JOURNAL FOR THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

IAPLL

Theoretical Article

Language Teacher Emotion Regulation Training: Theoretical Foundations, Design and Implementation

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(Received 11 September 2025; accepted 18 March 2026)

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ABSTRACT

Despite numerous calls for language teacher emotion regulation training, few interventional programmes exist for in-service teachers to learn about, practice and reflect upon the emotion regulation motives and strategies that they need to employ during the course of their work. In the first half of this theoretical paper, two important considerations are discussed: the range of emotion regulation skills that are required by language teachers and how teachers might be trained to actually improve these skills. A definition of emotion regulation competence is developed that includes knowledge requirements in relation to emotion, emotion regulation and the self, and skill requirements through which various instrumental and health-related motives are able to be achieved. The paper advocates that training programmes be holistic and longitudinal in nature, involving elements of knowledge development, skill development, and reflection. In the second half of the paper, an example emotion regulation training programme is introduced. The six-session course has been designed for in-service teachers working in Japan. The paper describes the theoretical pillars of the course (knowledge and awareness, skill practice, and reflection), and discusses implementation considerations. Taken as a whole, the paper provides a commentary on what emotion regulation training might need to achieve and offers advice for trainers and course designers on how such training can be implemented more broadly and overtly within the field.

Keywords: emotion regulation training, teacher emotions, teacher training, emotion regulation, affect regulation training

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INTRODUCTION

As the breadth and depth of this special issue attest, the importance of emotion regulation in the classroom cannot be understated. This is certainly true for language teachers, who may display, fake, exaggerate and suppress a range of positive and negative emotions within a single class period as they work to achieve various pedagogical and personal goals. Given this importance, it is unsurprising that there have been so many calls made for emotion regulation training (e.g., Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020; Dumančić, 2018, 2025; King et al., 2024; Martínez Agudo, 2018; Morris, 2025; Morris & King, 2024). Unfortunately, although investigations of language teacher emotion regulation have been on the rise, there has been scant reporting of emotion regulation-focused training and interventions in the field of applied linguistics (See Morris & King, 2024 for a more detailed discussion of this point). The goal of this paper is, thus, to address some of this imbalance.

This paper adopts two important foundational assumptions at the outset. Firstly, it assumes that the development of emotion regulation skills is something that is achievable. On this point, psychologists working in the field of emotional intelligence note that the development of emotion regulation skills may be a natural consequence as we move through life (Brackett et al., 2016). This fact is clearly evident in the teaching profession, with teachers advancing their repertoire of emotion regulation competencies (Mevarech & Maskit, 2015) and building greater awareness of the impact of their emotions on students' successes (Sutton & Knight, 2006) as they gain experience. Importantly though, there is also ample evidence that emotion regulation competencies can be directly improved through targeted training, both in general psychological fields (e.g., Berking et al., 2019; Stasiewicz et al., 2013) and also in educational settings (e.g., Özdemir Cihan & Dilekmen, 2024; Pozo-Rico et al., 2023). In other words, teachers do not need to be left to wade through emotional fog. With the right initiative, teachers can (and should) be supported to accelerate the development of their emotion regulation skills.

The second assumption underlying this paper is that emotion regulation development is something that is desirable. This assumption is supported by the large body of work that has revealed the various emotion-related responsibilities of language teachers in the classroom and the importance of emotion regulation skills in meeting those demands (e.g., Gkonou & Miller, 2023; King, 2016; Loh & Liew, 2016; Morris, 2025). This assumption is also supported by literature which has shown that teachers with strong emotion regulation prowess experience more positive psychological health-related outcomes (e.g. Azari Noughabi et al., 2022; Brackett et al., 2010; Yin et al., 2016). Additionally, and importantly, emotion regulation training can be considered desirable because studies have shown that teachers who are able to regulate their emotions effectively have a hugely positive impact on student behaviour and relationships (e.g., Vogl et al., 2025). Finally, the assumption is validated by the fact that practicing language teachers themselves indicate the importance of emotion regulation training. In a recent study, emotion regulation was ranked as the highest emotional skill that language teachers believe training should be provided in (Dumančić, 2025).

In assuming that emotion regulation is both possible and desirable, the more relevant questions that this paper attends to are questions of what and how. What knowledge and skills do teachers need to be provided with, and how might these be developed? This paper offers an account of my own journey to answer these questions.

The paper is divided into three broad sections. Given that any training programme requires a clear vision of what it should achieve, in the first section I explore the literature in both general psychology and applied linguistics to generate a formal definition of emotion regulation competence for language teachers. In the second section, I consider the conceptual underpinnings that might form a coherent emotion regulation training programme, interrogating the use of both interventional and holistic instruction. Finally, in the third section I offer my own proposal for a programme, a six-session emotion regulation training course delivered through synchronous online sessions and offline reflective journaling. Although the current paper is theoretical in focus, the training programme I outline has been fully developed and has been

implemented with a group of teachers working in the Japanese education system. Funding for the creation of the programme was provided by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science, and while the evaluation of its impact remains ongoing, I hope and believe that the discussions within will provide supportive guidelines and advice for others seeking to educate teachers in the emotion regulation dimensions of their work.

DEFINING EMOTION REGULATION COMPETENCE

In this first section, I wish to consider the meaning of emotion regulation competence and form a cohesive definition in relation to language teaching.

Definitions of 'Good' Regulation

While emotion regulation refers broadly to the ways that individuals might have an influence over the course of their emotions, it can more usefully be conceived of as a process of four components: motives, goals, strategies and outcomes (Gross, 2014; Tamir, 2016). Firstly, *emotion regulation motives* describe the real-world consequences that any individual wishes to have with their emotions and emotional displays (Tamir, 2016; Tamir et al., 2020). Within language teaching, these would include varied personal and professional outcomes such as the creation of a positive classroom atmosphere, the management of student behaviour, and the reduction of stress (Morris, 2025). Secondly, in order for any teacher to achieve such motives, they also need a goal. *Emotion regulation goals* refer to the actual emotional changes that language teachers desire, such as the suppression of anger, the lengthening of enjoyment, or the feigning of excitement. Emotion regulation goals may target the experiencing of an emotion, the display of an emotion, or the symptoms of an emotion. Once an emotion regulation motive and a goal have been established, an individual will take actions to manifest the emotional change. Such actions are referred to as *emotion regulation strategies*. Teachers might, for example, breathe deeply to reduce

feelings of irritation, daydream about a positive event to increase feelings of joy, or separate two off-task students to alleviate anger. Emotion regulation strategies are numerous in nature and can target at least four dimensions of an emotion: the external world events that are causing the emotion, an individual's attention, their thoughts and cognitions about the stressor, and the symptoms and expression of the emotion itself (Gross, 2014, 2015). Finally, it must also be acknowledged that any act of emotion regulation has visible and experiential results. *Emotion regulation outcomes* refer to the actual changes that materialise. Is the teacher able to reduce their irritation, increase their joy or hide their anger? It is important to remember that emotion regulation strategies are not always successful.

Within general psychology, discussions of 'good' regulation often focus overtly on mental health under the tenet that those who are unable to successfully regulate their emotions are more likely to experience negative psychological outcomes (Berking & Whitley, 2014). A key goal of emotion regulation training in general psychology, therefore, is helping individuals to decrease their tendency to regulate emotions in ways that are detrimental whilst simultaneously increasing their ability to employ adaptive strategies (McRae & Gross, 2020).

While this is also true to a great degree within the field of applied linguistics, everyday life goals are not always congruent with the goals of the classroom. As part of their work, language teachers need to use their emotions as a tool to have instrumental impacts on themselves and those under their instruction (Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020; Gkonou & Miller, 2017; Morris, 2025; Morris & King, 2023). Accordingly, Jim King and I have previously summarily defined instances of successful language teacher emotion regulation as being "those where an appropriate strategy is used to achieve a desired emotion regulation motive and goal without causing adverse outcomes for teachers or students" (Morris & King, 2023, p. 2). This definition is broad in nature, and if we wish to provide successful training, it seems prudent to extend and develop this definition so that it attends more formally to the various contextual facets shaping teachers' regulatory decision-making. To construct such a definition, I now consider four important facets of emotion regulation.

The Need for Awareness of Emotions and Emotional Triggers

Firstly, an important dimension of emotion regulation is that emotions themselves are not hardwired into the brain, but instead are constructed by and within individuals as they cognitively assess how their present circumstances compare with their whole history of past experiences (Barrett, 2017). In other words, when a teacher experiences anger in the classroom, their emotion is moulded by their previous life experiences relating to this emotion and to the antecedent circumstances. Emotions are, in such a way, uniquely tied to any individual's history in both their professional and personal lives. Language teachers have experiences as teachers and learners themselves. They have childhoods and adulthoods. And they have a range of formative and critical incidents that they draw upon as they move through their working day. All of these experiences influence their emotions and their regulation decision-making. To be successful at emotion regulation, teachers need to have a strong awareness of the range of historical factors that shape their emotions in the present. It can be deduced that an important part of being a good emotion regulator means being aware of your own emotions, the things that cause you to feel emotions, and the elements of your past that are influencing the paths of your emotions.

The Need for Awareness of Emotional Nuances

A second important dimension of knowledge that good regulators might possess is an understanding that emotions are driven by culturally specific behavioural and display rules (Barrett, 2014; Mesquita et al., 2016), and by power dynamics within societal hierarchies (Hochschild, 1983; Kemper, 1981; Shuman & Scherer, 2014). These kinds of pressures overtly and tacitly direct teachers' emotional experiences and displays. For example, teachers in the Japanese context (where I teach) are often influenced by racially defined emotional expectations. Japanese teachers are expected to teach classes in a comparatively serious manner, while non-Japanese teachers are expected to teach classes in a comparatively more relaxed and fun manner (Nagatomo, 2016; Poole, 2010). In the past, students in Japan have reported that both

Japanese and non-Japanese teachers do indeed conform to these expectations (Shimizu, 1995).

Whenever language teachers make emotion regulation decisions (particularly with regards to the emotions they wish to display), they do so in consideration of the sociocultural rules of both the culture(s) that they come from and the culture(s) they are working with. Since language teachers frequently work either in cultures they may be unfamiliar with or with learners whose backgrounds do not match their own, it can be deduced that an awareness of the expectations of those other cultures (and an openness to, and empathy for those expectations) are crucial for emotion regulation success.

The Need to Achieve Instrumental Goals

In the previous two sections I outlined the knowledge that good emotion regulators might need to acquire, but it is important to remember that emotion regulation is chiefly a functional skill that has real-life consequences. As was noted earlier, emotion regulation is a motivated activity (Tamir, 2016; Tamir et al., 2020). This means that whenever language teachers regulate, they do so in order to achieve one or many higher-order motives relating to a range of social, behavioural, health-related or identity-related outcomes (Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020; Gkonou & Miller, 2023; Morris, 2025; Morris & King, 2023). Previous research suggests that the range of instrumental motives (i.e. non-health related motives) lying underneath language teacher emotion regulation is significant and includes such motives as affecting the atmosphere of classrooms (for example, by consciously displaying energetic emotions to generate a positive atmosphere), managing student behaviour (using anger to maintain control), managing self-behaviour (recalling guilt to prevent future negative actions), improving the manner of instruction (genuinely expressing passion to highlight the importance of topics), building social relationships (displaying warm emotions with shy students), and meeting perceived emotional display responsibilities (suppressing anger at the behest of a manager) (For a fuller discussion of the range

of emotion regulation motives that teachers may regulate for, see Morris, 2025). What is clear from this research is that, to be successful, language teachers need to be able to actually enact emotions that have a positive instrumental impact on their students and their teaching.

The Need to Regulate in Adaptive Ways

Finally, a foundational understanding of good emotion regulation is that it should improve rather than impede well-being. For language teachers, what this means in practice is that when regulating emotions in the pursuit of various instrumental motives, teachers own health should not be sacrificed. Although the relationship between well-being and emotional health is rather complex, some useful generalizations can be made. Firstly, it is generally accepted that strategies which target the sources of emotions (known formally as antecedent strategies - Gross, 1998) are healthier than those which target the symptoms and expression of emotions (response strategies - Gross, 1998) (Gross & John, 2003; Nyklíček et al., 2011). This conclusion is supported by pivotal research from Gross and John (2003) who, in large-scale laboratory studies, found that individuals who habitually used cognitive reappraisal (an antecedent strategy whereby an individual regulates an emotion by forming new cognitions about the situation they are experiencing) had significantly more adaptive outcomes than those who habitually used suppression (a response strategy whereby an individual simply pushes down an emotion). Evidence within teaching itself has often been in agreement with this conclusion (Azari Noughabi et al., 2022; Fan & Wang, 2022; Lee et al., 2016; Yin et al., 2016), though some studies have also found that, while the use of habitual suppression correlates with emotional exhaustion, the use of reappraisal does not necessarily reduce negative outcomes (e.g. Chang, 2013; Kafetsios et al., 2012).

Another common generalisation made in relation to well-being is that some strategy types may be overtly good or bad. Ruminating in negative emotions (McRae & Gross, 2020), and habitually ignoring problems (Roth & Cohen, 1986), are often singled out

as being manifestly maladaptive actions, while the use of cognitive strategies such as reappraisal (Gross & John, 2003), and gratitude (Quoidbach et al., 2015), alongside attentional strategies such as mental time travel (Eren, 2009; Quoidbach et al., 2015), are frequently cited as adaptive. These assertions exemplify that language teachers who are good emotion regulators should be able to use a variety of healthy strategies within their everyday working situations.

Summary: Defining 'Good' Language Teacher Emotion Regulators

Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence that I have discussed above, I now propose a more intricate definition of good emotion regulation in the context of language teaching, as described by the following four statements:

1. Language teachers who are good emotion regulators are aware of their emotional antecedents, both with respect to the classroom features that cause them to feel emotions and also to the subjective past experiences that underlie their emotional responses.
2. Language teachers who are good emotion regulators are aware of the emotional nuances of their own and their students' socio-cultural backgrounds.
3. Language teachers who are good emotion regulators are able to use emotion regulation skills to formulate and achieve a variety of instrumental goals which ably serve learner success.
4. Language teachers who are good emotion regulators are able to regulate their emotions in manners that are adaptive with regard to their psychological well-being.

Statements 1 and 2 here are knowledge-based, and statements 3 and 4 are skills-based. Moreover, the four statements are not mutually exclusive, with skills 3 and 4, in particular, highly dependent upon the knowledge and awareness teachers may have accumulated in relation to points 1 and 2.

The usefulness of this kind of definition cannot be overstated when considering how language teachers might be taught to more successfully regulate their emotions.

Such a definition may act as a form of curriculum, with trainers able to design courses to build the knowledge and skills that the definition asserts are necessary. Moreover, such a definition provides trainers with success criteria and targets to aim for, and equally provides trainees with a tool from which they may assess their own confidence and abilities.

TRAINING LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN EMOTION REGULATION

In the previous section I defined the emotion regulation knowledge and skills that language teachers need in their work. In this section, I consider more formally how we might provide training to teachers. Again, I draw from literature both in general psychology and also in the field of education itself, and I review some previous attempts to provide emotion regulation training to language teachers.

Broadly speaking, instructional methods for emotion regulation can be broken into two forms, what I choose here to call *holistic* training and *targeted interventions* respectively. By holistic training, I am referring to very comprehensive approaches, often located within general psychology, that have as their goal an extensive reformulation of how an individual might regulate their whole range of emotions. On the other hand, by targeted interventions I am referring to narrower but still very intentional approaches that aim to support individuals with specific obstacles, emotions or strategies. Such interventions may enact small but not insignificant changes within an individual's ability to regulate their emotions. Since important lessons can be taken from both of these kinds of training methods, I consider each of them in detail and in turn.

Holistic Training

Within general psychological fields, holistic training is frequently performed under the banner and tenets of cognitive behavioural theory (CBT). Two important examples of this are *emotion regulation therapy* and *emotion-focused CBT*. In emotion regulation

therapy, a series of cumulative sessions are used to raise individuals' awareness of their emotional and motivational states and provide them with the practical skills required to have regulatory control over them (Mennin & Fresco, 2014). Similarly, in emotion-focused CBT, a variety of reflective and discursive activities (e.g., role-plays, vignette explorations) are used to inform individuals about the emergence and function of emotions and strategies for their control (Suveg et al., 2006). Both models are intensive and require a significant commitment on behalf of the clinician and patient alike.

Also emerging from the tenets of CBT, and perhaps the most well-developed model of regulation training, is the *affect regulation training* programme (known as ART) (Berking & Whitley, 2014). It is an excellent model for understanding how holistic emotion regulation education might function and be adapted for the language teaching profession. ART was originally formulated in 2004 as a response to a scarcity of useful affect-focused approaches within psychotherapy, and the method has since been widely employed in Europe (Berking & Whitley, 2014).

Building on numerous pre-existing frameworks, ART conceives of seven key emotional skills needed for regulatory success: the capacity to be conscious of emotions, the capacity to recognise and label emotions, the capacity to discern the antecedents of emotion, the capacity to modify emotions in positive ways, the capacity to accept undesirable emotions if required, the capacity to engage with negative circumstances, and the capacity to provide effective self-support (Berking & Whitley, 2014). To achieve competence in these seven skills, ART outlines a comprehensive training programme, usually delivered in approximately 12 sessions over 6 weeks. Within the programme, attention is provided to each of the seven skills, with participants repeatedly practicing a sequence of actions that help them to regulate with more intention.

An important part of ART is the notion of knowledge enhancement. For example, within the course, participants are explicitly taught about how negative emotions and stress develop, about the importance of an approach mindset, about the effects of

various emotional states on the body, and the neuroscientific bases for the regulatory solutions. Participants are not passive but spend a significant amount of time reflecting on themselves, on their past experiences, on the foundations of their emotional responses, and on their progress with new emotion regulation strategies.

In broad terms, ART is a useful model because it illustrates how knowledge and skill development can be integrated across a training course. Early sessions focus predominantly on knowledge development, while later sessions focus on skill practice. Skill practice sessions encourage participants to develop a regulatory process (known as the ART sequence) consisting of steps that move the patient from relaxing themselves, through acceptance of their emotional state, towards an analysis of the emotion, and finally to changing an emotional path. This sequence is introduced in stages, with participants adding new steps to the process as they move through the course. The course also teaches participants new emotion regulation strategies and encourages them to employ them. Actively employing emotion regulation strategies is an important goal since they may become habitual under repetition in the right conditions (Gyurak et al., 2011).

The ART training method is clearly an important approach towards emotion regulation skill development and it has shown efficacy in a variety of clinical areas including treatment for depression (Berking et al., 2019) and alcohol dependence (Stasiewicz et al., 2013). On the other hand, perhaps the biggest difficulty in implementing ART is its relative complexity. Since it is a formal psychological intervention, ample experience and training in diverse clinical areas are necessary for appropriate delivery of the course (Berking & Whitley, 2014). Moreover, since it is designed to treat general-life emotion regulation dysfunction, parts of the course are perhaps not well suited to the work of language teachers. Nevertheless, any language teacher emotion regulation training programme can certainly draw from many of the tenets, goals, and activities of ART.

When searching for holistic training programmes in language education that have targeted emotion regulation, no clear examples emerge; however, Eraldemir-Tuyan

(2019), has described a successful 10-week training programme that focused on emotional intelligence (of which emotion regulation is a core component - see Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The training took place with 17 EFL teachers working at a state university in Turkey and was intensive in nature, with participating teachers meeting weekly to discuss articles and complete activities to educate them on their emotional strengths and weaknesses. Although the course did not overtly attend to emotion regulation, numerous suggestions emerged that are very relevant to regulation training. Firstly, the authors recommended that training courses in emotional issues be voluntary in nature, since volunteer trainees are more likely to have the self-motivation to apply things they learn to their own classroom practice. Secondly, the course highlighted that group work, sharing and discussion are critical for supporting trainees to ascertain new knowledge. Given the inherent personal nature of emotional topics, the authors also concur with others (e.g., Nakamura, 2023) that rapport and a safe learning space are key. Finally, the authors recommended that reflection be a regular part of the course. Such reflections are most successful when learners are encouraged to make connections between new ideas and their past experiences. Each of these recommendations is highly relevant to others seeking to organise holistic training programmes focusing on emotion regulation.

Targeted Interventions

In contrast to the very intensive holistic training programmes often used in psychology, smaller and shorter-term targeted interventions may also be applicable to educational fields. In relation to emotion regulation, we can conceive of targeted interventions as those which support teachers with a specific problem they are having, perhaps by giving them a single or limited number of strategies to try. Targeted interventions are appealing because of their relative simplicity in comparison to holistic training methods, but also because, theoretically, they can be used to treat unique and small-scale issues.

Targeted emotion regulation interventions are similar to other strategy instructional methods which are widely accepted and utilised in language education. Such methods frequently follow clear guidelines: strategy instruction is most effective when individuals (a) are helped to recognise their existing strategy use, (b) are taught new strategies, (c) are encouraged to use these new strategies, and (d) are supported to reflect on the implementation of new strategies (for an excellent overview of varying strategy instruction models and their applicability to emotion regulation instruction, see Nakamura, 2023).

Since, by its very definition, emotion regulation is a skill reliant on strategies, it makes sense that it could be taught using a strategy-focused instructional method. In the case of language teacher emotion regulation, any form of intervention or training that provides opportunities for the four elements described above is most likely to have some positive effect on a teacher's emotion regulation ability. Moreover, it is well established that positive interventions, those strategies which focus on increasing positive affect (rather than managing negative emotional states), may have a significant positive impact on overall well-being, even to the same degree as established psychotherapeutic methods (Quoidbach et al., 2015). Consequently, emotion regulation training interventions can support teachers to manage stress while simultaneously encouraging them to increase positive emotions. Finally, meta-analyses exploring the impact of affective strategies highlight that interventional choices which suit the individual (in terms of personality and culture) are particularly powerful (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). This suggests that during targeted interventions, instructors should do well to engage in constructive dialogue with trainees and make room for reflection.

Within language teacher education, there is one important study that attempted targeted interventions, and which highlights some of the important points discussed so far in this section. Gregersen et al. (2020) attempted a positive intervention with an in-service teacher working in very difficult circumstances in West Africa. To support change, the researchers instructed the trainee in the silver linings approach, a positive

intervention through which the participant was encouraged to reflect on difficult situations and to attempt to draw positive observations about them. The training programme itself was short, with the participant engaging in the intervention for just one week. The researchers reported that while the intervention was somewhat successful in the present moment, it was not possible for the participant to make long-term changes to their regulation of emotions. The study provides some important conclusions for potential training programmes, with the authors highlighting the overall short time frame of the intervention and the fact that the intervention was perhaps unsuited to the very emotionally demanding situations the participating teacher faced (including violent protests within their city and very difficult working conditions). Such conclusions perhaps highlight the complexity of enacting emotional change through small-scale interventions and suggest that larger-scale, more longitudinal forms of training are more likely to have success, particularly when dealing with difficult emotional circumstances.

Summary: Lessons for Language Teacher Emotion Regulation Training

In consideration of the discussion above, I wish to draw attention to the following points of consideration for emotion regulation training.

1. Language teacher emotion regulation training could take the form of targeted interventions or more holistic training programmes. At this stage there is only extremely limited empirical evidence to suggest that such programmes may have a positive effect, reinforcing the need for more attempts to provide and evaluate training.

2. Holistic training programmes within general psychology draw heavily on the tenets of CBT to implement long-lasting change in individuals' emotion regulation habits. Such training programmes are likely successful because they provide knowledge instruction to participants (knowledge of emotions and knowledge of regulation), because they provide opportunities to practice new skills, because they provide

systematic processes for participants to learn and follow, and because they include forums for reflection.

3. Targeted interventions may be useful for supporting individuals with unique emotions, situations or issues. Such interventions can be implemented by following well-established guidelines on strategy instruction, but they may not be suitable for all circumstances.

AN EXAMPLE LANGUAGE TEACHER EMOTION REGULATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

My goal so far in this paper has been to explore theoretical perspectives on emotion regulation training: Namely, what emotion regulation skills might language teachers need to acquire and how might these be taught? I believe there may be many effective ways to organise a training initiative that adheres to the important ideas I have introduced thus far, but in this final section, I would like to describe in concrete terms how such a training programme might function. For ease, I refer to the training programme as Language Teacher Emotion Regulation Training (LT-ERT) throughout the remainder of the paper.

Goals of Training Programme

In accordance with the definition of a good language teacher emotion regulator described earlier in the paper, I suggest that LT-ERT be a holistic training programme which supports participants to develop the required competences. In particular, the goals of LT-ERT should be as follows:

1. To develop participants' declarative knowledge of emotions and emotion regulation, such that they may understand how emotions function and the impact of emotion regulation decisions.

2. To develop participants' repertoire of emotion regulation skills and strategies such that they may be more able to make effective and adaptive emotion regulation decisions.

3. To support teachers to have a greater awareness of their own emotions, their own emotion regulation decision-making, and the contextual factors underpinning themselves and their students.

To meet these goals, LT-ERT functions as a multi-session programme, with each session targeting a particular component of emotion regulation. Given the complexity of emotion regulation, I believe that a minimum of 6 sessions is desirable, and in Table 1 I offer an overview of six such sessions.

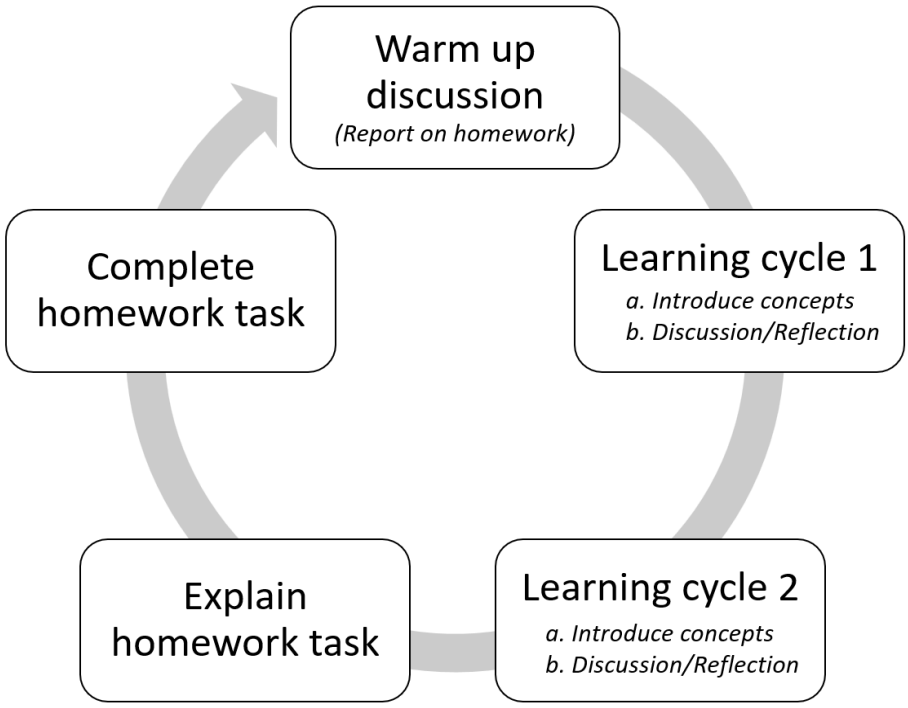
Table 1. Overview of Six LT-ERT Sessions

	Title	Core learning
Session 1	What are emotions?	Learning cycle 1: Biological perspectives on the origins and functions of emotions Learning cycle 2: Psychological perspectives on the origins and functions of emotions
Session 2	What is emotion regulation?	Learning cycle 1: Core features of emotion regulation (motives, goals, strategies and outcomes) Learning cycle 2: Gross's process model of emotion regulation. Situational, attentional, cognitive and response strategies
Session 3	Emotion regulation motives	Learning cycle 1: Different forms of emotion regulation motive in language teaching Learning cycle 2: Connections between emotion regulation motives and teacher well-being
Session 4	Responsive strategies	Learning cycle 1: Using a process to implement new emotion regulation strategies Learning cycle 2: Learning new responsive strategies
Session 5	Antecedent strategies	Learning cycle 1: Learning new antecedent strategies Learning cycle 2: Using reflective tools to improve emotion regulation abilities
Session 6	Review	Learning cycle 1: Reviewing core learning from the course Learning cycle 2: Looking to the future – How to continue to develop after the course

As can be seen in the table, each session deals with a single topic related to emotion regulation, and, similar to other holistic training programmes (e.g., the ART programme, Berking & Whitley, 2014), participants on the course complete cycles of skill implementation and reflection as they progress. Each session is designed to build upon the previous, with participants likely to find the greatest benefit from moving through the sessions in the order they are prescribed. The six sessions of LT-ERT could be delivered face-to-face or through synchronous online sessions. Ideally, the same instructor would run each session, themselves having both knowledge and practice with emotion regulation either in their personal or professional lives.

In the training programme, each session of the course should follow the same structure (see Figure 1). Following a warm-up conversation, trainees undergo two learning cycles. In each cycle, the instructor spends time (approximately 10-15 minutes) introducing new concepts, and then trainees spend time (approximately 20-25 minutes) discussing their understanding of this new knowledge and reflecting on its relevance to their own classrooms. At the end of each session, homework tasks should be provided, involving elements of practice and reflection. Trainees would complete these tasks and report back on their experiences at the beginning of the proceeding session. Since each session of the course follows the same pattern, the procedural complexity of the training is reduced, allowing the participants more cognitive room for knowledge and skill development (Ball, 2018).

Figure 1. *Session Structure on the LT-ERT*



Theoretical Pillars Underlying the Course

In order to achieve its aims, LT-ERT is supported by three 'pillars'- key guiding principles that govern both its design and implementation. These pillars are derived from the many theoretical conclusions that have been discussed in the first two parts of this paper.

Pillar 1: Knowledge and Awareness

Given that good emotion regulators have knowledge and awareness about emotions, about emotion regulation, and about themselves (Berking et al., 2019), knowledge development forms a key part of a training programme.

For the proposed LT-ERT, knowledge development is most visible in the first three sessions of the course. Session 1 explores two major ideas. In the first learning cycle, key theories are introduced that posit emotions as evolutionary programmes being driven by cognitive appraisals of experienced events (Lazarus, 1991), which cause a range of behavioural, psychological and physiological changes in individuals (Scherer,

2009; Shuman & Scherer, 2014). Trainees are taught to consider relevant conclusions in relation to their work and, perhaps most importantly, that classroom emotions should not be considered as inherently positive or negative, but rather as being desirable or undesirable in particular circumstances. In the second learning cycle, participants learn that emotional responses and their emerging paths are a consequence of social and historical contexts (Barrett, 2017; Mesquita, 2022). They are therefore taught that their classroom emotions are born of their own past and present experiences, not limited to their childhoods, family circumstances, experiences at school with their own teachers, and their current working contexts. Taken as a whole, session 1 should highlight the individuality of the participants in relation to their emotional responses in any given situation.

In session 2, trainees are educated about emotion regulation itself. In the first learning cycle, the instructor raises awareness about the range of outcomes which might be considered emotion regulation (hiding emotions, showing emotions, exaggerating emotions, etc.), the fact that emotion regulation is a motivated activity (Tamir, 2016; Tamir et al., 2020) and the notion that emotion regulation is achieved through the enactment of strategies. In the second learning cycle of session 2, the participants are taught Gross's process model (Gross, 2014, 2015), an important framework for understanding emotion regulation strategy types that is widely employed in general psychology and educational research. This model suggests that emotion regulation strategies can target one of four elements of an emotion: the external world triggers that a teacher is responding to, the location of their attention, the cognitions and thoughts that are affecting the way they are responding, or the symptoms and expressions of the emotion itself.

In session 3, the focus of knowledge development turns specifically to emotion regulation motives. The reason for focusing on motives in detail is that when individuals have a clear understanding of why they are trying to regulate, they are more likely to be successful (Tamir, 2016). Through the two learning cycles, the participants are introduced to a range of instrumental and hedonic (i.e., well-being-

related) motives for regulation. Moreover, they learn that there might be instances when they desire to achieve two or more emotion regulation motives and that these motives may be in conflict. Emotion regulation motive conflict refers to times when a teacher must achieve one motive at the expense of another, such as when teachers prioritise their hedonic well-being ahead of dealing with emotionally difficult issues, and they can be particularly detrimental to a teacher's emotional well-being. (see Morris & King, 2020).

Pillar 2: Skill Practice

Both holistic and interventional training programmes advocate for the overt instruction and practice of new emotion regulation strategies. This kind of exposure and implementation takes place in the second half of LT-ERT, most visibly in sessions 4 and 5.

In session 4, participants are intentionally taught about response-focused strategies (Gross, 1998). These are strategies which are used after an emotion has already emerged, and they are used to manage both the facial displays and symptoms of emotions. Then in session 5, participants learn about antecedent strategies (Gross, 1998). These are strategies which are usually applied in advance of an emotion arising. Antecedent strategies are often preparatory in nature, designed to support a person to be proactive in the management of emotions so that they can be more agentive in their decision-making. In studying both of these kinds of strategies, the participants learn to pre-emptively intercept emotions and also how to deal with emotions if they do come to fruition.

In both sessions 4 and 5, the participants are provided with written descriptions of a total of 20 emotion regulation strategies (see Appendix A as an example). These strategies are chosen because they have generally been reported as being adaptive (i.e., beneficial) in emotion regulation literature. The participants read and discuss the strategies and consider them in comparison to their existing emotion regulation habits.

The course does not only focus on exposing the participants to new strategies but also to using them. At the end of sessions 4 and 5, the participants are explicitly asked to

choose one strategy that is new for them and to intentionally use (or attempt to use) this strategy within the week following the session. The participants then report back on their experiences at the opening of the proceeding session.

Pillar 3: Reflection

The third pillar of the course relates to how participants might reflect upon their emotion regulation understanding, habits, expectations and actions. Monitoring and reflecting on new emotion regulation strategies is valuable in promoting autonomy and self-management of those strategies (Berking & Whitley, 2014; Nakamura, 2023).

During LT-ERT, reflection takes place in both spoken and written forms. In spoken forms, which take place twice in every classroom session at the end of each learning cycle, the participants are asked to consider the ideas they are being exposed to and reflect on how they might apply to their own learning. For example, in the second session of the course, after the participants are taught Gross's (2014, 2015) taxonomy for categorising emotion regulation strategies, the participants are asked to discuss times in their past when they think that they have employed examples of these strategies in their work.

Written reflections are completed as a weekly homework task (see Figure 1), and such tasks change throughout the course. In the opening three sessions, the participants are encouraged to complete written reflections that target the main learning aims of the sessions. However, starting with session 4, when participants began to try new strategies for themselves, the participants reflect using two specifically created reflection tools. One of these tools targets general emotional experiences (Appendix B) and the other is designed to support the trainees to find emotion regulation solutions to specific and identifiable problems they are currently facing (Appendix C). The tools follow steps advocated for by the ART sequence (Berking & Whitley, 2014), with participants first analysing the origins of an emotional response and its contextual antecedents before then considering regulatory solutions. The final sections of the tools encourage the trainees to be critical about their regulatory attempts and to make active plans for future changes.

Of course, the success of any course is dependent not only upon the learning that takes place within it, but also on how much trainees are able to continue to implement changes after the course is completed. Consequently, participants are encouraged to continue using these tools to help them to develop their approaches to emotion regulation moving forward after the course has finished.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have endeavoured to provide both a theoretical overview of emotion regulation training and also outline a potential programme. While the discussion points herein are based upon solid theoretical and empirical foundations, it is clear that much more work is needed to establish how we may best train teachers to employ more effective regulation.

Although I have presented LT-ERT as a theoretical proposal herein, the course I described is, in fact, a concrete reality. The course and accompanying material were developed with financial support from the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science, and they are currently being tested with language teachers in Japan. Data on the effectiveness of the course will be forthcoming.

More than anything, I hope that this paper encourages more critical discussion and active movement towards an increase in the amount and quality of emotion-focused training that is offered to both pre-sessional and in-service language teachers. As was noted above, teachers need their emotions to teach effectively, and any efforts to support teachers to improve their emotion regulation skills are likely to improve outcomes for both teachers and students.

Authors' Contributions

All aspects of this article were completed by the author, Sam Morris. This includes, but is not limited to: conception of the work, drafting of the article, revision of the article, and final approval of the version to be published.

Declaration of GenAI and AI-Assisted Technologies

GenAI tools were not used in the preparation of this manuscript.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Work related to the emotion regulation training programme described in this paper received ethical approval from the Journal and Research Committee at the Center for Foreign Language Education and Research at Rikkyo University.

Funding

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP23K00756.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Examples of emotion regulation strategies provided to trainees.

Response strategies

Turn around / Walk away What it is: This strategy involves physically removing yourself from a triggering situation to prevent an emotional reaction. How to do it: When you are feeling overwhelmed,you could, for example, turn to the board, step to another part of the classroom, or briefly leave the room (if appropriate in your context). Why it is useful: Creating physical space gives you time to regain composure and respond more thoughtfully.	**Breathe (4/7/8)** What it is: Controlled breathing can be used to calm the physical effects of an emotion. How to do it: One way is to inhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 7, and exhale slowly for a count of 8. It may also help to focus on deep breaths from the diaphragm. Why it is useful: This technique can help to reduce the physical effects of an emotion.
Count What it is: Counting is a mental distraction that creates a brief pause before you react. How to do it: When an emotion emerges, in your head count to 5 or 10. You could also count backwards. Why it is useful: This act gives you time to slow down and shift away from automatic reaction. Therefore, it can help you to respond more deliberately.	**Use a mantra** What it is: A mantra is a calming phrase repeated to yourself to help you reassess an emotion you are experiencing. How to do it: Silently repeat a phrase like “stay calm”, “this will pass”, “it doesn’t matter”, or “I’m doing my best” during stressful moments. Why it is useful: Mantras reinforce self-regulation and positive thinking. They also help you to reinterpret the things that are happening around you.

Antecedent strategies

Focus on classroom routines What it is: Clear classroom routines are useful because they can guide student behaviour and reduce feelings of uncertainty. How to do it: Some areas where routines might work include the order of activities in classes, how and when you give feedback, what you do when moving around the room, any punishments or reprimands that you give. Why it is useful: Routines minimize confusion and misbehavior, reducing emotional stress for both teachers and students.	**Focus on preparation routines** What it is: If there is an area of your classroom preparation that causes you stress, try to establish a routine around it. How to do it: Evaluate what tasks cause you stress and then plan routines to avoid them. For example, if you feel rushed in the morning, routinely organise your materials and desk before going home each day. If a particular class is causing you stress, routinely take a walk before the class. Why it's useful: Routines help proactively lower stress and emotions during emotional events.
Reappraisal What it is: Reappraisal means changing how you interpret a situation to reduce its emotional impact. How to do it: Commonly, a student might not pay attention. Instead of viewing their behaviour as disengagement, you might view it as shyness, tiredness, or stress. Why it's useful: By reappraising what we see, we can prevent negative assumptions. This supports a more constructive emotional response.	**Gratitude** What it is: To practice gratitude, take time to remind yourself of the positive aspects of your job/life. Mentally express your gratitude towards these things. How to do it: One way to do this is to think about what you are grateful for at the same time each day. For example, you could think about a student who has made progress or a colleague who supported you that day. You could think about how your job is allowing you to achieve personal goals. Why it's useful: Gratitude boosts positive emotions. Moreover, it helps us to avoid overly focusing on negative circumstances and feelings.

APPENDIX B. Language teacher emotion regulation planning tool for general emotions.

Regulating General Emotions

Analysis: Goals, motives and causes

*An emotion I **don't** want to feel*		*An emotion I **do** want to feel*
What is the emotion you don't want to feel (or want to feel less of)?		What is the emotion you do want to feel (or want to feel more of)?
Why is this emotion unproductive?		How will this emotion be helpful to you?
When do you usually feel the emotion?	OR	In what kinds of situations do you want to feel this emotion and why?
Why do you think you feel this emotion in those situations?		

Make a plan – Consider the following ideas

Situational • What can I change in my environment to have an impact?	
Cognitive • Is there another way I can look at things?	
Response • Will any response-focused strategies be helpful?	
Key strategies • What is a strategy that I want to try?	

Evaluation

After trying the plan, how satisfied was I?
What can I change to have more success?

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APPENDIX C. Language teacher emotion regulation planning tool for specific issues.

Regulating for a specific issue

Analysis: Goals, motives and causes

The past	*The future*
What is the emotion you don't want to feel?	What is the emotion you do want to feel?
Why is this emotion unproductive?	How will this emotion be helpful to you?

What was happening in the present that caused you to feel the emotion?

What factors from your past influenced your emotional response?

Solutions

Situational • Are there any changes I can make to prevent this emotion from emerging?	
Cognitive • Can I think about this problem in a different way? • Are there any positives I can take from this situation?	
Response • When this emotion happens again, what can I do to minimize its effects? • What do I need to remember to do next time I feel this emotion?	
Key strategies • What are the most important strategies I want to try?	

Evaluation

After trying the plan, how satisfied was I?

What can I change to have more success?

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