

DETERMINANTS OF RESILIENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS AMID MARTIAL LAW

The teaching profession inherently demands a high level of dedication, adaptability, and resilience. However, during periods of instability, such as martial law, these attributes are tested to their limits. English language teachers, in particular, face the dual challenge of continuing to fulfil their educational duties while also coping with the unpredictability and emotional strain associated with wartime conditions. This paper explores the various factors that contribute to the resilience of English language teachers in such extreme contexts, analysing both personal and professional aspects that enable them to persevere despite significant disruptions to the education system.

Resilience, in the context of teaching, refers to an individual's ability to withstand challenges, maintain psychological well-being, and continue professional responsibilities under adverse conditions. During martial law, English language teachers in Ukraine encounter [5] unique stressors, including the disruption of school operations, shifts to distance learning, and the emotional toll of living through war. Despite these challenges, many teachers continue to exhibit remarkable resilience, driven by a combination of professional commitment, social support, personal strategies, and adaptive skills that enhance their ability to navigate the complex environment of wartime teaching [6].

Recent studies have highlighted the resilience of educators in warfare zones, focusing on psychological well-being and professional support systems [7]. For instance, Kim and Asbury [2] explored how teachers' emotional resilience is bolstered by community networks during crises, while Huberman et al. examined the adaptation of teaching methods in emergency remote learning contexts. However, there is limited research specifically addressing the resilience of English language teachers under martial law, particularly in relation to their professional identity and long-term adaptive strategies, which this article aims to address.

Professional identity and motivation

A crucial factor in the resilience of English language teachers is their strong professional identity and intrinsic motivation [1]. Many teachers view their role as not only imparting linguistic skills but also fostering a sense of normalcy and continuity in students' lives amidst chaos. Dedication to their profession and an awareness of the broader importance of teaching English during wartime contribute significantly to their ability to maintain focus and motivation. These educators recognize that their role extends beyond language instruction – it provides a vital link to global communication and opportunities for students, particularly in conflict-ridden regions. This sense of purpose strengthens their resolve to continue working, even when the challenges seem overwhelming.

Social support and professional community

Social support, both within and outside the professional community, plays a vital role in reinforcing the resilience of English language teachers. Interaction with colleagues, either through formal professional communities or informal peer networks, allows teachers to share experiences, seek advice, and offer emotional support [3]. Participation in professional development programs or online forums becomes particularly important, as these platforms enable educators to discuss best practices, troubleshoot common challenges, and find solidarity in shared struggles. This sense of belonging and mutual support mitigates feelings of isolation, reduces burnout, and empowers teachers to sustain their efforts despite the adversities imposed by martial law.

Use of self-help and self-regulation strategies

Resilient teachers often employ self-help and self-regulation strategies to cope with the heightened stress associated with wartime teaching. These strategies include mindfulness practices, physical exercise, time management, and reflective practices, which help them maintain psychological well-being. Teachers also develop techniques to manage classroom dynamics in unstable conditions, fostering a safe and supportive environment for their students. By maintaining a balance between their professional and personal lives, they are better equipped to handle stress and continue functioning effectively. Such strategies are crucial for sustaining resilience over prolonged periods of uncertainty.

Adaptation to new working conditions

The rapid shift to distance learning and the integration of new technologies during martial law require teachers to quickly adapt to altered working conditions. The ability to embrace digital tools, reconfigure curricula, and navigate the challenges of online instruction is a key aspect of resilience. Teachers who demonstrate flexibility and openness to new methods are more likely to succeed in delivering quality education despite the constraints of the environment. Additionally, the changes in curricula and the need to align instruction with students' diverse needs during wartime enhance teachers' adaptability, ensuring continuity of learning in a disrupted setting.

Prospects for using resilience experience in future professional activities

The skills and strategies developed during wartime teaching are not only crucial for immediate resilience but also serve as valuable assets for future professional activities [4]. The experiences of navigating extreme challenges will equip teachers with a unique skill set that can be applied to future crises or disruptions, enhancing their overall capacity for professional growth. Furthermore, teachers can share their wartime experiences with colleagues, contributing to the broader professional community's understanding of resilience. These insights may inform future educational policies and resilience-building practices, ensuring that educators are better prepared for future disruptions.

The teachers of the Department of Foreign Languages at VNTU, despite the immense strain brought on by Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, remain unwavering in their commitment. Though weary, we draw strength from our families, students, and the shared humour and camaraderie that binds us as a team.

Engaging in routine work, connecting with one another, and offering mutual support provide a sense of normalcy in these turbulent times. It is this stability amidst the chaos that fuels our resilience and inspires us to continue working tirelessly for the victory of Ukraine.

In summary, the resilience of English language teachers during martial law is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon rooted in professional dedication, social support, personal coping strategies, adaptability, and forward-looking resilience. By understanding these factors, we can better understand each other and support educators in war zones and equip them with the tools necessary to continue their vital work under the most challenging circumstances.

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