“There Are No Emotions in Math”: How Teachers Approach Emotions in the Classroom

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Topics

by Meca Williams, Dionne Cross, Ji Hong, Lori Aultman, Jennifer Osbon & Paul Schutz — 2008

Background/Context: *Our research describes teacher emotions and the way that teachers manage emotional events in the classroom. Recent work completed by these researchers suggests that teachers' emotions and their reaction to student emotions are influenced by the teachers' beliefs.*

Purpose/Objective/Research Question/Focus of Study: *In this study, we explored teachers' beliefs and their descriptions of emotional events within their classrooms to understand how these teachers attempted to address or repress student emotions. The research questions were written accordingly: (1) How do teachers view their role in addressing student emotions? (2) How do teachers approach student emotions in building relationships with their students to establish suitable learning environments?*

Setting: *From previous studies on emotions and building relationships with students, we surmised that the beginning of the school year would be a useful time to develop an understanding of the teachers' perceptions of emotions in the classroom. Participants were interviewed twice in their classrooms, the first time 2 weeks before the beginning of school, and the follow-up was conducted 2 weeks after school started.*

Population/Participants/Subjects: *Eight in-service teachers were individually recruited from one of the researchers' graduate courses at a southeastern university. These particular teachers were purposefully recruited because they expressed an interest in improving themselves as teachers, were willing to talk freely about their classroom transactions, and discussed the importance of developing relationships with their students.*

Research Design: *This research used thematic analysis from qualitative data interviews.*

Data Collection and Analysis: *A semistructured protocol was used in the interviews to encourage the participants to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about events that transpired during the first few weeks of school. Questions such as “Tell me about your first day of class” and “What happened?” were asked to examine how participants described their perceptions of their students, their introductions with the students, and developing their classroom atmosphere.*

Findings/Results: *This research sheds light on the multiple issues that are involved in developing a useful emotional climate in the classroom. Many of the teachers were consistent in their teacher beliefs, the teacher selves they wanted to portray, and approaches they used when emotional events occurred within their classrooms or with a particular student. Frequently, the participants described instances in which they juggled their daily instruction agendas while handling student emotions. We found that those participants who believed that teachers should shoulder the responsibility of addressing student emotions did so to create a more nurturing and sensitive classroom environment. The participants also revealed that their perceptions of dealing with student emotions changed or shifted after working with their students. Realizing that teaching students is more than instruction, one teacher described his conceptual change of what teaching was and how emotions impacted his students and their relationship.*

Conclusions/Recommendations: *Having a thorough understanding of the prevalence of emotional experiences in the profession might help teachers to feel more competent in acknowledging and helping manage student emotions, rather than avoiding emotional situations in the classroom. Additionally, different subjects tend to elicit different types and levels of emotional experiences for both teachers and students. Although we tend to focus more on unpleasant emotions, both preservice and in-service teachers also need to be able to address pleasant emotions, which can also be disruptive and cause harm if they are not dealt with appropriately. As such, teachers within specific subject areas should be educated on how to handle emotions that are commonly felt within their domain.*

Walk into any school in the world, and one of the things you will quickly notice is the emotional nature of classroom transactions. At any given point, classroom emotions range from boredom to excited laughter; from anxiety and panic to intense engagement or pride. It is clear that emotions are a palpable part of schooling contexts and may have strong influences on teaching and learning processes. Researchers who have investigated the emotional lives of teachers have begun to paint a picture of how teachers view themselves and their emotions in their professional lives (Day & Leitch, 2001; Golby, 1996; Goldstein & Lake, 2000; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000; Meyer & Turner, 2002; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002; Sutton, 2004; Zembylas, 2004).

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These researchers have suggested that emotions are an integral part of how teachers view their roles, yet when it comes to the preparation and development of preservice and in-service teachers, the function of emotions in the classroom tends to be either ignored or relegated to a minor status. Therefore, the emphasis of our research is on how teachers describe, approach, and, as Hochschild (1983) described, “manage” emotions within their classrooms. We propose that by examining these emotional occurrences, our research may assist beginning and veteran teachers in their practice.

RESEARCH ON CLASSROOM EMOTIONS

The academic community has tended to ignore emotions because of the perception that they are generally considered private, unstable, and irrational (Fineman, 1996; Sutton, 2005; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Zembylas, 2004). Yet, within the last decade, more studies have emphasized how emotions are inextricably associated with the teaching profession (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Recent studies include issues concerning emotional labor and using emotional metaphors while teaching (Zembylas, 2004), and the emotional interactions between teachers and students (Hargreaves, 2000). Most current are the emotional implications of educational reform (Van Veen & Sleegers, 2006). These researchers have suggested that emotions tend to be an ever-present companion within the service of teaching. For example, Turner et al. (2002) demonstrated how emotions permeate the classroom while instruction is taking place. They suggested that teachers’ illustrations of care, sensitivity, and humor created classroom environments in which students were less likely to avoid tasks and increase student performance in mathematics. It was through these teachers’ show of emotion and professionalism that students seemed to excel in their mathematic achievement, thereby demonstrating a relationship among positive teacher emotions, nurturing classroom environment, and increases in student progress.

Similar to most professions that require a positive work relationship with the public, teachers must realize that it is necessary to juggle their own emotions while trying to contend with their students’ needs and attend to other administrative duties. Hochschild (1983) surmised that these internal actions are “managing emotions” to achieve personal or professional goals. Yet these interactions, internal and external, make teaching an emotionally charged situation and, if not regulated appropriately or discussed with others, may lead to anxiety, depression, anger, or simply becoming “burned out” on teaching (Carlyle & Woods, 2002; Golby, 1996; Goldstein & Lake, 2000; Hargreaves, 2000; Nias, 1996). Within this space in which teachers’ beliefs and emotions transact, situations are created in which teachers must negotiate between their professional self and their emotions. Professional self is considered one’s self shaped by diverse aspects of teaching and the school contexts (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Lasky, 2005), and thus, teachers’ professional self is inevitably related to their emotions. As a result, researchers have begun to associate teaching with the idea of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1990; Schutz, Hong, Cross, & Osbon, 2006; Zembylas, 2003). According to Zembylas (2003), in this context, emotional labor is the work or effort used to present various teacher selves during transactions that teachers identify as school related. Emotional labor suggests that during transactions with stakeholders involved in schooling, teachers express, repress, or generate emotions based on perceived needs during a particular event. For example, Shelton and Stern (2004), focusing exclusively on teachers’ emotions, detailed suggestions for dealing with everyday classroom experiences involving emotions. They suggested that handling emotions promptly and reasonably can foster students’ well-being and academic performance. They recommended that being aware of one’s own emotions on the part of the teacher will assist them in building and sustaining relationships in the classroom. In addition, by modeling how to effectively regulate emotions, teachers can demonstrate its impact on the learning experience.

From our theoretical perspective, teacher emotions and the way that teachers manage emotional events in the classroom are influenced by teachers’ beliefs (Schutz, Cross, Hong, & Osbon, 2007). Teachers’ beliefs and values about their professional roles seem to establish a framework from which the teachers transact with students inside and outside the school context (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Schutz, DiStefano, Benson, & Davis, 2004; Schutz & Davis, 2000; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002; Woolfolk-Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006). Thus, it is these teacher beliefs that may provide the foundation on which teachers attempt to understand emotional classroom transactions. This article is an attempt to provide a bridge that connects teacher beliefs and the teacher’s approach to emotions in the classroom.

RESEARCH ON TEACHERS, BELIEFS, AND IDENTITY

White Research I Institution” in *Urban Review* (2005).

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Frank Pajares's 1992 review of the literature on teacher beliefs suggested that studying teacher beliefs could be useful in understanding educational practices. Yet, many researchers omit beliefs or circumvent the topic because it is viewed as an area for philosophical debate. What has been reported on teacher beliefs is that these tightly held ideals or preconceptions by teachers influence their approach to teaching, their professional identity, and their interactions with colleagues, parents, students, family members, and other professionals (Ashton & Gregoire Gill, 2003; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Korthagen, 2004; Pajares; Van den Berg, 2002; Walkington, 2005; Woolfolk-Hoy et al., 2006).

Our definition of beliefs aligns with that of Harvey (1986), who considers them an individual's representation of reality that is perceived to have enough validity, truth, or credibility to guide behavior and reasoning. For teachers, these beliefs encompass not only the emotional learning environment they wish to create for their students but also shape the "possible selves" that these teachers envision. Therefore, we also sought to understand how our participants described their teacher selves and how this image was projected in their classroom environment.

Borko and Putnam (1996) discussed how teachers establish professional images of themselves based on their early schooling experiences with their own teachers. This notion was expanded by Ben-Peretz, Mendelson, and Kron (1999), who suggested that teachers' perceptions of themselves could be represented by images that explain past experiences and their current teaching assignments. Our conception of teacher self is similar to Zembylas (2003), who asserted that the construction of an identity is based on what teachers know of themselves, what they know about their students and their subject matter, and their concern with teaching and student learning. We propose that if we are able to understand how the teachers view themselves and their teacher beliefs, we can then unfold how they perceive emotions in the classroom and how they choose or develop strategies to build relationships with their students (Calderhead, 1996; Davis, 2003; Hargreaves, 1998; Meyer & Turner, 2002; Sutton, 2004; Zembylas, 2002).

Thus, in this study, we explored teachers' beliefs and their descriptions of emotional events within their classrooms to understand how these teachers attempted to address or repress student emotions. Our findings extend research on emotions in the classroom by illustrating connections between teacher beliefs, teacher selves, and emotions in the classroom. By displaying how teachers approach emotional transactions with their students, we reveal how our participants' view their roles as teachers and how they manage some emotional transactions that could have burdened or sabotaged their daily objectives and negatively impacted the learning environment.

We contend that an increased understanding of emotions and how teachers describe emotional events may be useful in understanding how emotions impact the teaching and learning process. In an effort to investigate these issues, we focused our research questions on understanding how teachers talk about emotional transactions in the classroom and the teachers' beliefs related to those transactions. Accordingly, we attempted to answer the following research questions: (1) How do teachers view their role in addressing student emotions? (2) How do teachers approach student emotions in building relationships with their students in order to establish suitable learning environments?

We began by focusing on the beginning of the school year while our participants were trying to establish classroom routines, learn personal information about their students, and manage administrative duties. From previous studies on emotions and building relationships with students (Aultman, Williams, Garcia, & Schutz, 2006), we surmised that the beginning of the school year would be a useful time to develop an understanding of the teachers' perceptions of emotions in the classroom.

METHODS

Our theoretical framework was phenomenological, in that we assume that there was some essence to classroom emotional experiences (Moustakas, 1994). According to Husserl (1950/1999), phenomenology is defined as a "theory of the essence of the pure phenomenon of knowing" (p. 36). Phenomenology advocates the investigation of an experience through the lens of the person living the experience—in our case, the teachers' own "knowing" of emotional experiences in the classroom. Further, to focus on the participants' description of the experience, we, as researchers,

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attempted to intentionally set aside, or bracket, our own preconceived ideas about the phenomenon of interest so the view of the participant was at the center of our analysis.

Purposeful sampling was used to recruit 8 in-service teachers. Seven of the teachers were individually recruited from one of the researchers' graduate courses at a southeastern university. These particular teachers were purposefully recruited because they expressed an interest in improving themselves as teachers, were willing to talk freely about their classroom transactions, and discussed the importance of developing relationships with their students. Our contention was that these teachers would be critical to our developing theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

In addition, because our past research only included female teachers, we also wanted to include several male teachers; therefore, an 8th teacher was recruited from a local school district because he also exhibited the aforementioned characteristics and because he was male. As a result, our participants included 3 males and 5 females. They ranged in teaching experience from 3 years to 24 years and taught in elementary, middle, or high school (see Table 1).

Name	Number of years teaching	Grade level	Subject	Perceived school context	Teacher extracurricular involvement	Descriptive quote
Mr. Lipson	4+ years	High school	Math	"We are. . .around 2,600 enrollment. . .about 33% African American, about 27% Caucasian . . .in the low 20s Hispanic, and then the rest is just a mix. We're somewhere around 50 different countries and 60 different languages spoken at our school. . . a low SES. . .rate that seems to increase about 1% a year. . .high ESOL."	Girls' volleyball coach, head of intramurals, teacher social committee	"I'm there to teach you and we're there to compete and we're there to win. I sometimes let my coaching, competitive self probably come into the classroom. We're here for an hour. Push it aside."

Journal of General Education (2005).

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Ms. Walker	6 years	Elementary: 3rd & 4th grades	Reading	"We're. . .pre-K-5th grade. The makeup of the school is about 55% Hispanic and maybe about 30% Black and maybe a little bit less than 20% White. Our students come from working-class homes."	Reading tutor for after-school program	"I have to constantly be a cheerleader and say. 'Come on, you have to do this. . .it's important." I have to constantly motivate them and sometimes when things get out of hand and students become too frustrated, then I have to stop and start going to my coach mode like a basketball coach and say things like, 'We can't be defeated. We have to do this.' Just a cheerleader and a coach all the time, and that's kind of hard to do."

R. Pekrun, *Emotion in Education* (Elsevier, 2007); and, with J. Y. Hong, D. I. Cross, and J. N. Osbon, "Reflections on Investigating Emotion in Educational Activity Settings" in *Educational Psychology Review* (2006).

Mr. Pedersen	4+ years	Elementary: 2nd grade	Gifted, reading	“This. . .is a suburban school. . .primary upper- to middle-class students. . .the majority are Caucasian. . .some Asian students and also some Hispanics. . .a small percentage of African American. . .there are about 1,400 students in this school. . .it’s kindergarten-5th grade. . .there’s a lot of teachers.”	None currently	“I think you really should share as much as you can with the kids so they can see you as a human being and they can see how you react to frustration. If I can’t deal with frustration or model it to the kids, I’m not really teaching them how to deal with it. I think you have to be pretty emotionally free with the kids. Of course, you can’t yell and scream, but you can express anger. I feel like I’m pretty emotionally expressive and free with the kids.”

Ms. Keirstead	18 years	Elementary and middle school	Gifted, social studies, math, reading	“Everybody in this county who is in pre-K through 12 is in this building. . .we have 570 kids. . .about 90% White. . .there is a very small Black population in this county. . . almost 50% of the adult population in this county over 25 do not have a high school diploma.”	Head coach, girls’ basketball & girls’ softball	“There’s a whole lot more I can do for these children to get to know them than help them with things about life than I can ever teach from a book, and that’s a whole lot more important than what I’m ever going to teach from a book. The governor and the QCCs might disagree, but that’s the way I feel.”

[Table 1 continued]

Name	Number of years teaching	Grade level	Subject	Perceived school context	Teacher extracurricular involvement	Descriptive quote

Ms. Napolean	3 years	Elementary: 1st grade	Multiple	"It's a fairly large school…K-5…about 950 students…I think there's seven [classes] on each grade level…most students are middle class… about 30% lower SES… maybe 20% upper [SES]."	None currently	"It makes me sad for them because they're so little and they have all these needs. I think a lot of times we forget that they have emotions too and they know a lot more than their parents or even myself as a teacher think that they know. They read people very well and know if they're happy or not. It's sad for me because I want them all to have a perfect, nice little life which I know isn't reality."
Ms. DeVoss	2 years as teaching assistant, 8 + years teaching	Elementary & middle school: 4th, 5th, & 6th grades	Multiple	"Montessori school. . .it] has grown to 4 primary classes, 3 lower elementary classes, 1 large combined upper elementary class and middle school. . .over 250 students. . .this school tries to keep tuition down so that everyone has an opportunity to send their child here."	None currently	"I feel like being more comfortable, I have more to offer them. I don't know. I'm not weary of students anymore. They're all so unique and I try to get to know each one so that I can do my best to make their educational experience here a good one. That's my job. That's what I do. That's why I'm here."

Ms. Collins	5 years	High school	Math	“There’s about 2,400 students. . .about 150 teachers. . .it’s a pretty high credited school. . .good students and SAT scores.”	Faculty head of Beta Club service organization	“[To much involvement is] giving up a little too much personal information about you, and maybe going past the adult/student relationship and being more of a friend than an adult figure. I think you can be friendly with your students, but you don’t need to be one of their friends.”

Mr. Netter	24 years	High school	Psychology, drama, media	“The school is in kind of a rural setting. . . [the school] has more of a vocational emphasis versus a college prep emphasis. . .it is also a school system that is unknowingly progressive in its approach to education.”	None currently	“My job is a really interesting job. . . . It’s really hard for me. One of the toughest things is. . .you’re looking [out] for these kids and you’re trying to develop them and then they reach their potential and then they leave. And then the next crops coming in. . .my thing, from an emotional point of view, is watching them depart because I know that that’s over and it will never be the same and if they show up and they’ll see that interaction.”

Table 1. Biographical features and school information for interview participants

After obtaining a school contact person for each participant, we secured permission to interview the participants in their classrooms. The teachers participated in two interviews. The first and fourth authors conducted the first interview during preplanning, before the inception of the school year, and the other within the first 2 weeks of school. Our previous studies detailed that the first 2 weeks of school were critical for building the foundation for relationships with students and creating a classroom where they could feel comfortable sharing their ideas (Aultman et al., 2006). This period was further described as a time for classroom introductions, when students became familiar with the expectations and management styles of their teachers. At this point in the school year, teachers were in the beginning stages of recognizing each individual student and simultaneously gauging their students’ collective attitudes that set the emotional atmosphere within their classrooms.

We conducted all interviews in the teachers’ classrooms to develop a more accurate picture of the context of the school and to explore what the teacher envisioned for his or her classroom. All interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and sent to the participants for member checks to see if the transcripts accurately conveyed the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview. Member checks allowed us to enhance the trustworthiness of our research by triangulating the data. The interviews were 45 minutes to 1 1/2 hours.

Each of the teachers was initially interviewed using a semistructured protocol, with questions such as, “Tell me about your school,” “Describe your emotional involvement with your students,” and “What do you plan to during the first day?” This interview was designed to obtain a description of the context of the school, allow the participants to reflect on past experiences with emotions in the classroom, and probe the teachers’ planning and expectations for the upcoming academic year (see Appendix A).

A semistructured protocol was used in the second interview to follow up on the first interview and to encourage the participants to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about events that transpired during the first few weeks of school (see Appendix B). We asked if the teachers’ goals were accomplished related to creating a comfortable environment for their students. Questions such as “Tell me about your first day of class” and “What happened?” were asked to examine how they described their perceptions of their students, their introductions with the students, and developing their classroom atmosphere. In addition, we prompted participants to talk about the emotional transactions in the classroom during the first week of school and to describe previous emotionally charged situations that had occurred in their teaching.

DATA ANALYSIS

Horizonalizing, or regarding each statement deemed relevant to the topic as having equal value, was the first step in working phenomenologically with the transcripts. To accomplish this, we adapted Strauss and Corbin’s (1999) open coding as a technique for coding participants’ statements relevant to emotions in the classroom. Coding was done simultaneously, with each researcher coding the same transcript. The transcripts were then compared and coded text was discussed among the research group. Similar bits of the data were coded using identical terms among the researchers. When coded items differed, we discussed our perspectives and presented our concerns. Through this process, we decided which codes were clearly related to our research questions. As Moustakas (1994) suggested, this peer review process is a necessary strategy in enhancing credibility and validity of the research.

The descriptions, patterns, and relationships among the codes aided in the building of categories. The development of categories was an ongoing, iterative process that was reevaluated and refined to mirror participants’ descriptions of the essence of the phenomenon. The themes in this study emerged inductively from the data through examination of the categories generated. Multiple readings of the transcripts were completed to ensure that the codes, categories, and emerging themes were reflective of the overall context and the meaning making of each participant (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989).

Through the researchers’ interactions with the data, we created categories and themes (see Table 2). Once the codes were developed, we tested their appropriateness deductively by examining deviate narratives that did not fit the categories. In this confirmatory stage, we also developed a hypothetical model by interpreting the relationships between categories (see Figure 1). Figure 1 summarizes a conceptual model that depicts teachers’ perceptions of emotions in the classroom during the first week of school and its interplay in this context.

Teacher Selves Beliefs, values, and ways of being a teacher	Assessing emotional boundaries Beliefs about child development Beliefs about disciplinary practices Dedication to teaching Excited about teaching Feeling burnout Feeling empathetic toward students Focus on preparing students for future Focus on student-centered learning Focus on teacher-centered learning Importance of establishing a persona to portray to students	Importance of establishing a persona to portray to students Importance of flexibility in teaching Importance of teacher time commitment Interest in professional development Model emotions for student Possession of high expectations for students Practicing self-reflection about teaching Self-efficacious teacher Student advocacy Uses resources for teachers Cares about students' emotions Values authentic relationships with students Values being accessible to students Values being an organized teacher Willing to negotiate career self Willing to negotiate the teacher role
Building Relationships with students, other teachers, and parents	Accepting student differences Acknowledging student differences Being sensitive to student needs Being responsive to student emotions Being involved in extracurricular activities Building rapport Caring for students Creating a safe classroom environment Creating involvement with students	Communicating with parents Communicating with students Discussing emotional events Establishing trust Identifying community Negotiating emotional boundaries Negotiating friendship boundaries Sharing personal information Using humor

Negotiating the Classroom Context	First-day (get to know you) activities Ability attribution Animating classroom activities Being aware of what is going on in class (“with-it-ness”) Creating cooperative activities Discussing classroom goals Effort attribution Emotionally supporting student learning Encouraging student learning Encouraging student participation Engaging students in learning Establishing rules and procedures	Giving feedback Luck attribution Maintaining classroom control Managing classroom activities Managing transition time Creating cooperative activities Discussing classroom goals Regulating classroom emotions Reciprocal strategies Strategy attribution Structuring the classroom environment Supporting student autonomy Validating student ideas
Describing Classroom Emotional Events	Anger Attention-seeking students Confused student(s) Chaotic classroom Discipline problem(s) Excited teacher Excited student Exhausted teacher Frustrated teacher	Happy to see students Nervous Overwhelmed Petrified Quiet Stressed Tense Worried

Table 2. Themes and categories that emerged from the interview

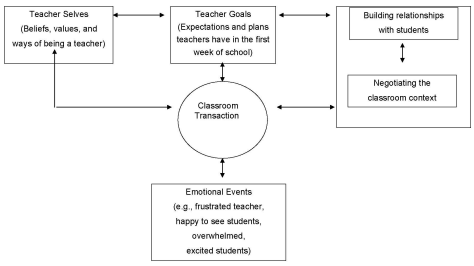

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Figure 1. Hypothetical Model of Emotional Transactions in the Classroom

RESULTS

Each participant has a unique story of the different experiences that he or she has had related to emotions in the classroom. Thus, for the purpose of illustrating a typical case, we foreground the narrative of Ms. Walker. This foregrounding allows us to show a more complete picture of the transactions among a teacher, her students, and their classroom contexts. After our presentation of Ms. Walker's more complete case, we bring in the other participants to discuss the themes that characterize these teachers' understanding of emotions in the classroom and their beliefs related to that understanding.

Ms. Walker is an experienced teacher who attempted to articulate her thoughts and beliefs about, and approaches to, the beginning of school and her reflections about the emotional transactions that occurred in the classroom. At the time of the first interview, Ms. Walker was beginning her sixth year of teaching. She taught third- and fourth-grade reading and described her school as having a diverse population of students (see Table 1). When we spoke with Ms. Walker during the week before school began, like most teachers at that time of the year, she expressed feelings of both excitement and apprehension. She said, "I'm kind of anxious thinking about all the things that can happen, but I'm excited at the same time."

Much of Ms. Walker's thoughts at the beginning of the school year centered on developing relationships with her students:

I get to know each student. I have to. I want to know their educational needs and their emotional needs. If a child is shy I will give him or her maybe a secret nod or a wink or something . . . something that I can share with this person to make them feel more welcomed.

The development of relationships with her students also extended to getting to know the students' parents. She described one experience when working with a mother whose son was having some difficulty with fractions, and the parent was not confident in her own mastery of fractions: "So I tutored her [the mother] a little bit on fractions, I worked with her separately from her son and tutored her so she could work with him also, and we could both work together on the situation."

As Ms. Walker described this experience, she included how important it is for parents to feel a part of their children's educational processes. She routinely opens her classroom to parents. By inviting parents and collaborating on methods to best help the child, Ms. Walker practices what researchers recommend and, in doing so, she builds positive family relationships that may directly impact her students' achievement (Edwards & Warin, 1999; Fan & Chen, 2001; Lasky, 2000; Stevenson, 1987). Ms. Walker's emphasis on developing and maintaining relationships with her students and their parents reflects how she sees herself as a teacher, or one of the *teacher selves* that she attempted to portray to her students. She described herself in this manner:

I really would like them to see me as a teacher who cares about their progress and cares about them as an individual. . . I want them to think of me as a teacher who's not going to have low expectations. . . I want to be someone who's compassionate but also a motivator.

This tough but caring approach was conveyed to her students. Ms. Walker indicated that they tended to make statements like, "She's mean, but she's not." In other words, she balances a strict teacher persona with a more caring approach to maintain an effective learning environment. To convey these two seemingly contradictory teacher selves, Ms. Walker used two related metaphors (Zembylas, 2004) to talk about her roles with her students: "I have to constantly be a cheerleader and say 'Come on, you have to do this. It's important.' I have to constantly motivate them and sometimes . . . start going to my coach mode like a basketball coach and say things like 'We can't be defeated.'"

For Ms. Walker, her beliefs and thoughts about emotions in the classroom tended to influence what she shared with her students and when she shared it. For example, Ms. Walker was asked, “What sort of emotions do you show your students?” She indicated, “The whole spectrum of emotions; I try not to ever get too angry, but I will show them my serious face, and I also show a lot of humor.”

It was clear that she had thought about these issues and found a place where she was comfortable with what she wanted to convey to her students:

So I have to constantly watch my emotions with my students. I don’t want anyone to fear me in my classroom at all. . . . They want you to have control of the class. They feel more comfortable if you’re leading and you have a plan and they know that you have a plan.

Ms. Walker concentrated on renewing relationships with returning students and communicating her expectations for her new students. She tends not to share much about her personal life on the first few days., For example, she said,

My fourth graders know me already so I just kind of welcome them back by saying, “How are you doing?” . . . . But for the new students I kind of told them what I expected for the year and what my hopes would be for them for this year and what I expect them to do. I didn’t go much into my personal life. On the first few days, you don’t want to open up too much.

She deliberately revealed parts of her personal and professional identity to her students. She set the stage for her students to feel comfortable talking to her without overwhelming them with information about her personal life or becoming too sociable.

As a result, Ms. Walker’s first week involved some of the pleasant emotions that many teachers associate with the profession—the reason that they become and continue to be teachers:

We read this book and the book had a real unexpected ending and when she [one of the students] turned the page and read the ending she was like “Wow!” In fact, the whole group was like that. They were very surprised. It was so wonderful to see them get so excited about a story and when we turned the page and the surprise was unveiled, then everyone, in unison, was like “Wow! Look! I didn’t expect that.”

On the other end of the spectrum, recognizing and regulating emotions in the classroom was a test early in the school year for Ms. Walker. She was teaching her last-period reading class during the first week of school, and her lesson plan seemed to fall apart: “They weren’t really frustrated and angry, just kind of tired and they couldn’t really pay attention a lot in class. They weren’t really happy and they weren’t really sad. They were just kind of ‘I can’t wait for this day to end.’”

During this experience, she attempted to regulate the students’ level of involvement in the class by changing into her “cheerleader” role: “I just tried to cheer them up by saying, ‘Come on guys. You’ve got to do this.’ I let them get up and maybe stand up and maybe go get a drink of water. . .get them focused and reoriented.”

Ms. Walker’s attempt to regulate their emotions suggests, as other researchers have indicated, that teaching is a profession that requires emotional labor (Hargreaves, 1998; Zembylas, 2003, 2004). Ms. Walker also described the potential effect of this emotional labor: “I always feel overwhelmed. I really do. I have a lot of things that I’m responsible for . . . I have the extra work of getting to know the students and understand what they need and think about how I can give them what they need academically and emotionally.”

In this case, Ms. Walker seemed to be suggesting that her goal of being attentive to students’ needs was tied to her feelings of being overwhelmed. We associated this with emotional labor, which has

been, under some circumstances, related to emotional exhaustion (a key component of burnout), job satisfaction, and health symptoms (Hochschild, 1990; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Schaubroek & Jones, 2000).

We used Ms. Walker's story to illustrate how she made meaning of the emotional incidents that she encountered with her students during the first week of school. The story exemplified how her beliefs about teachers and teaching influenced the relationships in her classroom. This is also reflected in how she attempted to balance her seemingly emotionally laborious teacher selves. We now turn to the themes that emerged in our analysis of the interviews.

INTERPRETING THE THEMES

Although each person's story was unique, there were similar themes across the teachers' narratives. A critical part of our analysis was attempting to interpret and organize the themes to construct a portrait of the emotional phenomenon that the teachers described (LeCompte, 2000). The centrality of emotions within the transcripts provided a complex phenomenological account of the teachers' perceptions of emotions in the classroom. The themes we now describe illustrate how teachers talked about emotions in their classroom and how they addressed the emotional issues. As we discuss the themes, we will introduce the experiences of the other 7 teacher participants.

Teacher Selves

Teachers' beliefs about their roles or perceptions of themselves as teachers often influenced their behavior and the way that they dealt with emotional situations in the classroom (Korthagen, 2004; Nias, 1989). These beliefs also affected their own individual emotions and the relationships that they developed and maintained with their students. In some cases, these teacher selves were aligned with whom teachers perceived themselves to be inside the classroom, their job, the perceptions of others, and their emotional involvement with the students. Attempting to understand the teacher self aided us in answering our first research question concerning how teachers viewed their roles in addressing student emotions. Toward that end, we compiled a list of common themes presented in Table 2 that reflect what we abstracted from the interview transcripts to describe how teachers perceived their teacher selves and their approaches to student emotions.

Ms. Walker believed that her primary teaching role was to motivate and prepare her students for a successful future. She adapted a teacher persona and, in her explanation, this persona allowed her to effectively motivate her students regardless of whether it was a false reflection of her true persona. In this case, she accepted the students considering her to be a "mean" teacher because it allowed her to actualize this aspect of her teacher self as she demonstrated a tough but caring approach. The act of having one feeling and portraying a different feeling has been referred to by Hochschild (1983) as "surface acting." In other words, teachers may wear a mask to show their students an authoritative figure, when in actuality these teachers may not be commanding individuals.

Mr. Lipson, a high school math teacher, negotiated a teacher self that was a no-nonsense, all-business type of teacher. This "self" reflected his beliefs about himself, his job, and the perception that he wanted to portray to his students.

> Once I'm in class I've got a job. I'm here to teach Algebra II and you're here to learn Algebra II. If you need someone to talk to, that's fine but you have to do it before school or after school . . . we don't have time to talk about everybody's Friday night . . . we have so much we've got to cover.

In contrast, some teachers believed that it was unnecessary to portray a content-focused attitude and that the profession involved not just teaching the subject matter content but also teaching students about life. Ms. Keirstead, a veteran teacher, wanted to be comfortable with her students because she believed it is important to them and integral to their success as students.

You begin to realize for these kids, it's important the way you act. It's not what you teach them. It's how you act to them. I guess I didn't use to realize that because I used to be really rough on some kids… I've said all along, it's way beyond what you teach them in a book, and so I decided maybe I better try to do a better job.

Ms. Keirstead believed in the importance of being less authoritative to create an environment where she and her students would feel more comfortable. She also commented that her students' well-being was her primary concern. By telling humorous stories and using lighthearted sarcasm to playfully talk with her students, Ms. Keirstead established a safe space for her students to learn while at the same time expressing herself. She explained, "I know we're taught not to ever be sarcastic with the kids or anything like that, but I can't just change my personality."

By admitting that her personality often differed from traditional teacher protocol, Ms. Keirstead ultimately decided that her teaching approach allowed her to leave at the end of the day without feeling hypocritical. Thus, her acceptance of this teacher self may be partly due to what Winograd (2003) described as the effects of emotional labor that are significantly mediated by the individual's personal or social identity. Ms. Keirstead had reconciled her personality with her teaching approach. Consequently, accepting her slightly sarcastic personality and its difference from teacher protocol was less laborious than conforming to the standards. Benefits of accepting the personal self and overriding the professional self is expressed in Ms. Keirstead's description of a letter from a former student stating how valuable this class was to her personal growth and how excited she was that her young sister would have the same opportunity.

She wrote me this letter and it about made me cry. . . . She said, "I hope you teach [my sister] everything you taught me and I don't just mean in a book. I mean all about life." So I hope that's what they'll say, that I care about them and I'll listen and I taught them a whole lot more about life to help them and I'll be there for them.

While matching her beliefs with the way she taught, Ms. Keirstead felt content with the relationships she had with her students. She spoke of recognizing the importance of her actions toward her students and making efforts to continue to teach in this fashion. This alignment also allowed her to express her own emotions in the classroom and more effectively address emotional situations that arose.

Building Relationships

We noticed a connection among teachers' beliefs and the ways that they developed relationships with their students (see Table 2 for themes). The beginning of the school year, as the teachers indicated, was the most hectic and yet the most pivotal time to set the tone in their classrooms. There were many administrative and organizational duties; furthermore, it was the most crucial time to start building relationships with their students. There was an expressed belief that teachers have the ability to create a positive environment and classroom community by conveying genuine interest in both the teacher-student and the student-to-student interactions. This process included talking about topics of student interest and choice, using humor, fostering an atmosphere of mutual encouragement, and attending extracurricular activities. In answering research question 2 on teachers' approaches to building relationships, we saw how teachers talked about building rapport with their students, negotiated emotional boundaries, and shared personal information. These seem to be key issues to describe their procedures for establishing a suitable learning environment. For example, Ms. Walker reported that it was essential to know her students because it was critical to how she conducted her class. She thought that having that relationship with her students contributed to establishing classroom norms that were conducive to learning.

Another teacher, Ms. DeVoss, expressed similar views, stating that getting to know her students helped to raise the comfort level of students in the classroom environment: "I just make sure that everybody feels good about learning all the new things and touching base with their friends and getting to know us and us getting to know them and learning each other's names."

Ms. Napolean recounted the steps that she took in getting to know her students and how the steps were manifested in the relationships she built: "I like to get to know them and make sure they're

comfortable in the classroom . . . like a family within my classroom." Later, she noted her expectations and how they tied into making the classroom a comfortable environment: "I expect a lot out of them but we have so much fun in the classroom even though we're learning, and I expect highest of standards from them they know its okay to play around and I'm going to be there for them no matter what."

Trying to establish an environment where the students felt at ease and were academically successful was closely tied to building relationships with the teacher and how teachers negotiated the classroom environment. Research by Ben-Pertez et al. (1999) supports what these teachers have stated. In their study, the researchers found that teachers' instructional decisions were dependent on their beliefs about how to relate to their students, whether their role was instructor or entertainer. In this case, Ms. Napolean believed that students would perform at a higher standard if they felt comfortable and at ease in their classroom. She therefore set out to establish a comfort level by incorporating humor into her teaching. She skillfully negotiated her role by blending the "instructor" and the "entertainer."

Negotiating the Classroom Environment

In addition to developing relationships with their students, the teachers also described how they negotiated their classroom environments with their students. We found that this theme specifically responded to our research question regarding how teachers established the learning environment. At the beginning of the school year, teachers described activities such as establishing rules and procedures, regulating classroom emotions, and structuring the classroom environment (see Table 2).

For example, several teachers indicated that they were trying to structure a classroom environment that was conducive to learning and to motivating students. Mr. Netter, a veteran drama teacher of 24 years, mentioned that he wanted his students to be stakeholders in his class. He negotiated with his students by surrendering some of his power as the overseer of the classroom and allowing his students to decorate the classroom and the sets for their performances. He stated that the students began to take ownership of the classroom environment. At first Mr. Netter was uncertain about giving the students so much control over the class environment. He reflected, "One of the students asked if they could change the set. Well, that almost scared me. That's all right. That's fine. If they want to change it, it's their school."

For Mr. Netter, giving the students control by allowing them to decorate the classroom environment helps him to do more with students as they work together on creating a classroom that they all can share. He also mentioned that he would put photos of each of his classes on the wall as a way to represent their participation in the class.

Mr. Pederson, a fourth-year elementary school teacher, considers it important to maintain a comfortable student-centered classroom but admits that with the pressure of the administrative responsibilities of teaching, he often loses focus.

You come up with all these idealistic things and you're like, "All these kids are so precious. I just want to do so much for them. I love them so much." Then you realize all the things you're supposed to be doing and the responsibilities you have and you kind of get sidetracked. You really do kind of have to revisit every year.

Mr. Pederson reflected on how easy it was to get distracted from his responsibilities to his students when bombarded with all the other duties. He recognized that to be nurturing and supportive to his students' needs, he must continually recommit himself to the task.

Mr. Pederson's philosophy of teaching resonates well with Borko and Putnam's (1996) description: "Teaching is less a matter of presenting knowledge and ready-made understandings to learners and more a matter of creating environments that support learners' efforts to construct meanings" (p. 674). However, Mr. Pederson recognized that creating this ideal required consistent renewal of his

personal commitment to teaching and to his students. This, he admitted, was quite difficult because he constantly had to negotiate between his role as a teacher with many administrative duties and his role as a caring educator. Ms. Walker, Ms. DeVoss, Ms. Napolean, and Mr. Netter also spoke about how laborious negotiating the classroom context was, having to simultaneously create a comfortable forum for their students and establish a classroom conducive to learning.

Emotional Events in the Classroom

The prior themes of teacher selves, building relationships, and negotiating the classroom context were securely nested in how the teachers perceived emotional events that occurred in their classrooms. The teachers attempted to establish classrooms where they could achieve their teaching goals where the students could feel comfortable. Researchers suggest that building such environments creates an atmosphere of trust that enables students to take risks, develop their sense of efficacy, and discuss their emotions (Calderhead, 1996; Charney & Secor, 1992; McDermott, 1977). Our analysis delved deeper into understanding why teachers create the classrooms they do and how they recognize and perceive emotional events. This theme illustrates how teachers approached student emotions after having developed some relationship with their students. The teachers' approaches to their classrooms and relationships with students were grounded in their beliefs and how they saw themselves as teachers. As a result of showing the outcome of how some teachers build their relationships and develop their classroom environments, we further illustrate how they approach particular emotional events. By providing descriptors of emotional experiences in the classroom, we show a more holistic picture of how the previously stated themes connect to each other while simultaneously providing evidence of the steps that teachers take to approach or avoid dealing with emotions in the classroom. We labeled six types of classroom emotional events that emerged in the interview data with our participants. These types of events suggest the ways that teachers approached different situations that involved student emotions in their classrooms at a specific time. We also used metaphors to describe the approaches. Employing metaphors in teacher research is a powerful tool to express the teachers' experiences with vivid imagery and illustration (Zembylas, 2002). Using metaphorical language in this manner helped us to identify and analyze the teachers' professional dilemmas that were emotionally pressing to the students but may seem insignificant to others. From the teacher perspective, these are ways of regulating or dealing with emotions in the classroom.

Detached (no emotions). Some teachers described that it was difficult to think of a specific emotional event in their classroom. Mr. Lipson stated that while receiving his teacher training, none of his professors or books focused on student emotions, and he felt that there were "no emotions in math." It's "Here's the numbers, give the answer," suggesting that the content of math was devoid of emotions. This seemed to be more of a goal for him than classroom reality, as we will see later.

Put this on the back burner (not-right-now approach). A few of the participants openly stated that they did not have the time to address students' emotions. When they noticed some students having emotional reactions to particularly difficult personal events, they asked the students to push those emotions aside. These teachers viewed their goals for teaching the daily objective as ranking higher than the student's emotions.

Mr. Lipson illustrated how he talked to his high school students at times when he had to finish teaching his daily lesson: "Sometimes I do forget to ask why they might be having a bad day . . . and say 'well, you can't worry about that right now. You've got to push that aside.'"

Mr. Pedersen also reflected a similar sentiment, but he attributed his priorities to the many administrative duties that teachers are required to manage in addition to their teaching load.

It's like you are so rushed and you are so pressed that I think emotions sometimes do get pushed to the side. A lot of times we'll just send them to the counselor because they don't know how to deal with it; it's like we don't have time for that, we have to do this now. We only have half an hour.

The sacrifice of time was a significant factor described in the teachers' responses. The amount of time teachers devoted to their students and involvement in school activities seem to serve as a measure for how teachers perceived their emotional awareness and emotional involvement with

their students. Investing various amounts of time served as a gauge of how the teachers perceived their level of acknowledging and addressing student emotions. Time was a factor that some teachers were not willing to sacrifice because discussing emotions might infringe on achieving teaching goals. Emotions had to wait until the instructional goals were accomplished.

Mr. Pederson discussed how the time factor caused him to struggle between responding to the emotions of the students and attempting to achieve the curriculum objectives: “I feel this pressure to cover everything and sometimes, hopefully, I’m not stampeding over people’s emotions and feelings by just cutting them off. School’s going to be over and I have to have this finished.”

We assumed that many of the teachers were dealing with similar issues, in that they battled with their roles as a professional to cover the curriculum and their role as a caring adult who should give undivided attention to an individual student in distress. Mr. Pederson stated there were times when he surrendered his professional role to extend a more personal, supportive, and caring individual who was concerned about his students’ emotional well-being.

As far as kids not feeling well, you have to be careful about how close you get to students, but there are times when I’ll hug a student if they come up to me in the hallway and they put their arms around me because they’re so glad to see me. I know that the kids need that and, for them, that’s real reassuring and comforting.

Many of the other teachers noted that there were times when they could devote some time to the student’s individual needs, but for the most part, their professional duties would not allow much time for addressing these emotions. Ms. Keirstead summed up this conflict by reasoning, “We do the best that we can. You’re just not the same every day, just like they are not the same every day. We’re all human.”

She admitted that balancing the demands of teaching duties with the personal and emotional demands of the students was difficult, and often she did not perform this job well. She also recognized that perfection was not a realistic goal and that it sufficed to strive for continual improvement.

No more tears (avoiding-emotions approach). At times, some teachers were in a quandary as to how to assist students when emotional events occurred in their classrooms. They acknowledged the problem but sent the student to a counselor or avoided issues that they knew would evoke an emotional response. Although Ms. Keirstead had a comfortable rapport with her students, she established a boundary when it came to her elementary students crying to her about their problems. She stated, “I can deal with the angry emotions. No trouble. But that wanting to cry, I’m like, ‘Why don’t you go see somebody else and then let them deal with it.’ That makes me uncomfortable.”

Ms. DeVoss would censor topics for discussions with her students, so students would only share what she wanted. Although she felt capable of helping students when the need arose, she did not try to provoke any emotions.

We try to stay away from things that parents might not want us to discuss, like 9/11. We talked about that but in a kind of general way and didn’t get real specific . . . so we just try and temper it but let them know it’s okay for them to express themselves and how they feel about things within a reasonable limit without upsetting other people. We don’t allow them to become really aggressive and violent.

Ms. DeVoss’s approach with her Montessori students appeared to be professional and understanding of her students’ emotions, but it could also be seen as avoidance because she recognized the potential of students showing emotions and chose to redirect her discussion.

Handle with care (responsive to student emotions). At times, the teachers discussed emotional events as an opportunity to be responsive to students’ needs. Some teachers talked about the

emotions shared in their classrooms by students as a way to create a new learning opportunity. The teachers expressed that they would come to learn more about their students and were more aware of how to reach and teach them.

Ms. Napolean described how she handled a situation with one of her students who was coping with his parents' divorce. She made a conscious effort to reach out to the student and provided an atmosphere where the student felt comfortable.

If a student is not focused emotionally, how can they focus on academic stuff? Like my student that is going through so much turmoil inside with his parents divorcing, right now, he's doing well academically, three or four weeks down the road he may not be. If he's not comfortable there's no way his focus is on that [schoolwork].

Ms. Napolean articulated that the classroom has important implications for management and motivation of student learning. She believed that she had the ability to generate a safe environment where her students felt comfortable and open to discuss their feelings. Ms. DeVoss described an event when one of her young students was out of school because of a deadly disease. She used this opportunity to discuss symptoms of leukemia with her students and gave them some time to cope with understanding their classmate's condition: "We have a student who has leukemia, and she very nearly died last year and a lot of the children know her and we sent her poems and drawings. They made these for her just to let her know that they were thinking about her."

Undoubtedly teaching encompasses more than promoting academic achievement; it also extends to the nurturing of the emotional and caring selves of our students. The situation of a dying student was an opportunity to teach her students life lessons of empathy and concern for others. Ms. DeVoss recognized that and embraced it.

Shifting directions (emotional regulation). When approached with difficulties from students' behaviors or attitudes, our teachers used tactics to change negative talk in the classroom to reflect a more positive situation. An example of this response was the event that Ms. Walker shared, when her class seemed tired and not engaged in the classroom activity. When she became aware of the mood and lack of involvement, she chose to change her persona and her strategy by becoming the "cheerleader." In a similar event but with a different emotion—anxiety—Mr. Lipson discussed an algebra class in which (a place where he suggested there should be "no emotions") he noticed that his students seemed frustrated and anxious. He described his attempts to regulate the emotions:

[I told them to] "Just calm down." . . . . I'll put like 2X + 10 = 4X + 12 and then put one next to it with variables and say, "okay, what would we do here? We'd subtract 12 or whatever." I usually end up trying to show them and then eventually they calm down and get to working.

Ms. Collins had a similar experience when she noticed that one of her students was putting himself down to another student after a math test that did not go as well as he had hoped. She indicated that she became aware of this by his facial expressions. She chose to get involved by trying to put the test into perspective: "After class I talked to him—I told him about my class this summer that I struggled with a lot. I told him how I was getting help all the time and that's something he may need to do."

In each of these examples, the teachers' awareness of a particular student or types of student emotions served as a cue to monitor and, in these examples, change what they were doing in an effort to reclaim what they perceived to be a classroom more conducive to student learning by helping students regulate their emotions. For Ms. Walker, that meant speeding up what was going on, and for Mr. Lipson, it meant slowing down his instruction while trying to make necessary connections.

Totally engrossed (the flow). Our teachers also shared events that represented those moments in the classroom when there was a match between the challenges related to the activity and the skill levels of the students. Ms. Walker's earlier discussion of her students' enjoyment in reading their

assigned book represents what Csikszentmihalyi (1994) referred to as being in “flow.” According to Csikszentmihalyi, flow represents our optimal fulfillment and engagement in an experience. Ms. Keirstead described a similar flow experience while her class was reading a book:

It’s a wonderful book . . . *Roll of Thunder*, it’s like a different class. I had two of them who finished it the first of last week. Some of them were like, “I cried at the end.” I guess that is some emotion that I’m having with that class that I have never had before. It’s always been like pulling teeth to get them to do anything. They’re reading this, “I was late getting started last night but I stayed up until 11:30 so I could get this read.”

This example of a match between skill and challenge as described by Ms. Keirstead illustrates the type of experience that brings people like these teachers to the profession.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research project was to begin to develop an understanding of how teachers talk about emotional transactions in the classroom. These interviews provided us with a window into teachers’ perspectives of emotions in the classroom and enabled us to gain insight into how teachers view emotions and their involvement with students. Through the two interviews with each teacher, we found how our participants built relationships with their students, negotiated the classroom environment, and described their teacher self and their approaches to students’ emotions in the classroom. The time lapse between the interviews helped us to gather the perspectives and expectations of the teachers before school started, and the changes in their perceptions after 2 weeks with their students. We found that when teachers were actually confronted with emotional events, they chose approaches that were consistent with how they described their teacher self. We use one of Ms. Walker’s approaches to an emotional event to illustrate how her teacher self influenced her approach to student emotions in the classroom (see Figure 1). Figure 1 is a model of our current thinking about the transactions among the themes that emerged during this study. It does not represent a causal model but is simply a way to organize the themes. The focus of the model is on the transactional events, which is the point at which the other themes in the model are negotiated.

During the first week of school, Ms. Walker felt the need to revive her last reading class for the day. Ms. Walker saw herself as a motivator and believed in the importance of working hard and developing her students’ reading skills. In her opinion, caring did not include coddling her students, but rather focused on the importance of preparing them for the future. Therefore, her teacher goals and standards related to her last period of that day were to accomplish the academic plan that she had developed for class. However, because of the relationship she had established with her students and the knowledge she gained from this, it was clear to her that they were tired and not actively engaging in the activities she had planned for the day.

Her appraisal of that particular classroom transaction was that the class was not going the way it should. This is what researchers refer to as goal incongruent (see Schutz & Davis, 2000; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002). In negotiating the classroom context in this situation, Ms. Walker, in essence, relied on one of her teacher selves, “the cheerleader,” in an attempt to regulate the emotions to create the classroom climate conducive to the teacher goals she had for that day.

This classroom transaction also demonstrated the expenditure of emotional work associated with service professions such as teaching. During this transaction, it was critical for Ms. Walker to attempt to change the emotional climate in the classroom to attain her instructional goal. Therefore, she had to alter her current persona to facilitate her students’ learning. This is viewed as emotional work because of the time and energy that several of the teachers put into getting to know their students, their emotions, and their perceived need for relationship building.

According to Mirchandiani (2003), there are three distinct dimensions that constitute emotional work: “the management of self-feelings, the work of making others feel a certain way and the effort involved in giving definition to one’s work”(p. 722). By applying these dimensions to our study, we were better able to synthesize teacher beliefs, teacher self, and how emotions are interconnected. The manifestation of the emotional work dimensions can be seen in the examples of how our

teachers approached emotions in the classrooms. Ms. Walker employed different roles to persuade students to attempt their class work and motivate them to feel successful while working. In contrast, Mr. Lipson showed how he managed his own self feelings and how he managed to silence his students' expression of emotion by asking them to push the emotions to the side. Mr. Lipson, as well as the other teachers, did not reveal any insistence in which the student did not push the emotions aside or challenged their teachers' requests. We speculate that these events illustrate how our teachers negotiated their classroom context by attempting to exert their power to diffuse potential problems, thereby controlling the classroom environment to continue instruction. Finally, Ms. Keirstead gave definition to her work by explaining how important it was to teach students about life and life skills. She believed that her teacher role was to assist students in feeling comfortable in their learning environment and to instruct them on lessons of life. Our model displays the process through which these emotional situations are tangentially affiliated with the teacher perception of their role and their portrayed teacher self.

For the teachers we interviewed, effective rapport and relationship building appeared to be an essential component of their beginning-of-the-year strategies. Conveying genuine and sincere interest in their students was considered a top priority for the majority of our participants, as was generating meaningful involvement. In addition, there was a sense of urgency when they discussed getting to know their students at the beginning of the school year, a timeframe that teachers' experiences have established as both valuable and impressionable. Our participants thought that by availing themselves of the first few days to begin building a rapport with their students, they had a better chance of gaining the students' trust, a necessary first step in developing emotional awareness of their students. We also noticed a disconnect between what many of the teachers described as the desire to create a comfortable learning environment, and an unwillingness to discuss some individual students' emotions during instructional time. These events challenged their perceptions of their teacher self by having to decide what issues were more significant to benefiting the larger group of students while having to teach content in a limited time span. Although the teachers acknowledged these instances and the emotional impact of building relationships with the individual student, some felt that it was of great importance to continue instruction and asked the student to push the emotions aside and approach the situation at a later time.

Teachers who talked about their classrooms as facilitative environments reiterated several strategies and tools for creating and maintaining a positive emotional climate. Communication about topics that were of interest to and chosen by students was a priority for several participants in this study. Listening closely to students and sharing some personal information in an effort to relate to them were important to communication. Embracing students' individuality, conveying a genuine interest in each as an individual, and participating in extracurricular activities were also viewed as ways to display a caring attitude.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Certain limitations of this study need to be acknowledged. First, all teachers taught in only one region of the country. In addition, we did not collect observational data during class time in this study, which would have provided additional support to our claims. In future research, it is advisable to observe these teachers in the classroom to enhance the knowledge of teachers' perceptions of their roles, how emotions relate to their beliefs about their roles as teachers, and how teachers transact emotionally with others. There were some teachers in our study who seemed to have a greater understanding of the centrality of emotions in the classroom and the school context. It was these teachers who described a greater sense of community in their classrooms. It would prove useful to study classroom settings where a higher level of emotional understanding is being achieved. These emotional transactions have a profound impact on educators' personal and professional lives and, ultimately, on their students in the classroom. In addition, Delpit (1995) stated that a teacher's commitment to establishing and maintaining relationships with his or her students is linked positively to students' attitudes, achievement, and regulating emotions in the classroom. Therefore, future research should be designed to interview students to gather their perspectives on the emotional climate of the classroom. This would allow for triangulation of data and increase our knowledge of how students perceive teachers' approaches to emotions displayed by themselves or their peers.

While contributing to our understanding of the nature of emotions in the school context, this research has shed light on the multiple issues that are involved in developing a useful emotional climate in the classroom. Many of the teachers were consistent in their teacher beliefs, the teacher selves they wanted to portray, and approaches used when emotional events occurred within their

classrooms or with a particular student. Frequently, the participants described instances in which they juggled their daily instruction agenda while handling student emotions. We found that those participants who believed that teachers should shoulder the responsibility of addressing student emotions did so to create a more nurturing and sensitive classroom environment. Some of the participants, such as Mr. Lipson, also revealed that their perceptions of dealing with student emotions changed or shifted after working with their students. Realizing that teaching students is more than math instruction, Mr. Lipson described his conceptual change of what teaching mathematics was and how emotions impacted his students and their relationship.

The implications of this study suggest that teacher beliefs influence how they see themselves as teachers and also influence their approaches to emotions in the classroom context.

Increasing teachers' understanding of their beliefs might help them see that creating a suitable classroom is not only about how a teacher views the self but also about how he or she views students and his or her role in developing relationships with students. In developing these strategies, we further suggest that in-service teachers should reflect on their teaching beliefs and evaluate the situations that have transpired within their classrooms. Through this process of continual reflection, they may begin to reconceptualize their beliefs that could transform how they relate to their students' emotional and academic needs. Teacher educators should also recognize the importance of emotional awareness and addressing emotional situations in the teaching profession, and incorporate these ideas into their teacher education programs. This can be done by integrating certain practices into their programs, such as requiring reflection journals so that preservice teachers become more aware of their teaching beliefs. Additionally, these teachers could explore student emotions in classrooms by reading and reacting to actual classroom scenarios or observing and interviewing in-service teachers who have experience dealing with emotional events. Engaging in these experiences may provide insight into the ubiquitous nature of emotions in their upcoming careers (Winograd, 2003).

Having a thorough understanding of the prevalence of emotional experiences in the profession might help teachers to feel more competent in acknowledging and helping manage student emotions, rather than avoiding emotional situations in the classroom. Teachers should also be able to discern which events would be more appropriately addressed by a counselor or other helping professional and be willing to use other school resources if they feel that the emotional problems expressed by the student are more severe than common school-age concerns.

Additionally, different subjects tend to elicit different types and levels emotional experiences for both teachers and students. Although we tend to focus more on how to be more aware of and regulate unpleasant emotions, teachers, both preservice and in-service, also need to be able to address situations in which pleasant emotions may arise; if not dealt with appropriately, they may also be disruptive and cause harm. As such, teachers within specific subject areas should be educated on how to handle emotions that are commonly felt within their domain. For example, many students engaging in mathematical problem solving experience feelings of anxiety, frustration, and distress. As a result, mathematics teachers who deal with these emotionally charged situations may experience similar emotions. It is therefore important that preservice teachers be first made aware of the emotional nature of teaching and learning experiences within the domain. Additionally, they need to be taught how to structure their classroom environments, with regard to both content and teaching strategies, to minimize this. There are also activities within most content areas that tend to elicit joy and excitement; although these are emotions that we are encouraged, as teachers, to try to evoke in our students, if not regulated appropriately, they can also lead to unwanted behavior. As such, teacher education programs should not only create awareness of these subject-related issues but also provide specific apprenticeship experiences for preservice teachers so that this knowledge will be more meaningful.

This study attempted to examine how teachers view their role in addressing student emotions and how they build relationships to establish suitable learning environments. These findings explain how teachers describe their teacher selves, their procedures in building relationships, and how they negotiate the classroom context while showing how they individually approach student emotions. The themes that emerged in this study work together to define and describe teachers' differences in their beliefs about emotions in the classroom, including why and how some teachers choose to deal with these emotions. This work is important to the field of education in that it addresses the sensitive nature of building relationships within the classroom. We contend that this research offers fresh insights about teacher emotions and beliefs that may ultimately lead to new approaches for teacher development and assist in programs for school improvement.

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APPENDIX A

Interview 1 Protocol

1.

Tell me about your school. What attracted you to this school? Other than this school, at which other schools have you worked?

2.

As you think about the beginning of the school year, what are your thoughts about the first week of school?

3.

How would your ideal first week go? For you, what would your worst first week look like?

4.

What activities are you planning to do the first week? How did you choose that activity? What else? (Do a lot of probing here to get an idea of their plans for the first week).

5.

What sort of things will you tell your students about yourself? How about your own emotions that you share? What are some emotions you think you should not share?

6.

How would you describe your involvement with your students when you first started teaching? How are you thinking about becoming involved with your students this year? How has your thinking about student involvement changed? How would a student from your class last year describe you, related to emotional involvement, to a student who was going to have you this year?

7.

Think about yourself in the future as a teacher and describe what you hope your involvement with your students will be like. What would be the best-case scenario?

8.

Think about yourself in the future as a teacher and describe what you fear your involvement with your students will be like. What would be the worst-case scenario?

9.

Sometimes you hear people talk about “getting too involved with their students.” What do you think that phrase means?

10.

Currently, when you think about yourself dealing with emotions in the classroom, what concerns you?

11. So far we have been talking a lot about student emotions in the classroom. What kind of training have you had related to students’ emotions or emotional development?”

12. What are some things about student emotions in the classroom that I have not asked you about?

APPENDIX B

Interview 2 Protocol

1.

Have you had any additional thoughts about emotions in the classroom or anything since the first interview?

2.

We talked last time about the first day of school. How did that go?

3.

What types of things did you tell your students about yourself?

4.

Could you describe an occasion during the first part of this year when you were aware of your students' emotions in the classroom? What was that like for you? Did you talk to anyone about this event?

5.

Have you seen instances where students were bored or unengaged? How about a time when students were enthusiastic and engaged? How about anxious? How about angry?

6.

Some students say that teachers have eyes in the back of their head. What does that mean to you?

7.

Think about being aware of student emotions on a continuum from low awareness of student emotions to high awareness. Low is one and high is five. Describe a teacher you've had or one whom you know who would be at a level one. Describe a teacher you've had or one whom you know who would be at a level three. Describe a teacher you've had or one whom you know who would be at a level five.

8.

Where would you put yourself on that continuum currently? When you first started teaching, where would you have been? What brought about the change in your awareness? Where would you like to be ideally?

9.

How do you think students' emotions are related to their learning?

10.

Sometimes we hear people say, “If I knew then what I know now, things would be different.” Say you were talking to someone who’s just beginning his or her first year of teaching. What are some of the things that you know now about emotions in the classroom that would be helpful to him or her as a beginning teacher?

11.

Last time, we also talked about what training you have had related to emotions. As you think about that, what would you like to know about emotions, emotional development, and emotional regulation?

12.

Anything else related to emotions or emotions in the classroom that I haven’t asked you about that you would like to add?