

DUAL MISCONCEPTIONS OF ASIAN-AMERICAN STUDENT SUCCESS
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Thesis by

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Bachelor of Arts, Wichita State University, 2004

Bachelor of Arts, Wichita State University, 2004

Submitted to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
and the faculty of the Graduate School of
Wichita State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

May 2011

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Liberal Studies.

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To the uneducated, an A is just three sticks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Rhonda Lewis, for her patience and encouragement. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the members of my committee, Dr. David Soles and Dr. Dorothy Billings (formerly Dr. Anna Chandler), for their helpful comments and support over the years. A special thank you is due to my children Steven and Senda Vu and closest friends, Cecilia Nguyen and Pamaline King-Burns, whose continued belief in me despite the obstacles I've faced made it easier to continue the pursuit for my master degree. I also want to thank Dr. Marlene Schommer-Aikins for allowing me to use components of her epistemological beliefs survey in developing the assessment tool, and for the years she has dedicated in mentoring and motivating me towards the area of educational research. Last, but not least important, I would like to thank Dr. Joseph Mau whose introduction to the area of Asian studies in my thesis coursework helped spark the interest in this population.

ABSTRACT

Student retention studies is an ever-growing field of interest as educational institutions of both secondary and post-secondary levels try to find ways to increase their enrollment numbers while decreasing drop-out rates. For over 40 years, research has been done in order to identify different subgroups at-risk of dropping out or „stopping’ out of college (Hansmeier, 1965; Astin, 1975; and Tinto, 1975). Some of the commonly identified risk factors include being a first-generation student—neither parents graduated with a bachelor degree, coming from a low-income household, and being a nontraditionally aged student upon entering college (Choy & Premo, 1995; Hansmeier, 1965; Horn, 1996; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Shield, 1994). Although retention studies have been conducted since the 1960’s, Asian/Asian-American students have only been examined for about 15 years. The purpose of this study is to assess the retention rates of Asian-American students at a mid-sized university. Risk factors for dropping out for Asian and other ethnic groups will be discussed. The study also discusses an assessment tool designed for instructors to help identify characteristics that can be seen as risk factors in this student population as well as utilized for identifying risk factors for all student populations in general.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Student retention has been an important issue for colleges nationwide for the past 45 years. The majority of research has focused on the negative reasons for student drop-out rates: Hansmeier (1965) and Wishart (1990) noted the negative relationship between students' past grade point average and their success after readmission. Tinto (1975) found that student entrance exam scores were strong indicators of student success and could predict student failure and drop out. Studies have grouped students according to their familial education attainment—if their parents did not graduate from college, they were less likely to graduate themselves (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Based on Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin's (1998) study, approximately 56% of first-generation students have been reported to stop out of college before obtaining a college degree. Others have identified low-income households as another indication of poor student success rates. Based on Horn & Carroll's (2006) findings, the average graduation rate of low-income students for moderately selective institutions is 51% and as low as 35% for institutions with large low-income enrollment levels. A more recent change in increasing enrollment numbers has also started a focus on studying nontraditional (age 24+) students and their success in college (Choy & Premo, 1995; Horn, 1996; Horn et. al., 2002; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). According to Choy and Premo (1995), a previous 1989-1990 study conducted reported that 71% of nontraditional students will stop out within the first two years of college. Out of these individuals, an average of 51% did not re-enroll within that time period. Another study showed that nontraditional students were also more likely to be in the lower-income brackets or have parents who had lower educational backgrounds (Horn et al, 2002). Additionally, nontraditional students are more likely to have other familial obligations, and time-

management as well as gender-centered concerns that can play a role in their ability to focus on educational attainment (Berker & Horn, 2003; Choy & Premo, 1995; Horn, 1996; Neukrug, 2003).

These previous studies identified different at-risk populations, but they did not focus on the positive aspects of students who may have had all the risk-factors and still graduated from college. This ability to bounce back and continue towards graduation can be summed up by one word: *resiliency*. In Spring 2001's pilot study conducted by Vu & Kabagarama (2001), Wichita State University (WSU) academic advisors were asked to spontaneously generate a list of characteristics they believed resilient students possessed. The following Spring, another study was conducted using the list of items generated from surveys and personal interviews in the 2001 pilot study. In this second study, WSU Advisors were given a questionnaire and asked to rate the resiliency items as well as choose the top three reasons they felt students were resilient at their university. The top five factors believed to be characteristic of resilient students were identified based on frequency of selection for the top three characteristics listed by those surveyed (Vu & Schommer-Aikins, 2002). In Spring 2003, a third study was conducted using a questionnaire similar to the one in Spring 2002. The main difference is that the updated questionnaire included a section for participants to include the names of their current institutions. The participants in this third study consisted of those who had any academic advising experience at their educational institution and were attending the Kansas Academic Advising Network (KAAN) Conference held at Hutchinson County Community College in Hutchinson, Kansas in Fall 2002. Responses from the Spring 2002 study were combined with those surveyed at the conference. Responses from the two groups were analyzed and compared. Once again, the top five perceived reasons for student resiliency were identified based on the frequency of the Top

Three choices chosen by the participants. Ancillary analysis was also conducted on the advisors' epistemological beliefs of knowledge and their ratings of reasons for resiliency. According to this study, the more WSU Advisors believed that the ability to learn can improve over time, the more likely they were to believe that students who have positive self-perceptions are more resilient ($r = -.39, p < .05$). Additionally, WSU Advisors who had teaching experience held a stronger belief that knowledge is continuously changing ($F(1, 28) = 4.79, p < .05$). The ancillary analysis results suggested that WSU Advisors saw a relationship between student's resiliency and their belief that the ability to learn can improve over time as is consistent with Schommer's (1990) findings (Vu & Schommer-Aikins, 2003).

What are the risk factors that affect Asian-American student success in higher education? Like their racial counterparts, Asian-Americans could be first-generation college students (parents did not graduate with a four-year degree), low-income, or academically unprepared. On the other hand, there may be cultural stereotypes or differences that could hinder their ability to succeed in college. It has often been stated that "all Asian students are smart...they don't need any help in school." Is this an accurate statement or just a misconception held by those who have only met the 'smart' Asian students in class? Furthermore, is there another stereotype that makes others believe that Asian-American students are language or knowledge-challenged and are in need of remedial intervention?

Gitterman (2001) states that "by emphasizing the deficits and negative aspects of [an] individual,...we have given insufficient attention to other dimensions of the human experience such as resourcefulness, courage, coping, and recovery" (p. 22). This study is the fourth of a series of studies focused on resiliency and positive characteristics of successful students in college. Using risk factors—also known as negative characteristics—identified by past research

(Astin, 1975; Choy & Premo, 1995; Hansmeier, 1965; Horn, 1996; Horn et. al., 2002; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Tinto, 1975; and Wishart, 1990), we plan to take a more positive and proactive approach by utilizing it for the betterment of the students. Although students may have risk factors that can make success harder to obtain in college, adapting to their needs can be easier once these needs are identified.

The purpose of this study is to assess the retention rates of Asian-American students at a mid-sized university and identify any misconceptions that can prevent them from obtaining the academic support needed to be successful. Risk factors for dropping out for Asian and other ethnic groups will be discussed. The study also discusses an assessment tool designed for instructors to help identify characteristics that can be seen as risk factors in this student population.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purpose of this study, Asian students are considered to be those who were born outside of the United States and citizens from the country of Asia, and Asian-American students are those who were either born in the United States or are naturalized citizens. In order to answer the question, “Are there misconceptions on the academic abilities of Asian/Asian-American students?” a review of Asian/Asian-American student literature was conducted.

Resources Used for Locating Information

Review of literary works was conducted using both the city public library and university library card catalogs and electronic databases such as ERIC and PsycINFO. Searches using a variety of keywords including the terms “Asian studies” and “Asian-American college students” were conducted. Over 170 total listings were provided, but the number of available full-text or relevant articles and journal offerings dropped to the 40’s upon closer inspection. Electronic academic research articles, educational books on the topics of multiculturalism, national educational and statistical databases, and editorials written by Asians on their life experiences were examined. Qualitative data obtained through personal interviews, classroom discussions in coursework on multicultural issues, and Vu’s personal life experiences were also utilized for the purpose of this study.

Contradictions in Asian/Asian-American Studies

Although retention studies can be found since the 1960’s, Asian/Asian-American studies have only started to blossom within the last 15 years. The literature studied indicated a contradiction of information, which is believed to be a result of researchers’ limitations on the

available Asian-American student population studied. Researchers from various disciplines have identified Asian-American students as the model minority that has earned higher grade point averages, scored higher on standardized tests related to mathematical abilities, and have entered college at higher rates than other racial groups (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). According to Lee (1996), despite the different levels of high and low academic educational achievement or the many struggles that Asian-American students experience, as a group overall they are believed to be successful and free of any problems and do not need help. Because of this, they are sometimes not recognized as educationally disadvantaged and have been excluded from some studies on minorities in higher education such as Astin's (1982) *Minorities in Higher Education* (Nakanishi, 1995). High educational success of Asian/Asian-American students are believed to be a direct result of positive cultural values such as hard work, family ties, the value placed on education, and sacrifices made by parents for the betterment of their children (Min, 2003).

Some may believe in the notion that smartness is an innate characteristic of all Asian students, but Vu has also met others who believed that Asian-Americans born outside the United States need remedial courses because they are more likely to have a language barrier (C.T. Nguyen, personal communications, 2007; R. Sudarjanto, personal communications, 2006). Others would also argue that much research data is aggregated and neglect to separate the academic and personal struggles that different ethnic groups within the Asian student population face. For example, Southeast Asian students (Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, and Hmong) are considered to be different from other Asian students in that a majority of them came to the United States as a result of war; thus, the majority are refugees and not immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). According to Takaki (1989), Asian refugees flocked to the United States in

three waves: the first-wave (1975-1979) included those who were the educated elite, professionals, and individuals who worked closely with the U.S. military during the Vietnam War; the second-wave (1979-1982) primarily included those who were family members of those from the first-wave group and who were educated and had above-average economic attainment and social resources; and the third-wave (1982-present) included those who have lived in the refugee camps in Thailand for years before immigrating to the U.S. and primarily consisted of the Hmong and Lowland Lao who had worked as farmers and were the least educated of the Southeast Asian refugees. This can be best summed by Dr. Gerald Fry's statement that "not all Asians are the same...Chinese and Vietnamese students are usually the predominant students in Asian-American research numbers, but other Southeast Asian students like the Laotian, Cambodians, and Hmong are not really studied. These [latter] are the groups with the lower academic attainment because of the higher value that is placed on work instead of education in their culture" (personal communications, February & March 2003).

According to Sue & Sue (2003), Asians are raised with the "guilt and shame" psychological method to ensure that they follow the request of their parents. Likewise, Asians are believed to be more reserved than other cultures (Root, 1998) and this behavior is often believed to be a result of self-control or a lack of confidence in their spoken English. Interviews conducted with two Asian female professionals—one who came to the U.S. as an international student and one who was a naturalized citizen—in the academic and teaching fields support these findings (C.T. Nguyen, personal communications, 2007; R. Sudarjanto, personal communications, 2006). Unable to ask for help from their own parents—individuals who may be deficient in English and other academic areas—and being taught to learn on their own or be punished for not being straight A students, these students are less likely to seek help from their

teachers or advisors than their racial counterparts. There is a general belief that all Asians tend to strive for academic excellence, which has often times made them workaholics (Sue & Sue, 2003). Cultural differences in listening and learning styles also exist between Asian/Asian-American students and other minority groups. Contrary to American culture, Asians are taught that looking a person in the position of authority in the eye while being spoken to is a sign of disrespect. Asian students who have been taught within the home or outside American classrooms at a young age are also trained to not talk to or question their instructors (C.T. Nguyen, personal communications, 2007; Root, 1998; R. Sudarjanto, personal communications, 2006; Sue & Sue, 2003). Thus, direct eye contact or discussions with instructors is not a common practice for these students.

Programs and Resources Available to Target Population

Numerous programs have been in place since the mid 1960's to help minority students achieve academic and economic success such as the TRIO programs (Council for Opportunity in Education, 2005). Except for the various student groups and associations available on college campuses across the United States, not much could be found in terms of specific educational support programs specifically designed for Asian-American students. Through internet searches, Asian students and their families are offered direct educational support globally—except for students in the United States. Studies have shown that Southeast Asians are often portrayed as high school drop outs, gangsters, and welfare dependents (Ngo, 2006). In contradiction, being considered as the model minority group by many scholars, Asian-American students have often been excluded from social and educational programs (Hurh & Kim, 1989; Lee, 1996; Nakanishi, 1995). As such, those who are not successful are considered dysfunctional and are undeserving of assistance (Um, 2003). Ideals such as these, and the feelings of shame of not being able to

understand a subject area, can also prevent Asian students from asking for and receiving the adequate support needed to succeed in college (Sue & Sue, 2003).

CHAPTER III

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This research attempts to offer a resource for educators and administrators in that it could provide insight to distinct characteristics of risk factors affecting Asian students in higher education. It was concluded that despite Asians' impact on the developing history of the United States, the study of Asian/Asian-American student academic success has only been recently pursued within the last two decades. As suggested by Dr. Fry, research supports his assertion that Asian retention studies are not adequate to support the notion that Asian/Asian-American students are not at risk of dropping out of college. It is apparent in the research literature that there is a dual misconception of the academic abilities of Asian-American students in institutions of higher education.

Risk Factors Commonly Shared by Other Racial Cohorts

It is important to note that Asian-American students have other risk factors that are shared with their racial counterparts. For instance, a majority of Asian-American students are first-generation students. This means that neither of their parents has graduated with a four-year degree; thus, Asian/Asian-American students are more at risk of stopping out of college due to the lack of academic support (Nunez & Cucaro-Alamin, 1998). Of those whose parents have attended college, many may have attended colleges in their native countries where the classroom norms are not aligned with the norms of an American college classroom: i.e. classroom discussions are non-existent (Sue & Sue, 2003; Root, 1998; classroom discussions in Dr. Mau's Multicultural Issues in Counseling, November 2004). Most Asian-American students who came to the U.S. during the great influx of Asian refugee years (1974-mid 1980's) were most likely living in poverty or on public assistance since their parents came to the United States with no

money and low education. Research shows that a student's household income, or poverty level, can be an indicator that he/she is at risk of dropping out of college (Horn & Carroll, 2006).

Another risk factor beyond this racial group's control that could have a negative impact on student success is age. During the years as a co-instructor for the Conversation Class for Non-Native Speakers, this became a topic of discussion for one of the sessions as it became apparent that Asian students were usually entering college at an older age—usually in their mid-to-late twenties—while Asian-American students were entering closer to the traditional age of 18. This disparity was explained as a result of the differences in the way these two groups' educational path was designed by outside forces known as social norms. It was discovered that many of the Asian-American students were simply following what is considered to be the norm for American high school students transitioning to college. Whereas, Asian students were entering later due to their late arrivals into the United States (language being a commonly identified barrier for this group) or their late release from governmentally sanctioned years of service (as is for male students in Japan and other countries where they are required to serve time in their government's army until they reach the age of 25-28) before being allowed to attend college. If they enter college as a nontraditional student, they are at an even higher risk of stopping out of college due to academic unpreparedness or outside familial obligations that could interfere with this subgroup's ability to thrive in the classroom setting (Berker & Horn, 2003; Choy & Premo, 1995; Horn, 1996; Horn et al, 2002; Neukrug, 2003).

Risk Factors not Common to Other Racial Cohorts

Although Asian/Asian-American students may share some of the same risk factors as other ethnic groups, cultural differences may be additional risk factors that will need to be addressed in order to fully provide these students with the proper assistance necessary to reach

their academic potential in college. Research show that both Asian and Asian-American students share a common heritage: most are raised traditionally using guilt (Sue & Sue, 2003). If a course subject is too difficult for them to comprehend, the shame and guilt they feel along with their tendencies to refrain from expressing emotions (Uba, 1994), can prevent them from seeking outside assistance. This cultural belief system can also restrict the academic or career options pressed upon them from academic advisors in educational settings and can have a detrimental effect to the person's perception of his/her cognitive or artistic abilities. An example of this can be found in the lyrics of a song from the Vietnamese music group Heart2Exist, "an Asian rapper?...he is just trying to be black....Asians are supposed to be...a Doctor, Computer Engineer, and mathematician....Your stereotypes are making me sick...." Therefore, as supported by Sue & Sue (2003) and Shonfeld-Ringel (2001), direct questioning regarding their academic progress will be the most productive method in advising them as well as increasing verbal participation.

When counseling Asian/Asian-American students, it is also advised that advisors or instructors be cognitive of the cultural differences in listening and learning styles. By following what they were taught as showing respect to their instructors by not making direct eye contact while lessons are being given (C.T. Nguyen, personal communications, 2007; Root, 1998; R. Sudarijanto, personal communications, 2006; Sue & Sue, 2003), these students can be erroneously labeled as not being attentive, not participating in class, or not showing interest in the subject matter. These assumptions can lower a student's performance rating in a class that could continue throughout his/her academic career. Overall, cultural sensitivity is crucial in helping Asian and Asian-American students succeed in college. Without being culturally aware of the differences between Asian/Asian-American students and their racial counterparts, advising

and teaching these students would be difficult if they do not feel that the instructor is an expert or trustworthy (Zhang & Dixon, 2001). Body posturing such as smiling and nodding throughout discussion periods with these students could increase their willingness to participate more actively as well as make them feel as if the sessions are productive enough to continue working with the instructor (Kim, Liang, & Li, 2003).

CHAPTER IV

RESOURCE TOOL: VATS

Since a single Asian/Asian-American student can have a multitude of characteristics known as risk factors affecting their academic success, an assessment tool designed to identify risk factors would be beneficial to instructors when dealing with this population in the classroom. As a result of this research, an assessment tool (Vu's Assessment Tool for Success--VATS) was created in hopes that it will provide educators and administrators with a useful resource to help identify risk factors in the classrooms. Results from VATS can be used to adapt curriculum to include campus resources available to address possible obstacles that may occur throughout the semester as well as the student's academic career.

Section 1: Educational and Demographic Background

The VATS is a universal tool intended to be administered to those enrolled in a College Orientation/Introductory to the University/College Success/Becoming a Master Student course at least a week prior to the first day of class. It is composed of three sections. The first section will assess students' academic and demographic background such as their name (will only be used to identify those students who have sent in their responses prior to class), student ID, semester in college, whether they were required to enroll in the class due to probationary or academic requirements, age, gender, ethnicity, parents' educational attainment (to help identify first-generation students), household size and adjusted gross income (to help identify low-income individuals; the income brackets should change annually based on the federal low-income guidelines). This section could be considered the general area of concern as it can quickly identify risk factors for all students.

Section 2: Students' Epistemological Beliefs about the Nature of Knowledge and Learning

The second section will assess students' epistemological beliefs, or beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning, using a 32-item questionnaire developed from a longer questionnaire used for the last 21 years (Schommer, 1990). This section will identify the classroom student beliefs in the acquisition of knowledge based on four categories of belief systems: 1) innate ability, 2) simple knowledge, 3) quick learning, and 4) certain knowledge. Students' beliefs in the certainty of knowledge as well as their beliefs in the speed and ability of learning will be assessed using a 5-point Likert Scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). This section may be more useful for identifying risk factors for Asian-American students who believe that knowledge is not fixed or innate, which may be contradictory to the popular notion that "all Asian students are smart."

Section 3: Students' Agreement to Perceived Factors Affecting Resiliency

The last section of the assessment tool will assess students' agreement to perceived factors affecting resiliency. This section will provide greater understanding of students' beliefs about what would make it easier for them to be resilient in college. In order to aide students with this section, the definition of *resilient* will be provided along with the instructions for this section. Initially, this section begins with the statement: "Students are more likely to be resilient if..." The remainder of the section will consist of 27 sentence fragments—derived from responses to Vu & Kabagarama's (2001) pilot study—that can complete the statement. Sample sentence fragments include: "they have a good support system," "they are academically prepared," and "they believe that they can overcome any barriers they encounter." Each student will be asked to rate the degree of agreement in which they believe each fragment statement could complete the initial statement using the Likert Scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly

agree). At the conclusion each will be asked to pick the top three fragment statements they believe to be the main reasons students are resilient. This section will give instructors a better understanding of their students' beliefs about resiliency. The findings may also offer suggestions on ways to improve their students' resiliency if certain items are selected as the top three: such as providing information on resources to support systems on campus if having a good support system is among that classroom's top three selected.

Examples of Uses of VATS for Instructors and Advisors

It is expected that the VATS will be an asset for instructors in planning and preparing for a productive semester. Possessing general demographic and educational statuses of their students prior to the onset of the course can aide instructors by quickly indentifying risk factors that are predominant in their classroom student body. In return, they can be prepared to include these issues on the syllabus for future discussion throughout the semester. Important items to discuss could include social and moral support groups (Shields, 1994) for those who are first-generation students. Mentors in their academic area of interest would be perfect examples of a support system that could help guide these students through their academic careers. Another topic that could be added to the instructional agenda is financial aid—intended for all students but especially key if the majority of the classroom body is identified as low-income.

Introduction to other campus or community resources that could assist with funding books or extracurricular activities on campus would be another asset for low-income at-risk groups. For a classroom group that is identified as having a high nontraditional student body, resources for adult learners and even day-care scholarships would be positive features on campus to be mentioned during the course of the semester.

Since students' beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning, epistemological beliefs, have been linked to their academic performance (Schommer, 1990), having data on their beliefs will also be useful. Instructors will be able to provide the proper and explicit directions necessary for students to successfully complete assignments as required if they have a better understanding of their students' epistemological beliefs. For example, students who have a strong belief that the ability to learn is fixed at birth are more likely to display helpless behaviors and give up whenever they are faced with difficult tasks (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Likewise, students who have a strong belief that knowledge never changes will struggle with accepting any answers that are speculative (Schommer, 1990). Students with these beliefs may find that subject matters involving critical thinking, such as philosophy, are almost impossible to comprehend. In opposition, Schommer and Walker's study (1995) showed that students were able to more accurately comprehend passage information on two different academic domains the less they believed in simple knowledge and certain knowledge.

Understanding students' beliefs about what increases resiliency would also be beneficial for instructors. Despite what the instructor believes to be reasons for resiliency, a student's belief on this subject will most likely play a stronger role in his/her academic success. As shown in Vu & Schommer-Aikin's (2002) study, Wichita State University academic advisors believed that a student's positive self-perception is a key component to their ability to be resilient. This belief was once again supported by their 2003 study, which surveyed Kansas Advisors' views on student resiliency (Vu & Schommer-Aikins, 2003). With the data collected from section three of the assessment tool, instructors will have a clearer awareness of what students may need in order to be resilient throughout their academic years. If positive self-perception is identified as a strong indicator of resiliency for the classroom, then implementation of classroom exercises or

practices that promotes positive self-perceptions would be appropriate. Similarly, if the item, “they have a good support system” is identified, then additional discussions on support systems should be encouraged.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

VU’S ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR SUCCESS (VATS)

The purpose of this assessment tool is to help identify your belief in the nature of knowledge and the ability to be successful in college. In order to plan this semester’s course and cater to your educational needs, please complete this assessment tool and return it to your instructor as noted on the attached informational sheet. This assessment is **required** and is a part of your classroom grade. This is not a test and there is no right or wrong answers.

(Please Print Legibly)

SECTION 1: YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name	Student ID#
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Semester in college: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th Other: _____

I enrolled in this class because:

- I was placed on Probation due to poor grades from previous semester(s).
- It was a part of my Admissions requirement.
- My advisor suggested that I take this course because I am not sure what college is.
- I was told that everyone had to enroll in it as a Freshman.
- I was not required to take this course—just enrolled on my own.

Age: _____ Gender: Male Female

Ethnicity: Which ethnic group/culture do you identify with the most?

- Caucasian/White African- American/Black
- Asian-American Alaskan/Pacific Islander
- Native American/Indian Hispanic/Latino
- Other: _____

Your Parent’s Highest Level of Education Completed:

- Elementary School (grades K-5)
- Middle School (grades 6-8)
- High School (grades 9-12)
- Vocational School (Certificates, Licenses, Diplomas)
- Some College but did not graduate
- Community College
 - Certificate or Diploma Associates Degree
- 4-yr College or University
 - Associates Degree Bachelor Degree
 - Master Degree Doctorate Degree
 - Professional License Other: _____
- I don’t know/they have never discussed their educational level

APPENDIX (continued)

Household Size: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8+

Household Adjusted Gross Income (all income received by family members for the entire year. It is okay to estimate):

<input type="checkbox"/> \$16,335 or less	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39,256 - 44,985
<input type="checkbox"/> \$16,336 - 22,065	<input type="checkbox"/> \$44,986 - 50,715
<input type="checkbox"/> \$22,066 - 27,795	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,716 - 56,445
<input type="checkbox"/> \$27,796 - 33,525	<input type="checkbox"/> \$56,446 or more

SECTION II: YOUR BELIEFS ON THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE & LEARNING
(Adapted from Dr. Marlene Schommer-Aikins)

Directions: Using the scale below, rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Write your answers on the line to the left of each statement as provided.

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- ___ 1. It is hard to learn from a textbook unless you start at the beginning and learn one chapter at a time.
- ___ 2. If I can't understand something right away, I will keep trying.
- ___ 3. The best thing about a science course is that most problems have only one right answer.
- ___ 4. You will get mixed-up if you try to combine new ideas in a textbook with what you already know.
- ___ 5. I like it when experts disagree.
- ___ 6. Some people are just born smart; others are born dumb.
- ___ 7. Being a good student generally involves memorizing facts.
- ___ 8. What students learn from a textbook depends on how they study it.
- ___ 9. You cannot learn anything more from a textbook by reading it twice.
- ___ 10. Please leave this line blank and go on to number 11.
- ___ 11. I can depend on the facts written in my college books for the rest of my life.

APPENDIX (continued)

- | Strongly
Disagree
1 | Somewhat
Disagree
2 | Neutral
3 | Somewhat
Agree
4 | Strongly
Agree
5 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
- ___ 12. A class in study skills would probably help slow learners.
- ___ 13. Learning something really well takes a long time.
- ___ 14. Thinking about what a textbook says is more important than memorizing what a textbook says.
- ___ 15. Working hard on a difficult problem only pays off for the really smart students.
- ___ 16. An expert is someone who is really born smart in something.
- ___ 17. Successful students understand things quickly.
- ___ 18. I really do not like listening to teachers who cannot seem to make up their minds as to what they really believe.
- ___ 19. If I cannot understand something quickly, it usually means I will never understand it.
- ___ 20. Scientists can get to the truth if they just keep searching for it.
- ___ 21. Most words have one clear meaning.
- ___ 22. Please leave this line blank and go on to number 23.
- ___ 23. If I am ever going to be able to understand something, it will make sense to me the first time.
- ___ 24. Today's facts may be tomorrow's fiction.
- ___ 25. To me studying means getting the big ideas from the textbook, rather than the details.
- ___ 26. The really smart students don't have to work hard to do well in school.
- ___ 27. The only thing you can be sure of is that nothing is sure.
- ___ 28. If I find the time to re-read a textbook chapter, I get a lot more out of it the second time.
- ___ 29. Students who are "average" in school will remain "average" for the rest of their lives.
- ___ 30. If scientists try hard enough, they can find the truth to almost everything.
- ___ 31. Getting ahead takes a lot of work.
- ___ 32. The knowledge of "how to study" is usually learned as we grow older.

APPENDIX (continued)

SECTION III: YOUR BELIEFS ON RESILIENCY

Directions: Using the same scale, rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statements completing the following sentence fragment: “Students are more likely to be resilient if...” There is no right or wrong answers for the following statements. Write your answers on the line to the left of each statement as provided. Resiliency in this study is defined as the “ability to recover rapidly, as from misfortune” or being able to “regain [one’s] original shape after being bent, stretched, or compressed” (Webster’s new Riverside Dictionary, 1984).

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Students are more likely to be resilient if...

- ___ 1. they understand the connection between their education and their future employment.
- ___ 2. they possess and use personality traits (stubbornness, pride, determination, motivation, goal-driven, etc) in a positive way.
- ___ 3. they have a good social support system.
- ___ 4. college is a priority for them.
- ___ 5. they want to obtain a degree for job security.
- ___ 6. they have a significant “someone” in college (personal relationships).
- ___ 7. they need a degree for job security/financial stability.
- ___ 8. obtaining a degree will give them a sense of accomplishment.
- ___ 9. they receive financial aid that is tied to the University.
- ___ 10. they are academically prepared.
- ___ 11. they have experienced “success”/good grades in academic courses.
- ___ 12. they believe that they can overcome any barriers they encounter.
- ___ 13. they receive good (proper) academic advising.
- ___ 14. they need a degree for more advanced degrees (Masters or Doctorates).
- ___ 15. they believe that they can overcome any barriers they encounter.
- ___ 16. they believe that having a degree would give them status and prestige.

APPENDIX (continued)

**Strongly
Disagree**
1

**Somewhat
Disagree**
2

Neutral
3

**Somewhat
Agree**
4

**Strongly
Agree**
5

- ___17. they have had quality instructors who can teach well.
- ___18. they take advantage of Student Support Services on campus.
- ___19. there is a wide variety of degrees offered.
- ___20. they are more involved in extracurricular campus activities.
- ___21. they have better time management skills.
- ___22. they have positive perceptions of themselves (believe that they can do it).
- ___23. they feel excited about being in college.
- ___24. they feel that college is a personal goal for them.
- ___25. they do not let past failures affect them negatively.
- ___26. they believe that this is the right time for college.
- ___27. they have better stress management skills.

From the 27 resilient items previously listed, in your opinion, what are the top three reasons why students are resilient?

#_____, #_____, #_____