

Essential Questions



- What do we know about fostering resilience?
- How does this research support adolescent motivation and engagement?
- How does this look in a classroom?

Resilience consists of . . .

- Social competence
- Problem-solving skills
- Critical consciousness
- Autonomy
- A sense of purpose



Fostering Resilience

- Caring relationships
- Opportunities for belonging
- High expectations

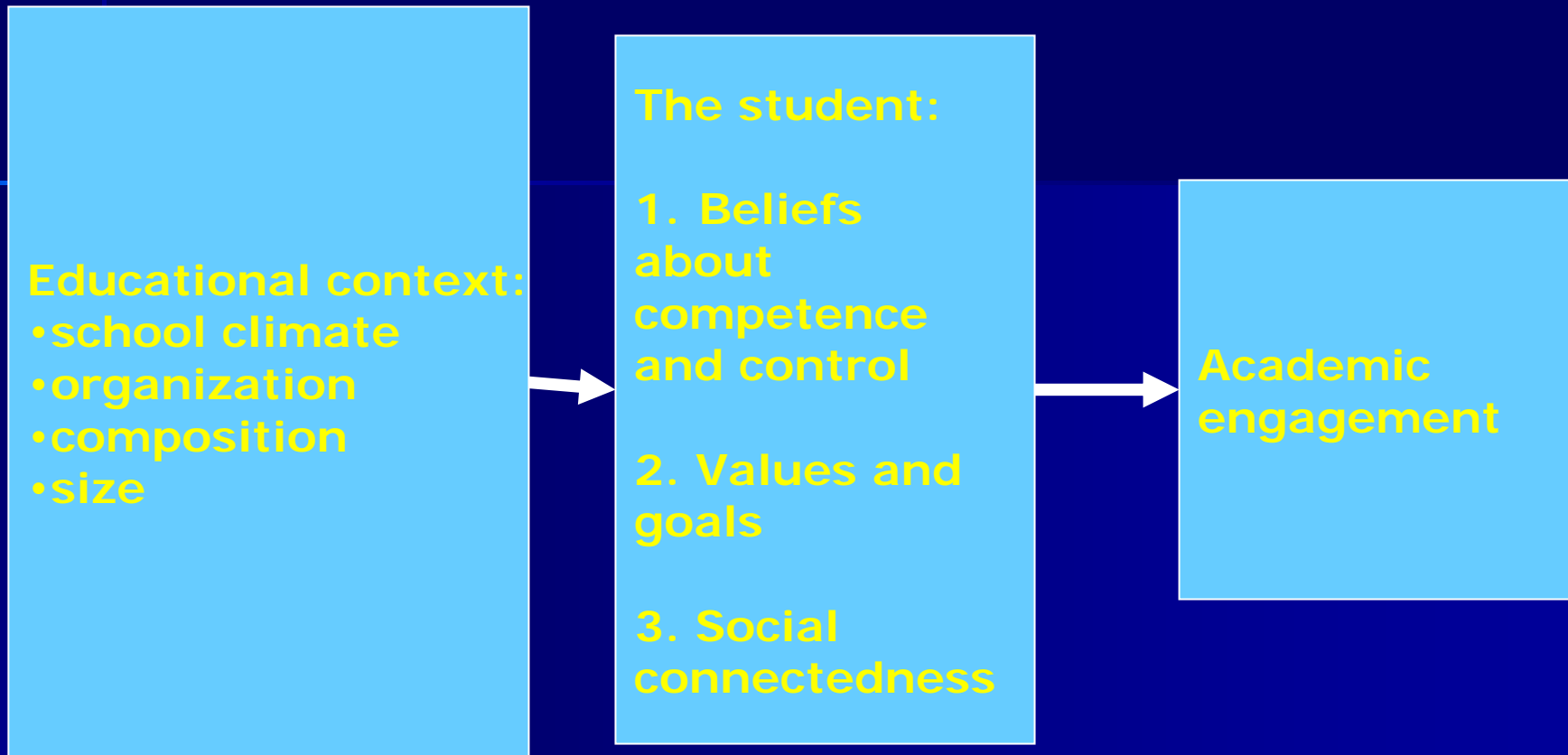
What is motivation, or engagement?

- Mental or cognitive behaviors *and*
- Observable behaviors


Psychological mediators of engagement include one's

- Beliefs about competence and control
- Values and goals
- Social connectedness

From *Engaging Schools*, 2004



Too many reforms overlook the teen.

A close-up, slightly angled portrait of a young boy with light brown hair and eyes. He has a serious, somewhat somber expression. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong blue light on the left side of his face and a green light on the right side. The background is dark and out of focus.

Beliefs about competence and control

- Can I?

“Students’ perceptions of their competencies can be difficult to change because they interpret feedback and their own performance through this lens. Students’ beliefs have a direct effect on their intellectual engagement; they also lead to emotions that promote or interfere with engagement in schoolwork.” (*Engaging Schools*, 2004)

How to promote beliefs of competence and control

1. Instruction that provides “optimal challenge”
2. “Academic press,” or high expectations
 - Offering demanding curricula and having high expectations without pressuring performance or undermining autonomy (Phillips, 1997)
 - Both direct and indirect expressions of expectations are powerful [See *Choice Words*]
3. Evaluation that is varied and provides specific feedback to guide efforts (Stipek, 2002)

Practices that undermine perceptions of competence and control:

- Adults at school who “don’t notice” poor or incomplete work (Cushman, 2002)
- Negative comments about their ability (reported disproportionately by students of color, according to Davidson, 1999)
- Non-verbal messages that attributions of low expectations to a particular student, neighborhood or ethnic group: *“When he talks about people that will end up on the streets. . . And then he turns to look at all the Mexicans. I want to get up and tell him off or just walk out”* (p. 41).

High Expectations

- Interpersonal level
- School level

Interpersonal expectations

For children who are used to thinking of themselves as stupid or not worth talking to... a good teacher can provide an astonishing revelation. A good teacher can give a child at least a chance to feel, “She thinks I’m worth something; maybe I am.”

-Kidder, 1990

Values and goals

- What's in it for me?



- Intrinsic interest in the topic
- Internalized values
 - Highly dependent on the values of others around them
- Extrinsic goals and incentives
 - Typically good grades and social recognition, but only if students believe these are within their reach.
 - Of limited sustained value, though helpful at first.

Promoting academic values and goals

What must we do?

Choice is a critical ingredient.

Garfield

By Jim Davis



Students are more likely to want to do schoolwork when they have some choices in the courses they take, in the material they study, and in the strategies they use to complete tasks. (*Engaging Schools*, 2004, p. 48)

These practices *undermine* academic values and engagement:

- Reliance on extrinsic consequences
- Authoritarian disciplinary practices
- Policies that limit options or ability to make decisions
- Rigid and distrustful teachers
- Teachers who did not encourage students to express their views and opinions in class

(Davidson and Phelan, 1999)

Activities that spark students' enthusiasm

- Emphasis on **higher-order thinking** and to wrestle with new ideas as long as there is a chance to convey and clarify what's not clear. (Davidson and Phelan, 1999)
- **Challenging work** (low-income students asked to identify the most interesting and worthwhile class typically named the class that made them think the hardest (Newmann, 1992)

Activities that spark students' enthusiasm

- Active participation
- Variety
- Meaningful connections to students' outside lives
- Collaborative activities that address status conditions:
 - Open-ended tasks
 - Incorporating multiple intellectual abilities
 - Bolstering group interdependence and enforcing individual accountability
 - Connecting activities through central concepts and big ideas (Lotan, 1997)

Social connectedness

- Where do I fit in here?



Opportunities for Participation

When school ignore this basic human need, they become alienating places.

---Saran, 1990

Those with caring and supportive interpersonal relationships in school have more positive academic attitudes and are more satisfied with school. African-American students may be particularly responsive to teachers who care (Ferguson, 2002).

Caring Relationships

The presence of at least one caring person Most teenagers say that the close and unwavering attention of teachers, even more than higher standards, is the real key to getting them to learn more. (Hamburg, 1986)

How do teens describe a teacher who *cares*?

- Tries to make class interesting
- Talks and listens to them
- Is honest, fair*, and trusting
- Shows concern by asking if students need help
- Makes sure students understand what's being taught
- Asks students if something is wrong

(Wentzel, 1997)

*perceptions of teacher fairness predicted interest, enjoyment, and desire to learn (Wentzel, 2002)

How do teens describe a teacher who *doesn't care*?

- Boring or off task
- Continues to teach when kids aren't paying attention
- Ignores, interrupts, embarrasses, or insults, or yells at students
- Shows little interest in them, by forgetting their name, not doing anything when the student did something wrong, not trying to explain when the student didn't understand

Students stressed two teacher behaviors that were important:

- Learning something about their lives outside of school
- Communicating directly and regularly with them about their academic progress
as well as subtle indicators such as noticing when students were confused, disagreed with an idea, or were late to class

(Davidson and Phelan, 1999)

Connections matter.

Adolescents who are *emotionally connected* to their families and schools are generally healthier than those who are not.

Specifically, we find consistent evidence that perceived caring and connectedness to others is important in understanding the health of young people today.

---Resnick et al., 1997

When adolescents feel connected to their parents and their school, they are less likely than other adolescents to:

- Suffer from emotional distress
- Have suicidal thoughts and ideation
- Use violence
- Smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or smoke marijuana
- Have early sexual experiences

**These findings . . . are unique
because they represent the first
time certain protective factors
have been shown to apply across
the major risk domains.**

--Resnick et al. 1997

Most essential is the “presence of at least one caring, competent adult. It’s wonderful if it’s Mom or Dad, but it doesn’t have to be.”

-Resnick, 1997

An ethic of caring is obviously not a “program” or “strategy” per se but rather a way of being in the world, a way of relating to youth, their families, and each other that conveys compassion, understanding, respect, and interest. It is also the wellspring from which flow the two other protective factors.

---Benard, 1995

Taken together, the evidence suggests that high schools need to convey a clearly articulated and coherent set of values that focus on learning and achievement in the context of close and caring relationships with adults and peers.

(Engaging Schools, p. 105)

At a time when the traditional structures of caring have deteriorated, schools must become places where teachers and students live together, talk with each other, take delight in one another's company... It is obvious that children will work harder and do things ...for people they trust.

---Noddings, 1988

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