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INTEGRATING THE PERMA MODEL TO ENHANCE TEACHER AND STUDENT WELL-BEING IN 21ST-CENTURY CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

The increasing complexity of 21st-century education has intensified cognitive, emotional, and organizational demands on both teachers and students, particularly within language learning environments. Language classrooms require sustained communicative engagement, exposure to uncertainty, and continuous interpersonal interaction, all of which may contribute to elevated anxiety and reduced motivation among learners. Simultaneously, teachers face expanding professional responsibilities that extend beyond classroom instruction to include curriculum development, interdisciplinary projects, administrative duties, and institutional coordination. These combined pressures suggest increasing the risk of chronic stress and professional burnout. This article aims to explore the integration of the PERMA model of positive psychology – Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment – with coaching methodologies as a pedagogical framework for enhancing well-being in language classrooms. Coaching practices such as goal-setting, reflective questioning, strengths-based feedback, and solution-focused dialogue are examined as operational tools for embedding PERMA principles into instructional practice. The study develops a conceptual framework that links coaching strategies to second language acquisition processes, emphasizing learner autonomy, emotional safety, and communicative confidence.

Current analysis suggests that PERMA-informed coaching holds promise for high-demand academic high schools. Initial insights point to potential student benefits – including reduced language anxiety, higher engagement, and stronger interpersonal relationships – while supporting teacher well-being through reflective practice and reduced emotional exhaustion. Ultimately, this framework provides a baseline for future empirical studies to evaluate whether integrated coaching interventions can enhance student and teacher well-being.

Keywords: *coaching, language education, PERMA model, teacher and student well-being*

Introduction

Language education in the 21st century is characterized by increasing pedagogical complexity, technological integration, and heightened expectations for communicative

competence (Cefai et al., 2023; Burow & Gallenkamp, 2017). Unlike content-based disciplines, language learning requires learners to continuously engage in spontaneous expression, interpersonal communication, and meaning negotiation in a non-native linguistic system. Building on foundational models of language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986), these conditions involve psychological vulnerability, which frequently manifests as reduced willingness to communicate and avoidance behavior (Nerlicki, 2011; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Zengin & Şahin Toptaş, 2023).

Teachers in language education within the EU operate under demanding work conditions (OECD, 2018, 2025). Beyond core instructional responsibilities – such as designing communicative tasks, differentiating instruction, and integrating digital tools – they are increasingly expected to foster students' socio-emotional development (Council of Europe CEFR Expert Group, 2023). In secondary education, particularly within academic high schools, these demands are compounded by administrative requirements, including content and language integrated learning (CLIL) projects, curriculum planning, and institutional governance (European Commission et al., 2023). This combination of administrative and instructional pressure can contribute to emotional exhaustion, suggesting that burnout in education may be understood as a systemic issue tied to institutional structures rather than individual weakness. In line with this perspective, a report by UNESCO and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2024) points to unstable employment conditions and emotional exhaustion as primary factors behind the high rate of European teachers leaving the profession.

From the student perspective, academic high school education is frequently characterized by high academic expectations, performance-driven assessment systems, and intensive workload demands. These stressors are supported by a World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (2024) study of 279,117 adolescents across 44 countries, which documented a decline in youth support networks between 2018 and 2022. High family support dropped from 73% to 67%, peer support fell from 61% to 58%, and perceived teacher support decreased to 36%, while school-related pressure rose – reaching 63% among 15-year-old girls. Together, these factors can create a dual-pressure environment in which students and teachers face ongoing daily stress. Consequently, well-being in education is increasingly understood not as a purely individual trait, but as an interactive condition shaped by institutional and pedagogical structures (Lichtinger, 2025).

Positive psychology provides a valuable counter-perspective by shifting focus from deficit reduction toward human flourishing. First introduced in 2011, Seligman's (2013, 2018) PERMA model conceptualizes well-being through five core dimensions: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. While the PERMA model is well-established in general education, its direct application to school-based language teaching remains limited (Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025).

Coaching methodologies provide a practical framework for turning PERMA theory into concrete classroom strategies. In modern coaching practice, established models – ranging from systemic and solution-focused approaches to cognitive-behavioral frameworks – rely on key principles such as self-responsibility, mutual respect, transparency,

and a collaborative, peer-like dynamic (Roth & Ryba, 2016). Additionally, professional coaching centers on building self-reflection and self-awareness, allowing individuals to expand their thinking, emotional regulation, and choice of actions in a self-directed way (Deutscher Bundesverband Coaching, n.d.). Within language education, these principles align directly with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritizes learner autonomy, reflective interaction, and functional language use in meaningful contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Drawing on this overlap, this paper explores how positive coaching methods, grounded in the PERMA model, might be applied in foreign language classrooms to support both teacher and student well-being. Following Seligman's (2013, p. 24) framework, well-being is defined not as a single general state, but as a construct driven by five distinct elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. Because no single factor builds well-being on its own, the paper suggests that applying these five components alongside coaching principles moves PERMA beyond individual psychology. Instead, this study views well-being as a shared classroom process shaped by daily interactions between teachers, students, and teaching methods, aiming to offer a practical model for more sustainable teaching in demanding school environments.

This paper is guided by one central research question: *To what extent can positive coaching methods and the PERMA model be integrated into foreign language education – specifically in German as a Foreign Language (GFL) classrooms – and what are the primary trends, practices, and challenges in using them to support teacher and student well-being?*

The author holds complete intellectual responsibility for the content, analysis, and conclusions of this study. Generative AI tools (ChatGPT, 2026; Gemini, 2026) were used solely for linguistic refinement, stylistic editing, reference formatting, and initial diagram generation. All AI-generated suggestions and visual materials were carefully evaluated, fact-checked, and revised by the author to ensure academic accuracy and original scholarly integrity.

Methodology

Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

This study uses a qualitative, conceptual design (Creswell, 2014) based on an integrative literature review methodology (Torraco, 2016) to bring together research on positive psychology, educational coaching, and foreign language teaching. Literature searches were conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and APA PsycInfo for English- and German-language publications released between 2011 and 2026, with a primary focus on research from 2020 to 2026. Along with the database search, key books and foundational texts were reviewed by hand. Search terms paired theoretical models (*PERMA model*, *positive psychology*) with coaching methods (*instructional coaching*, *GROW model*), language teaching (*second language acquisition*, *German as a foreign language*, *communicative competence*), and well-being measures (*classroom anxiety*, *burnout*).

Source selection was guided by specific inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria: Peer-reviewed empirical and theoretical studies on educational coaching, positive psychology interventions, or emotional dynamics in language learning; official educational policy reports (e.g., OECD, Council of Europe); and central Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) frameworks.

Exclusion Criteria: Literature focused on clinical psychology, psychiatric treatment, or corporate executive coaching outside educational contexts.

Because direct research on applying the PERMA model specifically within German as a Foreign Language (GFL) classrooms remains limited, the search scope was extended to general English Language Teaching (ELT) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature where theoretical principles overlap.

An initial database search identified 125 records. Following title and abstract screening, 68 full-text sources were evaluated against the inclusion criteria. Ultimately, 50 key sources were chosen for the analysis – a mix of empirical studies, foundational books, policy reports, and practical handbooks.

Data Analysis and Model Synthesis

Data analysis took place in two steps. First, key elements of the PERMA model (Seligman, 2013) and coaching practices (e.g., Roth & Ryba, 2016) were identified and grouped into themes. Second, these themes were mapped against common challenges in language learning, particularly foreign language classroom anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016) and barriers to communication.

In the final step, these findings were combined to outline the proposed **PERMA–Coaching Language Learning Model**. The model frames classroom well-being not as a fixed trait, but as an interactive process: by integrating coaching methods, teachers may help foster student well-being, which in turn can reduce language anxiety and potentially support teacher resilience as well.

Results

Coaching Methodologies in Language Education

Coaching in educational contexts is understood as a structured, reflective dialogue designed to support critical thinking, goal achievement, and personal growth (van Nieuwerburgh, 2020). In this setup, regular dialogue between coach and learner appears to support self-regulation and skill development. Unlike traditional teaching approaches that rely on a top-down transmission of knowledge, educational coaching emphasizes learner autonomy, personal agency, and self-discovery (van Nieuwerburgh, 2020; Knight, 2007). By shifting responsibility to the individual, this approach positions the educator not as a traditional instructor, but as a facilitator of cognitive and emotional growth (Roth & Ryba, 2016). Within positive education, such coaching structures can serve a dual purpose, potentially helping to reduce educational stress while

fostering an environment where student well-being and academic achievement support one another (Lichtinger, 2023).

One widely applied coaching approach is the GROW model, structured around four steps: Goal, Reality, Options, and Will or Way Forward (Whitmore, 2009). In language classrooms, this model can help learners set speaking and writing goals, reflect on their current language skills, explore study strategies, and plan concrete next steps. As Blickhan (2021, p. 65) suggests, coaching generally focuses on helping individuals clarify what they want to achieve, draw on available resources, and address obstacles along the way. Within the GROW model, establishing a goal offers a starting point for practical change – a process Blickhan (2021, p. 66) summarizes with the equation: *"Current State + Solution Paths + Resources = Goal"* (author's translation). This forward-looking emphasis tends to differentiate coaching from traditional counseling or psychotherapy, which often focuses first on diagnosing and analyzing underlying problems or difficulties.

Adopting a coaching approach over traditional, lecture-based teaching may allow educators to act more as facilitators than direct instructors (Whitmore, 2017; Sadewo et al., 2025). Rather than simply delivering information, teachers can use open-ended questions to encourage students to evaluate their progress, consider potential solutions, and take greater responsibility for their learning (Whitmore, 2017). To help apply these principles, Sadewo et al. (2025) proposed expanding the classic GROW framework into the GAARANTUNG model (*Goal, Actual, Alternative, Realistic Action Plan, Navigate Action, Track Monitoring, and Understand New Growth*). By combining face-to-face coaching with digital tools, this framework seeks to guide learners through reflection, practical action, regular progress checks, and final evaluation, offering a structured pathway toward greater student autonomy.

Beyond the GROW model, other coaching frameworks can also be useful in school settings. For a long time, educators and organizational leaders relied on the SMART model criteria – aiming for goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (Doran, 1982, as cited in Mangelsdorf, 2020, p. 18). While research indicates that SMART goals often lead to reliable results, Cameron and Plews (2012, as cited in Mangelsdorf, 2020, p. 19) proposed an alternative model called "Everest goals." Rooted in positive leadership research, this approach shifts how goals are viewed: instead of treating a goal simply as a step-by-step fix for a current problem, an Everest goal is designed to serve as an ambitious source of inspiration and inner drive (Cameron, 2013, as cited in Mangelsdorf, 2020, p. 19). In a demanding school environment, introducing these broader, vision-driven goals may encourage both teachers and students to look beyond just fixing immediate weaknesses and focus on long-term personal growth instead.

Another approach gaining attention in German-speaking coaching contexts is the Berlin Development Model (*Das Berliner Entwicklungsmodell*), developed by Mangelsdorf and Çelebi (as cited in Mangelsdorf, 2020, pp. 25–37; author's translation). Rather than focusing primarily on psychological difficulties or gaps, this model is designed to highlight individual strengths and growth potential.

It centers on three key areas, each guided by specific reflective questions:

1. Strengths: Finding the person's top five natural talents so they can put them to good use.
2. Values: Identifying the personal principles and beliefs that matter most to them.
3. Meaning: Exploring what brings purpose and direction to their life.

To make these ideas easier to understand and apply, the model uses the image of a tree (Mangelsdorf, 2020, p. 26). In this setup, the roots represent a person's core values, the trunk and branches stand for their key strengths, and the sun represents their main source of meaning and purpose. Using this simple visual in schools can give teachers and students a practical way to reflect on their personal strengths and personal growth.

To put coaching models like GROW, Everest goals, or the Berlin Development Model into practice, teachers can rely on thoughtful communication strategies. Building on solution-focused coaching, Prohaska (2013) outlines several types of questions designed to encourage reflection and help students rethink their perspective:

- Problem-Oriented Questions: These can help clarify what is currently happening. However, they are best used sparingly so the student does not get stuck focusing only on what is wrong (p. 10).
- Resource-Oriented Questions: These can shift attention toward helpful people, supportive surroundings, and personal strengths that can help students work through academic or personal challenges (p. 11).
- Goal-Oriented Questions: These look to the future, asking students to describe where they want to be, consider how reaching that goal affects them and others, and spot potential hurdles ahead of time (pp. 11–12).
- Scaling Questions: These use a simple scale (like 1 to 10) to measure feelings, confidence, or progress. Making small improvements visible can make this especially helpful for teenagers dealing with school stress and emotional distress (pp. 13–14).
- Dissociated Questions: By encouraging a step back to look at the situation from an outside perspective, these questions can help students see things differently and discover new ways forward (pp. 14–15).
- Hypothetical Questions: These can invite students to imagine ideal scenarios or outcomes, giving them room to explore potential solutions without immediate pressure (pp. 15–16).
- Paradoxical Questions: These can take a problem to its extreme, helping to break up rigid thinking in a constructive way (pp. 16–17).

PERMA Model and Language Classrooms

Developed by Martin Seligman (2013), the PERMA model offers a practical guide for supporting well-being in both schools and coaching settings. Applied to education, it shapes the approach known as Positive Education, an approach that combines traditional teaching with a focus on student well-being (Seligman et al., 2009). Studies suggest that encouraging positive feelings, focusing on student strengths, and using collaborative activities can increase motivation, classroom participation, and learning outcomes (Ly &

Nguyen, 2024; Waters, 2011). In practice, some schools work with PERMA by nurturing the five key elements through reflection, active learning, teamwork, relevant assignments, and constructive feedback. In coaching, the model gives individuals a structured way to use their personal strengths, set clear goals, build motivation, and reflect regularly on their progress (Blickhan, 2021; Brohm-Badry & Endres, 2017).

Closely connected to this approach is Peterson and Seligman's (2004) VIA classification of 24 character strengths, which builds on common personal qualities like curiosity, perseverance, kindness, and teamwork. In educational and coaching settings alike, identifying these qualities can help individuals to work on their existing strengths to support learning, daily performance, and personal growth (Lichtinger, 2023, 2025). In language classrooms specifically, combining the PERMA model with character strengths can make learning a more well-rounded experience.

In school environments, the PERMA model offers a clear, practical guide for supporting student well-being:

- Positive Emotions: Teachers can encourage these feelings by acknowledging individual progress, using playful learning activities, and guiding students to reflect on positive experiences (Lichtinger, 2025; Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025; Seligman, 2013, p. 16).
- Engagement: Students reach a state of deep focus – often called "flow" – when working on naturally interesting tasks, especially through project-based and student-centered activities (Lichtinger, 2025; Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025; Seligman, 2013, pp. 16–17).
- Relationships: This component reflects the overall classroom atmosphere and the quality of connections between teachers and students. Educators can assess these dynamics through simple surveys on student support or by observing how well students work together in group tasks (Lichtinger, 2025; Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025; Seligman, 2013, pp. 20–24).
- Meaning: Students can experience meaning when they see how classroom learning connects to real life – something teachers can foster through cross-subject projects and discussions about real-world issues (Lichtinger, 2025; Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025; Seligman, 2013, pp. 17–18).
- Accomplishment: This element can grow when students work toward realistic goals and receive recognition for their effort and progress. Educators can measure this growth through student portfolios, shared goal-setting, and regular feedback (Lichtinger, 2025; Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025; Seligman, 2013, pp. 18–20).

Positive emotions like joy, interest, and gratitude do more than offer short-term comfort; they broaden how people think and act. According to Fredrickson's (2013) broaden-and-build theory, these feelings temporarily open up attention and encourage flexible problem-solving. Over time, repeated positive feelings help create lasting personal resources, including emotional resilience and social support. This implies that experiencing positive moments regularly can set off an upward loop toward better overall health (Fredrickson, 2009, 2013).



Figure 1. PERMA-Model of Well-Being (Seligman, 2013).

Note. PERMA model of well-being. Adapted from Seligman (2013). Created with Canva and presented by Vītola (2026b) at the 84th Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia.

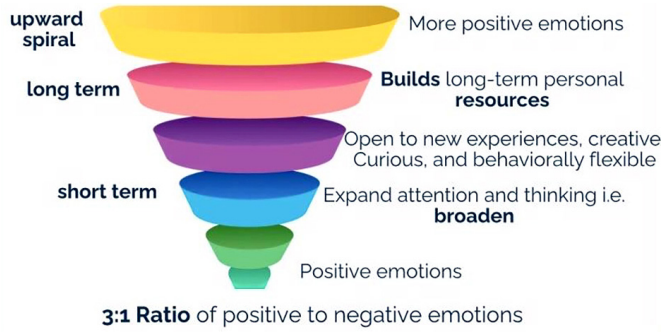


Figure 2. Broaden & Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 1998).

Note. Broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (adapted from Fredrickson, 1998, 2013). Created with Canva and presented by Vītola (2026b) at the 84th Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia.

In positive coaching, these ideas come into play through strength-focused feedback, shared goal setting, and guided reflection. By drawing attention to past wins and building on small successes, coaching can help people open up their thinking, feel more confident in their abilities, and build lasting skills for growth. This points to the idea that targeted coaching support can help individuals continuously adapt and develop over time (Lichtinger, 2025; Blickhan, 2021; Mangelsdorf, 2020).

PERMA–Coaching Framework for Language Classes

Building on these principles, Table 1 offers practical suggestions for applying Seligman's PERMA framework in German as a Second Language (GSL) classes. The Table 1 outlines how each PERMA dimension can be linked to specific learning outcomes, classroom activities, and speaking tasks. By giving students opportunities to use German in real conversations, peer discussions, and creative tasks, this approach suggests a way to develop communicative skills while supporting student motivation and well-being.

Table 1. The PERMA Framework in the Language Classroom for the Enhancement of Communicative Competence.

PERMA-dimension	Learning Outcome	Activity and Speaking Link	Key sources
Positive Emotions	Self-confidence, positive learning attitude	Warm-up conversations, short "moments of happiness," playful speaking games. Reduces speaking anxiety and facilitates entry into oral interactions	Fredrickson (2011); Seligman (2013); Waters (2011); Barabadi et al. (2022); Sendatzki et al. (2026)
Engagement	Motivation, active learning, flow experience.	Role-plays, project-based tasks, creative presentations. Promotes longer and more intensive oral contributions from learners	Csikszentmihalyi (1990); Sambanis & Ludwig (2024); Mercer, MacIntyre, Gregersen & Talbot (2018); Proyer (2022)
Relationships	Cooperation, social interaction, communication skills.	Pair work, group discussions, tandem interviews, peer feedback Increases the frequency of authentic speaking situations in the classroom	Mercer et al. (2016); MacIntyre et al. (1998); Sambanis & Ludwig (2025)
Meaning	Reflective ability, intercultural competence	Discussion of real-life topics, cultural comparisons, personal experiences. Motivates learners to express their opinions orally	Seligman (2013); Sambanis & Ludwig (2025)
Accomplishment	Self-efficacy, goal orientation	Presentations, portfolio work, formative and summative assessments/ tests. Visible progress strengthens learners' willingness to speak actively	Hattie (2009, cited in Steffens & Höfer, 2014); Bandura (1997); Sambanis & Ludwig (2025)

Note. The PERMA framework in the language classroom for communicative competence. Self-created illustration based on Bandura (1997), Barabadi et al. (2022), Csikszentmihalyi (1990), Fredrickson (2011), MacIntyre et al. (1998), Mercer et al. (2016), Mercer et al. (2018), Proyer (2022), Sambanis & Ludwig (2024, 2025), Seligman (2013), Sendatzki et al. (2026), Steffens & Höfer (2014), and Waters (2011). Presented by Vītola (2026b) at the 84th Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia.

Table 2. Applying PERMA: German Language Classroom Practice.

Phases of a class	First Class	Second Class	Third Class
Orientation phase	"One thing that went well today" (adapted from the "Positive Daily Reflection" intervention; Blickhan, 2015, p. 77). Purpose: to foster gratitude through reflection on positive daily events (Blickhan, 2015, p. 295).	"A word that supports me through the day" (adapted from the "words that make me happy intervention; Sambanis, 2024). Purpose: to enhance mindfulness and positive emotions through reflection on a supportive word (Sambanis, 2024b).	"A good deed today – I share" (adapted from the "act of kindness" intervention; Fredrickson, 2011, pp. 226 ff.). Purpose: to raise awareness of social relationships through reflection on kind actions (Blickhan, 2015, p. 296; Fredrickson, 2011, pp. 226 ff.).
Exploration and construction phase	other excercises	Youth slang words 2025 – guessing meanings. Implementation: Students listen to a song from the Frankfurt Book Fair 2025 about the "youth word of the year," note the top 10 slang words, and work in small groups to guess their meanings.	Bullet-point associations to an image of an unusual office setting. Implementation: Students analyze the image, note key associations, and briefly discuss them in plenary.
Practice with playful elements	other excercises	Which team wins? – sentences with *dass*. Implementation: In small groups, students write sentences with dass on healthy lifestyle/food for 3 minutes. One student per group shares a sentence and throws a ball to another group.	Audio recording via Vocaroo. Implementation: Students write ideas for innovative or relaxing school breaks using "if -then" sentences, record them in the Vocaroo app, and emailing the recording to the teacher.
Consolidation and application phase	Dialogue at a market in Germany. Implementation: Students prepare a dialogue at a market and perform it using a toy cash register and real-life props (shopping basket, fruit, vegetables, shopping bags, money).	Dialogue at a bakery/café. Implementation: After watching a learning video, students prepare dialogues in small groups and perform them using realistic props.	"Treasure box" of well-being strategies. Implementation: Students develop short- and long-term well-being activities (individual and social) based on a prompt, then present selected ideas briefly.
Reflection and evaluation phase	Students first write down individual feedback and then optionally share some points in plenary. Based on the "Positive Daily Reflection" (Blickhan, 2015, p. 77) and the "Positive Daily Outlook" (Blickhan, 2021, p. 91).	Students first write down individual feedback and then optionally share some points in plenary. Based on the "Positive Daily Reflection" (Blickhan, 2015, p. 77) and the "Positive Daily Outlook" (Blickhan, 2021, p. 91).	Students write brief responses to four question categories in small groups (1 minute each). Sheets are rotated three times so all groups contribute to each category. Based on the "Positive Daily Reflection and Outlook" (Blickhan, 2015, 2021).

Note. Applying PERMA: German Language Classroom Practice. Created in Canva and presented by Vītola (2026b) at the 84th Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia.

To illustrate how these ideas work in practice, Table 2 outlines a three-class lesson sequence for German as a Second Language (GSL). It breaks down how the PERMA

framework can be applied across different phases of instruction – from initial orientation to reflection and evaluation. By combining core language goals with specific PERMA dimensions in each phase, this structured sequence suggests a practical way to integrate well-being strategies into everyday classroom teaching. While theoretical models and lesson plans provide a helpful framework, their real value depends on how students experience them in the classroom. To examine how PERMA-based strategies function in practice, a case study was carried out at the University of Latvia in spring 2026 as part of the author's qualification thesis (Vītola, 2026a). The study examined how applying the PERMA model in German as a Foreign Language (GFL) classes could support student well-being, with a focus on speaking skills. The intervention took place over three weeks (six lessons) in a 10th-grade GFL class at a Latvian secondary school (n = 11), during which a series of structured classroom activities – as partly outlined in Table 2 – were applied. Data was collected through pre- and post-surveys, teacher observations, interviews, and written feedback, giving a practical look at how positive psychology can be applied in language teaching.

The survey results and student feedback indicated a tendency toward positive shifts across several PERMA areas. Students reported slightly higher levels of enjoyment in class (rising from 3.82 to 4.27 on a 5-point scale) and viewed the topics as somewhat more relevant to them (increasing from 3.45 to 4.00). Alongside these reports, data pointed to an increased willingness to speak: willingness to share opinions despite making mistakes moved from 3.09 to 3.82, while willingness to talk in front of the class moved from 2.64 to 3.55. Teacher observation notes also showed progress in vocabulary, sentence structure, and task completion, with average scores moving from 10.1 to 12.7 points.

These findings suggest that combining positive emotions, everyday topics, and group work may help students feel more comfortable speaking up. However, these results should be read with caution. Because the study involved only 11 students over six lessons, the findings show short-term local trends rather than broad rules. In addition, a slight drop in self-reported concentration (from 4.36 to 3.91) shows that active tasks can require more mental effort, which teachers need to balance carefully. While limited in scope, this case study points to PERMA-based activities as one possible avenue for further academic exploration regarding classroom well-being and speaking practice, as the theoretical part of this study suggests.

Discussion

Data from the World Health Organization (2024) suggests that educational burnout may stem more from systemic school environments than individual weaknesses. Viewing well-being as something shaped by the learning environment rather than just a personal trait (Lichtinger, 2025) offers a helpful perspective for language pedagogy. Language learning often involves emotional pressure, self-doubt, and anxiety around evaluation (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986). In German as a Foreign Language (GFL) class, these feelings can be linked to complex grammar, strict correction, and

the pressure of speaking spontaneously. Integrating Seligman's (2013) PERMA framework with positive coaching methods might offer a practical approach to help ease these daily classroom challenges for both teachers and students.

While positive psychology focuses on student well-being, applying these ideas inside structured language classes is still a work in progress (Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025). Positive coaching offers a practical way to connect the two by bringing PERMA principles directly into daily GFL activities. In particular, encouraging student choice and self-reliance (Deutscher Bundesverband Coaching, n.d.; Roth & Ryba, 2016) can help create a calmer classroom atmosphere, which may ease speaking anxiety and support a learner's readiness to talk (Zengin & Şahin Toptaş, 2023).

Recent findings from the World Health Organization (2024) highlighting drops in school-based support point to the importance of building stronger connections in class. Using open, reflective dialogue to balance teacher-student roles (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) could help lower the sense of isolation that leads to teacher fatigue and low student motivation or withdrawal. Instead of focusing mainly on language mistakes, a strengths-based approach can give students clearer, more realistic goals. This shift might turn intimidating speaking tasks into manageable steps for personal growth.

A key idea behind this integrated framework is moving away from seeing teacher and student well-being as separate issues. Because a classroom is a shared space, teacher strain (Council of Europe CEFR Expert Group, 2023; WHO, 2022) and student stress (WHO, 2024) often influence one another. Giving GFL teachers simple coaching tools doesn't have to mean adding to their workload (European Commission et al., 2023). Instead, it can help shift the teacher's role from constantly correcting errors to guiding open communication. This shift can lighten the emotional pressure on teachers while making students feel less anxious about performance.

Even though communicative language teaching fits well with positive coaching, some practical challenges remain. High schools often rely on traditional grading systems that focus mainly on test scores rather than overall well-being, and teacher training programs rarely include coaching skills. For this approach to work more broadly in language classes, it helps to see that well-being and learning outcomes can support each other rather than conflict. Future research could follow students over longer periods to see how coaching-based activities affect both language test scores and general student well-being over time.

Conclusions

This study evaluated how Martin Seligman's PERMA model and positive coaching methods can be used in foreign language education, specifically in German as a Foreign Language (GFL) classrooms. In exploring the central research question, this study raises the possibility that positive coaching methods can be thought of as more than just extra teaching techniques. Instead, they can offer a practical framework that may help lower the specific stress and anxiety connected with learning a new language. A clear

trend in recent research points to a need to move away from looking mostly at language mistakes toward supporting student choice and positive communication. Practical tools like the GROW model, Everest goals, the Berlin Development Model, and Prohaska's questioning strategies can turn well-being concepts into daily classroom activities.

Additionally, this work shows that teacher well-being and student well-being are closely linked. When teachers shift from acting primarily as strict evaluators to working as supportive guides, it can reduce the daily stress that leads to teacher burnout. At the same time, this approach can lower language anxiety and help students feel more confident when speaking. This combined effect is especially important given recent reports showing a drop in emotional support for teenagers in schools.

Finally, this study offers a starting point for future research. Longitudinal studies could examine how PERMA-based coaching influences standardized test scores, speaking skills, and students' own evaluations of their mental well-being in secondary schools.

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