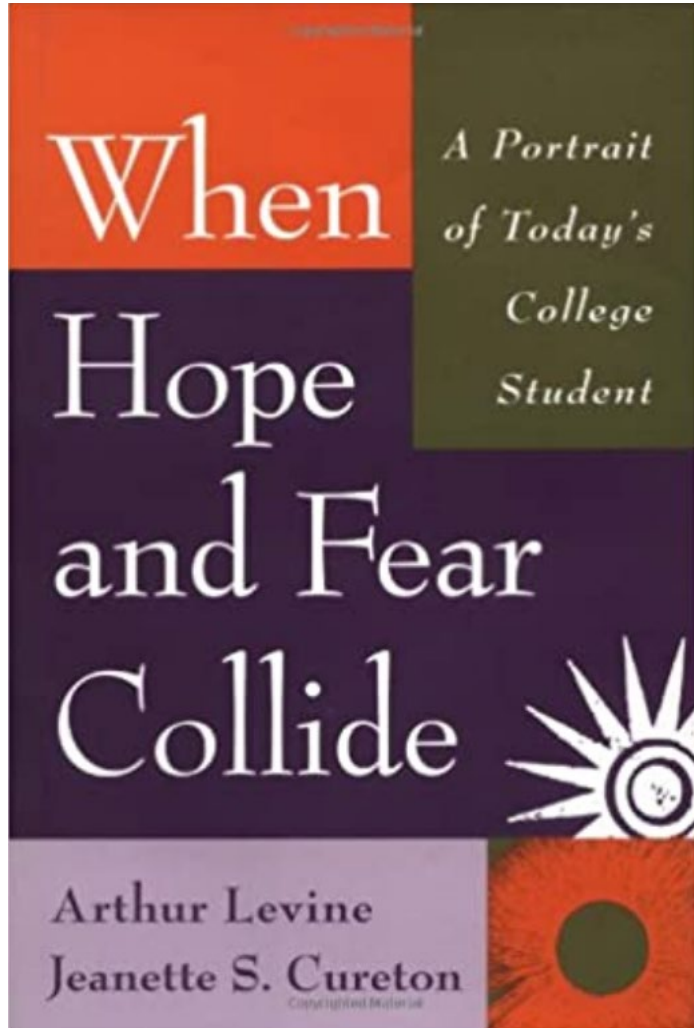# Student resilience in challenging times: When hope and fear collide

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Professional development series
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Context: 1998

When Hope and Fear Collide examines a generation motivated by a conflicting sense of hope and fear. While today's students fear a great many things both on a global level and on a local level, they are less pessimistic than the previous generation, as they look for ways to make a difference in their world.

Source: Amazon
***When Hope and Fear Collide: A Portrait of Today's College Student* (1998)**

Would the same be true two decades later in 2020?
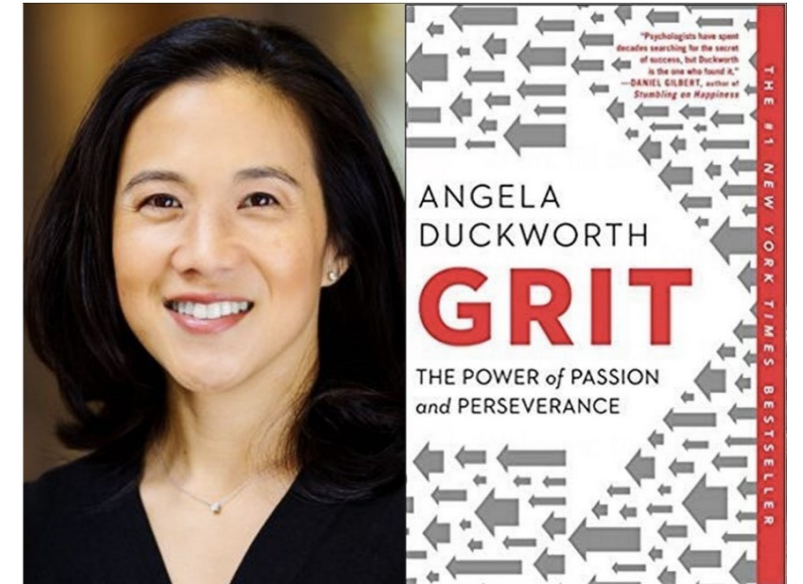
Resilience and Grit

Resilience

- A positive, evolving, 'able to move forward' response to adversity
- you are able to move forward without crumbling.

(*Dr Fred Luskin,*
Director, Stanford University Forgiveness Projects)

Grit Passion and perseverance for long-term goals

- Firmness of mind and spirit
- Unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger

(*Professor Angela Duckworth*)

Reflection Questions: What role do you play?

1. What role do you think academic skills development plays in building student resilience and 'grit', particularly in a post COVID learning environment?

Towards a health promoting university

Enhancing the student experience and academic outcomes

Professor Lena Sanci and colleagues (2020)
Available online:
https://about.unimelb.edu.au/newsroom/news/2020/october/
shining-a-spotlight-on-student-health-and-wellbeing

Department of General Practice, Melbourne Medical School;
Melbourne School of Population and Global Health:
Global and Cultural Mental Health Unit
Centre of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Survey responses

emails sent = 56,375

commenced survey = 14,880

(complete data = 12, 416)

>> overall response rate = **26%**
85% consent to link with academic records

Health and wellbeing survey aims

To compare **LOCAL** and **INTERNATIONAL** students on:

Health & wellbeing

Healthcare awareness & access

Academic performance

Social determinants of health academic performance

Survey: main findings

- High prevalence of depression and anxiety symptoms, and eating disorder symptoms

- Other academic and social determinants as potential sources of stress and poor health:
  - social support   - living arrangements
  - financial concerns   - violence and abuse
  - social media use   - discrimination
  - low awareness of services   - academic pressures.

  International students are more socially isolated

- Some issues are more prevalent amongst local students than international:
  - mental disorder symptoms,
  - academic coping difficulties,
  - financial concerns,
  - alcohol, substance use,
  - risk for STI

Survey: main findings (continued)

- Poor mental health strongly associated with poorer academic outcomes

- International students are less likely to be aware of and accessing health services

- Most students see GPs for health concerns

- Most students go online for health and wellbeing information
  - International students (30%) also go to home country online services

Selected Recommendations

1. **Develop an institution-wide mental health strategy and implementation plan** using an evidence-based approach

2. **Develop an integrated mental health care system for students**

3. **Ensure programs and services are aligned with the student wellbeing and mental health strategy and system**

4. **Implement ongoing monitoring of student health and wellbeing indicators** – incorporate with routine student survey (e.g. student experience)

5. **Provide training for University teaching staff** to respond to mental health and wellbeing issues

6. **International students** - improve access to and uptake of health and wellbeing services

Reflection Questions: What role do you play?

1. What role do you think academic skills development plays in building student resilience and 'grit', particularly in a post COVID learning environment?

2. Bearing in mind the key findings of the 'Towards a health promoting university' report, what role do <u>you</u> play, as an academic language and learning professional, in enhancing student wellbeing and mental health at your institution?

3. One recommendation of the 'Towards a health promoting university' report is: ***Ensure programs and services are aligned with the mental health strategy and system.***

In what ways are your academic language and learning programs aligned with your institution's student wellbeing and mental health strategy?

4. What is **one action you will take** as a result of today's discussion about student resilience and the role of academic language and learning programs?

References

Duckworth, A. (2017). *Grit: Why passion and resilience and the secrets to success*. London: Penguin.

Levine, A., & Cureton, J. (1998). *When hope and fear collide: A portrait of today's college student*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Luskin, F. Director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Projects. Visit: https://learningtoforgive.com/about/

Sanci, L and colleagues (2020). *Towards a health promoting university.* Available online: https://about.unimelb.edu.au/newsroom/news/2020/october/shining-a-spotlight-on-student-health-and-wellbeing