Fostering Resilience among International Journalism Students

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Abstract

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Articles

Academic performance of first-year university students: the influence of resilience and engagement

Juan Carlos Ayala ✉ iD & Guadalupe Manzano

Cite this article   https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2018.1502258   Check for updates

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ABSTRACT

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Engagement and academic performance

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This study, using a time-lagged design, investigated whether or not a relationship between the dimensions of resilience and engagement, and the academic performance of first-year university students, existed. Moreover, we investigated whether or not the dimensions of resilience and engagement were different in students who dropped out of their university studies during their first year as compared to those who remained in university. For the total sample ($N = 748$), the results showed that two dimensions of resilience (hardiness and resourcefulness) and two of engagement (dedication and absorption) helped predict the academic performance of students. Nevertheless, the importance of each one of these variables differed according to gender. Absorption predicted academic performance in males but not in females. Results showed that those students who remained in university after their first year had more vigor, more hardiness and more resourcefulness than those who had dropped out of their university studies. These results suggested that resilience and engagement had to be taken into consideration at the time of university admission if there was an aim to improve the results of the academic performance.

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Journalism under pressure worldwide
Gwyneth Ho (*please follow her case*)

Fostering Resilience among Mundus Journalism Students

- **Purpose:** Amsterdam pilot as evidence base for consortium-wide resilience initiative

- **Resilience**: "*the ability to adapt to setbacks, manage stress, and persist in the face of challenges*"

- **Problem**: Mundus students face stress when transitioning from Aarhus (structured, cohort-based) to Amsterdam (more independent, research-driven) and during their studies

- **Goal**: Strengthen students' capacity to adapt, manage stress, and thrive academically and personally

"It's not that we're not resilient. It's just that we already used up a lot of that resilience getting here — moving countries, sorting visas, all of it. There's not always much left in the tank when something goes wrong."

Fostering Resilience among Mundus Journalism Students

- **Approach**: Program-level innovation, grounded in *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT) *& Growth Mindset Theory* (=resilience shaped by environment, learnable skill, not fixed trait)

- **Process**: 10 stakeholder interviews (students, alumni, teachers, study advisors, administrators, consortium staff); co-creation of interventions

- **Outlook:** Pilot in Amsterdam track; Ambition: sharing/scaling to Mundus Consortium level ("*Resilience Task Force*") with local fit across consortium; creating **Resilience Toolbox** (pick & choose)

"They expect their solution to be implemented and when it's not, they get frustrated. The moment something doesn't go as expected, it can become a very emotional moment — not just disappointment, but sometimes real outrage or despair."

"Failure is an opportunity to grow"

GROWTH MINDSET

"I can learn to do anything I want"

"Challenges help me to grow"

"My effort and attitude determine my abilities"

"Feedback is constructive"

"I am inspired by the success of others"

"I like to try new things"

"Failure is the limit of my abilities"

FIXED MINDSET

"I'm either good at it or I'm not"

"My abilities are unchanging"

"I don't like to be challenged"

"I can either do it, or I can't"

"My potential is predetermined"

"When I'm frustrated, I give up"

"Feedback and criticism are personal

"I stick to what I know"

# The problem we're solving: systemic, not individual

- **Transition shock First year→Specialism**: norms, grading, and '*what next?*' feel opaque upon arrival

- **Self-Determination-Theory needs under pressure**: *competence*, *autonomy*, and *relatedness* are strained at key moments

- **Support perception gap**: services exist but feel hard to navigate under stress; guidance needs repetition; some students more likely to seek help than others

- **Professional anxiety**: job precarity, visas, and housing amplify pressure during Year 2

"You go from a very structured environment where everything is planned for you to suddenly having to make all your own choices—courses, thesis, everything. It's exciting, but also overwhelming."

The problem we're solving: systemic, not individual

- **Peer networks are double-edged**: strong support, but can also become negative echo chambers under stress

- **Resilience partly 'used up' before arrival at specialism university** due to visa, housing, and financial stress

- **Students want clear, repeated expectation-setting** and visible, low-threshold routes to help

- **Staff are willing; but workload is an issue**—solutions must be light-touch and embedded
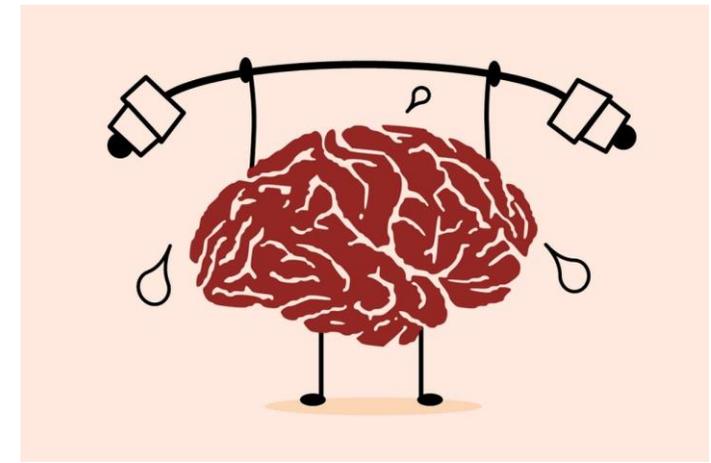
"Sometimes it's just so helpful to hear that others are also overwhelmed—it makes you feel less alone, and like it's not just you who's behind or struggling."

Seven light, embedded measures

- **Structured Orientation & Expectation Management**: normalize differences and struggle
- **Peer Reflection Check-ins** (in group setting): facilitated sharing + reset expectations
- **Informal mentoring pilots**: small groups with alumni / cross-year peers
- **'Resilience Talks' + "*Fail Nights*"**: candid stories (live/podcast)
- **Micro-workshops (opt-in)**: stress regulation, intercultural adaptation, time planning
- **Teacher micro-support sessions** (professional development): three lunch sessions/year to share best practices and prompts
- **Constructive-alignment tweaks**: e.g. reflective logs, one formative resubmission, rubric criteria for process/effort

>> *Targeting*: early interventions, ongoing support, specific skills, teacher support

# Proposal: a Consortium
"*Resilience Toolbox*"

- **Why a *toolbox* (not a template):** respect differences across specialisms, same stress points → provide options, not prescriptions

- **Initial contents of the Toolbox:** (1) Orientation kit; (2) Peer-reflection playbook; (3) Alumni engagement tools; (4) Micro-workshop bundle; (5) Teacher professional development kit; (6) Assessment alignment options

- **Local fit:** Toolbox as a living document, each site picks what makes sense; Resilience Task Force curates and updates the menu

- ***Next steps:*** Develop toolbox, pilots, shared evaluation framework, tackle open questions (e.g., honorarium for alumni), present plan in spring

Discussion points

What is the problem?
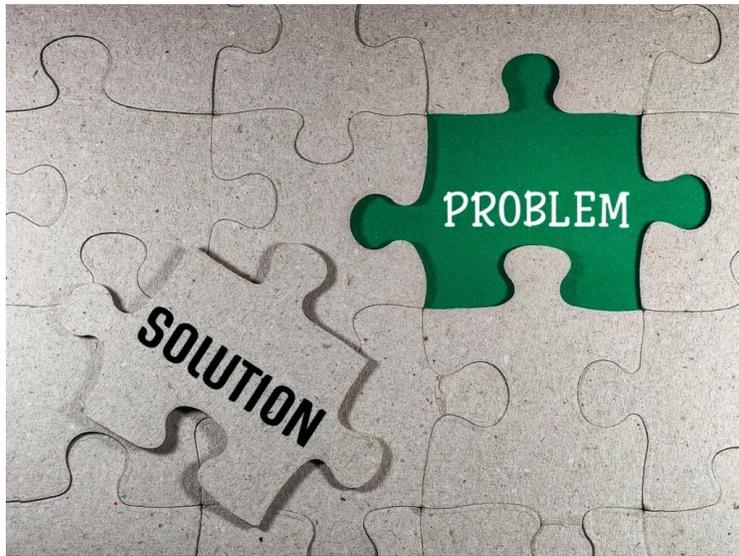
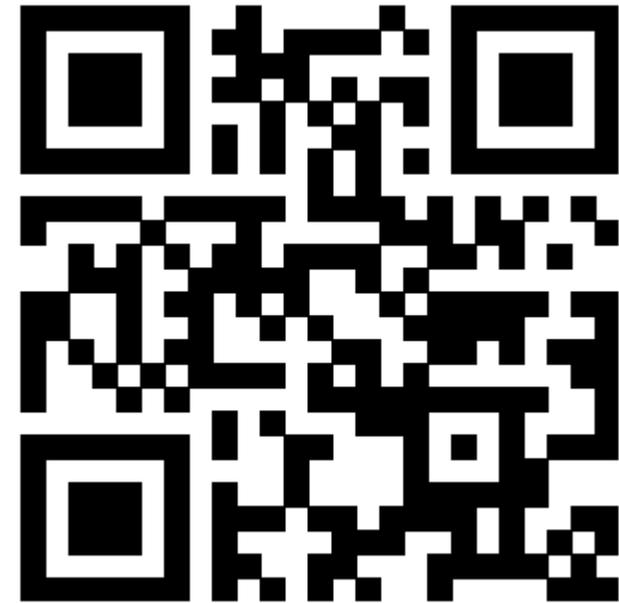## What is your experience?

What to do?