Student Wellness and Personal Change Projects in the Management Classroom

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Abstract

We present a description and results of wellness and/or personal change projects which are designed to help management students understand how wellness, stress, and performance are related and to give them the experience of designing, implementing, tracking, and recording outcomes of their own projects. Students choose an area of life to address, set measurable goals, and develop strategies and techniques to implement the change in their lives. Progress is tracked through class discussions and reflection papers including thoughts on challenges, stress levels, frustrations, successes, as well as set-backs. Specifics of the projects are outlined and evidence of learning are discussed.

Introduction

Managing one's personal health and stress is a complex process. As management educators, we have an opportunity to help our students unravel the complex issues of managing stress, health, and wellness at the individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels, as well as help them learn them how these issues will affect them as future managers and employees. The current generation of young people, including many of our college students, is given a grim prognosis: due to the health and nutrition practices of our culture, we have raised a generation of individuals that, on average, will not live as long as their parents (Rimm et al., 2010). As a result, public awareness of the need to manage one's health is being raised by the media, medical providers, employers, schools, social and family circles, and by organizations. Furthermore, rising health care costs have prompted organizations to work with their health insurance providers to initiate wellness education programs for employees (Conlin, 2010; Schmidt et al., 2010). Additionally, many organizations are offering their employees financial incentives (such as lower premiums) to participate in their insurance providers' wellness programs or, more recently, *requiring* them to participate. Over 70% of Fortune 100 companies offer physical fitness programs, according to the National Business Group on Health (2010) and an April survey by the corporate benefits group Workplace Options revealed that 36% of employees report that their jobs offer perks such as wellness coaches, on-site health screenings, and fitness programs (Levine, 2011).

Additionally, our current generation of students may set aside their healthy habits while in college for a variety of reasons, including increased time pressures, peer influences, and having less structure in their lives than in high school (Campbell et al., 1992). Lack of attention towards

health is frequently compounded by the absence of school-mandated physical education courses which are often only required in the student's freshman year in college (Sliepcevich, 2001). Finally, because we are preparing our college students to be successful in the workplace, it seems apparent that there is a gap in their formative college years where there is little emphasis on wellness and health. This gap can be seen when imaging a timeline: previously, in grades K through 12, nearly all students have health education as well as physical education classes, and when students enter the workplace they will be likely to be involved in some sort of corporate wellness program (Thompson & Swihart, 2007). Thus, the gap occurs during the college years. To address this gap as we see it and to perhaps better prepare our students for the realities of the workplace, we designed a semester-long wellness and/or personal change project in our Human Resource Management and Management of Change courses.

In this article we describe our journey of why and how we designed, implemented, and modified semester-long wellness and/or personal change projects in two management courses. The first project was implemented in undergraduate Human Resource Management classrooms and was called a "Class-Sponsored Personal Change Program" (CSPCP) which is a classroom-adapted version of a Company Sponsored Physical Fitness Program (CSPFP). Over 50,000 companies nation-wide have established such programs for their managers and employees (Dishman et al., 2009). The second project was implemented in undergraduate Management of Change classrooms is called a Personal Change Project, tailored for a management class focusing on organizational change. Much research on organizational change suggests that employees who are successful in making personal changes have a higher readiness for organizational change and redesign activities (Cunningham et al., 2002). Although the names of the projects differ, we refer to them in this article collectively as "wellness and/or personal change projects" because while they are implemented in different courses, the projects share similar objectives, are structured in the same way, and student outcomes are comparable.

We use Kolb's experiential learning model (1984) as a template for our wellness/personal change projects and designed the components and requirements to replicate the four stages of active learning. In the remaining sections, we briefly discuss the conceptual background of the wellness/personal change projects and present the learning objectives. Then we describe the projects in detail and how the project components reflect each of the four components of Kolb's experiential learning model (1984), and identify the potential benefits by drawing on the related literature on management education, wellness, feedback, and reflection, followed by an evaluation of the outcomes based on qualitative as well as quantitative data from multiple sources.

Why Teaching Management Students About Wellness and Stress is Important

Answering the call for the management disciplines to move from problem-oriented management (narrow, short-term and piecemeal) to "more prevention-oriented management characterized by long-term, holistic vision and values as well as proactive behaviors (pg. 140)" by Schmidt-Wilk (2009b), we suggest our approach meets her challenge. That is, we are graduating students and future managers to be reflective human beings that can understand the "why" and "how" to change themselves and to be empathetic with others undergoing changes in our fast-paced world.

Our newer pedagogical approach is designed to positively inspire future managers to use their personal experiences and apply them in their future roles in organizations. While we admit that the prevention-oriented management approach may be applied to most areas within an organization's realm, our project focuses on the application to the particular areas of individual wellness and personal changes, which can be representative in an organization as components of an organizational wellness program.

The number of companies offering wellness programs is on the rise nationally, with 93% of companies with 200 or more employees offering wellness programs, up from 88% in 2008 (Hand, 2009). Employee wellness programs have been around for decades, but since the passage of the final rules on group health plans under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in 2006, the numbers of organizations that are more actively pursuing stricter health standards for employees has grown exponentially. Many large organizations (e.g., Scott, SSM Healthcare) now refuse to hire smokers (and test their current employees), and several state governments (e.g., Alabama) now charge additional premiums to those employees who have high cholesterol levels or are diagnosed as being obese, and who refuse to participate in measures to address their health issues (Schmidt et al., 2010). Furthermore, research on the health and stress of college students continues to suggest that the prevalence of childhood obesity, diabetes in young adulthood, and the poor health habits of college students add to the prediction that the life expectancy of our youth today may be lower than our older generation's life expectancy (Rimm et al., 2010). Moreover, because the wellness and lifestyle choices students learn in their formative university years will have life-long repercussions (Meyers & Mobley, 2004), college campuses may represent the last change for systematically educating and enabling a large segment of the adult population to embrace health and wellness (Sullivan et al, 2008).

The theory of preventive stress management in organizations was originally formulated in 1977 (Vailant, 1977). The most complete statement of the theory and its six core hypotheses is included in Cooper's *Theories of Organizational Stress* (Quick, Quick & Nelson, 1998) with key constructs falling into two broad categories: those related to the organizational stress processes and those related to public health notions of stress prevention. Organizational stress process constructs are demands/stressors, the stress response, and the outcomes of distress (negative) and eustress (positive) (Quick et al., 1998). Public health constructs are primary (changing the environment), secondary (helping the person identify and reduce stress) , and tertiary (rehabilitating the person rather than addressing the source of the stress) prevention strategies; wellness programs typically focus on secondary prevention strategies (Dewe, 1994).

Corporations are becoming more concerned with stress since it has been perceived that higher stress levels result in poorer work performance, lower productivity, higher turnover, absenteeism, and accidents (Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2002). Work stress researchers appear to agree that job stress is a serious problem in many organizations. Concern over the mounting research evidence linking work stress to negative individual and organizational outcomes has prompted an interest in identifying and developing strategies to prevent, control, and manage stress and its consequences (Murphy, 1995). Employee wellness programs are thought to reduce the impact of stress by improving the health of the employees (Driver & Ratliff, 1982). Therefore, our consideration regarding planning a wellness/personal change project in the classroom is

important not only in identifying and framing stress, but in identifying this as a stress management intervention.

In the following sections we present the learning objectives, describe the projects, present evidence of how the wellness/personal change projects reflect the stages of Kolb's model, and outline how the project outcomes support our learning objectives.

Learning Objectives and Project Description

At the end of the semester, the student will be able to:
   1. Design and implement a wellness/personal change project through the use of goal-setting, developing plans, and considering feedback;
   2. Use reflection techniques to better understand their own individual strengths and weaknesses for future life changes,
   3. Describe topics of wellness programs, personal change, stress, and performance; and,
   4. Analyze the change process and incorporate adjustments to the process.

Overview

Each course syllabus includes a description of the required project which is shown below in italics. The first is the description of the "Class-Sponsored Personal Change Program" which was implemented in the undergraduate Human Resource Management Course, followed by the description of the Personal Change Project implemented in the Management of Change course. We then describe the steps we take to help students select a habit or behavior to focus on for their projects, describe the focus for the weekly project reports, and briefly summarize the final project paper outcomes. More specific details can be found in Appendix 2.

Wellness/Personal Change Project: As a Human Resource Management professional, it is important to be interested in the health of your employees, as well as in your own health. So in this class, we will do a number of basic things to bring this to light, and will start with a tour of your own school's fitness facilities. We will also be reading a number of articles from Business Week and other business publications regarding how companies today are monitoring employee health, imposing sanctions on those who refuse to undergo health assessments, and reward systems for employees who change. In addition, I will periodically remind you of area events such as 5Ks, 10Ks, Relay For Life Events, other charitable health activities, and encourage you to participate in or volunteer at the event. Additional wellness project possibilities include setting semester-long goals such as making the commitment to quit/cut back smoking, eating healthier a certain number of times/week, incorporate a fitness routine to your week, monitoring your alcohol or caffeine intake, and so on. During the first week of the semester we will compile a list of habits/activities/areas in which students suggest that they believe to be unhealthy or causing stress in their lives. Examples may include such things as poor time management, unbalanced sleep habits, or unhealthy eating. Each Thursday during class you will write a one-page project update, telling me what steps you are taking to reach your goal, and any progress or setbacks you have experienced. We will devote time during class each Thursday to a discussion of the wellness projects. A short paper is due at the end of the semester outlining the following areas: your initial goal(s) and your strategies you undertook, progress made, feedback you may have incorporated into your change plan, thoughts and feelings regarding

having to be reminded of your project on a weekly basis, any setbacks experienced, and how you would encourage your employees to participate in a wellness program given your experience with the simulated wellness program and your knowledge of the effort required and the feelings and attitudes associated with trying to make a personal change.

Individual Change Project: *In this Management of Change course, you will be required to demonstrate the use of personal change tools by completing an individual change and/or project transition. This project assignment requires you to identify and track one personal change goal for the semester (more discussion during the first week of the semester). The course discussions around the change project will begin with William Bridges' (2004) book, Transitions, a very useful tool for understanding life changes and transitions. Throughout the semester you will keep a journal reflecting on your activities and progress toward your selected personal change. You will need a separate writing journal for these reflections and you may use any bound notebook of your preference for this assignment. I will collect the journals regularly and will give feedback regarding the steps you are taking as well as your progress. At the end of the semester you will write a summary and reflection of your change process.*

We begin the first week of class explaining the wellness/personal change project to the students. Past student projects are discussed and details given regarding the wide variety of projects which have been completed. Furthermore, we utilized an idea from Bacon and Stewart (2001) and began quantitatively tracking specific goals and strategies that did work, as well as those that did not, presenting these findings to students to assist them in setting realistic goals. On our journey since 2003 to enhance student learning, we have learned to use, but not over use, a structured set of activities to assist in keeping the students on track. A list of required readings can be found in Appendix 1, and specific details and a timeline are contained in Appendix 2.

Project Components Related to Kolb's Stages of Learning and Their Relationship to the Learning Objectives

In order for students to engage in a wellness/personal change process, we found it important to consider the entire learning process and create a conceptual framework that includes all the learning goals for the project (see Table 1). Considering David Whetten's (2007) comments on course design, we realized we could especially impact students' comprehensive learning by "making the connections between a serious curriculum, on the one hand and the student's personal lives, values and experiences on the other (pg. 345)." Components of the project provide students with the opportunity to engage in the experiential learning cycle by having a concrete experience, reflecting and reviewing the experience both individually and as a group, learn from the experience and make adjustments, and actively plan and try out what they have learned. These components of the wellness/personal change project will be described in the following sections as they relate to each learning objective.

Table 1: Relationship between Kolb's Model and Wellness/Personal Change Project

Stage in Kolb's Model of the learning process	Process (Relationship to learning objective)	Examples of component project parts that correspond to this stage of the learning process
Concrete Experience (doing/having an experience)	Design, try, and complete personal change/wellness project.	Choosing a personal wellness or personal change goal, designing, trying & revising strategic plan.
Reflective Observation (reviewing/reflecting on the experience)	Demonstrate skills of reflection and also developed skills of incorporating feedback. Synthesize change experiences to better understand individual strengths and weakness.	Completing reflection assignments, sharing in groups to get new ideas and perspectives, rethinking steps to take to reach goal.
Abstract Conceptualization (conclusions/learning from the experience)	Describe the topics of personal change, wellness programs, stress and performance.	Readings and class discussions on theories and practices of change and wellness. Instructor provided materials and relevant reading.
Active Experimentation (planning/trying out what was learned)	Analyzing the change process and incorporating adjustments based on readings and discussions.	Adjusting and rethinking change project to fit students' limitations or new information provided by instructors.

Learning Objective 1: Concrete Experience

The concrete experience learning objective was to design and implement a wellness/personal change project through the use of goal-setting, developing plans, and considering feedback. To accomplish this objective, we first asked them to develop a list of choices that they could then narrow down into possible wellness or personal change projects. If it was apparent that the student needed assistance, we suggested possible choices. Because a key component of each project was to provide on-going feedback to students in a performance-management style, similar to what students will experience in the organizational workplace, we focused on giving written feedback to each student weekly, as well as giving verbal feedback during the weekly class discussions. In addition, by allowing the students to choose their own wellness/change goal, many students chose a goal (e.g., eating less fast food) that included more than one measurable outcome (losing weight and lowering their cholesterol). We allowed students the freedom to choose more than one goal if it appeared as though progress toward one might enhance progress toward the other. Examples of student projects and their progress can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of One Semester's Wellness/Personal Change Projects and Progress Made

Type of wellness or personal change project	Percentage of students	Percentage of students who made positive progress toward their goal
Start working out or achieve regularity in working out	55.36%	87.10%
Address eating habits	46.43%	53.85%
Lose weight	37.50%	71.43%
Address time management	10.71%	100%
Address smoking	8.93%	60%
Cut back/Cut out alcohol	7.14%	100%
Start walking	7.14%	100%
Join a team sport	5.36%	100%
Address caffeine	3.57%	100%
Dress professionally	3.57%	100%
Address spending habits	3.57%	100%
Address gambling	1.79%	100%

Note. Percentage of students was calculated adding using the total number of students in both authors' classes during one semester (56).

Note. Percentage of students who made positive progress toward their goal was estimated based on examining both effort and outcomes as stated in students' weekly and final reflection papers

Evidence that students accomplished this objective can be seen in excerpts from weekly progress/reflection papers below:

> The wellness project that I did helped me face one of the areas in my life in which I needed aid. Road rage had become a big part of my life, and I tried many different strategies to work on this. I learned that I can control my anger by focusing on music, and my family and friends even told me that they could see how differently I handle things now when I am driving.

> For my wellness project in my Human Resource Management this semester, I chose the goal of better managing my time. For years I have been a procrastinator. I started keeping better track of my homework and things to do. I even started using a calendar that one of our speakers gave out when he talked in class. The past few weeks I have not pulled one all-nighter.

> My goal is to become healthier and another step I added is to quit drinking alcohol. Back in February and March I made decisions while intoxicated that were downright stupid and regretful and this has been a problem before. I have not made any stupid decisions since I stopped drinking alcohol and feel healthier.

Learning Objective 2: Reflective Observation

This learning objective was for students to use reflection techniques to better understand their own individual strengths and weaknesses for future life changes. We supported active learning over the course of the semester by continuing to monitor student's progress and setbacks, and make suggestions via the weekly reflection papers/summaries of their progress, as well as facilitate class discussions of the implementation of the wellness/change project. This seems to be analogous to prompting as described by Lombard et al. (1995). They found that prompting is effective in increasing and maintaining physical activity as well as other change behaviors. Therefore, we used short class activities in which we asked students to discuss with their partners or group members their experiences with their project including progress, setbacks, and the potential causes for the setbacks. We felt the discussions helped students stay focused on their change by verbalizing their commitment and hearing the story of another student's change progress. This component of the project also seemed to strengthen students' commitment to their personal wellness/change project and created a supportive class culture. Following are excerpts from weekly reflection papers (with instructor comments in italics):

> I am still focusing on my major addition: caffeine. This week I tracked my intake and only drank one can of soda per day (40 mg of caffeine) and about three cans of Monster per day (160 mg of caffeine in each can). Next week I plan to drink less Monster (*Suggestion: substitute Vitamin Water for Monster*)

> One of my goals was to lose weight for my May 15th wedding, and the past two weeks I have used the Weight Watchers guide and kept a log of my eating habits and portions. Through this I have showed my fiancé that portion size would not, in fact, starve him. (*Suggestion: set a certain a weekly, specific goal*)

> The week after spring break I got too busy to go to the fitness center so I changed things up and decided to walk my dog instead and make sure that I had fruits and vegetables twice a day and drank more water. I feel like this was a good alternative (*Suggestion: try going to the gym once/week with a buddy to make it fun and get help with time management*).

One of the required end products was a reflection paper which we describe in more detail in Appendix 2. An important component of the final paper was having the students synthesize their process and extrapolate their experiences as well as the experiences of their classmates to suggest how a similar project might be successful in an organization. In Kolb's (1984) model, learning takes place through concrete experience where the assigned activity can fully engage students while reflective observation requires them to record, listen, and elaborate on the concrete experience. This reflection, the cognitive process in which the student attempts to increase his or her awareness of the experience and therefore his or her ability to learn from it, involves the absorption and evaluation of new concepts (Gray, 2007). Many argue that reflection without feedback is not effective in learning situations. By applying the Kolb (1984) model to a wellness/personal change project in the classroom which includes a regular reflection component, we believe that it employs the whole learning wheel, from goal setting, to experimenting and observing, to reviewing, and finally to action-planning.

Reflection is concerned not only with what a manager (or student) does, but also with his or her thoughts about what he or she did. As Scott (2010) suggests, reflection is fodder for self-regulation in an environment where what we define as useful and effective behavior changes continuously. Similarly, the student's wellness/personal change project required a weekly progress report/update which included an element of reflection. Students were encouraged to not simply focus on their progress, but to elaborate on the process and corresponding feelings encountered when considering the steps they took in their wellness/personal change project during that particular week and to report on their levels of stress. Each weekly reflection served to help the students integrate their experiences and observations with a reevaluation of their process, behavior, and progress, and to make sense of it. Because the experiential learning approach emphasized reflection, we hoped the students would become aware of how difficult personal change can be. We also hoped they would come to develop an empathic attitude toward others who will be required to make workplace changes.

Learning Objective 3: Abstract Conceptualization

This learning objective was to describe topics of wellness programs, personal change, stress, and performance. To achieve this learning objective, we presented literature and materials in two ways. First, we required students to do a brief and simple search for initial information that would be easily available to them, which would assist them in making their final selection of a wellness/personal change project, and would help them develop a plan with a timeline. For example, one student who wanted to run three to five miles by the end of the semester found a plan for running a race entitled "*90 Days to Your 1st 5K*." Second, we assigned readings that were an integral part of the course discussions, as well as a list of complementary readings (Appendix A).

During class discussions, we asked students to consider the assigned readings and asked them to relate what they read back to their own experience during that week. For example, in the Management of Change course we asked if the students could see their change process as presented in the literature. In the HRM class, a discussion on the differences between incentives and penalties used by organizations to help employees meet wellness standards was discussed. Information on the transactional stress model was presented so that students could better grasp the concept that stress arises from people's perceptions that they are not able to deal with situations in ways that they deem satisfactory (Hiebert, 2006). Other class discussions included information on how Employee Assistance Programs and wellness programs may be related in the workplace as well as information on outside resources that are available to individuals, which include community service programs such as stress management and anger management classes, support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and others.

Evidence from student final papers includes the following connections between the class project and wellness/personal change in the workplace:

> I would use my personal experience with this project along with others' experiences to encourage others to set wellness goals for themselves, whether their company makes them do it or not. Employees should take advantage of this opportunity even if they work at it slowly.

Wellness is very important regarding companies because having people with higher wellness may be better able to handle stress, be more productive, and the bottom line: make the company more money!

If companies want their employees healthier due to the insurance costs, they could set up incentives and weekly reminders like we did in class. They could also offer healthier food choices. Awards are especially important when one is just starting out because like me, it is hard to become committed in the beginning.

Learning Objective 4: Active Experimentation

This learning objective was for students to be able analyze the change process and incorporate adjustments to the process. One of the important components of this project was to keep the students engaged in an on-going basis and for this we used a version (individualized rather than group) of Spee's (2005) focused conversation model technique and which uses four categories of questions (objective, reflective, interpretive, and decisional) in order to help students synthesize the process (sample questions can be found in Appendix 2).

The literature on self-regulated learning (SRL) includes over twenty years of research in the field of education and examines student-controlled strategies for learning and achievements. SRL is an active, constructive process by which learners set goals, monitor their learning, and control their motivation and behavior while maintaining awareness of their relevant learning environments and goals (Pintrich, 2000). In the context of implementing wellness/personal change projects in the classroom, it seems appropriate to conceptualize those projects as ones that utilize SRL behaviors. These projects involve asking questions, sharing information, experimenting with actions, and pursuing feedback, all of which are the essence of SRL. We present the following as evidence of student learning:

> ....when it came to changing myself, I found out that it was not as easy as I thought. W.E.B. DuBois said, 'the most important thing to remember is this: To be ready at any moment to give up what you are for what you might become.' Change is an idea that is often thought of as something to easily do and overcome. Reflecting on DuBois' quote, preparing yourself for change seems to be challenging but it is the actual art of changing, moving on and becoming someone new which is difficult.

> Since the end of September, I have been working on my health project. However, it has been a bumpier road than estimated. My original goal was to go to the gym twice a week. However, I eventually changed it to a goal that I could accomplish, a more attainable goal, one that I could do with the resources that I had, which was to go on a walk every morning. Once I got into a routine of doing this, it was very easy. Like me, people can become very busy and burdened by other commitments and do not have time to get to the gym.

> This personal change experiment taught me a great deal. I realized that discussing ideas openly with my professors and my manager at work can make a difference. My manager at work now realizes that I do need assistance at work. Communication is a key part of change. Others must understand exactly what one is trying to achieve in order to make change work. I also realized goals for change must be realistic. My plan to run on an

outdoor track during the winter while I was working and attending school was not realistic.

Conclusions

This classroom project succeeded in giving students skills that will help them become healthier and wiser. Students have learned to recognize change as well as plan and implement a change process, on their way to becoming healthier and wiser. The tools of reflection allow students to assess progress made toward their change goals. Students are armed with the ability to research how and why to begin a change process as well as find support for their desired change. Future challenges students may not be limited to mandatory participation in corporate wellness programs, but might include moving to a new location, beginning or ending relationships, or adjusting to a new career position.

The current health conditions of many students today seem to suggest that students engaged in acquiring skills to succeed in the workplace might be better prepared if given a chance to both engage in a wellness/personal change project and to experience the ups and downs of making lifestyle changes. However, as we watched students progress throughout the semesters we realized the definition of success is different for each student. Over time, we learned to focus the project on the process of change and de-emphasize the actual goal. At the end of the semester more permanent changes may occur if students understand what a healthy diet looks like and how to develop one, rather than simply lose weight. We recognize that our students are very busy today and are often juggling not only work and school schedules, but other issues and problems as well. Learning more about our students' lives helped us improve both our course design and delivery.

As evidenced in Table 3, we continue to develop and refine this project. We continue to ensure that the learning objectives have been met by supplementing data collected via student self-report to involve student acquaintances, other professors, and listening to students talk outside the classroom to their friends about their endeavors. To assist readers who may wish to pursue a similar project, Appendix 1 and 2 provide additional guidelines; additionally, the first author welcomes emails and will provide additional information.

Table 3: Summary of Major Changes to Project From 2003-2011

Year	Project Description/Major Changes Made
2003-04	Assigned a simple personal change project; checked in with students bi-weekly; students wrote 1-page summary at end of semester.
2004	Incorporated into the HRM class (project in HRM class was extra credit only); suggested projects to class were primarily physical competitions (e.g., Relay For Life Events, 5K run/walks)
2005	Assigned required weekly journal reports by students in one notebook. Collected at monthly intervals to assign points.
2006-2008	HRM personal wellness project became required (maximum of 50 points) Change class required a plan for the semester-long personal change. Requirements included information on "how" to make a specific change.
2008	In-class reflections assigned consisting or weekly written progress reflections during the first 15 minutes of class. Each report was specific to one aspect of the change or transition, includes adjusting plan for "reality." Final student reflection required students to apply their concrete experience to the change/transition models presented in class.
2009	Personal wellness project in HRM class expanded to focus on more than *physical* improvement projects, broadened to include personal change such as addressing road rage or alcohol consumption, weekly discussion in class regarding feelings about set-backs and successes, weekly write-ups done in class focusing on how well their strategies were working to meet their stated goals.
2009-2010	Initial class introduction of personal change assignment is followed by an in-class group planning assignments. Students working on the same changes work together to gather information and present responses to the following questions: why is the change important? What steps are necessary for the change? What behaviors will be used to implement your change? Who could/will be your support group during the change process? When will you schedule your change efforts during the week/day? Some group time is offered by instructor in weekly night class.
2010	Final paper requirements broadened to include the following: original goal(s), initial steps/strategies planned, outcomes and results after each week, whether instructor feedback or group feedback was used to incorporate new ideas, feelings and attitudes resulting from engaging in the on-going, outside of class process to make personal wellness or personal change. More in-class discussion devoted to how these skills

	from this project translate to skills in the workplace.
2011-12	Focused on collecting evidence from multiple sources including students not in the classroom and other professors, sought feedback from other teaching professionals outside our school, began using different methods of data collection including having peers evaluate each other on progress and report on other's feelings about project.

A worthwhile issue to consider is that with classroom projects that involve individualism and on-going progress outside of a student's comfort zone, these learning outcomes may not have been realized by all students. In addition, because these projects required students to reflect on their progress in their weekly reflection papers and class discussion, we realize that some students who were previously unfamiliar with reflection writing may have struggled. Furthermore, because wellness and personal change may be a sensitive topic for some students (especially particular cultures), in-class discussions may not have been as beneficial to them. Finally, we recognize that for some students, this project may have been an additional source of stress, which is not the intended outcome of the project. However, both authors remain committed to providing extra help to those students who may need it. We believe, as Parker Palmer (2004) so aptly states, that "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness, and are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves." Because our students are facing an increasingly complex organizational world, we feel a personal responsibility to not only educate them in the appropriate subject matter, but also to relate this subject matter to how the student might best use it once they enter the workplace. The implementation of the wellness/change project into the authors' classrooms may be a step toward helping students begin to weave.

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Appendix 1: Required Readings for Course

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Appendix 2: Instructor Notes for Wellness/Personal Change Project Implementation

Description: Students are asked on the first day of class to think about something they want to change. Examples of changes students have worked on are smoking cessation, weight loss, healthy eating, increased exercise with a purpose (such as walking or running a 5K) and money/budget management.

During the second week of the semester they are asked to decide to narrow their choice to one of the wellness changes. Often, the changes can be integrated. For example, students commonly write down three things to change that will include eating healthier, losing weight and starting an exercise program. Given the semester is 15 weeks, students can often change their grocery shopping habits along with their exercise habits with one outcome of these two changes being losing weight. Of course, there are other benefits to this type of change, including increased health and lower stress.

During one class session three weeks into the semester, students are divided into groups by change project type; that is, students working on smoking cessation work together, etc. The students are given sheets of large flip-chart paper to share ideas (especially if more than one student has chosen a similar goal) and time to retrieve information from the Internet as a starting point for options to identify strategies and to create a change plan. Students are asked to find information on why the change is beneficial to them; what activities their specific change plan would require succeed at the specified change; how such a change plan could be implemented; and, who (friends, family, classmates) would be a potential support group for them. After gathering information, the students write out their plan articulating suggested strategies. In the last 10 to 15 minutes of class, each group selects a spokesperson to present their findings.

Students are then asked to use information from class to develop their own change plan during the next week and turn the plan into the professor for feedback.

In class once each week, students are given five to ten minutes to complete a reflective writing assignment to evaluate not only their progress towards their wellness plan, but reflect on the match of the strategies they selected to reach their goal and whether or not there is a match. What are they using to carry out their plan and how the implementation is actually working for them. Students are asked to include what is working for them as well as areas they may have been having difficulty doing.

We provide written feedback to the students on their weekly progress/reflection papers so that if students seem to be struggling with reaching one of their goals, we can offer suggestions as well as outside resources such as support groups or campus services. In addition, we facilitate

classroom discussion by asking four types of questions, being careful not to single out any student who may not feel comfortable talking about the specifics of their change or the strategies they have chosen.

Sample Questions to use when discussing wellness/change progress in class:
Objective questions: Are you making progress toward your wellness goal? What happened to interfere with your plan?
Reflective questions: How do you feel about your progress (or lack of progress) towards your goal? Do you feel satisfied with your progress? Optimistic about your potential progress? Do you feel challenged? Frustrated? Disappointed in your progress?
Interpretative questions: Why do you think the events impacted your progress? What effect did these events have on the progress toward your goal? What have you learned from this setback?
Decisional questions: How could your wellness/change plan be adjusted to improve your progress? How can the class help you?

Assignments: Each weekly (10 total) progress/reflection paper will be worth five points
Weekly progress/reflection papers have the following grading rubric:
5 points (full understanding of process): Provided clear responses to the questions asked, demonstrating an understanding of the questions and were able to articulate a specific change in their activities for future weeks.
3 points (partial understanding of process): Provided general responses to the questions asked, demonstrating some understanding of the questions and were able to articulate a general idea of future activities.
1 point (minimal understanding of process): Provided minimal response to the questions asked and only discussed their activities and behaviors during the week.

Final reflection papers are worth 50 points and must include the following:
1. Demonstrate your understanding of wellness programs, stress and stress management as it relates to your wellness/change plan.
2. Statement of your initial wellness/change goal and your initial plan to reach this goal.
3. The major steps undertaken to reach stated goal, any setbacks that you encountered, and how you addressed your setbacks.
4. The ways in which your weekly reflections helped you incorporate changes or adjustments into your change/wellness processes.
5. The learnings you will take away from this project that will help you manage future life changes. How has this overall process helped you understand your personal strengths and weakness to manage personal and professional projects? How could you implement a similar project in the workplace?

Final reflection papers have the following grading rubric:

Exceeds expectations: Presents a well integrated paper, supporting each idea with effective examples, integrating specific decisions made during the semester relating to the student's emotional and structural issues learned throughout the project. Student is able to state practical "take aways" from this project and reflect how they may adjust their philosophy of managing others.

Meets expectations: Presents a well organized paper that integrates the student's emotional and structural issues that impacted their progress in reaching their planned goal. The student is able to describe adjustments to the original plan based on their change process over the semester. Student is able to state practical "take aways" from this project and reflect how they may approach future projects of this nature.

Needs improvement: Student is able to discuss their initial change project, the steps taken to implement change, and, some issues that impacted reaching their wellness/change project goal. The description of "take aways" is limited to this project.