2 Why the best teaching and learning in schools requires everyday resilience

Drawing upon evidence from the research and policy literature, this chapter will show that results-driven policy agendas in many countries have increased the pressures on schools, not only to raise the standards of teaching but to ensure that teaching itself is target driven and compliant to more explicitly instrumentalist agendas. In addition, it will show how the changing socio-cultural conditions in which students live have combined to place increased external accountabilities, work complexity and emotional workload on teachers. In the twenty-first-century world of the teacher notions of the autonomous, ‘activist’ professional are said to be challenged by neo liberal, ‘performativity’ agendas (Ball, 2003; Sachs, 2003a). We do not challenge this evidence but examine how it might affect teachers’ capacities and capabilities to teach to their best.

‘Visible learning’

In his synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to student achievement, John Hattie (2009) found that”

the act of teaching reaches the epitome of success after [our emphasis] the lesson has been structured, after the content has been delivered, and after the classroom has been organised. The art of teaching, and its major successes, relate to ‘what happens next’ – the manner in which the teacher reacts to how the student interprets, accommodates, rejects, and or reinvents the content and skills, how the student relates and applies the content to other tasks, and how the student reacts in light of success and failure apropos the content and methods that the teacher has taught.

(Hattie, 2009: 2)

One of the major findings in his analysis is that increasing the amount of feedback to the teacher:

about what students can and cannot do ... is more powerful than feedback to the student ... [but that] ... increasing the amount of feedback in order to have a positive effect on student achievement requires a change in perceptions
of what it means to be a teacher ... and necessitates a different way of interacting and respecting students.

( Ibid. : 4 )

He goes on to refer to Marzano's (2000) findings that '[e]xceptional performance on the part of teachers not only compensates for average performance at the school level, but even ineffective performance at the school level' ( Marzano , 2000: 81 ).

So we might conclude that ensuring the well-being of teachers is paramount to the intellectual well-being and progress needs of their pupils. A tired, disenchanted or depressed teacher is unlikely to have the intellectual and emotional energy and agility necessary to engage in the complex activities which Hattie finds necessary to the best teaching and learning:

When these professionals see learning occurring or not occurring, they intervene in calculated and meaningful ways to alter the direction of learning to attain various shared, specific, and challenging goals. In particular, they provide students with multiple opportunities and alternatives for developing learning strategies based on the surface and deep levels of learning.

( Hattie , 2009: 22–3 )

To achieve this, Hattie continues, teachers need to be passionate, absorbed in the process of teaching and learning. Passion:

requires more than content knowledge, acts of skilled teaching, or engaged students to make the difference ... It requires a love of the content, an ethical caring stance to wish to imbue others with a liking or even love of the discipline being taught, and a demonstration that the teacher is not only teaching but learning—typically about the students’ processes and outcomes of learning.

( Hattie , 2009: 24 )

Over a lifetime, most workers, regardless of the particularities of their work context, role or status, will need at one time or another, for shorter or longer periods, as an everyday feature of their work processes, to call upon reserves of physical, psychological or emotional energy if they are to carry out their work to the best of their ability. Schools and classrooms, especially, are demanding of energy of these kinds, partly because not every student chooses to be there and partly because successful teaching and learning requires cognitive, social and emotional investment by both teachers and students. Given the likely associations between resilience and teaching quality ( see Chapter 9 ), it is all the more surprising, therefore, to find that identifying factors which influence and promote the capacity and capability to be resilient in schools has been largely ignored by governments and researchers in the past who have preferred instead to focus upon problems of teacher stress, burnout and retention. So, for example, whilst
the final report of the Skills Tests Review Panel to the Secretary of State for Education in June 2012, commissioned by the English government to review the recruitment and selection procedures, identified the need for new written tests in literacy, numeracy and reasoning, it recommended that so-called ‘personal qualities such as oral communication, empathy and resilience’ should be ‘the responsibility of providers of training’ (though not, interestingly, of the schools in which they will spend most of their working lives).

Notwithstanding the difficulties of de-contextualised one-off testing, it does seem to be important to investigate exactly why the capacity and capability to be resilient is important to high quality teaching. Which parent, for example, would want their child to be taught by a teacher whose commitment had become eroded over time? Here is what one experienced VITAE teacher, who had lost heart, said:

I would say it’s [commitment] gone down. The desire to contribute isn’t there anymore. I used to be a real race horse. I was working every hour I could, but now I don’t feel it’s worth it anymore ... It’s getting harder and harder to get up in the mornings. It’s more of a duty to come into school. I used to really, really love the job and a lot of that has kind of worn off now and that has been over the last year. It’s been getting less fun and I’ve been less inclined to try new things and push myself that little extra as I used to do as a teacher.

Developing professional capital

Teachers’ work in the twenty-first century especially, if it is to be at its best, requires higher levels of intellectual and emotional energy than ever before. It requires investment in what Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan have described as ‘professional capital’ (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). This is an amalgam of ‘human, social and decisional’ capital (ibid.: 3). Their work draws upon and extends research by Leana (2011) in New York elementary schools. She found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that strong associations between the combination of individual qualifications (human capital) and talent and ‘the frequency and focus of conversations and interactions with peers (social capital) that centered on instruction’ (cited in Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012: 3), resulted in pupils making higher gains in mathematics achievement (similar findings to those of Bryk and Schneider, 2002, who found that relational trust was a key factor in pupils’ achievement in maths and reading in elementary schools in Chicago; and Karen Seashore Louis who identified organisational trust as a key factor in improving and effective high schools in North America). They define the third element of professional capital, decisional capital, as:

the capital that professionals acquire and accumulate through structured and unstructured experience, practice, and reflection — capital that enables them to make wise judgments in circumstances where there is no fixed rule or piece of incontrovertible evidence to guide them.

(Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012: 93–4)
A range of research supports the notion that investing in ‘professional capital’ as defined by Hargreaves and Fullan is likely to result in more highly motivated, self-efficacious, committed and capable teachers. In many ways this is self-evident. After all, in those countries and jurisdictions whose students achieve well in international league tables (e.g. South Korea, Alberta, Canada, Shanghai, Singapore and Finland), teachers have high qualifications and status and in-school collaborations are high. However, as Hargreaves and Fullan note, drawing on our own work among others, teachers’ professional capital varies within and across career phases (ibid.: 77).

As yet, the research and policy communities have largely neglected consideration of variations in the work and lives of the existing majority of teachers and the question of promoting much needed resilience in times of change remains an overlooked and under-researched area. The chapter will discuss those issues in national and international contexts which challenge teachers’ capacities to be resilient.

What is work-related stress?

Work-related stress has been defined as ‘the process that arises where work demands of various types and the combinations exceed the person’s capacity and ability to cope’ (Health and Safety Executive, 2009, cited in Griffiths, Knight and Mahudin, 2009: 11–12). Stress is not just about being busy (a key characteristic of teaching is ‘busyness’); it is not just about being challenged (to master new situations or learn new skills); it is not just about facing the challenges of unusual, dramatic events or incidents of a short-term nature. Rather, stress is more likely to result from longer term, persisting adversity: for example, continuing disruption of learning and teaching in the classroom, adverse working conditions or relationships with colleagues. It may even be the result of physical illness, relationships or other circumstances outside the school. Whilst individuals will vary in their capacity and capability to manage stress, changes in work-related attitudes and behaviour are likely to have similar features – for example, loss of confidence in one’s ability to do the job well (low self-efficacy); fractured relationships with colleagues; poor time management; loss of efficiency; constant feelings of fatigue; loss of previously high levels of motivation and commitment; emotional uncertainty; social withdrawal; and lower quality work.

In summary, work-related stress is probably best understood as an unpleasant emotional state that results from an unhealthy transaction between the environment and the person that, if persistent, can lead to the development of both psychological and physical illness. Matters tend to be worse when people are put under prolonged pressure, have little control or flexibility over what they do and are not well supported or resourced ... Anyone, in any occupation, can suffer from work-related stress, but it has been commonly reported among teachers, nurses, medical practitioners, public administration
and public sector security-based occupations such as police officers, prison officers and UK armed forces personnel.

(Griffiths, Knight and Mahudin, 2009: 12-13)

It is important to acknowledge not only the negative effects which context can have upon employees but also the costs of these to employers themselves. Evidence suggests that employers in general tend to underestimate the extent of psychological ill-health amongst their staff. Psychological ill-health, whether work-related or not, has been estimated to cost UK employers approximately £25 billion per annum. On average this equates to £1,000 per employee. A small organisation with 50 staff (for example, an average-sized primary school) might lose around £50,000 a year. This figure includes sickness absence and replacement costs, but also the reduced productivity of staff who attend work but who are unwell, a phenomenon known as ‘presenteeism’. The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health’s report in 2007 also estimated that ‘presenteeism’ accounted for at least 1.5 times as much lost working time as absenteeism. Although precise figures for the education sector are not available, it is not unreasonable to assume that the extent of ‘presenteeism’ there may be as considerable as it is for the workforce as a whole: a substantial number of teachers may be attending work whilst not well. Over time this suggests that they are likely to be less able to teach to their best.

Teacher absence and school culture

One consequence of continuing to teach in adverse circumstances is teacher absence and this can have negative effects on both them and their pupils: ‘between kindergarten and 12th grade, a typical student is taught by someone other than the regularly assigned teacher for the equivalent of two-thirds of a school year’ (Miller, 2008: 1)

Whilst there is much research on teacher attrition and retention, there is less on teacher absence and its effects. Miller (October 2008), in a policy analysis for the Center for American Progress, a non-partisan research and educational institute, reported that:

- Teacher absence is expensive. With 5.3 per cent of teachers absent on a given day, stipends for substitute teachers and associated administrative costs amount to $4 billion annually.
- Teacher absence negatively affects student achievement. Researchers have found that every 10 absences lowers mathematics achievement by the same amount as having a teacher with one year or two years of experience instead of a teacher with three years to five years of experience.
- Teacher absence disproportionately affects low income students. Students in schools serving predominantly low-income families experience teacher absence at higher rates than students in more affluent communities. Part of the achievement gap is thus due to a teacher attendance gap.

(Miller, 2008: 1)
In England, in the academic year 2010/11, 56 per cent of teachers took some sickness leave, as compared with 52 per cent in 2008/09, with an average of 4.6 days per teacher (DfE, 2012). Whilst rates of teacher absence are higher in the developing world (20 per cent) and lower in the UK (3.2 per cent) and Queensland, Australia (3.1 per cent), the overall costs are likely to be significant. These general figures also mask differences between individual schools with different contexts and cultures. Perhaps not surprisingly, Miller’s research found that those schools with high levels of trust (as a measure of professional autonomy) between teachers and school leaders have significantly lower rates of teacher absence.

It might also be the case that there are teachers who are not yet absent from school but whose levels of anxiety are high. Stanley (2012), the Chief Executive of the Teacher Support Network in England, has reported that ‘[b]etween 2010 and 2011, 19,000 users … recorded 45,633 incidents … with 4,589 of these specifically related to anxiety. A further … 2,180 incidents were logged by people losing sleep over their worries’.

**Effects of teacher turnover**

It may also be the case that teachers will leave one school for another not only for promotion but also because they have experienced relationships (with pupils and/or colleagues) which have challenged their ideals, beliefs or practices. In a study that estimated the effects of teacher turnover on 850,000 students in New York schools over eight years, Ronfeldt et al. (2013) found that pupils in schools with a higher teacher turnover rate scored lower in English language and maths tests than others, regardless of the effectiveness of teachers who had left the school, and that, within this, those in schools in socially disadvantaged communities (which were already lower achieving) scored even lower. This research confirms the work of, for example, Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Johnson et al. (2005a, 2005b) who found that the quality of relationships, especially trust, was related to rising levels of pupil engagement and achievement. Of particular interest is the finding that:

> turnover has a broader, harmful influence on student achievement since it can reach beyond just those students of teachers who left or of those that replaced them. Any explanation for the effect of turnover must possess these characteristics. One possibility is that turnover negatively affects collegiality or relational trust among faculty [staff]; or perhaps turnover results in loss of institutional knowledge among faculty that is critical for supporting student learning.

(Ronfeldt et al., 2013: 32)

Rather than ask, ‘How can we prevent stress and mental/emotional ill-health?’ or ‘How can we retain teachers?’ the more important questions are, we believe: ‘How can we foster resilience so that teachers can have the best opportunities always to seek to teach to their best on every school day?’ and ‘What types of
training, support, work environment, culture, leadership and management practices will facilitate its development?

**Everyday resilience**

The more traditional, psychologically derived notions that resilience is ‘the ability to bounce back in adverse circumstances’, as we have shown in Chapter 1, do not lend themselves to the work of teachers. The capacity to be resilient in mind and action is likely to fluctuate according to personal, workplace, policy challenges and pupil behaviour; and the ability of individuals to manage the situations in which such fluctuations occur will vary. Thus, the process of teaching, learning and leading requires those who are engaged in them to exercise their capacity to be resilient on an everyday basis, to have a resolute persistence and commitment and to be supported in these by strong core values. It is this more positive view of teacher resilience associated with teacher quality which should, we believe, inform policies of selection, recruitment and retention. To teach to one’s best over time, then, requires ‘everyday resilience’. This is more than the ability to manage the different change scenarios which teachers experience, more than coping or surviving. It is being able to continue to have the capacity and capability to be sufficiently resilient, to have the desire, determination and energy as well as the knowledge and strong moral purpose which enable teachers to teach to their best.

Yet, whilst many teachers enter the profession with a sense of vocation and with a passion to give their best to the learning and growth of their pupils, for some these become diminished with the passage of time, changing external and internal working conditions and contexts, and unanticipated personal events. They may lose their sense of purpose and well-being which are so intimately connected with their positive sense of professional identity and which enable them to draw upon, deploy and manage the inherently dynamic emotionally vulnerable contexts of teaching in which they teach and in which their pupils learn. In a relatively recent survey by the Teacher Support Network (2008) among teachers in schools in England, for example, teachers reported the damaging impact of these symptoms on their work performance. Issues were, in rank order: excessive workload; rapid pace of change; pupil behaviour; unreasonable demands from managers; bullying by colleagues; and problems with pupils’ parents (http://teachersupport.info/news/policy-and-public-affairs/better-health-and-wellbeing.php).

**Resilience is not an innate quality or disposition: conditions count**

The key messages from a recent interdisciplinary series of research seminars in England are that:

- Teaching at its best is emotionally as well as intellectually demanding work and demands everyday resilience.
Teaching and learning requires everyday resilience

- Levels of work-related stress, anxiety and depression are higher within education than within many other occupational groups.
- Rather than focusing upon managing stress, a more productive approach would be to focus upon fostering and sustaining resilience.
- Resilience is more than an individual trait. It is a capacity which arises through interactions between people within organisational contexts.
- Teachers’ resilience needs to be actively nurtured through initial training and managed through the different phases of their professional lives.
- Because government has a particular responsibility in relation to teaching standards, it needs to ensure that it establishes national policy environments and provides development opportunities which acknowledge the importance of resilience to high quality teaching (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-451-26-0668/outputs/read/d93b9939-79f3-474f-ad74-911e6a16a160).

Resilience is not a quality that is innate. Rather, it is relative, developmental, dynamic and influenced by context. A range of research discussed in Chapter 1 suggests that resilient qualities can be learned or acquired and can be achieved through providing relevant and practical protective factors, such as caring and attentive educational settings in which school leaders promote high expectations, positive learning environments, a strong supportive social community, and supportive peer relationships. Without such organisational support, bringing a passionate, competent and resilient self to teaching effectively every day of every week of every school term and year can be stressful not only to the body but also to the heart and soul; for the processes of teaching and learning are rarely smooth, and the results are not always predictable.

Reporting on a project which combined insights from the natural sciences with a social constructionist perspective, Eccleston and Lewis (2014, in press) defined resilience as ‘one of several, inter-related constructs that comprise “emotional well-being”, including optimism, emotional literacy (especially self-awareness, empathy and emotional regulation), altruism, self-esteem and stoicism’ (2014: 2). They argue that resilient systems follow four rules. They:

(A) have the capacity to detect changes which may perturb them
(B) link this detection to a response
(C) respond in a way which is appropriate, and which in some way either ameliorates the effects of the change or adapts the resilient system to withstand them and to recover from them
(D) end the response when the need is no longer present, since the response is one which will require resources

(2014: 2)

Whilst these rules describe how resilient individuals behave and so are useful as a means of diagnosis or even analysis, they take no account of how personal, social and policy conditions and contexts may either increase or decrease the capacity
and capabilities of individuals and organisations to apply these rules. To put it a
different way, attempts to present resilience as ‘fixed individual psychological
“attributes” or a set of trainable behaviours’ (2014: 8) without considering the
broader educational and social contexts, present circumstances and social
interactions, are misguided.

Emotional regulation and control of self and others which notions of ‘emotional
intelligence’ (Goleman, 1995) espouse over-emphasise the responsibility of the
individual without, at the same time, examining the social structures in which the
individual works and which are likely to influence that individual’s capacity to be
resilient (see Chapter 3 for a critique). Thus ‘[f]rom a critical perspective,
resilience interventions need to position the gendered, classed or raced subjects as
able to act upon and change the conditions of their lives and not just to adjust
their responses to those conditions’ (Ecclestone and Lewis, 2014, in press: 10).

It seems to be clear from this evidence that the capacity and capability to be
resilient, allied with knowledge of subject and pedagogy and a strong sense of
moral purpose within supportive school and classroom environments, is essential
to teachers’ ability to sustain the intellectual and emotional energy and
commitment that the best teaching demands. If this is indeed the case, it follows
that efforts to increase the quality of teaching and raise standards of learning and
achievement for all pupils must focus on efforts to build, sustain and renew
teacher resilience, and that these efforts must take place in initial teacher training,
be promoted at policy levels, through training and developing and, most of all, in
the teaching and learning cultures of schools themselves.

Five challenges which test resilience

1. Increases in social problems

In research on teachers from the USA, Australia, New Zealand and England
(Scott and Dinham, 2002), teachers frequently commented upon the impact on
their professional lives of the increase in social problems, summed by a US
classroom teacher as ‘the type of students we must face (unlike the classrooms of
yesteryear)’. An Australian classroom teacher expressed the same concerns and
mentioned students’ ‘lack of real interest and maturation as well as general and
severe behaviour problems associated with the above reasons or due to welfare
problems’; and a New Zealand specialist teacher produced a similar list of student
difficulties, ‘poor family backgrounds – lack of experiences, language, attendance
at school, physical/emotional abuse, all factors which severely affect children’s
progress’ (Scott and Dinham, 2002: 18).

The views of the teachers to whom Scott and Dinham referred in 2002 could
well have been expressed by teachers more than ten years later. Changes in
influences upon different generations of pupils as they come to school are an
inevitable consequence of changes in the wider society. According to a UNICEF
(2007) report, 16.2 per cent of British children lived below the poverty line, 35.8
per cent reported that they were bullied within a two-month period, 35.3 per
cent of 15-year-old pupils aspired to low-skilled work and 30.8 per cent of young people reported that they had been drunk two or more times. The UK was in the bottom third of the rankings in a league of 21 economically advanced countries in its treatment of children as assessed by material well-being, health and safety, educational well-being, family and peer relationships, behaviours and risks, and young people’s perceptions of their own well-being. The position in education specifically was 17th out of 21. Despite criticisms of the report’s narrow focus (Ansell et al., 2007), this is a worrying trend which, nevertheless, will have consequences for teachers.

What keeps teachers going, according to teachers themselves, is essentially their emotional commitment to the pupils they teach. Hastings and Bham’s (2003) research on the relationship between student behaviour patterns and teacher burnout found that students influence teachers’ sense of emotional exhaustion, leading to feelings of depersonalisation and lack of personal achievement; and:

additional responsibilities (e.g. time constraints) to be the strongest predictor of emotional exhaustion, student disrespect to be the strongest predictor of teacher depersonalisation and student lack of sociability to be the strongest predictor of teachers’ lack of personal accomplishment.

(cited in Klassen and Anderson, 2009: 755)

If we are to take the negative findings expressed above even half seriously then we must begin to place the need to foster and support resilience in teachers much higher on the school improvement agenda. For many students, the authority of the classroom (and even school) as a legitimate or primary location for learning, is no longer a ‘given’. The traditional role of teachers as knowledge experts is being challenged and, with this, their professional identities. For some, such challenges of change are likely to threaten their sense of self-esteem, resilience and emotional stability.

Whilst a positive sense of identity is essential if teachers are to teach to their best, supportive relationships with colleagues are also known to contribute to teachers’ sense of self-esteem, commitment and belonging (Day and Gu, 2010). Moreover, as much recent empirical research internationally has revealed, a sense of individual, relational and collective trustworthiness and trust – through, for example, experiencing a high degree of collegiality in decisions about the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and participating actively in leadership roles – are important contributors to the quality of teaching and student achievement (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Day et al., 2011).

2. Screen cultures

Pupils in classrooms present an increasing number of challenges, not least those associated with emotional uncertainties in family lives and learning uncertainties associated with their increasing participation in ‘screen cultures’ and social
networking sites which are contributing to a ‘blurring’ of what, where and how they learn. There can be no doubt that in many countries family norms and expectations have changed and that the influence of new technologies upon pupils is increasingly profound. In many countries, also, teachers are not now accorded respect simply because they are teachers; and what may be learned from teachers in classrooms must compete with what may be learned from the internet, social networks and other information and communication devices:

In less than the span of a single childhood, we have merged with our machines, staring at a screen for eight hours a day, more time than we spend on any other activity, including sleeping. British adolescents spend an average of six hours a day online, and, according to the Royal College of Paediatrics and Clinical Health, 10- and 11-year olds have access to five screens at home. (Dokouupil, 2012: 2)

In an article drawing upon several pieces of research on the negative effects of digital technologies and originally appearing in Newsweek, Dokouupil raises important issues for teachers. He suggests that the physical wiring of the brains of some of their pupils may have already been affected by their interaction with technologies ‘in areas charged with attention, control and decision making’. It is claimed that they may be more impulsive than others as a result of their use of technology. They may feel more isolated and struggle in forming a stable sense of self: ‘A Carnegie Mellon University study found that web use over a two-year period was linked to blue moods, loneliness and the loss of real-world friends’ (Dokouupil, 2012: 3). It has also been suggested that there are associations between the excessive use of the internet and mobile technology and the reported 66 per cent rise in ADHD and OCD disorders among children and young people in the last ten years (Aboujaoude et al., 2006).

Taken together, even with a ‘pinch of salt’, these findings suggest that teachers in all schools are likely having to manage new sets of challenges in promoting the learning and achievement of at least some of the pupils in their classes – another situation in which they need to call upon ‘everyday resilience’.

3. The pressures of policy

To a great extent, in the UK and in England in particular, the role of the individual school, and indeed the local education authority, has been subordinated to and by ... national policy initiatives ... [but] ... policy-makers do not normally take account of the complexity of policy enactment environments and the need for schools to simultaneously respond to multiple policy (and other) demands and expectations.

(Braun et al., 2010: 547–8)

The research on which these statements are based problematises the well-established but, nevertheless, naive notion in much of the change literature on
Teaching and learning requires everyday resilience 25

so-called problems of implementation of external reform initiatives as perceived by policy makers. Rather, it understands that policies are “interpreted” and “translated” by diverse policy actors in the school environment (Braun et al., 2010: 549). The authors continue: ‘putting policies into practice is a creative, sophisticated and complex process …of interpretation’ (ibid.: 549). Because changes in external policy have become a dominant feature in the changing landscape of school governance, curriculum and classrooms over the last three decades in English schools, and because teachers themselves are key mediating agents in their enactment, it is perhaps not surprising that for many, being a teacher and achieving success has become more complex, more highly cognitive and emotionally demanding. One consequence of continuing changes in policy, then, has been a greater need for teachers to have the capacity to be resilient. The authors provide an example of a maths teacher in an average-sized comprehensive school:

Roger: [W]e seem to be doing every initiative there is before it eventually becomes government policy. And some of us feel that maybe sometimes we try and do too much and not focus on some things. I know from colleagues in other schools nearby, you know, they haven’t got a clue about PLTS [Personal Learning and Thinking Skills] or anything else … We’re still only satisfactory [in Ofsted terms] and thus, you know, we’ve got to be seen to be doing really well.

(Braun et al., 2010: 552–3)

4. Standards and accountability

Standards of teaching, learning and achievement appear to be judged by policy makers in England and many other countries to be in almost constant crisis. The emphasis upon standardised tests and examinations and the development of new technologies to compare these within and across schools and countries (PISA, TIMMS) are said to have caused more emphasis upon teaching to the test in classrooms. Teachers, particularly those who work in schools which serve socio-economically and emotionally challenging urban and rural contexts, are caught in the middle between efforts to engage students who may be less willing (or able) to be engaged and satisfying the demands of results-driven agendas by which the relative ‘success’ of schools and, therefore, teachers may be measured and compared.

Writing in the Journal of the Royal Society of Arts in the summer of 2012, Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England, wrote of teachers: ‘Teaching is a noble profession that has the power to changes lives, particularly for those disadvantaged young people who need it most … We need to celebrate diversity, ingenuity and imagination in the way we teach’ (Wilshaw, 2012: 17). He wrote of two ‘incredibly successful’ teachers: ‘These teachers were resilient people who withstood the slings and arrows … unflinchingly. They never let failure get the better of them. They learnt from it and came back
stronger, tougher and better' (ibid.: 17). In his 'Teacher’s Three-Term Report Card' (see Figure 2.1), he identified ten ‘skills’ and six ‘traits’. We re-produce this here because it illustrates well the key strengths which every teacher will need to teach to their best and which every school will need to support in every teacher, regardless of experience.

It is possible to see Wilshaw’s skills and traits in research on effective classroom learning and teaching as, in essence, being complemented by the research of John Hattie (2009) to whose work we referred earlier in this chapter. He found that

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<tr>
<th>TEACHER’S THREE-TERM REPORT CARD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marks:</strong> E (90=100%); VG (75–89%); G (60–74%); FG (50–59%); F (35–49%); O (under 35%)</td>
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<tr>
<th>SKILLS</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>TRAITS</strong></th>
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<th><strong>AS A MEMBER OF STAFF</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Keeps control of</td>
<td>1. Shares ideas with</td>
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<td>class</td>
<td>colleagues</td>
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<td>2. Plans lessons</td>
<td>2. Prepared to</td>
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<tr>
<td>effectively</td>
<td>accept criticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Shows sensitivity</td>
<td>3. Good at</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>to pupils’ needs</td>
<td>relationship building</td>
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</table>

Teacher’s name:

Head teacher’s signature:

N.B. The head teacher is always willing to interview parents regarding a teacher’s conduct.

*Figure 2.1 Teacher’s Three-Term Report Card (Wilshaw, 2012: 6).*
reciprocal teaching, feedback, teaching pupils meta-cognition strategies, problem-solving and self-verbalisation and self-questioning were practices which had the most positive impacts on pupil learning and that 'these top methods rely upon the influence of peers, feedback, transparent learning intentions and success criteria ... using various strategies, attending to both surface and deep knowing' (cited in Hargreaves and Fullan 2012: 52). He provided not a report card but six signposts about good teaching:

i) Teachers are among the most powerful influences upon learning.
ii) Teachers need to be directive, influential, caring, and actively engaged in the passion of teaching and learning.
iii) Teachers need to be aware of what every child is thinking and knowing, to construct meaningful experiences in light of this knowledge.
iv) Teachers need to know the learning intentions and success criteria of their lessons, know how well they are attaining these criteria for all students, and know where to go next in the light of the gap.
v) Teachers need to move from single ideas to multiple ideas ... such that learners are able to construct and reconstruct knowledge and ideas whatever specific measure is being used at one time.
vi) School leaders and teachers need to create [learning] environments where error is welcomed as a learning opportunity and where discarding incorrect knowledge and understanding is welcomed.

(cited in Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012: 52)

It is all very well to set the standards for outstanding teaching, as Wilshaw’s Report Card does, and to identify the traits and behaviours of effective teachers, as Hattie’s research does. The reality, however, is that the majority of teachers are unlikely to be able to be outstanding always and that, for most teachers, performance will vary according to circumstances in their classrooms, schools and personal lives.

To be resilient, flexible, reflective, empathetic, imaginative and perceptive – five of Sir Michael’s ten necessary ‘skills’ – and to attain each of Hattie’s six signposts requires huge amounts of emotional and intellectual energy and a continuing high level of motivation, commitment and resilience in an environment which is both challenging and supportive rather than energy draining and destructive of the professional self.

5. Higher demand cultures

A study in New Zealand sought to compare primary teachers’ workload in 2012 with a similar study carried out 20 years earlier by the same author (Bridges, 1992). Given the increase in government-led reforms, including the introduction of national teaching standards and an emphasis on raising pupils’ levels of performance through tests and examinations – a pattern which is repeated across the world as evidenced by the development and use of international comparators...
(PISA, TIMMS) – the results were not surprising. The working week for teachers was now reported to be 55 hours as against 50 hours previously; ICT use was taking more time than five years previously, as was time spent in meeting special learning needs of pupils; a majority of principals and senior leaders spent more time in administration tasks; and more teachers than in 1992 reported that they faced very heavy or ‘overload’ workloads. Although these findings are the result of self-report by the 379 self-selected respondents and so should be treated with some caution, what is especially of concern is the authors’ report that ‘large numbers of primary teachers – more than half overall – do not feel able to keep going in the way that they are at present’ (Bridges and Searle, 2011: 423).

Additionally, work relating directly to the needs of the children and the class, a priority for 51.3 per cent of teachers in 1992, was now a priority for 37 per cent, with demands by ‘hierarchy’, management and others now a priority for 15 per cent as against 1.5 per cent in 1992: ‘My workload tends to be prioritised by those in power telling me what they need to see and when, to prove I do the job effectively, not prioritised by the needs that arise day to day in my class’ (in Bridges and Searle, 2011: 424).

Increased workload itself does not necessarily lead to job dissatisfaction and low morale, although it clearly tests teachers’ capacity to be resilient. For example, Herzberg’s (1966) work suggests that job satisfaction can be high from relationships with pupils and the opportunity to ‘make a difference’ in their learning and achievement, whereas simultaneously job dissatisfaction can also be high because of poor working conditions or external policy environments (see Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of the effects of these upon teachers’ sense of professional identity). A survey commissioned by ETUCE (2011) of 5,400 teachers in 500 schools across Europe found that UK teachers reported the highest levels of burnout, second highest levels of cognitive stress, above average levels of pupil discipline problems and conflicts with parents. Teachers in this survey also reported the second-highest levels of workload and that these impacted negatively on their personal lives outside school.

While international and national surveys have consistently found associations between increased workloads and job dissatisfaction (e.g. Dinham and Scott, 2000, 2002; Rhodes et al., 2004), there is no necessary cause and effect relationship. Indeed, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction have been found to be the result of interaction between three dynamic factors – core commitment to pupils’ learning, school leadership and culture, and societal and policy issues.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to argue that where workloads increase and where demands for improved performance in tests and examinations persist, these are likely to demand a greater capacity for resilience. When these become constant, it is also likely that reservoirs of care and hope may begin to run dry, unless schools themselves ensure otherwise through supportive, collegial cultures in which building and sustaining teachers’ capacity to be and continue to be resilient is central to their mission. This will apply especially to those schools which serve pupils from highly disadvantaged communities (see Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of this).