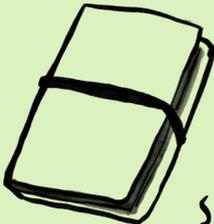


# RESILIENCE & WELL-BEING

OF (PRE-SERVICE) TEACHERS



THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIPS



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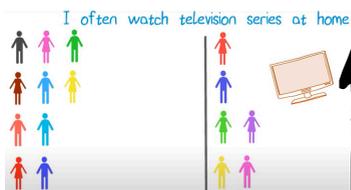
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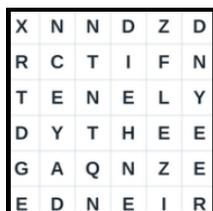
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## COLOFON

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# INTRODUCTION

**We proudly present the magazine Resilience & Well-being, a project that we developed as part of our internship assignment. In this magazine, we explain more about the different ways in which relationships influence and strengthen resilience.**

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In this magazine, we highlight both personal stories and scientific insights and show how support, trust, communication, and connectedness can contribute to growth, recovery, and well-being. At the same time, we also look at the vulnerability that lies within relationships, and how this vulnerability may provide opportunities for development.

Our goal is to inspire the reader, offer recognition, and provide new perspectives. We hope that this magazine is not only a final product of our internship, but also an invitation to pause and reflect on the value of the people around us – and the strength that lies within that connection.

Enjoy reading!



# THE RESILIENT TEACHER

**Due to the increasing teacher shortage and the high workload, the need for teachers who can deal with challenging situations is greater than ever. Teachers who can recover after difficult moments and even grow from what they experience. Resilient teachers use different resources and consciously choose strategies to deal with difficult moments. But what makes a teacher resilient? And how can this resilience be developed?**

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Maybe you feel completely at ease as a teacher, but perhaps you sometimes have doubts as well. Does this really suit me? You may have to deal with a high workload and diverse needs of students. A lot comes your way, but a resilient teacher is less likely to drop out of the programme and the teaching profession. But what makes a teacher resilient?

*“Resilient teachers recover after challenging or difficult situations and flourish, both professionally and personally, which results in positive thoughts about themselves, well-being, and commitment to the teaching profession.”*  
(Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2016)

Resilience is not a trait that you either have or do not have, but a developmental process that

depends on personal skills and the professional environment. Because of this, you can, with the right strategies, become more resilient. Catherine F. Mansfield has outlined resilience in the ‘BRITE’ framework. This framework shows that resilience consists of several interconnected themes that together contribute to being a resilient teacher.

## **Building resilience**

Awareness forms the basis of building resilience. It is about gaining insight into yourself as a teacher: your beliefs, values, strengths, and vulnerabilities. By reflecting on what you think, feel, and do in challenging situations, space is created to make conscious choices. Mansfield emphasizes that this self-knowledge helps teachers to recognize signs of stress or

overload in time and to respond to them appropriately. Recognizing the importance of and becoming familiar with resilience is also an important part of awareness.

### Relationships

Resilience develops and strengthens through a social network. These are relationships in the workplace, such as colleagues, mentors, and supervisors, but also relationships in private life, such as family, friends, and other people you can rely on. When you have a social network around you as a safety net, you

can share experiences and express your feelings. Not only when things are difficult, but also to celebrate successes together. Resilience therefore does not only arise within yourself, but also in connection with others. The people around you help you to give meaning to what you experience, to recover after difficult moments, and to stay motivated in the teaching profession.

### Taking initiative

Taking initiative means actively looking for solutions, support, or new approaches, instead of

## BRiTE framework



(Fokkens-Bruinsma et al., z.d.)

remaining stuck in what does not work. Mansfield describes this as experiencing agency: the feeling of having influence over your own actions and development within the profession.

### Well-being

Within the BRiTE framework, well-being is both a condition and an outcome of resilience. It concerns maintaining balance, taking moments for recovery, and recognizing personal boundaries. Teachers who pay attention to their own well-being are better able to deal with the complexity and intensity of education and to remain engaged in their work.

### Emotions

When you teach, you bring your own emotions with you. These can be positive emotions, but also negative ones. It is therefore important to be resilient. Within the BRiTE framework, it is not about avoiding difficult emotions, but about learning to recognize, understand, and regulate them. Resilient teachers develop skills to deal with emotions, so that emotions do not stand in their way, but instead help them to deal with different situations.

In this magazine, social relationships and strengthening them are central. We explore how these relationships contribute to resilience and well-being and invite you to discover how others maintain and strengthen relationships and how you can work with this yourself, in order to be a resilient teacher.

*This article is inspired by the BRiTE framework for resilience in teacher education (Mansfield et al., 2016), by research on teacher resilience (Beltman et al., 2011), and by the report 'Life is tough, but so are you' by Fokkens-Bruinsma and Poort (2023).*

# INTERVIEW WITH A STUDENT

**We spoke with a student who studies at the University of Groningen and follows the educational minor in geography within the Academic Teacher Education Programme. For her studies, she is doing an internship at a secondary school, where she teaches three classes for about five to six hours per week. How does this student experience resilience and how does she deal with challenges that come her way?**

## **Support from friends and family**

For me, my parents and my boyfriend especially provide a lot of support. My parents regularly ask how I am doing and whether they can do anything for me. These warm and reassuring words help me enormously. Because my friends live across the country, I am extra grateful for the support that I receive from my parents and my boyfriend.

## **Difficult situations during the internship**

I once experienced a lesson that completely failed, during which students even threw set squares across the classroom. When I entered the staff room afterwards, I burst into tears. At that moment in particular, I experienced a lot of support from the teachers in the department staff room.

“Teachers also say: ‘We have all experienced this.’ That gives a lot of support.”

I noticed that I can always ask questions there and know that there is a place where I can go. It feels like a kind of teachers’ lounge of our own, but then per subject department. Because of this, I was fortunately able quite quickly not to take the experience home with me. The Department of Teacher Education also strongly emphasized that the role of teacher and the personal role should be separated from each other. This helped me enormously, because after this lesson I did know that the behaviour of the students had to do with my position as a trainee teacher, and not with me as a person.

"It is not about me as a person, but about me in my role as a teacher"

### Support from the teacher training program or internship school

All trainees have an intervision (peer reflection) session every Thursday, where we can talk about the things we are struggling with. I personally don't share very much there, because I have often already discussed the problems I experience earlier with another trainee or with teachers from my section. I prefer to discuss it with people I see more often

and know better. However, I do feel that during the intervision you can discuss everything.

### Relationships in the workplace

To build new relationships with colleagues, I think the most important thing is simply to greet everyone and have a friendly chat by the coffee machine. After that, I noticed that it went quite naturally, because you see everyone more often and start remembering small things about others, which makes contact increasingly easier.

What is building relationships like for you? Which parts of the student's story do you relate to, and which parts less so? Maybe you could send them a message...?

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# INTERVIEW WITH A SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER EDUCATOR.

We spoke with a school-based teacher educator at a secondary school. She has been working as a teacher at this school for 23 years. In addition to her work in the classroom, she has been active as a school-based teacher educator for 13 years, guiding pre-service teachers from both research universities and universities of applied sciences. During the interview, she shared her experiences with us on the topic of resilience and relationships.

## **Support from Family and Friends: Listening and Putting Things into Perspective**

When the school-based teacher educator experiences something at work that affects her, she seeks support from people around her, such as her husband or friends. She explains that the support for her mainly lies in sharing experiences.

“I think that support mainly lies in listening and sometimes taking the sting out of things. So, putting things into perspective.”

## **Social Relationships in the Workplace**

Social relationships play an important role in the workplace.

She explains that work helps in building relationships, because colleagues share many of the same experiences. In addition, the staff association organizes activities such as pub quizzes and social gatherings, which help strengthen the connections between colleagues.

“I do think it helps people who normally talk less in the staff room or during work to get to know each other better.”

## **Social Relationships and Resilience**

She believes that social relationships can influence the resilience of pre-service teachers. She emphasizes that this differs from person to

person, depending on their background, upbringing, and the extent to which they feel able to talk about their emotions. The school-based teacher educator does emphasize the importance of putting things into perspective, something she also applies frequently in her guidance of students.

### **Maintaining Relationships**

Although the school-based teacher educator indicates that she invests little energy in actively maintaining social relationships, she does encourage pre-service teachers to seek connection within the team. She encourages them to spend time in the staff room and to share their ideas with colleagues.

### **Dealing with Stressful Situations**

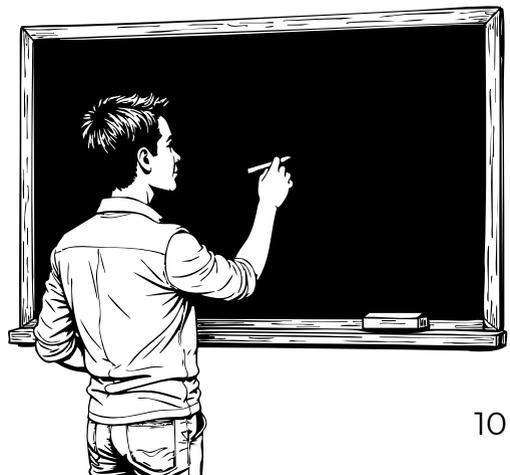
She recalls a stressful situation in which support from those around her played an important role. She had received an email in which parents expressed criticism. In that situation, her team leader stood by her side, which gave her a lot of support.

“He stood beside me instead of opposite me, which was very reassuring.”

### **Guiding Beginning Teachers**

She notices that beginning and pre-service teachers often find it particularly difficult to deal with challenging student behavior. This behavior is often not meant personally, but is the result of adolescence, fatigue, or students testing boundaries. During intervision sessions, pre-service teachers discuss what happened, how they responded, how it affected them, and what possible next steps could be taken. Attention is also given to the emotional side of these situations.

“I try to give them the confidence that their input, even though they are just starting out, is valuable.”



# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AS A TEACHER

According to the BRiTE model, relationships are important for resilience, and so far we have also read how a school-based teacher educator and a student experience resilience. In this chapter, you will read what the literature says about how social relationships can be strengthened.

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## Social Relationships and Resilience in the Teaching Profession

For teachers, social relationships are crucial, especially those that contribute to successfully completing their training and effectively carrying out their profession. When these relationships do not develop sufficiently, this can lead to feelings of isolation and decreased engagement with work. In contrast, strong social relationships provide support, help teachers cope with workload and stress, and therefore strengthen teachers' resilience.

Social relationships involve both building new connections and maintaining existing ones. Central to this are one's social network, human connection, and the sense of belonging. The interaction between teacher and student also plays an essential role in this process.

## Physical Presence and Social Integration

To strengthen the sense of connection, physical presence is important. This can occur during informal encounters, such as in the hallways, at staff outings, social gatherings, or education-related events. In this way, opportunities arise for spontaneous conversations with colleagues and students. These gatherings provide an accessible and informal context for building relationships.

Examples of conversation starters you might use during such informal meetings include:

- "How are you?"
- "How is your day/week going so far?"
- "Which classes are you currently teaching?"
- "What do you like to do in your free time to relax?"

Engaging in such conversations requires active listening, asking follow-up questions, and showing genuine interest. It is important to be patient: social relationships develop gradually and require time and attention.

### Professional Growth and Resilience

In addition to social support, encouraging pedagogical and professional growth is essential. Opportunities for development contribute to job satisfaction, which in turn strengthens teachers' resilience. Professional training, intervision sessions, and moments of reflection are effective tools in this regard.

### Key Points

- Creating a sense of belonging, acceptance, and valuing people's well-being.
- Encouraging pedagogical and professional growth.
- Sharing and taking collective responsibility for the well-being and resilience of teachers.

*This article is based on the following sources:*

*Beltman et al., 2011; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Poort, 2023; Mansfield et al., 2016a; Mansfield et al., 2016b; Mansfield et al., 2021.*

What are your strengths and areas for improvement regarding social relationships as a teacher?

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What do you need to develop in these points? Who or what can help you with this?

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# INTERVIEW WITH A TEACHER

We spoke with a teacher/former school-based teacher educator. In addition to his work as a teacher, he also served as a school-based teacher educator for ten years until 2023. During the interview, he shared his experiences with us regarding the theme of resilience and well-being.

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## Support from Friends and Family

When the teacher experiences something at work, he is glad that he can talk about it with friends or his wife. He especially emphasizes how important it is for him to be able to vent and share what is on his mind.

It's very important to have people around you you can talk to and share your story with. Sharing it and getting things off your chest is already very comforting.

## Relationships in the Workplace

The teacher believes that social relationships at work, especially with colleagues, have an impact on your resilience. For example, at the beginning of the school

year team activities are organized, and at the end of the school year a trip to Schiermonnikoog is organized. In addition, a weekly social gathering is held every Thursday.

## Dealing with Stressful Situations

When I experience a stressful situation, I deal with it by discussing it with colleagues and seeking support at school.

“When I'm not sure what to do, I can turn to my team leader or coordinator.”

## Role in Guiding Students

The teacher indicates that it is not his role to immediately provide solutions. Instead, he finds it important to think about the situation together.

He facilitates opportunities for them to exchange experiences, both during intervision sessions and outside of them.

“Sometimes I would also do intervision with them outside. We would go out together— intervision in a café, or for example in the Noorderplantsoen.”

Some students find it difficult to let go of their internship or studies during the weekend. The teacher advises students to seek relaxation, for example by meeting up with friends or going to a party.



# RELATIVIZING RELAY

## **Relativizing Relay**

In the interviews, “taking the sting out of the situation” is mentioned as a crucial skill. The relativizing relay activity trains participants to collectively turn stress into resilience.

### **Setup**

Form a line. The first person receives a “stress card.” These are cards with situations that can cause a lot of stress or pressure (for example: “The computer crashes during an important presentation” or “A parent sends an angry email”). Before the game starts, each player creates two or three of these cards (depending on the size of the group and how much time you want to spend on the activity).

### **The game**

The first person whispers a negative thought about the situation to the person next to them (for example: “I’m completely messing this up.”). The next person must reframe this thought into something resilient (for example: “This is a technical problem, not a failure on my part”) and then whispers the positive version to the next person.

# GAME RULES

1. Give each participant a few minutes to write two or three “stress cards.” On each card they write a situation that could cause stress or pressure.
2. Collect all the cards, mix them together, and shuffle them.
3. Divide the participants into groups of three or four and give each group a small stack of cards without reading the situations first.
4. One participant picks a card and reads the situation aloud.
5. That same person then whispers a negative thought they might have in that situation to the person next to them.
6. The next participant reframes this thought into a resilient message and whispers it to the next person. The goal is not to minimize the problem, but to turn the thought into a more constructive and resilient perspective.
7. Each following participant can add to or strengthen the resilient message as it moves through the group.
8. When the message reaches the last participant, they say the final resilient message out loud to the group.
9. Repeat the process with new cards until everyone has had a turn reading a situation.

# INTERVIEW WITH A UNIVERSITY LECTURER

We spoke with a university lecturer. Her role involves both teaching and conducting research, although the main focus is on research. She does give workshops on resilience and is involved in educational projects, but she does not teach regular classes herself. She also assesses students within the program and conducts classroom observations.

## Role of Friends and Family

“For me, friends and family mainly provide a listening ear. You can share your story with them openly and without filtering, both the frustrations and the positive things. They are interested in what I do, and that sense of involvement is important.”

“A listening ear at home or in the workplace can be a tremendous source of support.”

## Dealing with Stressful or Difficult Situations

When something is going on, I usually discuss it with a colleague first. Talking it through, consulting each other, thinking out loud, and looking together at what is possible already helps a lot.

I have also experienced periods when the workload temporarily became too high; at that point a student assistant was assigned to take over part of the work. That kind of practical support shows that colleagues genuinely try to help each other, although there are of course limits to this because of the high workload and the growing number of students.



## Building New Relationships in the Workplace

It's always busy, so it's not possible to build equally strong relationships with everyone, but I do try to make a conscious effort to connect. For example, by having a short chat at the coffee machine. By nature I am quite observant and somewhat reserved, but I have learned that this can sometimes be misinterpreted. That's why I now take the initiative more often, because the longer you keep running into each other without talking, the harder it becomes to take the first step.

## Resilience of Pre-service and Beginning Teachers

Resilience and well-being should not be a separate addition to the program, but rather the foundation of the curriculum. When making decisions about workload and course content, it is important to continually consider what is manageable and healthy for both students and teachers. At the moment, there are workshops available, but these are mainly preventive and intended to provide students with practical tools in time to help them maintain a good balance between study, work, and personal life.



# CROSS THE LINE

## **Step Across the Line if You...**

The goal of this activity is to reflect on your own relationships. By literally stepping across a line, you show which statements you recognize in yourself. This helps you to see that you are not alone and can lead to new insights about yourself and the people around you.

## **Game rules**

Before the game starts, choose several statements that fit your group and the amount of time available. The next page contains some statements that you can use. You can also also create your own.

1. Starting position: All participants stand on one side of the line.
2. Read a statement: The facilitator reads a statement aloud, for example: "Step across the line if you sometimes find it difficult to say no."
3. Step across: Anyone who relates to the statement steps across the line.
4. Look around and discuss: Observe who stepped across the line and start a conversation with each other. For example: why did you cross the line? Why not? Can you describe a specific situation where this was the case? Try to start the conversation with each other.
5. Everyone gets back to the starting position.
6. Next statement: read the next statement out loud and repeat steps 3-5.

# STATEMENTS

1. Cross the line if you prefer listening to talking in a group.
2. Cross the line if you find it difficult to express your opinion in class.
3. Cross the line if you are afraid of making mistakes in front of others.
4. Cross the line if you are afraid of disappointing someone.
5. Cross the line if you find it difficult to say no.
6. Cross the line if you feel that someone at school really listens to you.
7. Cross the line if you have discovered something new about yourself today.
8. Cross the line if you know who to turn to when you're not feeling well.
9. Cross the line if you notice that support from others makes you
10. stronger.
11. Cross the line if you find that being right is more important to you than receiving respect.
12. Cross the line if you adjust your behavior to who is in the room.
13. Cross the line if you find it easy to connect in a new place.
14. Cross the line if you manage to maintain a good balance between your studies/internship/work and your social life.
15. Cross the line if you are able to overcome difficult/stressful situations.
16. Cross the line if talking to others is the best way for you to put a stressful situation into perspective.

# WORD SEARCH

E	L	R	P	E	O	N	D	E	R	S	T	E	U	N	I	N	G
M	I	T	I	N	H	S	V	L	G	G	T	E	Q	G	W	D	I
V	O	T	Q	K	P	A	M	O	R	K	N	W	K	U	A	S	R
C	Q	Z	C	S	Y	G	C	S	O	M	M	C	B	B	F	D	S
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B	C	E	R	G	N	O	P	E	C	I	Q	Z	X	F	V	E	F

BALANS BRITE COPING FAMILIE GROEI INTERACTIE  
NETWERK OMGEVING ONDERSTEUNING ONTWIKKELING  
RELATIES STEUN VEERKRACHT VERBONDENHEID VERTROUWEN  
VRIENDEN WELZIJN ZELFZORG



This word search contains both English and Dutch words, which makes it extra challenging 😊.

# REFERENCES



