

The background features a stylized city skyline at the bottom with various building silhouettes in shades of blue and white. The sky is a gradient of blue, with several white, fluffy clouds scattered across it. The main text is centered and rendered in a bold, bright pink font.

Can We Build It?

An Action Research Study of

Integrated Academics and Resilience

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Background

- ★ Over 1,000 children in the area serving as the focus of this study were identified as victims of founded abuse in the 2018-2019 report released by Children's Trust of South Carolina (2020)
- ★ Over 600 children in the area serving as the focus of this study were identified as victims of neglect (Children's Trust of South Carolina, 2020)
- ★ Over 14,000 children in the area serving as the focus of this study were identified as living in poverty (Children's Trust of South Carolina, 2020)
- ★ Over 72,000 children in the area serving as the focus of this study were impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic's impact on school format and function (Children's Trust of South Carolina, 2020)

Learning Unit

- ★ A unit to integrate informational texts and resiliency-building has been an annual component of my curriculum
- + ★ The learning unit takes the form of “book clubs”
 - Students choose book club members
 - Students choose book club texts
 - Students choose book club norms
- ★ Book options come from the resiliency-building text set obtained through grants
 - All book topics address resiliency-building in some form
- ★ Daily mini-lessons are provided regarding academic objectives
- ★ Academic and resiliency-building objectives are reinforced during small group and one-on-one teacher conferences

Learning Unit

- ★ Trace and evaluate the strength of author's claims and arguments
- ★ Cite text evidence to support analysis of conclusions drawn from explicit and inferred ideas
- ★ Identify text features and structures that support author's claims
- ★ Provide objective summaries of informational texts with two or more central ideas
- ★ Opportunity to belong
- ★ Opportunity to have meaningful interactions with others (among peers, with teacher)
- ★ Challenging but obtainable expectations for success
- ★ Activities integrating multiple disciplines
- ★ Differentiation, scaffolding
- ★ Dialogic teaching
- ★ Formative assessments

Research Questions

- ★ 1. What impact, if any, does integrating topics specifically chosen to build resiliency with reading and writing have on students' academic achievement?
- ★ 2. What impact, if any, does integrating topics specifically chosen to build resiliency with reading and writing have on students' perceptions of resilience?



Assessments

- ★ Academic Pre-Assessment
- ★ Academic Post-Assessment
- ★ Brief Resilience Scale Pre-Assessment
- ★ Brief Resilience Scale Post-Assessment
- ★ Reflective Journal Entries (4)



Academic Assessment Findings

Pre-Assessment

- ★ 28.58% achieved passing scores (60-100)
- ★ 71.42% did not earn passing scores (0-59)

Post-Assessment

- ★ 77.14% achieved passing scores (60-100)
- ★ 22.86% did not earn passing scores (0-59)

Students Increasing Scores Between Pre-Assessment and Post Assessment	Students with No Change in Scores Between Pre-assessment and Post Assessment	Students Decreasing Scores Between Pre-Assessment and Post Assessment
84.29%	4.29%	11.43%

Academic Assessment Findings

Dependent t Test Results

- + ★ $p < .001$
- ★ Statistically significant
 - Strong evidence that random chance was not responsible for the changes

Conclusion

- ★ Both a comparison of academic assessment scores and a dependent samples t test provided strong evidence to support the conclusion of a positive impact on academic achievement when students participated in the integrated academic and resiliency-building unit.

Brief Resilience Scale Findings

Pre-Assessment

- ★ 7.14% were in the high resiliency range (4.31-5.0)
- ★ 44.29% were in the normal resiliency range (3.0-4.31)
- ★ 48.57% were in the low resiliency range (1.00-2.99)

Post-Assessment

- ★ 14.29% were in the high resiliency range (4.31-5.0)
- ★ 58.57% were in the normal resiliency range (3.0-4.31)
- ★ 27.14% were in the low resiliency range (1.00-2.99)

Students Increasing Scores Between Test 1 and Test 2	Students with No Change in Scores Between Test 1 and Test 2	Students Decreasing Scores Between Test 1 and Test 2
68.57%	1.43%	30.00%

Brief Resilience Scale Findings

Dependent *t* Test Results

- + ★ $p < .001$
- ★ Statistically significant
 - Strong evidence that random chance was not responsible for the changes

Conclusion

- ★ Both a comparison of Brief Resilience Scale scores and a dependent samples *t* test provided strong evidence to support the conclusion of a positive impact on students' perceptions of resilience when students participated in the integrated academic and resiliency-building unit.

Reflective Journal Findings

Journal 1: Predict Brief Resilience Scale Pre-Assessment Score

- ★ 28.36% predicted either low or low-normal ranges (sense of powerlessness over emotions)
- ★ 59.70% predicted a normal range (situationally appropriate emotions)
- ★ 11.94% predicted either a normal-high or high range (general lack of emotional responses)

Journal 2: Discuss Brief Resilience Scale Pre-Assessment Score

- ★ 81.82% considered pre-assessment scores accurate (situationally appropriate emotions)
- ★ 18.19% considered pre-assessment scores inaccurate (possess characteristics contrary to score results)

Reflective Journal Findings

Journal 3: Predict Brief Resilience Scale Post-Assessment Score

- ★ 5% predicted a decrease in score (sense of powerlessness over emotions)
- ★ 31.67% predicted no change in score (book club texts were positive but not entirely effective or not helpful at all)
- ★ 63.33% predicted an increase in score (book clubs were helpful or resiliency-building strategies were applied)

Journal 4: Discuss Brief Resilience Scale Post-Assessment Score

- ★ 86.89% considered post-assessment scores accurate (book clubs were helpful)
- ★ 9.84% considered post-assessment scores inaccurate (surprised then accepting)

Reflective Journal Findings

Conclusion

- ★ Over time, a shift in thought emerged as students moved from describing generalized senses of power (or lack thereof) to a focus on resources and circumstances.
- ★ Students describing ongoing struggles with resilience were able to draw connections between resiliency and circumstances.
- ★ Many students expressed hope for future growth.

Reflective journals provided qualitative data that described shifts in thinking. This change seemed to support the findings of a positive impact on students' perceptions of resilience.



Additional Findings

- ★ Among some students, there was difficulty understanding resilience outside the lens of current circumstances.
- + ★ Another group of students described their increased understanding of resilience as reasons for both increases and decreases in their Brief Resilience Scale scores.
- ★ Some text options for Book Clubs were met with resounding popularity which prompted me to move some texts to the general classroom library while other titles were widely disliked leading me to remove those titles from the resiliency-building library.
- ★ Because of the topics covered in this unit, some students revealed information which warranted offers of meetings with school guidance counselors. Two students described current concerns which led to school and home teamwork to secure intense interventions.



Recommendations

- ★ Make the small changes now.
- ★ Provide opportunities for trauma-informed curriculum design.
- ★ Provide ongoing professional development.
- ★ Continue the research.





Can We Build It?

YES!