

Research Article

Riccardo Amorati* and John Hajek

Fostering well-being in the university L2 classroom: the “I am an author” project

<https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2023-0051>

Received March 14, 2023; accepted September 15, 2023; published online October 10, 2023

Abstract: This study explores the effect of a project-based learning module informed by the principles of the Deep Approach to World Language Education on students' well-being in an advanced Italian language subject. Data were collected via a questionnaire ($n = 21$) created in light of Oxford's EMPATHICS model of well-being. As part of this module, students were tasked with creating and self-publishing an illustrated story in Italian. Results indicate that the project contributed to students' well-being, mostly because it enabled them to have an experience of authorship while also making a difference by supporting the local Italian community. Students were able to gain control of their learning by engaging in a task that they perceived as enriching and socially meaningful. The project also had a positive influence on students' self-efficacy and self-concept, on their intrinsic motivation for learning Italian, as well as on their overall sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Keywords: well-being; positive psychology intervention; emotions; EMPATHICS; project-based learning

1 Introduction

Well-being has been increasingly investigated in the field of positive psychology (henceforth PP), and more recently, in second language teaching (see e.g., Pentón Herrera et al. 2023). In PP well-being is defined as the combination of positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning and accomplishment (see Seligman 2011). This definition has been adapted by Oxford (2016a, 2016b) to the field of second language learning through the development of the EMPATHICS model, which is directly targeted at language students. Oxford's model, which informs our

***Corresponding author: Riccardo Amorati**, The University of Melbourne, Parkville Victoria, 3010 Melbourne, VIC, Australia, E-mail: riccardo.amorati@unimelb.edu.au

John Hajek, RUMACCC, School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

understanding of well-being in this study, describes the construct as resulting from the dynamic interaction of nine psychological dimensions: emotion and empathy, meaning and motivation, perseverance, agency and autonomy, time, hardiness and habits of mind, intelligences, character strengths and self-factors (see Section 3 for a definition of each dimension, as well as Oxford 2016a, 2016b). Following Oxford, well-being is defined in this study from both a hedonic and eudaimonic perspective, i.e. it is viewed as a complex construct which incorporates both the subjective experience of happiness during language learning and life in general (hedonic motive) as well processes of self-realization (eudaimonic motive; Tennant et al. 2007).

Several scholars (e.g., Dewaele et al. 2019; Palmieri 2017; Pentón Herrera et al. 2023) encourage the idea that teaching activities in the L2 classroom should draw on research on well-being and attempt to target its components to help learners relish their language learning experience. While there is considerable literature on the relevance of well-being and its components to language learning (see, e.g., Dewaele et al. 2019 for a recent overview), there is a need for more studies evaluating the effectiveness of practical positive psychology interventions (PPIs) in the language classroom. PPIs can be defined as teaching activities which seek to increase students' well-being as well as to promote students' linguistic progress (see e.g., Dewaele et al. 2019).

The scarcity of research available on PPIs (see, however, Gregersen et al. 2014, 2016) should come as no surprise, as the paucity of practical teaching-related research in comparison to more theoretical studies is a recognized trend in the field of second language learning. Rose (2019: 895) notes that this phenomenon contributes to widening the divide between teachers and researchers. A consequence of this is the fact that the former are more likely to disengage from research and less inclined to implement evidence-based teaching strategies and activities.

In full recognition of this issue, this article presents a practical project undertaken by university students of Italian and discusses its effect on their well-being and its underlying components (as defined in Oxford's EMPATHICS model) by discussing and evaluating quantitative and qualitative data collected via a questionnaire.

The article is structured as follows. First, we offer an overview of the project and its aims. We then describe its theoretical foundations, focusing on the pedagogical approaches informing the project and on the EMPATHICS model (Oxford 2016a, 2016b). After that, we outline the methodology of the empirical study we conducted, and then present and discuss the results.

2 The “I am an author” project: a brief overview

In this section, we briefly summarise the aims and structure of the project. The reader is referred to Amorati and Hajek (2021) for a more detailed description of its structure and mechanics.

The project is included in an upper-intermediate/advanced Italian subject which runs for twelve weeks over the course of one semester. The subject is divided into three components with dedicated time each week: culture, conversation and language. The book project is included in the last component, which mostly aims to develop students' writing skills and at the same time to reinforce their knowledge and use of Italian grammar and style. As part of the "Language" component, students are told that they have to write, illustrate and self-publish a short story in illustrated book-format in Italian. They are informed that their story, subject to final selection, might be made available online to the wider public, as it addresses a real problem: the lack of easily accessible reading resources in Italian for young children. This is a known issue in countries of considerable Italian migration, such as Australia, where the Italian community represents one of the largest ethnic and linguistic groups (ABS 2021) but for whom language maintenance and literacy are challenges (see also Slaughter and Hajek 2014).

As part of the project, students are exposed in class to conventions of narrative writing through reading and writing activities and are taught grammar and textual features that they should include in their final story (e.g., Italian tenses for narrating in the past; the imperative form which is often used in direct speech; structural and literary conventions of fairy tales and anti-fairy tales, etc.). Students are also given time in class to engage in creative writing and to brainstorm ideas about their story. At the end of semester, they are asked to submit their own small self-published book for young children as well as a reflective text about their creative process.

An initial mixed-method study conducted on the 2017 and 2018 student cohorts examining the effect of the learning module on students' motivation and creative skills (Amorati and Hajek 2021) revealed that the project mostly contributed to intrinsic motivation, a term which describes the desire to engage in tasks which are considered intrinsically fulfilling and personally relevant (Noels 2001). Students particularly appreciated being able to use Italian to address a real issue (the lack of literary resources) and felt proud about being able to make a difference by drawing on their language skills. The project was also found to have a positive influence on students' creative skills, which are typically disregarded in more formal academic assignments. Students' responses revealed the emergence of constructs normally associated with well-being (Oxford 2016a, 2016b), such as positive emotions, sense of pride, sense of belonging, agency and self-efficacy. This came as no surprise as the design of the project was informed by previous PP scholarship on well-being (see Section 3). We then decided to investigate this aspect in more detail by developing the study reported in this paper and by collecting new data on subsequent learner cohorts (see Section 4).

3 The theoretical framework of the project: literature review

In this section, we examine the literature that informed the design of our project, which, as noted previously, is a PPI that aims to foster well-being through social outreach participation. The PPI is framed as a project-based experiential activity, drawing on the principles of the Deep Approach to World Language Education (Tochon 2014, see also Bouvet et al. 2020) and incorporating the EMPATHICS model of well-being (Oxford 2016a, 2016b). The study we present is novel and is expected to make a considerable contribution to existing literature. Firstly, to the best of our knowledge, there have been few studies in this field that explore languages other than English – this includes Italian which, with few exceptions (e.g., Rubino et al. 2017; Strambi et al. 2017), has hitherto been largely overlooked – a gap we also aim to address here. In addition, there is limited research on the potential of project-based learning as a teaching methodology that can effectively promote well-being in the language classroom. Lastly, no previous study has utilised all the components of the EMPATHICS model to evaluate the effectiveness of PPIs. Our study also offers the first questionnaire to measure all components of EMPATHICS, which until this point have only been examined qualitatively.

3.1 Project-based experiential learning and the Deep Approach to World Language Education

Our teaching module is grounded in project-based learning, a methodology that empowers students to take ownership of their learning process by working towards the creation of a meaningful end product (Buck Institute of Education 2022; Larmer et al. 2015; Mergendoller et al. 2006). Extensive research has demonstrated the benefits of this approach on students' motivation, engagement, and well-being (see e.g., Amorati et al. 2022; Ghosheh Wahbeh et al. 2021; Gras-Velázquez 2019; Larmer et al. 2015; Polansky 2019; Stefanou et al. 2013; Stoller and Chandel Myers 2019; Supe and Kaupuzs 2015). However, the adoption of project-based learning as a methodology aimed at increasing student well-being, specifically focusing on Italian, has not received considerable attention in PP research.

The project is also informed by some of the key principles identified in the Deep Approach to World Language Education, a model proposed by Tochon (2014), which aims to promote meaningful learning experiences. This approach is based on the notion that students are at the centre of the learning process and that language education is not simply restricted to learning a language, but it is, to a large extent, a

social action (see also Bouvet et al. 2020), which enables students to engage more deeply with the communities that they inhabit or wish to inhabit and to put their skills to use to “do good” in these communities and make a difference. In line with the principle of the Deep Approach, the project also gives students agency in giving direction to their learning process and promotes individualised learning driven by personal interest and motivation. In this approach, teachers are facilitators and empower students to explore and learn, while also giving them considerable autonomy in shaping and directing their learning. While this approach has been used before in research on well-being in language learning (see e.g., Bouvet et al. 2020), its implementation, together with the EMPATHICS model in the context of PPI studies, has not been attempted previously.

3.2 A positive psychology intervention drawing upon the EMPATHICS model

As noted in the introduction, the design of the project was guided by a notion of well-being as conceptualised by Oxford’s (2016a, 2016b) EMPATHICS model.

Oxford’s model posits that well-being can be understood from a complex dynamic system perspective, where components are interconnected and interact in non-linear and emergent ways. Table 1 below offers an overview of the components of the EMPATHICS model, provides Oxford’s (2016a) definition for each, and also indicates how these components characterise learners with high levels of well-being, i.e. students who “progress rapidly, develop proficiency, and relish the language learning experience” (Oxford 2016a: 10).

The “I am an author” PPI targets all components of well-being included in EMPATHICS. It is assumed that positive emotions (such as happiness, pride and accomplishment) can be sparked by the complex yet fulfilling process involved in the creation and production of a small book in Italian. It is anticipated that the learning activity fosters intrinsic motivation (Noels 2001), as it encourages students’ engagement with a valued and intrinsically enjoyable project which has a real audience, and which addresses a real problem (cf. Amorati and Hajek 2021). The activity also fosters autonomy and agency as related to self-directed learning: students reflect on their strengths and talents and how they can be drawn upon to make their project more relevant to themselves. The learning module was also designed with the hope of offering students a memorable learning experience and to have them reconnect to positive childhood memories, linked presumably to their own experience of reading young children’s literature. Finally, the project is also expected to have an effect on various self-factors: students’ new identity as authors of a book is anticipated to be associated with an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence.

Table 1: Oxford’s (2016a) EMPATHICS model and definition of each component in relation to the characteristics of language learners with high well-being.

Components of EMPATHICS	Definitions	Dimension hypotheses: language learners with high well-being ...
E emotion and empathy (dimension 1);	<p>“Emotions involve physiological arousal, such as changes in blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature and stomach sensations. Emotions are accompanied by conscious, subjective interpretations called feelings” (Oxford 2016a, p. 12)</p> <p>Empathy is an “other-oriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else (...). [It] is not a single, discrete emotion but includes a whole constellation of feelings (...) [such as] sympathy, compassion, soft-heartedness, tenderness, and the like” (Batson et al. 2011, p. 418)” (Oxford 2016a, p. 17)</p>	Recognise their emotions, manage them effectively and show empathy for others
M meaning and motivation (dimension 2);	<p>“Meaning is roughly described as personal relevance and significance that give purpose to life. For well-being to occur, it is important to have ‘goals and beliefs that affirm sense of direction in life and feel that life has a purpose and meaning’ (Keyes 2002: 91)” (p. 18).</p> <p>“Motivation refers to a cumulative arousal, or want, that we are aware of” (Dörnyei 2009, p. 209) and is linked to meaning (Oxford 2016a, p. 24).</p>	Seek and create meaning, which helps them be motivated
P perseverance, including resilience, hope and optimism (dimension 3);	“ Perseverance is defined as continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure or opposition; the action or condition or an instance of persevering; steadfastness” (Oxford 2016a, p. 29)	Persevere in their learning
A agency and autonomy (dimension 4);	“ Agency is ‘the sense of knowing and having what it takes to achieve one’s goals’ (Little et al. 2002, p. 390) (see Oxford 2016a, p. 38)	Embody agency and autonomy

Table 1: (continued)

Components of EMPATHICS	Definitions	Dimension hypotheses: language learners with high well-being ...
T time (dimension 5);	A “ time perspective is defined as a preferential trajectory or direction of an individual’s thought toward the past, present or future, which exerts a dynamic influence on his or her experience, motivation, thinking and behavior (Boniwell 2011; Oxford 2016a, p. 45)	Appraise themselves temporally in a positive way and have a time perspective that fits their needs for learning
H hardiness and habits of mind (dimension 6);	“ Hardiness is largely conceptualized as a combination of three attitudes, known as the three ‘Cs: commitment, control and challenge. These three attitudes have different benefits. Strength of <i>commitment</i> leads a person to remain involved no matter how difficult or stressful things get, instead of becoming isolated or alienated. A person who is strong in <i>control</i> wants to influence outcomes, rather than withdrawing into passivity. A person who is strong in the realm of <i>challenge</i> rejects easy comfort and accepts stresses as a normal part of life and an opportunity to learn” (Oxford 2016a, p. 48) Habits of mind indicate the ability to habitually use certain behaviours to reach the best performance. Examples include “thinking flexibly, striving for accuracy, thinking about thinking, persisting (see perseverance), listening with understanding and empathy, finding humor, and communicating with accuracy and precision” (Oxford 2016a, p. 50)	Develop hardy attitudes and hardy action patterns and have useful habits of mind
I intelligences (dimension 7);	Intelligences refer to those identified by Gardner (2011): (a) musical, (b) logical-mathematical, (c) verbal-linguistic, (d) visual-spatial, (e) bodily-kinesthetic, (f) interpersonal (social), (g) intrapersonal (introspective), (h) existential (largely spiritual) and (i) naturalistic (ecological)	Recognize their own intelligences and take advantage of those intelligences for learning and living
C character strengths (dimension 8);	Character strengths include virtues such as creativity, curiosity, love of	

Table 1: (continued)

Components of EMPATHICS	Definitions	Dimension hypotheses: language learners with high well-being ...
	learning, curiosity, open-mindedness, perspective, authenticity, bravery, persistence, zest, kindness, etc.)	Have a range of character strengths that help them in their learning and their lives
S self factors (self-efficacy, self-concept, self-esteem, self-verification) (dimension 9).	<p>Self factors include a variety of constructs, such as:</p> <p><i>Self-efficacy</i>: “Self-efficacy is the person’s level of confidence (belief) that he or she can successfully carry out an action to achieve a specific goal in a particular setting under certain conditions (Bandura 1997; Oxford 2016a, p. 60; Zimmerman 2000)”</p> <p><i>Self-concept</i>: “Self-concept is a complex construct consisting of different dimensions or selves, namely physical, social, familial, personal, academic, and many other situational ones’ (Rubio 2014, p. 43)”</p> <p><i>Self-esteem</i>: “Self-esteem is ‘the [high–low] evaluative quality of the self-image or self-concept’ (Dörnyei 2005, p. 211)”</p> <p><i>Self-verification</i>: “Self-verification is personal confirmation of one’s own views about oneself and is assumed to be a basically adaptive process, though it is not without paradox” (Oxford 2016a, p. 67).</p>	Possess self-efficacy, positive self-concepts and high self-esteem, and use self-verification positively

3.3 Empirical studies on students’ well-being in L2 learning

This section presents some key studies in applied linguistics research informed by PP principles. Since there are very thorough recent overviews of literature in this area (see e.g., Dewaele et al. 2019), here we mostly present some general trends in the field and identify key studies that hold some relevance to our PPI.

As Dewaele et al. (2019: 9) note, since 2016 research on well-being in applied linguistics has mostly focused on positive emotions and positive character traits in an attempt to examine variables associated with positive learning experiences, such as – as they note – “empathy, selves, flow, perseverance, motivation, engagement, perseverance, love, and passion”. Studies conducted on the experiences of language learners throughout their learning process (e.g., Falout 2014, 2016; Gregersen et al. 2014; Jia 2022; Oxford and Cuéllar 2014; Proietti Ergün and Ersöz Demirdağ 2022) show that emotions and students’ appraisals of various aspects associated with the L2 learning environment are key components of any learning experience. More recent lines of inquiry have demonstrated the positive effect of well-being and academic engagement on students’ grit and overall enjoyment of the learning process (see Huo 2022 for a recent overview).

There is also a developing body of research focusing on the implementation of classroom activities informed by well-being research, whose general goal is to find strategies and evaluate activities which can improve the emotional climate in the classroom. In her PPI study, Gregersen (2016) has discussed “the potential of exposing learners to positive psychology exercises like those built around gratitude, altruism, music, laughter, pets and exercise”, concluding that a focus on positive emotions increases student enjoyment as well as long-term investment in L2 learning. Ibrahim’s (2016) study focused on the experiences of seven foreign language learners and found that participants’ main source of happiness in learning the L2 came from the transformational process of personal growth, as well as from positive changes to their self-image and identity as L2 speakers.

Recent studies on well-being in second language learning conducted in Australia have yielded positive findings, showing that a focus on well-being in the language classroom does not only contribute to learners’ flourishing on a personal level, but also has an influence on their intrinsic motivation for learning and attitudes towards the language learning process. Strambi et al. (2017), for instance, have demonstrated the effectiveness of integrating language learning activities which embrace principles of PP, Transition Pedagogy (i.e. a guiding philosophy for curriculum design which enhances first-year university students in their transition to university), and Content-and-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) into the university curriculum. The activities implemented, which pursued disciplinary aims and also contributed to students’ perceptions of their sense of self and self-efficacy, were perceived by students as relevant to their interests and personal goals. Bouvet and colleagues (2017) have explored the benefits of having students undertake work placements in various community organizations, showing that these placements not only promote meaningful interactions with L2 communities, but also lead to improved well-being, sense of satisfaction and achievement and to the creation of new positive relationships. The development of relationships and processes of self-realisations were also found to be

key components of well-being in other recent studies focussing on language learners (Palmieri 2017). While in its current design the “I am an author” project does not include group placements, it nevertheless aims to build a sense of connectedness between learners and the local Italian community, which is presented as the primary audience of the books produced by students.

Overall, this body of literature suggests that PP principles can be effectively implemented as part of classroom activities to improve students’ language learning experiences and emotional responses to the tasks at hand, as well as to encourage long-term investment in the L2 learning process. As noted previously, our research contributes to this body of literature by drawing on EMPATHICS and to the Deep Approach to Language Education to understand how a project-based learning activity targeting a language other than English can lead to enhanced well-being.

4 Methodology

As indicated above, this study builds on previous research conducted on the effect of the project on student motivation and creativity (Amorati and Hajek 2021) and in so doing sought to answer the following research question:

- What is the effect of the project-based learning module on students’ well-being, as conceptualised in Oxford’s (2016a, 2016b) EMPATHICS model?

4.1 Participants

Participants in this study were university students of Italian at The University of Melbourne in the academic years 2019 and 2020. A total of 21 respondents participated in this study (see Appendix 1). In terms of gender, females ($n = 61.9\%$) outnumbered males ($n = 38.1\%$). Most respondents were aged between 18 and 25 (90.5 %) and spoke English as their L1 (98.1 %). All respondents were domestic (rather than international) students and were completing a Bachelor of Arts (61.9 %) a Bachelor of Science (33.3 %) or a Bachelor of Biomedicine (4.8 %). The largest portion of respondents studied Italian as a major (47.6 %) or as part of a Diploma in Languages (which incorporates a major in Italian) concurrent with their degree (42.9 %).

4.2 Approach

While an action research framework could have lent itself to the project, since the first author was teaching the students who partook in it, it was decided not to employ

it, as action research relies heavily on participant observation (see e.g., O’Leary 2010) and students’ work on the book was mostly conducted outside the classroom. It was thus decided to collect data directly from students via a questionnaire eliciting both quantitative and qualitative data, following previous studies on intervention programs in educational research (see e.g., Magid and Chan 2012).

The present study takes advantage of the benefits offered by mixed-methods research designs, as outlined by Creswell (2013). By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of students’ attitudes. While quantitative data allow us to examine the distribution of these attitudes, qualitative data add depth and complement the quantitative findings, helping to uncover complex aspects that numerical data alone cannot fully capture, while also assisting in illustrating and expanding upon the quantitative data presented. This investigation follows the principles of a convergent parallel mixed-method approach, as described by Creswell (2013). Unlike sequential explanatory and exploratory study designs, where qualitative data are used primarily to validate quantitative results, in this research design equal importance is given to both data sets, data collection and analysis proceed independently for each set, and the findings from both are then combined and integrated.

4.3 Materials

The Likert items in the questionnaire elicited data on the constructs included in the EMPATHICS model (see Table 1). Considering that, to the best of these authors’ knowledge, there are no previous studies that have measured EMPATHICS via Likert items, these items were developed by the two authors. Although we are aware of the difficulties involved in creating new questionnaires (see Dörnyei and Dewaele 2022), efforts were made to create items that reflected the definitions of each EMPATHICS component presented by Oxford (2016a, 2016b). The questionnaire also included previous well-established items in the field of L2 motivation, as various scholars have measured constructs like intrinsic motivation, which are also relevant to EMPATHICS. The validity of the questionnaire was tested with initial piloting: two student volunteers agreed to fill out the questionnaire and provide feedback on the items included and the clarity of the questions. This led to slight changes to the wording of certain items.

In the questionnaire, participants were also asked to answer open-ended questions (see Appendix 2). In particular, they were invited to indicate whether they had experienced positive or negative emotions while working on their book, to talk about the reaction of family and friends to the finished project, to discuss whether the project had an influence on their sense of accomplishment, on their perception

about learning Italian or languages in general and on their motivation for learning Italian. Finally, participants were invited to elaborate on how memorable the experience was and whether they appreciated being given the opportunity to express their creativity by writing and publishing a book as part of the subject. All questionnaires were administered in English to avoid misunderstandings.

4.4 Procedure

The questionnaire was administered online via the software Qualtrics in 2021 using class lists from 2019 to 2020. In full consideration of ethical procedures, participants had already completed the subject and were not being taught by the researchers when they filled in the questionnaire.

4.5 Sample and data analysis

The data collected as part of the project are summarised in Table 2 below. As can be seen, out of the 21 respondents who completed the Likert items, only some answered the open-ended questions. Responses for the qualitative section of the questionnaire ranged from 15 to 17. In addition, 7 respondents left additional

Table 2: Number of quantitative and qualitative responses collected as part of this study. Number of responses is given for each qualitative question (abbreviated in the Table) included in the questionnaire.

Data set	Answers collected
Quantitative	Demographic data → <i>n</i> = 21 Likert items → <i>n</i> = 21
Qualitative	Comments and open-ended questions in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2 for questions asked) <i>Genre chosen and justification</i> → <i>n</i> = 18 <i>Emotions experienced</i> → <i>n</i> = 17 <i>Family and friends' reaction to students' work</i> → <i>n</i> = 16 <i>Project and influence on sense of accomplishment</i> → <i>n</i> = 16 <i>Influence of the project on students' perceptions about learning Italian or languages in general</i> → <i>n</i> = 15 <i>Influence of the project on motivation for learning Italian</i> → <i>n</i> = 17 <i>How memorable the project was</i> → <i>n</i> = 16 <i>Students' comments on being given the opportunity to be creative by writing and publishing a book</i> → <i>n</i> = 17 <i>Additional comments</i> → <i>n</i> = 7

comments at the end of the questionnaire. All the qualitative responses collected were in English except for 7 responses, which were given in Italian.

Because of the limited sample size, quantitative data were analysed by means of descriptive statistical procedures. Qualitative data were instead analysed on NVivo using general content analysis principles (O'Leary 2010: 256–277).

5 Results

This section presents participants' responses to the Likert items measuring the various components of EMPATHICS and complements them with the qualitative data collected via the questionnaire. For ease of presentation, due to the large number of components of EMPATHICS, we grouped the data into three overarching categories: "positive emotions, accomplishment and self-factors", "engagement, relationships and meaning" and "other components".

Since most participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statements presented, when describing the data below we mostly present the total combined rate of students who agreed, without differentiating agreement rates by severity, unless otherwise specified.

5.1 Positive emotions, accomplishment and self-factors

5.1.1 Dimension 1 of the EMPATHICS model (emotion and empathy)

As can be seen in Table 3, most respondents agreed (61.9 %) or strongly agreed (28.6 %) that the project improved or enhanced their mood. Various items elicited data on the positive emotions that the students experienced thanks to the project, and which influenced their overall mood. Specifically, more than four fifths of respondents (overall 85.7 %) indicated that the project gave them a sense of inner contentment and confirmed that creating and producing their own books made them feel good about themselves (overall 90.4 %). Respondents also revealed that they liked the feeling of being an author (overall 90.4 %) and appreciated the fact that they could make the assignment relevant to themselves (overall 90.5 %). It is also interesting to observe that three quarters of participants strongly agreed (76.9 %) that it felt good to be able to express their creativity while working on an academic task. Indeed, it is worth noting that this item received the highest number of "strongly agree" responses in the entire questionnaire. Linked to this, almost all participants (overall 95.3 %) appreciated being given the opportunity to work on an assignment that was completely different from any other assignment that they had done before.

Table 3: Likert items associated with emotions and empathy (EMPATHICS). The most selected responses are shaded in green.

Question	Dimension of EMPATHICS	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1) The project improved/ enhanced my mood		0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	4.8 % (1)	61.9 % (13)	28.6 % (6)
2) The project gave me a sense of inner contentment		0 % (0)	9.5 % (2)	4.8 % (1)	33.3 % (7)	52.4 % (11)
3) Creating and producing my own book made me feel good about myself		4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	33.3 % (7)	57.1 % (12)
4) I liked the feeling of being an author	Dimension 1 (emotion and empathy)	0 % (0)	0 % (0)	9.5 % (2)	33.3 % (7)	57.1 % (12)
5) It felt good that I could make this assignment relevant to myself		0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	4.8 % (1)	47.6 % (10)	42.9 % (9)
6) It felt good that I could express my creativity as part of an assessment task		4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	14.3 % (3)	76.9 % (16)
7) It felt good to do an assignment completely different from anything else that I have done at university		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	28.6 % (6)	66.7 % (14)
8) The project gave me a memorable experience		0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	33.3 % (7)	61.9 % (13)

The novelty of the project – paired with the positive emotions linked to the experience of authorship (see also next component) – can explain the high agreement rates in relation to item 8 (overall 95.2 %), with almost all participants also indicating that the project gave them a memorable experience.

To summarise, positive emotions were often linked to the novelty of the task, freedom in creative production, sense of pride for a finished product and students’ memorable experience of authorship. These findings were fully confirmed by the qualitative data:

This project was a great change from a lot of my other assessments, and it was very exciting to be in control of the creative process from start to finish. It’s quite fun to realise you can technically call yourself an author!

It was a very memorable experience – probably the most memorable assignment of my university journey. I never thought an assignment could bring my family such pride in me.

I find myself remembering about it every so often. I made sure the story was something that would appeal to myself, so that's largely why it sticks in my memory so strongly.

Qualitative responses also give some insight into the effect of the project on emotions relevant to well-being, such as empathy. Students' responses reveal that positive feelings often originated from the realisation of producing something that could help others and from thinking about important messages that could be of relevance to their readers. In creating their stories, students often had to take on the perspective of a young reader, had to understand their feelings and emotions, and try to convey messages in a way that could resonate with them while also teaching them a valuable lesson:

Lavorare sul libro mi ha dato l'opportunità di spiegare ai bambini un argomento molto difficile da capire per un bambino [affrontare la perdita di un membro della famiglia] siccome è difficile per un adulto come me, mi ha reso molto felice che potevo aiutare gli altri. [Working on the book gave me the opportunity to explain a topic to children that is very difficult for a child to understand – dealing with the death of a loved one – as it is difficult for an adult like me, the fact that I could help others made me very happy]

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of writing the story and finding the best (and most creative) avenues to be able to tell a story with a clear message that, I believe, is truly important for the younger generation.

5.1.2 Dimension 2 of EMPATHICS – motivation

The items associated with the second dimension of EMPATHICS sought to evaluate to what extent the emotions that students experienced during the PPI were linked to motivation, and particularly to intrinsic motivation, which was found relevant in a previous study on the project (Amorati and Hajek 2021). As noted in Section 2, intrinsic motivation (Noels 2001) denotes an individual's enjoyment of an activity that is perceived as enjoyable, personally relevant and challenging. The items also intended to evaluate whether students perceived the activity as meaningful, which was another aspect that contributed to the appeal of the project (Amorati and Hajek 2021). As can be seen in Table 4, around four fifths of the respondents enjoyed (overall 85.7 %) the process of creating a short story. The largest portion of participants (overall 85.7 %) agreed that it was exciting to write a book in Italian and to become authors (overall 90.5 %). All participants also appreciated the intellectual challenge of creating their own book. Most students in the sample (overall 95.2 %) agreed that they enjoyed working on a project that they valued highly. All in all, the high agreement rates for the items presented so far confirm that the project had a positive influence on students' intrinsic motivation, a construct which is generally associated with long-term investment in L2 study (see e.g., Noels 2001).

Table 4: Likert items associated with motivation (EMPATHICS). The most selected responses are shaded in green.

Question	Dimension of EMPATHICS	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1) I really enjoyed the process of creating my short story	Dimension 2 (motivation)	0 % (0)	0 % (0)	14.3 % (3)	47.6 % (10)	38.1 % (8)
2) I found it exciting to be able to write a book in Italian		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	14.3 % (3)	33.3 % (7)	52.4 % (11)
3) I found it exciting to be the author of a book in Italian		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	9.5 % (2)	38.1 % (8)	52.4 % (11)
4) I liked the intellectual challenge of creating my own book.		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	0 % (0)	52.4 % (11)	47.6 % (10)
5) I enjoyed working on a project that I valued highly		0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	33.3 % (7)	61.9 % (13)
6) The project made me more optimistic about the value of language learning		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	0 % (0)	47.6 % (10)	52.4 % (11)

All students also agreed or strongly agreed that the project made them more optimistic about the value of language learning. Qualitative comments show that students mostly appreciated being given the opportunity to do something that held world-life relevance:

It gave me a glimpse into the potential practical outputs that could be achieved through learning a language, beyond merely being able to engage within a classroom.

5.1.3 Dimension 3 of EMPATHICS – perseverance

The project also had an effect on the “perseverance” dimension of the EMPATHICS model. As can be seen in Table 5, most of the students confirmed that the PPI helped increase their motivation to persevere in L2 learning (overall 95.3 %). This shows how the PPI has an influence not only on short-term motivation – as is often the case with tasks or forms of assessment that must be completed by a deadline – but also on long-term motivation, as it contributed to increasing students’ investment in the learning process. As the quantitative data show, this result is mainly related to the

Table 5: Likert item associated with perseverance (EMPATHICS). The most selected response is shaded in green.

Question	Dimension of EMPATHICS	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
The project increased my motivation to persevere in language learning	Dimension 3 (perseverance)	0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	42.9 % (9)	52.4 % (11)

real-world nature of the project and the fact that it demonstrated that knowing a language can contribute to engaging with others and making a difference:

It makes me enthusiastic about continuing to study Italian at university if it will continue being so creative and real-world.

This project really made me see the benefits of language learning in a whole new light and motivated me to continue my Italian Studies throughout the remainder of my Arts degree. It has also inspired me to continue advocating for language learning in general, but particularly the Italian language, with the younger generation.

5.1.4 Dimension 9 EMPATHICS (self-factors)

The self-factor components were found to be extremely relevant to the project. As can be seen in Table 6, most students confirmed that creating the book had an effect on their sense of pride and accomplishment (item 1, overall 95.3 %), and improved

Table 6: Likert items associated with self-factors (EMPATHICS). The most selected responses are shaded in green.

Question	Dimension of EMPATHICS	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1) Seeing my printed book enhanced my sense of pride and accomplishment	Dimension 9 (self factors)	0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	52.4 % (11)	42.9 % (9)
2) By the end of this project, I feel more confident about writing in Italian		0 % (0)	9.5 % (2)	9.5 % (2)	38.1 % (8)	42.9 % (9)
3) By the end of this project, I feel more confident about my creative skills		4.8 % (1)	9.5 % (2)	4.8 % (1)	38.1 % (8)	42.9 % (9)
4) Seeing the finished product and showing it to others made me feel more confident about my Italian skills.		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	9.5 % (2)	57.1 % (12)	33.3 % (7)

their sense of confidence about writing in Italian (item 2, 81 %) and in their creative skills (item 3, 81 %). In addition, many students indicated that seeing their finished book and showing it to others positively influenced their confidence in their skills in Italian (item 4, 90.4 %). These results were fully confirmed in the qualitative data. Self-factors were mostly associated with an increase in self-confidence and pride for a finished product that could be enjoyed by others:

I felt a sense of pride in having written and illustrated my own book.

It makes me feel good about myself when people compliment my work. It boosts my confidence in being able to achieve tasks that I wouldn't otherwise normally do.

I think any task that is completed by myself makes me feel this way. I think having to hand in a hardcopy strengthened this sense of accomplishment as it is something that can be seen and held in hands.

To see a published piece of work in my own name that was created entirely by me was extremely fulfilling.

These findings show that creating a tangible finished product that can be shown to and enjoyed by others has a major effect on self-perception, contributing to a sense of pride and confidence in one's abilities.

5.2 Engagement, relationships and meaning

5.2.1 Dimension 2 EMPATHICS (meaning)

In this section we present data on aspects related to engagement and relationships as well as on the meaningfulness of the project.

Items on the engagement and relationship components referred to students' perceptions of the project as a means of creating relationships with the local community and with learners of Italian worldwide. As can be seen in Table 7, students agreed that the project made them think about the usefulness of their language skills both for the local community (item 1, overall 81 %) and for speakers of Italian around the world (item 2, overall 81 %). This finding is not surprising, given that students were aware that their books would then be made available as literacy resources for the local community and potentially for speakers of Italian around the world.

Overall, around half of the students (item 3, overall, 52.4 %) indicated that the project had influenced their perceived sense of belonging to an Italian-speaking community. The lower positive evaluation of this statement compared to the ones preceding it may be the result of an interpretation linking it to needing to have an

Table 7: Likert items associated with meaning (EMPATHICS). The most selected responses are shaded in green.

Question	Theoretical models (EMPATHICS)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1) The project made me reflect on the usefulness of my language skill for the local community		4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	14.3 % (3)	42.9 % (9)	38.1 % (8)
2) The project made me reflect on the usefulness of my language skills for Italian speakers in the world		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	19.1 % (4)	52.4 % (11)	28.6 % (6)
3) The project enhanced my feeling of belonging in a community of Italian speakers	Dimension 2 EMPATHICS (meaning)	0 % (0)	19.1 % (4)	28.6 % (6)	33.3 % (7)	19.1 % (4)
4) I liked that I could show what I know by producing something meaningful for others		4.8 % (1)	0 % (0)	9.5 % (2)	52.4 % (11)	33.3 % (7)
5) Being the author of something that could be useful for others (e.g., people who want to raise children bilingually in Australia) adds meaning to my life		0 % (0)	0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	47.6 % (10)	47.6 % (10)

Italian heritage background, which many students did not have. The possibility of being able to contribute to the development of language skills in other Italian learners seemed to have been the most important aspect related to a stronger sense of belonging:

It was a great opportunity to create a fiaba [fairy tale] that not only helped to develop my language skills but also the skills of other Italian learners.

It made me reflect upon the positive contribution learning Italian and I suppose languages in general could have on the wider community.

In general, student responses show positive attitudes toward project-based learning and learning by doing (item 4 “I liked that I could show what I know by producing

something meaningful for others”, overall 85.7 %). The data collected also suggest that producing something useful for others contributes to the value of the project and its meaningfulness for the students involved (item 5, overall 95.2 %). The meaningful nature of the project is linked, as confirmed by the qualitative data, to positive emotions such as a sense of pride and achievement:

[...] It did [contribute to my sense of accomplishment] because it was a more tangible example of my work that combined creativity with language knowledge and it was something that I knew could be enjoyed or at least interacted with by a larger audience. It felt like I had done a project that had more wide-reaching benefits.

The project did add to my feelings of accomplishment since it was a challenging task and I felt that I had produced a worthwhile piece of work.

5.3 Other components of well-being

This section presents data on the effect of the project on various aspects related to well-being identified by the EMPHATICS model, specifically as they relate to Dimensions 4–8 (see also Table 1). The first refers to the “hardiness” and “habits of mind” dimension. As can be seen in Table 8, most students stated that they needed to adopt various strategies effectively to successfully complete the project (item 1, overall 85.8 %), a finding that is not surprising given the complexity of the project. Similarly, most students affirmed that the project helped them develop strategies and skills that were useful for their own language learning (item 2, overall 81 %):

I think it [this project] is a good avenue for people to practice a variety of skills which cover multiple disciplines.

Outcomes associated with project-based learning are also found in responses to items related to the “agency” and “autonomy” dimensions. In general, students agreed that the project had an effect on their learning autonomy (item 3, overall 71.5 %) and that it helped them feel in control of their learning (item 4, overall 81 %). This result is confirmed by the qualitative data:

[...] It increased [my motivation] by showing me new ways in which to push myself and my use of Italian.

As for the items related to the dimension “time”, in general, students acknowledged that the project made them remember positive experiences that they had during childhood (item 5, overall 57.2 %). In fact, students often drew inspiration from their own experiences in structuring their stories to give their work a more personal touch. They then thought of topics that they found interesting as children and could therefore be of interest to their readers:

Table 8: Likert items associated with remaining components of the EMPATHICS model. The most selected responses are shaded in green.

Question	Theoretical models (EMPATHICS)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1) I needed to adopt various strategies effectively to successfully complete the project	Dimension 4 EMPATHICS (hardiness and habits of mind)	0 % (0)	9.5 % (1)	4.8 % (1)	42.9 % (9)	42.9 % (9)
2) The project helped me develop strategies useful for my future language learning endeavours		0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	14.3 % (3)	52.4 % (11)	28.6 % (6)
3) Working on the project outside the classroom increased my autonomy in learning	Dimension 5 EMPATHICS (agency and autonomy)	0 % (0)	9.5 % (2)	19.1 %	19.1 % (4)	52.4 % (11)
4) The project made me feel I am in control of my language learning		0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	14.3 %	47.6 % (10)	33.4 % (7)
5) The project made me think of positive experiences in my childhood	Dimension 6 EMPATHICS (time)	0 % (0)	23.8 % (5)	19.1 % (4)	28.6 % (6)	28.6 % (6)
6) The final book is a tangible product which reflects all the time I have spent learning Italian		4.8 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	9.5 % (2)	52.4 % (11)	28.6 % (6)
7) I will remember this project for a long time	Dimensions 7 EMPATHICS (Intelligences)	0 % (0)	4.8 % (1)	4.8 % (1)	38.1 % (8)	52.4 % (11)
8) The project made me reflect on how I can draw upon my own talents and abilities to do well in language learning		4.8 % (1)	0 %	4.8 % (1)	57.1 % (12)	33.3 % (7)
9) The project made me reflect on my capacity to rise to a challenge	Dimension 8 EMPATHICS (Character strengths)	0 % (0)	4.8 %	4.8 % (1)	57.1 % (12)	33.3 % (7)

I chose this [topic] because I felt inspired by my childhood to write a fairy-tale and give other children a similar pleasurable experience.

I was reminded of all the books I read and films I watched in Italian when I was a child throughout this project, and it was a very positive experience to feel that I was now contributing to this area.

That said, it was not always possible for students to make such a connection – indeed this item had the highest number of students who did not agree (23.8 %). This may be because some students may have connected the question specifically to reading children’s literature written in Italian when they were children, rather than such literature in any language.

Students then confirmed that their book was evidence of their efforts in learning Italian (item 6, overall 81 %). Finally, the vast majority of students identified the experience as memorable over time (item 7, overall 90.5 %). As the qualitative data showed, this was mostly due to the uniqueness of the project and its focus on creativity, which is usually overlooked in more traditional assessment tasks (see also Amorati and Hajek 2021):

It [the project] is extremely memorable. I’ve never ever done anything remotely similar to this project.

It [the project] was very memorable and one of my favourite assignments I’ve done. It allowed me to have more autonomy and creativity still within an academic framework.

The project also made them reflect on the ability to use their skills and talents to improve in learning (item 8, overall 90.4 %). Finally, the project was perceived as a positive challenge, and made students reflect on their own ability to deal with a challenge – such as that represented by a complex and multi-step process (item 9, overall 90.4 %). These findings were fully confirmed by the qualitative data:

[The project contributed my sense of accomplishment] because I created my own challenge and rose to it.

6 Discussion

This study sought to examine the effect of the “I am an author” project-based learning module on students’ well-being as conceptualised by Oxford (2016a, 2016b). The findings of our study contribute to the existing literature on well-being in language learning, and also provide some insights into the benefits of PBL as a teaching methodology – whether in Italian or any other language.

6.1 Well-being

As shown in the results section, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements included in the questionnaire relating to well-being. Students’ responses showed that the activity has a direct effect on each of the components of the EMPATHICS model. Figure 1 summarises key findings of the study in relation to EMPATHICS:

Overall, it can be seen that the project had a positive influence on students’ well-being because it allowed them to use Italian to address a real audience outside the university and enabled them to give personal direction to their learning by working on a task that they perceived as creative, socially valuable and personally enriching (see also Amorati and Hajek 2021).

Engaging in the project fostered the emergence of positive emotions associated with their experience of authorship and their pride in drawing on their expertise to produce something meaningful for others. Our findings on the emergence of positive emotions are in keeping with previous research on projects fostering social outreach participation. Activities promoting such outreach recognise language learning as a

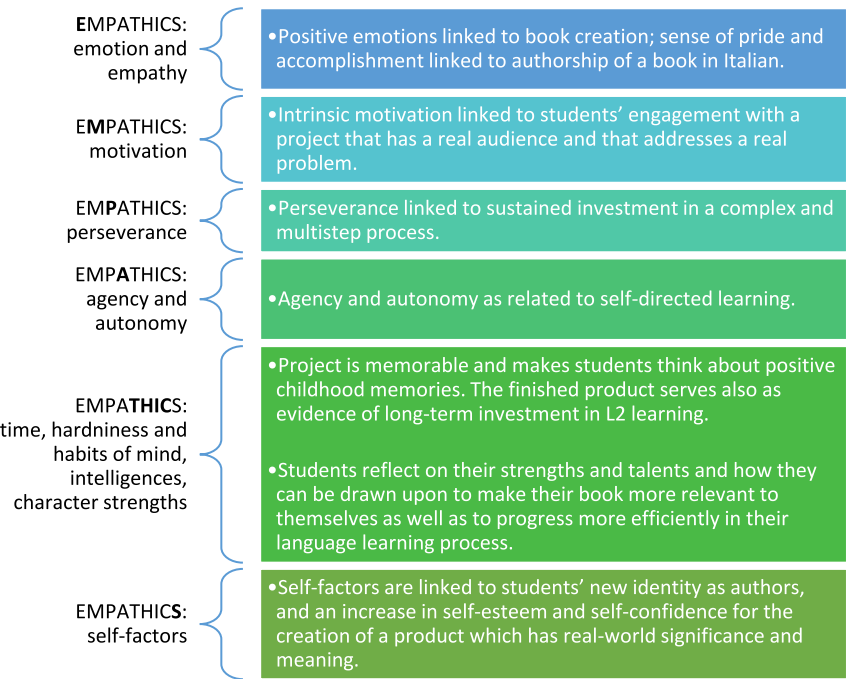


Figure 1: Key findings on components of well-being identified in the EMPATHICS model.

social action (Tochon 2014) and can “inspire learners to be more collaborating, helpful and happier” (Krishnan et al. 2016: 855). Indeed, for many respondents, the project represented an opportunity to do something of benefit for the community (see Bouvet et al. 2020). As noted previously, while the project did not include community placements like other activities we drew inspiration from (see e.g., Bouvet et al. 2017, 2020), the findings show that it nevertheless fostered engagement with the local Italian-speaking community, which were intended as the primary audience for the published short stories. A desire to engage with such a community was previously also found to be an important component of students’ motivation for learning Italian in Melbourne (Amorati 2022). The present study shows that activities promoting this engagement have the potential to positively influence students’ well-being, thus confirming the importance of creating language learning activities capitalising on Australia’s community resources (see e.g., Cordella and Huang 2016).

In line with Ibrahim’s (2016) study, the main source of happiness for participants in this study came from positive changes to their self-image and perception of themselves as L2 speakers and authors. Being able to give shape and claim an identity as the author of a book in an L2 was associated with positive feelings and sustained and reinforced students’ intrinsic motivation and learning effort. In keeping with the tenets of the Deep Approach to World Language Education (Tochon 2014), the fact that students could choose their own topic and were given full autonomy in the realisation of the project enabled them to make it relevant to themselves and be more engaged with it (see also Amorati and Hajek 2021; Amorati et al. 2022). Since learning a language often involves a process of identity reconstruction (Norton 2000, 2013; Palmieri 2017), the opportunity to present themselves as authors of a book and to help others learn Italian contributed to students’ motivation (see also Amorati and Hajek 2021). Indeed, the project enabled them to meet academic expectations, while also feeling involved in meaningful activities associated with a clear personally relevant goal, which was viewed as a personal accomplishment that influenced their self-perception.

Overall, the study conducted with learners of Italian confirms the effectiveness of the activity on student well-being and contributes to previous studies on PPIs which have to this point been conducted primarily on learners of English. Our data also give support to previous research pointing to the centrality of identity (Gregersen 2016; Norton 2013) and emotions (Dewaele 2015; Falout 2014, 2016; Gregersen et al. 2014; Oxford and Cuéllar 2014) in language learning experiences. Hence, the study paves the way for future activities recognising language learning as a transformative and emotion-laden process. To test the effectiveness of activities aimed at promoting students’ well-being, our study also offers a survey which was developed to measure the various components of EMPATHICS and which could be adapted and re-utilised in other quantitative studies.

6.2 Contribution to PBL scholarship

Our data also confirm previous findings on the benefits of PBL on aspects related to students' well-being, such as sense of self, achievement, pride, motivation (see e.g., Larmer et al. 2015) as well as for the development not only of disciplinary skills, but also of numerous other skills that are transferable to various fields, including the workplace, e.g., time management, organisational skills, etc. (see e.g., Ghosheh Wahbeh et al. 2021; Gras-Velázquez 2019; Larmer et al. 2015). Our study also shows that PBL lends itself well to tapping into students' own creativity by providing them with a clear frame and opportunity to do so as part of an assessment task. As previously noted, the positive feeling generated by this aspect of the project was the most strongly agreed with item (76.9 %) in our survey. The study also demonstrates that activities with a practical outcome contribute to student investment in language learning, to their sense of self and to general positive attitudes towards their learning process (Dörnyei 2001; Swain 2013). Specifically, this research paves the way for future PPIs drawing upon PBL and principles of the Deep Learning Approach to World Language Education to foster community engagement. In keeping with previous studies presenting PBL activities in the classroom (see e.g., Amorati et al. 2022), our research shows that students are more invested in projects that are practical in nature and have an immediate relevance in their socio-contexts.

7 Conclusions

The study presented in this paper has examined the effect on students' well-being of a creative project aimed at the creation of a small, illustrated children's book in Italian. Our findings clearly point to the effectiveness of the project on various aspects associated with well-being (e.g., positive emotions, engagement, meaning, self-efficacy, motivation, etc.) and confirm prior research on the benefits of PBL and on the effectiveness of activities with a practical purpose and which also foster community outreach (Strambi et al. 2017). While our project involved Italian, our findings are more broadly extensible. An important lesson learnt is that PPIs including key elements such as freedom in creative production, a certain degree of challenge, and community engagement have the potential to lead to enhanced well-being on the part of students.

This article paves the way for new lines of research into suitable activities that can be implemented by language practitioners to help students flourish while also progressing in their language learning journey. It is important to remember that promoting well-being in the language classroom requires "conscious effort and thoughtful action" (Gregersen et al. 2014: 332; see also Piasecka 2016: 88). More

research should be conducted to identify which aspects students appreciate the most about PPIs (e.g., freedom in topic choice, self-directed learning, community engagement, etc.) so that these can be taken into specific consideration in the design and implementation of future teaching/learning resources, both for Italian and other languages. Future research could also delve into cross-cultural variations in the impact of PPIs, examining how cultural factors might influence the effectiveness of similar projects in different linguistic and sociocultural contexts. Additionally, there is scope for investigating how technology and digital platforms can be harnessed to expand the reach of projects which have a specific audience and which foster community engagement. Finally, future research in applied linguistics should aim at developing standardized frameworks for integrating PPIs into language learning curricula, ensuring that the positive effects observed in this study can be replicated and optimized in various educational settings.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire respondents

Demographic variables	Answers	Freq.	%
Gender	Male	8	38.1 %
	Female	13	61.9 %
	Other	0	0 %
Age	18–25	19	90.5 %
	Over 25	2	9.5 %
L1	L1 English	19	90.5 %
	Other L1	2	9.5 %
Student classification	Domestic	21	100 %
	International	0	0 %
Degree	Bachelor of Arts	13	61.9 %
	Bachelor of Science	7	33.3 %
	Bachelor of Biomedicine	1	4.8 %
	Bachelor of Commerce	0	0 %
	Bachelor of Design	0	0 %
	Bachelor of Music	0	0 %
	Other	0	0 %
Role of Italian in students' degree	Major	10	47.6 %
	Diploma in Languages	9	42.9 %
	Minor	0	0 %
	Breadth	2	9.5 %
	Elective	0	0 %
	Other (please specify)	0	0 %
Year of completion of the subject	2020	9	42.7 %
	2019	12	57.1 %
Total		21	100 %

Appendix 2

Questionnaire: selected open-ended questions

- 1) Did you experience any positive or negative emotions while working on the project? Please explain.
- 2) What was the reaction of your family and/or friends when you showed them the completed book? What did they say to you? How did it make you feel? Please explain in as much detail as you wish.
- 3) Did the project contribute to your sense of accomplishment? Why?
- 4) Did the project influence your perception about learning Italian or learning languages in general?
- 5) Did the project have an influence on your motivation for learning Italian?
- 6) Looking back now, how memorable is the experience of the book project? Please motivate your answer.
- 7) Looking back now, did you appreciate to be given the opportunity to be creative by writing and publishing a book in Italian?
- 8) Please feel free to add any additional comments about your experience with the project.

References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021. *Census*. Available at: [https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/latest-release#:~:text=Top%20%20ancestries%20were%20English,Hinduism%20\(2.7%20per%20cent\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/latest-release#:~:text=Top%20%20ancestries%20were%20English,Hinduism%20(2.7%20per%20cent).).
- Amorati, Riccardo. 2022. Community presence, motivation and identity: The community-engaged L2 self of university learners of Italian in Melbourne. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 45(3). 299–321.
- Amorati, Riccardo, Ferrari Elisabetta & John Hajek. 2022. Podcasting as project-based learning and its effect on the acquisition of linguistic and non-linguistic skills. *Language Learning in Higher Education* 12(1). 7–28.
- Amorati, Riccardo & John Hajek. 2021. Fostering motivation and creativity through self-publishing as project-based learning in the Italian L2 classroom. *Foreign Language Annals* 54(4). 1003–1026.
- Bandura, Albert. 1997. *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Batson, Daniel C., Nadia Ahmad & David A. Lishner. 2011. Empathy and altruism. In Shane J. Lopez & Charles R. Snyder (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology*, 417–426. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boniwell, Ilona. 2011. Perspectives on time. In Shane J. Lopez & Charles R. Snyder (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology*, 295–302. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bouvet, Eric, Daniela Cosmini-Rose, Maria Palaktsoglou & Lynn Vanzo. 2017. “Doing good” in Italian through student community engagement: Positive psychology approaches to the teaching and learning of Italian in Australia. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 40(2). 159–175.
- Bouvet, Eric, Javier Diaz-Martinez, Daniela Cosmini-Rose, Maria Palaktsoglou, Lynn Vanzo & Rosslyn Von der Borch. 2020. Learning language “In Action”: Creating a work placement program in languages. In Jean Fornasiero, Sarah M. A. Reed, Rob Amery, Eric Bouvet, Kayoko Enomoto &

- Hui Ling Xu (eds.), *Intersections in language planning and policy: Establishing connections in languages and cultures*, 189–203. Cham: Springer Nature.
- Buck Institute of Education. 2022. *Golden standards for PBL*. Available at: <https://www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl/gold-standard-project-design/>.
- Cordella, Maria & Hui Huang (eds.), 2016. *Rethinking second language learning: Using intergenerational community resources*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Creswell, John W. 2013. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 4th edn. London: SAGE Publications.
- Dewaele, Jean-Marc. 2015. On emotions in foreign language learning and use. *The Language Teacher* 39(3). 13–15.
- Dewaele, Jean-Marc, Xijie Chen, Amado M. Padilla & J. Lake. 2019. The flowering of positive psychology in foreign language teaching and acquisition research. *Frontiers in Psychology* 10. 2128.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán. 2001. *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán. 2005. *The psychology of the language learner*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán. 2009. *The psychology of second language acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán & Jean-Marc Dewaele. 2022. *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*, 3rd edn. Abington: Routledge.
- Falout, Joseph. 2014. Circular seating arrangements: Approaching the social crux in language classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 4(2). 275–300.
- Falout, Joseph. 2016. The dynamics of past selves in language learning and well-being. In Peter D. MacIntyre, Tammy Gregersen & Sarah Mercer (eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA*, 112–129. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Gardner, Howard. 2011. The theory of multiple intelligences. In Robert J. Sternberg & Scott Barry Kaufman (eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of intelligence*, 485–503. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghosheh Wahbeh, Dua', Eman A. Najjar, Adel F. Sartawi, Maysa Abuzant & Wajeeh Daher. 2021. The role of project-based language learning in developing students' life skills. *Sustainability* 13(12). 6518.
- Gras-Velázquez, Adrian (ed.). 2019. *Project-based learning in second language acquisition: Building communities of practice in higher education*. New York: Routledge.
- Gregersen, Tammy. 2016. The positive broadening power of a focus on well-being in the language classroom. In Danuta Gabryś-Barker & Dagmara Gałajda (eds.), *Positive psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching*, 59–73. New York: Springer.
- Gregersen, Tammy, Peter D. MacIntyre, Kate Hein Finegan, Kyle Read Talbot & Shelby L. Claman. 2014. Examining emotional intelligence within the context of positive psychology interventions. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 4(2). 327–353.
- Gregersen, Tammy, Peter D. MacIntyre & Margarita Meza. 2016. Positive psychology exercises build social capital for language learners: Preliminary evidence. In Peter D. MacIntyre, Tammy Gregersen & Sarah Mercer (eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA*, 147–167. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Huo, Jiaying. 2022. The role of learners' psychological well-being and academic engagement on their grit. *Frontiers of Psychology* 13. 848325.
- Ibrahim, Zana. 2016. Affect in directed motivational currents: Positive emotionality in long-term L2 engagement. In Peter D. MacIntyre, Tammy Gregersen & Sarah Mercer (eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA*, 258–281. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Jia, Hui. 2022. English as a foreign language learners' well-being and their academic engagement: The mediating role of English as a foreign language learners' self-efficacy. *Frontiers of Psychology* 13. 882886.
- Keyes, Corey L. M. 2002. The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43(2). 207–222.

- Krishnan, Sujata, Simon Williams, Mohd Ridhwan Abdullah & Persis Dineen Rodrigues. 2016. Because I'm happy: Investigating the effects of a social outreach project on happiness among ESL learners in a Malaysian private university. In Chan Yuen Fook, Gurnam Kaur Sidhu, Suthagar Narasuman, Lee Lai Fong & Shireena Basree Abdul Rahman (eds.), *7th international conference on university learning and teaching (InCULT 2014) proceedings*, 841–858. Singapore: Springer.
- Larmer, John, John Mergendoller & Suzie Boss. 2015. *Setting the standard for project-based learning*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Little, Todd D., Patricia H. Hawley, Christopher C. Henrich & Katherine W. Marsland. 2002. Three views of the agentic self: A developmental synthesis. In Edward L. Deci & Richard M. Ryan (eds.), *Handbook of self-determination research*, 389–404. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.
- Magid, Michael & Letty Chan. 2012. Motivating English learners by helping them visualise their ideal L2 self: Lessons from two motivational programmes. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 6(2). 113–125.
- Mergendoller, John R., Thom Markham, Jason Ravitz & John Larmer. 2006. Pervasive management of project-based learning: Teachers as guides and facilitators. In Carolyn M. Evertson & Carol Simon Weinstein (eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues*, 583–615. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Noels, Kim A. 2001. New orientations in language learning motivation: Towards a model of intrinsic, extrinsic, and integrative orientations and motivation. In Zoltán Dörnyei & Richard Schmidt (eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition*, 43–68. Honolulu: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- Norton, Bonny. 2000. *Identity and language learning. Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Norton, Bonny. 2013. *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- O'Leary, Zina. 2010. *The essential guide to doing your research project*. London: Sage.
- Oxford, Rebecca L. 2016a. Toward a psychology of well-being for language learners: The “EMPATHICS” vision. In Peter D. MacIntyre, Tammy Gregersen & Sarah Mercer (eds.), *Positive psychology in second language acquisition*, 10–87. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Oxford, Rebecca L. 2016b. Powerfully positive: Searching for a model of language learner well-being. In Danuda Gabrys-Barker & Dagmara Gałajda (eds.), *Positive psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching*, 21–37. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Oxford, Rebecca L. & Lourdes Cuéllar. 2014. Positive psychology in cross-cultural narratives: Mexican students discover themselves while learning Chinese. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 4(2). 173–203.
- Palmieri, Cristiana. 2017. Belonging, idealized self and wellbeing. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 40(2). 176–193.
- Pentón Herrera, Javier L., Gilda Martinez-Alba & Ethan T. Trjnh. 2023. *Teacher well-being in English language teaching: An ecological approach*. New York: Routledge.
- Piasecka, Liliana. 2016. Activating character strengths through poetic encounters in a foreign language—a case study. In Danuda Gabrys-Barker & Dagmara Gałajda (eds.), *Positive psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching*, 75–92. New York: Springer.
- Polansky, Susan G. 2019. Community bridges and interdisciplinary language learning projects. Stepping out of comfort zones and building ways to grow. In Adrian Gras-Velázquez (ed.), *Project-based learning in second language acquisition: Building communities of practice in higher education*, 63–81. New York: Routledge.

- Proietti Ergün, Anna Lia & Hande Ersöz Demirdağ. 2022. The relation between foreign language enjoyment, subjective well-being, and perceived stress in multilingual students. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2057504>.
- Rose, Heath. 2019. Dismantling the ivory tower in TESOL: A renewed call for teaching-informed research. *TESOL Quarterly* 53(3). 895–905.
- Rubino, Antonia, Antonella Strambi & Vincenza Tudini. 2017. Flourishing in Italian: Positive psychology perspectives on the teaching and learning of Italian in Australia. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 40(2). 105–107.
- Rubio, Fernando D. 2014. Self-esteem and self-concept in foreign language learning. In Sarah Mercer & Marion Williams (eds.), *Multiple perspectives on the self in SLA*, 41–58. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Seligman, Martin E. P. 2011. *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Atria/Simon & Schuster.
- Slaughter, Yvette & John Hajek. 2014. *Challenging the monolingual mindset*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Stefanou, Candice, Jonathan D. Stolk, Michael Prince, John C. Chen & Susan M. Lord. 2013. Self-regulation and autonomy in problem- and project-based learning environments. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 14(2). 109–122.
- Stoller, Fredricka L. & CeAnn Chandel Myers. 2019. Project-based learning: A five-stage framework to guide language teachers. In Adrian Gras-Velázquez (ed.), *Project-based learning in second language acquisition: Building communities of practice in higher education*, 25–47. New York: Routledge.
- Strambi, Antonella, Ann Luzeckyj & Antonia Rubino. 2017. Flourishing in a second language (FL2): Integrating positive psychology, transition pedagogy and CLIL principles. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 40(2). 121–139.
- Supe, Olga & Aivars Kaupuzs. 2015. The effectiveness of project-based learning in the acquisition of English as a foreign language. *Society, Integration, Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Disciplines* 2. 210–218.
- Swain, Merrill. 2013. The inseparability of cognition and emotion in second language learning. *Language Teaching* 46(2). 195–207.
- Tennant, Ruth, Louise Hiller, Ruth Fishwick, Stephen Platt, Stephen Joseph, Scott Weich, Jane Parkinson, Jenny Secker & Sarah Stewart-Brown. 2007. The Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS): Development and UK validation. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes* 5. 63.
- Tochon, François Victor. 2014. *Help them learn a language deeply: François Victor Tochon's deep approach to world languages and cultures*. Blue Mounds: Deep University Press.
- Zimmerman, Barry J. 2000. Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In Monique Boekaerts, Paul R. Pintrich & Moshe Zeidner (eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation*, 13–39. San Diego: Academic Press.