

TEACHER RESILIENCE: MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY TO THRIVE IN THE CLASSROOM*

Author: Jamie Thom

Publisher: John Catt Educational, 2020

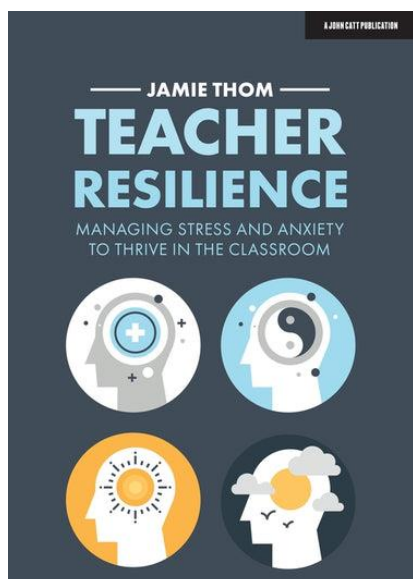
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Teacher resilience has become a more significant concern for teachers and educators worldwide than ever before since the educational crisis in the 2020s when Covid-19 started. *Teacher Resilience: Managing Stress and Anxiety to Thrive in the Classroom* by Jamie Thom, published by John Catt Educational in 2020, has timely addressed the real issues facing teachers and provided strategies that can empower them to be more resilient and thrive in the daily

demands of teaching. Through anecdotal sections that reflect personal experiences in surviving teaching practice and overcoming/alleviating stress and anxiety, the author provides a thoughtful outlook on teacher resilience and addresses teachers' mental health and well-being during a challenging time in education. This book is a toolkit with practical advice underpinned by well-established research. It is valuable for a more resilient mindset to help school teachers cope with the consequences of uncertainty and the demands of teaching and being their best.

This book is organised into five main parts, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The first part is about the importance of resilience, focusing on teaching challenges and the critical need to build this quality as a teacher. Part II looks into the nature of the mindset and highlights the value of self-talk, gratitude, supporting others, self-awareness, managing conflict and learning from mistakes. Teacher actions are the foci of Part III, in which the author provides practical advice regarding not only collaborative relationships, professional development, lesson observations, or

* This research has been completed under the sponsorship of VNU University of Languages and International Studies (VNU-ULIS) under the Project No. N.22.03

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becoming a digital minimalist but also teachers' physical and mental health matters, such as restorative sleep and self-regulation. In Part IV, from the teacher's perspective, the author clearly and persuasively addresses current issues and practical strategies which enable school teachers to deal with the unique challenges of everyday teaching in the classroom. Hands-on tips and techniques related to lesson planning, differentiation dilemmas, and collaborative feedback are presented in detail to promote teachers' teaching practice, in addition to authentic, sensitive strategies to deal with pushy parents and classroom bad behaviours. All these suggestions can be incorporated into a practical action plan to help school teachers alleviate stress and anxiety and stay resilient. The issues of empowering teacher resilience are elaborated on and discussed in light of leadership in Part V. In a letter format, followed by two case studies in which the details about how leaders build resilience in their staff are presented, the author highlights the vital role of school leaders, more than any other, in teacher resilience building.

Within approximately 200 pages, a thoughtful exploration of teacher resilience is presented and discussed in light of evidence-based research. I strongly believe that any school teacher will see themselves in the anecdotal scenarios and find the book worth reading. As presented in the promising title, the author has succinctly explored what teacher resilience is, its components, and the specific challenges of teaching practice teachers face. More importantly, practical strategies for managing stress and anxiety have been provided for schoolteachers to truly thrive in the classroom. The key message here is that teacher resilience can be developed over time, both at the individual and organisational levels. Of particular interest is the focus on the significant impact of teachers' autonomy and identity on resilience building to be prepared to cope

with the demands of their jobs, especially during the uncertainty of the circumstances 2020 presented. While leadership support is critical for nurturing teacher resilience, pragmatic strategies regarding the regular practice of self-compassion, modelling the values of gratitude, self-awareness etc., should be considered core merits of the school community.

Looking closer into subsections, school teachers, especially those in their early careers, will find a practical toolkit that can be applied to their contexts. In addition to sensitive strategies for dealing with tricky parents or special-needs students, the author includes a bundle of tips that teachers could frequently use in the classroom. He emphasised how to define the objective of each lesson in accordance with the available resources, minimise the destructive impact of a comparative mindset during an assessment, or maximise the value of positive feedback for students' academic achievement and development. The effectiveness of some techniques, such as eliciting questioning, modelling, or scaffolding, to tailor to students' diverse needs and differentiation is also highlighted.

Another notable aspect of the book is its reader-friendly format, with authentic anecdotes at the beginning of most subsections, followed by the author's thoughtful discussion and advice, and a serene summary at the end. Readers, particularly school teachers, will feel a close connection with various scenarios reflecting the real daily challenges and anxiety they face. They will be reassured they are not alone when dealing with misbehaviours, differentiation dilemmas, or scrutinised observations. At the end of every section, the author recaps what has been presented. This way, readers can better understand the issue, grasp the takeaway idea, and trigger more ideas before moving to the next contextual challenge.

While the target of this book is to empower teachers' resilience in the teaching profession, teachers in various cultural contexts should consider their own circumstances to apply the author's advice and suggestions. For example, within the Vietnamese context, dominated by the hierarchy regarding authority or senior levels, some strategies, such as setting boundaries to maintain a healthy work-life

balance or dealing with conflict in situations like interviews or observations, might need more consideration. Despite this, the suggested approach to nurturing resilience within the school community, in accordance with practical strategies, will help teachers step up to thrive. This book is also a must-read for educators, policymakers, and school leaders wishing to develop teacher resilience to flourish in teaching in their communities.