

# Community-Engaged Learning and STEM: How Initial Perceptions Vary Based on Course

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## Community-Engaged Learning

- Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) is a combination of academic work and collaborating with the community<sup>1</sup>
- Involves students, community partners, and campus partners
- Students reflect on their experiences
- Benefits: “real world” application, increases engagement, improves skills<sup>2</sup>
- Expose students to career options and give them experience needed for careers

## Research Questions

Does course type (major) differentially affect student perceptions of CEL?

How do student perceptions of CEL affect buy-in?

## Survey Approach

### Survey

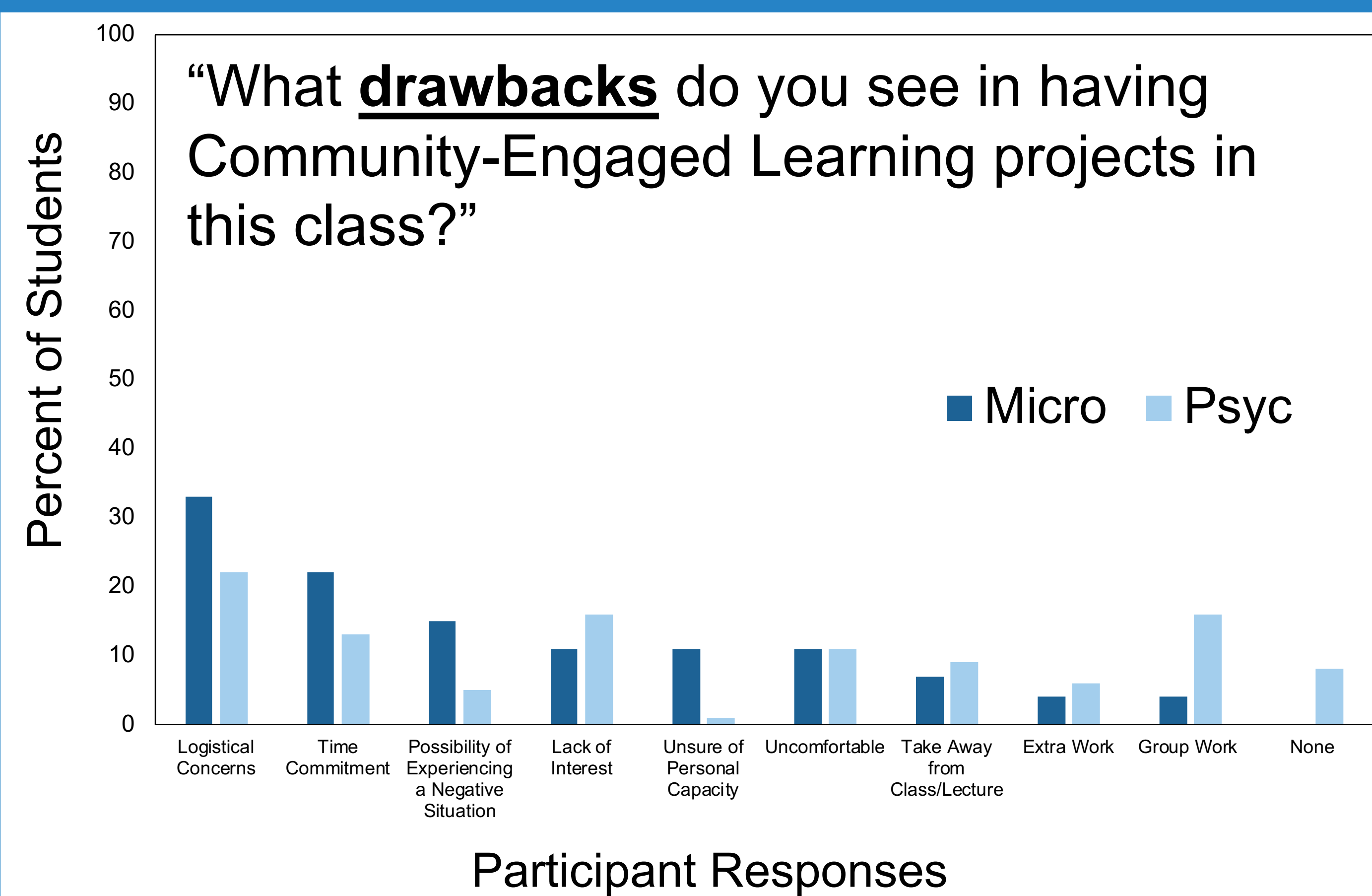
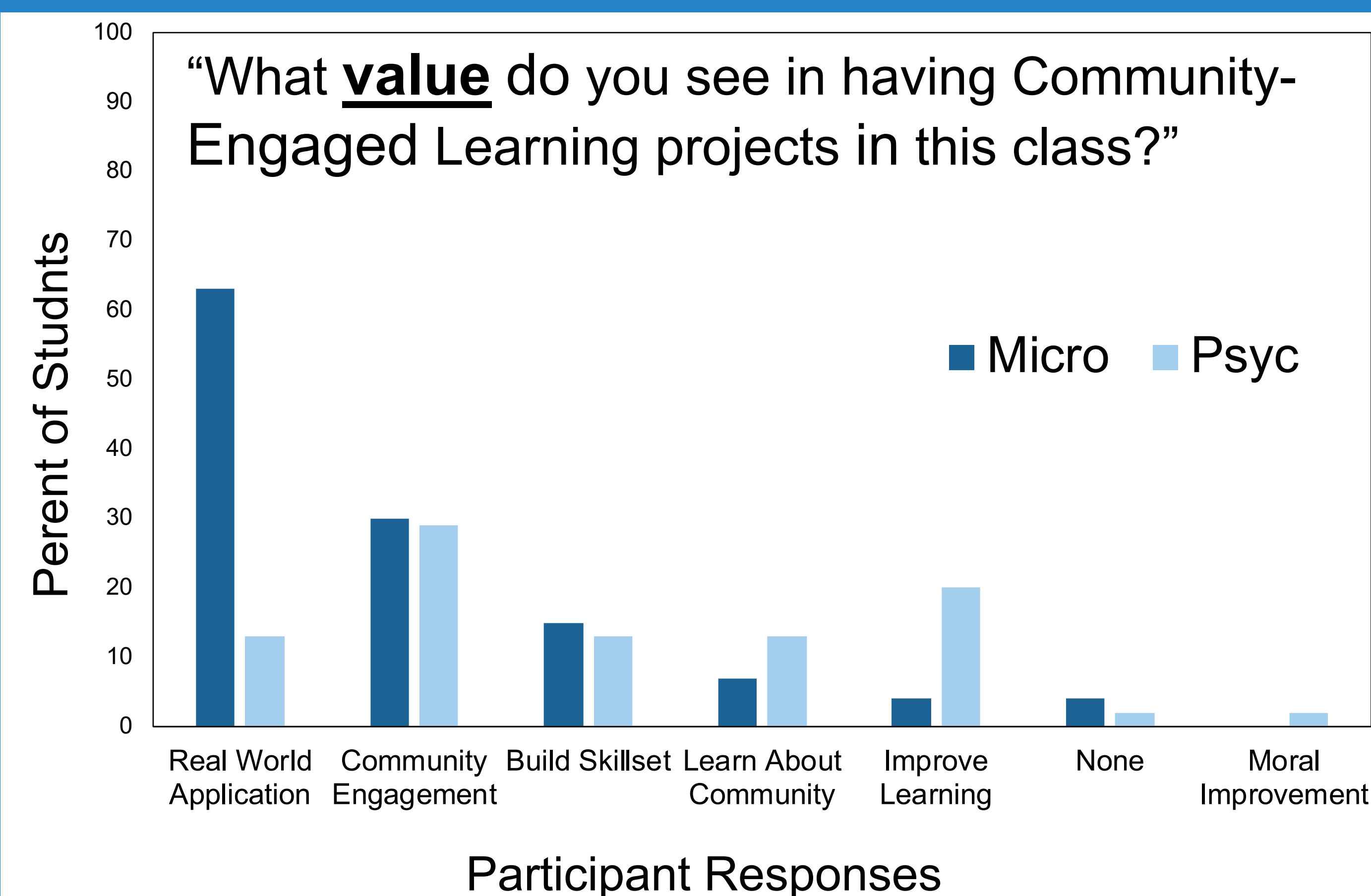
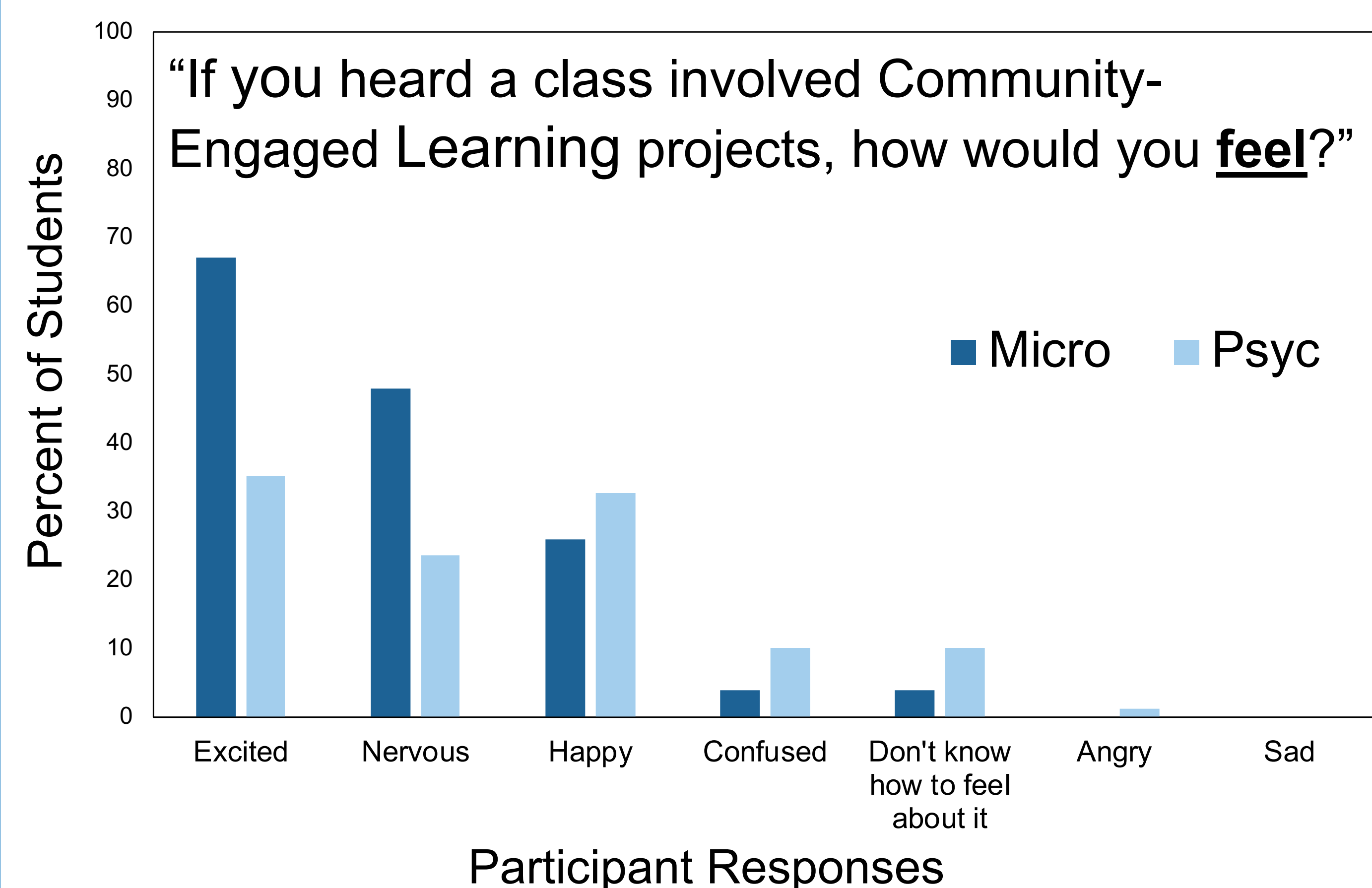
- Exploratory survey given to undergraduate microbiology and psychology courses
- Psyc 111 (Introduction to Psychology): general education, elective, 158 students
- Micro 352 (Introduction to Microbiology II): upper level, major course, 27 students
- Close and open-ended questions

### Coding

- Coding scheme based on student responses
- IRR above 90% for open-ended questions

### Analysis

- Compared responses from each course for relevant survey questions



## Students are Positive, but Nervous

### Feeling

- Majority positive feelings, but nervous
- Differences between courses:

	Micro	Psyc
Excited	67%	45%
Nervous	48%	24%

### Value

- Differences between courses:

	Micro	Psyc
Real World Application	63%	13%
Improve Learning	4%	20%

### Drawbacks

- Similar between courses
- Largest concerns were logistical and time commitment

## Buy-In to Implement CEL

- Buy-in for a CEL course is needed to ease nervousness in both major and non-major courses
- The results suggest highlighting the values of CEL would be beneficial
  - Especially real world application for a non-major course
- It would also be advantageous for instructors to address major drawbacks that students see with CEL
- Future directions:
  - Data support implementation of CEL in a major course
  - Working to link CEL to career

### Acknowledgements



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### References

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<sup>2</sup>Peterson, J.J., Wardwell, C., Will, K., Campana, K.L. (2014). Pursuing a purpose: the role of career exploration courses and service-learning internships in recognizing and developing knowledge, skills, and abilities. *Teaching of Psychology*, 41, 354-359.