

Capturing Beginning Teacher's Emotional Experiences in Teaching: An Analysis of Teaching Case in Introduction to Literature Class

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Abstract

Teachers frequently experience a wide variety of emotions during their teaching services. It is reported that the teachers' emotional experiences affect their performances in the classroom and can be one of the main sources of burnout and retention. This study captures the emotional experiences faced by a beginning teacher in her first days in the teaching practice program in an institution. This is a self-study with descriptive qualitative as the method of research. The researcher analyzed the teaching reflection as the instrument of the research. Based on the reflection, the teacher experienced emotional teaching practice mostly in dealing with the students' behavior, discipline and engagement. She is also emotionally triggered in dealing with dissatisfaction and students' effort in learning. Before pre-service teachers begin their teaching practice in schools, it is suggested that education study programs draw attention to this problem. Pre-service teachers must also comprehend the significance of reflective practices so that they can learn from their classroom performances and encounters. Future researchers are urged to investigate teachers' emotional experiences in a broader context and with a greater number of participants.

Keywords: *emotional experience; teaching; beginning teacher; self-study*

INTRODUCTION

Every individual has emotions. Emotion has been linked to the feelings that individual experiences in a certain situation or activity. Emotions are socially constructed phenomena (Chahkandi et al., 2016). The building of emotion can be influenced by the social environment of a certain individual. Emotions are crucial factors that influence an individual's success in leading their personal and professional lives (Kotsou et al., 2019). Teaching is one of the emotional activities. Teachers often experience the wide range of emotions in relation to their professional responsibilities (Stephanou et al., 2013). When learning objectives are achieved by the students, teachers may feel happy, enthusiastic and satisfied. However, when the students struggle to understand a topic, they may feel frustrated, disappointed with their lack of effort, and anxious as their skills are being challenged.

Recently, research into teacher emotions has received significant interest (Anisa et al., 2019; Chahkandi et al., 2016; Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015; Gong et al., 2013; Han & Yin, 2016; Kotsou et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016; Lopez, 2011). Teachers report that these emotions often arise from management and disciplinary classroom interactions and that they try to regulate these emotions frequently because they believe emotional regulation helps them achieve their goals (Nichols et al., 2017). Focusing on emotion allows teachers to recognize

how they view themselves, their colleagues, their students, and the decisions about these groups (Shapiro, 2010). To improve the conditions of teachers and provide them with instructional feedback that directly influences student learning and the overall quality of teaching and learning, empirical studies on the effects of teacher emotions are necessary (Frenzel, 2014). The study of Hernández-Amorós and Urrea-Solano (2017) suggests that the curricula of teaching degrees should be redesigned to incorporate material on emotional education and how to address it in the classroom.

A study conducted by Anisa and colleagues (2019) implies that teachers' emotional competence has a significant contribution to students' learning motivation in class. Although teachers may often try to hide their feelings, students are often aware of their emotions toward their teachers. Teachers are required to be perfect in every teaching; especially when they are dealing with their emotions. The way teachers manage and regulate their emotions may affect the students. The teachers and students may end up having a good relationship because of the way the teachers manage and regulate their emotions in class and outside the classroom. Capturing teachers' emotional experiences in teaching can help the teachers to be more aware of their fluctuation of emotion happened during the teaching-learning process in class and the causes that may influence their anger or burnout. Based on the significance, the researcher formulated a question to be answered in the article: What are the emotional experiences faced by the teacher in teaching. The researcher tried to capture the emotional experiences based on teaching case. This article is expected to give insights into the emotional experiences of the teacher and the way she regulated her emotion that gives impact the teacher and the students. It is expected that teachers will be more aware of their emotional fluctuation and the importance of emotion regulation in teaching.

Emotions frequently shape cognitions, and some emotion academics define the emotion process along with changes in cognitive functioning (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Teachers experience a range of emotions during work (Frenzel, 2015), which are driven by many factors and their interactions (Schutz et al., 2014). Typically, teachers' emotions develop in response to their environment. Teachers interact with a variety of people at work (e.g., colleagues, parents), but interactions with their students appear to be the most powerful in terms of eliciting positive or negative emotions, as empirical studies (mostly qualitative) have revealed (Frenzel et al., 2009; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). According to research, primary and secondary teachers' emotions are strongly linked to positive interactions with their students (e.g., a student's success story, showing appreciation for the teachers' work), evoking responses such as joy and satisfaction (Hargreaves, 2000). When negative emotions arose in students, teachers began yelling, frowning, scolding, or simply looking them in the eyes (Chahkandi et al., 2016). An interesting finding is shown by Nichols and colleagues (2017) arguing that the teachers' interactions with students triggered a strong sense of empathy for their problems and a desire to 'save' them. Still, they also caused the teacher to struggle because they contradicted their perception of what it meant to be a teacher to these students. In the classroom context, Chang (2009) argues that the more a teacher cares about his or her students, the more likely an emotional encounter is important; a student's disruptive behaviors might be a threat to a teacher's goal achievement if a teacher's goal is to teach students academic skills. Teachers' emotional state and satisfaction with the support they received have a statistically significant impact on their identity professional accomplishment (Fiorilli et al., 2015).

According There are two lineages on the emotional regulation of teachers, the first being (1) research on emotion regulation, (2) Research on emotional labor has focused on how individuals manage their emotions to conform to the display regulations of the workplace (Hargreaves, 1998, as cited in Jiang et al., 2016). Teachers' emotional labor is often included in the consideration of teaching values (Lee & Yin, 2011). Since both emotion regulation and emotional labor research have been elucidated as essential aspects of emotion management,

each paradigm has limits. Emotional work is described as "controlling the emotion of presenting one's face and body in public" (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) argues that emotional labor needs dedication and can result in stress, fatigue, and a sense of inauthenticity. She offered two emotional functioning strategies: surface acting (factoring unfeared emotions and/or shielding perceived emotions) and deep acting (factoring felt emotions and/or shielding perceived emotions) (altering inner emotional states to feel the desired emotion). In other words, surface acting involves superficial manifestations of unexpressed emotions (regulatory gestures), but deep acting entails the modification of interior emotional states (Grandey, 2000). Due to the emotional labor and work that goes into teaching, teachers can experience emotional exhaustion. The result is supported by the findings from Ghanizadeh and Royaei (2015) indicate that emotional regulation significantly and negatively influenced teacher burnout. As teachers' burnout has been identified as a serious issue in academic settings around the world (Loonstra et al., 2009). The primary indicator of teacher burnout is emotional exhaustion, which is directly related to teachers' personal experiences, characteristics, and emotional states (Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015). Stephanou et al., (2013) concludes that emotional experience is an important aspect of teachers' engagement at school. Moreover, teachers' appreciation, job satisfaction and regulation of their emotions are the essential parts of effective professional life and personal well-being.

METHOD

This is qualitative descriptive research that employs the reflective practice of the researcher. This is self-study research on teaching emotional experiences in which the researcher did a study based on what she had been through during her teaching practicum. According to Zeichner (1999) cited by Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2015), many teacher educators have reported that self-study has had a profound impact on their lives and work, and it has been called "the single most significant breakthrough in the field." (p.510). The researcher conducted reflective teaching and analyzed the issues that emerged during the teaching practicum. Reflective practice can be used in teaching at both the pre-service and in-service levels (Mathew et al., 2017). Moreover, Mathew and colleagues (2017) elaborate that a person who reflects during his or her practice is not only recalling past actions and events; rather, he or she is consciously examining emotions, experiences, actions, and responses to add to his or her existing knowledge and achieve a deeper level of comprehension (p.127). Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2015) imply that self-study researchers typically use existing written (such as lesson plans, meeting reports, and comments on discussion boards) and non-written (such as images, and videotapes of instructional activities) data to support their research objectives rather than necessarily collecting new data for the sole purpose of their study.

Participant

The participant was the researcher herself when she was a beginning teacher. The teaching reflection is based on her first teaching practice in Introduction to Literature class. The teaching practice was done when she was a student in an English Education Master's Program at a private university in Yogyakarta. She did her teaching practicum for two weeks in an English Education Study Program.

Instruments, data collection and analysis

The data for the study were the researcher's teaching reflection. The researcher used one of the real teaching cases in the Introduction to Literature class. The instrument is in the reflection form the teacher who taught the course. In that reflection, she described the state and atmosphere of the class during the learning process and the emotional experiences in the class that caused challenges in regulating her emotions. Reflection is required for pre-service teachers

to learn from their teaching practices (Nurfaidah et al., 2016). The researcher analyzed the reflection, identified and classified the emotional experiences in the teaching practice into some parts, and described the data based on the presented theories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Emotional experiences in teaching: Teaching case in introduction to literature class)

The results of data analysis showed that the teacher was exposed to emotional experiences in her teaching. Hagenauer et al., (2015) confirm that emotional experiences of teachers during teaching are significantly associated to the quality of the relationship between teachers and students. In this study, the emotional experiences of the teacher were related to the students' misbehaviors, class discipline, students' engagement, the teacher's dissatisfaction and the students' effort.

Dealing with students' misbehaviors

"When I arrived at the class, the students seemed busy writing. At first, I was a bit surprised because they had seated and done something. Some students were not coming yet, but most of them had come to the class. When I checked the students, they were busy doing the homework that I assigned at the last meeting. Some of them were working on the tasks that I gave before the class"- Teacher

From this part, it can be seen that the students were not doing what the teacher told them to do. They did not do the homework on time, instead, they did it in the classroom. The teacher did control her emotion in which she responded calmly to the attitude of the students. She tried to relate and keep a good atmosphere in the class. However, it is not only important for teachers to relate to students but also to maintain interpersonal control (by showing leadership and strictness and limiting uncertain behavior) in the classroom (Telli et al., 2010). In this case, the teachers are expected to be strict. The strictness is not only for regulating the students' misbehaviors but also for regulating the teacher's emotions. When the students obey the rules in the class, the teacher will feel more secure and comfortable teaching the students.

Attaining class discipline

*I asked them if they had already finished the homework, and they stated that some had not yet finished. I told them that **it is okay**; I will collect the homework after the class." - Teacher*

In this case, the teacher controlled her emotion in dealing with the students' behaviors. She tried to create a positive emotion in the class so that she could communicate with the teachers. Teachers may up-regulate a positive emotion such as joy or enthusiasm to communicate positively with students; teachers may also up-regulate a negative emotion such as anger to educate the students not to break the rules. In turn, they defined down-regulating as attempts to decrease the emotional experience. Teachers frequently down-regulate negative emotions such as anger to maintain classroom management and develop positive relationships with students (Jiang et al., 2016). It also can be seen as part of suppression strategy in which teachers are frustrated by the misbehavior of their students but they just pretend it does not affect them (Schutz et al., 2014). Grandey and Gabriel (2015) denote that employee burnout and job dissatisfaction are strongly associated with emotional labor as inconsistencies or self-suppression (e.g., requirements to suppress negative emotions, surface acting, disagreement, or inauthenticity). It can be seen from the reflection that the students uncooperative and indiscipline actions did not affect the teacher. She kept proceeding the lesson and eventually gave the students extra time for task submission. Yin & Lee (2012) suggest that to cope with

these emotional demands and expectations, teachers must perform emotional labor for both successful teaching and harmonious interactions with the students. However, it could be contradictory because teacher did not warn the students about the importance of submitting their work on time. She did not show strictness and attained class discipline.

Encouraging students' engagement

*"I asked how they started their day, especially how they got up this morning. Some of them expressed the things they did enthusiastically, **but the others just listened without any response**. Some students that they got up early and prepared themselves to come to class today."* -Teacher

This shows the effort of the teacher to encourage the students at the beginning part of the lesson. Fostering enthusiasm and joy at the beginning of the learning process is very important that shows the quality of learning. Students will be more active in the learning process because they feel comfortable and happy to be in class. Nevertheless, in reality, some students are indifferent to the teacher's efforts to improve the quality of the learning process. They do not care about the teacher. That is one of the causes of teachers experiencing emotional labor in the classroom. If the teachers have no control on their emotional labor, it practically can lead to burnout (Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015). It needs emotional adjustment. The objective of emotional adjustment is to recognize one's own positive and negative emotions, as well as to be able to control one's negative feelings in relation to self and others (Amin & Farasat, 2011).

Dealing with dissatisfaction

*"**Honestly, I expected the last class**. I attempted to apply a short-flipped classroom; in which they were expected to learn the materials before the class. I sent a message to the captain of the class for sharing the topic and the material with the students."* -Teacher

In any new work experience, there are expectations for success (Roberson, 2008). However, we could not deny that reality may be different from reality. The teacher in the teaching case experienced dissatisfaction because the reality was different from what she had expected. She expected that she could implement a simple example of a flipped classroom in her class, but the students could not support the plan. The teacher experienced dissatisfaction in the teaching process.

*"**Well, we should also know that realities might not be as expected**. The trouble was that the students did not fully do what I assigned. Just a few of them had read the story I shared. Some of them stated that they had started reading the text but did not fully understand yet"* -Teacher

The teacher did not express her emotion in front of the students. She consciously managed and regulated her emotion so that they would not disturb the learning process in the class. When our feelings appear to be disharmonious with a given situation, we always try to regulate our emotional reactions so that they better meet our goals (Jiang et al., 2016). When the teachers lacked control over the situation, they modified their understanding by accepting reality and adjusting their expectations (Chahkandi et al., 2016). The teachers should manage the process properly because Fiorilli and colleagues (2015) discovered that emotional intensity and dissatisfaction with support were significant predictors of emotional exhaustion.

Students' effort in learning

*"The good thing that happened in the class was because I already asked them to find the definitions of the symbolism and irony; they could give their opinions about that. I asked the students to share what they had read. **Some students read the definitions, although they did not seem to understand what they had read.** I understood that. Some of them already know how to give definitions based on what they read. I was very happy." – Teacher*

One of the emotional experiences experienced by teachers during the learning process takes place is how students strive to understand and participate in learning activities in the classroom. The students' efforts may emotionally move teachers. It is not about how much they can master in one class meeting but how much they try to capture and understand what teachers teach them.

The teacher employed similar strategy to the participant in the study of Jiang et al., (2016) who stated that she attempted to reshape her perception of a difficult student by considering her students from a different perspective. She was able to regulate her negative emotions. The other thing that made teacher emotionally moved was when she noticed the students' progress in the class. Teachers may experience satisfaction, pride, enthusiasm, happiness, and pleasure as a result of their effective teaching and students' academic progress (Stephanou et al., 2013).

Emotional experiences can positively or negatively influence the flow of teaching and learning in the class. The ability to manage classrooms effectively and to develop successful interpersonal relationships with students is considered an important factor in the emotional well-being of the teacher at work. In addition, it is concluded that the positive emotions of teachers are likely to induce positive emotions in students. According to Telli et al., (2010), it is important not only for teachers to relate to students, but also to maintain interpersonal control (by demonstrating leadership and rigor, limiting uncertain behaviors) in the communication process in the classroom. Amin and Farasat (2011) state that both perceptions of influence and proximity are determined by the non-verbal and verbal behaviors of teachers.

Positive teacher emotions may not only be essential for the well-being of teachers but they may also affect students' well-being and learning in class. For that reason, Jiang et al., (2016) point out an interesting finding from their study that teachers tend to do suppression in controlling their negative emotion. They suppressed the negative emotion occurred in the learning process so that it would not affect the students' learning in the class. However, their study suggests that suppression should not be applied in managing emotions because it reduces the teacher's positive emotional expression and hinder the development of students-teacher relationship. Teachers who are purely sympathetic, compassionate, and intimate increase students' cognitive and emotional success (Amin & Farasat, 2011).

The article, in conclusion, reveals several specific emotional experiences faced by the teacher when communicating with students. It introduces an important concept of how teachers interact with students and the ways the interaction affects the teacher's emotions. Nichols and colleagues (2017) also suggest that new teachers learning how to navigate the management and instructional pressures of teaching may need to engage in conscious attribution work regarding the (perceived) successes and failures of their teaching practice.

CONCLUSION

It is crucial for beginners to teachers to be aware of the influence of their emotions in their teaching services. Emotional experiences or episodes will take part in their journey to become experienced and professional teachers. Therefore, they need to understand how to manage and control their emotions so that they will bring positive and meaningful experiences for both the teachers and the students. The education study programs are suggested to highlight this issue for the pre-service teachers before they start their teaching practice at the schools. Pre-service

teachers are also required to understand the importance of reflective practices so they will be able to learn from their performances and experiences in class. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate more about factors and effects of teachers' emotional experiences with larger and broader contexts and participants.

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