

REL Appalachia Ask A REL Response

Behavior and Mental Health, Teacher Workforce
November 2020

Question:

What does research say about measuring teacher well-being, stress, and burnout after a crisis event?

Response:

Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about teacher well-being, stress, and burnout. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. Ask A REL provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations in response to questions about available education research.

Following an established REL Appalachia research protocol, we searched for peer-reviewed articles and other research reports on potential measures of teacher well-being, stress, and burnout. The sources included ERIC and other federally funded databases and organizations, research institutions, academic research databases, and general Internet search engines. For more details, please see the methods section at the end of this document.

The research team did not evaluate the quality of the resources provided in this response; we offer them only for your reference. Also, the search included the most commonly used research databases and search engines to produce the references presented here, but the references are not necessarily comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist. References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance.

References

Adams, E. (2001). A proposed causal model of vocational teacher stress. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 53(2), 223–246.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13636820100200153>

From the abstract: “This study investigated the impact of three latent variables comprised of 18 indicator variables or stressors on vocational teacher stress. A causal model was constructed using the literature on teacher stress as a conceptual framework. The causal model examined the linkages that exist among school systems (role ambiguity, role conflict, school stress, task stress, supervisory support, non-participation, peer support, role overload and management style) and vocational teacher stress. It examined the linkages among teacher

internal characteristics (role preparation, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, illness symptoms, locus of control and self-esteem) and vocational teacher stress. It examined the linkages among students (class size, student learning and student behavior) and vocational teacher stress. Linear Structural Relations Analysis (LISREL) was used to evaluate the effects of the identified stressors on vocational teacher stress. The proposed causal model was found to be successful in explaining 72% of the variance in vocational teacher stress.”

Cole, R., Hayes, B., Jones, D., & Shah, S. (2013). Coping strategies used by school staff after a crisis: A research note. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 18*(5), 472–481. Abstract retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1035107>; full text available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4118944/pdf/upil18_472.pdf

From the abstract: “There is much literature on crisis support in schools but little on how school staff are affected. This research had two aims: to begin to explore the coping strategies used by school staff after a crisis event, and to investigate measures that might prove valuable for future research. Seven cases are presented using three measures: the WHO (Five) Wellbeing Index, the Impact of Event Scale-Revised, and the Ways of Coping-Revised. Results from this initial study show great variation in the range of responses reported by teachers.”

Renshaw, R. L., Long, A. C., & Cook, C. R. (2015). Assessing teachers’ positive psychological functioning at work: Development and validation of the Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire. *School Psychology Quarterly, 30*(2), 289–306. Abstract retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1167869>; full text available at <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/spq-spq0000112.pdf>

From the abstract: “This study reports on the initial development and validation of the Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (TSWQ) with 2 samples of educators—a general sample of 185 elementary and middle school teachers, and a target sample of 21 elementary school teachers experiencing classroom management challenges. The TSWQ is an 8-item self-report instrument for assessing teachers’ subjective wellbeing, which is operationalized via subscales measuring school connectedness and teaching efficacy. The conceptualization and development processes underlying the TSWQ are described, and results from a series of preliminary psychometric and exploratory analyses are reported to establish initial construct validity. Findings indicated that the TSWQ was characterized by 2 conceptually sound latent factors, that both subscales and the composite scale demonstrated strong internal consistency, and that all scales demonstrated convergent validity with self-reported school supports and divergent validity with self-reported stress and emotional burnout. Furthermore, results indicated that TSWQ scores did not differ according to teachers’ school level (i.e., elementary vs. middle), but that they did differ according to unique school environment (e.g., 1 middle school vs. another middle school) and teacher stressors (i.e., general teachers vs. teachers experiencing classroom management challenges). Results also indicated that, for teachers experiencing classroom challenges, the TSWQ had strong short-term predictive validity for psychological distress, accounting for approximately half of the variance in teacher stress and emotional burnout. Implications for theory, research, and the practice of school psychology are discussed.”

- *TSWQ Instrument*: Renshaw, T. L. (2020). Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (TSWQ): Measure and user guide. *Open Science Framework*. <https://osf.io/6548v/>

Viac, C., & Fraser, P. (2020). Teachers' well-being: A framework for data collection and analysis. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 213. *OECD Publishing*. Abstract retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED604872>; full text available at <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0741/01ad8a1f324a61789d092d614d5ae86570b9.pdf>

From the abstract: “Modern education systems evolve in a context of growing teacher shortages, frequent turnover and a low attractiveness of the profession. In such a context where these challenges interrelate, there is an urgent need to better understand the well-being of teachers and its implications on the teaching and learning nexus. This working paper proposes a comprehensive conceptual framework to analyze teachers’ occupational well-being and its linkages with quality teaching. The core concept of this framework defines teachers’ well-being around four key components: physical and mental well-being, cognitive well-being, subjective well-being and social well-being. The framework then explores how working conditions, at both system and school levels, can impact and shape teachers’ well-being, both positively and negatively aspects. It also presents two types of expected outcomes regarding teachers’ well-being: inward outcomes for teachers in terms of levels of stress and intentions to leave the profession; and outward outcomes on quality teaching in terms of classroom processes and student’ well-being. In an annex, the paper proposes an analytical plan on how to analyze teachers’ well-being indicators and cross the results with other OECD instruments. It also presents the field trial items of the new module on teachers’ wellbeing which are included in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2021 teacher questionnaire.”

Additional Ask A REL Responses to Consult

Ask A REL Central at Marzano Research. (2018). *What impact do working conditions have on teacher health and well-being?*

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/askarel/responses/teacherworkforce-0818.asp>

Ask A REL Midwest at American Institutes for Research. (2020). *What research and resources are available on the impact of secondary trauma on public school educators?*

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/askarel/2020/educators-secondary-trauma.aspx>

Ask A REL Northwest at Education Northwest. (2020). *What does the research say about evidence-based practices and programs that support K–12 school employee health, resilience, and well-being?*

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/askarel/school-employee-health.asp>

Additional Organizations to Consult

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at American Institutes for Research:

<http://www.gtlcenter.org/>

From the website: “The GTL Center team has a deep bench of national experts ready to deliver a comprehensive set of services to meet your unique needs. Our team includes former teachers, principals, and teacher leaders, including National Board Certified Teachers. As former practitioners who have worked in classrooms, schools, districts, and state agencies, we know first-hand what it looks like when a school system works, and when it does not. We’re passionate about using effective strategies to help states and their districts build diverse, talented teams of educators as the foundation for student success.”

- Educator Stress Spectrum: <https://gtlcenter.org/products-resources/educator-stress-spectrum>

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools: <https://rems.ed.gov/>

From the website: “The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Supportive Schools has administered the REMS TA Center to serve two critical functions aimed at helping education agencies, with their community partners, manage safety, security, and emergency management programs. We build the preparedness capacity (including prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts) of schools, school districts, IHEs, and their community partners at the local, state, and Federal levels. We also serve as the primary source of information dissemination for schools, school districts, and IHEs for emergencies via the REMS TA Center Website.”

Regional Educational Laboratory Program, COVID-19: Evidence-Based Resources: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/covid-19/>

From the website: “The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences funds a network of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs). Each REL serves a designated region of the country and works with educators and policymakers to support a more evidence-based education system. In response to COVID-19, the RELs have collaborated to produce this series of evidence-based resources and guidance about teaching and learning in a remote environment, as well as other considerations brought by the pandemic.”

Support for Teachers Affected by Trauma: <http://statprogram.org/>

From the website: “Geared toward preK–12 teachers, STAT (Support for Teachers Affected by Trauma) was developed over a two-year period by a group of experts in the fields of secondary traumatic stress (STS), education, and technology. STAT comprises five online modules that explore the concepts of secondary trauma, risk factors associated with susceptibility to STS, the impact of STS across multiple life domains, and tangible self-care skills.”

U.S. Department of Education, COVID-19 (“Coronavirus”) Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel: <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>

From the website: “Health officials are currently taking steps to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 (‘Coronavirus’) into communities across the United States. Coronavirus.gov offers the most up to date information about this rapidly evolving situation. Through collaboration and coordination with State and local health departments, State and

local educational agencies, other education officials, and elected officials, schools can disseminate critical information about the disease and its potential transmission to students, families, staff, and community.”

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- teacher AND (burnout OR well-being OR wellbeing OR stress OR wellness) AND (instrument* OR measure* OR assess* OR survey)
- teacher AND (burnout OR well-being OR wellbeing OR stress OR wellness) AND (disaster OR crisis OR pandemic OR COVID-19)

Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), for relevant resources. Additionally, we searched the academic database ProQuest, Google Scholar, and the commercial search engine Google.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

In reviewing resources, Reference Desk researchers consider—among other things—these four factors:

- Date of the publication: Searches cover information available within the last 10 years, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- Reference sources: IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols receive highest priority. Applicable resources must be publicly available online and in English.
- Methodology: The following methodological priorities/considerations guide the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized controlled trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, policy briefs, etc., generally in this order; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected), study duration, etc.; (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, etc.
- Existing knowledge base: Vetted resources (e.g., peer-reviewed research journals) are the primary focus, but the research base is occasionally slim or nonexistent. In those cases, the best resources available may include, for example, reports, white papers, guides, reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, and organization websites.

Resources included in this document were last accessed on November 2, 2020. URLs, descriptions, and content included here were current at that time.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by education stakeholders in the Appalachia region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia (REL AP) at SRI International. This Ask A REL response was developed by REL AP under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0004 from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, administered by SRI International. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.