

Expanding the Limits of Positive Leadership into the World of Higher Education

Águeda Benito

Laureate International Universities,
Baltimore, US

**Miriam Jiménez-Bernal, César Lajud-Desentis, Alberto Moreno-Melgarejo
and Jesús A. Muñoz-Sepúlveda**

Universidad Europea de Madrid
Villaviciosa de Odón, Spain

Abstract. Given the success that Positive Leadership has brought along in so many organizations of different nature, it seems clear that there might also be an opportunity for it to contribute to Higher Education in a valuable manner. This article describes how a group of professors from a Higher Education institution in Spain transferred the Positive Leadership principles to the teaching-learning process, with the expectation that it would improve academic performance, student satisfaction with faculty and the engagement of the faculty members themselves.

Keywords: Higher Education, Positive Leadership, Learning effectiveness, Student engagement, Student satisfaction, Human interactions.

1. The positive impact of Positive Leadership

There are countless studies, theories and informed recommendations about leadership, many of them focusing on how leaders provide direction and exercise influence (De José Belzunce et al., 2011; Gautrey, 2014). Some of those studies even contemplate what they consider positive leaders and describe their traits and behaviors. The work of Fisher Thornton and Covey (2013) extensively covers this topic, affirming that positive leaders stay grounded in ethical values and use a human growth mindset. They are committed to their ethical values, but behave in a flexible manner, willing to introduce the necessary changes with the times.

In the last decades, there have also been an increasing number of studies addressing the impact of positive psychology in different fields (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2015), including management skills for leaders. However, among

all the existing studies and theories, the authors of this paper would like to highlight one particular framework that stands out because of the extraordinarily positive impact that it shows when adopted, which is the Positive Leadership approach framed by Professor Kim Cameron, from the University of Michigan (Cameron, 2012).

Positive Leadership is based on positive ethical values, assuming that people will do amazing things if we intentionally bring the best out of themselves. It is the goal of Positive Leadership to lead in ways that bring out the capabilities of each person, in the context of a culture of respect, transparency and support, where interactions are net positive. According to Lino (2017) the essence of being a positive leader resides in focusing on the best in those around us, at the same time as we work on becoming the best of ourselves.

In his multiple publications, Kim Cameron refers to various examples of success stories, where the incorporation of the four Positive Leadership strategies, the cultivation of positive climate, positive relationships, positive communication and positive meaning, proves to be able to generate extremely positive outcomes. For instance, in 40 organizations of financial services, research showed a clear cause-effect relationship between positive, virtuous practices and financial performance. During the two years that were considered in the study, firms that were more compassionate, forgiving, grateful and trustworthy achieved better profitability outcomes than firms that were not (Cameron, 2010). The cases analyzed by the father of Positive Leadership refer to various other sectors, like that of health care, where Griffin Hospital constitutes a great example of how to enable positively deviant change that brought incredibly good financial results and took the company into the Top 100 best places to work. Another illustration that occurred in a different field was that of Prudential Real Estate and Relocation company, where CEO Jim Mallozzi implemented Positive Leadership and got his company to the best ever results in the broadest possible sense.

2. Positive innovations in the teaching-learning process

Given the success that Positive Leadership has brought along in so many organizations of such a different nature, it seems clear that there might also be an opportunity for it to contribute to Higher Education in a valuable manner. That was the rationale behind the proposal of Benito et al. (2018), which inspired the present pilot study. In their proposal, a group of professors from several institutions of Higher Education worked together to be able to transfer the general principles of positive leadership to the teaching-learning process, assuming the hypothesis that it would have a positive effect on various academic outcomes, like students' grades, student satisfaction with faculty and the engagement of the participating instructors.

Further literature review concludes that there are a significant number of interesting initiatives in the lower levels of education, somehow related to Positive Leadership (Norrish et al., 2013; Furlong et al., 2014; Noble and McGrath, 2015; Buchanan and Hinton, 2018), but not so many can be found in the context of Higher Education. However, Balwant (2016) strongly recommends

the development and implementation of positive actions with two different purposes: (i) to increase student motivation and (ii) to boost instructor credibility and student satisfaction.

Evidence about the influence of positivity on student success in school is unquestionable. All consulted studies show that when the classroom has a positive environment, the results are clearly beneficial. Positive Education, “a blend of evidence-based learning from the science of positive psychology and best practices in learning and teaching” (White, 2016), constitutes a relevant movement that has lately acquired increased attention and substantial adoption by educational institutions and even educational systems in some countries. It is clear that in all referenced initiatives, Positive Education produces the flourishing of students and staff, the enhancement of academic performance, happiness and comfort, as well as a longer term positive impact on societies and communities (Cintra and War, 2017).

An interesting example of the implementation of Positive Education can be found at the Geelong Grammar School in Australia, where several teachers assigned time within their normal coursework (Math, History, etc.) to address the development of positive emotions and character traits in their students. The Character Growth Card, as it is called, is used by the KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) network of charter schools, emphasizing the importance of growth instead of the grade (Norrish et al., 2013). Another valuable experience is described in the article of Buchanan and Hinton (2018). The authors found a significant increase in the marks of students after they were exposed to positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) in Physical Education courses.

Additionally, a very valuable compendium of recent initiatives regarding Positive Education is contained in the report on the State of Positive Education that was published after the World Education Summit of 2016. Seligman, considered the father of Positive Education, and a team of authors (Bott et al., 2016) provide very interesting references of positive innovative practices in the teaching-learning process.

Even though there are not many related practices in Higher Education, it is relevant to highlight that Universidad Tecmilenio Mexico constitutes a great example of an institution that is leading the way by implementing a new, positive philosophy. In 2013, Universidad Tecmilenio launched a new university model, as a statement of their innovative nature. According to them,

“the most disruptive feature of their model is the importance it gives to the students' long-term well-being, which is based on Positive Psychology and supported by the Institute of Happiness Sciences, created by Universidad Tecmilenio in 2013” (Universidad Tecmilenio, n.d.).

3. Piloting positive leadership in Spanish Higher Education

The pilot study described in this article took place during the last quarter of 2018, in a medium sized, well recognized, private university in Spain. The pilot

project was carried out in collaboration with some other three institutions that belong to the same network of universities, located in India and Peru.

A few requirements were identified before the actual selection of the subjects. First of all, the adjustment of the subject calendar to the project timeframe was necessary. Also, the subjects needed to be fully taught by a single instructor, and not be shared by more than one, as it is usually the case. Additionally, the modalities had to be different too, so that the face to face and online components could be explored.

With all these conditionings the alternatives were considerably reduced, and the selected subjects corresponded to the following two Master's degrees:

- Master's degree in Trade and International Economic Relations. This is an on-campus based program running from October until June. The selected subject to conduct the research was Business International Strategies, with 6 ECTS. This is a very international-oriented program with 20 students. More than 50% of the students taking the program are international students from China and Latin-America.
- Master's degree in Bilingual Education. This is a blended program running from October until June. The selected subject to implement the pilot was Linguistics Applied to Second Language Teaching, with 6 ECTS. This is a fully English taught program with 28 students. Around 50% of the students are Chinese, 30% are coming from Europe or Americas and 20% are Spanish.

The instructors in charge of teaching both subjects were specifically trained on how to enhance positive leadership with their students, then the initiative was piloted and the impact was measured using a mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) approach. The instructors were advised to undertake the following tasks before starting teaching their subjects with a Positive Leadership approach, which they did.

1. **Reflecting on the positive leadership principles to the teaching and learning process.** As a first step, the faculty members involved in this project were asked to read the book *Positive Leadership: Strategies for Extraordinary Performance* by Kim Cameron and to reflect about the possibility of adapting positive leadership principles to the teaching and learning process.
2. **Conversation with Kim Cameron.** After reading the book and reflecting on it, both instructors had the chance to have a private conversation with Kim Cameron in order to share their thoughts and questions.
3. **Workshop.** The two selected faculty members were asked to participate in a 2 hours workshop with the following learning outcomes: understanding positive leadership and how it can be applied to the teaching and learning process and applying the principles of positive leadership to the class management and subject delivery.
4. **On-line training.** An on-line learning capsule was created to help the selected faculty members evolve towards a transformational instructor-leaders profile. It took around 30 minutes for them to do it, including some interactive activities and a final test to assess knowledge.

5. **Planning class delivery.** Prior to starting the subject, instructors thoroughly planned the incorporation of the various tools, techniques and resources. The effective incorporation of positive leadership in the teaching and learning process requires focus and consistency; therefore, it was recommended for every class incorporating some positive leadership ingredient. The creation of a specific timetable for concrete actions to be implemented, as part of a comprehensive pedagogical framework was requested for both instructors and validated by the research team.

Regarding the actual implementation, the instructors started to deploy positive leadership activities following their delivery plan in every class or on-line contact with the students. The actions taken by the instructors included calling students by their names, thanking their interventions, using humor, implementing active methodologies such as Cooperative Learning or Service-Learning and providing students with feedback, not only as part of the assessment, but also any time they participated. The ratio of positive to negative input was increased as close as possible to 5:1, and the negative feedback was always presented in a constructive, developmental manner. Additionally, students participated in peer assessment, and practiced how to provide positive feedback to others. Instructors intended to encourage students' participation and create an environment where students could be able to interact, be more relaxed and prone to work on the activities and find the significance of the subjects they were studying.

It was the belief of the research team that the initiative described in this section would have a positive impact on the students' learning. In particular, the working hypotheses were that, by introducing Positive Leadership in the teaching and learning process:

- 1) the teaching and learning process would be humanized
- 2) student and faculty engagement would increase
- 3) student satisfaction would grow
- 4) attrition would be reduced and
- 5) the academic results and overall learning effectiveness would be improved

4. Research methodology

A mixed methodology was used in this research, in order to show quantitative and measurable results and the most accurate interpretation of them. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has been developed during the last decades, especially in Social Sciences, and it has proven to be most interesting in the educational field (Núñez Moscoso, 2017), given the fact that it provides both figures and meaning.

The quantitative side of this research project is based on a survey conducted with students in the courses involved. The survey included questions on students' satisfaction, engagement and learning, and focused specifically on the experience of the student and the contribution of the teacher to the students' development. Questions involved levelled answers (from "nothing" to "very much") as well as yes/no questions, but also the possibility to explain in their

own words what students enjoyed the most, highlighting some topics that could match the items selected by the instructors and researchers. Moreover, final grades of the students were also considered to carry out a paired t-test analysis that allowed the comparison of the average grades of the students before and after the implementation of Positive Leadership in the teaching and learning process.

The qualitative side of the research project was based on focus groups, although the opportunity to interview specific students if needed was not dismissed. Two focus groups were carried out, one per course. The premises were that at least 3 participants were needed, they could be carried out in English or Spanish (depending on the vehicular language of the course) and they would last, at least, half an hour. They were semi-structured, with certain basic questions but bearing in mind the importance of students' opinions and of the unexpected topics that might arise.

Results of the survey are presented after their statistical analysis, and those from the focus groups are presented after their transcription and careful discourse analysis. Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 2016) will contribute to the better understanding of the figures shown by statistical analysis, adding information on the opinions of students and the significance of those items applied to the teaching method. The analysis started with the identification of relevant topics by means of the frequency of appearance during the discussion, taking into account the possible synonyms and related terms. Also, those topics mentioned once were considered, and compared with the comments and remarks made by students in the open section of the survey, as well as with the observations of teachers.

The research methodology applied in this study was very similar to that corresponding to the other three institutions where the incorporation of Positive Leadership was also piloted. Up to this moment, the conclusions presented in this paper will only respond to the local study, but they will be compared in the future and might be generalized to a greater extent.

5. The impact on students: quantitative results

To evaluate the impact of Positive Leadership in the teaching and learning process, students had to complete a closed survey with different questions related to the implementation of this methodology. The results of the surveys reveal a total participation of 41 students: 46.3% corresponding to students enrolled in the Master in Trade and International Economic Relations and the remaining 53.7% to students enrolled in the Master in Bilingual Education. This section of the paper shows the main results obtained in the research.

First, the students had to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: "How satisfied are you with your experience in this subject?" Table 1 collects the results for the first three questions of the survey. As it can be appreciated in this table, the results shows that 36.6% of students were highly satisfied with the implementation of Positive Leadership in the teaching and learning process, while 46.3% reported being very satisfied. Only 2.44% of total

students showed a low level of satisfaction with the introduction of this new learning methodology.

The second important question of the survey asked students about the level of engagement of the classes. As it can be seen in Table 1, results reveal again a high degree of satisfaction and a good perception of the class engagement. More specifically, 34.2% of students were highly satisfied with the engagement they had experienced, while 43.9% of them declared themselves very satisfied. Regarding this question, it is necessary to mention that no student showed a low level of satisfaction with the engagement of the classes. This result may suggest that all actions taken by instructors to implement the Positive Leadership in the classroom were very effective and extremely appreciated by students.

With respect to students' learning process, the next questions assessed their level of learning after the implementation of positive actions at class, as well as the contribution of instructors to their professional development. On the one hand, in order to evaluate students' learning process, they had to answer the following question: "How much did you learn in this subject?" As can be seen in Table 1, elaborated by the authors from the surveys to students, more than 80% of the total students declared that they learnt much (39%) and very much (41.5%) when instructors incorporated positive actions at class. Therefore, it seems clear that the application of this new teaching methodology significantly increases the perception of the students about their level of learning.

Table 1. Students' perception when Positive Leadership is implemented

| Q1: Satisfaction with the experience | % | Q2: Level of class engagement | % | Q3: Level of learning | % |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| Not satisfied | 0.00 | Not engaging | 0.00 | Nothing | 0.00 |
| Not very satisfied | 2.44 | Not very engaging | 0.00 | A little | 0.00 |
| Quite satisfied | 14.63 | Quite engaging | 21.95 | Some | 19.51 |
| Very satisfied | 46.34 | Very engaging | 43.90 | Much | 39.03 |
| Highly satisfied | 36.59 | Highly engaging | 34.15 | Very Much | 41.46 |

On the other hand, all the students that completed the survey mentioned that instructors contribute positively to their professional development. In our opinion, this is a very important finding because it means that all positive actions and practices applied at class had a significant impact on students' development.

The last questions of the survey allowed students to talk about their experience in this positive subject in comparison with their experience in some other courses. Also, students were asked about whether they would recommend the implementation of these positive practices to other subjects. The results indicate that 85% of total students agreed with the application of this methodology and claimed that this experience was better than others. Additionally, they would strongly recommend the positive subject they studied to other students. Specifically, the percentage of students that would recommend the introduction of Positive Leadership in the teaching and learning process was around 97.5%.

To assess aspects related to student satisfaction, they had to rate in a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest mark and 5 is the highest one, their global satisfaction with the teacher. In particular, this part of the research will compare the evolution of the student satisfaction in two different academic years: (i) the global satisfaction in the 2017-2018 academic year in which instructors did not implement positive practices at class, and (ii) the global satisfaction in the 2018-2019 academic year in which they incorporated several Positive Leadership actions. Table 2 shows the average scores obtained in this question. As it can be seen, the global satisfaction of the students in the subject on Business International Strategies of the Master in Trade and International Economic Relations significantly increased by 19.25% when the instructor applied Positive Leadership practices in his class. However, the results of the subject on Linguistics Applied to Second Language Teaching show a slight reduction in the overall student. In this regard, it is necessary to mention that the number of answers in this subject in academic year 2018-2019 has been significantly lower than that of the previous year, which could have affected the overall average score. It is also difficult to imagine much possible improvement of a 4.96 evaluation in a 1-5 scale. Additionally, the qualitative results shown in the next section do not seem to show any evidence of discontent, on the contrary, they are 100% positive.

Table 2. Student satisfaction with faculty (1-5 scale)

| Master's subject | Average score | |
|---|---|--|
| | 2017-2018 academic year (no Positive Leadership) | 2018-2019 academic year (Positive Leadership) |
| Business International Strategies | 4.00 | 4.77 |
| Linguistics Applied to Second Language Teaching | 4.96 | 4.57 |

Regarding the fourth hypothesis of this research related to student attrition, we do not observe any case of attrition in any of the two courses for any of the two academic years considered. Therefore, our findings reveal that the application of Positive Leadership practices do not seem to affect the very high student retention rates.

Finally, in order to analyze the effect on students' academic achievement, this research also evaluates the existence of statistically significant differences between the students' grades concerning the introduction of this new teaching and learning environment. Specifically, the grades of the students for the same subjects during two consecutive academic years were compared: 2017-2018 (without the application of positive leadership practices) and 2018-2019 (with the implementation of positive leadership actions). The total number of students enrolled in positive and non-positive leadership courses was 47 and 34, respectively.

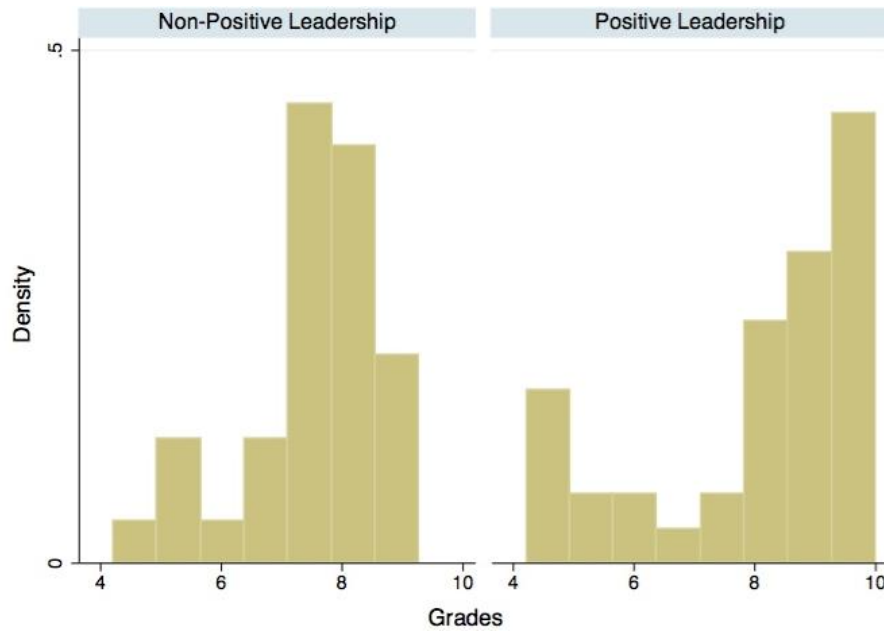


Figure 1: Histogram of students' grades

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the students' grades before and after the implementation of positive actions in the class. As can be seen, it seems clear that the grades are higher when instructors apply Positive Leadership practices. In order to statistically evaluate this result, we carried out a paired t-test analysis to compare the average scores of both groups of students. Table 2 collects the results of this statistical analysis. As it can be observed in Table 3, the average grades of the courses that applied positive actions is higher than those of the courses where these practices were not implemented (8.045 vs. 7.485). In addition, the results of the t-test analysis show that the difference between both average grades is significantly positive at 6% level of significance. Therefore, this result implies that the application of these positive practices in the class significantly increased the scores of the students.

Table 3: Students' average grade depending on the implementation of Positive Leadership practices

| | Observ. | Mean | Std. Error | Std. Dev. |
|--------------------------------|---------|------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Positive | 41 | 8.045 | 0.281 | 1.800 |
| Non-Positive | 34 | 7.485 | 0.190 | 1.109 |
| Combined | 75 | 7.791 | 0.178 | 1.543 |
| diff (Positive - Non-positive) | | 0.559 | 0.354 | |
| $H_0: \text{diff} = 0$ | | | | |
| $H_a: \text{diff} > 0$ | | $H_a: \text{diff} < 0$ | | $H_a: \text{diff} \neq 0$ |
| Pr = 0.059 | | Pr = 0.941 | | Pr = 0.119 |

6. The impact on students: qualitative results

Two focus groups were carried out in order to obtain some qualitative data that would allow researchers to offer some deeper interpretations for the quantitative results. Five students participated in the first one, corresponding to the Master's Degree in Trade and International Economic Relations, and four participated in the second one, corresponding to the Master's Degree in Bilingual Education. Seven questions were set according to the objectives of the research and the main items in Positive Leadership (communication, meaning, climate and relationships), although researchers expected unforeseen topics to arise during the discussion, which was conducted in a semi structured way.

Both focus groups took place after the implementation of the Positive Leadership approach and after conducting the surveys. The final part of those surveys allowed students to explain, using their own words, the more positive aspects of the subject. After analyzing the comments, the following terms were selected by researchers as remarkably positive according to students: group work, nice and open teacher, relaxing atmosphere, meaningful examples, interaction and active teaching methods (engagement), debates and discussions (communication). Those terms elicited the set of questions designed as the basis for the two focus groups:

- Describe your experience in this subject
- Was it positive?
- How was the interaction with other students?
- How would you describe the class environment?
- Do you see the sense of this subject in your future career?
- How much do you value the human component in your learning experience? Can you give some examples of what you experienced in this subject?
- Would you recommend this kind of pedagogical approach? Why?

Regarding the first question, students pointed out several aspects that made the atmosphere in the classroom pleasant and friendly. Those general aspects included the fact that both instructors made their classes very interactive and focused on group work, thus allowing a closer rapport even though students did not know each other beforehand. Openness, active participation and interest in the opinions and ideas of students were also highlighted as key elements to make the subject motivating and attractive.

The experience, thus, was considered very positive from different points of view. Students stated that the instructors created an atmosphere where all of them felt comfortable enough to participate, where they felt encouraged. While students in Focus Group 2 focused more on the balance between theory and practice as a way to keep students engaged, students in Focus Group 1 stressed the importance of feeling as a team in spite of their different backgrounds.

Also, students found the interaction with the instructors to be engaging, direct and very close, what contributed to a higher participation and active involvement. They always felt that their participation during the class through comments or questions was relevant since the instructors always appreciated

their participation and encouraged it by asking for their opinions and previous ideas. A professional but still close position was very appreciated in both cases.

This relaxed and engaging climate, together with the closer rapport with the instructors, probably contributed to create a friendlier context for students, who described the interaction between the components of the group as a very good one. It is an outstanding start as long as everyone has felt welcome and a relevant member of the learning community within the program. It has been noted that the group has felt like a true friendship community generating strong relations between its members, in Focus Group 1, while students in Focus Group 2 perceived their group to be a “difficult” one, given the differences among their cultures, but still a more united one thanks to group work.

Since the class environment was perceived as dynamic and amusing, students in Focus Group 1 mentioned they wanted to attend class although, a priori, the subject did not seem very attractive. This is a fact highlighting the level of motivation that the instructor has managed to generate among his students. Participants have revealed the differences with the other lecturers the program where a masterclass approach was carried out, the main difference being the level of stimulation and motivation experienced by the students.

Regarding the topic of significance (positive meaning), students declared that they were able to see the relevance of the subject in their future career thanks to the fact that real and meaningful examples have been used with an eminently practical approach. The students have worked on activities where the theoretical contents of the subject were applied. Students, in both cases, mentioned the fact that they had learnt not only contents related to the subject, but also ways to communicate and work with some other people, because the instructors were models for them. This was especially relevant for students in Focus Group 2, because they are teachers (or teachers-to-be) and, as such, they are aware of the importance of the teacher’s role.

However, an integral training and education includes more than just contents and skills, and focuses on values, since students are being trained as workers, but also as citizens and people. Thus, the human component is very important to develop students’ skills and capacities beyond purely theoretical knowledge. Promoting a close relationship between students and professors through a great accessibility was key and they even felt the instructors as friends or, at least, people they can talk about anything with. Nonetheless, despite being close to the instructors, they still identified them as the teaching authority. Also, students highlighted the fact that instructors provided personalized feedbacks. They felt they were important for the instructors and they acknowledged the relevance of teachers in the way students feel about a specific subject.

Finally, students confirmed they would recommend the pedagogical approach implemented, pointing out that, although it is clear that every teacher must adapt it to his/her own personality, any instructor could do it at a different level. This methodology generates more desire to learn, increases their motivation and engages students in their learning process. Subjects could be perceived, thanks to this approach, as more appealing and meaningful, and the opportunities to learn from people from different countries and cultural

backgrounds as more enriching and positive. Table 4 shows the key terms summarising focus groups outcomes.

Table 4. Key terms extracted from the focus groups

| Topic | Key terms |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Experience in this subject | Positive, interactive, comfortable, confident |
| Interaction with the teacher | Friendly but in a professional way, close, open |
| Interaction with other students | Favoured (by group work), good |
| Class environment | Friendly, comfortable, easy to participate, fun, interesting, motivating, dynamic |
| Significance of the subject | Real examples, modelling |
| Human component | Important, respect, motivation, not being afraid |

7. Contributions to the faculty mindset and their future careers

Two teachers participated in this experience. Both of them had more than 2 years of experience teaching the very same or similar courses to the ones involved in this project. In both cases, teachers had already included some of the elements that constitute the focus of this research, such as the use of humour or the development of group activities to highlight the relevance of the course. However, this time those items were introduced in a more conscious and planned way, as part of the research but also as part of the teaching method, and the conclusions are very positive. Both teachers are pleased with the results regarding the engagement of students, their satisfaction and their overall experience. The relation between students, as well as between the instructor and the students, was significantly positive, as evidenced by the data collected and by the instructors' observation.

The introduction of humour in one of the groups, consisting of 75% of international students from at least 6 nationalities, and using English as the medium of instruction, was particularly hard, according to the teachers' notes. Also, instructors made a special effort to learn foreign names written in different alphabets and to promote the participation of students from educational systems where traditional lectures are the main teaching method and students' participation is very limited. Another difficulty was the fact that one of the courses was taught in a blended learning modality, and the face to face contact with students was not as frequent, so the focus on fostering a positive relation between students and between students and the instructor was especially important.

On a more personal note, both instructors referred feeling more motivated about their job, comfortable with the methodological approach and willing to continue implementing actions related to the Positive Leadership aspects applied to the

classroom. A closer but still professional rapport with students, the relaxed environment and the perception of the relevance of their work in the learning process reinforced, undoubtedly, their passion for teaching.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

After the implementation of Positive Leadership in the teaching and Learning process of the two subjects where this initiative took place, it can be concluded that the hypotheses that were originally established can be confirmed. This particular initiative is something students and faculty enjoyed and appreciated, and which has brought along a very positive impact regarding engagement and learning effectiveness.

The qualitative results show evidence of a more humanized teaching and learning process, which students find very relevant. Also, both the qualitative and quantitative results show very high engagement levels of students and faculty. Students' satisfaction is really high with the participating faculty, even higher than in the previous years, and their grades are also better, proving higher levels of learning effectiveness than before. The only one hypothesis that could not be proved was the improvement of attrition, since no students dropped out the year before, what continued to be the case this time.

Additionally, one may think that there might be a future impact that has not been measured, which is the attitudes and values that might have been developed in the students, hopefully leading them to playing a more active role in making our society more respectful and positive, and therefore being more prepared to make the world a better place.

It is our final recommendation that Positive Leadership shall be actively incorporated in Higher Education, maybe as part of the curriculum itself, but mainly through the faculty who, at the end of the day, are the key players in the quality of the students' learning experience and their readiness as professionals and citizens of the future.

References

- Balwant, P. T. (2016). Transformational Instructor-Leadership in Higher Education Teaching: A Meta-Analytic Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 9(4), 20-42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21423>
- Benito, A., Canteri, K., Grimley, M., Khanka, S., Lajud Desentis, C., Moreno Melgarejo, A., Morley, S., Paul, N., & Vasu, T. (2018). Introducing Positive Leadership in the teaching & learning process of Higher Education. *International Journal of Arts and Social Science*, 1(2), 33-42.
- Bott, D., Escamilia, H., Kaufman, S.B., Kern, M.L., Krekel, C., Schlicht-Schmälzle, R., Seldon, A., Seligman, M., & White, M. (2016). *The State of Positive Education. The World Education Summit & the International Positive Education Network (IPEN)*. Retrieved December 11, 2018, from <https://www.worldgovernmentsummit.org/api/publications/document/8f647dc4-e97c-6578-b2f8-ff0000a7ddb6>

- Buchanan, A.M., & Hinton V. (2018). Behavior Support in Physical Education: A Case from a Pre-service Field Experience. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 17(2), 74-86. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.17.2.5>
- Cameron, K. (2010). Five keys to flourishing in trying times. *Leader to Leader*, 55, 45-51. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ltl.401>
- Cameron, K. (2012). *Positive leadership: Strategies for extraordinary performance*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- De José Belzuce, M., Danvila del Valle, I., & Martínez-López F.J. (2011). *Guía de competencias emocionales para directivos*. Madrid: ESIC.
- Cintra, C. L., & Martins, G.V. (2017). Positive Education: The Application of Positive Psychology to Educational Institutions. *School and Educational Psychology*, 21(3), 505-514.
- Fisher Thornton, L. & Covey, S.M.R. (2013). *7 Lenses: Learning the Principles and Practices of Ethical Leadership*. Richmond, VA: Leading in Context LLC.
- Furlong, M.J., Gilman, R., & Huebner, E.S. (2014). *Handbook of Positive Psychology in Schools Second*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203106525>
- Gautrey, C. (2014). *Influential leadership: A leader's guide to getting things done*. Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page.
- Lino, C. (2017). *Positive Education Practices and Our Must-Read Book List*. Available from <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/positive-education-books-practices/>
- Noble, T., & McGrath, H. (2015). PROSPER: A New Framework for Positive Education. *Psychology of Well-Being*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13612-015-0030-2>
- Norrish, J. M., Williams, P., O'Connor, M., & Robinson, J. (2013). An applied framework for positive education. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 3(2), 147-161. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v3i2.2>
- Núñez Moscoso, J. (2017). Los métodos mixtos en la investigación en Educación. Hacia un uso reflexivo. *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, 47(164), 632-649. <https://doi.org/10.1590/198053143763>
- Tugade M.M., & Fredrickson, B.L. (2008). Positive Emotions and Emotional Inteligence. In Cassady, J. C., & Ali, E. M. (eds.). *Emotional intelligence: Perspectives on educational and positive psychologie*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Universidad Tecmilenio (n.d.). *Institutional Philosophy*. Retrieved January 10, 2019, from <http://tecmilenio.mx/en/filosofia-institucional#>
- Van Dijk, T. (2016). Estudios críticos del discurso: un enfoque sociocognitivo. *Discurso & Sociedad*, 10(1), 137-162.
- White, M. (2016). Why won't it Stick? Positive Psychology and Positive Education. *Psychology of Well-Being*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13612-016-0039-1>