

## **Well-being, leadership, and positive organizational scholarship: A case study of project-based learning in higher education**

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### **Abstract**

The emerging fields of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship (POS) contribute new perspectives and approaches for leadership education and leadership development in higher education. While there are emerging empirical studies in these new fields, little connection has been made to the intellectual and practical applications for undergraduate leadership education. In this paper, the authors make a case for the intersection of leadership and positive organizational scholarship in the context of an academic course that combines theory-to-practice using a project-based learning approach. Student learning gains in this course are reported through a pre-post assessment of student's competency and personal levels of well-being.

An increasing number of colleges and universities are turning attention to the science of well-being and positive psychology within the context of higher education (Lopez, 2006; Parks, 2013). Well-being as a construct has existed for centuries in conventional disciplines such as philosophy and psychology, but only recently has it gained traction as an area of research and subsequent evidence-based applications, largely attributable to the advent of positive psychology (Rathunde, 2001; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). A wide range of disciplines and fields are now engaging in critical questions and intellectual discourse on areas including the scholarship of strengths, well-being, and optimal functioning (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Interdisciplinary fields are emerging, such as neuropsychology and neuroleadership, that forge these relationships and advance new knowledge and evidence-based practices. In the context of higher education, the aim of positive psychology has been to create conditions under which students can flourish by maximizing their strengths, finding flow or optimal experiences, and improving their experiences (Buck, Carr, & Robertson, 2008).

Much has been written on the effects of bad or toxic leadership on organizational members and followers, resulting in moral distress, conflict, turnover, and negative effects on creativity and performance (Kellerman, 2004; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012). The emerging field of positive organizational scholarship shows the connection between positive organizational behavior and emotions with leadership (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). Positive leadership approaches yield gains in extraordinary performance or what Cameron (2008) refers to as "positively deviant performance" that significantly exceeds expectations (p.

2). Studies of organizations that practice positive leadership show increases in profits, productivity, quality of work, customer satisfaction, and employee retention (Cameron, Bright, & Caza, 2004; Cameron, 2013). Unlike toxic leaders, positive leaders have a positive impact on organizational members' well-being, including reports of greater meaning in their work and increased psychological well-being (Barling, 2014).

Research and applications on positive leadership, positive organizational behavior, and positive capital have gained most traction in the workplace (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Cameron, 2008; Cameron & Caza, 2004; Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Lucas, 2015; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). According to a 2010 review, a total of 148 empirically-based articles were published on the topics of positive organizational scholarship, positive organizational behavior, or organizational studies from a positive psychology perspective. The topic of positive leadership topped the list with 17 articles, while the topics of hope and work-life relationships were at the bottom with three publications each (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). While claims cannot be made for the robust base of peer-reviewed publications on positive leadership, there are indications that this overall body of literature is growing. Informal and formal leaders are using these approaches as a way to create and sustain high performing teams and conditions where all organizational members can flourish.

Higher education is lagging behind the workforce in preparing future generations of leaders and employees with this framework. In reviewing the formal literature on leadership education and positive psychology in the context of higher education, little evidence exists on how students formally learn about these connections and applications. For example, Acacia Parks (2013) published an edited volume on *Positive Psychology in Higher Education* showcasing a number of educational courses and programs designed for college students, with instruction on developmental psychology and adolescent popularity, service-learning, and happiness. Yet, there was no reference to connections between leadership education and positive psychology. As another example, in the book *Exploring Leadership: For College Students Who Want to Make a Difference*, the authors dedicate a chapter on the intersection of positive psychology and leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahaon, 2013), but it falls short of exposing students to the depth and breadth of this work. A deeper dive is needed to enhance student's learning on the connections between leadership and positive organizational scholarship. Providing leadership educational experiences to undergraduate students where they can learn about the science and application of positive organization scholarship and its connection with leadership will prepare students for advancing these concepts in public and private sector organizations. Students' individual well-being can be simultaneously enhanced as they learn the science of optimal human functioning, strengths, resilience, positive emotions, and positive relationships.

In the current paper, we present a case study of project-based learning (PBL) within an academic course that was designed to advance college students' knowledge on the intersection of leadership and positive organizational scholarship. A major emphasis on this course was transforming the classroom into a laboratory where students applied formal course concepts and interventions with client organizations. We discuss the impact the course had on students' learning and personal levels of well-being in the context of findings from a self-report survey students completed before and after the course.

## **Intersections of Leadership and Positive Organizational Scholarship**

Positive psychology is defined as "...the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 104). Other authors refer to positive psychology as "...nothing more than the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues" (Sheldon & King, 2001, p. 216). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) describe the evolution of the positive psychology field in three levels:

The subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level, it is about civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic. (p. 5)

Building upon the work in the positive psychology field, positive organizational scholarship (POS) emerged in 2003 as a new subfield in organizational sciences (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2003) describe POS as "...the study of especially positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members" (p. 4). Distinguished from organizational studies, POS has an emphasis on the positive conditions that enable people in organizations to thrive using terms such as excellence, thriving, flourishing, abundance, resilience, or virtuousness (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). "POS promotes the study of enablers, motivations, and effects associated with positive phenomena, with the aim of revealing positive states and processes that would otherwise be missed or obscured by traditional, 'non-POS,' perspectives" (Caza & Cameron, 2008, p. 3). While positive organizational scholarship and practices are gaining attention in the public and private sectors, this work has been sparsely integrated into college and university student leadership programs and academic courses.

## **Deepening Students' Learning of Leadership and Positive Organizational Scholarship Using Project-Based Learning**

Identifying interventions for facilitating college students' leadership development and deep learning can be challenging. For example, day-long student leadership conferences that expose students to a wide range of topics in one-hour sessions do not deepen their learning nor do these experiences facilitate leadership development over time. At best, these types of programs provide students with an intermediate inundation of knowledge about leadership concepts and practices. Leadership courses that extend over a semester and expose students to a survey of leadership theories and models without applied learning fall short of making the critical connection of these theories with application or practice. While much has been written about the nature of leadership as an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field, few of these connections are made in formal learning settings. More emphasis needs to be placed on how to deepen students' leadership development (Jenkins & Dugan, Owen, 2015; Priest & Clegorne, 2015).

Project-based learning (PBL) is a methodology that promotes student-centered learning (Mergendoller, 2006). PBL is a type of student-centered instruction during which students select and create a product, presentation, or performance that helps address a real-world challenge (Holm, 2011). Students work autonomously on these projects for an extended period of time, with teachers serving as facilitators that offer guidance and strategic instruction as the project progresses.

Five common features of PBL can be distilled from the literature (Holm, 2011). First, PBL projects focus on content that is central to a given curriculum (e.g., academic course), such that these projects are the primary tool for learning the material. Second, projects are based questions of importance, “driving questions” (Blumenfeld et al., 1991), that are crafted to engage students in active intellectual pursuit of solutions. These questions need be relevant to content and facilitate student engagement. Third, projects required students to identify problems, find and develop solutions, and produce a final product, such as a presentation or report. Fourth, projects are student-centered and maximize student autonomy. Instructors and teachers provide guidance as needed, but the students lead and carry out their projects. Fifth, projects are design to solve, address, or investigate real-world problems.

Educational scholars tout the PBL teaching methodology as superior to others in advancing critical thinking, collaborating, and problem solving skills while engaging students’ in their learning (Berends, Boersma & Weggemann, 2003; Scarborough, Bresnen, Edelman, Laurent; Holm, 2011; Tsang, 1997). In a review of studies comparing PBL to traditional instruction techniques, PBL was shown to enhance domain knowledge or content and skills-based learning (Holm, 2011). PBL also led to higher gains in process and skill development and information literacy skills compared to lecture-based classroom environments. PBL through social interaction, such as team or group projects that encourage collaborative learning, may promote a higher state of development than projects designed to promote individual learning (Helle et al., 2006). This approach is rooted in Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of social learning, which suggests that learning is largely a social process that takes places with the guidance or collaboration of peers. Advocates of PBL suggest that this teaching style helps equip students with collaboration skills necessarily to thrive in the workplace, such as critical thinking, problem solving, integrative learning, and teamwork (David, 2008; Hart Research Associates, 2015).

Still, PBL as a tool for educators is not without limitations. Critics of PBL note that student-centered learning that diminishes the role of the formal instructor fails to demonstrate gains in student autonomy and problem solving skills (Holm, 2011). Others argue that PBL approaches leave too much discretion to student learners, and that these methods are contradictory to cognition research on the developmental challenges of novice learners who are exposed to a student-centered learning pedagogy (Holm, 2011). Embedding PBL in academic courses requires additional instructional effort from designing the experiences to serving as facilitators for students’ learning. Not all students are ready for the developmental and structural challenges of the PBL approach, which is a significant challenge for instructors.

## Leadership and Positive Organization Academic Course Course overview

The interactive course described here, Leadership and Positive Organizations, provided an overview and connection between two interdisciplinary fields – leadership and positive organizational scholarship. Students explored the connections between positive organizational scholarship and contemporary leadership models while learning about evidence-based applications that result in highly functioning teams, quality relationships, increased productivity, and greater levels of individual and organizational well-being. Through a focus on PBL, the classroom became a laboratory for applying concepts and bridging formal learning with application. The course objectives were to:

- Investigate the interface between POS and leadership theories with a focus on core topics and foundational contemporary theories.
- Develop an analytical lens in critiquing POS and leadership theories and frameworks
- Learn strategies for creating and sustaining organizations, units, and teams that facilitate greater levels of well-being,
- Transform the classroom into a laboratory where students and instructors model and apply course concepts and approaches using case studies, classroom discussion, team projects, assessments, and personal reflection.

In addition to the course objectives, Table 1 outlines the three learning competencies embedded in the course.

In terms of course organization, students were assigned a primary textbook, *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*, to learn foundational concepts of POS. Students were assigned a variety of outside readings, including peer-reviewed journal articles and popular press writings, related to contemporary leadership theories and models, well-being constructs, positive organizational studies, and positive organizational behaviors. Students worked in teams to explore critical questions with real-world applications, such as, “What is the role of strengths in workplace well-being and engagement?”, “Why and how do people and groups thrive in organizations?” and “What role do emotions play in the workplace?” They examined these concepts from individual and organizational contexts. In addition, students were assigned a secondary textbook entitled *Becoming a Resonant Leader* (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston, 2008) that served as a reflective journal and workbook throughout the semester, encouraging students’ personal and professional growth. The secondary text complemented the course focus on an organizational context through activities and written reflections designed to facilitate individual leadership development. The blend between individual and organizational learning in this course allowed students engage in a PBL activity with an organizational context and focus, while simultaneously reflecting on their own well-being and leadership development.

Table 1.

*Leadership and Positive Organizations course learning competencies***Learning Competency**

<b>Well-being:</b> the life-long subjective experience of life satisfaction, happiness, and a sense of one's life as worthwhile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience a sense of meaning and purpose in life</li> <li>• Develop self-efficacy and control over one's own life</li> <li>• Effectively self-manage stress and anxiety</li> <li>• Find equanimity, peacefulness, and resiliency in the face of adversity</li> <li>• Possess optimism and positive emotions</li> <li>• Have a feeling of social support and social trust (friends, teachers and/or family who listen to you deeply and show their understanding and care).</li> </ul>
<b>Communication:</b> the process of creating and sharing meaning through human interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak, read, write and listen effectively.</li> <li>• Use appropriate language, nonverbal and visual symbols.</li> <li>• Organize strategically ideas and information.</li> <li>• Design, revise and produce work tailored to diverse audiences.</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Thinking:</b> a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the issues and identify the problem(s)</li> <li>• Distinguish among facts, opinions and inferences</li> <li>• Understand the influence of context and assumptions</li> <li>• Summarize and synthesize key issues</li> <li>• Articulate his or her own position using evidence-based arguments</li> <li>• Design and implement problem solving plans.</li> </ul>

**The Client Project: A project-based learning assignment**

Central to the Leadership and Positive Organizations course was the Client Project, a semester-long PBL project. While this course included a range of activities and assignments designed to meet course objectives and competencies, the PBL emphasis utilized in the Client Project was a key strategy for helping students make connections between leadership and POS and deepen their learning. The use of PBL allowed for greater integration of various leadership and positive organizational scholarship concepts and theories, and it served as a method for collaborative, guided discovery with the intention of encouraging self-regulated learning (Helle et al., 2006).

Students organized themselves into teams of five or six, then chose one of four university departments or units as their client. The instructor selected the four clients in advance of the course, with clients volunteering their work units and employees for the PBL assignment. Each client had an average of 15 full-time employees. There were three major interventions or applications that the student teams were responsible for conducting: an assessment of character

strengths (Clifton StrengthsFinder Assessment), Appreciative Inquiry (AI) interviews, and a survey of employees' positive behaviors (Positive Practices Survey; Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, & Calarco, 2011).

The first major application of the Client Project was an assessment of character strengths. The purpose of the StrengthsFinder Assessment is to provide knowledge about a person's individual strengths and how they can apply those strengths in various settings. It is a self-discovery tool based on Gallup's longitudinal studies on what factors contributed to highly productive employees. The assessment measures 34 themes of talent and produces a profile of individual's five signature strengths. Employees in each of the four client organizations completed the StrengthsFinder inventory and received their Top 5 strengths profiles. Student teams compiled all employees' strengths and created a team profile matrix that mapped out everyone's strengths. Creating a team profile builds awareness of each teammate's unique strengths. This type of understanding facilitates task delegation and guides collaboration. Students also learned how to use their top strengths to maximize their individual leadership development and leverage their strengths in other aspects of their lives (e.g., interpersonal relationships). Students learned how to design the clients' team profile of strengths along four domains of leadership and how to interpret those profiles for their clients.

The second major application of the Client Project was a battery of AI interviews. AI is a process characterized by deliberate questions that focus on the positive in order to discover the root causes of success. AI assessments are conducted to better understand what is currently working in an organization, how to sustain what is working, and what is needed to improve the organization and its employees. AI focuses in what is working well, not what is problematic. Questions target both the individual and organizational level. Students conducted semi-structured AI interviews with members of their Client's organization. Their task was to organization information gained from these interviews to distill themes of the organization. For example, an organization might emphasize collaboration, have an orientation towards growth or expansion, or value traditions. Identifying positive themes within a unit highlights and reinforces positive behaviors and attitudes already in place within an organization. Students provided recommendations based on these themes and general observations from their interviews. Each recommendation was tailored to meet the Client's unique needs.

The third major application of the Client Project was a survey of employee's positive practices and behaviors. The Positive Practices Survey (Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, & Calarco, 2011) is a self-report questionnaire designed to assess the employees' positive behaviors within each Client organization. Positive practices are behaviors or activities sponsored by and characteristic of an organization that represent positively deviant performance. They focus on strengths and possibilities rather than weaknesses and problems. The Positive Practices Survey assesses six proposed dimensions of positive practices: Caring (People care for, are interested in, and maintain responsibility for one another as friends), Compassionate support (people provide support for one another, including kindness and compassion when others are struggling), Forgiveness (people avoid blame and forgive mistakes), Inspiration (people inspire one another at work), Meaning (the meaningfulness of the work is emphasized, and people are elevated and renewed by the work), and Respect, integrity, and gratitude (people treat one another with respect and express appreciation for one another). Each employee rated the extent to which 29

different behaviors are typical of their department. Students compiled the results from this assessment to create a summary of employees' positive behaviors within their Client organization and provide appropriate recommendations.

While the Client Project was the vehicle for students to apply their learning and reflect upon their experiences, students also learned how to apply what they were learning in their own lives. Students learned about the development, efficacy, and application of each these interventions in the course through assigned readings, lectures, and case studies. Instructors introduced the Client Project on the first day of class and emphasized that their final products would be a culmination of a large portion of the course content. Class time was devoted to practicing how to facilitate and implement these applications in small groups. For example, during one class, students generated a list of potential problems within an organization, then developed two to three recommendations to address these based on course readings. Finally, students completed each component of the project within their teams before conducting the projects with their clients. Instructors encouraged students to apply these interventions in their own project teams as a way for them to leverage their strengths and increase team engagement and productivity. For example, teams used strengths generated from the StrengthsFinder assessment to generate their own team strengths profile as a guide for task delegation.

Student teams collaborated on the planning and execution of all aspects related to the Client Project, including scheduling interviews and the dissemination of surveys. The major deliverables to the clients were a written report summarizing and analyzing the data students collected and a presentation to the client. Both the written report and the client presentation served as main way to assess students' learning in the course. Student teams collaborated in writing the report and facilitating the client presentation.

### **Well-being competency assessment**

To gain empirical support for the effectiveness of the course on student learning and personal growth, students were invited to complete the Well-being Competency Assessment (WCA) once at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. The purpose of the WCA is to assess student's gains in *knowledge* of well-being areas and growth in *personal* well-being. This distinction is important. Greater knowledge of well-being does not necessarily translate into greater well-being, although there is emerging evidence to suggest that teaching well-being in educational contexts leads to boosts in well-being (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). Thus, while we might expect a spillover effect such that greater knowledge of well-being leads to greater well-being, the two are distinct constructs that need to be measured separately.

The first part of the WCA measures individuals' knowledge of eight topics related to well-being of habits (the development of insights and habits that lead to life satisfaction, happiness, and purpose), self-assessment (regularly assessing one's quality of life); self-efficacy (one's belief in their ability to complete tasks and reach goals), stress management (strategies used to manage and control distress and challenges of daily life), resilience (strategies to learn ways of finding equanimity, peacefulness and resilience in the face of adversity), problem solving (cultivating alternative solutions to challenges in order to achieve goals and overcome



obstacles), social support (creating and sustaining positive relationships and social support), and prosocial behaviors (prosocial behaviors and emotions, such as compassion, joy, gratitude, and cooperation). These topics were chosen to align with priorities established by the Well-being University and the broader mission of George Mason University. Participants rate their level of perceived competence in each domain using a 4-point Likert scale, where 1=*novice*, 2=*emerging*, 3=*advanced*, and 4=*expert*.

The second part of the WCA assessment measure levels of individual's positive psychological functioning using Ryff's (1989) Scales of Psychological Well-being. This widely used measure contains six subscales: self-acceptance (a person's positive evaluations of oneself and one's past life), positive relations with others (quality of one's interpersonal relationships), autonomy (self-determination and independence, including the ability to evaluate oneself by personal standards), environmental mastery (the capacity to effectively manage one's life and surrounding world), purpose in life (belief that one's life has meaning, purpose, and a clear sense of direction), and personal growth (belief that one's life has meaning, purpose, and a clear sense of direction). Participants respond to items on a 7-point Likert scale from 1=*absolutely untrue* to 7=*absolutely true*.

A research assistant provided informed consent and informed the students that participation was voluntary, unknown to course instructors, and in no way affected their grade in the course. A total of 20 students completed the WCA at the beginning of the semester, and 14 of these students completed it at the end of the semester. Given the small sample size, we addressed issues of non-normally distributed data by conducting nonparametric tests (i.e., Wilcoxon signed-rank tests) to examine pre-post changes. All results remained significant.

Results indicate that on average, students felt more knowledgeable about each topic related to well-being at the conclusion of the course compared to the start of the course (see Figure 1). We conducted paired sample t-tests to determine if these gains were statistically significant<sup>1</sup>. Results showed that students gained more competence in their knowledge of resilience ( $t = 2.51, p < .05$ ) and social support ( $t = 2.46, p < .05$ ). Three results were trending, such that students reported more competence in their knowledge of self-assessment ( $t = 1.84, p = .09$ ), self-efficacy ( $t = 1.90, p = .08$ ), and stress management ( $t = 2.11, p = .055$ ). These results provide encouraging support for the effectiveness of PBL in deepening students learning, particularly in well-being scholarship.

In terms of personal well-being, students' well-being increased on average across five of the six domains (positive relationships as the exception). We conducted paired sample t-tests to determine if these gains were statistically significant. Results showed that students reported greater well-being related to personal growth ( $t = 2.34, p < .05$ ) and at trending levels of significance for purpose in life ( $t = 1.84, p = .09$ ). Thus, following the course, students had a greater sense that their lives had meaning and clear direction.

Interestingly, students reported a *decrease* in positive relationships ( $t = 6.03, p < .001$ ). Students' competency gains related to social support did not spillover into a greater quality of their own relationships. However, this trend is not unique to this in course. Each time the WCA

had been administered to an academic course, students have reported significantly decreased well-being in personal relationships. One explanation for this finding is that students tend to be more stressed at the end of the semester. Perhaps they feel that they have less capacity to nurture their interpersonal relationships and are more likely to engage conflict. Further research is needed to better understand this trend.

Several limitations of the WCA warrant discussion. First, observed gains may have not been a direct function of the course. Although we can say with some degree of confidence that competency gains were at least partially related to the course, given the direct teaching and application of well-being concepts, we can be less certain about gains in well-being. Many things occur over the course of a semester that contribute to well-being, and it is difficult to decipher antecedents and consequences. Second, our measure of personal well-being (Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-being) measures trait-like well-being and thus may be insensitive to fluctuations in well-being. Methodologies that are more sensitive to context (e.g., ecological momentary assessment, daily diary studies) may be better suited to capture changes in well-being. Third, students' well-being at the end of the semester may be dampened by stress associated with final exams and related semester-end obligations. It is possible that students did experience gains in their dispositional levels of well-being, but that these effects were attenuated by state-dependent stress or fatigue.

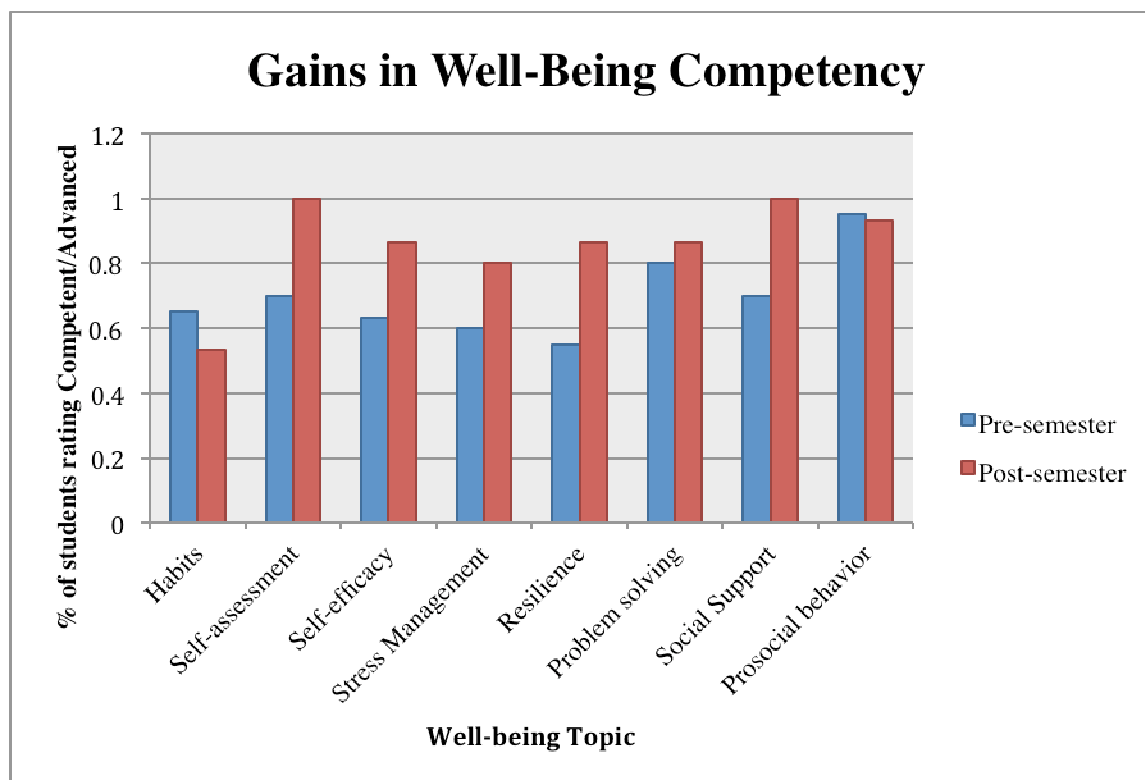


Figure 1 Students' competency gains across multiple areas of well-being

## **Discussion**

Project-based learning (PBL) brings promise to deepening students learning about leadership and their leadership development while engaging them in examining and solving real problems that are relevant and important to them. Providing students with concrete experiences over the course of a semester allows them to practice leadership and evidence-based organizational strategies that yield optimal human performance while critically examining theoretical models of leadership. In real time, students not only are knowledgeable about the kind of leadership it takes to build and grow positive organizations, they have the opportunity to influence the organizational cultures and leadership of their organizational clients through strategy development and implementation of course concepts. In turn, these project-based learning experiences have promise for facilitating students' own leadership development through the principles of positive organizational behavior and positive leadership practices. Students are better prepared to transfer their learning and skills to situations beyond the classroom from their project-based learning experiences.

Several modifications can be made to the approach detailed in this case study. In the case of the Leadership and Positive Organizations course, more ongoing communications with client liaisons would have been useful in establishing shared expectations and goals. While instructors provided detailed communications to clients at the onset of the student project, subsequent meetings and correspondence could have improved the quality of the overall experience for both students and clients. Increasing the amount of time and frequency from the instructors with the student groups throughout the semester could have strengthened the experience for students and ultimately for the clients. A challenge for instructors is to strike a balance between offering direction and nurturing students' autonomy. Additionally, embedding PBL in leadership courses is labor intensive for students and instructors. Although students positively evaluated this course with emphasis on the value of real world application through the PBL experience, a number of students commented on the disproportionate workload based on the academic credits assigned to the course. Future courses can be modified by reducing workload outside of the PBL assignment or offering an additional experiential learning credit (so in a typical university environment, the class could be 4 credits total, with 1 credit devoted exclusively to a PBL assignment). Given that this was an upper level course (400s), all students were in their junior or senior year of schooling. It is commonplace in higher education for students to first take introductory courses, and then take courses that use PBL approaches, such as a senior capstone project. Given the utility of PBL as a vehicle for comprehension and engagement, student learning could be enhanced by completing PBL assignments early on in their undergraduate education.

While lecture-based instruction remains a dominant force in facilitating students' learning, PBL is emerging as an effective teaching tool in a wide range of fields and disciplines. A key to continued success is the requisite institutional support in PBL courses. PBL has promise in deepening students' learning on the intersections of leadership and positive organizational scholarship through mastering course content, analyzing information, and applying knowledge. Facilitating students' holistic learning about team leadership and intra-group dynamics in the context of positive organizational scholarship also can be measured in project-based classroom environments. Further examination is needed on its efficacy in

undergraduate and graduate college-level leadership courses, including the effective and ineffective dimensions of project-based instruction and learning.

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