

## ***Perezhivanie* and Its Application to the Professional Growth of TESOL Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

This conceptual article focuses on the notion of *perezhivanie* – a teacher’s unique way of experiencing classroom events through the dynamic interaction of emotions, cognition, and environmental factors – and discusses its application to the professional growth of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) teachers. To achieve such growth, teachers must acquire new knowledge and skills while simultaneously critically reflecting on their practice, as professional learning arises from reflecting on experiences. Furthermore, critical reflection must consider the emotions associated with teachers’ experiences as professionals, as these substantially impact how teachers make sense of their lived experiences and disseminate their narratives. The article begins by defining the concept of *perezhivanie*, bridging psychology and English language education. It examines how *perezhivanie* intersects with TESOL teachers’ professional growth through lived and transformative experiences, all of which are situated within emotionally-, empathetically-, culturally-, and socially-charged contexts. Additionally, to ensure TESOL teachers are fully prepared for their careers, the article provides several strategies for integrating the concept of *perezhivanie* into TESOL teacher education programmes and activities supporting continuing professional development (CPD). Although its primary focus is on TESOL teachers, the article also serves as a valuable resource for teachers, teacher educators, and CPD providers across languages, including non-language-specific disciplines.

**Keywords:** *perezhivanie*; reflective practice; professional development; TESOL teachers; English language education; TESOL teacher education

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in the twenty-first century is becoming increasingly complex and demanding as teachers are faced with an array of diverse challenges (Cirocki & Hallet, 2024; OECD/Asia Society, 2018; Rossner, 2017; UNESCO, 2018). These challenges are being driven by a number of trends that are exerting a rapid and transformative influence on the educational landscape, including sustainability,

internationalisation, technologisation, innovation, inclusion, and diversity. Teachers in the twenty-first century must not only be cognisant of these trends but also proactively endorse them in their classrooms and schools. These trends also contribute to the development of complex competence frameworks that guide language teacher education and professional development (Cirocki & Hallet, 2024). As a result, the list of competences present-day teachers are asked to demonstrate is continuously growing, as is the inventory of arduous and complicated tasks they are expected to perform each day in the classroom. These tasks include, among others, problem solving, decision making, and independent action (Cirocki & Hallet, 2024; Priestley et al., 2015; Teng, 2019).

Consequently, the development of critical reflection skills is essential for teachers (Farrell, 2015, 2022; Mann & Walsh, 2017) in order to examine and gain a better understanding of recent pedagogical trends and the resultant demanding tasks, such as the integration of digital tools into the teaching-learning process or the adaptation of content to learners' needs and interests. This involves examining the components, implications, and outcomes of these tasks, as well as the emotions involved, and, in the case of problem solving, providing appropriate remedies. The related emotions can be both positive, such as pride, joy, and excitement, and negative, arising from both tensions and conflicts (Cong-Lem et al., 2023; Veresov, 2019).

The emotionally charged moments teachers experience in their professional lives may arise from the successes of their students, their own professional achievements, or the competing demands of different stakeholders such as students, parents, administration, and policymakers. Additionally, the challenges related to these emotions may result from the discrepancy between personal teaching philosophies and institutional expectations. The emotions teachers feel whilst teaching greatly influence the ways in which they respond to the professional scenarios they encounter and play a vital role in determining the course of their development as professionals (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Zhao et al., 2022).

Similarly, such emotionally charged moments arise in the context of teacher professional development, which still largely operates from a deficit perspective where interventions are offered to fix teacher behaviours or devalue their experiential and context-specific knowledge (Gregersen et al., 2022). Whilst positive feelings are associated with successfully completing continuing professional development (CPD) courses or the joy of acquiring new competences, teachers also face stressful situations. For instance, they must manage high expectations so that they can adapt to new teaching situations such as integrating new technologies, implementing new curriculum standards, and complying with evolving educational policies. Additionally, teachers are expected to learn how to effectively cope with professional insecurities (e.g., performance evaluations, workforce reductions) and demographic shifts in the student population. Given all these emotional situations, it is crucial for language teachers to be aware of their emotions and regulate them effectively throughout their professional journeys (Morris & King, 2018, 2020). Such awareness and regulation help ensure their emotional wellbeing is maintained, thereby enabling them to nurture their passion for teaching, foster an emotional balance, and sustain their desire to undertake professional learning. In addition, it allows them to understand their professional experiences at a much deeper level. For the latter to occur, teachers are expected to know and engage with a wide range of strategies that enable them to reflect critically on their emotions and emotional responses in professional contexts, and to then adapt their practices appropriately.

This conceptual article specifically examines the concept of *perezhivanie*, which epitomises how classroom practitioners subjectively and emotionally experience and process incidents or events in the workplace, and the relationship this has with professional growth. Because the concept of *perezhivanie* is complex and often unfamiliar to teachers and teacher educators

(Smirnova, 2021, 2024), the article begins by defining it and establishing its relevance to English language teaching, thus bridging the fields of education and psychology (from where *perezhivanie* originates). Following this introduction, the focus shifts to explaining how to embed the concept of *perezhivanie* into TESOL teacher education programmes and CPD through several hands-on strategies. In addition, it is important to emphasise that although this article focuses on TESOL teachers and their education and professional development, it also serves as a valuable resource for teachers and teacher educators across languages, including non-language subjects.

### **Conceptualising *Perezhivanie* for TESOL Teachers**

*Perezhivanie* is a complex psychological construct encompassing multilayered subjective experiences. It has no direct equivalent in English, and its translations in the literature range from emotional experiences (Golombek, 2015) through lived experiences (Mochizuki, 2019) to lived-through emotional experiences (Golombek & Doran, 2014). However, for Vygotsky (1971, 1994), *perezhivanie* alluded to the unity of the environment and the individual, thus connecting characteristic features of specific situations and the individuals participating in them (Vygotsky, 1994). According to Vygotsky's reasoning, *perezhivanie* refers to the way in which teachers become aware of, interpret, and emotionally respond to events (Vygotsky, 1994). Based on this, it can be concluded that *perezhivanie* is about more than simple emotional responses; rather, it is synonymous with an integrative process in which cognitive, affective, and social components intersect (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Lambert & Johnson, 2011). This perspective is in line with that of Cong-Lem (2022), who breaks the complexity of *perezhivanie* down into four component parts: environmental factors (i.e., external situations that individuals encounter), personal characteristics (e.g., individuals' beliefs), the refraction prism (i.e., how individuals perceive and interpret external situations), and psychological influences (e.g., individuals' emotional responses).

Extending these ideas to TESOL teacher education, it can be inferred that *perezhivanie* involves two key elements: (1) the deeply personal and emotional experiences teachers live through when they engage with their professional environments (e.g., interactions with other stakeholders and the broader educational context) and (2) the subjective process of interpreting these experiences, along with their attendant challenges, conflicts, and successes. It is the second element that engages classroom practitioners in reflection so that they not only understand their reactions and responses but also learn from their emotionally laden professional experiences. This reflective process contributes to shaping English language teachers' professional identity (Uştuk & Yazan, 2024) and, more specifically, to their professional growth, as explored in the following section.

To guide the discussion in this article, *perezhivanie* is understood as a dynamic process in which teachers cognitively and emotionally live through (i.e., perceive and affectively respond to) classroom situations, shaped by their personal characteristics (e.g., beliefs, patience, and emotional resilience) and context-specific factors (e.g., institutional expectations and cultural norms). These lived-through emotional experiences are influenced by how teachers interpret the situations and the emotions they evoke, essentially affecting their pedagogical thinking, reflective practice, and professional growth.

### ***Perezhivanie* and the Professional Growth of TESOL Teachers**

Having defined *perezhivanie*, the next essential step is to discuss how *perezhivanie* among TESOL teachers intersects with their professional growth. To that end, this section examines several personal and context-specific factors with which English language teachers often engage.

## **Emotion as a Catalyst for Action**

Perezhivanie emphasises the emotional impact of experiences on a teacher and can act as a catalyst for action and professional growth. This is in agreement with Smirnova (2024), who suggests that engaging with their emotions can provide an opportunity for educators to critically reflect on their practices, leading to deeper reflection, self-assessment, and potentially transformative changes in their teaching approaches. This process underscores the interplay between emotion, intellect, and action in professional growth.

Similarly, Agnoletto et al.'s (2022) study on the perezhivanie and epistemic agency of a novice teacher during practicum experiences in Brazil elucidated how emotional engagement with teaching situations can enhance and actionise critical thinking and decision-making skills. Nine classroom observations followed by post-observation interviews revealed the contradictions faced by having the novice teacher's practice examined by a more experienced peer, as well as tracing how the said teacher's perezhivanie shaped their professional development. The authors concluded that reflecting on emotionally charged experiences fosters a deeper understanding of teaching practices and promotes professional agency and growth.

In the same context, Ramos (2022), on examining the complexities of teachers' experiences through the lens of perezhivanie, revealed that emotional engagement with teaching challenges leads to critical reflection and adaptive changes in teaching strategies. Specifically, the structure of classroom lessons in organisation and clear teaching objectives lessened over time due to infrastructure and resource considerations. However, successful mediation from experienced peer instructors, who acknowledged that individuals experience emotions differently depending on the culture of the classroom space, facilitated effective adaptations in the Brazilian educational system. This process emphasises the importance of acknowledging and reflecting on emotional experiences in order to drive professional agency and development.

As demonstrated, engaging in the process of perezhivanie enables teachers to adapt their practices, fostering professional growth and enhancing teaching effectiveness. It also highlights the essential role of emotion in driving agency and transformation within the teaching profession. Valuable insights into the interplay between emotion and intellect in teacher development were generated by research conducted by Schwarz et al. (2024) on the use of perezhivanie in research on teacher training. This revealed that by reflecting on their lived experiences through the lens of perezhivanie, teachers can better understand how significant events act as catalysts for professional transformation. The latter is often preceded by teacher professional agency through which classroom practitioners assume responsibility for their development and make informed decisions to improve their practice (Ballantyne, 2018; Leijen et al. 2022). McNamara (2022) argues that perezhivanie emphasises the transformative power of experiences. For teachers, significant events can act as turning points – such as challenging classroom situations or critical incidents – which exert a profound impact upon them, leading to deep reflection, transformative action, and professional growth.

## **Emotional Depth as a Source of Strength**

Engaging in the process of living through classroom experiences shaped by personal characteristics and context specificity – perezhivanie – can significantly enhance a teacher's capacity to adapt, recover, and grow in response to challenges (Nazari & Porsam, 2024). Transforming challenging moments in the classroom into professional growth opportunities is a demanding yet essential component of personal development for teachers. Facing such difficulties can strengthen their motivation, perseverance, and resilience (Yang & Markauskaite, 2021). When teachers confront obstacles – such as diverse learning needs, behavioural issues, or systemic constraints – they refine their instructional methods, strengthen

their problem-solving abilities, and build emotional resilience. According to Gu and Day (2013), teachers who engage in reflective practice and emotional regulation enhance their resilience and job satisfaction, resulting in sustained professional growth. By viewing struggles as opportunities for learning rather than setbacks, teachers not only improve their teaching effectiveness but also reinforce their commitment to student success.

Furthermore, focusing on resilience processes in which teachers' wellbeing and commitment were restored, Clarà (2017) presented two case studies examining how teachers reappraised situations of adversity in ways that allowed them to transition from states of suffering and despair to states of restored wellbeing and emotional strength. The concept of teacher resilience has enabled numerous researchers to focus not on those who exit the profession, but on those who remain committed and maintain emotional and psychological balance despite challenging work conditions (Gu & Day, 2007; Mansfield et al., 2016).

### **Emotional Engagement and Meaning Making**

Transformative learning is an intricate process involving substantive changes in the ways in which teachers view problems and how expectations affect the way they think, feel, and behave (Christie et al., 2015; Mezirow, 1991). This prompts a fundamental shift in their perspectives, often anchored in experiences that challenge their existing beliefs and assumptions. This process is not solely cognitive but deeply intertwined with emotions. In the realm of transformative learning, emotional engagement is considered essential for deep, meaningful change (Briciu, 2024). As individuals engage emotionally with new or challenging experiences, they are prompted to reflect critically, leading to a re-evaluation of their understanding and the construction of new meanings (Mezirow, 1991). This emotional involvement ensures that the insights gained are deeply internalised, promoting lasting change and meaningful development.

Furthermore, research indicates that educators who engage in *perezhivanie* also have a significant impact on students' learning outcomes. For instance, a study by Liu et al. (2024) exploring the relationships among psychological capital, learning motivation, emotional engagement, and academic performance revealed that in a blended learning environment, emotional engagement positively influences academic success. Specifically, teachers who fostered emotional engagement increased intrinsic motivation and psychological resilience among their students, resulting in better academic performance and the construction of new meanings.

In another study, Alves et al. (2024) found that in professional settings such as the turbulent emotional roller coaster of PhD candidate education, emotional engagement is crucial for teachers' reflective practice. Although educators at these higher academic levels may focus on informational transmission over emotional engagement, this research found that educators who combined mediation, lived experiences, and autonomy-focused supervision displayed the greatest success and achievement, particularly in the selection of student-chosen research projects. This is because emotionally engaging with their experiences meant teachers were more likely to reflect deeply, leading to meaningful insights and professional growth. This process of emotional engagement and meaning making enabled them to develop a more profound understanding of their practice, fostering continuous improvement and effectiveness in their teaching and supervision.

According to Smirnova (2024), *perezhivanie* is a psychological reaction to challenging classroom situations, involving stages from cognitive dissonance through to meaning making. This process further highlights the importance of teachers' emotional experiences in their professional development and reflective practice. Illustrating this, Kim's (2019) research on

international faculty members' lived experiences of teaching in US research universities utilised perezhivanie theory to illuminate the challenges they faced. In this study, Kim focused on difficulties related to language, cultural differences, and teaching expectations, exploring how educators developed resilience through their emotionally charged experiences. The findings showed that faculty members inevitably faced challenges early in their careers but were able to shift their perspectives and successfully acclimate to their teaching environments through effort and resilience.

For teachers, engaging deeply at an emotional level with their own experiences of perezhivanie – living through situations that they interpret, make sense of, and internalise – can significantly enhance their empathy, fostering more supportive and effective learning environments (Sun et al., 2023). This involves teachers reflecting on their personal and professional experiences, resulting in a deeper understanding of both their own emotions and those of their students. Such empathy is crucial in education as it enables teachers to connect with students, construct understandings of their perspectives, and respond effectively to their needs. Teachers with higher levels of empathy are more likely to adopt emotionally supportive strategies, such as comfort and encouragement, when dealing with challenging student behaviours (Willis, 2021). This emotionally charged and empathetic approach contributes to a positive teacher-student relationship, fostering meaning making and deeper engagement, which are associated with improved student outcomes (Sun et al., 2023).

This occurs because reflecting on one's own perezhivanie can engender greater self-awareness and emotional intelligence – interconnected components of empathy (Riess, 2017). By making sense of their own emotional responses and experiences, teachers relate better to their students' feelings and perspectives. Such enhanced empathy allows teachers to create more supportive and effective learning environments, as they are better equipped to address students' emotional and academic needs. Moreover, in research examining teachers' cultural, social, and emotional capabilities, Willis (2021) found that teacher empathy is an antecedent of student confidence. This suggests that teachers who engage with and make sense of their own emotionally engaging experiences can positively influence their students' emotional development and academic success.

By acknowledging the emotional and cognitive dimensions of teaching, educators and researchers can better support teacher development and address the complex challenges inherent within meaning making in educational settings.

### **Interaction with and Emotional Responses to Teaching Contexts**

The sociocultural contexts of teachers' practice heavily influence their development, helping shape their evolving identity as professionals. Perezhivanie, as conceptualised by Vygotsky (1971) and framed in our definition guiding the discussion in this article, emphasises the dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment. For teachers, this interaction is not merely about external circumstances but also about how these circumstances are interpreted, experienced, and emotionally processed. Thus, their responses to the sociocultural contexts of their pedagogical practice – including the classroom environment, institutional culture, student demographics, and broader societal norms – play a pivotal role in shaping their professional development. For example, TESOL teachers in a multilingual mixed-proficiency classroom may feel frustrated by inconsistent student participation. By reflecting on learners' individual differences, they are likely to begin to adapt their instructional styles, developing greater awareness and empathy.

Perezhivanie underscores the fact that teachers' interpretations and emotional reactions to their contexts are not passive. For instance, a teacher working in an under-resourced school may

initially feel frustration or stress, but through reflection, this experience can foster resilience, creativity, and a strong sense of advocacy. Conversely, positive experiences, such as successful student outcomes or supportive mentorship within the sociocultural contexts of teachers' workplaces, can reinforce confidence and professional commitment (Wei, 2021).

## **Integrating *Perezhivanie* into TESOL Teacher Education Programmes and CPD**

There are several ways in which *perezhivanie*-focused activities can be integrated into the professional learning of pre- and in-service English language teachers. Some of these strategies can be more formal than others; for instance, they can be graded, longitudinal, collaborative, or individual. Their nature and complexity depend on practitioners' teaching experiences and the particular levels of the programmes or courses they attend. Useful methods for integrating *perezhivanie*-oriented activities and transformative change in the classroom that TESOL teacher educators or CPD providers could incorporate into their activities or events feature, among others, reflective practice, case studies, mentorship schemes, emotional awareness workshops, video-recorded observations, emotion-centred professional portfolios, and *perezhivanie*-focused circles.

The seven activities outlined below have been specifically designed for the purposes of this article to support teacher educators in foregrounding the construct of *perezhivanie* within their teacher education programmes. Activities 1, 2, 5, and 7 have already been trialled with English language teachers during CPD events. They were well received and generated significant interest among the participants. Three participants provided the following evaluative comments:

*I really enjoyed these activities. Finally, the focus on teacher emotions! The CPD so far has hardly ever touched on this stuff. Thank you for this. I hope there's more coming*



*This workshop has been such an eye-opener. We never talked about these things during my Master's studies. I now know how to reflect on my emotions. Super useful activities!*

*I really enjoyed the practical side of the workshop; so many interesting and hands-on activities! I had fun doing them and will definitely share them with my colleagues who train teachers at the local uni. I think they'd be great for their pre-service teachers.*

### **Reflective Practice**

Reflective practice is an ongoing process whereby classroom practitioners critically examine their teaching to improve their pedagogical practice and offer their students optimal learning conditions. This enables teachers to engage in reflection before, during, after, and beyond lessons and to “compare theory with practice, ask probing questions about the teaching-learning process, analyse cause-effect relationships between teaching and learning, and seek optimal solutions for classroom dilemmas” (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017, p. 7; Girocki & Widodo, 2019; Farrell, 2015).

By engaging in reflective journalling (Activity 1) or discussions about their teaching experiences, teachers can recapture their lived moments, including the personal and contextual factors that shape them and relive their classroom experiences through their journal narratives. According to Farrell (2012), reflective journalling involves documenting lived experiences that revolve around classroom teaching and professional growth. A vital element of such journalling is for practitioners to describe how they felt, thought, and responded at particular times during their teaching, a process that furnishes them with a greater understanding of the ways in which they respond to challenging situations in the classroom. This strategy is likely to enable them

to foster emotional resilience and cultivate a more profound comprehension of their pedagogical methods (Abednia et al., 2013; Ruiz-Lopez et al., 2015; Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2018). There is no set structure for writing reflective journals, as these tools are meant for teachers' own use; hence, the writing process is entirely free-form. Nevertheless, for teachers with less experience, there are general guidelines available which they can follow. For example, they are advised to set aside a regular time and place for writing their journals, reflecting on their experiences and emotions, concentrating on personal development, nurturing a distinct voice and style of writing, and exercising compassion for themselves.

### **Activity 1 - Journaling on a Recent Lesson**

#### **Focus**

Reflect on your most recent lesson.

#### **Prompts**

Describe a moment that stood out. What happened? How did it happen? Why did it happen? How did you feel in that moment (explore the intensity and complexity of your emotions)? What were your thoughts? What was your interpretation of the event in relation to your teaching practices, goals, or beliefs? In what ways did your emotional and/or cognitive responses affect your decisions, behaviours, or actions during and after the event?

#### **Reflection**

What did you learn about your teaching style and the theories and principles underpinning it? Did you encounter any challenges? How did you respond to them?

#### **Professional development**

If you could teach the same lesson again, what would you do differently to improve your effectiveness or student engagement? Are there moments in your lesson where adjusting your emotional responses could have improved the learning environment?

### **Case Studies**

Another strategy for promoting emotion-laden learning experiences is to encourage teachers to write case studies (Activity 2) through which they can explore and share their personal stories of teaching. As such, case studies constitute in-depth examinations of specific classroom situations occurring in real-world contexts, generating within teachers a multi-perspective understanding of the issues under focus (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Tardi, 2019; Yin, 2017). Moreover, in the process of writing their case studies, it is essential for teachers to concentrate on instances where their level of emotional engagement was intense, assess the importance of such instances, and what this has taught them. This will allow teachers to identify how their professional decisions and interactions with students and other education stakeholders are shaped by their emotions and their subjective understandings of the experiences they have lived through. These case studies may then be shared with relevant colleagues as part of data-based reflections or disseminated as practitioner research at conferences.

To encourage teachers to write case studies, teacher educators could scaffold the process by providing them with useful prompts, such as clarifying the purpose of their case studies, choosing the right material (one lesson, a series of lessons) to include in the case study analysis, telling an engaging story, ensuring their stories are suitable for their target audiences, and presenting/publishing the final products in an effective way to maximise their impact. For more practical information about case studies in education, classroom practitioners should see

Campoy (2005) or Andrews (2021). Further examples of the use of case studies as research tools can be found in Gerring (2017) and Yin (2017). Considering case studies as research tools and using them in classroom-based research may be particularly useful for reflective practitioners, as this type of research can help them better understand their own or their students' experiences, capture context-specific practices, develop their own theories of teaching, or document innovative practices.

### **Activity 2 - Reflecting on My Teaching Experience: A Case Study Approach**

#### **Purpose**

Clarify the focus of the case study.

#### **Material**

Choose a specific lesson (or a series of lessons) that best illustrates the issue or theme you aim to explore. This should be a lesson (or a series of lessons) that had a significant emotional or cognitive impact on you.

#### **Structure**

Tell an engaging story with a clear beginning, main body, and conclusion. Include a moment that triggered strong emotional or cognitive responses. Describe how these emotions interacted with your thoughts and actions.

#### **Audience awareness**

Ensure your language, content, and style resonate with the target audience.

#### **Analysis and reflection**

Analyse and reflect on what worked and what did not (and why), and what could be improved or changed to make your teaching more effective. Reflect on how the interplay of emotions and thoughts during the experience informed your professional learning as a teacher.

#### **Presentation**

Ensure your case study is well-organised, accessible, and disseminated in an attractive way.

### **Mentorship Schemes**

Perezhivanie-focused activities could also be integrated into TESOL teacher education programmes and CPD events through mentorship schemes. These structured initiatives are based on key principles of mentorship where experienced teachers share stories informed by their perezhivanie with pre-service or novice teachers and then encourage the latter to do the same (Activity 3). The core values underpinning successful mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees include (1) setting expectations, objectives, and standards; (2) active listening and empathetic engagement; (3) giving constructive feedback; (4) advocating; and (5) withdrawing support and promoting autonomy and agency (Aguilar, 2013; Connor & Pokora, 2012; Knight, 2007). As such, the purpose of mentorship schemes is to match novice teachers with more experienced mentors who can assist them in nurturing a more profound comprehension of the intricacies of teaching, encourage them to talk about their experiences in the classroom, and offer valuable support as they navigate the complicated emotional dynamics intrinsic to the teaching process (Keh & Swartzendruber, 2021; Knight, 2007; Lengeling & Wilson, 2017). It is recommended that such schemes also offer guidance to teachers on handling student emotions and maintaining their own emotional wellbeing. The ethos underpinning mentorship is that it views teaching as not just an intellectual exercise but an

endeavour that makes heavy emotional demands of instructors (Donker et al., 2023; Tuxford & Bradley, 2014).

### **Activity 3 - Sharing Classroom Challenges and Emotions**

#### **Discussion**

Inexperienced teachers share recent emotionally challenging classroom experiences with their mentors. The mentors listen attentively and ask guiding questions to help mentees share the emotions involved.

#### **Emotion Analysis**

Mentors and mentees collaborate to identify the principal emotions experienced in difficult scenarios, discuss the reasons as to why such emotions arose, and assess the degree to which they affected the responses of mentees.

#### **Strategy Sharing**

The mentors share useful techniques they use to handle similar emotional situations. The mentees choose one or more strategies to try in their next class and devise a step-by-step procedure for their implementation within the teaching-learning process.

### **Emotional Awareness Workshops**

As stated previously, teaching requires a high level of emotional resilience and engagement (Agyapong, 2022; Kariou et al., 2021). This is not simply because of the stress induced by long hours and heavy workloads; teachers are also responsible for enhancing students' academic performance and safeguarding their emotional wellbeing and mental health. Hence, it is recommended that workshops concentrating on emotional intelligence and awareness be included in CPD events for TESOL teachers and TESOL teacher education programmes (Activity 4). Through their involvement in such workshops, teachers may enhance their ability to successfully manage their emotions and respond more effectively to the disparate needs of students. Ideally, such workshops should combine psychological theory, research, and practice to develop teachers' understanding of primary and secondary emotions, emotion regulation strategies, empathy development, and conflict resolution skills – qualities needed to profoundly understand and accurately interpret lived experiences. Such content is likely to help pre- and in-service English language teachers recognise and process their emotional experiences in the workplace, thus cultivating their emotional intelligence and resilience.

Activity 4 is proposed as a response to noteworthy research on teacher emotional intelligence and resilience. For instance, Palomera et al. (2008) stress that high levels of emotional intelligence significantly influence teaching practice. Similarly, Su et al. (2022) demonstrate that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with work engagement and teaching for creativity, with work engagement mediating this relationship. In terms of emotional resilience, studies have shown its importance in fostering positive teacher–student relationships and supporting teachers' emotional wellbeing (Hagenauer et al., 2015; Näring et al., 2012). At the institutional level, however, positive emotions contribute to staff stability, increased teacher commitment, and reduced turnover intentions (Lee et al., 2021). It is hoped that Activity 4 will evolve into a research project, encouraging teacher educators to report their findings through professional literature.

## **Activity 4 - Workshop on Emotional Awareness for Language Teachers**

### **1. Opening**

- Welcoming remarks
- Clarifying the objectives: (1) equipping pre-service teachers with a general understanding of emotional awareness and connecting this to participants' personal or professional contexts, (2) providing pre-service teachers with practical strategies to regulate their emotions, and (3) encouraging pre-service teachers to reflect on the theme of the workshop and create a plan for implementing new emotion regulation strategies in their work environments
- Presenting the agenda

### **2. Core Content**

- Emotions in teaching
- Emotional self-awareness
- Emotion regulation strategies

### **3. Practical Activities**

- Breathing exercises
- Emotional body scan
- Energy shake-off
- Social stories (teachers share stories through which they learn about emotions and how to react to them)
- Role-plays (teachers respond to challenging classroom scenarios with emotion regulation strategies)
- Problem-solving tasks (teachers address challenging classroom issues)
- Emotion mapping activities (teachers watch video clips, identify and list emotions demonstrated by students, and discuss possible ways of addressing the emotions in the recorded material)
- Step-into-their-world tasks (teachers explore the lived experiences of their students, reflect on what these experiences might be like for the students, and suggest ways of providing students with empathetic assistance).

### **4. Reflection** (teachers think about the new content and its relevance to their professional lives, recap the key points covered, and ask questions emerging from their reflections).

### **5. Closing**

- Key takeaways
- Feedback collection
- Thanking participants for their time and contributions to the workshop

## **Video-Recorded Observations**

The focus on perezhivanie could also be amplified through video-recorded observations of taught lessons (Activity 5). As the literature reveals (e.g., Baecher et al., 2014; Cutrim Schmid, 2011; Endacott, 2016), videos are crucial in allowing teachers to identify and reflect on

nuanced details in their teaching and their students' learning at their own convenience, thus making professional learning more flexible. Videos can also increase teachers' comprehension of instructional practices and strengthen their reflections on the personal as well as emotional experiences that arise in professional settings, thus ensuring *perezhivanie* becomes central to their thinking. Seen through another lens, video-recorded observations should be viewed as data-led and evidence-based reflective practice, as advocated by Walsh and Mann (2015).

### **Activity 5 - Guided Reflection on Student Engagement and Teacher Emotions in the Classroom**

#### **A. Watch the recorded lesson and answer the following questions:**

1. What specific strategies did you use to engage students?
2. How did you manage and ensure smooth transitions between activities/lesson stages?
3. What evidence of student engagement did you record?
4. Which student behaviours required you to make emotional responses?
5. How did your emotions affect your interactions with the students?
6. Do you think teachers' emotions can enhance as well as diminish student engagement? Can you provide examples of this?

#### **B. Discuss your answers with your mentor.**

### **Emotion-Centred Professional Portfolios**

Another strategy TESOL teacher educators and CPD providers could implement in their professional activities for English language teachers is emotion-centred professional portfolios (Activity 6). Created in digital or physical formats, these portfolios could function as tools for transformation and reflection, enabling teachers to record and scrutinise the emotional experiences they confronted during the course of their journeys as teachers and how such experiences impacted their professional development. Although it can take a considerable amount of time to write these portfolios, it is essential for teachers to be cognisant of the multiple advantages these reflective tools provide regarding their development as professionals. For example, writing emotion-centred portfolios can enhance their self-awareness, improve their emotional intelligence, and strengthen their professional identities (Beka & Kulinxa, 2021; Hamilton, 2018). Systematic engagement with portfolios allows teachers to revisit and reanalyse various classroom events (Jones & Shelton, 2011; Xerri, 2015; Xerri & Campbell, 2016). This includes considering the cognitive, affective, and social factors involved, as well as the wide range of emotions experienced and teachers' subjective interpretations of these experiences. Additionally, such portfolios demonstrate to teachers that the levels of stress they experience can not only have an extremely negative impact on their mental health and job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012) but also influence student-oriented outcomes such as academic achievement and the quality of the classroom setting (Hoglund et al., 2015; McLean & Connor, 2015).

### **Activity 6 - Structure of an Emotion-Centred Professional Portfolio**

1. Introduction (including a teacher's personal statement and emotional overview)
2. Accounts of Emotional Responses to Teaching with Effective Strategies
3. Reports of the Development of Emotional Intelligence
4. Professional Evidence (e.g., emotional artefacts and CPD records)
5. Action Points and Future Directions
6. Useful Literature and Resources

## Perezhivanie-Focused Circles

The final strategy to be discussed is perezhivanie-focused circles, which can take the form of digital or face-to-face reflective communities. Through this strategy, TESOL teacher educators or CPD providers can promote collaboration among English language teachers and increase critical thinking and reflection on their professional practices, experiences, development, and social-emotional competence (Boulton & Hramiak, 2012; Lenkaitis, 2020; O’Dowd & Dooly, 2022; Tilson et al., 2017). These professional circles could be structured along three dimensions, as proposed by Wenger (2011): scope (i.e., the shared area of interest), community (i.e., teachers, along with their mentors, bringing diverse skills, experiences, beliefs, and needs), and practice (i.e., the shared methods and tools that contribute to the professional growth of the community). Such communities should conduct regular meetings guided by an explicit agenda. Within these sessions, teachers should be prompted to talk about their emotions, thoughts, and subjective responses during their practice, thus rendering perezhivanie a fundamental component of these communities. Following Wenger (1998), Activity 7 outlines seven steps for establishing perezhivanie-focused communities for teachers. However, it is important to clarify that Wenger’s work focuses on developing communities of practice more broadly, rather than on perezhivanie-focused circles specifically.

### Activity 7 - Steps for Establishing Perezhivanie-Focused Circles for TESOL Teachers

#### 1. Identify the Scope

(the subject matter, where, how, and the degree to which it operates)

#### 2. Build the Community

(the process of creating and nurturing a group of individuals)

#### 3. Develop the Practice

(engaging a group of individuals in meaningful activities)

#### 4. Support Participation

(creating a welcoming environment which invites group members to contribute, and providing resources to make their participation easy)

#### 5. Cultivate Leadership

(empowering group members to assume leadership roles)

#### 6. Promote Sustainability

(fostering practices that ensure the long-term effectiveness and success of the community)

#### 7. Reflect and Evaluate

(the process of appraising how well the community functions)

## Conclusion

This conceptual article has focused on the notion of perezhivanie – a teacher’s unique way of experiencing classroom events through the dynamic interaction of emotions, cognition, and environmental factors. In conceptualising this term, this article has sought to provide a background and blueprint for teacher educators and classroom practitioners to understand and apply this concept in both reflective practice and professional development. Understanding perezhivanie highlights its personal and subjective nature, showing how TESOL teachers’ experiences shape their professional growth. Integrating perezhivanie-based strategies into teacher education fosters a reflective, human-centred, and context-driven approach to learning.

The current contribution has several limitations. Firstly, it does not reflect the psychologically dense nature of perezhivanie, as the article aims to simplify it to practitioners and teacher educators unfamiliar with sociocultural frameworks. Secondly, it does not account for cultural or individual differences in how language teachers experience and make meaning of perezhivanie across diverse geographical contexts. Thirdly, it insufficiently addresses how institutional factors, such as policy demands, university assessment pressures, or professional learning cultures in schools, may impede the incorporation of perezhivanie-informed approaches in teacher education programmes or CPD activities within schools or universities. Finally, the practical activities presented are not grounded in original data, which brings into question their successful implementation in diverse teacher education contexts.

Building on these limitations, future research should:

1. Explore TESOL teachers' lived experiences of perezhivanie during practicum for pre-service teachers or different career stages for in-service teachers in global educational settings.
2. Focus on the need for the design and evaluation of perezhivanie-oriented professional development interventions and their impact on TESOL teacher professional learning or their ability to cope with work-related challenges and stressors.
3. Investigate cross-cultural comparisons of perezhivanie in TESOL teacher education.
4. Examine the integration of digital tools to facilitate and document reflection on the process of perezhivanie among TESOL teachers.
5. Analyse, longitudinally, the role of perezhivanie in teacher identity formation and sustainable career progression.

It is hoped that these empirical projects will generate a large body of data and substantial findings to illuminate the complex nature of perezhivanie and reinforce its role in teacher professional learning and identity, thus establishing it as a lasting element of teacher education programmes worldwide.

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