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Positive Language Education: Combining Positive Education and Language Education

Abstract

In this paper, we discuss the notion of Positive Language Education (PLE), which stems from a combination of Positive Education and Language Education. We suggest that there are good reasons for language educators to engage in enhancing 21st-century skills alongside the promotion of linguistic skills. One key set of 21st-century competences that would have academic and non-academic benefits are those which promote wellbeing. Wellbeing is indeed the foundation for effective learning and a good life more generally. Drawing on ideas from Content and Integrated Language Learning and Positive Education, PLE involves integrating non-linguistic and linguistic aims in sustainable ways which do not compromise the development of either skill set, or overburden educators. We believe that there are strong foundations on which to build a framework of PLE. Firstly, many language teachers already promote many wellbeing competences, in order to facilitate language learning. There is also a growing body of research on positive psychology (PP) in Second Language Acquisition on which further empirical work with PLE interventions can be developed. Building on the theoretical arguments put forward in this paper, we call for an empirically validated framework of PLE, which can be implemented in diverse cultural and linguistic settings.

Keywords: positive psychology, language education, wellbeing, PERMA

Introduction

In many ways, the purpose, aims, and processes of language education already stretch beyond narrowly defined linguistic competences. Most communicative competence models include some expression of socio-cultural competence in using the language appropriately to interact and promote positive relationships with others through the use of language. In order to do this, learners need to have some self-awareness, openness to others and tolerance. Very often students are expected to collaborate and work with others in order to complete various communicative tasks in language classrooms. In bilingual and multilingual contexts around the world, learners are encouraged to use their incipient skills in the community, to speak with others for authentic communicative purposes. It is widely acknowledged that language learning also essentially involves core issues of self and identity (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). But have we thought, as a discipline, what effect all this might have on the learners' wellbeing? Cook (2013, p. 51) stresses that a multicompetence model of language teaching highlights that learning to use an L2 has numerous additional "internal mental side effects." In this paper, we propose that language educators consider the degree to which they may contribute to, and possibly detract from, learners' sense of wellbeing through their practices and pedagogical goals.

Background

Albert Einstein once said that "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school." This negativity toward schooling was reiterated in the responses of hundreds of parents in a 2009 study (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) in which they were asked what it is they want for their children in life. Unsurprisingly, they typically reported qualities such as happiness, confidence, contentment, health, satisfaction, etc. In short, these are notions that would usually be considered components of wellbeing. When asked what they thought schools taught, they reported on accomplishment-related concepts such as achievement, thinking skills, literacy, maths, discipline, etc. While traditional subjects being taught in schools certainly have their value, the gap between the two lists and an examination of what is not being taught in schools suggest an over-emphasis in some education systems on making students suitable for the workplace and their future careers with little to no attention to their lives and wellbeing beyond this. Interestingly, there is

good reason to believe that attending to these socio-emotional dimensions of the whole person would in fact improve and enhance learning in traditional subjects and academic success (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Sammons et al., 2007) as well as promote positive competences in the future workplace (Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). In other words, wellbeing and positive psychology skills and traits are not only useful for people's lives outside of work but also in work and school (White, 2011).

In this paper, we discuss the notion of Positive Language Education. We put forward three main arguments as to why wellbeing should be an approach *and* an outcome of education more broadly and language learning specifically. We argue that wellbeing is a key 21st-century life skill that should be promoted to help people of all ages manage contemporary life. Secondly, we believe that education should per se be a positive learning experience. Finally, we show how developing wellbeing skills and traits lead to positive learning outcomes. Focusing on language learning specifically, we suggest that the nature of language learning makes it ideally suited for integrating positive education values alongside linguistic competences. We consider how insights from CLIL could serve as a useful lens for reflecting on how wellbeing aims could be integrated with language learning aims in a range of forms from strong to weak in a sustainable way without leading to additional strain for language educators. We discuss existing challenges and consider the future direction for PLE as a potentially powerful positive force in the field of language learning and intercultural competence.

Twenty-first Century Life Skills

Throughout the history of education, debates have raged over the focus and purpose of education, and it is nothing new to find ourselves today critically questioning the purpose of education, and more specifically, the purpose of language education. In the title of his book, Guy Claxton (2008) asked the pertinent and fundamental question: *What's the Point of School?* He outlines the stress epidemic facing young people and argues this is exacerbated by schooling systems as they currently exist with their emphasis on standardized tests and mass education treating all learners the same. He suggests that, "in the thrall to content and qualifications, we have forgotten the deeper purpose of education. In the rush to make young people into successful exam passers, we have overlooked their deeper need to become successful *people*" (Claxton, 2008, p. ix. Italics in original). Instead, he goes on to explain that young people need to be equipped with skills to cope with life more generally.

But, what are such skills? Therein lies a fundamental question about what skills people need to be taught in school, the purpose of education, and what makes for a 'good' life. In the current educational debate, it is fashionable to discuss 21st-century skills. There are a diffuse number of definitions of what exactly is meant by such skills and which sub-competences each supposed skill has. Indeed, a range of frameworks and terms exist (see, e.g., ATC21S; Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (P21); OECD PISA Global Competence Framework; Project Zero; UNESCO four pillars of learning). Perhaps one key distinction across the frameworks is the extent to which the emphasis is on skills needed for the future workplace (typically digital literacies, creativity, critical thinking skills and collaboration skills) or on ways of living in society and as an individual (typically personal wellbeing, citizenship and social awareness). More typically, it is those skills associated with being successful workers in the future marketplace that tend to be the focus of many 21st-century skill frameworks. In contemporary language education, many of these 21st-century skills are increasingly being considered in course book design (see, e.g., *Open Mind/Mind* series by Macmillan; *Think!* by Cambridge University Press; *Together* by Oxford University Press). Gradually and very recently, 21st-century skills are beginning to appear alongside language education goals (see, e.g., *Cambridge Framework for Life Competences*).

Wellbeing as a Key Life Skill

One of the core life skills that has received comparatively little attention is teaching for wellbeing. However, we argue that in the 21st century, this is perhaps one of the main skills people need to manage their lives successfully. In education circles, concerns are growing about students' mental welfare, not only in schools, but also in other educational settings, especially at tertiary level. There is widespread acknowledgement in industrialised countries that large numbers of children and adolescents are reporting depression and anxiety, although scholars' explanations for the increase differ (see, e.g., Hidaka, 2012; Jane Costello, Erklani, & Angold, 2006; Mojtabai, Olfson, & Han, 2016; Skrove, Romundstad, & Indredavik, 2013). University students are recognised as being especially at risk (see, e.g., Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein, & Herner, 2007; Zivin, Eisenberg, Gollust, & Golberstein, 2009) with a tripling number of students dropping out of higher education due to mental health issues in recent years (HESA report 2017 in *Guardian*). According to the World Health Organisation report (2017), around 322 million people worldwide suffer from some form of depressive disorder and 264 million from some form of anxiety

disorder—and figures for both are increasing. In the UK alone, McManus, Bebbington, Jenkins, and Brugha (2014) report that one in six adults has some form of mental disorder. In his review of the prevalence of depression in industrialised countries, Hidaka (2012, p. 205) concludes with the alarming summary:

Modern populations are increasingly overfed, malnourished, sedentary, sunlight-deficient, sleep-deprived, and socially-isolated. These changes in lifestyle each contribute to poor physical health and affect the incidence and treatment of depression.

In measuring the success of a country, Diener and Seligman (2004) argued that a country's policy decisions are based heavily on economic indicators yet, as they show, wealthy nations with high GDP are not necessarily happy nations (see also Adler & Seligman, 2016). This means that what makes a happy, successful society cannot only be measured in economic terms. Instead, Diener and Seligman (2004) argue that a country's success indicators should include a wellbeing index measuring key variables such as relative positive and negative emotions, purpose, meaning, optimism and trust, among others. Indeed, there are signs that international organisations and some countries are beginning to take note of the importance of non-economic factors as indicators for the state of a nation. In 2017, the world's first happiness report was published and presented at the UN (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017). It highlighted the personal and social nature of wellbeing, the variation in wellbeing within countries, and the fact that work is a major factor affecting happiness. Concurring with a growing recognition of the importance of wellbeing for the functioning of societies, an OECD report in June 2016 (OECD, p. 3) states explicitly that one of its top priorities is to "[C]ontinue our efforts to build a new growth narrative that focuses on the well-being of people." Similarly, a UK government initiative has given equal weight to both physical and mental health (Aked, Marks, Cordon, & Thompson, 2008, p. 4). In the UK government white paper, *No Health without Mental Health*, it states:

The Government recognises that our mental health is central to our quality of life, central to our economic success and interdependent with our success in improving education, training and employment outcomes and tackling some of the persistent problems that scar our society, from homelessness, violence and abuse, to drug use and crime. (p. 2)

Importantly, these developments also recognise that taking a reactive deficit approach alone to dealing with mental health is insufficient. Rather, there is also a need to proactively prevent problems arising and promote positive mental health as a way of being day-to-day, not just in response to crises. It

is clear that education has a potentially key role to play in such preventative approaches. Interestingly, this development reflects moves in the field of psychology to switch from a deficit position to one which acknowledges the need to understand, appreciate and support flourishing in people's lives (Seligman, 2011). As such, recent years have seen the emergence of Positive Psychology (PP) as one branch of the broader field. PP is concerned with the scientific study of the positive aspects of life, areas of growth, and characteristics of "optimal human functioning" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It is not meant to replace traditional areas of research but to complement them, ensuring more balanced coverage of human psychology. One of its main stated aims is to understand what makes people flourish and what contributes to the 'good life' (Seligman, 2011). It represents the academic foundation for investigating and promoting wellbeing as an educational goal and life skill. As Waters (2011, p. 76) states, "The emphasis of positive psychology on wellbeing, flourishing, character, meaning and virtue aligns strongly with the ethos of whole-student learning in 21st-century schooling."

Defining Wellbeing

So, what is meant by wellbeing? Leiter and Cooper (2017, p. 1) note how difficult it is to define, given the research community cannot even agree on whether to write the term with a hyphen or not. However, most scholars tend to agree that it is a multifaceted construct that includes an emotional dimension, attitudes, perceptions, and, in some cases, physical and mental health. One of the most widely used definitions is the term "subjective well-being" (SWB). Diener, Oishi, and Lucas (2009, p. 187) explain that SWB is a broad construct that refers essentially to "a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life as a whole." It is typically described as being comprised of life satisfaction, a relative lack of negative emotions and the presence of positive emotions (Kahneman, Diener & Schwartz, 1999). It is important to note here that this definition does not exclude negative emotions, which also have a key role to play in wellbeing, but, ideally, the ratio should be more positive than negative emotions overall. The assumption underlying definitions of SWB is that for the 'good life,' a person needs to like themselves and their lives (Diener et al., 2009). As a construct, this term has been utilised in a broad range of studies and has strong reliable measures and tools based on this definition (Diener et al., 2010; Eid & Diener, 2004; Goodman, Disabato, Kashdan, & Kauffman, 2017).

Another commonly used definition of wellbeing as a component of the 'good life' is offered by Seligman (2011) in his PERMA model. PERMA

refers to Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment. It is interesting and perhaps important to note that Seligman made the deliberate decision to move from “authentic happiness theory” to “wellbeing theory” as a model and construct, in order to avoid the simplistic misapprehensions that are encumbered in the connotations of the word “happiness.” As an approach, PERMA emphasises more the eudaimonic notion of wellbeing, which contrasts with the somewhat more hedonic notion of SWB. That said, a study by Goodman et al. (2017) comparing SWB and PERMA suggests the two constructs are capturing similar kinds of wellbeing. A strength of the PERMA model is its foregrounding of the social nature of wellbeing and how it is not merely situated in the perceptive frame of an individual but involves others in social communities and relationships. Although there are relatively few empirical tools designed explicitly to test the PERMA model, one example that has good reliability scores is the PERMA Profiler—Short Form, which is a 15-item measure of all the core elements: positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and achievement (Butler & Kern, 2016). More recently, a sixth dimension has theoretically been added to the PERMA model to create the PERMA-V model (Zhiotovskaya at the Flourishing Centre). “V” stands for “vitality” in the sense of physical wellbeing and makes an essential addition to the model uniting body and mind and highlighting the link between physical and mental wellbeing (Diener & Chan, 2011; Veenhoven, 2008; Xu & Roberts, 2010). However, there is an absence of empirical research incorporating this additional sixth element at present although the PERMA profiler does include some items on health (see, e.g., Butler & Kern, 2016). For our purposes, the presence of these theoretical models of wellbeing and related empirical tools (see Adler & Seligman, 2016) suggest that the field is in a position to measure wellbeing as an educational outcome and, therefore, measure, evaluate and assess the effectiveness of any interventions.

Can Wellbeing Be Enhanced through Interventions?

If wellbeing is proposed as a goal of education and we can define and measure this reliably, we also need to be sure that wellbeing is malleable and can be specifically targeted and enhanced in interventions in education. In fact, Layous and Lyubomirsky (2014) argue that the question is no longer whether wellbeing activities and interventions work, but rather how such interventions work and to what degree. Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) are defined by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009, p. 467) as intentional programs, practices, treatment methods or activities “aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive

behaviours, or positive cognitions.” Duckworth, Steen, and Seligman (2005, p. 641) argue that PPIs are worthwhile for two reasons. Firstly, because they, by definition, “build pleasure, engagement, and meaning,” and hence are defensible on their own. Second, they contend that “building positive emotion, engagement, and meaning may actually counter disorder itself.” However, views on the second claim vary (see, e.g., Mongrain & Anselmo-Matthews, 2012). In their meta-analysis of 49 studies investigating positive psychology interventions (PPIs), Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) conclude that:

(t)he combined results of 49 studies revealed that PPIs do, in fact, significantly enhance WB [wellbeing], and the combined results of 25 studies showed that PPIs are also effective for treating depressive symptoms. The magnitude of these effects is medium-sized (mean $r = .29$ for WB, mean $r = .31$ for depression), indicating that not only do PPIs work, they work well. (p. 482)

In another meta-analysis of PPIs in 39 studies, Bolier et al. (2013, p. 1) also found that PPIs “can be effective in the enhancement of subjective well-being and psychological well-being, as well as in helping to reduce depressive symptoms.” They also found that these effects were significant over time showing that effects are sustainable. However, there are some notable mediating variables. Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) developed a model based on their analysis of theoretical and empirical studies to show that the effects of PPIs are mediated by features of the activities themselves (such as duration, dosage, and variety), the characteristics of the person (such as their motivation and effort), and how well the person and activity suit each other, known as ‘person-activity fit.’ A key factor affecting this is the cultural context of the individual as different cultures value different things (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). Naturally, the cultural appropriacy of any intervention is especially important to consider in the context of language education.

There are a wide range of possible PPIs that exist and Duckworth et al. (2005) suggest that there are at least over 100 possible suggested activities. However, not all have been empirically tested and/or found to have robust findings in affecting change. Yet, there are clear indications about the positive effects of specific interventions and these would seem to be the ones to build on initially for any planned intervention or series of activities to be integrated in language education (see Appendix A for a referenced list of empirically validated interventions).

Positive Education

Positive Education (PE) is defined as “the bringing together of the science of positive psychology with best practices teaching, to encourage and support schools and individuals to flourish” (Norrish, 2015, p. xxvii). Rather than addressing only negative factors in education, the PE approach is designed to actively build on positive factors to promote flourishing. As an educational approach, PE seeks to put wellbeing at the core of education alongside academic subjects without either being compromised by the other. It has its roots in humanistic educational approaches and connections to a range of other approaches including Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), holistic education, etc. Fundamentally, PE focuses on supporting academic growth through and alongside the promotion of learner wellbeing, and deliberately integrates good teaching principles with specific empirically validated approaches from positive psychology. The International Positive Education Network (IPEN) uses the double helix metaphor to explain how the DNA of education needs to have two intertwined strands of equal importance: Academics (fulfilment of intellectual potential) and Character and Wellbeing (development of character strengths and wellbeing). IPEN emphasizes that the “character plus academics” combination are complementary and mutually reinforcing, with character strengths and wellbeing contributing positively to academic achievement and vice versa. Indeed, research suggests this is the case. Noble, Wyatt, McGrath, Carbines, and Leone (2008, p. 14) conclude their wide-ranging evaluation and report on wellbeing initiatives in schools in Australia by concluding that, “efforts to improve the wellbeing of young people in schools are therefore important for maximising the likelihood that young people can benefit from their participation in schooling.” Specifically, positive wellbeing is associated with an impressive range of psychological, social, and academic benefits (Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Quinn & Duckworth, 2007; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Further, research into positive emotions shows how this can broaden attention (Fredrickson, 1998; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Rowe, Hirsh, & Anderson, 2007), lead to more creative thinking (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987; Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1994), and foster more trusting relationships with people from other cultural groups (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009; Fredrickson & Cohn, 2008; Fredrickson, 2013). In educational contexts, research shows specifically how students who experience positive emotions tend to earn higher grades (Pekrun, Goetz, Frenzel, Barchfeld, & Perry, 2011; Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013), use learning strategies more effectively (King & Areepattamannil, 2014), and are more active participants in class activities (King, McInerney, Ganotice, & Villarosa, 2015; Pekrun et al., 2011). As Waters (2011, p. 77) explains, “Positive education also works on the precept that the skills and mindsets that promote positive emotions, posi-

tive relationships and character strengths also promote learning and academic success (Bernard & Walton, 2011).” Seligman et al. (2009, p. 295) conclude that wellbeing should be taught in schools, “as an antidote to depression, as a vehicle for increasing life satisfaction, and as an aid to better learning and more creative thinking.”

Integrating wellbeing into educational approaches can be carried out along a continuum from strong to weak forms. In its weakest form, it could be doing an explicit individual task or a smaller project explicitly or simply raising awareness of the wellbeing impact of the approaches taken. At the other end of the spectrum, others discuss the potential of teaching wellbeing as a specific separate school subject (White, 2016), although there are concerns about how sustainable that is and what message about the significance of this it sends to learners if it separated from the core curriculum. The strongest forms would be whole school reform or nationwide curricular changes. For those who wish to introduce PE in some form, there are growing numbers of education-based interventions available as well as established wellbeing models on which to base programmes. One such example is the Positive Educational Practices (PEP) Framework proposed by Noble and McGrath (2008). It centres on five foundations that are closely linked to Seligman’s PERMA model but also draws on other areas of psychology. The foundations are: social and emotional competency, positive emotions, positive relationships, engagement through strengths, and a sense of meaning and purpose.

Which form of PE is most appropriate for any given setting will depend on the contextual constraints, attitudes, and resources available. As such, how PE could be integrated cannot be prescribed and at this relatively early stage of our educational experiences with this approach, a number of questions remain to be clarified. For example, concerns which need to be addressed include the strength and/or limitations of empirical evidence for the lasting effectiveness of such programmes (Spence & Shortt, 2007), debates around the moral, political and interpretative discourse of wellbeing (Ecclestone, 2012; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009a, b), and concerns that a focus on wellbeing distracts attention from the academic subjects at the heart of traditional educational approaches (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006). Essentially, for teachers to work with PE in their teaching, they must feel it is worthwhile, feel capable to incorporate it and have the sense that this is something they can integrate into their teaching in a sustainable way, rather than it being a burden as yet another additional add-on responsibility for the educator to find time and become responsible for. All of these are legitimate concerns which must be solved for wellbeing to earn its place alongside academics in all educational levels and teacher development programmes would have a key role to play.

Positive Language Education

We believe that wellbeing is not only a justifiable and legitimate aim for education alongside academics, but a highly necessary aim in the context of 21st-century life skills. Now we consider why we think language education specifically is an ideal context within which to develop wellbeing competences. As stated at the outset, language education typically aims for more than narrowly defined linguistic competence and it often involves many aspects of the individual and their psychologies. Indeed, learning a language can be thought of as a way in itself of enhancing wellbeing (see also notions of the ‘Healthy Linguistic Diet,’ Bak & Mehmedbegovic, 2017).

A specific population worth mentioning in this regard are refugees and migrants who are learning a language. There is an expectation that such populations are likely to be at greater risk of psychological problems and difficulties (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Nielsen et al., 2008). As such, it is possible they would benefit even more from a dual strand approach to language learning that incorporates a wellbeing life skills perspective when approached in culturally sensitive ways. In a study by the British Council and UNHCR, Capstick and Delaney (2016) show how languages used by the refugees helped them build resilience at individual, family and community levels. They suggest that language is a factor in strengthening resilience and is a factor in preventing conflict and strengthening communities. They argue that the use of languages has “a central role to play in helping refugees to address the effects of loss, displacement and trauma” (Capstick & Delaney, 2016, p. 7) by providing them with a voice to share their stories. They suggest that through various activities and forms of play and storytelling using the “safe space of a second or third language” (Capstick & Delaney, 2016, p. 7), people can be supported in making sense of their experiences and expressing their feelings. Very much in line with what is being proposed in this article, they suggest that “psycho-social interventions do not always need to be seen as separate interventions to language learning” (Capstick & Delaney, 2016, p. 7).

An obvious model for the dual strand approach proposed by IPEN can be found in the areas of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The definition of CLIL offered by Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) explains the dual focus aims of the approach:

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. That is, in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language.

Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. (p. 1)

In this way, a CLIL framework could offer a useful lens for reflecting on how to work through the language with a content focus on wellbeing and elements of PP in ways stretching from strong to weak forms, as with CLIL. At present, the key difference is that the content of wellbeing is rarely, if ever, part of the curriculum—in contrast to CLIL which is traditionally used for content subjects already anchored in the curriculum. Typically, language educators use language to reflect on and discuss various topic areas and themes. By working on those topics and issues, language skills are developed and further promoted. Language-in-use is in fact the key tenet of the communicative approach. This suggests that language could also be used to teach competences at the heart of PE such as hope, gratitude, growth, positivity, kindness, optimism, tolerance, empathy, meaning, etc. alongside the development of language skills.

It is worth noting that nobody is suggesting that language teachers become “surrogate psychologists” (Craig, 2009, p. 1), and some teachers may feel that promoting wellbeing does not fall in their remit, responsibilities, or range of competences. However, many language educators already work on promoting positive individual and social characteristics (such as motivation, positive identities, sense of confidence, growth mindsets, empathy, positive relationships, etc.), in order to facilitate and promote language learning, thereby supporting learners in their broader lives. Yet, even in countries where wellbeing and health are considered within the professional remit of teachers, there is evidence that their training in this regard is at best patchy with reasons given such as a lack of time and a prevailing belief that wellbeing and health are low priorities in education (see, e.g., Dewhurst et al., 2014). However, for language educators to incorporate language and wellbeing aims consciously and effectively, they would need proper support and training.

Foundations for PLE in SLA to Date

To date, there are very few explicit programmes which exist to combine language learning and wellbeing aims. One that we are aware of is a project by Strambi, Luzeckyj, and Rubino (2017) at two universities in Australia to develop a curriculum incorporating PP, Transition Pedagogy, and CLIL principles to promote wellbeing in students transitioning to university and the teaching of Italian. There are also several course book series aiming at combining language learning with the development of 21st-century life skills although they

differ in their conceptualisations and where the relative emphasis lies (see, e.g., *Open Mind/Mind* series by Macmillan; *Think!* by Cambridge University Press; *Together* by Oxford University Press). However, the field has seen an explosion of interest in positive psychology (PP), which forms the foundations of PE in line with the contemporary zeitgeist of language education where there is an increasing focus on the learner as a whole person (MacIntyre, 2016). Humanistic work in SLA is being revisited from a contemporary lens (Arnold & Murphey, 2013; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014) with emotions no longer being ‘shunned’ as the poor cousin of cognition (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

In terms of PP interventions specifically in SLA, work has begun with students and pre-service teachers to integrate language or pedagogical learning alongside wellbeing development. Although the focus of this article has been on language education, the same arguments can equally be applied to language teacher development. Language teachers too have a critical need for wellbeing. This is especially important given the high rates of burnout among teachers (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) and the fact that we know that teachers with high levels of wellbeing are simply better, more effective teachers (Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman 2009; Sammons et al., 2007). Importantly, it suggests that there may be potential for PPIs in the context of teacher development (pre-service and in-service) explicitly incorporating wellbeing aims alongside other professional development goals to prepare language teachers for the rest of their careers. For example, Gregersen, MacIntyre, and Meza (2016) have examined individualized PPIs, integrated into a conversation partners program and report evidence of increased wellbeing scores over-and-above the benefits of participating in the regular programme. Hiver (2016) also focused on the wellbeing of the language teacher. His investigation on novice teacher resiliency generated data that suggested that the early career teachers who were prepared for the variability of the emotional peaks and valleys that are naturally inherent in classroom practice ended up with greater hope and hardiness than those who were ill-prepared in this regard.

Similar to PPIs focused on language teachers, second language researchers have also been actively pursuing empirical data on PPIs with language learners. For example, working from the position of “self” studies, Lake (2016) offered pedagogically applicable findings suggesting that positive L2 learner identities are important for learners to flourish. Flourishing in the language classroom may also be partly achieved through flow which is best achieved, according to Czimmermann and Piniel (2016), when there exists an advantageous blend of task difficulty and focused engagement. This combination, according to their quantitative evidence, is more likely to result in greater L2 learner control. Also with a focus on the impact of PPIs in learner development, Gregersen, MacIntyre, Finegan, Talbot, and Claman (2014) gathered evidence suggesting that emotional intelligence plays an important role in the success of specific

PPIs like “three good things,” “savoring,” and “learned optimism.” Furthermore, using music as a PPI, Murphey (2014; 2016) followed learners’ advancement of wellbeing as a process (rather than an end-state) and demonstrated that learners-as-teachers can also spread positivity to others outside the classroom in their own social networks. These examples of just some of the ways in which PP is gaining a place in SLA research provide promising foundations within SLA on which to build an integrated approach of PLE substantiated with empirical evidence. While wellbeing aims may vary according to age as well as cultural contexts, the development of a coherent framework of competences and curricular designed with an integration of wellbeing competences alongside language education goals for both learners and teachers would seem to be vital next steps.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have suggested there are good reasons for language educators to engage in enhancing 21st-century skills alongside the promotion of linguistic skills. We suggest that one key 21st-century skill that would have academic and non-academic benefits would be to focus on developing the competences, which promote wellbeing. Following the double helix metaphor, the non-linguistic and linguistic aims can be interwoven in practice in sustainable ways which do not compromise the development of either skill set, or overburden educators. We have suggested that many language teachers already promote many of these competences in order to facilitate language learning. However, a concern is that this is often done in an ad hoc way with no training or explicit support, guidelines or practical frameworks. As such, training is needed at in-service and pre-service levels to support teachers in understanding what wellbeing is and how it can be fostered for both themselves and their learners. We need to work towards a framework of Positive Language Education that can be empirically validated and further developed, and which can be practically implemented in diverse cultural and linguistic settings without prescriptivism and in sustainable ways. The wellbeing of learners and teachers should not be considered an optional extra but is a fundamental foundation of the skill sets both need to cope in their personal and professional lives in the future. The language learning context is ideally positioned to facilitate the learning of wellbeing through language use and learning. The question is whether this is especially ‘positive’ language education, or simply what good language education ought to be anyway.

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Sarah Mercer, Peter MacIntyre, Tammy Gregersen, Kyle Talbot

Positiver Sprachunterricht: Kombination von positiver Einstellung zum Unterricht mit Sprachunterricht

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag schildert die Methode der positiven Einstellung zum Sprachunterricht (PLE von engl. *Positive Language Education*), die auf einer Kombination von positivem Unterricht mit Sprachunterricht beruht. Seine Verfasser argumentieren, dass sich die Sprachlehrerinnen für Entfaltung gegenwärtiger Kompetenzen, darunter auch Sprachkompetenzen, einsetzen sollen. Eine solcher Kompetenzen ist das dem effektiven Fremdsprachenunterricht zugrunde liegende Wohlbefinden. Sich die Ideen positiven und integrierten Unterrichts zunutze machend integriert PLE auf ausgewogene Weise sprachliche und außersprachliche Zwecke. Den Verfassern zufolge gibt es relevante Grundlagen, PLE auszubauen. Zum einen sind schon heutzutage zahlreiche Fremdsprachenlehrerinnen im Stande, verschiedene außersprachliche Kompetenzen bei ihren Schülerninnen zu entwickeln. Zum anderen befassen sich wissenschaftliche Forschungen immer häufiger mit dem Thema Positiver Psychologie beim Fremdspracherwerben. Im vorliegenden Beitrag werden theoretische Argumente dafür angeführt, dass es notwendig wäre, empirische Forschungen im PLE-Modell zu verschiedenen Sprachen und deren spezifischen Kulturmerkmalen durchzuführen.

Schlüsselwörter: Positive Psychologie, Unterricht, Wohlbefinden, PERMA, gegenwärtige Kompetenzen