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**Academic Success for At-Risk Students**

I conduct research with children, adolescents, and young adults who are considered at-risk for academic failure. My research focuses on the factors and processes that help students facing difficult environmental stressors (such as poverty) to “beat the odds” and achieve academic success. This line of study is grounded in the literature focused on resilience—the interaction of multiple factors that foster a student’s positive adaptation in the face of significant adversity. My research focuses specifically on the area of educational resilience defined as increased likelihood of academic success despite personal vulnerabilities and environmental adversities. My goal is to more clearly identify which factors foster academic success for different students and explain how those factors make the difference for students facing adversity.

Given the severe lifelong economic and social disadvantage for students who experience academic failure and/or dropout, I have dedicated considerable effort toward identifying factors and approaches that can be used to support students’ academic success and foster educational resilience. My findings show that focused support from adults, specific curricular supplements, and sound pedagogy help to foster students’ academic success in the face of risk and adversity. In fact, it appears that informed pedagogy may be a critical mechanism for both learning and protection in the lives of at-risk students. My research offers support for the notion that there is a sense of “ordinary magic” in the daily life of the classroom (Masten, 2001) and in a world full of stresses for students and teachers alike, my research clearly shows that everyday interactions in classrooms really do matter.

My findings also suggest that the academic success of students who face adversity cannot be viewed as the responsibility of any single entity. Rather, the findings point to multiple opportunities and responsibilities that need to be distributed throughout the community. School leaders, teachers, counselors, families, and community organizations must work together to foster the academic achievement of children who face adversity. Given that young people’s futures are at stake, it is urgent that all parties work together to offer these students realistic opportunities to achieve success.

**Sample Publications**


