

Call for Manuscripts by Invitation: Special Issue of the *ECDC*, 2019
**Promoting resilience in the early years of people’s lives by developing their
communication skills and enhancing their narratability**

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This Call for Manuscripts concerns three closely connected aspects of early childhood education, namely the importance of promoting resilience in the early years of people’s lives, developing their communication skills, and improving their narratability. These aspects are discussed briefly below.

To begin with: While the construct ‘resilience’ refers to healthy and successful development in the context of risk and adversity (Masten, 2001), resilience research covers people’s development over their entire lifespan as well as a number of related topics. Extensive research has been conducted on issues relating to the theories and methodologies of childhood development, learning, and education, yet little research has been done on theories and methodologies of resilience in the early years of people’s lives (Masten, Gewirtz, & Sapienza, 2013) and on the role of significant others in the development of children and childhood resilience in particular. The acquisition of resilience occurs within specific developmental and context-specific processes; for instance, it is generally accepted that children need a safe and nurturing environment to develop satisfactorily. They cannot achieve healthy development on their own – they need the help of significant others such as their primary caretakers (Masten et al., 2013). Adult social and emotional support is a key protective factor that promotes children’s experience of resilience (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011; Masten, 2001; Theron & Theron, 2010).

Little attention has been given to how resilience can be strengthened in the early years of people’s lives by developing their communication skills, even though the importance of promoting communication as a key protective factor in enhancing resilience throughout people’s lifespan is generally accepted. It should also be borne in mind that earlier research on childhood resilience was conducted from a developmental psychopathology perspective (Garmezy & Masten 1986) and focused on promoting healthy developmental trajectories for children raised by parents with “mental illness or stress in the family, social disadvantages, or poverty” (Masten et al. 2013, p. 2). At the same time, research on resilience and language development tended to focus on the communication and academic performance of school-going children.

Secondly, the close link between the acquisition of resilience and language development is generally acknowledged, where language development is seen as a process that helps children communicate their thoughts, opinions, and wishes to others. Language and, more specifically, articulation supports children’s ability to express their ideas and

emotions to others as well as their ability to process and understand information received from others. The key role of language in learning and in promoting resilience cannot be overstated. Early experiences in listening and talking provide the foundation for reading, writing, and expressing one's innermost feelings. What children learn through oral language provides a knowledge base for their reading and writing skills, which, in turn, enhances their articulation competencies. Learners without a robust literacy foundation may struggle not only academically but also in terms of becoming more resilient. Inadequate language skills acquisition in the early years can become a pervasive problem that manifests also later at secondary school and after school (Spaull, 2013).

Thirdly, as with resilience research, research on career development in people's early lives has received minimal attention (Maree, 2018a, b; Patton, 2017). Patton (2017, p. 174) claims that "[t]he career development field has erred in not attending to developmental tasks able to be successfully completed in childhood" and adds that research on the twin fields of career development and resilience in childhood is seriously lacking. This is puzzling as major career counselling theories stress the importance of mastering numerous developmental tasks (including the acquisition of resilience and language skills) in the early childhood years. Super's (1957) lifespan, life-space approach, for instance, regards career development as an ongoing process that commences in childhood and extends across the entire lifespan. Likewise, psychodynamic theories (Freud, 1963) emphasize the importance of early life events in the lives of workers and link the acquisition of resilience to healthy emotional development. Acquiring narratability (the ability to articulate one's 'life story,' including one's deepest needs and feelings) is currently considered a major factor in promoting autobiographicity (the ability to articulate and draw on one's life story) (Savickas, 2011). These notions lie at the heart of career construction counselling and life designing (Hartung, 2011; Maree, 2013; Savickas, 2011, 2015), which is facilitated through the elicitation of people's numerous micro- and meso-stories to help them reconstruct "a subjective macro-narrative of identity" (Peila-Shuster, 2017, p. 291; Savickas, 2013) and satisfactorily construct, deconstruct, re-construct, and co-construct 'painful' stories into 'healthy' stories built on mutual respect. The aim is to enable people to author their own career-life stories, exploit their own reflections, and listen to and advise themselves. Seen from this perspective, it is clear that enhancing people's resilience and advancing their communication skills constitute a key primary (career) developmental task during the early years. Likewise, identity formation (which is what holds people's career-life stories together) is central to life design and to helping people find a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The importance of enabling people from an early age to develop their work-life identity is therefore self-evident. Without a strong sense of such identity, negotiating later work-related transitions can become more problematical. Career counselling therefore needs to be advanced in such a way that it promotes people's ability to articulate and draw on their autobiographies so that they can design stable work-life identities to help them convert major challenges into exciting opportunities.

This Call for Manuscripts extends an invitation to theorists and practitioners alike to share with a global audience their views on the following trio of related issues: promoting resilience in the early years of people's lives, developing their communication and articulation skills, and improving their narratability. It thus aims to address the lacunae in this area of research.

Types of manuscripts sought

Contributors are invited to propose innovative theoretical approaches as well as practical intervention measures, strategies, and techniques to promote resilience in the early years of people's lives by developing their communication skills and narratability. Typical questions would be the following:

- ✓ How can resilience in the early years of people's lives be promoted?
- ✓ What language processes are required in the early years to promote resilience, and how can these processes be enhanced?
- ✓ How can identity formation be bolstered in the early years to help people deal with repeated transitions in a changed and changing world of work?
- ✓ What are the main theories and associated praxis on promoting resilience in the early years of people's lives, developing their communication skills, and enhancing their narratability?
- ✓ How can promoting resilience in the early years of people's lives by developing their communication skills and their narratability be harnessed to promote their resilience?
- ✓ How can resilience in the early years of people's lives be promoted by developing their communication skills and their narratability in group-based contexts?
- ✓ How can resilience in the early years of people's lives be advanced by developing their communication skills and their narratability in family contexts and in primary schools?

We look forward to receiving a wide-ranging collection of thought-provoking contributions that extend across research methodologies and emulate the high standard of previous contributions to the *ECDC*. Above all, we are looking for 'positive' contributions that, while not losing sight of the major challenges in promoting resilience in the early years of people's lives by developing their communication skills and their narratability, are solution-based, opportunity seeking, and encouraging,

Deadline for submissions

Please e-mail proposals for articles to kobus.maree@up.ac.za. In your proposal, include

- a. the proposed title,
- b. a brief abstract (maximum word count of 350 words),
- c. your name, affiliations, and contact details.

Proposals should be submitted by no later than **31 December 2018**. All proposals will be considered, and you will be notified about the outcome as soon as possible. If your proposal is accepted, we will e-mail you the author's guidelines and additional details. Completed

manuscripts should be submitted for review before 30 April 2019, and submissions should be made on-line through the ECDC's website. The journal's publishers are Taylor and Francis who use the Scholar One management system. In exceptional circumstances, manuscripts may be submitted as e-mail attachments to the guest editor Kobus Maree or the chief editor Roy Evans (r.evans14@btinternet.com) Submitted manuscripts will undergo peer review, and authors will normally receive the results of the review within eight weeks of the submission of their manuscripts. We hope to complete the proofreading and editing of this special issue by 30 September 2019. The issue will be published on-line in a form that is fully citable. Hard copy publication will take place at the earliest opportunity in 2020. If a sufficiently large number of articles are accepted for publication, the volume will be published in book form by SAGE.

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