

**A STUDY OF AN EMOTIONAL LABOR TRAINING PROGRAM FOR CLASSROOM  
TEACHERS**

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
the School of Education in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2018

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Emotional labor refers to the efforts workers engage in to manage the expression of their feelings in order to meet organizational goals or norms. Although education researchers have established emotional labor among classroom teachers, the nuances and effects of emotional labor in classroom settings still requires more study and understanding. In particular, as researchers have identified the connections between emotional labor and stress among educators, they have posited that providing instruction on the constructs of emotional labor may help to decrease those feelings of stress. Researchers have not yet studied this idea. The aim of this study was to fill that gap by creating and evaluating an in-service training program for educators that teaches about the constructs of emotional labor.

The study design incorporated both qualitative and quantitative measures to determine not only if teachers can increase their understanding of emotional labor constructs through in-service training, but also how they apply these new understandings in their daily practice. The participants included 22 K-5 classroom teachers from an elementary school in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Over the course of 10 weeks, the teachers participated in five 30-minute long training sessions that were delivered via direct instruction,

whole group discussion, and small group discussion. They completed a pre-test and post-test around the first direct instruction training session to determine if their understanding of emotional labor increased after the training. As the training program continued over the course of four more sessions, the participants completed journal entries, which were analyzed to determine how the teachers were recognizing and understanding emotional labor in their practice. The analysis of the journal entries and post-test results serve to extend the field of emotional labor research, because it established that this group of teachers increased their understanding of emotional labor and applied their new learning to their practice. The findings from this study may also be interpreted as a call to action for further research, because the participants requested additional training during which they could talk with colleagues about how to manage the stress they feel related to emotional labor.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.1 DISCERNING EMOTIONAL LABOR FROM EMOTIONAL REGULATION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2 KEY TERMS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.2.1 Emotional Display Rules .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.2.2 Surface Acting.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2.3 Deep Acting.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.3 SCOPE OF RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.3.1 Emotional Labor Among Educators .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.3.2 Teaching as Emotional Labor.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.3.3 Teachers’ Use of Emotional Labor Strategies.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.3.4 Emotional Display Rules for Teachers.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.3.5 Negative Outcomes Associated With Emotional Labor in Teachers .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>2.4 CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.0 METHODS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.1 DESIGN .....</b>	<b>28</b>

<b>3.2</b>	<b>INQUIRY QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.4.1</b>	<b>Protocols.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.4.2</b>	<b>Training Program .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.4.3</b>	<b>Survey Tools .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.4.3.1</b>	<b>Analysis of Survey Data.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.4.4</b>	<b>Journal .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>3.4.5</b>	<b>Guided Notes .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.4.5.1</b>	<b>Analysis of Journal Entries and Guided Notes .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT DO K-5 TEACHERS LEARN ABOUT EMOTIONAL LABOR?.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>WILL K-5 TEACHERS APPLY THE CONCEPTS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR TO THEIR PRACTICE? .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>CAN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON CONCEPTS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE LANGUAGE USED IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING?.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>DO K-5 TEACHERS REPORT POSITIVE REACTIONS TO LEARNING ABOUT EMOTIONAL LABOR? .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>FRAMING THE DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>LIMITATIONS.....</b>	<b>50</b>

5.3	IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	51
5.4	IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE.....	54
5.5	CONCLUSION .....	57
6.0	EPILOGUE.....	58
6.1	SCHOOL LEADER AWARENESS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR.....	59
6.2	THE SCHOOL LEADER’S ROLE IN STRESS REDUCTION .....	59
	APPENDIX A .....	62
	APPENDIX B .....	64
	APPENDIX C .....	65
	APPENDIX D .....	68
	APPENDIX E .....	69
	APPENDIX F .....	70
	APPENDIX G.....	71
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	72



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of seminal works in the field of emotional labor .....	15
Table 2. Example quotes from journal responses .....	43
Table 3. Construct language frequency from guided notes .....	45
Table 4. Training and data collection timeline .....	64

## PREFACE

The journey to the completion of this dissertation was simultaneously frustrating, challenging, and immensely rewarding. When I took the first steps on this path, I set out to understand why teaching can be such a stressful occupation. Throughout my career I have known too many excellent teachers who left the profession because they felt tired, overwhelmed, or ineffective. As I studied, researched, and wrote over the last three years there were moments when I also felt tired and ineffective, but with the help of my support network I remained focused until my journey was complete. I could not have completed this project without that support.

First, to the members of my dissertation committee, thank you all for challenging me and asking thoughtful questions that caused me to revisit findings and think deeply about their meaning. Dr. Trovato and Dr. Cribbs, thank you for all of the time and effort you gave to this work. Dr. Kerr, thank you for helping me find this path and providing me with guidance when all I could think to do was cry. Thank you also for connecting me with Christina Scanlon, my statistician, without whom I may not have survived the data analysis process.

Special thanks to the teachers who volunteered to participate in this study. They opened themselves up and gave of their time to help me understand the emotional demands placed on educators. I hope that our work here will serve the field of education by helping others to navigate their own emotional labor.

To the many colleagues who offered advice and understanding as I complained about the challenges of running a school building while completing a dissertation, thank you for helping me to stay focused on the light at the end of the tunnel. I see it now. Special thanks go to Dr. Kristen Silbaugh whose unending encouragement and words of wisdom during long runs around the lake kept me both sane and motivated.

Thanks to the employees and owners of Big Dog Coffee who did not complain when I set up camp for hours on end and also provided support through bottomless cups of coffee. To the members of Work Hard Pittsburgh, thank you for offering me space, camaraderie, and encouragement along the way.

More than anyone, I must acknowledge the support of my family. My mom and dad, Charley and Joe Hannagan, have always encouraged me to push the limits and persevere through challenges in order to achieve success; this dissertation is the embodiment of that drive. To my sister, Sarah Stickney, you have been the one person who truly understands all of my frustrations and all of my joys. Thank you for being my big sister in every sense of the term. Finally, to my husband, Josh Lucas, thank you for challenging me to find the balance of work and play, but also understanding when I had to focus on this rather than our home and our family. We made it.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of emotional labor began in earnest in 1983 with the release of Hochschild's *The Managed Heart*. The book described not only the emotional labor strategies employed by flight attendants, but also the explicit training these employees received in order to correctly follow the emotional display rules as defined by Delta. Hochschild was one of the first researchers to identify the stress that could be felt as a result of emotional labor. Over time, other researchers have added levels of complexity to the definition of emotional labor, but all have held to the existence of emotional display rules and the need for the employee to use surface acting or deep acting to successfully navigate those rules (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

While the seminal works in the field have focused on service industry professions that include hospitality and customer service work, more recently, education researchers have been establishing emotional labor as a phenomenon in K-12 classroom settings as well. Researchers like Brown, Hargreaves, Kerr, and Zembylas have written multiple papers that link emotional labor to teaching. Their work has concluded that teachers are using emotional labor strategies on a daily basis to interact with their customer base, which would include students, parents, and administrators. Unlike work in hospitality fields where employees earn a wage for their emotional labor, teachers see the results of their labor not as the wage earned, but as improved academic achievement for their students (Cribbs, 2015). It seems that teachers engage in

emotional labor because they view it as a required aspect of their profession (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Zembylas, 2005).

Although emotional labor is seen as a requirement for professional educators, it has been repeatedly established that teachers have not been explicitly taught about key aspects of emotional labor, including emotional display rules, and how to navigate surface acting and deep acting (Brown, 2011; Brown et al. 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001; Kerr & Brown, 2015; O'Connor, 2008; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2004). This is a significant finding when it is coupled with the knowledge that emotional labor can contribute to feelings of stress, exhaustion, and burnout (Naring et al., 2006; Naring et al., 2012; Schutz & Lee, 2014; Ye & Chen, 2015; Zhang & Zhu, 2008). Some studies have specified that school administrators can be a source of guidance and understanding for emotional labor by providing teachers with a shared conception of emotional display rules (Hargreaves, 1998; Oplatka, 2007). In fact, each time an education researcher identifies some construct of emotional labor in schools, he or she concludes the study by suggesting that teachers are not receiving training about emotional labor either in pre-service training or on-the-job professional development (Brown, 2011; Brown et al. 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001; Kerr & Brown, 2015; O'Connor, 2008; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2004). Unfortunately, a review of the literature and an internet search using Google leads us to conclude that despite these repeated calls to action, a program designed specifically to teach educators about the key constructs of emotional labor has yet to be developed.

This problem manifests in elementary schools in particular because of stereotypes and expectations for these teachers. Unwritten emotional display rules imply that elementary teachers should appear happy, excited, and pleasant at all times, even outside of work. Parents

have an expectation for how elementary teachers should interact during communications and might say that a teacher is “cold” if the interactions are matter-of-fact rather than bubbly. Written emotional display rules, such as those delineating teacher interactions with students, also affect stress from emotional labor. For example, the Danielson Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2007), a widely accepted rubric for teacher observations, delineates expectations for interactions with students during both academic instruction and behavior management.

How to instruct teachers about emotional labor is an area that needs further research (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Hebson, et al., 2007; Kerr & Brown, 2015; Pfister, 2015; Yin et al., 2013). This inquiry will be an attempt to overcome that, by developing and evaluating a program that instructs teachers on the key constructs of emotional labor. In particular the following questions will be addressed: To what extent can classroom teachers be taught about emotional labor? Do classroom teachers report positive reactions to learning about emotional labor? We hope that by providing teachers with explicit language for their emotional labor they will be able to navigate it effectively (Brown et al., 2014; Kerr & Brown, 2015). Preparing teachers to recognize emotional labor in their professional practice may help them to overcome emotional exhaustion, avoid burnout, and ultimately remain in the profession.

## 2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Arlie Hochschild first introduced emotional labor in her seminal work, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983). In the book, she made a case for the conscious and subconscious efforts that service industry workers employ in order to be successful on the job. She studied bill collectors and flight attendants to offer a dichotomous view of how people in both professions are required to *labor* through their *emotions* in order to earn a wage. This is in contrast to the work performed by a pipe fitter or assembly line worker who must *labor physically* in order to earn a wage. Many researchers quote Hochschild's definition of emotional labor as simply "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display;" however, the definition does not stop there, Hochschild in fact goes on to say, "emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value," (1983, p. 7). To understand emotional labor theory, it is important to fully grasp its transactional nature – money is earned through the management and expression of emotions. Emotional labor theory is grounded in the idea that what could once privately be considered the management of emotions, is now being bought and sold as labor in professions where employees must interact with people in order to complete job tasks. Emotion management is used to maintain the greater social order in that people endeavor to behave in expected ways; this management becomes labor when it is taken from the internal, private world and brought forth as part of the professional world (Hochschild, 1979).

## 2.1 DISCERNING EMOTIONAL LABOR FROM EMOTIONAL REGULATION

In Hochschild's view, emotion management and emotional labor were interchangeable to the point that the same processes are occurring, but labor occurs in an effort to maintain a job whereas management may occur in an effort to be socially accepted (Hochschild, 1983). As important as it is to understand and accept the transactional nature of emotional labor, it is equally important to recognize the difference between emotional labor and emotional regulation. In 1998, Gross defined emotional regulation as "the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions," (p. 275). This definition of emotional regulation is now commonly used for the purposes of emotional labor research. In fact, Grandey used Gross's definition as a guiding theory in her 2000 article, which offered an updated view of emotional labor that accounted for individual and situational differences. Since its publication, Grandey's piece has become one of the seminal works in the field of emotional labor, which makes it more important than ever to clearly separate emotional labor and emotional regulation as distinct constructs. Gross noted that emotional regulation is "almost always a social affair" (p. 279) this statement in and of itself is enough to separate regulation from labor. Emotional labor is about behaving in a way that will result in earning a wage, not necessarily being socially accepted.

Consider the bill collector as described by Hochschild (1983). Typically, this person is not liked because of how he must behave on the job. In order to earn his wage, the bill collector must act angry or scary, even though these emotions are not typically socially accepted. Each of the mechanisms of emotional labor is either defined by, or occurs in support of, the job (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional regulation, on the other hand, is accomplished by choosing a specific situation (e.g., avoiding a neighbor who makes you feel uncomfortable) or modifying an



existing situation that is already happening (e.g., changing the subject if a political discussion gets acrimonious). Employees do not have the ability to avoid or modify their situation because their work is bounded by the organization. Emotional regulation then, should be viewed as an entirely separate construct more similar to emotion management than emotional labor.

Both emotional regulation and emotional labor require the management of emotions, but their delineating factor is the moderator of those emotions – in labor, it is the job and in regulation it is social mores. When emotional labor occurs, the locus of control is within the organization that sets the standards for behavior and thus the expression of emotions (Hochschild, 1983). When emotional regulation occurs, the locus of control is within the individual who gets to decide whether or not the social mores will be followed (Gross, 1998). Imagine an individual who in one instance is working as a server and must maintain a bright smile and happy exterior in order to earn tips. While on the floor, a co-worker bumps into him, causing him to drop a plate. The server is in front of customers, so he must show a calm exterior as he quickly cleans up the mess. Imagine this same individual at the end of his shift. He has put on his coat and boarded the bus for the journey home when someone knocks in to him causing him to drop his soda. In the second scenario, the individual gets to decide, “Do I yell and act angrily, or do I smile at the person who bumped into me and tell them not to worry about it?” Similar emotion management techniques are occurring in both scenarios, but in the first the individual does not get to decide the emotion he expresses; he must follow the rules set by the employer to earn his wages, this is the inherent difference between regulation and labor. Emotional labor encompasses the application of employer-defined rules for emotional display, or simply emotional display rules, which will be defined in the next section.

## 2.2 KEY TERMS

Now that we have delineated emotional labor from emotional regulation, we can move more deeply into our discussion with a look at the three major constructs that underlie emotional labor theory. To understand this theory, it is important for the reader to acknowledge that as employees perform emotional labor they must first recognize emotional display rules and then perform either surface acting or deep acting to meet those rules. Each of these three terms is described in this next section. We will first define emotional display rules and then move to surface acting and deep acting.

### 2.2.1 Emotional Display Rules

Referring to them initially as feeling rules Hochschild began her discussion of *emotional display rules* by saying that, “The social guidelines that direct how we want to try to feel may be describable as a set of socially shared, albeit often latent (not thought about unless probed at) rules,” (1979, p. 563). The phrase, “how we *want to try* to feel” is key to understanding not only emotional display rules, but also emotional labor overall. What Hochschild takes pains to get across to the reader, is that the concept is not about the internal emotions felt by the employee, but the external emotions showed to the customer. As was discussed earlier, the employee is successful when he or she earns money by displaying the expected emotion for the situation. What the employee shows on the outside does not necessarily have to be connected to what he or she feels on the inside.

In *The Managed Heart* (1983) Hochschild explained emotional labor and its component parts by delving deep into an exploration of the training that Delta Airlines flight attendants went

through to begin work for the company. She followed them through the steps in their training and interviewed veteran flight attendants about their experiences. Thus, we offer Hochschild's example of the Delta flight attendant in the 1970's to explain how emotional display rules are understood and acted upon. The trainees went through months of extensive training on how to interact with customers. The primary focus of this training was that the flight attendant would learn how to make the customer feel happy, relaxed, wanted, and "at home." The Delta flight attendants were explicitly told what emotions they should and should not display to the passengers, both during a flight and in their personal time. The trainers even went as far as to tell them that if they did not follow these emotional display rules, they would be fired because there were, "5,000 girls out there wanting *your* job," (Hochschild, 1983, p. 99).

In the flight attendant example, the worker is explicitly told what the company's emotional display rules are and that following them is a requirement of employment; however, this is not always the case. In fact, it is more often the case that emotional display rules are implicitly stated through interpretations of employee handbooks, codes of ethics, or group norms (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983; Zembylas, 2002). Zembylas succinctly states, "We know these rules from how we or others respond to instances of emotional display. Emotional rules, like other rules, delineate a zone within which certain emotions are permitted and others are not permitted..." (2002, p. 200). Similarly, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) described emotional display rules as an amalgamation of the norms that are generally accepted in society, the occupational field in general, and the organization specifically. Thus, workers determine the acceptable emotional displays for a situation based on what is expected by society, what is expected of people in their profession, and then what their specific employer expects. Dieffendorf and Gosserand (2003) go further to define emotional display rules within the context

of emotional labor by stating that to accomplish work goals, workers will engage in a process of managing the expression of their emotions in response to the organization's rules for emotional display. Specifically, they wrote that, "display rules clarify the standard (for emotional display), increasing the likelihood that employees will display what the organization wants and ultimately perform better on the job," (p. 250). Thus, workers manage their emotions to be successful on the job and they determine whether they are successful based on the rules of the organization. This extends the definition of emotional labor as well, taking it beyond simple transactions for pay, but into the nature of meeting performance goals.

### **2.2.2 Surface Acting**

This process, of attempting to first understand display rules and then abide by them to achieve success, can be stressful if the worker is left to navigate the rule system independently. Although it is beneficial to the organization, "managing emotions for pay may be detrimental to the employee," (Grandey, 2000, p. 95). To overcome this, employees might detach themselves from the conflict they feel when trying to manage the difference between internal feelings and external displays by using a process called *surface acting*. Surface acting occurs when an employee intentionally displays an expected emotion on the outside, while feeling something different internally. As an example, we again return to Hochschild's observations of the Delta flight attendants. One of her interviewees related that she was confident that even if the plane were crashing, she would be able to convey a sense of calm and that regarding the passengers she "could get them to believe the best," about their situation (Hochschild, 1983, p. 107). This flight attendant clearly felt practiced and adept at her ability to use surface acting to separate her external displays from her internal emotions.

Most people can relate to surface acting when they feel frustrated or annoyed on the inside, but take a deep breath, recall the rules for their situation, and show a happy or contented look on the outside. Consider the overworked barista who has a line of customers extending out the door of her coffee shop. Her co-worker is nowhere in sight, having disappeared for an extended smoke break. She likely feels frustrated and stressed about her never-ending line of customers, but she greets each one with a smile and a pleasant, “Good morning!” in order to meet the emotional display rules for her profession. This is surface acting. Her customers never know how annoyed she is on the inside, because she follows the display rules for a neighborhood coffee shop and greets them all pleasantly.

### **2.2.3 Deep Acting**

Surface acting is just one strategy by which employees emotionally labor; they can also resort to *deep acting* to meet the emotional demands of their organization (Hochschild, 1983). Deep acting occurs when an employee manages his internal emotions to match the expectations set by the organization’s display rules (Hochschild, 1983). The major difference between these two strategies is that surface acting involves regulating the expression that is shown to others, whereas deep acting involves regulating the internal feeling so that it matches the expressed emotion (Grandey, 2000). Returning to our coffee shop barista, she might employ deep acting by thinking about something that makes her happy in an effort to forget about her absent co-worker. She adopts this strategy so that she can feel happy on the inside while displaying a smile on the outside. As is evident from each of the barista examples, surface acting and deep acting both require effort on the part of the employee and do not happen passively (Grandey, 2000).

Although these three terms combine to make up the key constructs of emotional labor, it is important to also explore the seminal works that over time have come to define the field of research.

### **2.3 SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

For more than two decades, much of the research on emotional labor concentrated on the service industry; this is likely because of the clear link between a smiling server and a higher tip, or a warm sales representative and a successful sale. More recently, research has been expanding to include other person-to-person professions including educators. Before moving further into the impacts of emotional labor on educators it is important to understand those works that are considered most influential to the study of emotional labor. In addition to *The Managed Heart*, four other studies have significantly helped to define and enhance the current field. We will begin chronologically to track the progression of this growing field of research before moving into the research with educators.

Hochschild's initial theory of emotional labor implied that workers manage the display of their emotions to manage the feelings or reactions of the customers with whom they are interacting (1983). She was interested in understanding how workers showed others how they feel to manage the customer interaction and earn a wage. Almost a decade after Hochschild's study was published, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) released a study that added the influence of social identity theory to the definition of emotional labor. They focused not only on the management of feelings, but also on the observable behaviors that are a consequence of emotional labor. This refined Hochschild's focus on the management of the feeling that would

*create* a “publicly observable” display down to the actual “*act* of displaying the appropriate emotion,” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 90). This is important to the field because it puts the focus on the outcomes that are produced as a result of managing emotions, which moves us more directly to the transactional nature of emotional labor. Ashforth and Humphrey’s work separated the “experience of emotion from the expression of emotion,” (1993, p. 90) and in so doing argued that emotion management could be an effortless process for the employee rather than a stressful one.

In 1996 Morris and Feldman argued that emotional labor itself is complex and thus requires a more complex definition than what had previously been proffered. They used an interactionist lens that accounts for the idea that the situational environment partially determines emotions. In their view, emotional labor is not a yes or no phenomenon; it has four dimensions each of which may either be present or not be present at any given time (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Specifically, they defined emotional labor as “the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions,” (p. 987). The interactionist view of emotional labor places emotional display rules in the hands of the organization. The display rules influence both how the service worker and how the customer expect each other to show emotion during the transaction. How each person then behaves influences how the other person will feel and then respond. This back and forth and the internal processes that the individuals are going through to show the expected emotions is emotional labor. The transaction will be considered successful if both parties have managed their emotions in a way that causes them to follow the organization’s display rules. The four dimensions of emotional labor are: the frequency of showing appropriate emotional display; the individual’s attentiveness to the required display rules; the variety of emotions that the individual is required

to display during an interaction; the cognitive dissonance that is created by showing an emotion that the individual does not truly feel (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

The dimensions and complexity offered by Morris and Feldman's (1996) definition seems to run counter to Ashforth and Humphrey's (1993) claim that emotion management is an effortless process. However, Morris and Feldman accept that while some of the individual dimensions of emotional labor may be inherently stressful, they note that it is more likely that cognitive dissonance is the biggest stressor in the emotional labor process. Grandey (2000) seemed to accept both sides of the discussion by stating that although emotional labor is both an effortful and stressful process for employees, it has value because it serves a purpose for the organization.

Grandey's (2000) definition of emotional labor added the concept of emotional regulation to the process of emotion management. Emotional labor is then defined as the process of regulating emotions through surface acting and deep acting to accomplish an organizational goal (Grandey, 2000). It seems that this definition would be contradictory to Hochschild's original conceptualization of emotional labor as a process of emotion management, which we have established as different from regulation. As discussed earlier, regulation implies a thermostat-style of control over feeling, while management implies that the person responds to emotions as they come without an attempt to control feeling. To overcome this, Grandey draws primarily from Gross (1998), who defines regulation as an, "attempt to influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how these emotions are experienced or expressed," (p. 224). It is the idea of influence that allows the connection to regulation, without being completely contradictory to Hochschild's original definition. By stating that regulation is about influence, it leaves open the idea that the emotions are still occurring, and emotional labor is the process of



influencing the emotions that are felt, not controlling which emotions are felt. Grandey went on to define surface acting and deep acting in terms of regulation, where surface acting is the process of regulating the expression of emotion and deep acting is the regulation of the felt emotion, in order that the organizationally accepted emotion may be expressed.

In 2003 Diefendorff and Gosserand took the idea of emotional labor as a complex phenomenon still further by layering control theory and theories of motivation to generate a new, process-based definition. The authors theorized that emotional labor is a dynamic process, whereby the individual is constantly evaluating the difference between the emotion displayed and the organization's emotional display rules. As a result of the evaluation the individual will either choose to adjust the emotion displayed, in an attempt to match the display rule, or adjust their goal, in an attempt to decrease the difference between the emotion displayed and the emotional display rule (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Using this model emotional labor is defined as, "a cyclical discrepancy-monitoring and reduction process in which perceptions of emotional displays and display rules are continuously compared," (Dieffendorf & Gosserand, 2003, p. 955).

**Table 1.** Summary of seminal works in the field of emotional labor

Citation	Key Contributions	Notes
Hochschild, 1983	Emotional labor is “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” and “is sold for a wage,” (p. 7).	Workers manage the display of emotions to manage reactions of customers in service to an organization.
Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993	Adds social identity theory to the definition of emotional labor, defining it as the “ <i>act</i> of displaying the appropriate emotion,” (p. 90).	Focused on outcomes of emotional labor. The experience of emotion is separate from the expression of emotion.
Morris & Feldman, 1996	Views emotional labor from an interactionist lens defining it as “the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions,” (p. 987).	Emotional labor is a complex phenomenon requiring a four-phase definition that is equally complex.
Grandey, 2000	Relates emotional labor to emotional regulation, defining it as “the process of regulating both feelings and expression for organizational goals” (p. 97).	Definition seems to run counter to Hochschild’s initial definition but is accepted because emotional labor is the process of influencing felt emotions, not controlling which emotions are felt.
Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003	Added control theory and motivation theories to define emotional labor as, “a cyclical discrepancy-monitoring and reduction process in which perceptions of emotional displays and display rules are continuously compared” (p.955).	Emotional labor is both a complex and dynamic process that occurs through interactions between employee and customer.

### 2.3.1 Emotional Labor Among Educators

In the studies mentioned previously, almost all the research was performed with individuals in the service industry. Accordingly, the effects of emotional labor are well documented by more than 30 years of research on flight attendants, restaurant servers, hotel workers, customer service

representatives, and other service industry professionals. Research in the field has recently turned toward professional educators, but there is still much to be learned. We will now discuss what *is* known about emotional labor in classroom settings in an effort to discern the specific areas that require more research.

### **2.3.2 Teaching as Emotional Labor**

Professions that require interactions between and among people in direct service of the profession are considered emotion work because of those interactions (Denzin, 1984; Hochschild, 1983). As people exchange information and language, they necessarily exchange emotion. This does not stop when a teacher enters the classroom. Teachers' emotions are tied into their instructional strategies and classroom management techniques (O'Connor, 2008). Beyond conveying knowledge, the teacher's job is to create and maintain a positive school climate that is founded on positive student and teacher interactions – the creation of these positive feelings is emotional labor (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009).

Consider that during a typical elementary school day, teachers engage in hundreds of interpersonal interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators. During each interaction, there is a cultural expectation for how the teacher should display feelings and express emotions. These expectations may be based in the stereotype of the “saccharine” elementary school teacher who exudes happy and sweet displays of emotion at all times. Teachers who adhere to this cultural expectation create positive feelings in others. To maintain these feelings and contribute to a positive climate, the teachers cannot be unpredictable in their emotional expressions; no matter what they are feeling internally, elementary teachers are expected to appear happy. Using the language of emotional labor, this dynamic process, expressing sweet

and bubbly emotions outwardly while feeling different emotions inwardly, is referred to as surface acting (Hochschild, 1983). The expectations maintained by the saccharine stereotype are the emotional display rules, because the stereotype determines the emotions people expect a teacher show (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983; Zembylas, 2002). Together these constructs, emotional display rules and emotional labor strategies, make up emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983).

Without question, teaching and learning is a reciprocal exchange between teacher and student. The teacher conveys knowledge or provides a path to discovery, while the student asks questions, gains insight, and has breakthroughs. Teaching and learning does not start and stop with curriculum materials and pedagogical technique; it is also an emotional practice that requires teachers to convey emotion in an attempt to affect how students feel about their own learning (Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001). The argument is that if students feel happy, safe, or confident in a classroom they will be more committed to their learning. It is the responsibility of the teacher to behave in a manner that will elicit these feelings in her students (Brown, 2011; Hargreaves, 1998; Winograd, 2003). Teachers must simultaneously do this both for groups of students and individuals (Hargreaves, 2000).

Although these interactions are labor, it is important to remember that labor is not inherently negative. The term labor is used to convey that teachers exchange their emotions to be successful and accomplish work goals as described by the interactionist view of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996). In fact, teachers report that they enjoy the emotional aspects of their work with students, because they are doing it to accomplish the goals of their classroom (Hargreaves, 2000). Conversely, they report that they do not enjoy emotional labor during interactions with parents, because they are required to mask and conjure emotions

more often and more directly in service of the larger organization (Hargreaves, 2000). This finding is in support of Hochschild's (1983) claim that emotional labor has negative effects on employees when the worker feels like his emotions are under the control of the organization. More simply, teachers willingly perform emotional labor when it is in service to the professional goals they set for their own classrooms, but when they are not in support of their own goals they feel a greater cognitive dissonance and have a negative feeling about the emotional labor.

Combining Dieffendorf and Gosserand's (2003) control theory model of emotional labor with Denizen's (1984) concept of emotional understanding we can see how difficult and emotion-driven a teacher's work truly is. People come to understand the emotions of others by constantly scanning the people around them and quickly deciding what that person is feeling; they then adjust their emotional display to elicit the desired emotions from others (Denizen, 1984; Dieffendorf & Gosserand, 2003). Teachers are constantly monitoring students to determine how they are responding to the lesson and then adjusting their instruction to elicit learning. This adjustment comes not only in the form of instructional strategies or materials, but also emotions, as teachers perform emotional labor to elicit excitement and interest from their students (Hargreaves, 2000). At the beginning of the school year, before teachers know their students well, they must work harder to read the students correctly and reach emotional understanding, but as they build relationships and learn their students' personalities and reactions, emotional labor comes more naturally and requires less effort (Denizen, 1984; Dieffendorf & Gosserand, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000, 2001). Conversely, if teachers do not build these relationships and come naturally and correctly to interpret their students' emotions, this can lead to emotional misunderstandings with deleterious effects (Denizen, 1984; Hargreaves, 2001). This concern is not limited to teachers but is a potential consequence of any human interaction;

however, in educators it can create stereotypes and misconceptions that over time, lead to lowered standards for student learning, result in a diminished quality of teaching (Hargreaves, 2001).

It is important to note that even though emotional labor can become less effortful, that does not mean it stops occurring (Hargreaves, 2000). As Zembylas stated, “emotion management over time becomes part of a teacher’s habitus,” (2005, p. 209). Repeatedly, researchers have confirmed that educators spend their whole days performing emotional labor in service to their profession (Brown, 2011; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001; Kerr & Brown, 2015; O’Connor, 2008; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2004). Conducting a self-study analysis of his own journals, Winograd (2003) determined that he performed emotional labor daily during instruction, when interacting with colleagues, and even when he was at home with his own family and not meant to be working. This was later confirmed by a survey study of a heterogeneous group of 469 classroom teachers that established that emotional labor is, in fact, a part of the working lives of educators (Brown, 2011). In an analysis of three case studies conducted with secondary school teachers, O’Connor (2008) found that the teachers performed emotional labor throughout the school day by surface acting and deep acting to engage with students and colleagues. Hargreaves also identified several aspects of emotional labor in teachers using qualitative methods with both single-case studies and heterogeneous groups (1998, 2000, 2001).

Hochschild (1983) established three criteria for emotional labor: 1.) the work must occur in a face-to-face setting with the public 2.) the worker must be required to produce a feeling or emotion in another person and 3.) the organization must have a degree of control over the employee’s emotions. Returning to our example of the elementary school teacher we can see

that emotional labor must be a part of teaching because: 1) the teacher works face-to-face with students and parents 2) the teacher must make the students feel safe, happy, and eager to learn and must instill a sense of safety and confidence in the parents as well (Hargreaves, 1998) and 3) the culture of schools determines how teachers display emotions to students and parents (Brown, 2011; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2005).

We turn now to further discussion of the key constructs of emotional labor in classroom teaching.

### **2.3.3 Teachers' Use of Emotional Labor Strategies**

In one study, teachers identified that they were engaging in a “performance” and had to make a “conscious decision” to care about their students (O’Connor, 2008). These behaviors clearly suggest surface acting and deep acting. Hochschild (1983) identified that deep acting is akin to method acting in that the worker must prepare, decide, or make an effort to feel the emotion that he is displaying, such as making a conscious decision. In contrast, surface acting is about simply showing an unfeared emotion or performing (Hochschild, 1983). Other researchers have recognized that teachers must also use both surface acting and deep acting strategies in their classrooms (Brown, 2011; Brown, Horner, Kerr, & Scanlon, 2014; Hargreaves 1998, 2000; Yin, Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013). Hargreaves noted that a good teacher is not always, “just act(ing) out feelings... but also consciously working oneself up into a state of actually experiencing the necessary feelings,” (1998, p. 840).

The level of energy, excitement, and passion that great teaching requires does not happen naturally; it requires educators to labor to accomplish their goals (Hargreaves, 2000). Even during instruction, educators use deep acting strategies to keep themselves energized throughout

the course of a 45 or 60-minute lesson (Brown et al., 2014; Hargreaves, 2000; Winograd, 2003). Winograd (2003) talked about surface acting with his students when he simply hid his internal emotions and displayed the expected emotion, by either faking a smile or feigning anger as necessary to the situation. Zembylas (2005) identified surface acting when dealing with colleagues, noting that teachers might downgrade their emotion to find a more socially acceptable approach. For example, instead of showing anger at a colleague, a teacher might instead express her emotion as a feeling of hurt.

It is important to note that although there is much research that supports the existence of emotional labor strategies in teaching, some researchers argue that teachers generally do feel the emotions they are displaying, so the terms surface acting and deep acting cannot be correctly applied (Hebson, Earnshaw, & Marchington, 2007). Despite this claim, we are choosing to accept the majority conclusions of research and move forward with the notion that teachers are using emotional labor strategies during their work day (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Kerr & Brown, 2015). We argue that the “sincere emotion” (Hebson et al., 2007, p. 682) seen in teachers does not negate the fact that teachers must at times display emotions externally that are incongruent with their felt emotions.

#### **2.3.4 Emotional Display Rules for Teachers**

Surface acting and deep acting are strategies that teachers use to align their external emotional displays with the expectations of the organization (Brown et al., 2014; Hochschild, 1983). To better understand these strategies, a few researchers have recently begun deciphering the display rules that exist for teachers (Brown et al., 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006; Winograd, 2003;). Their results have varied from the general, control negative emotions and



display caring emotions (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006), to the specific, have a sense of humor and love your students (Winograd, 2003). When asked, teachers themselves often refer to the display rules as “being professional” or “being appropriate,” but state that no one has ever explicitly instructed them on what that might mean, or even how to “be professional” (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Zembylas, 2005).

One researcher determined that there were at least five expectations for how he should behave with his students, but none of them had been explicitly taught to him during pre-service training or by his organization (Winograd, 2003). In a similarly designed case study Zembylas (2005) found that display rules for teachers were encoded as school policies, long standing practices, and group conventions. Interestingly, a qualitative study of K-12 teachers in Israel found that although there were cultural mores influencing unwritten expectations for teachers’ emotional displays these were not display rules, because the teachers had the free will to determine if they would follow them (Oplatka, 2007). Contrastingly, teachers in the United Kingdom are given explicit emotional display rules through their standards for professional practice (Hebson et al., 2007). Research has also concluded that emotional rules for teachers are even encoded in the historical practices of teaching (Zembylas, 2005).

Accepting that teachers participate in emotional labor but knowing that they rarely have knowledge of explicit organizational rules for emotional display, we can surmise that emotional labor in teachers would almost always encompass unwritten emotional display rules for how they should show emotions to students, parents, administrators, and colleagues. We are left to wonder: if the display rules for teachers are exclusively implicit, how is a teacher supposed to understand what the organization’s display rules are? The implications create space for misinterpretations of display rules and misunderstandings of practice. For instance, if a new

teacher is not explicitly told that the leaders in the school expect teachers to never show anger to their students, no matter what the circumstance, she could find herself in trouble if she is caught yelling at two students who just got into a shoving match on the playground. Even if her intentions were good, this misunderstanding could negatively affect both her perception of herself and the organization's perception of her.

### **2.3.5 Negative Outcomes Associated With Emotional Labor in Teachers**

Unfortunately, "(t)eachers are always prone to fall short emotionally because people expect too much of them," (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 836). As teachers labor to match the rules of their organization, they can begin to have their own negative intrapersonal reactions to the situation; this is where emotional labor takes an undesirable turn. When employees do not feel control over their emotions, because they must mask some and fake others in service to the organization, they might begin to view either themselves or their organization negatively (Hochschild, 1983). Some of the well-documented negative outcomes of emotional labor include feelings of stress, exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and eventually job attrition (Naring, Briet, & Brouwers, 2006; Naring, Vlerick, & Van de Ven, 2012; Schutz & Lee, 2014; Ye & Chen, 2015; Zhang & Zhu, 2008). In fact, one secondary school teacher specifically identified emotional labor as the most exhausting part of her job (O'Connor, 2008). A larger, quantitative study of secondary school teachers found that surface acting is associated with feelings of emotional exhaustion (Naring et al., 2006; Naring et al., 2012). Interestingly, these same effects are not found with deep acting (Humphrey, Ashforth & Diefendorff, 2015; Naring et al., 2006; Naring et al., 2012). One assumes that in deep acting, the teacher can make himself feel the expressed emotion and thus does not have the dissonance that leads to stress and exhaustion.

Teachers experience emotional dissonance because they do not always feel the emotion they are expected to show (Schutz & Lee, 2014). Over time, this internal discord can negatively impact teachers' feelings of self-efficacy and lead to attrition from the profession (Shutz & Lee, 2014; Shutz & Zembylas, 2009). High teacher turnover is not only bad for the professional, but it also negatively impacts the learning environment in the school. When teachers leave for other professions this increases the workload for school administrators and teacher mentors who must now invest time, energy, and resources in training yet another new educator.

Although all cultures require that teachers have some sort of emotional connection to their students, there is no universal rule for the emotional space that teachers and students should share (Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas, 2004). In the United States, elementary teachers report being emotionally closer to their students than secondary teachers do; correspondingly, they are also more likely to report feeling angry at or hurt by their students (Hargreaves, 2000). Secondary school teachers on the other hand, report negative effects related to feeling emotionally distant from their students (Hargreaves, 2000). When combined with the unwritten display rules that implore teachers not to show anger at their students, we can infer that teachers, at least elementary ones, must be storing these negative emotions or pushing them aside (Brown, 2011; Hargreaves, 1998; Winograd, 2003). Left unchecked, teachers may internalize that feelings such as anger or sadness must be dealt with in private and without the support of others (Zembylas, 2005). Where then do these negative emotions go? What happens to a teacher who cannot show her true emotions? From the research explored above, it seems that she becomes stressed, emotionally exhausted, and may eventually leave her job.

This literature review highlights recent research on emotional labor in K-12 settings, primarily in the United States. By reference we have also cited earlier studies in the field of

emotional labor in general. The review has clearly established that teachers participate in emotional labor as a part of their profession.

## **2.4 CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

The study of emotional labor began in earnest in 1983 with the release of Hochschild's *The Managed Heart*. In the book, she described not only the emotional labor strategies employed by flight attendants, but also the explicit training these employees received in order to correctly follow the emotional display rules as defined by Delta. Hochschild was also one of the first researchers to identify the stress that could be felt because of emotional labor. Over time, other researchers have added levels of complexity to the definition of emotional labor, but all have held to the existence of emotional display rules as defined by an organization and the need for the employee to use strategies to successfully navigate those rules (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

While the seminal works in the field have focused on service industry professions that include hospitality and customer service work, more recently, education researchers have established emotional labor as a phenomenon in K-12 classroom settings as well. Researchers like Brown, Hargreaves, Kerr, and Zembylas have written multiple papers that link emotional labor to teaching. Their work has concluded that teachers are using emotional labor strategies daily to interact with their customer base, which would include students, parents, and administrators. Unlike work in hospitality fields where employees earn a wage for their emotional labor, teachers see the results of their labor not as the wage earned, but as improved academic achievement for their students (Cribbs, 2015). We must conclude then, that teachers

engage in emotional labor because they view it as a required aspect of their profession (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Zembylas, 2005).

Although emotional labor is seen as a requirement for professional educators, it has been repeatedly established that teachers have not been explicitly taught about emotional display rules or how to navigate surface acting and deep acting (Brown, 2011; Brown et al. 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001; Kerr & Brown, 2015; O'Connor, 2008; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2004). This is a significant finding when it is coupled with the knowledge that emotional labor can contribute to feelings of stress, exhaustion, and burnout (Naring et al., 2006; Naring et al., 2012; Schutz & Lee, 2014; Ye & Chen, 2015; Zhang & Zhu, 2008). Teachers report that they feel “like a fake” or like they are “playing a role” when they have to engage in surface acting (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014). This can lead to feelings of decreased self-efficacy and attrition from the profession (Shutz & Lee, 2014; Shutz & Zembylas, 2009). Some studies have specified that school administrators can be a source of guidance and understanding for emotional labor by providing teachers with a shared conception of emotional display rules (Hargreaves, 1998; Oplatka, 2007). In fact, each time an education researcher identifies some construct of emotional labor in schools, he or she concludes the study by suggesting that teachers are not receiving training about emotional labor either in pre-service training or on-the-job professional development (Brown, 2011; Brown et al. 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001; Kerr & Brown, 2015; O'Connor, 2008; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2004).

Unfortunately, a quick Google search leads us to conclude that few researchers have taken up this call to action. One research team did propose a plan for teaching emotional labor to college students preparing for careers in public service fields, but did not actually carry out an evaluation of their plan (Mastracci, Newman, & Guy, 2010). They suggested adding training

about emotional labor to foundational courses that introduce students to the primary concepts and expectations of their field. Mastracci et al. laid out four points that should receive in-depth coverage when teaching about emotional labor: explaining it while contrasting emotional intelligence and emotion work; explaining how and why it is part of certain career fields; explaining that it can have negative outcomes; and, connecting it to the transactional nature of customer service. Despite their detailed plan, even Mastracci et al. has not actually studied its effectiveness.

Overall, this review of literature has identified gaps in the research that require further study. In particular, one wonders how classroom teachers can be taught about emotional labor. And in turn, what can school administrators do to help teachers mitigate the negative effects of emotional labor?

How to instruct teachers about emotional labor is an area that needs further research (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Hebson, et al., 2007; Kerr & Brown, 2015; Pfister, 2015; Yin et al., 2013). This study will be an attempt to address this gap, by developing and evaluating a program that instructs teachers on the key constructs of emotional labor. We hope that by providing teachers with explicit language for their emotional labor they will be able to navigate it effectively (Brown et al., 2014; Kerr & Brown, 2015). Preparing teachers to recognize and manage their emotional labor may help them overcome emotional exhaustion, avoid burnout, and ultimately remain in the profession.

### **3.0 METHODS**

The purpose of this inquiry is to gain understanding about how teachers can be taught the concepts of emotional labor in such a way that they will put those concepts into practice. Answering this question could help both K-5 administrators and educators gain a better understanding of their daily practice with students, parents, and colleagues. Using both qualitative and quantitative measures allowed us to see not only if teachers can increase their understanding of emotional labor constructs through in-service training, but also how they apply these new understandings in their daily practice.

#### **3.1 DESIGN**

The conceptualization of the problem area implies that professional development with working educators should be taking place. As such, an evaluation of one professional development plan was used to help identify what works in the realm of emotional labor. Guskey (2000) suggested five levels of professional development evaluation, four of which were used here to measure effectiveness. The fifth level concerns student learning outcomes and was not employed because research in the field of emotional labor does not yet indicate connections to student achievement. Thus, to attempt to connect professional development about emotional labor to student learning would be presumptive and likely inaccurate.

A series of professional development sessions was conducted with K-5 elementary school teachers during the first half of the 2017-2018 school year and the changes in the participants' understanding of emotional labor were tracked and analyzed. Because this inquiry was conducted with practicing educators, the professional development model and data collection tools were created with the goal of keeping them simple and effective. It would be counter-productive to introduce a professional development program that is predicated on relieving feelings of stress only to add stressors to the participants' lives.

The measures were predominantly self-report and relied on the participants to submit responses. Self-assessments were utilized to understand both the participants' knowledge acquisition and application of concepts over time.

### 3.2 INQUIRY QUESTIONS

The questions enumerated below align to four of the five levels of program evaluation as identified by Guskey (2000). Guskey's nomenclature is listed in italics next to the related question.

1. To what extent do K-5 teachers learn about emotional labor in a 30-minute professional development session? (*Participants' Learning*)
2. Will K-5 teachers apply the concepts of emotional labor in their daily practice? (*Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills*)
3. Can professional development on concepts of emotional labor have an impact on the language used in the school building? (*Organization Change*)



4. Do K-5 teachers report positive reactions to learning about emotional labor?  
*(Participants' Reactions)*

### **3.3 SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS**

Unwritten emotional display rules, furthered by stereotypes, imply that elementary school teachers should appear happy, excited, and pleasant at all times, even outside of work. Parents have an expectation for how elementary school teachers should interact during communications and might say that a teacher is “cold” if the interactions are matter-of-fact rather than bubbly. Written emotional display rules, such as those delineating teacher interactions with students, also affect stress from emotional labor. The Danielson Framework for Teaching, a rubric for teacher observations, delineates expectations for interactions with students during both academic instruction and behavior management (Danielson, 2007). Elementary school teachers who are prepared to identify and navigate emotional labor constructs may feel less stress and less emotional exhaustion from emotional labor.

The study was conducted in an elementary school in a Mid-Atlantic state. Teachers there are evaluated using the Danielson Framework, which implies emotions for effective teachers. The school is in a high-achieving district where parents and administrators have preconceived notions about the emotions that teachers should display during interactions. The characteristics of this setting align with the known factors that contribute to emotional labor and its resulting stress. The school has a population of around 300 students, served by 14 classroom teachers and 8 specialist teachers. The classroom teachers are responsible for instruction in core subjects (Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies) as well as maintaining

communications and relationships with the students' families. The specialists are responsible for instruction only in their specialty area (e. g, Art, Music, Reading Support, Math Enrichment, etc.). Specialists are not expected to maintain ongoing relationships with families but are expected to have a positive rapport with all 300 students. The educators' years of experience range from zero (newly hired from college and pre-service training) to more than 25, with most having taught for 7-15 years. All 22 teachers chose to participate in this study although, as the results will later indicate, not all participants completed all of the requested data collection tools.

### **3.4 PROCEDURES**

#### **3.4.1 Protocols**

The superintendent of the identified school provided approval for the study before I started any portion of this study at the site. Potential participants were contacted in-person via a presentation during a monthly faculty meeting. A follow up email was sent to all potential participants one week later. Both the in-person presentation and the email followed the Recruitment Script that can be found in Appendix A. All participants in the study first provided fully informed consent using the Consent Document that is located in Appendix B. Prior to completing the first data collection tool, each participant chose a coded identifier that was known only to them. Participants then entered this identifier each time they completed a survey or journal response so that individual changes in understanding and knowledge application could be tracked over time, while still protecting confidentiality. All data was collected and stored electronically using the online Qualtrics software system.

### 3.4.2 Training Program

Over the course of ten weeks, participants engaged in five professional development sessions following the structure below. The timeline for the entire program including the training sessions and the dispersal of the data collection tools can be found in Appendix C.

1. Introduction (Session #1) – Explanations and definitions of emotional labor constructs were provided through direct instruction. A question and answer period led to a large group discussion that provided further clarification on topics of interest or confusion for the participants.
2. Recognition (Session #2) – Given real-life examples of emotional labor in elementary classrooms, participants discussed and identified the constructs in the examples. Direct instruction was provided on topics that received low scores on the posttest survey (i.e., emotional display rules), which had been distributed after the first session.
3. Understanding (Session #3) – In small groups, participants identified and agreed upon the emotional display rules for K-5 teachers. The small groups then shared their decisions with the large group and discussion was held to agree on the display rules for the school.
4. Understanding/Application (Session #4) – In smaller Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups participants met to discuss how they recognize and respond to emotional labor during their professional practice. These sessions were held outside the presence of the researcher but were guided using a list of questions provided by the researcher.
5. Application (Session #5) – Participants reported back to the whole group regarding their experiences with emotional labor and their learnings throughout the previous training sessions. A large group discussion took place regarding the ways to respond to emotional labor through surface acting and deep acting.

The training program was developed and carried out with respect to Guskey's levels of professional development and the findings of Mastracci, Newman, and Guy (2010). In their article about teaching emotional labor concepts to college students who were preparing for careers in public affairs, Mastracci et al. laid out concepts that they determined to be the most pertinent for teaching emotional labor. Their work emphasized the importance of providing this training before graduation so that young professionals were prepared for the emotion work they would encounter in their jobs. Because this study focused on in-service teacher training, as opposed to pre-service training, the model was modified to fit the time constraints and adult learning styles inherent to on-the-job training. In particular, Mastracci et al. indicated that lectures on emotional labor concepts should be coupled with homework assignments that asked students to interview individuals in the service industry to gain perspective on emotional labor. This sort of assignment could cause a professional educator to feel additional stressors due to having to perform work outside of the workday and thus was not employed.

### **3.4.3 Survey Tools**

A survey was administered to participants just prior to and then following the first training session. It was adapted from established measures of emotional labor constructs in educators and given as a pretest and posttest in order to track the elementary teachers' understanding of emotional labor over time.

A basic survey tool measuring emotional labor in workers was first used by Hoschild in her initial work identifying emotional labor (1983). For the next two decades, researchers followed her lead using simple, one-dimensional surveys to recognize emotional labor in a variety of other fields (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). It was not until 2003 that Brotheridge and Lee

developed and validated The Emotional Labor Scale (ELS). The ELS is now widely used in the study of emotional labor. That tool uses a 5-point Likert scale and the response stem, “On an average day at work how frequently do you....” It has a multi-faceted design that measures the frequency, intensity, and variety of emotional display expressed by participants.

The ELS was later adapted to specifically measure emotional labor in the teaching profession (Brown, 2011). The Emotional Labor of Teaching Scale (TELTS) includes demographic information, open-ended questions, and rating scales tailored for teachers. For example, teacher-participants are asked to identify the emotional display rules they encounter in their schools. The TELTS would be an effective survey tool for this inquiry because it gauges emotional labor in teachers in particular and has been found to be valid; however, the TELTS is a comprehensive tool created for use with a large sample size (Brown, 2011). Thus, a smaller survey tool was created that employs basic prompts to target the educator’s understanding of emotional labor. The final version of the survey is located in Appendix D. This measure matches both the limited scope of this inquiry and the aim of using only simple and efficient tools.

A second survey tool was administered at the very end of the training program, following the final training session. This took the form of four questions on a Likert scale that asked participants to rate their experience with the training program. One open-ended question asked participants to offer suggestions for improvements to the program. The Reaction Survey can be found in Appendix E.

**3.4.3.1 Analysis of Survey Data** The pretest and posttest survey data were deciphered using a matched pair analysis to determine if individual participants had an increase in understanding about emotional labor constructs after the initial training session. This parametric test revealed

not only changes in scores after the initial training, but also identified particular questions that had high or low scores. This analysis also guided the further development of content for the later training sessions. The mean for each question was also calculated. A question with a mean score of four or higher on the posttest indicated that participants self-reported a good understanding of the construct. A question with a mean score of two or lower indicated that participants self-reported a poor understanding of the construct. The mode was also calculated to determine the most common score for each question. Using the mode instead of relying solely on the average helped us to gain insight into the group's self-reported understanding of each emotional labor construct. The mode is less susceptible to outlier data and thus more reliable when determining the amount of understanding within the participant group. Finally, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of this emotional labor training on the educator's understanding of the concept.

The reaction survey data was analyzed with descriptive statistics resulting in the mean and mode for each question. The open-ended question was qualitatively analyzed for themes among the responses. This combination of analyses provided insight into not only whether or not the participants objectively enjoyed the training, but also told us what improvements might be helpful for future training programs.

#### **3.4.4 Journal**

On its own, the survey data is useful to decipher participant understanding, but it is current practice in the study of emotional labor to pair surveys with interviews (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Brown, 2011; Cribbs, 2015; Kerr & Brown, 2015), thus a modified version of this method was applied in this study. In the context under review here, the participant pool is small, and the

researcher has a prior relationship with them. Therefore, it was presumed that the participants would be more forthcoming using a journaling technique rather than traditional face-to-face interviews. The journals provided a deeper understanding of how the participants responded to and applied their learning about emotional labor than the survey alone could provide. A series of three open-ended prompts took the form of self-reflections in order to provide more detailed information about the teachers' application of their learning and the presentation of emotional labor in the school. This measure appears in Appendix F.

Participants were sent an online journal prompt following three of the training sessions. The prompts intended to encourage self-reflection in the participants. The three prompts asked the educators to describe and reflect on their experience with emotional display rules, surface acting and deep acting, and emotional labor in general.

The information gathered from the journals built on the work of Cribbs (2015), who studied emotional display rules within the context of student and teacher interactions. She used both a survey and semi-structured follow-up interviews to probe this problem area more deeply and as a result was able to report that teachers self-identified as needing training for both emotional labor in general and navigating emotional display rules more specifically.

### **3.4.5 Guided Notes**

The final tool employed for this inquiry was the use of Guided Notes. During their fourth training session, participants engaged in discussions in small, self-selected Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups. The researcher was not present for these groups, but the discussions were guided by pre-determined questions supplied on a guided notes sheet. The guided notes

were intended to focus both PLC discussions and note taking. This tool is available in Appendix G.

Similar to the journal tool, this method was employed to harness the power of the interview, which has proven to be an effective device when studying emotional labor, while also respecting the nuances that arise when the principal researcher has a prior relationship with participants (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Brown, 2011; Cribbs, 2015; Kerr & Brown, 2015).

**3.4.5.1 Analysis of Journal Entries and Guided Notes** The journal entries and guided notes were analyzed using methods similar to those employed by Kerr and Brown (2015) and Hargreaves (1998) in their studies of emotional labor in teachers. In those studies, the researchers qualitatively coded responses and looked for similarities with concepts previously reported in the literature. As described by Mertens (2015), qualitative analysis is an ongoing, cyclical, and fluid process. Thus, a method of analysis was chosen that would allow for regular refinement and reinterpretation of the data until data aligned in such a way that conclusions could be drawn. The information garnered from this cyclical process helped to identify how participants were applying what they learned about emotional labor to their professional practice.

Using a constant comparative methodology as described by Mertens, I used the initial theory of emotional labor as the foundation for the codebook but then constantly revised and tested those codes against emerging data. I immersed myself in the full set of participant-created texts, keeping a research journal to flag and identify themes. As themes were discerned, they were reported from the set and used to refine the initial codes or create new ones. This process, described by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) as directed content analysis, improves the reliability of findings because it allows for the discovery of both “supporting and nonsupporting evidence for a theory,” (p. 1282). Directed content analysis not only allowed for the extension of the theory



of emotional labor, which was a particular aim of this study focusing on training about emotional labor, but it also allowed for the possibility of contradictory findings. This in turn decreases the likelihood of finding only those results that we are looking for, or hope to see (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Mertens refers to this as confirmability in that the “data and their interpretation are not figments of the researcher’s imagination,” (p. 272). The qualitative review of data happened throughout the training plan timeline such that the topics covered in the final session were revised in an effort to help participants master their understanding of emotional labor constructs. For instance, a review of the journal responses revealed that at least two participants were conflating feelings of physical illness with emotional feelings. This then became a brief discussion topic for the final training session. This and other results will be discussed in detail in Chapters Four and Five.

The guided notes were also coded for frequency of emotional labor vocabulary. This provided insight into the communication change that happened within the organization. The researcher was not present when the participants completed the guided notes sheet. It is thus presumed that the language found in the notes was a result of natural use by the participants and therefore indicative of organizational changes, not simply responses to the expectations of the researcher.

## **4.0 FINDINGS**

A review of the inquiry questions reminds us that we are evaluating this emotional labor training program using four of five levels of Guskey's model for evaluating professional development. In particular, we are interested in: Participants' Learning, Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills, Communication Change, and Participants' Reactions. The findings for each category will be discussed here.

### **4.1 TO WHAT EXTENT DO K-5 TEACHERS LEARN ABOUT EMOTIONAL LABOR?**

The participants' learning about emotional labor was measured via the pretest and posttest survey. The data from these surveys was extracted from Qualtrics and merged into an SPSS file for quantitative analysis. Twenty-two participants completed pretest and posttest surveys, providing a 100% response rate. Four of the surveys were not analyzed because two posttests did not have matching pretest surveys, and two pretests did not have matching posttest surveys. This resulted in a sample size of 18. Cronbach's coefficient alpha scores were calculated to test the internal consistency and determined to be .927. This score indicates that the scale in question is reliable. Reliability scores are commonly accepted beginning at the range of .75 (Mertens, 2015). The score calculated here connotes that the survey tool is a reliable measure of the

participants' understanding of emotional labor. Further assumptions of normal distributions were tested and determined to be met. Thus, parametric tests were carried out.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of emotional labor training on the participant's understanding of the concept. There was a significant increase in understanding from the pretest ( $M=2.36$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ) to the posttest ( $M=4.31$ ,  $SD=.63$ ),  $t(17)=-7.87$ ,  $p<.001$ . Cohen's  $d$  represents the effect size between two means as measured by eta squared. Analysis of Cohen's  $d$  using SPSS calculated it to be .78. The generally accepted rule is that .50 represents a medium effect and .80 represents a large effect (Mertens, 2015). Thus, there is convincing evidence that the training program had an effect on the participants' understanding of emotional labor.

Put simply, the participants' average understanding score increased after the first emotional labor training session. The statistical analyses conducted here indicate that K-5 classroom teachers can significantly increase their understanding of emotional labor after just a single, 30-minute training session on the constructs of emotional labor.

The mode for each question on the posttest survey was also calculated. It is of particular interest for question four, which asked participants about their understanding of emotional display rules. For each of the other questions in the survey, there was a clear mode, or commonly chosen answer, that also corresponded with the calculated mean; however, for emotional display rules not only was there not a mode, but there was also spread among the scores with participants indicating that they had a vague understanding or no understanding of the concept almost as often as other participants indicated that they understood the concept. Not surprisingly, this question had the lowest mean score overall. The implications of this finding will be discussed in Chapter Five.

## 4.2 WILL K-5 TEACHERS APPLY THE CONCEPTS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR TO THEIR PRACTICE?

Analysis of the journal responses provided the primary answer to the question regarding application of emotional labor constructs in practice. Teachers offered a total of 50 journal responses for the three prompts. Specifically, the first journal prompt had 19 responses (87% response rate), the second prompt had 13 responses (57% response rate), and the third prompt had 15 responses (67% response rate). In those responses, the participants were most likely to talk about their experiences with surface acting, no matter what the question prompted them to write about. There were 26 references to surface acting across all three prompts. These took the form of referencing the construct directly, but also via other coded language such as “act like” or “even though.” One other common refrain that occurred across multiple responses was that participants “put a smile on” or “put on a smile” in order to meet an expectation for emotional display. Most commonly, this involved showing students a happy expression when the educator was feeling angry or sad. For example, respondent S60 wrote, “I immediately *put on a smile* and greeted them with a warm welcome. Throughout the day I continued my positive, enthusiastic attitude. All the while I felt much differently on the inside.” This response is characteristic of many of the experiences described in the responses and indicates that teachers are applying the construct of surface acting in their practice.

The next most common concept discussed by participants was display rules. There were 21 instances of participants writing about display rules either directly or via indirect language. Participants wrote about expressions that they “had to” or “should” display for students, families, and administrators. A typical response here is exemplified by respondent W30 who described a display rule that was followed in spite of worry about an ill family member, “As the smiling

faces of my students came through the door, I *had to* be ‘on’ as they needed for me to be pleasant and excited to start our day.”

The participants were least likely to use language that referred to deep acting, although they did use it on eight occasions. One example of this is offered by a response from M43 who wrote about the emotional labor encountered during interactions with administrators stating, “I often cope by telling myself that I am fortunate to work in such a wonderful district and that other districts may not have [so many professional development sessions], but place other responsibilities on their teachers that are far worse.” As this answer implies, when discussing deep acting the participants also frequently noted the mechanisms and strategies that they use to cope with emotional labor. This ability to not only use the language of emotional labor, but also to explain how emotional labor is processed mentally is good evidence that the participants did apply their learning to their work.

Table 2 provides examples of the language that was typical of the respondents’ journal entries. Overall, the journal responses indicate that these K-5 teachers applied concepts of emotional labor to their daily practice.

**Table 2.** Example quotes from journal responses

Construct	Frequency	Example Quotes
Surface Acting	26	<p>“Throughout the day I felt anxious, nervous, and emotional about the surgery. As soon as my kiddos walked in the door, I immediately put on a smile and greeted them with a warm welcome. Throughout the day I continued my positive, enthusiastic attitude. All the while I felt much differently on the inside.” – S60</p> <p>“While my mind was with my daughter and worrying if she would be ok, I had to put a smile on my face and continue teaching my kiddos.” – J52</p> <p>“The children and a majority of the parents seem excited to be part of the festivities. As a classroom teacher, it is very exhausting putting on a ‘happy face’ while trying to maintain classroom management without putting a damper on the games/activities that the parents worked so hard on creating.” – M43</p> <p>“I have some very serious situations going on at home and I keep a smile on my face and put the kids first, even though I am devastated on the inside.” – J58</p> <p>“It was so upsetting and scary and it was hard not to feel really sad about it. I had to use Surface Acting around the children and my peers because I had to be very positive and friendly even though I was feeling sad inside.” – W49</p> <p>“An administrator is very excited about it and strikes up a conversation with you about the topic. You put on a smile, discuss the topic, and say how you will be able to use the information in your daily lessons. Meanwhile, you are thinking...I didn't learn anything that I didn't already know, I know it won't work because I have already tried it, or it really didn't pertain to me.” – M36</p>
Emotional Display Rules	21	<p>“Even though I felt shaken, I had to maintain a calm demeanor in front of the [students and parents] to keep them calm.” – S44</p> <p>“The students were happy to see me and greeted me with hugs. I needed to return this happiness and let them see that I was ready to be back. Inside, I was grieving. Outside, I was smiling. My voice, my face, my mannerisms had to reflect that I was there to be their teacher, to do the job that was expected of me.” – G30</p> <p>“As the smiling faces of my students came through the door, I had to be ‘on’ as they needed for me to be pleasant and excited to start our day.” – W30</p> <p>“It is our responsibility to be the teacher that a child wants to see each day.” – O37</p> <p>“We can't let our true feelings (when they are sad) show because we have a responsibility to be positive, happy role models when we are at school.” – W49</p> <p>“I ran into a student at a restaurant recently. I was happy to see her, but since my table was directly beside hers, I felt that I had to be careful during my conversations with my dining companion to not reveal any personal information and to not discuss school matters lest I be overheard. Even though it was well after ‘school time,’ I felt that I still needed to keep up my ‘teacher’ persona.” – L45</p>

Table 2 continued

Deep Acting	8	<p>“My mind was full of "what I am I going to do without a car" types of concerns until the kids came to the room. I found that my class distracted me from the negative thoughts and I was thankful that they were "mine" - since many of my friends were substitute teachers - I knew how blessed I was to have a class and to be teaching in a public school. By the time that day ended, my panic and fear was replaced with gratitude for the people I work with, my family, and my awesome first class.” – H48</p> <p>“I felt the stress and anxiety that comes along with spending money on something you don’t want to but have to, and began to cry. I checked the clock and knew that I had fifteen minutes until the kids would be back in the room. So, I wiped away my tears, put some eye drops in and tried to think positive thoughts even though that was the last thing I wanted to do right then. I had to put on a smiling face for the kids because I knew they needed me to be positive.” – N63</p> <p>“I talked with my co-directors before the [practice] and expressed my nervousness about the next day's activities, as well as my concerns for the [event] and our opening night (which was also the next day). I took a deep breath, started [practice], and stayed focused throughout the night. As I was leaving, my colleague wished me luck for the next day, and I realized that I hadn't thought of it once during [practice]. I feel that through deep focus I was able to stay "on task" and not feel anxious about upcoming events.” – S44</p> <p>“After having a crazy morning at home, I came in feeling out of sorts. Once the kids got here, their upbeat attitude and our morning routine changed my feelings inside and we were off to have a great day!” – J52</p> <p>“I was overwhelmed by my responsibilities as a mother and a full time employee, but as my students walked into class that morning, I took a deep breath and smiled. I had a great job, great support system, and terrific kids...at home and at school!” – W30</p> <p>“Most, if not all, of the teachers are exhausted from putting in a full day's worth of work only to sit for another hour and a half. I often cope by telling myself that I am fortunate to work in such a wonderful district and that other districts may not have [so many professional development sessions], but place other responsibilities on their teachers that are far worse. Putting my situation into perspective, helps to make the afternoon bearable and the time to pass more quickly. – M43</p>
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### 4.3 CAN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON CONCEPTS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE LANGUAGE USED IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING?

The guided notes were analyzed to determine if this training program had an impact on the language used in the school. As a reminder, the participants worked in self-selected small groups to discuss their experiences with emotional labor. One guided notes sheet was submitted from each group as evidence of this discussion. Thus, the 22 participants split themselves into four small groups of five or six members each. The frequency of the use of emotional labor language in the notes signified the participants' use of the language in their practice, which would be indicative of an organizational change in the school. Across the four small groups there were nine instances of the use of emotional labor language. The same codes were used for the guided notes as were used for the journal prompts. The frequency of use for each construct is provided in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Construct language frequency from guided notes

Construct	Frequency
Emotional Display Rules	4
Emotional Labor	2
Deep Acting	2
Surface Acting	1

The most commonly used language referred to emotional display rules, either directly or indirectly. Three instances involved the participants specifically citing display rules that they



followed during professional interactions. Although the guided notes do seem to suggest that the participants were using the emotional labor language in their school building, the response set provided was so small that it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions about the communication change. This is an apparent limitation of the results that will be discussed further in the next chapter.

#### **4.4 DO K-5 TEACHERS REPORT POSITIVE REACTIONS TO LEARNING ABOUT EMOTIONAL LABOR?**

The responses to the reaction survey, which was administered after the fifth and final training session, were used to determine how the participants felt about the training program. There were 16 total responses, which provided a 73% response rate. When completing the survey, participants were asked to consider their response to the program as a whole and think about all five training sessions. The responses to the training were generally positive with 100% of respondents (16 participants) indicating that the information presented to them was clear, and 75% (12 participants) indicating that the sessions were a good use of their time. Seventy-five percent of respondents, or 12 of the 22 participants, also reported that they enjoyed the training. The same number said that the information was valuable to their work.

One open-ended question asked participants to offer suggestions for improvement to the training program. Sixty-three percent of respondents answered the open-ended question, which accounts for 10 of the 22 total participants. Of those responses, 20% (2 participants) suggested adding a session for teachers to share coping strategies, 30% (3 participants) suggested providing

handouts, and 40% (4 participants) suggested that more time be spent on small group discussion among the educators either in the PLC groups or during the large group presentation.

Taken together, these results indicate that while adjustments could be made to improve some aspects of the emotional labor training program, the reaction to the training was largely positive.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 FRAMING THE DISCUSSION**

As far back as 1998 and as recently as 2015, emotional labor researchers have suggested that providing training about emotional labor may be helpful in reducing stress for practicing educators (Brown, 2011; Brown et al. 2014; Cribbs, 2015; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001; Kerr & Brown, 2015; O'Connor, 2008; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2004). Hargreaves specifically noted that administrators and school systems can be a source of support for emotional labor and even called for reforms and change initiatives that highlight the emotional aspects of teaching. Zembylas later observed that emotional display rules in schools “are disguised as ethical codes, professional techniques, and specialized pedagogical knowledge,” (p. 201). It is the navigation of these unwritten emotional display rules through surface acting and deep acting that causes the stress that contributes to burnout and attrition from the education profession (Shutz & Lee, 2014; Shutz & Zembylas, 2009). Thus, research has suggested that if teachers are explicitly taught about the constructs of emotional labor, then they might feel less stress from their jobs and be more likely to remain in their chosen careers.

Despite the suggestions from established researchers, and almost two decades since the confirmation of emotional labor among educators, the closest many school leaders have come to helping teachers navigate emotion in the classroom is to explicitly state that teachers should

“display passion” for their content, without clarifying what that looks like or what they should do if they do not actually feel passion during instruction (Danielson, 2007). This study was an attempt to close that gap by providing training to teachers to help them understand and navigate the emotional aspects of their work.

The training program employed here was designed to be simple so that it could be easily replicated by school leaders and not be an additional stressor for working educators. The program began by explicitly teaching K-5 teachers about the constructs of emotional labor. Once they had been introduced to the constructs, the teachers then applied them by identifying the display rules that are specific to their school setting. The results of this study indicate that practicing educators not only enjoyed learning about emotional labor, but they applied what they learned to their practice. One participant wrote, “I believe this training was very beneficial in knowing that ‘we aren't alone’ with the stress and emotional labor that occurs in our day. I think it was helpful to talk with our colleagues about ways to deal and un-stress from our day.” Another stated, “I thought this was an interesting and educational training. I also feel that the discussion of ‘Emotional Labor’ will help me be a better teacher.”

These findings serve to extend the field of emotional labor research, because it has been established that this group of teachers can learn about emotional labor, can apply their new learning to their practice, and even found the information useful for their professional lives. Calls to action for later research were generated as the participants suggested areas for improvement in the training program.

## 5.2 LIMITATIONS

As with all research, this study had limitations that should be noted. In particular, readers should use caution when trying to generalize these results to other contexts. This is due to both the particular setting for the research, as well as the small and specific sample size. Thus, the findings as described here can only truly represent the experiences of the participants in this study. It will be important for other researchers to replicate these findings with a larger sample size taken from diverse settings including non-public schools and 6-12 classroom teachers in order to establish these results more clearly. Additionally, the journal responses indicate that the participants experienced survey fatigue over the course of their involvement in this research. Specifically, the first journal prompt had an 87% response rate (19 participants), with only 57% of participants responding to the second prompt (13 participants), and 67% of participants responding to the third (15 participants). It is possible that the diminishing response rate could have skewed the data such that only those participants who were able to apply their understanding of emotional labor answered the prompts.

Finally, readers are reminded that when evaluating the effectiveness of this training program, I chose not to consider Guskey's fifth level of professional development evaluation that connects training effectiveness to student learning outcomes, because student achievement has not yet been measured with respect to the field of emotional labor. Unfortunately, the data collection method employed to measure organizational and communication change further constrained our results to only three of the five levels of evaluation. As was mentioned previously, the guided notes provided a small response set of just four total responses, because the 22 participants broke into four small groups and only one notes sheet was requested from each group. Any data gleaned from the guided notes is therefore difficult to use as an indicator

of organizational change in the school building. This inhibits our ability to conclude that the training program studied here was effective, at least as effectiveness is determined by Guskey (2000).

In the end, it seems only relevant to claim that three of the five levels of Guskey's evaluation model were actually studied here, those being: Participants' Learning, Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills, and Participants' Reactions. The power of our study is therefore limited; in spite of this, the findings are still valuable. Guskey himself noted that evaluators should not "shy away from reporting negative results, but believe their primary role is to help make things better," (p. 265). Thus, the next two sections in this chapter will focus on how similar studies can be improved in the future and how school leaders can build from what was learned here in order to help practicing educators overcome the negative effects of emotional labor.

### **5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Findings from this study point future researchers to additional investigation into how teachers can be taught about emotional display rules. The posttest results indicated that the question about emotional display rules had the most variability in responses from participants. Of the 21 posttest responses to this question, 20% (4 responses) indicated little to no understanding after the first training session. This suggests that more clarification in this area might have been helpful to the participants. That finding was used to refine later training sessions during which extra time was spent explaining the definition of display rules, as well as providing exemplars

from the field of education. It is perhaps because of this additional training that 36% (18) of the journal responses contained either implicit or explicit reference to emotional display rules.

In the third of the five training sessions offered, the participating teachers spent time identifying and then agreeing upon the emotional display rules that exist in their school building. Our results indicate that this activity was useful to assist the teachers in understanding emotional labor as it exists in their professional practice. Unfortunately, emotional display rules in schools are often not explicitly discussed in this manner but understood by educators as those things that might be categorized as “appropriate” or “professional” (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Zembylas, 2005). This understanding of what is “appropriate” or “professional” is often only understood through implications in written codes of conduct or guidelines for practice (Zembylas, 2002). By way of example, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania there are at least four laws that portray these types of guidelines: Act 82 of 2012, which governs teacher evaluation in Pennsylvania; PA School Code 49.16, which establishes that new teachers will go through an induction process during their first year in the profession; Chapter 235 of the PA School Code, *Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators*, which establishes a code of conduct for teachers; PA School Code 354.25, which governs the curriculum of teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania. How then can pre-service teachers, or those just starting out in the field, understand all of these implications without any practical experience? Researchers can aid this process by examining documents like the ones listed above individually and in concert to look for evidence of emotional display rules.

It would be important to review anything that could potentially govern how teachers display emotions to colleagues, parents, and students including state and local policies, codes of conduct, staff handbooks, teacher contracts, and observation and evaluation instruments (Pfister,

2015). This research could also provide additional context for how teachers come to understand the emotional display rules in their work lives. To that end, both small and large studies are recommended to help define and perhaps standardize the emotional display rules for teachers as they are implied in written texts. Once these are codified, both in-service and pre-service educators will benefit from a common understanding of the display rules for teachers.

As was discussed in the section covering limitations, the design of this study may have hampered any conclusions that could be drawn from the data in two important ways. First, there appeared to be survey fatigue as fewer participants answered the third journal prompt than answered the first journal prompt. Future studies seeking to replicate the findings that practicing educators can increase their understanding of emotional labor and apply that understanding to their work are encouraged to reconsider this design aspect in an effort to limit this phenomenon. Secondly, the data set used to represent the communication change in the building was extremely small, such that even with 100% participation, there were still only four responses, so the information could not be used to draw conclusions. Despite this, it is important to note that the primary researcher was present in the school building throughout the course of the study. Participants were often heard using the language of emotional labor in conversation. This observation seems to indicate that a communication change did take place in the school as a result of the emotional labor training. Guskey (2000) suggests a combination of methods to capture communication changes. One method he includes is direct observations. Thus, later researchers may wish to use a more ethnographic method to study and capture the organizational change that results from professional development.

Additional research is also implicated by the participants' responses to the open-ended questions in the reaction survey. The participants noted that they enjoyed talking with their



colleagues about emotional labor. Their suggestions for improvements to the program included time to talk to about, and specific instruction on, coping strategies to deal with the effects of emotional labor. The combination of these responses implies that collegial discussion might normalize stressful feelings caused by emotional labor and that discussion may in and of itself serve to decrease stress. Researchers are encouraged first to revise this emotional labor training program by adding a component for group discussion that includes coping strategies and then to study the effectiveness of that program.

#### **5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

The greatest implication from these findings is that school leaders can aid in supporting educators' understanding of and response to emotional labor by holding in-service trainings. In a policy brief, Beaver and Weinbaum (2012) noted that one critical factor for school improvement is fostering mutual understanding and trust within the school, which is uniquely the task of the school leader. The training program described and evaluated here served to create a mutual understanding around the concepts of emotional labor. Data indicated that the teachers found this to be a useful exercise. School administrators are thus encouraged to implement their own emotional labor training programs, with a few adjustments.

Namely, Guskey (2000) states that the value of reaction survey results lies in their power to improve the design and delivery of future programs. In our case, the reaction survey responses indicate that the program would benefit most from providing additional time for participants to talk with colleagues about emotional labor in their particular setting. This could be accomplished without adding time to the program, which is one resource that many schools

do not have. While conducting the training, observations indicated that the number of sessions (five) could have been decreased and had the same or nearly similar effectiveness in increasing participant understanding.

In particular, the order and emphasis of the sessions could be redesigned based on the findings from the posttest and the suggestions for improvement provided by the participants. Session two was initially designed to provide time to clear up any misconceptions left from session one as indicated by the results of the posttest, but the posttest indicated significant increases in understanding of emotional labor constructs and only minimal misunderstandings. As designed, session two was not as heavy in content as any of the other sessions. Thus, session one may be more effective if it is redesigned to place emphasis on understanding the construct of emotional display rules, as this was the weakest area indicated by the posttest results. During this initial session teachers would be provided with a handout that lists definitions for and examples of the emotional labor constructs. They would then work collaboratively to identify the emotional display rules that are specific to their setting. This redesign would free up the second session for teachers to talk about how they recognize and approach emotional labor in their practice, similar to the structure of session four in this program. The second session would begin with teachers applying the constructs of emotional labor by recognizing it in their practice through provided examples. Session three could then be spent in small groups sharing coping strategies, as suggested in the participants' reaction surveys. A fourth and final session would occur back in the whole group with a discussion to assure that everyone shares the same understanding of emotional labor and definition of emotional display rules in the particular setting.

While carrying out the training sessions, I noted that the participants' conversations almost always veered into ways that they cope with the stress and exhaustion they feel from emotional labor. During these conversations, the teachers would become animated and intently focused on whomever was speaking. They were seen nodding in agreement or quietly saying things such as, "Right. Me, too." Although this study was not focused on ways to cope with the emotional demands of their work, informal observations of the training program indicate that the participants were eager for this support and naturally began to add this to their discussions. School leaders who are interested in holding trainings about emotional labor are strongly encouraged to add programming that is focused on sharing coping strategies to decrease stress. This could serve to make the training even more useful to practicing educators as it will give them something tangible that they can "do" with their learning.

This next piece of information is shared as a caution for school leaders. Although it was only mentioned in two of the 50 journal responses, school administrators should be aware that teachers engage in emotional labor during interactions with supervisors. It is important for administrators to be cognizant of this when providing professional development, leading meetings, or just carrying out conversations. School leaders should be sensitive to the fact that the interaction may be inherently stressful for the teacher and respond accordingly. By recognizing and responding to situations that create stress for teachers, school leaders can help to create or maintain a positive culture in the school building.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

Although emotional labor is a known factor for stress and burnout in teachers, little has been done to help teachers manage this aspect of their job (Naring et al., 2006; Naring et al., 2012; Schutz & Lee, 2014; Ye & Chen, 2015; Zhang & Zhu, 2008). Preparing teachers to recognize and manage their emotional labor may help them overcome emotional exhaustion, avoid burnout, and ultimately remain in the profession. The aim of this study was to fill a gap in the research by evaluating an in-service training program for practicing educators that teaches about the constructs of emotional labor. Our findings indicate that teachers can increase their understanding of emotional labor after just one, 30-minute training session. The participants reported that the training was both enjoyable and useful for their jobs. They even requested additional training during which they could talk with colleagues about how to manage the stress related to emotional labor. These findings should be seen as a call to action for both practicing school leaders and education researchers.

We know that teaching is a stressful profession, in part because of the emotional aspects of the job. School administrators can mitigate this by learning about emotional labor, assuring that teachers have a common understanding of emotional labor, emotional display rules, and surface and deep acting, talking about the emotional display rules and acting required by the work, and recognizing emotional labor in their schools. Education researchers can help by building on this study through both a larger replication and the addition of training about coping strategies, as suggested by the participants themselves. Working together, we may be able to help decrease the stress that is associated with teaching, thus creating better and more effective environments for both education professionals and students.

## 6.0 EPILOGUE

Those who have read this dissertation in its entirety will recall that the pursuit began in an effort to understand *why* teaching is a stressful occupation. I happened upon the concept of emotional labor and had an “aha moment” as I connected with the experiences of educators who feel one emotion but are required to display a different emotion externally. Prior studies had not offered solutions for how teachers could be trained about the constructs of emotional labor, so I took up that call and created a training program. I then evaluated its effectiveness with a small sample of teachers. The study was a success in that the training was determined to increase teachers’ understanding of emotional labor in a way they thought was enjoyable. However, as I discussed these findings with colleagues I found that I was left with even more questions, especially about reducing the stress that teachers feel and how school leaders might help with that. Within the field of emotional labor, it now seems important to understand not just *why* teaching is stressful but also *how* it can be made less stressful. These remaining questions are logically necessary to create a full picture of emotional labor in schools, but only tangentially connected to the implications for practice and further research that were discussed in Chapter Five. Thus, they deserve their own space for consideration.

## **6.1 SCHOOL LEADER AWARENESS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR**

As mentioned in Chapter Five, school leaders should both recognize that teachers engage in emotional labor and provide in-service training on this topic for them. It seems logical then that principals must also learn about the constructs of emotional labor themselves so they are able to recognize situations in which emotional labor could be happening in their employees. But what does this training look like? Researchers might consider a train-the-trainer model, whereby an expert on emotional labor trains a group of school leaders on how to provide emotional labor training for practicing educators; however, this model may not put enough emphasis on the principal's awareness of emotional labor in themselves and others. Researchers would be wise to consider customized training about emotional labor for school leaders, determining the topics to be covered and the most effective form of training for working principals. For school leaders to be fully aware of emotional labor in others, they need a personal understanding of what it is, what it feels like, and how it is managed. This can only be accomplished if researchers investigate the specialized training needs of school leaders in regard to emotional labor.

## **6.2 THE SCHOOL LEADER'S ROLE IN STRESS REDUCTION**

Assuming that the principal is aware that emotional labor is happening in the school, and has provided training for teachers, the next logical step is for school leaders to assure that teachers have a way to cope with the stress they feel from emotional labor. What systems or environments can be created within the school to help teachers cope with the stress connected to the emotional aspects of their work? The teachers in this study indicated that they wanted "more

time” to discuss emotional labor and coping strategies with their colleagues, implying that during the course of their emotional labor training they naturally began to talk about ways to cope. This creates a clear entry point for researchers. Does providing time for teachers to talk about emotional labor decrease their feelings of stress? But that is not the only area left for study, researchers must also identify and determine the effects of other coping mechanisms on stress reduction for teachers.

The journal responses collected in the study indicated that participants experienced emotions from their home lives that they are required to cast off during the course of the school day. At least one participant also indicated that teachers are sometimes asked to take on the emotions of their students. It seems possible that the stress felt from emotional labor comes not just from the incongruence between internal emotion and external display, but also from the fact that many teachers might be living two entirely different lives – the home life where issues can be processed and emotions expressed as they arise, and the school life where the only issues that can be processed and emotions expressed are those that will benefit students. Perhaps principals should create safe spaces in which teachers are not expected to “be professional” in adherence with unwritten display rules. What would be the effect on stress if teachers were given more down time before students arrive in the morning and after students leave in the afternoon? The schedule change might allow teachers to process the emotions they bring from home before their work with students begins and give them time to process the emotions they feel from their work before they return home, thus eliminating the necessity for a home self and work self. These are certainly not the only coping mechanisms to be considered, but they serve to highlight the wide array of strategies that researchers could investigate.

It is the school leader's job to set and maintain the priorities for the school building, including finding the balance between high-quality instruction and mental well-being. Education researchers can help school leaders achieve that balance by examining the questions that remain regarding how teachers can cope with the stress related to emotional labor. Working together to explore these questions will help principals create environments that honor the emotional aspects of teaching and in turn reduce stress for teachers, while also helping researchers to more fully explore the field of emotional labor.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **RECRUITMENT SCRIPT**

The purpose of this research study is to determine how K-5 classroom teachers can be taught about the constructs of emotional labor. The research is being conducted by Colleen Hannagan as part of her Doctoral Program at the University of Pittsburgh. You are being asked to participate in five, 30-minute long training sessions about emotional labor here at your school. These sessions will occur over a period of four months. If you choose to participate in the study you will also be asked to complete a pre/post survey, three open-ended responses, a group guided-notes handout, and a five-question reaction survey. It is expected that the time required for the completion of all of the surveys would be about 90-120 minutes in total throughout the duration of the study. There is no direct benefit for your participation.

If you choose to participate in the study you will be asked to select and use a coded identifier throughout the study. The code will consist of the first letter of the name of the street you grew up on and the last digit in your mother's birth year. Only you will know this code, in order to protect your privacy and assure that all of the survey responses are masked to the principal investigator. All data will be kept confidential on secure, electronic data storage servers. Participation is not a requirement of employment and whether or not you choose to

participate will not affect your employment status. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time.

## APPENDIX B

### TRAINING AND DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE

**Table 4.** Training and data collection timeline

	<b>Week #1</b>	<b>Week #2</b>	<b>Week #3</b>	<b>Week #4</b>
<b>Month #1</b>	Distribute pre-test knowledge survey.	<b>Training session #1:</b> introduce and explain constructs of emotional labor  Distribute post-test knowledge survey.		<b>Training session #2:</b> respond to learning objectives not met in 1 <sup>st</sup> session (as indicated by post-test results); provide real-world examples of emotional labor
<b>Month #2</b>	Distribute experience survey #1.	<b>Training session #3:</b> participants generate and identify the emotional display rules	Distribute experience survey #2.	<b>Training session #4:</b> in PLCs, discuss recognition and response to emotional labor in practice; complete and hand in guided notes
<b>Month #3</b>	Distribute experience survey #3.	<b>Training session #5:</b> share learnings from PLCs; provide follow-up and clarification to conclude training program.  Distribute reaction survey.		

## APPENDIX C

### CONSENT DOCUMENT

#### Consent to Act as a Participant in a Research Study

**Title:** A Study of an Emotional Labor Training Program

**Principal Investigator:** Colleen Hannagan, M.S.Ed, M.Ed, Graduate Student  
University of Pittsburgh, School of Education  
Department of Administrative and Policy Studies

**Questions About the Study:** If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to talk to someone other than the research team, please call the University of Pittsburgh Human Subjects Protection Advocate toll-free at 866-212-2668.

**Introduction:** This study is being conducted to determine how K-5 classroom teachers can be taught about the constructs of emotional labor. Potential participants in this study include the teachers and teaching assistants working in kindergarten through fifth grade in one research site. The participants can be teaching in any content area, physical education, music, art or library media sciences. You are not under any obligation to participate in this research study.

**Time Commitment:** Participants will be asked to participate in five, separate 30-minute training sessions over the course of four months. In addition to these sessions, participants will be asked to complete six different surveys, each of which may take from 5 minutes up to 20 minutes to complete. The total expected time commitment from the training sessions is 150 minutes. The total expected time commitment from the completion of surveys is 90-120 minutes.

**Research Activities:** The principal researcher will conduct and lead the activities detailed below.

- Five, separate, 30-minute training sessions will be held over the course of 16 weeks.
- Each training session will occur from 8:00am – 8:30am.

- Training sessions will be held at the research site.
- The principal researcher will lead four of the five training sessions.
- One of the training sessions will be conducted in small, Professional Learning Community groups. This session will be led by the study participants without the presence of the researcher. A guided-notes sheet will be turned in to the researcher at the conclusion of this session.
- Participants will use an online system to complete surveys over the course of 16 weeks. Participants will not be identified by name in their responses. The surveys are:
  - Two multiple choice surveys
  - Three, separate, single question open-ended response surveys
  - One Likert Scale reaction survey

**Study Risks:** The known risks for participating in this study are minimal and not more than you would experience during your daily life. There is an infrequent risk of breach of confidentiality when completing the surveys online. Although every reasonable effort has been taken, confidentiality during internet communication activities cannot be guaranteed and it is possible that additional information beyond that collected for research purposes may be captured and used by others not associated with this study. There is also an infrequent risk of emotional discomfort when participants are learning about and discussing emotional labor concepts in a group setting with colleagues.

**Study Benefits:** There is no direct benefit for participating in this study.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:** The privacy and confidentiality of study participants will be protected by using a masking system so that no survey responses are linked to personally identifiable information. Study participants will choose their own masking code that is not known to the principal researcher, so that the researcher will have no knowledge of personally identifiable information. No identifiable information will be placed into research records. Per University of Pittsburgh policy, all research records must be maintained for at least seven years following final reporting or publication of a project. Authorized representatives from the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office may review your data solely for the purpose of monitoring the conduct of this study. Names of participants will not be shared or associated with any individual results.

**Right to Withdraw from Study Participation:** You can withdraw from this research study at any time. You can also withdraw your authorization for the researcher to use your survey responses for the purposes described above. This means that you will also be withdrawn from further participation in this research study. Any research information obtained as part of this study prior to the date that you withdrew your consent will continue to be used and disclosed by the researcher for the purposes, and in the manner, described above. To formally withdraw from this research study, you should provide verbal or written notification of this decision to the principal researcher at the address listed on the first page of this form. Your decision to withdraw from this study will have no effect on your employment status. It will also have no effect on your current or future relationship with both the principal researcher and the University of Pittsburgh.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. You may want to discuss this study with your family and friends before agreeing to participate. If there are any words you do not understand, feel free to ask about them. The researcher will be available to answer your current and future questions. Whether or not you provide your consent for participation in this research study will have no effect on your employment status. It will also have no effect on your current or future relationship with both the principal researcher and the University of Pittsburgh.

**Consent to Participate:** The above information has been explained to me and all of my current questions have been answered. I understand that I am encouraged to ask questions, voice concerns or complaints about any aspect of this research study during the course of this study, and that such future questions, concerns or complaints will be answered by a qualified individual or by the researcher listed on the first page of this consent document at the telephone number given. I understand that I may always request that my questions, concerns, or complaints be addressed by the listed researcher. I understand that I may contact the Human Subjects Protection Advocate of the IRB Office, University of Pittsburgh (1-866-212-2668) to discuss problems, concerns, and questions; obtain information; offer input; or discuss situations that occurred during my participation. By signing this form I agree to participate in this research study. A copy of this consent form will be given to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Investigator Certification:** I certify that I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study to the above-named individual(s), and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of study participation. Any questions the individual(s) have about this study have been answered, and we will always be available to address future questions, concerns or complaints as they arise. I further certify that no research component of this protocol was begun until after this consent form was signed.

Colleen S. Hannagan  
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Principal Researcher  
Role in Research Study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX D

### PRE/POST SURVEY

*For each of the definitions below, please rate your understanding of the topic, where 1 is No Understanding and 5 is Completely Understand.*

1. Emotional Labor is the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display in a professional setting.

<b><i>No Understanding</i></b>			<b><i>Neutral</i></b>		<b><i>Completely Understand</i></b>
1	2	3	4	5	

2. Surface Acting is when a person feels one emotion internally, but chooses to display a different emotion externally.

<b><i>No Understanding</i></b>			<b><i>Neutral</i></b>		<b><i>Completely Understand</i></b>
1	2	3	4	5	

3. Deep Acting is when a person actively works to change how he/she feels internally in order to match the emotion he/she is displaying externally.

<b><i>No Understanding</i></b>			<b><i>Neutral</i></b>		<b><i>Completely Understand</i></b>
1	2	3	4	5	

4. Emotional Display Rules are a socially shared set of rules for how emotions should be displayed in a professional setting.

<b><i>No Understanding</i></b>			<b><i>Neutral</i></b>		<b><i>Completely Understand</i></b>
1	2	3	4	5	

## APPENDIX E

### REACTION SURVEY

Please rate your experience with the training on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is Completely Disagree and 5 is Completely Agree.

1. I enjoyed this training.  

<b>Completely Disagree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Completely Agree</b>
1	2	3	4	5
  
2. This learning will be valuable to my work.  

<b>Completely Disagree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Completely Agree</b>
1	2	3	4	5
  
3. The information presented was clear and understandable.  

<b>Completely Disagree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Completely Agree</b>
1	2	3	4	5
  
4. This training was a good use of my time.  

<b>Completely Disagree</b>		<b>Neutral</b>		<b>Completely Agree</b>
1	2	3	4	5

Please provide suggestions for how this training might be improved in the future:

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## APPENDIX F

### JOURNAL PROMPTS

**#1:** Please describe and reflect on a professional situation during which you engaged in emotional labor.

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**#2:** Please describe and reflect on a professional situation during which you engaged in either surface acting or deep acting.

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**#3:** Please describe and reflect on a professional situation during which you adhered to an emotional display rule.

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## APPENDIX G

### GUIDED NOTES

*Before you begin the discussion please select three people to serve in the following roles:*

- 1.) *Time Keeper* -- keep the group on task by noting how much time is left in the session. Begin promptly at 8:00 and end promptly at 8:30.
- 2.) *Facilitator* -- be aware of the guided discussion questions and attempt to keep the group on topic.
- 3.) *Recorder* -- keep notes from the discussion using the space provided. It is not necessary to write in complete sentences. Submit guided notes at the end of this session.

**Task:** During your small group work session today, please reflect on the trainings that you have received about emotional labor. Please discuss these questions in your group.

*How do you witness emotional labor playing out in your professional practice with students, colleagues, or administrators?*

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*Are there recent situations where you can recall feeling one way internally, but needing to express a different emotion externally?*

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*How do you respond to feeling a difference between your internal emotion and external display?*

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