EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSFORMATIVE SELF-MASTERY SKILLS TRAINING IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

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We, the undersigned members of The Committee, have approved this dissertation.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to all those who look back on their young adult years and wish they had known more about themselves and how to dance powerfully with life back then. I also dedicate this to all the post-secondary educators who endeavor to speak into their students' hearts as well as their brains, to help prevent such a retrospective realization. Lastly, I dedicate this to all the emerging adults thirsting for a blueprint that enables them to live whole, fulfilling, purpose-fueled and happy lives.

Abstract

As young people head to college, they are entering an important period in their lives. Often, the challenges they face as they make the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood triggers stress, anxiety, and depression. Left unmanaged, these issues impact their post-secondary educational achievement, completion rates, and quality of life, as well as their career readiness and integration into society longer-term. Post-secondary institutions can provide novel non-cognitive/SEL skills-based interventions that build self-mastery that helps students deal better with the rigors and dynamics of their school, work, and personal lives.

In this IRB-approved human subjects study, post-secondary students were provided ten weeks of non-cognitive, co-curricular, social-emotional skills instruction inclusive of practical spirituality principles and practices to help them manage their whole lives better. Named *Living 101: Being Happy and Whole*© and *Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum*©, the courses were taught in a synchronous format with the same instructor teaching both. Proprietary content was delivered via lecture, assigned reading in the course text books (different for each course), case study analyses, dyad and triad discussion, experiential exercises, and a Capstone Project. Two validated instruments were used to assess the pre/post change in students' outlook and abilities: they were the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI). Based on the 167 respondents who qualified for inclusion in the study, the courses had a significant positive effect on enrolled students. The differences in post-course improvement in combined measures versus pre-course responses was +22 points in the CSEI and +6 points in the FFMQ. Additionally, there were statistically significant positive effects measured in all breakout categories. While these findings suggest the Living 101 and Living 102

courses can support post-secondary students to increase mindfulness and ability to navigate the rigors of undergraduate study, more research is warranted. As world problems continue to get more and more complex, the time is ripe to graduate a higher caliber of emerging leaders. Educators and policymakers are perhaps the most empowered now to evolve post-secondary curricula to get that job done.

Keywords

post-secondary, co-curricular education, social-emotional learning, emotional self-regulation, biopsychosocial approach, non-cognitive skills, soft skills, self-mastery training, practical spirituality, post-secondary education policy

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Preface

As a part-time lecturer at The Paul Merage School of Business (Merage) at the University of California, Irvine, (UCI) from 2007-2019, I interacted with hundreds of students. These young people were from various cultural, socio-economic, and geographic backgrounds, and were at various stages of degree completion. Coming from a corporate background rather than the traditional academic track to professorship, I suspect I presented as a different kind of educator with different predispositions and expectations. I had successfully completed a training program offered jointly by UCI and accrediting body American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) to prepare me to leverage my more than 25 years of experience as a professional marketer in collegiate classrooms. I was there to bring something I was told the students wanted: real-world experiences, problem-solving and storytelling that would bring examples of applied theory to life.

In addition to my marketing background, I also was interested in and offering services in personal development. I was speaking, training and facilitating workshops and retreats. The mission was to help people have more direction, connection, ease, inner peace and happiness using the teachings, tools and practices I was learning to integrate into my own life. This was a parallel path of demonstrating the benefits of applied theory to real-world situational dynamics.

I was a member of the Unity spiritual organization and was investigating ministerial credentials through field licensing through its ministerial program. I was reading a wide array of spiritual and human potential thought-leaders, including: Wayne Dyer, Don Miguel Ruiz, Florence Scovel Shinn, Ekhart Tolle, Louise Hay, Shakti Gawain, Myrtle and Charles Fillmore, Eric Butterworth, Thich Nhat Hahn, Eugene Whitworth, Colin Tipping, Paramahansa

Yogananda, Barbara and Jimmie Lewis, and more. I explored *A Course in Miracles*, *The Bhagavad Gita*, the *I Ching*, the Enneagram© (I'm an 8), and HeartMath©. I immersed myself in and helped facilitate transformational experiences with The S.O.U.L Institute™ for several years. I became certified as an archetype counselor through Caroline Myss's education organization and completed two years of a three-year Spiritual Direction certification.

I was probably most influenced by the down-to-earth nature of Wayne Dyer and the Lewis's (I chose their book, *"The Energy of Life"* as the textbook for Living 101), the mystical nature of Whitworth, Gawain, and anything to do with the life and messages of Jeshua. I began to notice what I call a "through line" in the wisdom from all these teachers and teachings. I used the highly analytical left-brain that had helped me be so successful in the business world and applied it to what I was noticing in the spiritual teachings. Over time, I distilled a set of steps that I branded as my "4-Step Happy to Be ME process" for personal transformation. They can be applied to large and small situations to provide a framework for supporting one's self to move forward, to transcend the situational dynamics of life while *still living through those experiences, exactly as they are*.

For the most part, I incorporated this unfolding and expanding body of work into public speaking engagements and workshops for adults. I created and facilitated my "Lighten Up and Let Go" weekend experiences to help people release the weights of their own "little pockets of sadness, fear, self-doubt and longing," and choose a new way of living their lives. That included my first Laughter Yoga experience and a sound healing experience with a gong and singing bowls avatar. The experiential movements got rave reviews from attendees, and I have continued to anchor my client service products in experiential offerings.

In 2010, I created a company called the Heart of Living Vibrantly™ and began to pull my "teachings" into a book. I often heard from older people who experienced my work that they wish they'd "had something like this when I was in college…My life would be so different." I could relate! I wonder still what different choices I might have made if I'd been enlivened back then with what I embody and teach now.

In 2013, in the midst of my ongoing journey, and while teaching at Merage, I noticed that many of the students who scheduled office hours appointments for my marketing courses would want to talk to me about things that had nothing to do with marketing. They would tell me about broken relationships with family or girlfriends/boyfriends, fear about failing and letting their parents down, suffering from intense fear about the future, knowing they were on the wrong degree track for who they felt they were, but not knowing how to get off, years of battling depression and more. I listened to their stories, gave guidance, and offered tissues for the tears. I later discovered they were specifically asking *me* because they'd done a little research on me as the instructor of a course they were planning to take as Merage students. They knew I did personal development work outside of the UCI environment. They had been to my website, read a couple of my published articles, and watched past interviews. They knew they were asking someone who had specific knowledge and deep passion for helping people get out of their own way, and they often told me as much.

Though I became more and more concerned about the plights of these students, at first, I did not see myself as a major resource. I had been applying my teachings to a much older population. I wanted to know where on campus I could refer them for additional support and started asking colleagues about that. In general, the main place for such assistance is the

counseling center, which I was soon to discover was problematic for troubled students from two perspectives. Sometimes, there was a shortage of qualified counselors, so students would be put on a waiting list for days or even weeks. Additionally, students didn't *want* to see a counselor, often stating that they'd prefer to figure things out themselves. They just didn't know where to go to get the skills they thought they needed. I later also uncovered the stigma associated with mental health issues and interventions, and the students who shared their issues with me didn't want that association.

I also discovered that other than a few one-off courses offered by a handful of faculty or staff, there was not much in the way of positive intervention. I couldn't understand why post-secondary education didn't offer required courses that would help these young adults become more well-rounded and self-sufficient. I started to envision a way to help them. It involved my body of work, which I'd been capturing in the manuscript of my soon-to-be-published spiritual self-help book, "*Living Happy to Be ME!:Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle*©," and a larger inquiry into what more was possible.

By January 2015, I'd been introduced to and had a meeting with UCI's then Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Dr. Thomas A. Parham. Through that initial discussion and his subsequent guidance, I became more steeped in the dynamics of co-curricular, non-cognitive education, including the lack of offerings in the subject matter that lay at the root of most of the problems with which I had been helping my students. He offered some suggestions for how to develop better understanding of co-curricular, non-cognitive education, and also asked me to submit a formal proposal for what I could bring as a solution.

I submitted my proposal later that month, and by the beginning of UCI's Spring Quarter in March 2015, I was teaching my course to 12 students. Over the next several quarters, I gathered data and refined the course offerings, and also received approval to expand access to graduate students and add an advanced level course. Our original data collection was not under an IRB-approved protocol, yet it showed similar results. We transitioned to an IRB-Approved protocol to add more rigor into the process and make the data publishable. This study provides insight into possible interventions to mitigate student stress, anxiety, and depression while supporting a stronger sense of self, purpose and direction.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The transition from high school to college, which is going from late adolescence to young adulthood, involves many developmental changes, including changes in relational aspects of their own bodies and authority figures, as well as with their identities, and cognitive skills such as abstract thinking. (Christie and Viner, 2005) Some young people may not fully be prepared for what the college experience entails, which includes developmental, academic, and social adjustments. (Sanders, 2013) These changes can mean that the transition to college experiences can be emotionally stressful and debilitating.

According to the most recent data, between 18 and 20 million young people were enrolled in public and private institutions of higher education in the U.S. in 2019 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2020; Statista, 2021). What happens among this population has implications for families, communities, and our nation at large. When this population is plagued by unmanaged stress, low sense of self and disconnection from a higher power, it can show up in their relational skills, decision-making, self-efficacy and employability, and should be cause for concern among parents, educators, employers and policy-makers alike.

According to a 2014 survey by the American College Counseling Association, 52% of university students seeking mental health treatment had serious psychological issues, up from 44% in 2013 and 16% in 2000, indicating the rising trend of stress among university students (Jafari, 2019; Reetz, Krylowicz & Mistler 2014). Additionally, research from the mid-2000s revealed that 64% of university students who dropped out did so for mental health reasons (Jafari, 2019; Allen, Robbins, Casillas, & Oh 2008; Gold & Albert 2006).

Background of the Problem

The rates of mental-health issues among undergraduate students are increasing significantly. (Jafari, 2019; Beiter et al. 2015; Brunner, Wallace, Reymann, Sellers & McCabe 2014; Gallagher 2015).

Stress

The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) reported that for the 12-month period ending Spring 2018, only 1.6 percent of undergraduates reported that they felt no stress. Over that same time period, 35.3% of students reported that stress had impacted their academic pursuits, defined in the study as: "received a lower grade on an exam or an important project; received a lower grade in the course; received an incomplete or dropped the course; or experienced a significant disruption in thesis, dissertation, research, or practicum work." (NCHA-II, 2018). This is supported by Beiter et al., who reported in 2015 that approximately 27% of undergraduate students experience stress. In a 2020 review of literature on post-secondary stress and mental well-being by Linden and Stuart, the majority of studies showed evidence of high levels of stress (Garcia-Williams, Moffitt, & Kaslow, 2014; Lee, Wuertz, Rogers, & Chen, 2013; Robinson, Jubenville, Renny, & Cairns, 2016; Wyatt & Oswalt, 2013).

Some significant specific sources of stress include: depth, breadth and difficulty of college course work (Westrick, Le, Robbins, Radunzel & Schmidt 2015; Kausar, 2010), students' ability to manage their time to get that work done (Kumaraswamy 2013), living away from the familiarity of home (Stroebe, Schut & Nauta 2015), and fear about the future, including financial fears and fears about finding a job after graduation (Keady, 1999; Ross, Niebling & Heckert, 1999; Linden & Stuart, 2020). Although certain stress is thought to be required to encourage and

excite people to reach their goals (Ellawela & Fonseka, 2011), stress might interfere with students' ability to concentrate, solve problems, make decisions, and other skills needed for learning (Yazdani et al., 2010). There is an acknowledgment that the excitement from anticipation creates a potentially beneficial stress, while the immune/adrenal impact of negative fear-based stress resulting from fear of failure, beliefs of inadequacies, and unrealistic expectations can be disease producing emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

In the study at the University of Minnesota, 34.7 percent of students said they were unable to manage stress. As anticipated, the data further suggests a link between uncontrolled stress and increased rates of diagnosis of acute illnesses and mental health problems, listed in the findings as anxiety, panic attacks, social anxiety, and depression, for example (Provost's white paper, UofMN). The ability to respond to and mitigate stress depends on the individual's coping strategies. (Manap et al. Date TBD)

Anxiety, Emotional Distress and Depression

According to research, anxiety levels among college students have risen dramatically over the last three decades (Davis, 2000.) The National Survey on Drug Use and Health, a nationally representative survey that has tracked drug and alcohol use, mental health and other health-related issues in individuals aged 12 and over in the United States since 1971, indicates the rate of individuals reporting symptoms consistent with major depression in the last 12 months increased +63 percent in young adults aged 18 to 25 from 2009 to 2017 (from 8.1 percent to 13.2 percent). There was also a +71 percent increase in young adults experiencing serious psychological distress in the previous 30 days from 2008 to 2017 (from 7.7 percent to 13.1 percent) (NSDUH, 2018).

Beiter reported that approximately 25% of undergraduate students experience anxiety and 22% experience depression (Beiter et al. 2015). According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), "Anxiety Disorders are one of the most common mental health problems on college campuses." The ADAA further reports a variety of statistics that delve deeper into the problem and experiences of college students. This includes that 85% of college students reported they had felt overwhelmed by everything they had to do at some point within the past year. Further, 24.5% of college students reported they were taking psychotropic medication, which represents a precursor to a life-style adaption that can be carried throughout adulthood. A 2013 survey of University and College Counseling Center Directors reported that 41.6% of respondents stated anxiety as the top presenting concern among the students they served (Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors Survey, 2013).

Figures compiled by Statista indicate nearly 75% of students enrolled in college in the U.S. in 2017 had experienced a sense of "overwhelming anxiety" at some point in their lives, and approximately 30% reported having felt that way in the most recent two-week period (stress.org, 2019). The same Spring 2018 NCHA report referenced above indicated that 19.8% of students reported that depression had impacted their academic pursuits, defined in the study as: "received a lower grade on an exam or an important project; received a lower grade in the course; received an incomplete or dropped the course; or experienced a significant disruption in thesis, dissertation, research, or practicum work." Further, students reported the following mental health distresses in the same period: Felt very sad (69.9%); Felt overwhelming anxiety (64.3%); Felt so depressed it was difficult to function (42.9%); Felt things were hopeless (55%); Felt exhausted (not from physical activity) (84.6%); Felt very lonely (64.4%) (NCHA-II, 2018).

The Healthy Minds Study (Healthy Minds Network, 2016) polls students on college campuses around the U.S. using questions from standardized assessment tools that include criteria from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The study aims to identify respondents who are at risk of developing a mental illness, regardless of whether they have been examined by a professional. According to a 2015 study of over 16,000 students, 35% of college students met the criteria for at least one mental illness in the previous year. One-fifth (20%) of respondents had moderate or severe depression, and 12% of students exceeded the threshold for major depression (two weeks or more of significant depression or loss of usual interests, associated with additional physiological and cognitive symptoms). Additionally, one-fifth of study subjects (20%) fulfilled anxiety criterion, with 40 percent being classified by their responses as having severe anxiety. *Surprisingly, 61% of individuals who met the criteria for a mental illness were not receiving any care.* This is also an indication that this extreme level of stress has evolved to be considered "normal" or simply "the way life is" thus not requiring any additional support. This belief system leaves these students unprepared for their lives post-graduation when knowing how to deal with stress, keep things in-perspective, and practice long-term self-care is imperative if they are to live productive and fulfilling lives versus just barely survive. Some studies measure emotional distress as "overwhelm." In a 2006 survey of college freshman conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles, more than 30% of respondents reported feeling "overwhelmed" a "great deal of the time," while 38% of college women respondents said they were "frequently overwhelmed." (Journal of American College Health, June 2006).

According to the American College Health Association's 2015 survey (American College Health Association, 2015), one in every five college students has been diagnosed with depression at some point in their lives. 13 percent of students said they had been diagnosed or treated for depression in the preceding year, while 16 percent said they had been diagnosed or treated for anxiety. Seven percent of students had panic episodes, according to the data. Furthermore, respondents reported significant rates of negative emotions and thoughts in the preceding 12 months, including feeling overwhelmed (86%), emotional exhaustion (82%), extremely sad (64%), very lonely (59%), overwhelming anxiety (57%), hopelessness (48%), and overwhelming anger (38%). Over a third (35%) said they had been depressed to the point of being unable to function.

The issues appear quite troublesome for graduate and professional students as well. While they are similarly vulnerable to mental illness, they must deal with different triggers than their undergraduate counterparts. When working directly with academics whose recommendations are essential for career development or in an "apprentice professional" capacity, these obstacles include an increased risk of social isolation, as well as actual and perceived repercussions of stigma. In a study conducted by Hyun, Quinn, Madon, and Lustig (2006), almost half of graduate students (44.7 percent) said they had an emotional or stress-related problem in the previous year, and more than half (57.7%) said they had a colleague with a comparable problem. According to a study of law students from 15 law schools, 17% of respondents tested positive for depression, 23% for mild to moderate anxiety, and 14% for severe anxiety (Organ, Jaffe, & Bender, 2015). Similarly, 44% of foreign graduate students are dealing with a stress or emotion-related issue that is negatively impacting their health and well-being

(Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2007). Sadly, the number of unreported difficulties could rapidly increase these statistics.

Impact of unmanaged student stress, anxiety, and depression

Unmanaged stress, anxiety and depression have multiple consequences for college students, both during their post-secondary pursuits and beyond. First and foremost, unmanaged stress has been associated with poor academic performance. According to a 2015 OECD report, findings of feelings of stress were higher among students who performed less well. Performing poorly as a result of unmanaged academic-related stress is not surprising given its link to decreased student academic motivation (Liu, 2015; Liu & Lu, 2011; Shinto, 1998) and academic disengagement (National Centre on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), 2003).

Additional health variables correlated to negative academic performance were highlighted in University of Minnesota's 2015 Student Health Services report on Health and Academic Impact. Lower grade point averages (GPA) are significantly linked to mental health issues, among them, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and other severe illnesses. Furthermore, poorer GPAs are linked to various stressors and the inability to address stress, trouble sleeping, days unwell due to mental health issues, and other mental health symptoms (Provost's Committee on Student Mental Health, University of MN, 2016; Boynton Health Services, 2015). Trouble sleeping appears in other studies showing the impact of unmanaged academic-related stress, along with increased use of alcohol, less exercise, unhealthy food choices (Lepink et al 2016, Hudd et al 2000, and Weidner et al 1996), exhaustion, depersonalization, and cynicism (Walburg, 2014).

Beyond post-secondary experience, unmanaged long-term stress has been linked to more serious mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression (Kessler, 1997; Moylan, Maes, Wray, & Berk, 2013). When unmanaged stress evolves into an anxiety disorder or depression, the consequences can be more significant, resulting in isolation behaviors, dropout or even suicide attempts (ADAA 2007 Audit). The long-term ramifications of drop-out are significant, to the student and society in general. Data suggests that school drop-out is linked to reduced employment security and earning capacity (Lamb & Huo, 2017), poverty (Black, 2007; Lamb & Huo, 2017; Muir, Family, Maguire, Slack-Smith, & Murray, 2003), and reduced self-sufficiency (Noble et al., 2008).

Impact of Low Self-Esteem

Studies have measured the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, in both secondary and post-secondary environments. In the United States and other Western countries, the rise in attention paid to self-esteem may be related to the persistent pattern of educational research demonstrating the academic and social benefits of a good sense of self (Booth and Gerard, 2011). A study in India among post-graduate students also showed the relevance of self-esteem to a person's overall well-being (Aloysius and Manoj, 212). Importantly, when cross-cultural comparisons of the influence of self-esteem on behavior come into the mix, the analysis of impact becomes more complicated and difficult. In fact, Baumeister et al found that the true influence of self-esteem on behavior could not be conclusively determined (Baumeister et al., 2003). Self-esteem does not necessarily ensure performance success (Bandura, 1997; Mone, Baker, & Jeffries, 1995), nor is it predictive of personal objectives (Mone, Baker, & Jeffries, 1995).

Low self-esteem is caused by a distorted self-image. Every recognized psychiatric ailment stems from a lack of self-esteem (Aloysius and Manoj, 2012). According to Dr. Kenneth Shore of the New Jersey Public School System, “Low self-esteem can lessen a student's desire to learn, her ability to focus, and her willingness to take risks.” (https://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/shore/shore059.shtml). Further, low self-esteem has a potentially negative impact on mental well-being and can lead to stress and low productivity (Lane et al., 2004).

Impact of Low Self-Efficacy

The American Psychological Association suggests the objectives for which people strive, the amount of energy invested in goal accomplishment, and the possibility of reaching specific levels of behavioral performance are all influenced by efficacy self-evaluations (Carey, Michael P. and Forsyth, Andrew D., 2009). Self-efficacy is described as an individual's belief in their capacity to carry out certain actions or accomplish specific goals (Lane, Lane & Kyprianou, 2004). Multiple studies have shown that in the presence of perceived self-efficacy within an individual, performance improves, regardless of task-specific understanding, although the strength of relationships vary between studies. (Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992; Multon, Brown, & Lent,1991; Lane and Lane, 2001; Lane, Lane & Cockerton, 2003). Self-efficacy differs from esteem, in that it relates to capabilities to execute specific tasks, or courses of action where the results do not necessarily have any perceived impact on self-esteem. (Lane, Lane & Kyprianou, 2004).

People with a poor sense of self-efficacy, on the other hand, see tough activities as personal dangers and avoid them. Difficult challenges cause people to focus on their weaknesses rather than their strengths. After a failure, it's simple for people to lose trust in their own skills.

High levels of stress and sadness have been related to low self-efficacy. (Bandura, 2010) When a person's sense of self-efficacy is poor, he or she might acquire learned helplessness, which is a feeling of utter loss of control when it comes to accomplishing a task. A pervasive sense of indifference and a conviction that effort makes no difference and does not lead to achievement characterize the attitude, which is comparable to depression. This is based on the work by psychologist Martin Seligman (1995). In an academic setting, this can translate to students perceiving or "learning" from one bad experience (on an exam, with student-to-faculty or with peer-to-peer relationships) that they are not capable of succeeding.

Impact of Lack of a Meaningful and Positive Spiritual Foundation

Spirituality is defined as by Dr. Maya Spencer (2012) of the Royal College of Psychiatrists as the realization of a sense or conviction that there is something larger than oneself, that there is more to the human experience than can be measured by the five senses, that the greater total of which we are a part is cosmic or divine in nature and that true spirituality necessitates the opening of one's heart. Spirituality's role in mental health is now generally acknowledged (Verghese, 2008), as is its role in other positive human traits, such as self-esteem, optimism, healthy relationships, and as sense of purpose in one's life (Howell, 2013). However, people can have negative spirituality (defined as feeling abandoned or punished by a higher power). Neuropsychologist and professor of health psychology Brick Johnstone (2015) studied 200 individuals to see if there was link between their spiritual beliefs and their health outcomes. His study showed that those with negative spirituality reported significantly worse pain and worse physical and mental health.

Fukofuka (2007) showed students who credit themselves with strong academic performance indicated their spirituality as a primary factor; similarly, those who lacked spirituality blame that absence as a key factor for their poor academic performance.

Overall, the above data suggest positive impact on stress, mental health and well-being from the spirituality-based self-mastery training evaluated in this study.

Statement of the Problem

There are many stressors effecting young adults as they enter college and complete a degree. Studies have shown that almost all of these young people have experienced one or more of these stressors, and many have succumbed to the debilitating impact these stressors can have on their personal health, well-being, academic engagement and performance, and quality of life. Many post-secondary students, however, may not seek treatment for mental health issues because they believe their symptoms are typical of college stress and fear that others will criticize them if they do (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Gollust, 2007).

Post-secondary students need compulsory transformative self-mastery skills training that includes social emotional learning (SEL) and practical spirituality to mitigate high levels of unmanaged stress, anxiety, depression and fear related to the rigors of their academic lives. Institutions of higher education need to recognize their responsibility for the whole being, and demonstrate their commitment to serving students to achieve that wholeness as a critical factor to achieving cognitive academic success.

Potential Positive Interventions

Teaching Non-cognitive skills/Social Emotional Learning/Emotional Intelligence

It has been established that stress management and coping behaviors can serve young adults, both while in school and beyond, and also can be learned effectively (Sawyer et al. 2012).

There are many examples of education-based interventions to help young adults manage stress and anxiety. Those specific to increasing skill development and proficiency to cope with stress have resulted in reduced stress symptoms and improved coping skills among students (Kraag, Zeegers, Kok, Hosman, & Abu-Saad, 2006), as well as positive impact in educational achievement while also reducing health risks. (Hanson & Austin, 2002; Perry et al., 2017; Weare & Gray, 2003). The Mayo Clinic's perspective on "treatment" for anxiety sufferers is that "lifestyle coaching" is a worthy option among additional interventions such as psychotherapy, medications and support groups.

Strengthening individuals' understanding and application of emotional intelligence skills is an intervention associated with decreased stress and depression (Fletcher, Leadbetter, Curran & O'Sullivan 2009). One potential source for efficacious interventions is the body of knowledge encompassed by the term social and emotional learning (SEL), which is broadly defined as education focused on decision-making, emotional regulation, goal-setting and achievement, and forming and engaging in healthy interpersonal relationships. (Cristóvão, Candeias & Verdasca, 2017). Social emotional learning provides a foundation for students to relate differently with stress. Importantly, students need to acknowledge that stressful situations may not change. They have to know, understand and utilize (embody) skills that they consciously choose as interventions to improve their self-efficacy in various kinds of stressful situations. Multiple sources report findings that suggest that successful SEL programs result in positive academic outcomes and improved social behavior. (Osher et al 2016; Durlak et al 2011)

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI), in a perspective on the broadest meaning of the term "educated," and what it means to be an educated person, suggests a level of development that includes skills and traits that make the SEL list, including critical thinking, problem-solving, social skills and self-control. Generically the term non-cognitive skills might be used to label this group of SEL skills and traits also. These kinds of skills and traits are ones EPI associates with a person's ability to "contribute meaningfully to society and to succeed in their public lives, workplaces, homes, and other societal contexts." (Heckman and Kautz, 2013). Non-cognitive skills are defined as the "patterns of thought, feelings and behaviours" (Borghans et al. 2008) that are socially determined and can be developed throughout the lifetime to produce value (Zhou, 2016).

While terms are sometimes used interchangeably to cover these skills (non-cognitive/ soft-skills/SEL) the important delineation is that they are separate from and augment cognitive skills in young people and adults, *and* they can be developed and strengthened over time for the benefit of the individual and society as a whole (Duckworth and Yeager, 2015). In fact, there is an hypothesis that there is a greater correlation between non-cognitive/soft-skills/SEL and ultimate intelligence and success. (Goleman, 1995)

Improving Self-Esteem

Cultivating self-awareness and self-esteem contribute to one's ability to make positive life changes and reach full potential. Yet, 85% of individuals are not self-aware at all, despite the fact that many people assume they are (Eurich, 2017). While this is not a self-esteem study, and it does not directly measure the impact of self-esteem on behavior, this study *does* include

content and practices designed to enable students to do critical and deep analysis of themselves in an effort to improve both self-awareness and self-esteem.

Developing Practical Spirituality

Spirituality is associated with a variety of essential elements of human functioning, including healthy relationships, high self-esteem, optimism, and a sense of meaning and purpose in life. (Howell, 2013). Spiritual experiences, as well as meditation and mindfulness can possess a psychological characteristic, since they have been recognized as components of happiness and health (Kohls, Walach & Lewitch, 2008). Additionally, spirituality has been recognized as a possible health resource for coping with disease and suffering (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Larson & Larson, 2003). According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (Greenstein, 2016), "spirituality also incorporates healthy practices for the mind and body, which positively influences mental health and emotional well-being." Among these positive benefits were listed: enhancing a person's sense of self and empowerment, encouraging meditation and self-reflection (mindfulness), and promoting oneness with one's natural surroundings and the world at large.

Among college students specifically, religious quest and engagement have been linked to lower psychological distress and higher psychological well-being (Pargament, 2002;Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005;Sandage & Jankowski, 2010;Vilchinsky & Kravetz, 2005), higher subjective well-being (Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005), lower substance abuse (Koenig, 2009), lower anxiety (Plante, Yancey, Sherman, & Guertin, 2000), and more negative attitudes toward suicide (Koenig, 2009). Spirituality has also been shown to protect against stress and its negative repercussions in recent research. (McClintock, Worhunsky, Balodis, et al. 2019)

Spirituality, the inner personal experience of higher power/God/Spirit as distinguished from specific religious dogma, creates a sense of self and connection to higher power that supports self-efficacy in post-secondary educational experiences and preparation for labor force entry. For all of these reasons, it makes sense to provide opportunities and means for young adults to build the necessary skills alongside their cognitive post-secondary academic pursuits. (OECD, 2015)

Purpose of the Study

The hypothesis that drove the development of this academic pilot and human research study was that non-cognitive skills/soft skills/SEL development in the form of "self-mastery" training, including an integrated combination of practical spirituality, emotional self-regulation, intra- and interpersonal communication, and personal responsibility in decision-making, could help young adults deal better with unmanaged stress, anxiety and/or depression related to the dynamics of their school, personal and family lives. Additionally, this kind of intervention would help them be more mature and prepared for career entry.

To test this hypothesis, two new co-curricular, non-cognitive courses rooted in practical spirituality called "*Living 101: Being Happy and Whole*©" (entry-level) and "*Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum*©" (advanced level) were piloted through the department of Student Affairs at the University of California, Irvine. Originally, the entry-level course was developed for "at-risk" students, described as those in jeopardy of not completing their degrees in a timely manner with excellence, to include primarily: low income, first generation, under-represented minorities, emancipated foster youth.

Data shows that within these groups, despite having achieved significant success in high school, the incidence of unmanaged stress, self-doubt, feelings of isolation, and potential to drop out are higher than among their White, more privileged counterparts (https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/18/magazine/who-gets-to-graduate.html). In addition, though the inquiry was not specific to "employability" of students who embodied better non-cognitive skills/soft skills/SEL, the course developer was aware of growing concern about post-graduate young adults and their lack of ability in areas deemed essential for workplace efficacy, specifically decision-making, verbal/written communication, and interpersonal engagement (Hart Research Associates, 2015).

Of paramount importance here is that the grouping of skills to which this study pertains is separate from and augments cognitive skills. Additionally, they may be cultivated and reinforced through time for the individual's and society's benefit. (Duckworth and Yeager, 2015). Indeed, there is a theory that non-cognitive/soft-skills/SEL have a stronger link to ultimate intellect and achievement (Goleman, 1995).

Research Questions

This researcher's inquiry for this pilot had to do with whether and how well self-mastery training, inclusive of practical spiritual concepts, could deliver better learning and quality-of-life outcomes overall for at-risk, post-secondary students.

1. Does non-cognitive, co-curricular skills training help at-risk post-secondary students mitigate stress to be more self-efficacious and resilient?
2. Is spirituality-based self-mastery training of interest to post-secondary students and will they take the knowledge and skills and create a practice to improve their lives?

3. What combination of skills help at-risk post-secondary students with retention, GPA, and graduation rates?
4. Can we teach students at an earlier age their awesome power as *causal* nature to create the lives they want, and will they *embody* the teachings beyond the course?

Significance of the Study

A framework for the broad implementation of SEL in post-secondary education has not been created (Conley 2015). This study provides another data source that supports ongoing efforts to create within post-secondary education policy and practice compulsory non-cognitive/ SEL skills training. Because of the specific content of the curriculum being studied, it is also providing data on the inclusion of practical spirituality content and practices in such co-curricular education for its benefits at helping students have an improved sense of self, life purpose, and direction. Institutions need to recognize and act on their responsibility for the whole being beyond cognitive academic development and/or achievement, and measures of success such as GPA and time to completion.

Definition of Terms

1. *Consciousness*: Consciousness is the characteristic or state of being aware of something outside of oneself or something inside oneself. Sentience, awareness, subjectivity, the ability to experience or feel, alertness, having a feeling of selfhood, and the executive control system of the mind are some of the terms used to describe it. Physicists have demonstrated that awareness is the Universe's creative power, and that matter appears as a result of our perception of it (Tipping, 2006).

2. *Practical Spirituality.* A grounded, accessible set of practices that enable individuals to know and express their intuitive, Divine nature in addition to their innately human characteristics. It is beyond any one religion's dogma, and encompasses many paths toward the same destination: Divine Love. Activating practical spirituality in one's life involves leveraging one's belief in spiritual principles and laws, as well as one's connection to energy and forces in the Universe that cannot be explained by the five senses. Practical spirituality stresses self-realization, God-realization, and world-realization in and through practice, but also cultivating humility not to limit them to practice alone. Practical spirituality is closely related to the spirit of science, which incorporates, in Albert Einstein's words, a holy spirit of inquiry, because of its emphasis on experience and realization. Practical spirituality stresses the importance of practice, emphasizing that we cannot experience truth—religious or otherwise—unless we engage in practice. (Giri, 2018)

   Practical Spirituality principles central to both the Living 101 and Living 102 courses are:

   1. People are integrated spiritual + human beings, having the abilities to think (reason), and also to feel, perceive, or experience *subjectively,* beyond the five senses (sentience).
   2. Everything in the Universe is energy, and energy dynamics known as non-physical or Spiritual Laws govern the way everything in the Universe relates and works.
   3. Living in harmony with those Spiritual Laws enables greater confidence, courage, inner peace and happiness.

3. *Self-Efficacy*. The ability of an individual to notice, assess and consciously choose what serves him/her at the highest levels in various circumstances and with a variety of situational

dynamics and human variables, most outside their realm of control. Self-Efficacy is supported by self-awareness and self-esteem. Knowing yourself, your talents and shortcomings, and what motivates you to act and feel the way you do are all examples of self-awareness. Self-awareness can contribute to improved self-esteem (Unal 2014).

4. *Mindfulness*. The state of being consciously aware of the present moment while simultaneously maintaining a state of neutrality with regard to experiencing one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.
5. *Sovereignty*. Being one's own supreme authority. Being able to regard options presented by others from a place of autonomy and supreme power, so as to engage a healthy and responsible selfishness in evaluating and selecting from those options presented, one's own course of action or inaction.
6. *Self-Mastery.* To "Master yourself in your life so you can exquisitely manage whatever your life brings your way." The three pillars of the principle of self-mastery are self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-love. Inherent in having mastery over oneself is to know why decisions are made or actions are taken/not taken, *and* to take personal responsibility for the choices, performance and resulting accomplishment or lack thereof. The goal is to create an internal 'operating system' or something akin to an "implicit curriculum" (Ebert, Ebert & Bentley, 2014) that is purposefully created and consciously embedded in the self that is the penultimate guidance for an individual. This is in contrast to being controlled by external forces, whether they be circumstantial, rooted in prior conditioning or driven by the demand of another being or collective of beings, as in social consciousness or peer pressure.

7. *Being At Cause.* Being and expressing oneself as supreme creative force in one's own life. This causal nature is demonstrated in outcomes that result from consciously integrating and applying principles of sovereignty and practical spirituality to guide discernment and decision-making. It is similar to the psychological principle of internal locus of control. It is the opposite of being "at effect," which is to be in a "victim of consequence or circumstance" position, wherein one can only react to what the world or others in the world give or do to him/her. To be "at effect" means to be acted upon, and is similar to the psychological principle of external locus of control.
8. *Non-Cognitive Skills*. Noncognitive skills are defined as "patterns of thinking, feelings, and behavior" (Borghans et al. 2008) that individuals build throughout their life (Bloom 1964) and that have a role in the educational process. Behavioral skills, soft skills, personality traits, non-cognitive abilities, character, socio-emotional skills are all terms used by researchers and writers to describe these strengths (Garcia, 2014).
9. *Co-Curricular Learning*: Describes the various courses and experiences that augment the credit hours and topics required in a post-secondary degree program. These are generally the kinds of courses and experiences that are associated with the ability to create a more "well-rounded" person, and that generally happen outside the classroom. The subjects explored and the skills taught are often considered "soft skills," and fill in gaps of understanding the world and one's place in it that required courses don't teach. Co-curricular experiences and exploration can help students build self-esteem and character, discover and apply strengths, practice personal and group leadership, and strengthen communication skills.

10. *Social-Emotional Learning (SEL skills)*. Social and emotional development is a distinct area of child development. It is a progressive, integrated process in which children learn to recognize, feel, express, and control emotions as well as form meaningful connections with others (Cohen et al, 2005). Social emotional development lays the groundwork for a child to be able to inter-relate and engage in other developmental activities. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making are the five core competencies that social and emotional learning in schools emphasizes (Oberle and Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Students may use these fundamental abilities to control and manage emotions, think critically, establish healthy relationships, cooperate successfully, and communicate effectively (Woolfolk et al, 2015-2016). Social and emotional learning has a strong correlation to academic achievement and is favorably connected to it.
11. *Wholeness*. Undivided or unbroken unity or totality. Completeness as derived from the sum of all of the parts. In the courses, it includes mind, body, spirit awareness and integration, and explores concepts of integrating the Spiritual and human selves, as well as the Higher Self and the "false" or "not" self, defined as the shadow self or separated ego (that aspect of a person that is rooted in negative conditioning and personal past woundology). The courses' teachings are inclusive and integrative of physiological, emotional, spiritual, and mental aspects of the whole being.
12. *Emotional Intelligence.* An individual's aptitude for discerning, classifying, and appropriately responding to his/her own emotions and the emotions of others (Goleman, 2006). The courses focused on awakening enrollees' awareness and understanding of their specific emotions (being able to discern whether they were feeling anger alone, or whether there was

also sadness or grief) and the emotional states of others, both independently and in response to their own states of being.

13. *Emotional Self-Regulation*. Also known as emotion regulation, is the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of one's experience with a variety of emotions in a socially acceptable manner, with the flexibility to allow spontaneous reactions as well as the ability to delay spontaneous reactions as needed (Cole et al, 1994).
14. *Biopsychosocial Approac*h. The biopsychosocial model is an inter-disciplinary paradigm that examines how biology, psychology, and socio-environmental variables are linked. The model looks at how the interplay of these factors contributes to a variety of issues, including health and illness, as well as human development. The biopsychosocial model highlights the complex interplay of biological (genetic, biochemical, etc.) psychological (mood, personality, behavior, etc.) and social variables (cultural, familial, socioeconomic, medical, etc.) in the development of illness. (Engel, 1977). Starting with psychoneuroimmunology leading into the current study of epigenetics, it has been repeatedly demonstrated with significant evidence that the multidimensional approach to health and healing is imperative for lasting care.
15. *At-Risk Students*: Those post-secondary students in jeopardy of not completing their degrees in a timely manner with excellence without programming and/or resources to support their success, to include primarily: low income, first generation, under-represented minorities, and emancipated foster youth because of background characteristics, internal characteristics, and environmental factors (Bulgar and Watson, 2006). Further, at-risk students have in some

cases been deemed "poorly equipped to perform up to academic standards" (Quinnan, 1997, 31).

Assumptions

The following were assumed by this researcher at the outset of the study:

- The data collected would be more projectable if the study used validated measurement instruments. Though the instruments chosen didn't directly measure the course elements themselves, each instrument measures aspects that contribute to course outcomes. In tandem, they were deemed sufficient to measure validly the post course impact of course content and methodology.
- The validated instruments would perform at least as well as their historically validated success.
- At-risk students would be the predominant enrollees.
- Formal training in the knowledge, skills and practices of the studied curriculum would be new to the enrollees.
- Enrollees can learn, adopt and embody the concepts, skills and practices through the course methodology and delivery of the course instructor.
- The concepts, skills and practices would be life-enriching and life-changing for the enrollees, while also support their timely post-secondary degree attainment.
- This researcher could create a safe container in which enrollees could explore, express and transform deep inner aspects of themselves.

Limitations

The following were the limitations of this researcher during the study:

- This researcher could not control the course environment (classrooms were designated by the Registrar, as was class session duration), who registered for the course, or which enrollees completed both the pre-course and post-course questionnaires to be included in the study.
- This researcher was bound by IRB-imposed limitations of data collection, handling and analysis to protect the integrity of the data. This included working with/through a separate Lead Researcher due to COI requirements (even though this researcher passed all COI evaluations by the IRB).
- To protect the integrity of the data under the IRB protocol, this researcher had limited access to raw data, specifically student-identifiable data, and zero interfacing with students in regard to the study (all study-related correspondence was from the Lead Researcher only).
- The study is only available to students enrolled in Living 101 or Living 102 at UCI. Only enrolled respondents who complete both the pre-course and post-course instruments will be included in the statistical analysis.

Delimitations

The following were the delimitations of the study:

- The content for both courses came from this researcher's previously curated intellectual property used outside of the UCI ecosystem.
- Course delivery (didactic + experiential, etc.) including the integration of learning elements to deliver stated course outcomes in the course Syllabi were created by this researcher and refined by this researcher each quarter.
- The two study instruments were researched and chosen by this researcher.

Conclusion

Given the high and rising incidence of stress, anxiety and depression among students in post-secondary educational arenas (Jafari, 2019), with nearly a quarter of them displaying one or more signs of mild to moderate mental-health distress, such as stress (27%), anxiety (25%), and depression (22%) (Beiter et al. 2015; Brunner, Wallace, Reymann, Sellers & McCabe 2014), educators and policy-makers should be concerned about how to support the students they serve to excel and succeed. In the absence of a framework for the broad implementation of non-cognitive/SEL skills training in post-secondary education (Conley 2015), *and* with at least one hypothesis that non-cognitive/SEL skills are more valuable to ultimate intellect and achievement than cognitive skills (Goleman, 1995), *and also* with much evidence supporting that non-cognitive/SEL skills augment cognitive skills in ways that benefit the individual and society as a whole (Duckworth and Yeager, 2015), it is meaningful to undertake scholarly evaluation of various such interventions, including those with practical spirituality training embedded in the content and practices. This study alongside the preponderance of the supportive data begs the question: Isn't it time for institutions to recognize their responsibility for the *whole being* beyond cognitive academic development and/or achievement, and measures of success such as GPA and time to completion, so their students and graduates can have an improved sense of self, life purpose, and direction?

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

This researcher's interest and focus in this work is multivariate in nature, which aligns with the nature of the problem as identified in Chapter 1. Post-secondary students, whether they be undergraduate, graduate, or professional students, must deal with numerous dynamics that can result in negative outcomes and reduced quality of life. The proliferation of unmanaged stress, anxiety disorder, sadness, overwhelm and depression, to name a few of the problems these students face, is difficult to accept. There is evidence that a biopsychosocial interventional approach holds promise for improving outcomes related to post-secondary student stress, anxiety, and depression because of its multivariate nature.

This study looked at an example of biopsychosocial intervention that includes an integration of non-cognitive/social-emotional learning skills (SEL) training that incorporates practical spirituality concepts, principles and practices to provide new findings, implications and indicated actions for educators and policymakers to better support the students they serve. Further, it is a call to action for post-secondary educators and policymakers to expand focus beyond cognitive skills measurements of success, such as GPA and time to completion, to include outcomes and measures of the *whole person*, including their self-efficacy, emotional self-regulation, self-esteem, and self-mastery as key contributors to resiliency to stress and overall well-being.

Because of the multivariate nature of the problem as well as this researcher's investigated solutions, this literature review is sectioned specifically related to those major subject areas, which are the impacts of:

- Unmanaged post-secondary student stress, anxiety, and depression
- Non-cognitive/social-emotional learning skills training (SEL) in post-secondary educational outcomes
- Practical spirituality in post-secondary educational outcomes
- Self-Efficacy in post-secondary educational outcomes
- Biopsychosocial interventions to improve student self-efficacy and quality of life

Background

This researcher reviewed numerous sources around the topics presented, including books, scholarly articles, dissertations, and policy papers, including meta-analyses of multiple data sources. Search terms used included: at-risk classification and association with educational outcomes; biopsychosocial framework, methodology and approach, both in education and mental health; cognitive versus non-cognitive education and skill definition; consciousness and human potential; emotional intelligence; counseling center access and utilization in post-secondary education; emotional learning; heart-based approaches to self-mastery; human potential movement; interdisciplinary education; incidence of post-secondary stress, anxiety and depression as well as interventions; life-skills in post-secondary education; benefits of mindfulness to students; mindfulness versus mindlessness; noetic sciences; non-cognitive skills defined and pedagogy in post-secondary education; psychology and emotions of late-adolescents; resiliency to stress; role of spirituality in human development and identity; SEL in post-secondary education; SEL and spirituality; self-efficacy versus self-esteem; self-mastery in post-secondary education; soft-skills; sources of post-secondary stress, anxiety and depression; spiritual interventions for stress in post-secondary education; spirituality linked to success;

spirituality linked to young adult development; transformative inquiry, transpersonal education; women experts in the consciousness and human potential movement; young adult empowerment; and well-being measures.

Sources most tightly aligned with the subjects researched and applicable to a post-secondary population were relied on most heavily. In some cases, there were few if any resources that met that relevancy test, which in and of itself contributes to this researcher's premise that the area of non-cognitive/social-emotional learning skills training (SEL) inclusive of practical spirituality training is a promising and cutting-edge area of pedagogical inquiry, practice and expansion that can benefit students and society as a whole. Whole campus ecosystems can be positively affected.

Theoretical Framework

This researcher identifies the theoretical framework to which this study contributes as follows. The philosophy underlying the study is slanted toward realism, which aligns with the researcher's embracing of metaphysics, belief and trust in the non-physical dimensions of existence, theistic influences via Universal Spiritual Laws and viewpoint that the world exists independent of the mind (Hasa, 2019). The study is designed to provide insight into the hidden, underlying emotional/mental/spiritual states-of-being of the research subjects and how those underlying dynamics: 1. come into play in subjects' decision-making, self-evaluation, and action; and 2. can be influenced with a carefully crafted course of study that includes structured practice of key skills, and designed to increase personal embodiment to mitigate stress and build resilience and self-efficacy.

An inductive approach was used in that the researcher observed varying presentations of the problem as evidenced in her private office-hours interactions with students, and based on those observations, she developed an hypothesis about the nature of the problem they were experiencing and why, as well as an hypothesis for a potential solution. Strategically, the study developed is mono-method quantitative school-wide action research (evaluating the researcher's approach to positively impacting a studied problem that is prevalent across a university campus and improving the intervention over time). Two validated study instruments were used to capture students' self-evaluated and self-reported responses in a pre- and post-course measurement. The timeframe of the study is a combination of cross-sectional (data were collected on a per-quarter basis over a four-year period) and longitudinal (data for multiple quarters were combined to develop the overall findings, implications and indicated actions). Per quarter data naturally involves different subjects, though a slight few subjects may be duplicated as students could take the courses more than once.

The quantitative data collected includes subjects' self-reported assessment of pre- and post- course values for mindfulness and self-efficacy. Within each quantitative instrument, respondents' unaided qualitative perspectives were captured through their answers to open-ended questions and/or their responses to the "Other" prompt in questions.

Review of Literature

Levels and Impacts of Unmanaged Post-Secondary Student Stress, Anxiety, and Depression

Stress, stressors and their impact on health and well-being have been studied for over a century, dating back to the pioneering work of experimental physiologist Claude Bernard, who in the late 19th century was the first to introduce the physiological state of homeostasis and the

theory of “the milieu intérieur,” translated as “the environment within” (Bernard, 1872). Well-known researchers such as Harvard-trained neurologist and physiologist Walter Cannon (Cannon-Bard Theory of Emotion) and Viennese endocrinologist Hans Selye (effects of stress on the human body) built on Bernard’s work. First forking into the separate paths of physiology and psychology, the overall area of stress research has blossomed in the 21st century across fields such as physiology, medicine, chemistry, endocrinology, neurosciences, epidemiology, psychiatry, epigenetics, and psychology, reflecting the theoretical and biological complexity of the concept (Robinson, 2018).

Stress may be beneficial or harmful. Stress is necessary for motivation and can be beneficial to people with responsibilities and/or deadlines, propelling them toward completion of critical tasks and projects. That said, researchers have identified stress thresholds that, once passed, may jeopardize proper psychological and physical functioning (Brantley & Jones, 1993). For example, while "change" is a natural and inevitable part of existence at all levels, the *quality* of change can be harmful to some people (Pearl, 1989). Stress is considered to be particularly sensitive among people in developmental transition, such as adolescents leaving home for the first time to attend college (Towbes & Cohen, 1996). Stress has been found to be harmful to society, both in terms of human suffering and the economic cost of medical bills, absenteeism, and occupational, teacher, or student injuries, according to research (Abouserie, 1994).

Stress is now acknowledged as a common occurrence in people's everyday lives and is thought to be a driving factor in evolution, as well as physical and mental health (Robinson, 2018). There has been a rising interest in the negative consequences of stress over time since the early writings of Selye and Cannon. Epidemiologists and public health researchers have been

investigating the influence of stress on patient outcomes, thanks to a growing understanding of how acute and chronic kinds of stress affect physical and mental health outcomes (Operario, Adler, & Williams, 2004; Whitehead & Dahlgren, 2006). For the purposes of this literature review, the researcher will focus on studies that investigate incidence levels of stress and the impact of unmanaged stress on post-secondary student life and academic pursuits, and stress-mitigating options.

Stress among post-secondary students has been of increasing concern for the past four decades. Several independent sources collect, tabulate, and report major studies on the incidence and type of student stressors, anxiety, and depression. The American College Health Association National College Health Assessment (NCHA) is a nationally recognized source of student-level data that can provide a complete story of student health, with insight across a wide range of health issues to include: substance use and abuse; sexual, physical and mental health; weight, nutrition and exercise; and personal safety and violence. Data has been collected since the study was piloted in 2007 and 2008, and it is periodically updated to incorporate measures for emerging health issues that warrant assessment and monitoring. Most recently, these have been sleep related problems, mental health and stress related issues (NCHA II, 2018). Other independent professional organizations that measure and review stress, anxiety and depression incidence and levels in post-secondary settings include the:

- American College Counseling Association (ACCA), comprised of counselors, psychologists, and social workers who work in the field of mental health in higher education settings. (http://www.collegecounseling.org/, 2021).

- National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), which collects data annually on cigarettes, alcohol, illicit drugs, and mental health in the United States at the national and state levels since 1971 (https://nsduhweb.rti.org/, 2021).
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), an American nonprofit organization committed to raising awareness of anxiety disorders in children and adults and improving their diagnosis, treatment, and cure (https://adaa.org/, 2021).
- Healthy Minds Network (HMN) administers The Healthy Minds Study (HMS) which is an annual web-based survey study of undergraduate and graduate students' mental health, service usage, and related concerns. HMS has been fielded at over 400 colleges and institutions throughout the country since its national introduction in 2007, amassing data from more than 550,000 survey respondents (https://healthymindsnetwork.org/, 2021).
- Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH) is a multidisciplinary, Practice-Research-Network combining practice, research, and technology to produce accurate and current research and reports about and clinical tools to improve today's college students' mental health. CCMH has built one of the nation's biggest databases on college student mental health because of the work of over 650 college and university counseling centers and associated organizations (https://ccmh.psu.edu/, 2021).
- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), a member-based professional association supporting growth and action-orientation of its network of 15,000 student affairs professionals serving 1,200 institutions globally. Through its Policy and Practice publication, it informs student affairs professionals on key issues

affecting student performance, quality of life, and campus ecosystems (https://www.naspa.org/, 2021).

Each of these sources' data shares the distinction of showing the increasing levels of post-secondary student stress, anxiety, and depression.

Psychological measures have been developed to measure student stress levels. Literature references two used on a broad scale: The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) which is the most widely referenced and used model (Cohen, 1994); and the Post-Secondary Student Stressors Index (PSSI). The PSS, available in 14-, 10- and 4-item formats, is a self-report instrument that assesses, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (very often), "how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives" (Cohen & Williamson, 1988). It's translated into 25 languages and used globally. The PSSI is a student-developed, 46-item survey designed to help post-secondary institutions identify the most serious and common stresses on their campuses (Linden and Stuart, 2019). Other less-referenced measurement instruments the researcher found include the Daily Hassles questionnaire (Ross et al., 1999); the Student Stress Survey (Ross et al.); the College Chronic Life Stress Survey (Towbes and Cohen, 1996).

Despite broad use of these, Linden and Stuart (2019), suggest that instruments currently in use to assess post-secondary student stress could be improved. Among the limitations they found are issues with characteristics of students in the creation of the assessments (e.g., most assessment tools only include students in a certain year, level, or program of study), issues with the basis of development (some have been created too narrowly e.g., basing item development solely on prevailing literature, with little consideration for student input) or issues with defining

stress too broadly (e.g., including stress-related items not relevant to, or modifiable by the post-secondary institution).

Linden and Stuart (2020) conducted what they reported to be the first "comprehensive, multidisciplinary review of the academic literature pertaining to post-secondary stress and mental well-being," which referenced various studies supporting the overall evidence of high levels of stress, including: Wyatt & Oswalt (2013); Lee, Wuertz, Rogers, & Chen (2013); Garcia-Williams, Moffitt, & Kaslow (2014); and Robinson, Jubenville, Renny, & Cairns (2016). Other researchers, including Brunner, Wallace, Reymann, Sellers & McCabe (2014); ; Gallagher (2015); Beiter et al. (2015); and Jafari et al. (2019) have all reported increasing longitudinal stress levels among undergraduates and graduates, as well as factors contributing to the reported incidence of stress. Breakout data specific to graduate students is less prevalent, but when available, it can show comparatively higher incidence of stress, anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation and attempts, though the latter is only supported by one study.

Researchers appear to broadly agree on the kinds of stress and the factors contributing to its prevalence in post-secondary students. These include:

- Transition to college is a major factor according to Towbes & Cohen (1996) and Ross, Niebling and Heckert (1999), especially among the first-year ("freshman") population (D'Zurilla & Sheedy, 1991). The adjustment period also involves new self-determined choices around managing peer pressure (Arnett, 2000) and navigating healthy versus unhealthy choices for exercise, sleep, and alcohol/drug consumption (Lovell et al, 2015 and Valerio, Kim, & Sexton-Radek, 2016).

- Belonging and integration into campus culture and social environment during the secondary-to-post-secondary transition adjustment (Brook & Willoughby, 2015). Multiple studies have determined racism and sexism to be major contributing factors of campus culture to student stress, including Currie, Wild, Schopflocher, Laing, & Veugelers, 2012; Hampton & Roy, 2002; and Lindsay, 2010. Hawley et al., 2016; Locke, Bieschke, Castonguay, & Hayes, 2012 found that ethnic minority students report higher levels of stress than their peers. A U.S.-based study by Dinh, Holmberg, Ho, & Haynes (2013) attributes prejudicial attitudes with predicted depression among undergraduate students. When students have trouble integrating into campus cultures, mental health is diminished from a perceived lack of belonging. Diminished belonging of international students (Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2007; Robertson, Holleran, & Samuels, 2015) Indigenous students (Robertson et al., 2015), and students belonging to ethnic minorities (Corona et al., 2017; Iturbide, Raffaelli, & Carlo, 2009; Pillay, 2005; Ruzek, Nguyen, & Herzog, 2011) is attributed to North American post-secondary ecosystems' reliance on Eurocentric modes of thought. Overall, belonging was found to be a predictor of student mental health among students in the United States (Dinh et al., 2013; Ketchen, Gaddis, Heinze, Beck, & Eisenberg, 2015), Canada (McBeath, Drysdale, & Bohn, 2018), Australia (O'Keeffe, 2013), and Japan (Nakashima, Isobe, & Ura, 2013), with O'Keefe (2013) reporting that improved retention in post-secondary institutions across Australia was positively correlated belongingness.

- The individual's perception of and reaction to stress factors and not just the factors themselves (Romano, 1992). Referred to as coping skills, students' abilities to effectively deal with stress factors when they present has also been researched, with findings suggesting there is need for interventions in this area (D'Zurilla & Sheedy, 1991). According to Ruthig and colleagues (2009) stress levels and mental health are inversely related to perceived academic control.
- Students' performance pressures in particular appear in the literature. Contributing factors include excessive homework, unclear assignments, and uncomfortable classrooms (Kohn & Frazer, 1986); ongoing evaluations, such as weekly examinations and papers (Wright, 1964); earning good grades (GPA) and also pressure to complete degree requirements (Hirsch & Ellis, 1996). Several researchers reported bidirectional causality between academic performance related stress and poor mental health (Holmes & Silvestri, 2016; Larson, Orr, & Warne, 2016; Luca et al., 2016; McFadden, 2016). Students' self-reported academic stressors differ between undergraduate and graduate students. Among undergraduates, reported stressors include the amount of coursework or research (Monk, 2004; Offstein, Larson, Mcneill, & Mwale, 2004; Stewart-Brown et al., 2000), lack of time to complete assignments (Monk, 2004), difficulty of course content (Monk, 2004), test anxiety (Tosevski & Milovancevic, 2010), fear of failure (Monk, 2004; Villatte, Marcotte, & Potvin, 2017), lack of motivation (Monk, 2004), and an inability to concentrate (Welle & Graf, 2011). According to Offstein and colleagues (2004) and Van Laethem and colleagues (2017), graduate students report factors having to do with milestone

completion toward degree attainment as key stressors, specifically completion of dissertation research, writing, and defense.

- Interpersonal communication and relationships are also cited as stress-inducing factors. Sgan-Cohen & Lowental (1988) reported faculty relations as a source of stress while Wright (1967) cited relationships with family and friends as potential triggers. Burke, Ruppel, & Dinsmore (2016) cited parental relationships, and Welle & Graf (2011) saw increased stress levels from decreased time spent with parents specifically. The term "friendsickness" was coined by Buote and colleagues (2007) to refer to the emotional distress some students experience because of the absence of childhood friends and fear of creating new relationships from scratch (Oswald & Clark, 2003). Pressure associated with the constellation of dynamics related to living with roommates for the first time has also been identified as a stressor (Dusselier, Dunn, Wang, Shelley, & Whalen, 2005; Welle & Graf, 2011).
- Financial strain appears prominently in the literature as a concerning student stressor (Kruisselbrink Flatt, 2013; Richardson, Elliott, Roberts, & Jansen, 2017; Stewart-Brown et al., 2000). This includes fear about post-graduate finances and loan payments (Richardson et al., 2017; Walsemann, Gee, & Gentile, 2015) and accumulation of credit card debt (Nelson, Lust, Story, & Ehlinger, 2008). Interestingly, improved financial confidence is associated with improved emotional well-being among post-secondary students (Adams, Meyers, & Beidas, 2016; Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2006; Lederer, Autry, Day, & Oswalt, 2015; Walsemann et al., 2015)

Beyond reporting of stress incidence and causes, there also have been several studies reporting the impacts of *unmanaged* stress. According to Crompton (2015) and Godin, Kittel, Coppieters, & Siegrist (2005) unmanaged long-term stress is highly correlated with negative mental health outcomes as well as significant impact on academic performance. Importantly, poor mental health can spiral downward into even more concerning impacts in students' lives including its linkages to: substance misuse; relationship difficulties; absenteeism and drop-out; engagement in risky behaviors and suicide (Linden and Stuart, 2020).

Although there is ample evidence cited from multiple researchers spanning decades on the levels of stress and kinds of stressors (79 articles found from 2000-2018 with samples sizes ranging from 23 to just over 70,000 for incidence predominantly in the U.S., Canada and Australia), Linden and Stuart reported finding only one U.S.-based study (n = 2,188) that found there were no significant differences in the rates of psychiatric disorders observed between a sample of college students and their non-college attending peers (Blanco et al., 2008). In that study, almost half of respondents reported having experienced a clinical mental illness within the past year.

According to Linden and Stuart, between 2000 and 2018, there were 42 studies that thematically evaluated programs and interventions. They involved samples sizes ranging from 8 to just over 22,000 and involved studies in Australia, Canada, China, Germany, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Singapore, and the United States. On the whole, the literature generally suggests:

- Resilience involves individual characteristics (i.e., self-efficacy, optimism), coping abilities/skills, help-seeking behaviors and access to appropriate supports and resources.

- Successful integration into the social aspects of the campus ecosystem that fosters perceived sense of belonging was a key predictor of students' well-being.
- Positive coping mechanisms (e.g. seeking formal help from a mental health professional, or informal support from family and friends) was rarely reported among post-secondary students.
- Barriers to seeking help for mental health problems were numerous, including students' concern that they lack the ability to determine the nature and seriousness of their individual mental health, and fear of being stigmatized for reporting having mental health issues.
- Self-management was preferred by students, with data showing they tend to seek professional help in the midst of symptom and behavioral indications the situation had become serious.

Impact of Non-Cognitive Skills/Social-Emotional Skills Training (SEL) in Post-Secondary

The topic of non-cognitive skills/social-emotional skills education (SEL) is most-often studied and advocated for in K-12 ecosystems. Various studies show the benefits of this kind of skills development for children (Bridgeland et al., 2013; DePaoli et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015), and delineate the core competency areas developed as: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness, and relationship skills (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2013, 2015; Weissberg et al., 2015). Some studies suggest specific approaches for embedding SEL training in curricula and delivering the content (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010; Yoder, 2013; Zins et al., 2004). So much emphasis has been placed on this augmentative developmental area for youth that SEL programs

have been implemented in thousands of schools globally (Humphrey, 2013; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013), and Dusenbury and colleagues (2015) report that many U.S. state departments of education have issued, or are in the process of issuing, standards for the development of specific SEL skills at each grade level. Researchers conducting several meta-analyses of short- and long-term effects of SEL interventions (synthesizing data from hundreds of studies involving hundreds of thousands of K-12 students) recommend they be delivered in "planned, ongoing, systemic ways from preschool through high school" (Berman et al., 2018; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017; Jones & Kahn, 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015).

Two major points to consider relative to SEL in post-secondary education proven in the aforementioned meta-analyses in K-12 programs are:

- Hill and colleagues (2008) determined that SEL programs are associated with an equivalent long-term impact on academic growth as was found for cognitive-based programs for academic learning.
- Taylor and colleagues (2017) found that the best predictor of the amplitude of students' long-term skill gains academically was the strength of their short-term gains in SEL. In other words, short-term improvement in SEL means academic gains last longer, and fade less over time.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS, 2017) released a report on intrapersonal and interpersonal capabilities and initiatives that improve college students' academic accomplishment (i.e., GPA), especially for underrepresented students. They identified eight critical intrapersonal behavioral competencies for student success (conscientiousness, sense of belonging, academic self-efficacy, growth mindset, utility goals and

values, intrinsic goals and interests, prosocial goals and values, and positive future self), and further, they assert these are malleable attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and dispositions.

According to Savitz-Romer and colleagues (2015), a predominant framework for SEL in post-secondary education does not exist, various reports *do* highlight important skills for both college and career success, and a growing body of evidence indicates providing SEL in post-secondary can continue beyond K-12 to support students' academic and life success. In fact, the body of data on the benefits and impact of SEL is so compelling that the National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development (Aspen Institute) in 2017 published a Consensus Statements of Evidence from the Council of Distinguished Scientists (a distinguished group of scientists, researchers, and academics across 19 disparate fields) providing evidence-based perspective on the integration of social, emotional, and academic development. Its statements affirm the interconnectedness of these three domains, and asserts they constitute what *is* learning. (Jones and Kahn, 2017). The Consensus Statements include summary data on the significant positive financial return-on-investment of SEL programs and the long-term earnings potential of SEL program graduates, in addition to the positive academic and life value of such programs to students.

Issues with terminology in SEL dates back to the 1970's; Mesnick (1979) found that though the term non-cognitive skills is broadly used, it suggests these skills are unrelated to or beyond cognition, which researchers dispute (Messick, 1979). Similarly, while the term social-emotional is specifically used as a category heading to describe SEL child development programming in K-12 settings, it is viewed by some as problematic because it suggests these

skills are completely separate from and have no interconnectivity to academic development and achievement (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015).

Ramos-Sanchez and Nichols (2007) assert students with positive self-awareness and self-perceptions, areas within the SEL domain, demonstrate a better ability to adapt in higher education contexts. Multiple researchers report similar findings, asserting that self-management competencies contribute positively to students' personal and emotional adjustment, as well as their academic and cognitive performance (e.g., Deckro et al., 2002; Palmer & Roger, 2009; Parker, Duffy, Wood, Bond, & Hogan, 2005). There is evidence from a contrasting perspective as well: poor self-management contributes to aspects of emotional distress, such as depression, anxiety, and stress, which have been continually called out as being among the most prevalent and challenging adjustment problems facing post-secondary students (Adlaf, Gliksman, Demers, & Newton-Taylor, 2001; American College Health Association, 2011; Bayram & Bilgel, 2008), *and* these have been associated with detrimental consequences in academic functioning and retention (Pritchard & Wilson, 2003). According to Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) social skills, social support, and social stress are essential factors of adjustment in higher education. Similarly other researchers found social awareness and relationship skills are essential for post-secondary student success (Hefner & Eisenberg, 2009; Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2000). Various research in post-secondary educational ecosystems demonstrates the importance of responsible decision making, relative to both curricular (e.g., academic goals and study skills; Robbins et al., 2004) and extracurricular (e.g., substance use; Wolaver, 2002) behaviors.

Theoretical and empirical research on SEL has largely focused on preschool through secondary school children, and SEL practice guidelines frequently emphasize objectives and

applications for these student groups. (CASEL, 2003; Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Conley asserts (2015) SEL is not intrinsically connected to any single learning setting or developmental stage because these dimensions and skills are relevant throughout one's life. The SEL framework, however, has yet to be applied broadly to higher education audiences and contexts. When there *has* been research conducted in post-secondary populations, social and emotional growth in students is linked to favorable academic outcomes, including academic performance and retention (Gloria & Ho, 2003). Additionally, social and emotional competencies have been linked to a variety of advantages outside of academic contexts and consequences, including job performance, healthy interpersonal connections, and improved mental health and general wellness. (Bar-On, Handley, & Fund, 2006; Jordan & Ashkanasy, 2006; Lopes, Salovey, Coté, & Beers, 2005; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004).

Conley and colleagues (2015) conducted a robust review of 113 SEL-related prevention and promotion programs that were conducted in higher education settings and published their findings as a chapter in the "*Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice*" (pp. 197–212). Focusing their results reporting of what works in studies that showed "statistically significant benefits ($p \leq .05$) on at least half of the study's assessed outcomes in social and emotional domains," their review found that SEL-related programs have positive effects for college students, both as elements of successful adjustment, and also for their potential to prevent associated parts of maladjustment. Unlike the foundation of SEL programs for preschool and elementary students that are designed and delivered such that students are given multiple opportunities and contexts through which to develop and practice skills across the five essential CASEL core competence areas, the design and delivery of similarly-focused

programs in post-secondary educational contexts is narrower, generally addressing only some of the SEL core competencies and for brief timespans (i.e., “lasting only a few weeks and rarely extending beyond one semester”) (Conley, 2015). Additionally, not all of the SEL programs in higher education provide means for skills development and practice. Many provide only didactic structures for information transmittal (Conley, 2015). This is extremely important to note as SEL research in younger populations suggests that skills-oriented preventive programs typically have much greater success than psychoeducational or purely didactic programs (Durlak, 1997; Durlak, Schellinger, Weissberg, Dymnicki, & Taylor, 2011; Greenberg et al., 2001). Data indicates that “supervised skills practice” is a key contributing factor that enhances success multiple times better in skills-oriented programs versus programs centered in pyschoeducational or didactic info exchanges only (Gresham, 1995; CASEL, 201; Conley et al., 2013). The literature identified the following key SEL skills most often emphasized in programs in post-secondary educational contexts:

- Cognitive-behavioral ability to be self-aware and to self-regulate emotions and actions.
- Meditation competence that contributes to self-awareness and self-management.
- Mindfulness skills that provide for astute social awareness and interpersonal relations in addition to strengthening self-awareness and self-management.
- Relaxation skills that contribute to self-regulation.
- Social skills development that enhances social awareness and relationship engagement, including conflict management.

The sole program category included in Conley and colleagues' (2015) "*What Works*" category is:

Mindfulness: seven of nine programs reviewed showed improvements in emotional distress, self-perceptions, and individual social-emotional skills (Astin, 1997; Hoffmann Gurka, 2005; Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008; Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Hojat, 2003; Sears & Kraus, 2009; Shapiro, Brown, & Biegel, 2007; Shapiro, Oman, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008; Shapiro, Schwartz, & Bonner, 1998). The success of mindfulness interventions is attributed to these programs' focus on applying the learned skills across one's daily life experiences, which produced beneficial outcomes in areas of emotional distress (including depression, anxiety, stress, and mood), social-emotional competence (including higher levels of mindfulness, rational beliefs, empathy, and forgiveness, and lower levels of rumination), and self-perceptions (including heightened self-compassion, sense of control, and hope). The review also noted that mindfulness interventions integrated experiential elements with didactic aspects, and structurally they typically ranged from 3 to 10 weekly sessions, lasting 1–3 hours each, comprising on average roughly 30 hours total intervention time.

Three program categories are included in Conley and colleagues' (2015) "*Promising*" category as follows:

Cognitive-behavioral interventions with supervised skills practice: 18 of 30 reviewed programs were deemed successful. The review reports that these types of programs typically follow a "manualized protocol or structured framework" (e.g., Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 1985; Burns, 1999; Ellis, 2001; Meichenbaum, 1985), with a skills emphasis on self-awareness and self-management, which included "recognizing triggers of stress and distress, identifying

automatic thoughts and self-statements, modifying or restructuring cognitions, improving coping skills, relaxing, and managing or reducing stress" in these studies. Some programs in this category of interventions in post-secondary settings also address "social awareness and relationship skills (e.g., using social support to enhance personal well-being, and improving social skills) and responsible decision making (e.g., taking steps to reduce stress, modifying maladaptive behaviors, setting goals and improving time management, and making healthy lifestyle choices)." Importantly, 12 of the 30 cognitive-behavioral interventions were deemed unsuccessful by the researchers, indicating it is not fully clear what pedagogically is essential to success.

Relaxation interventions with supervised skills practice: Six of 12 programs were deemed successful in this review. Researchers noted a mix of interventions across the successful programs, including autogenic training (Kanji, White, & Ernst, 2006), progressive muscle relaxation (Lyons & Lufkin, 1967), biofeedback (Ratanasiripong, Ratanasiripong, & Kathalae, 2012; Turner, 1991), relaxing breathing exercises (Baker, 2012), or a combination of such methods (Charlesworth, Murphy, & Beutler, 1981). The techniques taught target self-awareness and self-management by raising subjects' awareness of the physical sensations they experience in stressful versus relaxed circumstances. These relaxation interventions mainly assessed emotional distress (e.g., anxiety, stress, tension), and the three successful trials that determined relaxation techniques tested had significant impact on physiological markers of stress (including blood pressure, pulse, and an electromyographical measure of tension), as well as on self-reports of anxiety and stress. Importantly, 50% of the trials reviewed were deemed unsuccessful by the

Conley and colleague reviewers, indicating this is an area that also requires more research in post-secondary educational contexts.

Social skills interventions with supervised skills practice: Two of five social skills programs were deemed successful by the researchers (Braithwaite & Fincham, 2007; Waldo, 1982). These two interventions utilized significantly different program structures. One used a multi-variate pedagogical delivery that included a combination of didactic lectures, demonstrations, readings and reports and "structured experiences designed to foster a supportive interpersonal environment." Waldo (1982) reported study participants showed significantly enhanced levels of positive communication with roommates post versus pre-intervention. The second program administered by Braithwaite and Fincham (2007), utilized a computer-based intervention known as Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (ePREP) (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2001). The content included communication, conflict-management, and interpersonal problem-solving training delivered via slides in self-paced study. Though deemed successful using the review researchers' criteria, the study results were mixed. For example, there were areas across social-emotional domains that improved (emotional distress measures of depression, anxiety, and negative affect were lower; levels of trust were higher; psychological aggression and physical assault during conflict were lower) and areas across social-emotional domains that did *not* improve (there were no increases in levels of positive affect in emotional distress; no increases in levels of negotiation during conflict, and no significant differences in relationship satisfaction or in constructive communication patterns in interpersonal relationships). Importantly, even upon replication (Braithwaite & Fincham, 2009, 2011) the ePREP intervention did not perform conclusively versus control, indicating the ePREP

intervention requires further study to evaluate its potential for and intervention to improve social-emotional competencies in post-secondary student populations.

Three program categories are included in Conley and colleagues' (2015) "*What Does Not Work*" category as follows:

(1) meditation interventions, (2) interventions that emphasize skills but do not contain supervised practice of these skills, and (3) psychoeducational interventions that focus on didactics rather than skills. For these three intervention categories, empirical analysis within the review of these trials found them to be ineffective a majority of the time (67% or more of the evaluated trials).

Though there is much positive reporting in the literature, the extent of the impact of SEL abilities and interventions on students' academic outcomes is still being debated. The body of evidence exploring the relationships between these competencies and post-secondary outcomes (i.e. academic performance and retention) indicates inconsistent evidence across the different subsets of skills, as well as small effect sizes supporting their correlation with academic performance. Valentine, Dubois, and Cooper (2004) examined the relationship between self-beliefs (i.e. self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-concept) and academic achievement in a meta-analysis of 55 longitudinal studies published in 2004. They found a small positive relationship between these skills and academic achievement. A meta-analysis of 109 papers by Robbins and colleagues (2004) looked at the relationship between non-cognitive factors (i.e. achievement motivation, academic goals, institutional commitment, perceived social support, social involvement, academic self-efficacy, general self-concept, academic-related skills, and contextual influences) and academic outcomes, and while the majority of these elements were

found to be favorably associated with retention, the link between these skills and performance was not as significant, and sometime negligible.

A recent meta-analysis concentrating on growth mindset showed no correlations between growth mindset, mindset programs and various academic achievement metrics (Sisk et al., 2018). This study looked at a higher number of trials (129 studies and 273 impact sizes), but it was focused entirely on growth mindset. By contrast, Harackiweski and Priniski (2018) summarize research on social-psychosocial interventions in higher education that focus on 1) how students value and perceive academic tasks; 2) how they view academic challenges; and 3) students' personal values, referencing many positive findings of the impact of these interventions on students' academic achievement. Ultimately, while studies show that some abilities are more important than others in boosting college success (i.e. retention and academic accomplishment), there is evidence this link is weak and may have only little practical ramifications.

Interrelated to SEL is positive psychology (Seligman, 2009). Kennette and Myatt (2018) and Waters (2011) assert that incorporation of positive psychology principles into post-secondary classrooms can improve student outcomes, including but not limited to increased resilience, better stress management, and fewer experiences of depression. It may also contribute to improved well-being and classroom engagement of students (Myatt, 2016). A study by Kidger et al. (2010) found that teachers connect their own teaching to students' emotional health and well-being, and also believe that teaching itself is "inevitably linked" with the emotional health and well-being of the students being taught. Behavioral neuroscience researcher and scientific editor Joaquín Selva suggests that the order in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) indicates that emotional needs must be met in order to achieve the higher-order functions on the ladder,

one of which is learning. On the whole then, positive education is a 'both-and' equation: improved student mental health and well-being is the runway toward academic achievement (Curby et al., 2013).

Impact of Practical Spirituality in Post-Secondary Educational Outcomes

The American Council on Education (ACE) made development of the whole student a part of their philosophical statement (1937), emphasizing "the development of the student as a person rather than upon his intellectual training alone" (p. 3). Kegan (1982, 2000) argued the nature of student development is so complex that singularly focused theories on how it develops, and its impact were inadequate. Astin et al. (2011a) developed the framework of students' "inner" and "outer" facets, holding that the former encompasses who the student is, including student identity or sense of self. Several researchers have reported findings on the impact on persistence through graduation of developing a sense of self *and* sense of purpose *beyond* the self (aka spirituality) (Braxton, 2000; DeWitz et al. 2009; Duckworth et al., 2007; Melguizo, 2011; Tinto, 2012). Spirituality has been deemed an important aspect of mental health and knowing the spiritual history of a patient can contribute to diagnosis of mental health disturbances (Verghese, 2008). Portnoff and colleagues report (2017) research literature asserts spirituality and symptoms of depression and suicidal ideation are inversely related.

Kuh and Gonyea (2006) analyzed data collected from a randomly sampled group of almost 150,000 first-year (51 percent) and senior students (49 percent) from 461 different four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. who completed the National Survey of Student Engagement survey (NSSE) in 2004. They found that engaging in spiritually enhancing practices was linked to positive behaviors (e.g., exercising, attending extra-curricular activities and

community service) and satisfaction with the college experience. Additionally, they found no negative correlation with spiritual practices such as studying, deep learning, or extra-curricular involvement.

Spiritual well-being has been proven to protect against depression (Balbuena, Baetz, and Bowen, 2013; Portnoff, McClintock, Lau, Choi, and Miller, 2017) as well as anxiety (Shreve-Neiger and Edelstein, 2004; Shiah, Chang, Chiang, Lin and Tam, 2015). Additionally, in cohorts of healthy individuals, there is a link between spiritual well-being and general health, suggesting that higher spiritual well-being is linked to better health outcomes (Koenig, 2009; Koenig, McCullough and Larson, 2001). Several researchers, including those evaluating Chinese samples, assert that individuals can find stable support in a "transcendent reality" (beyond the material world) when they are attempting to navigate major life challenges (Wang et al., 2008; Raghallaigh, 2011; Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013; Portnoff et al., 2017).

Some literature refers to spirituality and deepening spiritual understanding as critical to individual contributions to an increasingly complex world because of their impact on self-awareness and personal development. Asserting that spiritual development in higher education comes under a neglected area of personal development: the sphere of values and beliefs, emotional maturity, moral development, and self-understanding that comprise "inner development," Astin and colleagues (2004, 2011) argue that self-awareness and self-understanding are essential prerequisites to individuals' ability to understand others and resolve conflicts. Hanson-Morgan (2017) suggests that the connection between spirituality and identity development needs further study, especially because the latter is generally accepted as a factor in students' academic success in college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, Tierney, 2000; Zhang, 2009).

A five-year study of the evolution of college students and how the institution and college life contribute to spiritual development (Astin, Astin and Lindholm, 2010) concluded that students' spiritual quest increased, and spiritual growth was associated with enhanced academic performance, leadership development, and satisfaction with college. Bowman and Small (2012) used separate measures to evaluate overall well-being (pleasure vs. quality of life) in their study of spiritual engagement in college students, finding that both contributed to students' sense of self-efficacy and self-determination.

One longitudinal national study (2003-2010) which included 112,232 student respondents attending a national sample of 236 colleges and universities conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (UCLA) reported (Astin et al., 2011a, 2011b) that respondents who scored high on measures of spirituality were slightly less likely to have positive psychological health scores as compared to their lower scoring counterparts. This contrasts with the positive impact data reported on spirituality in higher education. (Astin et al., 2005).

Lastly, the areas of spirituality and the transition from secondary to post-secondary educational ecosystems have been recorded in research literature, though the two ideas have generally been explored separately (Hardre, Sullivan, & Crowson 2009; Hornya & Bonds-Raacke 2012; LeBlanc & Slaughter 2012; Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, & Swan 2011).

Impact of Self-Efficacy/Self-Mastery in Post-Secondary Educational Outcomes

Research has been done for the past several decades attempting to determine the causes of and potential solutions for low persistence and high attrition rates among post-secondary students, in both two-year and four-year institutions. (Astin, 1999; Daugherty & Lane, 1999; McGrath & Braunstein, 1997). According to Bandura (1986) social cognitive theory is

descriptive of factors that contribute to student development and academic persistence. The cornerstone of social cognitive theory is an individual's self-efficacy beliefs, which are defined as "an individual's belief in his or her ability to carry out an action to reach a desired goal (Gore et al., 2006). Because there is a concept of generalized self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), which is distinct from self-efficacy in academic settings, which is defined as "students' perceived capability to manage their own learning behavior, to master academic material, and to fulfill academic expectations" (Bandura et al., 1999), the researcher will refer specifically to academic self-efficacy.

Academic self-efficacy beliefs, according to Russell and Petrie (1992), mix with academic elements (such as aptitude and drive) as well as social/environmental and personality factors to predict academic, social, and personal adjustment. Data collected from various research settings and methodologies demonstrates the positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and performance (Manstead & Van-Eekelen, 1998; Newby-Fraser & Schlebusch, 1998; Pajares, 1996; Sadri & Robertson, 1993; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Vrugt, Langereis, & Hoogstraten, 1997; Wolters & Pintrich, 1998). Pajares (1996) also asserts academic self-efficacy is predictive of college student performance. Linnenbrink and Pintrinch (2002) showed help-seeking and persistence are more likely behaviors among post-secondary students with high levels of academic self-efficacy. Cooper (2014) found that grit, described as "an ability to self-regulate and maintain focus in pursuit of a goal despite failure" was positively associated with academic self-efficacy, while also related to personal sense of self and college success (Hansen-Morgan, 2017). Multiple researchers assert several personal characteristics, including but not limited to academic self-efficacy and optimism, have been linked to better academic outcomes

(Burris, Brechting, Salsman, & Carlson, 2009; Flynn & Chow, 2017; Hartley, 2011; Knowlden, Hackman, & Sharma, 2016).

Multiple researchers have reported on the sources or drivers of academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997; Mone, Baker & Jeffries, 1995; Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992; Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991; Lane and Lane, 2001). Lane, Lane and Kyprianou (2004) reported that perceived academic success correlated significantly with academic self-efficacy measures; additionally, academic self-efficacy showed significant positive intercorrelations with self-esteem.

By contrast, Bandura (2010) related low academic self-efficacy to high levels of stress and sadness. The concept of "learned helplessness," pioneered by Overmier and Seligman in 1967 and further studied by Seligman and Maier (1967), related it to cognitive and emotional disruptions from persistent experiences of uncontrollable adverse events. This researcher hypothesizes that uncontrollable and persistent stressors in post-secondary settings qualify as forces that could trigger a similar learned helplessness response among post-secondary students. This researcher further hypothesizes that positive gains in measured student academic self-efficacy would reduce the negative impacts of long-term, unmanaged stress such that students will develop coping skills and/or help-seeking behaviors to build resilience, remain persistent and achieve academic success.

A tool that measures academic self-efficacy beliefs was developed by Solberg and colleagues (Solberg et al., 1998; Solberg, O'Brien, Villarreal, Kennel, & Davis, 1993; Solberg & Villarreal, 1997) to carefully measure and more completely characterize the relationship between students' academic performance and persistence with their academic self-efficacy beliefs. Known

as the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI), this instrument is a 20-item measure of students' confidence in their ability to successfully engage in a range of college-related behaviors. The CSEI is negatively correlated with measures of stress (e.g., physical, financial, academic, and psychological stress) and positively correlated with measures of parental and peer social support (Gore et al, 2006). For these reasons, the CSEI is one of the measurement tools chosen for this study.

Impact of Using a Biopsychosocial Approach (BPS) to Improving Post-Secondary Student Self-Efficacy and Quality of Life

Health is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "a condition of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than just the absence of sickness or infirmity" (WHO, 2018). The biopsychosocial approach (BPS) in medicine and psychology (Engel, 1977) is an evolution from a traditional biologically based focus for disease management, to a more holistic treatment approach that seeks to understand a fuller context of human health, illness, and well-being. Using the BPS approach, a healthcare practitioner/ researcher would explain health, sickness, and health care delivery by taking into account biological, psychological, and social variables, as well as their complex interconnections in a human's health and well-being system (Engel, 1977; Frankel et al., 2003).

The increased prevalence of psychosomatic medicine coupled with landmark studies connecting biological and psychosocial factors are credited with this evolution (Bevers et al., 2016). Examples of significant research in this area include Selye's 1950 analysis of the link between homeostasis breakdown and stress; Rosenman and colleagues' 1976 examination of the link between Type-A behavior and coronary heart disease; and Birk's 1973 application of

biofeedback techniques to medical conditions such as headaches. Over the same time period, professionals who advocated this approach began to stress the importance of psychological aspects in disease diagnosis and treatment, such as personality, attitude, and resilience. The transition to the apparently better treatment paradigm of BPS was aided by major advancements in neuroscience and the increasing attention paid to eastern medical methods. Criticisms which are still being explored by researchers are the seeming unstructured nature and subjective dynamics of the BPS model (Bevers et al., 2016).

Importantly with respect to stress mitigation in particular, comprehensive care frameworks are growing in their use of complementary, alternative, and integrative medicine approaches to self-management of emotional stress (Barnes et al., 2002). Literature reports the multimodal treatment program model has emerged as a desirable option in the management of stress disorders (Engel, 1977; Havelka et al., 2009). Al-Sabbah and colleagues (2021) studied the BPS factors affecting post-secondary student well-being specific to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of resulting structural and social changes in post-secondary education delivery in the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. They determined that a combination of evaluated social factors (comprising four personal assessment statements within interpersonal relationships, media mass communication, and work performance categories), psychological factors (comprising four personal assessment statements within self-awareness and positive vs. negative ideation categories) and biological factors (comprising four personal assessment statements within eating habits and physiological symptomology categories) contributed to or detracted from student's well-being.

In a meta-analysis of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a BPS modality, used to reduce anxiety and depression and improve quality of life among cancer patients, Osborn and colleagues (2006) determined that CBT as a short-term treatment for depression and anxiety was effective in adult cancer survivors. Additionally, results of the analysis showed both short- and long-term effects on participants' quality of life.

Zernicke and colleagues (2012) studied the impact of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), a form of BPS intervention used to help individuals with stress, chronic pain, anxiety, sleep, headache, and more (Chiesa and Serretti, 2009; Grossman et al., 2004), on the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome. Results of symptom reduction pre- to post-, and at 6-month follow-up timeframes, as well as improvements in overall mood, quality of life, and spirituality were observed for the MBSR group better than control, supporting the positive impact BPS interventions can have.

Crawford and colleagues (2013) studied multimodal BPS interventions utilizing self-management to reduce stress reactions and related disorders among combat veterans and their families. They employed a systematic review of literature as their methodology and reported findings from the analysis of randomized clinical trials. They assert that multiple BPS programs performed statistically better than control, including seven of 13 MBSR programs, eight of 14 cognitive behavioral stress management programs, three of 10 autogenic training programs, and 35 of 45 relaxation-based programs.

This researcher easily found hundreds of scholarly articles regarding the benefits of BPS interventions in medicine and psychology (e.g., chronic pain mitigation, weight management, reduction of distress in cancer patients and survivors, health education dissemination in chronic

treatment scenarios such as fibromyalgia, and more). As important as this whole, dynamic, person-based treatment philosophy is in medicine and psychology, this researcher had difficulty finding relevant scholarly articles specific to applying the BPS approach to interventions to mitigate stress, anxiety and/or depression, or improve quality of life among post-secondary students.

Versaevel (2014) reported on three studies using or related to the Spring 2013 National College Health Assessment (NCHA) to determine the stressors Canadian college students face, and the relationship of stress to education performance. The analysis suggests that a "socio-ecological" approach to stress mitigation is successful because of its more comprehensive approach to addressing stress and overall health of students at Canadian post-secondary institutions.

White and colleagues (2016) compared a psychosocial intervention (College and Living Success, which was designed to target social skills competence and emotional self-regulation) to a computer-assisted intervention (Brain-Computer Interface for ASD, which targeted social competence, focusing primarily on emotion recognition) for post-secondary students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Results showed limited if any positive trajectory in sub-scale measures for either intervention type; on certain sub-scales, data showed a decline in student performance. Additionally, this pilot showed no clinically meaningful change in overall measures for adaptation to college, academic adjustment, attachment, personal-emotional adjustment, and social adjustment for any study participant. Researchers considered the overall behavioral outcome data "equivocal," yet still assert that continued clinical evaluation of psychosocial and computer assisted interventions for students with ASD is warranted. (White et al., 2016)

Chang and colleagues (2020) conducted an environmental scan study of mental wellness resources on 135 post-secondary campuses in Canada in 2016. Their interest was specific to viability of education-based toolkits as a resource to ameliorate mental distress among post-secondary students. Their study showed that a toolkit is a viable intervention and substantiated the need and potential for a national response that includes a combination of elements across biological, psychological, and social spectrums to have the greatest impact.

Deckro and colleagues (2010) studied the effect of a 6-week mind/body program on college students' psychological distress, anxiety, and perception of stress. Students randomized to the experimental group received six 90-minute group-training sessions in relaxation response and cognitive behavioral skills. Significantly greater reductions in psychological distress, state anxiety, and perceived stress were found in the experimental group versus the waitlist control group at the end of the study. Researchers suggest this training may be useful as a preventive intervention for college students.

The field of social-psychological interventions fits within a BPS context. These programs are aimed at transforming students' beliefs about themselves and what they can do; the goal is to halt recurring negative dynamics which impact students' academic performance and outcomes (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Harackiewicz & Priniski (2018) conducted a review that determined social-psychosocial programs in post-secondary education have been studied extensively and relate to many of the skills seen in SEL frameworks. For example, self-awareness, as defined by CASEL (2013), encompasses growth mindset and self-efficacy, both of which are typical outcomes of social-psychological interventions and in the domain of social-psychological research. Importantly, this area of BPS programming has been noteworthy for its critical

relevance to improving students' academic achievement, especially among those deemed at high-risk of dropping out; implementation of these interventions has gained momentum in post-secondary educational arenas.

Overall, there is ample data in the literature to support BPS as not only viable but also successful as an intervention across various medical and psychological domains. The limited examples shared herein of BPS applied specific to post-secondary student interventions suggest this is a gap that future research should fill.

Summary

There have been decades worth of interest in and study of the rising incidence of unmanaged mental and emotional distress and viable mitigating interventions among post-secondary students. Several meta-analyses were referenced, as well as scoping reviews through which interventions reported in this review were considered promising to successful; with only a few showing little to no or negative impact on the studied area. Varied types of programming have been explored and documented, with multiple programming categories having been determined to provide positive impacts on student academic success and quality of life while reducing stress, anxiety and depression and the more serious negative impacts of leaving those conditions chronically unmanaged.

A little researched area of interventions specific to the post-secondary educational ecosystem is the biopsychosocial approach that integrates SEL skills training with practical spirituality. The data gathered through this multi-year pilot of human subjects research at the University of California, Irvine provides necessary data on the potential for such novel programs to positively impact student academic, wellness, and quality of life outcomes. These data suggest

that students can be taught to implement practices that support them, and significant positive gains can be made in overall student academic self-efficacy and mindfulness from such an approach, though more research is needed. Educators and policymakers have an opportunity to advance a *whole being* approach to post-secondary education and student support, whereby non-cognitive/SEL skills training integrated with practical spirituality is compulsory curricula to two- and four-year degrees. Higher education institutions, like elementary and secondary schools where SEL is most broadly studied, respected, and implemented, have a responsibility to "educate students to be knowledgeable, responsible, socially skilled, healthy, caring, and contributing citizens" (Greenberg et al., 2003, p. 466; Seal, Naumann, Scott, & Royce-Davies, 2010).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological underpinnings of the study, including support for the methodological choices made for the structure of the study. The two courses being researched in the study ["*Living 101: Being Happy and Whole*©" (entry-level) and "*Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum*©" (advanced level)] were developed with specific parameters designed to deliver the target outcomes. The courses' content is focused in the areas of non-cognitive skills/SEL skills training including practical spirituality principles and practices that build "self-mastery." A "Course-Specific Methodology" section is included in this Chapter to provide the details pertaining directly to the content, structure, and course pedagogy so those aspects are clear relative to the study methodology.

It is also important to note the overall timeline of the pilot of the course relative to the study. Living 101 was introduced at UCI in the Spring quarter of 2015, which is roughly April-June. Though we began capturing quantitative and qualitative outcomes data to assess the performance of the courses at that time, using the same measurement instruments as those used in the IRB-approved study, the data collection was not under an IRB protocol. Those data were analyzed by this researcher and the Lead Researcher's predecessor, and results showed statistically significant changes in the post-course responses versus the pre-course responses, and the courses were deemed successful at delivering intended outcomes. This resulted in course expansion to included graduate students, the students in the FYRE program (for emancipated foster youth), and the creation of the Life Scholars house, a 55-person freshman dormitory that would foster the teachings from the courses and encourage students to enroll. Living 101 and

Living 102 were in place and were, based on the data captured in the analysis of course performance, on a growth trajectory before the IRB protocol was approved in November 2017 and implemented in Winter quarter of 2018, which is roughly January-March.

This study was undertaken to advance the rigor and validate those prior non-IRB measurement results and provide a publishable data-based perspective on whether the academic pilot of Living 101 and Living 102 at UCI warranted further expansion and budget allocation. This researcher and then Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs were interested in confirming or refuting previous results in order to determine if the courses were viable as positive long-term interventions to help undergraduate students deal better with unmanaged stress, anxiety and/or depression related to the dynamics of their school, personal and family lives. There was also interest in helping students be more mature and prepared for career entry at college completion. This researcher was interested in learning whether or not a program to scale the curriculum at UCI and beyond was feasible and warranted.

In this study, students were provided ten weeks of non-cognitive, co-curricular, social-emotional skills instruction, including principles and tools of practical spirituality, to help them manage their whole lives better. Classes were taught in a synchronous format with the same instructor teaching both Living 101 and 102. Content was delivered via lecture, assigned reading in the course text books (different for each course), case study analyses, dyad and triad discussion, and experiential exercises. (See Appendix #1: Living 101 Syllabus and Course Outline and Appendix #2: Living 102 Syllabus and Course Outline) The courses had significant positive effect on enrolled students. Two validated instruments were used to assess the pre/post change in students' outlook and abilities. The differences in post-course responses versus pre-

course responses was +22 points in the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) [See Appendix #3] and +6 points in the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) [See Appendix #4], respectively.

Setting

The study took place in the United States at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), which is one of nine schools in the University of California system. UCI is a top ranked public institution in the country and is known for its research and access for under-represented students. Every school within UCI has won an array of national and international distinctions. According to its own reporting of 2021 points of distinction on UCI.edu, UCI is ranked: #1 Best College in the U.S. by Money Magazine; #8 Public University in the country by U.S. News and World Report; #1 University doing the most for the American Dream by The New York Times; and in the top 100 of the 2021 Times Higher Education World University Rankings. Over 37K undergraduate and graduate students attend, and for the 2019-20 academic year, the university awarded more than 11K undergraduate and graduate degrees.

The Living 101 and Living 102 courses were offered through the department of Student Affairs as general elective academic credits towards graduation. Student affairs is charged with supporting students' academic success while also contributing to their overall preparedness for leadership in a global society. This means enhancing and enriching their student life, mental health and overall well-being.

Classroom settings varied according to availability and were designated by the Registrar's office. Criteria that were established by this researcher to ensure the classroom space supported the learning best were: plenty of natural light, easy access to outdoors (several

experiential activities were facilitated outside), movable desks (to facilitate easier pairs and triad interactions, as well as "milling" exercises), and full complement of technological apparatus (to allow for multi-media content).

Research Questions

This researcher's inquiry for this study was fueled by one-on-one interactions with students who were asking for her perspective and help understanding and managing stressful and upsetting dynamics in their personal, academic, and work lives. This study was designed to evaluate if and how well her body of self-mastery training could support at-risk, post-secondary students to manage personal and academic stress, develop a better sense of self that supports higher self-efficacy, and experience better overall quality-of-life. Specific questions were:

1. Does non-cognitive, co-curricular skills training help at-risk post-secondary students mitigate stress to be more self-efficacious and resilient?
2. Is spirituality-based self-mastery training of interest to post-secondary students and will they take the knowledge and skills and create a practice to improve their lives?
3. What combination of skills help at-risk post-secondary students with retention, GPA, and graduation rates?
4. Can we teach students at an earlier age their *awesome* power as causal nature to create the lives they want, and will they embody the teachings beyond the course?

The hypothesis was that students who take one or both of these courses are more likely to express higher levels of self-efficacy and mindfulness traits at the end of the class than at the beginning, and are thus more likely to be retained at UCI, have higher GPAs, be less likely to be

placed on probation, and have a shorter time to degree completion than students who do not take either Living 101 or Living 102.

Research Design

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) researchers should determine research methodology or strategy based on the nature of the research question/s and the subjects being examined. As detailed in the Introduction to this Chapter, both Living 101 and Living 102 were fully implemented and being measured at UCI from 2015-2017, which is prior to the initiation of this study. In November 2017, this study was approved by UCI's Institutional Review Board (IRB) as human studies research. (See Appendix #5) This researcher took and passed all the required assessments to be designated Co-Researcher on the project. Students who were enrolled in the Living 101 and Living 102 courses in the five quarters encompassing Winter quarter 2018 through Spring quarter 2019 (January 2018-June 2019) at UCI completed mindfulness and self-efficacy surveys using validated instruments before and after the 10-week courses. Given that there is evidence that self-efficacy (e.g., Gore 2006) and mindfulness (e.g., Chemers et al., 2001) increase student success, and the courses were developed with elements that could increase both, the instruments chosen as measurement instruments were the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). Differences between pre- and post- scores for the instruments were calculated to test the hypothesis that non-cognitive skills/ SEL content taught inclusive of practical spirituality principles and practices through structured courses can be transformative, increasing self-efficacy and emotional intelligence and decreasing stress and other emotional upsets in post-secondary young adults.

The study's philosophy is realism-oriented, which corresponds to this researcher's acceptance of metaphysical principles as well as belief, and trust in non-physical dimensions of existence, theistic influences via Universal Spiritual Laws, and the belief that the world exists independently of the conscious or rational mind. This corresponds with the primary distinction between positivism and realism in that positivism is a philosophical theory that asserts that whatever exists can be verified through observation, experiments, and mathematical/logical evidence, whereas realism is a philosophical viewpoint that asserts that the external world exists independently of our conceptual scheme or perceptions (Hasa, 2019).

This researcher's realism-based viewpoint is embedded in the study via the course content and delivery, which includes teachings designed to provide students with practice at exploring the aspects of their lives that cannot be explained by rationalism and their five senses. In addition, the study looks at how to support the research subjects' personal decisions to explore how their own sub-conscious and/or unconscious conditioned patterns of interpreting and relating create dynamics that hinder or diminish their self-evaluation, self-efficacy, and quality of life. The hypothesis being tested is that the carefully crafted content and delivery arc of the Living 101 and Living 102 courses can take students to a new level of self-mastery that means they are *forever* equipped with the knowledge and embodiment skills to manage the ups and downs of their lives, during the post-secondary education phase of their lives and further into adulthood.

This researcher used a general inductive approach to determine the scope of questions and the problem in the study. Consistent with Strauss and Corbin's (1998, pg. 12) assertion that in inductive analysis, "This researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to

emerge from the data." The area of study was post-secondary students' unmanaged stress, anxiety and upset that was observed qualitatively during multiple private one-on-one discussions. From there, an hypothesis about the nature of the problem they were experiencing and why was developed, and based on the observations, an hypothesis for a potential solution merged. This is in line with the inductive approach's main goal, which is to allow research conclusions to emerge from raw data's frequent, dominant, or noteworthy themes without the constraints imposed by organized approaches (Thomas, 2006).

In terms of strategy, Bryman (2006) asserts there are three distinct approaches to research: quantitative; qualitative; and an approach that uses both, referred to as multi-methods (Brannen, 1992), multi-strategy (Bryman, 2004), mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003), or mixed methodology (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) research. Regarding the latter evidence, Bryman (2006) suggests that integrating quantitative and qualitative research has become recognized as a separate research method in its own right. In fact, in his content analysis of 232 social sciences articles, Bryman (2006) found that the collection of quantitative and qualitative data was not based on the administration of different research instruments in roughly 27% of papers; the qualitative data in approximately 21 percent of papers came from open-ended questions in a structured interview or self-administered quantitative questionnaire while in roughly 6.5 percent of articles, the quantitative data were captured from qualitative interviews. Methodology experts might hold that using one survey instrument to capture both quantitative and qualitative data does not represent true integration of research approaches because one will tend to subordinate the other (Bryman, 2006). On the other hand, a mixed-

methods approach leveraging both quantitative and qualitative data is reflective of a “pragmatic researcher” (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2003).

This study is predominantly mono-method quantitative research that captures qualitative data via open-ended questions in the self-administered questionnaire. It constitutes school-wide action research in that it examines this researcher's approach to positively effecting a studied problem that is pervasive across the university campus and improving the intervention over time. The study used a single survey instrument that was created by combining two separate validated questionnaires. Quantitative data was gathered using closed-ended questions that were compiled into tables to determine generalizable results from the study subjects relative to the research questions. In general, quantitative research tabulates occurrences, volumes, or the size of the associations between entities (Geertzt, 1973) and reduces the studied occurrences to numerical values fit for statistical analysis (Gelo, et al., 2008).

There are qualitative elements within the predominantly quantitative questionnaires where qualitative perspectives were captured through respondents’ answers to open-ended questions and/or were provided via responses to the “Other” prompt in questions. This was done to capture a deeper perspective of respondents’ experiences and their interpretations of those experiences. Rather than being explanatory, the goal of qualitative research is to be exploratory and descriptive (Ferreirra, Mouton, Puth, Schurink & Schurink, 1998). The descriptive character of qualitative research allows this researcher to provide an account of the participants' experiences, which will either confirm or refute the study's theoretical assumptions (Meyer, 2001). The descriptive aspect of qualitative research allows readers to grasp the significance of the experience, the unique character of the problem, and the problem's impact (Meyer, 2001).

The study's temporality is a mix of cross-sectional (data was gathered on a quarterly basis over a two-year period) and longitudinal (data for multiple quarters were combined to develop the overall findings, implications and indicated actions from the study). Different subjects are naturally included in each quarter's statistics, albeit a few subjects may be duplicated because students were permitted to take the courses more than once.

The study relies on self-reported assessment of subjects' performance relative to the particular areas of inquiry in the measurement instrument. Any test, measure, or survey that is based on an individual's own description of symptoms, behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes is considered a self-report (Levin-Aspenson and Watson, 2018). Among the benefits of collecting self-reported data as asserted by Warner and colleagues (2011) are: 1) ease and speed of acquisition; 2) low cost; 3) cover of anonymity that protects sensitive information and 4) potential for more truthful responses associated with anonymity. Stunkard and Albaum (1981) reported on multiple studies from 1963-1978 specifically in weight loss (Perry and Leonard, 1963; Wing et al., 1979; Charney et al., 1976 and Coates et al., 1978) that showed self-reported data with correlation co-efficients to measured data between .96-.98, suggesting the high level of integrity of this type of data. Cassady (2001) reported that self-reported GPA in a sample of college students showed correlation coefficients of .97 when compared with official university records. According to a meta-analysis conducted by Kuncel, Credé, and Thomas (2005), self-reports by students of factual data, such as GPA, is generally accurate.

However, Maxwell and Lopus (1994), Zimmerman, Caldwell and Bernat (2002), Mayer et al. (2007) and Cole and Gonyea (2010) reported different variations on the theme of lower performing students *inflating* self-reported GAP, SAT scores and other factual data. Also on the

the downside of self-report, Devaux and Sassi (2016) and Athubaiti (2016) found that because of external influences such as "social desirability," subjects may be biased in their own favor when self-reporting results. Additionally, Salters-Pedneault (2020) suggests specific limitations of self-reported data include:

- Honesty: Subjects may answer to be more socially acceptable rather than to be honest.
- Introspective ability: Subjects may not be able to self-evaluate accurately.
- Interpretation of questions: Questions may be confusing or have different meanings to different respondents.
- Rating scales: Rating scales can be too restrictive (yes/no answers), or can benefit from subjects' propensity to provide answers at the extremes or middle of the numerical scales for all questions.
- Response bias: Also known as survey bias, response bias is the tendency of respondents to answer untruthfully or erroneously. It is most common when people are asked to self-report their behaviors, but it can also be caused by faulty survey design.
- Sampling bias: Respondents may not be representative of a general population because they are more willing than others to participate in a study.

Respondents in the study were promised anonymity and this researcher (also the instructor of the courses) was not involved in recruiting for or discussing the study, so there was reasonable protection against something negative happening because of their answers.

In an ideal world, this researcher would have preferred to create an original questionnaire tied directly to the content and pedagogical delivery thereof. However, consultative advice from the Director of Assessments in UCI's Student Affairs organization indicated that doing so would open the study results to questions and skepticism because the measurement instrument was not validated. As a result, the decision was made to find a validated instrument that would come closest to measuring the intended outcomes of the study. As mentioned in the Chapter Two Review of Literature, The CSEI (Gore et al., 2005) and FFMQ (Baer et al., 2006) instruments both contain subsets of questions that measure components of self-efficacy, self-awareness and mindfulness, and they were chosen as the best surrogates to an original instrument (Bertram et al., 2021; Scott, 1997).

For CSEI, the subsets of questions that measure components of self-awareness and mindfulness are Course Self-Efficacy, Roommate Self-Efficacy, and Social Self-Efficacy, which have subscales of 7, 4, and 9 items, respectively. Each of the CSEI items is scored on a 1 to 10 scale and the total CSEI score can range from 20 (lowest) to 200 (highest).

For the FFMQ, the subsets are Observing, Describing, Acting with Awareness, Non-judging, and Non-reactivity. These FFMQ components are each scored 1 to 5, for a possible range of 15 (lowest) to 75 (highest) for the total score. Each of the components contain three items and thus have possible ranges of 3 to 15 for the component scores. Statistics were calculated for the total scores for each instrument, as well as the sums of their component scores.

The "PRE" inventory was only available from a few days before, and up to and including the beginning of their first class session; the "POST" instrument was only available from a few days before, and up to and including the beginning of their final class session. Students were

incentivized to participate in the study and were offered the chance to win $10 Starbucks gift cards via random drawings each quarter.

Because the course content is this researcher's intellectual property, the IRB protocol required that a different researcher be designated "Lead Researcher" on the study, and that role was assigned to the Director of Student Affairs Assessment, Research, and Evaluation at UCI. According to the protocol, this researcher was evaluated officially for conflict of interest and passed each time. Nonetheless, the protocol precluded this researcher from interacting with students in the recruitment and analysis of student-identifiable data from the study. The Lead Researcher was the only person who knew which students agreed to take the surveys, and she was the only person who saw their pre- and post-survey responses and their individual student records. This researcher passed all the required IRB training modules, interacted with participants as the class instructor and helped with interpretation of aggregated, non-identified data. There was also an intention that this researcher would present data at conferences and submit an article about the study to a peer-reviewed journal for publication, the goal being to inform other post-secondary institutions of beneficial co-curricular interventions that benefit post-secondary students.

In addition to measuring to what extent the Living 101/102 courses increase students' self-efficacy and mindfulness, the protocol called for measurement of long-term student success in terms of retention at UCI, higher GPAs, lower likelihood of being placed on academic probation, and graduating in less time. The goal was to determine if the training provided created a transformative effect beyond the classroom to broader aspects of respondents' whole lives, including academic success and quality of life.

The Lead Researcher recruited volunteer subjects for the pre-and post- surveys from each quarter's roster of enrolled students via email, via UCI's online learning management system, and in person at the beginning of the first and last class sessions of the quarter (See Appendix #6). This researcher was not present in the classroom when students were given time to complete the study instruments during class. Long-term academic data would be accessed via each student's personal UCI records. Although the IRB protocol called for a control group of subjects from among all UCI undergraduate students with which to compare the experimental groups of Living 101 and Living 102 students, the Lead Researcher did not initiate that or the longitudinal portion of the study. As a result, the higher level of rigor that this researcher expected with respect to capture and analysis of overall results was not possible, and remains a research question of significant interest to this researcher going forward, and will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Participants

The original intent of the implementation of the courses was to support "at risk" students, specifically low-income, under-represented minorities, emancipated foster youth, and first-generation college students. This researcher hypothesized that the volunteer subjects would be similar in nature to a cross-section of students from the general student population across UCI, and there'd be neither a predisposition toward taking this kind of course nor to participating in the survey. The initial data collected from 2015-2017 (the non-IRB protocol which required students to complete the surveys) provided ample subjects that breakouts to analyze these cohorts were conducted. This researcher is not clear why breakouts by these cohorts were not

included in the analysis by the Lead Researcher. It is important to note that the courses attracted a cross-section of students that included students outside those at-rick cohorts.

Study participants were volunteer subjects who responded to one of the recruitment emails sent by the Lead Researcher prior to the first day of each course. In addition, course enrollees were given a chance to complete the study instruments in the first and final class sessions. This researcher developed and or edited messaging content before it was disseminated to the students. Critical to the successful completion of the study was that to be deemed a "study participant" and be included in the data analysis, students needed to complete both the pre- and post- questionnaires. The attrition of enrollees from first to last class session (e.g., some students came to the first class session, completed the survey instrument, then later dropped the course) inhibited a fuller data set. Other students joined the class after the first course session (e.g., when the course had a robust waiting list, students had to wait for an opening in order to register.). In these cases, the Lead Researcher would reach out to the via email with the pre- survey instrument. Some not all of these students volunteered to participate.

Course-Specific Methodology

Using the biopsychosocial approach (Christie & Viner), which establishes that adolescence includes biological, psychological, and social elements, this researcher hypothesized that a post-secondary education offering of content emphasizing non-cognitive skills/SEL could help student achievement in non-cognitive areas of development and mastery, and could, in turn, contribute to their academic achievement and employment outcomes. Subject matter featured topics and skills that most students reported they had not been formally taught before, including but not limited to addressing how to: know and leverage your inner voice (self-talk) and intuitive

nature; overcome limiting beliefs and fear; deal with difficult people and situations (grit); reduce stress, anxiety, and depression; develop greater motivation and focus; managing setbacks (resilience or grit), create a personal vision and chart a course toward living your purpose.

The 10-week "Living 101: Being Happy and Whole©" course was deemed 'entry level,' and was the launch course in the pilot. It was offered as a general elective for 1.3 credits on pass/no pass basis, and students could take it up to three times. The course textbook was "The Energy of Life" by Barbara and Jimmie Lewis. The first five weeks were foundational, and guided students to identify personal sources of stress, anxiety and other inner barriers to success. The second half of the course taught specific tools and behaviors to grow enrollees' ability to embody fully the content in their daily lives. The course also included a 5-week Capstone Project of self-discovery and transformation to ensure students understand and integrate the principles, including creating and implementing personal strategies to resolve their issues.

Living 101 was open to both undergraduate and graduate students from any major. Class sessions combined classroom-style didactic lectures with interactive activities such as dyad and small group discussion, case analyses, reflective writing assignments, play and artistic expression to help students identify personality, identity, belief, and values dynamics that create general stress and anxiety, contribute to academic-related stress and anxiety, prevent them from feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness, and diminish their sense of self and self-efficacy.

Based on student demand, an advanced level 'practicum' course was added to the curriculum. "*Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum*©" provided deeper exploration of topics introduced in Living 101. Living 101 was a prerequisite. Living 102 was also offered as a general elective for 1.3 credits on a pass/no pass basis, and students could take it up to three

times. The course text book was the course developer's multi-award-winning book "*Living Happy to Be ME!: Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle*©" which teaches spiritually-based principles for taking personal responsibility for one's development, in whatever ways that improves one's life. The book was made available through the UCI book store, amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com for purchase, as well as through a free downloadable PDF version via the book's official website (happytobeme.net). Class sessions primarily leveraged intimate group discussion, short reflective writing assignments, and weekly "hot-seat" focus on an individual volunteer. The focus each week was evaluating student progress with *embodying* the teachings or walking the talk.

Both courses also emphasized content from other sources such as psychologist Marshall Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication, The Heart Math Institute's Emotional Regulation, human behavior expert Gregg Ciotti's Behavior Chains, energy dynamics taught by guest facilitator James Woeber, Founder of The Art of Heartful Living, play theory and gelotology (the science of laughter).

Worth noting from a course design perspective is that due to mandate from the Registrar (in an effort to bring course instruction in alignment with the number of credits attained), the Living 101 course changed from one three-hour session per week to one two-hour session per week at the beginning of the Spring 2018 quarter. Data from the two versions of the course were combined because of the small number of students.

Data Collection

Data was collected via online mechanism integrated within UCI's learning management system. Each quarter's data was kept separate until aggregated by the Lead Researcher for overall analysis. The Lead Researcher had access to all the data. Though the IRB protocol stated

that this researcher would participate in the data analysis with the Lead Researcher, that was not the case, for reasons that are not 100% clear to this researcher. This researcher received one spreadsheet that included all de-identified responses, broken out by study instrument by respondent for each course.

Data Analysis

All five quarters of data were aggregated for each of the two courses. Data for the pre- and post- survey instruments were aggregated within these two data sets. Only data from respondents who completed both the pre- and post- course instruments in the same quarter for each course were included in the analysis and reporting. The Lead Researcher provided the aggregated data to this researcher in early 2020 for separate analysis and reporting to be completed; this was done to protect the integrity of the student-identified data, as per the IRB protocol. This researcher then contracted a separate statistician and worked with the Director of UCI's Center for Statistical Consulting to conduct a separate analysis of the data as provided by the Lead Researcher. (See Appendix #7)

Data tables were duplicated from the Lead Researcher's report (this researcher was not provided with any raw data for Tables 1-3 of this dissertation), and histograms and other graphs and charts in this dissertation were provided by the independent statistician based on the aggregated raw data and reviewed and approved by the Director of UCI's Center for Statistical Consulting.

Validity

Validity (Gibbs, 2002; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007) is a theory commonly connected with quantitative research methodologies that gauges the extent to which ideas or explanations

produced from the study data are true and accurately describe the phenomenon under examination. The data were collected according to the IRB protocol as overseen by the Lead Researcher. The Lead Researcher was the sole member of the research team to have access to the full data repository, including the dis-aggregated student-identified data. This researcher, the independent statistician and the Director of UCI's Center for Statistical Consulting had no access to the students or their individual responses. The aggregated data was provided to this researcher by the Lead Researcher; this researcher made the aggregated data available to the independent researcher and the Director of UCI's Center for Statistical Consulting in March 2020.

This researcher's assumption is that the data tabulation and tables created from data aggregation reflects respondents' answers to both qualitative and quantitative questions in the two study instruments. This study produced similarly positive statistically significant results as the previously analyzed non-IRB measures of the courses, which suggests the study could be replicated and produce actionable findings.

Statistical Methods

Statistical analysis was conducted by an independent statistician. Data for Living 101 and Living 102 were analyzed separately since the courses were different and participants may have enrolled in both. Individuals' changes in scores between the pre- and post-course surveys were calculated by subtracting the pre-course score from the post-course score so that a positive value indicated an improvement in the instrument.

Histograms were used to visualize the distributions of scores and differences between pre- and post-course scores. Means, standard deviations, and 95% confidence intervals of the differences were calculated for each instrument and component. Paired t-tests were used to

compare pre- and post-course mean scores and p-values were calculated using non-parametric sign tests when distributions violated normality assumptions. All analyses were performed using Stata software (StataCorp. 2019. *Stata Statistical Software: Release 16*. College Station, TX: StataCorp LLC).

Conclusion

A rigorous IRB-approved protocol was developed and followed to capture quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of the two courses being researched in the study ["*Living 101: Being Happy and Whole*©" (entry-level) and "*Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum*©" (advanced level)]. Each course had separate but related content, pedagogical structures and intended outcomes, all aimed at determining whether or not the academic pilot of these two novel courses at UCI would help undergraduate students deal better with unmanaged stress, anxiety and/or depression related to the dynamics of their school, personal and family lives, as well as enable them to improve academic outcomes, quality of life and career readiness. The courses were delivered over ten weeks, and consisted of non-cognitive, co-curricular, social-emotional skills instruction, including principles and tools of practical spirituality.

Because of this researcher's financial interest in the outcome, special parameters were built into the IRB protocol to follow established procedures for conducting human subject research and to protect the integrity of the data. Those parameters were followed, and this study is deemed valid by the Lead Researcher and the Director of UCI's Center for Statistical Consulting.

Using two validated study instruments, data were collected over the course of five academic quarters and analyzed for pre- versus post-course changes in the sub scales and overall

tests for mindfulness (FFMQ) and self-efficacy (CSEI), as well as for statistical significance. Data evidenced that the courses had significant positive effect on respondents. The differences in post-course responses versus pre-course responses was +22 points in the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) and +6 points in the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), respectively. Chapter 4 provides greater detail on the final results across the two inventories.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

This details the results of human subjects research to assess the effectiveness of two novel courses, Living 101 and Living 102, under an IRB-approved protocol at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). The purpose of this study was to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate the effectiveness of a structured pedagogy of non-cognitive/SEL skills training inclusive of practical spirituality at decreasing disturbances (primarily unmanaged stress, anxiety, and depression) that impede academic success, including GPA, retention and time to completion, and increase self-efficacy and quality of life of post-secondary students. The hypothesis that drove the development of the overall academic pilot of Living 101 and Living 102 was that a 10-week structured course of “self-mastery" training, created by this researcher as non-cognitive skills/ SEL training could help emerging adult college students deal better with the challenges they face. Furthermore, such an intervention would assist them in becoming more mature and equipped for career entry.

The courses’ content included an integrated combination of practical spirituality, emotional self-regulation, intra- and interpersonal communication, and personal responsibility in decision-making. It's critical to note that the set of skills under consideration in this study is distinct from and complements cognitive abilities. The studied skills can also be nurtured and reinforced through time for the benefit of both the individual and society (Yeager and Duckworth, 2015). Further, there is a belief that non-cognitive/SEL skills have a higher link to ultimate intelligence and achievement than cognitive/hard-skills (Goleman, 1995). The course

pilot began in 2015 and the IRB-approved protocol for human subjects research was initiated in 2018.

This researcher's inquiry for the curriculum pilot and the human subjects research was whether the teaching, practices, and principles within her body of work and applied primarily to older adults (her intellectual property generally used with 40+ adults) could attract and transform emerging adults in post-secondary environments. The specific research questions incorporated within the study parameters were:

1. Does non-cognitive, co-curricular skills training help at-risk post-secondary students mitigate stress to be more self-efficacious and resilient?
2. Is spirituality-based self-mastery training of interest to post-secondary students and will they take the knowledge and skills and create a practice to improve their lives?
3. What combination of skills help at-risk post-secondary students with retention, GPA, and graduation rates?
4. Can we teach students at an earlier age their awesome power as *causal* nature to create the lives they want, and will they *embody* the teachings beyond the course?

The study involved volunteer participants from among Living 101 and Living 102 enrolled students. Study participants completed a self-report survey instrument at the beginning (the pre- measure) and end of the courses (the post- measure). The study instrument was created by merging two validated instruments: The College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). In order to increase the study's rigor, these instruments were chosen and combined to form a surrogate measurement instrument to replace

an original instrument created by this researcher. The study duration was January 2018 - June 2019, which encompasses five academic quarters of instruction at UCI.

This study was conducted under a Lead Researcher, UCI's Director of Student Affairs Assessment, Research, and Evaluation; this researcher acted as Co-Researcher on the project. The Lead Researcher had direct contact with course enrollees and study participants regarding all aspects of the study and produced a report from the data in June 2019. Due to conflict-of-interest guidelines within the study protocol, this researcher had limited access to the study's raw data (only aggregated raw data was provided), and some of the tabular results provided here are duplications of The Lead Researcher's original tables. The data showed that the courses had a considerable favorable impact on the participants. In the FFMQ and the CSEI, the differences in post-course responses over pre-course responses were +6 points and +22 points, respectively. The final results of the two inventories are provided below and discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five.

Summary of Findings

Overview of Subjects

A total of 404 Living 101 and 49 Living 102 students were given the opportunity to participate in the pre-course study during the academic quarters during which the IRB Protocol was in place (n=453). A total of 279 Living 101 and 40 Living 102 students were given the opportunity to participate in the post-course study during that same period (n=319). The difference in the pre- and post-course available pool of students reflects natural class enrollment attrition through the normal campus add/drop period. A total of 280 students, predominantly undergraduates, completed the Living 101 pre-course survey and 34 completed the Living 102

pre-course survey (n=314). A total of 199 students completed the Living 101 post-course survey and 30 students completed the Living 102 post-course survey (n=233). Only those students who completed both pre- and post-course inventories for the same quarter of instruction were included in the analysis, which includes 149 Living 101 students and 18 Living 102 students (n=167).

Data collection for the Living 101 course took place in the Winter, Spring, and Fall academic quarters of 2018, and Winter and Spring 2019 (January 2018-June 2-19); data collection for the Living 102 course took place in the Spring and Fall academic quarters of 2018 March-December 2018) and Spring 2019 (March-June 2019 (Living 102 was not offered in any Winter quarter). The results reported therefore are for a total of 149 Living 101 and 18 Living 102 respondents, as shown here in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Subjects

Completed Survey Living 101			**Completed Survey Living 102**			**Received Survey Living 101**		**Received Survey Living 102**	
N Pre	N Post	N Both	N Pre	N Post	N Both	N Pre	N Post	N Pre	N Post
280	199	**149**	34	30	**18**	404	279	49	40

Students were permitted to enroll in these courses up to three times for a total of 3.9 general elective credits. A small number of students took both the pre and post inventories more than once for the same course, in which case, all but their responses from their first completion of one of the instruments is excluded from the analysis and reporting.

The beginning of course questionnaire captured data about respondents' reasons for taking the course. As shown in Table 2, roughly 63% of Living 101 and 68% of Living 102 students reported that the course content was the driver in their decision to take the course. This is likely from a pre-registration review of the course Syllabi, which were available online in the Canvas learning management system at UCI (See Appendix 2). Within the write-in responses captured for the open-ended "Other" response, there are multiple factors, including recommendations of friends and staff (the L101/102 curriculum was required in UCI's Foster Youth Resilience in Education program), stress management, and improving quality of life.

Table 2. Students' Enrollment Aspirations

Q: Why did you enroll and what did you hope to learn?	Living 101 n=	Living 101 %	Living 102 n=	Living 102 %
Instructor	5.0	3.4	5.0	27.8
Course content	93.0	62.8	12.0	66.7
Needed units and course fit my	36.0	24.3	- -	- -
Other	14.0	9.5	1.0	5.6
No Response	1.0	- -	- -	- -
Total	**149.0**	**100.0**	**18.0**	**100.0**

"Other" write-in reasons for taking Living 101 (verbatim):

- A friend asked me to take it
- Both the course content and needed units
- Both the course content and needing units to fit in my schedule
- Deeper understanding of self, consistency, and help with direction post graduation
- I am having difficulties to navigate my life. I am also suffering from mental illness.
- I failed my first Class at UCI last Quarter and I want to recover and cope in a healthy way
- I got an email and I thought this was an interesting/different course to take than the traditional classes I am used to.

- Improve life
- Mandatory: FYRE program
- Personal improvement, unsure if what's covered in the course would help
- Recommendation from brother who took it last Quarter
- Required for program
- Requirement for the FYRE Scholars Program

"Other" reasons for taking Living 102:

- but also Sheppard was totally a huge part of it
- Wanted to explore myself in more depth.

Students were also asked about how they would use the content from the course once it was learned. Table 3 shows that slightly more than two-thirds of the Living 101 and close to all of the Living 102 respondents intended to apply their learnings from the courses to "Understand myself, identities, or relationships." Within the write-in responses captured for the open-ended "Other" response, the primary factor for both courses appear to be stress management and emotional health. Responses to both questions reviewed in Tables 2 and 3 provide strong evidence that these respondents wanted support from post-secondary course options to improve their emotional health and intelligence, and quality of life.

Table 3. Application of Course Teachings

Q: In which area do you most want to apply what you learn?	Living 101 n=	Living 101 %	Living 102 n=	Living 102 %
Achieve academically	15.0	10.1	1.0	5.6
Explore career options	4.0	2.7	- -	- -
Manage my time	24.0	16.1	- -	- -
Understand myself, identities, or relationships	100.0	67.1	17.0	94.4
Other not listed	6.0	4.0	- -	- -

None, material won't really help me	- -	- -	- -	- -
Total	**149.0**	**100.0**	**18.0**	**100.0**

"Other not listed," Living 101 (verbatim):

- Design and live my life more intentionally to be more fulfilling
- Reduce fear, stress, improve self esteem, while making friends.
- Stress management and emotional health
- To better manage and mitigate stress
- To make myself a better me!

"Other not listed," Living 102:

- I really just need help managing my stress and anxiety

Statistical Analyses

During the first and tenth weeks of the ten-week sessions, the 15-question version of the FFMQ was used to assess mindfulness (See Appendix 1). The tables below show its five sub-scales and two mindfulness totals: the original 15-item total and a 12-item total that omits the three items in the "Observing" sub-scale (at least one publication claims this is substantially superior). The FFMQ elements are rated from one to five, giving the full scale a potential range of 15 (lowest mindfulness) to 75 (highest mindfulness). Its five sub-scales each feature three items, resulting in theoretical ranges of three to 15. The five FFMQ subscales are:

- Observing (according to the literature, should no be used)
- Describing
- Acting with Awareness
- Non-judging (non-judging of inner experience)
- Mindful Non-reactivity (non-reactivity to inner experience)

Self-efficacy was measured using the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (See Appendix #3). The 20 CSEI components are evaluated on a scale of one to 10, giving the instrument a theoretical range of 20 (lowest self-efficacy) to 200 (highest self-efficacy). The sub-scales are as follows:

- Self-Efficacy in the Classroom (seven items)
- Self-Efficacy of Roommates (four items)
- Social Self-Efficacy (nine items).

Sub-scales are relevant because self-efficacy is considered to be situationally specific, meaning a person's ideas about their ability to perform tasks varies with the domain in which that task lies (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997; Barry and Finney, 2009). This study used and analyzed all of the sub-scales, though some research suggests that the sub-scales for this instrument, particularly the "Social" sub-scale, should not be used (Fouladi and Wallace, 2014).

Histograms for pre- and post-course scores and score differences for the three main instruments are shown in Figures 1-3. Shapiro-Wilks tests show that all are approximately normally distributed except for CSEI post-course scores and CSEI differences (the distributions of scores for CSEI components Coursework, Roommate, and Social were also non-normal, not shown); for any surveys with non-normal distributions, the nonparametric sign test was used to calculate the p-values.

Figure 1: Histograms of pre-course CSEI, post-course CSEI, and paired differences.

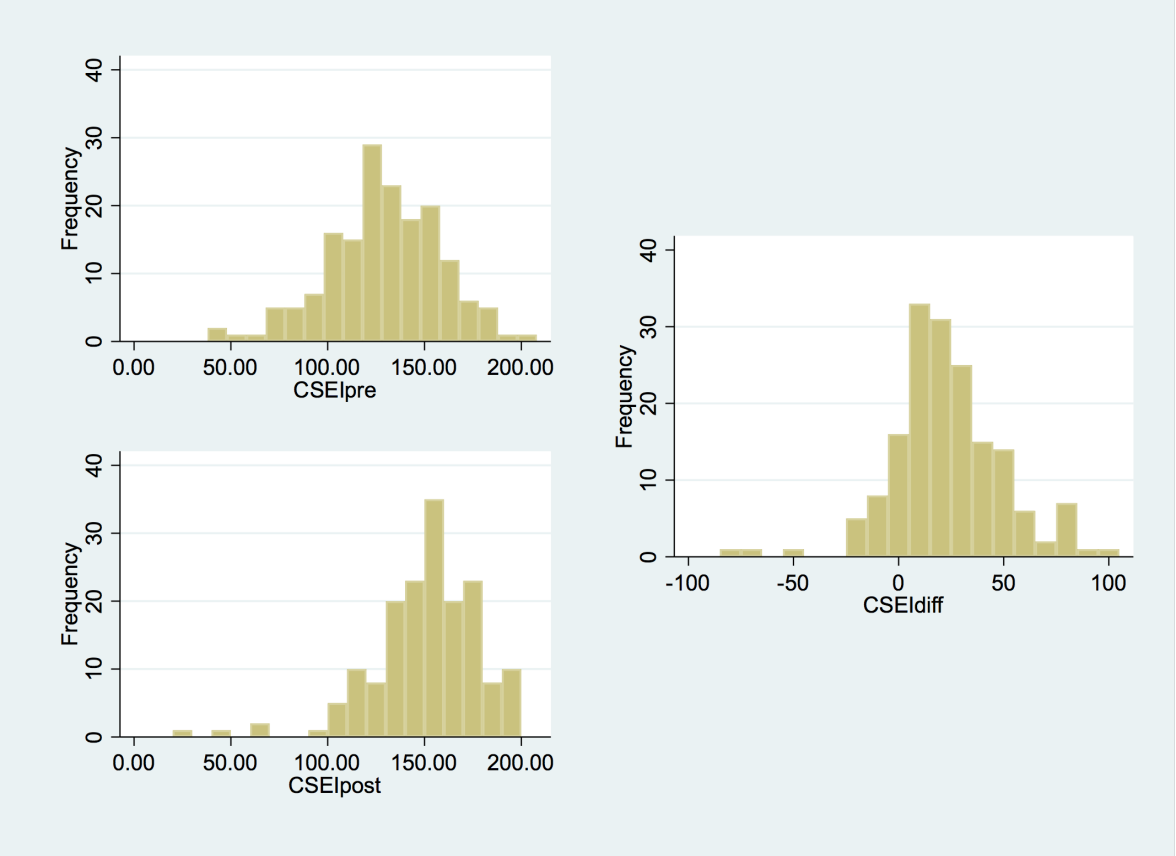

Figure 2: Histograms of pre-course FFMQ12, post-course FFMQ12, and paired differences.

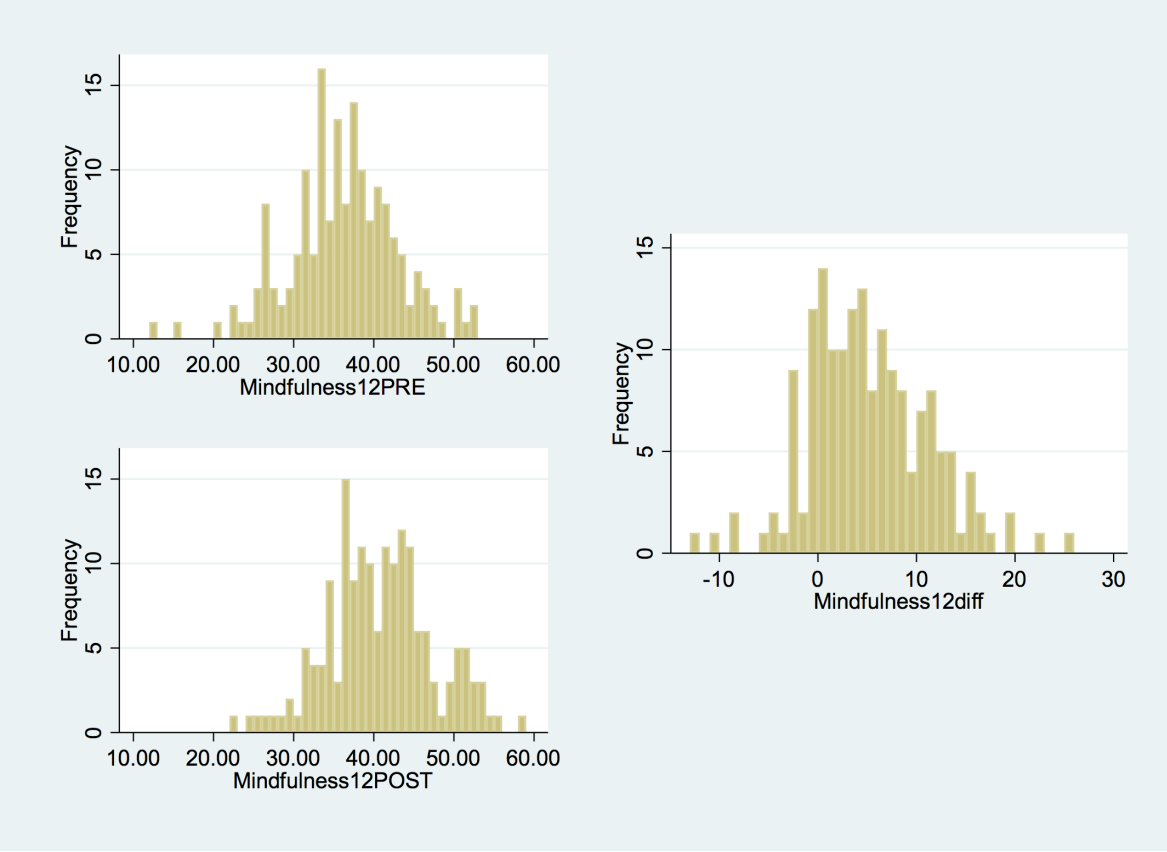

Figure 3: Histograms of pre-course FFMQ-15, post-course FFMQ-15, and paired differences.

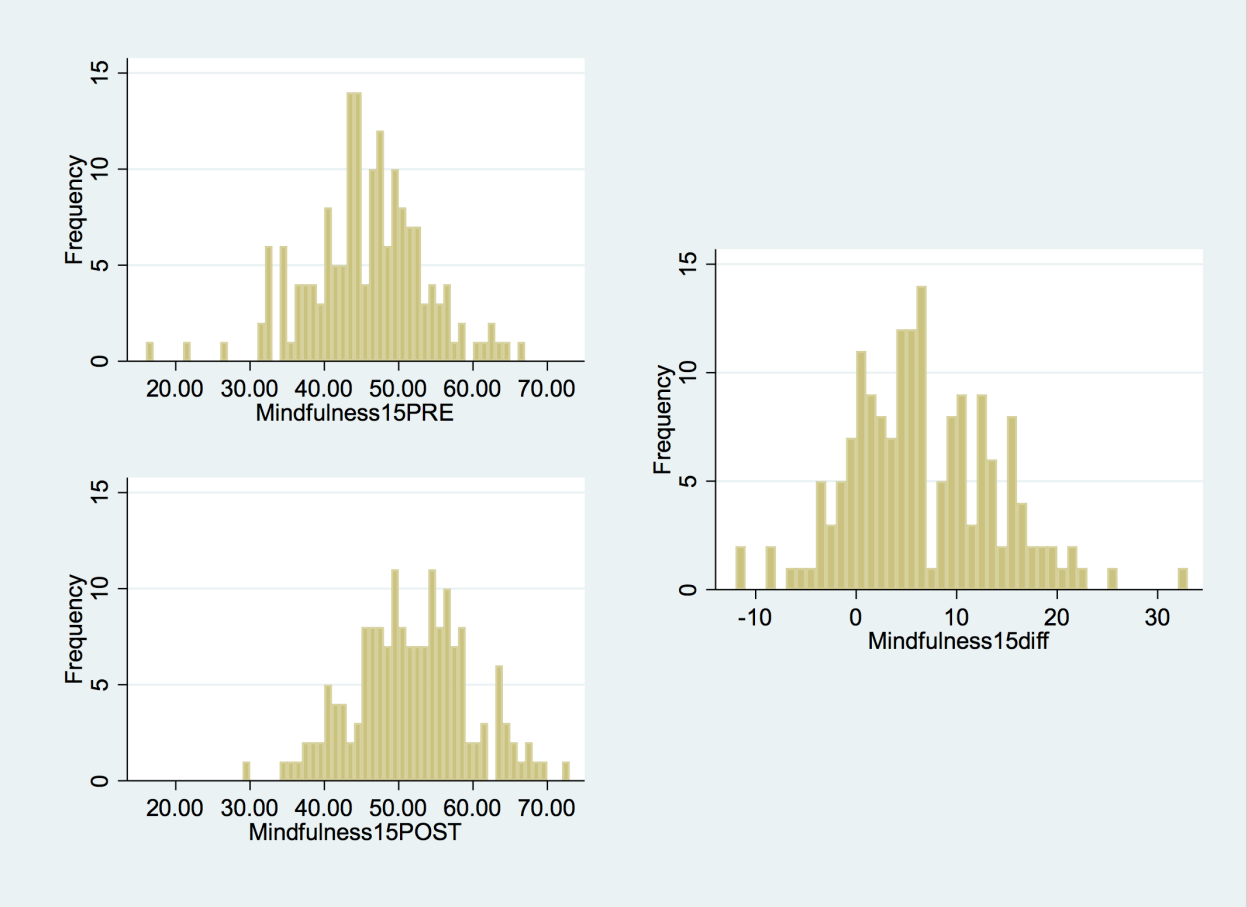

Table 4 shows that there were statistically significant improvements in overall FFMQ-12 score, the overall FFMQ-15 score, as well as in the five FFMQ facets. In this dataset, there were 4- to 6-point increases in FFMQ instrument scores between the start and end of the Living 101 and Living 102 courses.

The difference between pre- and post-course CSEI scores was statistically significantly different from zero, as were the CSEI components. Scores increased +22 points for the overall CSEI survey, and from +2.5 to +13 points for the CSEI components.

Table 4: Pre-course, post-course, and differences in the survey instrument scores.

Instrument	Pre-Course Score Mean (SD)	Post-Course Score Mean (SD)	Difference Pre- to Post- Mean (SD)	95% CI	p-value
Living 101 & 102 combined (n=167)					
CSEI	128.4 (28.7)	150.4 (28.0)	22.0 (26.6)	18.0-26.1	<0.0001
Coursework	46.8 (11.0)	53.3 (10.4)	6.4 (10.1)	4.9-8.0	<0.0001
Roommate	29.3 (6.9)	31.9 (6.6)	2.5 (6.5)	1.6-3.5	<0.0001
Social	52.2 (16.6)	65.3 (14.5)	13.0 (13.6)	11.0-15.1	<0.0001
FFMQ-12	35.7 (6.8)	40.3 (6.6)	4.6 (6.2)	3.7-5.6	<0.0001
FFMQ-15	45.2 (7.9)	51.3 (7.7)	6.1 (7.3)	5.0-7.2	<0.0001
Observing	9.6 (2.5)	11.0 (2.4)	1.5 (2.3)	1.1-1.8	<0.0001
Describing	9.0 (2.6)	10.3 (2.4)	1.3 (2.2)	1.0-1.6	<0.0001
Acting with Awareness	8.8 (2.4)	9.3 (2.2)	0.5 (2.1)	0.2-0.8	0.0014
Nonjudging	9.0 (2.7)	10.5 (2.7)	1.5 (2.8)	1.0-1.9	<0.0001
Nonreactivity	8.9 (2.2)	10.2 (2.2)	1.3 (2.6)	0.9-1.7	<0.0001
Living 101 (n=149)					
CSEI	126.5 (28.9)	149.0 (28.9)	22.4 (27.5)	18.1-26.9	<0.0001
FFMQ-12	35.4 (6.8)	40.0 (6.7)	4.5 (6.3)	3.5-5.5	<0.0001
FFMQ-15	45.0 (7.9)	50.9 (7.9)	6.0 (7.4)	4.8-7.2	<0.0001
Living 102 (n=18)					
CSEI	144.4 (22.3)	162.6 (14.8)	18.2 (18.6)	8.9-27.4	0.0075
FFMQ-12	37.3 (7.2)	43.0 (5.1)	5.7 (5.4)	3.0-8.3	0.0042

FFMQ-15	47.3 (7.4)	54.7 (5.4)	7.4 (6.1)	4.4-51.0	0.0001

Conclusion

There were statistically significant improvements in overall FFMQ-12 score, the overall FFMQ-15 score, as well as in the five FFMQ facets. The difference between pre- and post-course CSEI scores was statistically significantly different from zero, as were the CSEI components. Means and confidence intervals for scores of Living 101 students were similar in magnitude and direction to those of Living 102 students. This statistical significance suggests that if the participants were a random sample of UCI students, we would anticipate the entire UCI student population to demonstrate pre-to-post score gains as a result of completing these courses. The degree of significance does not refer to the magnitude of the pre-to-post rise we should expect, but rather to the chance of such an increase. This researcher explores the implications of these data in Chapter 5, including offering recommendations for further research and potential positive interventions in post-secondary education.

Chapter 5: Summary

Introduction

The question of how to support post-secondary students to manage stress, anxiety and depression, as well as to improve their academic engagement, outcomes and quality of life is an important and dynamic one. It involves a review of a complex set of interrelated systems, and requires a willingness to go beyond emphasis on traditional measures of post-secondary student success to the question of 'what more is possible and how do we get there?' This study looked at specific areas that the data supports as potential interventions for further study and broader implementation in post-secondary settings.

As has been studied, proven, and implemented in primary and secondary education, student success can be served when students themselves are served a curriculum that incorporates non-cognitive/SEL skills (Bridgeland et al., 2013; DePaoli et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015). Likewise, practical spirituality is an intervention area with proven positive outcomes, not only within student academic success (Kuh and Gonyea, 2006), but also within general health (Koenig, 2009; Koenig, McCullough and Larson, 2001), and mental well-being (Balbuena, Baetz, and Bowen, 2013; Portnoff, McClintock, Lau, Choi, and Miller, 2017; Shreve-Neiger and Edelstein, 2004; Shiah, Chang, Chiang, Lin and Tam, 2015). Also studied with proven positive outcomes in post-secondary education is the area of academic self-efficacy, with multiple studies showing a positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic performance (Manstead & Van-Eekelen, 1998; Newby-Fraser & Schlebusch, 1998; Pajares, 1996; Sadri & Robertson, 1993; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Vrugt, Langereis, & Hoogstraten,

1997; Wolters & Pintrich, 1998), and at least one study showing academic self-efficacy is *predictive* of academic performance (Pajares, 1996).

Lastly, the biopsychosocial approach, broadly studied and implemented in medicine and psychology, is gaining momentum as a viable and feasible interventional modality within post-secondary education. Deckro and colleagues (2010) reported significant reductions in anxiety and stress from implementation of a mind/body program among college students; Versaevel (2014) reported that a "socio-ecological" approach to stress mitigation is successful; Harackiewicz & Priniski (2018) asserted that social-psychosocial programs in post-secondary parallel skills recommended in SEL frameworks implemented broadly in K-12; Chang and colleagues (2020) determined that education-based toolkits reduced stress among Canadian students across 135 campuses in 2016. By contrast, White and colleagues (2016) considered overall behavioral outcomes data from a psychosocial study among post-secondary students with autism "equivocal," though they advocate for further study of the approach within this population of students.

This researcher's overall questions stemmed from direct interactions with post-secondary students in multiple degree programs at the University of California, Irvine in Orange County, California in the United States (UCI). The issues these students were trying to overcome were beyond the academic sphere. They ranged from interpersonal dynamics with family and roommates to major life issues such as discovering a life purpose and figuring out how to be happy and fulfilled. The questions driving the course methodology and content, and further the study itself, were chosen to lead to clarity with respect to how to cultivate within post-secondary

students, especially those deemed "at-risk," the ability to rise to whatever challenges they face, be they academic, health, mental/emotional well-being, or career in nature.

As a spiritual transformational coach and self-mastery teacher, this researcher's hypothesis was that her body of work that had been successful with older professional clients outside the campus environment could be implemented with post-secondary students to achieve positive outcomes. Specifically, the proposal presented to then UCI Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Dr. Thomas A. Parham, was to conduct a pilot of self-mastery training, inclusive of practical spiritual concepts, to determine whether it could enhance academic and quality-of-life outcomes for at-risk, post-secondary students. Of interest was whether this kind of training would enable students to manage stress and anxiety, build self-efficacy and increase resilience. Would students be interested in the spiritual aspects of training, and would the less tangible, more esoteric aspects resonate enough for them to stay engaged? How would the various aspects of the training be integrated to create a whole that delivered desired outcomes?

This study adds to the growing body of evidence supporting initiatives to incorporate non-cognitive/SEL skills training into post-secondary education policy and practice. Importantly, the integration of practical spirituality principles and practices in such co-curricular education for its benefits in helping students have a better sense of self, life purpose, and direction was also investigated as it was a central part of the studied curriculum content. These results substantiate to policy makers and institutional leaders that taking a whole student approach in post-secondary education, which means going beyond cognitive academic development and/or achievement, and indicators of success such as GPA and time to completion, is not only feasible but appropriate. This chapter reports conclusions, implications and indicated actions from the study.

Summary of Findings

The key findings are detailed below, organized by research question. Each question from Chapter One is repeated here with the pertinent results as reported in Chapter 4. Overall, this researcher set out to discover answers to the following questions regarding whether and how well self-mastery training, inclusive of practical spiritual concepts, could deliver better academic and quality-of-life outcomes for at-risk, post-secondary students.

1. Does non-cognitive, co-curricular skills training help at-risk post-secondary students mitigate stress and be more self-efficacious and resilient?

Students in this multi-quarter pilot were given access to non-cognitive/SEL skills training in two variations of 10-week course content through the courses, *"Living 101: Being Happy and Whole"* (entry-level course) and *"Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum"* (advanced course). The first five weeks were foundational, and 1) equipped students with life principles and practices to take personal responsibility for creating a fulfilling and happy life; and 2) guided students to identify personal sources of stress, anxiety and other inner barriers to success. The second half of the course taught specific tools and behaviors to grow enrollees' ability to embody fully the content in their daily lives through the inclusion of a 5-week Capstone Project. This was designed as a tool of self-discovery and transformation to ensure students were capable of diagnosing their own problems (personal responsibility, self-efficacy and interior locus of control), and integrating the principles into their daily lives, including crafting and adopting personal strategies to resolve their issues, and taking ownership of continuing to live the principles past the end date of the courses.

The statistical analyses on the pre- and post-course responses to both the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) survey instruments reported in Chapter Four indicate both Living 101 and Living 102 positively impacted students' self-efficacy and mindfulness, respectively. Because this researcher and her statistician team were not provided any subject-identifiable data (according to the IRB protocol), we do not know the demographics of the survey respondents. As a result, we are unable to conduct breakout analyses on subjects who fit the at-risk definition.

That said, per the data collected on enrollments for the period 2015-2016 and outside the IRB protocol, on the whole, 42% of enrollees were first generation students and 28% were under-represented minorities. While these student-specific data are not relevant to the study findings, they can be considered reflective of a profile of enrollees going forward. In addition, because of anecdotal evidence of impact on students from student word-of-mouth reporting, the UCI Foster Youth Resilience in Education director made successful completion of Living 101 a required co-curricular course to strengthen program participants' self-efficacy and resilience.

The anecdotal and unsolicited evidence voluntarily submitted from students regarding these courses supports that they aided, from a number of perspectives, the vast majority of students who completed the courses. Specifically, the evidence supports that enrollees applied the course teachings to strengthen their self-awareness, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy. For example, one student emailed this researcher after attaining her degree from UCI to share personal perspective on how the ongoing embodiment of course teachings was unfolding in her life after college:

"Professor Sheppard, I graduated and I wanted to let you know how my life is going since I

moved back to my home town. At this moment, I can definitely say I am feeling truly happy. Lately, I have been thinking a lot about all the different lessons I learned from you and have been putting them to use. Some are easier done than others and I definitely have to work on a lot of things. One thing I do know for sure is that by taking your classes and having the chance to meet you really changed my way of thinking and my life. I am really grateful for all of that. If I am ever down in Southern California I would love to catch up!" ~ A. Cervantes, Masters in Mechanical Engineering, 2017

Likewise, the following student reported that the courses provided safe space for her to do deep introspection and application of transformational teachings through a non-cognitive/SEL skills-focused course (in addition to mitigating anxiety), and that was a novel experience at an academic outcomes-focused post-secondary institution: *"Living 101 was an absolutely amazing class! At a school that is so academically focused, it was refreshing to spend time learning about myself and life skills that will serve my future just as much as the academics. The skills I have learned in this class are ones that I will carry with me for the rest of my life and consistently try to put into practice. I can honestly say that I have been happier and less anxious since taking Living 101 and I truly believe that it should be a university requirement to take Professor Sheppard's motivating and inspirational class of life skills. Self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-love are crucial to being happy, especially for college students in their twenties. Being allowed to introspectively work on these things in a supportive group of amazing people made Living 101 one of the most valuable classes I have taken at UC Irvine."* ~ A. Tarwater, English, 2018

One aspect of personal responsibility taught in the courses was honest self-assessment that enables practical decision-making to continue on the path to greater self-mastery. Enrollees were expanding in their individual abilities to experience their own shortcomings and persist toward their goals, a quality that's critical in the long-term time horizon of a 4-year or longer pursuit of a post-secondary degree. Here is one example that's illustrative:

"Thank you for everything. Being able to take this class has really helped me tremendously. I have felt a lot of positive changes take place in my life, and even though I may stumble every now and then with the teachings, I take that as a blessing and an opportunity to strengthen what I have learned and keep practicing until it becomes second nature. I really look forward to seeing you again and taking your class again, hopefully before I graduate." ~ A. Portugal, Behavioral Psychology, 2017

Given the IRB-approved study's data and these and other voluntary student impact reports (from students who may or may not be included in the study data), there is strong and clear evidence that the subject matter and the way it was taught helped enrolled post-secondary students mitigate stress and be more self-efficacious and resilient. (See Appendix #8 for a partial list of additional student Impact Statements)

2. Is spirituality-based self-mastery training of interest to post-secondary students and will they take the knowledge and skills and create a practice to improve their lives?

At the outset of the Living 101 pilot in 2015, this researcher was concerned about this question the most. As UCI is a federally-funded public institution, the awareness of the restrictions around course content that could be perceived as religious instruction was front and center. For that reason, the spiritual nature of course content was less prevalently shared in

promotional materials about the courses, and as the creator and sole instructor, language was carefully chosen to avoid trouble while also delivering practical and actionable spirituality-based content.

The pre-course survey instrument asked enrollees why they registered for the courses, and where they would apply what they learned. Because neither questionnaire was designed specifically for this study, neither included questions specific to practical spirituality. None of the qualitative responses specifically mentioned that subject matter as a reason for taking the courses either. However, the spiritual component *is* mentioned directly in the title of the Living 101 course textbook, "The Energy of Life: Guide to Practical Spirituality©" (See Appendix #9), or alluded to (as with use of terminology that is spirituality related, such as "Consciousness," "metaphysics" and "Universal Laws") in various course materials, such as the Syllabi, lecture power point presentations and case studies. Therefore, it is possible that students knew the course was going to teach spiritual principles and practices before they chose to enroll.

Quantitatively and qualitatively, the course content was the overwhelming driver of responding students' decisions to enroll in the courses, with 67% of Living 101 and 94% of Living 102 responding students making that selection. Additionally, verbatim responses to the "Other" option for the question about where they would apply their learnings, included answers that specifically cited reducing stress and anxiety and increasing emotional health, and designing and living an intentional and purpose-fueled life. (See Chapter Four, Table 2). It's possible that students were including the spiritual nature of course content when they choose their responses, but we have no way of definitively ascertaining that from the study data. Multiple studies referenced in Chapter Two reported findings on the impact on persistence through graduation of

developing a sense of self *and* sense of purpose *beyond* the self (a.k.a. spirituality) (Braxton, 2000; DeWitz et al. 2009; Duckworth et al., 2007; Melguizo, 2011; Tinto, 2012) which is further support for an hypothesis that suggests that deepening spiritual understanding can positively impact academic outcomes.

Importantly, several Student Impact Statements (See Appendix #8) give verbatims on the learnings attained and how they helped students' lives and self-efficacy, including some that specifically mentioned the spiritual nature of what these enrollees had gained. Here are two such examples (from students who may or may not be included in the study data):

"I thoroughly enjoyed Living 101!!! What an awesome class, learning experience, group dynamic and spiritual exploration. Thank you for a great journey, and I look forward to enrolling in Living 102. ~ L. Scott, Drama 2018

"I think all persons of all ages should take Living 101 because it is a well-rounded class that teaches a person about themselves. The course has made me a conscious person of who I am, my actions, and my words. In the past, I have always thought to put others before me but never thought to take care of myself. Now, I can honestly tell someone my thoughts and feelings without feeling like I will hurt the other party. I can put myself first for once. Living 101 is a great course because it is a teaching on our life. It opens up spirituality for everyone or anyone, it is not about religion but the focus of our true self with the Universe. If you truly want to take care of yourself, this is a great class to take." ~ L. Lee, Psychology and Social Behavior, 2016

By practical spirituality training here, this researcher is referring to a structured and supervised applied practice of spirituality-based life skills that enable greater self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-mastery. The principles included in Chapter One provide additional

perspective on the nature of the content that was included in Living 101 and Living102, that is recommended for further study. Namely, these essential and foundational principles are:

1. People are integrated spiritual + human beings, having the abilities to think (reason), and also to feel, perceive, or experience *subjectively,* beyond the five senses (sentience).
2. Everything in the Universe is energy, and energy dynamics known as non-physical or Spiritual Laws govern the way everything in the Universe relates and works.
3. Living in harmony with those Spiritual Laws enables greater confidence, courage, inner peace and happiness.

Given the data shared in the Chapter Two review of literature and the anecdotal evidence gathered from students taking Living 101 and Living 102 (who may or may not be included in the study data) about the evidence of transformational success from applying skills rooted in practical spirituality, this is fertile ground for additional inquiry and research.

3. What combination of skills help at-risk post-secondary students with retention, GPA, and graduation rates?

Though the approved IRB Narrative for this study (See Appendix #5) indicated that academic outcomes would be reviewed, no such report based on student identifiable data was prepared or provided to this researcher. As this researcher was prohibited from access to student identifiable data to protect the integrity of the data, an independent analysis of purely academic outcomes such as retention, GPA and graduation rates was not conducted by this researcher. That said, given the positive and promising quantitative results of the courses as measured by the CSEI and FFMQ reported here in Chapters Four and Five, and the studies referenced in the

literature that show linkages between the CSEI and academic outcomes, this researcher hypothesizes that there would be measurable improvements in the targeted outcomes.

According to Table 3. Application of Course Teachings in Chapter Four, 10% of Living 101 respondents and 5.6 % of Living 102 respondents said they would apply what they learned from the courses to "Achieve Academically." Importantly, as pointed out in the Chapter Two Review of Literature, there are multiple studies which assert that increases in academic self-efficacy improve academic performance. At least one voluntarily submitted student impact statement (from a student who may or may not be included in the study data) specifically called out that what he learned in and applied from the courses supported his academic improvements, although there is no way to validate his statements with actual academic outcomes data:

"I found Professor Sheppard's Living 101 course to be the only class on campus to actively challenge students to improve their lives. There are many stresses that come with being a university student, and it's easy to get caught up with everything and forget self-care. Living 101 and Professor Sheppard helped me take a step back from my busy schedule to identify and delve into habits that were causing me unhealthy stress and unhappiness. After looking into these issues through readings and class reflections, the class helped me set up a concrete plan to address what was making me unhappy. These improvements not only helped me personally, but I saw better performance in my life academically and careerwise too. Professor Sheppard helped me realize how these habits weren't just affecting certain aspects, but rather that they permeate my whole life. It's not very often that students can connect with a well-meaning and driven professor in a class with matching eye-opening and introspective curriculum. Take advantage!" ~ R. Leung, Biological Sciences, 2016

This researcher hypothesizes that had the academic outcomes data been collected and analyzed as laid out in the IRB protocol, we would have seen increases in measures of academic performance, both immediately and longitudinally. This is fertile and recommended ground for continued study.

4. Can we teach students at an earlier age their awesome power as *causal* nature to create the lives they want, and will they *embody* the teachings beyond the course?

This question is largely integrated with number two above regarding practical spirituality given a central call-to-action in the Living 101 and Living 102 course teachings is to understand and embody the integrated spiritual-human nature of themselves and work in harmony with Universal Laws. This central tenet is communicated via the didactic lecture in the very first session of the 10-week course, and in keeping with strengthening the "the inner facet" of students (Astin et al., 2011) which is their identity or sense of self, is reiterated every course session and in all assignments.

The concepts introduced in Chapter One that relate to students having causal nature are sovereignty (acting as one's own supreme authority in a personally responsible manner), being "at cause" (being and expressing oneself from an internal locus of control as able to create one's own life), and self-mastery (mastering yourself in your life so you can exquisitely manage whatever your life brings your way). Supporting post-secondary students to engage their lives from a place of causal nature means they behave more as empowered self-leaders than as victims of circumstance. While they are discerning enough to recognize that much of their lives *may* be outside their realm of control (including other people's actions), at a bare minimum, they can

determine that which they can influence, and craft strategies and action plans to think, feel and act in ways that serve them toward achieving their highest and best outcomes.

Again, the use in the study of validated survey instruments limited how closely the data gathered could inform on the transformative effectiveness of the Living 101 and Living 102 interventions. Data from Tables 2 and 3 in Chapter Four, indicates that developing knowledge around a personal identity was important to some of the respondents in the study. Verbatim answers given to the open-ended "Other" response when asked why they were taking the course included: 1) "Deeper understanding of self, consistency, and help with direction post-graduation;" 2) "I am having difficulties to navigate my life. I am also suffering from mental illness;" 3) "I failed my first Class at UCI last Quarter and I want to recover and cope in a healthy way;" and 4) "Wanted to explore myself in more depth." Verbatim answers given to the open-ended "Other" response when asked where they would apply their learning included: 1) "Design and live my life more intentionally to be more fulfilling;" 2) To make myself a better me!"; and 3) "I really just need help managing my stress and anxiety." The very nature of these statements suggests these respondents were seeing themselves as causal in their lives to some degree.

One of the requirements mandated by UCI for co-curricular courses was that they have at least one writing assignment. Both courses in the study had mandatory "Creative Communication Assignments," including short personal reflections called "Golden Nuggets," longer "Reflection Papers" and a "Capstone Project." (See Appendices #1 and #2). This researcher was often quite surprised at the depth of personal reflection and courageous action students were engaging in as a part of deepening their connection to their causal natures through

the courses. Here is one such example (from a student who may or may not be included in the study data), which is blinded to protect the author's identity.

Golden Nugget #2

"During Week 6, I learned a lot more about myself than I thought I would. For my capstone, I realized that I have been freeing myself of personal judgment, slowly but surely. I learned that I can change the situation I am in or my thoughts about it. This occurred recently. Though it benefits me, I am still having a difficult time. I recently realized that my four-year relationship my boyfriend, not sure what to call him right now, isn't serving me right now. It is a deep realization I noticed that I am a people pleaser. I was completely aware that I am with my family, but I didn't know that I took it with me into my relationship. This means I don't know how to live my life as my own. So, I went through a roller coaster of feelings and emotions. At first, I judged myself and thought I was weak, but it is what I needed to go through. With these realizations, I allowed myself to stand up for myself and decided, on my own accord, to take a break from my relationship. I did this to help myself. Though during the moment I told him, I felt this sadness for "breaking" our four years and that I was terrible for breaking someone's heart. It took me time to think, "hey this happened, but I shouldn't be harsh on myself and continuously beat myself down for it." I am doing this because I love myself and I know that I am not happy in my relationship. I feel that I am reassuring myself that I loved this person because of the amount of time spent together. I've gone with what I have been feeling and have been following that instead of thinking what is good for the other person. Many tears were and are shared but I know that it will make me stronger. It's a tough time for me right now, but I am doing things that serve

myself to expel judgment of myself. I am taking time to care for myself, which I don't typically do."

The following course enrollees (who may or may not be included in the study data) submitted personal impact statements in which they shared how aspects like self-awareness, self-confidence and wholeness strengthened their abilities to be 'master and commander' of their lives:

"When I enrolled for Living 101, I took the class for the extra units. After the first day of class, I knew that it wasn't like any other class I've taken at UC Irvine. In fact, it was an eye-opening and life-changing experience! You have taught me to be more aware of my body and realize my self-worth. Not only did this class help me grow as a person, I learned to take charge of my life and my health to be the happy and whole person that I am! Thank you so much for teaching such valuable lessons that will help me throughout my college life and beyond!" ~ K. Castillo, Business Administration, 2020

"I just wanted to reach out and let you know that I got the fellowship that I interviewed for! I can say without a doubt that I wouldn't have even had the confidence to apply for the fellowship without all that I learned from Living 101 and 102, so thank you so much for doing all that you do! My life is changing for the better a little bit every single day, and I owe it all to you and the teachings. Thanks so much for an amazing fall quarter, and maybe I'll see you again in future offerings of Living 102!" ~ C. Grigorian, PhD Candidate, Chemical Engineering and Materials Science

As Albert Bandura, the developer of the self-efficacy theory asserted, people who believe themselves to be highly efficacious create their own futures, rather than simply talk about it. This

combination of study data and anecdotal evidence suggests the Living 101 and Living 102 courses as interventions to mitigate stress and increase elf-efficacy, resilience and quality of life are both reasonable and feasible, though further research is warranted.

Conclusions

This multi-year, campus-wide investigation of two post-secondary courses designed to strengthen student self-efficacy, resilience and quality of life while helping reduce stress was successful in important ways, inconclusive in others and overall, contributory to increasing understanding of the need for and impact of con-cognitive skills/SEL skills training inclusive of practical spirituality principles and practices in post-secondary education. Using the validated CSEI and FFMQ survey instruments, both the Living 101 and Living 102 courses improved respondents' self-efficacy (+22 points) and mindfulness (+6 points) in statistically significant ways. Because, as Conley (2015) asserts, no framework for the broad implementation of SEL in post-secondary education exists, this study provides incremental data that indicates this type of course content is both novel, useful and successful toward reducing post-secondary student stress and anxiety while also increasing resilience, self-efficacy and quality of life. Further, this study supports ongoing efforts to create within post-secondary education policy and practice compulsory non-cognitive/SEL skills training. Because of the specific content of the curriculum being studied, it also provides data on the inclusion of practical spirituality principles and practices in such co-curricular education for its benefits at helping students have an improved sense of self, life purpose, and direction. Overall, this study is a call-to-action entreating institutional decision-makers and governmental policy-makers to recognize and act on their

responsibility for students' *whole* being beyond their cognitive academic development and/or achievement, and measures of success such as GPA and time to completion.

Because some structural aspects of the study were not established by the Lead Researcher, no data was collected and therefore no analysis could be completed in those areas, which were:

- Comparison of the test group of subjects versus an established control for each academic quarter of the study. Though these results are strong and promising, without the ability to compare to a control, it remains unclear how much of the study effect was from the courses versus some other factor that was unmeasured by the study.
- Longitudinal effect analysis at specific time intervals after successful completion of one or both courses, as well as post-graduation from UCI. Though some of these subjects volunteered comments about the longevity of their personal transformations via their impact statements, we cannot determine from the study data whether the effects on the subjects lasts beyond the study period. Longitudinal analysis of life and career impact at 6-, 12- and 24-month intervals post-course completion would provide important additional perspective about the strength of this intervention to mitigate stress and build self-efficacy and resilience.
- Linkages of increased self-efficacy and mindfulness to academic outcomes and career-readiness. In particular, this researcher would like to know the effect of this non-cognitive/ SEL skills intervention on academic outcomes such as GPA, retention to graduation and time to degree completion versus a control.
- Breakout analysis specific to "at-risk" student classifications or general demographics Though this researcher/course instructor knows the courses had a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic,

multi-racial student population, no student-identifiable data was available to her. It's not clear whether the Lead Researcher conducted breakout analyses on any of these variables. Given the potential need for additional support to at-risk student populations, it is meaningful and necessary to determine this intervention's viability as an intervention that can support student success in this population. Specific risk variables of interest are ethnicity, socio-economic level, first generation college student and emancipated foster youth.

These areas are recommended as areas for future study. Additional considerations and areas of interest for further development and study appear next.

Discussion and Areas for Further Research

The following are areas of interest for future exploration and analysis that could expand the usefulness of the data collected via this study.

1. The collected variables included only the Living 101 and Living 102 courses taken and the pre- and post-course scores for students enrolled in them. It is possible that other factors exists that remain unmeasured by this study that could explain the increase in scores observed. This could include general maturity with increases in life experience and age, impact of academic courses with related topics, and knowledge developed through other sources altogether. Future research should do a more conclusive job at ruling these factors into or out of the measured variables.
2. The data clearly shows that every student enrolled in Living 101 and Living 102 did not complete the survey instruments, and there is the potential for selection bias if only those who benefitted from the courses completed the post-course questionnaire. While statistically

significant results were found for both survey instruments and all sub-scale components, it is not clear whether the results are *practically* significant, and a control would help determine if the interventions had as positive results as these data suggest. Especially given that the absence of a control can result in people discounting the results of this study, future iterations must include a control.

3. This researcher chose the rigor associated with validated survey instruments. Though the CSEI and FFMQ came close to appropriately measuring the pre-intervention states of study subjects and post-intervention results of this study, their use necessitated a trade-off of more intervention-specific assessment questions. In an ideal world, the interventions would be measured using instruments designed specifically to capture the transformational effectiveness of the components of the courses themselves. That includes questions more closely tied to the elements of practical spirituality, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, and especially applicable to post-secondary situational dynamics. At this time, this researcher is unaware of any validated instruments that would lend themselves to the overall structure and content of the interventions in this study; one validated instrument to investigate for future use is Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Others will need to be investigated and measured for fit and feasibility as future iterations of research on these study questions are implemented.
4. As mentioned, multiple times in this dissertation, most of the scholarly data sourced for this article on non-cognitive skills/SEL skills training related to research, advocacy, and implementation with K-12 subjects. Though a broad framework for use in post-secondary education doesn't exist, it appears meaningful to evaluate the determinants of education

success and related interventions to improve non-cognitive/SEL skill development in post-secondary undergraduate and graduate populations, especially where there is evidence of high levels of unmanaged stress and anxiety. This researcher's hypothesis is that stress mitigation and management are as much factors of understanding the sources of stress as understanding and leveraging self-esteem, personal responsibility, and other dimensions of social-emotional skills. In other words, stress mitigation and management is less about cognitive understanding of sources and tools as it is about conditioning relative to internal and external facets of student identity and abilities to relate psychologically, socially and emotionally to what's going on internally and in the world around them. Even though students may have been exposed to non-cognitive/SEL skills training in their K-12 years, the dynamics of students' academic, personal and career lives are substantially different as they become emerging adults, making decisions supporting independent living for the first time. Broader and deeper exploration and practice in a structured curriculum can help students adopt transformational interventions that support greater self-efficacy and academic outcomes overall. This means students can get beyond surface levels of stress and anxiety management (sleep habits, positive thinking, financial literacy, and eating habits) to subconscious and unconscious sources of stress and anxiety (sense of self, belonging, self-compassion, personal responsibility and spiritual understanding of self relative to the world).

5. The literature review provided strong support for development of a "toolkit" specific to post-secondary students. Through their study of mental wellness resources on post-secondary campuses in Canada, Chang and colleagues (2020) showed that a toolkit is workable solution, and further, that one consisting of an integrated combination of elements across

biological, psychological and social spectrums (biopsychosocial) had the greatest impact. This researcher has envisioned a five-course self-mastery tool-kit designed to serve emerging adults. It is intended to be a biopsychosocial intervention that experientially teaches young adults (including post-secondary students) how to "master themselves in their lives so they can exquisitely manage whatever their lives bring their way." The goal is that completion of the full toolkit earns a personal development certification that supports the maturity and career-readiness of 18–25-year-olds. This toolkit would include both the Living 101 and Living 102 courses, plus three other courses similarly experiential and multi-variate in nature, that support problem-solving and decision-making, interpersonal relational skills and communication, and servant leadership for civic engagement. In addition, this toolkit would take the practical spirituality foundation from Living 101 and Living 102, which is very personally developed, and guide enrollees to expand their depth of understanding and breadth of real-world application. Lastly, this researcher believes strongly that such a toolkit should be of interest to both parents and employers as an intervention that strengthens the likelihood of emerging adults' success in post-secondary academic pursuits as well as their career readiness. This is area for further development and future study.

6. As included in the course Syllabi and Outlines (See Appendices #1 and #2), this researcher believes Living 101 and Living 102 were taught with novel features, including their practical spirituality roots, reflection writing topics and assignment timing, experiential elements, textbooks and the 5-week Capstone Project. As sole instructor of both courses, this researcher was able to interact with students throughout each class session and private office hours, as well as through their written assignments and in-class presentations of their

personal growth in action. However, the study design did not lend itself to comparative internal analysis of those individual elements, so there are no quantitative or qualitative measures that provide guidance for pedagogical changes to enhance course effectiveness. This is an area for future study. This researcher's hypothesis is that as awareness of the courses' content, outcomes and impact become wore widely visible and championed by educators, administrators and students, student demand would increase exponentially.

7. While this study included 149 Living 101 and 18 Living 102 students who completed both the pre- and post-course survey instruments, these numbers do not fully show the population of enrollees in the two course interventions at UCI because students who completed only one or neither questionnaire were excluded from the study altogether. In total, the courses were in pilot from Spring 2015-Spring 2019, which encompassed a total of 13 academic quarters and a total of 486 Living 101 and 69 Living 102 students. A major surprise for this researcher/instructor was the broad reach across campus in terms of the degree programs of the enrollees, who represented each academic unit on campus. On a percentage basis, the top three academic units represented in Living 101 were Social Sciences (~19%), Social Ecology (~16%) and Engineering (~12%). For the quarters for which the data was accessible, the enrollees split roughly 65% female and 35% male. Roughly 40% of all enrollees were seniors. Notably, despite enrollment drives that included multiple email messages and other cross-campus communication devices, the overall awareness and reach of the two courses on the UCI campus of over 35,000 students was minuscule. Anecdotally, students were generally surprised when they learned of the courses' availability and often lamented that they hadn't known of their availability earlier in their UCI experience. The question of how

to attract more enrollees was an ongoing question throughout the pilot, including the study period. Some potential interventions (texting services promotional programs) were not approved for use by campus communications, and others were not feasible (student messages in classrooms at the beginning of each quarter). This is an area that warrants further exploration, development, and study.

8. As the course enrollments grew at UCI, the question of scaling loomed large. In the current pedagogical design of synchronous delivery, there is an upper limit for the number of students that could be served reasonably well given a budget that covered one instructor plus a learning assistant. At the time of the pilot's completion, class enrollment was averaging 60 students/quarter for the last four quarters of Living 101. Given the number of writing assignments and the extent of the Capstone Project, it was becoming clear that a plan beyond multiple offerings of the same course each quarter needed to be developed. In addition, a successful novel non-cognitive/SEL skills offering such as the studied intervention could be viable as a required course for all Freshman, and at UCI, that means several thousand students each academic year. A question remains about how the experiential and writing aspects of the courses would be translated to online equivalents for an hybrid synchronous and asynchronous delivery format that would make it more scalable to serve thousands of students. A corollary to this question is how to serve students at multiple geographic locations around the world.
9. Multiple class sessions for both courses involved peer-to-peer interaction, primarily designed to foster community and belonging. However, all instructional or mentoring interactions were from instructor to student. This researcher is interested in the viability and feasibility of

developing peer-to-peer mentors to support learning outcomes and ongoing embodiment of the teachings. This question includes how to certify potential mentors for sufficient understanding and implementation of course principles and practices, as well as how to ensure confidentiality. This idea needs further development and evaluation of various legal considerations before being studied.

10. This researcher may be uniquely qualified to teach the subject matter in the course structure as studied in this UCI pilot. First, she has more than 20 years of prior experience with team and individual leadership and high-performance team-building skills from personal and professional endeavors, including coaching girls' soccer, mentoring homeless women and leading work teams as a corporate vice president. Second, she has been deeply engaged in her own personal development and transformation, which involved studying, implementing and evolving tools and practices to discover the best ways to shepherd herself to a better life. This aspect of her journey culminated in her multi-award-winning spiritual self-help book that is the text for Living 102, "*Living Happy to Be ME!: Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle*©." (See Appendix #10) Third, having been a university lecturer for multiple years, she can navigate the vulnerability and authenticity necessary to engage in the subject matter with students in a believable and trustworthy way. That said, there is no data from this study that delineates what skills and personality traits are essential to instructing students in the principles and practices that are key to the courses. Given the desire to and investigation in scaling the interventions for mass consumption, this is a critical area for further development and future study. As this dissertation was being written, this researcher had filed a provisional patent on a potential means for replicating her signature way of evaluating,

advising, and advancing students through the content and learning. This area will be pursued going forward.

11. There are global implications for the questions posed by this study. UNESCO reports that there were 215.9 million students enrolled in higher education globally in 2016, and it projects that number to rise to 305.9 million globally by 2025 (Calderon, UNESCO 2018). With that many emerging adults preparing to enter the workforce and/or embark on entrepreneurial adventures, it feels a worthy pursuit, if not a necessary one, to do as much as possible to ensure they have easy access to skill development and practice that cultivate a whole self-engagement in and growth from their lives. The threatening dynamics our world is facing, from climate change to pollution, from racial inequities and institutionalized racial bias to mass incarceration, from changing workforce demographics to changes in the nature of work that needs to be done, future generations are going to need to be better equipped to get out of their own way and focus massive energy and ability on problem resolution. This researcher hypothesizes that the kind of non-cognitive skills/SEL skills training via a biopsychosocial intervention measured by this study can be supportive if offered in culturally aligned ways. That said, there are challenges for global development, implementation and monitoring of such a program. Although progress has been made in establishing and quantifying non-cognitive abilities, there is currently no such systematic worldwide measure, and global monitoring of non-cognitive skills is hampered by a number of variables. There is a paucity of strong evidence demonstrating which soft skills predict academic and workforce success, as well as how the strength of this association varies depending on the situation (Zhou 2017), country and culture (Miyamoto, Huerta, & Kubacka, 2015; McCroskey &

Richmond, 1990). While the subjects in this study were from various cultures and countries, data was not broken out to evaluate results within those groups. The cultural applicability of this studied intervention is an area of interest especially because the long-range plan is to scale the course delivery and instructional framework to be able to welcome students from across the world. This inquiry warrants further exploration, development and study.

Summary

In the face of the high and rising incidence of post-secondary student stress, anxiety and depression, creating and implementing novel ways to serve these emerging adults to mitigate emotional roadblocks to excel and succeed should be among the top priorities of educators and policy-makers alike. Various interventions reported herein from many decades of study were considered promising to successful by the researchers, and only a few interventions showed little to no or negative impact on the studied area, making it clear that it's possible to construct means to reduce stress, anxiety and depression and the more serious negative impacts of leaving those conditions chronically unmanaged. Though less studied in the area of post-secondary education interventions for student success, the biopsychosocial approach was of interest to this researcher for its multivariate nature at problem resolution.

Overall, data collected during this multi-year pilot of human subjects research at the University of California, Irvine suggests the studied novel curriculum of structured non-cognitive/SEL skills training inclusive of practical spirituality principles and practices (what this researcher calls self-mastery skills) can support post-secondary undergraduate and graduate students to develop facets of mindfulness and dimensions of self-efficacy that support their positive post-secondary educational experience and personal development. This study provides

additional data that supports the development of a framework for the broad implementation of self-mastery skills in higher education, and is supported by previous studies and sage perspectives that suggest these kinds of skills are at least as valuable as cognitive skills to individual intellectual development and academic achievement, while benefitting society as a whole, though this researcher recommends further study on the research questions and adjacent ideas for supporting post-secondary student success.

Further, this study alongside the preponderance of other supportive data provides a catalyst for inquiry among post-secondary institutional decision makers to explore how they can take better responsibility for educating students as *whole beings,* meaning going beyond teaching cognitive skills and driving students to academic achievement, to also help them mature as humans. This means strengthening their self-efficacy, resilience, personal responsibility, interpersonal communication and other aspects of non-cognitive/SEL skills. Let's imagine the upside potential to campus environments, students' lives, and the world community at large of graduating students with this better developed *wholeness*. As world problems continue to get more and more complex, the time is ripe to graduate a higher caliber of emerging leaders. Educators and policymakers are perhaps the most empowered now to evolve post-secondary curricula to get that job done.

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APPENDIX #1: Living 101 Syllabus and Course Outline

Student Affairs, UC Irvine
Living 101: Being Happy and Whole
SYLLABUS
UNI AFF IC (86910) - Spring 2019
Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.
Dr. White Room, Cross Cultural Center

Instructor:	Valerie Sheppard
Email:	shepparv@uci.edu
Course Webpage:	https://BeHappy.sites.uci.edu
Office Location:	Merage School of Business, SB1 3232
Office Phone & Hours:	949-241-3730; TBD **by appointment only.**
Emergency Contact:	949-241-3730

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

Welcome to Living 101: Being Happy and Whole! The next 10 weeks have the potential to be an eye- and heart-opening time for you. Whether you have delved into this kind of personal development already, or it's brand new for you, you will benefit from this class.

This is a "life-mastery" course, designed to strengthen your non-cognitive approach to your life so you can have more happiness, success and fulfillment, at UCI and beyond, no matter what is going on around/with you. The concepts and practices we explore will strengthen your *inner* abilities - the most powerful means you have - to create the kind of life you most want to live.

We start at the core, your concept of *who* and *what* you are, and how the world works, through exploration of Universal Laws, energy dynamics and metaphysics, and Consciousness. This section includes what I call an "archeology of the Self," through which you'll get clear on your beliefs and values and how they impact your thoughts and behaviors, and subsequently, your results and experiences.

We'll expand from there to explore your outward expression of that Self, including how you "show up" in the various circumstances in your life. Are you empowered, optimistic, courageous, curious, and playing full out? Or are you feeling held back, fragmented, seeing all the negatives, wanting to be someone else, and generally playing small? *Without judging either as right or wrong*, we'll ask how what is going on is serving you, and using the teachings from the class, we'll create a real-time path toward having things be better.

My ***overall*** goal is to enable you to learn practical, actionable skills that help you transition into young adulthood and your careers with more courage, confidence, inner peace and happiness. The class combines lecture with small group experiences, games, laughter and artistic expression to help you identify inner issues and create personal strategies and action plans to resolve them. Your creativity, evaluative and synthesizing abilities, as well as written and verbal communication skills will all be applied and strengthened throughout.

On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the hardest, on the challenging scale, I'd rate this course a variable 7. The content and tasks are *not* difficult to understand or hard to work with. The rating reflects the fact that **mastery requires commitment and practice**. If it's hard for you to commit to yourself, the course may feel harder and uncomfortable; if not, it will be pretty simple and enjoyable. **We'll do a lot during class sessions, but full integration will depend on you incorporating the tools, ways of thinking and practices into your life on an ongoing basis until they become second nature.** This is not about learning some things so you can pass a test or wow me once with some words on a page. **It's about incorporating the wisdom into your lifestyle as the starting point for how you create your life from this point forward. The goal is to create a firm foundation on which to build for years to come.**

I've structured the quarter so that each session builds on the prior session's principles and practices, while taking things deeper through incorporation of complementary ideas, concepts, tools and practices. We'll also devote time to situational coaching so that if something is emotionally/mentally pressing on you, we can apply the teachings to help you deal with it in the moment. I believe you will find this class dynamic, stimulating, and fun. I will certainly be doing my best to make that the case, and I invite you to invest in helping make that an outcome as well.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Describe Universal Laws, metaphysics and energy dynamics, Consciousness, heart

vs. brain power, compassionate communication, and how they impact individual life situations (from lecture, readings, discussions and case study analysis).

2. Apply the concepts and tools to real situations in your life so you can create personal practices that help make life simpler and more fun (through case study analysis, discussion and personal application outside of class).
3. Strengthen self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-esteem, self-care and self-love so you are a more grounded, connected and powerful leader of your life (through in-class experiences, short reflection writings, and personal application outside of class).
4. Improve empowered decision-making so you feel more confident through life's ups and downs (through in-class experiences, short reflection writings, and personal application outside of class).
5. Begin releasing beliefs/values/behaviors that are self-sabotaging (through personal reflection and application outside of class).
6. Create new interpersonal connections based in mutual understanding and exploration so you have an expanded support network of like-hearted individuals and a deeper sense of belonging (through paired and small group discussions and other in-class interactions).

Required Course Materials

Readings for this class will come from a number of sources, but the primary and required book is *The Energy of Life*, Jimmie and Barbara Lewis, ISBN: 978-0-9914629-2-6; 2014 Edition, 1+1=1 Publishing.

You are expected to have completed all readings prior to class. I'll also provide handouts, articles, case studies and other perspectives to read. Copies of the PowerPoint lecture presentations will be available online on the Course Materials page of the course website (https://BeHappy.sites.uci.edu). I request that you print them out in the Notes format and use those for handwritten note-taking. This is because data on learning outcomes suggests that students who write their notes do better than those who type them on their computers.

FINAL EXAM

There is NO final exam for this class. Instead of a final, you will create and present a Capstone project. Attendance is mandatory on the final day of class, meaning you must attend to pass.

Grading

This is a 1.3 unit Pass/No Pass course. **In order to receive a Pass, you must attend a minimum of 9 classes AND complete all deliverables, including the reflection paper, Golden Nugget and Capstone Project.** Active participation in class is expected.

Attendance and Class Contribution

Attendance is essential to your success in this course. Attendance is tracked through your initials on the Attendance Sheet. Data on learning outcomes indicates that those who regularly participate in class receive a full grade level improvement in final grade versus their peers who do not participate. Even in a P/NP class, your active participation makes a difference.

I will excuse one missed class session. It is your responsibility to get the notes and manage integrating whatever you missed. **Being absent when an assignment is due doesn't excuse you from turning in the assignment on its due date. I don't accept late assignments. Missed assignments must be made up with substitute work. Attendance on the day scheduled for the Capstone presentations is mandatory**.

Assigned Readings

The assigned readings are core elements of the class, but for most learners, completing the readings is only the foundation of learning. Your engagement in and contribution to in-class activities is a primary way to integrate the concepts more completely. What is shared in class will be *supplemental* to what's in the readings, not simply a regurgitation of it. We'll discuss stories and case examples to bring the concepts to life, and to give you an opportunity to apply critical thinking and interpretation relative to your personal experiences.

Creative Communication Assignments

A **Golden Nugget (1)** is a short summary of *your* key take-away and how you will apply the learning from the material presented in class and/or the chapter reading. It must be submitted **via Canvas** according to the Course Outline. It should demonstrate your most profound take-away from the material covered as it specifically relates to your challenges, successes, failures, etc. in your life. This assignment gives you an opportunity to interpret what you've read/heard and communicate it in your own words, and should aid you in understanding, application and integration of the concepts. The Golden Nugget is an individual assignment and should not be worked on collaboratively. Additionally, it assesses your integration and communication skills, so simply copying from lecture slides or readings is not acceptable.

The **Reflection Paper (1)** is a short 1-2 page paper through which you will share your thoughts on a particular topic assigned in class. The assigned topic could come from the reading, class discussion, in-class experience, or case analysis. It should be a thoughtful presentation of your personal point of view on the assigned subject, and not meant to require additional research or reading to complete (but it certainly can if you are interested in doing so). **Your paper should be a *minimum* of one full 8.5 x 11 page, single spaced, Arial 11 font. Turning in less than this will result in a make-up assignment. The paper must be turned in via Canvas.**

Case Analyses are done in class. You'll discuss the case handout in pairs or triads, interpreting what is going on and what each party in the case could do differently to manage and/or transcend the situation. We will debrief the case as a group.

The **Capstone Project** is a combination of a summary of what you've learned and a statement of how you will express it in your life going forward. It can take any form you like, as long as it authentically expresses you. It is a combination of written communication and creative expression. The details of the project will be provided by week 6. **You must follow the individual steps of the Capstone Rubric to receive full credit. All parts of the Capstone are turned in via Canvas. Attendance on the day scheduled for the Capstone presentations is mandatory**.

MY EXPECTATIONS

To help you understand what might be underneath my behaviors and subjective evaluation of your contributions, here is a brief list of my values:

- Fairness
- Authenticity
- Contribution, Collaboration and Community
- Results (not simply effort)
- Proactive Communication and Engagement
- Thinking & Problem-Solving
- Personal Responsibility (meaning you take responsibility for your learning)

I'm happy to expand on these if you would like to know more. You are welcome to ask me in class or schedule a meeting during office hours to discuss privately.

Name Tents/Nametags

To facilitate my monitoring of in-class contribution, and to help me learn your names, please

bring and use a name tent each class.

Subject Matter Expertise

The topics we will explore have been studied, written about, and experienced throughout time all over the world. Every culture has an approach to spirituality, happiness, leadership, communication, and creative expression. I have studied and applied the topics for more than 20 years in my own life. I've coached young people and adults using a process I created from my observations and experiences, and have written about in my #1 best-selling book, **Living Happy to Be ME! - Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle.©** I believe you will find what I share meaningful and applicable to your personal situations.

The ultimate decision about what is right for you is yours. I encourage you to share what's working and what's not, what feels in alignment and what doesn't. I'm passionate about teaching this subject matter, but I'm not here to listen to myself speak. Without your engagement, the circle is broken. Your input helps me ensure I'm supporting your personal development. Let's support one another to give and receive our best.

Additional Readings

I sincerely hope that all of you are stimulated to go much deeper with the concepts and practices we explore. The more I've been a messenger of this work, the more I've found diverse content and variations on practices that uplift and support me to be more happy, peaceful, inspired and content, while I'm also creating external worldly success and dealing with external disappointments and difficulties. I have a beautiful library of books, poetry, quotations, etc. so if you'd like some suggestions on additional readings, please be sure to ask!

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to comply with the University's policy on academic honesty in all aspects of the class. You can find details about the Academic Honesty Policy at the following website: http://www.editor.uci.edu/catalogue/appx/appx.2.htm#top.

Using any materials other than those developed by you for written assignments is unacceptable behavior and violates Academic Honesty Policy. Allowing another class member to copy your work is unacceptable behavior.

Any person engaging in this type of behavior will be assigned a grade of zero on the involved assignment. A repeat of this situation will lead to a non-passing grade for the course. Also, keep

in mind that this type of behavior degrades your work and yourself, and defeats the purpose of taking this class in particular.

Technology

You are expected to be courteous with your use of technology in class. This means you should silence your cell phone (vibrate is not silence). I also expect that your focus in class will be on what is going on in class, and not on doing other things on your laptop, tablet, or phone. Absolutely no texting will be tolerated.

Copyright

The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, teaching videos, cases, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University of California Academic Integrity Policy and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students.

Mutual Respect

It's imperative that you respect divergent points of view and support an open forum that encourages your classmates to participate. You will learn from and grow with one another. Staying open to all that is shared will enable you to go the furthest.

Special Needs

If you have a special need that will help you be more successful in this class, please go to the Disabilities Service Center and work directly with them for an official accommodation.

Valerie Sheppard
March 2019

Living 101 Course Outline

March 28, 2019

The flow of the course is provided below, including lecture topics, reading assignments, and due dates for your deliverables. **The schedule is subject to change based on class progress.** If it would serve you to take more time on some concepts, we will, which means the pace and what we complete can change at my discretion. I've built in some "TBD" time to allow that flexibility. Revisions will be highlighted in class and posted on the class website.

WEEK/ DATE	LECTURE TOPIC and IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES	READINGS and OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES
1 4/4	• Course overview and orientation • Ice-Breaker Experience • Fundamentals lecture: How the World Works	Review the Syllabus. Purchase "The Energy of Life."
2 4/11	• Discuss reading: pages 1-52 in the text • Personal Responsibility case discussion • Silence & Meditation	Assignments Due: • Read pages 1-52
3 4/18	• Intimacy experience • Discuss reading: pages 53-96 in the text • Focus/Perception/Receiving case discussion	Assignments Due: • Read Pages 53-96
4 4/25	• Discuss reading: pages 96-132 in the text • Turn in and discuss insights/clarifications from Golden Nuggets • Review Capstone Project Guidelines	Assignments Due: • Read pages 96-132 • Print and read Capstone guidelines • Golden Nugget: What are your key take-aways/your ahas's so far?
5 5/2	**MID-QUARTER CHECKPOINT** • Discuss any questions about Capstone decisions • Emotional Intelligence and Vibration • Review Reflection Paper assignment: Our Deepest Fear poem (Handout)	Assignments Due: • Turn in Capstone Proposal paragraph

6 5/9	• Check-in on Capstones and debrief reflection papers • ID Corners Diversity Experience • Vulnerability and Authenticity Milling Experiences	Assignments Due: • Reflection Paper on the poem "Our Deepest Fear." What does it mean to you? What are you afraid of? How are you a living example of the poem?
7 5/16	• Check-in on Capstones • The 4Fs Energy Experience (Guest Facilitator: James Woeber)	Assignments Due: • Make-up Golden Nugget: What did you get from the Week 6 Experiences? **Only for students missing an assignment.**
8 5/23	• Check-in on Capstones • Discuss reading: pages 135-190 in the text • Compassionate Communication	Assignments Due: • Read pages 135-190 • Continue pursuing Capstone
9 5/30	• Check-in: Biggest transformation • TBD	Assignments Due: • Continue pursuing Capstone
10 6/6	**CAPSTONE PRESENTATIONS** **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY** • Post Assessment and Course Evaluations • Closing group experience	Assignment Due: • Deliver Capstone presentations and turn-in Parts 2, 3 and 4. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY**

APPENDIX #2: Living 102 Syllabus and Course Outline

University Affairs, UC Irvine

UNI AFF 1C - Course Code 86920
Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum

Spring 2019 SYLLABUS

Tuesdays, 2-3:50 p.m., SSL 155

Instructor:	Valerie Sheppard
Email:	shepparv@uci.edu
Course Webpage:	https://BeHappy.sites.uci.edu
Office Location:	Merage School of Business, SB1 3232
Office Phone & Hours:	949-241-3730; Wednesdays, 12:00-3:00 p.m., **by appointment only**.
Emergency Contact:	949-241-3730

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

Prerequisite: Living 101: Being Happy and Whole

Welcome to Living 102! I'm thrilled that you are looking to go higher and deeper, and I promise we will! This course is right for you if you desire to continue with the self-discovery, self-

mastery and life-skills development that you started in Living 101. This course will build on that foundation and take you deeper into self-awareness and self-acceptance, and focuses on application of the principles from Living 101, through heart-to-heart conversation, case discussion and experiential activities.

The tools and practices explored will include: meditation, personal responsibility, non-violent communication, inner speak and the mind-body connection, emotional intelligence, beliefs, perceptions, values exploration, journaling, and creative expression.

My ***overall*** goal is for you to move beyond being exposed to and knowing the principles and tools to enable you to embody them. It's my firm belief and experience that courage, confidence, inner peace and happiness of life come from that. Like Living 101, this course combines lecture with other activities, but the emphasis is on guiding you to build a personal practice of the tools that serve you the best as you continue to identify inner issues and create personal strategies and action plans to resolve them. Your creativity, evaluative and synthesizing abilities, and written and verbal communication skills will all be applied and strengthened throughout.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Apply the 4-Step Happy to Be ME! process to master your life.
- Identify and release limiting beliefs that lie beneath habitual patterns of self-sabotaging behavior.
- Strengthen your ability to self-regulate emotions.
- Quiet mind chatter and reduce stress.
- Improve self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy.

Required Course Materials

Readings for this class will come from a number of sources, but the primary and required text is: *Living Happy to Be ME!: Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle©. Published by The Heart of Living Vibrantly, 2016. ISBN 978-0-9963559-5-7 You can download the entire book at* http://HappytoBeME.net/private-download. *You can also purchase a hard copy in The Hill or purchase the hard copy or Kindle version through Amazon at:* http://getbook.at/LivingHTBM.

You are expected to have completed all readings prior to class. I'll also provide handouts, articles, case studies and other perspectives to read. Copies of the PowerPoint lecture presentations will be available online at the course website. I request that you print them out in the Notes format and use those for handwritten note-taking. This is because data on learning

outcomes suggests that students who write their notes do better than those who type them on their computers.

FINAL EXAM

There is NO final exam for this class.

Grading

This is a 1.3 unit Pass/No Pass course. In order to receive a passing grade, you must attend a minimum of 9 classes and complete all assignments. Active participation in class is expected.

Attendance and Class Contribution

Attendance is essential to your success in this course. Attendance is tracked through your initials on the Attendance Sheet. I will excuse one missed class session, after which, your grade will be impacted. It is your responsibility to get the notes and manage integrating whatever you missed.

The assigned readings are core elements of the class, but for most learners, completing the readings is only the foundation of learning. Your engagement in and contribution to in-class activities is a primary way to integrate the concepts more completely. What is shared in class will be supplemental to what's in the readings, not simply a regurgitation of it. We'll discuss stories and case examples to bring the concepts to life, and to give you an opportunity to apply critical thinking and interpretation relative to your personal experiences. Data on learning outcomes indicates that those who regularly participate in class receive a full grade level improvement in final grade versus their peers who do not participate. Even in a P/NP class, it makes a difference.

Creative Communication Assignments

Reflection Papers are short 1-2 page papers through which you will share your thoughts on a particular topic assigned in class. The assigned topic could come from the reading, class discussion, in-class experience, or case analysis. They should be a thoughtful presentation of your personal point of view on the assigned subject, and not meant to require additional research or reading to complete (but they certainly can if you are interested in doing so). Your papers should be no more than 2 pages single spaced, Arial 11 font.

Case Analyses are done in class in pairs/small groups. We'll discuss the case handout, and you will interpret what is going on and what each party in the case could do differently to manage and/or transcend the situation. You will write-up your conclusions and present them in class as

we debrief the case as a group.

MY EXPECTATIONS

To help you understand what might be underneath my behaviors and subjective evaluation of your contributions, here is a brief list of my values:

- Fairness
- Authenticity
- Contribution, Collaboration and Community
- Results (not simply effort)
- Proactive Communication and Engagement
- Thinking & Problem-Solving
- Personal Responsibility (meaning you take responsibility for your learning)

I'm happy to expand on these if you would like to know more. You are welcome to ask me in class or schedule a meeting during office hours to discuss privately.

Subject Matter Expertise

The topics we will explore have been studied, written about, and experienced throughout time all over the world. Every culture has an approach to spirituality, happiness, leadership, communication, and creative expression. I have studied and applied the topics for more than 20 years in my own life. I've coached young people and adults using a process I created from my observations and experiences, and have written about them in my soon-to-be-published book, "Living Happy to Be ME! - Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle.©" I believe you will find what I share meaningful and applicable to your personal situations.

The ultimate decision about what is right for you is yours. I encourage you to share what's working and what's not, what feels in alignment and what doesn't. I'm passionate about teaching this subject matter, but I'm not here to listen to myself speak. Without your engagement, the circle is broken. Your input helps me ensure I'm supporting your personal development. Let's support one another to give our best and receive the best in return.

Additional Readings

I sincerely hope that all of you are stimulated to go much deeper with the concepts and practices we explore. The more I've been a messenger of this work, the more I've found diverse content and variations on practices that uplift and support me to be more happy, peaceful, inspired and content, while I'm also creating external worldly success and dealing with external disappointments and difficulties. I have a beautiful library of books, poetry, quotations, etc. so if you'd like some suggestions on additional readings, please be sure to ask!

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Mutual Respect

It's imperative that you respect divergent points of view and support an open forum that encourages your classmates to participate. You will learn from and grow with one another. Staying open to all that is shared will enable you to go the furthest.

To facilitate my monitoring of in-class contribution, and to help me learn your names, please

bring and use a name tent each class.

Special Needs

If you have a special need that will help you be more successful in this class, please go to the Disabilities Service Center and work directly with them for an official accommodation.

Valerie Sheppard
March 2019

Living 102 Course Outline

March 20, 2019

The flow of the course is provided below, including lecture topics, reading assignments, and due dates for your deliverables. **The schedule is subject to change based on class progress.** If we need to take more time on some concepts, we will, which means the pace and what we complete can change at my discretion. Revisions will be highlighted in class and posted on the class website.

WEEK/ DATE	LECTURE TOPIC and IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES	READINGS and OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES
1 4/2	• Welcome & Catch-up • Quote Meaning • The Principles of Living Happy to Be ME©	Review Syllabus Purchase/Download "Living Happy to Be ME!."
2 4/9	• Discuss reading: pages 1-43 in the text • Debrief the Check-in • Heart Intelligence & Connection	Assignments Due: • Read pages 1-43 • Check-ins on pages 39-40
3 4/16	• Discuss reading: Step 1: Wake Up! to the Truth of You, pages 45-58 in the text • Debrief the Check-in • Heart-to-Heart Coaching	Assignments Due: • Read Pages 45-58 • Check-in on page 56
4 4/23	• Discuss reading: Step 2: Shake Up! And Release What is Not the True You, pages 59-93 in the text • Intimacy experience • Heart-to-Heart Coaching	Assignments Due: • Read Pages 59-93 • 1-page Reflection Paper #1: What is Calling to You to be Released?
5 4/30	MID-QUARTER CHECKPOINT • Discuss reading: Step 3, Step 4 and Putting It All Together • Heart-to-Heart Coaching	Assignments Due: • Read Pages 94-133
6 5/7	• Discuss insights/clarifications from Reflections and Lightstyle Experiences • Heart-to-Heart Coaching	Assignments Due: • You With You Lightstyle Experience
7 5/14	• Mindfulness • Dealing with Difficult People & Circumstances	Assignments Due: • You and Your Routines Lightstyle Experience

8 5/21	• Review Final Project Guidelines • Sharing of practices	Assignments Due: • You in Your World Lightstyle Experience
9 5/28	**TBD**	Assignments Due: • None (Continue dancing with your Lightstyle presentation)
10 6/4	**You With You PRESENTATIONS** • Post Assessment and Course Evaluations	Assignment Due: • Deliver Capstone presentations and turn-in papers **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY**

APPENDIX #3: College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI)

Please think about yourself as a college student. For each statement below, please select the ranking that best represents your CURRENT level of confidence. How do you rate your current abilities to complete the following tasks?:

	Totally Unconfident	Very Unconfident	Unconfident	Somewhat Unconfident	Undecided	Somewhat Confident	Confident	Very Confident	Totally Confident
1. Make new friends at college									
2. Talk to my professors/instructors									
3. Take good class notes									
4. Divide chores with others I live with									
5. Research a term paper									
6. Understand my textbooks									
7. Get a date when I want one									
8. Join an intramural sports team									
9. Ask a professor or instructor a question outside of class									
10. Get along with others I live with									
11. Write a course paper									
12. Socialize with others I live with									
13. Do well on my exams									
14. Talk with a school academic and support staff									
15. Manage my time effectively									
16. Join a student organization									
17. Ask a question in class									
18. Divide space in my residence (if applicable)									
19. Participate in class discussions									
20. Keep up to date with my school work									

References:

Barry, CL and SJ Finney 2009 Can we feel confident in how we measure college confidence?: A psychometric investigation of the College Self−Efficacy Inventory. Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 43(3):197−222.

Chemers, MM, LT Hu, and BF Garcia 2001 Academic self−efficacy and first−year college student performance and adjustment. Journal of Educational Psychology 93(1):55−66.

Fouladi, RT and P Wallis. 2014 College Self−efficacy subscales: contrasting associations with background, linguistic, and other psychological variables. Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences 112: 5−16.

Gore Jr., PA 2006 Academic self−efficacy as a predictor of college outcomes: two incremental validity studies. Journal of Career Assessment 14(1):92−115.

Gore, Jr., PA, WC Leuwerke, SE Turley 2006 A psychometric study of the College Self−Efficacy Inventory. J of College Student Retention 7(3−4):227−244.

APPENDIX #4: Five Facet Mindfulness 15-Item Questionnaire (FFMQ-15)

Instructions

Please use the 1 (never or very rarely true) to 5 (very often or always true) scale provided to indicate how true the below statements are of you. Circle the number in the box to the right of each statement which represents your own opinion of what is generally true for you. For example, if you think that a statement is often true of you, circle '4' and if you think a statement is sometimes true of you, circle '3'.

	Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
1. When I take a shower or a bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them.	1	2	3	4	5

10. When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Even when I'm feeling terribly upset I can find a way to put it into words.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I find myself doing things without paying attention.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
15. When I have distressing thoughts or images I just notice them and let them go.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring Information

Observing items: 1, 6, 11.
Describe items: 2, 7R, 12.
Acting with awareness
items: 3R, 8R, 13R.
Non-judging items: 4R,
9R, 14R.
Non-reactivity items: 5, 10, 15.

Reverse-phrased items are denoted by 'R' after the item number, e.g. 14R.

References

The original FFMQ was developed by Baer et al. (2006) and the FFMQ-15 was developed by Baer et al. (2012). The factor structure and psychometric properties of the FFMQ-15 was tested by Gu et al. (2016).

Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment, 13*(1), 27–45. doi: /10.1177/1073191105283504

Baer, R. A., Carmody, J., & Hunsinger, M. (2012). Weekly change in mindfulness and perceived stress in a mindfulness- based stress reduction program. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 68*(7), 755-765. doi: 10.1002/jclp.21865

Gu, J., Strauss, C., Crane, C., Barnhofer, T., Karl, A., Cavanagh, K., & Kuyken, W. (2016). Examining the

factor structure of the 39-item and 15-item versions of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire before and after mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for people with recurrent depression. *Psychological assessment, 28*(7), 791. doi: 10.1037/pas0000263

Appendix #5: IRB Protocol Narrative

UCI Office of Research

Institutional Review Board
Human Research Protections
Protocol Narrative ~ Expedited/Full Committee Social/Behavioral/ Educational Research
Version February 2017

Upload this completed narrative and any supplemental documentation to the IRB Application.

IRB USE ONLY –
HS#: 2017-3882

Lead Researcher Name: Anita L. Iannucci, Ph.D.

Study Title: The Effects of "Living 101" and "Living 102" Courses on Student Success

ABSTRACT

Provide a non-technical summary of the proposed research that can be understood by IRB members with varied research backgrounds, including non-scientists and community members. The summary should include a brief statement of the **purpose of the research** and a brief description of the **procedure(s)**. *This summary should not exceed more than 250 words.*

Living 101 and Living 102 are 1.3-unit P/NP courses in Student Affairs (listed in the schedule of courses as Uni Aff 1A in the fall, 1B in the winter, and 1C in the spring) that teach life-mastery skills. (There are two courses total, even though they are 1A, 1B, and 1C.) Instructor Valerie Sheppard uses lectures, interactive activities, case analysis, reflection writing, and a 5-week capstone self-discovery project to ensure students understand and integrate the principles, clarify values, develop written and verbal communication skills, and hone decision-making competencies.

This study examines the impact of these two courses on students' lives via self-report and long-term academic success, and with different populations of subjects. (1) Pre-Post Surveys: Pre-post self-reports via surveys of self-efficacy and mindfulness will be compared for students who take Sheppard's course and agree to participate as subjects in the taking of these surveys. (2) Academic Outcomes: Academic success (retention, GPA, being subject to probation [for grades or insufficient units passed], and time to degree) will be compared for all students who took her course(s) and students who did not, with statistical controls included in the analyses because those who take her course are self-selected and probably not representative of UCI's student population as a whole.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

1. Provide the scientific or scholarly **rationale** for the research. Describe the relevant background information and the specific gaps in current knowledge that this study intends to address.

These courses are designed to improve students' lives, both short-term and longer-term. We wish to determine the extent to which they do so for purposes of both (1) course improvement and (2) presentations at conferences and/or publications so that other universities can use this information to improve their students' lives.

The courses were designed and are taught by Valerie Sheppard, who also teaches in The Paul Merage School of Business. She has a background in coaching and teaching leadership and self-mastery.

Pre-Post Surveys: I plan to administer two standardized instruments, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; 15-question version) and the College Self-Efficacy Inventory, at the beginning and end of each "Living" course and compare the results (matching each student's pre and post scores).

Academic Outcomes: Once there are sufficient course participants to allow for statistical control of students' background variables, this study will also examine academic success for course participants versus nonparticipants (retention at UCI, GPA, being subject to probation, time to degree).

2. Describe the **purpose, specific aims** or **objectives**. Specify the hypotheses or research questions to be studied.

It has been shown that self-efficacy (e.g., Gore 2006) and mindfulness (e.g., Chemers et al., 2001) increase student success. We wish to determine: (1) to what extent the Living 101/102 courses increase students' self-efficacy and mindfulness, and (2) whether taking the Living 101/102 courses leads to greater student success in terms of retention at UCI, higher GPAs, less likely to be subject to probation, and graduating in less time.

The hypothesis is that students who take one or both of these courses will be more likely to express more self-efficacy and mindfulness at the end of the class than at the beginning, and in the long run will be more likely to be retained at UCI, have higher GPAs, less likely to be subject to probation, and will have shorter time-to-degree than students who do not take either of these courses.

3. List up to **ten relevant references/articles** to support the rationale for the research.

Gore Jr., PA 2006 Academic self-efficacy as a predictor of college outcomes: two incremental validity studies. Journal of Career Assessment 14(1):92-115.

Gore, Jr., PA, WC Leuwerke, SE Turley 2006 A psychometric study of the College Self-Efficacy Inventory. J of College Student Retention 7(3-4):227-244.

Fouladi, RT and P Wallis. 2014 College Self-efficacy subscales: contrasting associations with background, linguistic, and other psychological variables. Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences 112: 5-16.

Chemers, MM, LT Hu, and BF Garcia 2001 Academic self-efficacy and first-year college student performance and adjustment. Journal of Educational Psychology 93(1):55-66.

Barry, CL and SJ Finney 2009 Can we feel confident in how we measure college confidence?: A psychometric investigation of the College Self-Efficacy Inventory. Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 43(3):197-222.

Baer, RA, GT Smith, J Hopkins, J Kreitemeyer, and L Toney 2006 Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. Assessment 13(1):27-45.

Gu, J, C Strauss, C Crane, T Barnhofer, A Karl, K Cavanagh, W Kuyken 2016 Examining the factor structure of the 39-item and 15-item versions of the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire before and after Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for people with recurrent depression. Psychological Assessment 28.7:791-802.

SECTION 2: ROLES AND EXPERTISE OF THE STUDY TEAM

Complete the table below (LR: Lead Researcher, FS: Faculty Sponsor, CR: Co-Researcher, RP: Research Personnel). Indicate whether the study team member will be involved in the following research activities.

***Note**: Personnel who are not interacting with participants for research purposes and/or who do not have access to identifiable private information about the research participants (e.g., statisticians) are not engaged in human-subjects research and therefore should not be listed below.*

*If there is a Faculty Sponsor, s/he **must be** listed below (even if s/he is not engaged in human-subjects research), as s/he must be identified to provide oversight and guidance to the Lead Researcher.*

Name	Role	List Department, Title, & Degrees. Include UCI Affiliation - Faculty / Staff, Grad- or Under- Student	Recruitment	Informed Consent Process	Interact with Participants	Access Participant Identifiable Data?	Analyze Participant Identifiable Data?
Anita L Iannucci, Ph.D.	LR	Ph.D. in Social Sciences from UCI; Director of Student Affairs Assessment, Research, and Evaluation - Staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Michael Dennin, Ph.D.	FS	PhD,, Vice Provost & Dean, - Office of the Vice Provost Teaching & Learning, Professor of Physics at UCI	No	No	No	No	No
Valerie Sheppard , MBA	CR	MBA, Syracuse University; Lecturer in UCI Business School and UCI Student Affairs	No	No	Yes – through classroom instruction only	No (see below)	No (see below)
Jean Lee	RP	MA UCI Staff Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor Student Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Julie Song	RP	BA UCI Staff Project & Policy Analyst Student Life & Leadership, Student Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Erika Mey	RP	UCI Staff, BA in Public Health & Sociology, UCI - Interim Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor Student Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Valerie Sheppard will receive the raw data de-identified by Lead Researcher Anita Iannucci. Ms. Sheppard wishes to find someone else to perform some statistical analyses of the data. The data Ms. Sheppard, and any assisting statistical analyst, would receive from the LR would contain only the survey responses, and not the demographic or other data listed in the protocol narrative. While UCInetIDs and other identifying information would be stripped from the data provided to Ms. Sheppard, the pre and post responses to every individual question for each individual subject would be linked, i.e., would be together in one single row in the data file. If they were not linked, the statistical analyses could not be as powerful.
This only pertains to subjects for which we have both pre and post data, n=149 for the Living 101 course and n=18 for the Living 102 course; she does not have a use for the data from respondents who only took pre or post. The data would have to be provided separately for the Living 101 and Living 102 courses.

Because the pre and post are linked and the questions are so personal to determine the impact of this life coaching course, I am not certain if these data would be considered “participant identifiable,” so I’m not sure how to mark the box above.

A. Training of Personnel

1. Describe the training plan that will be provided to your study team members. Who will provide the training, what will be included in the training, how will their level of knowledge be assessed to ensure they are ready to perform their assigned duties, and who will provide ongoing oversight.
2. Please identify who will interact with non-English speaking participants, if applicable.

1. Anita Iannucci, an experienced campus researcher, will be performing most of the study. Anita Iannucci is the only person who will know which of Valerie Sheppard's students have agreed to take the surveys, and is the only person who will see their their student records.
2. Valerie Sheppard has passed all the required IRB training modules. Valerie Sheppard will only be interacting with participants through her role as the class instructor. She will receive access to the de-identified matched pre and post survey responses, but not the additional demographic data. The pre and post will be matched for each individual respondent, but she will not receive the participants' names or IDs. She, probably along with a colleague, will perform additional statistical analysis of the de-identified data. She will help with interpretation of results because Anita Iannucci is not as familiar with the courses and thus the specific ways in which they might impact students. Sheppard will also present results at conferences.
3. Jean Lee, Julie Song, and Erika Mey will be trained by Anita Iannucci. Their only role will be to go to Valerie Sheppard's classroom to invite students to take the pre- and post-surveys in the event that Anita Iannucci is unable to do so. We are adding Erika as a third backup because one of the other backups for Anita Iannucci does not have a flexible schedule.
4. We would like Jean Lee, Julie Song, and Erika Mey to have access to some of the data for this reason: We learned in the "pre" surveys at the beginning of the course that many students are there who have not yet enrolled. Those students needed to be added on the spot to EEE's survey tool so that they could take the survey if they wished. Anita Iannucci did all that, but if she is unable to attend at a data collection time her backups will need to be able to do this. It should be less a problem at the end of the course than the beginning, but we anticipate this problem at the beginning of every quarter and occasionally at the end as well. Thus, they will have access to only the survey data collected for that time period (i.e., only pre or only post for the given quarter). Anita Iannucci will remove their access from that data as soon as she is able to after, the class session in which the surveys were completed.

3. All subjects are UCI students, so there will be no non-English speakers.

A.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

A. Individuals To Be Enrolled on this UCI protocol (Persons/Records)

1. Complete the table of participant enrollments below. *Include additional rows for subject category/group, as needed.*
2. If the study involves the use of existing or prospective records, specify the maximum number to be reviewed / collected, and the number needed (i.e., expected to complete study) to address the research question.

Category/Group (e.g., adults, parents, children)	**Age Range** (e.g., 7-12, 13–17, 18 or older)	**Maximum Number to be Consented or Reviewed/Collected**	**Number Expected to Complete the Study**
A. UCI students Online survey	A few undergraduate students might be age 17 or below, most will be 18-24. Undergrad	All students enrolled in either Living 101 or Living 102 from fall 2017 through summer 2010 (three years). Maximum number: 600 (estimated number: 200)	80% of 800, so 640

B. UCI students –Study of Existing UCI Data – Note that this category INCLUDES all students in Category A above.	Mostly 18-24 (undergraduate and graduate students). A few undergraduate students might be age 17 or below.	All UCI students enrolled fall 2017 through summer 2010 – Estimate total of 61,000	100%
		Total: 61,000	

A.

B. Eligibility Criteria

1. Identify the criteria for inclusion and exclusion.
Pre-Post Surveys: Students enrolled in Living 101 and/or Living 102, courses in Student Affairs, from fall 2017 through summer 2020 quarters. (Currently about 25% of the Living 101 students go on to take Living 102.) Subjects will be students either officially enrolled or attending class and planning/considering enrolling. Especially at the PRE, many students in the classroom have not yet enrolled, and at the POST there could be an occasional glitch where a student who has been attending class all quarter is not on the class roster for some reason, but should be included in the study if they wish to be. Academic Outcomes: All regular students enrolled at UCI from fall 2017 through summer 2020 quarters. Students who are at UCI from other campuses for a short time will be excluded. It is likely that graduate students will be excluded as well, but if the Living 101/102 course enrollment shows a large increase in the number of graduate students we will include them as subjects (but in separate analyses from the undergraduates) for some outcome measures.
2. If eligibility is based on age, gender, pregnancy/childbearing potential, social/ethnic group, or language spoken (e.g., English Speakers only), provide a **scientific rationale**.
[X] Not applicable: Subject eligibility is not based on these factors

SECTION 4: RECRUITMENT METHODS AND PROCESS

[ ] This study involves no direct contact with participants (i.e., use of existing data, records, charts, specimens). *Skip to Section 6.*

A. Recruitment Process

1. Describe **when, where, by whom** and how potential participants will be approached. If posting on your Facebook page or other social media sites, please explain.
2. If you will recruit by e-mail, phone, etc., explain how the researcher will obtain the participants' **contact information**.
3. Please **attach Advertisements, Flyers, Social Sciences Human Subject Pool (SSHSP) Form, Scripts, Letters, and Announcements**. See Recruitment Guidelines.

***Note**: If recruiting via online sources / social media (i.e., Facebook or Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT), etc.), submit the statement that will be posted. Refer to participants as 'research participants,' not 'workers'.*

Anita Iannucci will recruit subjects for the pre-post surveys via email and in person. Every quarter, students will be told about the study and invited to participate, but told participation is voluntary. This recruitment will take place (1) during and prior to class near the beginning and end of each quarter, and (2) via emails during those same time periods. Students will be reminded about the study via emails Anita Iannucci via the EEE survey system and its future replacement campus survey system. There will be two emails for each pre and each post survey. Emails will always come from Anita Iannucci, but in-classroom recruiting might occasionally be done by Jean Lee and/or Julie Song and/or Shannon Duran, who will serve as backups for Iannucci, should Iannucci be unable to go to the classroom on a specific date.

When students are given time to complete the surveys in-class, Valerie Sheppard will be out of the room. Only Anita Iannucci (and/or Jean Lee and/or Julie Song and/or Shannon Duran) will be in the room. And we expect that some students will prefer to take the survey prior to class or not take it at all, and of course all students will have both these options.

The Study Information Sheet (SIS), which appears at the top of the survey, is attached, as are the emails from Iannucci.

There will be no contact with the subjects who are not either enrolled in or present in the classroom of Sheppard's courses; only their existing UCI records will be used in the long-term academic outcomes portion of this study.

SECTION 5: INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

1. **Submit the Consent, Study Info Sheet, Courtesy Letter, Assent document(s).** ***Note:** After IRB Approval, distribute to participants the version of the document with the IRB-approval information in the footer.*
2. Describe the specific **steps for obtaining consent**. See **Guidance for Consenting Process**.

Check all that apply:

[ ] Written / Signed informed consent will be obtained.

Customize the Consent for SBE Research.

[X] Oral / Implied informed consent will be obtained (i.e., requesting a waiver from obtaining signed informed consent).

*Customize the **Study Information Sheet** and Complete Appendix P.*

***Note**: If obtaining consent online (e.g., research involves completing a survey electronically administered via AMT, EEE, etc.), participants should:*

- *View the Consent/Study Info Sheet prior to participation*
- *Be prompted to verify they meet the eligibility criteria, and*
- *Indicate their willingness to participate in the research (e.g., click "Yes").*

Implied informed consent is for the Pre-Post Surveys to be taken by the students in Valerie Sheppard's courses.

[X] Informed consent will NOT be obtained (i.e., requesting a *complete* waiver of informed consent). No contact with participants; using existing data, records, charts, specimens, etc.

Complete Appendix O. Skip to Section 6.

Informed consent will not be obtained from students for use of their academic records, i.e., all UCI undergraduates. This study will use their existing UCI records only, data that the Lead Researcher already regularly uses in her work.

Students will be referred to the "Study Information Sheet" at the top of the online survey when recruited either by email or in-class, the latter usually by Anita Iannucci, but occasionally by Jean Lee and/or Julie Song and/or Shannon Duran. Responding to at least one survey question and clicking to submit the survey will constitute assent to taking the surveys and allowing the Lead Researcher to analyze the pre-post results. Thus, simply not submitting survey results will constitute opting out of the survey portion of this study.

3. UCI Students / Employees: If study team members will approach their own students or employees:
   a. Explain what precautions will be taken to **minimize potential undue influence or coercion.**
   b. Explain **how compromised objectivity will be avoided**.

Instructor Valerie Sheppard will not know which students chose to participate; she will only know how many responded. Only Anita Iannucci will know who participated.

4. Children / Minors: If children (anyone less than 18 years old) are participants, please describe the **parent / legal guardian permission** process and the **child assent** process.

5. Deception: If **deception** is involved, describe the process by which participants will be informed of the true nature of the study after participation has been completed. Please attach a 'Debriefing Script.'

Complete Appendices G (Deception) and *O (Alteration of Consent).*

Not applicable – no deception.

6. Release Form: If publications and/or presentations will include **identifiable information**, specify how the study team will obtain permission from participants. Please submit a 'Release Form'

Not applicable – publications and/or presentations will only present data in aggregate. If any student's response to an open-ended question is used to illustrate a point we will not disclose the student's name or which quarter or year the student took the class.

7. **Non-English Speaking Participants:** In order to consent participants who are unable to communicate (i.e., read, write, and/or speak) in English, the English version of the consent form must be translated into appropriate language(s) once IRB approval is granted. Please specify in 'Section 2. Study Team' who will be responsible for interacting with non-English speaking participants.

Check all that apply:

[X] Not applicable - Only individuals who can read and speak English are eligible for this study.

[ ] The English version of the consent form will be translated into appropriate languages for non-English speaking participants once IRB approval is granted. An interpreter will be involved in the consenting process. ***Note:*** *After IRB Approval, distribute to participants the version of the document with the IRB-approval information in the footer.*

SECTION 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/STUDY PROCEDURES

A. Study Design and Procedures

1. Provide a **description of the proposed research** (e.g., pilot testing, screening, intervention/interaction/ data collection, and follow-up) and **procedures** (e.g., surveys, interview, focus group, and observation). See **Guidance for Online Research**.
   a. Specify **where** the research will take please (e.g., UCI, local public schools, international site, private business, etc.).
   b. Include an explanation of the study design (e.g., randomization, cross-sectional, longitudinal, etc.).
   c. Indicate how much **time will be required of the participant**, per visit and in total for the study.
   d. If a procedure will be completed more than once (e.g., multiple visits, pre and post survey), indicate **how many times** and the **time span** between administrations.
   e. If a procedure will occur via a crowdsourcing Internet marketplace (e.g., AMT) or in the cloud (e.g., Google Docs), please describe.
   f. Indicate if study procedures include collecting **photographs** or **audio/video recording**.

Pre-Post Surveys: Data collection for this short-term pre-post survey research study will take place wherever the student wishes to complete the survey(s). The surveys will be on UCI's EEE, and when EEE's survey instrument is replaced, they will be on its replacement. Class time will be offered for survey completion for those who wish to take advantage of it, but students may prefer to take it at home or somewhere else (or not at all). When class time is offered for taking the survey, only Anita Iannucci and/or Jean Lee and/or Julie Song and/or Shannon Duran will be in the classroom; Valerie Sheppard will step out of and away from the room and will not return until Anita Iannucci or Jean Lee or Julie Song or Shannon Duran tells her that all students who wish to complete the survey during class have done so.

All students in Valerie Sheppard's Living 101 and 102 courses will be invited to participate in this study.

Students already enrolled in the course will receive an email and a followup over a period of about 5-7 days prior to the class meeting inviting them to take the survey at pre and at post for each of Sheppard's Living 101/102 courses in which they enroll. UCI allows them to enroll in these courses a total of three times (three times total, not three for each course).

Thus, students may take the survey prior to class (due to notifications via email for enrolled students) or in their first or last class session.

The surveys will probably take about 10 minutes at each of pre and post, 20 minutes total for students who take both, and 60 minutes for those very few students who take the class the maximum three times and also choose to take all three pre and all three post surveys.

No photographs, audio or video recording will be done.

Academic Outcomes: This is a longitudinal cohort study. All UCI undergraduates will be participants, with the students in Valerie's Sheppard's Living 101 and Living 102 compared with outcomes for students who did not take Living 101 or Living 102. In other words, Sheppard's students will be the experimental group and all other students will comprise the control group. The data will include Registrar, Admissions, Degrees, and Housing data from all UCI students during the fall 2017 through summer 2020 academic years, and follow each student for six years or until they leave UCI, whichever happens first. Statistical controls will include UCI major, level in school at the time of taking the "Living" class, major, gender, housing (on campus, near campus, longer commute), ethnicity, country of citizenship (because cultural differences might be relevant), whether English was the first language learned, low income, first generation, high school or transfer GPA, API score of the high school (for those who attended public high schools in California), and SAT and ACT scores. The outcomes examined will be UCI quarterly GPA, being subject to academic probation for either grades or insufficient units passed, retention at UCI, and time to degree at UCI.

This portion of the study requires no contact with the subjects, and thus no time from them.

No photographs, audio or video recording will be done.

2. **Off-Site Research –**
   a. See **Guidance for Letter(s) of Permission**
   b. See **Template Letter of Permission**

[ ] Check here to confirm Letter(s) of Permission has been / will be obtained and kept on file.

B. Measures / Data Sources

1. List the measures that will be administered or data sources that will be accessed.
2. Submit **data collection instruments** (e.g., data abstraction sheet listing the variables that will be collected/ analyzed for records reviews, measures, questionnaires, list of interview or focus group questions, observational tool, etc.).

The pre and post EEE survey will be set up in the Student Affairs Assessment account, but will also contain Anita Iannucci's name, affiliation, and contact information. The survey will consist of two standardized instruments and a few additional questions. The instruments are: the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). The surveys are attached to this submission.

Additional data sources that will be accessed are the Registrar's Student Information System (SIS), Admissions (SIR/ Admissions) and Degrees databases, and Student Affairs' Housing database. Anita Iannucci has been doing research using these databases for the past six years (mostly for program improvement and thus not subject to IRB approval).

IMPORTANT TIME SAVER: PLEASE ATTACH *ALL* MEASURES FOR REVIEW. APPLICATIONS ARE INCOMPLETE AND WILL NOT BE REVIEWED UNLESS MEASURES ARE PROVIDED.

SECTION 7: RISK ASSESSMENT AND POSSIBLE BENEFITS

A. Level of Risk

Place an "**X**" in the bracket **[ ]** next to the level of review (based upon the investigator's risk assessment).

[ ] This study involves **greater than minimal risk** and requires **Full Committee review.**

[X] This study involves **no more than minimal risk** and qualifies as **Expedited research**.

B. Risks and Discomforts

1. Describe the **risks/potential discomforts** (e.g., emotional reaction from personal or sensitive information included in surveys, interviews, focus group, etc.; embarrassment or stigma; invasion of privacy) associated with **each** intervention or research procedure.

Pre-Post Surveys: Any risk and discomfort to the subjects should be small; the survey questions are not likely to make most students uncomfortable. There would be a risk of embarrassment to the students if their survey responses are somehow released, but the chances of that happening are tiny.

Academic Outcomes: The academic data are analyzed regularly for a variety of research projects for campus administrators to inform program and policy changes. The only reason this particular analysis needs IRB approval is that we might wish to present these results at a conference. Again, there would be a risk of embarrassment to the students if their UCI data were somehow released, but the chances of the data being released are tiny.

[X] This study involves the collection of participant identifiable data (even if temporary such as for recruitment or compensation purposes), and as such, a breach of confidentiality is a risk associated with the research.

2. Discuss what steps have been taken and/or will be taken **minimize and prevent** any risks/potential discomforts described above.

If the student chooses to complete the survey in a room alone (it will be on EEE) no one but the Lead Researcher will be able to see the individual responses.

Pre-Post Surveys: The surveys will require a login by UCInetID, and thus will be associated with each student's UCInetID. The UCInetIDs from the EEE surveys will be used to match pre and post surveys to determine whether changes occurred.

Academic Outcomes: Student ID numbers from the Registrar's ECF files will be used to determine which students were enrolled in Living 101/102. UCI Registrar (SIS, ECF, Degrees), housing, and Admissions data will be merged in to obtain the variables of interest as listed in Section 6. These are data that Anita Iannucci has used almost daily for six years. Identifiable data for many projects are always left on Anita Iannucci's networked drive; they are never put onto laptop computers or tablets or any other devices. Her computer is password-protected. All reports – both internal and external to the campus – will show results only in aggregate.

The likelihood of risk is extremely small, and its severity should be mild. Because Anita Iannucci has been doing this sort of research for many years and has been working with these databases for six years without any breach of confidentiality of data, the risk of it happening with this project is extremely small.

C. Potential Benefits

Discuss the potential benefits directly **to the participant and to society**. **Compensation (i.e., gift cards, cash, course credit, etc.) is *not* a benefit.**

[X] There is no direct benefit anticipated for the participant.

OR

Societal Benefits: If these courses show benefits for students in terms of self-efficacy, mindfulness, and/or academic outcomes, the results will be shared at conferences so other universities can develop similar courses or incorporate aspects of these courses into their existing courses or programs.

SECTION 8: PARTICIPANT COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

1. If participants will be compensated (e.g., money, extra credit, etc.) for their time and effort, indicate the method/type (i.e., cash, check, gift certificate, etc.) and **exact amount**.
2. Indicate **when** compensation be provided (e.g., directly after participating in the interview, within two weeks) **and how** it will be provided (e.g., in person, by mail, emailed an electronic gift card code)?
3. Compensation should be offered on a **prorated basis** when the procedures involve multiple sessions. Provide a **breakdown of the amount, specifying for which exact procedure it pertains, and the total amount** that may be given.
4. Specify whether subjects will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses (i.e., parking fees, transportation, etc.). If so, describe any requirements for reimbursement (e.g., receipt).

[X] Not applicable - This study involves no interaction/intervention with participants (i.e., involves the use of data, records, charts, specimens).
For the "Academic Outcomes" portion of our study.

[ ] No compensation will be provided to participants.

[X] No reimbursement will be provided to participants.

OR

For the Pre-Post Surveys:
For every four students who complete the survey at the beginning of the course, one will be randomly selected to win a $10 Starbucks gift card. This criterion will be the same in each class (Living 101 and Living 102) and at both pre and post.

Winners will be selected within about a week of the close of each survey (usually the next day, but longer if Anita Iannucci is out of the office) and will be notified by email, and they can pick up their gift cards directly from Anita Iannucci's office in Aldrich Hall.

SECTION 9: CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH DATA

1. Will researchers maintain any participant identifiers? Check all that apply:

[ ] Participant identifiers are not maintained (i.e., researchers will not collect information that can link the participant to their data)

OR

[X] Names	**[ ]** Social Security Numbers	**[ ]** Device identifiers/Serial numbers
[ ] Dates*	**[ ]** Medical record numbers	**[ ]** Web URLs
[ ] Postal address	**[ ]** Health plan numbers	**[ ]** IP address numbers
[ ] Phone numbers	**[ ]** Account numbers	**[ ]** Biometric identifiers
[ ] Fax numbers	**[ ]** License/Certificate numbers	**[ ]** Facial Photos/Images
[X] Email address	**[ ]** Vehicle id numbers	**[ ]** Any other unique identifier

[X] Other (Specify all): UCInetID and Student ID numbers; EEE provides UCInetIDs only, so those will be used to link with Student ID numbers in the student data files to link survey responses with campus databases (Registrar's SIS and SIR/Admissions and Degrees files; Student Affairs' Housing data file).

* birth date, treatment/hospitalization dates

2. Indicate **how identifiable data will be recorded, stored, secured.**

Note: *If the research data includes identifiable private information the storage devices or the electronic research files must be encrypted. [For guidance on the use of cloud services, please review the UCI OIT policy.]*

[ ] No identifiers will be maintained

[ ] Biological specimens

[X] Other(s) (specify): UCInetID and Student ID numbers

Electronic Data (check all that apply):
[X] Coded data; code key is kept separate from data in secure location.
[ ] Data includes identifiable information. ***Note:*** *Encryption software is required.* Provide rationale for maintaining identifiable info**:** <Type here>
[X] Data will be stored on secure network server.
[ ] Data will be stored on stand-alone desktop computer (not connected to network/internet)
[ ] Data will be stored in the cloud (specify source providing service): <Type here>
[ ] Other (specify here): <Type here>

Hardcopy Data, Recordings and Biospecimens (check all that apply):
[ ] Coded data; code key is kept separate from data in secure location.
[ ] Data includes identifiable information. Provide rationale for maintaining identifiable info**:** <Type here>
[ ] Data will be stored in locked file cabinet or locked room at UCI/UCIMC.
[ ] Data will be stored locked lab/refrigerator/freezer at UCI/UCIMC.
[ ] Other (specify here):

Not applicable: no hardcopy data will be kept/used for this study.

Data on Portable Devices:

5. Specify whether participant **identifiable data** will be stored on the device. If so, **explain why** it is necessary to store identifiers on the device.
6. Describe the **portable device(s) to be used** (e.g. audio/video recording device, tapes, cameras, mobile phones / iPhone, laptop, tablet, portable hard drive including USB flash drives).
7. Explain how long the identifiable data will be maintained on the portable device.

Note: *Only the "minimum data necessary" should be stored on portable devices as these devices are particularly susceptible to loss or theft, thus creating a source for potential breach of confidentiality. If there is a necessity to use portable devices for initial collection of identifiable private information, the portable storage devices or the research files* ***MUST BE ENCRYPTED****, and identifiers transferred to a secure system as soon as possible.*

[X] Not applicable – No study data will be maintained on portable devices.

OR

<Type here>

Data Retention:

8. Explain **how long participant identifiers** will be **retained**. This includes the key code linking the data to the participants.

Note: *If more than one of the options below is applicable [e.g., the study involves children], records should be kept for the longer period.*

[ ] Not applicable. No identifiers are retained.
[ ] Destroy once its purposes has been served (e.g., for recruitment, after compensation granted)
[X] Destroy once data collection/analysis is complete. For the Pre-Post Surveys
[ ] Destroy after publication/presentation.
[X] Maintain for approximately six years after study enrollment, which is when data analysis will be complete for the Student Outcomes portion; email address will be retained for only two quarters (e.g., 3 months, etc.)
[ ] Maintain indefinitely. Other researchers may have access to de-identified data for future research. Note: ***Appendix M is required if identifiable data will be shared with non-UCI Researchers.***
[ ] Identifiable research records will be retained for seven years after all children enrolled in the study reach the age of majority [age 18 in California] as this study includes children.
[ ] Other: <Type here>

Data Destruction of Recordings / Photographs: If subject identifiable audio or video recordings or photographs will be collected, specify the timeframe for the transcription and describe retention / destruction plans.

[X] Not applicable – No audio/video recordings or photographs will be collected.

[ ] Audio or video recordings transcribed and de-identified; specify time frame: <Type here>
[ ] Audio or video recordings maintained with identifiers; specify time frame: <Type here>
[ ] Audio or video recordings destroyed; specify time frame: <Type here>

[ ] Photographs maintained with identifiers; specify time frame: <Type here>
[ ] Photographs destroyed; specify time frame: <Type here>

Certificate of Confidentiality:
Specify whether a Certificate of Confidentiality (COC) has been or will be requested from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). If yes, explain in what situations personally identifiable information protected by a COC will be disclosed by the UCI study team.

Note: *If the COC has been secured, provide a copy of the COC Approval Letter with your IRB application or provide it to the IRB upon receipt.*

[X] Not applicable – No COC has been requested for this study.

OR

<Type here>

APPENDIX #6: IRB Protocol, Participant Recruitment Letter and Scripts

Recruitment Email

Greetings Living 101 Students!

Congratulations for deciding to take this course. As I said in the Syllabus, the next 10 weeks have the potential to be an eye- and heart-opening time for you, and I believe you will benefit.

This is a fairly new and distinct area of co-curricular education at UCI that UCI Student Affairs has been piloting since Spring 2015. This course has the potential to support the overall success of many students, both undergraduate and graduate.

In order to measure how well the course is delivering against its intended outcomes, we have created a questionnaire, and are administering it before the course gets underway and after completion. Your responses will provide insight into the strengths, areas that need improvement, and additional offerings going forward. For example, enrollee feedback was the primary driver in our decision to create Living 102 as an advance offering of this curriculum.

The study is designed to quantify the change in measures for individual respondents. While your responses have to be linked to you to analyze this change, your responses are only accessible by the lead researcher, Anita Iannucci. I will not have access to your responses.

This invites and encourages you to participate in the Living 101 study. For every five students who complete the survey at the beginning of the course, one will be randomly selected to win a $10 Starbucks gift card.

If you choose to participate, please follow this link:

If you have any questions about the study, please don't hesitate to contact Anita Iannucci at iannucci@uci.edu or (949) 824-7828.

Blessings, and thanks,
Valerie

Scripts for In-Class Survey Recruiting

PRE-Course Survey Recruitment:

I want to tell you about a research study about this course. The purpose of this study is to better understand how the Living 101 and Living 102 classes are working. Thus, we are asking all students enrolled in this class or here today and considering enrolling in this class if they are willing to complete two surveys this quarter, one survey at the beginning of the quarter and one at the end. The surveys are optional, and whether or not you take them will not impact your course grade. As a thank you for participation, for every four students who completed the survey, one student will be randomly selected to win a $10 Starbucks gift card.

We ask you to log in to take this survey so that the researcher can match your responses with your responses to the second survey, in case you decide to take it too.

You have probably already received an email about this survey, and maybe you have already taken it. If you have not taken it yet and you wish to do so, we will allow 10 minutes now. This is your last chance to take the survey, because the course will begin immediately following it and the survey needs to be completed, if you wish to complete it, before the course begins.

Taking this survey now does not in any way obligate you to also take the survey at the end of the course.

If you have already taken the survey or do not wish to take it, please sit quietly for the next 10 minutes.

What we learn will be used to improve the Living 101 and Living 102 classes, making them better for future UCI students.

If you wish to take the survey now, please go to this link [write url on board], log in using your UCInetID.

POST-Course Survey Recruitment

I am here to remind you about the research study concerning this course. The purpose of this study is to better understand how the Living 101 and Living 102 classes are working. Thus, we

have asked all students enrolled in or attending this class if they are willing to complete two surveys this quarter, one survey at the beginning of the quarter and one at the end. The surveys are optional, and whether or not you take them will not impact your course grade. Even if you did not take the first survey, you are welcome to take this second one. If you did take the first survey and do not wish to take this second one, that is okay too. As a thank you for participation, for every four students who complete this survey, one student will be randomly selected to win a $10 Starbucks gift card.

We ask you to log in to take this survey so that the researcher can match your responses with your responses to the first survey, in case you took it too.

You have probably already received an email about this survey, and maybe you have already taken it. If you have not taken yet it and you wish to do so, we will allow 10 minutes now. This will be your last opportunity to take the end-of-quarter survey, because it will close during your class session today.

If you have already taken the end-of-quarter survey or do not wish to take it, please sit quietly for the next 10 minutes.

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If you wish to take the survey now, please go to this link [write url on board], log in using your UCInetID.

APPENDIX #7: Statistician Biographies

Kate Kirby, MS Biostatistics (Michigan, 2003) is a Senior Statistician at the Center for Statistical Consulting at University of California, Irvine. She has over 17 years of experience in data analysis and statistical consulting and has collaborated with researchers on a wide variety of projects in medicine and public health. Kate is often involved in study design, grant preparation, manuscript writing, and mentoring students and assisting research fellows and medical residents in their research projects.

Joni Ricks-Oddie, PhD (UCLA, 2012) is the Director of the UCI Center for Statistical Consulting. Dr. Ricks-Oddie oversees general operations and strategic planning for the Center and its consulting activities. She facilitates connections between campus researchers in need of consulting services and the Statistics faculty with the expertise to assist them. Dr. Ricks-Oddie's current affiliations also include the UC Irvine Institute for Clinical and Translational Science where she serves as the Director of the Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design (BERD) Unit.

APPENDIX #8: Partial List of Student-Reported Impact Statements

This is a partial consolidation of individual impact statements submitted voluntarily by graduates of Living 101 and Living 102. Color coding emphasis on comments specific to impact were added by this researcher after the fact. These testimonials were used to promote the courses to other students via the course website and mass messaging via email across the UCI campus. Students gave written permission for their names, degree program and graduation year to be published with promotion materials and messaging.

"*Thank you so much for a life changing quarter, and I can't wait to come back to 102!!*" ~ **C. Grigorian, Ph.D. Candidate, Chemical Engineering and Materials Sciences, 2020**

"I loved this class. Valerie Sheppard is a professor everyone at UCI should have at least once. Her positivity and outlook on life are contagious**.** *I learned so much from this class that I wouldn't have been able to learn anywhere else. This class should be a requirement for freshmen,* not even kidding bro. If you need a more positive outlook on life you need to take this class. If you need 1.3 units to graduate on time you need to take this class. If you're taking 21 units already and you can't fit another class in your schedule…you need to take this class." ~ **K. Solano, Sociology, 2019**

"*I honestly took this class to better myself. Every time after class, I feel more refreshed, positive, and good about myself. I go home on the weekends and share what I have learned from this class with my sister* because I feel like it's something she would enjoy hearing and learning about. Thank you for teaching this course that helped me open up more and be true to myself." ~ **E. Heng, Behavioral Psychology, 2018**

"Sometimes, we know within that we need to change something in our lives to be happier but we're scared to do it by ourselves. *Living 101 would definitely be the strength to push you forward in order to face your fears.*" ~ **J. Almodovar, Psychology and Social Behavior, 2021**

"Thank you for putting so much effort your Living 101 class, and using your light to improve the quality of student life on campus. Even though we didn't talk much personally, *you forced me to take a good hard look at myself and really think about how certain mindsets and actions were holding me down. With your encouragement, I'm finally feeling like I'm taking active steps to be the best version of myself, something I haven't felt in a long time.* I hope to find time to take

Living 102 and I hope your classes continue to expand." ~ **D. Mak, B.S. Computer Science, 2019**

"When I enrolled for Living 101, I took the class for the extra units. *After the first day of class, I knew that it wasn't like any other class I've taken at UC Irvine. In fact, it was an eye-opening and life-changing experience! You have taught me to be more aware of my body and realize my self-worth. Not only did this class help me grow as a person, I learned to take charge of my life and my health to be the happy and whole person that I am!* Thank you so much for teaching such valuable lessons that will help me throughout my college life and beyond!" ~ **K. Castillo, Business Administration, 2020**

"*I thoroughly enjoyed Living 101!!! What an awesome class, learning experience, group dynamic and spiritual exploration. Thank you for a great journey,* and I look forward to enrolling in Living 102." **~ L. Scott, Drama 2018**

"*Thank you for an amazing life changing quarter.*" **~ R. Campos, Social Ecology and Criminology, Law, and Society, 2018.**

"I have held off taking Living 101 for one reason or another for most of my college years, and just as well, I could have survived this past quarter without registering for the umpteenth time. HOWEVER, I don't regret for a minute that I took this class because *I got to learn so much about myself in the safe, loving, accepting environment of my peers and Valerie. College is what you make of it, and I made it with Being Happy and Whole!*" **~ J. Peng, Business Administration 2018**

"*Professor Sheppard's Living 101 class was the turning point of my life.* She combines her passion for self-awareness with her professional, down-to-earth manner to inspire and motivate students to truly become the best versions of themselves. She will bring focus to the areas of your life where you know you need to change and grow. *Each week, her pivotal lessons will force you to dig deeper and make positive changes you desire. I can confidently say that she has blessed me both personally and professionally. I recommend this class to anyone who is ready to finally take control of their own lives and create the life they wanted.* I will be enrolling again in her next course, and look forward to it. Take advantage!" **~ J. Ahn, Business Economics, 2017**

"*This class and you are such a blessing to my life.* It makes me so happy to see you delighting so much in teaching us! AMAZING!" **~ J. Ji, Philosophy and Law, 2018**

"I think all persons of all ages should take Living 101 because it is a well-rounded class that teaches a person about themselves. The course has made me a conscious person of who I am, my actions, and my words. *In the past, I have always thought to put others before me but never thought to take care of myself. Now, I can honestly tell someone my thoughts and feelings without feeling like I will hurt the other party. I can put myself first for once.* Living 101 is a great course because it is a teaching on our life. It opens up spirituality for everyone or anyone, it is not about religion but the focus of our true self with the Universe. If you truly want to take care of yourself, this is a great class to take." **~ L. Lee, Psychology and Social Behavior, 2016**

"I think everyone is on a journey into discovering his/her *true* self. For me, Professor Sheppard's Living 101 class has been a stimulating contribution to my personal research. *I had the chance to take away many useful suggestions and tips that I can apply in everyday situations to understand and make the most of everything that happens to me, both good or bad. I was challenged with questions and doubts I never had the courage to ask myself.* While it's easy to see the light when everything is bright, it is much more difficult to keep a positive attitude during the darkest time. This class will help you foster the positivity that's already inside you. This reason alone is enough for me to say that 10/10 I would take it again." **~ L. Signoretti, Business Administration, 2016**

"*This class is for sure one of the most valuable classes I've taken in college!*" **~ A. Nguyen, Business Information Mgmt., 2016**

"If you like stimulating discussions, Living 101 is definitely for you! *This course will empower you to improve every facet of your life through understanding yourself and others on a deeper level.* Professor Sheppard's vibrant energy and open mind will keep you engaged and excited to participate in class." **~ Z. Kidane, Public Health Policy, 2016**

"In the spring quarter of my fourth year at UCI, I showed up to Professor Sheppard's Living 101 class with the intention to support her, because she had spent time with our fraternity members the winter before, and I thought she did wonderful, empowering work. As soon as Professor Sheppard began going over the syllabus and explained to us what we could expect to learn, she

grabbed my attention. She spoke about teaching self-love, self-acceptance, and self-awareness. These were all aspects of my life that needed improving. I did not know it at the time, but I was leading myself down a path guided by fear and uncertainty. So much so, I did not fully recognize or understand what I was doing or how I was holding myself back.

The teachings I would learn over the course of the quarter would change me, slowly but surely. I began to embody the principles and received a lot of positive results almost instantly. By the time presentations of our final projects came around, I had three separate experiences that demonstrated how I had applied the teachings and the resulting improvements they made in my life. I am and will be forever thankful for the numerous lessons I learned about myself and others through this class, and I cannot emphasize my respect for Professor Sheppard's style of teaching enough. She not only engages and challenges us, but she is a prime example of embodiment of her own work, and the consistency between her actions and words makes her and her mission to help students trustworthy, genuine, and unique. The opportunity to take a class that focuses on this type of individual development is rare. Even more rare, is the opportunity to engage with a UCI faculty member that is so willing to help you become the best version of you that you can be. She is truly an inspiration and gift to the UCI community.

I read something once that said "You are all here, in college, because you have a little bit of 'I want to save the world" in you. I want to let you know that, it's okay if you only save one person, and it's okay if that person is you." *Because of Living 101, I gained insight and confidence in my journey. I have a greater sense of peace in my own mission and purpose, and while some days I only have the capacity to save myself, I know as long as I keep living to be closer to my true, authentic self, I will rise to the occasion and help others do the same.* I hope my story helps you to move, as that first class helped me, because all it takes to begin is to give yourself the chance you deserve." **~ M. Stevenson, Education and Behavioral Psychology, 2016**

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me realize how these habits weren't just affecting certain aspects, but rather that they permeate my whole life. It's not very often that students can connect with a well-meaning and driven professor in a class with matching eye-opening and introspective curriculum. Take advantage!" ~ **R. Leung, Biological Sciences, 2016**

"Living 101 was an absolutely amazing class! At a school that is so academically focused, it was refreshing to spend time learning about myself and life skills that will serve my future just as much as the academics. *The skills I have learned in this class are ones that I will carry with me for the rest of my life and consistently try to put into practice. I can honestly say that I have been happier and less anxious since taking Living 101 and I truly believe that it should be a university requirement to take Professor Sheppard's motivating and inspirational class of life skills.* Self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-love are crucial to being happy, especially for college students in their twenties. Being allowed to introspectively work on these things in a supportive group of amazing people made Living 101 one of the most valuable classes I have taken at UC Irvine." ~ **A. Tarwater, English, 2018**

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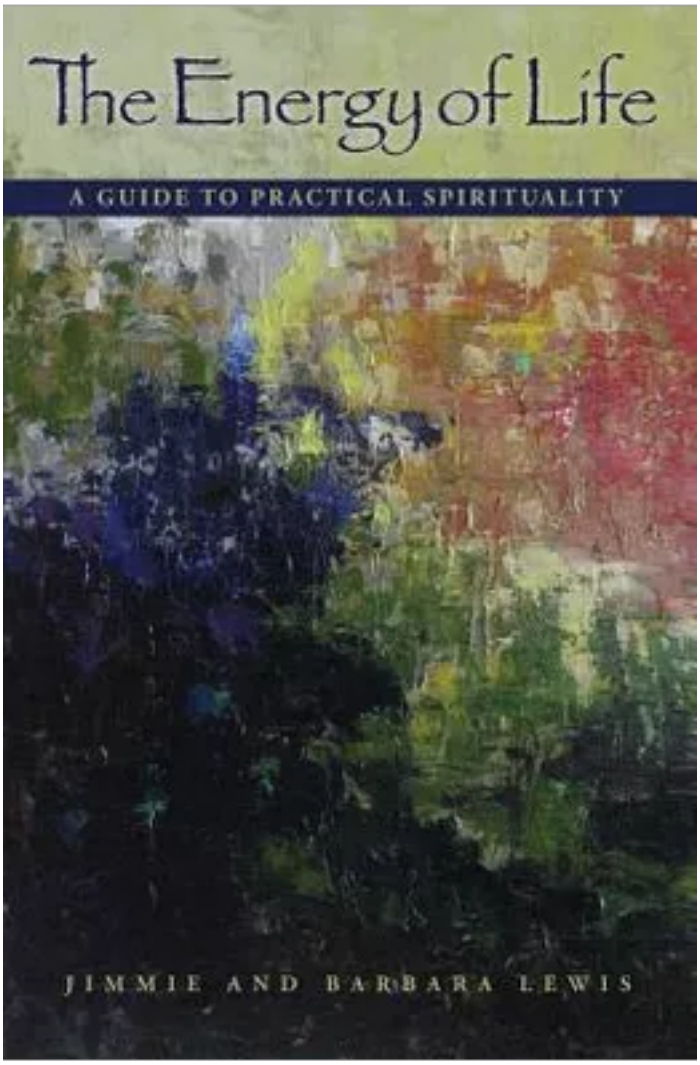
APPENDIX #9: Living 101 Textbook



SELF-HELP/SPIRITUALITY $13.95

The Energy of Life is a book that will change your life for the better, whether you are currently in the depths of despair or at the pinnacle of your success.

Barbara and Jimmie Lewis are co-authors of two books, ***The Energy of Life*** and ***The Real Miracle***. They wrote each book as a way of solidifying what they were learning about life and as a way of sharing what they learned with the rest of the world. When Barbara and Jimmie got together as a couple, they knew instantly that their relationship was to be a vehicle for spiritual awakening. They went to graduate school together and became counseling psychologists with a double major in transpersonal psychology and relationships.

When Barbara and Jimmie manifested their vision of living in financial and time freedom, they moved from busy lives in Houston to a mountain retreat in Northern California. Their remaining time together, and how they used their relationship for spiritual awakening, is beautifully expressed in Jimmie's moving account of their lives in his third book, ***A Holy Relationship: The Memoir of One Couple's Transformation.***

For personal appearances, workshops, retreats, groups or private sessions: jimmie@jimmielewis.com or www.jimmielewis.com

"This is a must-read for anyone feeling like their life has gone in directions they do not like. It will empower you to take back your life through showing you in laymen's terms how to get back on track. I personally equate it to viewing my life as a movie. I am the director and producer of my life, and my actions and non-actions are the script. I have the power to change my script. Whenever I feel off-track, this book is a welcome resource to gently remind me of the power I have to change my life for the better."
—Lorene Chandler, Hidden Valley Lake, CA

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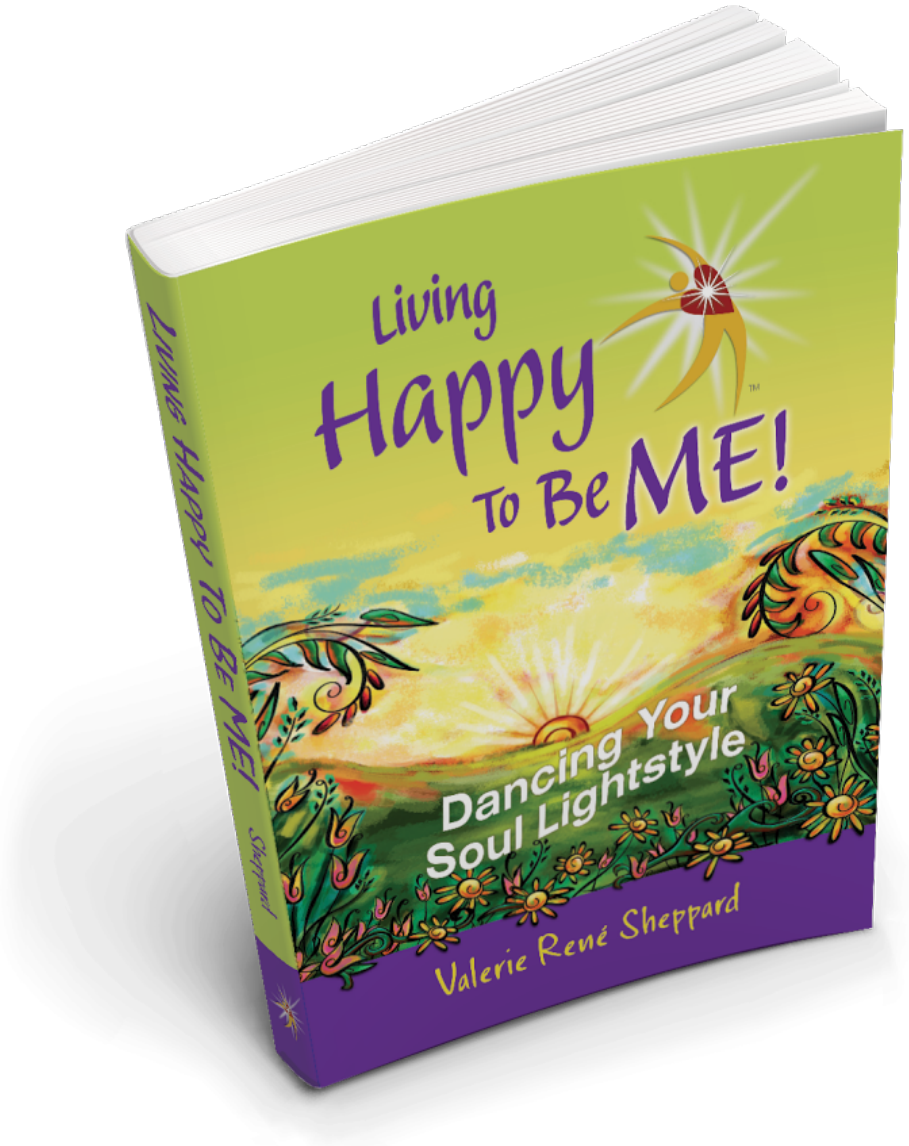
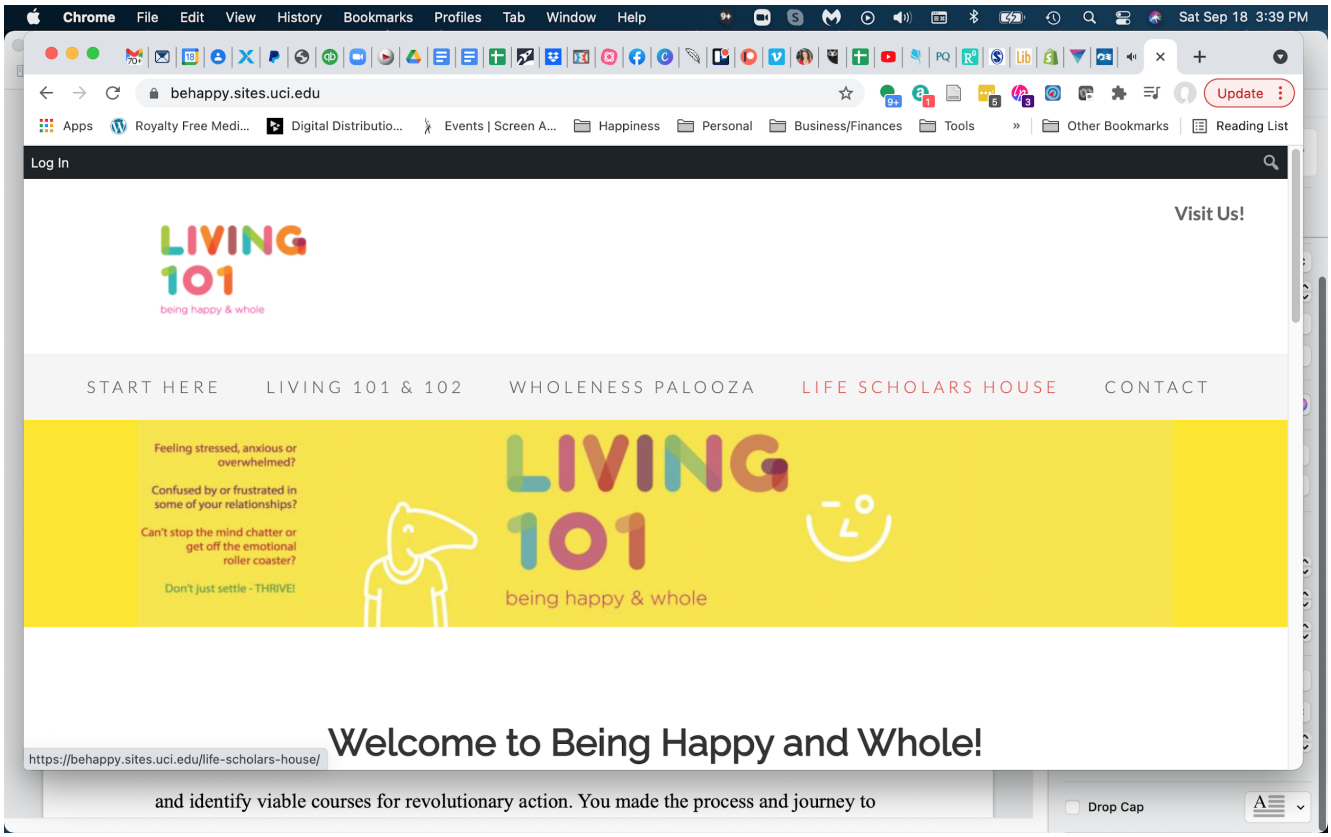
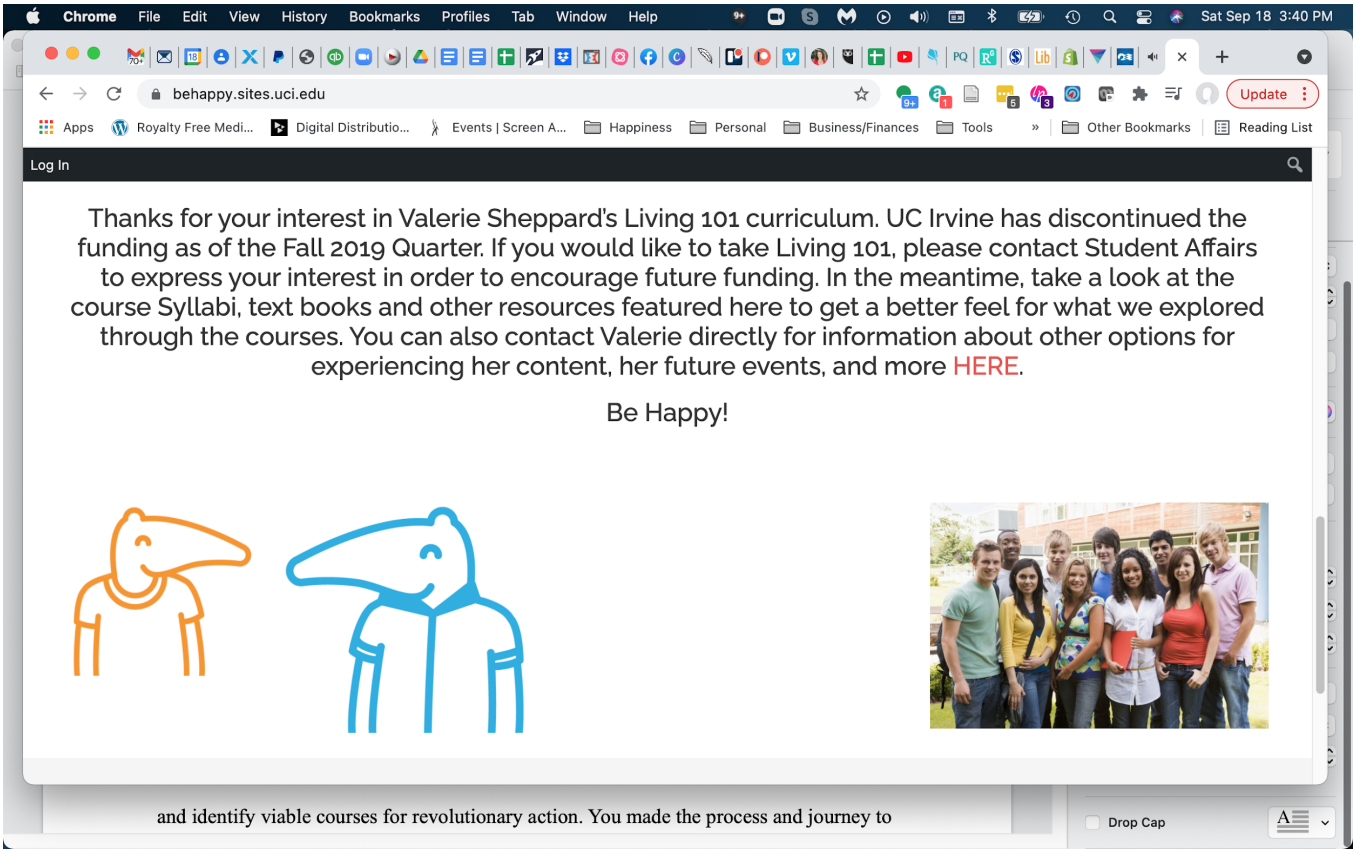
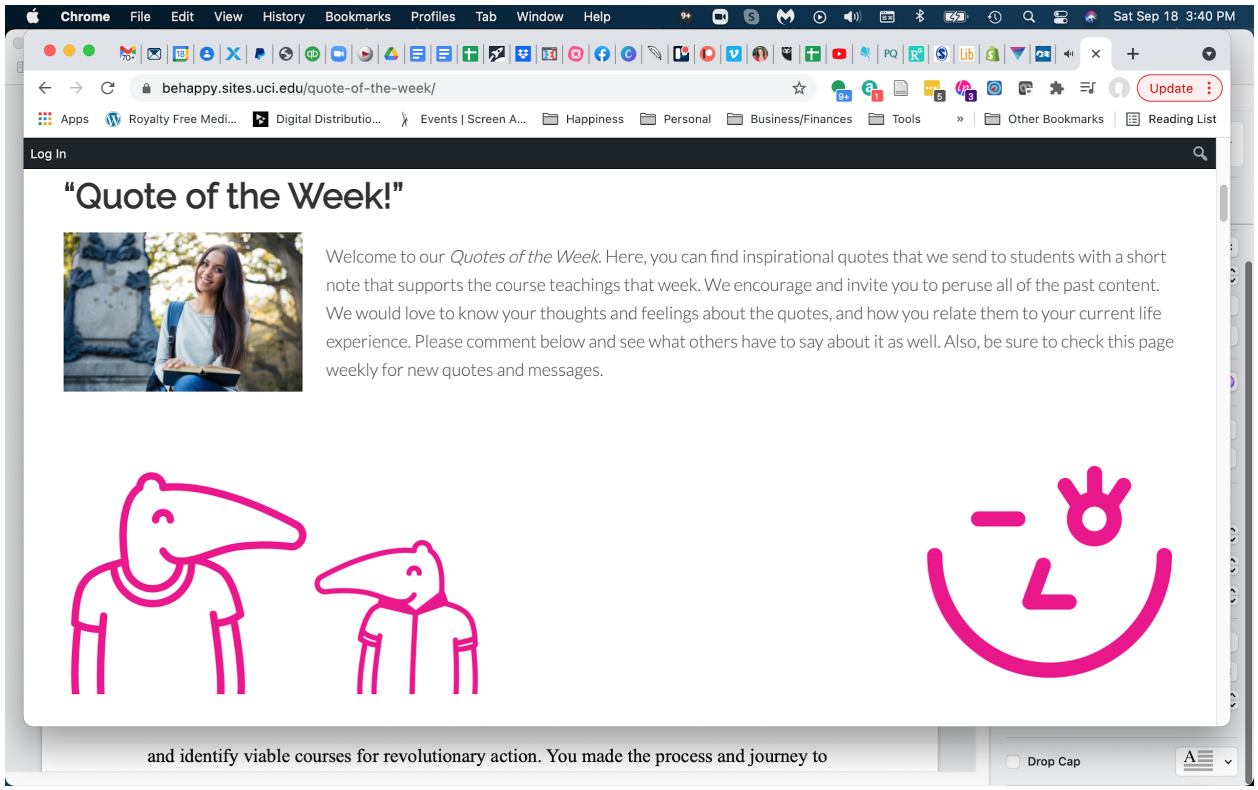
APPENDIX #10: Living 102 Textbook



APPENDIX #11: The UCI Website for the Courses



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"Quote of the Week!"
Welcome to our Quotes of the Week. Here, you can find inspirational quotes that we send to students with a short note that supports the course teachings that week. We encourage and invite you to peruse all of the past content. We would love to know your thoughts and feelings about the quotes, and how you relate them to your current life experience. Please comment below and see what others have to say about it as well. Also, be sure to check this page weekly for new quotes and messages.
and identify viable courses for revolutionary action. You made the process and journey to
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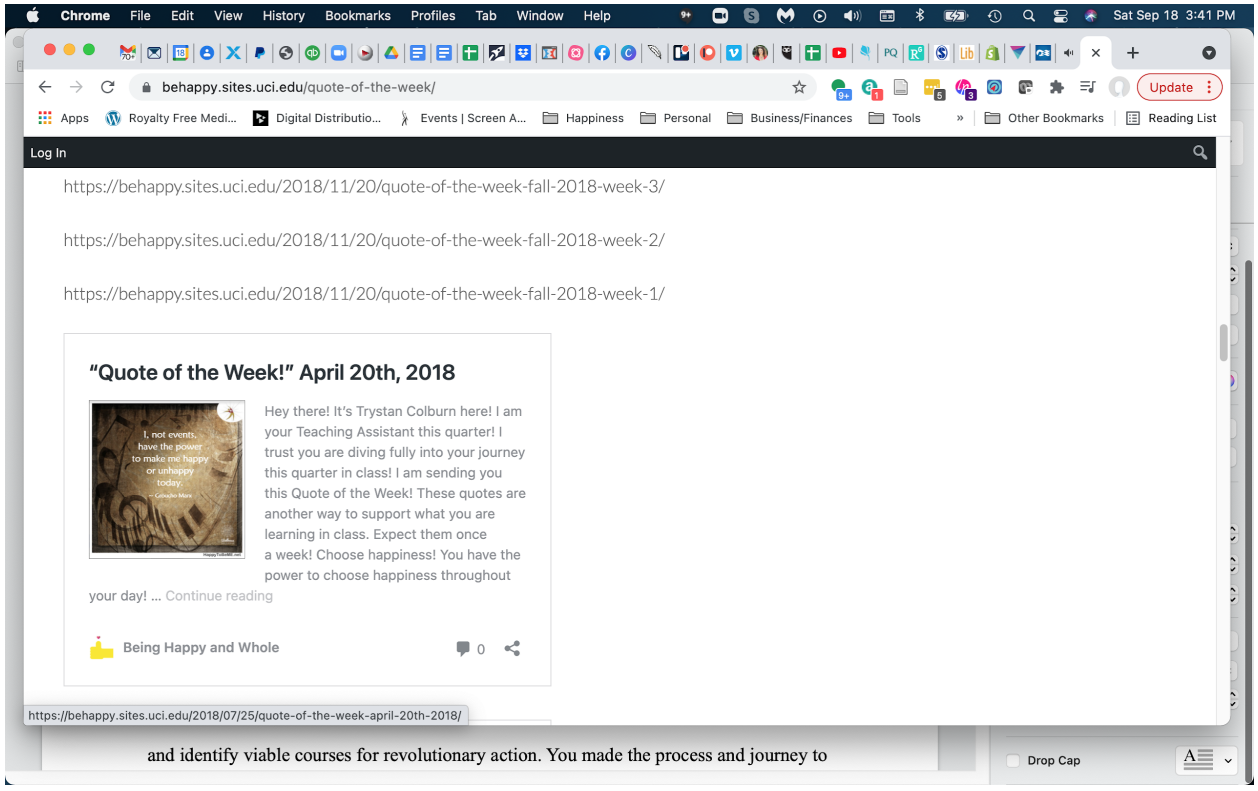
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https://behappy.sites.uci.edu/2018/11/20/quote-of-the-week-fall-2018-week-1/
"Quote of the Week!" April 20th, 2018
I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today.
Hey there! It's Trystan Colburn here! I am your Teaching Assistant this quarter! I trust you are diving fully into your journey this quarter in class! I am sending you this Quote of the Week! These quotes are another way to support what you are learning in class. Expect them once a week! Choose happiness! You have the power to choose happiness throughout your day! ... Continue reading
Being Happy and Whole
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https://behappy.sites.uci.edu/2018/07/25/quote-of-the-week-april-20th-2018/
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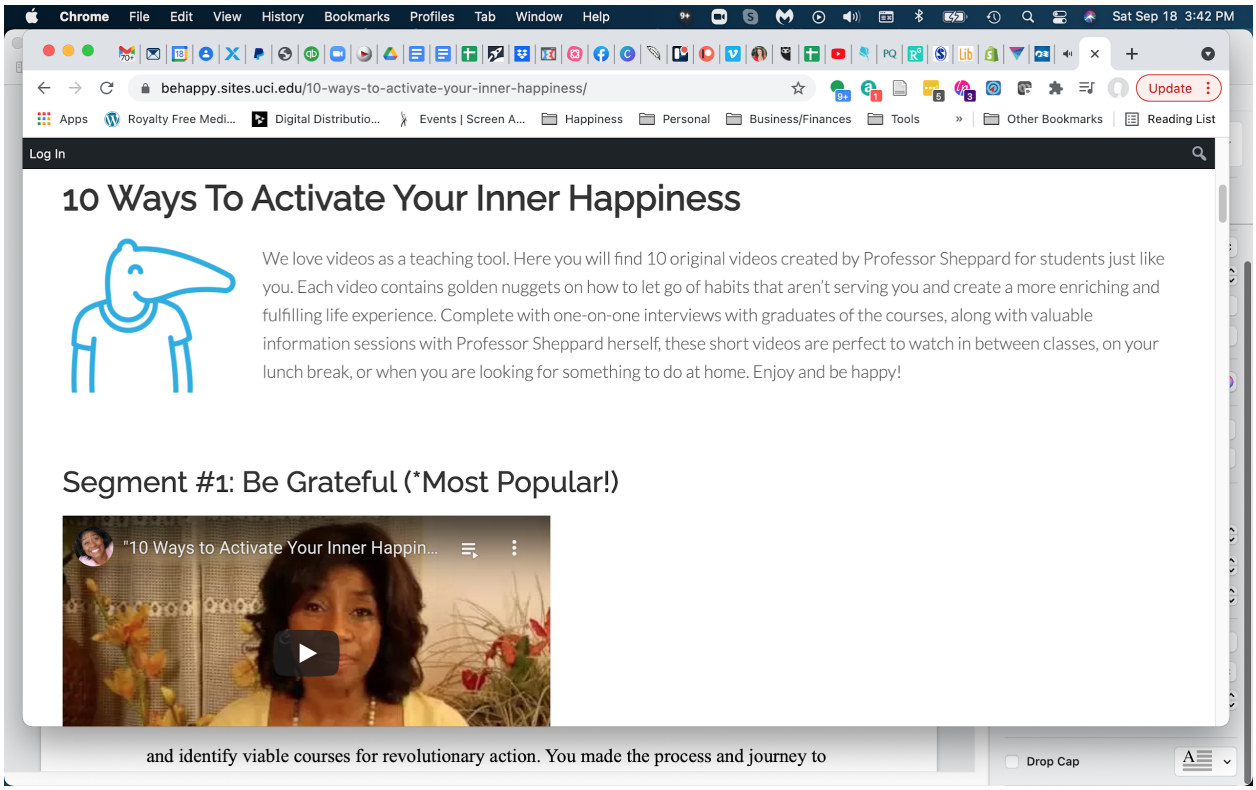
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10 Ways To Activate Your Inner Happiness
We love videos as a teaching tool. Here you will find 10 original videos created by Professor Sheppard for students just like you. Each video contains golden nuggets on how to let go of habits that aren't serving you and create a more enriching and fulfilling life experience. Complete with one-on-one interviews with graduates of the courses, along with valuable information sessions with Professor Sheppard herself, these short videos are perfect to watch in between classes, on your lunch break, or when you are looking for something to do at home. Enjoy and be happy!
Segment #1: Be Grateful (*Most Popular!)
"10 Ways to Activate Your Inner Happin...
and identify viable courses for revolutionary action. You made the process and journey to
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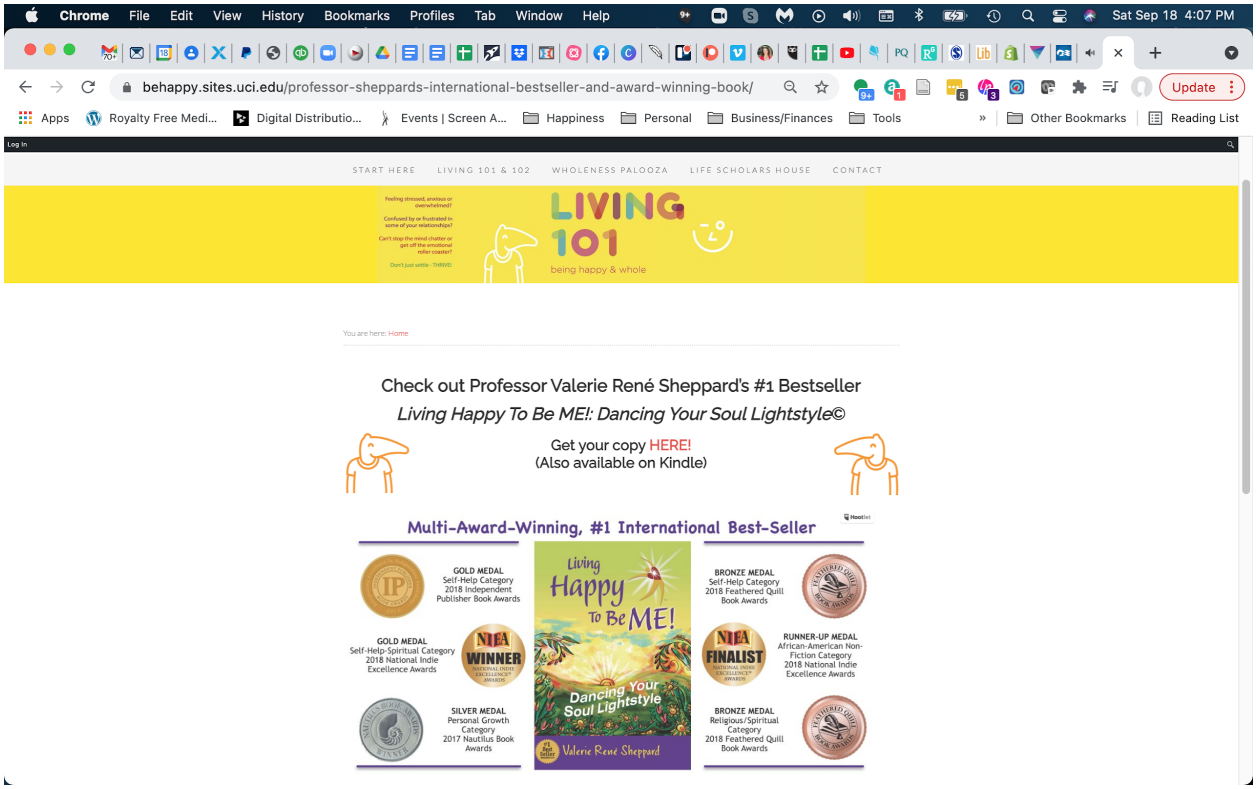
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LIVING 101 & 102
WHOLENESS PALOOZA
LIFE SCHOLARS HOUSE
CONTACT
LIVING 101
being happy & whole
Check out Professor Valerie René Sheppard's #1 Bestseller
Living Happy To Be ME!: Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle©
Get your copy HERE!
(Also available on Kindle)
Multi-Award-Winning, #1 International Best-Seller
GOLD MEDAL
Self-Help Category
2018 Independent Publisher Book Awards
GOLD MEDAL
Self-Help-Spiritual Category
2018 National Indie Excellence Awards
NIEA WINNER
SILVER MEDAL
Personal Growth Category
2017 Nautilus Book Awards
Living Happy To Be ME!
Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle
Valerie René Sheppard
BRONZE MEDAL
Self-Help Category
2018 Feathered Quill Book Awards
NIEA FINALIST
RUNNER-UP MEDAL
African-American Non-Fiction Category
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BRONZE MEDAL
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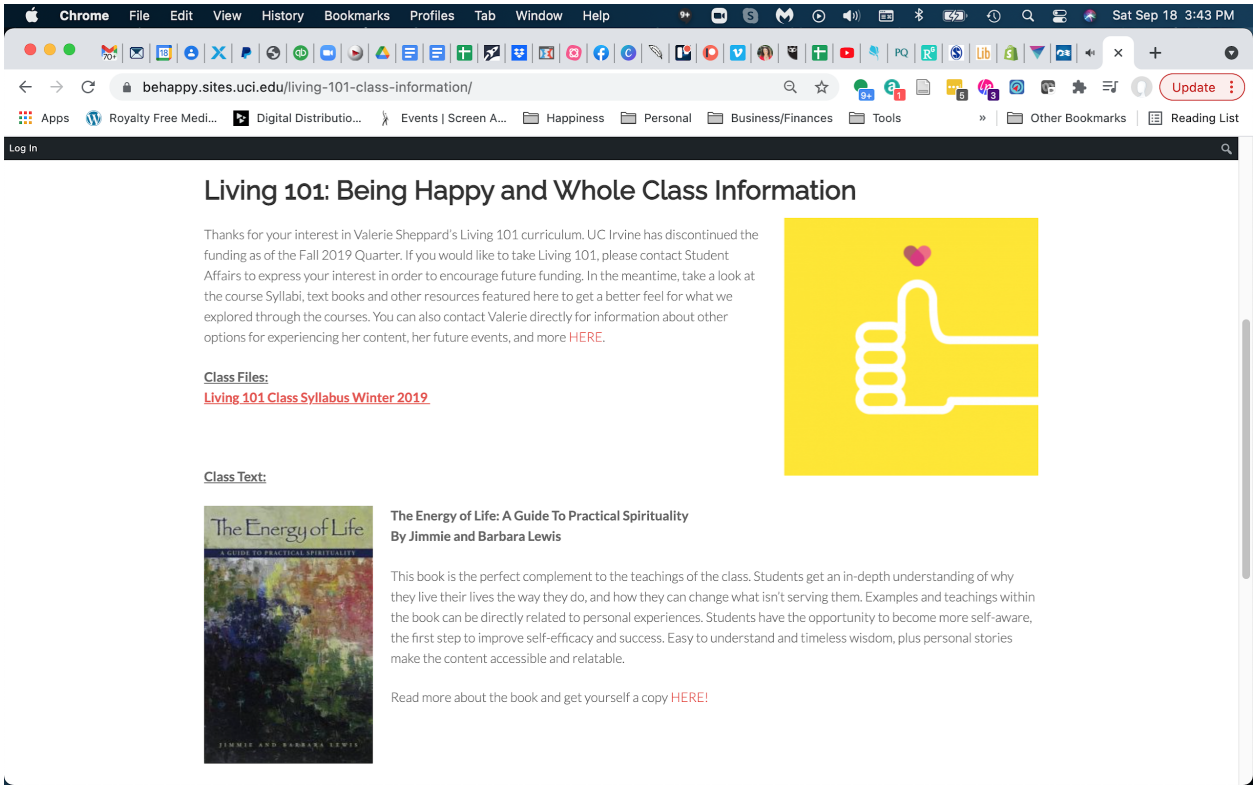
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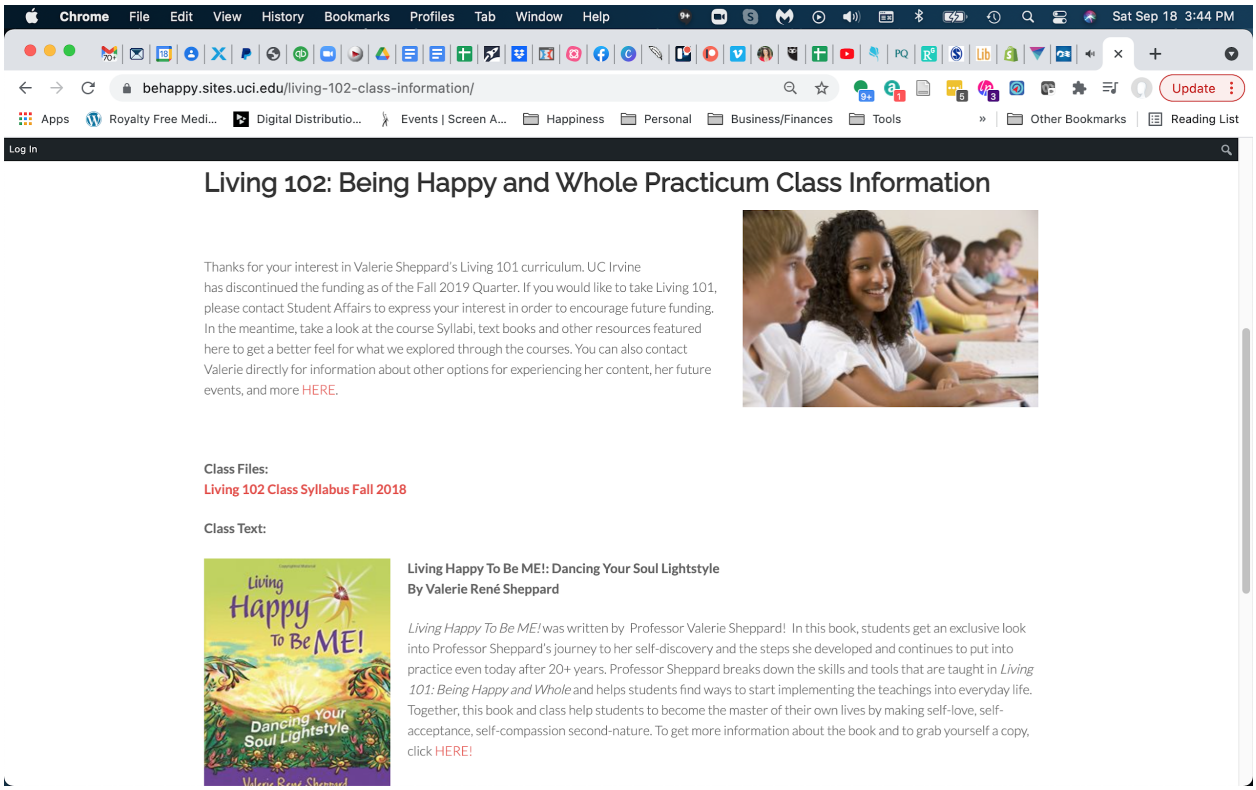
Log In
Living 101: Being Happy and Whole Class Information
Thanks for your interest in Valerie Sheppard's Living 101 curriculum. UC Irvine has discontinued the funding as of the Fall 2019 Quarter. If you would like to take Living 101, please contact Student Affairs to express your interest in order to encourage future funding. In the meantime, take a look at the course Syllabi, text books and other resources featured here to get a better feel for what we explored through the courses. You can also contact Valerie directly for information about other options for experiencing her content, her future events, and more HERE.
Class Files:
Living 101 Class Syllabus Winter 2019
Class Text:
The Energy of Life
A GUIDE TO PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY
JIMMIE AND BARBARA LEWIS
The Energy of Life: A Guide To Practical Spirituality
By Jimmie and Barbara Lewis
This book is the perfect complement to the teachings of the class. Students get an in-depth understanding of why they live their lives the way they do, and how they can change what isn't serving them. Examples and teachings within the book can be directly related to personal experiences. Students have the opportunity to become more self-aware, the first step to improve self-efficacy and success. Easy to understand and timeless wisdom, plus personal stories make the content accessible and relatable.
Read more about the book and get yourself a copy HERE!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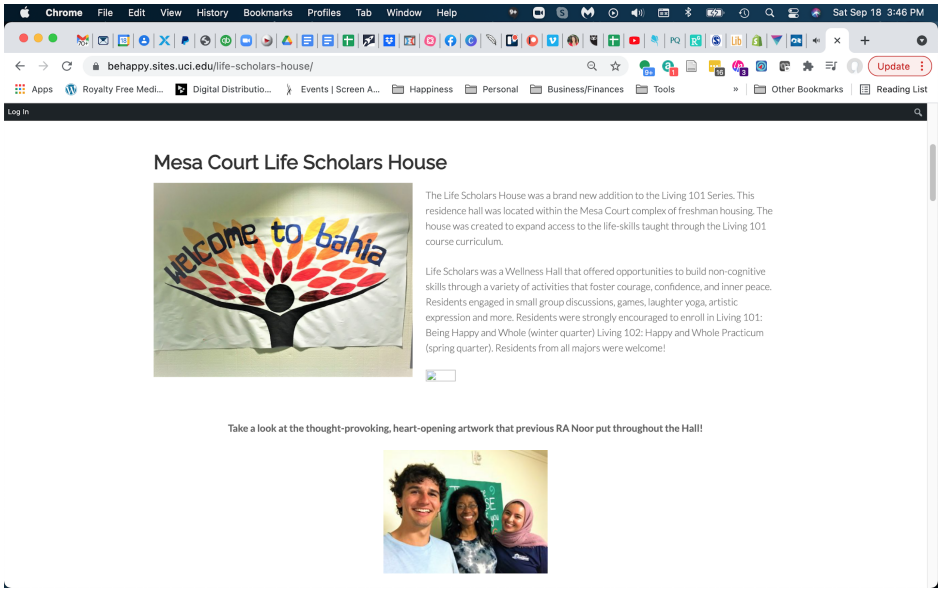
Living 102: Being Happy and Whole Practicum Class Information
Thanks for your interest in Valerie Sheppard's Living 101 curriculum. UC Irvine has discontinued the funding as of the Fall 2019 Quarter. If you would like to take Living 101, please contact Student Affairs to express your interest in order to encourage future funding. In the meantime, take a look at the course Syllabi, text books and other resources featured here to get a better feel for what we explored through the courses. You can also contact Valerie directly for information about other options for experiencing her content, her future events, and more HERE.
Class Files:
Living 102 Class Syllabus Fall 2018
Class Text:
Living Happy To Be ME! Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle
Living Happy To Be ME!: Dancing Your Soul Lightstyle
By Valerie René Sheppard
Living Happy To Be ME! was written by Professor Valerie Sheppard! In this book, students get an exclusive look into Professor Sheppard's journey to her self-discovery and the steps she developed and continues to put into practice even today after 20+ years. Professor Sheppard breaks down the skills and tools that are taught in Living 101: Being Happy and Whole and helps students find ways to start implementing the teachings into everyday life. Together, this book and class help students to become the master of their own lives by making self-love, self-acceptance, self-compassion second-nature. To get more information about the book and to grab yourself a copy, click HERE!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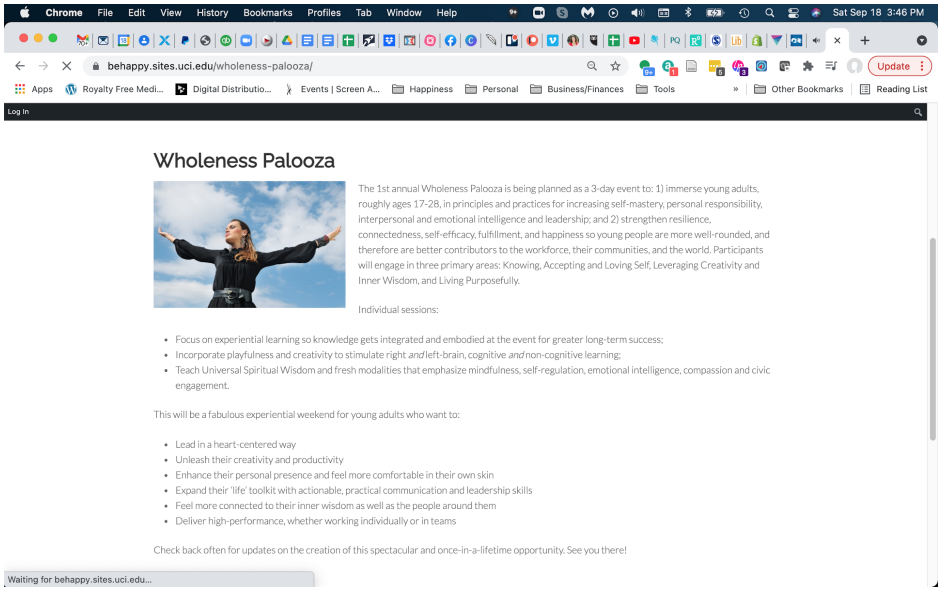
Mesa Court Life Scholars House
welcome to bahia
The Life Scholars House was a brand new addition to the Living 101 Series. This residence hall was located within the Mesa Court complex of freshman housing. The house was created to expand access to the life-skills taught through the Living 101 course curriculum.
Life Scholars was a Wellness Hall that offered opportunities to build non-cognitive skills through a variety of activities that foster courage, confidence, and inner peace. Residents engaged in small group discussions, games, laughter yoga, artistic expression and more. Residents were strongly encouraged to enroll in Living 101: Being Happy and Whole (winter quarter) Living 102: Happy and Whole Practicum (spring quarter). Residents from all majors were welcome!
Take a look at the thought-provoking, heart-opening artwork that previous RA Noor put throughout the Hall!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Wholeness Palooza
The 1st annual Wholeness Palooza is being planned as a 3-day event to: 1) immerse young adults, roughly ages 17-28, in principles and practices for increasing self-mastery, personal responsibility, interpersonal and emotional intelligence and leadership; and 2) strengthen resilience, connectedness, self-efficacy, fulfillment, and happiness so young people are more well-rounded, and therefore are better contributors to the workforce, their communities, and the world. Participants will engage in three primary areas: Knowing, Accepting and Loving Self, Leveraging Creativity and Inner Wisdom, and Living Purposefully.
Individual sessions:
Focus on experiential learning so knowledge gets integrated and embodied at the event for greater long-term success;
Incorporate playfulness and creativity to stimulate right and left-brain, cognitive and non-cognitive learning;
Teach Universal Spiritual Wisdom and fresh modalities that emphasize mindfulness, self-regulation, emotional intelligence, compassion and civic engagement.
This will be a fabulous experiential weekend for young adults who want to:
Lead in a heart-centered way
Unleash their creativity and productivity
Enhance their personal presence and feel more comfortable in their own skin
Expand their 'life' toolkit with actionable, practical communication and leadership skills
Feel more connected to their inner wisdom as well as the people around them
Deliver high-performance, whether working individually or in teams
Check back often for updates on the creation of this spectacular and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. See you there!
Waiting for behappy.sites.uci.edu...