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**Journal Article Summary:**  
**“How School Ecologies Facilitate Resilience Among Adolescents with Intellectual Disability: Guidelines for Teachers”**

Hall, A.-M., & Theron, L. (2016). How school ecologies facilitate resilience among adolescents with Intellectual Disability: Guidelines for teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 36(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v36n2a1154>

The study by Hall and Theron, both Humanities faculty members at North-West University in South Africa investigated educational strategies that build resilience in adolescent students with intellectual disability (ID). The study explained that students with ID are part of a population who are vulnerable to abuse, discrimination, and poor performance at both work and school due to their deficits. Because of their relative dependence on supports, the researchers argued that building resiliency in school is an effective means to help students with ID to learn self-reliance. They defined resilience as “the positive adjustment to risks (such as ID), as a reciprocal process between the individual and his or her social ecology (Hall & Theron, 2016, p. 2).

To study the impact of learning environments on resilience in students with ID, the researchers studied 24 students by asking them to draw pictures that described what helped them do well when they felt things were hard. Then the students’ teachers, 18 instructors with varying levels of field experience, filled out a survey that asked questions about the students’ level of vulnerability (Hall & Theron, 2016, pp. 3-8). The students and teachers who participated in the study were members of non-mainstream schools dedicated specifically to serve students with disabilities.

Hall and Theron found that there were four main factors in the educational environment that positively impacted resilience in students with ID. The first factor that positively impacted student resilience was participation in activities, such as sports, that gave students a sense of accomplishment. The second element that made students more resilient was the use of differentiated instruction in the classroom, so that students were taught at their speed and academic level. The addition of transitional supports from school to work was reported as another important component in an educational program that builds resistance to vulnerability. Finally, the researchers found that a trusting relationship with a teacher was a large factor in building student confidence and self-sufficiency (Hall & Theron, 2016, pp. 9-11).

**References**

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