

ANN-KATHRIN WATOLLA, FREIA KUPER, BRONWEN DEACON, LENA
MARIE HENKES, ANNA AUST

RESILIENCE + CREATIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**A short introduction to theory and practices for working with
the Resilience & Creativity Canvas**

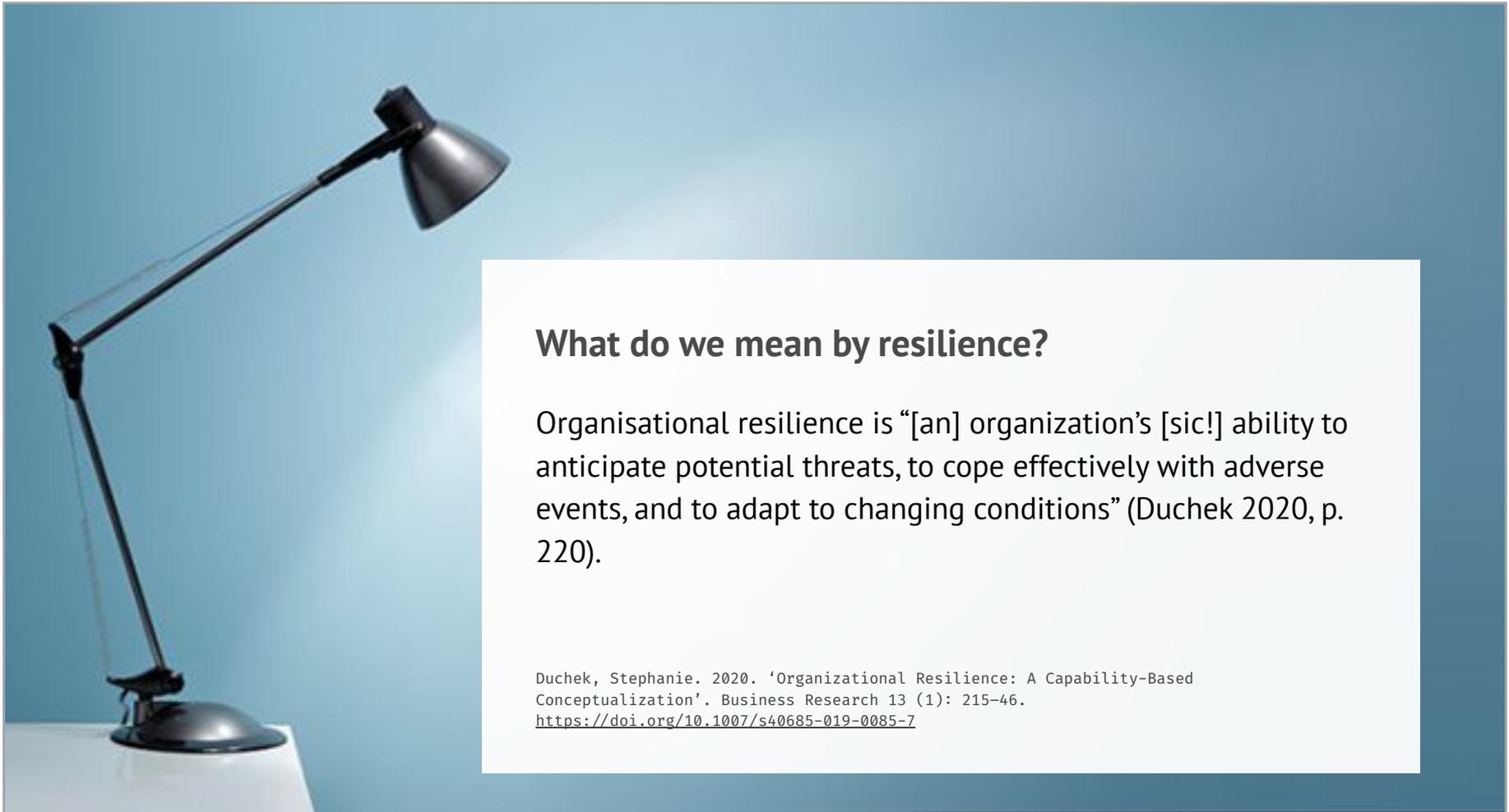
Introduction: How to use this presentation

This presentation serves as a brief introduction for working with the Resilience & Creativity Canvas. While it is recommended to work through the entire Learn-and-Do-Kit, if you are short on time, this presentation will encompass the key learnings of the knowledge base to keep in mind when initiating your reflection process:

- What do the terms 'resilience' and 'creativity' mean according to research?
- What does the interplay between resilience and creativity look like in practice?
- What is the Resilience & Creativity Canvas and how is it structured?



**WHAT DO THE TERMS 'RESILIENCE'
AND 'CREATIVITY' MEAN ACCORDING
TO RESEARCH?**



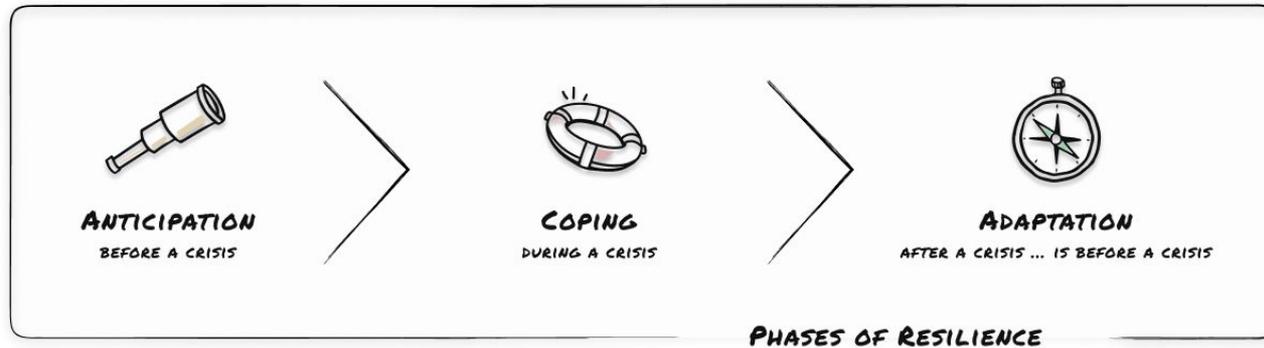
What do we mean by resilience?

Organisational resilience is “[an] organization’s [sic!] ability to anticipate potential threats, to cope effectively with adverse events, and to adapt to changing conditions” (Duchek 2020, p. 220).

Duchek, Stephanie. 2020. ‘Organizational Resilience: A Capability-Based Conceptualization’. *Business Research* 13 (1): 215–46.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7>

Understanding resilience as a processual capacity

Resilience refers not only to the capacity to endure stress but also to the ability to adapt, evolve and innovate in response to crisis (Duchek 2020; Brewer et al. 2019):



Brewer, Margo. L., Gisela Van Kessel, Brooke Sanderson, Fiona Naumann, Murray Lane, Alan Reubenson, & Alice Carter (2019). 'Resilience in Higher Education Students: A Scoping Review'. Higher Education Research & Development 38 (6): 1105-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1626810>

Duchek, Stephanie. 2020. 'Organizational Resilience: A Capability-Based Conceptualization'. Business Research 13 (1): 215-46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7>

The role of creativity in the three phases of resilience



ANTICIPATION BEFORE A CRISIS

Creativity widens the set of possible responses through scenario-building and the imagination of alternative futures. In doing so, it strengthens proactive exploration.



COPING DURING A CRISIS

Creativity relates to the improvisation to adapt tools, roles and practices in real time, often without the option to plan first and act later as well as to finding ad-hoc solutions and novel collaborations.



ADAPTATION AFTER A CRISIS ... IS BEFORE A CRISIS

Creativity contributes to translating improvisations into long-term practices, thereby cultivating institutional learning and embedding innovation in institutional culture.



What do we mean by creativity?

Organisational creativity is the ability of an organisation to produce “novel, useful ideas or problem solutions” (Amabile et al., 2005, p. 368).

Amabile, T. M., Barsade, S. G., Mueller, J. S., & Staw, B. M. (2005). Affect and Creativity at Work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(3), 367-403. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2005.50.3.367>

A close-up photograph of a white watercolor paint palette. The palette contains numerous small, circular wells, each filled with a different color of watercolor paint. The colors include shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, red, pink, and purple. The paint in the wells is smooth and vibrant. The palette is set against a light, neutral background.

**WHAT DOES THE INTERPLAY
BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND
CREATIVITY LOOK LIKE IN
PRACTICE?**

Background information on the empirical research basis

Scope of the conducted empirical research:

Case study research conducted in seven countries across twelve higher education institutions revealed how creativity comes into play across all stages of the anticipation, coping and adaptation phases of dealing with a crisis.

→ [Find out more about our research](#)

Identification of practices depicting the interplay between resilience and creativity:

Throughout the research, specific practices revealed how higher education institutions already connect resilience and creativity. Showcasing selected practices on the following slides allows for illustration of these rather abstract theoretical concepts.

→ [Explore all identified practices of the empirical research](#)

Practical example: interlinking resilience and creativity in the anticipation phase

Creation and use of a global network

- Proactive networks outside the university open up new perspectives
- Exposure to alternative ways of thinking and acting fosters creativity
- Enhances the institution's ability to anticipate and adapt
- Increases the likelihood of new ideas emerging when routines come under pressure



ANTICIPATION

Limitations in the anticipation phase

- **Resource constraints** reduce institution's ability to invest in training, support structures and cross-role exchange beyond day-to-day delivery
- **Standardisation and tool restrictions** increase stability but can hinder experimentation

Practical example: interlinking resilience and creativity in the coping phase

Flexibility of roles and responsibilities

- Flexible roles and responsibilities allow for ideas to circulate more quickly
- Solutions are judged by their usefulness, not by hierarchy
- Combination of resilience and creativity in action
- Faster response to disruptions through collective effort



COPING

Limitations in the anticipation phase:

- **Workload:** While intensified collaboration and shared responsibility enable rapid responses, it also increases pressure on individuals.
- **Recognition:** Some members of the teaching staff reported feeling overburdened by additional work and insufficiently recognised for their contributions.

Practical example: interlinking resilience and creativity in the adaptation phase

Revising curricula development

- Collaboration and communication bring together different disciplines
- Integration into new fields of knowledge (interdisciplinary/ transdisciplinary)
- Sustainable responses to technological and societal challenges
- Embedding innovation within the institution (culture, routines, programmes)



ADAPTATION

Limitations in the adaptation phase:

- Crisis-driven innovations rely on intense individual effort, but once pressure eases, exhaustion and workload strain often hinder their institutionalisation.
- Even when innovations prove useful, resistance rooted in tradition, scepticism, or fatigue often curbs their lasting institutionalisation.

A close-up photograph of a white watercolor palette. The palette contains numerous small, circular wells, each filled with a different color of watercolor paint. The colors include shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, red, pink, and purple. The paint in the wells is smooth and vibrant. The palette is set against a light, neutral background.

**WHAT IS THE RESILIENCE AND
CREATIVITY CANVAS
AND HOW IS IT STRUCTURED?**

Purpose of the Resilience & Creativity Canvas

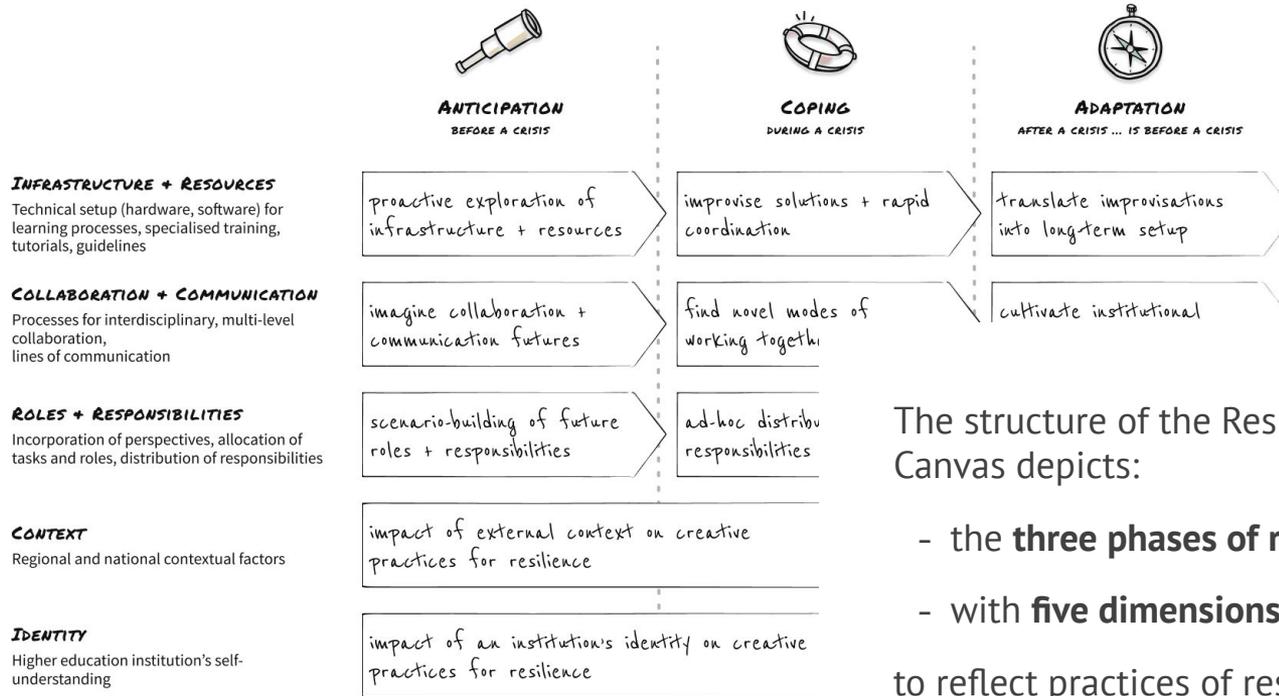
Building on the theoretical foundations and empirical practices (for more detail visit the Learn-and-Do Kit), the Resilience & Creativity Canvas enables you to reflect your institution's practices of resilience and creativity as well as your role within these processes.

Through reflective questions and thought-provoking ideas, the canvas and the accompanying materials encourage you to identify key bottlenecks, enabling structures and actionable changes for your specific role within your institution.

WHAT IS A CANVAS?

The canvas is a structured template or visual workspace used to organise, analyse and systematically work through complex topics. In our case, it is a template for reflection and introspection of the interplay between resilience and creativity in higher education institutions.

Overview of the Resilience & Creativity Canvas



The structure of the Resilience & Creativity Canvas depicts:

- the **three phases of resilience** horizontally
- with **five dimensions** vertically

to reflect practices of resilience and creativity.

Exploring the five dimensions of the canvas

The five dimensions, arranged vertically in the Resilience & Creativity Canvas, have been derived from the practices within the empirical research:

- **Infrastructure & Resources:** technical setup for learning processes (including specific tools), training opportunities for different target groups and purposes, actual use of existing resources
- **Collaboration & Communication:** processes and structures for interdisciplinary and multi-level collaboration, lines of communication, forms of cooperation within and beyond the institution
- **Roles & Responsibilities:** combination and inclusion of multiple perspectives, allocation of work packages and tasks, distribution of responsibilities
- **Context:** regional and national contextual factors like policies and regulations, funding, disciplinary culture, faculty guidelines, IT accessibility
- **Identity:** a higher education institution's self-understanding expressed through mission statements, teaching culture, sense of belonging, routines and practices of communication and collaboration

Exploring the three phases of resilience in the canvas

The three phases of resilience, arranged horizontally in the Resilience & Creativity Canvas, have been derived from the theoretical background of the research:

- Anticipation relates to what happens before a crisis. It involves recognising potential threats as well as taking preparatory actions. Anticipation at higher education institutions relies heavily on understanding the resources of the organisation: **What can we draw on?**
- Coping refers to what happens during a crisis. It is connected to the concrete actions taken to manage an acute crisis. Coping mechanisms are immediately relevant for internal and external communication to flow and for sustaining academic and administrative functions, including teaching and faculty work: **What needs to be done immediately to cope with the crisis?**
- Adaptation relates to after the crisis with long term changes possibly taking place. Reflecting on the experiences from the crisis can lead to new insights and changes within the institution: **What can we learn from this crisis to help us prepare for future ones?**

How to work with the Resilience & Creativity Canvas

Two ways of working with the Resilience & Creativity Canvas:

- Using the Resilience & Creativity Canvas for **individual reflection** enables members of different stakeholder groups within higher education institutions to conduct a self-facilitated work session.
→ [Go to individual reflection](#)
- Using the Resilience & Creativity Canvas for **collective reflection** enables higher education institutions to facilitate an extensive exchange around resilience and creativity across all relevant stakeholder groups.
→ [Go to collective reflection](#)

EXPLORE THE ENTIRE LEARN-AND-DO KIT:



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