

Building Student Communities in Spite of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: In times when the humanities at large have suffered reductions in enrollments, the ability to build student communities has been seminal to the survival of many departments. Building student communities for language departments in particular includes planning conversation hours, movie nights, and cultural events aimed at attracting students and raising retention rates. The 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has forced departments across the country to modify not only their course formats but also the events offered outside of the regular teaching schedule. In this article, we discuss the shift that the Italian Language Program at Indiana University Bloomington decided to apply to our community-building activities during and after the transition from in-person to an online mode of instruction. To translate several events planned for the rest of the spring 2020 semester into an online environment, we had to resort to the extensive use of social media, such as Instagram and Facebook. Moreover, it was necessary to find creative ways to completely rethink our outreach efforts while still being relevant. Through a tight collaboration among language instructors, we invented and implemented a series of new activities (such as online bingo and cooking lessons) as well as translated those that were crucial for our program to exist and thrive into an online environment. A karaoke project that was originally intended to be the highlight of the academic year presented the greatest challenge in organization and modification; and yet, with creativity and an open-minded attitude, we managed to successfully finish the project with high student participation.

Keywords: Italian, community building, karaoke, social media, intercultural competence, online instruction.

Introduction

On a unique spring day, a group of 12 Italian language instructors from Indiana University Bloomington met on Zoom to record a short video addressed to their students. “We are all here to tell you that we care and we want you to feel that you belong,” recited the first speaker. “Although we are not on our beloved campus in Bloomington, we are all in this together. So here we are, as a team,” the speaker continued. The 12 instructors then introduced themselves and proceeded to unveil the Italian Language Program’s offerings for the upcoming weeks of lockdown and social distancing. These weeks of campus closure signified neither the end of instruction nor the suspension of cocurricular activities, but quite the opposite. Scored with Rino Gaetano’s popular Italian tune “Ma il cielo è sempre più blu,” the video is a cheerful and heartwarming advertisement that displays the

determination to “finish stronger than how we started” and invites all viewers to “prove that, in difficult times, we can stick together and be successful.” Most importantly, the video highlights the existence of a community that functions thanks to each instructor’s participation and dedication. As three of those 12 instructors, we recall our communal desire to keep weaving the threads of social relations with and among our students of Italian despite being forcibly apart.¹ In making this video, we became aware of how our network of dedicated teachers, their humanity, and personal participation were finally laid bare to students; in this video, it was made clear the often behind-the-scenes work that directly contributes to students’ learning and overall engagement with Italian language and culture while enrolled in a university program.² In this article, we aim to reflect on the actions we took, along with nine fellow teachers at Indiana University Bloomington, to keep building students’ communities in spite of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic between March and May 2020. While the group video is the earliest and most visible proof of our engagement, the actions taken on a personal, class, and departmental level were many more. Further to this reflection, in this article we discuss how the tight collaboration among language instructors (and a clear goal established by the director of language instruction of Italian) allowed for, fueled, and ultimately supported our undertaking in building a student community beyond the barriers of social distancing.

Community building in higher education refers to creating a sense of belonging and continuity among students, faculty, and staff as well as to cultivating a feeling of connection to others, ideas, and values (Brown, 2001). It may have an outward or inward quality. Community building with an outward scope indicates those actions taken to create or strengthen the ties between students and the larger community to which their institution belongs. When it is an internal process, instead, it functions to support the creation of a group of people that work with a shared purpose, identify under the same institution, and inhabit the same virtual or physical space. Practically, community-building actions happen in person or through electronic communication and in virtual spaces, such as social media. Even when “pedagogical lurking,” or nonpublic participation, occurs, it entails actions that are still pedagogically relevant, such as reading other students’ posts or watching their videos in the target language (Arnold & Paulus, 2010). Moreover, social media’s architecture promotes sharing everyday activities with others and makes it possible for users to employ social media as a shared playground (Reinhardt, 2020).

The benefits of conscious, structured, and continued community building are evident, especially for departments in the humanities, already suffering from historic declines in enrollment before the pandemic and its impact on higher education (Burke, 2020; Polikoff, Silver, & Korn, 2020). In addition, there is a connection between building communities and cultural exposure since community-building activities allow language learners to move beyond memorizing cultural facts and closer to directly experiencing the culture while negotiating diverse aspects of the target culture (Nugent & Catalano, 2015). Through interaction with those representing the target culture, the students develop intercultural competence. Hence, in our courses we focus on products, values, and changes over time to separate patterns from stereotypes and understand together the reasoning behind them. All of these elements give the students the ability to successfully communicate with people from another culture. The community-building activities we created and continue to use allow students to test, expand, and share their knowledge in a realistic, albeit conditioned and simulated, environment.

¹ Viola Ardeni was a visiting lecturer in Italian; Sara Dallavalle was a Ph.D. candidate in Italian and the program’s social media manager; Karolina Serafin is a senior lecturer and the director of language instruction of Italian.

² The participating instructors were Viola Ardeni, Francesco Brenna, Leonardo Cabrini, Sara Dallavalle, Kenna Daniels, Vincenzo Dimaggio, Marcogildo Lettieri, Giorgio Losi, Pantalea Mazzitello, Emma Pcolinski, Karolina Serafin, and Pietro Tripano. Link to the video: https://youtu.be/WrP_I6DtS-8

Building Communities Before the Pandemic

In our Italian program, next to in-class activities led by our instructors in their courses, we have a long-standing tradition of organizing cocurricular activities that serve a triple function: to create a community of learners, to advertise our program, and last but not least, to increase students' intercultural competence. Through the years, our cocurricular activities have taken various forms, depending on the current coordinator, chosen from our teaching graduate students. The activities we offer vary from cooking nights, meet-and-greet sessions with Italian exchange students, and carnival-mask-decorating events to conversation hours for advanced and beginner students. We aim to engage our diverse undergraduate student population while taking advantage of instructors' personal interests. This allows us to introduce topics about which we are truly passionate, strengthening both our undergraduate and graduate student communities. Our cultural events are usually conducted in English to include students of all levels, while the weekly conversation hours are offered in Italian. The weekly conversation hours serve as a venue where the students are able to practice the target language without the burden of a grade. Through these activities we all have the chance to interact with students who might enroll in our courses in the future or who were enrolled in them in the past. The students also meet each other and talk about the next semesters of instruction, become friends, and support each other. Since many students take Italian as a language requirement, one event per semester is mandatory and it counts as 3% of the final grade. Year after year, our efforts to engage students in our program have proven successful. Increasingly, we have students that begin taking Italian classes to fulfill their language requirement and end up falling in love with the culture and pursuing a minor.

In the 2019/2020 academic year, we decided to add another level of community building and an intercultural learning element by creating a karaoke-centered, semester-long event. We conceived it as a collaborative, multistep project that would involve Italian sections from second semester to the advanced literature course and would enable students to get to know each other and build community outside the classroom. Each class would be divided into groups; each group would present a song and compete against each other. The winning song from each section would represent the whole class in the competition for the karaoke final prize.³ The karaoke project had well-designed pedagogical goals and carefully planned steps (see handouts in Appendix A):

1. Pre-project survey dedicated to attitudes toward karaoke and group projects;
2. Culture lesson dedicated to Italian music;
3. Outside-of-class collaborative writing assignment based on research;
4. In-class collaborative song presentation based on the writing assignment;
5. Karaoke concert;
6. Two post-project surveys dedicated to student-to-student collaboration and change in attitudes toward karaoke and group projects.

The project was made part of the students' final grade; essays and presentations had points assigned with clear grading rubrics. Each syllabus included dedicated days for cultural lessons and group presentations. We were excited to engage and challenge our students with this new cultural experiment but, as we explain in the following section, we were forced to change and adapt our plans.

In addition to our cocurricular cultural events, our program is also engaged in social media use and outreach. We use it as a means to communicate with students and friends of the program, to

³ There were 11 participating sections in the competition for a total of 210 students, four full-time lecturers, and five teaching graduate students.

advertise our lower and upper division course offerings, and to showcase and promote our cultural events. While our social media communication is not entirely in Italian, our accounts connect the students to a broader notion of Italian culture that enriches and complements in-class and cocurricular activities. As early as 2014, we created our Facebook page @italianprogramIU, which now has more than 670 followers. The page is successful because it is a team effort. The director of language instruction of Italian and her graduate assistant, as well as several instructors, have been participating in the creation of content, engaging the audience with informative videos and posts from Italy and with the latest news about course offerings. The photo albums document a variety of successful events we organized in the past, such as the 2019 live music concert, our annual cooking nights, and photos from the summer study abroad program in Florence. It is undeniable, however, that Facebook is no longer the favorite social network among college-aged students. Surveys reveal that Generation Z has been gradually moving away from the platform (Dreyfuss, 2019). The social media apps that 18- to 24-year-olds seem to prefer are Snapchat and Instagram (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). In light of these trends, the program created its Instagram business profile in August 2018 with the name @iu_italian. Unlike Facebook, the Instagram account has been moderated only by our social media manager. On the Instagram page, followers find posts and stories displaying the highlights of cultural activities organized by the program, as well as departmental events involving Italian graduate students, lecturers, and faculty. The main aim of this account is familiarizing followers with the vast and diverse community of scholars, instructors, and students in our program. Since January 2019, the page has been featuring the segment “Profiles in Awesomeness,” comprising brief, snappy video interviews with several members of the program, to reveal their academic interests, their hobbies, and the reasons why they teach Italian. Posts and stories serve as a showcase for the program, but also, and more importantly, they encourage students to engage with their teachers, not just as members of an institution, but also as individual people. After 2 years, the account is one of the most active and followed among U.S. university Italian programs, featuring 130 posts and almost 370 followers.

Building Communities in Spite of the Pandemic

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to move all instruction and cocurricular activities online for the rest of the semester, as well as to refrain from live interactions. At that point, we already knew that along with quarantines and lockdowns would come alienation, mental health problems, and loneliness. For this reason, when we transitioned to online instruction, we decided to adopt our social media as a platform for enabling our students to communicate with us and each other. Facebook and Instagram allowed us not only to continue offering cocurricular, cultural activities but also to present the outcomes of the karaoke project. Our desire was to keep the students engaged, motivated, and hopeful that we could proceed as “normal” again.

Replacing our cocurricular events was not an easy task to accomplish with such short notice but, instead of slowing down, we decided to challenge ourselves by organizing a brand-new activity that could easily take place in an online environment. In just a few days, the director of language instruction came up with the idea of the “Bingo Anti-Virale.” This consisted of 48 boxes, including fun and inspirational activities that students could do as part of their cocurricular grade and for extra credit on their final grade (see details in Appendix B). A few examples of these activities are meeting up with classmates on Zoom to chat, sharing a video of Italians singing from their balconies, teaching a relative a couple of sentences in Italian, and doing 50 push-ups while counting in Italian. Five boxes counted for one in-person cocurricular cultural activity, but we encouraged students to do as many as they could to receive a special prize. Weekly conversation hours continued as well, and students could attend them on Zoom and then include their participation as one of the bingo boxes.

Since we graded the students' participation in the Bingo Anti-Virale, we had to find effective ways for instructors to be able to monitor participation and progress. We decided to use Instagram as our social platform, where students could share their posts and stories with the program, their instructors, and their peers. To ensure that both students and instructors were able to participate in the contest, we followed a few important steps:

1. Each instructor created their own public Instagram profile, following @iu_italian to be able to access content;
2. Students could use their personal account, but we encouraged them to create a new, public profile, so that they could comfortably follow and be followed by their instructors and the program without being forced to share their personal life details;
3. Everyone that participated in the Bingo was asked to tag the program and add our tailored hashtags, such as #bingoantivirale #italianatiu #italianonlineIU #iorestoacasa;
4. The program's social media manager reposted all accessible content (posts and stories that mentioned or tagged @iu_italian), mainly using the "stories" tool and creating "highlight" folders where stories can be featured permanently.

As a result, by clicking the highlight named "Bingo!" and opening the tagged post section of the Instagram profile, every user was (and still is) able to see the participants' contributions, in the form of photos of Italian products and homemade dishes, Tik-Tok videos of dancing to Italian songs, funny memes in Italian, recommendations for Italian books, movies, and songs, and many more (see screenshots in Appendix B).

Eventually, while the Bingo Anti-Virale on Instagram could not entirely substitute for the experience of face-to-face interactions, nor provide the same chances for practicing oral skills outside the classroom, it succeeded in actively engaging students, connecting them with each other and the outside world, and broadening their understanding of Italian culture. Furthermore, by employing social media in addition to our course management system, Canvas, we decentralized students' interactions among themselves and with Italian culture. The instructor was no longer the sole access point to culture. Rather, the instructor became just one of several community members. As Arnold and Paulus (2010) remarked, "students may perceive [social media] to facilitate communication and collaboration while [course management systems] are primarily designed for a one-way information transfer controlled by the instructor" (p. 195). In our experience, the Bingo Anti-Virale allowed us to move beyond the obstacles of instructor-driven communication and to enable students' organic interaction with Italian culture. Examples of this can still be seen in some Instagram accounts dedicated to participation in the Bingo Anti-Virale that students have left public. A student from an elementary Italian class section, for instance, captioned her account with the phrase "Here to celebrate and post about my Italian adventures" and shared photos of the conversation hours and introduced her pet in Italian to her Instagram viewers.⁴ Another first-semester Italian student even wrote her caption in Italian: "Ciao! Mi chiamo Shelby. Io sono una studentessa all'università dell'Indiana. Io Faccio la lezione di italiano M100. Ciao!" (Hello! My name is Shelby. I am a student at Indiana University. I take the Italian course M100. Bye!).⁵ By browsing these Instagram accounts, one is able to witness the interactions within our student community, and the students' negotiation between personal identity and in-class learning.

⁴ https://www.instagram.com/gracem_in_italian/

⁵ <https://www.instagram.com/sunriseandsunset/>. See also this account, where the student introduces two family members, completes push-ups while counting in Italian, and cooks: <https://www.instagram.com/frankiesiracusanoitaliano/>

The second major event that took place on Instagram was the culmination of the karaoke project. When it became clear that the semester would no longer include in-person instruction, we knew that we could not organize a live event that would include over 100 participants; however, we were more than halfway done with the project and in the majority of classes the students had already voted for the best song. After all the effort we had put into building it, we decided to migrate the live event to an online platform to give the students the possibility to fully enjoy the end of the semester, just as we had planned to do in-person. After our all-instructors Zoom meeting, and the subsequent group video mentioned above, we turned the final karaoke concert into an Instagram event where we published videos created by our students.

The final product each class was asked to submit was a 3- to 4-min video including a presentation and karaoke version of the song chosen by the whole class. We granted students a high degree of freedom, as we wanted them to enjoy the event, to have fun in creating shared memories, and to strengthen the community. We anticipated possible problems such as lack of reliable internet connection, personal issues with camera exposure, or unwillingness to collaborate with others and contribute to the project. In an effort to overcome these obstacles, the participation in this part of the karaoke project became optional and was awarded extra credit. In addition, we tailored specific roles to suit the students' needs and preferences:

1. The lead presenters were the face of the video and they would introduce the song;
2. The graphic designers were responsible for creating visual materials used in the video (slides for the presentation, flyer to advertise the song, etc.);
3. The digitalization team was in charge of the technology;
4. The grammar and pronunciation coaches reviewed the materials for accuracy and worked with the presenters on their pronunciation and grammar;
5. The group liaisons were responsible for communicating and setting up the group meetings.

While these roles divided the students into smaller groups, the singing portion of the presentation would feature all participating students. We replaced the former detailed handouts with minimalistic flyers, including the roles and a suggested timeline that would work well for Facebook and Instagram publicity (see Appendix C). The instructors were responsible for distributing these flyers via email, showing them during the synchronous Zoom class meetings, and encouraging the students to work on the project. Despite the constraints of the pandemic, we employed an element of competition; only the winning class would receive additional extra credit. The students were asked to record their video submissions and upload to an Indiana University Box (file-sharing service) folder. Once the videos were downloaded from Box, we used Instagram's video application to share the videos of the six participating classes. With views ranging from 102 to 189, Instagram amplified our students' voices and allowed them to publicly present the result of their semester-long effort. Once the videos were uploaded, all the students were invited to vote for the winner through a Doodle poll. The voting process exceeded our expectations and the reception of the videos was very positive. Yet, the winning video recorded more than 1,000 votes, and such a stark difference in the numbers of views and votes led us to the conclusion that there could have been vote manipulation.⁶ In hindsight, we should have foreseen this possibility and addressed it more thoroughly.

⁶ Link to the winning video: https://www.instagram.com/tv/B_LauszJHj0/

Feedback and Reflections

The migration of the cocurricular activities and the karaoke project to an online setting was not devoid of challenges. First, not all instructors felt comfortable using Instagram, because they either were not skilled in or did not support social media. These instructors preferred to receive evidence of their students' engagement via more formal platforms, such as Canvas. One of them admitted:

I think the most challenging aspect was how to make it easy for students to submit the activities and for us how to check the submissions (creating an IG profile, asking to tag us, distinguish between story and post, ask to post a screenshot on Canvas...).

This situation might not have been ideal, but as long as the majority of instructors were present and active on Instagram, reposting and commenting on students' posts and stories, the platform remained effective. A further challenge was presented in transferring the entire community online, with the risk of replicating, if not amplifying, problematic social dynamics, dislikes, or frictions among community members. The collaborative and demanding nature of the karaoke project raised a number of concerns from instructors and students alike. For example, often instructors who were hesitant about the project before the pandemic decided not to insist on its online implementation. One instructor specifically expressed a preference for the in-person version of the project, which would allow more oversight of students' collaborations and would possibly avoid some of the already existing interpersonal issues among students.

Additionally, a student from one of the advanced courses wrote in the final course evaluations: "I would prefer not to do group work; it is inconvenient and prevented me from getting assignments done at the best times in my schedule. Also, the Karaoke project was overambitious and not necessary." As this learner's comment reveals, personal attitudes regarding peer collaboration may not be changed, no matter the instructors' efforts. The latter part of the comment, then, points to a discrepancy between the student's perception and the program's intent to achieve specific learning goals and foster community. Other issues arose when group work functioned as an exclusionary rather than inclusionary practice, possibly accentuating interpersonal minor conflicts that had arisen during in-person instruction and did not dissipate online. Noticeably not all the sections decided to work on and submit a video. In our opinion, this inconsistent participation often reflected the instructors' engagement and their lack of willingness to push the students further.

The transition also had some significant, positive aspects. Several instructors found the Bingo Anti-Virale very efficient because it gave everybody the opportunity to connect through comments and likes outside of personal preferences. Indeed, they noticed that many students, more than in previous semesters, decided to earn extra credit by completing the bingo activities. Some instructors even decided to participate in the Bingo Anti-Virale themselves and truly enjoyed it, while others engaged in the karaoke project and enjoyed working online with the students. One commented:

I was worried that students would lose motivation for karaoke, but I was impressed by how many of my students were still interested in doing it and I thought they did a good job putting it together. Having to do it via Zoom made it more difficult for them to sing together, but they managed.

Another instructor wondered about the influence of these activities over time and yet assumed they would strengthen our community even more. Another commented:

I liked how students were involved through the use of media they are familiar with, like Instagram. I liked the creativity of the activities and how they allowed them to incorporate different aspects of what the students like about Italy (news, cuisine, photos, songs...). I also liked the flexibility of the Bingo.

A literature course instructor commented:

In my class, some of the students who were very hesitant to participate in Karaoke in-person flourished as soon as the project was moved online. I believe that those students treated the screen as a protective device that allowed them to overcome their shyness.

This is consistent with what we usually notice in our online courses: Less outspoken students tend to participate more actively.

Recognizing the connection and continuity between the in-person and online activities, a second-semester Italian student commented: "I loved going to the *Circolo Italiano* [the cocurricular events]. I always had fun and learned something. I thought the Bingo was a very creative way to continue it." A fellow student expressed the desire to always have the Bingo Anti-Virale as an option. This projection into future courses makes us hopeful that students feel they belong. A similar recognition of community participation is present in another evaluation: "I participated in the extra credit karaoke project which I actually found to be really fun as our group met up multiple times on zoom to communicate and just talk." A fourth student wrote: "I liked Karaoke online. It was fun to still do it while we were all so far away from campus." Some stated that collaborating with others online was easier than in-person collaborative work, appreciating the flexibility that the project granted. The new roles for the online version of the karaoke project were particularly appreciated: "I liked doing the group karaoke project because everyone was able to choose to do what they liked."

Conclusion

Our experience taught us that especially in times that forced us to challenge what we know about ourselves and our world, being part of a group helped each one of us grow, while strengthening the community as a whole. The online activities that we proposed allowed us to stay in touch with each other, support each other, and be creatively involved with the language program despite moving online or leaving Bloomington. There is no better way to fight stagnation and the feeling of solitude than being part of a group and helping each other through a communal project. As instructors, we created the conditions for our students to interact online, and while they had tasks to perform, the very act of meeting and sharing a common goal increased a general sense of community. Online community-building activities make it possible to have a more equalized participation, going beyond traditional teacher-to-student vertical communication. In particular, we experienced enhanced student-to-student horizontal exchanges and connections as well as unexpected, organic relations that involved students and instructors alike. In a sense, the online environment encouraged us to recognize our mutual humanity and to meet as a community of peers. In spring 2020, when we were all trying to compensate for the lack of human interactions, we gave more attention and thought to the community we were building. In a moment that perhaps saw our biggest personal fragilities, we were all more available to engage with each other, possibly beyond expectations. Even when confronted with the impossibility of in-person interactions, our desire to be together and to cultivate our passion for Italian culture was stronger than ever. While we individually and collectively have begun a new academic year, which at the time of this writing bears many similarities to last semester, we do wonder whether these activities

might have relevance during regular in-person instruction and what their impact would be in building communities. To what degree of success could other language programs replicate them? Could practices of student community building benefit the humanities at large? Could the humanities set an example for higher education's role in community building overall? We can only hope that our actions at Indiana University Bloomington may inspire other programs to explore and experiment with online and in-person community-building activities.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Pre-pandemic Karaoke Project Handouts.

Handout #1: Pre-project survey

1. Complete the sentences circling each of the words that describe your feelings.

When I think of music:

indifference boredom nostalgia happiness serenity energy

When I think of Karaoke, I feel:

anxiety fear apprehension curiosity happiness excitement

Add another emotion you might feel (either in English or in Italian):

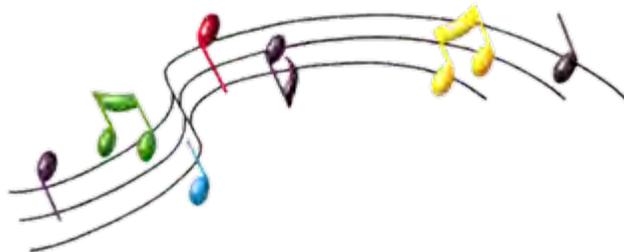
2. Complete the sentence by circling each of the words that describe your feelings.

When I think of a collaborative, group project:

- ... I think it will be a lot of work
- ... I think there will be a lot of problems
- ... I'm afraid
- ... I'm excited to get to know my classmates better
- ... I'm happy to be able to learn from my classmates
- ... I'm happy to share responsibilities with someone

Add any other sentence or words that might describe your feelings about a collaborative, group project (either in English or in Italian):

Handout #2: Karaoke Project—collaborative writing assignment guidelines



Welcome to the world of Italian music! In order to be successful in this composition, you must collaborate well,

help each other out, and follow each of the instructions below!



Choose an Italian singer-songwriter and one of his or her songs that you like.



Assign roles to each group member, taking into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of each:

- Biographer (present the biography and discography of the musician in 200 words in addition to the bibliography)
- Musical historian (present the history of the album and of the song, as well as its success via reviews, top charts, etc. in 200 words, plus bibliography)
- Interpreter (speak of the significance of the song and of its interpretation in 200 words, plus bibliography)
- Editor (check the whole text from the point of view of vocabulary, grammar, and content; add 100 words in order to convince others to listen to this song; complete the bibliography and submit the composition as a single, cohesive document on Canvas)

Each of the different parts must be ready for the Editor at least a week before the deadline. This way the Editor has a week to correct the text with care and attention.

Evaluation criteria:

Each student will receive an individual grade that will be awarded based on the following two elements:

1. The composition itself (40 points)
2. The anonymous survey of group members (10 points)

Total: 50 points

Writing assignment rubric (40 points):

Grammar (6 points)	The composition is written correctly. The verb tenses are used correctly and the verbs themselves are conjugated well. The agreement between articles, nouns, and adjectives is correct. The verb forms are rich and varied.
Vocabulary (4 points)	The vocabulary used in the composition is rich and is not repetitive. The words used are correct in their context. The text is clear and reads easily.
Cultural content (6 points)	The cultural content is interesting and engaging. The information is presented in the students' own words, with originality and clarity. The text contains quotes from interviews, reviews, or other secondary sources.
Creativity (4 points)	The text achieves its goal to convince others to listen to the song and is able to connect all elements in an interesting and engaging way.
Individual work (20 points)	The individual part of the composition is efficient and coherent. The quality of the individual work corresponds to that of the rest of the group, or exceeds the group.

Anonymous survey: complete an anonymous survey for each group member:

Student's name _____

Circle the point value that you would like to assign to this group member:

Collaborated very well (2), well (1), or insufficiently (0).

Contributed a lot (2), enough (1), little (0) during each of the encounters and email exchanges with creative and interesting ideas.

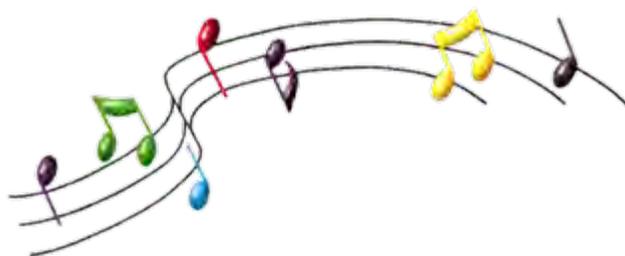
Responded to emails promptly (2), after a few days (1), never or rarely (0).

In the choices of time and day of group meetings, this student was very flexible (2), flexible enough (1), not flexible (0).

Submitted an excellent (2), good (1), insufficient (0) composition from a grammatical or cultural standpoint.

Total points: _____ / 10

Handout #3: Karaoke Project—collaborative presentation guidelines



Congratulations! You have finished your essay on Italian music! Now, you will move on to the next phase of the karaoke project. Together with your group members, you need to transform your essay into an eight-minute presentation.

The ultimate objective of this presentation is to win the nomination for the best song! This song will be sung by your whole class at the concert!

Just like in the essay, each group member will have an assigned role in the presentation. Each of you must consider your strengths and weaknesses when assigning group roles.

Expectations:

- The presentation must be eight minutes long, plus the time to listen to the song.
- All of the group members must speak during the presentation, but the lead presenter will speak for four to five minutes out of the eight.
- The peer reviewer must check all written materials before sending it into the professor for further correction.
- The pronunciation coach must go to the professor's office hours in order to practice the pronunciation of the entire presentation.
- The peer reviewer and the pronunciation coach must work with all group members in order to help them with the grammar and the pronunciation of their individual sections of the presentation.
- The graphic designer is responsible for the design of the slides (PowerPoint or Google Slide) and of the flyer.
- The flyer must have: 1) the lyrics of the song, 2) the basic information regarding the singer and the song, 3) the reasons why your song should win the competition.
- Each member of the group must contribute to the written aspects of the slides and the flyer.

Group rules:

- The lead presenter (the person who speaks for the longest time)
- The pronunciation coach (the person who meets with the professor to practice the presentation's pronunciation and then teaches it to the presenters)
- The graphic designer (the person who prepares the slides and the flyer to give to your classmates)

- The peer reviewer (the person who checks all of the documents for correct content, grammar, and vocabulary)

Evaluation criteria:

Each group member will receive an individual grade that will be awarded based on these two elements:

1. The presentation itself (80 points)
2. An anonymous survey completed by each of the group members (20 points)

Total: 100 points

Presentation rubric (80 points):

Grammar and vocabulary (15 points)	The student speaks correctly according to his or her level. He or she conjugates verbs correctly, follows agreement, and uses a rich and non-repetitive vocabulary.
Pronunciation and clarity (15 points)	The pronunciation is clear and without errors. The content is easily understood and flows well.
Cultural content and creativity (15 points)	The content is interesting and engaging. The information provided is presented with originality, clarity, and is said in the speaker's own words. The text contains secondary sources, such as quotes from interviews and reviews.
Visual materials (15 points)	The visual materials presented in class (the slides and the flyer) are interesting. They convince other students to listen to and to sing the presented song. These materials do not have grammatical errors or spelling mistakes.
Individual work (20 points)	The individual part of the presentation is efficient and coherent. The quality of the work corresponds to that of the rest of the group or exceeds the group.

Anonymous survey: complete an anonymous survey for each group member:

Student's name _____

Circle the point value that you would like to assign to this group member:

Collaborated very well (3), well (2), or insufficiently (1).

Contributed a lot (3), enough (2), little (1) during each of the encounters and email exchanges with creative and interesting ideas.

Responded to emails promptly (3), after a few days (2), never or rarely (1).

In the choices of time and day of group meetings, this student was very flexible (3), flexible enough (2), not flexible (1).

Offered to the group excellent (3), sufficient (2), insufficient (1) materials from a grammatical or vocabulary standpoint.

Completed his or her individual role excellently (5), very well (4) well (3), sufficiently (2), insufficiently (1).

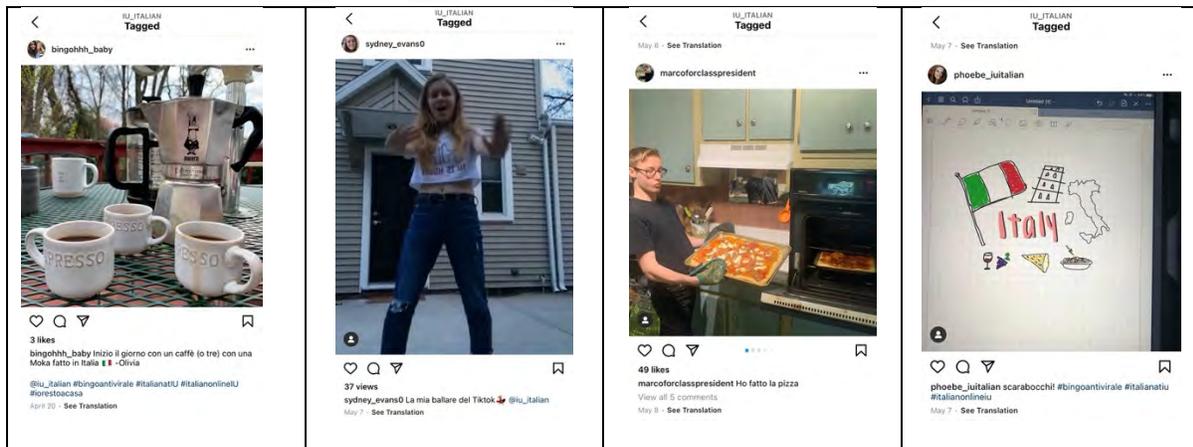
Total points: _____ / 20

Appendix 2. “Bingo Anti-Virale” and Sample of Students’ Instagram Posts.

BINGO ANTI-VIRALE!

Five boxes count for one Circolo Italiano! To win the big prize, complete all boxes! To participate, post each square that you complete on Instagram and tag us @iu_italian using these hashtags: #bingoantivirale #italianatiu #italianonlineiu #iorestocasa
You can also upload to Canvas! We will repost all content on our social media pages.

I	T	A	L	I	A	N	O
Post a review of an Italian film you've seen	Post a video of your daily routine	Post a picture of homemade pizza (not ordered) Be creative! 🍕	Post an Italian song you like	Meet up with some classmates on ZOOM to chat	Chat with your classmates in Italian using any virtual method and share the video	Share a video of Italians singing from their balconies during the quarantine	Give us a virtual tour of your house
Introduce your pets and/or family in a video in Italian	Post a review of an Italian book, article or comic	Participate in a virtual conversation hour	Post an article or piece of news about Italy	Practice your karaoke song and record it (with classmates or by yourself)	Tweet a video that has to do with Italian culture	Find a book in your house that is set in Italy	Host an interview in Italian with a friend or a classmate about how they're passing the time during the quarantine
Post some info about a famous Italian	Post a drawing of yours (or anything else) connected to Italian art	Teach a relative two sentences in Italian and share the video	Find something in your home that was made in Italy	Post a video about something fun you're doing at home (in Italian)	Post a video in which you recite an Italian poem from memory 🗣️	Find an Italian social media page that you like and share your favorite post.	Post a video of your self-care routine—how do you spoil yourself?
Take yourself reading a page from a book in the "Biblioteca Anti-Virale"	Sing two or three Italian songs in the shower and share which song was the best	Do 50 pushups in Italian (they don't need to be done all at once to count!) (let your instructor know if you need an alternative)	Participate in your second virtual conversation hour	FREE SPACE: being a great Italian student! 	Connect to the collective reading of the <i>Decameron</i> and share your experience https://www.sns.it/it/evento/lallegra-brigata	Act out a scene from an Italian play (es. <i>La mandragola</i> , <i>La locandiera</i>) and post it with TikTok	Write a comic in Italian – you can copy a famous style you know or make it completely your own
Make pasta alla carbonara (or another Italian recipe) and post a picture	Post a video in which you explain why more people should take Italian	Meet up on ZOOM with your karaoke group to talk about your project	Do 100 squats in Italian and post the video (let your instructor know if you need an alternative)	Go on a virtual tour of an Italian museum and post a picture of your favorite work of art	Write an email to your teacher to ask how they're doing and to give them updates on how you're doing 📧	Write a song or a funny poem in Italian about the quarantine	Share a video of yourself where you wash your hands and sing "tanti auguri a te" twice
Repost a video about an Italian sporting event	Repost a video from a famous person who speaks Italian, but isn't Italian	Play chess, <i>Magic The Gathering</i> (or any online game) in Italian and post the video	Share a video of your newly-acquired quarantine hobby	Share a video in Italian of your quarantine high fashion: pajamas and lounge wear!	Share your dream Italian vacation (where, when, how) for when the quarantine is over	Tweet an Italian meme	Create a dance video on TikTok with an Italian song



Appendix C. Online Karaoke Project Flyers

Italian Karaoke
Vote on April 19, 2020

Compete for a chance to win 10 points extra credit for your class! For fame in the IU Italian community!

Your class will work together, following the suggested timeline, to make a creative, 4 minute video to compete! Dedicate 3 minutes to presenting your song, and the rest to singing. You can use any video editing platform you would like. Creativity is key! We will share these on our Instagram page @iu_italian and on our website! You will vote on the winner using a digital poll on Sunday, April 19th.

Choose your role!

THE LEAD PRESENTERS
the face of the video, presents, sings, and speaks. *qualities: confident, clear, enunciate*

THE GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
visual materials, flyers, and presentation materials. *qualities: detail oriented, precision*

THE DIGITALIZATION TEAM
convert the presentation from an in-person to video format. *qualities: special effects, creativity, vision*

THE GRAMMAR AND PRONUNCIATION COACHES
copy editing, proofreading, and language practice. *qualities: behind the scenes, careful, helps the whole team do their best*

THE GROUP LIAISONS
organize meetings, contacting students and professors. *qualities: leaders and clear communicators*

While only the winners get 10 points of extra credit, each class' presentation is worth an additional 10 points on their grade!

Suggested Timeline:

MARCH 30
choose your role, sign up online with the link provided by your instructor

APRIL 4
have met with your role specific groups and as a class at least once to divide tasks, set goals and expectations

APRIL 6
send first drafts of all written material to grammar coaches

APRIL 9
have met at least one other time with smaller group and class for updates and practice

APRIL 12
send all video material to the digitalization team for edits

APRIL 16
review the final product together, make any changes necessary, submit on your class' IUBox

Vote on April 19, 2020
Italian Karaoke

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