

Fostering Resilience in Early Adolescents: A Canadian Evaluation of the HEROES Program

Authors : Patricia L. Fontanilla, David Nordstokke

Abstract : Introduction: Today's children and youth face increasing social and behavioural challenges, leading to delays in social development and greater mental health needs. Early adolescents (aged 9 to 14) are experiencing a rise in mental health symptoms and diagnoses. This study examines the impact of HEROES, a social-emotional learning (SEL) program, on resilience and academic outcomes in early adolescents. The HEROES program is designed to enhance resilience the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity, equipping youth to navigate developmental transitions and challenges. This study's objective was to evaluate the program's long-term effectiveness by measuring changes in resilience and academic resilience across 10 months. Methodology: This study collected data from 21 middle school students (grades 7 to 9) in a rural Canadian school. Quantitative data were gathered at four intervals: pre-intervention, post-intervention, and at 2- and 4-month follow-ups. Data were analyzed with linear mixed models (LMM). Results: Findings showed statistically significant increases in academic resilience over time and significant increases in resilience from pre-intervention to 2 and 4 months later. Limitations included a small sample size, which may affect generalizability. Conclusion: The HEROES program demonstrates promise in increasing resilience and academic resilience among early adolescents through SEL skill development.

Keywords : academic resilience, early adolescence, resilience, SEL, social-emotional learning program

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