

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

L2 Writing Teachers' Emotion Regulation in Feedback Provision: Perceptions, Strategies, and Delivery

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ABSTRACT

{en} While teacher emotions critically shape L2 writing feedback, how teachers regulate these emotions throughout the whole feedback process requires deeper investigation. This qualitative study involving six high school L2 writing teachers examined the perceived impact of their emotions, their regulation strategies, and the specific approach in feedback delivery. Findings from semi-interviews and follow-up stimulated recall reveal that teachers recognize multi-level emotional impacts, including information, individual, and socio-cultural levels. They actively manage these using diverse strategies, with expert teachers leveraging a wider array of techniques than experienced teachers. Importantly, the study connects these regulation efforts to concrete feedback practices, showing how teachers adapt content, language, timing, and manner to navigate emotional challenges effectively. By illuminating the journey from emotional awareness to regulated feedback delivery in secondary L2 writing contexts, this study provides valuable insights for enhancing teaching practice and evidence for teacher emotion research.

摘要

尽管教师情绪对二语写作反馈有重要影响,但教师在整个反馈过程中如何调节这些情绪仍需深入研究。本文是一个涉及六位高中二语写作教师的定性研究,考察了他们对自身情绪影响的认知、情绪调节策略以及反馈实施的具体方式。通过半结构化访谈和后续的刺激回忆法,研究结果显示,教师们认识到情绪的多层次影响,包括信息层面、个人层面和社会文化层面。他们会运用多种策略积极管理情绪,且专家型教师比有经验的教师运用的技巧更为丰富。重要的是,本研究将这些调节策略与具体的反馈实践联系起来,揭示了教师如何调整反馈内容、语言、时机和方式,以有效应对情绪挑战。通过阐明中学二语写作情境中从情绪意识到调节后的反馈传递这一过程,本研究为改进教学实践提供了宝贵见解,并为教师情绪研究提供了实证依据。

1 | Introduction

One of the main tasks of L2 writing teachers is to provide focused and constructive feedback on student writing. For them, providing feedback is not only intellectually demanding (Hattie and Timperley 2007) but also emotionally charged (Stough and Emmer 1998). Recent developments in the field of teacher-written feedback have shifted interest from cognitive capability to emotional dynamics (Carless and Young 2024). While cognitive

capabilities, including feedback knowledge, expertise, and disposition, are essential for crafting feedback that is clear, specific, and effective (Xu and Carless 2017), the emotional dimension featuring the attention to communicational and relational aspects of feedback with students is equally influential (Carless and Winstone 2023; Värlander 2008).

Research indicates that L2 writing teachers experience both positive (e.g., happiness, satisfaction) and negative emotions

(e.g., frustration, anger) when providing feedback (Brown et al. 2018). These emotions, whether positive or negative, significantly influence teaching practices (Chen 2019) and impact students' motivation and self-efficacy in writing. Despite their importance, limited research has explored how L2 writing teachers perceive the impact of their emotions in feedback (Elbra-Ramsay 2022; Yao et al. 2023; Yu et al. 2021). To manage the emotional aspects of feedback, L2 writing teachers employ various emotion regulation strategies in feedback practices. While studies acknowledge the mediating role of such strategies (Geng and Yu 2024), research has yet to systematically examine the specific strategies teachers use in feedback provision.

Feedback, as a final product, involves a complex interaction characterized by both information transfer and emotional connection between teachers and students (Winstone et al. 2017). To ensure feedback aligns with pedagogical principles while meeting the emotional needs of both teachers and students, the role of teacher emotions in feedback provision must be properly understood. Emotions in feedback serve not as disruptive variables but as catalytic resources: when regulated, both positive and negative emotions converge on a dual goal: making feedback pedagogically rigorous and emotionally supportive (Han et al. 2023; Hyland and Hyland 2006). The transformation determines whether feedback can evolve from mere "information delivery" to "emotional empowerment." However, existing research has not pointed out how teachers maximize the value of emotions in feedback practices.

To address these issues, this study was conducted with six L2 writing teachers within China's high school context to investigate the entire process from L2 writing teachers' self-awareness to specific emotion regulation strategies they employ and to actual feedback delivered. In high-stakes secondary education contexts—particularly in systems dominated by standardized testing such as China's *Gaokao* (National College Entrance Examination)—L2 writing teachers face intensified emotional demands. By exploring these emotional aspects, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotional dynamics in teacher-student feedback interactions.

2 | Literature Review

2.1 | L2 Writing Teacher Emotions in Feedback Provision

The emotional dimensions of L2 writing instruction have gained increasing scholarly attention, yet research specifically examining teacher emotions during feedback provision remains fragmented. This section critically analyzes existing literature on the emotional experiences of L2 writing teachers in feedback provision.

Empirical research confirms that L2 writing teachers experience a complex emotional spectrum when providing feedback (Loh and Liew 2016). Yao et al. (2023) documented that Chinese university L2 writing teachers simultaneously experienced both positive emotions (contentment and cheerfulness) and negative emotions (anger and disappointment) during the feedback pro-

cesses. In addition, Tao and Zhou (2024) documented that 61% of L2 writing teachers described emotional exhaustion when confronting recurring grammatical or structural mistakes, noting that such frustration differs from classroom-based irritation due to the feedback's individualized nature. This study also reported teachers experienced numbness, surprise, regret, confusion, and disappointment. These studies, while valuable in identifying the emotional landscape, have primarily focused on cataloging emotional states rather than examining their functional significance in the pedagogical process. This represents a conceptual limitation in current research, as emotional experiences are positioned as by-products of teaching rather than integral components of pedagogical practice (Zembylas 2007).

A significant gap remains in understanding how teachers' metacognitive awareness of their emotions shapes pedagogical decisions during feedback. Little is known about the specific mechanisms through which teachers' emotional awareness impacts feedback content, tone, and student reception, all of which are critical for fostering a supportive learning environment. This is particularly important because teachers' emotional awareness could directly affect their ability to foster a constructive and supportive learning environment, which is essential for student engagement and growth.

2.2 | The Perceived Impact of L2 Writing Teacher Emotions in Feedback Process

While scholarly interest in L2 teacher emotions has grown, research specifically examining teachers' perceptions of their emotional impact during feedback is still limited. Existing literature reveals that L2 teachers recognize their emotions as impacting four areas: (1) teaching practice (information level), (2) themselves (individual level), (3) students (individual level), and (4) teacher-student relationships (socio-cultural level). First, research on teacher cognition emphasizes that emotions can significantly shape teaching practices (Kaymakamoglu 2018; Zhao and Zhang 2022), with teachers often feeling that neutrality and objectivity are key to professionalism (Pham and Phan 2023). Second, teachers also report experiencing emotional burdens that impact their enthusiasm, leading to burnout and resignation, especially in test-centered environments (Zhang and Zhang 2024). These findings highlight the metacognitive reflection teachers undergo regarding their own emotional responses and their effects on their professional well-being. Third, L2 teachers tend to instrumentalize their emotions in teaching, managing emotional responses to ensure positive student outcomes. Studies have shown that teachers actively regulate their emotional expressions, balancing positive emotions to foster a relaxed learning atmosphere, while suppressing negative emotions to avoid disrupting classroom dynamics (Yin and Lee 2012). Finally, teachers acknowledge that negative emotional expressions, if frequent, can strain teacher-student relationships, leading to emotional withdrawal or resistance in students (Jiang et al. 2019).

Current research conceptualizes the impact of teacher emotions on writing pedagogy through three interrelated mechanisms, though these have been insufficiently examined within L2 writing feedback contexts specifically. First, emotion transmission—the

phenomenon through which teachers' affective states influence student emotional responses through verbal and nonverbal channels—has been documented in classroom interactions (Hatfield et al. 1993). However, how this transmission functions in written feedback contexts, where paraverbal cues are limited or absent, remains theoretically underdeveloped. Given that emotional expressions in feedback can influence student receptivity, this aspect of feedback delivery warrants further exploration. Second, research has established bidirectional relationships between teacher emotions and well-being (Yilmaz et al. 2015). While sustained negative emotions during feedback provision potentially contribute to psychological strain and burnout, this relationship has not been adequately examined in L2 writing contexts specifically, where the cumulative emotional labor of responding to large volumes of student writing may present unique challenges. This gap is particularly salient given the intensive emotional demands of feedback provision in high-stakes educational environments where teachers must balance developmental and evaluative functions simultaneously. Third, the relational dimension of teacher emotions has been documented by Wang et al. (2019), who demonstrate how emotional experiences shape teacher-student relationships. However, the existing literature has primarily conceptualized these relationships within classroom interactions rather than through the lens of written feedback exchanges, which constitute a distinct form of pedagogical relationship-building. While previous studies have focused on emotional dynamics in classroom interactions, the role of emotions in shaping written feedback relationships—where interaction is less immediate and more formal—remains understudied. The relational dynamics in written feedback may differ in terms of their long-term cumulative effects, such as building trust or fostering disengagement, rather than immediate emotional transmission.

While literature addresses teacher emotions in the writing classroom, their specific impact within the feedback context—particularly how they shape feedback delivery and student receptivity in secondary education—remains underdeveloped. This gap obscures the interplay between evaluation and emotional support in feedback provision. This gap is particularly salient given the emerging reconceptualization of feedback as fundamentally relational rather than merely informational (Yang and Carless 2013), suggesting that teachers' emotional awareness and regulatory capabilities may significantly influence feedback effectiveness beyond cognitive factors alone.

2.3 | L2 Writing Teachers' Emotion Regulation in Feedback Provision

The theoretical foundation for examining emotion regulation in L2 writing feedback provision has primarily drawn from Gross's (1998, 2015) process model, which offers a comprehensive framework but requires critical adaptation to educational contexts. Gross conceptualizes emotion regulation as “the processes by which individuals consciously or unconsciously influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them” (1998, 275). Antecedent-focused regulation encompasses four distinct processes: situation selection (approaching or avoiding emotional triggers),

situation modification (altering contextual factors to change emotional trajectories), attentional deployment (redirecting focus toward or away from emotion-eliciting stimuli), and cognitive change (reinterpreting situations to modify their emotional significance). Response-focused regulation, by contrast, primarily involves response modulation—the direct manipulation of experiential, behavioral, or physiological aspects of emotional responses.

However, to date there has been a relative scarcity of research on teacher emotion regulation in feedback context. Among the scarce literature, Tao and Zhou (2024) redefined emotion regulation in feedback contexts. They identified cognitive change and response modulation as predominant strategies in emotion regulation in the feedback context. Geng and Yu (2024) compared three teachers' emotion regulation strategies in three kinds of writing pedagogy, respectively. They found that teachers adopted different strategies due to the differences in teaching goals, feedback focus, and interaction between teachers and students in these three pedagogic settings. Gross's model of emotion regulation is empirically supported in Geng and Yu's (2024) case studies, where L2 writing teachers employed situation selection (e.g., task segmentation), situation modification (e.g., technological tool integration), attentional deployment (e.g., positive case reflection), cognitive change (e.g., reframing errors as learning stages), and response modulation (e.g., calming down).

However, their exclusive focus on university instructors leaves unaddressed the potentially distinct regulatory demands faced by secondary educators. For one thing, secondary L2 writing teachers engage with adolescents during formative developmental stages when feedback may have particularly profound affective consequences. This developmental sensitivity creates unique regulatory challenges compared to university contexts, where students possess greater emotional maturity and academic independence (Zheng et al. 2024). For another, high school teachers face more rigid curriculum requirements and time constraints. They need to balance the pressure of preparing students for standardized tests such as China's *Gaokao* with the need to provide meaningful feedback on writing assignments. This requires them to be more efficient and strategic in their feedback and emotion regulation practices. In university settings, teachers have more autonomy in designing their courses and providing feedback.

2.4 | L2 Writing Feedback Delivery Influenced by Emotion Regulation

Studies examining feedback delivery have identified various factors influencing information reception. One key factor is “usability,” or whether feedback content is clear and constructive. Effective feedback must be actionable; for it to be acted upon, students must understand what they need to do, which requires clarity and constructiveness (Ferguson 2011; Henderson et al. 2019). Another factor is “niceness” (Playfoot et al. 2025), which means feedback should be supportive, encouraging, and positively framed. Under this category, feedback timing, language, and manner are umbrella themes. Timing has emerged as a key factor (Lynam and Cachia 2018), with research indicating

that timely feedback is more likely to be accepted and acted upon. Moreover, the tone and language used in feedback play a critical role; overly critical feedback can demotivate students and is less likely to be acted upon, whereas positively framed feedback is more likely to be utilized and accepted (Dawson et al. 2019; Winstone et al. 2016). Third, in terms of feedback manner, teachers should show support and care (Xu and Carless 2017), develop trust (Carless 2009), and encourage motivation (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Existing literature has established connections between regulatory strategies and feedback practices (Geng and Yu 2024). In other words, emotion regulation affects not merely teachers' subjective experiences but fundamentally influences feedback reception and implementation (Ahmed Shafi et al. 2018; Yu et al. 2021). This suggests that emotional regulation should be conceptualized not as peripheral to feedback pedagogy but as a core competency that directly mediates instructional effectiveness—a perspective that challenges conventional cognitive-dominant models of teaching expertise. Emotional regulation can significantly influence the content, language, approach, and timing of the feedback they provide to students. Well-regulated teachers are able to offer more comprehensive, objective, and positive feedback; keenly identify the most appropriate timing for feedback, using gentle, appropriate, and inspiring language; and flexibly select suitable feedback methods according to students' personalities and specific situations (Geng and Yu 2024). For example, Geng and Yu (2024) observed that when teachers applied cognitive changes, they were more likely to view student errors as learning opportunities, which resulted in feedback language that emphasized potential rather than failure. Similarly, Tao and Zhou (2024) reported that teachers who engaged in response modulation, such as calming themselves before writing comments, tended to adjust the tone, enhancing student receptivity. These examples underscore the need to conceptualize emotion regulation not as an abstract teacher competence, but as a practical mechanism that actively shapes feedback behaviors.

Addressing these theoretical and empirical gaps, the present study examines how L2 writing teachers' emotional perception and regulatory strategies shape their feedback practices in secondary educational contexts. Through three interconnected research questions, this study examines how L2 writing teachers perceive their emotions' influence in the feedback process, identifies the specific regulatory strategies they employ, and analyzes how these strategies shape feedback delivery. This integrated approach moves beyond descriptive accounts of emotional states to examine the dynamic interplay between perception, regulation, and pedagogical action, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the affective dimensions of L2 writing instruction.

- RQ1. How do L2 writing teachers perceive the impact of their emotions in the feedback process?
- RQ2. What emotion regulation strategies do L2 writing teachers use when providing feedback?
- RQ3. How do L2 writing teachers address the emotional impacts of feedback to optimize its delivery?

3 | Methodology

3.1 | Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in a high school located in the South-east of China. The school emphasizes a comprehensive approach to language learning, incorporating reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. In the English writing curriculum, the teachers often assign students to practice writing continuations after reading or writing tasks from textbooks or workbooks, covering narrative, expository, and argumentative essays. After the students submit their compositions, the teachers often employ various forms of feedback, including marginal comments, scoring and grading, written feedback, face-to-face conferences, sample essays, error analysis, recommendations for improvement, and so on. The teachers often give feedback to students' compositions in terms of content, language, spelling, structure, and so on. The goal of these pedagogic procedures is to prepare students for the standardized test, *Gaokao*.

Guided by principles of purposeful sampling (Patton 2014), participants were selected based on relevance criteria aligned with the study's focus: holding a bachelor's or master's degree in education, varied teaching experience (5–12 years), gender distribution (5 female, 1 male), feedback frequency (at least once a week) and willingness to articulate emotional experiences. Finally, we obtained the consent of each participant (see Table 1 for details). The diversity in teaching years and feedback frequencies enhances the richness and transferability of findings to similar secondary education contexts. Based on their years of teaching and the findings of Ericsson et al. (1993), participants were divided into two groups:

1. Expert teachers with a broad range of teaching experience (i.e., ≤ 10 years)
2. Experienced teachers with a relatively limited range of teaching experience (i.e., $10 \geq$ years)

3.2 | Data Collection

Informed by Yu et al. (2021), a range of verbal and textual data sources were collected to comprehensively portray the emotional experience of L2 writing teachers when delivering feedback. First, a semi-structured interview lasting 40 to 60 min was conducted individually with each teacher to gain insights into their feedback practices and emotional experiences during feedback provision. To ensure clarity and accuracy while allowing participants to freely express their emotions and viewpoints, the interviews were conducted in Chinese, the participants' native language. The initial questions encouraged participants to recall their feedback practices and emotional experiences, while follow-up questions prompted them to discuss their views on the impact of emotions generated in feedback provision and how they managed and adjusted these emotions. Then, a stimulated recall session was conducted using each participant's feedback on students' compositions. Teacher feedback artifacts were collected, the interviewer randomly selected one or two samples as stimuli to minimize researcher bias, and participants were encouraged

TABLE 1 | Demographic information of participants.

Teacher	Gender	Years of teaching	Weekly class sessions	Frequency of feedback
Mia	F	10	6	Once or twice a week
Jacky	M	7	12	Once a week
Linda	F	8	12	Once a week
Olivia	F	9	13	Once or twice a week
Emily	F	5	6	Once or twice a week
Sophia	F	12	6	Once a week

to discuss additional emotionally significant feedback instances. They were invited to share their perspectives on how they actually produced feedback to manage the potential impact of their emotions by reflecting on their own emotional experiences and decision-making when providing feedback. All interview sessions were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and then transcribed into text files for analysis.

3.3 | Data Analysis

Different coding methods were used in three research questions. For RQ1 and RQ3, this study followed thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) to systematically code and analyze the data. First, data excerpts were open-coded to generate initial codes. Then, the codes were categorized and refined through a rigorous process of examining their alignment with data excerpts and conducting comparative analyses: (1) between codes, (2) between categories, and (3) across different cases. For RQ2, we drew on Gross (2015)'s emotion regulation model, and data were encoded and categorized. The theory-driven method in addressing RQ2 helped us identify specific emotion regulation strategies used by teachers in feedback provision.

To enhance the credibility of the coding process and gain deeper insight into teachers' emotional experiences in feedback provision, this study cross-referenced teacher feedback excerpts with interview transcripts. These excerpts encompassed teachers' textual and semiotic assessments of students' writing, as referenced in the interview data. Comparing self-reported interview data with corresponding written feedback excerpts helped validate teachers' feedback practices.

4 | Results

4.1 | Perceived Impact of L2 Writing Teachers' Emotions on Feedback Provision

Thematic analysis identified three distinct levels at which L2 writing teachers perceive their emotions influencing feedback provision: the informational level (feedback content), the individual level (teachers and students), and the socio-cultural level (teacher-student relationship). These findings, summarized in Table 2, underscore the multifaceted emotional dynamics in feedback practices.

4.2 | Perceived Impact on Feedback Content (informational level)

It was reported that teachers' emotions significantly affect the quality of feedback they provide in L2 writing classes. Recurrent mistakes in student writing arouse anger among teachers. Teachers tend to deliver harsher and less objective feedback in this situation, often focusing excessively on students' errors while overlooking the positive aspects of their performance. For example, Jacky reflected on how his emotional state impacted the tone of feedback. He shared a personal experience in which one of his students tearfully confronted him after receiving feedback. This emotional reaction from the student prompted Jacky to examine how his frustration had shaped his language choices and influenced the quality of feedback. Jacky observed:

I feel angry when students repeatedly make grammatical mistakes that I have explained before. In fact, feedback delivered in anger tends to be harsher and less objective. I first recognized this pattern when a student tearfully returned her essay, asking, "Why are you so mean with me?" That confrontation forced me to review my past feedback and realize how often frustration leaked into my feedback.

Additionally, Emily reported that she unconsciously used more negative expression markers, such as exclamation points and question marks, to convey her feelings. These punctuation marks are employed to express anger, create a visual impact, and emphasize the need for error correction. Upon comparing her feedback with her colleagues', she realized this sign was the external representation of emotions. Emily explained:

Sometimes, students' spelling mistakes irritate me. I may use more and bigger exclamation marks to warn them. But some changes happened when I began comparing my mark with other teachers' relatively fewer and smaller marks.

On the contrary, Olivia described how positive emotions led to more patient and detailed feedback. Instead of offering superficial feedback, she was willing to analyze students' learning achievements and identify specific issues in their composition. As reported by Olivia:

TABLE 2 | Perceived impact of teachers' emotions in feedback provision.

Category of impact	Coding	Examples
Perceived impact on feedback (information level)	Less objective under negative emotions	The words spoken...are more or less harsh, and the feedback given is less objective
	Increased negative markers	I may use more exclamation marks
	Enhanced specificity under positive emotions	I will surely become more patient and careful, and the feedback... more specific
Perceived impact on teachers (individual level)	Disruption of teaching plans	Lecture them in an attempt to correct students' attitude... affect my teaching plan
	Reduced teaching efficacy	The negative emotions...affect my self-efficacy
	Impaired well-being	My anger will affect my own physical health
	Motivation variability	In a positive mood... more motivated. But if the results are not satisfactory... lower my requirements
Perceived impact on students (individual level)	Encouragement from positive emotions	She was very happy, and her accuracy in writing also improved.
	Demotivation from harsh feedback	It demotivates them
	Resistance to emotionally charged feedback	They are even less willing to accept my feedback
Perceived impact on teacher-student relationship (socio-cultural level)	Relational strain from negative emotions	If my face turns gloomy, the estrangement... will be strengthened.

When I'm in a good mood for their progress, I definitely become more patient. The feedback I provide becomes more detailed, including analyzing paragraph structure with the students and guiding them on more effective word usage.

Teachers' emotional states essentially impact feedback quality. Ideally, teachers aim to provide "objective and specific feedback." However, when faced with students' errors, teachers may develop negative emotions, leading to harsh language in comments (e.g., overusing exclamation marks). This emotional release not only deviates from their original feedback goals but also reinforces their undermined self-efficacy and motivation fluctuation.

4.3 | Perceived Impact on Teachers (individual level)

The participants reported that both positive and negative emotions influenced L2 writing teachers themselves. When negative emotions arose from students' perfunctory attitude, the teachers found it necessary to interrupt their instructional activities to address emotional outbursts. As reported by Mia:

When I enter the classroom to deliver a lesson, I occasionally lose my temper because some students don't take writing assignments seriously, which compels me to lecture them in an attempt to correct students' attitudes. This will affect my teaching plan.

Furthermore, Jacky also noted that negative emotions elicited by students' poor performance significantly undermined his teaching self-efficacy.

The extent to which students fulfill the composition requirements is, in essence, indicative of teaching success. The negative emotions I experience in providing feedback diminish my self-efficacy, leading me to question my capabilities as a teacher.

A recurring theme regarding the impact of negative emotions during feedback provision was the detrimental effect of workload on teachers' physical well-being. Mia and Sophia, two expert teachers who fully perceived the relationship between the teachers' emotions and physical situations in their teaching careers, both indicated that:

Providing feedback is a routine aspect of teaching. My anger and tiredness resulting from overload have a negative impact on my own physical health. I become aware of it when some problems arise in my physical health.

Additionally, it was observed that negative emotions created a detrimental cycle characterized by negative emotions and superficial feedback. To mitigate the persistent intrusion of such negative feelings, the teachers tended to lower their expectations. Consequently, the frequency of feedback diminished, and the level of engagement significantly declined. This lack of effective feedback hindered students' ability to rectify their writing errors, further exacerbating teachers' frustration. Conversely, a positive

emotional cycle was reported to exist between positive emotions and thorough feedback. When teachers realized the progress achieved by students, they reported increased motivation to offer detailed feedback that would further facilitate student progress. Jacky shared:

When I find significant progress in their writing, I am undoubtedly more motivated. Observing students' progress encourages me to provide feedback consistently. However, if the outcomes are unsatisfactory, I may lower my expectations, which ultimately leads to a decrease in the frequency of my feedback and a reduction in my overall engagement.

Teachers' emotional fluctuations don't just affect themselves. There will be emotion contagion, or emotion transmission. When teachers give feedback with a sense of frustration, this emotion can be conveyed to students through feedback, leading to student disengagement or resistance. Conversely, when teachers give feedback with anticipation, this positive emotion can also be transmitted, inspiring and encouraging the students.

4.4 | Perceived Impact on Students (individual level)

Positive emotions experienced by L2 writing teachers in giving feedback can act as a catalyst for fostering constructive teaching behaviors, which in turn can elicit positive academic emotions among students. This emotional transmission, where the teacher's positive emotional state influences the student's emotional response, is exemplified by Mia's experience. Mia shared a moment where she felt a surge of positive emotions upon discovering that a female student's composition surpassed her expectations. This emotional response naturally motivated the teacher to engage in encouraging pedagogical practices. Consequently, the student, upon receiving the teacher's commendation, exhibited an increased enthusiasm for learning.

A girl's performance exceeded my expectations, so I praised her. She was very happy, and her accuracy in writing also improved.

Conversely, when L2 writing teachers experience negative emotions while providing feedback, the nature of the feedback may become more critical and harsher. In such instances, the feedback was likely to be full of dissatisfaction and criticism, akin to sharp blades that can inflict emotional pain and demotivate students. Jacky shared:

Giving feedback to students when you're angry is actually uttering angry words in rage. It really hurts their feelings and demotivates them.

When L2 writing teachers deliver feedback in a state of anger, students may become more focused on the emotional expressions of the teachers rather than the content of the feedback itself. This emotionally charged interaction can result in students feeling attacked, which may generate resistance and subsequently

diminish their engagement in the feedback. Mia, an expert teacher who was sensitive to student emotions, stated:

If I am feeling angry, or if I vent my anger towards my students, they are even less willing to accept my feedback.

Drawing on Hatfield et al. (1993) concept of emotional contagion, Mia's observation exemplifies how teachers' negative emotions are transmitted through feedback, leading students to perceive feedback as threatening. If students repeatedly receive emotional feedback, negative reactions among students can accumulate. Over time, this accumulation can transcend individual boundaries and erode the trust between teachers and students.

4.5 | Perceived Impact on Teacher-Student Relationship (socio-cultural Level)

Research indicates teachers' negative emotions in feedback provision can have an enduring influence on teacher-student relationships (TSR). Jacky recalled that when students saw his gloomy expression, they often felt fearful, tended to withdraw, and thus intentionally maintained a distance from the teacher in future learning interactions to avoid potential conflict. Over time, this dynamic hinders the positive cycle of teaching and learning. This phenomenon illustrates how emotional transmission in feedback contexts creates a "relational strain."

If the students don't perform well and my face turns gloomy, the estrangement between the teacher and the students is exacerbated, leading to a situation where students cease to communicate their authentic needs.

Such negative interactions indicate that the impact of emotions has escalated from the individual to the socio-cultural level, adversely affecting the teaching environment and students' motivation to learn.

4.6 | L2 Writing Teachers' Emotion Regulation Strategies in Feedback Provision

Teachers employed a repertoire of strategies to regulate emotions, aligning with Gross's (2015) framework: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. These strategies managed negative emotions (e.g., anger, frustration) and sustained positive emotions (e.g., happiness, excitement), as detailed in Table 3.

4.7 | Situation Selection

Situation selection entails proactively shaping feedback contexts to preempt emotional triggers. For example, Jacky mitigated frustration by clarifying expectations. The structured feedback context teachers intentionally design ensures that students can meet expectations and successfully complete writing tasks. He shared:

TABLE 3 | Emotion regulation strategies in feedback provision.

Emotion regulation strategies	Coding	Examples
Situation selection	Clarify writing requirements	Provide students with a template... prevents from deviating from the topic
	Foster positivity via exemplars	Showcase well-written sentences... my positive emotions can maintain
	Manage time schedule	Plan the feedback time and rhythm
	Set a comfortable environment	
Situation modification	Private interaction	I invite the student to my office for a conversation
Attentional deployment	Seek distraction	Release my anger, like listening to music
	Review past successes	Review their previous performance
Cognitive change	Justify students' performance	Remind myself that there are reasons behind their performance
	Refocus on feedback	Compel myself to refocus on the feedback and issues presented this time
	Adjust expectations	Not all feedback will yield immediate results... changes require patience
	Reflect on consequences	Think about these worse outcomes
	Analyze emotion triggers	Realizing that my anger comes from students not mastering a certain knowledge
Response modulation	Seek social support	Vent my frustration... with other teachers in the office
	Calm down and take a deep breath	I first calm myself down
	Accomplishment reinforcement	We established a teacher-student relationship similar to partnership

For most compositions, I provide students with a template, and we collaboratively brainstorm the main body paragraphs in class. This approach allows us to reach a consensus on the requirements and prevents students from deviating from the topic, which would otherwise frustrate me.

Similarly, Linda fostered a positive atmosphere by showcasing exemplars: By highlighting well-crafted sentences, teachers showed genuine appreciation for the students' achievement and enhanced the writing skills of their peers, thereby maintaining positive emotions in subsequent feedback sessions. She illustrated:

I want to create a positive environment for students' writing. I always showcase the well-written sentences from students' compositions because these examples genuinely excite me. My goal is to help them recognize the aspects of their writing that I value and to encourage them to emulate these exemplary sentences, ensuring that my positive emotions are sustained during the next feedback session.

Sophia, an expert teacher with a 12-year career, distinguished herself through her strategic use of situation selection. She regulated her negative emotions by planning feedback rhythm

in advance, grading compositions in batches, and arranging rest periods between batches. This approach created a more relaxed and efficient grading environment, helping to avoid anxiety caused by heavy workloads and tight schedules.

I plan the feedback time and rhythm to avoid anxiety from heavy workload and time pressure. I divide compositions into several batches, set reasonable feedback time for each, add proper breaks, and ensure giving feedback in a high-energy state.

Sophia also mentioned the importance of a comfortable environment. She chose a quiet and well-lit room when giving feedback. Such a setting allowed her to focus on providing constructive feedback rather than being distracted or stressed by uncomfortable surroundings.

I prefer to work in a quiet and well-lit room because I feel more relaxed and focus on my work better.

4.8 | Situation Modification

Situation modification involves adapting feedback contexts in real-time. Mia shifted from written feedback to one-on-one discussions. Feedback in a face-to-face manner facilitates personalized instruction, allowing students to address their misunderstandings directly with teachers and exercise agency by

negotiating the feedback they receive. Mia, an expert teacher who possesses a more abundant art of teaching, mentioned:

Sometimes, encountering a particularly poorly written composition, I invite the student to my office for a conversation. By transforming the original written feedback into a dialogue, I can alleviate my emotions because I know the rationale behind their writing.

4.9 | Attentional Deployment

Attentional deployment redirects focus to regulate emotions. Mia managed negative emotions through active distraction. When feeling angry or frustrated while giving feedback, she would listen to music to divert her attention and restore emotional calm. As she suggested:

When giving feedback, I might need something else to release my anger, like listening to music, to keep my attention away from the things that make me upset.

In contrast, Olivia addressed negative emotions by reviewing past successes. When she felt angry, she would review students' previous well-done compositions, seeking positive evidence to reassess the students' abilities and fostering a balanced perspective on student potential.

When I am angry, I think about the times when the student performed well. I go back and review their previous compositions, as there is always one that was good.

4.10 | Cognitive Change

Cognitive change reframes emotional triggers through cognitive reappraisal. The core of the strategy lay in teachers' ability to adjust their cognitive perspective to manage their emotions. Emily justified poor performance and reduced frustration by contextualizing student challenges such as difficulties, resource limitations, or learning obstacles. She shared:

When I receive a composition that makes me angry, I try to understand the underlying reasons for the submission. I consider factors such as poor time management due to excessive homework over the weekend or the possibility that the work was completed hastily due to time constraints during the examination. I remind myself that there are reasons behind their performance to avoid expressing my frustration directly.

Additionally, Jacky refocused on pedagogical goals, channeling affect into teaching improvements rather than a "fix-it" list for a particular composition. As he explained:

When I come across poorly written compositions that elicit negative emotions, I focus on the issues and errors presented, rather than immersing myself in negative feelings. During subsequent writing lessons, I will address these issues, which allows me to continually optimize my instructional content.

Furthermore, Jacky noted that he was able to mitigate negative feelings by recognizing the developmental reality that student improvement is a gradual process rather than an instantaneous one.

Not every student fits the mold of what is traditionally considered a "good" student. When dealing with the rest of students, who consistently underperform, I adjust my expectations to manage my emotional responses. I remind myself that not all feedback will yield immediate results and that students' changes require patience and time.

Last, Mia, an expert teacher who believes in the importance of self-hint in giving feedback, employed rumination on potential consequences and triggers as a means of regulating negative emotions during the feedback process. She acknowledged that middle school students were particularly sensitive to direct criticism, which potentially diminished their future willingness to write. To mitigate this risk, she contemplated a worst-case scenario in which students entirely lose their motivation to write, prompting her to adopt a proactive rather than reactive approach.

After all, middle school students are very self-conscious. If I criticize them in my feedback, they might feel that I don't like what they've written and become even less willing to write the next composition. When I think about these worse outcomes, I realize I should focus on the long-term growth of students and become calmer.

She also recognized her frustration stemmed from students' inability to grasp knowledge in time. Guided by the belief that "if students respect the teacher, they trust the teaching," she adopted a gentler approach to feedback. She noted:

When I sense the urge to lose my temper, I try to think about the meaning behind my emotions, realizing that my anger comes from the students not mastering certain knowledge. If I write feedback to them gently, they feel closer to me and are more likely to absorb the feedback I give.

4.11 | Response Modulation

Response modulation managed emotional expression post-onset. Mia sought social support by venting her negative emotions in

TABLE 4 | Strategies for managing emotional impact in feedback delivery.

Categories of approaches	Coding	Examples
Feedback content	Objective criteria	If feedback is framed in terms of external requirements...
	Scaffolding	Channel any frustration into constructive feedback
Feedback language	Gentle tongue	We should... praise the good aspects of their work
	Humor	I might draw an angry emoticon
	Supportive language	I might add some wavy lines, a star, and a word like “fantastic”
Feedback timing	Feedback delay	I’ll give feedback after I’ve calmed down
Feedback manner	Personalized feedback	Teenagers have different personalities
	Detailed feedback	In this way, a virtuous cycle is formed
	Sandwich feedback	Positive feedback, followed by constructive criticism, and concluded with further praise

front of colleagues, which provided her with an immediate outlet for emotional release.

I sometimes set down my pen and vent my frustration and irritation to other teachers in the office. Sharing these feelings in giving feedback is a great way to relieve stress.

Another approach to modulating emotional responses is suppressing negative emotions. Mia would consciously adjust her external emotional responses to remain calm and neutral. The self-calming technique prevented emotional spillover into feedback and preserved instructional integrity. Sophia would take a deep breath to keep her calm. These two expert teachers provided some tactics to regulate negative emotions:

When I am angry, I first calm myself down so that I’m in a peaceful state of mind for feedback practice.

Upon perceiving these negative emotions, I stop my work and take a deep breath.

Olivia regulated or maintained her positive emotions through accomplishment reinforcement. Her transformation of feedback into a collaborative triumph reinforced a positive emotional loop that benefits both teacher and student.

Initially, he (one of her students) seemed confused in the continuation writing, and sometimes he couldn’t even complete the composition. But now he can finish the entire composition. I found that we established a teacher-student relationship similar to a partnership, where we have jointly participated in a battle, overcome many difficulties, and finally achieved victory.

4.12 | Managing Feedback Delivery

After recognizing emotions’ multi-level impact and regulating emotions, teachers adapted feedback delivery across content, language, timing, and manner, as outlined in Table 4.

4.13 | Feedback Content

Teachers tailored content to reduce student resistance to feedback. Jacky employed objective criteria, utilizing external standards to depersonalize evaluations and mitigating the emotional friction often associated with critique. Additionally, his scaffolding approach transformed criticism into guidance. By deconstructing complex tasks, he not only addresses errors but also empowers students to take ownership of their learning. Jacky’s experience illustrates a critical distinction between unregulated and regulated emotions. While initial frustration may lead to harsh comments, when consciously regulated, it fosters increased feedback constructiveness. This demonstrates that negative emotions, once regulated, can enhance rather than harm pedagogical effectiveness.

In high school, students are often reluctant to accept your suggestions. However, when feedback is framed in terms of external requirements, such as, “I believe you have performed well, and adhering to the exam criteria will likely enhance your score in the future,” they are more willing to accept it.

I think it’s typical for teachers to experience emotions during feedback sessions. Nevertheless, my objective is to channel any frustration into constructive feedback that facilitates specific actions for student improvement. I carefully analyze paragraph structures and suggest better vocabulary usage, providing scaffolding that enables them to correct their mistakes.

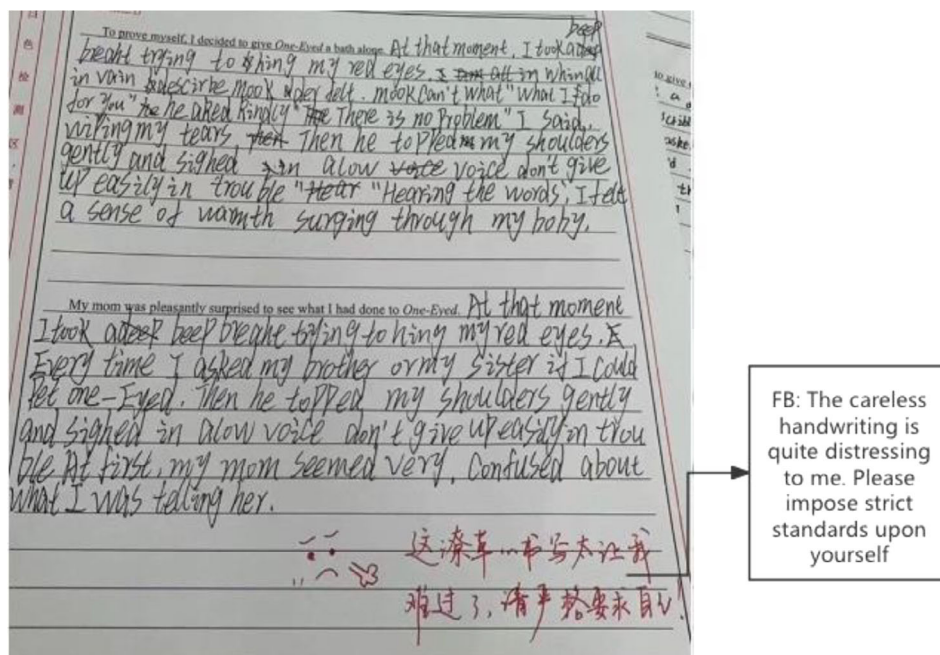


FIGURE 1 | An example of showing humor in feedback (Olivia). [Color figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jal.12854)]

4.14 | Feedback Language

Jacky advocated a gentle tone in feedback to preserve rapport and shift feedback practice from fault-finding to encouragement.

When students underperform, teachers often exhibit their disappointment through facial expressions, which can significantly impact students, as they are sensitive to such emotional cues. We should encourage students to try better expressions and praise the good aspects of their work, rather than blaming them for their shortcomings.

Similarly, Olivia's use of humor, such as emojis (see Figure 1), serves to mitigate potential emotional tension, transforming critique into a less threatening exchange and fostering a more receptive attitude among students.

I might draw an angry emoticon if expressing anger. Appropriate humor can ease the tension students feel when receiving feedback and make them feel more relaxed.

Linda's supportive language, exemplified by words like "fantastic," leverages positive reinforcement to build student self-efficacy.

If a student fully meets my requirements, I might add some wavy lines, a star, and a word like "fantastic." These can make students sense my happiness and boost their confidence.

4.15 | Feedback Timing

Appropriate selection of feedback timing is a strategy to preserve feedback efficacy. Jacky delayed responses to prevent the delivery of emotionally charged responses that could damage student morale or trust and ensure that the feedback provided is grounded in rationality rather than reactivity.

I will circle all the mistakes and put that badly written composition aside. Then, I'll give feedback after I've calmed down. I won't give feedback when I'm angry because giving feedback to others when angry can be really hurtful.

4.16 | Feedback Manner

As Mia reported, personalized feedback means adapting to student characteristics, making feedback no longer a one-size-fits-all template but a customized communication that fits the emotional situation of each student.

Teenagers have different personalities. A teenager who is open to advice may recognize that the teacher's intentions are beneficial, leading him to reflect on his errors and prompting the teacher to offer additional suggestions. However, some students might be resistant, which could provoke defensive emotions regardless of the teacher's feedback. In that case, I should give him more encouragement.

Detailed feedback is a manifestation of utilizing the virtuous cycle between teacher emotions in feedback and students' writing

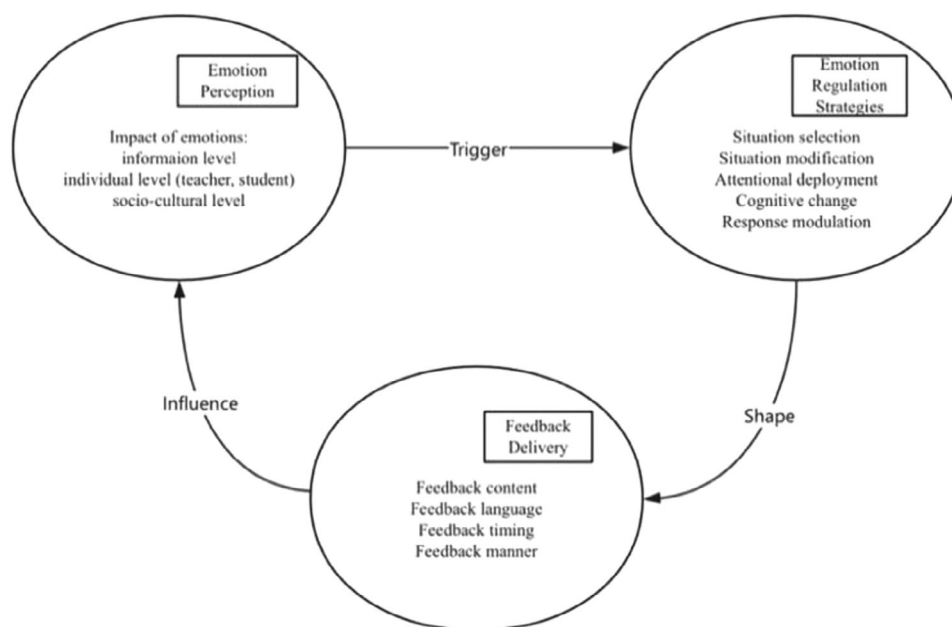


FIGURE 2 | A model of teacher emotion regulation process in feedback provision.

potential. The teachers' detailed feedback acted like a catalyst, continuously pushing students to make continuous progress on the path of writing. Jacky shared:

When students hand in the writing, I provide feedback that is rather detailed. As a result, students are willing to write a second time and take it seriously. In this way, a virtuous cycle is formed.

Sandwich-like feedback shared by Emily balanced critique with affirmation, reducing resistance and sustaining motivation. By framing criticism within layers of praise, students are more likely to perceive feedback as a constructive tool for improvement rather than as a personal affront.

When giving feedback, I initiate feedback with positive feedback, follow with constructive criticism, and conclude with further praise. This approach allows me to identify strengths even in less successful compositions.

5 | Discussion

Synthesizing the thematic findings, we proposed a model of the teacher emotion regulation process in feedback provision (presented by Figure 2). This model illustrates how teachers' emotions permeate feedback across informational, individual, and socio-cultural levels, and how targeted regulation strategies catalyze feedback adaptations that, in turn, reinforce emotional equilibrium and pedagogical efficacy. Teachers first perceive how their emotions permeate feedback across informational, individual, and socio-cultural levels (Geng and Yu 2024; Yu et al. 2021). To cope with the challenges brought by emotions, teachers activate emotion regulation strategies. These strategies act as mediators, enabling teachers to shift from "being controlled by emotions" to "using emotions to drive teaching improvement"

(Taxer and Gross 2018). After regulating through these strategies, teachers transform the value of emotions into all dimensions of feedback delivery. From this perspective, emotions are no longer byproducts of feedback (Zembylas 2007); instead, they become agents that drive feedback to be precise, supportive, and effective. When the optimized feedback is transmitted to students, a reciprocal cycle unfolds: students, benefiting from well-framed feedback, make progress based on constructive suggestions. As their writing improves, the teacher's sense of teaching efficacy increases, and the emotional dynamics of feedback delivery continue to evolve (Gan and Wang 2025). In this way, the "emotion perception-strategy regulation-feedback delivery" forms a closed loop, enabling the continuous iteration of emotion management and teaching feedback.

While our data initially revealed a general trend associating positive emotions with constructive feedback and negative emotions with harsh tones, a closer examination, especially in Jacky's case, suggests that this relationship is not a simple polarity model. Teachers often harness regulated negative emotions, such as frustration, to produce specific and constructive feedback. For instance, Jacky's ability to redirect his frustration into detailed scaffolding through situation selection and cognitive change demonstrates that emotional valence alone does not determine pedagogical outcome; rather, it is the process of emotional regulation that mediates the emotional influence. As Gross (2015) argues, emotional regulation acts as a transformative mechanism, allowing negative emotions to be transformed towards pedagogical improvement.

One salient finding is the individual differences in their overall regulatory repertoire—defined as the range of emotion regulation strategies employed across different contexts (Grommisch et al. 2020)—emerge as a significant finding. The correlation between teaching experience and strategy diversity was particularly noteworthy: Emily, with 5 years of teaching experience, predominantly relied on cognitive change strategies, while Mia,

with 10 years of experience, demonstrated mastery of five distinct regulation strategies. This pattern suggests that extended professional experience exposes teachers to a broader spectrum of challenging teaching scenarios, facilitating the development of a more sophisticated regulatory repertoire. Another finding is the individual differences in their preference of regulatory repertoire. Although Mia and Sophia, two expert teachers with more than 10 years of experience, master more regulation strategies, they tend to adopt different kinds of regulatory strategies, with Mia preferring cognitive change and Sophia preferring situation selection. Mia's inclination toward cognitive change indicates that she may be more comfortable with internally driven approaches. She likely navigates her emotions by reframing her thoughts and altering her perception of emotional triggers. On the other hand, Sophia's preference for situation selection shows that she is more inclined to shape her environment to suit her emotional needs. She probably manages her emotions by strategically choosing situations that align with her emotional well-being. This distinction highlights that even among expert teachers with a broad range of regulatory strategies at their disposal, personal tendencies and inclinations shape how they implement these strategies in practice (Bonanno and Burton 2013).

Well-regulated emotions significantly enhance pedagogical effectiveness by enabling higher-quality feedback interactions. Teachers who effectively regulate emotions produce more developmentally supportive feedback through specific practices: scaffolding criticism into actionable improvement steps and adopting supportive language (including humor, praise, and emojis) to ensure emotional balance (Chen et al. 2024). This approach embodies relational feedback principles, where students feel "recognized and valued" (Dai et al. 2024), creating stronger motivational foundations for growth. Moreover, personalized feedback tailored to individual needs—including strategic implementation of the "sandwich approach" (praise-criticism-praise)—mitigates potential relational harm caused by negative emotions, thereby strengthening the teacher-student relationship (Hyland and Hyland 2001). These emotionally regulated feedback practices ultimately generate a virtuous pedagogical cycle: as students engage more receptively with emotionally balanced feedback, their learning motivation and academic progress accelerate, creating positive reinforcement for both teachers and students. This demonstrates how emotion regulation transcends being merely a coping mechanism and becomes a foundational pedagogical skill that directly enhances teaching effectiveness and student outcomes in L2 writing contexts.

6 | Conclusion

This study illuminates the multifaceted role of emotions and the critical importance of emotion regulation throughout the L2 writing feedback process. Our findings demonstrate that high school L2 writing teachers perceive their emotions as significantly influencing feedback provision across informational, individual, and socio-cultural levels. Consequently, teachers employ a diverse range of antecedent-focused and response-focused regulation strategies to manage these emotional impacts, thereby actively shaping their feedback delivery in terms of content, language, timing, and manner. A key insight emerging from this research is the influence of teaching experience, with more sea-

soned educators exhibiting broader and more flexible regulatory repertoires, suggesting that these skills may develop over time through exposure to varied classroom challenges.

By examining the complete cycle from emotional perception to regulated pedagogical action, this study underscores that emotion regulation is not merely a coping mechanism but a fundamental aspect of effective L2 writing pedagogy. The findings offer practical implications for teacher education and professional development, highlighting the need to equip teachers with greater emotional awareness and specific regulation strategies tailored to the demands of feedback provision. Theoretically, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of teacher emotions by detailing the situated nature of regulation within the specific context of L2 writing feedback.

Several limitations acknowledge the scope of this study and pave the way for future research. First, the findings are derived from a small sample within a single school context, limiting generalizability. Future research employing larger-scale quantitative or mixed-methods designs across diverse educational settings would be valuable for validating and extending these insights into the broader processes of teacher emotion regulation during feedback. Second, while this study identifies various regulation strategies, deeper investigation using mixed methods could offer richer insights into the dynamic interplay between emotional experiences, strategy selection, and feedback outcomes in real-time. Third, to fully unpack the reciprocal relationship between emotion regulation and feedback effectiveness, future mixed-method studies should incorporate student feedback reception data, such as through post-feedback surveys or writing performance comparisons, to complement the teacher-centric insights provided here. Finally, the observed link between teaching experience and strategy repertoire warrants more focused theoretical and empirical scrutiny to understand the developmental trajectory of these regulatory skills and the factors that facilitate their growth.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Peer Review

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