

Mini-EdPsych Q & A – Dr. Steven Shaw

Resilience:

Success against all odds

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How do you differentiate between learning disabilities and borderline intelligence?

There are over 100 different methods to identify learning disabilities used in the US and Canada, so it is difficult to generalize too much. But generally, persons with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence and low academic skills. The large difference between intelligence and academic skills defines learning disabilities. For children with borderline intelligence, both intelligence and academic skills are well below average. There is no significant difference between intelligence and academic skills--both are low.

In the individual key variables, how do "self esteem" and "perseverance" score?

For this study, there was no difference between resilient and non-resilient children on our measures of either. The only major influence of self-esteem and perseverance is that both improved as the amount of academic skills and academic success improved. For both variables, they were not the cause, but the result of improved skills.

What is your philosophy with regard to keeping a child back one grade in order for them to catch-up, should they be behind academically?

Don't do it. It is a major cause of depressive behaviours in children. There is little to no evidence that these are successful strategies. Yet, we cannot move children ahead when they have not developed some level of academic skills. Rapid and early identification and immediate/intensive academic interventions are required. Waiting for children to "grow out of it" simply does not work.