Expanding Teacher Reflection on Emotions in Online Teaching: Grappling with Teacher Identity and Student (non)Participation

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A B S T R A C T

Amid the recent overwhelming demand for online education as emergency remote teaching, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of online teaching and learning experiences. Through a self-study of online teaching, it explores a teacher educator's emotional experiences and struggles during online teaching concerning teacher identity, pedagogy, and student participation. The study includes both the teacher educator's reflection on her own emotional experiences and her students' end-of-the-semester reflections on their online participation, providing multiple perspectives on a variety of online pedagogical tools. Her self-reflection on online teaching deepened her understanding of the role of emotions in her teaching. Additionally, her discovery of students' perspectives on their (non)participation and subsequent reflection brought new insight and understanding of student experiences, reducing her own teaching anxiety and self-doubt in the negotiation of teacher identity online. Results of the study suggest that both the teacher's and students' emotional experiences are significant resources for pedagogical development via critical reflection, suggesting that the scope of teacher reflection should be expanded to include self-reflective work on emotions for teachers' own personal growth and professional development.

Keywords: online education; emotion; participation; teacher reflection; self-study

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Introduction

Scholarly reflection on teaching and teacher education has tended to focus on cognitive analysis of teaching skills and approaches (Zembylas, 2014). But some scholars resist the side-lining of emotions seemingly required by institutional norms as "professionalism" in teaching. Leaving emotions out of teaching also demands a great deal of emotional labor, the work necessary to manage emotions by suppressing real feelings to display other "legitimate" emotional expressions (Hochschild, 1983). The emotional labor often leads to teacher-burnout, self-isolation, and teacher-dropout. In order to minimize the negative effects of this kind of emotional labor, teachers must learn to reflect critically on their emotions. Research on teacher emotions shows that emotions are constructed in relation to power relations, ideology, and culture in sociocultural and institutional contexts of teaching and that the construction of teacher identity is fundamentally affective (Benesch, 2017; Gkonou & Miller, 2019; Wolff & De Costa, 2017; Zembylas, 2014). Thus, an investigation of teacher identity and trajectory of professional development from an affective perspective will provide a richer understanding of the teacher self.

Teaching in an online context compounds challenges and aggravates teachers' feelings of vulnerability, but research on common predicaments of online teaching in language teacher education is rare. Amid the recent and overwhelming demand for online teaching for all disciplines, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of online teaching experiences through a self-study. The study incorporates a teacher educator's reflection of her online teaching and her students' reflections on their online participation. The results of the study will help disentangle struggles inherent in seeking one's own notion of good teaching while at the same time negotiating teacher identity and developing new forms of pedagogy in the online context. Two questions guided the self-exploration: (1) What are a teacher's primary emotional experiences and challenges in online teaching?; (2) How might self-reflection on one's own and students' emotional experiences influence professional development in the areas of teacher identity and pedagogy?

Emotions and Online Education

Studies show that traditional teacher-educator coursework gives insufficient attention to online teacher development and content-specific student learning needs (Keengwe & Kang, 2012; Peercy et al., 2016). As a result, many teachers are inexperienced both in online learning and in online teaching, leaving them underprepared for online course design and student learning in the virtual context (Cutri & Whiting, 2018). Merely transferring existing lectures and activities to an online course management system does not constitute effective technology integration for online education (Oliver & Stallings, 2014). The inadequacy of this direct transfer approach lowers teacher confidence as the transition from face-to-face learning to online courses presents many challenges to teachers and learners.

The assumption that electronic learning is less emotional and more impersonal than face-to-face learning must be challenged; emotion is hardly absent from online contexts. Research demonstrates that feelings of loneliness, isolation, anxiety and anxiety-management are a significant challenge for online teachers (MacFadden, 2005; Reupert et al., 2009). Students' negative emotional experiences may escalate online, with higher levels of reported boredom, anxiety, anger, and overall lower feelings of enjoyment (Conrad, 2005; Marchand & Gutierrez, 2012; Zembylas, 2008). In this regard, it is suggested that paying greater attention to the emotional landscape of online learning and addressing emotional issues as they arise may be the most effective way to facilitate online education (MacFadden, 2005). For this, MacFadden (2005) proposed a *constructivistic, emotionally-oriented model* (COM) that prioritizes students' feelings of

security, so that they may more easily engage in online learning and communication and be more likely to respond positively to academic challenges and critical thinking.

Despite similarities in students' emotional experiences in online and in-person courses (Daniels & Stupnisky, 2012), there are some differences in students' emotional experiences regarding online learning that can be attributed to unique online pedagogical tools and approaches (Zembylas, 2008). Students showed favorable attitudes towards synchronous activities (D'Errico, Paciello, & Cerniglia, 2016). For example, students' negative emotions such as loneliness and isolation have been found to decrease when they experience connectedness to their peers within the in-person classroom setting in a hybrid course. The in-person part of student interaction in an online/hybrid course increases students' self-confidence and overall performance (Zembylas, 2008). Asynchronous online discussion allowing students and teachers time to reflect and refine discussion contributions does not necessarily reduce anxiety for some students and teachers, due to the fact that written comments tend to carry greater weight than verbal speech (Benfield, 2000). Synchronous face-to-face video conferencing seems to intensify the emotional dynamics of online experiences due to the challenges of missing conversational cues and rhythms (Conrad, 2005). But some online students learn to utilize learning strategies that allow for more effective emotional regulation online. Because online education gives students more flexibility for their own time management, they can learn to manage their anxiety and perform better (Marchand & Gutierrez, 2012), indicating that learners' negative emotional experiences do not necessarily correlate with low academic performance online.

Research on teacher emotions with respect to online teaching is limited, but teachers, like their students, also experience feelings of anxiety, isolation, and devaluation. Teachers find that online courses limit opportunities for dialogue (Horzum, 2015), a problem for which teachers feel responsible, thereby exacerbating their feelings of vulnerability. Additionally, the top-down pressure for providing conveniently accessible course content and implementing more lenient and flexible assessment to lower student anxiety and maintaining enrollment numbers leaves teachers feeling devalued (Regan et al., 2012). For teachers, these feelings of being devalued are intensified in the absence of class participation and direct student and teacher interactions. Thus, teachers report feeling more restricted and stressed in asynchronous online formats than they do utilizing synchronous formats for online teaching (Regan et al., 2012).

Examining challenges particular to teaching online requires looking beyond content knowledge and skills-delivery, necessitating deeper discussion on the central role of teacher identity (White & Ding, 2009). Searching for ways to feel like "real teachers" in online classrooms upends the view that teaching is merely allocating assessment points (Fletcher & Bullock, 2015) and drives teachers to do the necessary work of finding their own emotional rewards and satisfactions in new teaching environments (Miller & Gkonou, 2018).

Studies suggest that for successful online education, a collaborative learning community is necessary (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2004). And a successful learning community is constructed through a mutual understanding of the unique features presented by the online educational setting in response to participants' needs (Dunn & Rice, 2019). Research shows that certain pedagogical tools and strategies used in online education can either enhance or aggravate learners' emotional and learning experiences (Dirkx, 2006). Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), in this regard, argued that successful online education should go beyond a cognitive dimension to foster an actual learning community. According to them, online teaching needs to involve not only *cognitive presence* (planning effective online instruction, exploring, integrating, and seeking resolutions for critical thinking), but also *social presence* (creating authentic and intensive interactions including emotional expression, open communication, and building group cohesion) and *teaching presence* (instructional management and direct instruction for building understanding)

(Garrison et al., 2004). Social presence among members is critical in building community to promote emotional security and dialogue, but establishing this kind of community online is challenging due to a lack of visual cues among members, which are a primary way of building social presence.

The Methodology: Self-Study of Online Teaching

The aim of self-study in teacher education is to better understand the dimensions of action and identity. Self-study requires critical self-reflection on what it means to be both teaching practitioner and researcher. Understanding these dual roles through a more unified sense of identity entails exploration into one's own personal history and professional experience, especially with respect to viewpoints that inform pedagogy and the ongoing negotiation of institutional expectations (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Self-study in this sense is a great way for exploring how emotions influence and guide the ways in which teachers grapple with their dual roles as researchers and teaching practitioners.

Although the self-study method is accepted in general teacher education, it is noticeably absent from major venues in applied linguistics and ELT research (See a complete review by Peercy & Sharkey, 2020). There has been no self-study research specific to ELT teachers' and teacher educators' experiences during online teaching. Thus, little is known about their experiences in general, and about their emotions in particular. This study explores a teacher educator's online teaching experiences through a self-study. By focusing on my own and my students' emotional experiences, this self-study aims to enhance an understanding of how emotions affect online teaching and learning and how teacher reflection on emotions leads to professional development in the areas of teacher identity and pedagogy.

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary source of data for this self-study came from my own self-reflection on emotional experiences in two online language teacher education courses taught in 2020, one graduate course (n=11, 8 female/3 male) and one undergraduate course (n=19, 13 female/6 male). To utilize this self-study for researching the affective aspect of teaching and learning online as well as for my own professional development through learning about the teacher self, I followed a three-step reflective process: (1) my teacher self-reflection on emotional experiences while teaching online, (2) my reflection on student self-reflections (n=30) on their participation in online courses, and (3) a final reflection on my own professional and pedagogical development incorporating students' perspectives and experiences.

The initial reflection focused on my teaching practices and the emotions I experienced while teaching those courses and interacting with students as I reviewed course content, course modules and tools, email exchanges, and other relevant materials. To understand students' perspectives, I created ten reflection questions (See Appendix) based on my own reflection on online teaching experiences, asking them to describe their emotional experiences about the course contents and activities and their course participation at the end of the semester. I reviewed and reflected on students' perspectives on course activities, participation, and how they felt about their experiences. This process, a multiple reflective process on my own experiences and students' perspectives, prompted a deeper reflection on my teacher identity and pedagogy, highlighting layers of my emotions which I, otherwise, forgot or was reluctant to share. In particular, my review and reflection on student reflections forced me to revisit my initial reflection and bring my covert feelings to the surface, articulating my emotional experiences and underlying sources much closer to real.

For the data analysis, I employed a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) to analyze qualitative data drawn from my reflective narratives as well as students' reflective statements in the two courses. Preliminary exploratory analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) gave me a general sense of the data, which included my own written responses to various dimensions of online teaching, relevant events, activities, and student and professional interactions, helping me to understand the context and particular sources of my emotional responses. The analysis led to several major emotions that I experienced during my online teaching, including anxiety about the (in)effectiveness of the online teaching methods, insecurity about my status, and frustration about students' low (or non-) participation. I then reviewed students' reflective statements on the relevant areas, exploring and identifying students' major emotional experiences at the intersections between my own and student perspectives. Finally, I produced and reviewed my final reflection on students' perspectives and coded them according to the major emotional experiences.

The next stage of the analysis was to become immersed in the data, taking a lean coding approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to help reduce the number of codes to one major theme: how understanding of major sources that affect one's emotional experiences leads to professional development. The theme included three sub-themes: (1) understanding sources of my emotional experiences (online teaching anxiety, insecurity, and frustration about student participation); (2) understanding students' views and emotional experiences of online activities; and (3) seeking professional and pedagogical development through self-reflection on the role of emotions in teacher identity and pedagogy. I approached those themes from the perspective of my own teacher identity that includes practitioner, researcher, and scholar (Peercy & Sharkey, 2020).

Reflection on My Own Emotional Experiences Online

My experience in teaching online courses is not new; at the time of the study, I had been teaching online and in-person courses for over ten years, but recent experience teaching all courses online brought some changes to my perspective on the online classroom. Initially, I started teaching online with some doubts due to the fact that not much was known about its effectiveness. While I understand the potential benefits of online learning, I considered it to be a complement to face-to-face education, as opposed to being an independent education approach with its own merit. After reflection, I realized that several contextual issues influenced this view of online education: (1) There was no institutional support or explicit discourse for online pedagogies, and (2) institutional policy treated online courses as "other" (for example, student evaluations of online courses were not included as criteria for the Faculty Annual Report or the Tenure and Promotion Application). These institutional practices and policies, along with my own doubts about the effectiveness of online education, resulted in my view of online courses as secondary to in-person instruction in terms of quality and standards.

I felt I was stuck between meeting the institutional goal of increasing enrollment numbers through online education and satisfying individual students' academic goals of achieving a quality and successful education. As a teacher, I feel responsible for meeting students' academic needs through quality academic contents, but this was difficult to achieve and seemingly not the immediate concern of the institution then. This generated a conflict within me. On one hand, the view of online courses as a merely recruitment tool for the institution was not acceptable to me; on the other hand, I felt some measure of relief when I needed to teach online courses, since I was not expected to meet the same standards used for in-person instruction. I rationalized my not so-perfect online teaching according to the contextual challenges that I experienced, such as lower student participation, lack of better equipment, and general difficulties in establishing myself as a teacher authority in the virtual classroom (Fletcher & Bullock, 2015). However, I also felt guilty

about offering (or being expected to offer) sub-standard courses, even if this was not my intention.

Doubts about the effectiveness of online education and my struggles to establish teacher authority led me to make online education as close as possible to face-to-face teaching. The task was not easy, since these two contexts of teaching are very different, and I was frustrated by the process and experienced negative emotions about my professional status and teaching practice. My negative feelings came from the assumption that online courses are secondary to in-person instruction, and I felt that I had failed in making online more like in-person instruction. The major factor that prevented me from succeeding at merging the two contexts was the lack of a classroom learning community online. Promoting a learning community, which provides students and teachers with cognitive and social support, without a physically proximate connection was a challenge, and this challenge triggered my reflection on the role of social presence in building a community and engaging student participation (See the following three sub-sections).

Students navigate online spaces in often disembodied ways (Darvin, 2019), and it is careless to assume that their experiences of transitioning into online participation is seamless. Students may experience more and dissimilar challenges when they transit into an online setting. From my observation, I realized that students need to draw on different sets of strategies, skills, and modalities to participate in an online learning community. I felt that it was critical to allow and understand divergent modes of participation, which involves and depends on a student's capacity to interpret continually evolving digital genres and to recognize the online community and its cultures. This means that students may come with diverse digital repertoires on top of the culturally different notions of participation that pre-exist in in-person instruction. Students' different levels of socialization within online practices may unequally prepare them for their online participation.

With this understanding, I began to think about students' silence as potentially meaningful (Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2007), rather than as a simple sign of non-participation. Silence may indicate intimidation or it may point to thoughtful processing. Due to the fact that written comments tend to carry greater weight than verbal speech, some students experience higher anxiety in online courses (Benfield, 2000). And synchronous face-to-face video conferencing intensifies their anxiety due to the lack of conversational cues and rhythms that they can rely on in face-to-face interactions (Conrad, 2005). My realization of the challenges of online participation led me to give more attention to student silence and concentrate on course activities that would encourage and accommodate different forms of participation.

My reflection focused on the following three aspects of online teaching in relation to these observations and my own emotional experiences.

Synchronous Sessions

I taught my online courses through synchronous sessions to emphasize cognitive presence, teaching presence, and social presence. I believed that virtual face-to-face meetings provide cognitive support for student learning through collaborative talk among participants (Vygotsky, 1987) and through active teaching during class meetings. I thought that these meetings would provide opportunities for students to make emotional connections as they got to know each other, being "real in the same space."

More importantly, synchronous meetings enabled me to create a sense of community, and this played a significant role in constructing my teacher identity. I realized that those meetings provide better opportunities for getting to know students in terms of who they are. Such a feeling of

knowing them allowed me to care about them. This sense of caring, "the very bedrock of all successful education" (Noddings, 1992, p.27), placed the students at the center of my teaching and reflection and enabled me to engage students more actively in my teaching, as well as to reflect upon and refine my pedagogical approaches to meet students' needs. I recognized the importance of social presence in building an online learning community and constructing who I am as a teacher. My experiences in this regard reiterate the fact that emotions play a critical role in teaching (Hargreaves, 1998).

Asynchronous Student Presentation and Discussion

I flipped the courses partially in order to have an asynchronous presentation and follow-up discussion prior to the scheduled synchronous session each week. By incorporating asynchronous features, I hoped that everyone would have a chance to participate, regardless of their availability for synchronous sessions. Synchronous sessions can easily be dominated by a few active students, leaving other students invisible, voluntarily or involuntarily. I felt less "control" of student participation online due to limitations of virtual space, since it is difficult to nudge student participation without directly calling their names.

I understand that silence is not always a manifestation of students' amotivation, and that silence online in particular has multiple meanings (Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2007). But silence may reduce students' social presence and consequently reduce my own sense of connectedness with students. I believed that asynchronous discussion gives every student an opportunity to speak up in a less-threatening way. For example, a recorded student presentation gives more time for student responses to discussion questions raised by the presenter. Through this asynchronous activity, I aimed to create a discourse community among students, where they would discuss, share, and support each other's ideas. I believed that each student's "mandatory presence" through the presentation and online discussion was critical for building community.

The flipped aspect of the course brought inclusion of social presence for the students who could not attend synchronous sessions regularly or who were silent during live sessions. This alternative way of presence was a catalyst for constructing my teacher identity. Reviewing student presentations thorough their video recordings allowed me to see them as "real students," which is an essential element for making me feel like a real teacher. That is, student presentations were not only sources for academic assessment, but were also foundational to my understanding of who they are, which led to my caring relationship with them.

Online Video and Chat during the Synchronous Sessions

During the synchronous discussions and lectures, I utilized various tools: video camera, screen sharing, chat, breakout rooms, surveys, and emoticons. Initially troubling for me was students' reluctance to turn on their video cameras, choosing instead to turn off their microphones and use the chat function for communicating. For more interactive and dynamic online discussion sessions, however, those two tools, video cameras and microphones, are critical. The whole point of having the synchronous sessions was to have more interactive discussions and participation, so I was disappointed with students' reluctance in these areas. While I encouraged students to use these tools, I did not force them to do so, as I understood that students' levels of anxiety differ between online and in-person settings, and that their silence does not mean a lack of attention to the on-going discussion.

However, teaching a course without seeing or hearing students' reactions was very challenging and frustrating for me, especially when I was leading a discussion. I relied on the reactions and

responses of the few students who left their cameras on to determine the pace and content of discussion. Reading chat postings later was helpful to assess students' understanding, but I could not read them during live discussion, and I felt distant from the students I was not able to connect with visually and verbally. I also felt that students' non-participation undermined my own teacher identity. It seemed as though these students put themselves in a position to be easily distracted from what was going on online, which frustrated me further, as I tried to balance making online instruction effective with staying open to students' new ways of participation.

Students' Emotional Experiences and Online Participation

Synchronous and Asynchronous Discussion

In general, students in the two courses expressed positive attitudes towards online courses as they found the online setting more comfortable and "safer," reporting lower levels of anxiety than would be the case in a traditional in-person class setting. While some students considered online instruction as a temporary, emergency method, and longed to return to in-person instruction, many expressed a feeling of comfort in online learning; comfort was one of the most significant emotions students expressed concerning their online experience.

Most of the students preferred synchronous sessions over asynchronous sessions due to its interactive features and structures which helped them stay on the tasks on time (Joo, Bong, & Choi, 2000). However, students also appreciated the asynchronous elements of the course as they provide flexibility. Students reported finding it difficult to participate in online discussion during the synchronous sessions because of a lack of conversational cues in video conferencing as many students muted their microphones or turned off their video cameras. They commented on their experiences and views of online discussion during the synchronous sessions:

> *It's harder to speak and contribute without talking over someone most of the time, or a couple of people dominate the discussion, leaving everyone else out of the loop even if they had something to contribute.*

> *It is very difficult for me to talk on Zoom. It feels weird to me, therefore, I rarely do it. The only thing that would have influenced my verbal participation in this course was if it was in-person, but that would have taken away the entire experience of an online course.*

For a similar reason, they welcomed asynchronous presentations as one of the best features of the online education due to its comfortableness and flexibility. Students indicated how the asynchronous presentations helped them reduce their anxiety.

> *I liked the format of this assignment and was happy that it was asynchronous versus a synchronous presentation. The fact that it was asynchronous made me feel much more comfortable because I was able to review my presentation before sharing and make changes based on what I saw during my first recording.*

Students also commented that the convenient features of asynchronous presentations and discussion postings distributed participation opportunities more evenly as every student needs to participate in the presentation and discussion. They also reported that they got to know each other better as they could review and read peers' presentations and discussion postings, including those of students who were often "invisible" during the synchronous sessions.

Video Camera and Chat during Synchronous Sessions

Students expressed mixed attitudes about use of the video camera and chat tool during the synchronous sessions. Most students raved about the chat function for sharing ideas in a non-threatening way during online discussion, while a few students found the chat function distracting. Some argued that use of the chat function is "an improvement over the in-person classroom" as it allows them to talk to each other without interrupting the main speaker/presenter. They believed that the chat function gave them the flexibility to participate in the sidelines of the on-going discussion as they can "speak specifically to another student without interrupting the flow of things."

While some students pointed out the advantages of using the chat tool, most students preferred not to turn on their video camera during the synchronous discussion. They were afraid that using the video would "keep the window into our private life so open." And some students thought that turning off the camera would help them reduce their anxiety in the synchronous discussion:

> *I really liked the participation in the Zoom sessions. One thing that helped me participate more was being able to have my camera off. It takes a lot of pressure off the speaker if you know people literally cannot see you, but only hear your opinion.*

Here, the student felt that turning off the camera actually helped her participate in the discussion better with less pressure. Other students said that video cameras often distract them from the on-going discussion because they not only watch what other students do, but also are constantly checking on how they look on-screen. Monitoring what others are doing or how they themselves are appearing becomes an even bigger distraction when they do things that are not relevant to the discussion at hand. Most of the students suggested that students should have an option to turn off the camera. One student commented:

> *I do believe that it should be a student choice to turn on their camera or not--it shouldn't affect the quality of the lecture being given if cameras are on or off. As a teacher, I don't have experience teaching on Zoom. However, if a student feels more comfortable with their camera off (for whatever reason), I don't think it's right to require them to turn it on.*

Only two students said that they tried to turn on their cameras out of respect for the speaker as they felt very frustrated when their own students turned off their cameras and did not pay attention to what was going on in the session. But they complained that appearing on the video often forced them to respond to every question the instructor asked, as if they were the only one on the spot, which made them feel uncomfortable.

Other Challenges

Students also identified challenges they experienced in taking online courses. Some of the challenges mentioned are related to technology, but difficulty using technological tools is not one of them. They talked about instructors' low technology literacy, which is an obstacle for efficient online delivery and communication. Students expressed their frustration, disappointment, and anger about technological failures limiting their participation and performance, noting that these incidents caused increased anxiety on top of the anxiety they experienced at having to do what they needed to do for content learning. Students also mentioned difficulties in finding information in different online courses due to how each course is structured differently, and how each course utilizes different tools. Some instructors use weekly modules with various tools and extra links, but others utilize only the syllabus page without much information. Students reported

that their navigation of each online course setting often led to disappointment due to limited course content and tools available for the course.

Students reported that what they missed most in their online courses was the feeling of having a shared space where they talked to their peers and instructors freely, which they believed provided them with emotional and cognitive support to keep coming back and complete all the course work.

> *I would like to have more contact with my classmates to exchange ideas and opinions after class. It seems that when the online conference is done, everybody is destined to go back to their reality, and that kind of after-class chat is something that is not very often found in these kinds of courses.*

Here, the student expressed that she missed the opportunities to ask and answer privately and informally in in-person instruction. The fact that other students are always present and what she says may be recorded, she did not want to ask any questions during the online sessions. While this student noted the lack of after-class conversation, another student mentioned that asking the instructor questions should be pre-arranged. In his view, this formality discourages interaction between the instructor and himself, limiting potential learning opportunities.

Discussion: Teacher Reflection on Emotions and Professional Development

Reflecting upon and writing about my own online experiences enabled me to articulate underlying rationales for my teaching practices, and to look at the sources of my emotional struggles and anxieties. Self-understanding furthers the negotiation of my teacher identity in the online context, as I grapple with my own "traditional" sense of teacher authority, effective pedagogy, and student participation. Learning about students' views through their reflections of online participation and their emotional experiences also enhanced my understanding of students' attitudes towards online practices and different forms of participation. Students' reflective narratives explained their choices and preferences, which enabled me to juxtapose my own personal and professional perspectives with students' perspectives, compelling further reflection on my own struggles and practices in view of my professional development.

My reflection on the student perspectives on online courses in general and the synchronous and asynchronous elements in particular helped me reduce my anxiety and doubts about my online teaching. The fact that most students felt more comfortable recording and posting their video presentations than they did presenting during a synchronous session particularly reduced my doubts about the asynchronous presentation and my feeling of guilt for "not being there" for my students. My reflection on student perspectives also increased my confidence about my own online pedagogy. I was afraid that students might consider those asynchronous features as just time-consuming work as these need to be done outside of the set time for the synchronous discussion. However, students' positive experiences with those asynchronous elements strengthened my confidence in the area of online course designing and shifted the view of my role as a teacher. I used to hold a traditional view of teacher presence, being real in the same space with students to support their learning. But I realized that the notion of teacher presence as "being real" can be modified according to the course tasks and learning goals. I felt that a careful planning for the asynchronous presentation with clear instructions and supportive feedback on their presentations before and during the synchronous sessions helped them more than my actual presence during their presentations.

Reflecting on student experiences with the chat tool and the video camera during the synchronous sessions was helpful for my understanding of student participation online and my

own emotional struggles and teacher identity. One of the biggest challenges that I experienced while teaching online was teaching a course without seeing or hearing students' reactions. Students' reluctance to turn on their video cameras was frustrating for me, especially when I was leading a discussion. My negative emotional experience in this area came from my view that this practice (turning off the video cameras) defeated the purpose of the synchronous discussion—to make the online discussion more like a whole class discussion in a traditional sense. Students' unwillingness to be seen in the synchronous sessions also undermined my own teacher identity since I felt that students' unwillingness might index their low motivation to participate in the class discussion.

However, reflecting on student perspectives in this area shifted my view on their participation and their use of the video camera. My understanding of students' emotional experiences also ameliorated my frustration and self-doubt about my own teaching in dealing with low student participation and my feelings of disconnectedness during the synchronous sessions. These negative feelings sometimes triggered feelings of students being disrespectful, damaging my sense of teacher identity. However, I found students' reluctance to leave on their video camera understandable, due to their concerns about privacy and the possibly disruptive effect of too many video cameras. Consideration of these reasons gave me a more neutral view about students' unwillingness to activate their video camera, leading to feelings of relief about my teaching practice and teacher status. Reflection on student perspectives also minimized my feelings of distance from the students, and helped to alleviate self-doubt about course content and pedagogies that had been ignited by the assumption that video-off was a sign of disparagement over my status as teacher.

After deepening reflection on other challenges that student experienced in online courses, I implemented new elements into my online courses by, (1) joining the synchronous sessions early and staying a few minutes longer for informal interactions with students; (2) creating a Question & Answer section for each assignment in the online platform for students to share their concerns and questions and support each other; and (3) implementing more options for student participation through synchronous and asynchronous small group discussions with an option for video-on/off, which, according to students, is the most engaging and less threatening online activity.

My reflection on students' comments on the positive aspects of online courses allowed me to move away from the view that online education is justified as an emergency solution or is just a way to increase enrollment numbers to a view of online education as a unique educational opportunity on its own merits. This shift in my perspective enabled me to put students at the center of my online course design, making online activities more meaningful for student learning through a supportive learning community.

Conclusion

Writing and reflecting on my emotional struggles, and researching students' views on their participation and emotional experiences in an online setting brought self-study to the forefront of my own professional development and personal growth in the areas of affect and education. Given that emotion plays a significant role in teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 1998), understanding the role of my own and my students' emotions in pedagogy and learning has become critical to continuing my professional development for effective practices and emotional wellbeing. This highlights the importance of teacher reflection, which should go beyond the

teacher's knowledge and skills from a cognitive perspective and incorporate teachers' and students' emotional experiences.

Additionally, self-study has given me new insight into notions of effective teaching and participation in an online setting. While online teaching should offer social, cognitive, and teaching presence, the student responses suggest that online presence should not be considered in a traditional way. While students seek quality content and challenging activities that require their cognitive presence, they enjoy the convenience and the flexibility that online education offers, and these two characteristics enhance their emotional experiences. The results suggest that online teachers might better cope with new modes and forms of student participation by creating more flexible and diverse venues for student participation. Further studies in this arena should focus on new teacher strategies and practices that allow for multiple dimensions of online presence so that student learning and participation may be better understood and assessed.

As the current study focused on how my reflection on my own and students' emotional experiences led to professional learning and development in a specific context, the results of the study may resonate with teachers and teacher educators who share similar experiences. That is, the results are in nature subjective, reflective, and self-transformative. The discussion on the students' experiences and their perspectives included in the study were limited as they were mainly used as sources for my own self-reflection. More studies on teachers and teacher educators from diverse contexts, as well as further discussion on students' emotional experiences online will yield a deeper understanding of the affective aspect of online teaching and learning.

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Appendix

1. How many online courses have you taken prior to this semester? How would you describe your experiences in the online courses?
2. At the beginning of the semester, how did you feel about your participation and the content of the course? Any changes over time?
3. How would you describe your participation in the online live discussion via Zoom?
4. How did you feel about turning on the video camera during the online live discussion? Do you think turning on and off the video camera affected your participation?
5. How did you feel about using the chat-function during the online live discussion?
6. How did you feel about using the discussion board?
7. How did you feel about making your asynchronous video presentation and reviewing the video presentations by your peers?
8. What do you think about the communication mediums for the online course? Did any of them frustrate you?
9. What were the most and the least effective activities for you? Why?
10. What was the most difficult challenge(s) you have faced in taking an online course? What did/would you do to overcome the challenge(s)?