BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Dr. S. E. Nnamdi; Abubakar Abdullahi; Olutola, Funmilola Bosede

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education Federal University, Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.

nesunday@fudutsinma.edu.ng; aabdullahinesunday@fudutsinma.edu.ng

3Department of Psychology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. funmilolatola@gmail.com

Abstract

Strengthening a child’s sense of self-esteem and emotional well-being is not an “extra” curriculum; if anything, a child’s sense of belonging, security, and self-confidence provides the scaffolding that supports the foundation for enhanced learning, motivation, and self-discipline. Required is an educational atmosphere capable of instillation what is called a resilient mindset in students. To do this, the school has to provide social and emotional interventions hand in hand with academic education. Infect, a sustainable school environment must be capable of meeting up with the social, emotional, and academic needs of the children. This study therefore looked at the reports of the teachers in developing and implementing strategies for fostering learning and a sense of competence and optimism in their children, management model of the school schools, and management and their constraints. Looked at, are the strategies of building resilient children, discipline in school and how it affects the children. The author suggested that the psychological needs of the children must be recognized opportunities must be created for the children to exercise their independent judgements. The author concluded that classroom indiscipline demands immense effort, comprehensive and a calculated response on the part of the teacher and management of children.

Keywords: School, schools’ management, resilience and children.

Introduction

Resilience has been described in various (sometimes opposing) ways. It has been described as a process, a capacity and an outcome, and there is much about resilience that remains unclear or unknown. This work therefore establishes Building Resilience in Children: School Management Strategies. Resilience is doing well during or after an adverse events or a period of adversity (Alvord & Grados, 2005). Resilience that is something developed through a dynamic process, involving individual factors such as temperament, or environmental factors. The environmental factors could be family relationships, and the interactions between those factors. Something that exists on a spectrum, something that could change over time, something that everyone could learn- to deal with current adverse experiences or to prepare for future adversity, something that may look different in different setting, including family, cultural and broader community environments (Briere, & Scott, 2016).

Different children will have different experiences of adversity. For example, a child who has a network of strong, supportive relationships (known as potential relationships) may not experience the death of a loved one as a serious hardship. In comparison, a child whose loved one provided frequent support
in the absence of other protective relationship is going to experience the death of that loved one much more adversely (Alvore & Grados, 2005).

Sources of adversity include those related to the child (e.g. disability), and those related to the child’s environment—either the child’s immediate environment (e.g. socio-economic disadvantage within the family), or broader structural factors (e.g. systemic discrimination) (Halle, Metz & Martinez-Black, 2013). Resilience in its form is taken care of more in the school.

A school is a society in its miniature form. Just a visit to some schools will give the reflection of the society from where the children come to the school. The society set up schools for its own betterment. To just establish a school is not enough, but making the school to function properly through its proper growth and development should be the ultimate aim of the organizers or society. That is why Elsebree (cited in Jack & Demy, 1996), stated that “organization of a school is the administrative expression of educational theory”. The better the school, the better the children, and the better would be the society.

The more effective teachers and school managers are in developing and implementing strategies for fostering learning and a sense of competence and opinion in the children, the better chance children have for success. The more effectively consultants can articulate the components of effective mindsets for teachers and children, the more they make these framework conscious guides for educators (Capenter & Mckee-Higgs, 1996).

The basic feature of resilient children is that their self-esteem and sense of competence are intact or if damaged, capable of repair. Resilient children pose feelings of hope and optimism, of ownership and personal control. They are matured by charismatic educators, capable of providing experience to reinforce their strength and enhance their feelings of self-worth in such environment. All children even those with challenging behavior can flourish (Diganji and Maag 1992).

The acknowledged goal for all children is to develop self-esteem, self-respect and compassion first and foremost (Blair, Umbrent, and BOS, (1999). The prime location for nurturing resilience children is the school environment. Armendariz and Umbreit, (1999) state that the mindset of effective educators and productive consultants provides a framework for understanding the life long impact adults can have upon their children based upon day in day out classroom activities. Failure of effective methods often reflects failure to ensure generalization and implementation. (Hendridason, Novak and Peck, 1996) stated the four theme impacts of educator’s effectiveness in the classroom.

**Impacts of Educators’ Effectiveness**

i. Impact of casual attributions on beliefs about student behaviour and required intervention by teachers.

ii. The manner in which direct and indirect services are combined.

iii. The impact of curative beliefs and academic standard on teachers’ perception of intervention effectiveness.

i. Opportunity for ongoing support within the consultant relationship.
School psychologists and other classroom consultants often focus on factors outside the child such as home and school influences in explaining behavior in contrast, teachers tend to believe that family factors play a part but largely tend not to address these contributions to the child’s problems. Teachers generally blame students’ failure or behaviour problem on internal characteristics of the students or home (Katsiyanis, 1998).

In general, teachers have been found to believe that children’s problems are due to something within the child. They place more emphasis on treatment than consultants aimed directly at the student, often suggesting the student needs to take ownership for the problem and solution. The internal attribute style of the teachers is reflected in their beliefs about needed classroom treatment and that problems are caused by something wrong within the child (Garsle & Meplahon, 1997).

Teachers tend to attribute lack of progress to children while crediting either themselves or students when progress is made. Yet, teachers high in efficacy tend to deemphasize home variables in students success and failure, pointing instead to the instructional programme and the teachers role. Consultants often view lack of progress as related to teachers’ behaviour toward children and general issues related to stress (Jack and Demy, 1996).

Severity of the child’s behaviour problems is also an issue, (Lenny, 1996). Furthermore, teachers tend to value academic progress (e.g. work completion) over behavioural progress (e.g. stay steeled and don’t speak out of turn). Studies of teacher/child relationship in terms of how the relationship developed during typical classroom interactions, such as instructions, socialization and management depends on the activities and time. Classroom interactions have social and effective components for both the children and the teachers to the degree to which is a good fit for reflecting the child’s needs and strength (Gansle, 1997).

Resilient children’s behaviour can be impacted in general ways such as reinforcement or token economic, active feedback, group consequences, social approval, motivation and attribution, building educational opportunities and violence’s prevention. These strategies are equally appropriate for children and adolescents with disruptive, non-disruptive or developmental problems. Furthermore, an emphasis on preventive discipline through sound instructional strategies undoubtedly leads to the most efficient classroom management (Digan and Meag, 1992).

So many years ago, the teachers in both well and poorly managed classrooms respond similarly to children’s behaviour. However, teachers of well-managed classrooms were much more efficient in monitoring children’s attention and performance, structuring beginning of the year activities and implementing classroom rules and procedures (Katsiyannis, 1998).
He noted further that the majority of these efforts are prophylactic or preventive rather than reactionary in pursuing. Following are some class of techniques available to teachers to effectively manage their behaviour:

i. Knowledge of the power of various stimuli in triggering certain good or negative behaviours increases the likelihood of successful student behaviour and its management implications.

ii. Teachers may reinforce or punish themselves contingent on their own behaviour.

iii. Teachers can monitor their own behaviour and make change accordingly.

iv. Teachers can learn to guide and instruct themselves more efficiently through self-monitoring.

v. Teachers can learn alternative responses or new ways of responding to problem behaviour.

Teachers possess basic techniques to manage student behaviour, including positive reinforcement, extrication, punishment modeling and desensitization. When used appropriately, all of these techniques can be quite effective across all student ages. These strategies are based on the premise that the consultant and teacher will first observe, define and target problem behaviours to teacher determine behaviour.

Hendrickson, (1996) noted that many teachers develop misconception about difficult students as he focuses on misbehavior and overlook the occasions to reward positive behaviour. One of these biases is that teachers often fail to reward a problem child, even when he or she is behaving well or appropriately. When such children are not behaving in bothersome ways, teachers like the parents appear to have a tendency to leave them alone so as not to “rock the boat”. Finally, teachers expect all students much beyond kindergarten age to behave well. Therefore, they often find it difficult to consistently reward appropriate behaviour in the students who may need such reinforcement most.

With understanding and preventive planning techniques, anticipatory response and systematic interventions, teachers can avoid behavioural problems by motivating children who want to behave in desirable ways. Preventive rather than reactive representation is a key component in creating a resilient classroom and sustainable school. To ensure positive classroom behaviour, teachers must possess a basic system to identify and deal with problems.

There are two important types of constraints in the management of school resilient children. These are:

**Constraints of Building Resilience**

Building children’s resilience involves both improving the skills and capabilities of the child, and improving the environments around the child. Therefore, to build children’s resilience, it is necessary to focus on approaches that target children, as well as their environment—including their parents, peers, and educational and community settings. High quality relationships—both within and outside a child’s family is critical to children’s resilience.

The factors that create constraints in building resilience in children are in three categories:

i. Factors within the child;

ii. Factors within the family;

iii. Factors within the community (Katsiyanis and Maag, 1998).
The factors within the child include:
Genetic and biological factors; coping skills and a sense of positive self-esteem; positive self-talk and self compassion; a sense of autonomy and independence (to try things for oneself); being able to identify and articulate feelings or needs; development of self-regulation; a sense of confidence and self-competence (‘I can handle this’). Others include; positive social skills and empathy; a sense of optimism or a positive attitude; a sense of responsibility in connection to family/community; a sense of belonging and health thinking habit.

Factors within the family are: Positive family relationship; family identity; and connectedness and effective parenting.

Factors within the community and society:
These are peers, neighbourhood and community, and society.
Peers: These are connections and interactions with peers, educational settings and educational settings that provide positive relationships.

Neighbourhood and community: These are socially inclusive and family-and child-friendly community values and beliefs. It also involves socially inclusive family and child-friendly spaces (e.g. parks, community centers).

Society: These are socially inclusive family and child-friendly public policies. It involves opportunities for children to participate in health risk-taking, opportunities for positive experiences and having an on-going, meaningful relationship with at least one significant supportive adult who the child can talk to (e.g. family member, teacher, community mentors etc.

Strategies of Building Resilient Children
Building resilient children in school and the society have some strategies that should be followed. These include:
Educating people about resilience: So many people listen, feel and observe resilience, but often do not understand it well. So, educating children, parents, and the community about what resilience is and how it develops is the step towards improving the conditions that builds resilience.

The more consistent it is in the use of language, the more likely we are to increase the community’s awareness and understanding of resilience. Other steps include to teach the children about the meaning of resilience, to read-age appropriate stories to children about people who have overcome adversity, encourage children to ask for help or support when they are needed, brainstorm with them about where and whom they can go to when they need support. Make the children know when they will need this support, make the children know that facing challenges can be useful and provide families with access to information and tools that can be used to improve the conditions that promote resilience such positive family relationships, family connectedness and family and effective parenting.
Building, Strengthen and Promoting Supportive Relationship
High-quality relationships are fundamental to children’s resilience. You can develop children’s resilience by helping them to build and strengthen supportive relationships with their parents and others, and by working with parents and the community to do the same. In addition to using everyday strategies for promoting resilience you can build children’s resilience by implementing structured interventions in your service setting, or by developing your own interventions.

Focus on Autonomy and Responsibility
Autonomy and responsibility play an important role in building children’s resilience. Children can be encouraged to take on responsibilities and develop a sense of autonomy. Parents and community members can also be encouraged to encourage children to do the same.

Focus on Managing Emotions
Being resilient is not always about feeling better or having fewer emotional reactions. It is about managing and responding to emotions in a healthy and positive way. So many adults in a child’s life play a role in helping children articulate, respond to and manage emotions and the interventions to focus.

Be clear about the goals of your intervention and what you want to achieve. This will help you decide which existing intervention to select or, if you are designing your own intervention, what your intervention will focus on.
Broadly, goals for resilience interventions should include:
- introducing protective factors for children;
- enhancing existing protective factors for children;
- providing resources and experiences that build children’s resilience;
- reducing risk factors among children; and
- building attributes in children (Alvored and Grados, 2005).
Because these goals are so broad, the framework for building children’s resilience can be used to narrow the focus and identify the desired outcome(s) of your intervention. This approach could be used to identify an existing structured intervention (e.g. an intervention that has been shown to improve communication and negotiation skills within children’s families), or as the basis for designing your intervention (e.g. ‘our intervention will involve strengthening healthy mind habits among children’).

Create Opportunities for Personal Challenge
Make children have opportunities to build their confidence and learn how to deal with obstacles, success and failures when they undertake personal challenges to build their resilience. Being resilient is not always about feeling better or having fewer emotional reactions. It’s about managing and responding to emotions in a healthy and positive way. You, and other adults in a child’s life, play a role in helping children articulate, respond to and manage emotions.

Conclusion
Most teachers frequently utilize strategies using threat or punishment (e.g. less of privilege or suspension) to pressure aggressive children into controlling their behaviour. However, teachers found to be more effective based upon direct classroom observation used instructive positive interventions much more successfully to deal with aggressive non-compliant children than those reductionist interventions.

Effective teachers look forward to seeing a high academic performance and good conduct of their children. They therefore carefully design activities to maintain high rates of corrective response and low rates of off risk behaviour, frequently praise children for appropriate behaviour, basically utilize criticism or punishment and are generally confident in their ability to help children learn and behave appropriately.

The problem of indiscipline behaviour in classroom is a major crisis in the hands of contemporary teachers. The problem requires the teachers possessing good understanding of these indiscipline behaviours and their genesis as well as acquiring the relevant skill for their management. Most relevant of these is the link between the demonstration of a particular unacceptable behavior by a child and a teacher formal response to the situation. Classroom indiscipline demands immense effort, comprehensive and a calculated response on the part of the teacher.

**Recommendations**

Most schools and managers overlook misbehaviors and their adverse effect on the children in particular and the school in general. These misbehaviors must be appropriately handled with in order to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

The following recommendations are proffered to help both the teachers and the school administrators in managing resilience children.

i. The psychological needs of the children must be recognized.
ii. Opportunities should be created for the children to exercise their independent judgment.
iii. Avoid undue criticism and ridicule of the children as most teachers and school heads ridicule and criticize the students, even their parents and guidance unnecessarily.
iv. Teachers should continually show the children of their competence in academics.
v. Teachers and the school administrators should have the sense of humor, recognition of one’s position as an instructional leader, empathy, hard work, diligence and responsibility are major teacher characteristics that evoke respect on them and administration from the children to their teachers.
vi. Teachers and the school administrators should be democratic rather than autocratic in approach to classroom discipline.
vii. The school must create code of regulations that guide classroom behavior democratically.
viii. Teachers should be able to know the children names one after the other in their various classes.
ix. The teachers should be fair and friendly to all children; but at the same be firm.
x. Use of punishment must be avoided especially corporal punishment.
References


