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# The Efficacy of an Eight-Week Undergraduate Course in Resilience

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The Efficacy of an Eight-Week Undergraduate Course in Resilience

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Community Health Promotion

by

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to measure the efficacy of an 8-week undergraduate course in resilience. Finding useful strategies to understand how college students manage stress and adversity is important to college administrators. The main topics that were assessed were resilience, well-being, and assertiveness. Participants for this study included undergraduate students enrolled either in a 8-week course on Resilience or a Public Health course. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being, and the Simple Rathus Assertiveness Scale were used to determine the efficacy of the 8-week course. Overall, there was not a significant difference in resilience and well-being, but there was a significant difference for the topic of assertiveness. There was a significant difference among genders, with males reporting higher means in resilience and assertiveness than females at the end of the course. There was also a significant difference between students who are affiliated with a Greek organization with being a member of a Greek organization resulting in lower means for resilience, well-being, and assertiveness. In qualitative analyses performed after completion of the course it was found that the class was helpful in teaching students breathing and other techniques to help them manage their stress. This study provided insight into some methods that can be implemented with college students to help them learn to deal with the stresses and adversities that they will face in their lives. The hope of this research is that it will serve as a guide to college health educators and administrators that resilience programming and education is a vital necessity that will lead to healthier and happier students who graduate.

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my amazing wife and kids. Kris, I would not have been able to finish without your constant kind words of encouragement and pushing me to never give up. Kora and Abraham, I know that you do not currently realize the magnitude of completing a doctoral degree but you may one day. I want you to be able to look back on this dissertation with pride knowing that your other mother has gone before you and understands your struggle. I will always be there for you, there is nothing in this world that you cannot accomplish if you set your mind to it, and I will forever be your biggest fan! Follow your heart, always!

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

College is often viewed as a rite of passage that adolescents must pass through in order to become educated, independent adults. This shift from high school to college involves many transitions for students and they experience many challenges that can affect both their physical and emotional health as well as their personal identity (Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007; Steinhardt & Dolbier, 2008). Steinhardt and Dolbier (2008) also stated that the stressors this population faces are on the rise and result from a variety of different areas in their lives such as intrapersonal (changes in sleeping and eating habits), academic (increased workload and class difficulty), interpersonal (changes in social activities), and environmental (computer problems). Most first-year undergraduates are living apart from their parents or guardians for the first time while most upper class undergraduates are facing continuing pressure for their academic performance as well as difficult career choices and job search issues (Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante & Flinders, 2008). Stress is a major issue for college students as they work to find a balance for the variety of pressures that they face. This has led to an increasing number of students reporting feeling overwhelmed on annual college health surveys (Deckro et al., 2002).

O'Leary and Ickovics (1995) asserts that if one lives long enough, something bad is bound to happen. This serves as a warning regarding the likelihood that all individuals will at some time be faced with challenges or stressors that may threaten their health or well-being. Newman and Blackburn (2002) stated that transitional periods in the lives of young people are times of threat, but also of opportunity for change. If these young people possess adequate coping skills and have the opportunity to learn and adapt through being exposed to adversity, then a successful transition is likely. However, if neither the coping skills nor an environment to promote them are present, periods of transition and adversity become points in the adolescent life

span where serious developmental damage may occur (Newman & Blackburn, 2002). An important developmental task for college students is learning to manage excessive unnecessary distress while actively engaging with healthy, age-appropriate challenges that promote growth (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). The research done by Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) also determined that people gain resilience not by avoiding these stressful times but by learning to cope with the stressors. One way for college students to manage their stress is to become involved. Student involvement refers to the amount of energy that the student devotes to the college experience, both academically and socially. A highly involved student is one who devotes much energy to their studies, spending much time on campus, participating actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty and staff members as well as other students (Astin, 1999).

Resilience has been defined in many different ways in the research. The common themes in the definition are that resilience is the ability to recover quickly from disruptions in functioning that result from stressful situations that individuals face in their lives allowing them to thrive in the face of adversity (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Newman & Blackburn, 2002; Steinhardt & Dolbier, 2008). The experience of adversity, be it serious stress or trauma, physical or psychological, can sometimes provide long-term benefits to the individual who experiences it (Carver, 1998). Following an adverse event, many individuals find it hard to concentrate. They may feel anxious, confused and depressed, and they may not eat or sleep properly (Bonanno, 2005). The construct of resilience has been identified as a protective factor that may help to decrease adjustment problems for college students and increase positive change when coping with stressful situations (Dolbier, Jaggars, & Steinhardt, 2010). More than just survive, it is the goal of university professionals, faculty and staff, to help students thrive. This concept of

thriving represents a type of growth, in knowledge, skill, confidence, and greater elaboration and differentiation in one's ability to deal with the world at large (Carver, 1998).

Resilience comes from the field of positive psychology, which is about a positive subjective experience in life: well-being and satisfaction with the past, flow, joy, and happiness in the present, and constructive cognitions about the future such as optimism, hope, and faith (Seligman, 2002). He goes on to explain that positive psychology, at the individual level, is the capacity for love, courage, interpersonal skill, perseverance, forgiveness, future-mindedness, and wisdom. At the group level it is about civic virtues and the institutions, such as university, that move individuals toward better citizenship through responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Srivastava and Sinha (2005) state that positive psychology is nothing more than the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues. They further state the positive psychology looks at the "average person" with an interest in finding out what works, what is right and what is improving.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Carver (1998) stated that if we can understand why some individuals thrive, and we are able to teach those skills to others that the benefits can be enormous. University professionals, faculty, health educators, counselors, and administrators can all benefit from an increased attention on the positive aspects of individuals and what helps them process and cope with hard times (Sheldon & King, 2001). If educators are able to gain a better understanding of the processes that work to promote resilience in youth, they will also be in a better position to understand and support student strengths and coping (Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007). The growing focus on well-being and health promotion, shifting away from being pathology and

problem-focused, provides an opportunity to explore the role of resilience in individual health (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

Psychoeducational resilience interventions have been designed to enhance personal and social resources with the goals of facilitating individual resilience and when possible, a state of thriving where the individual is able to develop a level of functioning that is greater than before experiencing the adverse event (Steinhardt, 2008). The construct of resilience has been identified as a protective factor that may decrease adjustment problems and increase positive change when coping with stressful situations (Paton, Violanti, & Smith, 2003). Expanding upon that, the construct of thriving is aligned with the idea that adversity can eventually lead to benefits for the individual affected, and such growth is an indicator that thriving has occurred (Carver, 1998). Interventions that lead to an increase in an individual's subjective well-being, or life satisfaction and happiness, are important because it feels good to be happy but also happy individuals are also shown to volunteer more, have greater work satisfaction, and exhibit other desirable characteristics (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2009).

Compared to earlier generations, children and adolescents appear to have become less able to cope with and overcome stressors and obstacles, possibly as a result of their being sheltered from challenging opportunities (Newman & Blackburn, 2002). The promotion of resilience is an important strategy in attempting to reverse this trend, through placing less emphasis on risk factors, and more on factors that promote well-being. The recognition that adverse situations can be overcome plays a crucial role in developing an approach to life that is active rather than passive, and optimistic rather than pessimistic (Newman & Blackburn, 2002). Building skills for life in general, such as the development of generic social skills and problem-

solving skills, can be just as important as building skills for avoiding risks (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this study will be to determine whether a significant difference exists between pre-test and post-test resilience scores among individuals who are enrolled in an 8-week course on resilience, thriving, and wellness.

### **Course Overview**

The Resilience, Thriving and Wellness course is based upon positive psychology. This area of psychology focuses on the study of human strength and virtue with the aim of understanding and facilitating positive developmental outcomes (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The course is based off the resilience framework that has been shown to be a powerful tool for realizing the goals of positive psychology because it justifies prior calls for wellness enhancement and competence promotion (Cowen, 1991). The course is also aligned with the belief that resilience develops through the positive use of stress to improve competence and that a key component in that development is the ability to see adversity in a new way, and recognize that one is not a powerless actor in a drama written by others (Newman & Blackburn, 2002).

The facilitators of the 8-week public health class on Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness collaborated to determine the three main areas that the class is to focus on: mindfulness, yoga, and assertiveness. A collaborative curriculum was created that would allow for each facilitator to present the same information to their own classes. The classes are intentionally kept small, allowing a maximum of 19 students per section, to allow for the class to maintain an interactive and experiential nature.

**Hypotheses**

H<sub>1</sub>: Students will report significantly higher levels of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness at the end of the 8-week class in comparison to the level of resilience at the start of the class.

H<sub>2</sub>: Students enrolled in the Resilience, Thriving and Wellness class will report significantly higher levels of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness at the end of the class than students in a control group.

H<sub>3</sub>: There will not be a significant difference between men and women in the class from pre-test to post-test. This will indicate that each student enrolled in the class, regardless of their gender, will have higher scores of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness after completion of the class.

H<sub>4</sub>: There will not be a significant difference between individuals in the class who are Greek versus non-Greek affiliated. This will indicate that each student enrolled in the class, regardless of their Greek affiliation, will have higher scores of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness after completion of the class.

## Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Happiness is the goal of human existence and while the definition of said happiness may vary from culture to culture people often rank the pursuit of happiness as one of their most sought after goals in life (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). The field of psychology tends to gravitate towards problems and works to solve them (Fredrickson, 1998). Clinical psychology has focused the majority of its attention on diagnosis and treatment of pathology, looking at negative emotions such as depression and anxiety more than positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction (Myers & Diener, 1995). The field of positive psychology is an attempt to advise psychologists to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives, and capacities (Sheldon & King, 2001). The goal of positive psychology is to develop a deeper understanding and ways to foster the factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to be resilient and flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This comes out of a desire of some researchers to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life (Seligman, 2002). This study of positive psychology encourages a shift in emphasis from a preoccupation with the inevitability of disease and deficit to the strength and virtue in human development (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, Srivastava & Sinha, 2005). O'Leary and Ickovics state that resilience did not begin to receive attention until the 1970s, when researchers began to shift their focus away from the debilitating effects of risk toward the positive outcomes such as adaptation, protection, and competence.

Resilience is the process of overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with the risk (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Resilience is characterized by good outcomes in

spite of serious threats to adaptation or development (Masten, 2001). If an individual's ability to adapt is in good working order, their development is healthy even in the face of adversity. If the basic adaptation systems are impaired, the risk for developmental problems is greater, especially if the period of adversity is prolonged (Masten, 2001). Rutter (1987) conceptualized resilience as a protective process that promotes successful adaptation in response to psychological or environmental stressors. He suggested that resilience has four functions: to reduce risk impact, to reduce negative chain reactions, to establish/maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy, and to enhance opportunities for growth (Rutter, 1987). Individuals are not considered resilient if there has never been a significant threat to their development; there must be current or past hardships judged to have the potential to disrupt normal development (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

Resilience does not come from rare or special qualities only possessed by certain individuals, but rather from the normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). It is not the hard times that an individual faces that determine success or failure, but rather the way the individual responds to those hard times (Jackson & Watkin, 2004).

In college, an individual's ability to recognize adversity and come up with adequate and flexible solutions to an ever-changing environment has been shown to lead to an increase in resilience and reported feelings of happiness across the different domains of life (Denny & Steiner, 2009). One group where this is particularly important is first generation college students. Pascarella, Pierson, Wolinak, and Terenzini (2004) stated that first generation college students tend to be at a disadvantage with respect to basic knowledge about postsecondary education, level of family income and support, educational degree expectations and plans, and academic preparation in high school. They go on to state that these students also experience a

more difficult transition from secondary schools to college than their peers. Individuals with highly educated parents may have an advantage over first generation students in understanding the culture of higher education and its role in personal development (Pascarella et al., 2004).

Yates and Masten (2004) define adversity as negative experiences that have the potential to disrupt adaptive functioning or development. Adverse experiences may temporarily overwhelm all the adaptive resources of an individual. Adversity may be acute, as in a natural disaster, or chronic, as in child abuse/neglect, and it might also arise within the environment, as in inter-parental conflict, or within the person, as in a brain tumor, but on some level it has the potential to disrupt development and thwart positive adaptation. O'Leary and Ickovicks (1995) found that when an individual experiences adversity, either physical or psychological in nature, there are four potential outcomes. The first is the individual succumbs to the adversity and continues on a downward spiral as a result of the event. The second possible outcome is a lesser form of succumbing where the individual survives but is partially diminished or impaired, physically or psychologically. The third possible outcome consists of the individual returning to their pre-adversity level of functioning. This return can happen either quickly or be more gradual. The fourth possibility is that the individual not only returns to their pre-adversity level of functioning but also surpasses it in some way, thus thriving despite the circumstances. Resilience is often reserved as a return to the pre-adversity level of functioning, where as the term thriving refers to being better off after experiencing adversity (Carver, 1998).

Thriving is defined as the effective mobilization of individual and social resources in response to risk or threat (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995). They went on to say that when individuals are confronted with challenges, they might succumb or they may respond in one of three ways, survive, recover, or thrive. Surviving implies that the individual continues to

function, although in an impaired fashion. Recovery indicates a return to baseline, the individual is able to return to previous levels of social and psychological functioning. Thriving represents the ability to go beyond the original level of psychosocial functioning, to grow vigorously, and to flourish. Through the interactive process of confronting and coping with a challenge, a transformation occurs and the individual does not merely return to a previous state, but rather grows beyond it, and in that process adds value to life (O'Leary & Ickivics, 1995).

### **Positive Emotions**

Positive emotions serve as indicators of individual flourishing but they also produce a sense of personal flourishing (Fredrickson, 2001). Positive emotions act as a reserve to be drawn upon by individuals later on when approached with future threats. They foster creative thinking, motivate individuals to engage in activities that enhance their personal skills, aid in recovery from negative emotions, and strengthen social bonds (Harker & Keltner, 2001). Research by Tugade and Fredrickson (2000) suggests that positive emotions may fuel psychological resilience finding that more resilient individuals reported higher levels of positive affect on a mood measure. Resilient individuals are said to bounce back, or recover, from stressful experiences quickly and efficiently relative to their less resilient peers (Carver, 1998).

Positive emotions increase the likelihood that individuals will feel good in the future by broadening an individual's attention and cognition thus encouraging them to discover new lines of thought or action (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Diener (2000) stated that among students, even those who are from societies that are not fully westernized, levels of happiness and life satisfaction were reported to be very important and that students thought about them often. Happy individuals tend to have rich and satisfying social relationships and spend little time alone relative to average people (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Individuals with greater

social support are less likely to be affected by stressful events and are more likely to maintain good physical and mental health (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995). However, unhappy individuals tend to have social relationships that are significantly worse than average (Diener & Selgiman, 2002). They also found that the very happiest of individuals are not immune to unpleasant emotions, and that while they feel happy most of the time, their ability to feel and process unpleasant emotions are functional. Also, the happiest people rarely feel euphoria or ecstasy, rather they feel medium to moderately strong pleasant emotions most of the time.

### **Broaden and Build Theory**

Many of the external pressures on our resilience can neither be controlled or reversed, however, Jackson and Watkin (2004) suggest that an individual's internal thinking process can both moderate the impact of adversity and provide a valuable resource in moving forward, focusing on the things that the individual can control rather than those they cannot. The key to resilience is the ability to recognize your own thoughts and feelings and use the flexibility of thinking to manage the emotions effectively and grow from the situation (Jackson & Watkin, 2004).

Positive emotions such as joy, interest, contentment, pride and love broaden an individual's momentary thought-action processes, widening the array of thoughts and actions that come to mind when that emotion is felt (Fredrickson, 2001). Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) stated that the effects of positive emotions should accumulate and compound. The broadened, or expanded, attention and cognition is triggered by earlier experiences of positive emotion, which should facilitate the ability to cope with adversity. This improved coping should in turn predict future experiences of positive emotion and as this cycle continues, individuals build their emotional well-being and psychological resilience. In contrast to the positive emotions, negative

emotions carry immediate adaptive benefits in situations that threaten survival (Fredrickson, 2001). These negative emotions also broaden the thought-action processes which has long-term benefits as it broadens and builds the personal resources that an individual has which acts as a reserve of emotion and resources that can be drawn upon in the future to manage threats that arise. The broadening hypothesis has been shown to demonstrate the strategies that individuals use to regulate their experiences and negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2001).

The broaden and build theory suggests that positive emotions, although sometimes fleeting, have long-lasting effects which allow for individual growth and social connection (Fredrickson, 2001). By building an individual's personal and social resources, positive emotions transform people and give them better lives, as they are more capable to cope with what the future holds. Positive emotions broaden attention, enabling flexibility and creative thinking, thus facilitating the ability to cope with stress and adversity (Aspinwall, 1998).

Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, and Freedman (2006) call this re-perceiving, a process where individuals are able to attend to the information they take in in a moment. This awareness allows the individual to gain more access to data, even data that may have been too uncomfortable or painful to previously examine. They continue by stating that through re-perceiving the individual is no longer controlled by anxiety or fear but can use them as information. Individuals can choose to attend to the emotion they are feeling, and choose to self-regulate in ways that foster greater well-being. Through intentionally bringing awareness and acceptance to the present moment, the individual is able to better use a wider, more adaptive range of coping skills (Shapiro et al., 2006).

## **Resilience**

During the normal course of their lives, most individuals face one or more traumatic events. Following these events, many people may find themselves feeling anxious, confused, and depressed (Bonanno, 1999; Deckro, et al., 2002). Some individuals have such a strong reaction to these events that they are unable to function normally for years afterward. Resilience is what allows an individual to tap into the personal qualities that they possess which enables them to thrive in the face of adversity (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Miller & Daniel, 2007). However, resilience is not a quality of an individual that is always present in every situation (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Instead, resilience involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that, with practice, that can be fostered in anyone (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Srivastava & Sinha, 2005).

Deckro et al (2002) found that college students who attended a 6-week course on relaxation response based skills and cognitive behavioral interventions demonstrated reductions in psychological distress, anxiety, and the perception of stress, compared to a control group. In research on trauma survivors among college students, Banyard and Cantor (2004) found that survivors who believe that they have control in what happens to them or control over how they respond to the trauma are more resilient than individuals who believe that their lives are controlled by powers beyond their control. Banyard and Cantor (2004) also concluded that individuals who believe that they can learn something positive or become stronger as a result of the trauma they endured, thus making some positive meaning out of their experiences, appear to be more resilient. It should also be noted that an individual may be resilient when dealing with one type of risk but may be unable to overcome other types of risks, thus an individual may not be resilient at all times and in all situations (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Earlier research

(Finkel & Jacobson, 1977) has demonstrated that younger adults were more likely to perceive experiencing benefits from undergoing trauma or adversity than older adults.

Another term for resilience is stress-related growth, as defined by Dolbier et al (2010), because it encompasses positive changes that result from adversity. Many individuals will have stints of anger, depression, and anxiety as well as possible physical symptoms about an event. Researchers (Calhoun and Tedeschi, 1998; Richardson, 2002) found, however, that negative changes due to a stressful event may also co-occur with positive changes. They state that in fact, the painful struggle of coming to terms with a negative experience could be in face the source of a positive benefit, and a place for personal growth to take place, some level of psychological discomfort must occur. Resilience is not a trait, nor is it a cause of individual's faring well in the face of adversity. Resilience is what occurs when adaptive systems that have been developed in the lives of individuals, within themselves, their personal relationships, and their environments, work effectively to maintain and restore competence in their development (Yates & Masten, 2004).

Factors contributing to resilience include having caring and supportive relationships outside the family, the capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out, a positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities, skills in communication and problem solving, and the capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses (Srivastava & Sinha, 2005). These are all factors that can be developed. Classical strengths like self-control, hope, forgiveness, and gratitude, are frequently attempted in preventing or remediating an individual's own sense of dissatisfaction (McCullough & Snyder, 2000; Seligman, 2002). However, most professionals do not frequently use them in educational or therapeutic interventions. The educational experience of identifying and exploring resilience allows students

to contemplate who they are and how their body, mind, and spirit function in relation to personal sources of strength (Richardson, 2002).

### **Well-Being**

Well-being should be defined not simply as the absence of psychopathology, but instead as an array of positive aspects of functioning that are promoted by the attainment of strong attachment relationships, the acquisition of age-appropriate cognitive, interpersonal, and coping skills, and exposure to environments that empower the person (Cowen, 1991). To be well psychologically means more than to be free of distress or other mental problems. It is to possess positive self-regard, mastery, autonomy, positive relationships with other people, a sense of purposefulness and meaning in life, and feelings of continued growth and development (Ryff, 1995). Researchers began to make the shift away from the term happiness in the 1990s, moving toward what they called subjective well-being which focused more on the individual as a whole and what factors were contributing to their feelings of happiness. The concept of well-being refers to optimal psychological functioning and experience (Ryan & Deci, 2001), which depends on a number of factors that can be part of the personality, the personal history of various positive and negative reinforcements, or even a genetic configuration (Srivastava & Sinha, 2005).

#### *Hedonism*

Hedonism, the view that well-being consists of pleasure and happiness, has a long history. Aristippis, a fourth century B.C. Greek philosopher taught that the goal of life is to experience the maximum amount of pleasure, and that happiness is the summation of one's hedonic moments (Ryan & Deci, 2001). They go on to note that hedonism, in terms of well-being, has been expressed from a narrow focus such as bodily pleasures to a wide focus such as appetites and self-interests. However, not everyone has viewed the hedonic way in a positive

light. Aristotle considered hedonic happiness to be a vulgar ideal that led humans to be slavish followers of desires (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hedonism is a broad concept that includes preferences and pleasures of the mind as well as the body (Kubovy, 1999). Researchers have evaluated the pleasure/pain continuum in human experience in many ways, but hedonism is best assessed utilizing subjective well-being (Diener & Lucas, 1999).

### *Subjective Well-Being*

Emmons (1986) stated that having goals, making progress toward goals, and freedom from conflict among one's goals were all predictors of subjective well-being. Individuals reporting high levels of subjective well-being reflected an abundance of positive thoughts and feelings about their own life, feeling primarily pleasant emotions as a result of their positive appraisal of ongoing circumstances and situations (Myers & Diener, 1995). Subjective well-being includes a global sense of satisfaction with life, fed by satisfactions with one's work, marriage, and other life domains (Myers & Diener, 1995).

Diener and Lucas (1999) stated that subjective well-being consists of the presence of three major components: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood. These factors taken together can often sum up an individual's happiness. Lyubomirsky and Ross (1999) found that individuals high in subjective well-being were more likely to view events and situations in a positive light, to be less responsive to negative feedback, and to more strongly criticize opportunities not available to them. Individuals high in subjective well-being demonstrate having attributes that are more self-enhancing and more enabling, which in turn could contribute to the relative stability of their happiness.

### *Eudaimonic Well-Being*

Well-being consists of more than just happiness. It also entails the actualization of human potentials in a view labeled eudaimonism. This view conveys the belief that well-being consists of fulfilling or realizing one's daimon or true self and true nature (Waterman, 1993). The daimon refers to those potentialities of each person, the realization of which represents the greatest fulfillment in living of which each individual is capable. Eudaimonic theories state that not all desires, outcomes that a person might value, lead to well-being when attained (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The eudaimonic conception of well-being calls upon individuals to live in accordance with their true self, or their daimon (Waterman, 1993). He also states that eudaimonia occurs when an individual's life activities are most enmeshed with their deeply held values and are holistically or fully engaged. In contrast to the hedonic view, eudaimonia suggests that the important issue concerning emotions is not necessarily feelings but rather the extent to which the person is fully functioning, stating that even under certain circumstances such as the death of a loved one, a person is still fully functioning and experiencing rather than avoiding the negative feelings of sadness (Ryan & Deci, 2001). They go on to state that eudaimonic theorists claim that emotional access and congruence are important key factors for well-being.

### **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness has its roots in Eastern contemplative traditions and is most often associated with the practice of mindfulness meditation (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). However, mindfulness is more than meditation. Brown and Ryan (2003) describe mindfulness as an inherent state of consciousness, which involves consciously attending to one's moment-to-moment experience. An often cited definition of mindfulness is "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in

the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p.4). He goes on to state that mindfulness includes three axioms: intention, attention or, and attitude.

When Western psychology attempted to extract the spirit of mindfulness practice from its original religious/cultural roots, the aspect of intention was lost, to some extent, which was enlightenment and compassion for all things (Shapiro et al., 2006). In earlier work, Shapiro (1992) explored the intentions of meditation practitioners and found that as they continue to practice, their intentions shifted along a continuum from self-regulation, to self-exploration, and finally to self-liberation. Intention is often an overlooked component of mindfulness that is crucial to understanding the practice as a whole (Shapiro et al., 2006). Paying attention is another facet of mindfulness. Attention involves observing the operations of one’s moment-to-moment internal and external experiences (Shapiro et al., 2006). They go on to state that attention has been found to be critical to the healing process and is often used in the field of psychology, especially cognitive psychology. Finally, how an individual attends is essential to mindfulness. The attitude one brings to the attention is crucial (Shapiro et al., 2006). Mindfulness has to do with particular qualities of attention and awareness that can be cultivated and developed through meditation. A working definitions of mindfulness is: “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). He went on to note an example of this in that “attention can have a cold, critical quality, or it can include an affectionate, compassionate quality... a sense of openhearted, friendly presence and interest” (p. 145). The characteristics of mindfulness are composed of two interactive figures: one mind, and the other heart (Shapiro, 1992). Persons can learn to attend to their own internal and external experiences, without evaluation or interpretation, and practice acceptance, kindness, and

openness even when what is occurring in their field of experience conflicts with their wishes or expectations (Shapiro et al., 2006).

Through the process of mindfulness, an individual is able to separate from their thoughts and view their moment-by-moment experience with increased clarity and objectivity. This is a process that Shapiro et al (2006) call re-perceiving as it involves a fundamental shift in perspective. They define re-perceiving as a “rotation in consciousness in which what was previously subject becomes object” (Shapiro et al, 2006, p. 378). As individuals are able to shift their perspective away from the narrow and limiting confines of their own personal points of reference, development occurs and practicing mindfulness helps to accelerate this shift. Re-perceiving facilitates the ability to observe one’s mental commentary about the experiences they encounter in life and enables them to see the present situation as it is in that moment and to respond accordingly, instead of with reactionary thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Shapiro et al., 2006)

### **Flow**

Martin Csikszentmihalyi coined the term flow in the late 1980s and early 1990s. To be in flow means to be completely absorbed so much so that one gets so caught up in an activity that the mind does not wander and one becomes oblivious to their surroundings, and time flies (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). He also discovered that happiness comes not from mindless passivity but from engagement in a mindful challenge. Therefore, involvement in interesting activities, including engaging work, is a major source of well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

### **Assertiveness**

Assertiveness refers to an individual’s ability to make requests, actively disagree, express personal rights and feelings, initiate, maintain, or disengage from conversations, and to stand up

for one's self (Lazarus, 1973). Most people resonate to concepts such as honesty, integrity, and the golden rule. Since resilience is a motivating force, then freedom and energy flourish when living within one's moral framework. When someone is living outside his or her moral code, then the resulting guilt saps much of the individual's energy (Richardson, 2002). Feeling confident and capable of discerning if something is right or wrong and having the ability to articulate individual needs is key to resilience. Richardson (2002) also stated that one of the most powerful tools that will be developed, refined, and trusted in resilience interventions are intuitive skills.

Attempts to increase assertiveness have typically focused on shaping both verbal and non-verbal communication, or altering negative anxiety responses to interpersonal conversations (Lazarus, 1973). Other research (Rook, 1984) found that helping individuals acquire the interpersonal skills to access and naturally use existing social support resources had a positive impact on assertiveness in a group setting. Being able to develop cognitive-behavioral skills related to building self-esteem, communicating effectively, developing relationships with other, and asserting rights is a key component of resilience as it focuses on individual assets for healthy and effective social interaction (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

### **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness, by virtue of its utility in helping people maintain a set of stable, supportive interpersonal relationships, is associated with mental and physical well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). McCullough et al (1998) state the forgiveness is the foregoing of vengeful behavior, which can be an expression of the victim's self-worth. The ability to forgive one's transgressor leads to the re-establishment and preservation of supportive, caring relationships between victim and offender (McCullough, 2000). People who are able to forgive their

transgressors are more likely to be able to restore a positive relationship with them; in comparison, people who cannot forgive those who hurt them eventually lose those relationships. Forgiveness is a virtue because it allows an individual to give up their anger without abandoning their judgment about the severity of the offense and the culpability of the offender (Roberts, 1995). The act or process of forgiveness is a dispelling of justified anger at one who has offended against oneself. Roberts (1995) continues by stating that it is a psychological matter that some people may be unable to forgive a certain kind of offense against them.

McCullough (2000) also identified variables that influence an individual's capability to forgive such as cognitive and emotional processes like empathy, perspective-taking, rumination, and suppression; relationship qualities like closeness, commitment, and satisfaction; and situational factors like apologies. Another cognitive variable that is a likely determinant of forgiving is rumination about the offense (McCullough et al., 1998). McCullough et al (1998) went on to say that ruminating over intrusive thoughts, images, and affects related to the interpersonal offense would maintain people's distress regarding the offense and, possibly, maintain their motivations to avoid contact with and see revenge against the offender(s). The perceived severity of the offense, and its immediate consequences to the victim, influence their willingness to forgive, with more severe offenses being more difficult to forgive (Girard & Mullet, 1997).

Individuals who are in a relationship are more willing to forgive one another for interpersonal offenses if their relationship is characterized by high satisfaction, closeness, and commitment (Van Lange et al., 1997). They continue on to say that there are four ways that individuals in relationships forgive one another. First, partners in close relationships are more willing to forgive because they are highly motivated to preserve relationships in which they have

considerable resources invested and on which they rely for a variety of resources. Second, partners in high-quality relationships have a long-term orientation that might motivate them to overlook hurts in order to maximize the likelihood of preserving the relationship. The third factor is that the interests of oneself and one's partner have merged. Fourth, relational quality may bring about a collectivistic orientation that promotes a willingness to act in ways that are beneficial for the relationship partner, even if they involve some cost to the self (Van Lange et al., 1997).

### **Gratitude**

Gratitude has had a long past in the history of ideas. Across cultures and generations, experiences and expressions of gratitude have been treated as both a basic and desirable aspect of human personality and social life (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). By definition, gratitude is a characteristic to feel and express consistently the emotion of thankfulness across situation and over time (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). To be genuinely grateful means to feel indebted for a debt that cannot be repaid. However, expressions of gratefulness are attempts to repay this debt (Roberts, 1991). Roberts (1991) goes on to state that this acknowledgment of the indebtedness is in itself the repayment of the gift in a way that is appropriate to the relationship of the recipient to the giver and that gratitude is symbolic of the strong feelings of appreciation towards those who have significant meaning in an individual's life.

Having a grateful disposition is the tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotion to the roles of other people's benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). People are morally obligated to feel and express gratitude in response to received gifts or benefits (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Emmons and Crumpler (2000) found that individuals who were assigned to a gratitude group felt

better about their lives as a whole and were more optimistic regarding their expectations for the future than those assigned to a control group. They also found that the benefits of an attitude of gratitude extended beyond just mood and well-being to be an indicator of effective functioning and attaining goals in life. McCullough et al (2002) stated that grateful people may be prone to positive emotions and subjective well-being. Grateful people are higher in positive emotions and life satisfaction and also lower in negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, and envy. They are more pro-socially oriented in that they are more empathetic, forgiving, helpful, and supportive (McCullough et al., 2002).

### **Optimism**

Tiger (1979) defined optimism as “a mood or attitude associated with an expectation about the social or material future – one which the evaluator regards as socially desirable, to his or her advantage, or for his or her pleasure” (p. 18). Happy people are usually optimistic. Optimists tend to be more successful, healthier, and happier than pessimists (Myers & Diener, 1995). Learning optimism helps to prevent depression and anxiety in children and adults, roughly halving their incidence or depressive symptoms over the next two years (Seligman, 2002).

### **Learned Helplessness**

Learned helplessness is when a person expects that their future actions and responses are futile when it comes to having an impact, positive or negative, on the given situation (Abramson, Selligman, & Teasdale, 1978). They continued by stating that there is a difference between personal and universal helplessness. Situations in which individuals believe they cannot solve solvable problems are instances of personal helplessness where as situations in which individuals

believe that neither they nor their peers can solve the problem is universal helplessness (Abramson, et al., 1978).

### **Coping**

Coping is defined, by Lazarus (1993), as “a person’s efforts in thought and action to manage specific demands that are appraised as taxing or overwhelming” (p.8). Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) stated that resilience is sometimes confused with coping. The construct of coping is related to resilience but it is also distinct. How an individual copes with adversity may result in a return to a level of homeostasis, or their pre-adversity level of functioning as described by O’Leary and Ickovics (1995), but they may also have long-term consequences which can either be positive or negative, or more likely some combination of the two (Aldwin, Sutton, & Lachman, 1996). Some coping strategies that participants reported were rules their parents had taught them or that they had learned from watching others that they admired handle a difficult situation. Beasley, Thompson, and Davidson (2003) indicated that coping styles could affect how a stressful event is perceived and how it is managed. They also state, however, that coping is not always related to a good outcome. From both a theoretical perspective and a common sense standpoint, Miller and Daniel (2007) stated that it is clear that a belief in one’s ability to cope with life’s challenges influences one’s overall evaluation of oneself.

Bryant (1989) proposed that a four-factor model of perceived control emerges that consists of self-evaluations of one’s ability to (a) avoid negative events, (b) cope with negative events, (c) obtain positive events, and (d) savor positive events.

#### *Avoiding*

The perceived ability to avoid negative outcomes may result from beliefs about an individual’s direct behavioral control that one has over aversive events, personal good fortune,

one's ability to predict negative events so as to avoid them, one's ability to ward off bad events through superstitious rituals, or one's protection from negative outcomes by powerful others (Bryant, 1989). In regards to resilience, protection develops not through the evasion of risk, but in the successful engagement with it (Rutter, 1987).

### *Coping*

The perceived ability to cope with negative events may emanate from an individual's beliefs about the direct or indirect coping strategies that one can use to minimize or decrease distress, one's ability to predict negative events to avoid disappointment, one's ability to overcome problems through the help of powerful others, or one's personal relationship with a higher power, which can provide solace, inspiration, and meaning in the face of adversity (Bryant, 1989).

### *Obtaining*

Growth from negative or adversarial events has been positively related to an individual's ability to use problem-focused coping strategies such as active coping, planning, and positive reappraisal (Park & Fenster, 2004; Wild & Paivio) as well as emotion-focused coping strategies such as emotional support and religious coping (Park, 2006). It has been proposed by Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004), however, that it takes a severely stressful event to disrupt one's world view enough that the window for growth opens.

The perceived ability to obtain positive outcomes may result from beliefs about the direct behavioral control that one has over satisfying events, one's dispositional good luck, one's ability to predict positive events so as to seek them out, one's ability to bring about good events through superstitious rituals, or powerful others in one's life who can provide one with positive outcomes (Bryant, 1989).

### *Savoring*

The perceived ability to savor positive events may come from beliefs about the cognitive or behavioral strategies that one can use to amplify or prolong enjoyment of positive events, one's ability to anticipate future positive outcomes in a way that promotes a sense of pleasure in the present, one's ability to recall past positive events in ways that enhance present well-being, or friends or relatives that can help one enjoy positive events (Bryant, 1989).

### **Hardiness**

Hardiness is a term explored by Kobasa (1979). She defines an individual with hardiness as "able to experience high degrees of stress without falling ill" (p. 3). Hardiness facilitates the kind of perception, evaluation, and coping that leads to the successful resolution of situations created by stressful events (Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983). Kobasa goes on to state that individuals who are hardy typically have three general characteristics: (1) the belief that they can control or influence the events of their experience, (2) the ability to feel deeply involved in or committed to the activities in their lives, and (3) the ability to see change as an exciting challenge to their further development (Kobasa, 1979). The personality dispositions of hardiness are commitment, control, and challenge (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982).

The commitment disposition is typically expressed as a tendency to involve oneself in whatever one is doing or any situations that one encounters (Kobasa et al., 1982; Maddi, Hoover, & Kobasa, 1982). These types of individuals have a general sense of purpose that allows them to identify with and find meaning in events, things, and people within their environment. They are invested enough in themselves that they do not give in under pressure. Individuals with the committed disposition take an active approach, rather than a passive one, in relationships with others (Maddi et al., 1982).

Individuals with the control disposition tend to feel and act as if they are influential, rather than helpless, in the face of adversity (Averill, 1973). These individuals perceive themselves as having an unmistakable influence on their life situation and events through the exercise of imagination, knowledge, and control (Kobasa et al., 1982). Kobasa et al (1982) also stated that control enhances their resistance to stress by increasing the likelihood that events will be experienced, as a natural growth of one's self, rather than an unexpected and overwhelming experience. This control leads to actions that transform events into something that is consistent with the individual's life plan; therefore, events happen the way they are supposed to according to the individual (Kobasa et al., 1982; Maddi et al., 1982). Personal control makes it possible for an individual to incorporate the potential threatening event into a cognitive plan, thus reducing their stress and anxiety (Averill, 1973). Finally, control has been found to be responsible for the development of a broad repertoire of responses to stress, which can be used in the future even in the most threatening of circumstances (Kobasa et al., 1982).

The challenge disposition is expressed as the beliefs that change rather than stability is normal in life and that if an individual is able to anticipate the changes they are incentives for personal growth rather than threats to security (Kobasa et al., 1982). Challenge reframes the stressfulness of events by coloring them as stimulating rather than threatening, because they are changes that require readjustment. Challenge will lead to attempts to transform oneself thus allowing the individual to grow rather than remain in their former existence (Kobasa, 1979; Kobasa et al., 1982).

All of these reasons demonstrate that commitment, challenge, and control work to keep individuals healthy despite encounters with stressful events. Johnson and Sarason (1978) found that college students who perceived themselves as having a greater sense of control over the

events in their lives reported having fewer illnesses than those individuals who perceive themselves as having less control. These three factors indicate that hardiness has its greatest effects on health when stressful life events are at their peak (Kobasa et al., 1982).

## **Yoga**

Self-regulatory coping skills and resilience are believed to be effective countermeasures for stress (Noggle, Steiner, Minami, & Khalsa, 2012). Pressure to achieve outcomes is expected in the workplace; however, excessive pressure can negatively affect both physical health and psychological well-being (Hartfiel, Havenhand, Khalsa, Clarke, & Krayner, 2011). Gura (2002) reported on the effectiveness of yoga for the improvement of well-being and reduction of absenteeism in the workplace. For college students this would translate to class attendance and participation. Yoga is a holistic system of multiple mind body practices for mental and physical health that include physical postures and exercises, breathing techniques, deep relaxation practices, cultivation of awareness/mindfulness, and meditation (Khalsa, Hickey-Schultz, Cohen, Steiner, & Cope, 2011; Noggle et al., 2012). The multiple techniques of regular yoga and meditation practices have been shown to lead to reductions in perceived stress and improved mood and well-being (Khalsa & Cope, 2006; Noggle et al., 2012).

Hartfiel et al. (2011) found that at the end of six week yoga program where individuals were required to attend a minimum of one of three offered sessions that the participants reported feeling significantly less anxious, confused, depressed, tired, and had a greater sense of purpose and satisfaction and were more self-confident during stressful situations. Other research by Lavey et al (2005) showed that even a single yoga session was effective at improving mood and that participants reported feeling less tense and anxious, less depressed, and less fatigued after participating in the yoga class. In a study by Schure, Christopher, and Christopher (2008)

students in a 15-week mindfulness-based stress reduction class reported believing that yoga had helped them increase their flexibility, strength and balance. Several participants also noted an additional benefit of the yoga in that they got sick less frequently than normal while taking the course.

Yoga helps an individual learn how to untie the knots that allow them to identify with their suffering self (Kempton, 2007). Yoga practice is meant to teach us how to untangle these inner knots. Kempton (2007) also stated that often times an individual does not realize how much of a difference their yoga practice has made until they find themselves dealing with a crisis without going into a complete meltdown. She states that there is a sense of awareness and inner compassion that allows the individual to stay in the present moment and not get sucked into fear or anger.

When one starts to look at resilience as a trait, it places blame on the individual for not being able to overcome adversity or risk (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). The key to resilience is the ability to recognize your own thoughts and feelings and use the flexibility of thinking to manage the emotions effectively and grow from the situation (Jackson & Watkin, 2004). Jackson and Watkin (2004) state that this is an ability that can be taught, measured, and improved upon. Positive psychology aims to learn how to build the qualities that help individuals and communities not just endure and survive but also flourish (Seligman, 2002). The resilience, thriving, and wellness course aims to educate undergraduate students in the constructs of resilience and overall wellness. The purpose of this study is to determine the efficacy of the course in achieving that goal of educating undergraduate college students on the tools that can be used to promote resilience in their own lives.

The following chapters will detail the methods used to evaluate the 8-week course in Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness, and provide an explanation of the outcomes found to determine the efficacy of said course.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

This chapter includes a detailed description of the Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness 8-week course and the participants involved in the study, followed by the tools used for data collections. A description of the procedures used to conduct the investigation, as well as information about the statistical analysis utilizes are also presented.

#### **Description of Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness Course**

The 8-week Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness course is taught through the university's Public Health program and is offered for one credit hour. A topical curriculum for the course (See Appendix A) is based upon the philosophy of positive psychology and the concepts presented by Martin Seligman in his book *Authentic Happiness* (2002). The course targets three main topics: yoga, mindfulness, and assertiveness, as well as including meditation, assertiveness, gratitude, forgiveness, and personal strengths. Resilience can be seen as a simple and practical application to everyday living (Richardson, 2002). Skills such as meditation, Tai Chi, prayer, yoga, Aikido, and other alternative therapies can also be used to cultivate resilience. Practice of these skills can provide hope and with time, increase self-efficacy, for people to have more control and order in their lives and rely less on outside support.

A key part of the course is a journaling assignment. The students were given specific topics upon which to reflect and are encouraged to expand and reflect upon anything that we are covering in class. This assignment falls in line with the research that states a journaling intervention with undergraduates led to an increase in stress-related growth (Ullrich & Lutgendorf, 2002).

## **Participants**

All participants were undergraduate college students enrolled in a large public Division I university in the southern United States. There were 68 students enrolled in the 8-week Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness course, and 22 students in the control group.

## **Measures**

To measure the efficacy of the 8-week Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness course, three main topics were analyzed: resilience, well-being, and assertiveness.

### *Resilience*

The 25-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003, see Appendix B) includes items that represent a variety of resilient characteristics such as goal setting, patience, faith, humor, and tolerance of negative affect as well as the ability to perceive a challenge, make a commitment and take control. This scale is aimed at assessing characteristics of resilience. Participants respond to items using a five-point scale ranging from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time). Scores are then totaled with a possible range from 0 to 100. Higher scores reflect a higher sense of resilience. Internal consistency, measured by Chronbach's  $\alpha$ , was 0.89. Test-retest reliability has demonstrated a correlation coefficient of 0.87 (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

### *Well-Being*

The Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being (QEWB) is comprised of 21 Likert scale items and was developed to measure well-being in a manner consistent with the eudaemonist philosophy (Waterman et al., 2010, see Appendix C). Participants respond to items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Fourteen of the items are written in an affirmative direction with higher scores indicating eudaimonic well-being;

seven of the items are written in the negative direction, indicating a lack of eudaimonic well-being, and are reverse scored. The possible range of scores on the QEWB is from 0 to 84 with higher scores demonstrating higher levels of well-being. The QEWB was found to have sufficient reliability ( $\alpha=0.86$ ) by Waterman and colleagues (2010).

### *Assertiveness*

The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) is a scale used to measure assertive behaviors across a variety of situational contexts (Rathus, 1973, see Appendix D). McCormick (1984) created a simple version (SRAS), which consists of 30 items, scored on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (very unlike me) to 5 (very much like me). Sixteen of the item measures are reverse scored to avoid response bias. Scores can range from 0 to 150 with higher scores indicating higher levels of assertiveness. The SRAS demonstrated better readability for participants and demonstrated good reliability with a correlation coefficient of 0.90.

### **Procedures**

Permission was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board prior to conducting this study. Participants were informed of the purpose of this research prior to taking the survey and were read instructions by course instructors if they chose to participate in the study. Participants were notified that the survey is confidential and anonymous. The participants were asked if they chose to complete the survey, to provide their initials and the last 4 digits of their telephone number in order to match the pre- and post test surveys. This information was not utilized in any way to identify the participants. The survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Upon completion of the post-test, participants in the experimental group (those enrolled in the 8-week course) were informed that they may receive an email with a link to an online

survey with 6 open-ended follow up questions regarding the class. The link was sent out to 55 students and 5 responded resulting in a response rate of 9%. The open-ended questions that were asked can be seen in Appendix F.

Data for the control group was collected in the same manner as mentioned above but for the second 8-weeks. The control group was not given the follow-up open-ended survey.

### **Design and Statistical Analysis**

Determining the effect of an 8-week course, Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness, on students' self-reported levels of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness is the primary focus of this study. In a quasi-experimental design, participants completed a pre-test on the first day of the 8-week course and a post-test on the last day of the course. The experimental group consisted of students who voluntarily enrolled in the 8-week course and agreed to participate in the study. This study took place in the spring semester and the experimental group consisted of students from both the first and second eight weeks of the semester. The majority of students (57%) reported that "needing one credit hour" was their primary reason for enrolling in the 8-week course. A non-equivalent control group consisted of students who were enrolled in a 16-week Personal Health and Safety course. They ranged in age from 18-28 with the mean age being 20.3. Sixty-four percent of the control group was female, 36% reported being male. Five percent of the control group reported being Asian American, 9% African American, 82% Caucasian, and 5% percent did not report a race. Eighty-two percent reported being non-Hispanic/Latino.

In the present study, data analyses were conducted in two parts: demographic analyses and main analyses utilizing Statistical Package for Social Science 22 (SPSS). The demographic analyses compared with the main variables of interest. This entailed of a series of univariate and

multivariate analyses, which consisted of, paired samples t-tests, one-way ANOVAs with repeated measures, and two-way ANOVAs with repeated measures to test the associations between categorical and numerical variables.

To test the first hypothesis and determine if there was any significant change from pre- to post-test a paired samples t-test was conducted for the entire group. For the second hypothesis, to determine if there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group from pre- to post-test a one-way ANOVA with repeated measures was conducted. To analyze the third hypothesis, to determine if there was a significant difference among genders, male and female, from pre- to post-test, a two-way ANOVA with repeated measures was conducted. Finally, for the fourth hypothesis, to determine if there was a significant difference between students who are members of a Greek organization and students who are not, from pre- to post-test, a one-way ANOVA with repeated measures was conducted. Pillai's Trace was used to investigate between-subjects interactions. Post hoc analyses were conducted using the Bonferroni method. Significance for this study was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

## Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will provide results from the data analysis to answer the research questions regarding the efficacy of the 8-week course in Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness. Here we will examine the findings regarding the overall effectiveness of the course, the differences between students enrolled in the course and students in the control group, gender differences, and differences relating to Greek organization affiliation.

### Participants

Participants were all undergraduate students enrolled in a large university in the southern United States. There were 53 students in the experimental group, those enrolled in the 8-week course on Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness. The age range was from 18-27, with the mean age being 19.66. The group consisted of 26.4% males and 73.6% females, with 86.8% of the group being Caucasian. Fifty-two percent of the group reported being members of a social Greek organization and 3.8% reported being a member of varsity athletics.

A control group consisted of 22 undergraduate students enrolled in general education Personal Health and Safety class. The students ranged in age from 18-28, with the mean age being 20.33. The control group consisted of 36.4% females and 63.6% males, with 81.8% of the participants being Caucasian. Approximately thirty-two (31.8) percent reported being members of a social Greek organization.

One distinct difference between the experimental and the control group is that 41% of the control group reported being varsity athletes compared to only 3.8% of the experimental group. Fifteen participants were excluded from the experimental group as they did not complete either the pre-test or the post-test thus their data was incomplete. The total number of participants included in the study was 75 (treatment: n=53, control: n=22).

## Efficacy of the Course

Three paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the overall scores on the CD-RISC, the QEWB, and the SRAS at the start of the 8-week course and at the end of the 8-week course (See Tables 1 & 2). There was not a significant difference in scores for the CD-RISC from pre-test (M=74.85, SD=9.75) to post-test (M=76.77, SD=10.38);  $t(52)=-1.86$ ,  $p=0.07$ . There was not a significant difference in scores for the QEWB from pre-test (M=57.53, SD=12.03) and post-test (M=59.58, SD= 7.06);  $t(52)=-1.60$ ,  $p=0.12$ . Finally, there was a significant difference in scores for the SRAS from pre-test (M=76.21, SD=18.87) and post-test (M=79.06, SD=19.95);  $t(52)=-2.40$ ,  $p=0.02$ . These results indicate that the 8-week course in Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness led to a significant increase in reported feelings for assertiveness. There was a trend towards significance for overall feelings of resilience. The course did not lead to a significant increase in reported feelings of well-being.

Table 1

### *Efficacy of the 8-week Course (pre to post-test)*

	<u>Pre</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Std. Error Mean</u>
Resilience pre	74.85	53	9.75	1.34
Resilience post	76.77	53	10.38	1.43
Well-being pre	57.53	53	12.03	1.65
Well-being post	59.58	53	7.06	0.97
Assertiveness pre	76.21	53	18.87	2.59
Assertiveness post	79.06	53	19.95	2.74

Table 2

### *Paired Samples t-test*

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Resilience	-1.92	7.54	-1.86	52	.07
Well-being	-2.06	9.34	-1.60	52	.12
Assertiveness	-2.85	8.65	-2.40	52	.02

Significance was set at  $p=0.05$

## Group Differences

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of being enrolled in the experimental group versus the control group on reported scores of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness at both pre- and post-test conditions (See Table 3). There was not a significant effect of group, Pillai's Trace=0.69,  $F(3,71)=1.75$ ,  $p=0.16$ . These findings suggest that there was no relationship on whether a student enrolled in the 8-week course or in the control group reported an increase in overall feelings of efficacy in resilience, well-being, and assertiveness. Means can be see in Table 3. However, there was a significant time effect, Piillai's Trace=.013,  $F(3,71)=3.54$ ,  $p=0.02$ . Pairwise comparisons found this difference to be significant only for assertiveness,  $F(1,73)=10.00$ ,  $p=0.002$ .

Table 3

### *Difference in Groups Means*

	Type III SS	df	F	p
Resilience	135.07	1	0.702	.41
Well-being	131.57	1	0.847	.36
Assertiveness	757.59	1	1.074	.30

Table 4

### *Group x Time Means*

	Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Resilience	Control	73.77	73.68
	Experimental	74.85	76.77
Well-Being	Control	60.22	61.00
	Experimental	57.53	59.59
Assertiveness	Control	80.09	85.05
	Experimental	76.21	79.06

## Gender Differences

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the differences among gender on the reported scores of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness at both

pre- and post-test conditions. There was not an overall significant effect for gender, Pillai's Trace=0.05,  $F(3,69)=1.20$ ,  $p=0.32$ . These findings indicate that there was no relationship between genders with regards to reported scores of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness. However, a within-subjects effect was found to be significant for time,  $F(3,69)=2.76$ ,  $p=0.05$ . Further testing found that only the factor of assertiveness was significant over time,  $F(1,71)=7.20$ ,  $p=0.01$ . Means can be seen in Table 5. A test of the between-subjects effects found gender to be near significance for the factor of assertiveness,  $F(1,71)=3.03$ ,  $p=0.09$ .

Table 5

*Gender x Time Means*

	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Pre-Test</u>	<u>Post-Test</u>
Resilience	Male	76.21	78.55
	Female	73.50	73.71
Well-Being	Male	60.03	60.81
	Female	58.26	60.25
Assertiveness	Male	85.21	87.18
	Female	74.93	80.00

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA was performed to measure the differences between genders within the experimental and control groups from pre- to post-test. Overall there was no significant finding for this interaction of gender X group, Pillai's Trace=0.003,  $F(3,69)=0.08$ ,  $p=0.97$ .

Table 6

*Gender x Group x Time Interaction Means*

	<u>Group</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Pre-Test</u>	<u>Post-Test</u>
Resilience	Control	Male	75.00	76.50
		Female	73.07	71.93
	Experimental	Male	77.43	80.36
		Female	73.92	75.49
Well-Being	Control	Male	62.13	59.63
		Female	59.14	61.79
	Experimental	Male	57.93	62.00
		Female	57.39	58.62
Assertiveness	Control	Male	86.50	87.00
		Female	76.43	83.93
	Experimental	Male	83.93	87.36
		Female	73.44	76.08

Table 7

*Gender x Group Interaction Means*

	<u>Group</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>
Resilience	Control	Male	75.88	3.46
		Female	72.50	2.61
	Experimental	Male	78.89	2.61
		Female	74.71	1.57
Well-Being	Control	Male	60.88	3.15
		Female	60.46	2.38
	Experimental	Male	59.96	2.38
		Female	58.05	1.43
Assertiveness	Control	Male	86.75	6.54
		Female	80.18	4.95
	Experimental	Male	85.64	4.95
		Female	74.76	2.96

**Greek Affiliation**

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to measure the differences of membership in a Greek organization within the experimental and control groups across time on reported scores of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness. A significant difference was identified between the groups, Pillai's Trace=0.124,  $F(3, 69)=3.25$ ,  $p=0.03$  and between Greek affiliation, Pillai's Trace=0.11,  $F(3, 69)=2.92$ ,  $p=0.04$ . Means will be

reported in Table 8. The interaction between group and Greek affiliation neared significance, Pillai's Trace=0.09,  $F(3,69)=2.25$ ,  $p=0.09$ . These findings suggest that Greek affiliation was a factor in reported levels of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness, with those who are members of a Greek organization reporting lower levels of resilience and assertiveness. Members of Greek organizations in the control group reported higher levels of well-being. Means will be shown in Tables 9 and 10.

Within-subjects effects found time to be significant,  $F(3,69)=3.45$ ,  $p=0.02$ . Further analyses on the effect of time found that only the factor of assertiveness was significant,  $F(1,71)=10.51$ ,  $p=0.002$ . Means will be shown in Tables 11 and 12. Tests of the between subjects factors relating to social Greek membership revealed that resilience neared significance,  $F(1,71)=3.37$ ,  $p=0.07$ .

Table 8

*Between Subjects Effects of Group*

	<u>Type III SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Resilience	633.19	1	1.93	.17
Well-being	246.39	1	1.58	.21
Assertiveness	460.52	1	0.639	.43

Table 9

*Between Subjects Effects of Greek Affiliation*

	<u>Type III SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Resilience	633.19	1	3.37	.07
Well-being	144.20	1	0.92	.34
Assertiveness	326.54	1	0.45	.50

Table 10

*Greek Affiliation x Group Interaction Means*

	<u>Group</u>	<u>Greek Status</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std.Error</u>
Resilience	Control	Non-Greek	76.30	2.50
		Greek	68.21	3.67
	Experimental	Non-Greek	76.56	1.94
		Greek	75.14	1.83
Well-being	Control	Non-Greek	59.00	2.28
		Greek	64.07	3.34
	Experimental	Non-Greek	58.84	1.77
		Greek	58.30	1.67
Assertiveness	Control	Non-Greek	84.00	4.90
		Greek	79.50	7.14
	Experimental	Non-Greek	78.86	3.80
		Greek	76.54	3.59

Table 11

*Greek Affiliation x Time Means*

	<u>Greek Membership</u>	<u>Pre-Test</u>	<u>Post-Test</u>
Resilience	Non-member	75.65	77.21
	Member	71.77	71.59
Well-Being	Non-member	57.70	60.14
	Member	61.45	60.93
Assertiveness	Non-member	79.81	83.05
	Member	75.39	80.64

Table 12

*Group x Greek Affiliation x Time Means*

	<u>Group</u>	<u>Greek Membership</u>	<u>Pre-Test</u>	<u>Post-Test</u>
Resilience	Control	Non-member	75.93	76.67
		Member	69.14	67.29
	Experimental	Non-member	75.36	77.76
		Member	74.39	75.89
Well-Being	Control	Non-member	57.80	60.20
		Member	65.43	62.71
	Experimental	Non-member	57.60	60.08
		Member	57.46	59.14
Assertiveness	Control	Non-member	82.13	85.87
		Member	75.71	83.29
	Experimental	Non-member	77.48	80.24
		Member	75.07	78.00

## Qualitative Findings

Participants from the experimental group, those enrolled in the 8-week course, were randomly sent a link from Survey Monkey to complete 7 open-ended questions relating to the class. The list of questions can be seen in Appendix D. The following tables will present the student's responses to the questions.

Table 13

### *Qualitative Question One*

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Please identify what you valued most about the Resilience and Thriving course.

Participant 1 – Learning to focus on my health.

Participant 2 – The new outlook on stress that it provided me.

Participant 3 – It made me really think introspectively and was fairly interesting.

Participant 4 – I liked that it was not a stressful class and that there were chances to make up things that may have been missed.

Participant 5 – Learning ways to increase my happiness.

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Table 14

### *Qualitative Question Two*

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Please identify what you valued least about the Resilience and Thriving course.

Participant 1 – Professor tried too hard to engage a class to the point of meanness.

Participant 2 – I least valued the journal. I see why it was necessary but I just wish we could have done more with it.

Participant 3 – It wasn't part of my major and it was only one hour so it didn't matter very much how well I did.

Participant 4 – I did not enjoy that some of the assignments were too much. The assignment about going vegetarian I did not complete. It was over a weekend I was celebrating with my family and I did not want to burden my grandmother who had pre-cooked for the weekend.

Participant 5 – Random materials, lessons jumped around too much.

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Table 15

*Qualitative Question Three*


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Please identify the strengths of the Resilience and Thriving course.

Participant 1 – Methods to reduce stress.

Participant 2 – The strengths are being able to relate to as many people as it did. The topics such as stress, forgiveness, and assertiveness are topics that everyone can relate to.

Participant 3 – It was interesting and caused you to think a lot so long as you participated.

Participant 4 – The lessons were strong.

Participant 5 – Casual and makes everyone feel comfortable.

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Table 16

*Qualitative Question Four*


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Please identify the weaknesses of the Resilience and Thriving course

Participant 1 – Not enough time.

Participant 2 – Sometimes when no one wants to talk, the class becomes dull.

Participant 3 – It was very easy so you didn't have to give a lot so it's easy to float through numbly.

Participant 4 – The instructors did not always know what they were supposed to be doing with us.

Participant 5 – Sometimes not focused.

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Table 17

*Qualitative Question Five*


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Please explain how you feel the class did/did not provide you with strategies to cope with stress/deal with times of adversity.

Participant 1 – I finally learned how to breathe. While working out, taking a test, relaxing. I am a better breather and my stress level has decreased astronomically.

Participant 2 – I feel like it did provide me with strategies because now I take the time to decide if it is even something I could change in the first place. If not, I don't even worry about it.

Participant 3 – It allowed me to analyze how I do cope now and how I can better cope with my ways in the future.

Participant 4 – Respondent skipped this question.

Participant 5 – It helped me learn how to control my emotions better.

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Table 18

*Qualitative Question Six*

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Please explain how confident you do/do not feel at implementing the strategies that were taught in the Resilience and Thriving course.

Participant 1 – The only strategy I will have to work on is yoga.

Participant 2 – I feel very confident in implementing the strategies learned in the class.

Participant 3 – Very confident; they're good strategies.

Participant 4 – Respondent skipped this question

Participant 5 – I feel very confident.

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Table 19

*Qualitative Question Seven*

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Please explain how the course provided you with understanding of the topic of resilience.

Participant 1 – I now understand that being happy is more important than being wealthy.

Participant 2 – I learned that resilience is how well someone bounces back.

Participant 3 – Explaining what being resilient entails and how to implement it to my life.

Participant 4 – Respondent skipped this question.

Participant 5 – It gave different examples and situations to develop my personal definition.

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## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the efficacy of an 8-week undergraduate course on student's reported feelings of resilience, well-being, and assertiveness. This chapter provides a discussion of the results that were found.

Overall there was no significant difference determined as a result of taking the 8-week course in Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness on the factors of resilience and well-being. This is contrary to work by Deckro et al (2002) where they found that a 6-week course resulted in decreases in stress and anxiety among college students. One possible reason for this finding is that while the class had a set curriculum, there were four instructors of the course all with different styles and experience. This could possibly result in the material becoming muddled across the courses, as there is no way to ensure that each instructor presented the information exactly the same way. Another reason as demonstrated in the qualitative responses is that there was just not enough time to adequately cover all of the topics to result in a difference. Often a topic was covered only once and the students were given an outside assignment to practice and reflect on their own experience. An analysis of each individual class was not performed in this study, as it was determined that the cell sizes would be too small for an adequate result.

A significant difference was not found between the control and experimental groups on any of the factors assessed. However, there was a significant time effect. This indicates that regardless of whether a student was enrolled in the control or the experimental group they experienced a significant increase in the factors that were assessed. Further analysis demonstrated that this increase was only significant for the factor of assertiveness. Therefore, regardless of whether a student was enrolled in the 8-week course or in the control course, reported feelings of assertiveness increased. This could be due to the topics covered in the

classes as many were related to taking care of oneself and especially in the 8-week course called for looking within oneself to determine values and how to act upon them.

With regard to this study, a significant difference among genders was not found. However, upon further analysis it was determined that there was a significant time effect. It was determined that the only factor that the time effect was significant for was assertiveness, with males reporting higher levels than females. This finding aligns with previous research (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010), which states that males are more assertive in advocating for themselves and for others. Some possible explanations for this are that women have not been raised to be assertive. Gender roles teach women to be calm and quiet and that these traits are “ladylike”. While males are not always taught to express their emotions in a healthy manner, it is socially acceptable for them to become angry and assert themselves. Eagly and Karau (2002) state that males do not fear backlash or social disapproval for advocating for themselves or others where as females can and do experience these consequences.

Whether or not a student was affiliated with a Greek organization on campus was shown to have a significant effect. While having a strong social support network and feeling connected to the community have been shown to be related to increased feelings of resilience and well-being (Diener & Seligman, 2002; O’Leary & Ickovics, 1995), typically factors that parallel Greek organization membership, this study did not support these previous findings. Students who reported being members of a social Greek organization also reported lower levels of resilience and assertiveness than those who are not a member of a social Greek organization.

While the quantitative analysis demonstrated only a few significant findings, the qualitative responses allow us to have a better view of what the participants enrolled in the 8-week course might have felt. As expected, some felt that they gained strategies to help them deal

with the adversity in their lives and some did not. With one of the most prevalent reasons for taking the course being “I needed one hour for my scholarship”, it is not surprising that a few of the responses demonstrated students lack of motivation for the course.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study. While there was a set topical curriculum for this class, it was not standardized among the different instructors. Having so many instructors teaching the course, the material taught was potentially not standardized thus potentially leading to a lack of fidelity with the course. Different instructors have different teaching styles and methods of presentation, so that even though the information was all the same, the way it was delivered was different. An example of this is the student that reported “the professor tried to hard to engage the class, to the point of meanness”.

A convenience sample was used for this study. To evaluate the efficacy of the 8-week course, it is imperative that individuals enrolled in the course be included. However, the size of the class and the number of sections offered did not allow for any other type of sampling strategy than to look at everyone enrolled. The size and demographics of this sample may make it difficult to generalize to other college campuses.

Finally, the length of the course is a limitation. Eight weeks is not sufficient time to adequately cover all of the topics in a way that would lead to meaningful change. Students are only able to scratch the surface of the tools in the course’s current format. The class becomes a whirlwind of mindfulness and coping strategies that is thrown at the student for them to decide what works and what does not.

### **Suggestions for improving the curriculum**

One limiting factor in this study is that the course only lasts for 8 weeks. The instructors were only able to cover a topic in one, sometimes two, class sessions at the most and then the students were given an assignment regarding the practice of the topic and they were to journal about it. To determine the efficacy of the course, it may be better if it was a full semester, 16-week course, to allow for deeper in-class instruction as well as some guided practice before the students were sent to practice on their own. This might allow for the student to develop a better understanding of if the topic, such as mindful breathing, is a technique that would be useful to them or not.

Future studies might also focus on a tighter curriculum and standardized instruction. There were four instructors for this class, yet even with a standard topical curriculum, the classes were not taught in the same order. Also, one of the instructors has 20+ years of experience with the topics of the course, whereas the other instructors, which included two staff members and one graduate assistant.

### **Suggestions for future research**

More in-depth follow-up analyses once the course is completed would possibly yield richer data regarding the efficacy of the course. Investigators may find meaningful information and data from performing interviews of students enrolled in the class as well as excerpts from their journals. More specifically, it is recommended that further qualitative investigations be performed at the conclusion of the course, specifically targeting females. This suggestion is the result of there being a drop in the means for all topics, resilience, well-being, and assertiveness for females who were enrolled in the 8-week course. This is alarming as a greater percentage of

the sample is female. Future research may consider looking at a gender specific course to determine more specific factors that contribute to females reported feelings of resilience.

This research did not demonstrate the expected outcomes, but did, however, provide meaningful information about how this study can be modified to potentially find the keys to college student resilience, well-being, and assertiveness. Such research is beneficial to university administrators as well as college health professionals.

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## Appendix A

## Topical Curriculum for the Resilience, Thriving, and Wellness Course

The following is a standardized listing of all of the topics that were covered by four different instructors who taught the course. The instructors did not follow the same schedule of when the topics were presented but instructors included all of the following over the course of the 8-weeks. The asterisk indicates a journaling assignment associated with the topic.

Topics included:

- Introduction to the history of positive psychology and the purpose of the class
  - Random acts of kindness/Individual acts of self-care \*
- Creating a well-life vision utilizing the wheel of life \*
- Watching the documentary Happy \*
- Contentment with the past/Hope for the future
  - Gratitude and/or forgiveness letter\*
- Mindfulness
  - Disconnecting from phone/electronics for a period of time \*
  - Mindful Eating \*
  - Meditation sittings \*
- Yoga as a system of wellness
  - Practice on their own\*
- Personal strengths
  - Assertiveness\*
  - Complete StrengthsQuest assessment\*
- Review implementation of well-life vision/resilience plan for the future

**Appendix B**

**Connor Davidson Resilience Scale**

Please read each sentence carefully. For each sentence, please mark an “X” in the box below that best indicates how much you agree with the following statements as they apply to you over the past MONTH. If a particular situation has not occurred recently, answer according to how you think you would have felt.

	Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all of the time
I am able to adapt when changes occur.					
I have at least one close and secure relationship that helps me when I am stressed.					
When there are no clear solutions to my problems, sometimes fate or God can help.					
I can deal with whatever comes my way.					
Past successes give me confidence in dealing with new challenges and difficulties.					
I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems.					
Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.					
I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships.					
Good or bad, I believe that most things happen for a reason.					
I give my best effort no matter what the outcome may be.					
I believe that I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles.					
Even when things look hopeless, I don't give up.					
During times of stress/crisis, I know where to turn for help.					
Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.					
I prefer to take the lead in solving problems rather than letting others make all the decisions.					
I am not easily discouraged by failure.					
I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties.					
I can make unpopular or difficult decisions that affect other people, if necessary.					

<b>I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger.</b>					
<b>In dealing with life's problems, sometimes you have to act on a hunch without knowing why.</b>					
<b>I have a strong sense of purpose in life.</b>					
<b>I feel in control of my life.</b>					
<b>I like challenges.</b>					
<b>I work to attain my goals no matter what roadblocks I encounter along the way.</b>					
<b>I take pride in my achievements.</b>					

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being

This questionnaire contains a series of statements that refer to how you may feel things have been going in your life. Read each statement and decide the extent to which you agree or disagree with it. Try to respond to each statement according to your own feelings about how things are actually going, rather than how you might wish them to be.

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
I find I get intensely involved in many of the things I do each day.					
I believe I have discovered who I really am.					
I think it would be ideal if things came easily to me in my life.					
My life is centered around a set of core beliefs that give meaning to my life.					
It is more important that I really enjoy what I do than that other people are impressed by it.					
I believe I know what my best potentials are and I try to develop them whenever possible.					
Other people usually know better what would be good for me to do than I know myself.					
I feel best when I'm doing something worth investing a great deal of effort in.					
I can say that I have found my purpose in life.					
If I did not find what I was doing rewarding for me, I do not think I could continue doing it.					
As yet, I've not yet figured out what to do with my life.					
I can't understand why some people want to work so hard on the things that they do.					
I believe it is important to know how what I'm doing fits with purposes worth pursuing.					
I usually know what I should do because some actions just feel right to me.					
When I engage in activities that involve my best potentials, I have					

this sense of really being alive.					
I am confused about what my talents really are.					
I find a lot of the things I do are personally expressive for me.					
It is important to me that I feel fulfilled by the activities that I engage in.					
If something is really difficult, it probably isn't worth doing.					
I find it hard to get really invested in the things that I do.					
I believe I know what I was meant to do in life.					

**Appendix D**

### Simple Rathus Assertiveness Schedule

Please read each sentence carefully and select the answer with an "X" that you feel is most like how you would respond.

	Very unlike me	Rather unlike me	Somewhat unlike me	Somewhat like me	Rather like me	Very much like me
Most people stand up for themselves more than I do.						
At times I have not made or gone on dates before because of my shyness						
When I am eating out and the food I am served is not cooked the way I like it, I complain to the person serving it.						
I am careful not to hurt other people's feelings, even when I feel hurt.						
If a person serving in a store has gone to a lot of trouble to show me something, which I do not really like, I have a hard time saying "No".						
When I am asked to do something, I always want to know why.						
There are times when I look for a good strong argument.						
I try as hard to get ahead in life as most people like me do.						
To be honest, people often get the better of me.						
I enjoy meeting and talking with people for the first time.						
I often don't know what to say to good-looking people of the opposite sex.						
I do not like making phone calls to businesses or companies.						
I would rather apply for jobs by writing letters than by going to talk to the people.						
I feel silly if I return things I don't like to the store that I bought them from.						
If a close relative that I liked						

were upsetting me, I would hide my feelings rather than say I was upset..						
I have sometimes not asked questions for fear of sounding stupid.						
During an argument I am sometimes afraid that I will get so upset that I will shake all over.						
If a famous person was talking in a crowd and I thought he or she was wrong, I would get up and say what I thought.						
I don't argue over prices with people selling things.						

	Very unlike me	Rather unlike me	Somewhat unlike me	Somewhat like me	Rather like me	Very much like me
When I do something important or good, I try to let others know about it.						
I am open and honest about my feelings.						
If someone has been telling false and bad stories about me, I see him (her) as soon as possible to "have a talk" about it.						
I often have a hard time saying "No".						
I tend not to show my feelings rather than upsetting others.						
I complain about poor service when I am eating out or in other places.						
When someone says I have done very well, I sometimes just don't know what to say.						
I a couple near me in a theatre were talking rather loudly, I would ask them to be quiet or to go somewhere else and talk.						
Anyone trying to push ahead of me in line is in for a good						

<b>battle.</b>						
<b>I am quick to say what I think.</b>						
<b>There are times when I just can't say anything.</b>						

**Appendix E**

Last Initial \_\_\_\_ Last 4 digits of phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer

Race:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black
- White
- Other

Ethnicity

- Hispanic/Latino
- Not Hispanic/Latino

Relationship Status:

- Single
- In a relationship
- Married/Domestic Partner
- Separated
- Widowed
- Divorced

Classification:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Law
- Graduate

Current Residence:

- On-campus residence hall
- Greek housing
- Off-campus apartment/house
- At home with parents
- Other

Which college are you currently enrolled in?

- College of Education & Health Professions
- College of Engineering
- Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food & Life Sciences
- Fay Jones School of Architecture
- Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
- Walton College of Business
- Undecided

Are you a member of any of the following? Check all that apply.

- Academic Greek organization
- Social Greek organization
- Intramural athletic team
- Varsity athletic team
- Student government

Have you ever taken any of the following CHLP/PBHL 2101 courses? Check all that apply.

- Assertiveness Training
- Complementary Wellness Strategies
- Mindfulness
- Resilience, Thriving, & Wellness (not currently enrolled)
- Yoga for Holistic Health

Why did you enroll in PBHL 2101 Resilience, Thriving, & Wellness?

**Appendix F**

**List of open-ended questions sent after completion of the course.**

1. Please identify what you valued most about the Resilience and Thriving course.
2. Please identify what you valued least about the Resilience and Thriving course.
3. Please identify the strengths of the Resilience and Thriving course.
4. Please identify the weaknesses of the Resilience and Thriving course.
5. Please explain how you feel the class did/did not provide you with strategies to cope with stress/deal with times of adversity.
6. Please explain how confident you do/do not feel at implementing the strategies that were taught in the Resilience and Thriving class.
7. Please explain how the course provided you with understanding of the topic of resilience.

**Appendix G**



# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

December 17, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Debbie Morgan  
Bart Hammig *Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board*

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 14-12-380

Protocol Title: *Efficacy of an 8-Week Undergraduate Course in Resilience*

Review Type:  EXEMPT  EXPEDITED  FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 12/17/2014 Expiration Date: 12/16/2015

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

**This protocol has been approved for 200 participants.** If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).

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