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Hope Ballentine

Diana Dunbar

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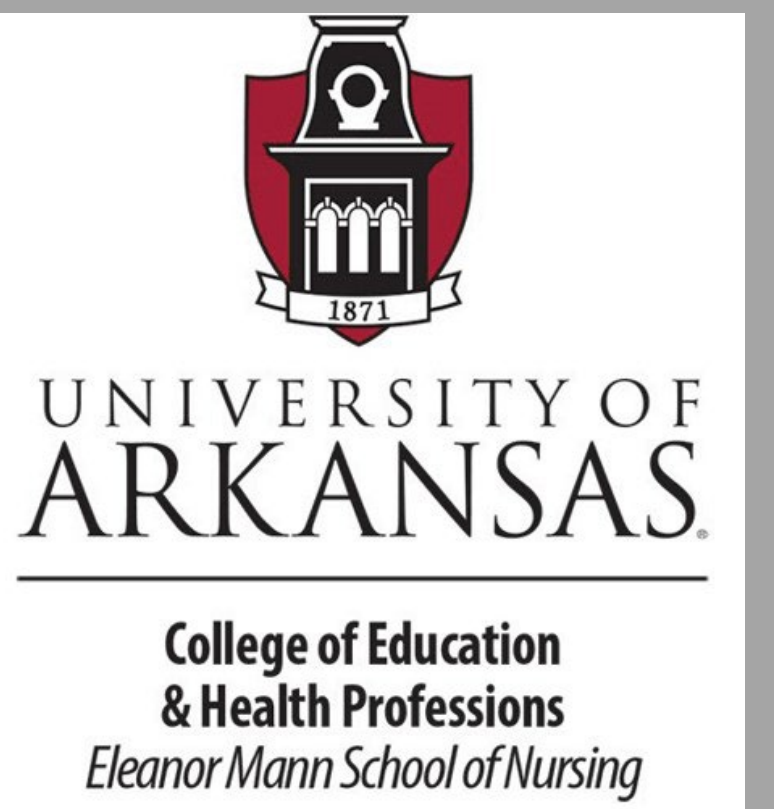
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Fostering GRIT in the University Student

Hope Ballentine, DNP, MSN, CNM, RN, CNE and Diana Dunbar, MSN, RN, APRN, FNP-C

Eleanor Mann School of Nursing, University of Arkansas



Introduction

- In the preeminent work on grit, Duckworth et al. (2007) first defined grit as “perseverance and passion for long term-goals.”
- Evidence is overwhelming that grit is a predictor of success in various arenas of life, often when no other valid predictors can be identified.
- Grit was the only statistically significant predictor of both academic and clinical success in an Australian study of over 2000 Nursing students (Terry & Peck, 2020).
- Both job satisfaction and performance are improved with increased grit (Cho & Kim, 2022).
- Clear evidence that a link exists between burnout and decreased levels of resilience clarifies the need for wellbeing promotion that include strategies for increasing resilience (Armstrong et al., 2022)

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to identify practical, evidence-based strategies that promote GRIT development in university students.

Methods

- Utilizing GRIT as an acronym for the concepts of Growth, Resilience, Inspiration, and Tenacity (Seegmiller Renner et. al., 2022) as a framework, we developed attitude goals for students to foster GRIT both to further understand and define the components of grit and to discuss strategies for increasing grit.
- After understanding the concepts through synthesis of the literature, we developed multiple strategies for curricular development for each concept that can be incorporated into classroom settings and program development.

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Growth

Attitude Goal

"I can do things scared"



Course interventions

- Incorporate activities (i.e., case studies) on growth vs. fixed mindset with application to both the academic and practical settings
- Include content about how to use failure as an opportunity for growth
- Give students permission to eliminate the perfectionism mindset (i.e. modeling this behavior)

Program interventions

- Create opportunities for individual goal setting, career trajectory planning, resume building
- Encourage students to participate in things beyond academics (study abroad, athletics, band, etc.)
- Develop activities (i.e. panel discussions) about ways to increase emotional intelligence

Student Reflection: "Being placed in an unknown situation made me realize I am capable of more than I give myself credit. I grew because I forced myself to dive into something I feared and I became someone I'm proud of. I now know with my newfound perspective of the world I can rely on myself to succeed." –Cole McBride, senior Nursing student

Resilience

Attitude Goal

"I can try again"



Course interventions

- Incorporate content about overcoming social disadvantages and micro-aggressions
- Create opportunities for students to fail at something that is low stakes to promote trying again without fear of grade compromise
- Build self-reflection opportunities into each course and encourage self-reflection as a practice that promotes learning

Program interventions

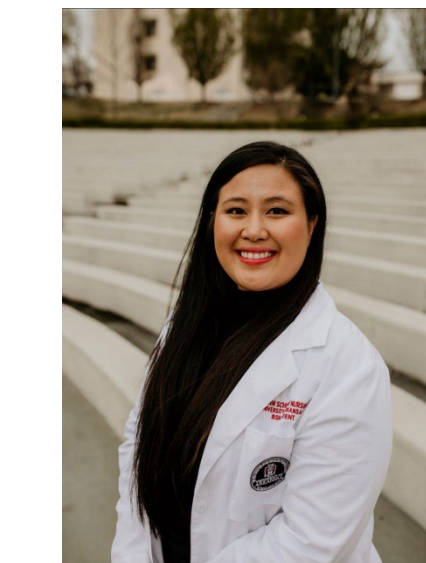
- Let students take the lead on DEI initiatives
- Encourage and orient students to self-care practices as this positively correlates with resilience
- Offer self care practices within program (weekly yoga, meditation spaces, decompression centers, animal-assisted therapy)

Student Reflection: "Despite the characteristics of my environment and the highly competitive nature of acceptance into nursing school, I realized that nursing is my dream and one worth fighting for. I used to only dream of wearing the infamous red scrubs and everyday feels like such a privilege to be the representation I always wanted." –Dana Allen, junior Nursing student

Inspiration

Attitude Goal

"I can make a difference"



Course interventions

- Encourage students to find a professional who they aspire to be like
- Validate that students don't have to be passionate about every course or experience while encouraging them to find what they can to apply to their passions
- Find ways in incorporate art into your class: a song, play, book, painting, or sculpture can create renewed feelings and expand ideas.

Program interventions

- Encourage students to find a community, population, or group they are passionate about
- Expose students to modern-day leaders in their profession through hosted events (guest speakers, networking events, continuing education)
- Create group learning environments outside of the classroom for a low stakes high impact activity (book clubs)

Student Reflection: "Growing up as the child of Laotian refugees, I witnessed the impact of what systemic barriers and disparities can have for people and families like mine. The painful experiences that stemmed from these issues inspired me to pursue a career that would allow me to become a part of the solution... I am eager to foster an environment that holds space for those who are still learning to navigate the complexities of their identity." –Matha Phakhin, senior Nursing student

Tenacity

Attitude Goal

"I can persist when things get hard"



Course interventions

- Structure experiential and didactic programs that promote self-efficacy
- Expose students to people in their profession who have persisted in the face of struggle
- Create learning environments with problems and have students create solutions based off budget, infrastructure, and time limitations

Program interventions

- Encourage student-led mentorship and/or book clubs with older students and non-traditional students
- Include orientations on self-discipline including study habits, test taking strategies, and what to do when things get hard
- Develop interview skills and have mock interviews with program leadership where students practice answering challenging questions

Student Reflection: "Nursing encompass' relentless determination and persistence, inadvertently instilling hope that those who are cared for are strong, capable and will not fall victim to their circumstance. I have grown to hold this responsibility for myself, to honor and encourage adversity, with an attitude of relentless determination and persistence." –Ella Boston, senior Nursing student

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Conclusions

- To prepare students to enter, stay and flourish in the ever-changing workforce, educators must be aware of the need for grit development.
- Through interventions aimed at promoting growth, resilience, inspiration, and tenacity, faculty can help create a culture of grittiness in the next generation of professionals.
- Data is needed to further validate these strategies in university curricula and to create additional strategies to develop grit in university students.