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Self-Study of a Teacher's Practices of and Experience with Emotion Regulation

Lauren Elyse Paravato

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Self-Study of a Teacher's Practices of and Experience with Emotion Regulation

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Master of Arts

In the past decade, educational researchers have engaged in research on teacher emotion regulation. However, there has never been an in-depth look at teacher emotion regulation studied from the first person perspective of the teacher. This study seeks to offer just such a perspective. The self-study explored how, across time, I as the teacher participant, teaching in a mid-socioeconomic suburb of Utah, responded emotionally in terms of classroom interactions. Over a 4-month period, I made daily "in the moment" recordings of emotional classrooms situations and at the end of each week, the collection of recordings was reviewed and coded, creating analytic memos that identified patterns of responses. A critical friend then interrogated my analysis to provide me with critique, analysis, and response concerning the patterns and progression she and I identified. This process reveals a pattern of emotional experience (that of a triggering episode eliciting an emotional response, followed by negative or positive reaction) and the subsequent less or more effective coping strategies. As the study progressed, the coping strategies I utilized as emotion regulation in my classroom shifted from less to more effective as I made judgments about whether my responses effectively supported me in terms of emotion regulation, and my goals for the classroom. Reflection shifted my understanding of the underlying reasons for my emotional responses, which enabled me to create new patterns of analysis and response that led me to better regulate my emotion within my classroom. Findings reveal that reflection, coupled with interaction with a critical friend, contributes significantly to my development of emotion regulation as a teacher. Although this study provides an examination into my particular emotion regulation, both teachers and teacher educators can profit from the findings. This study demonstrates the need for a different kind of professional development for supporting teacher emotion regulation, one that incorporates cycles of "in the moment" recording of experience, reflection on experiences, and interaction with a critical friend allowing space to adjust and retry. The findings suggest practical approaches to support teachers in developing more effective emotion regulation.

Keywords: teacher emotion, emotion regulation, teacher-student relationships

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When my original chair fell through, Dr. Pinnegar was the professor who stepped up to help me. I will forever be grateful for her care to go above and beyond to help me. She has looked out for me ever since, and I ended up loving both of her classes about qualitative research and thesis writing. And finally, Dr. Newberry. I love and appreciate her so much. She taught us about teacher development and eventually chaired my thesis committee. I would not be graduating without her help. She is brilliant, and I love her. Thank you, Dr. Melissa Newberry!

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DESCRIPTION OF THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis, Self-Study of a Teacher's Practices of and Experience with Emotion Regulation, is written in a hybrid format. The hybrid format brings together traditional thesis requirements with journal publication formats. A vast majority of the data that came from this study has already been presented to the American Educational Research Association in April, 2018. I also plan to present this research at the Castle Conference in July, 2018. Preparations are being made to submit one article from the study as presented here.

The preliminary pages of the thesis reflect requirements for submission to Brigham Young University. The thesis report is presented as a journal article and conforms to length and style requirements for submitting research reports to education journals. The full literature review is included in the Appendix. This thesis format contains two reference lists. The first reference list contains references included in the journal-ready article. The second list includes all citations used in the Appendix entitled "Review of the Literature."

Background

During my second year of teaching, I was helping a group of students at the back table, when I looked across the room and saw one of the boys doing something that is unacceptable classroom behavior, the details of which I no longer remember. I do know, however, that it shocked me enough that I literally stood up and yelled in a loud, firm voice, “Hey! Knock it off!” In that moment, chilling air filled the room and my entire class turned around to see what had happened. I looked around the classroom to see 66 piercing eyes staring towards me in shock and awe. I had never yelled at a student before, nor do I believe that is an appropriate thing for a teacher to do. Within seconds I realized what I had done; I relaxed my face and in a soft, apologizing voice, addressed the student again, saying, “Oh my goodness, I am so sorry. I didn’t mean to do that. Now, go back to your desk and get to work.” Although the boy told me later that he didn’t care that I yelled at him and said that he felt that he deserved it, I told him again that I was sorry and that it was not acceptable behavior on my part. He forgave me and we continued to have a great relationship the rest of the school year.

While this kind of episode has not happened since, to this day it is a very memorable experience for me because it was such a real moment of lack of emotional self-control. I am getting better now in both controlling my frustration as well as containing my feelings of overwhelming joy that I get from being a dedicated teacher, but possessing self-control is still a challenge for me. Indeed, I exert so much energy on a daily basis in regulating my emotional reactions to the stresses of my job that at times it feels like another job all on its own.

Emotion Work in Teaching

Teachers go through numerous intensely felt emotions at school and must regulate them. Indeed, Chang (2009) even claims that the “emotional needs, labor, and work required for a

teacher are significant compared to other professions” (p. 194). Emotions and stressors for a teacher come from times of struggles with students, other teachers, parents, administration or even within themselves. They undergo stress and experience it through anger, frustration, anxiety, guilt, and sadness (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Just as my story indicates, it is not just the negative emotions but also the immediacy as well as the range of emotions teachers experience across a school day. Notably, just as negative emotions emerge during the day they are often juxtaposed against positive ones— such as excitement and joy that emerge from their positive relationships with students, student success, and good relationships with parents and coworkers. Because emotions are such an integral part of teaching and assessment, in order to understand teachers and teaching one must first come to understand teachers’ emotions and their use (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Positive emotions have a purpose in teaching because as teachers perceive that they are successful in their career, it can enhance their process of thought to action ratio and increase problem-solving skills as they are able to step back and objectively come up with solutions (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001). Positive emotions may also increase teacher performance by strengthening a teacher’s involvement and internal motivation to create appropriate classroom experiences for students.

Emotions are either naturally occurring or forced. Naturally occurring emotions are emotions which are evoked organically in response to a situation. Teachers often regulate these emotions; showing positive feelings appropriately and masking negative ones (Hagenauer, Gläser-Zikuda, & Volet, 2016). Forced emotions are emotions that the teacher willfully produces and delivers for a specific purpose. For example, some teachers consciously use “fake anger” to manage their students (Woods & Jeffrey, 1996). Teachers also may fake emotions in order to change their own behavior and evoke the desired emotion, for example if they act like they are

close to their students, then they really may eventually become so (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). The process of suppressing or artificially creating emotion is part of the emotion work of teaching. Emotion work is the process of attempting to modify or regulate feelings in order to support oneself or a relationship with others (Cook & Berger, 2000), which social struggle is a commonality of human experience (Zikhali & Perumal, 2015). Other individuals' actions can affect the people around them by evoking emotional responses and therefore influence others' emotional lives. As teachers, emotion work is imperative to success in the classroom, and it can be physically and emotionally taxing over time.

Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation in teaching is when teachers consciously regulate their unconscious thoughts/feelings based on circumstances where context could make it better or worse (Gross & Thompson, 2007). This is part of emotional labor—the act of managing one's personal feelings and thoughts for the good of one's career (Hochschild, 1983) beyond what is expected. To do so, teachers use coping strategies—ways of managing emotions—in order to deal with the everyday emotional labor in their profession. Up-regulating positive emotions (trying to heighten the positive emotions of a situation) and down regulating negative emotions (attempts to lessen the negative emotions felt) are ways that they can do this (Deng, Sang, & Luan, 2013). To up and down regulate emotions, often two overarching strategies are used (Gross, 2002).

First, a reappraisal strategy may be used in which teachers endeavor to look at things differently to increase positive emotions and decrease negative emotions. This technique aids understanding of a situation from multiple perspectives allowing for a wider range of potential responses that can be more productive in developing calmer classrooms and deeper relationships with students. Second, suppression as a coping technique is used by teachers to try to resist

acting on their emotions, which may or may not help their emotional situation. Other ways that teachers can cope are by journaling, problem-focused coping (when a person focuses on the task at hand to change it), or by emotion-focused coping (when steps are taken to help ease the emotional burden; Lazarus, 2001). Proactive coping is also performed where a teacher sets up protection against negative situations prior to situations arising (Greenglass, 2002). Teachers may reflect on past experiences for context (Chang, 2009), spend more quality time with students (Baştuğ, 2015), look to a principal or others for support (Gallant & Riley, 2014), or set up reliable classroom routines (Newberry & Davis, 2008). They may also put space between themselves and the students in order to avoid stress leading to burn out (Chang, 2009).

Coping strategies are important tools for teachers to use since prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job include exhaustion, cynicism, and a lack of self-efficacy (Maslach, 2003). Teachers who are constantly stressed and emotionally taxed may often quit their career because of lack of ability to regulate their emotions. Numerous teachers are exiting the profession in their early career years and the teacher attrition phenomenon is reaching an all time high (Gallant & Riley, 2014). Research has found that teachers who burn out the fastest are often the most committed and invested teachers (Freudenberger, 1974) and this trend tends to appear true even today.

Emotions in the Classroom

Emotions play an essential role in the learning environment of a classroom. As teachers experience physical changes in reaction to events, it influences the atmosphere in the classroom and affects the way the classroom functions. Students need to feel a sense of caring and acceptance from their teacher in order to excel (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). When a teacher is happy and uses humor throughout the day, students are more goal-oriented and motivated

(Turner et al., 2002). Sutton and Wheatley (2003), assert that monitoring action tendencies that teachers express (such as shouting for joy when students do what is right, or crying when they are having a hard day) allows teachers to maintain more civilized and constructive expressions, classrooms are more emotionally stable for the students.

However, teacher's relationships with students influence emotions and the learning environment as well. Teachers experience closeness to their students when there is little to no conflict and moderate dependency, where the student feels secure. Students see their teachers as caring when the teacher displays curiosity in their personal interests, academics, feelings, and when their teacher is consistent in discipline (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). It is essential for students to trust their teacher and if a teacher does not control his/her emotions, it affects the trust the students have for the teacher. Even if the teacher loses emotional control with only one student, since the event is public, other students can become fearful and suffer the loss of trust for their teacher (Thomas & Montgomery, 1998). When teachers control their emotions, students become more self-aware and build trust. Therefore, emotion regulation is critical in the teaching profession.

Statement of the Problem

There are countless causes of stress for a teacher in school. There are students who frustrate them, times of inner struggles, as well as times of struggles with other teachers, parents, and administration. In addition, experiences of frustration may be juxtaposed with a range of emotions, which can be experienced as whiplashes of emotions. Such experiences exhaust teachers and can lead to burn out and teacher attrition. Thus, struggling with one's emotions is a common experience in the teaching profession and emotion work among teachers is greater in comparison to other professions (Chang, 2009). Within the research of teacher emotion

regulation, strategies for responding, and the difficulties their failures can produce, have been identified. However, educational researchers studying emotion regulation lack intimate understanding of how an individual teacher experiences emotion and personal attempts to regulate it. All previous studies completed of teacher emotion regulation have been done through a third party looking at teachers' emotions and emotion regulation; thus the literature reflects assertions that lack the understanding of what teachers intimately experience in their daily struggle to navigate the emotional work of classrooms. Without this understanding, there is limited insight to the complexity of the situational factors that may influence teachers' emotional responses and how to support teachers in identifying and implementing effective strategies for avoiding burn-out.

Statement of Purpose

This study closely examines a teacher's experience of emotion and its regulation from her perspective and experience in her own classroom. Changes in teachers' experiences shape theories on teacher education as it progresses (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Therefore, the lived experience told from a first-person perspective would give teacher researchers, administrators, teachers, and teacher educators a better understanding of a teacher's emotional labor within her own school and classroom. Identifying the emotions, the interactions that produce emotional responses, and attempts to deal with emotion could provide vital insight into teacher emotion regulation across time. Researchers examining emotion regulation from the outside can only examine processes of emotional regulation external to the understandings of teachers experiencing the emotion—from an outward, cognitive, and detached view. Researchers can interview teachers and make inquiries about their experiences, but they can only do so from their own past experience and external perspective. The value of conducting a self-study of practice

of emotional regulation within my own classroom and reporting the results of the study enables researchers to gain insight into the approaches in which the theories of emotion regulation, the strategies behind it, and the constructs that inform it, live within the practices of a teacher seeking to understand and more fully enact emotion regulation across time. The study provides a particular, raw, first-person perspective. Readers will gain new insight into the day-to-day emotions and emotional interactions and responses of a teacher.

Research Question

This study will address the following research question:

1. How do I, as a teacher, experience and manage emotions in the moment and over time?

Method

Because my research question is self-initiated and self-focused, improvement aimed, interactive, with qualitative methods and exemplar validation, I use self-study of teaching practice (S-STEP) methodology as the orientation of my study. S-STEP is a research methodology that focuses on the self and one's own experience (LaBoskey, 2004). It is a design to improve the practice of the teacher through process of reflection and inquiry to build new understandings that help the teachers themselves as well as informs the greater audience about the phenomena represented in the classroom (Galman, Kosnik, & Lassonde, 2009). S-STEP is the most appropriate approach for this study because my purpose was to produce an in-depth look at a practicing teacher's experience of regulating her emotions throughout the day, during the school year. This comes through self-study with reflection and collaboration with another teacher or educator to look at situations from different perspectives (Barnes, 1998).

Participants

While my students form a backdrop to the study and my experiences with emotion regulation emerge from my interactions with them, my data focuses not my students but on my interactions with them and my responses to them. I am the primary participant of the study and the data collected does not name actual students but records details of events, interactions, and experiences with them. I am a 27 year old, Caucasian, female, who is an extremely passionate teacher. I teach sixth grade in a middle socioeconomic status area of the Utah valley. This is my fourth year teaching in a predominantly Caucasian school district. This past fall, I had 34 students in my classroom, one of which was an English language learning student, and five who were on individualized education plans (IEP). I plan lessons around the state core and do my best to help every child grow; including working with the students' parents for the emotional, social, and academic benefit of the students. I work well with the other sixth grade teachers at my school and help administration keep the school running smoothly. However, I consistently struggle to balance my emotional state. I started to feel as though I was experiencing daily emotional peaks and valleys for a good amount of time, which, unfortunately depleted me of emotional energy. This led to having a strong desire to recognize and regulate my emotions in order to be a good, more emotionally regulated teacher.

Context

Over the four years of my teaching experience, I have had many episodes filled with emotion—both positive and negative. It is in the context of my classroom that I experience the most intense emotion. For this reason, the classroom was the setting in which I chose to explore the emotions and circumstances that aroused those emotions, as well as my handling of those

emotions throughout the first semester of a new school year. In this paper I use pseudonyms in place of the real names of others to protect their identity.

Procedures

Data collection and analysis were ongoing and iterative for an in-depth examination at the emotional experiences being presented. There are two main sources of data collected for this study. First are the recordings of emotional episodes that I experienced in the classroom, and the second are the reflections on those episodes, or analytic memos. Together these data sets have allowed a more complete picture of the emotional state of my classroom as well as the context and process of teacher emotion regulation.

In-the-moment reflections. For the first data source, daily “in-the-moment” reflections were recorded. As events transpired arousing emotions throughout the day, I recorded who was involved, the events that transpired, and how I was feeling. I also explained my actions based on my original emotions and the resulting consequences. Recordings were made as close to the actual event as possible and were either recorded via voice to text, or typed into a Word document, and sent to myself via email where they were collected into a password protected Google document for the week. Over 120 memos were recorded over the three-month data collection period.

Analytic memos. Clandinin (2007) explained that narrative data must be analyzed in order to understand a participant and their life. To do this, data were reduced into themes by coding and revisiting them through analytic memos (Kim, 2016). A process of reflection and analysis about the week’s experience, based on the in-the-moment recordings, were conducted and written in a Google doc journal entry on each Saturday morning throughout the semester. In these entries, after having reviewed the week’s recorded thoughts and occurrences, I provided

more detail and explored possibilities of why the situations may have occurred, rationales for my responses, what feelings were evoked, and what affect it had on the classroom environment and my interactions in the classroom. This collection of entries is referred to as analytic memos.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed throughout the Fall semester. The data analysis consisted of weekly coding and reviewing of in-the-moment reflections into analytic memos, then conferencing with a critical friend the following Monday over the data. Using this process enabled examination and interrogation of the experiences to better understand them (Kim, 2016).

Individual analysis. Each Saturday, I coded the data by highlighting moments of up-regulation and down-regulation, moments where I attempted to increase positive emotions and decrease negative ones. Those selected portions of data were then coded for emotions, reactions, and regulation strategies and I noted the patterns that emerged, as well as the precursors to the emotion. After the first week, this became an iterative process in which the results of the coding and analytic memo of the previous week were compared/connected to the current week's themes.

Use of critical friend. Every Monday morning, I met with a teaching colleague and we analyzed the previous week's data. She reviewed both the in-the-moment recordings and the analytic memos from the previous Saturday. We then discussed her observations as she inquired more into situations or challenged my thinking, helping to identify emotions or regulation techniques overlooked previously. These inquiries and challenges were recorded on the same Google doc as the analytic memo, and I added additional thoughts in response to her comments. Throughout the week, much from those discussions influenced interactions in the classroom, which added a layer of analysis the following Saturday. This iterative process provided an exhaustive analysis of the emotional experiences of the classroom and led to my findings.

Findings

In response to the research question, findings are organized into two sections. The first section illustrates the pattern of emotional experiences along with the categories of stimuli that were most often present in the classroom, as well as the conditions that magnified the emotions. The second section describes the progression of less effective to more effective coping strategies that were employed throughout the course of the study and the shift in use over time.

Pattern of Emotional Experience

The daily in the moment recordings consisted of a recognition of an event that stimulated emotions (a trigger) and feelings elicited by the event. Four categories of triggers were perceived: student misbehavior, academic success/failure, lack of control, and support. A variety of emotions were experienced, depending on the trigger. This trigger and emotional response was then followed by an action—either negative or positive, depending on the emotion felt, as depicted in Figure 1. In addition, there were personal and contextual conditions that enhanced the intensity of the emotion. Below I outline the pattern of emotional experiences that were dependent upon the category of the triggering event.

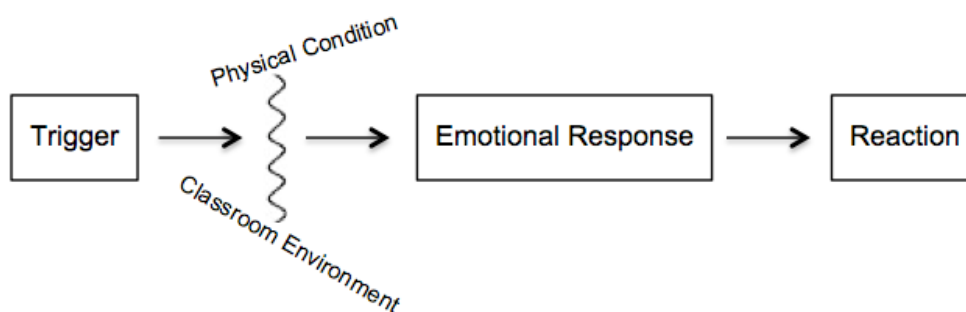


Figure 1. Pattern of emotional experiences. This figure illustrates the order in which emotions are elicited, felt, and acted on in this study.

Student misbehavior. The most common trigger (35%) was student misbehavior. I categorized student misbehavior as situations where students disobeyed school or classroom rules, such as yelling in the hallways, talking over the teacher, or being off task. There was a continual pattern of 1) witnessing misbehavior, which 2) brought feelings of anger, frustration, or annoyance, that 3) led to a negative reaction from me in the moment. A typical example of this pattern was recorded in the beginning of the school year in the middle of a school day. Miss O'Leary's sixth grade students were in my classroom writing an informational essay. I share the responsibilities with her for teaching students from both of our classrooms. We switch classes for an hour of the day where I teach her students writing while she teaches my students science. For this writing activity, the students were supposed to be looking up articles from certain approved websites. I recorded,

I became so frustrated with Sean. This is the second day in a row that he was using his computer inappropriately (on an unapproved website). Usually I would give him a warning, telling him to get on an appropriate website or he will lose the computer privilege, but today I was so frustrated that he disobeyed the classroom rules again that I took away his computer without warning and told him he needed to write the essay on paper. When he refused to do so, I immediately went across the hall to tell his homeroom teacher about the situation and ask for her advice. I did not know what to do. (9/2017)

In this example, we see the pattern clearly. The trigger of a student disobeying the classroom rules is representative of many different situations in which the student is not following the rules due to ignoring instruction, not paying attention to the teacher, or being openly defiant. Depending on the severity or nuances of the situation, this trigger led to the feelings of anger, frustration, or annoyance. I would feel angry because students would disregard

my rules, frustrated when they would ignore the rules, and annoyed when they would not listen to me when I was speaking and therefore not understand what was going on. These feelings then lead to me reacting to correct the situation. In the particular situation above, I was angry and frustrated with Sean's defiance and reacted to it by taking away his computer and then going to talk to his teacher about what to do. I reacted this way because I felt had to correct the situation. I took away his distraction and gave him a different opportunity to accomplish the work. I ended up going to his teacher to get help because I did not know how to diminish his defiance since it was the second time that he had disobeyed in class. Students following rules leads to academic learning, which is my end goal for the students I teach, and why classroom obedience is so important to me.

Academic success/failure. The pattern of triggering stimuli to emotional response to positive or negative reaction varied with the category of academic success or failure, with the failure leading to negative emotions and reactions and success leading to positive feelings and reactions. Examples of students' academic success were incidents of students having performed well on a test or learned a concept that was previously difficult for them to comprehend. When these incidents transpired in class, it always created feelings of joy and excitement within me and I therefore reacted positively to it, as is the typical response teachers have (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

An experience that demonstrates this pattern took place in the beginning of the school year, after having reviewed activities and pre-quizzes had been given to the students to uncover what standards they still needed assistance with in order to master. After analyzing these completed assessments, I recognized the students needed additional support in math. I proceeded during the following weeks to invite students back to the teacher table to work with them on

basic math concepts. Scaffolding time was also implemented throughout the day to assist the students, especially during math time. After the students finished their second math test, I recorded, “I almost cried because I was so excited to share the test scores with the students. As I looked out to their faces and while I expressed how well they were doing, I was so happy. They were excited, too.” We can see the pattern here in that their 1) academic success triggered, 2) my happy emotions, which led to 3) a physical reaction of getting emotional and communicating to them of how well they did. This pattern increased the sense of classroom bond I felt with students.

Situations involving students failing academically followed the same pattern as student academic success, the difference being that it triggered negative emotions, such as anger, stress, frustration, or annoyance, which led to an unproductive response. For example, in the beginning of the school year I was tutoring a group of students on a math concept. This was an intervention concerning a standard that had already been taught in previous years that these students still struggled to comprehend. I had them bring white boards and markers to the back table and we went over the standard. I explained to them what the lesson was, gave them an example problem, and guided them through other practice problems. They continued to struggle to understand the concept, despite my explanation and examples. I recorded,

I was helping a group of students with math and they were not getting it. I felt myself going in and out of being patient and helping them, to getting anxious because it was taking so long. I was tempted to start writing for them. I am trying to find a balance. I feel very frustrated that I can't help the students get it. I feel helpless, like a failure (8/2017).

This follows the pattern in that 1) the students were failing academically and struggling to understand despite my additional help. This then resulted in 2) feelings of anxiety and frustration

in the moment, leading to 3) an attempt to start doing the work for them, which demonstrated my frustration and impatience. Although a teacher should not do the work for the student, I was depleted of patience to continue with no mode of coping with this feeling of helplessness.

Lack of control. Another category that elicited the same pattern of emotional response at least 2-3 times a month was when I experienced a loss of control over a situation. Circumstances that facilitated a feeling of a lack of control often involved other faculty members who acted in ways that affected me or my classroom and that I could not change. At times their actions affected my schedule and other times they affected my students, which triggered a negative emotional response in me. I reacted by resisting, venting to others, or bearing through it.

One example is a day when a faculty member requested that I send out one of my students during class time to talk to him in the hallway because of a bad behavior the student had done earlier in the day. I attempted to explain to the faculty member that I would address it with the student personally, however this adult persisted with his request despite my continued pleading to handle it on my own. Because he does have some position of authority, his demand was in direct opposition to my authority in my own classroom as the teacher of the student in question. This led to feelings of frustration because he refused my assertion that I would handle the situation how I judged best.

As Connell and Wellborn (1991) found, students need to feel a sense of caring from their teacher to excel. I desired to provide such care, which I felt was being taken away from me. I recorded, "I am so annoyed; Joseph asked to talk to my student and I told him I didn't want him to, that I would take care of it and he persisted until I felt forced to bring him out. Why won't he just let me teach my kids!" Although it is possible that the faculty member was trying to be helpful, his insistence was perceived as too controlling of me and my students.

This situation was a great example of the emotional experience pattern. In this situation the trigger was 1) the imposition of another's wants over what I believed to be best for my student, which led to 2) feeling as if I had no control over the situation to help my student. The result was that 3) I ended up giving in and sending my student out to the hallway. It also left me with lingering, bottled up feelings of resentment toward the faculty member, which was expressed throughout the study. I wanted my student taken care of and I knew how to deal with my student because I am with him all day, and I believed that the other faculty member did not have the background knowledge or tools that I did to solve this issue adequately. I felt annoyed and maybe angry (indicated by the use of the exclamation mark). These kinds of experiences were unpleasant and were frustrating to have to endure, but I often felt were out of my control.

Support. Receiving support from others was the last category of triggers in which the pattern was observed. Situations of support that belong to this category are when people aided me or complimented my work. Throughout the data collection process, I recorded getting assistance from parents, recess aides, and even students at times. Just as Sutton and Wheatley (2003) have found, these moments of support from others generated feelings of happiness and I hence reacted in ways of gratitude.

One such example was early in the school year, when a mother of one of my students with behavioral challenges came into school on an errand and stopped by the classroom to see how her son was behaving. As we discussed how he was doing in school, I explained the progress that he had made and any lingering concerns that I had. I was relieved that she thanked me and proposed possible solutions to helping him improve behaviorally. I recorded during the next break, "I was so happy that Patrick's mom was helping me figure out how to manage him. I could not help but hug her. I was so grateful."

The trigger was Patrick's mom 1) working with me to figure out solutions to help him. This show of support brought 2) feelings of gratitude and happiness, which led me to 3) a physical display of appreciation. This was support directly shared with me by another adult. She had the ability to help me serve him. I sought for ways to help him behave and do well academically, therefore to have support from his mom made me quite happy. As I felt that happiness, I reacted positively and felt the need to express my gratitude.

Influences on Emotional Episodes

As the above categories of situations triggered emotions, the context around those situations enhanced the intensity of the experience of emotion. The two main types of conditions that enhanced the emotional experience were the classroom environment and my physical state.

Classroom environment. The classroom environment consists of the tangible and intangible elements of the classroom, which can directly impact teachers and students, and therefore the learning that takes place therein. Intangible factors can be such things as student attendance, temperature of the room, classroom procedures, or the time of day. Tangible factors are such things as organization of the classroom, disruptions that may occur, and seating assignments, etc.

Classroom environment influenced my emotional episodes because it either heightened the intensity of the emotion or helped me relieve negative emotions. For example on October 3rd, I recorded, "I feel much better about going to class today knowing that I organized the classroom, especially with parent teacher conferences coming up tomorrow." Demonstrated here, as the classroom was de-cluttered, I felt better. I was stressed anticipating parents coming into a dirty classroom, therefore cleaning and organizing the room relieved stress. Just as the unorganized room added stress, the clean and structured classroom reduced various stress.

Physical state. My emotional experiences were also intensified by my physical state. When I was tired or stressed I typically had worse responses to emotional triggers. Lack of sleep was by far the greatest culprit when it came to the decreased resilience to maintain stability in my emotional state. The following is an example from early in the school year. I recorded,

I am really tired today. I am fearful that I will snap at the students because I have less patience when I am tired. I feel stressed because of it... A couple of students were annoying me and I struggled to not be sarcastic with them. I need to get more sleep. I fear that I might treat my kids poorly (8/2017).

Not getting enough sleep and being tired lowered my ability to regulate my emotions. The negative emotion of anger is typically seen in teachers when they are tired and stressed (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991; Nias, 1989; Sutton, 2000). I was less effective in coping with emotions during circumstances where I was not in physically good condition. At times I was so tired that I could not think logically about the situation. I often recorded that because of my physical exhaustion, I would “zone out” or distract myself from others in order to not communicate and risk reacting negatively. Conversely, when I was in good physical condition I was much more likely to be clear minded and reflective before responding.

Progression of Emotion Regulation

Through the process of conferencing with my critical friend each week, we recognized some underlying reasons for my emotional reactions and we counseled together concerning the effectiveness of my coping strategies and how I might act differently. As we discussed these experiences and reactions, I realized the interconnection of my emotions and I adjusted my thinking to better control my classroom and myself. Attending to these deeper issues, I was able to adjust my reactions over time. I practiced noticing feelings and reflected on the deeper issue in

the following weeks, which is demonstrated in Figure 2. When the reaction lacked reflection, the result was a less effective coping strategy. When the reaction included a pause to reflect and identify the deeper issue involved, the result was a more effective coping strategy. Over time the use of less effective coping strategies, such as venting and avoiding, diminished. More effective coping strategies, such as using a good management system, changing the environment, and deep breathing/crying were enacted. Below, the discussion on the progression is divided into three parts: deeper emotional experiences, less effective coping strategies, and more effective coping strategies.

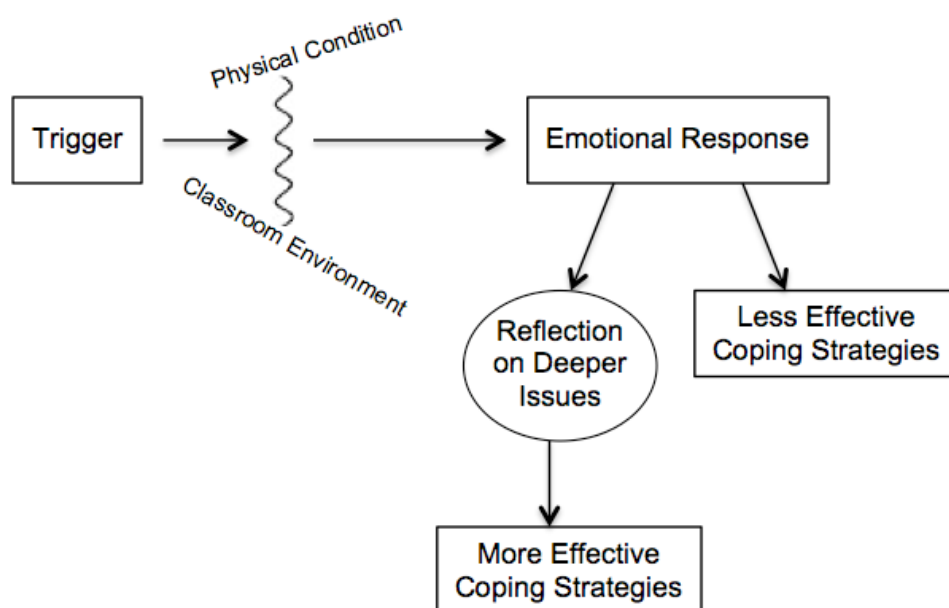


Figure 2. Progress of emotion regulation. This figure demonstrates the identification of emotional issues and the resultant emotion regulation strategy.

Deeper emotional experiences. Throughout the process of data collection it was apparent that different situations triggered different emotional responses. However, as I journaled each Saturday about the week and my critical friend evaluated it with me on Monday, we discovered that there were several deeper issues influencing the surface level emotions described in the recordings. These deeper issues are: a) feeling disrespected, b) love and concern

for students, c) needing validation, and d) feelings of shame. Identifying these deeper issues was essential to changing the way that I interacted with my students as it shifted my perspective on what was the real issue, and who had responsibility for it.

Disrespect. Feeling disrespected is not something I originally realized had influenced my emotions, but over time questions from my critical friend uncovered disrespect as a factor motivating my reaction. The following is an example that occurred when dealing with Miss O’Leary’s class while trying to talk to a parent. I recorded,

I just became so angry with Miss O’Leary’s class. I needed to step out of the classroom to talk to Hunter’s mom really quickly, so I instructed the students to whisper to the student sitting next to them; that I would be back shortly. I stepped in the hallway to speak to the parent and within minutes, I had kids coming out to tell me the class was being wild. One student even came crashing through the door and said, “Oops, sorry” and slunk back inside the classroom. I was so angry that in front of the parent I turned to the class as the door was still propped open, and yelled, “what are you doing?!” The parent then whispered to me she would talk to me later so I could deal with them. I was incredibly frustrated. I went back into the classroom and declared to the class, “That parent just left because I had people coming out saying it was crazy in here! Who wants to tell me what happened?” First, some students told me that the class was not that bad, however as I called on others to speak, they brought up that some students were singing loudly and others were walking around the room. I explained to the class that if it was only one student who came out to tell me there was a minor problem, I would have let it go. But because there were so many students coming out to get me, informing me that the class was misbehaving, I believe it. I asked the class what I did to deserve such treatment. I

proceeded to list all of the kind things I do, like take them outside for extra brain breaks, make fun lessons, and I am always praising them to other people. I was very frustrated and told them that I did not deserve that type of disrespect in my classroom. I didn't know what to do and to be honest, I did not want to ask Miss O'Leary, so I told them to I needed to think about this situation for a minute. I sat there for several minutes, thinking but not coming up with what to do. I finally told them to silently read at their desks and I would grade papers to cool down before continuing the lesson. They all proceeded to read silently except Nathan. He talked, hence, I kicked him out and told him to go back to Miss O'Leary's classroom. After approximately 20 minutes, I felt calm enough to continue the lesson. I was actually surprised that I was feeling better when we started the lesson. I was not angry at them anymore (10/2017).

In this example it is obvious that I was upset, expressing the hurt and frustration to the class. The following Monday, my critical friend read the memo and said,

The fact that you mentioned disrespect, it seems that you are more aware of the deeper issue. Before, you would have been frustrated with the students without telling them why. Now you can explain the deeper issue [affecting you because] of misbehavior (10/2017).

My critical friend pointed out the connection between the deeper issue of disrespect and the initial response of anger. We proceeded to look back at the situations in which anger was the emotional response, and we were able to pinpoint when I felt angry and corresponding actions by a student or other that could be considered disrespectful towards me. This analysis led to conversations about how students are not intentionally disrespectful, but they still learning boundaries, thus shifting my perspective and influencing my response.

Care/love for the students. Another major underlying reason for my emotional reactions was a deep love and care for the students. I truly want learning and happiness for my students, so I experience intense emotions in response to that desire. Sometimes this care is experienced as frustration, when students do not seem to be as concerned as I am with their progress. It can also be experienced as joy. A positive example of this is from one day in the beginning of the school year. As a class, we hold weekly meetings. In this particular meeting, we discussed how we were doing and any concerns that we had. A student raised his hand and spoke of concerns over academic struggles and we had a great conversation about it. I recorded,

In our class meeting, the students took initiative and requested more time on math because they felt that they were struggling. I was extremely excited because I have myself been stressed that they are struggling academically. I need to help get them up to a sixth grade academic level. I was so excited by their proactive attitude that I said, “Can I be honest then?” and I proceeded to tell them that I knew that they were struggling and I told them not to worry, that I would get them caught up. I thanked them for their good attitudes and after the class meeting I felt very happy. To release these pent up feelings, I spoke with my other sixth grade teachers about how excited I was over what the students had said. I feel that I am making a difference in the students’ lives. I feel that I matter in the world. I feel validation from my students. I feel the love coming back to me in return (8/2017).

This example shows both the initial frustration as I was already concerned about their grades and I had been putting a lot of effort into helping them. But it also highlights the joy I felt when realizing that the students also cared. The concern over their well-being and desire for them to do well was a motivation behind some feelings of frustration, when I did not feel that they were as

concerned as I was. Yet, it made me happy and hopeful that they shared my desires. I could let go of my original surface emotion of frustration and fear and focus on the process of helping them overcome their academic struggles.

Validation. The desire for validation appeared to be a strong, underlying reason for my emotional reactions in the classroom. Through analysis of my weekly memos, it was evident that I displayed positive reactions any time I was validated, either by the students or another adult. One day I was reading to the class and afterwards I recorded, “I feel bad that the kids are so upset when I stop reading Michael Vey, but also I am happy that they like it so much”. My reactions mirrored the students’ reactions. I had the surface emotion of sadness as they were sad, but I was also happy that they were happy with the book. This situation connects to the deeper issue of validation because the students were happy with something I executed, thus it produced positive emotions within me. They viewed me as doing well, so this success created closeness with my students (Newberry & Davis, 2008), and I felt good about myself. The emotions of happiness, joy, and excitement were most frequently connected to an action where other validated me as a teacher and as a person. These are career-reaffirming experiences.

Shame. In opposition to the issue of validation, the common issue of shame is also an underlying emotion masked by a surface emotional response, such as anger, anxiety, sadness, guilt, or frustration. These surface level negative emotions are felt, but upon reflection as to why those feelings arise, I saw that as I made mistakes in the classroom, I deemed myself to be incompetent as a teacher and as a person. One memorable experience displaying this was when a student who was being defiant during target time (a fifteen minute block of time where we work with certain sixth grade students who need help learning a past topic). We were working on a problem together and the bell rang. He wanted to go back to his own classroom but I wanted to

help him finish it first. He was becoming really angry and emotional trying to leave, and consequently I was becoming angry and emotional with his impatience. I recorded the situation as follows,

I wanted Joey to wait to leave because we were finishing a math problem. He kept arguing with me to allow him to go back to class. He kept crying out, 'The bell! The bell!' and I responded, 'hold on a couple seconds' and I attempted to finish showing him how to solve the problem. I finally allowed him to leave, but I was so angry. I found his teacher in the hallway getting the students and I whispered to her my frustrations. After I told his teacher what happened, she explained to me that he is on the spectrum for autism, and consequently anxiety is something he may struggle with. When she explained the situation to me, I felt remorse about how I dealt with him. I tried to comfort myself by telling myself that at least now I know it and will do better next time. That internal dialogue made me feel only a little better (11/2017).

Joey's anxiousness to leave made me frustrated. I felt annoyed that he was not allowing me to help him, which led to anger, but when I learned that he was on the autism spectrum my anger turned to guilt. I felt so guilty that I did not handle the situation appropriately, and for not knowing that he had special needs and struggles earlier so I could have adjusted. In this case, shame was the underlying issue. Initially shame was felt due to not being able to get the student to remain calm and focused in order accomplish the work, then because I did not recognize his issues on my own and was not able to meet his needs. The self-perceived failure as a teacher created feelings of shame within me and made me feel that I wasn't good enough. It requires tremendous effort to be a successful teacher. I experienced shame when I perceived that I did something incorrectly or did not execute a lesson well (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). As hinted

at earlier with the trigger of student academic success/ failure, stress over student progress is tied to shame for that reason. There are many memos throughout the study of me feeling helpless and like a failure as a result of not performing as I believe a teacher should.

Less effective coping strategies. The struggles based on deeper emotional issues led to needing coping strategies to minimize negative emotions or enhance positive ones (Koole, 2009). Over time, analysis of data revealed that two of the strategies I was utilizing to cope with negative emotions were not facilitating emotional stability. The first attempt I executed to cope with negative emotions was venting to others about my frustration. The other practice was avoiding people who were likely to upset me or simply not doing anything about the situation as a way of avoiding problems. Neither method was helpful in addressing my emotions in a healthy way towards positive changes, nor did they address the underlying problem.

Venting. Several times a week something occurred that frustrated me, and I would go tell another teacher. Initially, this was a consistent way that I attempted to cope with negative emotions, but it was not productive. It seemed to bring about a moment of emotional release, but there were no long-term benefits, as the negative emotions remained present. A clear example of this comes from an incident toward the end of the study. There was another faculty member with whom I was not getting along and it was wearing on me emotionally. To deal with those emotions I continued to go and vent to my team leader. One day this faculty member undermined me and my grade level teachers by telling the students that they could play cards in the hallway, even after the we had instructed them to go outside. The faculty member's action made me extremely angry because of the inconsistency shown to the students. I wrote, "I do not know if I am going to make it another year. I am so mad; my face is flushed and I had to tell Miss O'Leary. I can't stand him!" This is all I recorded about the incident. I vented to the team leader,

yet I left remaining angry. I had no other strategy of coping other than to go to another teacher for support, expressing how I was feeling and what had happened, yet left her room still upset. Such venting was essentially a practice that reinforced negative feelings rather than resolved them. Although I was able to share with someone what happened, I never left her classroom feeling any better; I felt just as frustrated and as angry as when I walked in. She was sympathetic about it, but there was nothing she could do to change the situation.

As my critical friend read the memos, she noticed that I was talking to people about issues I was having, but I was not addressing directly the people with whom I was having the issues. She voiced that avoiding people who were involved may not be effective and posed the question, “Has distancing yourself from them this week helped? I know that tension builds if you do not talk to people about issues you have with them. I just do not want that to happen to you. It is easier in the moment, but I worry about what will happen later if you hold it in” (9/2017). She was right. As time passed, I felt increasingly frustrated. I journaled that the weeks were becoming more difficult and that I was more stressed with certain people. This was evidence that it was an ineffective coping strategy, as distresses handled this way were never resolved and negative feelings lingered.

Avoiding/doing nothing. Besides venting, I attempted to cope with dilemmas by avoiding difficult people or situations. On one occasion, a student was struggling to behave in physical education class. He was getting in fights with other students because he was not playing by the rules. To combat this issue, the student, the PE teacher, and I created a positive rewards system for him if he obeyed the rules. The first day trying this system I recorded, “Today was the first day of Billy’s behavior plan in PE and the PE teacher informed me that he did not follow the rules of the game therefore does not get candy. Upon hearing this, Billy was sad and argued with

me about the details of the circumstance. I responded to his pleading by simply declaring, ‘No’ and then I irritably walked away.” (9/2017). I literally walked away from a student, not taking time to discuss the situation with him. I walked away from him in attempt to avoid my anger, but there was no positive change that resulted from my reaction. Rather than investigate with him as to why our system did not work that day and readjust the circumstances, I simply removed myself from the situation. Avoiding the matter only postponed and intensified issues, rather than aiding to improve situations and prevent more anger (Chang, 2009).

More effective coping strategies. Although some coping strategies did not produce effective emotion regulation, other coping strategies were helpful in emotion regulation. Throughout the beginning of data collection, the use of the strategies varied extensively depending on the situation and the feelings produced, but over time the frequency of positive strategies increased. Positive coping strategies that were identified were a) using a good management system, b) changing the environment, c) enacting physical processes. These were all techniques that effectively regulated my emotions, therefore they were used more often as time went on. They also became easier to implement in the classroom.

Using a management system. Student misbehavior was the category of triggers that most frequently produced negative emotions, such as anger, but after the identification that anger was masking the issue of disrespect felt due to the misbehavior, I attempted more frequently to demand respect through tighter discipline strategies (Newberry & Davis, 2008). With this adjustment implemented, I gradually became less reactive emotionally to student misbehavior, believing that students were not purposefully meaning to be disrespectful, and increased in confidence in the efficacy of the management plan I had in place to successfully redirect any misbehavior. For example. nearly midway through the data collection, a student was breaking

class rules during writing time. I was attempting to teach the lesson and he kept talking over me. I was able to control my anger by enacting the management plan. I recorded,

Alexander continued talking over me as I was teaching, so I gave him a warning and when he persisted talking over me, I dismissed him to go to Mrs. Bryant's fifth grade class for the day (which was the previously discussed consequence for misbehavior). I felt so happy about my reaction because the rest of the class was able to pay attention to the lesson and I felt good that I wasn't battling students anymore (11/2018).

Amazingly in this situation of student misbehavior, I did not feel or record any negative emotions; I wrote happy emotions. Previously when students would talk over me I would become so angry, feeling disrespected. I would assume it was a personal attack and would be upset that my students were not receiving the quality learning time that they needed and deserved. When responding according to my management plan, I didn't feel those emotions or have those concerns because I realized that students make wrong choices at times. Instead of getting angry and feeling helpless, I could demand respect and attention in my classroom by carrying out my management system.

This problem-coping strategy, where the issue is approached directly (Lazarus, 2000), was a great relief to me in the second half of the semester. This skill offered me emotional freedom, thus I learned to rely more upon it. I did not feel shame or loss of control that would previously come from episodes of student misbehavior, therefore I did not have the need to mask those feelings with anger. Enforcing boundaries and consequences for breaking rules created an environment that operated more smoothly.

Changing the environment. Changing the environment was another productive way that I managed negative emotions. A distinct example of this is from October 3rd. I was stressed due

to parent teacher conferences scheduled for the following week. There were copious amounts of work that needed to get done before they came and I grew nervous about the conferences.

Although the students were acting normally, good but active, I was not incredibly present mentally due to my stress. That morning I recorded, “I just had the kids do Lexia during track time so I could get things done. This helped me relax.” Lexia is a computer based language arts program that the students are supposed to do daily or weekly. We could have done Lexia or another activity, but because I was struggling emotionally I used Lexia to calm the environment as students work independently and quietly on the computer, which allowed me to focus on completing other important tasks. Taking the time to organize my space and accomplish tasks was a way to shift the environment and relieve certain stress (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). The classroom environment being calm increased my tranquility as well.

Physical processes. The last category of effective coping strategies is that of physical processes—physical enactment of emotion regulation that dealt with releasing emotion through either deep breathing or crying. Deep breathing is a “controlling action tendency” strategy in which you literally stop yourself to change your behavior by taking deep, focused breaths (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). One day as a student disregarded a classroom rule, I started to become angry. I recorded,

Cory continued to interrupt me while I was instructing the class; I was incredibly annoyed. As my body tensed up, another student suggested that I should take a deep breath. I immediately stopped talking and followed that suggestion. As I paused and calmed down, the students and I subsequently laughed together about the situation. I felt relieved and could move on, which I was grateful for because I was truly close to losing my patience with Cory (10/2018).

Because Cory kept talking over me in spite of the stern facial expressions that I had used to persuade him to be quiet, I was becoming frustrated. Stopping to inhale a longer breath in that instance helped me calm down. I continued to remind myself mentally throughout the rest of the semester to stop what I was doing and take a deep breath when I was getting frustrated with students. This technique facilitated time for me to pause and control my thoughts regarding the situation, which aided in assessing the negative emotions that were being felt, keeping me from a displaying a negative outburst at the students for being disobedient.

Crying was another coping strategy that relieved negative emotions as an effective coping strategy. One morning in my classroom, I cried in front of another teacher. I was overwhelmed regarding my past two weeks at school, managing issues of students and other faculty members. Before she came into the classroom, I felt wholly overcome and depleted of energy. The other teacher entered my room to tell me about her own problems at school. I recorded,

Mrs. Bryant just came into my classroom to talk about her teacher team problems, and my tears suddenly came out! I attempted vigorously to hold them in, but I wasn't capable. I, too, shared with her some of my frustrations, but out of respect for the faculty members I was presently frustrated with, I restrained myself from voicing too much negative material. Subsequently, I sensed that I needed to get more emotions off my chest. I moved outside to converse with Jacey (my critical friend, another teacher). By the time I reached her the bell rang and we needed to bring in our students. Too bad we didn't have more time (11/2017).

I usually get embarrassed when I cry in front of others. However, opening up to someone who was feeling similar frustrations was a relief. I typically feel weak and vulnerable when crying, which is why I originally attempted to hold back the tears while I was conversing with

Mrs. Bryant, but this time it was a relief. From the statement of wishing for more time to continue the emotional connections, it is indicated that even though I had initially resisted being that vulnerable, I did actually desire more opportunity to do so. It was different than simply an angry venting session, as those episodes simply made me angrier; getting riled up about the situation yet again and producing no change. This time, I appreciated having another teacher sympathize with me and show that she understood what I was experiencing. It eased my emotions and I did not need to be ashamed of my feelings since I was not the only one undergoing something so stressful or feeling such feelings. It also improved my emotional condition because she shared with me first, and then we were able to compare and share ideas of how to improve our situations since we were both working towards resolutions.

Conclusion

The recognition of the pattern of emotional episodes allowed me to identify and improve my own emotion regulation throughout the data collection period. Noticing that I have triggers, such as student behavior, student academic failure/success, lack of control and feeling supported, that bring forth strong emotion that often leads to impulsive reactions to that emotion was helpful to become self-aware of when my classroom was negatively affected by my emotional response. However, through reflection and analysis of these patterns, coming to understand that the emotions originally presented were only surface emotions, helped to determine why situations were so troubling. The surface emotions of anger, frustration, happiness, and joy, etc. were masking deeper issues of feeling disrespected, care/love for students, validation, and shame.

The current research on teacher emotion regulation focuses on the surface emotions that teachers experience and the situations in which they arise. However, very few, if any, delve into the more profound reasons—beyond another’s actions—that elicit emotion and motivate action.

This study highlights that emotions only indicate issues; they do not control responses. The fact that I could regulate and choose to respond differently once those deeper issues were addressed indicates that both the acknowledgement and resolution of deeper emotional issues is necessary in order to truly regulate emotions in the classroom.

In this study, classroom emotional struggles were alleviated by using positive coping strategies that addressed the deeper emotional issues, such as use of a management system or deep breathing, because they allowed for an effective calm response rather than an ineffective impulsive reaction. The more effective emotional regulation techniques resulted in a more confident teacher and a more positive classroom environment. Other teachers may have different issues and different triggers and may need different coping strategies in order to address the issues. However, by taking the time to reflect and examine the patterns of emotional experiences in the classroom all teachers could be able to positively affect the emotional environment of the classroom.

Limitations

This study aims to explore how emotions are experienced and dealt with by teachers, however, because it is the study of a particular teacher, readers would need to consider my context and my experience in relationship to their own and determine if it were applicable to them and whether they could apply my learning to their situation. Another limitation of this study is the inconsistencies that may have arisen because of time lapse between the actual events happening and the recording of the emotions, which may have altered the reporting of the feelings/reflection of the situation. Intermediate time may provide a cool down period after the situation. I may have been calmer in my recording of the situation, which would give readers a different view of the experience than what truly happened.

One other limitation of this study is the data being a self-report. Because this is a first-person account of the plot, there may have been struggles to be authentic and honest in sharing and reporting my emotions that may not have been realized with the human tendency to be self-protecting, which could have skewed the report in order to not appear difficult to the reader. I attempted to speak to this issue by the use of a critical friend.

Implications for Future Research

There are countless future research designs that may be executed to extend this study. The first idea for future research would be to have another teacher of different position or personality do this self-study. Such work would allow for comparison to identify commonalities of triggers, initial emotions, underlying issues, or coping strategies. There could also be broader studies carried out with the purpose of investigating how several teachers deal with emotions on a collaborative scale in their teaching teams. These studies are means to acquire more knowledge about the deeper emotional issues that teachers face in the classroom, such as disrespect, academic success/failure, control, or shame. Teachers will come to discover their deeper issues and develop effective coping strategies to manage their emotions.

Implications for Researchers/Practitioners

This study significantly contributes to the research of teacher emotion regulation. It addresses trends of emotions, why they occurred, and the progression of using effective coping strategies over time. There are implications for schools and professional development in finding ways to support teachers in identifying deeper issues that may be greater factors in burn out. This study demonstrates how one might reflect and address emotional issues that arise in the classroom with colleagues. School administrators should look for ways to support teachers in this endeavor as they navigate the emotion work of teaching.

Teachers must have tools to be able to identify and work through their deeper issues, such as feelings of incompetence or perfectionism. This study highlights effective coping strategies that may be used for emotion regulation that can be taught as alternatives in emotional processes as teachers uncover their own process of moving from initial reaction to deep reflection. The study can provide a guide in professional development for teachers as they reflect on their experience of emotions and what they could do to improve their own emotion regulation. Providing space and time for this type of emotionally collaborative work is essential for the health and well being of teachers.

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APPENDIX

Review of Literature

The review of literature presented here focuses on what has been done already in the realm of teacher emotion regulation. I first review emotions in teaching. This includes the types of emotions that teachers experience in their career, both positive and negative. It also includes the purposes and uses of our emotions as teachers. I will first review naturally occurring emotions and emotions that need to be forced by teachers in order to accomplish a purpose, such as excitement when teaching a science substandard that may be of less interest to an individual teacher. Then, I will review literature done on emotion regulation. I will explain the difference between emotional labor and emotional work, as well as the coping strategies that have already been explored. I will touch on teacher burnout that may result from these processes. Finally, I will review classroom environment characteristics, such as student-teacher relationships and the aspect of trust in a classroom.

Emotions in Teaching

There has now been a good amount of research done on teacher emotions: what teachers experience emotionally, how they regulate it, and how it affects them and others. This is thought to be a more recent topic of interest because study on emotion cognition did not begin until the 1970s and it was not applied in the teaching realm until the 1980s (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). There has been a fear of feeling and expressing emotions in the Western culture. Some people struggle acknowledging emotions because they feel that there is something wrong with having them (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). It is important, however, to examine emotions for teachers specifically because teachers who report more joy and happiness, rather than constant frustration, in their career seem to experience teaching differently. If teachers can come up with coping

strategies, such as positive thinking in stressful situations, it helps them handle different episodes in the classroom better (Relajo, Pilao, & Dela Rosa, 2015). Emotions are the underpinning of teaching and assessment and as interest in emotions is increasing as a research topic, we should add on emotional intelligence, as well (Neophytou, 2013). Because emotions are such an integral part of teaching and assessment, in order to understand teachers and teaching you must understand teachers' emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

Positive emotions. Teachers experience both positive and negative emotions while teaching. The overarching positive emotions felt by teachers are joy and excitement. One of the biggest sources for joy and excitement in teaching comes when teachers see their students learn and make progress in different areas (Emmer, 1994; Hargreaves, 1998; Hatch, 1993; Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989; Sutton, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Teachers also find joy and excitement in teaching through interaction with students, specifically when they see students improve who initially struggled (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), when spending time with students in extracurricular activities (e.g., Erb, 2002; Golby, 1996; Hargreaves, 2000; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989; Sutton, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), when students cooperate without giving the teacher trouble or being difficult (Emmer, 1994; Hatch, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Sutton, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley 2003), and when students from previous years' classes come to visit (Hargreaves, 1998; Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975; Sutton, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

In addition, teachers experience positive emotions when colleagues and parents are supportive and respectful (Erb, 2002; Lasky 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), when the teacher gets done what they need to do (Hatch, 1993; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), and when they have good overall relationships with students (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Teachers find joy through the adventure of their job (Jackson, 1968; Nias, 1989; Sutton, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003),

such as when they first have their own classroom (Huberman, 1993; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), when they hear surprising unique things that students say (Hargreaves, 1998; Jackson, 1968; Nias, 1989; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Waller, 1932), and by having different curriculum and activities hour by hour, day by day.

In more recent research, Zikhali and Perumal (2015) learned that teachers also feel positive emotions when promoted to upper head positions. Such promotion leads to the teachers feeling confident and of being honored and respected. The teachers who were studied expressed that these positive affirmations helped pull them through any hardships or negative emotions they experienced in teaching (Zikhali & Perumal, 2015).

Negative emotions. There are also many negative emotions that emerge in such an emotional job. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) identified five negative emotions that come from teaching; the first two are frustration and anger, which are commonly felt by many teachers (Sutton, 2000). Situations influencing anger and frustration in the classroom are the perception of uncaring and irresponsible parents (Lasky, 2000), students who don't do the work because they are perceived by the teacher as being lazy or aren't paying attention to the instructions (Reyna & Weiner, 2001), and seemingly uncooperative colleagues (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991; Erb, 2002; Nias, 1989). Anger is especially seen in teachers when they are tired and stressed (Bullough, et al., 1991; Nias, 1989; Sutton, 2000).

The third negative emotion is anxiety. Anxiety is found in different teaching situations, but it is most commonly found with beginning teachers (Bullough, et al., 1991; Erb, 2002; Lortie, 1975; Tickle, 1991). Teachers feel anxiety when talking to parents (Erb, 2002), as those teachers are wondering and worrying about whether they are doing a good job, and they feel anxiety when they stress over their desire to be a great teacher (Lazarus, 1991).

The fourth negative emotion outlined by Sutton and Wheatley (2003) is that of guilt. At times, teachers can feel at their limit of efficacy and therefore their helplessness leads to feelings of guilt. Four characteristics of this guilt are 1) the dedication of teachers to care for their students, 2) the open-ended nature of teaching, 3) the consistent increase in the profession of accountability via testing as a reflection of teachers' efficiency, and 4) the persona of perfectionism, meaning the desire and expectation of oneself to do everything right (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). Lastly, a feeling of sadness is a negative emotion teachers may experience, stemming from guilt or empathy for students. When asked about their students, particularly regarding their students' home lives, teachers expressed sadness. Researchers attributed this sadness to the teachers' lack of control over what happens to their students outside of the classroom, and feeling the implications of it for their students.

The research done by Zikhali and Perumal (2015) further contributes to our understanding of these sources of negative emotion for teachers in school. First, they found that gender stereotypes are hard to overcome, as some people in the community challenge female leaders. In their study, Zikhali and Perumal (2015) found that faculty and others push and challenge female leaders, characterizing females as jealous people and therefore not good leaders at school. These accusations brought frustration among the educators. Another source of teacher frustration is lack of parental cooperation (Zikhali & Perumal, 2015). Many times parents were found to disagree with the school, yet they would not come to meetings to work on solutions with the teachers. To have parents be so disconnected from their school was a stressor to the teachers interviewed. Lastly, they found that unrealistic professional and social expectations were difficult for teachers to deal with. Teachers have high expectations placed upon them to have all of their students perform well academically, no matter what the circumstances are. This

can be especially frustrating for caring teachers when they feel that they lack the quality materials needed to help all of their students learn the national standards to the mastery level.

Purposes and Uses of Emotions

Emotions have a purpose as they have certain effects on teachers. Positive emotions improve teachers' productivity as it strengthens their motivation and happiness at work. Research shows that teachers who have more positive emotions in comparison to negative emotions have a better thought-action ratio, meaning they can think quicker and act on those thoughts. They have more problem solving skills, as they are able to step back and objectively come up with a solution (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001). Positive emotions may increase teacher performance by strengthening a teacher's involvement and internal motivation (Pekrun, 2002). When teachers experience feelings of happiness at work, they perceive that they are doing a good job (Kavanaugh & Bower, 1985). Locke and Latham (1990) theorize that people who have positive moods have better goal setting skills. They also have more ambitious goals and work hard to achieve them (Locke & Latham, 1990). Therefore, teachers who enjoy working with their students have their goals elevated and their motivation to achieve them increases as well. Not all emotions in teaching are this naturally occurring; at times teachers invoke emotion for their advantage in teaching.

Naturally occurring emotion. There are both positive and negative emotions that come naturally to teachers that research suggests need to be monitored and regulated. It is also imperative, to be successful as a teacher, to manage your display of emotions, such as masking negative feelings and doing things in your classroom that reflect positive emotions (Hagenauer, Gläser-Zikuda, & Volet, 2016).

In Sutton's (2002) research with middle school teachers, the teachers talked about feeling the need to control their positive emotions when they feel excitement as students succeed or when the teacher gets overly excited about something else in their classroom. The teachers talked about waiting to show these emotions appropriately, such as needing to wait to congratulate kids privately, requiring them to down-regulate their emotions as they control their positive reactions. This keeps a stable atmosphere for students and teachers, which in turn builds trust and a good environment. Although these naturally occurring emotions were positive, teachers felt the need to regulate. The teachers, however, reported having more negative emotions to regulate, such as controlling their anger, in comparison to positive emotions.

Forced emotions. As real and naturally occurring as emotions can be in teaching, some emotions are fake or forced by a teacher for a specific purpose. For example, some teachers consciously use "fake anger" to manage their students (Woods & Jeffrey, 1996). Teachers also may fake emotions in order to change their own behavior and evoke the desired emotion, for example if they act like they are close to their students, then they really may eventually become so (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). Other times teachers have to try to diminish their negative emotions in order to be professional and cover up their natural emotions with a smile. As they do this, they may not have to deal with as much conflict. They may also have to express love to students that they don't naturally have a connection with (Newberry & Davis, 2008). Some students are more timid so they are harder to connect with, and other times they are too self-reliant where they act like they don't need their teacher (Newberry & Davis, 2008). In this case, it would take a tremendous amount of effort for teachers who want to feel close to their students to be able to mask their frustration. It is important to see the different types of emotions, both positive and

negative, natural and forced, to understand how these emotions play out in a classroom setting and in order to realize the level of emotional work and the amount of labor that is involved.

Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation in teaching comes as teachers consciously regulate their unconscious thoughts/feelings based on circumstances where context could make it better or worse (Gross & Thompson, 2007). They use processes to modify the intensity, duration, and expression of their emotions (Koole, 2009). As they modify their emotions it is called emotional labor because it is taxing emotional work in the workplace that was beyond the expectation. As they go about the teaching day, teachers have to use a strenuous amount of regulation to keep their emotions in check. Research has been done to analyze this process. Farah Naqvi (2013) did research on emotional labor in the hotel industry in terms of how coping strategies kept the hotel service providers' emotional labor from leading to emotional exhaustion. They used self-monitoring and co-worker support to deal with stress, which proved helpful. These are just some of the coping strategies that have been shown to help with emotional regulation in the workplace.

Emotional labor vs. emotional work. Emotional work is the process of trying to change or regulate feelings in order to support oneself or a relationship with others (Cook & Berger, 2000; Ferrara, 1993); it is a commonality of human experience. It isn't just something that we go through on an individual basis throughout the day, but it is a social experience (Zikhali & Perumal, 2015). Others affect our emotions and that influences our lives. Emotional labor stems from this concept. It is one of the three mental operations, alongside motivation and cognition, needed to productively and successfully navigate career work (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Emotional labor is the act of managing your personal feelings and thoughts (emotional work) for your career's good (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) coined this concept of emotional

labor with the job of flight attendants. She explained that flight attendants started being pushed to be exceptional; they cannot slow down physical expectations of their job demands, so they started managing their emotional expression of it. As a public service employee, in a profession where one is interacting with people, one understands that facial expressions, body language, and reactions as a whole affect the people one is working with or working for, and creates different environments (Hochschild, 1983). To control these modes of body language takes energy and attention. As a teacher, this is emotional labor that is imperative to success in a classroom, and it can be taxing to them over time.

In Zikhali and Perumal's (2015) research, they learned that teachers usually experience more negative emotions than positive emotions in consequence of emotional labor as teachers invest their emotional energy into their profession. They also saw that teachers were able to push through that imbalance of emotions through reflecting on their emotional triggers and the regulation of them. They explain the need for more strategies to be given to teachers to help them cope with the stress and demands of the job. Chang (2009) explains that there is no best way for teachers to cope with their emotions, so it is important for teachers to have a plethora of strategies to use that fits them best.

Coping strategies. Teachers need coping strategies to deal with the everyday emotional labor. They need to be able to control their overly excited feelings that may become distracting as well as their negative feelings. Often times this is done through up-regulating positive emotions and down regulating negative emotions (Deng, Sang, & Luan, 2013). This is done when teachers try to heighten the positive emotions within themselves and lessen the negative emotions felt. There are many models of strategies for teachers to do this, but often teachers do not use them. Gross (2002) suggests that teachers react to fluctuating emotions in two different

ways: reappraisal and suppression. In the reappraisal strategy, teachers try to look at things differently to increase positive emotions and decrease negative ones. In contrast, suppression is when teachers try to resist acting on their emotions, which ends up not helping their emotional situation. Teachers who reported suppressing their emotions had a higher level of stress and burnout (Chang, 2009; Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999; Mearns & Cain, 2003).

Unfortunately, despite this research, teachers suppress their emotions more than they express them because of their fear of endangering their career. This inevitably leads to greater burnout (Carson, 2007; Chang, 2009).

Regulating your emotions involves labeling them and picking strategies to heighten good feelings or weaken negative ones (Davis, DiStefano, & Schutz, 2008; Lazarus, 2000). One simple strategy used to cope with emotions is journaling, both by teacher and student. Coping strategies people use can be problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus, 2000). Problem focused coping is when a person focuses on the task at hand to change it. Emotion focused coping is when steps are taken to help ease the emotional burden. Lazarus (2000) suggests that both problem- focused and emotion- focused coping strategies are needed in combination to successfully cope with challenges.

Other researchers hypothesize that teacher emotions may be more complicated and need to be studied more in depth to better understand the complexities of teacher emotions and to come to understand how to cater to them (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Sometimes, teachers may react emotionally even when they're trying their best not to. When this happens, it can lead to habits that do not line up with their beliefs if they do not carefully reflect on the emotional situation that they are exposed to (Newberry & Davis, 2008). Perhaps a better way to deal with the struggle to react well emotionally is to set up protection against negative situations, which is

called proactive coping (Greenglass, 2002). In such cases, teachers predict situations before they arise and explore ways to prevent or overcome it. One of the ways Chang (2009) suggests teachers do this is to reflect on the events in a logical manner. She explains that sometimes teachers perceive things as something different than they are. For example, a teacher may become angry when a student talks back to her, although there may be some unknown motivation behind that student's behavior. Therefore, if the teacher took time to reflect on a past experience, for instance, thinking about a time when a student was snappy but later the teacher learned that the student's relative had just passed away, then she may be less likely to react harshly. Recognizing that there could be patterns to student behaviors as well as unknown motivations may help the teacher be more understanding in the future if a student loses control. Remembering situations could help teachers change their perspectives, and therefore change their emotional response to the student.

Another proactive strategy to decrease negative emotions is increasing positive emotions by having more time to enjoy the socialization with students (Baştuğ, 2015). This is hindered when there are too many meetings, new reforms to implement that teachers may struggle with, or that may slow student learning initially, as well as many after school curricular activities (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Asking a principal to step in and talk to the kids when they are getting too bad can be a helpful strategy for a struggling teacher; not only will the teacher feel support, but it can also prevent the class from getting so bad that the teacher can't handle it emotionally. Sometimes teachers need support from administration when they have a hard year. It also helps the teacher grow in confidence and that teacher has more peace (Gallant & Riley, 2014).

An important way teachers cope with challenges is making changes to their routines to avoid student misbehaviors (Newberry & Davis, 2008). If teachers see where students are

fighting or misbehaving, they can change their classroom expectations, reward/consequence systems, or warning system to prevent the students from making poor choices. Another way that may help teachers cope with stress of teaching is having the teacher put some space between themselves and the students. They do this by taking time to step out and talk to other teachers, leave school and spend time with family, or have the kids work on projects while you help someone else. This may prevent teachers from getting burned out (Chang, 2009).

Burnout

According to researchers Andrea Gallant and Philip Riley (2014) teachers leaving the profession in early career years has reached an all-time high. This trend is disconcerting because usually the teachers who burn out the fastest are the most committed and invested teachers (Freudenberger, 1974). This especially happens in their first year of teaching when they have to deal with the fear of not being liked, when they are wrongly accused, when they have the stress of learning the subject matter, and when they have to deal with new situations in a short amount of time (Chang, 2009). As novice teachers address all of these situations, it taxes their emotions.

One of the reasons teachers might be quitting the profession is the lack of ability to regulate their emotions. Just as positive emotions boost teacher efficiency and motivation, negative emotions hinder these things and can ultimately lead to teacher burnout (Frenzel, 2014). Christina Maslach (2003) describes job burnout as a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job and is defined by the three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and sense of inefficacy. Burnout, a social problem in many human services professions, was the impetus for the research that is now taking place in many countries on emotion regulation. Teaching in general is an emotionally taxing profession, however if teachers can monitor and regulate their emotions, they are less burdened. If teachers feel they cannot

control their students, or have other negative triggers, they tend to dwell on these negative emotions, which will cause even more stress (LeDoux, 1996). By regulating emotions, teachers will experience less burnout and contribute to a good learning environment.

Learning Environment

Emotions play an essential role in the learning environment; research strongly supports the correlation of teacher student relationships and better academic outcomes in improved learning environments (Davis, 2003; Hamre & Pianta 2001; Murray & Malmgren, 2005; Newberry, 2013; Wentzel, 2002). Pittam and Scherer (1993) found that people experience physical changes as they go through emotional changes. People's heart rates increase, their blood pressure rises, and even their body temperature changes when they are upset. These physical changes come out for others to see when people express their emotions through their facial expressions (Darwin, 1998). Physical changes in reaction to events happen to teachers in the classroom. As teachers experience physical changes in reaction to the events, it creates an atmosphere in the classroom, influencing the learning environment. The learning environment is also cultured by students, parents, rules, and educational content, however, teachers' emotions affect the way the classroom runs. Students need to feel a sense of caring and acceptance from both their teacher and their peers to excel (Connell & Wellborn, 1991).

Another aspect of teacher emotions that contributes to classroom environment is teacher humor. When a teacher is happy and uses humor throughout the day, students are more goal-oriented and motivated (Turner et al., 2002). Teachers also have what are called action tendencies when they experience strong emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). They may want to shout for joy when students do what is right, or they may want to cry when they are having a

hard day. Being able to monitor action tendencies shaping them to be civilized and constructive expressions keeps a stable emotion classroom for the students.

Student-teacher relationships. Emotion regulation is very important in regards to teacher-student relationships. Teacher-student relationships are viewed similarly to parent-child relationships (Davis, 2003) and teachers are reported to be close to their students when there is little to no conflict and moderate dependency where the student feels secure. Students see their teachers as caring when their teacher shows interest in their personal interests, academics, their feelings, and when their teacher is consistent in discipline (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). It may be hard for teachers to put effort into students who are too introverted to respond when the teacher reaches out or students that are different than them because teachers may not feel validation in their efforts to reach out to those students (Newberry & Davis, 2008). This can create an atmosphere void of connection, and can wear on the teacher's emotional state. However, it is important for teachers to put forth effort to create a relationship with those students because closeness and strong relationships form when the teacher also connects to the student's interest and they grow to like each other (Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000). It is not realistic or appropriate for teachers to think that every student will fulfill their need to feel loved and related to, but teachers can feel fulfilled despite some students not connecting with them if they have guiding principles for helping their students learn academics and good behavior (Newberry & Davis, 2008). This is an emotional labor that teachers must do.

It is also extremely important to study teacher emotional regulation because the students are affected by their teacher's emotions. Students have been shown to have a more negative self-image in school and have weaker resolve to learn when the teachers were more negative than

positive with them (Goldstein, 1999). This can be a challenge for teachers at times because they may get frustrated with students who they see as not living up to their potential.

Trust. Students must learn to trust their teacher. If a teacher does not control their emotions, it affects the trust the student has for them. When elementary students were interviewed about their teacher displaying negative emotions, they lamented about the negative effects of their teacher yelling. They said it was the worst experience and that it created feelings of guilt and sadness, even if the teacher wasn't yelling at them personally (Thomas & Montgomery, 1998). Students responded with withdrawal and mistrust and rather than conforming to the teacher's desires; they did not trust teachers who could not control their own anger. When teachers learn to control their emotions and help students be more self-determined, students feel less disappointment from teachers when they fail. They become more self-aware and it helps to build trust. Emotion regulation is thus important for teachers in order to support their students' learning by maintaining emotional trust in the classroom (Meyer & Turner, 2007).

Emotions are an integral part of teaching. Teachers deal with positive and negative emotions every day, both naturally occurring emotions and forced emotions. Because of the amount of oscillating emotions that teachers go through in their career, it can be emotionally exhausting. The attempt to regulate their emotions is emotion work that must happen in the classroom. As teachers navigate emotion work, they use a variety of coping strategies to enhance their positive emotions and decrease their negative emotions in order to prevent burnout and create a good learning environment. These things we know, as well as some conditions in which they feel such emotions. More research is needed on the context and contributing factors in teachers' decisions when navigating emotional experience. My research contributes to this work.

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