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Hope in the Storm: Teaching Resilience Through Lived Experience

Hope is central to both my personal journey and my educational practice. As a mature student, mother and dyslexic learner, my path into higher education was far from straightforward. There were many moments when academic study felt overwhelming, but those experiences taught me that hope is not passive optimism. Rather, it is the belief that progress remains possible even when the path ahead is uncertain.

The image accompanying this reflection illustrates my understanding of hope through the relationship between becoming and practising. The image on the left represents becoming: a space of learning, reflection and personal growth, filled with books, notes and the visible traces of knowledge construction. The image on the right represents practising: the digital learning environment where students apply their developing knowledge to complex professional challenges. Together, they reflect the transition from learner to practitioner, and the hope that accompanies that journey.

As a lecturer in Security, Risk, Resilience and Emergency Management, I teach subjects that often focus on disruption, uncertainty and crisis. Yet within these topics, I encourage students to recognise resilience, adaptation and possibility. Hope emerges when students begin to see themselves as capable professionals, able to navigate complexity and make meaningful contributions to their organisations and communities.

For me, hope is closely connected to resilience. It is not the absence of challenge but the confidence that growth can occur through challenge. In higher education, hope is nurtured through supportive relationships, shared learning and opportunities for transformation. A pedagogy of hope creates spaces where students can develop confidence, embrace uncertainty and recognise their own potential. Even amid disruption and change, hope enables us to continue learning, becoming and moving forward.