

A Brief Review of Teacher Emotions in a Scopus-indexed Journal: Research Trends, Findings, and Suggestions

Sang Truong Huynh^{1,2}, Thi Thanh Huyen Phan^{1,2*}

1. Faculty of Foreign Languages, An Giang University, Vietnam
2. Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

* E-mail of the corresponding author: ptthuyen@agu.edu.vn

Abstract

Teacher emotions have increasingly been acknowledged as a crucial aspect of the classroom context. Numerous studies have been conducted to explore their influence on teaching and learning outcomes. This paper aims to summarize trends in research on teacher emotions by reporting a brief review of 11 key articles published in *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* between 2016 and 2024. The review underscores diverse topics on teacher emotions, including school policies, students, students' parents, instructional strategies, and early years of teaching. This review advances a deeper understanding of teacher emotions across different contexts and disciplines. It offers valuable implications for strategies to impede teacher negative emotions while upholding their positive ones, ultimately facilitating their students' learning outcomes.

Keywords: teacher emotions, negative and positive emotions, research trends

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/16-3-22

Publication date: March 30th 2025

1. Introduction

Emotions are an essential factor in language teaching and learning since they are concerned with not only “a rational activity” but also “a social one” (Richards, 2022, p.225). Recognized as one of the key variables in teachers' professional development, teacher emotions – both positive and negative ones– are considered an influential factor for teaching effectiveness, which in turn has a bearing on learners' learning outcomes and their willingness to utilize their learned knowledge (Aldrup et al., 2023; Frenzel, 2014; Richards, 2022; Waber et al., 2021). In this respect, researchers emphasize that emotions, as part of teacher well-being, are closely interconnected with students' emotions, motivation, and learning experiences. Therefore, promoting positive emotions for both teachers and learners is a top priority in many EFL settings as it accounts for enhancing classroom dynamics, which in turn facilitates their academic achievements and the assignment fulfillments. By contrast, negative emotions should be properly impeded to foster those expectations. This perspective has led to extensive research into the role of teacher emotions in the broader context of classroom practices (Aldrup et al., 2023). Given the fact that abundant research is conducted on teacher emotions, little attempt has been made to synthesize the existing evidence. The remarkable exception is Aldrup et al. (2023) who implemented a systematic review focusing only on teachers' emotion regulation. The scope of this systematic review, however, remains limited and requires more updates on evidence of teacher emotions explored in other aspects. To bridge this gap, the present study aims to uncover a brief review of 11 selected papers published in *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* to identify emerging trends in teacher emotions. It is guided by the two following questions:

- (1) What are trends in research on teacher emotions from 2016 to 2024?
- (2) What are key findings in research on teacher emotions from 2016 to 2024?

2. Literature review

2.1 Conceptualization of emotions

Fredrickson and Cohn (2008, p.778) conceptualized emotions as “multicomponent response tendencies - incorporating muscle tension, hormone release, cardiovascular changes, facial expression, attention, and cognition, among other changes - that unfold over a relatively short time span”. Emotions that are considered intrinsic to engagement are more likely to activate and demotivate engagement (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012).

Positive emotions account for well-being and resilience (Conway et al., 2013). Fredrickson (2013) proposes ten representative positive emotions: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love.

1. Joy happens when one receives good news or experiences a pleasant surprise;
2. Gratitude emerges when people regard others as their sources of unexpected good fortune;
3. Serenity is described as one's relaxation and comfort in their current situations;
4. Interest is sparked when people encounter something novel and challenging but still controllable;
5. Hope may encourage people to take risks, but it also gives them a better choice of change and growth in the future;
6. Pride, as described by Tracy and Robins (2007), emerges when people have achieved their goals, encouraging them to work towards more significant accomplishments;
7. Amusement happens in the sense that people are in situations free of seriousness, hence sharing a laugh and finding a creative way;
8. Inspiration is the feeling of being inspired by those who do a good deed or perform at an unparalleled level;
9. Awe emerges when people are "overwhelmed by something (or someone) beautiful or powerful that seems larger than life";
10. Love is described when people are frequently put in a positive emotion, which happens in a safe, interpersonal relationship.

Fredrickson (2013) established a *Broaden-and-Build* theory of positive emotions, which emphasizes that positive emotions are a contributory factor to triggering novel thoughts, activities, and relationships, hence finally fostering enduring personal resources (e.g., social support, resilience, skills, and knowledge). Those factors are instrumental in enhancing health, survival, and fulfillment from which human beings gain more exposure to positive emotions, creating an upward spiral as described in *Figure 1*.

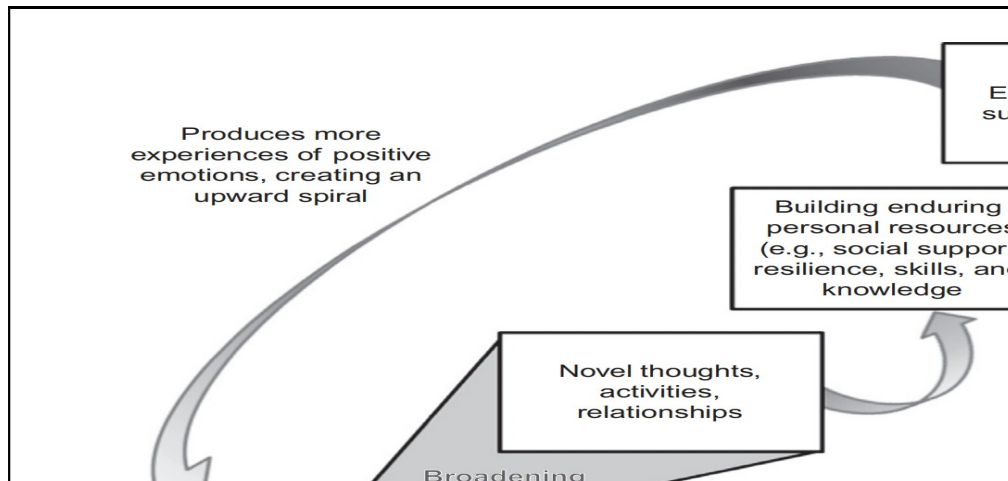


Figure 1. Broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions

Researchers (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1990) highlight the role of positive emotions in creating a facilitative condition for engaging people in their surroundings and activities. In the classroom context, when teachers experience positive emotions, they are more likely to be deeply engaged in their teaching career. Such positive emotions encourage the teachers to come up with more innovative ideas and activities to teach their students more effectively. To emphasize, positive emotions (i.e., joy, interest, contentment, and love), according to Fredrickson (2004, p.1367), "broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire: joy sparks the urge to play, interest sparks the urge to explore, contentment sparks the urge to savour and integrate, and love sparks a recurring cycle of each of these urges within safe, close relationships". On the contrary, negative emotions – such as anger, anxiety, boredom, and frustration – can downplay both teachers' and learners' engagement in classroom

activities. Conway et al. (2013) distinguish two emotional statuses: negative emotions, which occur in threatening situations and narrow people's attention to quick responses, and positive emotions, which occur in safe contexts and promote expansive attention, increase more exposure to various experiences irrespective of challenges. In the classroom context, factors such as teaching methods, social support, and even lesson content can impact the development of both teachers' and learners' negative and positive emotions.

In the present study, teachers' positive and negative emotions are a key focus for analyzing the trends and findings of 11 selected articles from *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*.

2.2. Research on teacher emotions in the classroom context

Eleven articles published during the period from 2016 to 2024 in *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* are reviewed, focusing on keywords such as teacher emotions, negative and positive emotions, and narratives. Significant features in those studies are described. First, the target participants predominantly include experienced and pre-service teachers, as well as students from various disciplines, across diverse classroom contexts in such countries as the U.S., China, and Switzerland. These contexts cover middle schools, high schools, and universities. Regarding research methodology, those studies employ qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches to guide data collection concerning teacher emotions. Questionnaires are primarily used to collect quantitative data whereas semi-structured interviews, self-reports, narrative inquiries, and open-ended questions are employed for qualitative data.

Brief reports are provided in line with eleven articles with a focus on four parameters: research aims, participants, instruments, and key findings.

(1) Torres (2021) qualitatively explored 25 US former school teachers' emotional experiences of job quitting through interviews. Results showed that most teachers expressed negative emotions—such as anger and guilt—which contributed to their identity adaptation, emotional struggles, and decreased commitment, ultimately leading them to leave the teaching profession.

(2) Waber et al. (2021) investigated 27 Swiss preservice teacher emotions in social interaction situations in the practicum and the factors that lead to those emotions. In addition, in light of the Self-determination theory, the study aimed to investigate how those emotions respond to the fulfillment of basic psychological needs. Through semi-structured interviews, findings revealed that positive and negative activating emotions were more dominant than deactivating in social interaction situations. Factors such as successful teaching-related cooperation, support, positive feedback, goodwill of the mentor teacher, and positive emotions are connected with preservice teachers' need fulfillment.

(3) Chang and Taxer (2020) examined how teachers emotionally react to students' misbehavior, and their affective response was processed in this regulation. Questionnaires and surveys were employed to collect data across two studies: Study 1 explored teachers' emotion regulation strategies, while Study 2 examined the impacts of teachers' trait-level emotion regulation on affective experiences and modulation strategies. Regarding target participants, Study 1 recruited teachers from school districts in western and southern USA, whereas participants in Study 2 were teachers from a Title-I middle school in a southeastern state in the U.S. Results revealed that while teachers from the study preferred various strategies such as reappraisal, suppression, and situation modification or attentional deployment to moderate their emotions when encountering student misbehavior, findings from Study 2 illustrated that those strategies provoked affective consequences.

(4) Moè and Katz (2020) administered questionnaires to identify in what way an autonomy-supportive and motivating teaching style can be facilitated among 290 Italian teachers from middle and high schools. In this respect, the study confirmed two elements as the mediating role of reappraisal and the moderation of emotional suppression. There is a close connection between teachers' need for satisfaction and reappraisal, which was related to the autonomy supportive and structuring motivating style.

(5) Burić and Frenzel (2020) found a close correlation between teachers' emotional labor, class-perceived instructional strategies, and their students' self-reported academic engagement, using questionnaires for data collection. In addition, the more often teachers had control over their feelings in class, the lower were the instructional strategies, as perceived by the students. Also, teachers' hiding emotions were positively linked with class-level engagement.

(6) Zheng et al. (2018) explored the relationships between leadership practices, emotional labor and teacher self-efficacy, focusing on the mediating role of emotional labor strategies among Chinese teachers, using a questionnaire survey for data collection. The leadership practices negatively affect surface acting and positive effects on deep acting, expression of natural felt emotion, and all three aspects of teacher efficacy. Surface acting

and expression of natural felt emotion significantly mediate the effects of leadership practices on teaching efficacy.

(7) Keller and Becker (2020) examined the impact of teacher emotions and emotional authenticity (expressing truly felt emotions) on students' emotions of enjoyment, anger, and anxiety among teachers and students, using questionnaires for data collection. In study 1, teachers' and students' self-reported enjoyment (but not anger and anxiety) were interrelated. In study 2, all three (perceived) teacher emotions were related to students' emotions. Further, in both studies students' perceptions of their teachers' emotional authenticity related to their own emotions.

(8) Lassila et al. (2021) examined emotionally challenging expectations in beginning teachers' relationships with students' parents. In order to do so, narrative interviews were conducted with 17 Japanese beginning teachers. The results revealed that (1) they are not fully aware of students' parental expectations, (2) they are expected to ask other colleagues for help when dealing with issues, and (3) they are expected to suffer from criticism and learn from it. To cope with these emotionally challenging expectations, beginning teachers perform emotional labor.

(9) Yang et al. (2024) explored the well-being of teaching assistants in Hong Kong primary schools, focusing on how their experiences with formative feedback practice affect their emotional well-being. A survey of 305 teacher assistants from 184 schools found that formative feedback practice positively influenced teaching assistants' emotions, including joy and love, and significantly and indirectly affected their job satisfaction through positive emotions. However, job stress showed little connection to formative feedback practice or positive emotions. The study highlights the need to include teaching assistants in research on teacher well-being, as they are a crucial but often overlooked group in educational settings.

(10) Li and Craig (2019) employed a narrative inquiry to explore an experienced teacher's emotions and identities recorded in a number of varied teacher communities within and outside a rural school in China. Based on interviews, the teacher's one-year reflective narratives, and interactions with participants of an online teacher community, the findings illustrated that teacher communities facilitated his positive feeling–best–loved self and enhanced his perceptions of experiences.

(11) Using a narrative inquiry, Yuan and Lee (2016) explored a preservice teacher's emotions through his journey to become a teacher. The findings revealed that, irrespective of his negative emotions from work which is disadvantageous for his self-belief as a teacher, he still experienced positive emotions as students' academic achievements. He was stressed by his mentor and school context, which leveled up his negative emotions.

In conclusion, research on teacher emotions (TE) is divided into four different strands such as TE towards school policies (studies 1, 5, 6, 9, 10); TE towards instructional strategies (studies 4, 5, 11); TE towards students (studies 3, 5, 7); TE towards students' parents (study 8); TE towards first years of teaching (studies 2, 8, 10, 11). It is noteworthy that trends overlap in some studies.

3. Research Methodology

A text analysis was employed in the present review to describe, interpret and understand texts (Kasper et al., 2017), specifically the eleven purposefully selected articles from *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*. The studies were conducted in K-12 and tertiary education in different countries such as the U.S., Italy, China, and Switzerland. A review process was implemented to select 11 studies based on a set of keywords for sample inclusion, such as teacher emotions, professional development, and negative and positive emotions.

Table 1. Characteristics of reported studies

Research design	Quantitative design (N=5) Qualitative design (N=5) Mixed-method design (N=1)
Year of publication	2016: N=1 2018: N=1 2019: N=1 2020: N=4 2021: N=3 2024: N= 1
Target participants	Only preservice teachers: N= 4 studies Only in-service teachers: N= 7 studies Both in-service teachers and students: N=3 studies

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Trends on teacher emotions

This section aims to answer the first research question: “What are the trends in research on teacher emotions (TE) from 2016 to 2024?” The findings show that common research trends on TE are related to school policies and classroom teaching practices, with less attention given to external factors such as parent-teacher relationships (Figure 2). TE concerning school policies received the highest attention, accounting for 50% of the studies under review. The findings suggest that teachers' emotional well-being was significantly influenced by such factors as work regulations, curriculum, testing and assessment, teacher autonomy, and administrative decisions. Teachers are often required to adhere to institutional mandates and educational reforms, which can generate both positive TE (job satisfaction, professional growth) and negative TE (stress, frustration, burnout) depending on the level of support they receive from school leadership. Given the prominence of this research area, it is clear that institutional factors significantly impact TE related to morale, motivation, and overall effectiveness in the classroom.

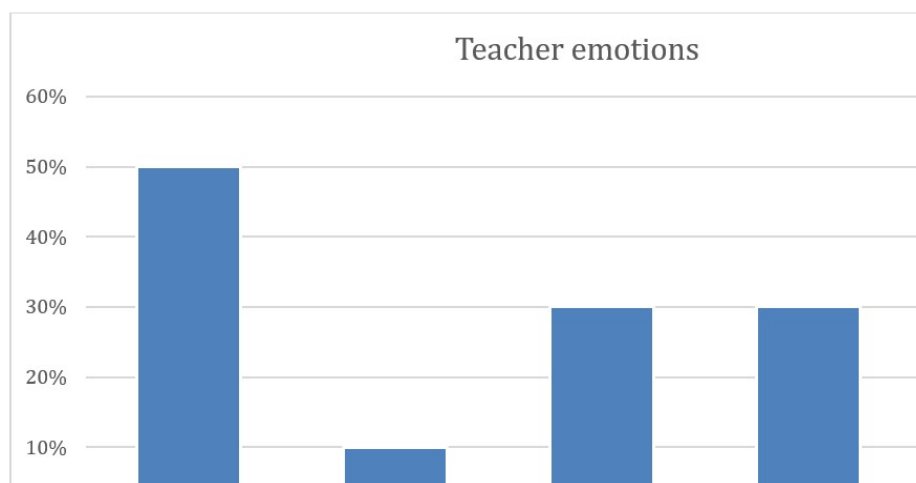


Figure 2. Trends in 11 studies on teacher emotions

In contrast, TE related to students’ parents received the least attention, making up only 10% of the reviewed studies. This finding suggests that relatively limited research has been conducted on how school and family interactions influence TE, despite the essential parent-teacher relationships in education. Also, parents’ expectations, feedback, and involvement in their children’s education can positively or negatively affect TE, yet this remains an underexplored area in TE research.

Additionally, TE towards three areas of instructional strategies, students, and the first years of teaching each accounted for 30% of the studies. Studies focusing on TE towards instructional strategies examine how various teaching methods—such as student-centered learning, technology integration, and differentiated instruction—affect TE in terms of job satisfaction, engagement, and teaching effectiveness. Meanwhile, research on TE towards students explores how student behavior, academic performance, and classroom interactions contribute to negative TE (stress, frustration) or positive TE (enthusiasm, motivation). Furthermore, early-career teachers often face unique emotional challenges, including workload pressure, classroom management difficulties, professional identity development, and job insecurity, making TE in the early years of teaching an important area of research.

4.2. Key findings on teacher emotions

The second research question is “What are the key findings in research on teacher emotions from 2016 to 2024?”. Data extracted from 11 representative studies illustrate that teachers experienced positive and negative emotions separately or both of them simultaneously, which could be explained from different contexts (Table 2). Both preservice and in-service teachers reported experiencing more negative emotions than positive emotions. Reasons are varied across studies.

Table 2. Findings of research on teacher emotions

No.	Studies	Teacher emotions		Situations
		Negative emotions	Positive emotions	
1	Torres (2021)	x		Teachers’ job retention
2	Waber et al. (2021)	x	x	Teaching practicum, preservice teachers
3	Chang & Taxer (2020)	x		Students’ misbehavior
4	Moè & Katz (2020)	x	x	Motivating teaching style
5	Burić & Frenzel (2020)	x		Students’ engagement
6	Zheng et al. (2018)	x		Leadership practices
7	Keller & Becker (2020)		x	Students’ emotions
8	Lassila et al. (2021)	x		Students’ parents
9	Li & Craig (2019)	x	x	Teachers’ job retention
10	Yuan & Lee (2016)	x	x	Pre-service teacher identities
11	Yang et al. (2024)	x	x	Formative feedback practice

To begin with, Swiss teachers coped with students’ non-cooperative, defiant, immature behaviors, which led to teachers’ physical and verbal aggression, such as being loud, clowning around, and being distracted (Chang & Taxer, 2020). In response to those negative feelings, the teachers used different regulation strategies such as reappraisal, suppression, and situation modification or attentional deployment.

Likewise, Moè and Katz (2020) used similar regulation strategies to foster teachers’ need satisfaction, thereby enhancing their adoption of a motivational style, which led to positive effects on students’ learning and well-being. Waber et al. (2021) found that preservice teachers showed positive emotions as long as their fulfillment of need was satisfied in light of the Self-Determination theory. By contrast, the threat to need for preservice teacher autonomy during interaction with mentor teachers is deemed as a deciding factor on their negative emotions.

Japanese novice teachers who have just embarked on their teaching jobs encounter negative emotions when conversing with students’ parents (Lassila et al., 2021) because (1) the teachers are not well aware of the

parents, (2) they are supposed to ask their colleagues for advice regarding problems with the parents, and (3) they may be criticized and have to learn from it. On the other hand, preservice teachers in a different context (which country? Yuan & Lee, 2016) reported that they experienced negative feelings about their work while their positive emotions were mainly recognized in their students' achievement. From the perspective of an elementary veteran teacher (Li & Craig, 2019), positive emotions were created by attending teacher communities in which he could enhance his perceptions of his teaching experiences and gravitate towards his best-loved self.

Teachers' natural emotions are more beneficial than hiding emotions when coping with unexpected situations. In particular, leadership practices had adverse effects on teachers' surface acting, known as their hiding emotions, which serves as nuisances to their perceptions of teaching effectiveness; however, this practice had positive effects on teachers' deep acting, known as their genuine emotions, which leads to increased teaching efficacy (Zheng et al., 2018). In the same vein, teachers' natural emotions were found to foster learners' positive emotions and enjoyment (Keller & Becker, 2020). In this respect, teachers' hiding felt emotions resulted in their low quality of teaching (Burić & Frenzel, 2020), while school teachers from the US decided to leave their jobs due to their emotionally negative experiences such as being angry, guilty, betrayed, and discouraged (Torres, 2021).

5. Conclusions and suggestions for future research

This paper has presented a modest analysis of 11 representative studies about teacher emotions from different classroom contexts. Research findings have generally confirmed the role of teacher emotions in moderating teaching effectiveness. In particular, teacher positive emotions in some of the reviewed studies were potentially helpful for fostering teachers' effective teaching practices, thereby, their students' positive emotions and academic engagement.

On the contrary, teacher negative emotions are detected in different situations such as students' misbehavior, leadership practices, conversations with students' parents, and school policies, which impede their teaching efficacy. In encountering those unexpected situations, teachers reported different strategies and suggestions, namely emotion regulations (i.e., reappraisal, emotional suppression, situation modification, or attentional deployment), fulfillment of teacher need and satisfaction, and expression of emotional authenticity rather than hiding negative emotions.

Future research should focus on both pre-service and in-service teacher emotions in classroom contexts, especially in such aspects as task-based language teaching, relationships between teacher emotions and their research engagement, and relationships between teacher emotions and learner engagement in task performance. Moreover, this research variable can be further explored in connection with other variables, such as mindsets, motivations, resilience, and autonomy. Last but not least, pre-service teacher emotions during their teaching practicum and their emotion regulation strategies should be explored in different settings as they offer insights into factors influencing their emotions and suggestions for fostering positive emotions, which may ultimately contribute to enhancing the quality of their teaching practice.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers of Journal of Education and Practice for their helpful comments and suggestions.

References

- Burić, I., & Frenzel, A. C. (2020). Teacher emotional labour, instructional strategies, and students' academic engagement: A multilevel analysis. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 27(5), 335-352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2020.1740194>
- Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1990). Origins and functions of positive and negative affect: A control-process view. *Psychological review*, 97(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.97.1.19>
- Chang, M. L., & Taxer, J. (2020). Teacher emotion regulation strategies in response to classroom misbehavior. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 27(5), 353-369. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2020.1740198>
- Conway, A. M., Tugade, M. M., Catalino, L. I., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions: Form, function and mechanisms. In David, S. A., Boniwell, I., & Ayers, A. C. (Eds.).

- The Oxford handbook of happiness*, 17-34. Oxford University Press.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of educational research*, 74(1), 59-109.
- Frenzel, A. C. (2014). Teacher emotions. In *International handbook of emotions in education* (pp. 494-519). Routledge.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). Positive emotions broaden and build. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 47, pp. 1-53). Academic Press.
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Cohn, M. A. (2008). Positive emotions. *Handbook of emotions*, 3, 777-796.
- Frenzel, A. C., Daniels, L., & Burić, I. (2021). Teacher emotions in the classroom and their implications for students. *Educational Psychologist*, 56(4), 250-264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2021.1985501>
- Keller, M. M., & Becker, E. S. (2020). Teachers' emotions and emotional authenticity: Do they matter to students' emotional responses in the classroom?. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 27(5), 404-422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2020.1834380>.
- Kasper Welbers, Wouter Van Atteveldt & Kenneth Benoit (2017). Text Analysis in R, Communication Methods and Measures, 11:4, 245-265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2017.1387238>
- Lassila, E. T., Estola, E., Kelchtermans, G., & Uitto, M. (2021). Coping with emotionally challenging expectations: Japanese beginning teachers and their relationships with students' parents?. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 27(5), 423-437. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2021.1933417>
- Li, J., & Craig, C. J. (2019). A narrative inquiry into a rural teacher's emotions and identities in China: Through a teacher knowledge community lens. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 25(8), 918-936. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2019.1652159>
- Moè, A., & Katz, I. (2020). Emotion regulation and need satisfaction shape a motivating teaching style. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 27(5), 370-387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2020.1777960>
- Pekrun, R., & Linnenbrink-Garcia, L. (2012). Academic emotions and student engagement. In *Handbook of research on student engagement*, 259-282. Boston, MA: Springer US.
- Rahimi, A., & Bigdeli, R. A. (2014). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions in second language learning. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, 159, 795-801.
- Richards, J. C. (2022). Exploring emotions in language teaching. *RELC Journal*, 53(1), 225-239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220927531>
- Torres, A. S. (2021). Emotions, identity, and commitment among early leavers in the United States of America. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 26(7-8), 508-521. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2021.1889494>
- Waber, J., Hagenauer, G., Hascher, T., & De Zordo, L. (2021). Emotions in social interactions in pre-service teachers' team practica. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 27(6), 520-541. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2021.1977271>
- Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (2016). 'I need to be strong and competent': A narrative inquiry of a student-teacher's emotions and identities in teaching practicum. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 22(7), 819-841. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1185819>
- Yang, L., Chi-Kin Lee, J., Zhang, D., & Chen, J. (2024). Examining the relationships among teaching assistants' self-efficacy, emotional well-being and job satisfaction. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 30(6), 835-861. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2023.2265825>
- Zheng, X., Yin, H., & Wang, M. (2018). Leading with teachers' emotional labour: Relationships between leadership practices, emotional labour strategies and efficacy in China. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 24(8), 965-979. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2018.1508432>.
- Kennedy, M. M. (2016). How does professional development improve teaching? *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 945-980.
- Zepeda, S. J. (2019). *Professional development: What works*. Routledge