

# TEACHER EMOTIONAL RULES

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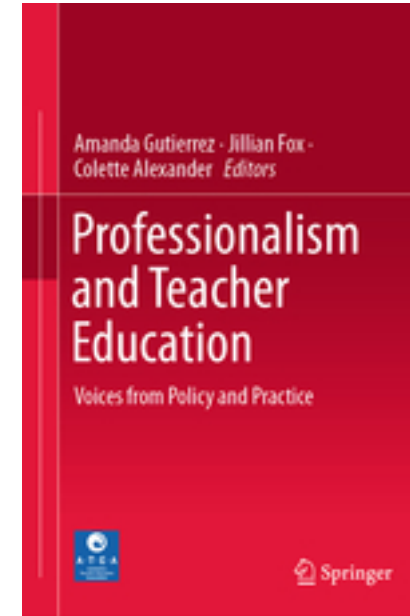
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# TEACHER EMOTIONAL RULES

- Teacher introductions — *Who are teachers?*
- The research project — *What do teachers do and who, or what influences them?*
- Unpack ‘teacher emotional rules’ — *What do teachers feel?*
- A teacher’s story — *Who, or what influences their feeling?*
- **The importance of teacher reflexivity in managing emotional work.**

# **PREFACE**

***'Emotional work: applying reflexivity in teacher practice'***

**(Hopman 2017)**

**Questions:**

- How can emotional consciousness impact teacher agency?**
- How can professional collaboration facilitate reflexivity?**

# WHO ARE TEACHERS?

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# WHO ARE TEACHERS?

## How would you describe your teaching practice?

- ◆ [Teaching] is a very personal profession I think (Blair).
- ◆ Being in a classroom can sometimes feel like you are on a roller coaster depending on what's happening around you, but it's my job to make the classroom calm (Marley).
- ◆ Caring can be the best part of [teaching], but it can also be the worst (Kai).
- ◆ There are so many corners that you can cut, but it just wouldn't be me if I cut the corner (Jesse).
- ◆ I love seeing progress in the students. Getting good results (Taylor).



# INTRODUCING EDEN

Non gender-specific pseudonyms have been used

The following introduction has been put together either from the teachers' responses to the question, 'how would you describe your teaching practice?'; or from conversation in reference to the teacher's personal attitude toward their own teaching practice or teaching practice in general.

# THE TEACHERS

## REWARD

- ‘love’ getting good results
- ‘caring’
- **enjoyment; excitement; passion**

Supported by Howes and Goodman-Delahunty (2015) and Keller et al. (2014).



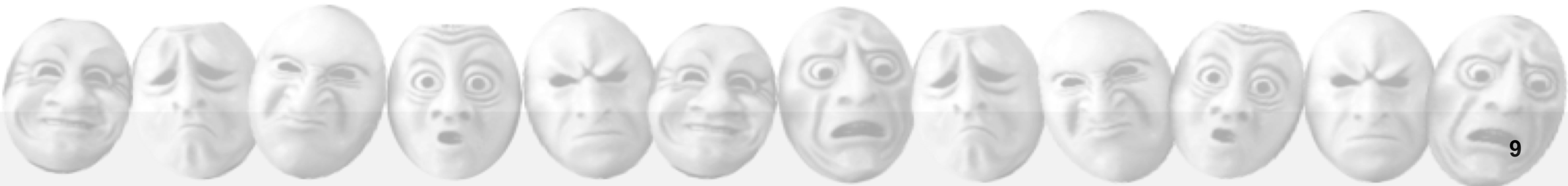


# THE TEACHERS

## WORK

- “*It’s my job to make the classroom calm*” (Marley).
- Eden suggests that teachers might typically have “*loud booming voices*” and be punitive.
- Taylor emphasises the importance of “*getting good results.*”

**The ‘hard work’ feeds into the reward.**



# THE TEACHERS

## EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE

'loud booming voices'; should continually learn, change, adapt; 'multiple roles'; 'having the answers'; 'getting good results'; 'get students to pass'; 'disciplining kids'; 'protect students'; 'enthuse the kids'; 'enhance and support [students]'; 'nurture'; 'meet students where they are'; 'make the classroom a calm place'.



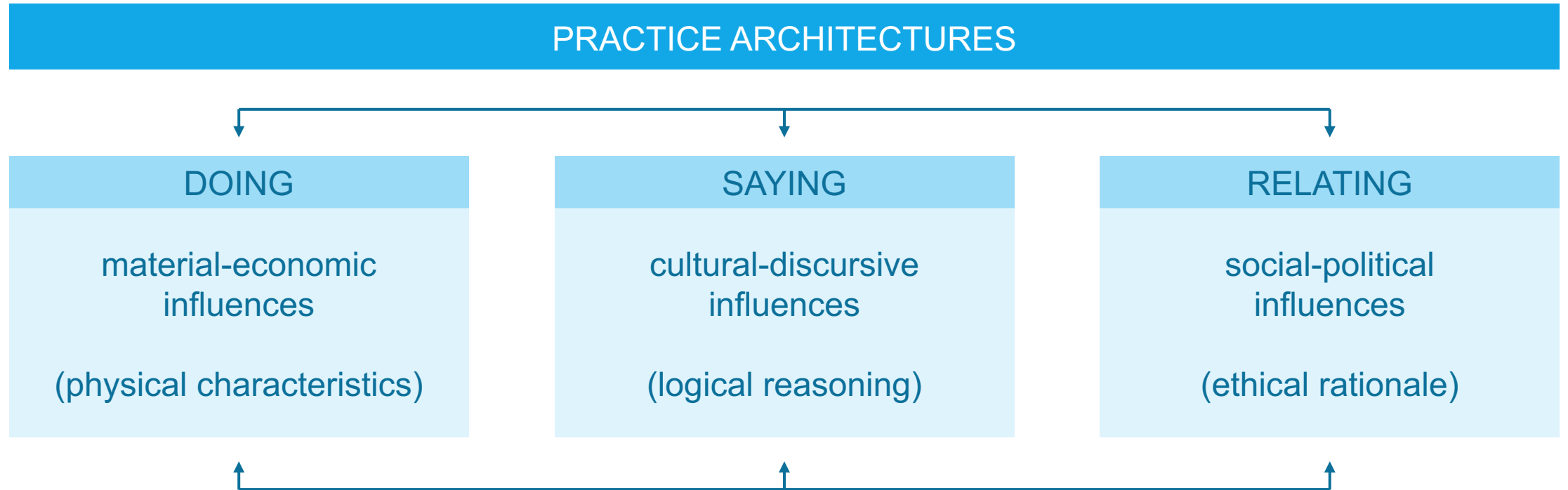
# THE TEACHERS

## PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES

- **doing** — informed by material-economic influences (physical characteristics)
- **saying** — cultural-discursive (product of logical reasoning)
- **relating** — social-political (ethics within relationships)

(Kemmis, 2009; Kemmis et al., 2014)

# THE TEACHERS



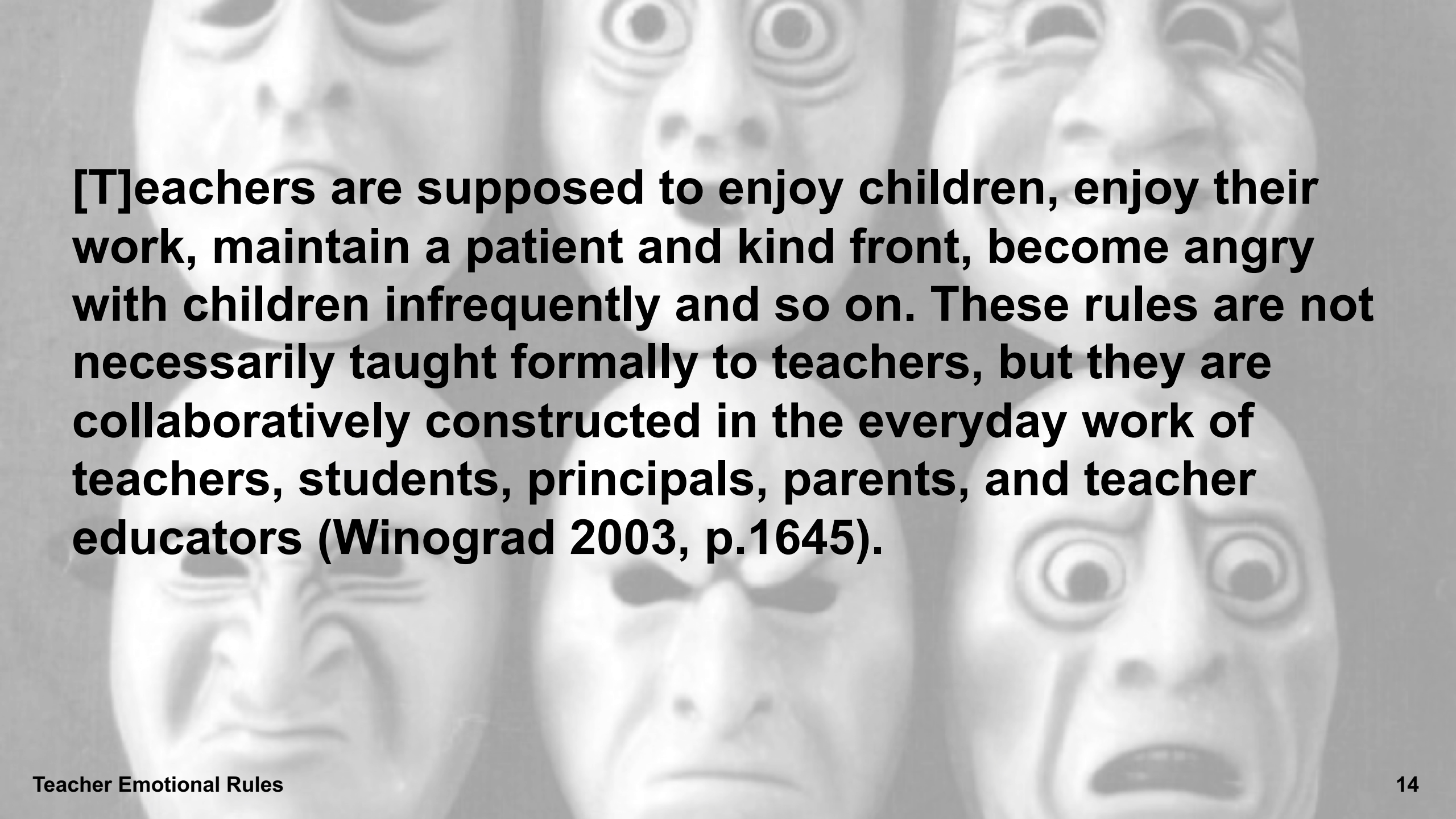
# THE TEACHERS

## PERFORMANCE

There is a **set of norms** and common knowledge drawn on to inform a teacher about how to 'perform' (Edwards 2017; Kelchtermans, 2009)

Teachers are expected to **fit a mould** (e.g. Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015; Burnard & White, 2008; Edwards, 2017; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2012; Hilferty, 2008; Johnson & Down, 2013; Priestley et al., 2012; Ryan & Bourke, 2013; White, 2010).

Teachers are expected to abide by **rules** (Winograd 2003)



**[T]eachers are supposed to enjoy children, enjoy their work, maintain a patient and kind front, become angry with children infrequently and so on. These rules are not necessarily taught formally to teachers, but they are collaboratively constructed in the everyday work of teachers, students, principals, parents, and teacher educators (Winograd 2003, p.1645).**

# THE TEACHERS

## THE TENSION

*“There are so many corners that you can cut, but it just wouldn’t be me if I cut the corner” (Jesse).*

What if “*cut[ting] the corner*” was the expectation in a certain situation?  
Then, Jesse could no longer be “*me.*”

# THE TEACHERS

## THE TENSION

The expectation that a teacher's "performance" will be measured against a preferred "script" of what to say and a long list of competency standards is very real but cannot replace teachers' "professional judgement or individual pedagogy," and ultimately reduces teachers' autonomy (White, 2010, p. 293).

A teacher's 'performance' includes how teachers emote (Yin, Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013).

**Perform the script or improvise?**



# THE TEACHERS

## THE STRUGGLE

- True self vs false self (Winnicott, 1965)
- Hide or fake emotions (Hochschild, 2012; Stebbins, 2010; Taxer & Frenzel, 2015; Winograd, 2003)
- Teachers prioritise the emotionally rich aspects of their work, the “relatings” but teachers are expected to prioritise the “doings” because a teacher *acting* “professional” instils confidence in the performance (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2012; Kemmis, 2009).



# THE TEACHERS

## RELATIONAL ARCHITECTURES

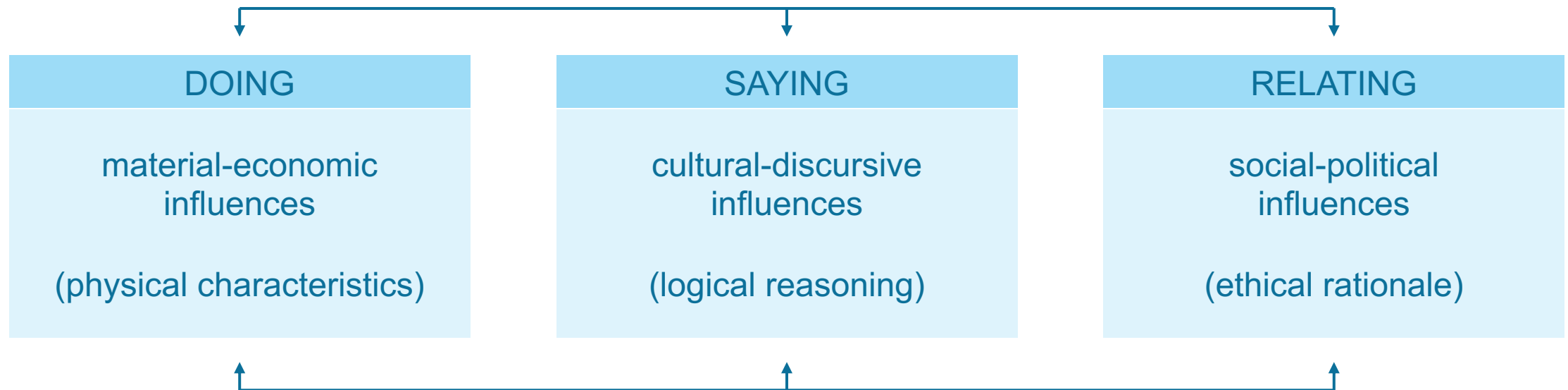
Edwards-Groves, Brennan Kemmis, Hardy, and Ponte (2010) build on Kemmis's (2009) practice architectures by explaining that practice architectures are shaped by and in turn shape social interactions, suggesting that there are relational architectures infused in practice architectures.



# THE TEACHERS

RELATIONAL ARCHITECTURES

PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES



# THE TEACHERS

## EMOTIONAL WORK

Hochschild (2012) has explored the notion of emotional rules and the “commercialization of human feeling.”

Shapiro (2010) described how “I began to sense that the longer I was a teacher, the less I might feel like a full human being. My professional identity was eclipsing my humanity” (p. 616)

# THE TEACHERS

## EMOTION

- Emotion is complex.
- Emotion consists of a physical feeling, an appraisal of an emotional incident, and a display of emotion, which takes place within a collective context shaped by relational/practice architectures.
- Emotion and thinking are enmeshed.
- Pleasure and unpleasure rather than positive and negative.
- Specific emotions are always clustered with other emotion.
- Individuals experience emotion within a collective experience framed by emotional rules.
- Abiding by display rules and feeling rules requires either faking or hiding emotion.

(Fried, Mansfield, & Dobozy, 2015; Keller, Frenzel, Goetz, Pekrun, Hensley, 2014; Schutz, Aultman, & Williams-Johnson, 2009; Turner, 2009)



# WHAT DO TEACHERS DO AND WHO, OR WHAT INFLUENCES THEM?

# THE PROJECT

- Research started in 2013
- Victorian secondary government school
- 6 teachers (co-researchers)

- Narrative inquiry
- Action research

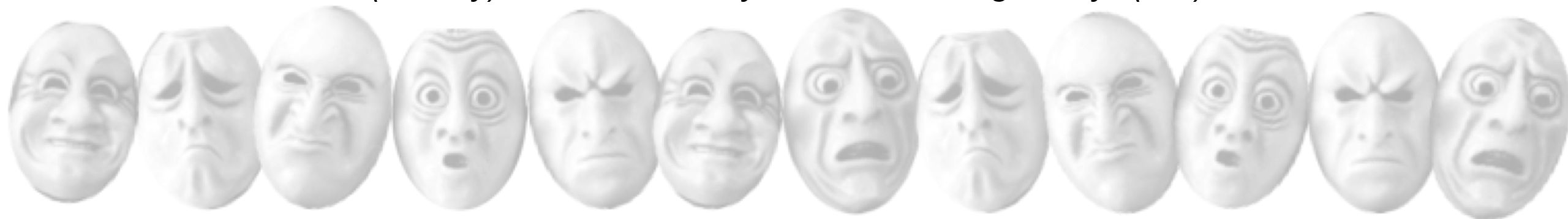
- Interviews (background/ debrief/ feedback)
- Collaborative inquiry (semi-structured conversation)

# THE PROJECT

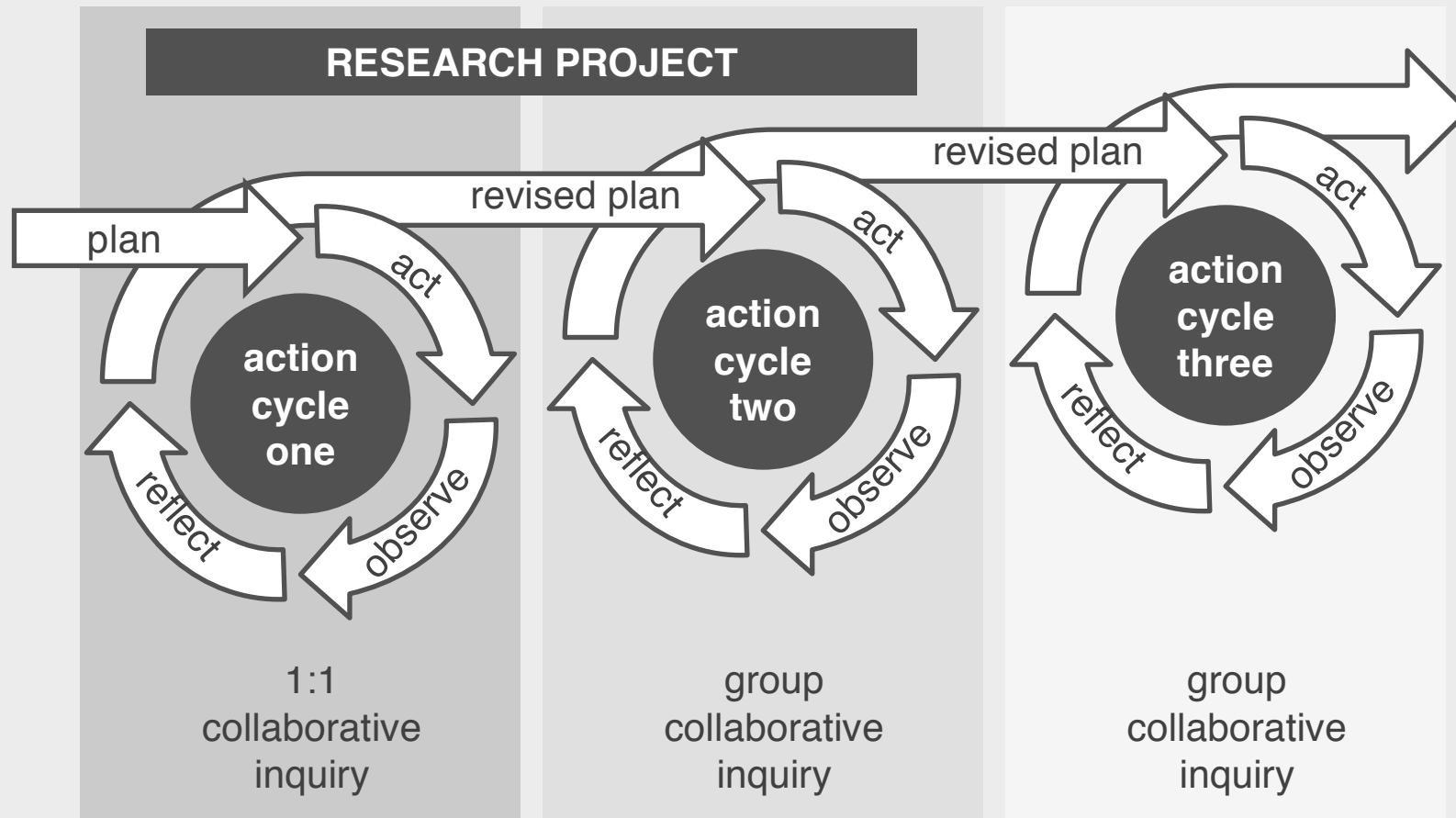
The critical incidents were not ‘critical’ in that the actual incident required critique but they were important to the teachers that shared them. The teachers were somehow ‘stuck’ on them, which caused an anxiety provoking emotional response.

For example;

*“I thought it was important for me to correct the uniform because that was my job as a teacher” (Marley) or “I did a really awesome thing today” (Kai).*







Based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) and Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012) work.

# THE PROJECT

## THE OUTCOME

33 hours of conversation transcribed and thematically coded

Minimum of sessions a teacher participated in = 5

Maximum of sessions a teacher participated in = 13



# THE PROJECT

## THE OUTCOME — COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

- (1) a teacher shared a story
- (2) the group identified strengths in the story
- (3) we each shared a similar story
- (4) we inquired into our collective similar—but not the same—experience

# THE PROJECT

## TEACHER AGENCY

Teacher agency is the potential for a teacher to take conscious action and it is not an individual entity but a collective capacity that can thrive or dampen depending on how the demands of teaching are understood (Edwards, 2017).

### What influences teachers?

- They strive to meet expectations and take action.
- But ... there is an emphasis on 'taking action' and not so much on consciousness.
- The Collaborative Inquiry Process intended to increase consciousness and therefore agency



# WHAT DO TEACHERS FEEL?

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# THE PROJECT

## THE OUTCOME — EMOTION

Eight notable emotions were identified in the teachers' work:

- Defeat (302) — included words like “*overwhelmed*,” “*challenged*,” “*overworked*,” “*difficult*,” “*fight*” and “*hard*”
- Contentment (122)
- Frustration
- Worry
- Anger
- Sadness
- Happiness
- Love

These eight emotions were present in over half of all of the sessions.

# THE PROJECT

## THE OUTCOME — EMOTION

- NVivo software was used to analyse the emotion holistically.
- I did not seek out specific emotions—the eight notable emotions emerged through the teachers' stories.

For example:

*[the student's poem] was really poignant and sweet and I read it and [I] burst into tears on the spot, well you know, you hide it but that was the impulse (Blair).*

- “sweet” implies delight and perhaps affection
- “poignant” implies sadness as does “bursting into tears”

# THE PROJECT

## THE OUTCOME — EMOTIONAL RULES

- Frustration, worry, sadness and anger are evoked by student interactions;
- Teachers should not feel or display fear;
- Teachers should not display anger;
- Teachers should not display sadness to students;
- Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching, students and other teachers;
- Happiness is evoked by the act of teaching and students;
- Love is evoked by the act of teaching;
- Teachers should not feel or display love for their students or other teachers; and
- Defeat is inherent in teaching but must not be shown.



# WHO, OR WHAT INFLUENCES THEIR FEELING?

# EDEN'S STORY

The story has been put together from a series of conversations over several sessions and contains only the voice of the recounting teacher.

# COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

- (1) a teacher shared a story
- (2) the group identified strengths in the story
- (3) we each shared a similar story
- (4) we inquired into our collective similar—but not the same—experience

# THE TENSION

## EXPECTATIONS:

- “*calmly*” get Berna “*back on track*”
- pacify the other student’s fears
- ignore the “*threat*”

## LIMITATIONS:

- it is very hard “*to control [Berna’s] behaviour*”
- Eden froze

# DEFEAT IS INHERENT IN TEACHING BUT MUST NOT BE SHOWN

## EDEN'S OPTIONS

- (1) keep Berna in the class and perhaps “*be the loudest*” to take “*control*,” which is necessary to reduce the “*threat*”; or
- (2) let Berna exit the classroom—and go where and do what?

# TEACHERS SHOULD NOT DISPLAY ANGER

*“the only way to get presence would be to be the loudest”*



# TEACHERS SHOULD NOT FEEL OR DISPLAY FEAR

- *“it was getting threatening—really hostile”*
- *“fight or flight”*
- *I never want to admit it—to the students, but I think it’s not so much a fear. I’m not worried about her hitting me or anything. She could if she wanted to, I wouldn’t do anything back, but I think that it’s more fear about—it’s way beyond my control (Eden).*
- Courage has to be conjured

# TEACHERS SHOULD NOT FEEL OR DISPLAY LOVE FOR THEIR STUDENTS OR OTHER TEACHERS

- “*I’m not worried about [Berna] hitting me*” — trust
- “*fairly proud of [Berna] for [exiting the classroom herself]*” — pleasure
- “*work out what to do for [Berna]*” — care





# TEACHERS SHOULD NOT DISPLAY SADNESS TO STUDENTS

*“It makes me sad that [people] think that [bad behaviour] is all that she’s boiled down to, just one or two mistakes that she’s made in her life” .*





# THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER REFLEXIVITY IN MANAGING EMOTIONAL WORK

# DEFEAT IS INHERENT IN TEACHING

- A teacher cannot physically, mentally and emotionally control every aspect of their practice, yet they are expected to follow a script, and if they deviate from that script, they are perceived as “wrong.”
- They can only sense their way forward by being alert to emotion
- Reflexivity and emotional consciousness is a necessity of teacher practice

# CONCLUSION

- For teachers to have agency (to be uninhibited) they have to have an understanding of what motivates their action .
- We are not always consciously aware of what motivates us but a process of reflexivity can help us interrogate.
- Emotion is a useful gateway to explore the complex thinking around an experience where limitations, expectations are in tension.
- Reflexivity is made even more difficult when politicised institutional emotional rules manipulate teacher emotions.
- A process of support is needed to formally confront the unknown aspects of 'the teacher' discourse



**THANK YOU**

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