose and increase their sense of vocation in the job. George, who had to choose between the school he is in now or another school he enjoyed working in before, stated what made him chose to remain in this DEIS school:

I chose here. Because of the whole picture. The kids are very straight out, if you met them outside they would say hi, if you didn't say hello they would say you were snobby, I like that. When they are abroad they show you their pictures of their nieces and nephews and it more than just teaching them a subject. They want a relationship there too and I like that.

Colleague support is also important in developing this respectful and honest school culture. It appears that classroom-based activities or episodes are handled at classroom level, but with the facility of going to the staff room to discuss issues with colleagues in an open, truthful and supportive way.

Role of teachers' families and friends

Family and friends were identified by all the participants as having an influence on how they coped with being a teacher. Higgins (1994) noted that he could characterise resilient adults the same as Benard (1991) had characterized resilient children. They had positive relationships, problem-solving skills, and the motivation for self-improvement. Family and friends formed part of this support of positive relationships for the teachers of this study also. They assisted them in solving problems. The role of family and friends had two distinct traits. Either the family and friends were teachers and this was of great help working out problems relating to school, or family and friends were not teachers and were a diversion from school problems. Some participants did not share school problems with friends who were not teachers, because they felt they would not understand either teaching in general or teaching in that school setting in particular. In general, however, the teachers of this study identified family and friends as playing an important role in supporting them, especially during difficult times. This had a considerable influence in developing and sustaining their resilience. As Angela recalls:

I would talk to family about it. I live on my own but I have four teachers in the family so I would talk to my sisters, they know what I am talking about and that sort of thing. I am just thinking, it has just come into my head, I had a really bad day for some reason, I called into my sister, she had small kids at the time, we talk it out and get rid of it. That's a big thing.

Professional life phases

Those with an Assistant Principal's post of responsibility sought more support than those with a Special Duties Teacher post. This may reflect the increase in responsibility in the Assistant Principal post compared to the Special Duties Post and the central involvement of the Assistant Principal in managing day-to-day activities and incidents in school. Most of the Assistant Principals were Year Heads, and pastoral care and discipline were part of their responsibility also.

Those in the later professional life phase talked about the effect of the distraction of having children at home. They had to look after them, and time was taken up with that when they went home. They clearly indicated that these changed circumstances created different

priorities for them and they did not think of school as much. The distraction of home responsibilities provided a protective factor that those with no home responsibilities did not have. They switched off school or had someone to discuss issues with at home. Those with no home responsibilities did not have such a distraction or support at home, and this may explain why those in the third professional life phase required more supports from school colleagues and the Principal.

Day, et al. (2006) revealed a complex relationship between multiple levels of internal and external contributing factors that influenced the resilience process. The data in this research concurs with the VITAE project (2006) research in that factors like pupil characteristics, staff collegiality, teachers' roles and responsibilities, and personal factors like family support and demands do indeed shape the teachers' professional lives and have a significant influence in developing and sustaining resilience. These social factors helped teachers to develop skills and competencies that enabled them to address issues at work and at home. This in turn allowed them to adapt and thus develop and sustain resilience.

Experience of a supportive school culture

A positive experience of colleague support had a significant role in teacher retention in the school and in developing resilience. The literature showed that resilience is influenced by individual circumstance, situation and environment (Luthar, 2006). Teachers in this school were influenced by this dynamic. Remaining in the school for many years, they developed relationships of mutual support and shared experiences in their working lives. This also played a role in supporting them in their personal lives. This support in turn developed and sustained their resilience. Working in other schools allowed teachers appreciate the support the present school setting offered. However, as one teacher observed, having taught in another school for twenty years it was 'wonderful to change (schools) and see things differently'. And yet, it is only over time that the mutual experience of daily challenges helps develop a relationship of trust that creates a supportive school culture. It would suggest that having the same staff over a period of time is important. Yet, as one teacher noted, the influx of newer or younger members of staff seemed to be equally supportive. They had a shared sense of fun, and they seemed to be adapting to the culture of the school. Through

this supportive school culture teachers learned to adapt after traumas, as Luthar and Brown (2007) identified.

Lack of colleague support was also identified as a problem that some teachers had seen in their past experiences of teaching. This reflected the struggle teachers experienced in their working day and difficulty developing a teacher identity, especially in their early years of teaching. The longer the teacher stayed in the school the less they reported lack of colleague support. However, teachers with more than thirty years experience could still recall a negative experience of colleagues. This suggests the importance of a mentor for a teacher new to the school to help him/her negotiate negative experiences from the past, and focus on the future. It also highlights the need for reflective practice in the early years of teaching in order to support teachers in developing their identities as teachers, and in developing resilience. Colleague support in this school reflected good practice and it seems that this can assist in building a healthy organisation. Barth (2002, p. 6) suggest that deeply ingrained in the very core of the organisation is culture. It can transmit patterns of 'meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act'. The core of this school culture is trust that supports teachers in learning from colleagues, including the Principal, while they grow in confidence in the teacher role.

Role of parents

The role of parents in this school was limited to their attending parent teacher meetings, and supporting the teacher if a difficulty arose. Interestingly, teachers spoke of a plan of not involving parents if they were confrontational. This lack of interference in the day-to-day teaching of the student and the handing over all responsibility for the student's education was seen as a positive. Perhaps in a more affluent area where parents are reportedly more questioning of teachers, parental support might not be seen as important in developing resilience as it is in this setting. Teachers in these affluent areas report anecdotally that parents challenge teachers on educational issues such as results and curriculum development, unlike the teachers in this study who were not challenged by parents on these issues.

School-based coping strategy

School-based activity included strategies within the classroom and relationships with the students or colleagues. The data suggest that the two are linked. Teachers talked about 'being organised, developing appropriate handouts for the troublesome classes, and not reacting to students'. As Joyce says 'keep going and don't show in any way that they have pressed any buttons'. Teachers learn to cope with classroom situations but this requires development of good student–teacher relationship.

However, classroom based strategies are not sufficient in isolation. As Angela reports, it is the combination of classroom strategies plus being able to talk to or look for backup from colleagues that helps as a coping strategy. Angela recalls a thirty-year working relationship with the same person in the same subject department: 'The two of us were side by side. So we could go and talk to each other at the end of the day. That kind of stuff. Like what strategies worked for you and what doesn't'.

Managing emotions

Teachers from all professional life phases recalled managing their emotional selves when trying to solve problems they encountered in day-to-day teaching or critical incidents. Teachers from the last professional life phase recalled the emotions they felt when dealing with critical incidents that occurred early in their careers, and how managing self was linked to managing of others. Teacher identity is closely linked to this managing of self, and this reflects the literature that shows there is a strong link between teacher identity and the emotions (Nias,1989; O'Connor;2008; Crawford, 2009). If they could manage themselves they could manage others, especially students who were problematic. What assisted the managing of self and others was the support they received from colleagues, especially the Principal. Interestingly there seemed to be a contradiction when teachers recalled their relationship with some colleagues. Some identified a colleague as a positive support while others saw them as a negative in terms of emotional support. This negative experience often took the guise of worrying about offending people. These comments came from the group of teachers who were in the third professional life phase and may reflect their junior

position in the school and the need for time to develop a trusting relationship with their colleagues.

All teachers reported the importance of time in learning how to manage emotions in the job. Individual experience was different, however. One senior teacher reflected on how there were no supports in dealing with emotions when she started teaching although they are available today. Another senior teacher recalled how a Principal in her early career supported them and called them over to the convent for a cup of tea after a bad day, and this was a great help in coping emotionally.

Teachers reported that not showing emotions during critical incidents or daily challenges in the classroom was important, as suggested by the concept of emotional labour. In recalling incidents teachers reported being conscious of not showing how they felt. This would suggest that emotional regulation or control was consciously applied by the teacher in challenging times. They learned over time to not show their emotions during incidents in order to stabilise the situation or regain control of it. Once they returned to the staffroom after the incident they were able to debrief and share how they were actually feeling when the situation occurred, so they were able to divest themselves of the emotional labour in supportive ways. The opportunity to come to the staffroom and debrief was referred to by most participants as a coping strategy for managing emotions. Knowing that the Principal's backup was available was a protective factor in surviving and negotiating critical incidents. Family and friends were the next most important source of support for managing self and others. Talking things over with either group appeared to help the teachers manage their emotions, and family or friends who were teachers helped especially.

Sharing their feelings with the Principal was also a significant support for the teachers in this study. Being able to share the feelings without being judged was important to their coping. Those with an Assistant Principal's Post sought more support from the Principal when managing emotions. This may reflect the pastoral care nature of the job and the counselling role often undertaken by the Assistant Principal.

Not surprisingly, teachers in this study identified emotions as being part of their decision-making process. Most of the reference to emotions and decisions was about remaining in the school or in a previous school, or about a critical incident. Teachers in the last professional life phase made least reference to it. Remaining in the school was bound up with feeling that they were 'happy', 'valued' and 'appreciated' in the school.

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS FOR THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION?

The focus of the previous data was on the teacher and what helps develop and sustain resilience by reflecting on their strategies and experiences both at work and at home. The second question posed in chapter one is discussed here: what are the lessons for the school as an organisation in providing the support structures that teachers need in their working lives in order to develop and sustain resilience. It deals with the way leaders in their leadership role can understand better the process of developing and sustaining resilience in a school organisation. This includes how policy is formed and practice is implemented, and the effect these have on teachers.

Principal support

The role of the Principal in developing a supportive school culture was essential. In this study the teachers all identified with Howard and Johnsons' (2004) research which showed that a strong caring leadership was a major source of personal support for teachers. This supportive school climate, led by the Principal, generated what Luthar, et al. (2007) called 'protective processes'. In building and role modelling supportive practice, the Principal led the culture of support for colleagues and students. This in turn built a community where risk was modified and resilience was developed and sustained. It allowed for a community where, Stoll and Louis (2007) suggest, teachers and students co-operate in the learning experience and build better relationships, thus improving efficacy and commitment and increasing job fulfillment. This support for the teacher in a challenging environment appears to develop and sustain resilience. Yet the identification of the Principal as the only leader of problem-solving is worrying. Other leadership roles need to develop to support teachers' difficulties or challenges. This in turn may reduce the burden of overreliance on the Principal as problem-solver.

The teachers in this research clearly identified the pivotal role of the Principal in developing and sustaining resilience. The feeling that the Principal should always be supportive of the teacher was significant. Reference to those with other leadership roles, such as Year Heads, was very limited. When teachers experienced daily challenges or critical incidents they all stressed the need of the Principal support. The Principal was required to provide a public perception of supporting the teacher. To do otherwise would be to undermine the teacher. Discussion was welcomed later in private, and an exchange of views accepted, but not in front of teachers, parents or students. Backing up the teacher, no matter what the event, was essential for teachers if they were to feel supported. Teachers required the Principal to reinforce their own sense of power and authority. This was seen to be achieved through the Principal's interaction with the whole school community. This reflects the findings of Harris and Chapman, (2002, p. 2) that effective leaders are constantly managing tensions and problems directly related to the particular circumstances and context of the school. They also found that a leader needed to be people centred. This is true of the expectations of the teachers in this organisation, where the Principal was required to support the teacher emotionally during daily challenges or stressful times. In all, the role of the Principal was seen as providing a caring leadership. Howard and Johnson's (2004) research saw this as a significant source of personal support for the teacher.

More females than males made reference to Principal support. The Principal support was required for both personal and professional issues. If a teacher had a sick child at home and needed to leave the school the Principal's support in arranging for the class to be covered was appreciated. Just knowing that they could ask and that they would get a favourable response was important. They also referred to 'an open door policy' of the Principal and that this was supportive. Teachers needed to feel that the Principal was available at all times and was willing to listen to their side of the story. Day and Gu (2010, p. 19) show that strong leadership support provides 'strength, confidence and a sense of belonging which enabled the participant to recover from his or her short-term setbacks and continue to make a difference to the learning and achievement of the pupils'. Teachers' experience of Principal support in this school in recent times enabled them to recover from short-term setbacks

and helped them continue to make a difference to the learning and achievements of their students. This support is pivotal in developing a supportive school culture that sustains recovery. This experience in turn helps teachers to develop and sustain resilience in their working lives.

Experience of policy and practice

The implementation of policy and practice was seen as both a help and a hindrance in this organisation. Teachers required the Principal to follow procedures and not doing so was perceived as a form of stress. Policy, practice and procedures were recalled by teachers when describing stressful or critical incidents and were seen as important in dealing with such incidents. Paradoxically, they were not seen to have any great importance in teachers' everyday teaching experience. It was there to back up the teacher but was not of huge importance to the teacher in their everyday teaching experience. The experience of one teacher, when an issue escalated and reached the Board of Management, sheds light on teachers' perceptions of policies and procedures in de-escalating stressful situations.

All the teachers were familiar with the various educational programmes implemented to support the teaching and learning in the school. While these were often seen as a source of stress, this may have reflected the type of student placed in these programmes rather than the programme themselves. All the teachers were familiar with the fact that they were a DEIS school but not one teacher referred to the DEIS target plan. This may reflect that DEIS planning is at an early stage. One teacher referred to the importance of all the supports the school receives from various initiatives and that they were a help. Perhaps, because these initiatives and programmes are now central to the school's educational approach, teachers are less conscious of the support they give. Future development and implementation of the DEIS plan may prompt them to reflect further on their significance. I had hoped to explore further the influence of these initiatives and programmes through the use of electronic collection of data but this was not successful. Most teachers did not respond to the emails and I could not explore the issue further.

Past and present Principals in this school introduced initiatives and changes to the curriculum that supported the teaching and learning experience. However, the teachers

rarely mentioned them. If prompted on the topic they quickly agreed they were beneficial but then dismissed the topic. Yet they have successfully implemented many key new DES initiatives and programmes. This may be a tribute to both the school leadership and the professional approach of the staff, who effected considerable educational change so successfully that the support it provides is now taken for granted.

The Principal and colleagues need to be mindful to give support to teachers in a particular way depending on their professional life phase. Those in the third professional life phase and with no home responsibilities required the most support, both emotionally and professionally, from the Principal and colleagues. Those in the last professional life phase required support also, particularly when carrying out their post of responsibility. Nurturing a community and providing personal support results in these teachers feeling valued and appreciated, and better able to cope with daily challenges and adapting to change.

Some teachers identified negative experiences of Principal support, but because it was short- term it did not have an adverse effect on their remaining in the school. The open door policy of the Principal allowed space for teachers to deal with their grievances and they felt listened to and supported by this experience. Although tensions may mount and tempers fray at times, teachers in this school show that trusting relationships involving teachers, students and the Principal are crucial in bringing about effective and lasting change

Summary

In this chapter I presented the analysis and looked at what enables teachers to develop and sustain resilience and the lessons this has for the school organisation. It points to organisational issues and support structures that teachers need in their working lives in order to develop and sustain resilience. Learning from colleagues and experience over time was significant to developing resilience. Negotiating teacher identity successfully was crucial to becoming a resilient teacher. Teachers in this study developed positive coping strategies over time. Student relationships were also important to teacher resilience. The research shows that humour is important for developing relationships and thus is a coping strategy that helps teachers to be resilient in challenging circumstances. The longer someone is teaching the more they can develop these types of relationship within a school

environment. A sense of vocation also had an impact on teachers remaining in the school. The opportunity to support students in their learning and in their day-to-day lives allowed teachers develop their moral purpose and increase their sense of vocation in the job. The role of family and friends had an influence on how teachers coped with being a teacher. Either the family and friends were teachers and this was of great help working out problems relating to school, or family and friends were not teachers and were a diversion from school problems. A positive experience of colleague support has a significant role in teacher retention in this school and in developing resilience. Remaining in the school for many years, they developed relationships of mutual support. It also played a role in supporting them in their personal lives. This support in turn developed and sustained their resilience. The core of this school culture is trust that supports teachers in learning from colleagues, including the Principal, while they grow in confidence in the teacher role. Managing emotions was significant and the role of colleagues, especially the Principal, was crucial.

The data shows that the role of the Principal developing a supportive school culture was pivotal. The Principal led the culture of support for colleagues and students. This built a community where risk was modified and resilience was developed and sustained. The Principal was required to provide a public perception of supporting the teacher. Teachers required the Principal to reinforce their own sense of power and authority. Teachers' experience of Principal support enabled them to recover from short-term setbacks and help them continue to make a difference to the learning and achievements of their students. This in turn helps the teachers develop and sustain resilience in their working lives. The implementation of policy and practice was seen as both a help and a hindrance in this organisation. Teachers required of the Principal to follow procedures in order to de-escalate stressful situations. The open door policy of the Principal allowed space for teachers to deal with grievances. This support developed and sustained their resilience.

The next chapter considers this study and areas of further research are identified. It also considers the implications for the researcher in her professional role.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The final chapter considers this study of how teachers' develop and sustain resilience and lessons for the school organisation. Firstly, the main findings of the study are summarised and considered. Secondly, emerging possibilities for further research are identified. Thirdly, the implications of the findings for the researcher in her professional role are discussed.

This study set out to understand what enables teachers to develop and sustain resilience and what lessons there are for the school organisation. Drawing on the experiences of an inner city school, in a socio-economically disadvantaged area, the life of one school can point to the realities of developing and sustaining resilience in teachers' lives. There is no universally accepted definition of resilience, and in reviewing the literature it was established that it was an unstable construct that involved psychological, behavioural and cognitive functioning in many settings. These settings include the personal, the professional and the organisational. Luthar (2006) found, when reviewing five decades of research on resilience that the phenomenon was influenced by individual circumstance, situation and environment. This study did not concentrate on individuals' strengths but focused on teachers' lives, including experiences from home that impacted on school life. The questionnaire mapped the territory for investigation and provided the basis for the interviews, and the recalling of a critical incident allowed for deeper recollection of teachers' lives. Teachers' recollection of their teaching careers helped to explore experiences and strategies they employed to sustain them on their journey, and provided insights on how they developed resilience.

Themes

Themes emerged from the analysis of the data collected. Four themes were presented in order to help understand what enabled teachers in this school to develop resilience. They were: school culture, teachers' work, policy and practice, and managing emotions. They also provided an insight into protective factors and processes that can develop and sustain resilience in teachers in their work. The presence of a supportive school culture thus emerged as very important to these teachers. The main support source was from:

- Colleagues
- Student support
- The role of the Principal.

Family and friends were also a support in helping the teacher reflect, negotiate and solve issues from school. The role of the Principal in developing the supportive school culture was pivotal. This was done through policy and practice, and in providing emotional support. This in turn had a positive effect on teachers' work and was a reason they remained in the school.

Implications for the school organisation

The implications for leadership in a school organisation are immense. The data from the four themes suggests:

- The role of the Principal is pivotal in developing a supportive school culture.
- Teacher identity deepens but only if sufficient support is provided by Principal.
- The strain on Principal providing support is immense.
- Implementation of policy and practice can be both a help and a hindrance.
- Building other leadership roles is required.
- Teachers require professional support.
- Managing emotions is significant, yet no professional support is provided.
- Support from Principal and colleagues is a significant reason in influencing teachers to remain teaching.

The role of the leaders of a teaching and learning organisation requires of Principals to manage and support aspects of the professional and personal life of the teacher. The outcome is having an effective staff which feels valued and appreciated. They are able to adapt in adversity and implement programmes or initiatives supporting the teaching and

learning in the school. The Principal has an important role in developing and supporting teachers not just at the beginning of their careers but also throughout their careers. The data in this research suggest that as teachers progress through the professional life phases, their sense of identity deepens but only if sufficient support is provided by the Principal.

The strain on a Principal in providing this level of support is immense. Balancing the daily educational and maintenance issues and meeting the expectations of the teachers to respond to their immediate needs is challenging. The Principal himself/herself needs to be resilient and possess a whole range of abilities and talents. This entails an overreliance on one person solving problems. Building capacity in the school through other leadership roles is required to reduce the strain on the Principal and to continue providing the needed support for teachers as suggested in this study. The onerous nature of the Principal's work suggests the need for a professional mentor who could provide support to the Principal and allow him/her space to reflect on actions and feelings. This would assist the Principal greatly in providing the quality of support that teachers need.

The teacher also requires professional support. This study would suggest that the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), responsible for teacher in-service education, needs to include in their provision the space for teachers to reflect on the day-to-day challenges and not just on the content of the curriculum. Teachers' experience of reflection and support at PDST in-service education has the potential to complement the supportive role of the Principal as provider of support.

Managing emotions was identified as significant in this research. Principals and colleagues provided support for this. Yet no professional support is provided for these teachers. The Department of Education and Skills have recently provided occupational health support but in the school setting there is no immediate professional support. Thus those in leadership, either at senior or middle management level, need to be given in-service education on how to support people emotionally, especially in times of difficulty. Lack of such training may result in critical indicators of emotional problems not being recognised in time, with possible negative if not dangerous outcomes.

New challenges

The use of ICT and other technologies in the classroom is bringing exciting but challenging changes to the teaching and learning. Teachers in the past have engaged students by adapting their approaches and curriculum. NCCA (2010, p.35) argues that: 'creating and building on the relationship between school knowledge and the student's 'informal' knowledge is central to the search for more effective learning and teaching approaches'.

It suggests that students need to be engaged in their learning by enabling and allowing them to lead, negotiate and choose *how, what* and *where* they learn. This could be challenging for teachers with a traditional approach, where the teacher only is in control of the teaching and learning experience. To adapt to a situation where the student is leading, negotiating and choosing how, what and where they learn can be very challenging for some teachers. Reflection on the teaching and learning experience is required to make this change.

Teachers may require emotional support in dealing with this new approach. Reflective workshops, focusing on the personal as well as to provide the professional, will be needed to provide the teacher with the confidence to adapt and be resilient in this new emerging context.

Further research

This study is limited as it is based on data collected from a single school. However, the reality of one school may have implications for others. This research did identify gender difference in how teachers manage emotions in their daily lives. Further research is required to identify if this is significant to developing and sustaining resilience for males. While Day and Gu (2007) and Harris and Chapman (2002) suggest that resilience is needed more in challenging schools, a comparative study that includes schools from different types of socioeconomic background could enhance the findings on how resilience is developed and sustained.

The role of parents in more affluent areas on resilience is worth exploring. This study showed that teachers were satisfied with the support offered by parents, but the role was limited to non-adversarial role. A study in a school in an affluent area, where parents are

reported to make suggestions to teachers and the Principal about individual teaching and learning experiences, could explore the positive or negative effects of this type of relationship on teacher resilience.

The NCCA is introducing changes in the Junior Certificate Programme and its certification. The number of subjects taken for examination will be limited to eight. Schools will be given the freedom to develop a curriculum suited to their students' needs and students may be expected to lead and negotiate their learning. This is an ideal opportunity to study teachers and capture their experience of sustaining resilience while they adapt to this new programme.

Finally, this research set out to include the use of electronic data through the use of email. While it was not a success this time, I believe electronic data collection has great potential for further studies. The use of a blog on teacher resilience, inviting comments on the issues as they occur over a significant period of time, could provide rich data that could explore resilience further.

Professional recommendations

The school organisation in this research shows that, while it faces many challenges, it is an effective healthy organisation. However, like all organisations, those who manage it need to be mindful of keeping it healthy in order to develop teacher resilience. Those who manage need to have a moral purpose and be willing to be collaborative. They will need to adapt to the changing world around them and lead others in a collaborative manner. The following are recommendations identified in the research that will enable a school organisation to develop teacher resilience.

Build healthy relationships within the school organisation in order to develop supports to meet the changing demands of the world we live in. Whole staff development days are essential in dealing with the challenging work environment this school offers. Teachers need space to reflect on issues and direction on how to cope. The physical development of the staff room itself is important, as this research identified it as the essential centre for colleague interaction. It requires a space to be able to meet and to talk about issues.

Invest in Professional Learning Communities where teachers in subject departments are given autonomy in developing subject plans. This would greatly encourage professional dialogue. Monitor and develop classroom supports. As the economic challenges impinge on schools, classroom support could be eroded and class sizes increased. Teachers' workload will become overloaded and their resilience may decline.

Teachers could benefit from a mentoring programme. An induction programme for newly qualified teachers has recently been introduced. This needs to be implemented nationwide immediately and made a mandatory requirement to entering the teaching profession. Teachers require further mentoring throughout their teaching careers. The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) needs to look at how it can integrate this into their programme.

A mentoring system for Principals to support them in the daily work is required. This support could be provided by either the trustees of the school or the Department of Education and Skills.

Fostering whole school activities where students and teachers work together on a non competitive activity can enhance this relationship. Also encourage parents and grandparents to participate in school functions and activities in order to maximize the support the home can offer.

Professional implications

Since beginning this research an economic recession has occurred that has reduced salaries, increased the pupil-teacher ratio and left schools with exceptionally limited financial resources. Teachers now need to be more resilient than ever before. Developing and sustaining resilience is essential for an experienced and competent teacher in order to continue to teach effectively. It includes developing skills and competencies for teaching and learning. As a Principal, and through this research process, I have become more aware of the importance and significance of developing and sustaining resilience in teachers, especially during these challenging times. The research process has taught me that time spent supporting colleagues is time well spent. The research has also highlighted the need

to balance this with finding time to provide support for myself as a Principal. In doing this, together with the whole school community, we will be able to develop and sustain resilience during a time of educational change in difficult economic circumstances. Developing and using research skills in my school has informed practice and improved outcomes. All this has enabled me to develop an effective teaching and learning culture that supports change and enhances the school as a learning organisation. I hope this study also can contribute to supporting other schools to build school communities and cultures with the confidence to adapt and be resilient in the context of emerging changes in education in Ireland.

Reflective Statement

The new Junior Cycle curriculum is a great opportunity for educational change in Ireland. The key to its implementation is finding the balance of support for teachers, students and parents in helping them to adapt to the change. Overload of work and lack of support could make the school organisation toxic. Communicating change clearly, listening to concerns and issues, and working together to develop policy and practices that support the learning community will be required. Building this working relationship will develop resilience and help us sustain the process of change. The role of the Principal is pivotal. In Ireland, at present, the burden of administration and school maintenance limits the time the Principal can devote to issues of teaching and learning.

Adapting to the new Junior Cycle curriculum and assessment, which involves teachers developing short courses to meet their own students' learning needs, will be a test of teachers' skills and competencies. A supportive and collegial teaching staff is required for this change. As this research shows, teachers' work can be understood in three different but interrelated ways: individual, relational and organisational. For teachers change is both personal and professional. Realising lasting changes can involve changing familiar, habitual practices that have stood the test of time. As a leader in a Junior Cycle network school I need to be sensitive to the essential connection between the personal and professional in the lives of teachers to effect educational change. Leading this change will indeed be a test

of my own school leadership, in developing a school culture of collegiality to improve school effectiveness. Teacher resilience will be required to sustain the journey.

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Appendix i

Developing and Sustaining Resilience

Questionnaire

A. About Background

1a Sex male female

1b How many years have you been teaching?

1c How many years have you been teaching in this school?

1d Qualifications

BA

BSC

BComm

MA

MED

PHD

Ed. D

Higher Diploma in Ed.

Other Please specify

1.e **What subjects do you teach?**

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4 _____ 5. _____

1.f **Which of the following positions do you hold?**

Head of Subject Department

Tutor

Year Head

Special Duties Teacher

Assistant Principal

If you have a post of responsibility, briefly state the area you are responsible for in your post.

B. About work

1. Would you describe your work as stressful? Yes No

If yes, what makes it stressful?

2. What kinds of things do you do with school-based stress while in school?

3. What kinds of things do you do with school-based stress when out of school?

4. What problem-solving strategies have you developed in school to deal with stress from school?

5. What role does your family play in supporting you in your work?

6. What role does the local community play in supporting you in your work?

7. I would like you to write down your definition of resilience in the space below.

8. What role do the following play in keeping you resilient?

Work colleagues

Students

Leadership

Career Professional Development

9. Where do you see yourself in terms of your career in ten years time?

10. What factors would keep you in teaching?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THE RESEARCH? (This will involve an interview, a critical incident report to be filled in and an email to explore the theme further.)

IF YES, PLEASE FILL IN THIS COLOUR PAGE AND PLACE IT IN THE ENVELOPE MARKED INTERVIEW.

Many thanks for your co-operation with this questionnaire.

Treasa Leahy

YES I WOULD LIKE TO BE INTERVIEWED

NAME:

CONTACT NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Appendix ii

Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. CAREER TO DATE/SKILLS AND TALENTS IN BECOMING A TEACHER

Brief summary of your career to date. How long have you been here? What subjects and what levels do you teach?

What influenced your decision to become a teacher? What skills and talents did you bring to the classroom and your career?

2. HIGHPOINTS AND LOWPOINTS IN YOUR CAREER/RESPONSE

Prompt Questions:

What are the day-to-day stresses that you face teaching in the school? What have been the highpoints and low points (e.g frustrating or/and disappointing moments) of your career? Can you tell me about some of them? How have these choices influenced your career? Why did you choose this school to teach in?

3. DEFINITION OF RESILIENT/ PERCEPTION THAT THEY ARE RESILIENT

What does it mean to you to be resilient? Do you consider yourself resilient? Why?

4. RECENT EVENT/RESPONSE/CHOICE/HELP/ AND SUPPORT

Tell me about two incidents (day-to-day stresses and most stressful) you have experienced teaching here?

Prompt questions:

- What happened?
- What did you do?
- How did you feel?
- How did you deal with what happened?

5. SCHOOL/DES SUPPORT

What type of support do you have in the school system that helps you during difficult events? Describe how the school staff (Management, Administration and Teaching Staff) supports you during difficult times.

6. PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

What other types of support both personally and professionally do you draw upon? Who do you talk to?

- At school
- Outside school

In an ideal world what other supports would you want?

7. RETENTION

Have you ever considered withdrawing from teaching? If so why and what helped you decide to continue on in education?

Appendix iv

Table 2 - Open codes Developed in Phase 1 of Analysis			
Topic	Code Description (Illustrative)	Primary Source Codes	Frequency (n)
Emotions	<i>Participant identifies or describes emotions of affect of everyday stresses or incident</i>	14	151
Coping Strategies		14	141
Positive Coping strategies	<i>Positive Coping strategies as identified by the literature</i>	14	134
Positive Coping strategies (2)	<i>Positive Coping strategies as identified by the literature</i>	13	132
Negative Emotions	<i>Experiences that gave teachers negative emotions</i>	13	71
Reflection as coping strategy	<i>Reflection as a positive coping strategy that can lead to action or change of behaviour or thought process</i>	12	68
Students and Emotions	<i>Teachers emotions in relation to students</i>	13	66
School based positive coping strategy	<i>Action taken in school that was a positive coping strategy.</i>	13	59
Principal Support	<i>Support received from Principal for every day hassles or incident</i>	14	55
Colleague Support		14	54
Positive emotions	<i>Experiences that gave teachers positive emotions</i>	14	54
Early Teaching Experience	<i>Looking back on early teaching experience</i>	12	49
Colleagues and Emotions	<i>Teachers and emotions in relation to colleagues</i>	12	48
Stresses		15	47
Family and Friends Support	<i>Support received from family and friend for every day hassles or incident report</i>	15	46
Positive Colleague Support	<i>Positive actions or words about colleagues support</i>	13	42
Person and Emotions	<i>Teachers and their personal attitude or feeling in relation to emotions in a situation</i>	10	39
Leadership and Emotions	<i>Teachers and emotions in relation to Principal, trustees, and other leaders</i>	8	36
Student Support	<i>Support given by students either through achieving educational goals, taking the teachers side during challenging situations, or simply being loyal and sharing in humorous encounters.</i>	13	34
Critical Incident		14	33
Retention	<i>Reasons for remaining in the school</i>	11	32
Parent Support		11	26
Responsibility	<i>What influence did the role of past of responsibility or just responsibility for a project have on resilience</i>	10	23
Negative Colleague Support	<i>Colleagues support that is negative</i>	8	22
Outside school activity	<i>Action or activity outside school for positive coping strategy</i>	11	22
Change in school culture	<i>The school changed in culture or context</i>	8	22
Career Professional Development		11	18
Coping strategies negative	<i>Coping strategies that are identified by the literature as negative</i>	10	18
Prior teaching experience	<i>Where and how long they taught before the present school</i>	12	15
Previous teaching experiences	<i>Experiences prior to teaching in present school</i>	8	14
Community support		8	13
Defining Resilience		11	12
Policies and Procedures	<i>Policies and procedures that support teachers</i>	8	12
Maintaining Wellness		10	10
Advice for New Teachers	<i>What advice would you give to someone starting teaching in this school</i>	9	10
Influence on Resilience	<i>Who or what was an overall influence on the participants development of resilience</i>	8	10
Highpoints	<i>Experiences that teachers identify as highpoints and increase their motivation in teaching and sustain them in the job</i>	7	10
Physical effect	<i>Physical feeling dealing with stress</i>	6	10
Family or friends and Emotions	<i>Teachers in relation to family or friends and emotions</i>	5	8
Seeking Challenges	<i>Actively seeking challenges in their job</i>	3	7
Community and Emotions	<i>Teachers and emotions in relation to the community including parents or guardians</i>	5	7
Ideal Support		5	5

Appendix v

CATEGORISED AND HIERARCHICAL CODE DEVELOPED IN PHASES 2 & 3 OF THE ANALYSIS

School Culture		14	705
	Change in school culture	6	17
	Critical Incident	14	33
	Defining Resilience	10	11
	Early Teaching Experience	12	49
	Emotions	14	151
	Colleagues and Emotions	12	48
	Community and Emotions	5	7
	Leadership and Emotions	8	36
	Person and Emotions	10	39
	Students and Emotions	13	66
	Highpoints	7	10
	Negative Colleague Support	8	22
	Parent Support	11	25
	Policies and Procedures	7	11
	Positive Colleague Support	13	41
	Positive Coping strategies	13	132
	Reflection as coping strategy	12	68
	School based positive coping strategy	13	59
	Principal Support	13	52
	Principal problem solver	7	13
	Supportive experience or response	10	24
	Unsupportive response or experience	6	20
	Responsibility	10	23
	Retention	10	31
	Seeking Challenges	3	7
	Stresses	14	46
	Student Support	12	33
	Developing a relationship with students	1	2
	Student achievement	4	10
	Student appreciation	1	1
	Student honesty and humour and sensitivity	8	12
	Student Loyalty	5	6
	Students with emotional or learning difficulties	5	5
	Verbal support and intervention	0	0
	Unsupportive student support	6	11

Teachers' work and how they cope		15	924
	Advice for New Teachers	9	10
	Colleagues and Emotions	12	48
	Community and Emotions	5	7
	Family or friends and Emotions	5	8
	Leadership and Emotions	8	36
	Person and Emotions	10	39
	Students and Emotions	13	66
	Community support	7	12
	Coping strategies negative	10	18
	Critical Incident	14	33
	Early Teaching Experience	12	49
	Emotions	14	151
	Colleagues and Emotions	12	48
	Community and Emotions	5	7
	Leadership and Emotions	8	36
	Person and Emotions	10	39
	Family and Friends Support	15	45
	Highpoints	7	10
	Ideal Support	5	5
	Maintaining Wellness	10	10
	Negative Colleague Support	8	22
	Negative Emotions	13	71
	Parent Support	11	25
	Physical effect	6	10
	Policies and Procedures	7	11
	Positive Colleague Support	14	44
	Positive Coping strategies	14	133
	Outside school activity	11	22
	Reflection as coping strategy	12	68
	School based positive coping strategy	13	59
	Positive emotions	15	55
	Principal Support	13	54
	Prior teaching experience	12	15
	Responsibility	10	23
	Retention	11	32
	Seeking Challenges	3	7
	Stresses	14	46
	Administration and management	1	3
	Being evaluated by others	4	5
	Coping with change	5	11
	Dealing with colleagues	6	9
	Maintaining discipline	8	10
	Poor working conditions	1	1
	Role conflict and ambiguity	5	5
	Self-esteem and status	7	12
	Teaching pupils who lack motivation	7	9
	Time pressure and work load	5	9
	Student Support	12	33
	Developing a relationship with students	1	2
	Student achievement	4	10
	Student appreciation	1	1
	Student honesty and humour and sensitivity	8	12
	Student Loyalty	5	6
	Students with emotional or learning difficulties	5	150 ⁵
	Verbal support and intervention	0	0

Policies, Procedures and Practice		15	510	
	Career Professional Development	10	17	
	Critical Incident	14	33	
	Early Teaching Experience	12	49	
	Emotions	14	151	
		Colleagues and Emotions	12	48
		Community and Emotions	5	7
		Emotion regulation	9	37
		Leadership and Emotions	8	36
		Person and Emotions	10	39
		Students and Emotions	13	67
	Parent Support	11	25	
	Policies and Procedures	12	26	
	Principal Support	13	54	
	Prior teaching experience	12	15	
	Responsibility	10	23	
	Retention	10	31	
	Seeking Challenges	3	7	
	Stresses	14	46	
	Student Support	12	33	

Emotions		Colleagues and Emotions	12	48
		Community and Emotions	5	7
		Emotion regulation	9	37
		Leadership and Emotions	8	36
		Person and Emotions	10	39
		Students and Emotions	13	67
	Parent Support		11	25
	Policies and Procedures		12	26
	Principal Support		13	54
	Prior teaching experience		12	15
	Responsibility		10	23
	Retention		10	31
	Seeking Challenges		3	7
	Stresses		14	46
	Student Support		12	33

Appendix vi

Table 1- Demographics

Case	Change of responsibility	Frequencies of change	Gender	Home responsibilities	Professional Life Phase
Nodes\Cases\Abbie	0	4	Female	No	8-15
Nodes\Cases\Angela	2	0	Female	No	31+
Nodes\Cases\Cathal	1	0	Male	No	8-15
Nodes\Cases\Cynthia	2	2	Female	Yes	31+
Nodes\Cases\Elaine	1	2	Female	No	8-15
Nodes\Cases\George	1	6	Male	Yes	16-23
Nodes\Cases\Grace	1	2	Female	Yes	8-15
Nodes\Cases\Joyce	2	2	Female	Yes	31+
Nodes\Cases\Mavis	2	1	Female	Yes	31+
Nodes\Cases\Victoria	1	1	Female	Yes	31+