



# Supporting resilience through curriculum content in the first year of university: A case study of CUC107

Charles Darwin University

School of Academic Language and Learning

**Birut Zemits, Amanda Janssen, Scott Knight & Susi Woolf**

# Food for thought? Building personal resilience

Building personal resilience (Black Dog Institute)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pS5H7VfkuPk>

# Reflection

- How resilient are you?
- How did you become as resilient as you are?
- How can we improve the way we support students to be resilient?

# Resilience?

- 'positive adaptation or ability to maintain or regain mental health, despite experiencing adversity' (Rutter 2006)
- 'a relatively positive psychological outcome despite serious risk experiences' (Hermann et al 2011)

**What is it - in the context of university?**



# Resilience in Tertiary study starting point?

- *While connected to childhood rearing practices... clear place for using this concept in a tertiary setting ... students increasingly come from non-traditional pathways (Gunnestad ..et al 2006, 2010).*
- *Resilience can be learned or extended at any time during a life-time (Stephens, 2013, 126).*

# Profile of a resilient student

*Students with*

- *strong problem solving abilities*
- *high levels of empathy*
- *self-efficacy*
- *optimism*
- *social support*

*are likely to have good resilience as such qualities are shown to operate as protective factors*

*(Kim, Lee & Lee 2013)*

# Resilience in CUC107

## Cultural Intelligence and Capability

How can **curriculum and teaching strategies** help to develop student resilience capacity in order to meet the demands of balancing life, work, study and the inevitable unforeseen events that may be put in their path?

Overcoming difficulties



# Current internal and external support processes

- Direct participation of ALLSP and Library Services
- Internal co-teaching
- Online session/s – twice weekly when high numbers
- Weekly letters
- Accessible clear guidelines
- Support materials e.g. extra power point tutorials



# The research method

Students from 2014 (still in CDU)

- Survey
- Focus groups

Staff experience of effective support

- External lecturers and tutors

Este, Sitter & Maclaurin (2009) Using Mixed Methods to Understand Youth Resilience. in: Ungar M and Liebenberg L (eds) *Researching resilience*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press., 201-224.

# All students

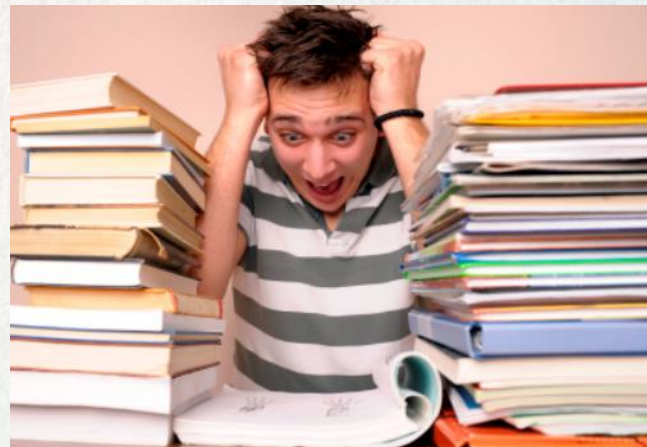
- Tertiary study + culture shock
- Academic challenges



hs-student-news.ciee.org



[https://www.timeshighereducation.com/sites/default/files/confused\\_student.jpg](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/sites/default/files/confused_student.jpg)



<http://alivecampus.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/13.jpg>

# Issues for international students

- English language proficiency and literacy issues  
(specific to particular fields e.g. Business, Nursing)
- Adaptation to Australian university & workplace contexts
  - different educational backgrounds and expectations
  - cultural dissonance
- Students' experience
  - Cultural non-tolerance
  - Mainstreaming teaching patterns

# For many students this manifests as

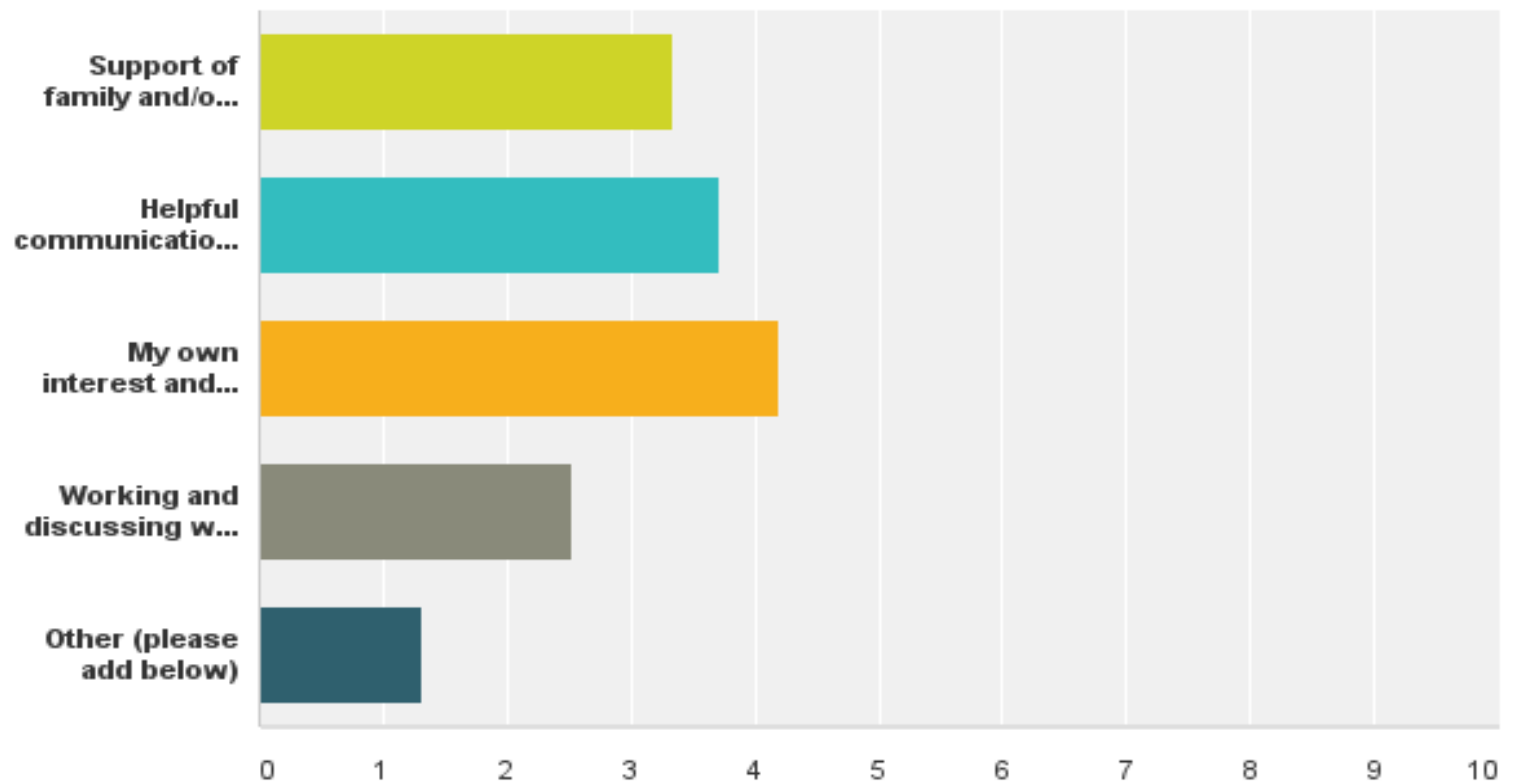
- Feeling left out
- Marginalisation
- Rejection



<http://blogs.acu.edu.au/international/11482/culture-shock/>

## Q8 What do you see as the most important social factors influencing your adaptation to university study? (1 most - 4 least)

Answered: 64 Skipped: 6



## **Q11 Please explain a little more about what you see as the most important things that helped you with your academic study in first year (optional).**

- *Common units (CUs )are a nice way to meet people. ...provided me with a good insight into "academic skills" and set me in good stead for the rest of the degree)*
- ALLSP
- Library
- Feedback (Feed forward!)
- *Communication and assistance from lecturers, especially when students are struggling!*

## Q12 I have found the assignment skills I learned in CUC107 useful for other study

- *Cultural intelligence, awareness and capabilities are also necessary and relevant ...It makes you more aware of your own culture and how it can impact on other cultures in the workplace*
- *Helped me to understand the assignment tasks and university academic culture...Constructing analytical essays and finding resources and journal articles*
- *Eye opening, makes you think more*
- *Knowing who I am teaches me personal strengths and weaknesses*
- *It makes me examine my own prejudice view*
- *Appreciating different cultures has allowed my future learning be so much more holistic.*

## Q14 I have applied what I learned about Cultural Intelligence in my work and study

- *Looking a little deeper into cross cultural communication (in my own country compared to previously being in a foreign country, 'looking outwards')*
- *I applied relationship between culture, knowledge, experience and behaviour in my work and study so I ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures.*
- *Understanding safe work spaces and how to create them*
- *I work in a managerial position, it has helped me widen my perspective.*
- *In current units work and personal life*



## I have had to apply knowledge about *safe spaces* in my study approach in the last year.

- *Previously, I didn't understand the meaning of 'safe places'. Also, working with children, I am more aware of my responsibilities*
- *It should be a professional practice nation wide, it's very relevant in working with diverse communities and multicultural backgrounds, especially in Darwin.*
- *Creating safe spaces is an important element for developing cultural capabilities.*
- *The awareness I have for cuc107 has broadened my knowledge in community safe practice and respecting other cultures and accepting the people involved in it*
- *Having a respect to your classmates helps me to become friends with other people and it help me express myself even beyond school works*

## **External Lecturers were invited to briefly reflect and respond to :**

- Can you describe the techniques that you currently implement or have implemented previously to support the resilience of first year undergraduate students to successfully complete CUC107 (and/or external first year study)?

## Key Points on experiences of supporting resilience in CUC107 - external lecturer (Summary):

- Identification of 'at risk' students
- Referral (ALLSP, Library, Counselling)
- Extra targeted sessions, extra support materials
- Support and responsiveness to (external) students
- Fostering student-student communication
- Relationship building
  - Availability
  - Accessibility
  - Regular contact (including standardised e.g. weekly email)
  - Empathy (perspective)
  - Prompt response
  - Feedback
  - Communication approach

## Key Points on experiences of supporting resilience in CUC107 - external lecturer (Summary):

*Resilience is not avoiding problems or disappointments, but learning to grow or move on from them; (specific acknowledgement of resilience?)*

*External Lecturers accessibility is invaluable to contributing to resilience;*

*People don't learn from strangers. They learn from people they respect.*

*External Students need to come to common unit with sufficient amount of inbuilt resilience as there isn't much lecturers can do, but if they do arrive with enough...*

# Summary of research

- Research process is ongoing
- Various cohorts need various approaches
- Resilience as a concept provides a backdrop to talk about supporting students.

**So where do we go from here?**



- [completecoach.pro](https://www.completecoach.pro)

# How resilient are you?

**Rate yourself from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree):**

1. I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.
2. Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.
3. I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.
4. I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm curious. I ask questions.
5. I'm playful. I find the humour in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.
6. I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
7. I'm good at solving problems. I'm good at making things work well.
8. I'm strong and durable. I hold up well during tough times.
9. I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

**Less than 20: Low Resilience** — You may have trouble handling pressure or setbacks, and may feel deeply hurt by any criticism. When things don't go well, you may feel helpless and without hope. Consider seeking some professional counsel or support in developing your resiliency skills. Connect with others who share your developmental goals.

**20–30: Some Resilience** — You have some valuable pro-resiliency skills, but also plenty of room for improvement. Strive to strengthen the characteristics you already have and to cultivate the characteristics you lack. You may also wish to seek some outside coaching or support

**30–35: Adequate Resilience** — You are a self-motivated learner who recovers well from most challenges. Learning more about resilience, and consciously building your resiliency skills, will empower you to find more joy in life, even in the face of adversity.

**35–45: Highly Resilient** — You bounce back well from life's setbacks and can thrive even under pressure. You could be of service to others who are trying to cope better with adversity.

# Case Studies

[http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/publications/files/091124-36595\\_Book\\_of\\_Resilience\\_LoRes.pdf](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/publications/files/091124-36595_Book_of_Resilience_LoRes.pdf)

## The Leeds Met Book of Resilience

By Lucia Poole and Ruth Lefever, with Jacqueline Stevenson, Sean Durrane and Amanda Wilson





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