

# **Beyond teacher cognition and teacher beliefs: the value of the ethnography of emotions in teaching**

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This article is an attempt to show the value of the ethnography of emotions in teaching, and the importance of exploring teacher emotion in understanding teaching. A coherent account of teacher emotion must find a dynamic outside the cognitive, discursive or normative practices that have monopolized attention in research on teacher cognition and teacher belief. Thus it is argued that this dynamic can be found in the very character of emotional expression—what the anthropologist William Reddy (1997, 2001) calls *emotives*. This article makes the above case through the description of findings from a case study of an elementary school teacher (Catherine) who participated in a three-year ethnographic project investigating the role of emotions in her teaching. Emotional suffering and emotional freedom are examined; such a theorization gives political meaning back to research on teacher emotions and allows us to discern the successes and failures of particular emotional regimes within a school culture.

*When I was a young teacher, I didn't have an arena or a place to go talk with people necessarily about how I felt. I'm not sure if I ever think I really had that. (Catherine, Interview, 24 March 1999)*

*It's not considered professional to talk about feelings. We usually don't feel its professional talking when, for example, you are really frustrated with a child. Or, I also find most of the time people probably have a very difficult time verbalizing or even being able to track and recognize how they feel. It's hard for people to do that. You know, I think we do talk about feelings, but I think there are lots of different levels of discussion about feelings. (Catherine, Interview, 22 January 1999)*

*I remember as a young teacher I often felt so much discomfort and shame, because my ideas were not appreciated. I felt that my feelings were ignored or dismissed by my colleagues.... And this made me feel a tremendous sense of disempowerment. Recognizing that my ideas and feelings lacked appreciation made me feel even more discouraged. (Catherine, Interview, 10 May 1999)*

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*When I went to kindergarten to teach, I felt comfortable for the first time talking about my feelings and my ideas. I felt I didn't need to know all the answers. Also, going to kindergarten I recognized the incredible need that everything had to be hands-on. Feeling comfortable for the first time to say to my students, 'I don't have all the answers,' opened the doors for a deeper reflection on my feelings, my teaching, and my self-confidence. (Catherine, Interview, 11 October 1998)*

Emotion is the least investigated aspect of research on teaching, yet it is probably the aspect most often mentioned as being important and deserving more attention. The literature on teaching is full of remarks that emphasize the significance of how teachers feel and the impact of these feelings on teaching and student learning (e.g. Beck & Kosnic, 1995; Nias, 1996; Goldstein, 1997; Stough & Emmer, 1998; Acker, 1999; Hargreaves, 2000); however, little has been done to incorporate affective concerns in a systematic way in research on teaching. As Norman (1981) pointed out over two decades ago, most educational theorists and researchers prefer to ignore the affective domain and concentrate instead on developing information-processing models of purely cognitive systems or examining the role of teacher beliefs (e.g. Richardson, 1996). There seems to be agreement among researchers that affect is much more complex and difficult to describe than cognition (Boler, 1999; Janack, 2000; McLeod, 1989; Simon, 1982; Zembylas, 2002b).

However, if educators aspire to a rich understanding of teaching, they can ill afford to leave out the emotional aspects. As Mandler (1989) argued: '[I]t is not enough for cognitive models to have nodes or processors labeled *fear* or *joy* that can be accessed whenever appropriate. That approach simply acknowledges theoretical impoverishment; it does not solve the problem of how emotions arise or how they are to be represented' (p. 4, emphasis in the original).

Ethnographic study of emotion in other disciplines (e.g. anthropology, sociology, cultural studies) has flourished in the past 20 years as part of the broad reaction against oversimplified views prevailing in strictly cognitive or psychological schemes (Reddy, 1997, 2001). Similarly, in the context of education, this article is an attempt to show the value of the ethnography of emotions in teaching, and the importance of exploring teacher emotion in understanding teaching. This makes it possible to show the value of moving beyond teacher cognition and teacher belief—the predominant foci of interest in research on teaching so far—while still interacting with these ideas, to explore emotion as more than a simple affective response to teaching situations, to put forward a notion of emotion as an inextricable aspect of teaching. Thus the purpose here is to propose a theoretical framework for investigating the role of emotion in teaching. An exploration of teacher emotion represents a promising new direction in research on teaching. Ultimately, the goal of research in this area is the improvement of instruction and student learning.

A coherent account of teacher emotion must find a dynamic outside the cognitive, discursive, or normative practices that have monopolized attention in research on teacher cognition and teacher belief. I will argue that this dynamic can be found in the very character of emotional expression—what William Reddy (1997, 2001) calls *emotives*. Emotives refer to emotional gestures and utterances, and to their capacity to alter the states of the speakers from whom they derive. For instance, in the example

with which this paper sets out, the concept of emotives helps us to grasp that emotional change in a teacher's life is a part of a larger project of managing emotion in a context of emotional tensions and complexities driven by micro-politics within a school. An account based on the concept of emotives points out that to allude to a feeling of 'shame' or 'dismissal,' as Catherine does in the first three excerpts, may well intensify it, and intensify at the same time a feeling of anxiety toward it, the feeling that it is something discomfoting.

This paper makes the above case through the description of findings from a case study of an elementary school teacher (Catherine) who participated in a three-year ethnographic project investigating the role of emotions in her teaching. I will argue that the concept of emotives is helpful both theoretically and practically in constructing an understanding of the role of emotions in teaching: theoretically, because the interrelations between beliefs, cognition and emotion can be identified without being caught in the dilemma of making an ontological distinction among them; and, practically, because it provides a mechanism to capture the two-way character of emotional utterances and acts in teaching. Such an understanding of emotion based on the capacity of emotional gestures and utterances to change the states of the speakers from whom they derive offers a starting point for a meaningful ethnography of emotions in teaching.

### **Theoretical framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is drawn from research analyzing the connections among teachers' experiences and emotions. By investigating work based on teachers' reflection on their experience, or what Connelly and Clandinin (1988) call teachers' 'personal practical knowledge,' I seek to understand how teachers come to know, feel and make sense of teaching. Teacher knowledge is located in 'the lived lives of teachers, in the values, beliefs, and deep convictions enacted in practice, in the social context that encloses such practice, and in the social relationships that enliven the teaching and learning encounter' (Britzman, 1991, p. 50). These values, beliefs *and emotions* come into play as teachers make decisions, act and reflect on the different purposes, methods and meanings of teaching.

Many researchers have described the tacit and situated nature of teacher knowledge (Bolster, 1987; Elbaz, 1983; Lampert, 1987). One might describe teacher discourses, narratives, actions or utterances, which somehow imply, embody or otherwise constitute 'teacher knowledge.' The underlying motivations for studying teacher knowledge vary and might stem from interests to explore, for example, 'teacher thinking' (e.g. Clark & Peterson, 1986), or 'teacher beliefs' (e.g. Nespor, 1987; Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan, 1992a, 1992b; Fang, 1996; Richardson, 1996). The problem, though, is that often 'emotions' and 'emotional knowledge'—knowledge that stems from how a teacher feels—is being cut off from these other forms of knowledge. For instance, emotional knowledge is missing from Shulman's (1987) seven categories of teacher knowledge. It is clear that teacher beliefs or teacher thinking are important components of teacher knowledge, but it is not obvious that they are the only components

or even the major components. Emotional knowledge is also an important part of teaching and thus it is greatly needed in understanding teaching and teachers. Certain aspects of teaching can only be learned in practice through how one feels and are not easily described by cognitive schemes. Teacher knowledge is a messy kind of knowledge that involves content knowledge, learning research and teaching techniques as well as knowledge that can only be attained in social practice or by personal exploration through how a teacher feels.

Recently, there has been an interest in the role of emotions in teaching (e.g. Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Kelchtermans, 1996; Little, 1996, 2000; Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Lasky, 2000; Schmidt, 2000; Day & Leitch, 2001; Zembylas, 2002a, 2002b) as a result of paying attention to the way teachers perceive, interpret and evaluate their relationship with the teaching environment—i.e. people, events and objects. Studies on teacher emotion emphasize how emotion is inextricably linked to teachers' lives. In light of the general assumption of teacher thinking research that teachers' thoughts determine their behavior, studies on teacher emotion have begun to illustrate very clearly how emotions play a very important role in teaching and learning.

Several authors argue that affective issues in teaching have long been under-represented themes in research on teaching and teachers (Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2002a). It is encouraging that in the last few years educators have been talking about the relationship between teaching and emotion. Boler (1993, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1999) combines cultural, ethical, political, multicultural and feminist analyses to explore how emotions have been disciplined, suppressed and ignored at all levels of education. Nias (1989, 1993, 1996) identifies the need to study teachers' emotional experiences because teaching is not just a technical enterprise but is inextricably linked to teachers' personal lives. Nias observes that teachers invest their selves in their work and so they closely merge their sense of personal and professional identity. They invest in the values that they believe their teaching represents. Consequently, she adds, their teaching and their classroom become a main source for their self-esteem and fulfillment as well as their vulnerability. Hargreaves (1998a, 1998b, 2000) calls for the creation of *emotional geographies of schooling* emphasizing the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions or relationships within the school, especially in the context of educational reforms. Similarly, Little (1996, 2000) uses the term *heightened emotionality* to describe the emotional facets of teaching in ordinary and reform contexts. As many of these studies indicate, the relationship between emotion and teaching is complex, but they all emphasize what Hargreaves was prompted (1998a) to call 'the emotional practice of teaching,' that is, how emotion is inextricably linked with teaching.

In spite of these important findings in this area, I contend that we cannot fully understand the meaning of teachers' emotional expressions and utterances unless we also attend to the implications of these utterances for teachers. This aspect has not been examined in studies of teacher emotion so far; their emphasis has been restricted to teachers' emotional expressions and utterances, without reference to how they come to be formulated. This notion implies that teaching is more than a body of

knowledge or a concrete list of practices or skills: it is a way of *being* and *feeling*, historically, in relation to others. Thus, the exploration of emotional expressions as instruments for directly changing, building, hiding or intensifying emotions becomes an important focus of investigation. Therefore, this investigation turns its attention to literature acknowledging the capacity of emotional expressions and utterances to alter what they 'refer' to.

### *The concept of emotives*

Reddy (1997, 2001) proposes the term 'emotives', which refer to emotional gestures and utterances, and to their capacity to alter the states of the speakers from whom they derive. For example, when a teacher says, 'I am angry,' the anger is not the utterance, although it seems that at first glance there is an external referent. However, on closer inspection, asserts Reddy, the external utterance that an emotive appears to point at is not passive in the formulation of the emotive, and it emerges from the act of uttering in a changed state. Reddy explains this in a statement that is worth quoting at length:

Emotives are influenced directly by and alter what they 'refer' to. Thus, emotives are similar to performatives (and differ from constatives [descriptive statements]) in that emotives do things in the world. Emotives are themselves instruments for directly changing, building, hiding, intensifying emotions. There is an 'inner' dimension to emotion, but it is never merely 'represented' by statements or actions. It is the necessary (relative) failure of all efforts to represent feeling that makes for (and sets limits on) our plasticity. Many ways of expressing feeling work equally well (poorly); all fail to some degree. It is here, rather than in some putative set of genetically programmed 'basic' emotions, that a universal conception of the person, one with political relevance, can be founded. (1997, p. 331)

Thus, expressing a feeling can easily result in its intensification or its rapid dissipation. Such statements, repeated over years, have very profound effects on one's identity, one's relationships, one's prospects. An emotive is not a 'mere report,' an accurate representation of one's feelings. A statement about how one feels is always a failure to one degree or another. As Reddy adds:

Emotives constitute a kind of pledge that alters, a kind of getting-through of something nonverbal into the verbal domain that could never be called an equivalence or a representation. The very failure of representation is recognized and brings an emotional response itself; this response is part of the emotive effect. (1997, p. 332)

This dynamic character of emotional utterances and gestures is central to the shaping and alteration of emotion 'discourse' in every context. Emotion talk and emotional gestures, argues Reddy, are not well characterized by the notion of 'discourse' (derived from the poststructuralist theories of Foucault) or by that of 'practice' (derived from the theoretical writings of Bourdieu, Giddens and others). These concepts, continues Reddy, do not capture the two-way character of emotional utterances and acts, their unique capacity to alter what they 'refer' to or what they 'represent.' Emotion statements, in which the statement's referent changes by virtue of the statement, i.e. emotives, capture this aspect missed by the notions of 'discourse'

and 'practice.' Further, the concept of emotives, says Reddy, guides one toward a political judgment about their impact because it allows one to appreciate how (emotional) rules, silences and talk have a strong shaping impact on one's emotions.

If we conceive of emotional rules as stipulating styles of emotional control that exploit the capacity of emotives to shape emotions, then power, politics and liberty regain their meaning. As Reddy asserts: 'Emotional control is the real site of the exercise of power: politics is just a process of determining who must repress as illegitimate, who must foreground as valuable, the feelings and desires that come up for them in given contexts and relationships' (1997, p. 335). That is to say, power is located in emotional control—in who gets to express and who must repress various emotions. These emotions are not the anti-cognitive domain of life but rather the very site of the capacity to effect change.

Rethinking emotion in the way Reddy describes has a major advantage over other approaches to emotion. His approach makes possible—for both theoretical and empirical reasons—a consideration of *changes* in emotional discourses over time. He insists that historical-ethnographic approaches to emotion enable us to comprehend the political bases of changes. The usual focus on the cognitive has tended to overlook the historical aspects of emotional change. But Reddy's argument allows a connection between individual psychic patterns and the broadest accounts of emotional change. Emotions are the very site of the capacity to effect change. At the same time, his analysis allows for the comparison between different 'cultural styles' of individual emotional management as time and place vary. In fact, he suggests that 'navigation' is a better term than 'management' because management does not always work; emotional expression can backfire and lead on to unexpected results (Reddy, 2001). Navigation includes the possibility of both radically changing course and making constant corrections in order to stay on a chosen course. Navigation refers to a broad array of emotional changes and encompasses management, which is emotional shaping in the name of a fixed set of goals.

### **The study**

The data on which this article is based are drawn from a study of the emotions of teaching with one teacher over three years. I engaged in this research project in a multi-age classroom of first and second graders at a multi-ethnic elementary school of 400 students, located in a medium-size university city in Illinois. My teacher-participant, Catherine Myers, is an experienced early childhood and elementary educator. She has been teaching for 25 years, and has worked with children from the kindergarten through to fifth grade. For the last 10 years she taught multi-age classes of kindergarten and first grade, or first and second grade.

For the first two years of the study, from January 1997 to July 1998, Catherine taught kindergarten and first grade, and first and second grade, i.e. she followed the same students for a second year; in the third year (September 1998–July 1999), she had all new students of first and second grade. A university faculty who described her as 'an exceptional teacher who is enthusiastic about teaching and who makes children



feel excited about learning' recommended Catherine to me. Although my study began as an exploration of how children's knowledge was legitimized in Catherine's classroom it soon evolved and focused on the role of emotions in her teaching, after we both discovered our common interest in investigating the emotional aspects of teaching.

My role evolved from that of 'participant-observer' at the beginning of the study to 'participant-collaborator' by the end of the study. During the latter phase, I helped in planning lessons, and in organizing and managing classroom activities in response to the needs and interests of Catherine and her students. I felt that my presence as a collaborator in her classroom was able to make a meaningful contribution to her professional life and made her feel more comfortable to share how she felt about her teaching role, her students, her pedagogy, the emotional politics at the school etc. This change in the research relationship had two interesting epistemological and methodological consequences. Epistemologically, it marked a shift from a voyeuristic looking and hearing that initially privileged the *representation* of Catherine's presence to a more fully grounded, multi-perspectival epistemology that did not privilege 'observation' over 'collaboration.' Both Catherine and I created a context for meaning that was thoroughly contextual; I gradually realized that seeking to find a space and a voice for Catherine would never bear fruit as long as I acted as a stable observer producing 'stable' representations of what happened. This entangling of my presence with Catherine's presence in the context of her classroom implied also that methodologically I had to momentarily suspend my preoccupation with 'the transcribed voice of the other' (Denzin, 1997, p. 47) and find new ways of collecting and interpreting Catherine's lived experiences: our collaborative relationship recovered the dialogical context of meaning, placing me (the 'observer') on both sides of the 'keyhole.'

My discussions with Catherine about the role of emotions in teaching led us to raise various questions, some of which are addressed here (for other kinds of questions and studies on this topic see Zembylas, 2002a, 2002b): (1) How are emotives formulated in Catherine's teaching and what is their potential for sustaining a particular emotional style in her classroom? (2) In what ways does Catherine 'submit' to or 'subvert' school emotional rules and why does it matter? What are the political implications of this and how does she construct a space in which she feels emotionally free?

## **Methodology**

The concept of emotives elaborated earlier is used in response to the need to explore the 'two-way' character of emotional utterances and acts. For this reason, I chose a qualitative, ethnographic methodology (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Denzin, 1997), as the basis for the data collection and analysis. Also, I chose to study Catherine's case over a long period (three years) to draw attention to the multiple complexities of what specifically can be learned from a single case study (Stake, 1994, 1995) on how emotives are formulated historically and what implications they have for one's teaching.

The data sources from this study were field observations, in-depth interviews and collection of documents of all kinds. The data consisted of interview transcripts, field

notes and videotapes from observations, an *Emotion Diary* (in which Catherine wrote how she felt about what happened during the day), and various documents such as lesson plans, philosophy statements, children's worksheets and school records. I estimated that during the three years I worked with Catherine, I spent over about 200 hours in her classroom observing her teaching, and approximately 45 hours in interviews with her. These estimates do not include telephone conversations, social occasions and occasional discussions outside school. I tape-recorded each interview, and I videotaped my observations. I kept a careful log of visits with complete field notes of what I saw and heard that I typed soon after a visit to Catherine's classroom or an interview with her. I used the data gathered to guide future data collection and analysis, and to further the analysis of the role of emotives in Catherine's teaching and pedagogy. This analysis emphasized the discovery of patterns in Catherine's actions and emotional expressions.

### *Procedures*

It should be noted that in this study students were not explicitly interviewed to elicit their emotions concerning their learning and their teacher's emotional responses, although Catherine's interactions with students were part of the study. Catherine participated in the study from January 1997 to July 1999. The days selected for observation were based on when Catherine taught explicit science lessons—usually twice or three times a week for approximately 50 minutes each time. Science teaching was deliberately chosen as a focus because of our common interest in science as well as the realization of the lack of any research on teacher emotion in this area. However, it should be emphasized that Catherine advocated interdisciplinary teaching, thus in essence she taught integrated units. Therefore, although she planned short activities in science almost on an everyday basis, I was present only when she taught science lessons 'explicitly.' On the other hand, it was not uncommon for me to be present in other lessons as well, especially when an activity followed a science lesson. Over the three years of the project, I got to know the children well, learned the rhythms of the classroom and watched Catherine in action.

My visits to Catherine's classroom lasted approximately two hours and included an hour of observations and an hour of open-ended interviews with her. During my observations, I wrote notes, which I later compiled with the aid of the audiotapes and videotapes into a narrative record of each observation. In these records, I made sure that the sequence of activities and interactions was preserved. My field notes were devoted primarily to descriptions of the activities, observations of Catherine and children's responses to and experiences with these activities, reflections on my own reactions in the activities, description of Catherine's roles, how she seemed to feel, and preliminary analyses of what I was seeing. I looked for examples of the role of emotions—e.g. excitement, anxiety, anger, satisfaction etc.—recording specific anecdotes where appropriate. During the open-ended interviews we had, we went into greater depth into what happened in the classroom but we also covered other topics



such as her family and educational history, educational philosophy and practices, reflections on students and so on.

### *Analysis*

Interview transcripts we analyzed using qualitative coding procedures as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), along with other organizational tools suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). I began with 'open coding' by placing conceptual labels on selected segments of transcripts to represent the preliminary themes emerging from the data. I then grouped these conceptual labels under broader categories, resulting in several major themes ('axial coding'). Rather than building a single storyline as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), for the purposes of this study it seemed more useful to think holistically about the data, focusing on the identification of major factors and experiences that appeared to contribute to the formulation of emotives. A constant comparative approach was taken to build and confirm emerging theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My interpretations of the major factors and experiences that appeared to contribute to the formulation of emotives in Catherine's teaching are presented below.

### **Interpretations**

To illustrate the major categories of factors influencing the formulation of emotives in Catherine's teaching, I will draw some examples from the study. These examples are organized around two themes: (1) emotional suffering and (2) emotional freedom. These themes were chosen because they were powerful themes—tales of struggle, suffering, survival and subversion—emerging from the data. These are evocative themes, personal and biographical; at the same time, they are school cultural performances because they reinscribe Catherine's lived experiences within the particular school culture in which she teaches. Thus not all collected data were used in this paper; the data used were those that applied to these experiences. Each theme will be discussed below.

### *Emotional suffering*

An examination of emotional suffering in Catherine's career as a science teacher suggests an analysis of the ways in which emotional rules within the school culture function to impose certain roles on her, and the ways in which such rules are internalized resulting in emotional suffering. The suffering in this case is precisely the suffering that results from goal, ideological or value conflicts. Due to lack of space, in this paper I examine one such value conflict (there are obviously numerous others) that is especially significant, because of its implications: the emotional suffering associated with Catherine's feeling of 'shame.' The conflict consists in the fact that Catherine strongly disagrees with the explicit value of efficiency in educational products represented in the massive obsession for better test results in standardized

examinations, and the cultivation of relevant ‘proper’ virtuous roles for the teacher (e.g. as someone who prepares students to pass tests). On the contrary, Catherine believes that teaching and learning science should be intellectually inspiring, not fixed at or determined by tests. She views her role as a guide who initiates a genuine scientific exploration among the students by capitalizing on their contributions and excitement. Thus, rather than funneling the children’s excitement, she takes her lead from their excitement and encourages them to build on one another’s contributions as she guides their scientific explorations. As she said:

*I remember curiosity as a kid, being fascinated just by things. And I think for me some of what happens with children is just exploring stuff and thinking about it and wondering with them as if I am a kindergartner or a first grader or a second grader. And I think my guess is that all of us have had those experiences when we were very young, about being really mesmerized by watching a worm, or a beautiful, colorful rock. And it seems very much so that a place to begin in science education is targeting what children or a teacher remembers or discovers as being interesting or being excited about.... I am appalled by this obsession for testing! It kills inspiration and love for learning. And it kills me too. (Interview, 24 March 1999)*

Emotional suffering occurs because Catherine’s priority goals in teaching science are in conflict with the priorities of her school. Seeking to accomplish her goal, as she has been doing all these years, exposes her to open rejection—and thus to the fact she has not embraced the school’s goals—especially when most of her colleagues consider testing as a priority. Submitting to the other’s goal may end the conflict but requires the sacrifice of a moral ideal and Catherine has made it clear that she will never do that. Resisting, though, for all these years means implicating herself in emotional suffering.

Central to the life of teachers, open to deep social influence, emotions are of the highest political significance. Any enduring *emotional regime* at a school—what is considered appropriate to do and feel and what is not—requires that normative emotions will be enhanced and habituated. ‘Emotional regimes’ refer to that aspect of school culture consisting of the systems of ‘emotional rules’ that are normatively imposed on the members of the school. They may or may not differ from or conflict with (as in Catherine’s case) the individual emotional rules.<sup>1</sup> Those who refuse to make the normative utterances (whether out of respect for themselves, love of children, or loyalty to an idea) are faced with the prospect of penalties. Those who make the required utterances and gestures but for whom the appropriate emotions are not enhanced or habituated may seek to conceal their lack of zeal. If they are unsuccessful, they too face penalties. The penalties may come in the form of emotional suffering as a result of marginalization and rejection aimed at extracting a change through induced goal conflict. Either way, the prospect of such penalties induces goal conflict in all those who do not react within the normative range to the emotive utterances required by the regime (Reddy, 1999, 2001). Such goal conflict, for many teachers, significantly increases the likelihood that required emotives will have the appropriate effect. Many teachers may find that the emotional regime at their school works well for them, shoring up a personal emotional management style that serves as the core of a coherent, rewarding way of life.

However, for Catherine, who has chosen not to submit to the school norms, the penalty has been an intense emotional suffering, and in particular, low self-esteem and *shame*. Bartky (1990) theorizes 'shame,' arguing that it is one of the patterns of mood or feeling that tend to characterize women more than men. To say this, she explains, it does not imply that shame is gender-specific: 'it is only to claim that women are more prone to experience the emotion in question and that the feeling itself has a different meaning in relation to their total psychic situation and general social location than has a similar emotion when experienced by men' (1990, p. 84). Shame in women may be a mark of powerlessness in a pervasive sense of personal inadequacy.

Shame has been a profound emotion in Catherine's early teaching career. As she points out in one of the excerpts with which this paper starts:

*I remember as a young teacher I often felt so much discomfort and shame, because my ideas were not appreciated. I felt that my feelings were ignored or dismissed by my colleagues.... And this made me feel a tremendous sense of disempowerment. Recognizing that my ideas and feelings lacked appreciation made me feel even more discouraged.* (Interview, 10 May 1999)

One way of describing shame is when one's self has been exposed as having some kinds of flaws. In this sense, Bartky's view of shame as 'profound mode of disclosure both of self and situation' (1990, p. 84) is valuable in understanding the implications of emotives in Catherine's teaching practices. Let us consider an example that exemplifies this point.

Catherine taught science through long-term interdisciplinary investigations of topics that her students were interested in. Although she addressed all of her school district's objectives, Catherine made it clear that she was against 'teaching-to-the-test' and the emphasis on content knowledge, 'drill and practice' instruction or other traditional instructional practices, which were prevalent among most of her colleagues and occasionally the school administration. As she described, during her early years of teaching many of the other teachers attacked her for being 'different' and for not teaching the way everyone else was. A young Catherine was encouraged (or rather 'forced') by the school social norms that offered rewards and penalties to develop a particular teaching approach in science. This conflict of values and ideals was an emotionally devastating experience for Catherine. As she said: 'I constantly felt like a failure.... During those days, I felt like crying all the time, feeling guilty of what I was doing. I thought I was a lousy teacher for not doing what everyone else was doing. I constantly questioned my approach ... and I still do' (Interview, 11 March 1999). Catherine described in detail how she felt alienated and dismissed by her colleagues; this feeling of dismissability hit at the heart of her self-confidence and self-esteem and led her to question her teaching philosophy and her values.

Shame, guilt and low self-esteem were the emotional consequences of the conflict between Catherine's values and the school norms. Her emotional suffering was characterized by a state of herself as inferior or in some way diminished. These self-concepts were powerful means in the formulation of emotives, because they contributed in the constitution of a personal emotional style for her. A response to feeling

shame is often a tendency to hide or get away (Bartky, 1990; Campbell, 1994, 1997). Shame can be a devastating experience characterized by many negative evaluations of one's self, and by a sense of worthlessness and powerlessness (Tangney, 1991). Emotional suffering led to Catherine's withdrawal from communicating with most of her colleagues coupled with action aimed at managing appearances; such action took the form of emotion talk and behavior that stimulated and intensified socially approved feelings and played down or denied deviant ones.<sup>2</sup> As she explained: 'I often had to pretend I felt differently, because I didn't want to reveal to them [colleagues] how I *really* felt. I became pretty good at saying and showing I felt one thing, while feeling something totally different.... As you can imagine, of course, the emotional cost was very high' (Interview, 11 October 1998). These responses were elements of Catherine's emotional style, style of use of emotive utterances. Withdrawal, for instance, is generally considered a widely popular emotional style. But, at the same time, as emotives, these statements by Catherine are to be seen as traces of an effort to reconfigure her emotions in a new way.

Defining emotional suffering as a form of value or goal conflict makes it possible to elaborate on the concept of emotional effort and emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Shuler & Sypher, 2000). Emotional labor and emotional effort consist of maintaining 'survival' against conflicting goals. Emotional labor at a school or in a classroom is not easily identified or recognized, mainly because emotional rules are disguised as ethical codes, professional techniques and specialized pedagogical knowledge (Zembylas, 2002b). For example, a rhetoric of objectivity in dealing with problems at school (whatever those may be) can act as a mechanism of control in which neutrality (and frequently propriety) is established, managed and displayed among teachers and school administration. Emotion management is seen as the type of emotion work ('what I try to feel') it takes to cope with emotional rules ('what I should feel'). The 'appropriateness' of an emotion is assessed by making a comparison between emotion and situation; this situation lends the teacher a socially 'normal' yardstick (Hochschild, 1979). Emotion work refers more broadly to the act of shaping or evoking an emotion (including suppression in some instances) and emotional labor is the outcome. Hochschild (1979) mentions three techniques of emotion work: cognitive (the attempt to change ideas or thoughts by changing the emotion associated with them), bodily (the attempt to change the physical symptoms of emotions), and expressive (the attempt to change expressive gestures to change how one feels).

Therefore, emotional management is organized around normative goals. However, 'emotives are both self-exploring and self-altering. It is never certain what effect they might have' (Reddy, 2001, p. 122). Consequently, one might argue that the emotional regime at Catherine's school offered 'strong emotional management tools at the expense of allowing greater scope for self-exploration and navigation' (Reddy, 2001, p. 126). Two points may be made here about the implications of this kind of emotional regime in Catherine's development as a teacher: (1) It seemed to achieve its stability by inducing goal conflict and inflicting intense emotional suffering on those who did not respond well to the normative emotives; and (2) when this regime

pronounced penalties on all deviations (e.g. marginalization), it ultimately induced a feeling of vulnerability in Catherine—the vulnerability to either shift her purposes or goals and ‘convert,’ or experience crisis, self-doubt and guilt for not doing so.

As Reddy (2001) argues, the idea that emotives make possible navigation—in which the self both undergoes changes of goals and seeks to maintain consistency around the pursuit of certain goals—allows for a politically relevant definition of emotional suffering. Navigation is a better term than management because the latter includes the possibility of making constant changes (including emotional ones) in order to stay on a chosen course (e.g. ‘survive’) without being normalized. The idea of navigation raises the question of how Catherine ‘survived’ and resisted normalization, thus achieving a sense of ‘emotional freedom’ (Reddy, 1999, 2001)—the freedom to navigate one’s emotions and challenge the prevalent emotional rules and social norms that guide emotional management. This is freedom to undergo conversion experiences and life-course changes despite numerous contrasting incommensurable factors. As I will show in the next section, the concept of emotives helps us grasp this journey of creating spaces for emotional freedom as a part of a larger project of navigating emotion in a context of marginalization and dismissal and a politics of individual liberation.

### *Emotional freedom*

First of all, emotional suffering and emotional freedom are not opposites; ‘a state of emotional freedom would not be one devoid of suffering, nor require no effort to sustain’ (Reddy, 2001, p. 124). Emotional suffering in teaching, as elaborated in Catherine’s case, is likely to accompany any important shifts in conflicts of goals or values and may take the form of guilt or shame, as has been shown. Emotional freedom (or my preferred term of ‘spaces for emotional freedom’) is at the core of a teacher’s capacity to act (or not to act) as one chooses or prefers, without being normalized by any external compulsion or restraint, although the existence of emotional rules or norms is clearly unavoidable.<sup>3</sup> In this section, I examine how Catherine constituted her sense of spaces for emotional freedom and challenged emotional rules in the context of her school.

The turning point in Catherine’s career occurred when she taught kindergarten some 15 years ago. It was then that she saw for the first time how she and her young students could articulate their own views as felt, not merely as thought. ‘When I went to kindergarten to teach,’ says Catherine:

*I felt comfortable for the first time talking about my feelings and my ideas. I felt I didn’t need to know all the answers. Also, going to kindergarten I recognized the incredible need that everything had to be hands-on. Feeling comfortable for the first time to say to my students, ‘I don’t have all the answers,’ opened the doors for a deeper reflection on my feelings, my teaching, and my self-confidence. (Interview, 11 October 1998)*

In practice, the complex social orders at school offered Catherine the opportunity to create relationships with her students or localized organizations in her classroom that

provided her with emotional refuge. In the context of her classroom, such norms were relaxed and even subverted; emotional control efforts by her colleagues (e.g. inducing guilt for not doing what everyone else was doing) were temporarily set aside. Affective connections with the children were established and celebrated. Such emotional refuges took a variety of forms and made the prevalent social order in Catherine's school more livable for her, some of the time.

Without wishing to sound simplistic, teachers' expectations of teaching sum up to their hope that their efforts will be somehow rewarded (by children, parents, administrators etc.) and that they themselves will value the reward (Nias, 1989). If teachers' rewards are reasonably worthwhile, a certain sense of belonging and of being valued for their competence will be constructed. The assumption behind this is the well-known commitment of the majority of teachers to give their selves generously to the cause of educating children. However, if teachers cannot satisfy their emotional and intellectual needs (e.g. if they are not rewarded), then their efforts to feel motivated to teach are endangered. This feeling of satisfaction from helping students and caring about their growth is evident in many recent international studies on the sources of teacher satisfaction (e.g. Dinham & Scott, 2000, 2002; Scott *et al.*, in press). Catherine felt satisfied when her students showed excitement about their learning. Seeing such enjoyment was an indication that she was achieving something worthwhile.

Seeing the children being excited about their learning affected Catherine's emotional style as well as her decisions and actions. As she pointed out:

*Over the years, I've become much more aware of the excitement, and yet again when it happens, I'm trying to understand why was that so exciting? What really made that experience so wonderful? I still go back and reflect further and frequently for me it is partly, in my experience, how it was similar to or different from something that happened to me when I was younger or last week—as well as how fascinating it was to see kids being engaged, so I was engaged, too. By expressing my excitement and by seeing kids expressing theirs, I become even more excited! And often, we take turns motivating each other and finding things that make us feel excited to learn. (Interview, 10 June 1999)*

Catherine built on how children felt to endorse and sustain feelings of excitement. She capitalized on events that arose in the classroom to emphasize that being excited about learning made you 'feel good.' Catherine's own excitement nurtured children's fascination and vice versa, and it was clear that there was a mutual support of one another that shaped and sustained a positive emotional style in the classroom. In addition, the children, as she argued, 'were more likely to believe that one succeeds in science by attempting to make sense of things that are exciting to them and less likely to believe that success comes from following what the teacher says' (Interview, 10 June 1999).

This dynamic character of emotional responses—their capacity to change one's own state as well as that of others—has to do with *empathetic understanding*. Empathetic understanding refers to two things: first, becoming aware of how the other feels and moving into rhythm with these feelings—in a sense, 'feeling with'; and second, developing a passionate affection for the 'object' one studies—that is, being caring



and passionate about what one explores, similar to what Barbara McClintock referred to as having ‘a feeling for the organism’ in her research on the genetics of corn (see Keller, 1983). In short, empathetic understanding has to do with the existence of a non-verbal ‘resonance’ that allows for empathetic communication across possible gaps.

The concept of emotives allows one to appreciate that Catherine’s propensity for empathetic understanding could have a strong impact on her emotions as well as on her students’ emotions. Far from being a mere cultural construct or discourse in Catherine’s classroom, empathetic understanding was an essential part of an emotional regime and favored a certain style of emotional navigation. From this perspective, Catherine’s actions took on a fascinating new significance. They urged her to express satisfaction with, and affection for, her students’ learning and commitment to their growth. They constituted emotives for her. They guided her to master her earlier shame and disappointment, and to enjoy many possibilities that were not accessible earlier in her career. As she noted:

*By reflecting on my feelings and on my understanding of children’s feelings, I guess I hope to find relationships between them. For example, what kinds of things excite kids and get them really wanting to question and explore and experiment with things.... And I guess that one of the things that to me is really important is that children get a chance to experience and to feel the world around us. That just seems to be really important to give kids a chance to fool around with it and share how they feel for what they are doing. I encourage them to experience and feel science.... When you reflect on how you feel, you expand your repertoire, you reach a deeper understanding of yourself, of who you are as a teacher. You ask another question. You stop and rethink: How do I feel? How do my kids feel? This process has gradually brought back the lost excitement and self-confidence I have been searching for for so long. (Interview, 22 January 1999)*

Empathetic understanding, then, became a valuable source of emotional knowledge—of a personal, practical and pedagogical nature—that strengthened Catherine’s feelings about herself and her pedagogical approach. An important aspect of this kind of knowledge, emotional knowledge, was Catherine’s ability to create *affective alliances* with her students and with what was being studied. Affective alliances made possible a sense of personal empowerment and freedom to creatively subvert negative feelings such as low self-esteem. The concept of emotives allows one to regard affective alliances in the classroom as powerful tools for shaping emotional material that stands in tension with the prevalent emotional regime at the school. They may not always work, of course, and Catherine had to run away and hide when the conflict with her colleagues seemed unbearable; however, their empowering effects might have intensified nonconformist sentiments.

On this view, it seemed that over the years and after considerable emotional suffering and emotional labor, Catherine managed to break free of the restraints imposed by the emotional regime(s) at her school. It seemed that the best resistance to the prevalent emotional rules of the school culture was to create spaces for emotional freedom in her classroom—through empathetic understanding and affective alliances. The fact that students responded positively and ultimately showed satisfactory learning outcomes—based on the results of mandatory state tests—seemed to

empower Catherine and her pedagogy.<sup>4</sup> Also, as a result of constantly accumulating new emotional knowledge about her teaching, Catherine asserted that gradually she managed to subvert feelings of shame and low self-esteem and feel more 'free' emotionally. As she explained:

*I don't think I had a broad enough understanding of how I could break free from all the restraints around me back when I was a young teacher.... Maybe it was when I freed up to 'Oh, I see that science is everything I do! OK!' Probably the biggest thing was just self-confidence. And in writing and reading more about ways to approach the teaching of science and thinking about my ideas and sharing my feelings with my children and some trusted colleagues. I think all of those experiences with things that made me feel more comfortable and more confident about 'Gee, it's not that I know a great deal more than I knew ten years ago about individual topics,' maybe this is about thinking more about what I think and how I feel it's important ... and seeing how positively kids respond to what we do. This is something that made me feel more free in a sense ... and feel good about what I am doing. (Interview, 24 March 1998)*

Additionally, Catherine discovered that the same thing happened to her students, i.e. she noticed that her pedagogy created more self-confidence and excitement for science learning. Thus, the establishment and nurturing of such emotional refuge in her classroom—independently of what took place in the rest of the school—became an important goal for Catherine. The concept of emotives makes possible this navigation, the freedom to change goals in response to ambivalent emotions and challenge the reign of goals imposed from outside. In the course of this study, I came to realize that the manner in which Catherine and her students organized emotion talk and classroom activities reflected some of Catherine's emotional suffering over the years. Catherine's insistence on valuing emotions as ways of knowing the world as well as her efforts to establish a nurturing emotional refuge in her classroom resulted partly from her earlier feelings of shame and frustration involving conflicts with goals and values that she considered unacceptable.

As Catherine's case study shows, a teacher can defy emotional rules by refusing to perform the emotion management necessary to feel what, according to these rules, it would seem appropriate to feel. As some ideologies gain acceptance and others decline, certain emotional rules rise and fall. Nevertheless, nonconformity to the prevailing emotional rules demands emotional suffering, and especially vulnerability, as is obvious in Catherine's case. To construct an emotional refuge that subverts the prevailing emotional rules, as a means of questioning these rules and their assumed ideologies and truths, invokes vulnerability as well as resistance. Resistances function both as defenses against vulnerability and as assertions of power in the face of impositions (Boler, 1999).

For example, empathetic understanding and affective alliances may function as forms of resistance, an alternative to vulnerability, and represent powerful modes of resistance to shame and guilt. Vulnerability, though, signals a significant amount of emotional suffering associated with resistance and often leads to teacher isolation (Nias, 1996). However, as Boler (1999) argues, vulnerability provides the turbulent ground on which to negotiate truths (e.g. new emotional rules that are less oppressive) that is a necessary foundation of transformation.

## Conclusion

As this case study of Catherine shows, Reddy's theory of emotives makes possible a theorization of the success of some emotional regimes at schools, the failure of others, and therefore helps us to understand how emotional rules come and go. In making these observations, it seems that a teacher's emotional development is profoundly influenced by his or her participation in particular forms of social and discursive practices at school. By making this point, I wish to avoid a suggestion that subordinates the individual to the social and loses sight of the reciprocal relation between the two. I represent this relation as shown in Figure 1.

This relation can be summarized by saying that individual emotives that fit together constitute the emotional rules that constrain the individual emotives that generate them. As I have shown, there is a great deal at stake in the emotional regimes that govern the lives of teachers and their sense of self. However, some teachers might be able to constitute spaces of emotional freedom that make their professional lives meaningful or tolerable. Others, unable to find any such spaces, may feel burned out and eventually leave the profession. Teacher burnout is an important consequence of emotional suffering whereby professional standards governing relationships require the loss of emotional freedom. The theorization of emotional freedom gives political meaning back to research on teacher emotions and allows us to discern the successes and failures of particular emotional regimes within a school culture. In light of this contention, it should be apparent that I view the process of renegotiating classroom or school emotional rules as one in which the teachers and students together interactively constitute the activity system that constrains or encourages their individual actions.

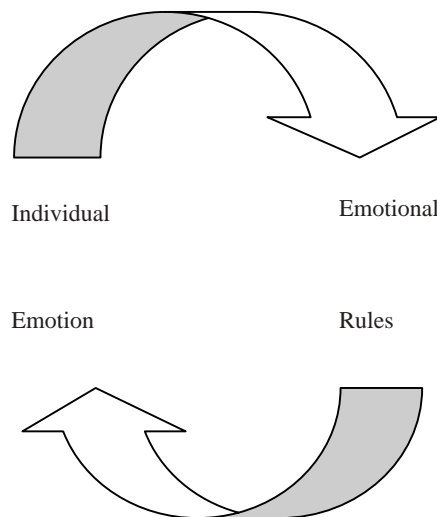


Figure 1. Relation between individual emotion and emotional rules.

Teaching values, goals and emotions are closely related and emotional claims are often made in contexts of goal conflicts (Reddy, 2001). As we have seen in Catherine's case, to sustain pursuit of a particular pedagogic goal there is often an emotional cost. Emotional freedom 'is the capacity to respond to emotive effects, wherever they lead, to drop goals or espouse new ones as appropriate, so as to minimize emotional suffering' (Reddy, 2001, p. 323). The complex of practices that establish a set of emotional rules at a school and that sanction those who break them create an emotional regime. However, teachers can construct emotional refuges, like Catherine did, that constitute the greatest possible spaces for emotional freedom. It was by initiating shifts in goals, as appropriate, from one level of discourse (e.g. school) to another (e.g. classroom) that Catherine initiated and guided her emotional freedom. I represent this relation as shown in Figure 2.

The articulate elaboration of alternatives and consequences—in other words, the emotional freedom to be open to deal with goal conflicts and their emotional suffering—facilitates emotional navigation. The potentiality in a teacher's emotional navigation—as it is facilitated by his or her close collaborators, i.e. trusted colleagues and students—is important for the reduction of emotional suffering. Where emotional rules can be subverted, teachers often establish their own 'informal emotional refuges' (Reddy, 2001). In other words, emotional refuge is Catherine's relationship in which she displayed deviant emotions openly in her classroom or among trusted colleagues. It is important to recognize two things: (1) that Catherine's spaces for emotional freedom have been facilitated by the development of empathetic understanding and

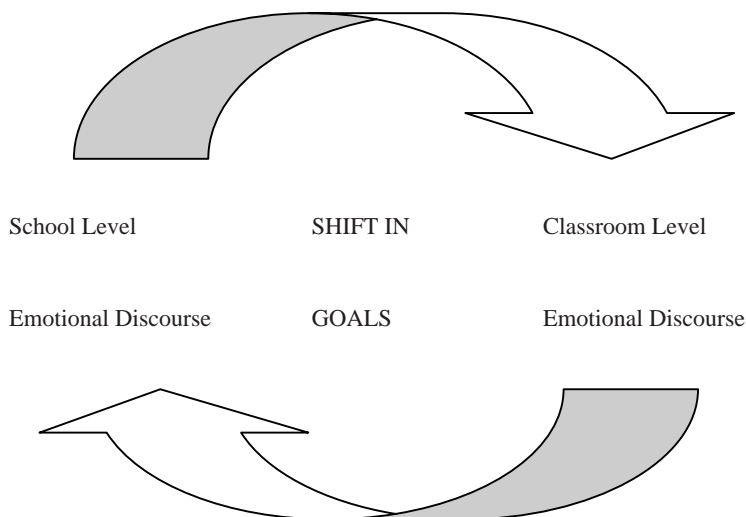


Figure 2. Relation between school-level emotional discourse and classroom-level emotional discourse, as a result of shift in Catherine's goals.

affective alliances; (2) that Catherine's struggle to find a way to deal with prevailing emotional rules was a personal struggle, her own emotional navigation. Armed with these two recognitions, it would be possible to write an ethnography of emotions in teaching that takes into account their political significance. There are already efforts that combine narrative-biographical and micropolitical approaches to explore how teachers' actions are influenced by professional interests (see Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). The concept of emotional navigation in teaching focuses on the often neglected political aspect of teacher knowledge. Thus, emotional navigation and the coping strategies used by teachers to subvert prevailing emotional rules in the schools reveal an interesting micro-political perspective.

In view of the high stakes in establishing normalization at a school, it is not surprising that such process almost always employs induced emotional suffering as a tool to enhance conformity and homogeneity to one degree or another. Emotional vulnerability, resistance and transformation of teachers emphasize the importance of being attentive to the project of ungrounding and unmaking of some rules according to which teachers should act, feel and think. They are an encouragement to tracing the multiple, heterogeneous and contingent conditions that have given rise to these rules. To analyze these rules and be subjected to discomfort and emotional suffering through challenging them is to reveal their historicity and contingency that have come to define the limits of teachers' understandings of themselves, individually and collectively. By doing so, it is to disturb, destabilize and subvert these rules, to identify some of the weak points and lines of fracture where structures of feeling (as counter-hegemonic) might make a difference. It is at this level, argues Rose (1999), that the problematization of what is given to us 'produces both its critical effect (making it more difficult for us to think and act in accustomed ways) and its positive effect (clearing a space for the possibility of thinking otherwise, for a consideration of the conditions for a real transformation of what we are)' (p. 277).

The above two schemes presented here, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, are the current results of an attempt to make sense of the emotional life of one teacher. I acknowledge this attempt is limited in that it ignores other factors of broader political context—for example, the function of the school as a political and social institution as well as the role of the teachers individually and collectively. Nonetheless, I have found it useful in this attempt to explore the emotional complexities of a teacher's life. With regard to research on teacher emotion, in general, this research can now be widened to include consideration of emotives.

The ultimate aim of the concept of emotives, then, is to reshape and expand the terms of emotion discourses in education, enabling different questions to be asked, modifying the relations of teachers to the rules in the name of which they govern or are governed. The contribution of emotives amounts to an intervention in a much larger debate about teacher subjectivity, in which concepts of affective elements of consciousness and relationships, school community and teacher change are slowly being re-examined. That is why a focus on emotion work of teachers through the concept of emotives leads to more recognition of the social and political character of teacher emotion. This sociopolitical character of teacher emotion creates the difference

between possible and real transformation, and it is this difference that constitutes the power of emotives as a tool to subvert the existing conditions.

In closing, I observe that the schemes represented in Figures 1 and 2 also give some sense of the multifaceted nature of the 'emotional practice of teaching' (Hargreaves, 1998a). The conflict of goals, in concrete form, is the emotional tension between the cognitive and emotional perspectives as it is realized in the lives of teachers. The need for a conceptualization of this conflict can guide ethnographic work on teacher emotions in whatever locality, work informed by a genuine search to understand the power and the limitations of emotives and the political merits or demerits of any emotional regime at a school or in a classroom.

### Notes on contributor

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### Notes

1. I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to my attention.
2. By 'emotion talk' here, I refer to patterns of talking about emotions and their effects in close relationships; for example, developing the tendency to downplaying how one feels, especially when expressing such emotions is not considered 'appropriate.'
3. The broad term 'emotional freedom' is used here to acknowledge Reddy's contribution and provide some continuity to this discussion. Gradually I shift to using the term 'spaces for emotional freedom' to avoid an inflation of 'freedom' although I still use the term 'emotional freedom' in a few cases to avoid confusion. Nevertheless, 'freedom' here needs to be understood contextually, not as an absolute condition of acting without any interference but as a performance of challenging taken-for-granted emotional rules.
4. The students were required to take a state-mandated accountability test. Those who failed this test had to attend remediation classes and, if necessary, repeat second grade. Catherine was well aware of this pressure and the fact that she was evaluated by her colleagues and the community almost exclusively in terms of these test scores. Thus over the years she developed her own system of assessment (both descriptive and quantitative) that was correlated with the district's educational goals and values. In this way, she was able to demonstrate that, despite the absence of 'drill and practice' and 'teaching-to-the-test', the performance of her students in the state-mandated test did not differ significantly from the rest of the students, and in fact, often it was better. As a consequence, she was able to gain some friends among her colleagues and administrators.

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