Turnaround Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Educational Resilience in a Disadvantaged School: A Qualitative Exploration

by

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B.A., University of Alberta, 2000

A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming
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ABSTRACT

A promising new approach for improving the education of students' "at-risk" of academic failure is focusing on educational resilience. The purpose of this research study was to examine the issue of educational resilience from a teacher's perspective. Participants were four elementary teachers from a disadvantaged school who were nominated as fulfilling the criteria of a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). The participants participated in a qualitative interview in which their perceived influence, beliefs, attitudes, and practices in the process of fostering resilience were explored. Findings suggest that the teachers were aware of the influence they have on their students' resilience. This influence was developed primarily through the personal relationships they had with their students. The participants had a strong belief that it takes just one person to influence a child's resilience. Implications of the study were addressed in relation to teacher training, intervention, hiring practices, and teacher burnout. The major limitations of the research and suggestions for future research were outlined.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful to many individuals for their heart-warming contributions and steadfast support during the lengthy and arduous process of this thesis. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of my helpful, supportive, encouraging, and ever-patient supervisor, Dr. Wanda Boyer. The sincere and valued efforts of my committee members, Dr. Margaret Robertson and Dr. Geoff Hett, have also been appreciated. A special thank-you is extended to the principal of the school in which I investigated this phenomenon. Of course, I am extremely thankful that the participants were more than willing to open both their hearts and minds to this research. Special recognition for their support, encouragement, and willingness to help, regardless of the cost, is extended to three of my brightest colleagues, Theresa VanDomselaar, Stephanie Versteege, and Heather Wilson.

I would like to begin by dedicating this work to my number one supporter, my Dad, Ellis Oberle. Without his inspiration for the topic, sincere interest, insightful comments, and willingness to lend an ear, this task would never have come to fruition. Patience, understanding, and caring are qualities that are wonderfully exemplified by my other biggest supporter, my Mom, Lynda Oberle. Thankfully, my sister, Michelle Buckley, also did her utmost to help when times were tough. She lent a thoughtful ear and provided support when it was needed most. I am also forever indebted to Andrew McCormick, who was willing to sacrifice our togetherness in order to support me in my dreams. A true strength was felt in his encouragement, acceptance, and endurance during all the hardships over the past two years.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Resilience theory is based on an optimistic view of life (Benard, 1998). This is a positive view focusing on hope (Werner, 1993), a construct so often neglected in today's society. Resilience research continues to shed a positive light on the future. Elements of hope and optimism are essential ingredients in a compassionate society. With these elements in place, beliefs that an individual has the ability to overcome disadvantaged life circumstances and flourish in today's society naturally follow. Researchers in the area of resilience continue to improve the recipe with strong assurances that the outcome will result in the building of a "compassionate and creative citizenry of the future that will restore our lost vision of social and economic justice" (Benard, 1998, p.35). Research in the area of resilience is contributing to a philosophical revolution of human development. The revolution is moving from a pathology-based medical model to a pro-active wellness model that focuses on the emergence of competence and empowerment (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). A new focus such as this is encouraging for both researchers and practicing professionals.

The researcher's interest in the topic of resilience stems mainly from work as a Psychology Intern in a Provincial Prison. Many individuals shared their stories of adversity and the researcher was moved by their willingness to move through these adversities and continue pushing towards overcoming them. Research on resilience later provided more encouragement for interest in the topic. The researcher became very hopeful when encountering the possibility that teachers can act as a vehicle for resilience. Although the researcher is not a teacher, this cross-professional study acknowledges the

reality that an individual does not have to be a teacher in order to be interested in the impact that teachers have in the classroom.

One of the greatest challenges in education today is helping those students who are "at-risk" for academic failure. It is important to address the educational issues faced by students "at-risk" because there has been an increase in their numbers over the past decade. Several factors are associated with students being "at-risk" of school failure, and in contrast to this, factors or processes that protect against school failure have also been found (Read, 1999). A promising new approach for improving the education of students "at-risk" of failure focuses on educational resilience (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1998).

Within the classroom, teachers exert a huge transformational effect over the children they teach. Teachers can use this influence to enable students in difficult life circumstances. To teach students about their own abilities, teachers must first recognize their own influencing capabilities (Benard, 1998). They can do this by examining their own beliefs, first and foremost, and by looking at what they do to foster educational resilience in their classrooms. Examining teachers' beliefs about their influence in this process of fostering resilience in the classroom will point to positive changes that can be made at the level of preservice teacher education, the level of the practicing teacher, and the school as a whole. Teachers have always fulfilled an important function in students' lives; however, it is now apparent that they are one of the most important building blocks for today's resilient youth (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). Improving educational practices is a concrete and valued goal of this study.

Statement of the Problem

What are elementary school "turnaround teachers' " (Benard, 1998) beliefs about fostering educational resilience in "at-risk" students?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present research study was to examine the issue of resilience from a teacher's perspective. Specifically, teachers' beliefs about their roles in fostering educational resilience are of interest. Examining "turnaround teachers"' (Benard, 1998) perceived influence on the educational resilience of children and how they maintain this influence through their attitudes and practices in the classroom will contribute to the existing literature on educational resilience. This study was also intended to illuminate further the research on children's resilience. Implications for the educational system, include teacher training, the development of relevant interventions, teacher burnout, and hiring practices. Furthermore, this research extends the knowledge of previous resilience research on "at-risk" children by focusing on the often neglected Canadian population.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are offered to ensure proper interpretation of the terminology used in the study:

"At-Risk"- This term "refers to children who differ in many ways and it can be applied to any group who is experiencing adversities that impede their academic and later life success" (Wang et al., 1998, p.4).

Educational Resilience - "The heightened likelihood of success in school despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994, p.46).

Environmental Protective Factors – Environmental protective factors refer to the events that are external to a child's nuclear family and to his or her personal self (Rhodes & Brown, 1991). "Turnaround teachers" are described as building three environmental protective factors (Benard, 1998):

Competence – Positive and high expectations that reflect a teacher's deep belief in students' competence (Benard, 1998).

Connection – Developing caring relationships with students through trust, compassion, and unconditional love and by meeting emotional and physical safety needs (Benard, 1998).

Contribution – Providing outlets for student contribution in a physically and psychologically safe and structured environment (Benard, 1998).

Protective Factors – The characteristics within the individual and environment that reduce the negative impact of stressful situations and problems (Henderson, 1996).

Resilience – The process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1991).

Teacher Beliefs – "Eclectic aggregations of cause effect propositions from many sources, rules of thumb, generalizations drawn from personal experience, beliefs, values, biases, and prejudices" (Clark, 1988, p.5).

"Turnaround Teacher"- Mentors who build in their own styles and ways crucial environmental protective factors for their students (Benard, 1998).

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations were imposed by the researcher:

1. The study was limited to female "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) from an elementary school in a disadvantaged area. All of the teachers involved in the study were full-time teachers from a public elementary school in the Western Prairie Region of Canada.
2. The study was limited to participants who were dually nominated by other elementary school staff members as fulfilling the criteria of "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) and who were present at a recruitment session and available and willing to be interviewed by the researcher.
3. The study was limited to data collected during June of 2002.
4. The number of study participants recruited did not exceed four (N = 4).
5. This study was limited by the investigator's abilities as both a researcher and an interviewer.
6. All variables, conditions, or populations not so specified in this study were considered to be beyond the scope of this investigation.

Assumptions

The following assumptions prevailed throughout the study:

1. The participants were expected to be open and honest with their responses.
2. The participants were expected to accurately carry out the instructions provided by the researcher and respond appropriately to the questions asked.
3. The participants were expected to have an accurate insight into their own beliefs to be able to represent them adequately to the researcher.

4. The participants were expected to have an appropriate level of verbal fluency, in order to respond to the researcher's questions.
5. The participants were expected to set aside enough time to dedicate to a thorough interview.
6. The researcher was expected to approach the data collection process by personally identifying values and beliefs of resilience through a process of bracketing in order to study the subjective states of the participants (Boeree, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Summary

This chapter has highlighted the optimistic view of resilience theory and research. An introduction to the importance, applicability, and implications of the proposed study regarding teachers' beliefs about their role in fostering resilience has been outlined. A discussion of the research question under examination and the purpose of the study followed this. Definitions of the terms were then provided to prevent any confusion, and the delimitations and assumptions of the study were outlined.

The next chapter begins by providing a historical background of resilience research and reflecting upon the theoretical framework of the present study. The rationale is then developed for the present study through an overview of relevant research in the areas of poverty and school failure to an exploration of educational resilience and teachers' role in this process. This review follows a developmental progression from an examination of risks to a focus on resilience (Lohrasbe, 2001). To conclude this chapter, teachers' beliefs and their importance in the classroom are described.

Following this chapter, Chapter Three provides an explicit description of the methodology of the study. The general approach, research design, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and the procedures for data analysis are also delineated in the third chapter. In Chapter Four, the results of the study are outlined. In Chapter Five, these results are discussed within the context of the research literature and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory. Chapter Five also outlines the limitations of the study, the possible implications of the study, and provides suggestions for future research. Finally, a conclusion to the study is provided in this last chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter provides a detailed background regarding resilience theory, and research, within the area of this study. The construct of resilience is reviewed using the resilience literature and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory as a theoretical framework. Some of the most influential studies in the resilience research area are presented for further understanding. Other issues discussed include the risk of poverty, specifically focusing on the "at-risk" student. An examination of protective factors found in the literature is then detailed and this section is concluded with a focus on the elementary educator and the potential that teachers have to foster resilience in their students. A progression over time from risk to resilience is exemplified by this literature review (Lohrasbe, 2001).

The Construct of Resilience

Resilience research contains both cross-cultural and life span developmental studies. These studies typically follow children born into seriously high-risk conditions. These risk conditions have included families where parents are mentally ill, alcoholic, abusive, or criminal. Communities that are poverty-stricken or war-torn have also been examined. Findings suggest that at least 50 percent of youth growing up in these high-risk conditions develop social competence and go on to lead successful lives (Benard, 1996). These stressful events in life have been shown to challenge certain children rather than to intensify their vulnerability (Rutter, 1986; Werner, 1986).

Questions have been raised about why some children adapt or cope more successfully than others in high-risk environments (Armstrong, 1994). It is these

questions which have acted as an incentive in the search for an understanding of resilient behaviour. Research in the fields of invulnerability, vulnerability, coping, and stresses have all played a critical role in the development of the construct of resilience (Jew, Green, & Kroger, 1999). Although acceptance of the term has been established among researchers, the definition of resilience is still a topic of controversy.

In terms of a definition, differences in terminology appear to exist. The Oxford Dictionary (1992) defines resilient as "readily recovering from a set back" (p. 773). Anthony (1974), one of the first to discuss the concept of resilience, described what he called "psychologically invulnerable" children. He explained that resilient children are those children invulnerable to adversity.

However, Rutter (1979, 1985) rejected the notion that a child has fixed features of invulnerability and pointed to the relativity of resistance to stress. He asserted that the resistance to stress a child may demonstrate does not necessarily apply to all life circumstances, and it is not innate. Other researchers agree that resilience is relative to both environmental and constitutional factors, and varies with a life span according to circumstances (Armstrong, 1994; Cohler, 1987). Werner and Smith (1992) identified the concept of resilience as the positive counterpart of vulnerability, which signifies an individual's susceptibility to a disorder, and risk factors. Risk factors were understood to be hazards that increased the likelihood of a negative developmental outcome in a group of people. Hauser, Vieyre, Jacobson, and Wertreib (1985) define resilience in children as the capacity of those who are exposed to identifiable risk factors to overcome those risks. In addition, these children go on to avoid negative life outcomes such as delinquency, behavioural problems, psychological maladjustment, academic difficulties, and physical

complications. As evidenced by the preceding discussion, preference for a more relative concept of resilience has emerged. This implies that the degree of this attribute can change over time and is affected differentially by various factors (Rutter, 1985).

Although these definitions or explanations of the construct of resilience all share a common basis, the minor differences that exist between them can become problematic. While it is still premature to agree on a definition of resilience, this may be a future goal of investigators. In the interim, specifics on the operationalization of resilience need to be included in all research reports (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993). For the present study of teacher perspectives, instead of beginning with an objective definition of resilience, each teacher was asked to define resilience based on their own beliefs (Kagan, 1988). If this task proved difficult for the participants, a short form of the following widely accepted explanation or definition of resilience was used to prompt them. Resilience has been described as the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation, positive functioning, or competence (Garmezy, 1993; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1991; Wolff, 1995) despite high risk status, chronic stress, or following prolonged or severe trauma (Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993). The use of their own definitions allowed comparisons to be drawn between all of the teachers' understandings of the term and permitted the sharing of their own perspectives on the construct. In addition, this line of questioning encouraged teachers to discuss students they perceived as resilient, based on their own beliefs.

With all of this in mind, it is interesting to examine how the construct of resilience has unfolded through time to arrive in its present form. The transitional elements of risk

and resilience research are examined and this is followed by a thorough overview of the progression over time of the most influential studies of resilience.

A Historical Overview from Risk to Resilience

Risk and resilience have been conceptualized as opposite poles of the differences in responses to stress and adversity, with risk representing the negative pole (i.e. succumbing to adversity) and resilience the positive (i.e. overcoming adversity). To understand the topic of resilience, it is first necessary to examine the opposing pole of risk (Doll and Lyon, 1998).

Resilience literature has examined many different risks stemming from biological risk factors to stressful life events (Werner & Smith, 1992). Rutter (1985) argues that the study of risk and risk factors has progressed through at least three phases. The first phase was concerned with negative life experiences as serving to produce or precipitate the development of mental health problems (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Rutter, 1985). These studies demonstrated that severe environmental deprivation placed infants at serious risk from developing cognitive, social, and emotional problems and reduced the likelihood they would develop a sense of well-being (Doll & Lyon, 1998). Rutter (1985) states that these claims went beyond any evidence available and that the estimated damage of an individual's mental health was overestimated in terms of both universality and irreversibility.

The second phase of studies developed a more detailed conceptualization of how different types of risk relate to varying types of outcomes. The perspective of adult psychiatry and child psychiatry were included in this genre (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Rutter, 1985). Rutter (1971, 1985) and Gordon and Song (1994) both suggest that the results of

this genre show that life experiences vary considerably in their risk potential and resulted in an extensive list of risk factors (Doll & Lyon, 1998).

The third phase of studies transformed the study of risk to considerations of resilience (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Rutter, 1985). This third iteration of studies has progressed for more than two decades and has looked at the impact of multiple risk factors and protective factors, singly and in combination (Doll & Lyon, 1998). Several important and influential studies have been instrumental in this transition from an examination of risk to one of resilience.

A considerable number of studies have examined resilience using longitudinal methods. In one of the most ambitious studies of resilient children, Werner and her colleagues (Werner, 1992; Werner & Smith, 1977, 1982, 1992) studied a large sample of youths in Kauai for a period of 32 years, beginning with the birth of 698 babies in 1955 (Rak & Patterson, 1996; Werner, 1994). The Kauai Longitudinal Study (as cited in Doll & Lyon, 1998) holds a position of special importance in the research on resilience because the study established the model that many researchers have subsequently followed and the population examined was predominantly non-white and of middle to lower socioeconomic status. Werner (1992) used a multifaceted assessment procedure to determine how well her participants adjusted to the relational and work aspects of living. The researchers had access to wealth of file data due to the cooperation health, education, social services, and juvenile justice divisions of the Hawaiian government (Doll & Lyon, 1998). A research team of pediatricians, public health nurses, public social workers, and psychologists collected data (Doll & Lyon, 1998).

The study began with an assessment of the reproductive histories and the physical and emotional status of the mothers. It continued with an evaluative look at the cumulative effects of perinatal stress, poverty, parental psychopathology, and disruptions of the family unit on the physical, intellectual, and social development of the children at 2 and 10 years (Werner & Smith, 1977, 1982). A further progression of the study examined those children who had successfully coped with biological and psychosocial risk factors. The study was extended to predict adolescent and then adult maladjustment, including mental illness, educational disabilities and delinquency (Doll & Lyon, 1998). Later follow-up at age 32 examined competence in adult life through a semi-structured interview and community records (Werner, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992). The researchers followed the cohort until 1979 (Doll & Lyon, 1998).

A further update on the resilient sub-sample was reported in 1989 (as cited in Doll & Lyon, 1998). Several clusters of protective factors and processes that appeared in the records of the high-risk children and played a part in the development of their successful adaptation in adult life were discovered (Werner, 1993, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992). *Cluster one* included temperamental characteristics of the individual that helped to elicit positive responses from caring persons. *Cluster two* included skills and values that led to an efficient use of individual abilities. Examples of these are realistic educational and vocational plans and regular household chores and responsibilities. *Cluster three* included parental characteristics and parenting styles that reflected competence and fostered self-esteem in the child. *Cluster four* consisted of relationships with supportive and trustworthy adults. Among these "surrogate" parents were mentors, grandparents, youth leaders, and church group members. Of particular relevance to the present study is the

finding that certain teachers acted as a protective factor or buffer against adversity for the participants of this study. Finally, major life transitions were found to change the trajectory of a large proportion of the high-risk children to the path of normal adulthood (Werner, 1993). Nearly one third of the sample appeared to be protected against poor outcomes by combinations of these various factors (as cited in Doll & Lyon, 1998).

Using a cohort of participants who were adolescents during the depression, Elder and his colleagues conducted studies on the long-term effects of economic hardship on the psychosocial development of families and their offspring during the Great Depression (as cited in Doll & Lyon, 1998). They found that a combination of "difficult" characteristics of children and harsh parenting by fathers tended to exacerbate risk for later problems, whereas "positive" characteristics of children and/or a warm relationship with their mother tended to protect against later dysfunction (Doll & Lyon, 1998).

The epidemiological studies of Rutter and his colleagues looked at samples in inner city London and on the Isle of Wight (as cited in Doll & Lyon, 1998) who had experienced various risks. Risks examined included parental marital discord, low socioeconomic status, overcrowding or large family size, parental criminality, maternal psychiatric disorder, or placement in government care. It was found that combinations of two or more stressors decreased the likelihood of positive outcomes, and additional stressors increased the impact of all pre-existing stressors (Rutter, 1979). In addition to isolating risk factors, they also identified a combination of factors that tended to reduce children's risk for disorder. These factors tended to be grouped into three main areas: the child's personal characteristics, the family unit, and the community and external supports (as cited in Doll & Lyon, 1998).

Garmezy (as cited in Doll & Lyon, 1998) summarized the findings on resilient children who had experienced unusually stressful situations such as war, concentration camps, and natural disasters. He found that children who were themselves competent, or adaptive, and received consistent care, fared well under these extreme conditions of stress (Garmezy, 1983). A child's temperament, a warm and cohesive family, and a source of external support were found to moderate such stressors. A child's temperament, and in turn their competence, was found to be evidenced in their activity level, reflectiveness in meeting new situations, cognitive skills, and positive responsiveness to others (Garmezy, 1991).

Long and Vaillant (1984) located a large proportion of Glueck and Glueck's (1950) control group from their 1940 Boston Underclass Study on inner-city delinquency (Doll & Lyon, 1998). In Glueck and Glueck's (1950) original study, a sample of 456 Boston inner-city junior high school youths formed a nondelinquent control group to be compared with an equal number of young males (ages 12 - 16 years) who had been sent to reform school (Long & Vaillant, 1984). Long and Vaillant's (1984) reconstituted sample of the non-delinquent youths consisted of 399 men from a highly impoverished neighborhood in the inner city. The men and their adult families participated in follow-up interviews in which information was gathered on the men's economic self-sufficiency, sociopathy, mental health, and overall social competence. Resilience was examined in a subset of these high-risk men (Doll & Lyon, 1998). The researchers wanted to compare the midlife outcomes of children from differently disadvantaged homes (Long & Vaillant, 1984). Long and Vaillant (1984) concluded that if these disadvantaged individuals were given the opportunity to engage in steady employment and occupational mobility, they

did not perpetuate their initial circumstances. Like the preceding studies, one must take into consideration the time-period of this research. In the case of Long and Vaillant's (1984) study, at the time the cohort was first examined, in the 1940's, the employment conditions were strikingly different than they have been over more recent years.

The Newcastle Thousand Family Survey study (Kolvin, Miller, Fleeting, & Kolvin, 1988) investigated the emergence of criminality among the entire birth cohort of the city of Newcastle in 1947 (Doll & Lyon, 1998). The aim of the study was to examine whether the children who grew up in 'deprived' families were more "at-risk" of offending during later childhood and adulthood (Kolvin et al., 1988). Six risk factors were examined: marital instability, parental illness, poor care of the children and home, social dependency, overcrowding, and poor mothering ability. Small red seals were placed on a family's file if they exhibited any of the risk factors. Families were visited annually for the next 15 years and again when the cohort was 31 years old. The researchers found that a combination of risk factors (i.e. poverty, low parental education, family dysfunction, child maltreatment, and parental mental illness) tended to predict later criminal behaviour for a large number of participants. The results suggested that children raised in 'deprived' families were, indeed, more "at-risk" of engaging in criminal behaviour (Kolvin et al., 1988). However, a number of participants also avoided this negative outcome and these individuals were described as more likely to have received effective and kind parenting (Doll & Lyon, 1998).

Mothers with emotional problems who had been identified before the birth of their children were included in the sample of the 1993 Rochester Longitudinal Study (Sameroff, Seifer, Baldwin, & Baldwin, 1993). They were compared to a matched control

group of mothers and children. An evaluation was conducted on environmental risk factors. Specifically, intelligence scores of children in this longitudinal study were assessed at 4 and 13 years. These scores were related to social and family risk factors (Sameroff et al., 1993). These risk factors included ethnic disadvantage, low parent education, parental unemployment or underemployment, large family size, father absence, stressful life events, maternal mental illness, and poor parenting among others (Doll & Lyon, 1998). A calculation was completed, determining a multiple environmental risk score, based on the number of high-risk conditions a child experienced from the above list of risk factors (Sameroff et al., 1993). By age 13, high-risk, but resilient children, were distinguished by their higher self-esteem, greater internal locus of control, effective parental teaching, limited parental criticism, and low rates of maternal depression (Doll & Lyon, 1998). According to Sameroff et al. (1993), the multiple risk scores explained one-third to one-half of the children's variance in IQ at age 4 and 13.

These studies have formed the basis for all future directions in the area of resilience and are often cited (Doll & Lyon, 1998) in the literature. Overall, there appear to be few consistent standards regarding research methodology and data analysis techniques, as evidenced in the preceding literature review. Thus when comparing these studies on resilience, the results and conclusions are sometimes conflicting, and it is difficult to generalize findings across studies (Heller, Larrieu, D'Imperio, & Boris, 1999). Future research on resilience should try to adopt more methodological standards, whether in a qualitative or quantitative approach. An example of a methodological standard is a

consistent operational definition of resilience. Generalization may not always be possible, but standards in the research can be a useful aid in understanding (Heller et al., 1999).

Following a similar pattern of risk to resilience (Lohrasbe, 2001), school-based resilience literature will be reviewed next. The combination of these studies with their differing methodologies and focus converge sharply on the various risk factors that appear to challenge an individual's resilience and the protective factors that have been found to ameliorate these risks (Doll & Lyon, 1998). To study resilience, first the risk to development must be specified. Second, the criteria by which an individual's adaptation is to be judged successful must be outlined, and third the specific features of the individual or the environment that help to explain resilient outcomes must be known (Masten, Hubbard, Gest, Tellegen, Garmezy, & Ramirez, 1999). The following review will outline these specific elements as they pertain to this study. This review will begin with an explanation of the risk of poverty, disadvantage, and school failure. In contrast to these risks, we find protective factors or processes. A review of known protective factors will narrow to a focus on the school, educational resilience, and further to the role of teachers and what can be done to encourage educational resilience in students. Through this presentation of the literature a rationale for the present study is sequentially developed. Just prior to the review of risk and protective factors, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is introduced by way of gaining perspective on these complex concepts and providing a structured explanation of the possible interaction of these factors.

Ecological Systems Theory

Resilience research can be theoretically framed in terms of the literature and resilience theory, as well as by drawing on ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ecological systems theory narrows the focus on resilience through an explanation of why some children display resilience in the face of adversity, while others do not (Howard & Johnson, 2000). The multiple factors that affect resilience, whether risk factors or protective factors, are taken into account in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Howard et al., (1999) contend that all future research on the construct of resilience should adopt this ecological framework. The advantage with this approach to the topic is that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory takes into account both the nature and nurture points of view as it sees both the child's individuality and the ecological systems in which the child is nested as contributing to the child's development.

In Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the development of a child takes place within the context of a series of concentric circles (Werner, 1986). Accommodations occur between the developing individual and the changing settings in which the child comes in contact (Werner, 1986). The theory refers to four different settings. The *microsystem* is defined as the child's immediate environment (i.e. the home or classroom). The *mesosystem* refers to interactions among microsystem factors (Howard, et al., 1999). This pertains to the interrelations a child may have with two or more settings, such as the playground and the classroom (Werner, 1986). Factors in the community make up the *exosystem* (Howard et al., 1999). These settings can indirectly affect the individual. An example would be the system responsible

for transporting the child between home and school (Werner, 1986). The *macrosystem* is the fourth setting in which a child develops. This refers to the institutional patterns and belief systems in which the individual is embedded, such as laws, values, and customs (Howard et al., 1999; Werner, 1986). When elements in one of the systems change, the other systems are affected. Therefore, children located at the centre of these systems are affected by the changes that occur in the environments that surround them. Ecological systems theory helps to explain why some children are put "at-risk," and why some are not (Howard & Johnson, 2000). With this theory in mind, the review will now move through a discussion of the various risk and protective factors involved in the development of resilience.

A Risks Perspective

Poverty and Disadvantage

The risk of poverty in our society is apparent in all of the studies mentioned above in the historical overview. In addition to these studies, a few simple statistics point to the prevalence of poverty in our country. Canada has the world's second highest rate of child poverty among industrialized countries. Forty percent of the welfare recipients in 1996 were children. In this same year, 500,000 children and their families lived in housing that did not meet federal standards for affordability and adequacy (The Canadian Council on Social Development, 1996). In Canada, the prevalence of poverty was 13.1% in 1998 in economic families, and 19.0% in people under the age of eighteen (Statistics Canada, 1998). In 1994, the average income of poor families with children was $8,300 below the poverty line (The Canadian Council on Social Development, 1996).

A longitudinal study of a poverty sample growing up in the 1980's demonstrates the increasing importance of resilience to poverty over time. Egeland et al. (1993) found poverty and the factors associated with poverty to have had a pervasively negative effect on child adaptation. The sample studied by Egeland et al. (1993) appeared to be functioning more poorly than the individuals studied by Werner and Smith in Hawaii. Poor families of the 1980's appeared to have experienced different, if not more, overall risk factors than the poor families of Werner's study in the 1950's.

Chronic poverty provides a longitudinal elucidation of the possible effects of cumulative stressors (Garmezy, 1993). Impoverished neighborhoods, particularly those in inner cities, are threatened by a set of risks that includes limited resources, lack of employment opportunities, disorderly and stressful environments, poor health care and widespread academic failure (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994). The child, in the most central circle of Bronfenbrenner's systems, is put 'at-risk' by an accumulation of these negative influences (Rutter, 1987).

Poverty inevitably provides a multitude of stressors, yet the literature outlined above in the historical overview reveals the patterning of positive behaviours in many children exposed to economic and/or social deprivation (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993). That many escape this sequence is a tribute to the resilience of those in poverty (Garmezy, 1993). Inner cities can also be rich in culture, institutions, and other resources that help mitigate against adversity and promote healthy learning and development. Perhaps, more importantly, these resources can further the individual's capacity to overcome adversity and to develop educational resilience (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997). Social science research has identified poverty as the factor most likely to put a

person "at-risk" for various negative outcomes, including school failure (Benard, 1997). The present study will take place within a disadvantaged school population, where the likelihood of poverty, and consequently school failure are greater than in other schools.

Children "At-Risk" for School Failure

Beginning in the late 1980's, "at-risk" views emerged. This identifier can be applied to any group who is undergoing hardships that thwart their academic and later life success (Wang et al., 1998). In the present study, the term "at-risk" refers to the increasing number of children in today's classrooms that are "at-risk" for school failure (Christiansen, 1997; Read, 1999). They include students who are hungry, those living in shelters, those alienated by the cultural norms of school, and students who have greater-than-usual instructional needs. Poverty, however, is the most pervasive condition in this group of "at-risk" individuals. Poverty is a cause of poor school achievement in itself (Wang et al., 1998). For children who have been exposed to such risks, it is necessary to search for the presence of "protective" factors that presumably compensate for those "risk" elements that are so prevalent in the environments of many disadvantaged children (Garmezy, 1993).

A Protective Factors Perspective

Protective factors are characteristics within the individual or environment that reduce the negative impact of stressful situations and problems (Henderson, 1996). One must keep in mind that any characteristic or factor that may promote resilience is likely a part of multiple processes involving adversity and individual adjustment (Gest, Neemann, Hubbard, Masten, & Tellegen, 1993). Therefore, it is appropriate to move away from the study of "factors" associated with resilience to discuss the "processes" related to

resilience (Gest et al., 1993). There is a strong need to identify the specific processes that interrupt the risk cycle, and explain their contribution to risk over time (Rutter 1987; 1994).

In addition, particular characteristics rarely serve exclusively risk or protective functions. Individuals who are resilient in one index often are not on other indices, and they are usually not equally resilient across contexts (Freitas & Downey, 1998). Children, who are considered resilient in the educational system, may not demonstrate this attribute in other areas. This attribute may also change over time as the child develops and encounters different environmental circumstances (Rutter, 1985). The resiliency model contends that when an individual experiences adversity they also experience protective processes that buffer the adversity. If the individual has enough protection, the person adapts to the adversity without experiencing a significant life disruption. The person may even move to a level of increased resilience because of the strength and healthy coping mechanisms they developed while overcoming the particular adversity. Without the necessary protection, the person can experience psychological disruption. Over time, the person may reintegrate from the disruption. Reintegration can result in a dysfunction or characteristics of maladaptation or it may also result in a return to homeostasis or increased resilience. This model offers further hope for those experiencing adversity. Adversity does not necessarily lead to dysfunction and even if an initial reaction of dysfunction occurs, over time this can improve (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

The interdependence of the home, school, classroom, peer group, and community contexts are stressed in resilience theory (Wang et al., 1998). Indeed, these *microsystem* elements and their interactions (termed *mesosystem*) can affect a child in a positive

manner. The stronger the links between these systems the better the child in the center will be protected from life's hardships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Although the present study's intention was to examine the role of the teacher in the classroom, one must keep in mind that a teacher is not a protective factor independently, but one that works in unison with several other factors. These factors may be found in the classroom and join with other environmental processes. Therefore, resilience is developed through an intermingling of these factors, and the teacher is certainly not the only protective figure at work. The combination of resources in each of these environments can help children overcome limitations in any single context (Wang et al., 1998). The specific process at work between these differing environmental contexts was considered beyond the scope of the present study. This study, however, may have illuminated the process specifically contained within the classroom.

Rhodes and Brown (1991) point to the interrelationship of three primary protective factors: personal characteristics, family experiences, and environmental circumstances. They assert that these three factors influence whether or not a child will overcome the stressors that have put him or her "at-risk." The present study focused on a specific environmental circumstance, the role of the teacher in the classroom. These factors or processes will be briefly reviewed before narrowing the focus to the school and the teacher's role in the classroom.

Personal Characteristics as Protective Factors

Children are the central figures of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. They are influenced not only by the environments surrounding them, but by their own individuality (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Children differ in their capacity to exploit positive features of

their environment and not succumb to challenges in their lives. Some are more successful than others in averting the risk of school failure. Attributes of children's personalities, temperaments, and abilities contribute to their capacity to exploit their environment (Masten et al., 1991). Personal characteristics include both acquired abilities and various circumstances. Factors such as age, gender, intelligence, personality, special needs, individual strengths, and weaknesses help to determine the relative vulnerability of children to specific types of crisis situations (Rhodes & Brown, 1991).

Several studies have provided information about the personality factors that distinguish resilient children from those who become more easily overwhelmed by stressors, such as poverty and disadvantage. The factors most often mentioned are the ability to gain positive attention from others, an optimistic attitude, the ability to visualize life positively, the ability to be alert and autonomous, to seek novel experiences, and to maintain a proactive perspective (Rak & Patterson, 1996). Furthermore, resilient children are characterized by verbal fluency, a sense of competence, good problem-solving skills, high self-control, flexibility, an even temper, and openness to new experiences. Caregivers find these characteristics attractive, prompting them to provide reinforcing comments to the children, and thereby further promoting resilience (Wang et al., 1998).

Another salient protective factor implicated in resilience research is the belief in one's own effectiveness, particularly in terms of self-efficacy and self-confidence (Masten et al., 1991). Self-efficacy increases as a result of mastery experiences. Feelings of self-efficacy increase the likelihood that resilient children may enter a situation more prepared for effective action by virtue of their self-confidence. Subsequently, successful mastery of a difficult situation would be expected to increase self-efficacy and reinforce

efforts to take action (Masten et al., 1991). Resilient children also benefit from their interpersonal skills, their ability to screen out or remove themselves from negative conditions, their resourcefulness, as well as their healthy expectations and clear sense of purpose (Wang et al., 1998).

In terms of child temperament, it is useful to turn to a line of research by Thomas, Chess, and Birch (1970). These researchers reject both the "nature" and "nurture" concepts and they contend that personality is shaped by a constant interplay of both temperament and the environment. A child's temperament may do well or poorly with the opportunities found in the child's social setting (Thompson, 1999). They found that children do show a distinct individuality in temperament in the first few weeks of life and these original characteristics tend to persist in later years. They also lend credit to the role of the environment, suggesting that environmental circumstances may modify children's reactions and behaviour. The influence of temperament on personality or adjustment depends on the way that temperament and the environmental circumstances exist well together (Thompson, 1999). Thomas, Chess, and Birch (1970) differentiate three primary types of temperament, the easy child, the difficult child, and the slow to warm up child. Certain temperament qualities may enhance a person's vulnerability to various stressors and contribute to maladjustment. On the other hand, these attributes may provide buffers against the stressors and strengthen a child's resilience through positive mood and adaptability (Thompson, 1999). A child growing up in a disadvantaged environment may do well, or demonstrate resilience, if they tend to demonstrate the temperament of an easy or adaptable child (Thompson, 1999).

Resilient children engage in many activities and have a belief that they determine their own lives. They further their own development through a selection of supportive relationships and environments. In school, they choose academic programs, activities, and assignments that enhance their skills, extend their experiences, and increase their opportunities for learning. They elicit their teachers' support and protection and receive attention under adverse circumstances (Wang et al., 1998).

Intelligence is mentioned consistently in studies of successful adaptation in the face of adversity (Monaghan-Blout, 1996). Radke-Yarrow and Brown (1993) compared resilient and troubled children to a well comparison group and found that troubled children with serious persistent problems had lower scores on the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) and poor academic achievement when compared to the well children. Antisocial children and criminal adults have been found to have lower intellectual functioning, and children who make it out of high-risk environments often have strong intellectual skills (Masten, 1994).

Smith and Prior (1995) assessed stress resilience in 81 school-aged children and adolescents. Resilient and non-resilient children were compared. They found that individual differences in child intelligence were related to academic adjustment. The processes underlying the connection of good cognitive skills to competence are not yet entirely clear (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). It is possible that more intelligent children may solve problems or protect themselves better or that they may better attract the interest of teachers. Another possibility is that they may have better self-regulation skills that help them function at school and avoid behaviour problems. In contrast, children with worse intellectual skills may find it difficult to negotiate threatening situations,

disengage from school because of feelings of failure, or fail to learn as much from their experiences (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). In any event, intelligence is a complex protective factor, likely working in unison with other individual or environmental factors to help prevent against the ill effects of poverty.

The role of personality, temperament, and abilities in a child's resilience serve as a reminder of the complexity of human development and the multifaceted ways that these influences combine to determine individuality (Thompson, 1999). Family can also provide experiences that may influence a child's resilience.

Family Experiences as Protective Factors

Family experiences and members play a major role in child development and in the systems approach espoused by Bronfenbrenner (Rhodes & Brown, 1991; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Families can actively foster resilience within and outside the home. Children who experience positive parent-child relationships, family warmth and cohesion, and an absence of conflict in their homes are more resilient. Despite poverty and stress, consistency and well-balanced discipline in the home can aid in resilience. Full participation in family life through parental encouragement and high expectations, can also be beneficial for a child in developing resilience and may serve to protect a child from a high-risk background (Werner & Smith, 1982; Rak & Patterson, 1996; Wang, et al., 1998; Rutter, 1987).

Certain family conditions that promote resilience in children have been identified. For example, the age of the opposite-sex parent seems to play a role. The spacing of births in the family is also important. Four or fewer children spaced more than two years apart appears to be an optimal age difference and spacing rate. Crucial to the

emergence of resilient persons is the presence of significant bonds with a parent, or relative (Farber & Egeland, 1987; Rak & Patterson, 1996). Interestingly, research points to mother's employment outside the household during childhood as not having any negative effects on resilient children, and possibly contributing to the competence and independence of resilient children (Werner & Smith, 1982).

Frequent relocations by a child's family can be a serious and pervasive risk factor for student learning among poor children. Wang et al. (1998) identified that when children move from a community of lower socioeconomic status to one of higher, they often suffer academic difficulties. Family involvement in children's education also enhances children's school achievement, school attendance, and decreases drop out rates, delinquency, and teenage pregnancy rates (Wang et al., 1998).

Environmental Circumstances as Protective Factors

Environmental circumstances include events external to the child's nuclear family and to his or her personal makeup. Included are relationships with peers, the community, the school, teachers, and others. Events that happen outside the home, such as school experiences, extracurricular activities, and social pressures are also included. These influences can work in concert or individually to either promote or hinder resilience (Rhodes & Brown, 1991). In ecological systems theory, these structures or events can work individually to make up the child's immediate environment or *microsystem*, or interact with one another to form the *mesosystem*. The factors or external events in the wider system would establish the child's *exosystem* (Howard et al., 1999).

After the family, peers provide the most influential source of support for resilient children. Peers can provide children with a sense of being valued, cared for, and loved.

Peer networks can facilitate the development of a resilient individual by providing a stable and supportive source of concern (Wang et al., 1998). Conversely, peer groups can inhibit positive educational outcomes by pressuring others to engage in misconduct rather than educational tasks. Peers also have a large impact on students' self-perceived school competence and attitude toward school. A peer group's attitude toward school is a predictor of group members' grades, achievement test scores, and perceived competence. Participation in the peer group itself influences learning. Interacting with students who have high achievement motivation, positive attitudes toward school, and a positive academic self-concept can benefit students "at-risk" of school failure (Wang et al., 1998).

Communities can affect their residents' sense of well being, safety, acceptance, and worth (Wang et al., 1998). Community supports can be very influential, especially when the child's difficulties originate within the family (Weinreb, 1997). High concentrations of economically disadvantaged families often lack a well-integrated network of social organizations for children in their communities. The services provided to impoverished urban communities are often fragmented (Wang et al., 1998). There is a special need to strengthen such informal support for those children and their families in our communities which appear most vulnerable (Werner, 1984).

Communities can encourage resilience to the risk of school failure through the availability and integration of a variety of human services. Other resilience-promoting factors include the expression of prosocial values (Wang et al., 1998). The expression of consistent social and cultural norms among community members and organizations helps children learn what constitutes desirable behaviour. Opportunities for children to participate as valued community members also serve as a protective factor. Werner and

Smith (1982) point out that, when a child finds a source of esteem in hobbies, this enables a protective factor to develop. If a child makes a contribution to their own social network, it can facilitate the development of resilience (Weinreb, 1997).

School as a Protective Factor. According to Rutter (1979), one source of external protective factors can be the school. More than any institution except the family, schools can provide the environment that fosters resilience in today's children and tomorrow's adults (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Research has shown that school environments can protect or buffer the effects of adverse conditions and thereby contribute to competence in students placed "at-risk" (Nettles, Mucherah, & Jones, 2000; Weinreb, 1997). On the other hand, many schools fail in the critical matter of basic learning. This is particularly evident in schools with a high concentration of students from economically disadvantaged homes (Wang, 1997). Increasingly, researchers are examining the role schools play in promoting educational resilience (Wang et al., 1998).

Various characteristics of effective, high achieving schools serving students "at-risk" for school failure have been identified by researchers (Wang et al., 1998). Schools that protect against these adverse conditions establish high expectations for student achievement, provide opportunities for participation in the classroom and the school, and provide caring and support for the students (Nettles et al., 2000; Weinreb, 1997). These schools tend to be smaller, more nurturing, more inclusive, and more involved with families and the community than lower achieving schools. They tend to be more structured and orderly. Behavioural expectations are clear, and children have a role in their determination. Both students and teachers have a sense of involvement and belonging (Wang et al., 1998). Schools provide a variety of arenas for building

competence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Education itself is protective when knowledge and problem-solving skills are fostered (Masten et al., 1991). Schools serve as a critical support system for children seeking to evade the negative outcomes of poor environments (Garmezy, 1991). Simply put, anything that occurs within the family, the community, and the school – the microsystem environments in which the child is located – can have a large impact on the development of resilience (Howard & Johnson, 2000). By identifying and implementing those features that act as protective factors, educational environments can be designed to be resilience-promoting (Wang et al., 1998).

Research studies have described effective schools serving students "at-risk" of school failure, but they have also raised questions about what teachers can do to foster students' achievement and development (Wang et al., 1998). It is important to note that few studies have actually examined the role of teachers as protective factors. Those that do exist have found that teachers can have a profound and enduring effect on their students (Weinreb, 1997).

The general risks to an individual's resilience as well as the more specific risks of poverty, disadvantage, and school failure have been reviewed. Further to this, the valuable factors or processes involved in aiding resilience have been outlined. We will now shift our examination to a closer look at a specific form of resilience, and the factors or processes involved in encouraging this form of resilience within the school framework.

Fostering Educational Resilience in Disadvantaged Schools

A promising new approach to dealing with the risk of school failure is focusing on educational resilience (Read, 1999). Educational resilience refers to students' capacity to achieve academic and social prosperity despite exposure to personal and environmental

adversities (Wang et al., 1998), such as poverty and disadvantage. Much work remains to add to our understanding of educational resilience (Wang et al., 1998). However, we do know that educational resilience is a potentially powerful construct for fostering resilience and the educational success of children who are enduring stressful life circumstances (Wang et al., 1997). The challenge to schools is to provide the relationships and involvement that can foster the development of this resilience (McMillan & Reed, 1994).

Increasingly, researchers are examining the role schools and their contexts play in promoting educational resilience (Wang et al., 1998). Only a few recent studies have focused on the classroom as a learning environment of resilient and nonresilient students from disadvantaged circumstances. Waxman and Huang (1996) found that resilient students from an inner city middle school had significantly higher perceptions of involvement, task orientation, rule clarity, satisfaction, pacing, and feedback than nonresilient students.

Similarly, Padron, Waxman, & Huang, (1999) compared the motivation and learning environments of resilient and nonresilient elementary students. They found that resilient students perceived a more positive learning environment, were more satisfied with reading and language arts programs, and spent more time interacting with and listening to the teacher than their nonresilient counterparts. Johnson (1997) asked Canadian principals and teachers from elementary, junior high, and high schools to reflect upon their experiences with "at-risk" students who demonstrate resilience. A broad range of protective factors were identified including: human relationships, student characteristics, family factors, community factors, and school factors. These studies have

examined the students from disadvantaged circumstances, but they have neglected to look at the experiences of the teachers who work in these environments.

A common finding in the resilience research is the influence of teachers, often unknown to them, to tilt the scale from risk to resilience (Benard, 1997). While some teachers may feel that assisting with these risks is beyond them, research points to educators' actions that can alleviate such problems by fostering educational resilience. Educational resilience can be enhanced by teachers adopting a new vision of their students as competent individuals who can make decisions, gain knowledge and skills, and succeed in a fulfilling life (Wang et al., 1998). Not all poor children are educationally disadvantaged (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989). This is particularly true when many protective factors or processes are evident in their environment. Key protective factors that can mitigate against academic failure are a teacher's concern, high expectations, and role modeling, particularly for students in difficult life circumstances (Wang et al., 1997).

In order to understand the influence a teacher has on a child, at the *microsystem* level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), it is necessary to investigate a teacher's role in the classroom. The present study focused on the teacher's role in protecting against students' school failure. This information was obtained by investigating teachers' beliefs about fostering educational resilience in the classroom.

Teachers with a Resiliency Attitude

Wang et al. (1998) state that teachers have the most intensive contact with children, other than their parents. Therefore, teachers have many opportunities to show their care and support to their students (Wang et al., 1998). Teachers are beginning to recognize the construct of resilience. Studies offer validation for their emerging belief

that all students have the potential to succeed. These educators are developing a "resiliency attitude," the critical first step in fostering resilience in school (Henderson, 1996).

This attitude is based on knowledge that there is good probability that everyone has some capacity for resilience that can be encouraged by supportive individuals. This allows those professionals working with troubled children to maintain a positive attitude, and this in turn, acts as a model for them (Benard, 1996). This is an optimistic possibility and has important consequences for building motivation. The research literature on intrinsic motivation summarizes many factors that have been empirically tested and found to enhance a child's intrinsic motivation, thus increasing their interest in learning. Deci and Ryan (1987) point to the role of autonomy in learning. Autonomy-supportive events are those that increase choice and often lead to enhanced motivation. Lepper and Hodell (1989) also agree that a feeling of empowerment gained from a sense of control can have positive effects on subsequent motivation and interest. The researchers point to curiosity, challenge, and fantasy as promoting intrinsic motivation, as well. Hidi (1990) also contends that interest can influence learning. Interest can influence how we choose to select and process information.

Connected with children's intrinsic motivation is playfulness (Boyer, 1998). Playfulness is a style of play that refers to the development and use of a playful attitude in learning. Various attributes have been found to be related to this attitude in learning. These include the characteristics of imagination, curiosity, increased communication, and persistence. This style of play has been known to enhance children's intrinsic motivation for learning. In a learning context, this style of play permits children to make mistakes

and it deemphasizes the role of perfection. This allows children to develop relationships with others, develop flexible thinking, commitment and a love for learning (Boyer, 1998).

Individual teachers may not be able to change class size, increase funding, or remedy all the conditions that place children "at-risk," but they can have a demonstrable and positive impact on students through their caring attitudes, high expectations, (Benard, 1998; Wang et al., 1998) and promotion of intrinsic motivation. Protective processes can be encouraged through teacher-student interactions. The existence of even a single protective factor can alleviate several adversities. For example, a caring teacher can enhance student learning, create a feeling of belonging, and serve as a role model (Wang et al., 1998). A teacher can act as a protective figure and try to do everything possible to enhance and encourage students' competence. This protective influence can remedy the antisocial tendencies, lackluster performances, and poor self-esteem that can be the outcome of risk elements present in an environment marked by disadvantage (Garmezy, 1991).

Elementary educators need to realize that their work in classrooms and schools is one of the most worthy societal enterprises; they are helping to protect children from a stressful world (Garmezy, 1991). The belief that every youth has the ability to become resilient necessitates the examination of every teacher's own beliefs about resilience, and how this is connected with what they do with their own students in the classroom (Benard, 1998).

With this attitude in place, fostering and promoting the learning of protective factors becomes the next step (Henderson, 1996). Teachers can empower students through their implementation of the "resiliency attitude," but this must be combined with

research-based, instructional practices that promote educational resilience and facilitate learning for students "at-risk" of student failure. Teachers can invent many pathways that lead to educational resilience among their students (Wang et al., 1998).

Teachers who Foster Educational Resilience in the Classroom

Wang (1997) states that one of the next steps in the research on educational resilience is to identify the individual attributes that contribute to resilience development and to then determine how such development can be promoted through intervention. An examination of the elementary teacher should lead in this new direction. Teachers frequently and actively demonstrate resilience-promoting strategies by showing caring, interest and concern for students, expressing respect, and having high expectations of their students (Wang et al., 1998). Teachers can foster resilience by facilitating classroom instruction to make the best of student's strengths, show them that they have the ability to become resilient, and providing growth opportunities in the classroom (Benard, 1997). These teachers function more as facilitators of learning than transmitters of information. When teachers give students greater autonomy and facilitate their active engagement with learning, students benefit. They use practices that support children's active inquiry, through experimentation, discussion, reflection, and engagement in the acquisition and instruction aspect of the classroom (Wang et al., 1998). Moreover, teachers can use positive action strategies such as brainstorming, creative problem solving, goal setting, and critical thinking that will help foster resilience in the classroom. In this way, students can direct their own learning. They become semi-independent learners and are therefore, more likely to become educationally resilient (Wang et al., 1998).

Teachers who setup well-managed classrooms promote educational resilience by guaranteeing that time for learning is a classroom priority. This is beneficial because children placed "at-risk" of school failure benefit most when they have a lot of learning time. Classrooms with fewer interruptions and less time spent on management have higher achievement than classrooms that do not make this a priority (Wang et al., 1998). Part of a well-managed classroom includes the use of consistent discipline. Effective classroom management places learning as the highest priority. This means that these teachers have a repertoire of techniques for engaging students and keeping them on task, as well as for minimizing disruptions. Teachers' techniques for maintaining discipline may include the use of humor, teaching the value of perseverance, or being a good role model. An effectively managed classroom may also have teachers that develop positive connections with their students and focus on preventative techniques such as immediately establishing rules and limits (Morrish, 2000). Well-managed classrooms have clearly laid out procedures that are determined by students, as well as teachers. These classrooms emphasize the importance of students and teachers respecting each other's activities and values (Wang et al., 1998).

Teachers who respect and respond to student diversity promote the educational resilience of students. Using knowledge of student differences, teachers can choose appropriate curricula to build upon students' backgrounds and prior knowledge, employ effective teaching strategies, and adapt and design classroom environments and assessments to meet students' learning needs and abilities (Wang et al., 1998).

Teachers who demonstrate the "resiliency attitude" and set up resilience-promoting classrooms can have a significant impact on their students. Sagor (1996)

mentions that building resilience in students need not take substantial time from teachers' other instructional pursuits. The techniques mentioned above may already be a part of many teachers' repertoires. Many educationally resilient children attribute their success, in part, to a caring or supportive teacher. They state that this person had high expectations for their success, believed in and listened to them, encouraged them, and praised them. Children who cite the influence of these teachers recognize that these mentors both respected and listened to them (Wang et al., 1998).

The "Turnaround Teacher" in Disadvantaged Schools. A powerful rationale for mentoring comes from the longitudinal research of Werner and others who have found that natural mentoring relationships are a protective factor for children growing up in stressful community and family environments (Benard, 1992). Werner (1984) found that a favorite teacher acted as an important buffer against adversity in the lives of young resilient school children. These favorite teachers, whether at the elementary or the high school level, took a personal interest in them, were not just academic instructors, but were also confidants and positive role models (Coburn & Nelson, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1989). Likewise, in qualitative studies, school staff were mentioned by resilient "at-risk" high school students as having taken a personal interest in them and being important to their success (Geary, 1988; Coburn & Nelson, 1989). McMillan and Reed (1994) in a study of elementary, middle, and secondary students found that resilient students had little difficulty naming one or more persons who had been "significant" in helping them. These role models or mentors can act as potential buffers for "at-risk" children of different ages (Dugan & Coles, 1989; Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Werner, 1984).

Teachers are in a unique position to provide support for "at-risk" children (Christiansen, Christiansen, & Howard, 1997). Mentors serve as critical support for children who are "at-risk" due to chronic poverty (White-Hood, 1993). Children can be helped while in the classroom through a process of modeling (Weinreb, 1997). Teachers not only provide institutional support for academic content and skills, but they can also help students to develop the values and attitudes needed to persevere in their school work and to achieve a high level of academic performance. Moreover, they also promote educational resilience by encouraging students to master new experiences, believe in their own efficacy, and take responsibility for their own learning (Wang et al., 1997). It seems evident that professionals can have an impact on "at-risk" children, although the positive end result may not always be obvious (Weinreb, 1997).

Benard (1993) states that resilience can be cultivated through a child's solid, meaningful connection with just one very caring individual. She has identified this type of teacher as a mentor or "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). These "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) are described as building, in their own personal styles and ways, three crucial environmental protective factors: *connection*, *competence*, and *contribution*. These factors are analogous to caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to participate and contribute. They provide and model these protective factors and enable positive development by meeting children's basic needs for safety, love and belonging, respect, accomplishment, and learning (Benard, 1997).

These teachers are characterized as caring individuals who develop relationships with their students in which they "*connect*" with students by showing compassion, nonjudgmental support and to other resources when needed. These teachers have a deep

belief in their student's *competence* and self-righting capacities. These teachers not only see the possibilities, they also recognize children's existing competencies and use these strengths and interests at the beginning point for learning. High expectations then become easier for students to meet. "Turnaround teachers" provide outlets for students to *contribute* to their own learning process (Benard, 1998).

The "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) characteristics provide the criteria used for the selection of the teacher participants in this study. Hurley's study found that mentoring as remediation of the "at-risk" student has received scant attention (as cited in Fehr, 1993). This study investigated the role of the resilience-promoting elementary teacher, or mentor, and their beliefs about fostering resilience in the classroom. These participants acted as experts on the topic of fostering resilience in the classroom, and individuals who were experiencing this phenomenon. By delineating experts' beliefs, the best practices and attitudes that foster resilience were revealed. In addition, an examination of their own perceived influence was conducted. This information could have an impact on new and challenged teachers and on how they begin or continue to think and practice in "at-risk" classrooms.

Teachers' Beliefs

Belief systems are important to the nature of teaching and learning (Read, 1999). Teachers' beliefs or perceptions concerning educational issues can differ from their actual practice due to many outside factors. An increased amount of research suggests that the beliefs teachers' hold can relate to their perceptions. These perceptions may, in turn, affect their classroom behaviours (Read, 1999). These beliefs may be related to teaching effectiveness (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Clark, 1988; Koehler, 1988).

Teachers who believe that all children are capable of learning and contributing to society hold them to high academic standards and expectations. Teachers need to examine how a child's behaviour affects their own feelings and actions in the classroom (Wang et al., 1998).

To believe in elementary students' resilience requires that teachers believe in their own capacity to transform and change (Benard, 1998). Garmezy (1991) states that educators need to be more aware of the significant contributions they make in providing children with the capability to withstand multiple stressors in their environments. With the realization of this positive influence, teacher burnout may become less of a risk and prompt greater understanding. Consequently, elementary teachers should reflect personally on their beliefs about resilience (Benard, 1997).

Little attention has been given to individual teachers and their perceptions. Read's (1999) study on fourth and fifth grade teachers from three elementary schools was based on the premise that much can be learned directly from teachers, especially those who work in "at-risk" environments. They compared elementary teachers' perceptions of effective instructional strategies for resilient and non-resilient students and the important aspects in children's lives leading to their resilience. Likewise, Werner and Smith (1992) agree that because adversity may be attributed to an adult, such as a teacher, it is important that teacher beliefs be addressed when examining factors that foster resilience. In another qualitative study on middle school teacher perceptions, the researcher examined the nature of a teacher leader's role in promoting professional and school-wide resilience (Patterson, 2002). This study took place in resilient schools and the findings suggest that creating a climate of caring and support for teachers and students and

communicating high expectations build resilience for teacher leaders, their peers, and the students they teach.

According to a review of effective school characteristics, many studies have found evidence that teachers have lower expectations for "at-risk" students (Edmonds, 1986), which directly or indirectly lower student achievement. For this reason it is possible that elementary teachers' perceptions or beliefs, practices, and expectations affect the learning outcomes of low-achieving students (Read, 1999). By holding difficult children to high expectations, teachers demonstrate their belief that all students can learn and thus, they promote students' engagement in the classroom (Wang et al., 1998). The present study took these findings an additional step further by examining elementary teacher's beliefs about their own perceived influence on educationally resilient "at-risk" students in their classrooms. The concept of "educational resilience" was not specified in the studies reviewed above.

Johnson, Howard, and Oswald (1999) in a study of primary, junior primary, and secondary schools found that female teachers are more likely to adopt approaches with their students that facilitate listening, support, and counsel. These communication styles extend caring, empathy, and understanding to students (Johnson et al., 1999) and it is these characteristics that are exhibited by the "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). Therefore, only female participants were included in the present study. It was explained to the possible participants that the study was limited to female teachers in order to limit the sample size and because the literature states that female teachers' approaches are most similar to that of the "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). This comment was qualified when the researcher explained that this certainly does not mean that male

teachers are not "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998). This purposeful sampling also allowed for a certain level of comfort for the interviewer and participant during the interview.

In the present study, teachers at the elementary level were chosen based on the following rationale. Elementary school children spend a considerable amount of time with their classroom teachers (Shumow, Vandell, & Posner, 1999). Elementary students are more likely than older students to indicate that teachers contributed to their success in school. The perceived influence of school and teachers has been inversely related to grade level; the higher the grade level, the less influence. For younger students, teachers play an important role in their experiences and successes (McMillan & Reed, 1994).

In a similar study, Johnson et al. (1999) examined various levels of teachers' views about the resilience-promoting factors of "at-risk" students. This Australian study used a quantitative approach to assess teachers' views about what influences the development of resilience in children and what they do to foster resilience. They found that teachers tend to undervalue their degree of influence and the help they offer in promoting protective mechanisms. In the present study, Canadian individuals were qualitatively interviewed based on a nomination from other elementary school staff as being influential in students' lives. This in-depth study resulted in rich information from a small sample of participants, as opposed to the narrow simplification of data found in the quantitative approach (Patton, 1990).

Few studies have considered resilience processes from a qualitative perspective (Smokowski, Reynolds, & Bezruczko, 1999). Examining teacher's beliefs necessitates a qualitative approach. Studies of teachers which focus on the individual teacher as the unit

of analysis are important to arrive at an understanding of the "teaching experience." This understanding is critical for the learning to teach process for developing teachers, and for an effective support for worthwhile teacher change (Richardson, 1990). For the same reason, and to show greater appreciation for the subjective nature of risk experiences, it has been suggested that new studies need to focus on the inner experience of the individual. Carefully designed qualitative studies that attempt to provide insight into the phenomenological world of resilient individuals, including personal reflections and perceptions about negotiating risk situations, may provide the invaluable processes used to overcome adversity (Doll & Lyon, 1998).

The present study, qualitatively examined "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) approaches in the classroom, specifically their own perceived influence in fostering resilience, the attitudes they exude towards their students, and the practices they use to encourage resilience in their "at-risk" students.

Summary

A review of the construct of resilience, the development of the resilience research over time, and the various risks and protective factors or processes documented in the resilience literature was offered for further understanding in this chapter. Circumstances, such as poverty, that can put a child "at-risk" for school failure where outlined. Protective processes that can help promote a child's resilience to the risk of school failure where outlined, culminating in an examination of the school and protective elements within this specific context. A potential protective element within the school is the elementary school teacher.

Little research has examined the protective influence or beliefs of teachers. A teacher can have a very influential role in fostering educational resilience in "at-risk" students. This ability to influence is established by the literature referring to the "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). This type of elementary teacher participated in the present study. The beliefs that these individuals have about their own persuasiveness in the classroom, their perceived influence, attitudes, and the resilience-promoting strategies they use were examined. The concluding section of this literature review established the need for qualitative studies in the area of teacher's beliefs. This research will add to what is already known, correct past discrepancies within the literature, contribute to Canadian literature on resilience and extend the findings into alternate areas of exploration. The next chapter will outline the methodological elements of the present study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

In this chapter, the specifics of the study pertaining to "turnaround teachers' " (Benard, 1998) beliefs are defined. The general approach, research design, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and procedures for data analysis are profiled in relation to the chosen methodology.

General Approach

The general approach of the present study was qualitative. "Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, and bring meaning to them" (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p.119). Through the qualitative research paradigm a "profound understanding of the world can be gained through conversation and observation in natural settings..." (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p.119). This type of research acknowledges the lived experience of a few individuals. This approach explains causal relationships among social phenomenon by assigning human intentions a major role. Researchers are able to become personally involved with research participants. The results directly pertain to the discovery, and are found during the course of the exploration (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Qualitative researchers objectively study the subjective states of their subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This approach can be very beneficial when studying a newer construct, or a construct that involves an element of human personality, as is the case with the construct of resilience in the present study. The rationale for choosing this approach is that the topic needs to be explored, and a detailed view of the topic is needed (Creswell, 1998).

Research Design

The research design chosen for the present study was a phenomenological approach to the research question. This design was chosen in order that the phenomenon of fostering resilience and the meaning it holds for the participants might be examined (Creswell, 1998). In this design, researchers search for the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intention of consciousness where experiences contain the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, meaning, and image (Creswell, 1998). Researchers attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions of people in particular situations (Bogan & Biklen, 1992). Phenomenological researchers draw on the participants in the study who describe the experience under investigation orally, in response to interview questions. Subjects are chosen based on their ability to function as informants, by providing rich descriptions of the experience being investigated (Valle & Halling, 1989).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) would describe a teacher's role as fitting into the *microsystem* of a child, the classroom. He notes that a critical term within the explanation of a *microsystem* is the word *experienced.* This refers to the assumption that the features of an environment include not only objective properties, but also the way in which these properties are perceived by the persons in the environment. Therefore, his theory places a strong emphasis on the phenomenological view. By doing this he accounts not only for the ecological aspects of the environment, but the theory also contends that the aspects of the environment that are most powerful in psychological growth are those that have meaning to a person in a given situation. This connection between phenomenology and

Bronfenbrenner's theory lends further support for the inclusion of both of these elements in the present study.

Phenomenological research is necessary in order to illuminate the phenomena under study or to understand the experience of the individual (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). In the present study, elementary teachers fitting the criteria of "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) were interviewed in order that they could describe the beliefs they held about their involvement in the phenomenon of fostering educational resilience in their students. Specifically, the researcher looked at the meaning that participation in this event had for them.

Bracketing. As mentioned above, a researcher employing a phenomenological research design should be very careful to be both non-judgemental and objective when conducting the interview. Although researchers do their best to enter a setting without bias, researchers do generally have certain assumptions about what they are studying. These can have to do with religious beliefs, political ideology, culture, or experience. Researchers are people and have their own opinions, beliefs, and prejudices (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Bracketing is much more than having an awareness of biases, it is having openness to what is found (Boeree, 1998). However, researchers do their best to guard against these by reflecting on their own way of thinking (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The process of bracketing, or guarding against these presumptions, is established by keeping detailed sources of information, immersion in the field, and a continual re-examination of one's own beliefs and attitudes. Additionally, the interviewers' primary goal is to add to knowledge, not pass judgement on a setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In this case, the researcher went through a personal process to list her own characteristics that might bias

her efforts as a research interviewer. She then wrote about how she might counteract these biases and further to this she examined how these efforts at counteracting her biases might themselves lead to other biases (Boeree, 1998). With this process accomplished, the researcher was confident that her biases had been accounted for and therefore were more easily remedied.

Validity and Reliability. Various procedures can be used to ensure the validity of the interview's content (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The major safeguard on internal validity is to obtain confirmation from as many data sources as possible; a method referred to as triangulation. The use of this method results in various sources of data pointing in the same direction relative to a given conclusion (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). First, the recordings in the field log must be precise, almost literal detailed descriptions of the people, situations, and comments. Anything missed by the note taking process can be audio recorded. This procedure will capture participant verbatim language (Weiss, 1994). The use of data triangulation (Patton, 1990) will help clear up any discrepancies and guard against any researcher biases. Triangulation can also help detect errors or anomalies in data (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). The two sources mentioned above, the field log, interview tapes and transcriptions, as well as a field journal were triangulated and formed a solid database in the present study. The use of a field journal accounted for a chain-of-evidence. The use of meticulous record keeping of all communications and reflective thinking activities during the research process ensured internal validity and is referred to as an audit trail. The information in the audit trail was used to aid in the recording of the decisions made concerning all aspects of the research process as they were encountered. This served to demonstrate how the links between the

data and analysis were derived (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). Further to this, the validity or meaning of the participants responses were checked in a follow-up interview conducted over the telephone. The use of this validity check will be expanded upon in the data analysis section of this chapter (Lohrasbe, 2001). In terms of external validity, the ability to generalize the findings of this study were limited due to the subjective nature of the study; however, generalization is not a fundamental component of this type of research (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998).

Inter-rater reliability was established through a process of investigator triangulation (Patton, 1990). Two coders were trained and participated in the coding process in addition to the researcher. Any disagreements on the resultant themes were discussed and agreed upon after which necessary changes were made. This procedure is expanded upon in the data analysis section.

Researcher and Researcher Role

The researcher brought to the research a perspective related to her educational training in psychology. Experience of the researcher includes a position as a Psychology Intern and similar positions working with adolescents and their families. Interest in the topic of resilience was prompted by various work experience where resilient individuals were encountered. This professional experience and training differs from that of a teacher. Interestingly, an individual, such as the researcher, can still appreciate and comfortably interview individuals working in a different profession. The researcher brought to the research an appreciation for the important role that a teacher plays in students' lives and the unique influence of the "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). Other professions can realize the value that teachers have to their "at-risk" students.

Cross-professional studies such as this encourage professionals to think outside their own training and profession and realize the importance of others in child development.

Participants

The participants were selected based on purposeful sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001), with a specific criterion (see Appendix A). Specifically, participants were selected through a nomination process in which administrators, teachers, counsellors, and other elementary school staff nominated female teachers who were recognized as demonstrating certain qualities with "at-risk" students. In a study examining themes of uncommonly successful teachers of "at-risk" students, this selection process was used to result in a sample of uncommonly good elementary, middle, and high school teachers (Peterson, Bennet, & Sherman, 1991).

The qualities used in the present study are based on a number of criteria developed from the literature on "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998; Weinreb, 1997). "Turnaround teachers" and mentors are described as building three crucial environmental protective factors in their students: *connection*, *competence*, and *contribution* (Benard, 1998). Described within these three categories are a number of specific attitudes and strategies teachers can use to demonstrate each protective factor. The nominating criteria consisted of these three categories and a number of descriptions characteristic of each category. The school personnel were asked to check off as many characteristics as they felt were applicable to the individual they nominated (see Appendix A). All of the individuals within this sample were selected from a public elementary school in a disadvantaged neighborhood, according to the school district and confirmed by the school principal, within a city located in the Western Prairie Region of Canada. The specified

school of interest was classified as being predominantly from a lower socioeconomic area. This classification of a lower socioeconomic status neighborhood or disadvantaged area was confirmed by the school principal. This selection process attempted to control for large variances in SES.

The researcher approached the school board in the school district of interest. Once written permission from the school board was received, the researcher approached the principal to gain her consent, as well. The researcher conducted a session in the school during a regular staff meeting. Before the recruitment session all school staff members received a small package in their mailboxes explaining the study's intent, their involvement, and an invitation to the recruitment session. In this recruitment session, the nomination process, and expectations of participation were outlined (see Appendix B for recruitment materials). The researcher explained to the school staff members that due to the modest nature of the study, it was unlikely that all the teachers nominated would be approached for their participation in the study. This procedure ensured that the process was comfortable for both those included in the study and those excluded. Participants were also told to nominate only one individual, the one who best fit the criteria outlined. Due to the nature of the study, it was important that the nominations were received from their colleagues. In addition, the researcher explained that a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) is a specific type of teacher, one who tends to encourage educational resilience in their students. This does not mean that the people who were nominated were 'excellent' teachers and those who were not nominated were 'poor' teachers. This distinction was not used at all in the present study. The individuals were asked to

nominate only full-time female teachers, as supported by the research of Johnson et al. (1999).

Staff members then had an opportunity to ask relevant questions. They proceeded to nominate the participants based on the criteria shared with them by the researcher (see Appendix A). Each individual received an envelope and a nomination paper. These envelopes were sealed and returned to the researcher. In this way, confidentiality of nominated teachers was provided for as best possible. Those who did not wish to participate in the nomination process were asked to indicate this on their nomination paper and to follow the procedure by sealing it and returning it to the researcher, as the others had. The staff members were not asked to give any identifying information about themselves. They were asked to choose which category (administrator, teacher, or other) they each fit. In addition, they were asked to fill out the grade level taught by the individual they nominated.

At the end of the session, a sign up sheet was circulated. The staff members were asked to leave the researcher with contact information on this sign-up sheet (i.e. email address and/or home telephone number) if they were interested in participating in the study. Again, the researcher explained that to help ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality that only a few individuals who volunteered would actually be contacted to participate. The staff members were thanked for their time and told that they, as well as the participants, would have access to a school copy of the study's results after its completion.

After the nominations were complete and the recruitment session was over, the researcher assessed the nominations. Nominations were accepted based on the acquisition

of a number of criteria. First, the individual had to receive two nominations from different staff members. Moreover, a number of the relevant criteria had to be checked off under each category on the nomination pamphlet. The presence of the participant at the recruitment session was also required. The participant had to be of female gender and of full-time working status. Last, there had to be available space in the study for the participant. The researcher then contacted the nominated teachers individually and asked for their participation in the study. Once their permission was verbally attained, the rationale and purpose of the study was reiterated to the participants and they were asked to give the researcher an idea of their availability for an interview. Four teachers fulfilled the criteria for nomination and participation and volunteered their participation for the study. They ranged in age from 35 to 53 years. Each participant taught various elementary grade levels ranging from grade four to grade six. The number of years of experience of the teachers ranged from 5 years to 20 years. All teachers held an education degree.

Instruments

Interview Guide and Protocol. The primary instrument used in this study was an interview guide (see Appendix C). An interview guide is a listing of areas to be covered in the interview, along with, for each area, a listing of topics or open-ended questions that together will suggest lines of inquiry. When the guide is overly detailed, a shift from the qualitative approach to a more survey-style interview can occur (Weiss, 1994). Where the interviewer is thoroughly familiar with the study's aims, guides can be sketchy, listing only topic headings (Weiss, 1994). In this case, the interview guide was developed in a semi-structured format to prevent both these limitations. The protocol (see Appendix C)

or script includes specific replies to any questions or comments asked by the participants within the interview context. This ensured that the researcher replies in a standard manner to any comments made by the participants. The guide and protocol were developed by the researcher for the present study, tested during a pilot interview, and used to aid in general understanding and clarification during the qualitative interview (Weiss, 1994).

Field Log. The field log is a chronological record that specifies the date and the amount of time spent in the field. The log is used to outline in detail the places and persons involved in all interactions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001), including both the pre-interview and post-interview communication. The interviewer also used this journal to take explicit field notes during each qualitative interview (Weiss, 1994) and added written detail following each interview. Nonverbal communications and initial insights were also recorded here (Weiss, 1994). Researcher biases were guarded against through the recording of these detailed field notes that included reflections on the researcher's own subjectivity (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The researcher was thereby forced to constantly confront her own opinions and prejudices (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) and correct for these in a given situation. These notes, when typed, provided an index to the tape, and transcription was also completed for each interview (Weiss, 1994). In addition, two other coders read the researcher's field notes during data analysis. These coders critiqued the field notes, as an additional check on bias (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Field Journal. The field journal is a continuous record of all decisions made by the researcher and their legitimacy. This journal provides the basis for reporting all changes in methodology. Any ethical considerations are also recorded in detail (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This journal acts as a source to further limit researcher bias, referred

to as bracketing (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). It was expected that when the researcher was confronted with these ethical considerations she would put time and effort into finding an appropriate, unbiased resolution to the situation. However, no ethical dilemmas occurred during the course of the participant interviews.

Written Interview Summaries. The interviewer also completed a written summary after each interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This helped the researcher remember the individual interview and any important issues that had arisen. This summary helped the researcher and the coders when the interviews were analyzed for contents and themes.

Tape Recording. In addition to the note-taking of the researcher, the interviews were also taped (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001), with the written permission of the participants. A mini tape recorder was used to complete this task, and was set on the table between the researcher and participant. When the interview began, the tape-recorder was turned on. At this time, the participant was reminded that they had agreed to the tape-recording and again, asked to recite their verbal permission. The tape-recording allowed the researcher and coders to review the interview process and discussion and further evaluate any instance of researcher bias (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Transcripts. As mentioned, all interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed for additional analysis of common themes and issues (McMillan & Reed, 1994). The transcriptions, field log, and written summaries were used in the data analysis procedure.

Data Collection

Pilot Interview. Before the recruitment of participants, a pilot interview took place. The interview was not conducted until ethical approval was received for the larger

study. This ethical approval was received through the University of Victoria Ethics in Human Research. This interview was used to assess the interview style and materials used by the researcher. One of the functions of pilot interviews is to field test a draft of the interview guide, and in this case the protocol or script, as well. A pilot interview can be used to suggest where a guide is overweighted or redundant and where it is skimpy (Weiss, 1994). The participant (n = 1) used in this pilot interview was nominated based on the criteria of a female "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998), by a reputable graduate level university professor. This individual was a friend of the supervising professor of this study interested in volunteering her time to the study. She received an explanation of the intent of the pilot study, an opportunity to ask any questions of the researcher, and contact information for the researcher was given to her. The pilot participant signed a consent form for the pilot interview (see Appendix D) and was asked to leave her mailing address with the researcher to receive the results of the study. In addition, she received a written thank-you from the researcher for her participation. The participant was asked to provide written and verbal comment on the interview format, the questions used, and the interviewer style. A number of pointed questions were asked to the participant in order to clarify the above issues. The interview lasted approximately an hour and was held in a designated area in the University of Victoria, as decided by the participant. The data collected were destroyed immediately after the interview. A participant debriefing followed. From this study, it was found that no adjustments needed to be made to the interview guide and interview process. The participant made only positive comments and had no suggestions for necessary changes. No forms of inducement were used.

Consent From Participants. As mentioned above, the researcher visited the schools and a small information session was held at which time all school staff were informed of the research study. The staff members then participated in the nomination process. The researcher, via the telephone, later contacted the individuals that were nominated at the session. They were asked if they still wanted to participate in the study and an interview time was designated. By having this researcher-participant contact occur primarily within the participant's own home or outside of the school setting, confidentiality and anonymity were further ensured. The researcher sent a reminder of the meeting time to the individuals via their email address, shortly before their scheduled interview date.

At the time of the interview, the consent form (see Appendix E) was reviewed by the researcher and completed by the participant. The participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary and could be revoked at anytime without question. All participants were given a copy of the signed consent form to keep in their own records. The consent form included a section directly pertaining to the audio taping of the interview. This required a second signature by the participant and they could have refused to consent to this, but could still have consented to participation in the study itself. This consent for tape recording was reaffirmed verbally when the taping session began. On-going consent for the study was checked during the course of the interview. At this time, the participants were asked to develop pseudonyms (Lohrasbe, 2001) for themselves in order to protect their identity and maintain confidentiality. The pseudonym was used on all documentation. The researcher also asked for the participant's home address to mail thank-you certificates at a later date.

Interviews. Interviews have many advantages. They can be used to study a wide range of phenomena, and are capable of detecting many aspects of experience. The procedures used in an interview are relatively straightforward (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001), show the value placed on the individual subject, and provide an in-depth analysis (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). Interviews can require a lengthy amount of time, a careful pre-planning of questions, a skilled interviewer, and can be costly (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). However, they are a common data collection method used in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 1998).

Upon receiving the consent from the participants (N = 4), the qualitative interview (Weiss, 1994) followed. A similar qualitative interviewing style was used by Lohrasbe (2001). In this study, the interviews lasted approximately one hour. Subjects were not offered inducements to participate. It was expected that teachers would want to participate based on the likelihood that they would contribute to positive and beneficial research findings. In total, one interview was held in the home of one of the participants, while the other three were held in the teachers' classrooms. This choice was left to the participants depending upon their preference. The interviewer spent time developing a rapport with the individual before commencing the interview. This should have helped in establishing the interviewing relationship (Weiss, 1994). Participants were asked if they had any questions before the interview began, and clarifications were given when needed. The researcher provided additional personal information if requested by the participant. The tape recorder was turned on and the purpose of the study was reiterated. Verbal consent was requested for the use of the tape recorder. Following this, the researcher began the interview by following the interview guide.

The interviewer began the interview by asking questions pertaining to the participant's demographics. The interview followed a semi-structured format, ensuring that each participant responded to the same set of questions. Participants were asked to share specific examples of the issues they discussed. Participants were asked to review any problematic or misunderstood comments during the interview. As well, member checking was used informally to check the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations (Patton, 1990). The researcher allowed the participants to comment as much or as little as they chose to for each question. However, as the open-ended questions were intended to prompt a response with some length, the researcher did attempt to prompt those participants who were less articulate or unfocused in their responses (Lohrasbe, 2001). Prompts were also used when a participant did not understand the wording of an interview question.

Data Classification System. A data classification system was developed during the course of the initial interviews. The data classification system was part of the written materials that the researcher filled out during the interviews. As the researcher interviewed the participants certain words, phrases, subjects' ways of thinking, and events repeated themselves in the interviews and stood out. As the researcher began to recognize these regularities and patterns with each successive interview, the coding process to began. The researcher documented the words and phrases that seemed apparent in the interview and those that repeated themselves in many of the responses to the interview question. If a participant continued to reflect upon a certain issue or thought this was documented in the data classification system. The noted topics and patterns acted as the initial coding categories for the eventual data analysis procedure (Bogdan &

Biklen, 1992). This system allowed the researcher to begin sorting the descriptive data as it was collected during the interview process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) and later reflect upon it when beginning data analysis.

Debriefing of Participants. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were debriefed (see Appendix F). This gave the teachers an opportunity to ask any questions or discuss anything that was brought up during the course of the interview. This prevented an abrupt severing of the researcher-participant relationship. The researcher then thanked the teachers for their participation, and explained how they could contact the researcher and when the results would likely be disseminated to the school. The researcher forewarned them and ask for their permission (in addition to the mention of this in the consent form) to be contacted via the telephone to discuss the researcher's data analysis. The researcher also asked the participants if they were experiencing any emotional difficulties due to the content of the interview. If they were, the researcher's intention was to discuss this reaction at length and offer to connect them to or provide them with community counsellors or other professionals' contact numbers (see Appendix G). In this study, no participants reported emotional difficulties.

Follow-up Interviews. Follow-up interviews (Lohrasbe, 2001) were conducted with the respondents via the telephone. These interviews were used to review the transcripts and further ensure that the meanings extracted from the interview were mutually consistent between the researcher, and the participant. Permission for these interviews was gained from the participants via the consent form and verbally during the participant debriefing. The telephone interviews lasted less than half an hour.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis proceeds through data reduction, analyzing specific statements and themes, and searching for all possible meanings (Creswell, 1998). According to Weiss' (1994) approaches to analysis, the approach chosen for this study is most similar to his description of the issue focused, generalized approach (Lohrasbe, 2001). This is determined by looking at whether the researcher is focusing on issues or on individual cases, and whether the researcher intends to report the results by presenting them individually or finding more generalized themes throughout the participants' replies to the interview questions. The approach chosen requires a process of coding, sorting, local integration, and inclusive integration for data analysis (Lohrasbe, 2001; Weiss, 1994).

Following the transcription of the interviews, all tapes were destroyed to maintain the confidentiality of all participants. Data analysis then followed the previously mentioned approach (Weiss, 1994) as well as incorporating a template style to data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This template style logically applies a set of codes or categories to the data. These codes were derived primarily from the data classification system and the responses to the interview questions. To start this process, one of the transcribed interviews was examined to begin to determine the relevant codes for the data. Each interview was subsequently examined and the codes were tested and similarly applied in a logical fashion to the each meaning unit (Creswell, 1998). The codes established in the data classification system were used to prompt the initial codes for all the data. These codes were the actual words of the participants or "invivo codes." The codes were written in the margins of the text after the researcher determined what

each unit (paragraph, sentence, or words) was about (Creswell, 1998). Once each transcribed interview had been examined and the codes were determined, a code list was developed. The transcribed interviews were then reviewed again to determine whether the codes needed to be adjusted to eliminate redundancy and establish similar codes across interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Once this initial coding process was complete, the data reduction process began. Weiss (1994) refers to this process as sorting, which involves determining where the transcript quotes fit in a broader category. The data, or transcribed responses from each interview question, were divided into various topics, usually 10 to 12 relevant issues. From these topics, categories were developed. Topics were narrowed into about six to eight larger clusters through this process. Following this, patterns or major themes emerged. Minor themes also became evident (Creswell, 1998). Specific participant quotations were used to enhance these patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). During this data reduction process, local integration, or the organization and assimilation of what the researcher was beginning to see develop occurred. The researcher began to determine the meaning of the participants' comments (Weiss, 1994).

After this reduction process was finished, a second and third coder were trained. During this training, the consistency of coding was practiced and assessed. This was done to ensure reliability of this information. The coders then reviewed the researcher's field notes, data classification system, and transcripts. The coders then began a process identical to the one previously accomplished by the researcher. Once the coders determined what they believed should be the appropriate codes, topics, clusters, and themes for the data their results were compared to the researcher's to determine

agreement. This process of investigator triangulation (Patton, 1990) was used to establish inter-rater reliability. Cases with discrepant data were not ignored. They were also recorded and analyzed. These cases may be an exception to previous patterns of the data or may modify patterns found in the data; however, this does not justify ignoring them, as they likely made a valuable contribution to the study findings (Patton, 1990). Any necessary adjustments were made to the data based on the outcome of this process and the final results outlined in the following chapter reflect the agreed upon views of the researcher and both coders. There was an 87.5 percent inter-rater reliability between the three parties, with only three adjustments having to be made. Two themes were found by the coders that were not initially discovered by the researcher. These themes included the minor theme of children's tendency to undervalue their resilience, and the positive experiences teachers had with other staff members. The researcher and one coder had found one theme, that of praise and recognition as a resilience-promoting strategy, that the third coder had not found. Once these discrepancies were discussed, all coders voiced their agreement for change and the appropriate naming of the themes was agreed upon. The coding was adjusted and the discovery of these patterns resulted in the inclusion of the themes.

After the data analysis, the researcher attempted to write the next chapter of the final document explaining the results of the analysis process. The purpose of this attempt at inclusive integration was to bring all of the data analysis together to tell a concise, descriptive story (Lohrasbe, 2001; Weiss, 1994). Once the chapter's rough draft was complete the researcher contacted all the participants for a follow-up call (Lohrasbe, 2001). All participants had agreed to this call during the initial interviews. The researcher

reviewed the themes with the participants and asked them to comment on the shared meaning of their words and thoughts with the researcher's interpretation of these elements. The participants were asked to comment on the data analysis, and the interpretations of the researcher. This member check was used to establish credibility of the data. The participant was sent a copy of the chapter to review more thoroughly (Robb, 1993). If the participant felt that the meaning of their words had not been expressed adequately in the written document, changes were made until the participant approved them. If the participant agreed that their comments had been represented appropriately, adjustments were not made to the written chapters. If this initial draft changed another copy was sent to the participants and the same process to check meaning was repeated. Changes only needed to be made for one teacher. This participant had some concerns about one comment that she felt had been misunderstood and she also wished to adapt some of the language she chose to use. Once the entirety of the data analysis, inter-rater reliability, and the member check was completed, the fourth chapter was adjusted and sections were re-written where necessary. The fifth chapter was written immediately following the completion of the fourth. It was this process of writing that brought cohesion and organization to the researcher's thematic interpretation of the data (Robb, 1993).

Summary

This third chapter has outlined the specifics of the methodology of the present of study. This chapter has given a detailed description of the specific elements included in the general approach, the specific research design used, and the inclusion and recruitment

of certain participants. In addition, the instruments used in the data collection process, the procedure for data collection, and the process for data analysis were also described.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This chapter begins with a general overview of the results of the study; the specific results of the study are then outlined. The similar themes that cross the elementary teachers' interviews are discussed at length. The chapter is concluded with a short summary of the main findings of the study. The general overview is followed by the themes found for each interview question. General understanding of resilience, a resilient child, educational resilience, the meaning of being recognized as a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998), philosophy of teaching and influence of attitude, the influence of home, community, and school in resilience, and resilience-promoting strategies, provide the major headings for the questions asked and answered by the participants of the study.

General Overview

The participant interviews emphasized many of the elementary "turnaround teachers' " (Benard, 1998) beliefs. It was challenging to sort through the various ideas and end up with an adequate representation of the many insightful thoughts, feelings, and comments made by the teachers. The results are presented outlining the major themes found in the participant responses to each question, followed by a description of the minor themes (Creswell, 1998) where applicable. These patterns were found by reducing the participants' comments through the data analysis process outlined previously in which the issue focused, generalized approach, combined with the use of a template style of data analysis were utilized. The result of this analysis was a pattern noted to be most frequently discussed by the participants. The participants ranged in age from 35 to 53 years. They taught various elementary grade levels ranging from grade four to grade six

and the number of years of experience of the teachers ranged from 5 years to 20 years. All teachers held an education degree.

Overall, the elementary teachers appeared to have good knowledge about the construct of resilience. The teachers spoke about a select number of resilient students rather than the whole class. They appeared to recognize that the process of resilience only happens to children who have experienced prior adversity and have overcome that adversity rather than to all children. When examples of resilience or resilient children were discussed, they conversed about many of their own beliefs about the different ways in which children demonstrate resilience. The teachers also commented on the various backgrounds or histories that children can come from that tend to challenge their resilience. Resilience was not only seen as overcoming poverty, but as overcoming death, rising above issues within the home environment, coping with parental separation, and dealing well with a variety of other challenging situations. Resilience was seen as a relative construct evolving through a process of distinct change. Teachers described resilient children's characteristics. Teachers commented on their own influence, whether indirect or direct, a number of times during the course of the interviews. When articulating their beliefs on the cause of resilience, most participants suggested that it only took one person or one comment to make a child feel worthy or loved and it was this connection that encouraged the process of resilience. The elementary teachers all commented on the positive feelings that resulted from their nominations as "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998).

Repetitive patterns in the dialogue of participants had to do with perspectives on the structure and values in effective resilience-promoting classrooms. Respect, dignity,

and perseverance were just a few of the named values. Setting clear limits and expectations, encouraging children to take risks in their education, and providing a classroom that is safe, fun, and allowed for choice were some of the other notable themes. The teachers also perceived personal connections with students as important. On numerous occasions the participants cited examples from their own personal experiences and talked about spending time with students and getting to know them as individuals.

During the course of the interviews, it became evident that some of the elementary school teachers shared a common belief, the belief that some of these children were not receiving the help they needed from home. Two of the teachers' comments suggested that they believed that home had a great impact on resilience and that as teachers they often had to try to compensate for certain home influences. Whether it was children whose parents had little interest or experience with education, or the lack of structure and limits in the child's home, these teachers explained that they felt that they often had to try and compensate for these home influences in the classroom. When referring to the participants in the following sections their chosen pseudonyms of Bonnie, Francine, Kyla, and Sally, will be used.

General Understanding of Resilience

The participants were asked to describe their general understanding of resilience in relationship to prior adversity. The participants' answers to this question focused on their beliefs about the definition of resilience, their belief in the construct, and children's tendency to undervalue their own resilience.

Definitions of Resilience. Participants created their own definitions of resilience based on their own personal beliefs. The participants' definitions or explanations of

resilience seemed to gather around the belief that resilient children have the ability to bounce back or spring back from, or not be defeated by, difficult life circumstances and prior adversity. Bonnie described resilient children as having an ability to "bounce back from something, to be able to accept and continue on." Bonnie characterized resilient children as "not being defeated... not to quit... to have the ability to persevere..." Sally explained that resilience is "having the power to spring back." She said that it is "the power to spring back from or overcome those really difficult situations." Francine defined resilience as children who "do well in spite of the bad things that are happening to them." Kyla described resilient children as those who have the "ability to continue doing well, not just in education, but in everything through life..."

A Belief in Children's Resilience. The participants seemed to share the belief that children are very resilient, and some commented that this resilience is not always evident to the children who experience it or that they are not necessarily aware of how much they accomplish in a day considering their difficult backgrounds. Bonnie, when making a general comment about resilience, stated "I believe children to be very, very resilient." She explained this further by stating that "...they bounce back, because after all, life goes on." Through their comments and stories of children, it became evident that all the teachers shared this belief. Sally explained that she works in a group where they have to overcome more things than most people will ever know in their lives. She believes that children are "much more resilient, they don't even know how resilient they are." Francine spoke about the many resilient children she encountered that came from a variety of difficult backgrounds including negative home environments where the children were exposed to differing forms of abuse and addiction. Kyla shared a similar perspective on

the topic. She felt that resilience was particularly noticeable at their school because many of the students came from broken homes or families.

A Resilient Child

Participants were asked to describe a particular child that stood out in their memory who demonstrated resilience. Based on their own definitions of resilience elementary school teachers shared stories of the students they believed to demonstrate resilience when faced with adversity. The themes found in the responses to this question were the teachers' beliefs about the risks and adversities to resilience that their students face, the change from risk to resilience that is evident in their students, and their beliefs about the personal characteristics of resilient children.

Risks and Adversities. According to the participants' own views of resilience, the major theme that appeared in the answers to this question centered on the challenges or risks to resilience that these children face. The main risk factors described by the teachers were death, crime, academic difficulties, and negative home environments including, marital discord, parents who spend little time at home, parents with little education, alcoholic families, and abusive homes. All these risks appeared to coincide with the disadvantaged backgrounds these children came from. Kyla shared an experience that one of her students had endured when her best friend died. She spoke about the strength and courage this child exhibited. She went on to discuss other types of hardships that children endured, like alcoholic and neglectful parents. Sally described one child's childhood as "brutal." She went on to explain that this child had experienced a murder in the family, and had gone through "abuse on every count you can possibly imagine." Francine gave an example of a student of hers who just switched around academically, she explained

that the adversity the child encountered was doing poorly in school and that she just "turned around into this very academically smart kind of kid." Bonnie spoke about her student's negative attitude toward school and learning and how he missed many classes. She explained that he was not very well taken care of at home and often came to school "ill kept... dirty... and his clothes did not fit..."

A Change from Risk to Resilience. Children were described as evidencing a variety of negative behaviours in the classroom, before experiencing some kind of positive transition or change. This change appeared to be a transition from experiencing risk or adversity to one of experiencing resilience at different times in children's lives. Prior to the onset of this change, negative behaviours were described as making these children difficult to work with in a classroom setting. Children were noted as missing school, displaying bad attitudes toward education, having poor self-concepts, lacking self-awareness, acting out in violent and aggressive manners, and being mean to other children. After this transition, some of the negative behaviours that made these children difficult to work with in a class environment were described as disappearing. Children's attitudes improved, their willingness to participate increased, they achieved better grades.

Bonnie spoke about the same child who demonstrated a negative attitude in school and was not very well taken care of. She noted that he suddenly changed after he had been placed in foster care. "Instantly... he lost his attitude, he lost his sneakiness... his meanness." Sally talked about a child who had a terrible self-image, a poor self-concept and self-awareness. She explained that he came to her very violent and aggressive with poor spelling. She went on to explain that by the end of the year his behaviour and spelling had improved greatly. Francine discussed the child who had just

turned around academically, it was like "... somebody just turned on the switch in her head." She was uncertain as to just how this child changed so dramatically. Kyla had many students that she considered to be resilient. She described one child as coming from a negative background, but doing well in school because she managed to get extra help from other students when she needed it.

Personal Characteristics of Resilient Children. Many personal characteristics of resilient children were shared. Children were described as having an increase in confidence, becoming more attentive, acting in a dependable and reliable manner, asking for help when it was needed, and wanting to be in class and wanting to learn.

Sally spoke about one of her favorite students, a child who she believed demonstrated resilience. "He's still my most dependable and reliable student...this kid gets kicked out because he's violent and aggressive and he can't learn and he comes back and he sits down, with his frown and his anger, and he says "...that he still wants to be learning in the classroom." Kyla talked about the child who dealt with her best friend's death in such a mature manner and was able to come to school and continue to smile. She also spoke about the child she described as "very street-wise" with the ability to get extra help from others when she needed it. She described this child as very intelligent. Bonnie described the young boy who had a terrible attitude in school until he was removed from his home and placed in a home where he received adequate sleep and nutrition. She described the change in him as "wonderful." "There is a smile on his face, he is just an absolutely good-looking boy." "He's just a real pleasure to be around." "I mean he still does some goofy things, he's a kid. But there's not the meanness in him anymore and the sneakiness." Francine's example child turned around academically in school after many

struggles to do well. She did not speculate on the personal characteristics of the child that may have helped and was uncertain as to how it happened, but she did comment that many things were tried and ultimately she just started to do well in her schoolwork.

Educational Resilience

Participants discussed their beliefs about definitions of educational resilience. Their definitions were all somewhat different, yet they each had some overlapping ideas. When speculating on some of the possible influences on educational resilience the theme of motivational influences appeared in the respondents' replies.

Definitions. The definitions centered on children not doing well academically, but pulling themselves back up or experiencing improvements in their schoolwork or in their academic standing. They managed to achieve some measure of success or to do well academically despite their limited experience or their problematic backgrounds. A couple of the teachers were quick to qualify that this measure of success was not necessarily honors standing, but an improved academic performance. As well, the results are not always evident in academics, but were noticeable in improved behaviour. "...You see it in his attitude, in his participation..." Sally commented on behaviour problems being a form of adversity for some children. She defined educational resilience as "when the tantruming stops and the pencil is picked up again." "Basically when the pencil is picked up again. When they redo it and are not afraid to make mistakes." This signifies to Sally that these children want to be in the classroom, they have the courage to continue, and they want to learn. Bonnie stated that an educationally resilient child is "somebody, for whatever reasons, and there could be many involved, who has not been successful, but has managed to pull themselves up and start to achieve some measure of success." "I

don't meant that success has to mean that you are an honors student..." Kyla talked about children doing well on achievement tests despite the fact that they rarely have enough experience to understand the questions because the examples are related to experiences that children in the area have never had. Francine explained that she believes that to be resilient you have to experience some form of adversity and that adversity can be "a whole life" or academic difficulties. She explained that she believes that "resilient children are the ones who will not give up... they keep trying harder... " She said that these children manage to improve their marks.

Motivational Influences. The participants speculated on some of the possible influences on educational resilience. Motivational elements of resilience were identified. Bonnie credited a child's "can-do" attitude or confidence as influential in the process. "The more confident they become, the more they see they can." She talked about kids who for some reason have not been successful, but someone has managed to find the "little hook in them." Francine described some children as not giving up, being determined to complete their work and having a need to do their best. She described this as being motivated and not getting discouraged. Sally spoke about children needing to put in the effort. She explained that it does not matter how many times a child has to redo something, they need to continue to put in the effort. Kyla suggested that educationally resilient children do things with enthusiasm and work through things in their mind in order to be able to answer questions and participate.

The Meaning of Being Recognized as a "Turnaround Teacher"

All the participants commented very positively about being nominated as a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) by fellow staff members. The teachers spoke about

the positive feelings they had about nomination, and they recognized other staff members' support and similar abilities.

Positive Feelings. Sally stated that she was happy that people had thought about her. "I'm glad that people recognize that I make a difference because I think I do." Kyla said, "it's nice to be in a school where you know you are appreciated." Bonnie described her feelings, "there's some kind of pleasure in being recognized in that capacity." Francine and others described a feeling of honor. Some of the teachers commented on the difficulty of accepting recognition, and Sally stated that although she was happy she was also embarrassed because admitting that you are good at what you do, even though you know it, can be difficult.

Positive Experiences With Other Staff. The teachers recognized similar abilities in the other teachers in their school and appreciated the support they received from other staff members. "There are so many outstanding teachers in this school." "... We've got some good teachers that make a difference." " We have a lot of them at our school." "I've had a lot of positive experiences with staff at this school." "You know that the staff are behind you regardless of what happens." "It's not simply because of what I've done, it's because of what other teachers have done..." Three of the teachers commented on their lack of surprise in being nominated, whether it was because they had helped to improve class grades, were often consulted about other teachers' behaviour problem children, or simply recognized their own abilities. Kyla explained that marks had risen in her class, but acknowledged that other staff members were also partially responsible for this. Sally recognized her own abilities. She admitted that recognition was difficult, but that she knows that she is very good at what she does. Bonnie commented that some of the other

teachers often consulted with her if they were having problems with a particular child. In contrast, Francine explained that the nomination was unexpected to her, as she had not been teaching at the school as long as many of the other staff members.

Philosophy of Teaching and Influence of Attitude

When discussing what they believed to be their own philosophy of teaching, the patterns found in the teachers' responses suggested that fostering values, encouraging children to take educational risks in a safe environment, and developing personal connections or relationships with students were very important in facilitating a beneficial learning environment for their students. The teachers described the importance of having a classroom with both defined expectations and boundaries and elements of fun and humor in which to learn. In terms of attitude, they touched on their own influential role in modeling appropriate attitudes.

Fostering Respect and Dignity. Kyla stated that she believes that "all kids are capable of learning." This seemed to reflect the respect that these teachers demonstrated to their students. This respect is described as something that is mutual and on-going. Francine illustrated this point very well when she explained "... so my rule is respect. You don't have to like me, I don't have to like you either. But we agree on some very common things. Number one, I respect you, you respect me..." For Francine, respect appeared to entail being polite and accepting of one another regardless of whether or not you truly like one another. Bonnie's response was very similar to Francine's. "...My very first day in every year we talk about respect and I use that as a big umbrella and under that umbrella comes all the other rules." She explained that this respect consists of not only respecting yourself, but respecting the teacher, other students, and property. In

addition to respect, Sally spoke about dignity. She described her teaching philosophy as "...dignity, dignity in learning and self-empowerment..." She also spoke about the need for children to have a voice because without a voice, in her opinion, learning cannot happen. She explained that she valued a personal experience in which one of her own teachers allowed her to speak her mind and listened. This prompted her own belief that children need to be encouraged to share and be listened to. They need to be able to feel comfortable sharing their views or their problems and have an opportunity to do so in the classroom before true learning can begin.

Risk and Safety. The participants shared their beliefs about the importance of encouraging children to take educational risks in the classroom. Teachers talked about "the freedom to fall" or to make mistakes. Sally said, "... I've got kids in here who can barely learn multiplication, but there's no math anxiety because there's the freedom to fall..." Kyla talked about children having the opportunity to learn at their own pace and at their own level. Francine tells her students that making a mistake is no big deal. "You know if you don't make mistakes you are never going to learn... you know, fall off the horse and brush yourself off..." She furthered this comment by stating "... you have to wade through all the garbage and make them feel safe before they're going to take chances for you... that your classroom be a safe place, and I still talk about this classroom being safe." Bonnie felt that she presented this safety to her students. "That safety zone, where they are free to do an awful lot within that, but just don't go outside those boundaries."

Expectations, Boundaries, and Discipline. Francine talked about the importance of setting out clear expectations or rules for her students. Setting up these expectations or

rules is one of the first processes that occurs in her classroom. Bonnie also shared her beliefs about the value in creating this atmosphere, one in which students feeling of safety is enhanced due to the establishment of guidelines. " I believe that kids need very strong, definite guidelines. I believe that kids want them, because that allows them to feel safe and they're happier with that..." Kyla stated that they have to understand that there are limits, "... so when it's time to sit down and work, they sit down and work." Sally explained that that she does not allow her students to say the words 'stupid' or 'shut-up' in her classroom. "There's nothing worse than feeling stupid... those words are not allowed in the classroom..." She explained that the level that her students were at was not important; regardless of this the primary objective was that they all needed to learn.

Personal Relationships with Students. When asked to describe their philosophy or attitude toward teaching the teachers focused on the desire or need for a personal connection or relationship with students. "...If you have a relationship with another human being... you tend to be more willing to do things for them... I think relationships are really important... it's way more difficult to hurt somebody or say something bad." After saying this, Francine illustrated this point by explaining that "... the first really important thing to her..." about teaching is "...to get straight about who you are and why you are here..." Bonnie calls her students names, "nice names." Examples she gave where nicknames such as "my munchkins...my chickadees... or my birdies... my little darlings..." She explained that she felt these names created a greater level of comfort for her students, and the more comfortable children are, the better able they are to learn. Kyla talked about the effects that her own awareness can have on a child's learning. A relationship between a teacher and a child can be very important. Knowing a child well

enough to recognize that they are having problems can prompt a teacher to facilitate learning in a different manner, as it did with Kyla and one of her students. Sally explained that she feels that it is very important to listen to students' problems. "Throw the chair, get it out, do what you need to do, tell me what's on your mind. We'll discuss it." She explained that this expression and having someone listen and understand is necessary before learning can take place.

Fun and Humour. Bonnie also spoke about the little "goofy sayings" she uses in class. She shared these examples as a way of pointing out that she uses humor a lot in class. "I'm going to have to drop kick you through the goal posts of life." She explained that the children become familiar with these sayings and have been known to repeat them. Other teachers commented that they do not feel that children should be solely focused on schoolwork all the time, they also have to have a little fun. Sally described her philosophy as being "very open education... and we have fun... our learning is fun." She went on to state that "I'm very cool and I'm young and we have fun." According to Kyla, her students come into her class knowing that there are limits, but she explained that she is also quite laid back in her approach. "So if they want to be goofy, they can be goofy, as long as they know there are limits..." Francine explained that she appreciates humor. She stated that it is not always necessary just to do schoolwork. "I think you have to try and have a little bit of fun."

Modeling. Francine described what she usually tells her students. "I tell them I'm the boss and the boss sets the tone, whether it's as an administrator, or a CEO, or a teacher, or the mother or father of the household. Like you know you can't do stuff and expect your kids not to do stuff, like you have to teach by showing." She places a great

deal of importance on attitude "... attitude is everything..." Francine commented that she believes that children are very smart and Sally supported this with her statements. "Kids are smart, they may come with deficits in learning and handicaps, but they are definitely able to read right through you..." Bonnie models to her students that it is unacceptable to laugh at other students. She explains to her students that she will not react well to this if it happens, "No one will ever laugh at you in my room, because if they laugh at you then they will have to deal with me and they won't want to deal with me." Kyla talked about being very open in the classroom, "I think that helps the students feel more comfortable in being themselves." By modeling this openness, she is encouraging her students to be open and comfortable as well. These teachers realize the importance of modeling an acceptable attitude, because children replicate the attitudes they see displayed by others.

The Influence of Home, Community, and School on Resilience

The participants were asked how they felt home, community, and school influenced their students' resilience. The participants felt that home, community, school and personal relationships, were influential in a child's resilience.

Home. To begin, the participants described the influence of home. All the teachers agreed that home is very influential in these children's lives. When discussing how much influence home can have on a child's resilience, all participants agreed that home is very influential. Bonnie stated that it has "an absolute major impact." Home provides the necessities of life to children, home boosts the child's confidence by reading with them and helping them with their homework, and home provides these children with encouragement in life. Francine explained that "... what happens is that somewhere in one of these three places something happens..." She did not differentiate between what

home, community, and school. She did explain that it was possible, according to her own beliefs, that resilience could be encouraged by a family relationship. Kyla commented that the influence "varies from student to student." Sally shared her frustrations with some of the homes her students come from. "... I think it affects it hugely in this school because there isn't any home..." She explained that in her class there is little parental involvement. "... Do I have a parent volunteer in the six or eight years I've been here, no." Kyla also commented on parental involvement. She explained that some parents are involved, while others cannot seem to understand and "so they are unable to help." She explained that although she only has Two, she does know of some parents who encourage their students to study. She spoke about many of these parents having little more than a high school education and about how this can be problematic when trying to get them to help their children with homework. She postulated that about one quarter of the parents are involved, and three-quarters or not. She attributed this to the large amount of single parent households.

Community. All the teachers agreed that the community could be very influential in these children's lives. Francine did not specify the exact role of the community in resilience, but explained that the influence most likely took place in one of the three places. She stated that this influence could even come from a respected priest or coach. Sally admitted that community "... plays a huge role..." in resilience.

Some of the opinions about whether or not there were resources in the community of this particular school seemed to center around the belief that the community area was not the best and that more resources could and should be provided. Kyla stated that "there aren't a lot of extracurricular activities available to them..." in the community. She stated

that one of the reasons for this could be that many of the parents in the area cannot afford to put their children in activities like soccer and hockey. She did express a need for activities for the children. "... If they could get some type of team going for these kids, I think that would affect their education because then they wouldn't just be hanging around the rink doing what kids like to do at rinks when they're not involved in some type of sport." Sally had a similar feeling about community as she did about home. "That is the part that I have the hardest time with, is that they don't have the home and they don't have the community in this area." She also suggested, like Kyla, that the community needs more resources. Sally commented that there are some resources in the community. She used the parent's association as an example. She stated that the school has a "fantastic parents association." She said, "... it's not the best community and it's not the safest, but it's trying really hard." Bonnie saw the community as providing strict guidelines for acceptable behaviour through various sports and activities. She explained that she hoped it was these same standards that were enforced in schools.

School. The participants also believed that school could be very influential in a child's resilience. School provides structure, consistency, and expectations for these children. Kyla believes that school is important because consistency and structure are neglected at home. Effort is acknowledged, praise is given, and small things are built upon to encourage confidence and follow through. Bonnie felt that school produces children who are "... independent thinkers, who are capable, who feel good about themselves..." Francine commented that it could be a very important teacher that influences a child's resilience. Support was identified as being important in dealing with the children. Specifically, the support of the principal and other teachers was named.

"You know what I mean, in order for me to develop resilience in these guys I have to be able to do what I do best." Sally explained that having the support of administration and of teachers in the school who understand what children need and support the staff in providing this to children can have an influence on a child's resilience.

The Influence of Personal Relationships with Students. The teachers spoke about home, community, and school and within this they made speculations as to where resilience was most influenced. Personal relationships were often mentioned as being influential. Teachers also reported that the encouraging or confidence-building comments made by these special individuals were influential. Sally stated her belief that the influence can come from one person. "I think it just takes one person, one good friend, one good teacher..." Francine has a similar perspective on the origin of influence. "I think that what happens is somewhere in one of these three places something happens, a relationship happens, or, um... something is said to a person..." "...They grab onto that sense that yeah somebody loves me, I'm worthwhile despite all the crap that's going on in my life..." She went on to say that she did not feel that the influence could necessarily be pinpointed.

In terms of their own influence, elementary school teachers also saw this as working through the personal connections they developed with their students. Kyla spoke about the personal relationships she has developed with her students and her own influence. She explained that she tells them a lot about her personal experiences in life. "I make myself very human to them. I don't put myself on a pedestal." She spoke about playing with them, playing marbles during recess and lunch hours. She spends time with her students after school, learning about them informally through discussion. She also

discussed taking the kids on overnight trips as a way of encouraging bonding experiences. "I think that kids maybe are a little more hesitant to act out or be inappropriate if they know that you know them..." Sally also mentioned that she shares a lot about her personal life with her students. She spends most of her day with them, including lunch times and they engage in social activities together, like playing games or watching movies and talking about everything and just enjoying each other's company and having some relaxed fun together. Bonnie talked about influencing students' confidence and promoting resilience by knowing a little bit about her students so she knows where to draw information from. As a teacher, there is an opportunity to be influential, if you have taken the time to develop relationships with your students.

Resilience-Promoting Strategies

In addition to explaining a few activities that they use to promote resilience, the participants tended to focus more on the types of experiences they encourage in their classrooms. Some even mentioned that they did not feel it was an easy question to answer. The teachers outlined their shared beliefs about the importance of praise and recognition, allowing children to have power and choices, and encouraging values in their students.

Praise and Recognition. A prominent theme found in the responses to this question was that of the value of praise and recognition. Bonnie said that she believes that all children like to be praised, but only if it is earned. False praise is detrimental according to her beliefs. She spoke about the importance of praising effort, even if the quality is not evident. Bonnie also believes that individual recognition, recognition of ability, school recognition, and behavioural recognition benefit children. Sally explained

that she does " a lot of praise even with the bad stuff that needs to be said or the not so good stuff, it always has to start with the good stuff." Sally stated that praise has to be given in a way that maintains a child's dignity. In terms of recognition, Francine commented that she believes that it is important that teachers praise children when they make good choices. Kyla spoke about getting her students to do presentations in class. The objective of this activity was to promote their self-confidence and comfort level. She recognizes their efforts to accomplish this task, especially when she has shy students who have some difficulty with the experience.

Power and Choices. "I think that when you have kids who come from a really hard life ... that they don't particularly have control over when they are going to receive their next beating or whatever, but they can make choices that will help them not to be that way." Francine also mentioned that these children need to know what good choices are. She commented, in her response to a previous question, that she is the boss in the classroom and therefore she sets the tone. However, evidently she still allows her students to have power in the classroom by encouraging them to make choices and explaining that their choices can have major consequences in their lives. Sally believes that the children need to hold some power. "And I think I let them have the power, actually. I don't stand in front of the class and say that I'm the boss. It's like I can be the king of the castle in here – that's my speech in the beginning of the year – or not.... I let them make their own choices all the time..." Kyla appears to develop her student's feelings of power by promoting their self-confidence. She encourages them to make presentations to the class, and commented that when given the choice some of the shy students do not give presentations at the beginning of the year, but this usually changes as

the year progresses. In contrast to the above perspectives, Bonnie discussed only giving praise when effort was obvious. This appeared to be a way of ensuring that the power a child felt from their accomplishment was real, rather than instilling a false sense of power. "All of a sudden they get to be twenty four years old and find out… they're really not that good. And I think it's unfair."

Fostering Values. Kyla spent a lot of time teaching the young females in her class how to treat each other appropriately and with respect. She mentioned that this was not a normal occurrence, but something that seemed to be necessary with the group that she had this year because of the turmoil they seemed to be experiencing in their relationships with one another. She also explained that she moves her class around once a month to encourage children to make new friends and develop new relationships. She also discussed various activities, like presenting in front of the class, that were used to encourage self-confidence in her students. Bonnie uses a "good book." This encourages a student to find something good about the day; it can be anything no matter how small. Sally teachers her students the value of perseverance. She stated that she did not use any kind of specific activity to encourage resilience, but that her students "just learn to persevere in learning." "I think we just learn a lesson and after an hour and a half if we've got it all wrong we do it again..." "I push them a lot, in a nice way." "We just think of persevering and doing and trying again and changing."

Francine discussed what she refers to as 'character education.' She was referring to the instilling of values such as respect, self-discipline, honesty, and generosity. One of the tools she uses to accomplish this task is a journal. She explained that the journal "… allows them to have an out for things…" Whether this means just getting something off

their chest or having a chance to "save face" for something that they did that was wrong. She also talked about doing a lot of reading and professional development about children and that this has helped her to learn about the things that they need in the classroom. Francine also implemented the five A's in her class- acceptance, attention, appreciation, affirmation, and affection. She shows her students that they are accepted, giving them attention, appreciating who they are, affirming something about them, and showing them that they are cared for. She also had a figure of an umbrella in her classroom with the words *connected*, *capable*, and *contributing* written on it. All of these elements appear to be the smaller parts of "character education." Interestingly, these three elements make up the larger part of the criteria for a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998; see Appendix A).

Summary

Within the themes, it was suggested that the elementary school teachers had a good understanding of resilience as a construct and a process and they believed that children tend to undervalue their own resilience. They gave examples of the multiple adversities that disadvantaged children can encounter and spoke about the personal characteristics of resilient children, and the motivational influences that encourage their educational resilience.

Being nominated as a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) had a positive meaning for the participants. Their philosophy of teaching and attitude centered on the importance of setting expectations, fostering values in their students, creating a safe atmosphere in which to learn, and encouraging fun within reasonable limits. Modeling appropriate attitudes and developing relationships with students was identified as important to resilience by the teachers' common beliefs and in the literature.

The participants believed that home, community, and school were all very influential in a child's resilience. Two of the teachers believed that children found little support at home and that the community had a lack of resources. Personal relationships were noted as having an influence on resilience, as were the relationships and connections these teachers developed with their own students. These teachers believed that giving children power was important, as was teaching them values, and giving them praise. The next chapter will discuss the results of the study in the context of the resilience literature and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. In addition, limitations of the present study, implications of the study, and directions for future research will be outlined.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusion

To begin, the chapter opens with a summary of the results delineated in the previous chapter. In order to follow the study's original intent, the results are discussed as they pertain to the main issues under investigation. The results are explained within the context of the resilience literature and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory which sees both the child's individuality and environment contributing to the development of resilience (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A summary of the overarching themes is presented and the results are discussed in relation to the central figure in ecological theory, the developing child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These results were set in the context of the elementary classroom where only a small number of children exemplify resilience. Implications of the present study are then outlined, as are limitations of the research, and suggestions for future directions. The chapter ends with a conclusion to the study.

Summary and Integration of Results

Beliefs about Resilience and Educational Resilience. Teachers' definitions of resilience focused on resilient children's tendency to spring back or bounce back from negative circumstances or prior adversity. These definitions were based on their own personal beliefs about what they see as resilience and how it is demonstrated to them. Teachers spoke about children's perseverance in this battle. Although teachers definitions had some similarity to those found within the literature (Anthony, 1974; The Oxford Dictionary, 1992), the teachers did not make clear whether this springing back or bouncing back was something that was relative to various life circumstances or whether it was something innate (Rutter, 1979, 1985). They did, however, see resilience as

occurring when an adversity was overcome. Comparatively, their definitions of resilience were quite similar, but the minor differences in terminology that are stated as being problematic in the literature still appear to exist in the responses from this sample (Cicchetti and Garmezy, 1993). These minor differences can become problematic when comparisons between different research studies are made and when trying to define exactly what resilience is. The teachers examples of resilient children may be most similar to the construct of resilience as determined in the professional literature, or the definitions may be more accurately described as fitting their own beliefs whether consistent or inconsistent with the literature. In this case, the teachers were given the opportunity to share their own beliefs on the definition of the construct, and they all commented on the positive nature of the construct and the positive nature of children. This is consistent with the 'resilience attitude' described by Benard (1998). Although resilience is still a newer construct, this research supports that agreement on a single definition of resilience could be beneficial in the future (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993).

The teachers shared their beliefs about children's tendency to be very resilient. However, two of the teachers commented that they felt that children tend to undervalue their own resilience. This is an interesting finding, and one that may add to the literature on resilience. Often cited is the tendency for teachers to undervalue their own influence (Benard, 1998), but less attention has been paid to children and their tendency to undervalue their own resilience. Further exploration of children's resilience could support their comments. Since Bronfenbrenner's theory sees the child as the most central figure, and notes that children's development is influenced by their own individuality

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979), children's tendency to undervalue their own resilience could, indeed, affect their ability to experience the process.

The participants cited a variety of risk factors and challenges to children's resilience and named some personal characteristics that resilient children have. When discussing the risks that children endure, interestingly the teachers did not only limit this discussion to the risk of poverty and school failure. They discussed the 'at-risk' child within the broader context of society. The risk factors mentioned by the participants not only took place in the child's school, but in the child's family or home as well. In Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1979) development takes place within the broader context of society, as well. The changing settings around children influence their ability to be resilient. Lending further support to the applicability of resilience to this theory, the teachers appeared to understand that a child not only experiences risks in the school, but that these risks can and do occur within the other contexts of life. The teachers' views on risk also support the notion that with poverty and disadvantage children are threatened with another set of risks, including stressful environments (Wang et al., 1994) as well as stresses that children from any kind of a background may face such as death or parental separation. In this case a few of the stressors the teachers appeared to associate with disadvantage included marital discord, crime, parents with little education, alcoholic family members, and abusive home environments. Certainly, it is evident that these children, in the most central circle of an ecological system, are put 'at-risk' by the accumulation of these negative influences (Rutter, 1987).

The participants also mentioned personal characteristics of resilient children. Attributes of children's personalities, temperaments, and abilities were mentioned as

contributing to the children's capacity to exploit their environment (Masten et al., 1991). Characteristics of resilient children's personalities mentioned by the participants include self-confidence, good attitudes, and maturity. Temperamental descriptors include describing a resilient child as "... just a pleasure to be around." Teachers also speculated on the desire to succeed in learning that their students displayed. Dependability, reliability, and the ability to gain extra help are a few of the abilities mentioned. "He's still my most dependable and reliable student..." These children demonstrated their ability to gain positive attention from others (Rak & Patterson, 1996), their interpersonal skills (Wang et al., 1998), and the belief in their own effectiveness in terms of self-confidence (Masten et al., 1991). These characteristics are in line with the research on resilience. According to Thomas, Chess, and Birch (1970) certain qualities of temperament may influence a person's vulnerability to various stressors or provide buffers against the stressors. In the descriptions of the resilient children, it was obvious that the easy or adaptable child (Thompson, 1999) was most often the child described as resilient.

These children were described by the "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) as undergoing some kind of change or transition from demonstrating negative qualities to then developing into positive, educationally successful children. "Instantly... he lost his attitude, he lost his sneakiness... his meanness." The teachers did not specify what they perceived this change was. One of them did, however, label it as a "metamorphosis." This change is consistent with the resiliency model. This transition may indicate that the child has experienced an adversity and due to having enough protective processes in the environment, the child may move to a level of increased resilience due to the emotional

strength and healthy coping mechanisms developed while overcoming the adversity (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). The development of emotional strength and healthy coping mechanisms is consistent with the personal attributes noted to be components of resilience (Wolff, 1995). The internal protective factors that help a child to become resilient in the face of adversity are often the result of environmental conditions that foster the development of these characteristics (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). An easy temperament with a capacity for adaptability, sociability, and positive mood is regularly found in resilient children. This helps them to get positive reactions from others which, in turn, mobilizes their external support systems or the conditions which help protect against adversity (Wolff, 1995).

The "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) appeared to recognize that resilience is a relative process. The teachers described a variety of different risk factors affecting their students, different risks occurred at different stages in the children's lives. As well, in describing the children the teachers acknowledgment of this change that children go through points to their understanding that a child is not always resilient, but that this resilience is demonstrated at different times in their lives. Kyla discussed a child who became resilient after the death of her best friend. Sally discussed a child who has behaviour problems and acts out aggressively, yet at times his demonstration of resilience by exhibiting a desire to learn. Rutter (1985) describes this more recent belief about resilience as a conceptual understanding that the degree of this attribute can change over time and is affected by many factors. This change does seem to reflect a certain level of adaptability, at different times, in resilient children. This may also reflect Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological transition. He describes this transition as taking place

when a person's position in the ecological environment is altered as the result of a change in role, setting, or both. In this case, the change may be one in role, from experiencing risk or being poorly adapted to experiencing adaptability or resilience.

Children are influenced by their own individuality (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Some children are more successful than others at averting school failure, as is evidenced by the group of resilient children these teachers described. The teachers had to think a little bit about the children they chose to use as examples of resilience. This need for thought reflects that not all children are resilient. Some children from disadvantaged backgrounds succeed in school, while others fail. According to Freitas and Downey (1998), even though these children are described as being resilient in the classroom, or educational system, they may not be equally resilient across contexts. However, the combination of the processes at work within the different environmental contexts and within the child can help a child to overcome adversities in any single context (Wang et al., 1998). Although an investigation of the differing environmental contexts of a resilient child was not the original intention of this study, the *microsystem* of the classroom was the anticipated research forum, this study may have shed light not only on other forms of resilience, but on the involvement of the *mesosystem* in the process of resilience (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Although unexpected, these findings are consistent with ecological theory, as Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains that all the environments of a child, and the child itself, act upon and influence development through interaction with one another. None of the factors or contexts works alone and all systems are affected by the changes occurring in each. The teachers began by discussing their beliefs about resilience and progressed to a discussion of educational resilience.

Educational resilience, as defined in the literature, refers to a student's capacity to achieve academic and social prosperity despite exposure to personal and environmental adversities (Wang et al., 1998). When describing educational resilience, definitions clearly focused on children's ability to improve academically and behaviourally, despite the variety of adversities in their lives. The teachers explained that it was not just a change from doing poorly to doing well, but they saw it as a change from doing poorly to doing better. This may have been a change in behaviour or an improvement in marks. They did not seem to define educational resilience as success on a large scale, but on a scale that had meaning for the child. Whether it was a child who pulled up a mark from a D to a C or someone who suddenly seemed to want to be in school, educational resilience was perceived as "doing better."

The teachers shared their beliefs about students' motivation impacting their educational resilience. Schools that are successful in promoting students' resilience build on children's intrinsic motivation and interests (Benard, 1993). Teachers identified a relationship between their students' need to do their best and why a child became educationally resilient. Bonnie talked about the "can-do" attitude demonstrated by a resilient child. Francine, Sally, and Kyla commented on determination, effort, and enthusiasm. Lepper and Hodell (1989) would explain this determination to do well as an intrinsic motivation for learning. Empowering learning environments can promote extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Activities and environments that undermine a learner's sense of control, by contrast, can have detrimental effects on motivation and interest. Autonomy support has generally been associated with more intrinsic motivation, greater interest, less pressure and tension, more creativity, better conceptual learning, higher self-

esteem, and more trust (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Hidi (1990) argues that interest can have a profound effect on cognitive functioning and learning. Although there are many unresolved questions in the area of intrinsic motivation and interest (Hidi, 1990), the characteristics of the classroom outlined in the research literature above share a close resemblance to those most typically implemented by a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998).

"Turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) provide caring or *connection* to their students (Benard, 1998). It is likely that the *connection* children feel to their teacher and their class encourages their interest in learning. At the core of caring relationships are positive and high expectations that guide and challenge students to perform beyond their own beliefs. This process reflects the beliefs that "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) hold about student's *competence* and ability to succeed. "Turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) also encourage their students to *contribute* by giving students responsibility and opportunities for involvement in classroom discipline. Children feel empowered in such classrooms (Benard, 1998). Educationally resilient children may experience a higher degree of intrinsic motivation than their non- resilient counterparts. "Turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) are student-centered. They use the students' strengths, interests, goals, and dreams as the entry point for learning and in this way they build intrinsic motivation (Benard, 1997).

The Meaning of Being Recognized as a "Turnaround Teacher"

The researcher's intentions were to discover the essence of the phenomenon, as experienced by "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998). To begin to piece together the essence of this experience, it is necessary to examine the participant's feelings about

nomination. Part of this phenomenon involves the nomination of a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). With this nomination, teachers became aware that others noticed the efforts they made with their students and the relationships they had with them. The findings from this qualitative analysis indicate that the "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) were honoured and pleased by their nomination. They mentioned that other teachers at their school also fit these criteria, and that they were pleased with the support that they received from other staff at the school. From their responses to this question, the teachers appeared to have a sense of accomplishment and gratitude for this nomination. They attributed a large amount of meaning to the nomination. Three of the participants explained that they were not surprised by this nomination because they recognized these characteristics in themselves. The reasons they gave for recognizing these characteristics in themselves included the realization that they helped improve class grades, recognizing their own talents, or helping other teachers deal with behavioural problems. Although, this nomination process appears to have had meaning to the participants, the greatest meaning found in the experience of fostering resilience did not seem to be found in their nomination, it was found in the act of helping children.

Attitudes in the Classroom. Henderson (1996) asserts that educators are developing the first critical step in fostering resilience in schools, that of the "resiliency attitude." At various times throughout the interview process the teachers commented on their deep beliefs that in general children have a tendency to be very resilient. They did not believe that all children have this tendency. This is illustrated by the themes found in the responses when the participants were asked about what they thought resilience was. "I believe children to be very, very resilient." All participants' responses were based on

their own personal beliefs about the construct of elementary school resilience as identified through this phenomenological research interview. According to these responses, the teachers were demonstrating this critical first step in fostering resilience; they believed that children are resilient and they demonstrated this attitude. Teachers who convey the message that they believe in their students' abilities and who play on the strengths of each child exert a powerful motivating influence, especially on the children who receive the opposite message in other contexts of their lives (Benard, 1993). Furthermore, this attitude was reflected in the participants' beliefs about the importance of fostering values, encouraging risk and providing safety, their beliefs about discipline, specifically having clear and definite expectations and boundaries, and the development of personal relationships with students.

The interview respondents acknowledged respect and dignity as important values in the classroom. The teachers spoke about the mutual respect that is necessary in teacher-student and student-student relationships. "... I respect you, you respect me..." Dignity was also discussed. Children need to be listened to and they need to feel a sense of dignity in their learning. Teachers help students to develop the values and attitudes they need to persevere in their schoolwork and thereby promote educational resilience (Wang et al., 1997).

In terms of encouraging risk and providing safety, the teachers talked about wanting children to understand that it was acceptable to make mistakes. They talked about having "... having the freedom to fall..." This freedom to fall referred to the acceptance of failure when trying to improve. The teachers wanted their students to feel safe in making mistakes and to feel safe in the classroom environment. The relationships

"turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) develop with their students are grounded in safety and trust (Benard, 1993). Providing connection can also translate into meeting the emotional safety needs of students (Benard, 1998). They provide a physically and psychologically safe and structured environment in which to learn (Benard, 1997).

Teachers discussed the ways in which they maintained discipline in their classrooms. Specifically, they focused on the use of expectations and boundaries. "I believe that kids need very strong, definite guidelines..." Clearly understood rules (Wang et al., 1998) were important to the interviewed teachers. Again, this is consistent with the literature. Well-managed classrooms have clearly understood rules and procedures that can promote educational resilience (Wang et al., 1998). The participants spoke about the necessity of establishing rules, boundaries, and expectations initially. Morrish (2000) explains that adults are expected to develop effective responses to the behaviours of children. He differentiates between reactive management and proactive discipline. This means that rules and limits are established initially so that children will understand what behaviours are unacceptable (Morrish, 2000). When discussing discipline the participants demonstrated their use of proactive discipline. Two of the teachers mentioned that they set up rules and discussed expectations prior to the onset of class.

The literature (Benard, 1996; 1998; Henderson, 1996; Wang et al., 1998) describes this attitude as including the belief that resilience can be encouraged by supportive individuals. The theme of personal relationships or connection was found in many of the answers to the interview questions on resilience. They discussed the importance of developing relationships with students, and having fun while learning. These sustained, close relationships between teacher and student can reduce stress and

provide support (Wang et al., 1997). Morrish (2000) discusses the importance of rapport between teacher and student. Rapport is about connecting with students in a positive way. Bonnie develops special relationships with her students by providing comfort to them. Often this comfort is created through the use of pet names, like "... munchkins..." or "... chickadees..." The use of these pet names, the use of humour, and an element of fun in the classroom all refer to intentional playfulness to support learning (Boyer, 1998). Boyer (1998) asserts that using this attitude in learning is an important part of developing the adaptive skills necessary to do well and meet the challenges of the 21st century. Playfulness de-emphasizes the need to be perfect (Boyer, 1998). This connects with the teachers' beliefs about creating safety by teaching students that it is acceptable to make mistakes.

Similarly, a connection can be found between playfulness and intrinsic motivation. Playfulness enhances a child's intrinsic motivation to learn (Boyer, 1998). Humor can relieve the tension of a difficult situation. Using humor in the classroom models for students how they can relieve the stress involved in everyday life (Morrish, 2000). The modeling and subsequent observation of humor connects with the next theme of modeling found in the participants' responses.

Teachers commented on the positive role of modeling. Children learn many of their behaviours by watching others. In the school environment the importance of this type of interaction can be easily overlooked. Resiliency research sees learning primarily as a process of modeling (Benard, 1993). This concept is particularly important in elementary school settings (Morrish, 2000). When talking about their own attitudes and how they influenced their students, teachers stated that they are aware that children are

smart and that they tend to take on the attitude of the teacher. "... The boss sets the tone..." The research literature also points to the positive attitude that acts as a model for resilient children. A teacher's role modeling is a key protective factor that mitigates against the likelihood of academic failure. Teachers not only provide support for children's learning, but they also serve as confidants and positive role models for their students (Wang et al., 1997). Teachers, in this case, are also modeling conduct in terms of attitudes and expectations. This is then internalized by students and it becomes a standard for self-evaluation (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2001). Evidently, these teachers realize the positive influence they can have due to modeling.

In this case, the teachers are fostering resilience in their students through both the attitudes that they model, as previously mentioned, and the attitudes they encourage in the students' learning processes. Teachers' caring is shown through both their academic and social interactions with children and through their classroom structure, curriculum, and practices (Wang et al., 1998). The development of resilience has been compared to the process of healthy human development. It has been described as a dynamic process in which both personality and environmental influences interact in a reciprocal, transactional relationship to promote development (Benard, 1993). In this case, the teachers focus on developing trust with their students and this progresses to a personal connection and is furthered through the facilitation of other important qualities. The teachers demonstrate an attitude of mutual respect and caring (Wang et al., 1998). This attitude is consistent with the literature, which states that classrooms that foster resilience place importance on the respect of each other's activities and values (Wang et al., 1998). They provide growth opportunities and encourage students' competence (Garmezy, 1991)

by encouraging them to take risks, because they will protect them and they believe in their abilities. They protect the dignity of their students. They develop relationships with their students. With all of these positive attitudes in place it becomes apparent just how much influence "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) can have on the *microsystem* of their students (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Influences on Resilience. Resilience theory stresses the interdependence of the home, the classroom, the school, and the community contexts. The resources and influences in each of these contexts can work in combination to overcome limitations in any single context (Wang et al., 1998). Home, community, and school are other *microsystems*, besides the classroom, in which the child is embedded, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979). The interrelations among two or more of these settings in which the child actively participates comprise the child's *mesosystem.* Children's learning is influenced most by the child's own characteristics and the features of his or her own home and classroom (Wang et al., 1994).

Home can be a context in which resilience is fostered or hindered (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When remarking about the influence that home has on resilience, teachers' comments suggest that they were aware that home could either help in fostering resilience or hinder this process. When family experiences act as protective factors certain qualities of the home are demonstrated. These qualities include consistency, well-balanced discipline, parental encouragement, high expectations (Werner & Smith, 1982; Rak & Patterson, 1996; Rutter, 1987; Wang et al., 1998), and family involvement in a child's education (Wang et al., 1998). Bonnie stated that home can have a positive impact by providing the necessities of life to children and

encouraging them. The home environment can provide an abundance of resources even among families that are of limited economic means (Wang et al., 1997).

In contrast to this, Kyla and Sally both commented on the lack of involvement that parents have with their students. Families' involvement has been found to facilitate enhanced communication between homes and schools (Wang et al., 1994). If compared with the qualities mentioned of resilience-promoting homes, it appears that the teachers believe that the homes of these children are lacking. Two of the participants commented that it becomes their responsibility to compensate for the child's neglect at home; they are forced to try to remedy the negative home situations their students come from. Family involvement in children's education enhances school performance (Wang et al., 1998). Both resiliency theory (Wang et al., 1998) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1979) stress the importance of the interconnections between a child's *microsystems*, termed *mesosystem*. The stronger these links, the better protected is the child. It appears that the link between the school and home may be poor from some of these teacher's perspectives, but to better protect children from life's hardships they are doing their best to correct for this discrepancy (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). They did qualify this comment by explaining that some parents do take an interest, but for the most part they believed that home was not helping. Again, this comment suggests that these teachers believe that some parents are helping and others are not and therefore home can be a context in which resilience is either fostered or hindered.

Communities can contribute to a child's resilience (Wang et al., 1998). Communities can positively influence the well being, health, safety, and intellectual life of their residents (Wang et al., 1997). Weinreb (1997) states that community supports can

be especially influential when the child's problems come from the family, or the home. Bonnie commented on the positive role that a community could have in providing guidelines for acceptable behaviour to children. The expression of consistent social and cultural norms among community members and various organizations can help children learn what constitutes desirable behaviour (Wang et al., 1998). Bonnie and Francine did not specify how they felt about their students' community. Unfortunately, according to some of the teacher's beliefs in this study, their children are not getting all that they could from their community. Both Kyla and Sally suggested that more resources were needed in the community. As is typical with impoverished neighborhoods, the teachers described a community with a poorly integrated network of social organizations and fragmented services (Wang et al., 1998). Kyla and Sally agreed that overall there is a shortage of resources in the community and that poverty can exacerbate the problem of accessibility. Due to children's disadvantaged backgrounds, their parents cannot afford to enroll them in extra-curricular activities. While community can have a positive influence on resilience, it can also impede a child's desire to succeed. In this case, the support found in the community could be improved. It is possible that these *mesosystem* links between the students, their homes, and their communities are weak, and this may prompt them to search for support in another *microsystem*, the school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Teachers spoke about the positive influence that school can have on children's resilience. In addition to the influences of teacher actions and expectations, influences including school climate play important roles in raising student learning, motivation, and attitudes toward school (Wang et al., 1997). Kyla spoke about school providing the elements that home was lacking like consistency, structure, and expectations. The school,

or the teachers in the school, appeared to serve as a support for the children seeking to avoid the negative environment of home (Garmezy, 1991). In resilient schools, behavioural expectations are clear, the children feel a sense of belonging (Wang et al., 1998), high expectations are established for them, the class sizes are often quite small, and caring and support are provided to them (Nettles et al., 2000; Weinreb, 1997). From the perspectives of the "turnaround teachers," (Benard, 1998) it is evident that these children do, indeed, have an uphill battle in search of resilience. The support from home and the community may need improving. From the teachers' conversations, it could be surmised that school may act as a supportive refuge for these resilient children. School was really the only *microsystem* that the teachers can influence in a positive manner. Although they saw other contexts as having both positive and negative impacts on resilience, teachers referred to school only in terms of having a positive influence. The teachers in this study described all these *microsystems* as having a major influence on resilience.

Perceived Influence on Fostering Resilience in Students. When hypothesizing about what tends to influence resilience the most, whether it was the home, the community, or the school, the participants most often mentioned the influence of one person. This influence occurred due to the development of a special relationship or due to the confidence-building comments coming from that special individual. This theme was prominent in many of the comments made by the teachers. The theme of personal relationships was evident in the teachers' beliefs about attitudes, practices, and influences on resilience. Although community and home were believed to have an impact, a few of the teachers described these elements as not doing their part in the fostering of resilience.

They did not differentiate between them in a search for the one with the most influence. Instead, they mentioned the role of relationships. They explained that they believe that relationships are the key to the promotion of resilience in children. It just takes this one personal connection, the one memorable comment from a valuable individual. They mentioned that this person could be anyone. According to these teachers, it may be the home, community, or school and specifically the individuals working in the particular environment that help tilt the scales for these children from risk to resilience (Benard, 1998).

The literature supports this belief. The mentoring literature explains that children often recognize that one or more persons had a significant impact in helping them. This person can be a family member, a grandparent, or a community member (McMillan & Reed, 1994; Wang et al., 1998; Werner, 1984). Children recognize that these mentors respected and listened to them (Wang et al., 1998). Often, the mentoring individual is a teacher. When asked about their own perceived influence in the process of resilience, the "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) cited the personal relationships and connections they have with their students. They appeared to recognize that they could be influential through these relationships and often talked about the ways in which they encouraged these relationships and connections to be developed in the classroom. They helped these children develop the attitudes and values they need to persevere in life (Wang et al., 1997). These teachers appear to be aware that increasing the connections they have with their students can help promote their resilience. This is consistent with the resilience literature, in which creating a climate of caring and support is key in fostering resilience in students (Benard 1991, 1998; Patterson, 2002). The relationship between teacher and

student is very important (Wang et al., 1997). More than any other way, schools that build resilience in students create environments of caring personal relationships that begin with teachers who have resilience-building attitudes (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

In contrast to the findings of Johnson et al. (1999), the present study suggests that these four elementary school teachers recognize their influence, unlike the previous finding in which the teachers tended to undervalue their own influence in the process of resilience. Certainly, the recognition could have something to do with the fact they were nominated as fitting the criteria and therefore, this could have prompted them to step back and realize the influence that they do have. Nonetheless, they were, indeed, aware that they had an impact on the resilience of their students. This study lends further support for the protective influence found through a mentoring relationship that teachers can provide to their students (Benard, 1992; Coburn & Nelson, 1989; Dugan & Coles, 1989; Garmezy et al., 1984; Geary, 1988; McMillan & Reed, 1994; Werner, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1989).

Arriving at an explanation of the meaning that this process has for another individual is difficult, even when it can be based on excerpts from conversations. Using a qualitative approach was very useful to extract a large amount of insightful information from this group of participants. The teachers came alive when the tape-recorder was turned on and they were asked to share their beliefs. It gave them an opportunity to be recognized as an expert and to share openly and honestly their opinions and perspectives on a topic that appeared to be very close to their hearts. Children are a very large part of each of their lives, and the animated way in which they shared the stories of their students and the caring and humourous way they brought these anecdotes across points to the

meaning that these children have in their lives. They take pride in the work they do and value their involvement in the process of fostering resilience. The essence of the experience, the utmost meaning, appears to be found in the personal connections they make with their students. These teachers appear to believe in and value their own capacity to transform and change their students (Benard, 1998).

Classroom Practices. According to Henderson (1996), part of the process involved in fostering educational resilience is that of promoting instructional practices that promote educational resilience and facilitate learning for students "at-risk' of student failure (Wang et al., 1998). Caring and belief in student potential must be combined with research-based instructional practices that promote educational resilience for students "at-risk" of school failure (Wang et al., 1998). In terms of classroom practices, strategies used by the teachers were mentioned more often than concrete activities. Praise and recognition were believed to be very important. Bonnie shared her beliefs about the importance of legitimate praise and recognition. Sally, Francine, and Kyla all use praise with their students. Francine commented that she praises her students when they make good choices. Allowing the students to have power and providing them with choices was also seen as crucial to resilience. Francine talked about the importance of making good life choices and teaching the children that they can have some control over certain aspects of their lives. Resilience literature explains that showing students that they have the power to construct the meaning they give to everything and the empowerment gained from having a role in decision-making can help foster their resilience. Allowing children to participate in the creation of the governing rules of the classroom is a way of encouraging their growth, as well (Benard, 1997). In this way, "turnaround teachers" are

allowing their students to contribute in a meaningful way. This meaningful participation encourages their feelings of belonging and gives them a sense of ownership. More importantly, this also helps build their ability to make responsible choices (Benard, 1998).

The teachers spoke about the development of values in their students. The use of character education was mentioned. This included encouraging the values of respect, self-discipline, honesty, and generosity. These characteristics can be described as resilience-promoting and teachers who demonstrate the "resiliency attitude" and set up these types of classrooms, can have a significant impact on their students (Henderson, 1996). In addition, Deci and Ryan (1987), Hidi (1990), and Lepper and Hodell (1989) would argue that these strategies of providing choice, empowerment, positive feedback, and promotion of autonomy enhance intrinsic motivation in learning. Sally explained "... if it's not intrinsic, it's just not..."

The elementary school teachers did not outline the specific activities that they do in the class; instead they spent more time discussing the building of character within their students. The belief was that most everything else would fall into place when a few of the basics of human care took precedence. These teachers believe in sharing the power, in allowing thee children to know that they can make choices that can make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. They may not have control over everything, but they can do a lot with what they have. These teachers seemed to understand that a transformation can exist in relationships, beliefs and expectations, and in the willingness to share power (Benard, 1998). Certainly, this is more supporting evidence that these teachers demonstrate the "resiliency attitude" and believe in children's capacity to be

resilient and overcome negative life circumstances, not just by doing well in school but in developing into good, honest, moral individuals. The next section of the chapter will summarize the important findings for the study as they relate to the elements intended for discovery.

A Summary of the Findings

The intention of the study was to conduct a qualitative exploration of the beliefs of "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998). Primarily, their perceived influence in the process of fostering resilience was under scrutiny. In addition, the researcher wanted to investigate the "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) beliefs about how their attitudes and practices helped maintain this influence. Furthermore, the intention was to examine these beliefs within the context of resilience, to gather more information about children's educational resilience.

There were a number of noteworthy overarching themes in the participants' dialogues. These themes were noted as being repetitive themes across questions or within the respondents' answers to more than one question. Most prominent was the theme of personal connection and relationships. This theme was mentioned again and again, by the participants in the context of what they try and provide to their students, as well as in terms of what they feel makes the difference for these children from disadvantaged areas. A few of the overarching themes had to do with what can be described as 'best practice' for the encouragement of resilience. One of these prevalent themes was fostering values. The teachers spoke about respect, dignity, perseverance, honesty, and generosity. They instill these values in their students. Another overarching theme was that of encouraging risk and providing safety. The teachers wanted their students to feel comfortable in their

learning environments. They wanted them to be able to make mistakes and not fear retribution from their classmates. They encouraged mutual acceptance and understanding from their students. The fourth overarching theme was that of expectations. These teachers felt that it was important to have clear, concise expectations that children understood.

What do these overarching themes tell us about the perceived influence of these teachers and their attitudes and practices in the *microsystem* of the classroom (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)? Simply, teachers are aware that they have an influence; these teachers know that they act as models to these children. The "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) maintain positive attitudes and are honest when they are unable to do so. They know that the relationships they have with these children and the other connections the children have with people can have a positive impact on their life. They maintain their "resiliency attitudes" through the display of appropriate attitudes and the encouragement of the development of character in their students. They show that they believe in their students and provide them with a safe place to learn. All these beliefs, attitudes, and practices, show that these teachers are aware that they play a part in the process of resilience. Coinciding with the awareness of their influence is the positive meaning that they attribute to being a valuable part of a child's life. These positive feelings are brought on by both their recognition as a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) and through the meaningful relationships they develop with their students. The students are the most central figures in this process of resilience, for it is the influences that impact their development that promote or hinder this process.

The Central Figure: The Child

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory contends that each of the ecological systems in which a child is surrounded work interdependently. If a change happens in one system, a change must occur elsewhere. Children are put "at-risk" by an accumulation of negative influences, yet despite this some are resilient to their negative circumstances. The stronger the links between the systems, the better the child is protected from hardships. Two of the teachers did not comment on the personal situations of their students, whether it was at home or in the community. Some comments reflected the positive influence that the child's *microsystems* can have. However, it is interesting to note that some of the teachers described the links between community and child, child and home, and home and school as weak. "There isn't any home..." "So they are unable to help..." "There aren't a lot of extracurricular activities available to them..." Then, one must ask, for the children with weak *mesosystems*, how can they still be resilient?

The teachers interviewed in this study would assert that it is the feelings of confidence and security that they find in a relationship with one special individual that makes the difference. This person may or may not be a teacher. Is it then possible that this relationship or connection over shadows the negative influences of the rest of the system? Is a relationship with another individual, so personally meaningful, that it has the power or capacity to influence a child's development in an extreme positive direction, despite all the negative influences in their lives? The protective factors or processes literature states that the existence of even a single protective factor can alleviate several adversities. This protective power may come from a caring teacher. Werner (1984) found that a favorite teacher acted as an important buffer against adversity in the lives of

resilient young children. A teacher can enhance student learning, create a feeling of belonging, and serve as a role model (Wang et al., 1998). This protective influence can remedy the risk elements present in an environment marked by disadvantage (Garmezy, 1991).

In terms of the causal mechanisms associated with the resilience process, the major findings focus on risk factors and the protective factors and processes found within a child and a child's environment. This makes the identification of the specific mechanisms particularly challenging because for each individual these protective processes may work differently. Bronfenbrenner (1979) acknowledges the importance of the role of experience for each individual. It is possible that the experience of human connectedness is so beneficial that its influence can correct for the negative *microsystem* and *mesosystem* factors in a child's life.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) would likely assert that a single person or system never works alone to influence the development of a child. Another possibility is that this person with whom a child has formed a connection acts as a catalyst in the resilience process by tightening the links in the child's mesosystem, thereby increasing the protective processes found in a child's environment, and prompting their resilience. Perhaps, resilient children undergo this transformation or ecological transition from risk to resilience shortly after this mentoring influence has taken hold. The strength of this bond could also depend on the change that it prompts in the child's other ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, Wang et al. (1998) explain that the existence of even a single protective factor can alleviate several adversities. Unfortunately, these postulated questions cannot be answered by the present study, but this potential for

discovery certainly brings forth many questions for the future study of the causal mechanisms involved in a child's resilience.

Implications of the Findings

This study has numerous implications for the educational system. Teacher education needs to provide a more thorough understanding of educational resilience to pre-service and experienced teachers (Wang et al., 1998). Without the knowledge of the strategies and attitudes to adopt, there is less chance that the school system will be filled with "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) and it is these types of teachers that students need to increase their chances of resilience.

In addition to this increased understanding of resilience, teacher training needs to specify the attitudes and practices that are valued by resilient children in the classroom. "Turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) could act as mentors or models to beginning teachers. Fostering values, creating a safe environment, encouraging educational risk-taking, and setting concrete expectations are the important elements in a resilience-promoting classroom identified in this study. In addition, teachers need to focus their energy on displaying positive attitudes, believing in their students' abilities, and giving them choices.

Providing classrooms that encourage intrinsic motivation should also be encouraged. One of the barriers to resiliency building is that teachers have perceived time limitations (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). An encouraging finding demonstrated by this study and past studies is that resiliency can be fostered with limited amounts of time (Sagor, 1996). Another barrier to resilience promotion arises from educators who feel their responsibility is limited to teaching the basics (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

Keeping in mind that this form of teaching requires little time and can help ensure a resilient society, acknowledging and utilizing this influence seems critical for all educators. Teachers need to examine or re-examine their basic attitudes and assumptions. They need to learn to trust the potential of their students, especially those "at-risk" of school failure (Wang et al., 1998).

Research on identifying ways to foster resilience has generated new approaches to studying and designing innovative interventions (Wang et al., 1994). The absence of specific resilience-fostering strategies and intervention and prevention programs can also provide barriers to resilience building. Teachers must implement instructional techniques that are linked to student learning and educational resilience (Wang et al., 1998). One must keep in mind that fostering resiliency is more about people-to-people interactions than it is about curricular programming (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Therefore, developing mentoring relationships may be the first key in resilience promotion. However, a number of simple strategies can also be used, as evidenced by the strategies used by "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) in this study. These elements of a resilience-promoting classroom could be taught to pre-service teachers for prevention purposes and fostered in interventions for those schools or classrooms lacking in the encouragement of educational resilience.

Wang (1997) suggested that one of the next steps in resilience research is to determine what contributes to resilience development and then promote such development through intervention. Many school reformers believe mentoring to be a powerful intervention for disadvantaged children. However, Benard (1992) has cautioned that the long-term effectiveness of such interventions has not been established (Wang et

al., 1994). The effectiveness of natural versus planned mentoring needs further research (Wang et al., 1994). For now, research has established that the natural mentoring developed through teacher-student relationships can be very effective with students (Benard, 1992).

The teachers need not be the only individuals responsible for the fostering of resilience in disadvantaged schools. Counselors and other school staff could provide after school programs focusing on the implementation of the "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) strategies. Parents, in the home, can provide these strategies as well. They can provide a positive attitude, believe in their children, and they can give their children choice and power.

These strategies can also be implemented at the community level. Programs that provide children with safety, caring, and connection can be created at a reasonable cost for lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. Any person or group or organization can be assessed as to how strongly they promote resilience (Henderson & Milstein, 1996); whether this be in the home, community, school, or classroom level. The promotion of resilience can occur in any of these *microsystems* and at the very least, or perhaps the very most, resilience can be encouraged by one special person. Relationships are key and anyone can become a friend to a child, anyone can tell a child how smart and creative they are. It may only take the interest of one person to motivate a child to learn and do well. Having a passion for helping students to be resilient, believing in the capacity for resilience, and having knowledge of the resiliency literature about how to foster resilience, are the driving forces that helps overcome the barriers to resilience-building and ensures a supply of competent educators (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

In terms of teacher burnout, the "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) in this study indicated that support from other teachers and administration were key in maintaining their abilities to continue in their pursuit of fostering resilience. Burnout reflects the subtle erosion of behaviour, attitude, health and spirit that can inhibit a teacher's ability to function effectively (Berg, 1994). Providing more links between home and the classroom, and home and the community could also lessen the pressure on the teacher and increase the chances that students will become resilient (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These connections need to be strengthened and widely implemented to foster healthy development and educational success (Wang et al., 1998). This would allow the teachers who have some reluctance in developing the "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) approach less pressure in implementing resilience-promoting strategies because of the external supports that would help them in the process.

School principals may want to examine the qualities of a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) and reflect upon these when engaged in the hiring process, especially when hiring teachers for disadvantaged schools. If these teachers can make a difference for children, a school full of such teachers could potentially encourage resilience community-wide, or at the very least school-wide. The knowledge and belief that everyone has the capacity to develop resilience can help prevent burnout for teachers working with "at-risk" children because this belief is grounded in optimism, hope, and possibility (Benard, 1993). Most importantly, children from disadvantaged neighborhoods experiencing the multiple risks of poverty can be helped through these caring relationships with mentors.

To decrease the risk of burnout, a simple nominating procedure in the school could make a difference for the teachers. If being nominated as a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) helps teachers realize the positive impact they can have on their students, their motivation to continue in their efforts may be encouraged by this recognition. In addition, the simple process of sharing one's beliefs about resilience could also prompt the realization of this positive influence, thus prompting greater understanding, and decreasing the risk of teacher burnout. Even if the barriers to resilience-building exist in schools, teachers can still create environments of resilience-building that are strongly associated with academic success. These educators can work to overcome the barriers to resilience that may exist in their schools (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations in terms of study implementation include the phrasing of some of the interview questions being difficult to understand, an initial negative reaction to the tape-recorder, and the possibility that the participants' conversations were influenced by their prior reading of the criteria of a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998). When the participants were recruited they were given a summary of the criteria to help them nominate individuals whom they felt demonstrated the criteria (see Appendix A). This awareness of the criteria of a "turnaround teacher" (Benard, 1998) could have prompted the participants to engage in a halo effect or bias which refers to an overall positive evaluation (Hoyle, Harris, & Judd, 2002) of self. They may have chosen to base their answers and experiences on the criteria originally shared with them. However, when interviewed the participants appeared to be fairly grounded by the nominations. One of the elementary teachers explained, "... it's hard to stand up and say... I'm really good at

what I do... it's embarrassing..." Although the teachers were proud and aware of their influence, they also appeared to be humbled by their nominations.

Limitations due to the time of year that the study was conducted were also apparent. Two schools were originally approached for their participation in the study; however, only one school received enough nominations to be included. The researcher may have had more interest in the project if the research was not conducted at a time so late in the year and just after a recent strike action. As well, although the data collected from the participants and the acknowledgment of the principal suggest that the school chosen was from a disadvantaged area other schools may have provided varied examples of disadvantage. Prior to the interviews a few of the participants commented that they were not very comfortable being taped. This reluctance appeared to subside as the interviews ensued; however, this could have effected their willingness to share their experiences, thereby influencing the richness of the data.

Future Directions

Resilience is an optimistic construct, one that provides hope for those enduring life's challenges (Benard, 1998). This hope needs to be investigated further. With all of the research that there is on resilience, some very important questions remain. In this researcher's opinion, it would be beneficial to continue to explore this construct from a qualitative perspective because this manner of investigation provides so much rich information. Quantitative studies are also valuable, but may be more helpful at a point further down the line. Issues that have been prompted by this research study could also be areas for further investigation. For instance, it would be interesting to investigate the possibility that children tend to undervalue their own resilience. As well, future studies

could examine how much influence one person could have on a child's resilience and whether or not this influence can overshadow the many negative impacts of the *microsystems* and *mesosystems* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) associated with poverty. Future studies could take the present investigation further by examining children's perspectives on their "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998). It would also be valuable to investigate the complex interrelationships between all the other contexts involved in influencing a child's resilience. The home is also a very important setting to a developing child, and is believed to be very influential. More research could focus on the home and interventions could be developed to try to correct for neglectful home environments.

Research could also investigate the differences in effectiveness between natural versus planned mentoring (Wang et al., 1994). In addition, it would be valuable to examine a teacher's own resilience, especially when working with "at-risk" students. Creating schools that promote resilience among the adults that work in them and the students who study in them is important for the development and maintenance of resilience (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). The role of intrinsic motivation in resilience would also be an interesting and important area to explore. These could include the development of parenting programs designed to teach parents resilience-promoting strategies with an emphasis on relationship-building and bonding.

Conclusion

This study qualitatively investigated "turnaround teachers" (Benard, 1998) beliefs about their influence, attitudes, and practices in the process of fostering resilience. These teachers provide *connection*, *competence*, and opportunities for *contribution* to their students. Findings suggest that these teachers are aware of not only their own influence in

the process, but of the influence of home, community, and school as well. These teachers point to the importance of the connections they form with their students. They believe that relationships are the most influential factor in a child's resilience. With their belief in the competence of children, their promotion of resilience-enhancing strategies in the classroom, and the bond they form with their students, children are beginning to get the help and understanding that they need. Indeed, a focus on the promotion of "educational resilience" is a promising approach for improving the education of "at-risk" students and providing them with a turnaround experience (Benard, 1997). The hope comes from the realization that it may take very little to change a child's development from a focus on risk to one of resilience. It may only take the influence of one powerful person. However, one must keep in mind that fostering the development of the whole child likely necessitates the collaboration of school, family, and community (Benard, 1997). Elementary school teachers are in a unique and powerful position to be "resiliency mentors" (Weinreb, 1997). Studies like this point to the protective value found in human relationships.

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APPENDIX A

Criteria for Turnaround Teacher Nomination

Nominator: please circle the category you best fit: Administrator / Teacher/ Other

Teacher Nominated: _____ Grade(s) the individual teaches:____

Please remember these teachers must be female and work full-time.

Please check off each of the strategies or approaches you feel this person uses in their teaching:

1. Turnaround teachers provide *connection* (Benard, 1998):
   (a) ____ they are caring individuals
   (b) ____ they develop relationships with their students
   (c) ____ they convey the message that they are there for the youth, through trust and unconditional love
   (d) ____ they help meet the basic survival needs of overwhelmed students and their families (ex. basic school supplies on hand, necessities on hand such as mitts, hats, personal hygiene items)
   (e) ____ they connect students and their families to outside community resources in order to find food, clothing, counseling, and treatment
   (f) ____ they are interested in, actively listen to, and validate the feelings of struggling young people
   (g) ____ they show nonjudgemental support that looks beneath students' negative behavior and sees their pain and suffering

2. Turnaround teachers build *competence* (Benard, 1998):
   (a) ____ they have positive and high expectations of their students
   (b) ____ they have a deep belief in the student's competence and self-righting capacities
   (c) ____ they recognize existing competencies and use these strengths, interests, goals, and dreams as the beginning point for learning
   (d) ____ they help youth avoid taking personally the adversity in their lives
   (e) ____ they help youth avoid seeing adversity as permanent
   (f) ____ they help youth avoid seeing setbacks as pervasive
   (g) ____ they build their students' sense of competency by teaching metacognition- the understanding of how thoughts influence feelings and behaviour

3. Turnaround teachers let students *contribute* (Benard, 1998):
   (a) ____ they provide outlets for student contribution in a physically and psychologically safe and structured environment
   (b) ___ they ask questions that encourage self-reflection, critical thinking, and dialogue
   (c) ___ they encourage peer helping
   (d) ___ they involve their students in curriculum planning
   (e) ___ they involve students in creating classroom rules

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Presentation

Thank you so much for coming here today to meet with me. My name is Tamara Oberle and I am a student at the University of Victoria. I am working towards a Master's degree in Educational Psychology. I wanted to let you know about a research study that I am doing and ask your help in the study. You have all received invitations inviting you to this nomination session. I would like to reiterate a little bit about my study. My study is about teachers who promote educational resilience in their students. Educational resilience means that despite certain children's disadvantaged circumstances, they still do well in school. The type of teacher who does this has been labelled a turnaround teacher by a researcher. Specifically, a turnaround teacher has been defined as a mentor who builds in her own style and way crucial environmental protective factors for her students.

I want you all to know that you are not being asked to participate in the study at this time. What I am asking you all to do is participate in this part of the project by nominating your peers on the basis of certain criteria, for inclusion in the actual study (which will be a one on one interview with myself). However, participation in this nomination process is voluntary. You can withdraw your participation at anytime and you do not have to participate if you do not want to, but I am asking that you remain in the room until I have completed the process.

I will now give you some information about what your participation in the nomination process entails and what you could possibly be asked to do as a participant in an interview. If you decide to participate in this nomination process, you will be asked to look at the criteria of a turnaround teacher and nominate female teachers that you feel fulfill the criteria. Female teachers have been chosen in order to limit the sample size and because the literature states that female teachers' approaches are most similar to that of the turnaround teacher. This purposeful sampling will also allow a certain level of comfort for the interviewer and participant during the interview. Male teachers are considered beyond the scope of this particular study; however, further studies could and should draw some comparisons between the different genders. Please keep in mind that the participants chosen may not be an exhaustive list of the "turnaround teachers" found in this environment, as my study only supports the time for a certain number of interviews. In addition, all participants need to receive more than one nomination, be full-time female teachers, and they have to agree to participate themselves. Receiving a nomination does not mean that those nominated are considered "excellent" teachers and that those who are not nominated are considered "poor" teachers. This distinction is not used at all in the present study.

For those of you who are nominated and asked to participate in the study: If you decide to go ahead and participate in this study, I will be asking you to participate in individual interviews lasting approximately one hour. Your involvement in the study is voluntary. These interviews will ask you about your beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceived influence about your interactions with your educationally resilient students and the role

you play in their lives. I will also be asking for your permission to tape record these interviews. The place where the interviews are conducted will be the choice of those nominated and willing to participate. All of the information that I gather will remain confidential. No one will be allowed to see the information except for my supervisor and myself. Your anonymity will be protected as best possible. The information will only be used for my thesis, and your names will be kept strictly private. You will each be given a pseudonym that will replace your name on any and all paper work. In addition, when the results are disseminated, any identifying information about yourself or your school district will not be made public. Do you have any questions before we begin the nomination process?

Now, I would like to ask those of you who are willing to begin the nomination process. I will now hand out the nomination envelopes. Anyone who does not wish to participate on this nomination process can simply indicate this on their nomination sheet and hand in a blank sheet in a sealed envelope. These nominations are based on a criteria which I will now share with you. Once this has been explained you can nominate the individual who you feel best fits this criteria. You are asked to only nominate one, so if you have more than one in mind please pick the one you feel is the best example of the criteria. I have left a number of blanks on your page; however, you are only asked to check off as many as you feel fit the individual you are nominating. You are also asked to determine what category you fit into (administrator, teacher, or other) and what category the individual you are nominating fits into (what grade they teach). When complete, please seal your envelopes to ensure confidentiality and return them to me.

Once I have a chance to determine who the participants will be, they will be contacted via the telephone. Before you leave today, I have left a sign up sheet near the exit door. I am asking that anyone who is a full-time female teacher and would be interested in participating in an interview, pending nomination, please leave their contact information on this sheet. Putting your name on this list does not guarantee you will be a participant, it merely shows you are interested. Therefore, others will not be certain who will participate. I request both an email address and a home phone number if possible. This will allow me to contact those individuals asked to participate within the next week to schedule an interview time.

Do you have any more questions at this time? I would really like to thank-you for helping with my study. I am expecting that the results should help us to gain a greater understanding of resilience, how teachers promote it, and their beliefs and attitudes about resilience. This could have some wide implications to pre-service teacher training and relevant interventions for children "at-risk." The results of the study should be available to all those interested via the school office in the early fall.

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide and Interview Protocol or Script

Introduction: Although you have already read this in the consent form I feel compelled to once again mention that your anonymity will be preserved as best possible. The confidentiality of your answers will at all times be respected and protected. This has already been explained in the consent form that you signed, please refer to it if you are uncertain. Thank-you for participating in this study. Do you have any questions before we begin? You have given written permission to have this interview taped. I will now turn on the tape recorder and ask that you recite your permission to audiotape for me.

Demographic Information: Age: Degree: Years of Experience: **Grade(s):**	For each question, one prompt will be given first, if the participant still does not understand the question a second prompt will be given. If both these prompts do not help the individual understand the question a standard third prompt will be given for all of the questions: *There is no correct answer to the question. Please answer it as it applies to you, as best as you can and as freely as you choose.*

Interview Guide	Interview Protocol or Script
Resilience Preamble: You have a reputation of being a turnaround teacher. Based on this others feel that you enable students to become educationally resilient. 1. Based on this what is your general understanding of a child's resilience?	**Question 1.** prompt 1: in the literature resilience has been defined as - successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1991). Prompt 2: How would your own understanding be similar or different to this one?
2. Can you think of a particular child that stands out in your memory related to this topic?	**Question 2** prompt 1: Let's look at the question in a different way. Describe the characteristics of a resilient child.
3. How do you know when a child is demonstrating educational resilience?	**Question 3** prompt 1: Let's look at the question in a different way. In the classroom what do you see and hear that makes you think of a child as resilient?
	Continued on next page...

Attitudes/ Fostering Resilience/ Perceived Influence in Fostering Resilience 4. Other staff members have nominated you as a turnaround teacher. What does this mean to you?	**Question 4** Prompt 1: Describe how this nomination is reflected in your teaching. Prompt 2: As a teacher and a person, how has this nomination affected you?
5. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching or attitude towards your students?	**Question 5** Prompt 1: How do you interact with your students? Prompt 2: How does your philosophy of working with children affect your teaching practices?
6. How does your attitude in the classroom influence your students? Could you give me some examples.	**Question 6** Prompt 1: How does your attitude towards the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social well being of a child influence how you work with your students?
7. How do home, community, and school influence or affect your students' resilience?	**Question 7** Prompt 1: What kinds of influences do home, community, and school have on your students?
Classroom Practices 8. What kinds of experiences or activities do you encourage or provide in your classroom to help promote resiliency in your students? Can you give me some examples.	**Question 8** Prompt 1: What kinds of things do you do with them in terms of their cognitive, emotional, physical, and social functioning that help promote resilience in them? Prompt 2: Which of your actions and attitudes help them to be personally empowered?
Conclusion 9. Is there anything that we have not covered that you feel would be important to add?	**Question 9:** Prompt 1: Do you wish to discuss anything else in relation to the topic of the study? Prompt 2: Do you want to expand on anything you have said?

Standard Prompts: used to try and get the participant to share more information when answers to questions are limited

1. Tell me more about this.
2. Could you expand on your answer a bit more.
3. Could you tell me more about what ------ meant?
4. What did this experience mean to you?

APPENDIX D

Pilot Interview Consent Form

Turnaround Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Educational Resilience in a Disadvantaged School: A Qualitative Exploration

You are being invited to participate in a pilot study of a larger study entitled "Turnaround Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Educational Resilience in a Disadvantaged School: A Qualitative Exploration" that is being conducted by myself, Tamara Oberle. I am a Graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology at The University of Victoria and you may contact me if you have further questions by calling my home at 895-7435 or via email (toberle@uvic.ca). As a graduate student, I am required to conduct this research as part of the requirements for a Masters degree in Educational Psychology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Wanda Boyer. You may contact my supervisor at 721-7814 or via email (wboyer@uvic.ca).

The purpose of this research project is to explore the beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceived influence of teachers who foster educational resilience in their students. The objectives include gaining greater insight into the experiences of "turnaround teachers" and learning how to improve current teaching practices. Research of this type is important because it can extend the research on the important topic of resilience, particularly examining the role of a teacher as a protective factor. As well, this research may have implications to the educational system, teacher training, the development of relevant interventions, and the education of children from disadvantaged circumstances.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been nominated by a close friend and colleague as fulfilling the criteria of a turnaround teacher, a teacher who fosters educational resilience in her students. Specifically, a turnaround teacher has been defined as a mentor who builds in her own style and way crucial environmental protective factors for her students. Educational resilience refers to a child's increased likelihood of success in school despite environmental adversities. These teachers play an important role in their resilient students' lives, and it is hoped that by better understanding this role, from the teacher's perspective, valuable information about the process of resilience and teachers involvement in the process can be gained. If you would like to see this criteria, it is available to you. If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, I would ask you to be available for a face-to-face interview approximately one hour in length. This interview will consist of a number of open-ended questions pertaining to your beliefs about the experience of fostering educational resilience in the students in your classroom. You may refuse to answer any given question. During the interview I will be using a tape recorder and taking notes, with your permission. The interview will take place wherever is most convenient for you (e.g. your home, or a designated area in the school). At the conclusion of the interview, I will also invite you to give me valuable feedback about the questions asked in the interview and the process of the interview. This will help me to firm up the interview procedure I will be using for the larger study. The interview will be taped, if you agree to this; however, the tape and all other data will be destroyed immediately after the researcher has determined that the technology functioned as expected. Your data will not be transcribed. Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, as you will be asked to give up approximately an hour of your time for the interview.

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include the possibility of an emotional risk. As the questions will reflect your personal beliefs about your experience as a teacher, there is a chance that discussing this personal topic may bring about some difficult emotions for you. If you feel that this is likely to occur, I suggest that you withdraw your participation at this time. To prevent or deal with these risks, the following steps will be taken. If these difficult emotions do occur during the course of the interview the researcher will discuss these feelings with you further and offer to connect you with community counselling resources or other relevant professionals. If you do not wish the researcher to connect you to these resources, a list can be left with you. The potential benefits of your participation in this research include a chance to share your feelings and beliefs on the topic, to contribute to the research on resilience, and to possibly aid in the improvement of the educational system and society as a whole.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be destroyed immediately by a paper shredding machine and will not be included in the study. To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will be asking you at numerous intervals during the taped interview whether or not you consent to a continuation of the interview and the research.

In terms of protecting your anonymity, the researcher and the individual who nominated you will be the only individual aware of your true identity. However, in the case of all written documentation and taped conversations your name will be replaced with a pseudonym. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by destroying all paper data and audiotapes immediately after the interview. The data collected from your interview will not be used in the actual study.

It is anticipated that the results of the larger study will be shared in the oral defense of my thesis (a small presentation at the University) and through my written thesis. In addition, the results will be provided to all interested parties or participants via a copy held at each participating school. Furthermore, the researcher can be contacted to receive individual copies of the results, if so desired. In addition to being able to contact the researcher and the supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at The University of Victoria (250-472-4632).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Your signature below indicates that you consent to the interview being taped by the researcher. This consent can be withdrawn at anytime during the course of the interview without penalty.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

APPENDIX E

Consent Form for the Study

Turnaround Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Educational Resilience in a Disadvantaged School: A Qualitative Exploration

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled "Turnaround Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Educational Resilience in a Disadvantaged School: A Qualitative Exploration" that is being conducted by myself, Tamara Oberle. I am a Graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology at The University of Victoria and you may contact me if you have further questions by calling my home at 895-7435 or via email (toberle@uvic.ca). As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters degree in Educational Psychology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Wanda Boyer. You may contact my supervisor at 721-7814 or via email (wboyer@uvic.ca).

The purpose of this research project is to explore the beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceived influence of teachers who foster educational resilience in their students. The objectives include gaining greater insight into the experiences of turnaround teachers and learning how to improve current teaching practices. Research of this type is important because it can extend the research on the important topic of resilience, particularly examining the role of a teacher as a protective factor. As well, this research may have implications to the educational system, teacher training, the development of relevant interventions, and the education of children from disadvantaged circumstances.

You are being asked to participate in this study because your colleagues have nominated you, during a recruitment session, as fulfilling the criteria of a turnaround teacher, a teacher who fosters educational resilience in her students. Specifically, a turnaround teacher has been defined as a mentor who builds in her own style and way crucial environmental protective factors for her students. Educational resilience refers to a child's increased likelihood of success in school despite environmental adversities. These teachers play an important role in their resilient students' lives and it is hoped that by better understanding this role, from the teacher's perspective, valuable information about the process of resilience and teachers involvement in the process can be gained. If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, I would ask you to be available for a face-to-face interview approximately one hour in length. This interview will consist of a number of open-ended questions pertaining to your beliefs about the experience of fostering educational resilience in the students in your classroom. You may refuse to answer any given question. During the interview I will be using a tape recorder and taking notes, with your permission. The interview will take place wherever is most convenient for you (e.g. your home, or a designated area in the school). I am also asking you to be available for a follow-up interview, which will be conducted over the telephone. This telephone call should be no longer than half an hour in length. The purpose of this follow-up call is to compare my interpretation of the transcripts and field notes I have taken from the initial interview with what you feel you shared. I will also invite you to give me your thoughts and valuable feedback about the study's results and your involvement in the process. I also want to let you know that participating in this study is not a part of the regular requirements of teachers. I certainly recognize and appreciate the personal commitment and time expenditure you will be making to this study if you agree to participate. Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, as you will be asked to give up approximately half an hour of your time for the interview and approximately half an hour for the follow-up interview. Thank-you for your interest and commitment.

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include the possibility of an emotional risk. As the questions will reflect your personal beliefs about your experience as a teacher, there is a chance that discussing this personal topic may bring about some difficult emotions for you. If you feel that this is likely to occur, I suggest that you withdraw your participation at this time. To prevent or deal with these risks, the following steps will be taken. If these difficult emotions do occur during the course of the interview the researcher will discuss these feelings with you further and offer to connect you with community counselling resources or other relevant professionals. If you do not wish the researcher to

connect you to these resources, a list can be left with you. The potential benefits of your participation in this research include a chance to share your feelings and beliefs on the topic, to contribute to the research on resilience, and to possibly aid in the improvement of the educational system and society as a whole. Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be destroyed immediately by a paper shredding machine and will not be included in the study. To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will be asking you at numerous intervals during the taped interview whether or not you consent to a continuation of the interview and the research.

In terms of protecting your anonymity, the researcher will be the only individual aware of your true identity, as this is necessary to contact you and conduct the follow-up interview. However, in the case of all written documentation and taped conversations your name will be replaced with a pseudonym. Pseudonyms and real names will be kept on a coding sheet that will only be accessible to the researcher, as it will be in a locked file cabinet that only the researcher has a key to. In the professional setting, all nominations of teachers will be given to the researcher in sealed envelopes, and only the researcher will have access to the information inside. Other staff members will have the potential to know if you were nominated in the recruitment session, as they may have nominated you themselves; however, they will not be certain that you have met the other criteria for inclusion in the study. In addition, any contact the researcher has with you will be done outside of the school. This should further ensure your anonymity.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by keeping the transcripts, field journals, and field logs in a locked file for a period of three years after the completion of the study. The records of this study will be kept private. Dr. Wanda Boyer and two other individuals (coders) will have access to the participant records at the time of data analysis, but your confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by the use of the pseudonyms and by the removal of any identifying information prior to these individuals seeing the materials. In addition, the coders will sign a confidentiality agreement with the researcher. If we include quotes from the participants in the written thesis, no identifying information about the participants or the study's location will be included. The tape recordings will be destroyed immediately after they are transcribed. After a three-year period, the field material and data analysis material will also be destroyed by a paper shredding machine.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared in an oral defense of my thesis (a small presentation at the University) and through my written thesis. In addition, the results will be provided to all interested parties or participants via a copy held at each participating school. Furthermore, the researcher can be contacted to receive individual copies of the results, if so desired. In addition to being able to contact the researcher and the supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at The University of Victoria (250-472-4632).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Your signature below indicates that you consent to the interview being taped by the researcher. This consent can be withdrawn at anytime during the course of the interview without penalty.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Your initials in the box below indicate that you consent to a follow-up interview via the telephone with the researcher, after the data has been analyzed. ☐

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

APPENDIX F

Debriefing

Congratulations! Your participation and support has helped us to gain valuable information about the practices and beliefs that teachers have in promoting resilience in their students. The knowledge you have gained about yourself and your beliefs will hopefully help in improving others' educational practices and pre-service teacher training. As indicated in the beginning, your anonymity will be preserved and your answers protected. On all written documentation and taped conversations your name will be replaced by a pseudonym and the researcher will be the only individual aware of your true identity. Other staff members may have been aware that you were nominated as a participant; however, they will not be certain you agreed to participate. Do you have any questions at this time?

If you have any questions in the future please feel free to contact me via the email address or phone number indicated on your copy of the consent form. The results of the study will be shared with you via a copy left a your school office. I am also asking that I may have permission to contact you at a later date via the telephone when I am analyzing the data. The purpose of this will be to compare my findings with what you feel you shared and to give you a chance to give me feed back. Can I have your permission to do this?

Now that you have completed the interview, I would like to ask you if you had or are experiencing any emotional difficulties due to what was discussed in the interview. I would like to discuss this with you further and I have also brought a list of professionals within the community with me, if you feel this information would be beneficial. Shall I leave this list with you or help you contact someone?

Thank-you so much for volunteering to help in this important study. I feel honoured that you have shared your knowledge and beliefs with me. Is there anything that we touched on in the interview that you feel you need further information about or would like to discuss further?

APPENDIX G

Community Contacts

1. Edmonton Resource Information Line (780) 482-4636
2. Alberta Mental Health Services (780) 427-4444
3. The Support Network (780) 482-0198
4. McMan Counselling Services (780) 482-1082
5. Cornerstone Counselling Centre (780) 482-6215
6. Humanacare Counselling Inc. (780) 429-3800

VITA

Surname: Oberle Given Names: Tamara Dawn

Place of Birth: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

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University of Alberta	1995 to 2000

Degrees Awarded:

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Title of the Thesis:

Turnaround Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Educational Resilience in a Disadvantaged School: A Qualitative Exploration

Author 

Tamara Dawn Oberle

December 10, 2002