



## Incorporating Hypnotic Suggestion into Teacher Education Programs: Emotional and Cognitive Implications for Teachers



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### Abstract

This study is a report on the emotional and cognitive impact of hypnotic suggestion on EFL teachers' practices. Twenty-five EFL teachers participated in two hypnotic suggestion sessions plus a self-suggestion training class to enhance their emotional and cognitive experiences. To understand teachers' emotional state, pre-intervention interviews were used, and post-intervention interviews were employed to assess the effects of the hypnotic suggestion intervention. Through content analysis, we found that the emotional experience of novice and expert teachers differed significantly. Furthermore, the effect of hypnotic suggestion on teachers' emotions, cognition, and practice was significant and conducive to change in their perspectives toward hypnotic suggestion programs. Thorough theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** Hypnotic suggestion; Teacher emotion; Teacher cognition; Teacher education; Process model of emotion.

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### Introduction

For three decades, significant contributions to uncovering the effects of teachers' cognition and emotion to teaching practices have been widely made under the influence of psychological breakthrough and its developmental perspectives (e.g., Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Alexander, 2004; Borg, 2009). The scope and purpose of the educational and teaching processes have also been heavily modified through the significant impact of psychology. For instance, the effect of teachers' beliefs and perceptions on their teaching and practices has been extensively investigated and studied from different perspectives under a bigger umbrella term "teacher cognition" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Accordingly, as teachers spend a significant amount of time in the interactive setting of the classroom, which is full of emotions, they have various positive and negative emotional experiences (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Therefore, teaching demands a great deal of emotional labor (Schutz, Cross, Hong, & Osbon, 2007) which directly influences their teaching and their students learning (Cross & Hong, 2012). Emotions

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have, also, motivational and regulatory roles (Izard, Stark, Trentacosta, & Schultz, 2008), which affect and guide teachers in employing different emotion regulatory strategies in teaching processes (Gross, 2015). Thus, teachers should learn how to regulate and express their emotions according to a particular situation and appraisal (Sutton, 2004).

Furthermore, emotion regulation is the processes by which individuals consciously or unconsciously “influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them” and has two broad categories of antecedent-focused and response-focused emotion regulation, which occurs before and after emotions are generated (Gross, 1998, p. 275). Based on these two categories or process models of emotion introduced by Gross (1998, 2015), five principles of emotion regulation strategies are proposed, including situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Accordingly, teachers may approach or avoid certain people or situations based on the expectation of experiencing certain emotions in a situation (situation selection); they may change a situation to regulate or alter its emotional impact (situation modification); they may focus their attention in order to alter emotional responses by distraction (attentional deployment); they, also, modify their appraisal of the situation to alter its emotional impact by reappraisal (cognitive change); they may modify physiological, experiential, or behavioral aspects of the emotional response by expressive suppression, faking, and masking (response modulation). Gross's model of emotion and the categories of emotion regulation influenced and guided the following investigations of emotion regulation strategies in teaching by educational researchers. For instance, how teachers use various regulation strategies in the classroom (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014), how teachers up-regulate and down-regulate both positive and negative emotions (Sutton & Harper, 2009), and how ignoring teacher emotion regulation may lead to teacher burnout (Carson & Templin, 2007) have been examined by researchers. Moreover, effective emotional expression and emotional competence are considered skills which high-quality teachers employ in their classrooms (Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011). But, what about novice or pre-service teachers who, almost, lack such skills and experience in teaching, and their emotional intelligence has been found to be below the average (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012). We attempted to bridge this gap and educate teachers both consciously and subconsciously by suggestion.

Lozanov (1978) developed the theory of Suggestology and applied it in pedagogy by utilizing it as a teaching tool. However, the concept of suggestion was introduced by Bernheim (1888) as an explanation of hypnosis and its use in non-hypnotic contexts. Lundh defined Suggestion as “a form of communication, or interpersonal priming, whereby (a) one person (the ‘suggestor’) intentionally or unintentionally influences another person (the ‘suggestant’) by means of verbal communication, non-verbal behaviors, and/or other contextual factors, and (b) in such a way that the suggestant takes over intentions, feelings, beliefs, or desires from the suggestor” (1998, p. 25). Thus, for influencing others in any way you have to, more or less, use suggestion (Schwanenberg, 1993), like psychologists and teachers (Lozanov, 1978; Çetin, Çimen, & Yetkiner, 2016).

Historically, the utilization of waking hypnosis or auto-suggestion was considered by Tremonti (1969) who reported different hypnosis and suggestion techniques used for the students to improve their motivation, their emotional state, and their learning processes. Also, different suggestions and hypnosis methodologies have been utilized by researchers such as Donk, Vingoe, Hall, and Doty (1970) who considered the difference of alert induction, Barber-type induction (Barber, 1962) (without eye-closure and sleepiness and no enhanced alertness), and traditional hypnosis to understand their respective effects on learners' reading comprehension; verbal motivation talks used by Schreiber and McSweeney (2004) to improve overall college course grades; relaxed and alert hypnosis have also been used by Wark and LaPlante (1991) to enhance reading ability. According to Wark (2011), real-world academic performance has been recognized to be affected well by alert hypnosis with appropriate suggestions.

As a ubiquitous factor in our interpersonal processes, suggestion operates on various levels of human psychological functioning, most importantly, their emotional aspects (Lundh, 1998). Accordingly, the connection of teachers' emotions with their efficiency in the classroom (Sutton, 2005) and shaping students' emotions (van Doorn, van Kleef, & van der Pligt, 2014) has been considered by researchers. However, the integration of suggestion into teacher preparation programs in their emotional and cognitive modification has not been duly noted. Since novice teachers do experience intense emotions during their teaching-training courses (Bloomfield, 2010), learning suggestion skills could give them a self-management tool (Hammond, 1988) in directing and managing their emotions. Thus, it is time to recognize and take a new approach toward addressing the affective domain of the teaching experience and understanding how teachers modify and regulate their emotions according to the suggestions they receive. The present study, focusing on suggestion as a prominent psychological factor in directing humans' actions and feelings, attempts to understand the effect of suggestion on teachers' emotions and cognition to recognize the way it modifies their beliefs and teaching processes.

According to the literature, not only has hypnosis not been applied and practiced officially in schools and universities but also the early research results have been ignored extensively (Wark, 2011). Although associating suggestion and hypnosis training could be of great help for teachers to deal effectively with their learners in the classroom, but the focus of this study is the teachers themselves and the application of the suggestion to enhance their emotional and cognitive performance. Despite the bulk of studies on emotion, suggestion, and cognition, no study (to the best of our knowledge) has directly considered the effect of the hypnotic suggestion on teachers' emotional and cognitive processes, performance, and professional development, which will affect the learners and educational setting consequently. To accomplish this task, we need at least to put teachers to light trance because suggestions given in 'normal state' seems to be understood, but rarely changes behavior or attitude (Zainurrahman, Harun, & Ahmad, 2017). Therefore, to change one's fixed cognition or attitude, we need a change in the subconscious level (Gunawan, 2012). Since emotion and cognition are closely related to each other and determine our behavior toward a specific activity, we may influence and even guide teachers' actions by hypnotic suggestion through using imagery visualization and self-suggestion which change the visualized action meaning and the emotions and cognition accompanying it (Gunawan, 2012). Addressing and altering the problems that teachers may face in the classroom and practices and perceptions that they may approach or avoid because of the lack of professional training may affect their emotional properties and attitudes and led them to experience an emotional struggle, feeling of powerlessness, and anxiety (Bloomfield, 2010). Therefore, we believe that the implications regarding teachers' emotional training and competency based on psychological processes like hypnotic suggestion could be very interesting not only for educators and teacher trainers but also for educational psychologists. Accordingly, the following research questions were generated:

1. How do EFL teachers with different professional profiles feel about their teaching practices?
2. How do EFL teachers control and regulate their emotions and whether it differs for experienced and novice teachers?
3. Can hypnotic suggestions affect teachers' practices and change their actions based on their respective suggestions?
4. How and to what extent does hypnotic suggestion deal with the emotional aspects of teachers and can resolve possible emotional disturbances like anxiety, stress, confidence, and uncertainty?
5. Does hypnotic suggestion alter teachers' fixed beliefs and cognition about teaching?

## Method

The central concentration of this study was to understand the impact of the hypnotic suggestion, self-suggestion, and light trance on directing teachers' practices and adjusting their emotional and cognitive orientation and regulation.

### Context and participants

First of all, the author personally met the principals of five institutes in Tehran, Iran, to get permission to conduct the research and invite the interested teachers to participate in the project. The principals of the institutes were informed of the nature, purpose, time, and method of the project and the voluntary basis of the participation. The author obtained four principals' permission to conduct the study, provided that it will not interfere with teachers' practices in the classroom.

Subsequently, the author met the teachers in each institute and explained the purpose and method of the project and the time they would spend on the research. The author met a total of 86 teachers with various professional profiles in a week, and a written consent form was delivered to the interested teachers containing information about the study together with the author's contact numbers and email addresses in case more information was needed.

The invitation resulted in a sample of twenty-five in-service and preservice teachers with different professional profiles from four different institutes in Tehran. Our participation rate was 29%, which is comparable to other research with teachers (e.g., Taxer & Frenzel, 2015, 33%; Taxer & Gross, 2018, 36%). The sample comprised 16 males (64%) and nine females (35%) on average 28.49 years old and 19 novice teachers with less than two years of teaching experience (including five preservice teachers) and six experienced teachers with more than five years of experience (with related academic education). Among the participants, 18 (72%) teachers (3 experienced and 15 novice teachers) were teaching mostly elementary and intermediate English to children under ten years old, and seven (28%) teachers (3 experienced teachers and four novice teachers) were teaching intermediate and advanced English to teenagers and adults aged 14-28.

### Data collection

In order to enhance the perceived authority of the person providing the suggestion and its importance in persuasion and attitude change (Eysenck, 1947), the author invited a psychology specialist (M.A. degree in Psychoanalysis) as an advisor to take the suggestibility test, perform the hypnotic suggestions, and teach self-suggestion to the subjects. Prior to the commencement of the study, all subjects, again, informed about the processes of the study and introduced to the advisor as the suggestor and shared their ideas about the project, which helped establish rapport with them.

Primarily, to obtain the suggestibility level of the participants, all subjects went through the body sway test (Eysenck, 1947) which teachers closed their eyes, and it was suggested that they were falling forward. It was measured according to the thread attached to the participants' clothes, and '12 inches' was considered as complete falls (p. 487). The average point of participants was 5.8 inches ( $SD = 2.12$  inches), which was considered to be the medium suggestibility for most teachers.

Subsequently, the pre-intervention interviews were conducted by the author in order to identify the emotional experience of the subjects. After the analysis of the primary interview data, the hypnotic suggestion and self-suggestion sessions were directed by the advisor based on the results of the pre-intervention interviews. Finally, the post-intervention interviews were conducted by the author in order

to evaluate the effect of the hypnotic-suggestion sessions on the participants' practices and emotions.

### Pre-intervention interview

Based on the central focus of the study, the author decided to identify the current emotional experience, strategies, and regulation of participants according to their subjective information on their inner processes, because it was required to understand teachers' emotional competence (Hosotani & Matsumura, 2011). Therefore, semi-structured interviews based on a protocol and core questions proposed by Sutton (2004) were utilized. Since presenting the core questions and the probes associated with them to the participants did not clearly state the emotional regulation strategies with examples which could be confusing for EFL teachers, the author decided to complement the core questions by adopting some of the open-ended questions and prompts developed by Taxer and Gross (2018) which was based on Gross (2015) process model of emotion. So, we utilized both of these core questions and survey to construct and complement the following core questions (Table 1).

**Table 1** *The sample semi-structured core questions for pre-intervention interviews.*

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1. When you think about emotions and classroom teaching what does come to your mind?
  2. Could you look at the list and tell me which seem most relevant to you when teaching? (List: Anger, Fear, Sadness, Joy, Self Confidence, Tension, Disappointment, Fatigue, Embarrassment). (Based on Damasio's (1994) primary or universal, secondary or behavior, and background emotion classification).
  3. Why do you think you feel [emotion stated]? How do you deal with that?
  4. Have you ever tried to control, regulate your emotional experiences in the classroom? For example, have you ever tried to:
    1. change how you think about the situation.
    2. hide or suppressing your emotions.
    3. focus your attention on something else.
    4. pretend to feel an emotion that you are actually not experiencing.
  5. Could you remember when and how did happen and describe the situation?
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According to the first introduction session with teachers in one of the institutes, teachers also shared their ideas on the process of interview sessions, and all of the participants agreed unanimously to answer the questions through the internet and Telegram. Since Telegram is the popular social media platform in Iran, it was used as the primary source of interview data collection. According to Cohen (2007), interviews that are based on the internet present immense opportunity for interviewing respondents, such as mutually time convenience and cost benefits. However, he also warns against the "reduction of the interview to purely a written exchange that can mitigate some of the essential features of an interview" (p. 242), which we attempted to resolve by regular follow-up telephone calls and personal meetings to confirm their answers.

All teachers were briefed about the questions and sample questions presented to thoroughly familiarize them with the answering manner. Moreover, the teachers were assured of their voluntary cooperation as well as the protection of the collected data and personal information for research use only, and their willingness to continue was verified.

Although the author informed teachers that they could answer questions in Persian or English, and either by typing or audio recording, most of the teachers answered questions in English and through texting, and only six teachers used audio, which made the transcription process much more manageable.

The interview process for each subject lasted an average of 36 min (range: 19-69 min), and it lasted more with experienced teachers. All teachers were interviewed by the author individually. After data transcription, content analysis was used to analyse the data explained in the following section.

### Post-intervention interview

The secondary semi-structured interview was conducted ten days after the hypnotic suggestion sessions to evaluate its effect on their personal life and teaching practices. The same procedure of pre-intervention interviews was employed for collecting and analysing data. The sample core questions developed by the researcher and the advisor are presented in Table 2. To ensure the validity of the questions, we used regular member checking to confirm subjectivity as well as providing thorough information on context, participants, and findings of the study.

**Table 2** *The sample semi-structured post-intervention core questions*

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1. How do you describe your emotions after the hypnotic suggestion sessions?
  2. Could you look at the list and tell me which describes your experience properly after the sessions?  
(List: emotional change, change in teaching, change in attitudes)
  3. Can you explain more about your experience?
  4. Have you ever tried the self-suggestion techniques? If yes -Was it effective?
  5. Would you like to experience the hypnotic suggestion again?
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### Interview analysis

Content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorp, 2004, p. 18). We decided to use content analysis because it can describe the relative frequency and importance of specific topics (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998) as well as the coding of open-ended questions and revealing the focus of individuals or groups (Weber, 1990). In fact, according to Weber (1990), both quantitative and qualitative analyses of texts are utilized in high-quality content-analytic studies which are the focus of this study in understanding the frequency of various emotions (quantitative) and the cause and effect behind those emotions (qualitative). In other words, the content analysis starts with coding by defining units of analysis, categorizing by creating meaningful categories to subsume the units, and comparing them to draw and develop theoretical conclusions (Cohen, 2007; Ezzy, 2002).

Accordingly, by finishing the transcription, we used thematic units of analysis proposed by Krippendorp (2004) by placing texts into themes and combinations of categories which seemed to be more suitable in analyzing our data. After readings and rereading of the texts, the codes ascribed to each piece of datum, and the categories were inferred and constructed by the researchers to form domains. In addition, we attempted to organize data based on individual participants, research questions, and the particular issues of the research which has been proposed by Cohen (2007) in order to derive conclusions based on teachers’ different professional profiles. After coding, detecting themes, forming domains or clusters, and summarizing data, we began to make generalizations by counting the frequency of the words (retrieval process) and analyzed small samples of the text of each participant to ensure reliability (Weber, 1990). Finally, we used statistical analysis such as tabulation (of frequencies) and correlation (of respondents answers) (Cohen, 2007) besides qualitative analysis such as clustering (of individuals, issues, and research questions) and building causal networks (of different element involved) (Robson, 2002). It should be noted that a trained rater, along with my advisor colleague, coded all responses, and any disagreement was decided by the author. Also, kappa

coefficients were used to examine Inter-rater reliability (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, Razavieh, 2010).

### Hypnotic suggestion sessions

Three consecutive sessions for three days were directed by the advisor based on the result of the pre-intervention interview analysis. The first two sessions were for the hypnotic suggestion, and the third session was about self-suggestion and its techniques, which were taught by the advisor. The sessions were held in an empty room in one of the institutes with the permission of the administrator. Each session lasted for 53 minutes on average. All the participants have never experienced hypnosis and suggestion. Therefore, after an initial introduction about hypnotic suggestion to build expectations, the advisor (suggestor) initiated the process by progressive relaxation for almost 14 minutes with Binaural Beats Spiritual Sleep music played in the background to assist hypnotic induction. Later, the advisor utilized the counting deepening technique to put the subjects into the light trance, which was verified through LeCron and Bordeaux's (1947) scoring system for indicating the depth of hypnosis. The subjects experienced a catalepsy of eyes and partial limb catalepsy. Since the subjects appeared to be highly motivated and willing to experience hypnotic trance, the permissive induction approach was employed with a soft-spoken and persuasive style to deliver the post-hypnotic suggestions in Persian (Table 3), which lasted for 37 minutes on average.

**Table 3** *The Core post-hypnotic suggestions delivered*

Techniques used	Main objectives	Examples
Direct suggestion	Emotional awareness	I am sure you already can recognize and understand your own and your students' emotions.
Indirect suggestion	Emotional competence	Perhaps you have noticed how you are always patient and hopeful teaching students who are not well in learning.
Response expectancies (Kirsch, 1985)	Emotional experience	I wonder if you've ever noticed you are always very motivated, enthusiastic, and energetic when you enter the class and start to teach and you respond to students' questions with confidence.
Visualization and imagery	Instilling positive attitudes	It's going to be a pleasure to imagine yourself to be a confident, motivated, and creative teacher who is free from any negative emotions, teaching in the class.
	Teaching efficiency	Imagine a class full of students who are eager and enthusiastic about your teaching and you have complete control over your emotions.
	Teaching skill	Now I would like you to visualize a class that you manage with great skill and knowledge of yours.

Acceptance of each suggestion was confirmed through nonverbal feedback ideomotor finger signals. In order to enhance the subsequent familiarity and effect of the suggestions, several repetitions of certain suggestions followed (Begg, Anas, & Farinacci, 1992). In addition, visualization was utilized to enhance the subjects' confidence and acceptance of the reality of the suggestions (Dobson & Markham, 1993). Finally, the advisor ended the session by counting and giving conventional suggestions. When the teachers opened their eyes and relaxed for about 5 minutes, three of them reported headaches which they were assured that it is temporary. Then, the advisor talked about their experience and communicated with each other for about ten minutes and left the class for tomorrow's session. The same process was repeated for the next session.

As it has been indicated that the effects of hypnotic suggestions may be lost after a few hours of the intervention (Brooks, 2009), we decided to include the self-suggestion program in our study to

progressively augment the effects of induced suggestions by the teachers' themselves. For the final session, auto-suggestion techniques were practically taught based on Atkinson (2010) and Coué (Brooks, 2009) conscious autosuggestion methods as well as the following principles:

1. basic introduction on the conscious and subconscious mind
2. benefits of self-suggestion (i.e., reduce stress)
3. easy and practical steps to perform auto-suggestion (i.e., affirmation, repetition, visualization)
4. real performance by each subject (Atkinson's technique: saying, seeing, and doing technique; p. 113-120).

For instance, to reduce tension and stress, the subjects attempted the repetition technique by closing their eyes and reflectively repeating and murmuring the single word "calm" reverently (Brooks, 2009). They were recommended to perform conscious auto-suggestion on a daily basis even before entering a classroom.

## Results

The results will be presented according to the procedure of data collection. First of all, the results based on the pre-intervention interviews will be demonstrated and organized according to the issues discussed, the individual participants, and research questions.

### Teachers' emotional experience

Teachers' responses about their emotional experience before, during, and after teaching practices were prompted by a list of emotional words. They were asked about how they feel about their teaching and to stimulate their memory a list of emotional words presented. Table 4 indicates the types of emotional experience developed from qualitative analysis and the frequency of each emotional experience reported by the teachers. The percentage was calculated based on the number of experienced and novice teachers as two separate groups in order to compare their responses.

### Anger

Based on Table 4, we attempted to identify and code not only the frequency of the emotion but also the possible reasons for it. The anger felt by experienced teachers appears to be originated mostly from the contextual factors rather than the others. They mostly talked about the work hours and the salary inequality besides the prescribed methodology and materials which they had to follow.

Sample 1:

*The salary does not match the effort we make in the classroom especially when you have to carefully follow the instruction imposed by the institute. Also, when you have to deal with kids that don't obey, I feel somehow angry.*

Considering the novice teachers' feeling of anger, it seems to be generated mostly by learners. When they were describing their emotions, they expressed how they have to control students when some of them come to class just for fun and waste their energy by not following their instructions.

Sample 2:

*Working with students that don't follow and cooperate really take my energy and make me angry because I sometimes have to skip some part of the book to finish the assigned section and not fully accomplish my duties.*



**Table 4** Variation of teachers' emotional experience frequency

	<b>Context related</b> (e.g. (low) salary, high responsibility, contextual (barriers))	<b>Learner- related</b> ((not) cooperating, annoying remarks)	<b>Self-related</b> (personal issues, standards)	<b>Teaching related</b> (e.g. professional standards, duty accomplishments)	<b>Total</b>	<b>K</b>
<b>Anger</b>						
Experienced T	5 (83%)	2 (33%)	3 (50%)	1 (16%)	11 (14%)	.85
Novice T	8 (42%)	16 (84%)	7 (36%)	5 (26%)	36 (14%)	.79
<b>Fear</b>						
Experienced T	0	0	0	4 (66%)	4 (5%)	.98
Novice T	10 (52%)	5 (26%)	3 (15%)	12 (63%)	30 (12%)	.84
<b>Sadness</b>						
Experienced T	0	1 (16%)	0	3 (50%)	4 (5%)	.97
Novice T	0	4 (21%)	1 (5%)	6 (31%)	11 (4%)	.93
<b>Joy</b>						
Experienced T	2 (33%)	5 (83%)	1 (16%)	6 (100%)	14 (18%)	.89
Novice T	4 (21%)	9 (47%)	3 (15%)	16 (84%)	32 (13%)	.86
<b>Self Confidence</b>						
Experienced T	0	0	5 (83%)	5 (83%)	10 (13%)	.81
Novice T	0	0	12 (63%)	11 (57%)	23 (9%)	.89
<b>Tension</b>						
Experienced T	4 (66%)	2 (33%)	1 (16%)	3 (50%)	10 (13%)	.98
Novice T	6 (31%)	8 (42%)	2 (10%)	10 (52%)	26 (10%)	.95
<b>Disappointment</b>						
Experienced T	1 (16%)	5 (83%)	3 (50%)	1 (16%)	10 (13%)	.89
Novice T	6 (31%)	18 (94%)	10 (52%)	3 (15%)	37 (15%)	.83
<b>Fatigue</b>						
Experienced T	0	5 (83%)	0	2 (33%)	7 (13%)	.96
Novice T	0	15 (78%)	1 (5%)	10 (52%)	26 (10%)	.95
<b>Embarrassment</b>						
Experienced T	0	1 (16%)	3 (52%)	1 (16%)	4 (5%)	.98
Novice T	2 (10%)	6 (31%)	10 (52%)	4 (21%)	22 (9%)	.88
<b>Total</b>	48 (15%) [Exp. 12] [Nov. 36]	102 (32%) [Exp. 21] [Nov. 81]	65 (20%) [Exp. 16] [Nov. 49]	103 (32%) [Exp. 26] [Nov. 74]		

**Fear**

Experienced and novice teachers seem to share this emotion when they mostly talked about the fear of questioning their professional responsibility and teaching potentials. In other words, the experienced teachers make promises that they have to keep, especially when they are teaching a crash course privately.

Sample 3:

*You know, I make promises to attract students to come to my class and I fear some students question my teaching by not passing an exam.*

Novice teachers (especially pre-service teachers), also, fear that their teaching is not good enough to enhance their students' proficiency and blamed high contextual responsibilities imposed by the institutes.

Sample 4:

*I do my best in the classroom but I fear failing to teach efficiently according to the standards set by the institute.*

### **Sadness**

Considering sadness, the teachers, mainly, talked about their teaching practices and professional standards they would like to meet, and failing to do so makes them sad, especially for experienced teachers who are expected to be more professional in their practices.

Sample 5:

*Not accomplishing my pre-set goals in the classes when everybody expects you to do so, especially in front of my colleagues makes me sad.*

### **Joy**

The feeling of joy was also common on both novice and experienced teachers when they talked about the joy they feel when they reach their professional goals and standards in teaching practices as well as their learners' success in making correct remarks or passing their exams.

Sample 6:

*I feel happy when everything goes as planned and my effort is evident in my students' success.*

### **Self-confidence**

Teachers mainly considered self-confidence as a personal issue related to the teacher himself/herself in conducting the class and his/her experience as a teacher. Also, they related self-confidence to the process of professional development which was entirely based on teachers' experience and personality as a teacher. Both groups of teachers appeared to share the same idea.

Sample 7:

*My self-confidence developed through my experience as a teacher, and I am developing it through my teaching with different students. Of course, I lacked self-confidence in the beginning when I didn't have experience.*

### **Tension**

The feeling of tension appears to be related to all four factors presented in Table 4, and it seems to be different for teachers. For instance, experienced teachers mostly blamed the contextual factors for creating tensions for teachers such as high expectations and institutes' prescriptive methods besides its supervising system meddling in the instruction posed some tensions for experienced teachers.

Sample 8:

*I understand that there should be some control over my teaching, but it seems that they need a robot to follow their instruction and achieve the best result. But sometimes the mood of the class and students could not be predicted and there should be some flexibility in the classroom, materials, and instruction methods.*

For novice teachers, too, not only their teaching practices and their responsibilities sometimes caused tensions, but the tensions caused by the learners also annoy them.

Sample 9:

*I feel tensions about my teaching when I could not do my job the right way and satisfy the supervisor especially when he took notes in my class. Also, when I cannot explain complex grammatical points well, I get the feeling of tension.*

### **Disappointment**

As is evident from the result, all teachers consider learners as a significant source of their disappointment feelings. They mostly talked about the failure of learners in doing their own share in learning by not doing their homework, not paying attention to the teacher in the class, and not following the instruction. It, simply, means learner failure could cause teacher disappointment about his efforts. Both groups of teachers appeared to share the same idea.

Sample 10:

*I do my best in the class even if I'm not feeling well... but when my students do not pay attention, do their homework, and fail to learn, I really feel disappointed about my teaching practices.*

### **Fatigue**

The feeling of fatigue was predominantly generated by the learners and, also, the teaching practices. This is the feeling that is experienced mostly by teaching children that may affect their practices for the following classes.

Sample 11:

*Teaching children require more energy and enthusiasm to attract their attention and trying to control the class could be difficult.*

### **Embarrassment**

Teachers related their embarrassment feeling to themselves and their teaching practices. Although four novice teachers talked about their embarrassing moments in front of the supervisor by blaming the contextual rules, the others blamed their own teaching.

Sample 12:

*It is really embarrassing when you could not remember simple grammatical rules or the meaning of the words especially when the supervisor is present.*

Overall, according to Table 4, joy and anger emotions by 18% and 14% respectively are the most frequent emotions felt by the experienced teachers. Considering the novice teachers, disappointment and anger by 15% and 14% respectively are their frequent emotions. In addition, the learners and teaching standards were two major sources of emotions for teachers. While teaching standards with the frequency of 26 and 34% triggered more emotions for experienced teachers, the learners with the frequency of 81 and 33% concerned and prompted more emotions for novice teachers. Although the percentages are somehow close, we could use it as a differentiating means for the experienced and novice teachers.

### **Emotion regulation strategies**

The frequency of teachers' emotion regulation strategies use can be seen in Table 5 based on the factors or situations that may stimulate them. Again, the percentage was calculated based on the number of experienced and novice teachers as two separate groups in order to compare their responses.

**Table 5** Variation of teachers' emotional regulation strategies frequency

	<b>Institute related</b> (e.g. salary, contextual requirements)	<b>Learners related</b> (e.g. misbehaving)	<b>Self-related</b> (e.g. personal issues)	<b>Teaching related</b> (e.g. professional standards)	<b>Total</b>	<b>K</b>
<b>Situation selection</b>						
Experienced T	4 (66%)	3 (50%)	0	1 (16%)	8 (3%)	.89
Novice T	5 (26%)	10 (52%)	2 (10%)	5 (26%)	22 (9%)	.91
<b>Situation modification</b>						
Experienced T	0	4 (66%)	1 (16%)	4 (66%)	9 (4%)	.88
Novice T	0	13 (68%)	0	8 (42%)	21 (9%)	.86
<b>Attentional Deployment</b>						
Experienced T	3 (50%)	4 (66%)	0	4 (66%)	11 (4%)	.92
Novice T	0	8 (42%)	9 (47%)	5 (26%)	22 (9%)	.85
<b>Cognitive change</b>						
Experienced T	3 (50%)	5 (83%)	1 (16%)	1 (16%)	10 (4%)	.90
Novice T	0	7 (36%)	0	4 (21%)	11 (4%)	.97
<b>Physiological (modulation)</b>						
Experienced T	0	2 (33%)	0	0	2 (08%)	.98
Novice T	0	5 (26%)	0	0	5 (2%)	.98
<b>Suppression</b>						
Experienced T	0	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	7 (3%)	.91
Novice T	0	13 (68%)	10 (52%)	2 (10%)	25 (11%)	.89
<b>Faking</b>						
Experienced T	0	6 (100%)	0	3 (50%)	9 (4%)	.92
Novice T	0	18 (94%)	0	14 (73%)	32 (14%)	.96
<b>Masking</b>						
Experienced T	0	5 (83%)	0	2 (33%)	7 (3%)	.97
Novice T	0	15 (78%)	0	9 (47%)	24 (10%)	.85
<b>Total</b>	15 (6%)	121 (53%)	25 (11%)	64 (28%)		
	[Exp.10] [Nov. 5]	[Exp.32] [Nov. 89]	[Exp.4] [Nov. 21]	[Exp.17] [Nov. 47]		

Considering situation selection, experienced teachers commonly talked about the contextual and institute related requirements that may affect their teaching and even to the point to leave the situation by selecting a new institute to teach. Experienced teachers also consider the learners in regulating and selecting their behavior and practices. For instance, the following comment indicates their sensitivity in selecting their practices according to their specific learners.

Sample 1:

*After a few sessions with a new class, I always select my relationship and teaching according to their behavior... I mean the teacher should watch his students' attitude in order to control and manage the classroom by selecting the appropriate practices and relationships.*

Novice teachers reported situation selection strategy as a means to control their students' misbehavior by selecting tasks that involve them more in the class activities such as asking a question in the beginning and define a reward or threatening to put a negative mark for them to have their attention. In addition, experienced teachers think of situation modification as an important factor for effective teaching, since during teaching, you have to deal with various unplanned situations such as students' misbehavior, posing unrelated questions, students not learning, and ineffective lesson plans. They think

that it is the teachers' responsibility to adjust and modify their practice for effective teaching and better learning. Novice teachers shared the same ideas by comments like the following:

Sample 2:

*The course of the class is unpredictable, and I should manage it, for example sometimes the students are bored with too many grammar practices in the book and I have to keep them interested by changing the practice or involve them in a funny action.*

For attentional deployment, experienced teachers talked about the way they try to ignore restrict rules and procedures of the institutes and attempt to concentrate on their teaching and learners by adding some flexibility to their practices. They said that they concentrate more on their teaching and learners' needs and try to ignore learners' misbehaviors, their personal issues, the institute's requirements, and their failures in teaching. But, as a novice teacher noted:

Sample 3:

*Teaching requires to get your attention away from anything else (e.g. personal problems) to the class. I always try to forget them and focus on the students.*

Novice teachers attempt to focus on the task at hand and ignore their problems as well as some students' disrupted actions. According to Table 5, the cognitive change appears to be used mostly by experienced teachers in order to be more patient with "learners' lack of interest or understanding, unsuccessful teaching, and contextual issues" (commented by some experienced teachers). Physiological response modulation appears not to be used frequently either by experienced or novice teachers. Considering suppression, experienced teachers mostly talked about hiding their personal emotions for the sake of effective teaching and attempted not to let some students' lack of understanding or misbehavior annoy them. Also, the novice teacher reported the frequent use of suppression like the following comment:

Sample 4:

*I always have some negative feelings about some students who always try to question my ability and authority... I always try to keep calm and not only hide my feelings but also suppress them.*

Faking and masking appears to be a common strategy among teachers, and it is, mostly, affected by (or for the sake of) the learners. The reason was simple:

Sample 5:

*All teachers do that [faking], we should show ourselves interested and enthusiastic about everything in the class... and sometimes it is really difficult.*

The novice teachers talked about how they mask their emotions when a student does not understand a simple point, and they simply try to be patient and explain again pretending normal, or when a teacher's negative emotions are masked to be positive by some students' misbehaviors which aim the teacher's authority.

Overall, based on the statistics, attentional deployment with 11(4%) frequency and cognitive change with 10 (4%) are regularly used by experienced teachers to regulate their emotions. Also, faking with 32 (14%) and suppression with 25 (11%) frequency are repeatedly used by novice teachers in order to adjust their emotions. It is evident that learners are the basis of teachers' decisions in regulating their emotions in most situations (53%), and teaching standards and professionalism (28%) is another principle in utilizing emotional regulation strategies. It appears that experienced teachers concern and

think more about contextual requirements than novice teachers, and physiological response modulation is not frequently used either by novice or experienced teachers.

When asked about whether they think before applying a specific emotional regulation strategy or they do it automatically and instinctively, experienced teachers claimed they attempt to regulate their emotions without any further evaluation, because they had encountered these situations before and reflected on them which make it more unconscious such as: faking, masking, and suppression. But, they (especially novice teachers) accepted that they need time to process and decide about some complex situations and emotions that occur in the class as the following comment by a teacher who used situation modification:

Sample 6:

*I remember last month when I visited a 12 years old boy... he was difficult to teach and manage and not interested in learning which irritated me...first I decided to be indifferent but then I thought to use some rewards and select easy assignments to make him interested and it worked.*

Therefore, we may conclude that with experience, some conscious emotion regulation strategies that are used frequently may become unconscious and instinctive.

### Post-intervention interview

Teachers' responses to their experience after hypnotic suggestion sessions are presented in Table 6. We compared and categorized their responses according to the factors presented in their interviews.

**Table 6** Participants' experiences on hypnotic suggestion and self-suggestion sessions

	No.	K	Examples
<b>Emotional change</b>			
Experienced T	3(50%)	.83	More energetic before the last classes, I am more patient with kids and students' late learnings- motivated to teach more- understand the importance of my students' emotion- talk about my emotions with my colleagues
Novice T	12(63%)	.81	Feeling relaxed teaching advanced students- reduced tensions- think more positive about my teaching experiences- care more about my emotions during teaching- I try to reflect on my emotions- try to enjoy teaching and avoid negative emotions- I talk with myself to calm and motivate myself- I am more self-confident during teaching- I don't get angry easily and try to control my emotions- not disappointed about my failures in teaching- realize emotions of others
<b>Change in teaching</b>			
Experienced T	2 (33%)	.91	I don't challenge my students much anymore and monitor their emotions- I ask my learners about their feelings at the end of the class. I reflect more on my teaching and study to gain more competence.
Novice T	8 (42%)	.83	I talk with all students personally during exercises to build a positive connection. Try to motivate students who lack interest- talk with students personally after class- share my experiences about teaching with my supervisor to enhance my abilities- I hold discussions to evaluate my students' emotions by providing an opportunity to talk freely.
<b>Change in attitudes</b>			
Experienced T	1 (16%)	.98	I didn't consider emotions in my teaching that much, but now I am reading about it and its effect. Now I believe in the great role of emotions in our life.
Novice T	3 (15%)	.96	I change my attitude about myself and now I think of myself as a confident teacher. I had doubts about my performance as a teacher, but I am feeling much better and confident.

According to the results of the interviews, emotional change, and change in teaching practices were reported by most of the teachers. For instance, as reported by some of the novice teachers, reduced tensions and feeling more positive emotions during teaching were the prominent theme after the intervention with long-lasting effects.

Sample 1

*I feel more positively about my teaching now because I believe in my abilities and I consider every challenge as a new experience toward being an expert teacher.*

However, change in attitude was not so evident in subjects. Also, four novice teachers and an experienced teacher reported no particular lasting change after the intervention.

Sample 2

*Although I enjoyed very much about the experience, the effects I think were temporary, unfortunately.*

Therefore, we could verify the impact of the hypnotic suggestion on the emotional development and teaching practices of the experienced and novice teachers based on the results of the interviews presented in Table 6. In addition, 14 novice teachers and four experienced teachers reported the use of self-suggestion techniques.

Sample 3

*I don't know why, but I feel more confident when I try the self-suggestion techniques. I try to fill myself with positive emotions.*

Accordingly, we should consider the probable role of the self-suggestion applied by teachers after the intervention in our result and its effect on teachers' emotions and teaching practices. Therefore, the results presented in Table 6 are based on the interaction effects of the hypnotic suggestion and self-suggestion training and could not be exclusive.

Finally, most of the teachers in this study ( $N= 21$ ) declared their interest in participating in hypnotic suggestion sessions again for reasons such as:

- its mesmeric procedure
- its relaxed state during trance
- its imminent effect on their emotions
- experiencing peaceful and positive emotions and mind
- feelings of motivation and reduced negative emotions

Thus, we could conclude with the positive effects of the hypnotic suggestions for teachers not only in their professional careers but also in their personal lives' and experiences. In addition, some teachers (particularly novice teachers) welcomed the idea of supplementing teacher education courses with hypnotic suggestion sessions to enrich teachers' feelings and practices and educate them emotionally through self-suggestion techniques.

## Discussion

This study was an attempt to understand the effect of suggestion on teachers' emotional and professional development. Based on the interviews, it was found that various teachers (novice and experienced teachers) experience different emotions during their practices (see Sutton, 2000). In

accordance with previous research (Bloomfield, 2010; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010), novice teachers involved more in detrimental emotional properties such as anger and disappointment, which was mainly provoked by learners (Taxer & Gross, 2018). We, also, researched EFL teachers' emotion regulation strategies to understand their main strategies and factors associated with their emotional control. We found that, unlike experienced teachers who used attentional deployment and cognitive change frequently, novice teachers applied faking and suppression in their teaching processes. Accordingly, we found that experienced teachers by using more of cognitive change were acting more at a deep level by generally re-valuating and modifying situations and events triggering their emotions, and novice teachers by utilizing more of faking and suppression were acting at the surface level of emotional regulation (Grandey, 2000). It is believed that deep acting in emotional regulation is conducive to an increased sense of self-efficacy as opposed to surface acting, which causes a decrease in teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout (Yin, Huang, & Lee, 2017). Our results on the frequency of the strategies used which considered the learners as the main factor of the regulation strategies usage were compatible with Taxer and Gross (2018) research. However, we found that experienced teachers concerned and attempted emotion regulation more about contextual issues than novice teachers, which restricted their autonomy (Ghasemi, 2018). Although teachers consciously attempted to regulate their emotions, especially in complex situations (Sutton, 2004), some teachers also reported to unconsciously manage and master common situations by faking and masking (Gross, 1998).

Besides the general descriptive findings presented above, according to the interviews, novice teachers are more susceptible to experience negative emotions, which is completely different from what experienced teachers feel. While experienced teachers suffer more of inner conflicts and irritation, novice teachers experienced discouragement and intimidation. Considering experienced teachers, the source of their emotions was tracked to the institutes' requirements, which restricted their autonomy and creativity. However, we should not forget the facilitative effects of conflicts and dissonances in teachers' professional development (Golombek & Karen Johnson, 2004; Galman, 2009; Darby, 2008). But considering the novice teachers, some of their negative emotions were generated by the critical remarks and counsels of the institute's supervisor, which endangered their self-image (particularly pre-service teachers) and was conducive to 47% contextual stimulated negative emotions (Table 4). We may better understand the effect of the supervisor's critical comments on novice teachers by considering Kelchtermans (2005) self-understanding components. Based on the interviews, fear of critical judgments discourages teachers and threatens their self-image (teachers' self-definition) and self-esteem (their teaching assessment), which could result in facilitative (Darby, 2008; Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011) or debilitating (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) negative emotions. Seeking support from other experienced teachers besides reflection was teachers' attempt to coordinate their self-image and professional development; otherwise, it would result in losing the sense of meaning in their profession (Zembylas, 2004).

However, the question of whether emotion regulation strategies will cover and regulate all emotional issues of teachers toward their professional development still remains to be answered; since some teachers commented on their difficulty regulating their negative emotions and were consciously loaded with negative emotions which hinder not only their teaching but also their personal life. This enhances the importance of emotional literacy and its lack in teacher education programs, particularly in Iran, where teacher education is transmission oriented and lacks critical EFL courses (Abednia, 2012).

Although it seems improbable to associate hypnotic suggestion to the teacher education programs in Iran, we could see self-suggestion as a suitable adjunct program to enhance emotional competence introduced by Saarni (1999) to manage emotions that could not be regulated through emotion regulation strategies presented by Gross (1998, 2015). Some teachers experienced difficulties expressing their feelings (particularly self-related issues), which directly influenced their teaching in



the class. For instance, a teacher talked about his irritation about the argument he had with his friend, and he did not manage to control and regulate it and it was expanded to his classes that day. You cannot imagine how he was thankful for self-suggestion techniques he learned in the final session of the intervention, and he employed those techniques every day in and out of his classes. Therefore, such emotional adjustment methods could yield positive feelings that enhance teachers' self-efficacy.

There is no doubt about the effect of the hypnotic suggestion in academic fields considering the bulk of research conducted with students (De Vos & Louw, 2006; Zainurrahman et al., 2017; Wark, 2011; Tremonti, 1969; Çetin et al., 2016). This study was an attempt to understand how hypnotic suggestion could work for teachers themselves in the first place and help teachers to develop healthy emotional, cognitive, and behavioral habits. We received positive results based on teachers' interviews, which indicated positive emotional and practical effects. Although the hypnotic suggestion was not successful in attitude change, it had a reasonable effect on teachers' practices which could, also, be the result of emotional change; since emotions not only motivate and regulate but also influence and guide teachers' cognition and action (Izard et al., 2008). Therefore, we could emphasize hypnotic suggestion short-term and self-suggestion long-term roles as motivating and regulating emotional and practical issues (Table 6) which could enhance teachers' emotional thought (Yang & Damasio, 2007) by highlighting the impact of emotions in the decision-making process in teaching practices. In other words, hypnotic suggestions provide short-term remedies for teachers' emotional disequilibrium by injecting positive emotions and thought to enhance their competence, and self-suggestion is an attempt to preserve the injected competence in a long-term period through daily practices. This could be a standard procedure for recognizing novice teachers' emotional disturbances and ameliorate their emotional experience through suggestions, particularly for those who are on the verge of losing the meaning and interest of their profession. Finally, self-suggestion techniques could accelerate emotional development by enhancing emotional thought in teaching practices and play a catalytic role in novice teachers' emotional development. In addition, learning to implement self-suggestion techniques could facilitate teachers' emotional control and sophistication in teaching children or misbehaving learners.

### **Conclusions and Directions for Further Research**

This study was an attempt to address teachers' emotions in EFL contexts where teacher education courses are diminished to general rules and directions transmission (particularly in Iran). Once a novice teacher, we, too, felt incongruent emotions and witnessed teachers' emotional struggle in their professional development. This could partly be attributed to the lack of emotional training in teacher education programs which may influence not only the teachers themselves by causing emotional exhaustion, burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) or reduced self-efficacy (Yin et al., 2017) but also their students' learning (Cross & Hong, 2012) and their enjoyment in the class (Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). By reflecting on the resolution, we decided to use psychological options to investigate its effect. This research was conducted with great promises to describe and explain the issue at hand, but it seems that it is just another step to know the complexities of the emotional and cognitive aspects of the human mind. Much more research is needed to understand the efficacy of hypnotic suggestion in educational settings, especially for teachers. This could be accomplished through longitudinal studies by investigating the impact of practices of teachers who pass hypnotic suggestion sessions on the students with those who do not. Finally, the author believes that the presence of a psychologist in institutes as an advisor not only for delivering positive suggestions to students and teachers but also for screening teachers with negative emotional load could be of great help and increase their self-efficacy and efficiency.

This study was not without its limitations. Our research is limited by its small sample size, and the conclusion drawn for experienced teachers may not be so generalizable. Therefore, we mainly

concentrated on the novice teachers, for we had a more representable sample. This study was an attempt to provide insights on teachers' emotional processes for researchers, teachers, teacher educators, school supervisors, and principals.

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