

***Positive psychology in cross-cultural narratives:
Mexican students discover themselves
while learning Chinese***

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Abstract

Using the principles of positive psychology and the tools of narrative research, this article focuses on the psychology of five language learners who crossed cultural and linguistic borders. All five were university students learning Chinese in Mexico, and two of them also studied Chinese in China. The grounded theory approach was used to analyze and interpret the students' narratives. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, the centerpiece of the modern view of well-being, provided the theoretical framework. The results led to the conclusion that language learning can be a major journey in self-discovery, rich in positive emotions tied to experiences of engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment.

Keywords: language learner narrative, PERMA model, Chinese as a second/foreign language

[W]hen you get a new model, a new paradigm, a new way of perceiving, . . . suddenly, you have an illumination, an insight.
Abraham Maslow (1971, p. 168)

1. Introduction

In this study, Mexican students discovered inner meaning and gained a large measure of fulfillment while they learned the Chinese language and culture. The principles of positive psychology, the empirical study of thriving and flourishing and of the virtues and strengths that lead to the good life (see this issue's introductory article), undergird the research reported here. Martin Seligman (2011), a founder of the positive psychology field, created a model in which flourishing is viewed as the gold standard for measuring well-being. The acronym PERMA reflects five elements of well-being. These elements are:

- Positive emotions
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment

In a complex dynamic system involving flourishing and well-being, “high-level mental attributes and functions are determined by a complex set of interconnected components that continuously evolve over time” (Dörnyei, 2009, pp. 195-196) in an organic, holistic, nonlinear, interactive fashion (Mercer, 2011). In our research, clear examples of the PERMA model were reflected in the retrospective narratives written by five Mexican students about their learning of Chinese. The narratives ultimately reflected significant psychological insights related to Seligman's theory, albeit with a more obvious interweaving of cultural factors than found in that theory.

2. Research review

This review is based on Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, starting with positive emotions and ending with accomplishment. We relate important variables to each aspect of PERMA.

2.1. Positive emotions

Emotions are the first aspect of the PERMA model. Emotions influence language learning (Arnold, 1999; Thornbury, 2013) and learning in general (Damasio, 1994; Le Doux, 1998). Language learning is especially emotion-laden; it is “a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition” (Guiora, 1983, p. 8), largely because of shifts

in identities. While learning a language, new or expanded personal identities are born, midwifed by emotion, through “. . . physically and symbolically cross[ing] the border . . . between one way of being and another” (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000, p. 174). Emotion “functions as an amplifier, providing the intensity, urgency, and energy to propel our behavior” in “everything we do,” and emotion may be more basic than cognition (MacIntyre, 2002, p. 61). Although much emotion-related research in the language learning field has focused on anxiety (Horwitz, 2007; Horwitz & Young, 1991), anxiety is not the only language learning emotion that has been studied. Narratives of bilingual writers who were once language learners show “an array of emotions,” such as guilt, insecurity, anxiety, angst, sadness, and confusion (Pavlenko, 2006, p. 5). Oxford and colleagues (Oxford, 1996, 2011a, 2013; Oxford, Ehrman, & Lavine, 1991; Oxford, Lavine, Felkins, Hollaway, & Saleh, 1996; Oxford, Meng, Zhou, Sung, & Jain, 2007; Oxford, Massey, & Anand, 2005; Oxford et al., 1998) also found many emotions in learner narratives: anxiety, anger, humiliation or shame, obsession, confidence, love, pleasure, pride, contentment, and joy. For bilinguals, emotion management can occur by means of humor (Vaid, 2006), and students can benefit from using humor as they deal with the stresses of language learning.

Hot cognition is related to positive emotions. William James (1910/1987) described volition as the “hot” merger of personal desire, excitement, will, and tension, creating a higher level of energy. Building on James’ work, Pintrich, Marx, and Boyle (1993) rejected a “cold,” overly rational, and emotion-free version of learner cognition and emphasized the need for hot cognition, that is, learning in which multiple levels of cognition are sparked by emotions and motivation in lively sociocultural contexts. They found that transformation of identity, self-worth, or attitude is linked to hot cognition (Pintrich et al., 1993). Instances of hot cognition were identified in learner narratives (Oxford, Daniel, Wei, & Richter, 2011; Oxford, 2011a).

Although Lazarus (2003) criticized the tendency of positive psychology to describe emotions as either positive or negative, this dichotomy is potentially very important. According to Frederickson, (2001, 2003), negative emotions (e.g., anxiety) and positive emotions (e.g., happiness) are two separate dimensions. Negative emotions constrict the individual’s focus, but positive emotions broaden the individual’s awareness; stimulate novel, creative, exploratory, and playful thoughts and actions; and build skills and resources for the future (Frederickson’s broaden-and-build theory). Positive psychology does not ignore negative emotions. In fact, Seligman (2011) mentioned that strong biological factors have predisposed certain people—Churchill, Lincoln, and many others—to sadness and other negative emotions, which can only be ameliorated rather than totally eliminated. Negative emotions can be at least partly controlled by using

the ABCDE technique, in which beliefs about adversity cause consequent feelings, but disputation, that is, presenting counter-evidence to negative beliefs, results in energization, or positive mood and behavior change (Seligman, 2006).

2.2. Engagement

Engagement is the second component in Seligman's PERMA model. Flow is comprised of complete engagement in an activity, merging of action and awareness without distraction, a subjective sense of joy and confidence, intrinsic motivation (autotelism, or the desire to do the task for its own sake), balance between challenges and competence (task is neither too easy nor too hard), heightened control (security and lack of worry about failure), effortlessness, lack of self-consciousness, and an altered perception of time (slowing down or speeding up) (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990, 1996/2013, 1998, 2008; Csíkszentmihályi & Csíkszentmihályi, 2006). Csíkszentmihályi (1990) described flow not as passive or relaxing but as occurring "when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile" (p. 3).

As noted, intrinsic motivation is part of flow. Intrinsically motivated learners talk about learning a second language for the enjoyment of finding out new things, for the pleasure experienced when grasping something difficult in the language, or for the "high" that is felt when learning or using the language (McIntosh & Noels, 2004). Kao and Oxford (2014) noted the value of intrinsic motivation for developing language proficiency. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2001), intrinsic motivation involves a combination of interest, enjoyment, novelty, and personal challenge, along with a feeling of competence, relatedness to others, and autonomy.

2.3. Relationships

Seligman's PERMA theory includes relationships. Language learners are not isolated beings but are instead in constant relationship with others. Ushioda's (2009) "person-in-context relational view" emphasizes relationships as part of the learning context. This view centers on "the interaction between this self-reflective intentional agent [the learner], and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded . . ." (p. 220). As noted earlier, self-determination theory emphasizes that intrinsic motivation involves, among other things, relationships with other people.

Although the PERMA model does not overly emphasize culture, relationships always occur in the context of culture, which is a complex dynamic system. In such a system, the context is not a static backdrop but instead a "de-

veloping process” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 32). Culture is “the shared way of life of a group of people, including their artifacts (such as social institutions and technology) and their symbols (such as communications and myths)” (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002, p. 477). It is also “the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them” (Lederach, 1995, p. 9). The Mexican learners in our study often mentioned culture as a crucial factor in their learning of the Chinese language, and some of these learners made conscious comparisons between Mexico and China. Hofstede’s multidimensional model compares and contrasts the cultures of China (Hofstede, 2014a) and Mexico (Hofstede, 2014b). In Hofstede’s perspective, both China and Mexico are *collectivist*, that is, interdependence-oriented, and *masculine*, focusing on success and competition. Nevertheless, Mexico scored high on the *indulgence* dimension, reflecting optimism and a desire to relax, have fun, and enjoy life, while China had a low score, indicating greater pessimism and restraint. China had a low score on *uncertainty avoidance*, reflecting comfort with ambiguity, while Mexico was high on this dimension, suggesting maintenance of rigid codes of belief and behavior. Such observations reflect the national character approach, which asserts that it is possible to describe the psychological qualities or modal personality of present-day nation states (Berry et al., 2002), but individuals within a given nation-state may differ dramatically from the modal personality described.

2.4. Meaning

The fourth element of PERMA is meaning. The learners in our study spoke of peak experiences, which are infused with personal meaning. A peak experience is “a great and mystical experience, a religious experience if you wish – an illumination, a revelation, an insight . . . [leading to] ‘the cognition of being,’ . . . the cognition that Plato and Socrates were talking about; almost, you could say, a technology of happiness, of pure excellence, pure truth, pure goodness” (Maslow, 1971, p. 169). Peak experiences are especially joyous, exciting, ego-transcending moments in life, involving sudden feelings of intense happiness or ecstasy, creativity, meaning, well-being, wonder, awe, love, unity, empathy, and timelessness. In peak experiences, the person feels simultaneously more powerful and also more helpless than ever before (Maslow, 1970). Maslow’s research indicates that “most people, or perhaps all people, have peak experiences, or ecstasies,” which can be uncovered by asking someone, “have you ever experienced transcendent ecstasy?” (Maslow, 1971, p. 168). There are countless triggers for peak experiences, such as meditation, art, music, and nature (Maslow,

1970, 1971). In the present study, as will be demonstrated, peak experiences are triggered by certain language learning situations and inspiring teachers.

Meaning is fundamentally tied to consciousness and can be enhanced by inspiration. In consciousness, presence—the field of attention—and copresence—the influential values, assumptions, beliefs, opinions, and situational factors that are outside of attention—“configure the image that an individual has of the world” (Silo, 2006a, p. 9). Information in presence is “always guided by interests” (Silo, 2006b, p. 61), while copresent aspects are taken for granted but are often more powerful than information in the field of presence (Silo, 2006a). “The intentionality of the consciousness (this directing the acts of consciousness toward determined objects) is always launched toward the future . . . , which is registered as the tension of searching” (Silo, 2006b, p. 61). When we seek a missing object, such as a set of keys, our consciousness starts searching. Even if we give up the search, the intention is still there in copresence, and consciousness does not give up until it finds its object (note the object-act bond). Even when we intentionally evoke the past by searching for a specific memory, we are still “always advancing” because of the search itself (p. 61).

Inspired consciousness is a perturbation or shaking up of ordinary consciousness (Silo, 2006c). It is “more than a state, it is a global structure that passes through different states and that can manifest in different levels” (Silo, 2006c, p. 102). Inspired consciousness can achieve immediate intuitions of reality and flashes of insight; it can organize groups of experiences without deductive or discursive thought. Mystics, philosophers, poets, novelists, artists, musicians, and even ordinary people can experience inspired consciousness—“superior states of consciousness” (Silo, 2006c, p. 95) such as ecstasy, rapture, and recognition—through dreams, visions, and intuitions. Ecstasy is accompanied by movement and generalized energy, rapture is marked by powerful positive emotion, and recognition involves a sense of comprehending everything in an instant (Silo, 2006c). Inspired consciousness can occur when ordinary individuals have successful hunches, fall in love, suddenly understand a complex situation, or instantaneously solve a problem (Silo, 2006c). Learning has special, inspired moments, which occur when students are moved by rapturous insight or when something magically clicks and matches what the learner is looking for. A feeling of certainty, or “this is how things are” (Silo, 2006c, p. 95), accompanies inspired consciousness. Several language learners’ experiences of sudden understandings, insights, and intuitions—what might be called inspired consciousness—were noted by Oxford (2011a).

2.5. Accomplishment

Seligman's final PERMA component, accomplishment, is easily related to language proficiency. In the language learning field, a significant contributor to accomplishment is learning strategies. Learning strategies are "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning" (Griffiths, 2013, p. 36) and for attaining proficiency (Griffiths, 2013; Gunning & Oxford, 2014; Oxford, 1990, 2011b). Although unsuccessful language learners also use learning strategies, these learners typically use strategies inefficiently or employ strategies that are inappropriate to the task or target language at hand (Oxford, 1990,). Oxford (2011b) presented four major learning strategy categories: cognitive, affective, sociocultural-interactive, and the master category of "metastrategies," such as planning, organizing, and evaluating. Promising approaches, including the cognitive academic language learning approach or CALLA (Chamot, 2007) and styles-and-strategies-based instruction or SSBI (Cohen, 2011), have arisen for teaching strategies to language learners.

As we have shown, the PERMA model is potentially relevant to language learning in general. This article will assess its relevance to five Mexican learners studying Chinese.

3. Method

3.1. The narrative perspective

Narratives are immensely important for understanding psychological and sociocultural issues in language learning. Narratives are pervasive, sense-making tools to help us understand our experiences. "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, plan, revise, criticize, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative" (Hardy, 1968, p. 5). "Stories identify, unify, give meaning to. Just as music is noise that makes sense, a painting is color that makes sense, so a story is life that makes sense" (Martel, 2011, p. 15). While learner narratives are shaped by experiences of the individual narrators, they are also "collective stories" reflecting multiple "voices," interpreted by those who hear or read them (Bakhtin, 1986). When learners narrate their experiences, they recognize more deeply the shifts in self-identities over time (McAdams, Josselson, & Liebllich, 2006; Pavlenko, 2006; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) and link emotionally fragmented elements into a meaningful whole (White, 2007). Because "narratives are an excellent method to capture the essence of human experience" (Barcelos, 2008, p. 37), particularly in a complex dynamic system (Dörnyei, 2009), narrative research in language learning is gaining attention (e.g., Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Barkhuizen,

2011; Bell, 2002; Benson & Nunan, 2004; Cuéllar, 2012; Oxford, 2011a, 2013). Compared to third-person observations of language learning, first-person learner narratives offer richer, more contextualized data and greater psychological insights (Oxford, 2011a; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

3.2. Setting

The setting was the Center for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Spanish acronym, CELE) at the largest autonomous university in Mexico (UNAM), which consists of more than 300,000 students. This center includes students from all faculties and schools of the University and even some external institutions. CELE teaches 16 different languages, including Chinese, and has about 350 Chinese students representing all proficiency levels. Interest in Chinese is increasing, and CELE cannot yet meet the demand. The learners of Chinese come from diverse fields: philosophy, economics, physics, biology, history, international relations, and many others.

3.3. Participants

We invited five students of different ages to participate in the study. All were deeply interested in learning Chinese at the time of the study. We intentionally included participants representing different academic areas and interests. We also ensured that the sample included some participants who had experience learning Chinese not only in Mexico but also in China. Participants gave informed consent for their narratives to be included in the study. Table 1 provides information about each of the participants.

Table 1 The participants

Name	Age	Academic specialty, in addition to Chinese	Comments
Mariana	28	International relations	Did her master's studies in China (about international relations) and now works as an interpreter for Xinhua
José Luis	34	History	Now works as a Chinese teacher in Mexico
Claudia	44	English and Italian professor	Is also a professional singer
Jorge	25	Physics (at the time he wrote his story) Acupuncture (at the time of the member check)	Recently dropped physics and changed his emphasis to acupuncture
Lizett	26	Administration (at the time she wrote her story) Chinese emphasis (at the time of the member check)	Decided to change her emphasis to something involving Chinese (teaching or acupuncture)

3.4. Data collection

Participants received the following instructions: “Write your language story, describing the most significant experiences along your path in studying Chinese and pointing out the most emotional or exciting moments (positive or negative ones).” Participants were not specifically asked to discuss culture or learning strategies, although all of them chose to do so. All wrote their stories in Spanish, and we translated the stories into English for this article. We checked the translations with each other and with the participants, all of whom knew English.

3.5. Data analysis

We analyzed these stories using a grounded theory approach, which, rather than beginning with a hypothesis as with traditional quantitative research, begins with the data, which are then analyzed into meaningful categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is a general approach that is used to derive a theory from observed and collected data, which are allowed to speak for themselves (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). In other words, although we were interested in PERMA and phenomena such as peak experiences, flow, and the like, the analysis did not begin with these; it began with the details of the stories.

In the grounded theory approach, there are three coding stages. At the *open coding stage*, phenomena are identified and roughly categorized into preliminary themes, without pre-established category names (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The next stage, *axial coding*, makes connections between categories by providing conceptual axes around which the key ideas revolve (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This stage allows the themes to emerge more definitively and to become better organized. At this stage, specific themes are also condensed into broader themes, while retaining key quotations and examples (Creswell, 2007). The final stage, *selective coding*, identifies one theme as the most important and encompassing (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Throughout this process, the themes are continually compared with the data (the constant comparison technique) to ensure the best fit.

In addition to applying the analytic stages, we followed Oxford’s (2011a) recommendations for understanding the stories. First, we used empathy by trying to get into the heart and mind of each participant (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995). Second, we analyzed case elements, such as roles of the learner, roles of other characters, location, events, and the degree of self-awareness. Third, we listened for multiple voices, such as the learner in the past, learner as present narrator, and others in the story. Fourth, we queried the story or people in it by asking questions like “Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?”

After translating the stories and giving our professional analysis based on the grounded theory approach, the second author contacted each participant to find out whether he or she agreed with our analysis of the story and to gather any updates or additions. This process is called “member checking,” and it occurred approximately 4 months after the stories were originally written. Four of the member checks occurred through individual interviews, which were digitally recorded in Spanish, transcribed, and translated into English. The fifth member check (for Mariana) was done through email. Member checking proved to be very valuable and added more depth. Based on some of the participants’ rich additions, we found it necessary to add more to the analysis, particularly enhancing the axial coding material.

A complete version of the narratives and the member checks is available in the Appendix of the online supporting information at [http://sslit.amu.edu.pl/download/docs/SSLIT%204\(2\)%20Oxford,%20Cuellar%20Appendix.pdf](http://sslit.amu.edu.pl/download/docs/SSLIT%204(2)%20Oxford,%20Cuellar%20Appendix.pdf).

4. Results

This section presents the results of all three stages of analysis. With reference to the axial coding results, we distinguish between the original narratives and the additions from the member checks.

4.1. Results of Stage 1: Open coding

Stage 1, open coding, involved the creation of several tables with participants’ names linked with various themes. Twenty themes arose in this stage, as follows: (a) number of years of learning Chinese in Mexico, if stated; (b) intensity of Chinese study in Mexico; (c) trips to China, if any; (d) intensity of Chinese study in China; (e) background of the participant; (f) inspiration from a teacher or class in Mexico; (g) inspiration from the language and culture; (h) extrinsic motivation; (i) intrinsic motivation, which overlapped significantly with inspiration; (j) peak experiences; (k) flow; (l) emotions; (m) hot cognition; (n) difficulties in learning Chinese; (o) learning strategies to address difficulties and propel progress; (p) relationships with other Mexican learners; (q) relationships with Chinese people; (r) Chinese philosophy, science, and general culture, sometimes as contrasted with Mexican or Western culture; (s) self-evaluation; and (t) general attitude. The cells of the table provided evidence in the form of relevant passages from the narratives.

4.2. Results of Stage 2: Axial coding

In Stage 2 of grounded theory analysis, links are made across the data elements, and thematic categories are consolidated and supported. The themes resulting from this stage were close but not identical to the PERMA pattern. The themes were: (a) emotions, (b) unification of engagement and meaning, (c) relationships within and across cultures, and (d) accomplishment.

4.2.1. Emotions

The first component of the PERMA model is positive emotions. However, not all the emotions in the narratives were positive. Both painful emotions and positive emotions were expressed, just as Piaget (1981) described in regard to all learning. For instance, Mariana expressed a range of emotions in her narrative. She seemed excited when her teacher offered inspiring instruction and when she experienced the mystery of this strange language. While watching Chinese TV dramas, she was sometimes tired and frustrated but showed a strong interest. She felt that the content was inviting her to follow, and she experienced much satisfaction. Note the presence of hot cognition in the uniting of positive emotion, motivation, and thought. In her member check, Mariana mentioned feeling “*passionate*” about understanding a new way of life through learning Chinese.

Learning Chinese in Mexico, José Luis was at first frustrated and struggling. In China he was frustrated for the first few days because of not understanding colloquial speech. However, after a while in China, once he got past the cognitive overload, he felt quite satisfied at seeing, knowing, and experiencing the language in context. His description of going north, south, east, and west in his Chinese travels and his story of the funerary paper horse captured the elements of hot cognition, in which positive emotions and motivation catalyzed intellectual understanding. In his member check, José Luis was more objective than emotional, though he did mention being “*passionate*” about his Chinese teaching, about always being in a “*good mood*” in front of his students, and about his contentment when he helps students to make a mental “*click*” (have an insight).

After two years of studying Chinese, Claudia experienced deep grief at the death of a friend, leading to a loss of interest in everything. She decided to quit studying Chinese. Later she missed Chinese and felt she had made a mistake in leaving it. She expressed a love of Chinese because of teachers, songs, fellow learners, and Chinese friends. Her emotional love of Chinese, when associated with motivation and intellect, stimulated hot cognition. Even so, she occasionally felt insecure about whether she would ever speak, understand, or write Chinese, though this emotion diminished, leaving her happy to be learn-

ing the language. Her member check revealed that Claudia had gone through a great physical, emotional, and spiritual trial when she had an accident as a child, and this made her even more determined to overcome challenges.

Jorge, was excited to learn Chinese because of the relationship between ancient Chinese teachings and modern physics and because of the linkage between the language and philosophy, and his main emotion was pleasure at learning Chinese. At these moments his positive emotions were merged with motivation and intellect to create hot cognition. In addition to feeling excitement and pleasure, he also indicated that sometimes he felt tired or upset, noted occasional frustration at the workings of the mind in forgetting what has not been recently practiced, and admitted to being fearful of encountering Chinese people on the street and not understanding what they were saying. His member check showed his disillusionment with “*deterministic*” Western science and his love of “*intuitive*” Chinese science.

Lizett’s emotions, like Claudia’s, were affected by the people around her. She initially feared and avoided the difficult language of the Chinese because her friend quit studying it, but she regained interest when her boss cited business reasons. Despite feeling anxiety about pronunciation and trying to hide from the teacher, Lizett’s pride eventually made her try harder, stimulating greater interest and perseverance. Eventually she fell in love with the language, merging intellect with emotion to generate the brightness of hot cognition. Her member check disclosed that she continued to be fulfilled in learning Chinese and felt “*only pleasure.*” Emotions played a great role for her: “*My feelings about Chinese are so strong that I have decided to stop my administrative studies and focus on Chinese.*”

4.2.2. Unification of engagement and meaning through intrinsic motivation, flow, peak experiences, and inspiration

The second and fourth components of PERMA, engagement and meaning, could not be separated in our analysis of the five narratives. Engagement, which was shown in flow and intrinsic motivation, was often tied firmly to meaning, which was found in peak experiences and inspiration.

All five participants experienced inspiration and/or support from teachers and inspiration from the language and culture. For these learners, the sense of inspiration was often connected with intrinsic motivation, or doing something because it is fundamentally interesting, enjoyable, novel, and challenging and because it makes the person experience competence, relatedness, and autonomy. As noted earlier, a peak experience is an ecstatic, transcendent experience that has a lot in common with inspired consciousness, and flow is a subjectively

felt combination of joy, intrinsic motivation, challenge, competence, confidence, and active immersion in a task. Because of the overlaps in these concepts, we discuss them together in relation to the participants' narratives.

Mariana used the word "*inspiring*" as she described Professor Xu's class, which "*opened up new worlds*" for the students. She stated that she had never before been this close to a Chinese person, particularly one who focused on self-perception and transmission of a different culture. For her, the language was mysterious (implying alluring) because it was so different from Spanish, involving contrasting mental structures, a different pronunciation system, and much mental storage. She repeatedly said that she liked and enjoyed Chinese and that she was learning it for the sake of learning (intrinsic motivation), rather than for any external reason. She seemed to experience flow while doing pleasurable and challenging activities, such as watching Chinese TV dramas and reading. She felt that the most rewarding thing was to understand and express content in Chinese, giving her strength for the long, continuous journey of learning the language. The whole process of learning Chinese seemed like an ongoing peak experience. In the member check, Mariana mentioned that she felt "*passionate*" about discovering a new way of life and understanding another culture, and learning Chinese helped her do this.

For Lizett, the teacher seemed inspiring because of telling about events and traditions in China, the meanings of the radicals (key parts of Chinese characters), and the teacher's own experiences in China. The "*excellent teacher touched me*" by knowing and sharing so much. "*All of this awakened something in me that motivated me to keep on studying the language,*" she said. Although Lizett started out with a powerful extrinsic motivation for learning Chinese (business opportunities, competitiveness, and money), she morphed it into a deeply intuitive, inspired "*feel*" for the language itself. Her peak experience was falling in love with the Chinese language, and falling in love also reflects inspired consciousness (Silo, 2006c). She described her love relationship with Chinese—which we can interpret as a peak experience—as follows: "*You enjoy every moment, every experience, and you struggle each day so that the relationship will last longer, because love motivates you to go on.*" Note the breath-like, inspired imagery she used in depicting Chinese as "*a beautiful language that fills me up and motivates me to keep on studying.*" A sense of flow pervaded her words about learning the Chinese language.

In Lizett's member check, we recognized her pleasure at overcoming challenges. The more difficult something was, the more she liked it. She felt satisfied. "*I feel Chinese fulfills me . . .*" "*With Chinese I will be able to know more, to see the world from another point of view and this moves me, enhances me.*" She was inspired to change her studies to the Chinese area. She decid-

ed to give up her administration major and specialize in Chinese teaching or acupuncture. She mentioned the possibility of going to China.

José Luis initially began learning Chinese for instrumental reasons (as a step toward his future studies of Chinese history), but little by little he became inspired by interacting with Chinese people while in China and in learning about Chinese culture. He was motivated to grasp every opportunity to study and travel in China and wanted to link language, culture, and history, the three main points of his original interest which strengthened his positive attitude towards Chinese. He had an “*unforgettable*” experience taking part in the Chinese Bridge competition on his first trip to China. Practicing Chinese in China showed his strengths and weaknesses, important discoveries about himself. Later he had the “*great opportunity*” to go to China for two years of total immersion, a peak experience during which he made great progress in the language and culture through talking to people and going to many parts of country. This was a key for him and a sense of flow accompanied his travels. A specific peak experience occurred in China when he was with American friends, examining a paper horse that looked like a piñata. Before he could take a photo of the horse, a Chinese person stopped him and told him it was a funerary object that could bring harm to those who did not respect it. He appeared to learn much from this crucial cultural incident.

José Luis’ member check highlighted the inspirational nature of teaching and learning Chinese. He was “*passionate*” about teaching Chinese, which gave him energy. He stated, “*my students are always surprised I am in a good mood, that I always have energy*”. We must remember that a state of ecstasy, which comes from an inspired consciousness, is accompanied by motor changes and generalized energy (Silo, 2006c). The passion José Luis feels gives him a special energy, which students perceive and admire. This energy has nothing to do with extrinsic motivation, nor with the instrumental purposes of the beginning of his learning, but instead relates to the inspiration he found in teaching and the sense of flow which accompanied it:

I think it is about inspiring other people to discover the good things that there are, and why not the bad stuff, and let them compare, each one of them, what’s related to the Chinese culture, its people, its history, what they do, the country the way it is, to make them show interest. That’s the light that awakens me, and I want to follow that path . . . [I]nspiration is relevant.

He depicted helping students to “*make that ‘click’*,” which is very similar to what we described concerning inspired consciousness (“something magically clicks and matches what the learner is looking for”). Students who cannot

“click” are the ones who are the hardest to teach, the unmotivated ones, whose motivation and inspiration must be awakened.

Claudia was initially curious about the language, and while she thought it would instrumentally open up opportunities for her, this gave way to a more powerful intrinsic attraction to the language. She mentioned that her teachers were always friendly and supportive, and her classmates made the environment pleasant, but her true inspiration came from the culture, the food, the traditions, the language, and the “*attractive and interesting*” Chinese people who offered “*beautiful friendship*.” Most significantly, she, like Lizett, had the peak experience of falling in love with Chinese. Claudia ecstatically exclaimed, “*love, love, love it!*” This exclamation was based on the fact that she learned a lot about culture, customs, and food—and about herself, “*how to struggle for what you want.*” Like Lizett, she demonstrated a sense of flow in her powerful love of the language.

Claudia’s member check revealed something extraordinarily interesting. She described an accident she had as a child and how this accident marked her entire life. She overcame this challenge through effort, and she felt that learning Chinese was a new challenge to be overcome. The difficulty of the language made it more attractive for her. Music was also a passion she had before starting to learn Chinese, and it fitted particularly well with the music of the Chinese language. The peak experiences and the flow we can see in Claudia’s narrative and member check relate to a personal trend to overcome challenges, to break limits, and to be where there is some music. The experience goes further than the mere act of learning a foreign language; it has to do with her personal life. Learning Chinese “*was particularly challenging for me because it has much to do with me, with my spirituality.*” Claudia’s narrative, like the others, showed the power of linking learning with a deep personal searching.

Jorge, who was a physics student at the time he wrote his narrative, had two inspiring teachers of Chinese, one in class and one who taught him Tai Ji Quan. In class “*the teacher, little by little, taught the ancient foundations of Chinese, new ways of approaching life, something completely unknown but very appealing.*” His skilled Tai Ji Quan teacher helped him understand linkages between Chinese philosophy and physical sensations, as well as teaching him the “*deep philosophical grounds of the language.*” Jorge was passionately inspired by the linkages he found between the language and its philosophy and by the deep symbolic meaning of each character, and as a result he was able to make intuitive, philosophic leaps of understanding in class and out. He appeared to have several peak experiences, starting when a friend gave him a copy of Laozi’s *Daodejing* after Jorge had already been studying meditation, self-reflection, and “*obscure arts.*” He realized that this book contained phrases and assertions that were similar to modern physics, and this was a

tremendous discovery for him. Jorge's story demonstrated once again that inspired consciousness during language learning leads students to discover new things about themselves. Because of the inspiration, it is easy to feel passionate about the experience itself (including all the positive emotions linked to it) and about what is supposed to produce the experience (in this case, encountering the Chinese language or Chinese culture). Another peak experience occurred when he, after only a few months of studying Chinese, was able to understand phrases in the film "House of Flying Daggers," in this case related with the empowerment of knowing the language. His practice of Tai Ji Quan with his exceptional guide proved to be yet another peak experience. All of these seemed to immerse Jorge in a sense of flow.

Jorge's member check revealed how important it was for him to read the *Daodejing* in Chinese. His Chinese learning experience moved him to give up his physics studies (he had been about to finish) and to study Chinese acupuncture. He was inspired and passionate about the way everything is connected, and he felt that Chinese philosophy reflected these interconnections. He showed a very deep excitement about his intuitions and feelings but could not explain them all in a scientific way, because there were no words to explain this kind of experience. He instead tried to describe the phenomena through many images of the differences between Western and Chinese culture. We interpreted that he experienced flow, based on expressions such as "*my language process has been very pleasurable and I hope never to abandon it*", "*my heart is Chinese*," and "*that's what made me love the language*". He was particularly entranced by the Chinese characters: ". . . *if you really learn the characters, you know the whole concept of heart as emotion, thought, and even its extension to the planets and the elements.*"

4.2.3. Relationships within and across cultures

Relationships, the third PERMA element, were very important to the five learners. Teacher-student relationships were naturally cited. For instance, Mariana spoke of Professor Xu as helping her to perceive herself differently and in giving her the gift of Chinese culture. José Luis talked glowingly about his Chinese teacher, a native Mexican: "*Professor Lourdes cared about creating a richer approach in class*" by teaching culture, showing films, presenting parts of literary works, and teaching about holidays and traditions. Jorge discussed his intellectual relationship with his Tai Ji Quan teacher, who was deeply influential in his life. Lizett felt the crucial nature of her relationship with the teacher, who "*touched me*" and stirred motivation to learn, and explained the culture. After she set herself free from business aspirations, Lizett remarked that

the teacher was helpful in transforming her understanding of Chinese culture: “. . . the teacher would tell us about what was going on in China, their traditions, her experience the first time she was there, and the detailed explanation of the radicals and what each one of them meant.” These cultural elements “motivated me to keep on studying the language.” Her member check indicated that learning Chinese from the teacher opened worlds for her. In all these instances, the teacher had an important role, not just because of what he or she did, but the way he or she connected with what the student felt, thought, and expected, even if the student was not fully conscious of it.

Claudia emphasized personal relationships within and across cultures. As noted earlier, she described her supportive teachers and classmates and the “beautiful friendship” she received from Chinese people. She also noted her deep grief at the death of a friend, an event which temporarily threatened to derail her Chinese learning. Lizett’s involvement with Chinese was also affected by the people around her. As explained previously, at first she avoided the language and then regained interest due to influences from people nearby.

Culture is a context for human relationships. Claudia mentioned that she felt a similarity with Chinese people. Her member check stated, “I feel Chinese people don’t see limitations, always find ways out, and this has motivated me very much. I feel the need to break the limits, to know for certain that everything can be achieved, even if slowly.”

Mariana mentioned the significance of culture. Learning Chinese “opened a new world for us,” and encountering a “different culture . . . became fascinating.” In the member check, Mariana described learning Chinese as “an unexpected way of discovering something that I’m passionate about, a way of life and understanding another culture.” She noted that “the most rewarding aspect was that learning Chinese made me travel to another continent and live in China, which was one of the most memorable experiences of my life.” She mentioned the great challenge of “living on my own and merging in a new culture” and speculated that she was perhaps unconsciously looking for new ways of looking at the world. Her mention of “unexpected” and “unconscious” indicated that cultural matters were not in full consciousness all the time; this might place them in the field of copresence at least part of the time.

Chinese culture was hugely important to José Luis, who visited China twice and eventually learned the importance of interacting with Chinese people. As mentioned in the discussion of his peak experiences, when he encountered a Chinese funerary object, Chinese people explained to him its significance. This interaction taught him something important about cross-cultural differences and emphasized his need to continue encountering the Chinese people in person. In the member check, José Luis recollected that his tendency had been to focus on

grammar and books rather than moving out into the culture to interact with others and build personal relationships: “*I must learn everything, otherwise I cannot go out to the street.*” However, he overcame that tendency and developed not only linguistic skill but also “*cultural insight,*” which was “*particularly important.*”

José Luis emphasized,

In Chinese, if you do not learn at least a minimum of cultural aspects, you are kind of fried . . . you are not learning the language properly. It's a circle: culture serves language, and the language is the door to the culture . . . and a spiral starts building up.

Based on his background in history, “*learning Chinese helped me learn about the Chinese culture,*” and this satisfied his historical and intellectual curiosity. He compared learning Chinese to learning other languages and said, “*I cannot recall studying so many cultural aspects during the course [in any other language].*” Knowing the culture changed his life: “*Definitely,*” he said. He contrasted Chinese culture with his own and described understanding Chinese culture very personally:

Because the Chinese culture is like a 360 degrees turn compared to the Mexican or western culture, so it helped me a lot knowing that another human being, similar to me, two eyes, two legs, two arms, sometimes can think and act in completely different ways, and from that perspective [I can] see all the creation that this person's culture has produced for such a long time, regarding architecture, thought, etc.

Due to adaptability and an open mind, he did not experience culture shock. He mentioned sitting in a bar with Chinese people and not being surprised at anything (“*smoking . . ., spitting, and stuff like that*”). He cited the cultural stereotypes foreigners have of Mexicans (Speedy Gonzalez, tequila-drinking, mariachis, zarapes, lying next to a cactus with a hat on) and implied that stereotypes are not useful.

Although Jorge had never visited China, his member check showed that he was deeply connected with the culture:

[My] connection was not just with the language but with the culture. And culture led me to learn many things, including philosophy, medicine, including how to see life as it is, that Chinese science is not a rational science, but it is a science that has a perfect consistency.

The contact he had with Chinese culture and philosophy through studying language and acupuncture made him feel strongly connected to the Chinese way of thought. He accepted that his Western, highly deterministic scientific background taught him how to think in a particular way, but he felt that very intuitive science of China added something that Western science cannot give him:

In the East, above all in China, important things are based on their philosophy. That's what made me love the language, because the language is not separated from that philosophy, and that philosophy is not separated from their science and art, and science and art are not separated from each other. Then everything is connected in such a way that if you study various issues, it all comes together, and the more you study one subject, the better you'll be at the other. And that does not happen here.

Lizett made a profound statement about overcoming barriers to cultural understanding:

What makes it hard for me to learn about the Chinese people is what I have learned in my culture, the fixed ideas that clash with the other world I want to know. The language prompts me to connect with that other side, which cannot be seen from this side.

4.2.4. Accomplishment

The final PERMA constituent is accomplishment. All of the participants were success-oriented and therefore wrote about their attainments on the journey of language learning. Most but not all described their accomplishments in light of the difficulty of the Chinese language. All five mentioned the home-grown strategies they used for learning Chinese. Mariana mentioned the difficulties inherent in the differences between Chinese and Spanish: mental structures (schemata), pronunciation, and the writing system. Though flashcards did not work for her, she found it useful to write *“the characters countless times while thinking about the meaning and pronunciation.”* Later she found that it was unnecessary to write the characters *“infinitely”* as she began to read and write complex sentences. At one point she concentrated so much on writing that she shortchanged her stronger skills, listening, speaking, and reading, until those three skills became weak. During the last two years of her 6 years of Chinese study, while in a master's program in Chinese, she watched Chinese TV dramas, avoided dealing with childish or boring content in instructional textbooks, and followed themes that piqued her interest.

For José Luis, the language at first seemed *“strange”* because of the characters, which seemed like *“weird drawings.”* He made slow progress in the beginning and could rarely use complete sentences or word combinations. He unsystematically focused on characters sometimes and on phonetics at other times. He marked the tones on the written characters in a text, emphasized the correct tones in pronunciation, and copied characters and texts when relevant. When in China, the most difficult thing was memorizing masses of characters, learning extensive vocabulary, and using vocabulary in different contexts; yet he

made the important, strategic decision not to lock himself away in a room studying from books but instead to go outside and interact with Chinese people.

Jorge found Chinese difficult, but not as difficult as a friend had led him to expect. His strategies were keyed to *“my inner being, my intellectual capacities (and in some cases emotions).”* He noted that if he were tired, he would lie on the bed and listen to Chinese audio, while if he were feeling calm he would study the meanings of characters, and if he were upset, he would stop studying and would concentrate on what was wrong. He watched Chinese films and a Chinese TV channel, encountering *“terrible”* but *“helpful”* soap operas and Chinese cultural offerings for Spanish speakers. Additionally, he practiced Tai Ji Quan to learn philosophy and language. He translated phrases in his mind anytime, anywhere; skipped unknown words as needed; tried to make a bond between words and their meanings; reviewed each word occasionally to overcome the forgetting problem; and decided that it would be *“wonderful”* to use words in phrases to remember them.

For Lizett, Chinese posed a heavy load of difficult challenges, such as pronunciation, grammar, and characters. Her learning strategies involved investigating Chinese culture and making good friends among her classmates to create a supportive environment. Her love of the language took over and sustained her.

Unlike the other participants, Claudia did not complain about difficulties in learning Chinese. She seemed to have helpful learning strategies from the start: studying every day, listening to Chinese music, and practicing speaking. Her learning strategies, and her learning itself, halted when a friend died, but later she decided to study Chinese again and listed the following strategies: studying 15-20 minutes daily, sharpening her ear by listening to audio lessons and music, reviewing vocabulary, and practicing with Chinese native speakers. *“The only thing is to have perseverance, study, practice, and have clear objectives.”*

4.3. Results of Stage 3: Selective coding

Stage 3 produces a single, overarching theme for the narratives. The theme is the importance of positive emotions (even in the presence of negative emotions), engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment as the five participants used their intentionality to learn Chinese. Intentionality keeps learners on the road to the future, and all five of the participants want to continue learning and using Chinese in the future.

5. Discussion

This discussion centers on PERMA as a potential framework, an identified gender difference, and the *“triple re-storying”* that can occur in narrative research.

5.1. PERMA as a potential framework

The PERMA components, namely positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, were a rather good fit to the narrative data in the study, but we must note certain cautions.

5.1.1. Positive emotions

Positive emotions, such as excitement, happiness, pleasure, love, and pride, were indeed present in the narratives. Negative emotions, such as frustration, grief, and anxiety, also appeared. Although the participants probably did not have access to Seligman's (2006) ABCDE technique, they managed to handle negative emotions and stayed on track, even if that meant (as it did in Claudia's case) taking some time off from studying Chinese and returning to it later. The emotional resilience of these students was noteworthy.

Despite the expression of some feelings of struggle and pain, the learning experiences in these stories were primarily accompanied by positive feelings. It seemed that even if a student learned in a negative situation, the learning experience left the learner with a sense of inner growth or awakening that was linked, in most cases, to positive emotions. Even when the language was difficult and complex and even when mental struggle was involved, the learning process included many elements of positivity.

In the five narratives, positive emotions made an important contribution to hot cognition. Cognition is never just an intellectual matter, but hot cognition is far beyond mere intellect. Strongly positive emotions, primed by motivation, are crucial for hot cognition to occur. The narratives of Mariana, Claudia, Jorge, Lizett, and José Luis all gave evidence of hot cognition in one instance or another. The narratives seemed to suggest that when hot cognition emerges, it provides reinforcement for seeking future learning experiences, especially those of a significant or transformative nature.

5.1.2. Engagement and meaning

As noted earlier, engagement and meaning were inextricably intertwined in the five narratives. We believe that engagement would not have occurred if meaning had not been present, and meaning would not have emerged without engagement. We found engagement to be associated with intrinsic motivation and flow, while meaning was linked with peak experiences and inspiration/inspired consciousness. All of these were interlocked.

Regarding meaning, the participants were often inspired, and they had many experiences that might be viewed as peak experiences. Several participants overtly mentioned inspiration, and several cited feeling passionate about Chinese. Mariana was inspired by Professor Xu. José Luis had an “*unforgettable*” experience in the Chinese Bridge competition and wanted to inspire his students, whom he was passionate about teaching. Jorge showed inspiration and passion about how everything in life is connected, based on Chinese philosophy. Claudia and Lizett described falling in love with Chinese. For Claudia, learning Chinese had to do with her spirituality and with her personal background, including a childhood accident. The music of the Chinese language fitted into her passion for music in general.

Engagement was identified in the individuals’ intrinsic motivation and their experience of flow. Three of the participants, Lizett, José Luis, and Claudia, started learning Chinese due to various types of extrinsic motivation, but their growing experience with Chinese led them to desire to learn the language for its own sake. Intrinsic motivation and total engagement are part of flow, which also involves unity of action and consciousness, joy, balance between challenge and skills, effortlessness, and time shifts. It is not clear that learning Chinese was ever effortless for the five students, but it became easier, and the devoted, passionate involvement of the participants leads us to think that flow was occasionally, if not often, present.

Something that could reinforce the learners’ engagement in learning Chinese (in comparison to other languages) has to do with the differences between Chinese and Spanish. According to the narratives, learning something absolutely new (in grammar, phonetics, writing, etc.) seems to be particularly exciting and opens learners’ minds to new worlds.

5.1.3. Relationships within and across cultures

In this study, relationships were highly important to learning and well-being. The students consistently talked about their positive relationships with their teachers of Chinese or other teachers. Some discussed relationships with supportive classmates. Several mentioned having positive relationships with Chinese people in Mexico. Those who had been to China cited the importance of interactions with Chinese people there. Relationships with friends and bosses were also discussed. In short, the participants showed themselves to be thoroughly social beings, just as the PERMA model might suggest.

PERMA does not, however, stress relationships in light of culture. In this study, and in the reality of the wider world, it is important to understand personal relationships in the context of culture. Culture is the very breath we

breathe; it is the ineffable substance that helps shape our beliefs and priorities, our relationships and institutions. Particularly when students are learning a new language, their social relationships expand cross-culturally. Learners' relationship with themselves—their sense of identity—grows, shifts, and occasionally fragments as they cross cultural and linguistic borders. PERMA deserves to have more elaboration related to culture. A culture constitutes a kind of framework to interpret the world, and studying a foreign language should help students to make this framework flexible enough to incorporate new frameworks in order to understand and interact in a wider and bigger world. As the narratives revealed, learning Chinese facilitates this purpose.

5.1.4. Accomplishment

Accomplishment was very important to all of the participants. They wanted to succeed in learning the Chinese language and culture, and they all reached a high level of accomplishment due to their efforts and attitudes. Mastery of characters, pronunciation, listening, grammar, and vocabulary was crucial. Four of the five participants, all except Claudia, mentioned the difficulty of learning Chinese. All five developed useful learning strategies. Examples included having clear objectives, watching Chinese TV dramas, listening to Chinese music, interacting with Chinese people instead of hiding behind books, practicing Tai Ji Quan, translating phrases in the mind, and creating supportive relationships with classmates. The learners did not appear to have had specific guidance about learning strategies. This suggests that there is room in the Chinese language learning field for strategy guidance or instruction (Griffiths, 2013; Oxford, 2011b).

5.2. Gender difference

It might already be obvious that a gender difference occurred in the narratives. Two of the three women, Claudia and Lizett, but neither of the men used effusive terms such as *“love”* and *“beautiful”*. Unlike the women, the men more rapidly contextualized their learning in relation to their academic interests: history for José Luis and science and philosophy for Jorge. Nevertheless, the men and the women appeared to be equally entranced by their interaction with the Chinese language and culture.

5.3. Triple re-storying, plus two

The five narratives also reflect the “triple re-storying” that occurs in narrative research with language learners (Oxford, 2011a). The first re-storying (“self-

translation”) occurs when the learner learns a language, crossing an internal border and, in some cases, a physical border (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). The second re-storying happens when the learner tells the story and thereby filters information, emphasizing some things over others (Bruner, 1991; Ochs, Taylor, Rudolph, & Smith, 1992). The third re-storying occurs when researchers examine the insights in a narrative (Bell, 2002) and make additional connections (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995), as we have done in our analysis. We might say that the re-storying hit two more levels, because we went back to the participants to do member checks. The participants judged whether our analysis was satisfactory and added more data, which we then analyzed. In general, the member checks were very helpful in deepening and broadening our understanding.

6. Conclusions

The results led to the conclusion that language learning can be a major journey in self-discovery, rich in positive emotions tied to experiences of engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment. The PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) was therefore a valuable framework for understanding the learner narratives. While the fit was not perfect and while the model did not sufficiently address culture, PERMA gave a useful archway for viewing the narratives as a whole and individually. This suggests that future narrative studies of language learning might benefit from adopting or adapting PERMA as a theoretical framework.

Learning Chinese proved to be transformative for all five participants. Mariana commented on her power to read, write, and understand Chinese and how this gave her strength for the ongoing journey of Chinese learning. José Luis remarked that if he had not been in China, he would never have seen, known, or experienced the amazing things he encountered. Claudia mentioned the “*magic*” of her beloved Chinese language and how it transformed her life for the better every day, resulting in the decision to become a Chinese teacher and translator. Jorge said that his learning process was “*very pleasurable*” and that he hoped “*never to abandon it,*” and so he changed his career to Chinese acupuncture. For Lizett, learning Chinese “*has been one of the most beautiful experiences of my life.*” For each of these learners, the fundamental, taken-for-granted sense of openness—openness to learning a new culture and language, openness to feelings, and openness to major change within himself or herself—was a powerful form of copresence that shaped progress in learning the language.

The narratives in the present study meet all of the criteria stated by Connelly and Clandinin (1999) for high-quality narratives. Each one tells a unified story, shows multiple timeframes, reveals causality, represents experiences clearly, is plausible, and invites the reader in. Additionally, as Connelly and

Clandinin encourage, the five narratives are authentic in being emotionally honest (expressing confusion, ambivalence, uncertainty, and emotional epiphanies), giving insights about identity transformations, and reflecting complexity. Learner narratives chart the experiences of intrepid learners as they encounter difficulties, transcend barriers, experience the ecstasy of peak experiences and inspired consciousness, feel the positive undercurrent of flow, experience diverse emotions, generate hot cognition, develop strength and proficiency, and encounter their own shifting identities in different contexts. The insights provided by learner narratives help teachers and researchers understand the problems learners face and offer clues about how to best help learners to achieve their ultimate potential. Learner narratives have a potentially significant role to play in language learning research and educational research more broadly. If we want to understand what stirs learners' hearts and minds and what lights their inner fires, we need more studies involving learner narratives, which let learners speak in their own authentic voices and express their own concerns and self-understandings. These narratives not only reveal what animates learners but also disclose the reasons why learning becomes so engaging.

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