Resilience in Higher Education: A Conversation with The Resilience Consortium

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Founding Members:
Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Harvard University, Princeton University, Stanford University, University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania
• What are the habits, attitudes, and skills associated with resilience in the college/university setting?
• To what extent can resilience be learned in young adulthood?
• What pedagogies and learning contexts influence student conceptions of success, failure, and risk, and promote or inhibit the development of resilience?
• What is the long term impact for young people in their academic and professional endeavors, when they are provided with opportunities to develop their capacities for resilience during their college/university years?
The Bureau of Study Counsel
Harvard University

AAC&U Conference
January 2016
Washington, DC
The BSC supports students in their learning and development.

- Academic Counseling
- Peer Tutoring
- ESL Peer Consultation
- The Reading Course
  - Workshops
  - Consultations
- Cranium Corner and Online Resources
- BWISE Student Fellows
- The Success-Failure Project
The Success/Failure Project

Promoting opportunities for discussion, reflection, and creative engagement regarding issues of success, failure, and resilience.

- Who defines what constitutes success and failure in my life?
- What am I working for? Who am I working for?
- What makes me feel fulfilled and what do I define as a success?
- Where do my beliefs about success and failure come from?
- What does it mean to be responsible for, to learn from, or just to suffer, both my successes and my failures?
- What factors and feelings play a role in success and failure? What about ambition, creativity, perfectionism, luck, joy, obligation, competition, integrity, fear, talent, and collaboration?
- What does it mean to be a good, successful, even excellent student and human being?
The Success/Failure Project

Events and Workshops

• Your GPA: Myths, Risks and Choices
  (faculty and advisor panel for first-year students)

• Desserts and Dialogue
  (faculty-student discussions of success and failure)

• Success, Failure, and Resilience: Voices of Experience
  (display in the University Library)

• Success, Failure, and Resilience in … the Arts
  … Athletics
  … Graduate School
  (faculty and alumni panels)

• Handouts and online materials
  • How to Have a Really Successful Failure – A. Lipson
  • On Helplessness, Contempt, and Forgiveness – K. Morimoto
  • Perfection vs. Excellence – S. Renna
  • The Fringe Benefits of Failure – J.K. Rowling 2008 Commencement Address
The Success/Failure Project

Reflections on Rejections
The Success/Failure Project

The Alumni Interview Project
Beyond the Success Paradigm

The Success/Failure Project
The Language of Life and Learning

Helping students capture and convey their experiences of life and learning

“This exercise turned small talk into real talk.”
(college student)

“We got to know each other better and moved forward from the exercise as more like fellow human beings in a shared experience, rather than strangers.”
(academic advisor)

“A wonderful way for students to share about themselves in a creative and structured format.”
(department chairperson)
Learning Strategy Programs
academicskills.stanford.edu

- Academic Skills Coaching
- The Duck Stops Here (weekly blog)
- Academic Skills Inventory
- **The Stanford Resilience Project**
Video Library

- interview
- thematic
- creative
Events & Programs

- Dorm panels
- Career development topics
- Returning from overseas
- Resilience in the arts
- Making Major Decisions

STANFORD, I SCREWED UP!
Russell Dinkins '13

"The end result, earning an Ivy League degree, says nothing about the journey that was taken to get there. To someone else who may not know the back story, my degree, my track and field success, and my involvement in artistic groups and volunteer groups may appear to be the results of effortless perfection. Such could not be further from the truth."

Read more...
Mission:

The Princeton Perspective Project (PPP) aims to empower Princeton students to:

• Alleviate the burden of unrealistic expectations (e.g. “effortless perfection”)
• Constructively navigate setbacks, disappointment, doubt, and loneliness
• Actively seek and embrace the risk of failure that accompanies meaningful challenges
• Build resilience and develop adaptive coping responses to stress
• Mitigate concerns and anxieties inherent in the academic, social, and personal lives of today’s college students
What Makes PPP Distinctive?

• Focus on “effortless perfection”
• Multi-unit partnership: ODOC, ODUS, CTL, USG
• Student Advisory Board
• Cross-campus collaborations/programming
Key Events:

1. Initial Launch: Photo-Campaign
2. Behind this Smile
3. Beyond the Bubble
4. “Everyone you meet is fighting a battle. Be kind always.” conversation series
5. Social Media & the Pressure of Perfection panel
6. Develop resilience curriculum to accompany video/website content
7. Entrepreneurship & resilience
1. Initial Launch: Photo-Campaign

- Fall 2014
- Marked the launch of PPP
- Students changed Facebook profile pictures to publicize the launch
- Goal: to encourage online story submissions in the form of written and video testimonials
2. Behind this Smile

April 18, 2015

- Keynote speaker
- Performances by University student groups
- Open mic storytelling
- Goal: to encourage students to talk about what is behind those smiles and eventually break down these barriers so that we can have a community-wide conversation about the obstacles we all face on and off campus.
3. Beyond the Bubble

• May 28-28, 2015
• Partnered with the Office of Career Services to solicit stories to “burst the Princeton bubble”
• Goal: Add alumni perspectives
4. Battle for a Burrito

Fall 2015/Spring 2016

• “Everyone you meet is fighting a battle. Be kind always.”
  – Partnered with Residential Colleges & Sustained Dialogue’s Ask Big Questions fellows.

• Goal: Encourage open dialogue about failure among undergraduates.
A Learning Instructor can assist you with:

- Time Management
- Exam Preparation
- Exam Taking Strategies
- Note-Taking in Class
- Critical Reading
- Research Skills
- Academic Writing
- Concentration
- Adjusting to the Academic Culture
Increased outreach: social and print media
**Impetus**
- The Resilience Consortium
- The Penn Students
- The Campus Culture

**Theme**
- The Penn Face
- Learning from setback, open conversations & use of campus resources

**Design**
- The Approach
- The Audience
“This is not just visual media; it’s a voice.”

“It’s students realizing they play a role.”
• How are issues of student resilience relevant to your own campus?
• What struck you as most interesting or thought-provoking in the presentations of resilience initiatives on other campuses?
• What programs or activities can you imagine initiating on your own campus?
  • What do you see as impediments?
  • Where might you find partners or resources?