

# The Emotional Experience of First-time Teaching: Reflections from Graduate Instructors, 1997–2006

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## Abstract

Teaching for the first time can be a challenging but rewarding experience. For first-time graduate student instructors, however, it also officially marks the transition from student to teacher—a process that can be both transformational and emotion-laden. In this article, we use content analysis of 86 first-time sociology graduate student instructors' reflections on their first semester teaching to explore the emotional aspects of first-time college teaching, an aspect that has received little attention in the existing literature. We describe the range of emotions—both positive and negative—first-time instructors highlighted in these written reflections, as well as their discussions of emotional highs and lows, emotional surprises, connections to pedagogical strategies, and the role of formal and informal departmental support in dealing with the emotional aspects of teaching. We conclude with the implications of these findings for graduate student teacher training and preparation programs and directions for future research.

## Keywords

emotions and teaching, scholarship of teaching and learning, professionalization of students

Teaching can be a challenging yet rewarding experience. For first-time instructors, it also officially marks the transition from student to teacher, a process that can be both transformational and emotion-laden. Yet the emotional aspects of first-time college teaching have received little attention in the existing literature (Sutton and Wheatley 2003). In this article, we assess and map the emotional dimension of the first semester of teaching based on content analyses of 86 end-of-the-semester reflections written by first-time graduate student sociology instructors. We find a remarkable range of emotion terms and a great deal of emotionally-laden language, with about 250 different emotion words used in these articles. Instructors reported more negative emotions than positive as they reflected back on their first semester teaching overall, but more positive emotions when looking forward to future teaching experiences. We discuss

these findings as well as first-time instructors' reports of a mismatch between their expectations and the reality of teaching and the relationship between the emotions and pedagogical strategies discussed in their reflections. We also consider how first-time instructors reported drawing on teacher preparation programs and how these insights can be used to better prepare those entering the teaching role for the first time.

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## EMOTIONS AND FIRST-TIME TEACHING

The emotional experiences of first-time teachers have received little attention in the existing literature, especially in relation to university teaching, with a few notable exceptions. Powell and Pescosolido (2011) describe a three-phase emotional trajectory experienced by new instructors: first, a period of anticipation, enthusiasm, and anxiety; second, an emotional dip, with less emotional turmoil; and third, a phase of resurgence and reconciliation. Postareff and Lindblom-Ylänne (2011) also note that teachers who are still developing their teaching approach express positive emotions, but also confusion, fear of applying new teaching methods, and limited confidence. Other literature has found that beginning teachers often experience anxiety and may be particularly vulnerable to negative emotions (Payne and Manning 1990).

### *Teaching and Emotionality*

A growing body of research, however, attends to the content of teachers' emotions more generally (Hargreaves 1998; Nias 1996). These studies, mostly focused on K–12 teachers, highlight a range of emotions associated with teaching, including positive emotions like caring, joy, satisfaction, and pride and negative emotions such as frustration, irritation, and anger (Gates 2000; Tsang 2011). A parallel literature focuses on stress and burnout as occupational risks for teachers (van Dick and Wagner 2001).

Yet few of these studies have explored the *balance* of positive and negative emotions experienced by teachers, and few have sought to catalog the range of emotions experienced (Sutton and Wheatley 2003). With respect to higher education teaching, only two interview studies have compared positive and negative emotions, with mixed results. Postareff and Lindblom-Ylänne (2011) found that university teachers in Finland reported experiencing various positive and negative emotions but that positive emotions, such as enjoyment, dominated. Hagenauer and Volet (2012) found 14 distinct negative and 9 distinct positive emotions but that instructors reported experiencing a balanced *frequency* of positive and negative emotions overall.

This literature has also linked teachers' emotions to pedagogical strategies and other outcomes. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) summarize the existing literature as suggesting that teachers' emotional

experiences may influence their cognitions and motivation, which in turn can influence teacher retention, teaching strategies, and other outcomes, such as the construction of a teacher identity or self (Zembylas 2003). University teachers' emotions have also been connected to the teaching strategies they adopt; positive emotions (e.g., pride and motivation) are associated with student-focused teaching approaches and negative emotions (e.g., anxiety and embarrassment) with teacher-centered approaches focused on information transmission (Trigwell 2012). Postareff and Lindblom-Ylänne (2011) similarly find that university teachers who report more well-developed, student-centered teaching approaches are the most "positively emotionally charged" toward teaching, leading the authors to conclude that positive emotions are associated with higher quality teaching.

### *Teaching and Emotional Labor*

A second strand of research on emotions in teaching draws on the concept of emotional labor, through which feelings are brought into line with "feeling rules" or norms about how people should feel in particular situations as part of one's job (Hochschild 1983). This labor can take the form of surface acting—altering or manipulating the outward expression of emotions—or deep acting, in which people modify the internal emotions they experience. Several studies have addressed emotional labor in college teaching (Lusk and Weinberg 1994; Roberts and Smith 2002). Bellas (1999) argues that professors use surface and deep acting to display positive emotions and control negative emotions in the classroom. Other work equates academics to front-line employees who must manage their own emotions for the benefit of student "customers" (Constanti and Gibbs 2004). Additionally, for some instructors, emotional labor is particularly pronounced. Harlow (2003) finds that black professors must perform more extensive emotion management and emotion work than their white colleagues. Bellas (1999) connects the emotional labor associated with teaching to traits culturally defined as feminine and a gendered reward structure in academia that emphasizes research and devalues teaching.

Emotional labor has also been connected to university instructors' job satisfaction, burnout, and perceived teaching effectiveness. Gates's (2000) ethnographic study connects instructors' emotion management to both job satisfaction and effective teaching, as instructors believe that appropriate

emotional expression is important for facilitating student learning (see also Sutton [2005]). Zhang and Zhu's (2008) survey of college instructors in China finds that deep acting is related to greater teacher satisfaction, while surface acting is less common and is associated with lower teacher satisfaction and higher burnout. Overall, this work suggests that emotions impact teachers' experiences and job satisfaction, as well as the pedagogical strategies teachers use in classrooms and their students' learning.

### *Graduate Students, First-time Teaching, and Emotions*

Emotions may be particularly important to consider in relation to first-time university instructors, for whom teaching marks an important transition or status passage (Glaser and Strauss 1971). Entering the teaching role is often a key step toward a professional academic identity. Social psychological research suggests that transitioning into a new work role creates a period of newness, contrasts, and surprises (Louis 1980). Perceived successes and failures in one's role performance, particularly when the role is important to one's identity, result in emotional responses (Stryker and Burke 2000). How new instructors experience and respond to their own emotional reactions may in turn shape the course of their professional development.

University teaching by graduate students thus represents a special case of first-time teaching. Within sociology, studies of first-time teaching have found wide variation in preparation of graduate student teachers; most recently, Pescosolido and Milkie (1995) found that only half of graduate student teachers and teaching assistants surveyed had received any formal teacher training. In addition to this frequent lack of preparation for teaching, graduate students may be particularly prone to role conflict as they assume their new, multiple, and sometimes competing roles as both teachers and researchers. Graduate student socialization in research-intensive institutions entails a shift away from the teaching role (Freyberg and Ponarin 1993), suggesting that socialization into the teaching role and socialization into the discipline can pull budding academics in different directions. Although this may vary by institution (Olson and Einwöhner 2001), most academic careers juggle teaching and research to some degree. The unique circumstances of first-time graduate student instructors may therefore add to or compound the

emotional experiences that arise in relation to teaching.

Our aim is an exploration that contributes a focus on the importance of emotions in first-time college teaching and a greater understanding of the emotional dimensions of teaching, as well as to foster efforts to better prepare budding sociology instructors for this challenge. This study is limited in scope to the experience of first-time graduate student teachers of sociology at one university, but begins to correct for the dearth of literature on emotionality in first-time teaching more generally.

### *Data and Methods*

We use content analysis of 86 reflection papers written by graduate student instructors in the sociology department of a large American research university over a 10-year period (1997–2006). The papers were written at the conclusion of a required course on pedagogy that in most cases was taken by graduate students during their first semester of teaching.<sup>1</sup> These reflection papers were a course requirement, but the assignment was largely unstructured: instructors were asked simply to reflect on their experiences of teaching for the first time. The focus and content of the papers thus varied widely, though they were often written to a presumed audience of future first-time teachers. The papers were about 10 pages long on average. On average, the instructors in our sample were 27 years old; 83 percent were white, and 62 percent were female. The majority (52 percent) of instructors taught Introduction to Sociology (see Table 1).

With Institutional Review Board approval, support staff removed authors' names and all other identifying information from each paper and assigned each a random number. We then used Microsoft Access to code the de-identified papers for global aspects of the first-time teaching experience, such as teaching techniques discussed as being used in class (lecture, discussion, group exercises, media, and games or simulations), instructors' discussion of their expectations going into the semester, and their overall evaluation of their first-time teaching experience. The second author and another graduate student performed this coding, using Excel to assign each paper to a coder randomly. Eight randomly selected papers were coded by both coders to check for intercoder reliability; these papers showed 85 percent agreement between coders. This coding was based on what instructors explicitly wrote in the papers; for example, we coded instructors' overall evaluation of their

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics ( $N = 86$ ).

Variable description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Instructor age	27.21	4.27	23	43
Instructor gender: female	0.62	0.49	0	1
Instructor race: white	0.83	0.38	0	1
Instructor race: Asian	0.01	0.11	0	1
Instructor race: African American	0.12	0.32	0	1
Instructor race: Latino/a	0.05	0.21	0	1
Instructor race: Nonwhite	0.17	0.38	0	1
Course taught: Introduction to Sociology	0.52	0.50	0	1
Course taught: other lower-level course	0.20	0.40	0	1
Course taught: upper-level course	0.28	0.45	0	1
Length of paper (number of pages)	10.38	2.33	3	17

experience based on explicit statements such as, “Overall, the semester went very well” (7). Respondents who did not explicitly evaluate their overall experience as positive or negative were coded as neutral. We coded instructors’ reported expectations as negative, positive, neutral, and no mention, also based on explicit discussions; 33 of the respondents did not discuss any expectations.

At this stage, the frequency of emotion-laden language within the papers led us to focus on the emotional aspects of first-time teaching. The authors then together used Atlas.ti, a qualitative analysis software package, to code each paper for the use of specific emotion terms. The first author then coded each use of an emotion term for whose emotion(s) were being referenced (self, students, or others), and another graduate student coded each term for the context in which these emotions were discussed (e.g., before the semester, in the classroom, or after the first semester teaching and looking ahead). The second author coded the valence (i.e., positive or negative) of each term on the basis of term definitions, the use of the affect control theory software “Interact,”<sup>2</sup> and the context of the term’s usage.

## RESULTS

Discussion of emotions and use of emotionally-laden language were common throughout the instructors’ written reflections. We first discuss the overall use of such language in these written reflections, including both positive and negative emotions. We then discuss emotional surprises and challenges, followed by the role of formal and informal support in helping first-time teachers cope with and manage these emotions. Lastly, we consider the

relationship between first-time teachers’ emotions and the pedagogical strategies they used. We conclude with implications of these findings for preparing graduate students and assistant professors to teach for the first time.

### *Overall Use of Emotion-laden Language*

Instructors described teaching for the first time as an emotional experience. The sheer emotionality of first-time teaching is one of the most striking aspects of our data. One instructor wrote: “The most challenging aspect of teaching this semester has not been the actual delivery of material, but the emotional work associated with teaching” (70).<sup>3</sup> Another first-time instructor similarly wrote that “teaching was one of the most emotionally and mentally exhausting things I have ever done in my life” (36). These quotations are illustrative of a broad trend: 95 percent of these instructors explicitly discussed the emotional demands of teaching. Instructors discussed a broad range of emotions—including 248 distinct emotion terms (see Figure 1). The instructors used emotion terms about 38 times (on average) per reflection, with a range of 7 to 95 emotion terms used and an average of 18 different emotion terms per paper.

Most first-time instructors discussed a mix of both positive and negative emotions in their reflections. One instructor, for example, wrote that “teaching has had a powerful influence on my emotional state the past few months. Good teaching days are an incredible, indescribable rush. Bad teaching days send me into a dark and ugly funk” (10). About 21 percent of our first-time instructors indicated that they experienced these emotional highs and lows.



many negative emotions, instructors do not necessarily view it as a negative emotional experience overall. The greater frequency of negative emotion terms in all other contexts—including in relation to preparations before the semester and on the first day of class—also suggests that first-time instructors' negative emotions, especially fear and anxiety, may decrease over time. It may also be that the relief of the semester's end allowed first-time teachers to return to optimism. This is similar to Powell and Pescosolido's (2011) discussion of a period of emotional resurgence.

### *Emotional Surprises and Challenges*

Entry into a new work environment brings strangeness and the unexpected for the newcomer, potentially creating numerous surprises (Louis 1980). We found that nearly half of the graduate teachers' reflection papers (48 percent) discussed being surprised by the level of emotionality involved in teaching or the particular emotions they experienced once they began teaching. Many explicitly wrote about unexpected or challenging emotional aspects of their first-time teaching experience. The unpredictability of student responses was cited as one common source of these continual emotional surprises. For example, one instructor wrote:

A surprising amount of surviving the first year of teaching seems to consist of . . . dealing with frustrations that come from dealing with students . . . students are always throwing you curveballs. What I couldn't have predicted was that your favorite students will sometimes frustrate you almost as much as your classroom nemesis. (42)

For this instructor, these "curveballs" were an unexpected source of frustration. Another instructor similarly wrote of constant surprises: "Whether it was a student calling my policies stupid and unfair in front of most of the class or one sharing the personal details of her divorce in a 10 minute diatribe . . . I must say, I was consistently surprised" (33). These quotations highlight why teaching could be experienced as continually emotionally surprising: Students' unexpected behavior triggered a range of emotional responses, and the timing of these instances was difficult to anticipate. Even if a particular emotion (e.g., frustration) became typical, knowing which student would provoke that response, and when, was impossible.

Some teachers were taken by surprise by particular emotional qualities of their teaching experiences. Several others reported being surprised by the emotions involved in teaching, such as one teacher's report of being "surprised at the intensity of my emotions" (70). Another instructor wrote: "[It] wasn't just the teaching and prep time. It was the recovery time. I would be sky high during class and then crash afterwards. The emotional highs and lows completely wiped me out. It took a nap just to get me to the point where I could adequately function again" (40). For this instructor, emotional exhaustion thus contributed to the remarkably time-consuming experience of teaching, and both phenomena were unanticipated.

How one might feel as a result of emotional exertion or emotion work in the classroom was, however, difficult to anticipate. Some teachers reported feeling energized, others drained, but regardless, the quality of the experience was described as difficult to imagine in advance. For example, knowing ahead of time that emotion work would likely be involved did not prepare this teacher for the taxing experience of emotion work in the classroom: "I guess I knew that this performance act and its corresponding 'emotion work' and impression management would be part of teaching, but I had no idea how stressful and draining this part would be" (67).

Teachers also weighed in on how surprised they were by the experience of particular emotions that didn't match the expectations they had prior to beginning teaching. Many reported that their first semesters' teaching inspired more positive or fewer negative emotions than they had anticipated. One instructor, for example, wrote that over the course of first-time teaching, "I came to a startling realization. I may have been nervous as hell, but I really enjoyed being at the front of that classroom." For other instructors, teaching was less of a negative emotional experience than they had anticipated; one wrote that teaching "wasn't nearly as horrifying as I imagined" (23); another reflected, "I expected to be more nervous" (26). On the other hand, some instructors were surprised to experience negative emotions beyond their expectations, such as one instructor's report that "I had so much fear (much more than I anticipated having)" (36). In other cases, first-time instructors described unanticipated emotions more generally, such as writing that "I did not expect that I would get as attached to some of my students" (58). Instructors thus reported that their emotional experiences over the course of the first semester teaching were not

always in line with the experiences they had anticipated.

A discrepancy between expectations and reality could bring relief or further emotional challenges. Overall, 29 percent of instructors reported having negative expectations going into their first time teaching, 14 percent had positive expectations, 18 percent had neutral expectations, and 38 percent did not report any expectations. Still, 60 percent of instructors ultimately evaluated their first-time teaching experiences positively, 33 percent neutrally, and 7 percent negatively. For almost 20 percent of instructors, there was a discrepancy between their (stated) expectations and reality.

Only two first-time instructors went into their first semester teaching with positive expectations but ultimately evaluated their actual experiences negatively. This mismatch between expectations and reality presented emotional difficulties. For example, one instructor found that teaching did not bring the expected positive feelings, which in turn brought about rumination and heightened emotionality:

The truth, which I was scared to admit to myself, let alone say out loud to someone else, was that I hated it. . . . I felt like I was on an out-of-control emotional and psychological roller coaster. . . . Granted, this mostly had to do with the expectations that I had going into teaching, I expected that it would change my life, fit like a magical glove and resolve all the uncertainty I had about graduate school and a career in academia. Wrong. This, I believe, is one of the most difficult things about teaching for the first time. Pretty regardless of what your expectations are, the experience itself is going to be much different. (39)

In contrast, 15 first-time instructors (almost 18 percent) went into their first semester teaching with negative expectations and emotions (e.g., anxiety or fear) but ultimately evaluated their actual experiences positively (accompanied by positive emotions such as enjoyment or comfort). One instructor concluded, “my fears never materialized . . . instead, [I] realized that I actually *enjoy* teaching” (34). Another prepared to experience anxiety but ultimately did not:

My biggest fear going into the classroom was that I would experience high levels of anxiety and be unable to perform my duties at all—or at least not without extreme discomfort. . . . I

actually went to [a doctor] and asked for a temporary supply of anti-anxiety medication for my first two weeks of classes. . . . I quickly discovered I did not need it at all. I found that I felt quite comfortable in front of the class, and that my anxiety was minimal. Not only was I able to perform, but I felt fairly “natural” while doing it. My biggest expectation, that I would “freeze under the headlights,” was completely off the mark. (80)

As this quotation illustrates, several first-time instructors reported a discrepancy between their emotional expectations and reality. Some were surprised by the sheer emotionality of teaching or the amount of emotion work it required; others were surprised by the particular emotions they experienced, often at odds with the emotions they anticipated. Discrepancies between expectations and reality could also bring further emotional challenges.

### *Drawing from Program Support*

In response to teaching-related stress, anxiety, or uncertainty, many instructors turned to peers and faculty for support. One such source of support was the department’s Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program, which included a required course for first-time graduate student instructors taught by a faculty member and an advanced graduate student, with meetings prior to and ongoing throughout instructors’ first semesters teaching.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, only about half of sociology graduate students responsible for their own courses receive formal training of this sort (Pescosolido and Milkie 1995).

Some resources for the emotional challenges of teaching came in the form of advance preparation before teachers set foot in the classroom. As one instructor wrote:

Before the start of the semester, I was scared to death. Fortunately, I was not alone. In a meeting before the official start of classes, [the instructor] told our [group of new teachers] the story of a promising young professor who had called to resign the night before his first class because he was so petrified of teaching. This was how I felt so I found the story both comforting and comical. (86)

Regular meetings throughout the first semester teaching was also described as helpful for dealing with the often-unexpected emotions involved in

teaching. Meetings combined open-ended discussion of course members' ongoing problems and issues with supportive advice from those with more experience, and many first-time teachers found comfort and reassurance in discussing their problems and finding that other first-time teachers had similar experiences. One instructor wrote, "The emotional work was very draining and could have easily overwhelmed me had it not been for the required teaching class. . . . I viewed it as a comfort zone where I could talk about issues related to my teaching experience with fellow first time-teachers that were also going through more or less a similar process" (70). Discussing teaching issues with the course members and supervisor also led to solutions to worries and anxieties. For example, one instructor wrote that discussing concerns with the teaching supervisor led to a helpful suggestion to seek more informal feedback from students and that "it had not yet occurred to me that talking with the students regarding their perceptions of the class would help alleviate some of the disquiet that troubled me. This was, after all, the foundation of my worries" (4).

Teachers also drew support from friends, teaching assistants, and campus teaching resources. The teaching resources center provided material to help address specific teaching-related issues; one teacher also found meeting with teaching resources staff comforting because it let one know if one was on the right track. Friends were a source of emotional support that allowed for more of an outside, unfiltered perspective on teaching problems; one teacher found that talking to friends allowed him or her to emotionally "unload" (33).

Not all teachers who discussed the PFF program described it as entirely helpful. One person suggested that meeting as a group with other first-time teachers and hearing about their innovations within the classroom was intimidating. Some teachers found that particular advice did not apply to them or that they agreed only in part with recommendations given. On the other hand, some rejected advice they received in their teaching preparation course only to find that, in hindsight, they wished they had heeded the advice. As one teacher put it, "Well (surprise!), all those people with experience actually *knew* what they were talking about" (27).

Additionally, preparation for first-time teaching, either within the auspices of the PFF program or simply through talking to other graduate students, was also experienced as incomplete. One instructor wrote:

I feel that I had experienced more than my fair share of anticipatory socialization: sharing many discussions about teaching with other graduate students in addition to many hours imagining what the experience would be like. While all of this preparation did give me a good sense of what the issues would be, I was amazed to discover how different the experiences would be from my expectations . . . what I expected to be problems were not, and things I thought I could handle, caused me more difficulty than I could have imagined. (80)

First-time teachers thus found that the unexpected aspects of emotionality threw a wrench into their attempts to fully prepare themselves for the experience of teaching for the first time. The final quotation underscores the importance of continued teacher training and support *during* first-time teaching, as new instructors encounter such unexpected emotional aspects of teaching.

### *Emotions and Pedagogical Strategies*

We lastly examined the relationship between the emotional experience of first-time teaching and the pedagogical strategies employed by the instructors. First-time instructors' reflections discussed their classroom practices and the use of different pedagogical techniques, and we draw from our coding of these mentions. Overall, 92 percent reported using lectures, 85 percent reported using discussions, 52 percent reported using media, 43 percent reported using group exercises, and 15 percent reported using games or other simulations. The overwhelming majority (94 percent) of our instructors' reflections reported using more than one of these strategies, while 3 percent did not report any specific pedagogical techniques in their reflections.

We found only one correlation between reported pedagogical strategies and emotions: Instructors who more frequently discussed positive self-emotions were also significantly more likely to report using group exercises. This difference is in line with claims that positive emotions are linked with more student-centered teaching approaches (Trigwell 2012), but we otherwise found no clear pattern of variation between reported emotions and particular pedagogical strategies. This is likely due to the variety of strategies these first-time instructors reported experimenting with in their classrooms.

## CONCLUSION

The reflections of graduate student instructors described first-time teaching as a highly emotional experience that called up a mix of both positive and negative emotions. Some emotions were generated by a mismatch between the instructors' expectations and the realities they reported once they began teaching; instructors also frequently discussed being surprised by the emotional aspects of teaching. While negative emotions were frequently reported, instructors discussed more positive emotions than negative in the context of looking ahead to the future, similar to Powell and Pescosolido's (2011) model of the emotional trajectory of first-time teaching, which ends with a period of resurgence.

These trends were notably similar across our pool of first-time instructors. We found no differences between male and female and white and non-white instructors—albeit among a predominantly white group. We also found only one difference in terms of emotions and pedagogical strategies, with instructors who reported more positive emotions also more likely to report using group exercises in the classroom. This suggests that first-time teaching may be an experience that overwhelms and obscures the differences that other scholars have found.

In the midst of the emotional experience of first-time teaching, instructors also discussed drawing on support from departmental programs, campus resources, and colleagues. Discussing the emotional aspects of teaching with teaching supervisors, fellow first-time teachers, and colleagues appeared to generally be beneficial to first-time teachers for both coping with their emotions and coming up with strategies to manage negative emotions. On the other hand, not all first-time instructors found these resources helpful and first-time teachers also simply could not always predict, and thus could not fully prepare for, how they would experience teaching for the first time.

These findings suggest that training and support should be available to first-time instructors both before and during their first teaching experiences and should incorporate attention to the emotional aspects of first-time teaching. Additionally, while our first-time instructors were all graduate students with access to both formal and informal teaching support as part of graduate student training, first-time teaching preparation and support programs are also needed for those who instead make this transition as new assistant professors.

Our instructors' reflections suggest that the formal support of a pedagogical course was helpful in two key ways that could be replicated in other settings. First, course meetings were described as providing a "comfort zone" (70) for new instructors to discuss their own experiences and hear about and learn from others' experiences. Periodic "support-group" style meetings for first-time instructors, whether graduate students or new assistant professors, are thus one possible form of programming.

A second key way that our first-time instructors described the pedagogical course as helpful in relation to the emotional experience of first-time teaching was through its provision of opportunities to discuss concerns with the course's teachers, either during class time or in individual meetings. These discussions were cited as a source of "advice" (4) and "perspective" (50) that helped to alleviate some of the worries surrounding first-time teaching. Providing first-time teachers with teaching mentors, either through a classroom program or via mentoring partnerships with more advanced faculty or graduate students, could also provide support both before and during the first semester teaching.

Our first-time instructors' reported experiences of emotional surprises and mismatches between their expectations and reality also underscores the importance of ongoing support. New instructors may also benefit from hearing about and learning from a *variety* of others' first-time teaching experiences. Giving future first-time instructors a sense of the range of possible emotional experiences, such as through a panel discussion, may help them "expect the unexpected" and recognize that their expectations may not match up with reality once they start teaching.

This study's focus on first-time instructors at the university level also speaks to a broader gap in the existing literature on emotions and teaching. The prevalence of instructors' discussion of emotions in reflecting on first-time teaching points to their importance for understanding new instructors' experiences. Such emotional experiences may hold important consequences for teacher motivation and retention, as well as for the teaching strategies that instructors adopt (Sutton 2005; Trigwell 2012). They may also impact instructors' development of a "teaching self" or commitment to the teaching role (Olson and Einwohner 2001; Zembylas 2003).

Future research is needed to more fully understand the impact of these emotional experiences on teachers and teaching more generally, especially over the course of teachers' development. While

the present study suggests that first-time instructors looked forward to future semesters of teaching, social desirability bias (Phillips and Clancy 1972) or attempts to salvage negative experiences through optimistic statements may mask the instructors' true feelings. We also do not know if these emotional experiences affect graduate student instructors' likelihood of completing graduate school and seeking teaching-oriented or other academic jobs. Future longitudinal research can examine whether and how the emotional aspects of first-time teaching change with subsequent teaching experience.

Another limitation is that much of our sample was white. The lack of racial differences observed in our study should be interpreted with caution and, ideally, investigated in future studies drawing upon more diverse populations. Finally, while our data suggest that support for new teachers is important, our respondents were not specifically asked to evaluate the helpfulness of support programs. Future research is needed to directly explore the impact of different types of formal and informal support on first-time teachers' emotional experiences.

## NOTES

Reviewers for this manuscript were, in alphabetical order, David Blouin, Patti Giuffre, and Alison Moss.

1. Occasionally, students would take the required course during a subsequent semester due to scheduling conflicts or would take the course during their first semester teaching at this university but have prior teaching experience from another university.
2. Interact is a computer program for examining the implications of affect control theory, available at <http://www.indiana.edu/~socpsy/ACT/interact/JavaInteract.html>.
3. As is evident in this quotation, these instructors, as sociology graduate students, drew on the sociology of emotions and literature on emotional labor in reflecting on their experiences. It is possible that familiarity with this literature made these instructors more aware of emotions and emotional labor than instructors from other disciplines might have been; future research is needed to consider variations across disciplines.
4. In constructing these valences, we split some of our codes, such as *surprise*, into positive and negative by closely examining the context in which the term was used.
5. Over the course of the 10 years included in our sample, three different faculty members and 10 different advanced graduate students taught this course.

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