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Understanding emotional and social intelligence among English language teachers

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University of Essex

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1

Abstract

Emotions and social relationships are at the centre of all human behaviour. Teaching in particular requires the careful handling of students' and teachers' own emotions as well as the sensitive promotion of positive social relationships between the teacher and students and among students. These emotional and social competences are key components of effective classroom management and teacher competences. However, there has been surprisingly little research on how these competences function in actual classrooms and how best they can be fostered. Language teaching in particular depends on these competences given the intercultural, social and interpersonal character of communication in a foreign language. In what follows, we review the literature on emotional intelligence (EI) and social intelligence (SI) within psychology and education, and argue for the relevance and importance of both constructs specifically within English language teaching (ELT). We report on the findings of a mixed-methods empirical study on the EI and SI of English language teachers across the globe, and then examine in more detail the beliefs and practices of highly emotionally and socially intelligent teachers in the UK and Austria. We conclude the paper by reflecting on the implications of the findings for language teaching and language teacher education.

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Literature review

2.1 Defining emotional intelligence

EI is defined by Goleman (1998: 317) as 'the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships'.[1] Goleman discussed five key components of EI: a) self-awareness, which means that individuals constantly endeavour to know themselves better by engaging in self-appraisals and critical reflection on their strengths and weaknesses, verbalising their emotions, welcoming feedback from others and treating failure as an impetus to self-improvement; b) self-regulation, which refers to the ability of individuals to manage their own emotions and behave in ways that are conducive to their own goal attainment; c) motivation, which encompasses a range of positive aspects such as hope, optimism and strong incentive to perform a task or participate in an activity; d) empathy, which reflects one's ability to share someone else's feelings by 'being in their shoes'; and e) social skills, which are indicative of people's willingness to take part in social interactions and their ability to handle interpersonal relationships.

Although the term EI became widely known through Goleman's (1995) bestselling book *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, it was Salovey et al. who introduced and discussed EI within the field of psychology in the early 1990s. They explained that the term EI:

> '…suggested to some that there might be other ways of being intelligent rather than those emphasized by standard IQ tests, that one might be able to develop these abilities, and that an emotional intelligence could be an important predictor of success in personal relationships, family functioning, and the workplace.' (Salovey et al., 2002: 159)

These three scholars later expressed their definitional concerns about EI and reflected on what EI is not. They explained that although EI was initially conceptualised as a set of interconnected abilities (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Salovey and Mayer, 1990), in subsequent interpretations, researchers have associated it with a range of other constructs such as happiness or self-esteem. They cautioned:

> '…groups of widely studied personality traits, including motives such as the need for achievement, self-related concepts such as self-control, emotional traits such as happiness, and social styles such as assertiveness should be called what they are, rather than being mixed together in haphazard-seeming assortments and named emotional intelligence.' (Mayer et al., 2008: 514)

The debate on whether EI is a stable personality trait or can instead be developed through training and instruction has dogged the field. However, findings from research in a range of areas such as psychotherapy, education and business management, have consistently underlined that people can improve their emotional competence (e.g. Barlow, 1985; Boyatzis et al., 1995; Cherniss and Goleman, 2001). Further, Emmerling and Goleman (2003) argue that nurture effects can impact on nature effects as far as training in respect to EI skills is concerned. Bar-On (2000) also suggested that EI can be developed through life experience. There have also been a number of intervention-based studies, which have shown that EI is malleable and can be fostered with focused attention, effort and in the context of a systematic programme (Brackett and Katulak, 2006; Nelis et al., 2009; Zins et al., 2004). This has led us to conclude that EI can be developed in individuals and is not a fixed personality trait. This understanding is important for ELT training programmes, which we discuss later in this paper. Essentially, it implies that teachers and also learners can improve their EI skills.

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1   Other definitions of EI (see, e.g., Bar-On, 2000, or Salovey and Mayer, 1990) have also been proposed, but we have chosen to work with Goleman's (1995, 1998) definition since it was through his publications that the term became common currency.

2.2 Defining social intelligence

SI is closely linked to EI; however, there are notable differences between the two constructs. Goleman (2006) highlights that a useful way to distinguish between them is to think of EI as focusing on one-person psychology within an individual as opposed to the two-person psychology mirrored in SI and stemming from social interactions and interpersonal relationships. In particular, Goleman (*ibid.*: 11) defined SI as 'being intelligent not just *about* our relationships but also *in* them' (italics in the original). Thus, SI centres on people's interpersonal awareness and social facility, their ability or skill to deal with social relationships effectively, co-operate and collaborate with others, and create and participate in healthy, positive and caring social interactions. Nel Noddings, who has worked extensively on the ethics of care and philosophy of education, explains that in a caring relationship, 'the carer is first of all attentive to the cared-for, and this attention is receptive; that is, the carer puts aside her own values and projects, and tries to understand the expressed needs of the cared-for' (2010: 390). This role is typical of what people in caring professions, such as education, do in their everyday practice, and it reflects what Kumaravadivelu (2012: 66) calls 'a teacher's moral agency'.

SI is closely linked to 'interpersonal energy' (Martin and Dowson, 2009: 330), which is mainly drawn from participation in social interactions and groups. The authors draw on Baumeister and Leary's (1995: 497) 'need to belong' hypothesis, which postulates that 'human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships.' When students in particular fulfil their need to belong to a group of peers, motivation may increase, maladaptive behaviours such as anxiety, avoiding classes and disconnecting from school might be minimised, and students' self-esteem and self-efficacy can be given a real boost (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1991; Zimmerman et al., 1992). These positive constructs contribute towards enhanced classroom participation, active and intensive language use and practice, and strong academic performance. With regard to teachers, high SI is conducive to positive social relationships with colleagues, trust and rapport, exchange of materials and ideas, and personal and professional well-being. Attending to SI is therefore important for ELT training programmes given the social and interpersonal nature of language teaching, which we discuss in more detail in Section 3.

2.3 Related movements and insights from general education

Teaching is inherently and fundamentally a social activity based upon relationships, necessitating teachers' attention to the relational aspects of classroom life and in particular how relationships among classroom members are shaped, mediated and enacted. In Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis of key factors in successful learning and teaching, he showed that teacher–student relationships were ranked 11th out of 138 influences on learning, far above other popular key factors such as motivation. Cozolino's (2013) research on the social neuroscience of education has also highlighted the importance of positive and healthy relationships in effective education. Furrer et al. (2014: 102) conclude that, 'an extensive body of research suggests the importance of close, caring *teacher*–student relationships and high quality *peer* relationships for students' academic self-perceptions, school engagement, motivation, learning, and performance' (italics in the original).

Within general education, the concept of 'social and emotional learning' (SEL) has begun to gain prominence in the last decade. SEL suggests that a range of social and emotional skills such as recognising and managing one's own emotions, understanding the emotions of others and empathising with them, attending to relationships and generally managing life effectively and ethically, can be explicitly taught from childhood. The implication has been that SEL can be facilitated with explicit instruction of relevant skills, and many programmes have been developed to support learners' development of these skills (Humphrey, 2013). Indeed, school-based SEL programmes have been found to successfully support students' social and emotional development (Allen et al., 2014), academic success (Denham and Brown, 2010; Merrell and Gueldner, 2010) and their attitudes towards self, others and the school, i.e. students became more proactive and motivated to learn, and more willing to verbalise and share their concerns rather than internalise them (Durlak et al., 2011).

Although by definition SEL focuses on learners, it also has strong implications for teachers in respect not only to their classroom management but also to the skills they promote within their learners and themselves as role models. Central to SEL is how teachers manage classroom relationships among learners as well as between themselves and their pupils. To do this, teachers first need to be able to recognise their own emotions and then read those of their learners by interpreting their behaviours, reactions and facial expressions (Bahman and Maffini, 2008; Denham and Brown, 2010; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Morris and Casey, 2006; Powell and Kusuma-Powell, 2010). One way to promote these skills and competences among teachers is to develop their EI and SI skills.

Having strong EI and SI competences has also been shown to have multiple benefits for teachers themselves. For example, educational research has revealed that highly emotionally intelligent teachers are better able to cope with the emotional demands of contemporary classrooms (Day and Gu, 2009; Elias and Arnold, 2006; Powell and Kusuma-Powell, 2010), and thus experience lower levels of teacher stress and higher levels of job satisfaction (Brackett et al., 2010; Chan, 2006; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Specifically, highly emotionally intelligent teachers have been found to be better able to create classroom environments that help learners to maintain and protect their motivation (Elias and Arnold, 2006; Graziano et al., 2007; Nizielski et al., 2012), mitigate maladaptive behaviours such as disconnecting from school and enduring emotional disturbances such as anxiety and depression (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Meyer and Turner, 2007; Thompson, 1991), reduce the rates of conflict, bullying, aggressiveness and antisocial behaviour (Gross and Levenson, 1993, 1997; Richards and Gross, 1999) which surface in classrooms across the world, and be more aware of their own emotions as they experience them (Corcoran and Tormey, 2012a, 2012b, 2013).

Comparatively, there has been notably less empirical research into SI than that into EI. One possible reason is that some scholars view EI as incorporating SI (Goleman, 2006). Nevertheless, studies have shown that highly socially intelligent teachers attend to positive and healthy group dynamics and enforce the idea of co-operation and collaboration among their learners (Albrecht, 2006) as well as classroom connectedness (Frisby and Martin, 2010), and that they are able to infer nonverbal cues about social interactions in class (Brown and Anthony, 1990).

Generally, the research findings on both EI and SI reveal how crucial both skills are for the quality of classroom life and the development and maintenance of positive and secure interpersonal relationships. Interestingly, the studies show that the teacher having high EI and SI is beneficial not only for the learners but also the teachers themselves; all stakeholders profit when teachers have strong competences in these areas. However, it is surprising to note that these two skills are rarely addressed in teacher training, either pre-service or in-service. While we wish to advocate the benefits of promoting these competences among language teachers, it is our conviction that we need to better understand the nature of teachers' EI and SI first before any attempt can be made to incorporate relevant training in teacher education programmes.

3

Why EI and SI are important in ELT

There are at least three key reasons why EI and SI are especially important in contemporary language classrooms. First of all, there is the nature of one of the dominant contemporary teaching paradigms in many language teaching contexts, which is communicative language teaching (CLT). Working from a CLT perspective places a focus on authentic classroom interactions, peer collaboration, and co-operative pair and group work activities. For language teachers who employ activities involving such in-class communication and co-operation, 'group dynamics is probably one of the most – if not *the* most – useful sub-disciplines in the social sciences for language teachers' (italics in the original) (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003: 1). As such, contemporary CLT approaches are highly social, interactional and interpersonal in nature, calling forth the interpersonal skills of both learners and teachers. Indeed, it is likely that whatever language teaching approach is employed, it will probably involve some form of communication and interpersonal interaction and possibly some kind of co-operative working structures, all of which can benefit from emotionally and socially competent learners as well as teachers.

A second development that has drawn attention to the need for such competences concerns global migration and the increasingly multicultural and multilingual nature of the classrooms in which teachers work as well as the world beyond the classroom. Thus, English language learners and teachers need intercultural skills for navigating not only their use of English but also their lives within and beyond the classroom. Here EI and SI are again

critical ingredients, helping learners and teachers develop and maintain rapport and show empathy and caring for others (Matsumoto et al., 2007; Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). Kumaravadivelu (2012: 67) claims that a relational approach to caring 'helps us to listen attentively to others without prejudice', and argues that this is 'what is most needed when teachers deal with students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Teachers of English, in particular, because they are dealing with a language of globality and coloniality, face numerous dilemmas and conflicts almost on a regular basis'. Therefore, English teachers need EI and SI to better guide these decisions.

The third reason is inherent in the nature of language teaching per se. One of the main goals of language teaching is to promote communicative competence, of which one dimension is intercultural competence. The latter in particular is linked to ethnocultural empathy, i.e. the ability to see the world from the perspective of someone from another culture (Rasoal et al., 2011). Fostering empathy, which is a key component of EI and SI, can mediate intercultural understanding, increase self-awareness and an awareness and appreciation of other cultures, and make learners open to others. Particularly in ELT, in which interlocutors may be using the language as a lingua franca, a non-culture-specific approach to intercultural competence is centrally important and, from this perspective, a key skill for learners and teacher to develop is that of empathy (Mercer, 2016).

4

Why we need this specific study

As has been seen, EI and SI have a central role to play in contemporary ELT; however, there remains a notable absence of empirical research in this area. As was the case with general education, within ELT, researchers have also focused more on EI than SI. Studies have shown that high EI in learners is linked to a range of other factors such as low foreign language anxiety (Dewaele et al., 2008; Shao et al., 2013) or positive attitudes towards foreign language learning (Oz et al., 2015). With regard to ELT teachers, strong EI skills were found to lead to higher self-efficacy (Moafian and Ghanizadeh, 2009), more effective regulation of teacher emotions while teaching (Gregersen et al., 2014), and higher self-reported creativity, classroom management and pedagogical skills (Dewaele et al., 2017).

With reference to language learners' or teachers' SI, although empirical research into SI appears to be entirely absent, certain aspects of SI appear in part under concepts such as group dynamics, teacher–student rapport and collaborative learning. Imai (2010) is perhaps the best example of empirical research into SI within second language acquisition. The researcher looked at emotions in collaborative learning through case studies with two different groups of Japanese university EFL learners working together outside of class in order to prepare for an oral group presentation in English. The findings indicated that emotions in language learning are socially and interactively constructed, and learners use them to support and help each other towards appropriating learning goals.

One dimension to EI and SI that is not clear from these studies is whether there are any domain-specific characteristics unique to ELT that need to be considered. In respect to other psychological constructs, it has been shown that some constructs function in domain-specific ways (see, e.g. Dewaele, 2012; Horwitz, forthcoming) and so we wanted to

investigate whether this also applied to EI/SI in language teaching. We also wanted to understand how English language teachers with high levels of EI/SI manage their classrooms and relationships with and among learners in practice, as well as how they manage their own motivations and emotions to protect their professional well-being. To cast light on this, we chose to look specifically at teachers' classroom practices to understand their EI and SI in action, instead of just relying on self-reported strategies. Given that many teachers are not aware of all of their behaviours and practices to be able to explicitly report on them (Brown and McIntyre, 1993), we decided to examine highly emotionally and socially intelligent teachers in action to help us to better appreciate how EI and SI are used both consciously and unconsciously by the teachers in their classrooms. Therefore, the present study aimed at illuminating more fully how EFL teachers perceive EI and SI, how they make use of both competences in their own teaching practice, and how these two competences influence aspects such as classroom management and decision-making processes. The following research questions guided the project:

- RQ1: To what extent are EFL teachers of varying degrees of experience across the globe emotionally and socially intelligent?

- RQ2: Does there appear to be a domain-specific form of EI/SI, which is distinct to trait EI/SI?

- RQ3: What factors potentially mediate their levels of EI and SI?

- RQ4: In what way/s do they perceive and manage their own emotions and those of their learners?

- RQ5: What specific practices and behaviours do EFL teachers with high levels of EI and SI use in order to enhance their teaching?

- RQ6: What lessons can be drawn for EFL teacher training programmes in order to promote the EI and SI of trainees?

5

Method

5.1 Research design

For the present study, we adopted a mixed-method, sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2009). The first step involved administering an online quantitative survey to a large cohort of English language teachers from across the globe in order to understand the nature of and participants' levels of EI and SI, as well as any potential mediating factors for both constructs, and whether we could argue for domain-specificity for both. The questionnaire results informed the collection of data for the second, qualitative stage of the study by identifying a number of teacher volunteers who scored high on EI and SI. The qualitative data collection phase involved observing three separate classes of three highly socio-emotional competent teachers in the UK and Austria[2] respectively and conducting stimulated-recall interviews with them about their beliefs and practices within and beyond the classroom. The qualitative component aimed at looking specifically at the behaviours of these participants in respect

to managing the emotions and relationships in class, as well as their awareness generally of EI and SI and their own strategies for managing their own emotions and motivation generally in their professional roles.

5.2 Participants and context

5.2.1 Quantitative component

EFL teachers (N = 890) from a wide range of teaching contexts and educational levels and with differing degrees of teaching and overseas teaching experiences participated in the first stage of the study. The participating teachers' mean age was 39.95 (SD = 10.56), the mean number of years of teaching experience was 14.81 (SD = 9.63) and the mean number of different countries the participants have worked in was 2.98 (SD = 2.64). Table 1 includes the descriptive statistics for teachers in terms of the geographical area they taught at the time of data collection, their overseas teaching experiences, gender, educational level they teach at and highest level of academic qualification.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for participants in the online survey*

Geographical area/continent	Europe: 292 North America: 14 South America: 13 Central America: 8 Asia: 410 Middle East: 104 Africa: 23 Oceania: 14
Overseas teaching experience	Yes: 297 No: 572
Gender	Male: 299 Female: 555 Prefer not to disclose: 15
Educational level of present teaching	Primary school: 248 Secondary school: 469 Post-secondary education: 528
Highest level of academic qualification	School-leaving certification: 16 Bachelor's degree: 269 Master's degree: 436 PhD: 99 Other: 52

*Categories do not add up to the sample size as some participants did not answer all the questions.

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2   These two countries represent the working contexts of the researchers.

Table 2: Demographic information for teacher participants in observations and interviews

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Experience of living abroad (in years)	Relevant qualifications	Total EI/ SI score	Context	L1 English
T1UK	49	Female	23	6	BA (Modern Languages). PGCE, TESOL, Diploma.	241	ESL	Yes
T2UK	36	Female	3		BA (Education). TESOL Certificate.	201	ESL	No
T3UK	39	Male	16	8	TESOL Certificate. Bell Delta.	235	ESL	Yes
T1A	42	Male	4	2	MA in teaching English and History.	214	EFL	No
T2A	53	Female	28	4	MA in teaching English and Sport.	253	EFL	No
T3A	62	Female	29	37	MA in Modern Languages. MA in English.	247	EFL	Yes

5.2.2 Qualitative component

In the second stage of the project, which involved classroom observations and stimulated-recall interviews, we worked with a total of six secondary-school teachers of English (three EFL teachers in Austria, three ESL teachers in the UK). The demographic information for the participants in the qualitative component is summarised in Table 2.

5.3 Ethics

Ethical approval was received in September 2015 by the University of Essex Ethics Committee. All participants gave their consent to participating. Specifically, for the online questionnaire, we took an 'opt-in' approach where consent was assumed on voluntary participation and completion of the questionnaire. The introductory text to the questionnaire provided participants with information about the study and their rights, and highlighted that all questions would be completed anonymously. For the classroom observations and follow-up interviews, teachers' and parents' informed consent was obtained in writing. The consent form included details about the study's aims, the procedure for collecting data and the duration of the interview. It was again emphasised that all personal data would be anonymised, and pseudonyms were used in order to maintain participant anonymity and confidentiality. For both data collection phases, participants were told explicitly that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any stage up to the point of publication.

5.4 Instruments

5.4.1 Quantitative component

For the first stage of the project, we developed a quantitative data collection instrument, the *EFL Teachers' Emotional and Social Intelligence Questionnaire* (EFL TESIQ), which was found to be highly reliable (80 items; α = .89). The questionnaire consisted of three main sections.

- Section 1: Biodata
  This section included questions on participant information such as current teaching context, teaching experience in present context and overseas, age, gender, educational level of present teaching and level of qualification.

- Section 2: General EI and SI
  This section contained 40 self-reported statements which measured participants' level of agreement through a seven-point Likert scale. These items were further divided into two categories as follows:

  Category 1: *Trait Emotional Intelligence*. This category included 20 items (α = .82) which were based on the *Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form* (TEIQue-SF; Petrides and Furnham, 2006). The items in this subscale represented the five main components of EI as defined by Goleman (1995), namely: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill. Although items were drawn from TEIQue-SF, it was decided to rely on Goleman's (1995) five components of EI to select specific

items, as TEIQue-SF did not make clear which aspects of EI are assigned to its different items. The original TEIQue-SF consists of 30 items which we reduced to 20 given that we felt that certain items were tautological and difficult for non-native speakers of English. Example items from the final questionnaire include *I am not always able to recognise what emotion I'm feeling* (self-awareness), *I usually find it difficult to control my emotions* (self-regulation), *I normally tend to be optimistic* (motivation), *I'm good at predicting how someone feels* (empathy) and *I can work effectively with other people* (social skill).

Category 2: *Trait Social Intelligence.* This category included 20 items (α = .79) which were drawn from the *Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire* (ICQ; Buhrmester et al., 1988) and represented the five components of interpersonal or social intelligence as defined by Buhrmester et al., namely: initiation, negative assertion, disclosure, emotional support and conflict management. The items were phrased slightly differently in the present study in order to match the statements of TEIQue-SF and because it was thought best to use I-statements for comprehensibility. For example, item 1 *Asking or suggesting to someone new that you get together and do something, e.g., go out together* was changed to *I typically ask or suggest to someone new that we get together and do something, e.g., go out together.* The original ICQ comprises 40 statements. These were again reduced to 20 in order to focus only on those items that were most relevant for a professional context. We also intended to maintain coherence among different subscales within the entire EFL TESIQ with regard to number of items and thus avoid administering a long survey, which might have led to high attrition rates. For coherence across the different scales in the final questionnaire, it was also decided to change the rating scale to a seven-point Likert scale as opposed to the original five-point one. Finally, some individual wording was altered to make it more readily comprehensible for different respondents in a variety of contexts where English may be their L2. Examples of trait social intelligence items include *I consider myself an easy person to get to know* (initiation), *I can confront close friends when they have broken a promise* (negative assertion), *I don't tell a close friend things about myself that I'm embarrassed about* (disclosure), *I am a good and sensitive listener for a friend who is upset* (emotional support) and *I am usually able to put negative feelings aside when having an argument with a close friend* (conflict management).

■ Section 3: Domain-specific EI and SI
This section comprised 40 self-reported statements which measured participants' level of agreement through a seven-point Likert scale. We adapted the first two subscales in order to write items which are relevant to educational-related contexts. They were divided into two categories as follows:

Category 1: *Educational-context-specific Emotional Intelligence.* This category included 20 items (α = .85) specific to an educational setting which were adapted from TEIQue-SF (Petrides and Furnham, 2006). Again, the items reflected Goleman's five components of EI but in domain-specific terms. Examples of items include: *I know what my strengths are as a teacher* (self-awareness), *I usually find it difficult to control my emotions in the classroom* (self-regulation), *On the whole, I am a highly motivated teacher* (motivation), *I'm normally able to 'get into my learners' shoes' and experience their emotions* (empathy), and *I am able to develop a positive rapport with my groups of learners* (social skill).

Category 2: *Educational-context-specific Social Intelligence.* This category consisted of 20 items (α = .70) specific to an educational setting adapted from Buhrmester et al. (1988) and mirroring their five components of interpersonal competence. Examples of items include: *I often suggest to colleagues that we co-operate on projects* (initiation), *I tell learners when they have behaved inappropriately towards me or the group* (negative assertion), *While teaching I tell learners stories from my own life when appropriate* (disclosure), *I'm usually able to attentively listen to a colleague complain about problems he or she is having* (emotional support), and *If students are arguing with each other, I am able to intervene and ensure both parties make up satisfactorily* (conflict management).

A first draft of the EFL TESIQ was piloted with a small sample of EFL teachers in September 2015. The pilot questionnaire yielded high reliability ratings, and the meta-feedback led to changes only in layout and design of the online representation of the questionnaire.

5.4.2 Qualitative component

The researchers conducted non-participant classroom observations. To ensure comparability of the notes made in the two different countries and to direct our attention to aspects of classroom life of particular relevance in a study of EI/SI, we designed a semi-structured observation protocol. This focused on the following aspects for each lesson stage and activity type: teacher classroom management techniques, teacher body language (position and

movement), teacher facial expressions, teacher communicating emotions non-verbally, teacher use of voice and teacher visual behaviour (e.g. eye contact and duration). Given that the lessons would be video recorded, we decided to limit the categories in the observation protocol to aspects of teacher behaviour and classroom management that would potentially be difficult to notice by re-watching the films after the lessons, our main guiding principle being that the protocols would complement the videos. In both research settings, only one camera was used, which was placed at the back of the class and focused on the teacher only and not the learners.

We then conducted follow-up, semi-structured, stimulated-recall interviews with the teachers as soon as possible following the observations. In all cases, this took place within a maximum of two weeks of the actual observations. To this end, we designed an interview guide, which comprised three main sections: a) background and understanding the context, which concentrated on teachers' experiences, emotions at the workplace, sharing practices with colleagues and general beliefs about what makes a good language lesson and teacher; b) discussion about the concepts of EI and SI, which included questions on teachers' awareness generally of the two constructs, their reported practices with relation to them, any training opportunities they have had on EI and SI, and what advice they would give to novice teachers; and c) looking at the videos, which centred on segments of the lessons chosen by the teachers and/or the researchers and how teachers viewed them in respect to EI and SI. At the same time, the design was left open to allow for interesting points raised by the participants during the interview to be followed up with additional questions by the researchers. The interviews lasted between 80 and 134 minutes. It is worth noting that some of the interviewed teachers were already known to the researchers – this is what Mann (2016: 74) calls 'acquaintance interviews/prior relationships'. He suggests that the familiarity between interviewer and interviewee may enable better understanding of the participants' lived experience, but, at the same time, care needs to be taken by interviewers not to project their own experience on interviewees. The researchers had never before discussed any of the themes from the survey or the topic of the research project with participants prior to the study. In analysing the data, a code was used entitled 'research effects' to examine if and where there might have been influences from the researchers, questioning or data collection and study per se on the responses of the participants. To the best of our knowledge, we do not feel that the participants were unduly affected by the prior relationships with the researchers or as a result of the study. (However, see Section 7.3.6 for the awareness-raising function of watching the videos for participants.)

5.5 Data collection procedures

5.5.1 Quantitative component

The online questionnaire was administered via SurveyMonkey in October 2015. The link to the questionnaire was sent to teachers at all educational levels through personal contact networks and lists of national and international EFL teacher associations across the globe. The questionnaire included an introductory text, which summarised the study, assured participants' anonymity and confidentiality, and acknowledged the external sources that were used to draw ideas for different items. At the end of the survey, we recommended a useful website o participants, which focused on EI, SI and positive psychology in education (http://greatergood. berkeley.edu). We also asked for volunteers who would be willing to participate in the classroom observations and interviews and thus share their name and email address with us.

5.5.2 Qualitative component

This part of the study involved non-participant classroom observations and individual, stimulated-recall interviews. An email was sent to teachers who scored high on EI and SI in December 2015 and who volunteered to take part in the second stage explaining the purpose of this part of the project and the procedure. These were selected from all volunteers according to the highest scores, teaching in secondary school settings and availability. The classes of three volunteer teachers in the UK and Austria respectively were observed between January and March 2016. The lessons to be observed were selected by the participating teachers with the guiding principle of different ages and levels of proficiency where possible. At the start of the first lesson, the researcher and research assistant introduced themselves to the students, who were already aware of their presence in their English classes. Students' parents were also informed through a formal letter about the project and the presence of a researcher and research assistant in their children's classes. Field notes were taken during the observations by the researcher and assistant. All lessons were video recorded, paying special attention to the teacher.

The follow-up, individual interviews were conducted in March and April 2016. These were arranged at a day and time that was most convenient for the teachers within a two-week period following the in-class observations. All interviews were audio recorded. At the end of each interview, in terms of reciprocity and beneficence, participants were offered a booklet with EFL activities which covered Goleman's (1998) five main components of EI and targeted all four language skills (Steinwidder, 2016), and were also thanked with a small gift for their time.

5.6 Data analysis

5.6.1 Quantitative component

The questionnaire data were analysed using SPSS version 19.0. The first step in data processing involved quantifying the data and reversing negatively worded items. Descriptive statistics (e.g. mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum) were used to present participants' EI and SI scores. Pearson product-moment correlations were performed in order to examine the relationship between trait EI, trait SI, educational-context-specific EI, and educational-context-specific SI. Correlations and an additional multiple regression analysis were conducted in order to test the relationship among EI, SI and teaching experience generally and specifically overseas as we hypothesised that experiences with varied populations might enhance their EI/SI, as well as the length of teaching experience as a possible predictor for both EI and SI.

5.6.2 Qualitative component

Each researcher read their classroom observation notes and watched the films of the lessons they observed. A list of common themes that emerged across all lessons in each setting was compiled. This list was then exchanged between the two researchers and was also inserted to the data management software ATLAS.ti for coding. All interviews were transcribed digitally for coding again using ATLAS.ti. This generated a corpus of 107,352 words. Both researchers first read the interview transcripts and took notes, which they shared and discussed with each other. One of the researchers then did a first wave of general coding. Coding was done inductively to ensure all data were considered in the analysis. At the same time a focus was placed on behaviours which are relevant to discussions of EI and SI, such as attending to relationships, group dynamics, empathy and emotion regulation. This first-level coding was then passed to the second researcher, who conducted multiple further waves of coding, merging various codes into meaningful categories, and refining and finalising these categories. These were then sent to the original first-wave coder for checking. Both researchers discussed the codes and salient themes emerging from the data. Based on the discussion, the codes from the classroom observations and interviews were assimilated and a first draft of the analysis was written by one of the researchers. Both researchers then worked collectively on the draft of analysis to ensure it represented both researchers' understandings of the data.

6

Findings

6.1 Questionnaire findings

The participating teachers' ratings of individual questionnaire items were added up in order to calculate their total score for trait EI, trait SI, educational-context-specific EI, and educational-context-specific SI. The findings showed that overall the participants reported high levels of EI and SI. The descriptive statistics for their levels of EI and SI are summarised in Table 3.

Pearson product-moment correlations between the different categories of EI and SI were also examined, primarily in order to establish whether there is a link between trait and educational-context-specific constructs. The strongest significant positive correlation was found between trait EI and

educational-context-specific EI. There was also a significant positive correlation between trait SI and educational-context-specific SI. Moderate to high significant positive correlations were found between trait EI and trait SI, trait EI and educational-context-specific SI, trait SI and educational-context-specific EI, and educational-context-specific EI and educational-context-specific SI. Table 4 presents the correlation matrix.

The correlation analysis suggested that the teachers' trait EI was similar to their educational-context-specific EI. Similarly, their trait SI was similar to their educational-context-specific SI, thus leading us to conclude that these scales do not represent a domain-specific form of EI/SI which is distinct from trait EI/SI.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for teachers' levels of EI and SI

	Trait EI	Trait SI	Educational-context-specific EI	Educational-context-specific SI
M	107.36	100.30	111.86	102.84
SD	12.99	13.32	12.47	11.40
Minimum	20	20	20	20
Maximum	140	140	140	140

Table 4: Correlations among the two different types of EI and SI

	Trait EI	Trait SI	Educational-context-specific EI	Educational-context-specific SI
Trait EI	1.00			
Trait SI	.68**	1.00		
Educational-context-specific EI	.79**	.60**	1.00	
Educational-context-specific SI	.60**	.70**	.69**	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

To answer RQ3, we examined the links between various demographic factors and trait EI and SI. First, we looked at gender differences and found that female teachers scored slightly higher than male teachers. Table 5 summarises the gender differences in mean scores.

Second, we focused on differences across geographical areas. The data showed that there were differences in mean scores across regional groups (see Table 6), thus raising questions about the cultural appropriacy of the EI and SI scales. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution as the mean differences might only be related to the regional groups that were picked up in the current measurement.

Third, we investigated the correlation between teachers' age, teaching experience, overseas experience, and trait EI and SI (see Table 7). The findings revealed a high positive correlation between the participants' age and their trait EI. Additionally, a moderate positive correlation was found between teaching experience and trait EI, overseas experience and trait EI, and overseas experience and trait SI. A very weak correlation was found between trait SI and teaching experience, and the correlation between trait SI and age was not statistically significant.

Table 5: Differences according to gender

	Trait EI	Trait SI
Male	M = 104.30 SD = 13.98	M = 97.18 SD = 15.06
Female	M = 108.74 SD = 12.2	M = 101.84 SD = 12.13
t-tests	$t(361) = 3.845, p < .05$	$t(334) = 3.792, p < .05$

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for trait EI/SI according to geographical area

	Geographical area	M	SD
Trait EI	Europe North America South America Central America Asia Middle East Africa Oceania	108.9402 111.9091 112.3333 108.5000 92.1303 81.3056 106.1667 103.0909	11.41476 7.99318 6.89202 12.58306 13.49438 15.41687 18.07476 12.65270
Trait SI	Europe North America South America Central America Asia Middle East Africa Oceania	100.2747 99.2727 114.1818 99.0000 100.4661 73.8261 99.6000 98.6000	11.45163 12.43456 6.99740 10.67708 13.57180 11.90576 10.12368 14.18293

Table 7: Correlations between trait EI and SI, and age, teaching experience and overseas experience

	Trait EI	Trait SI
Age	.720**	.130
Teaching experience	.541**	.120**
Overseas experience	.506*	.431*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 8: Multiple regression analysis for trait EI (R^2 = .66)

	β	t-statistic	p-value
Gender	.259	3.956	.000
Age	.172	.562	.000
Teaching experience	.127	.970	.000
Overseas experience	.110	1.617	.000
Qualification	.069	1.035	.302
Educational level of present teaching	.059	.757	.550

Table 9: Multiple regression analysis for trait SI (R^2 = .66)

	β	t-statistic	p-value
Gender	.262	3.953	.000
Age	.135	1.068	.287
Overseas experience	.125	.957	.000
Qualification	.118	.957	.000
Teaching experience	.113	.640	.000
Educational level of present teaching	.051	.675	.500

Finally, we evaluated the predictive power of the following demographic variables on trait EI/SI: age, gender, teaching experience, overseas experience, educational level of present teaching and highest academic qualification. The results of the analyses for trait EI and trait SI are presented in Tables 8 and 9 respectively.

Overall, gender made the strongest contribution to both trait EI and SI. With regard to trait EI, age was the second strongest predictor, followed by teaching experience and overseas experience. Qualification and educational level of present teaching did not predict trait EI. For trait SI, gender as a predictive factor was followed by overseas experience, qualification and teaching experience. Age and educational level of present teaching were not significant predictors of trait SI.

Figure 1: Summary of the qualitative data

Aim:
Quality interpersonal relationships
Quality interpersonal relationships based on: Empathy   Respect   Trust   Responsiveness

↕   ↕   ↕   ↕

Intrapersonal and contextual mediating factors

↕   ↕   ↕   ↕

SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS AND STRATEGIES
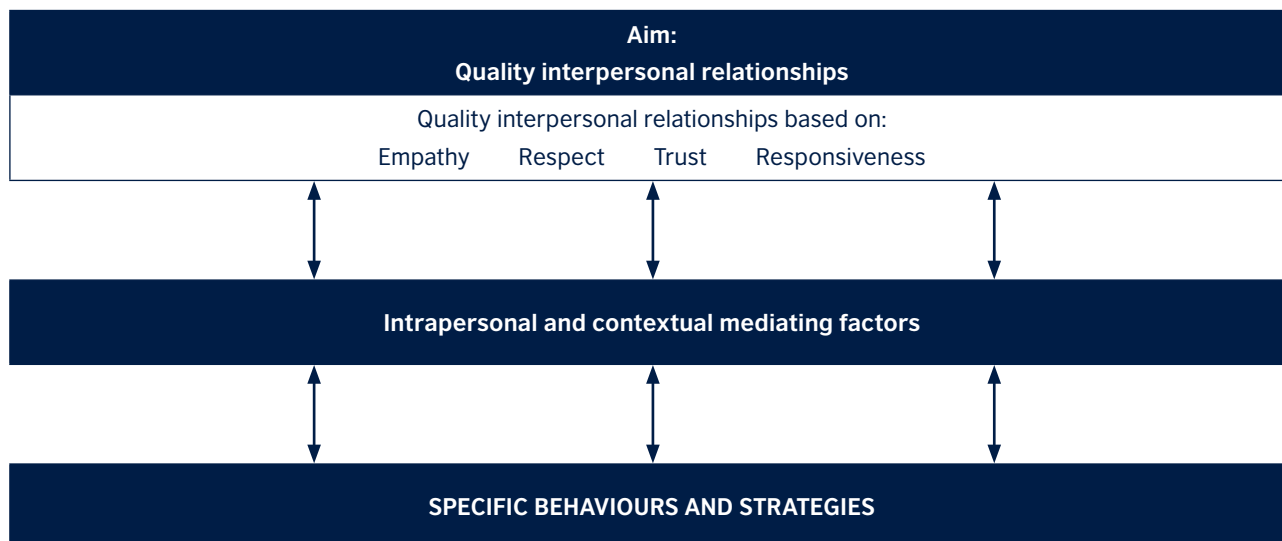
6.2 Qualitative findings

In this section, we report on the six teachers who scored highly on the EI/SI questionnaire and who kindly allowed us to observe their teaching in three different classes. We have organised the findings according to what the teachers focused on in EI/SI[3] terms (the aim being to create and maintain quality interpersonal relationships), the values and characteristics that appeared to underlie these relational aims (relational characteristics), how they enacted this in practical terms (the strategies they employed), and how and why the teachers also appeared to differ from each other (mediating factors).

6.2.1 The teachers' aims: quality interpersonal relationships

The focus of our study was on the EI/SI competences that English language teachers enacted in their daily practices and how this might vary across classes and teachers. Obviously, the focus of the interviews and observations was to a large extent set by us as researchers, yet, on analysing the data, it became apparent that the focus of the skill set and behaviours we were discussing all revolved around teachers' efforts to ensure quality relationships in their professional lives. Virtually all of our codes pointed to behaviours and beliefs that centred on their aims of creating and maintaining quality relationships between themselves and their pupils. We have deliberately chosen to use the term 'quality' and not 'positive' to avoid any possible misunderstandings that these teachers intended only happy, positive relationships. They valued honest relationships and while they wanted harmony, they were also aware that their role as teachers sometimes meant that discipline and temporary disharmony was necessary.

Traditionally, studies examining the relationships between teachers and pupils have concentrated on the effect teachers have on their pupils. However, one thing we noted in our study is that the effects of the relationships with pupils appeared to be bidirectional, with teachers also being influenced in their professional well-being through their relationships with their pupils. For example, two teachers reported explicitly on gaining positivity from their relationships to the pupils:

> …sometimes if you're not feeling up to teaching but then anyway you get into the mood anyway just by being in the class and interacting. (T3UK: 0752[4])

> They are comfortable with each other and I think when that doesn't happen I feel less comfortable as a teacher, so I guess maybe depend on it more than for the feedback, the kind of non-verbal feedback. (T1UK: 0036)

Similarly, two teachers explicitly reported gaining job satisfaction from positive dimensions of working with the learners such as seeing them grow, make progress and succeed:

> That is the most satisfying experience of all when somebody has had big problems but some text-writing let's take essay as an example and then suddenly they write an essay that has got you know a beginning a middle and an end (T3A: 6940)

> I think my motivation comes from seeing the students develop. I think just by being a teacher in itself you're kind of motivated because I think people want to become teachers because they want to make a difference and they want to help out. I think I'm motivated in that sense and I guess motivational so it comes from seeing the

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3   In the presentation of the qualitative findings and the discussion in the next section, we have decided to merge EI and SI as we could not easily distinguish between the two constructs. This also helps explain why research often subsumes these two constructs (Goleman, 2006).

4   The information in brackets explains which teacher's data set the extract is from and which line segment it is. The use of '…' indicates that a segment of transcript, which does not contribute to meaning, has been omitted.

interaction with the students and to see how they are developing in class. (T3UK: 0824)

On the whole, all the teachers seemed satisfied in their jobs and they all commented positively on their choice of career and the inherent and ongoing motivation behind their professional roles:

T: …this eh working with young people, yeah, and, and being able to really make an effort, I mean I've been ah to really make a difference

R: Yeah

T: as a teacher as a person. (T1A: 1858–1860)

…if I'm feeling miserable often the teaching will lift me up, yes because it's a positive thing. (T1UK: 0104)

However, it is worth noting that three teachers also drew attention to the fact that a negative group dynamic, mood or interaction can also influence themselves as teachers, again highlighting the bidirectionality of the teacher–pupil relationship.

…because they are not really motivated and they complain a lot and ta ta ta ta ta ta and this makes it very strenuous to be there. (T2A: 2708)

…there are the sometimes they don't do the home exercise that I assign them… and ahm they don't excuse for it but they communicate they have, the way, that way, that makes me quite aggressive really. (T1A: 2712)

…because I feel like I put so much effort in my lesson. I really enjoy making lesson plans. So I really enjoy that. But then when things go wrong, this is what frustrates me. Sometimes it just like knocks me down. Sometimes it knocks my motivation down sometimes. (T2UK: 0265)

Other relationships that the teachers were sensitive towards are those among the pupils. Indeed, the role of a positive group atmosphere and group dynamics was a central theme across all of the data. As T1UK succinctly explained:

Teaching is a group thing, it's got to be, and the group dynamics is so key. (T1UK: 0036)

An especially interesting dimension of the data was the degree to which teachers implied that the group dynamics were or were not within their control. In particular, there was a sense that working on group dynamics was important but easier to influence at the beginning of a group formation:

But for me it is just as important in the first few weeks of the course. Is just as important to establish in the first inter-relationships. In fact, it is more important for them to feel that they are they are doing something together. (T1UK: 0038)

Yes, because of classroom dynamics. Because of the good interactions between students and students. Sometimes it is not down to me, it is down to them. (T2UK: 0519)

T: I'm not talking about now who is in charge but what the climate is going to be that is decided by the kids by the the

R: And how much influence do you think the teachers have on the climate?

T: If once has been established it's very difficult to change a class climate I think if you have a class from the beginning you can do a lot (T3A: 6578–6580)

Related to the group dynamics was the visible sensitivity on the part of the teachers to the variations across groups and within groups depending on the week-by-week composition of classes.

No there some of the people were not here were not there last week who always change the dynamics in the class. (T2A: 3149)

Then I thought that teaching that teaching group B would be easier than teaching group A but I was wrong because the class dynamic in group A is much better than in group B. And because of that it helps me enjoy my teaching more. (T2UK: 0515)

All the teachers displayed an awareness of the unique characters of different groups and individuals and therefore the need for different ways of working depending on the group personality. Such responsiveness and flexibility was apparent in different forms for all of the teachers, although some foregrounded it more explicitly than others. As T2A explains:

…it's perfect to have a good idea but then you got to respond…to what's happening in front of you (T2A: 4630–4632)

Another set of relationships that were important for the teachers were those with their colleagues. For some, these potentially represent an important source of strength and positivity for their own professional well-being. For example:

So you often get teachers send in materials and emails and ideas and discussing what you do and just helping each other out. There's a nice veil of camaraderie there I think. I think there is a nice support there. You just kind of brainstorm and pick each other's brains and get ideas. Even just talking about how students respond to materials and how you deal with particular students. I think that's the massive part of teaching being able to bounce these ideas around and reflect on it with other teachers. (T3UK: 0888)

And we support each other just by you know having fun during the breaks meeting for drink after work and you know writing stupid things on WhatsApp (T2A: 3553)

However, for others, there was a concern that some negative relationships among colleagues could be problematic for their overall mood. For example, a key figure referred to by three teachers explicitly was the head teacher of the school, who is known to play a crucial role in school climate and teacher stress (Fullan, 2003; Price, 2012; Yariv, 2009). In these data too, there was evidence of the importance of their relationship to the teacher for their professional well-being (see also Section 6.2.4 on mediating factors).

> She is lovely. She always has time to listen to us. She has always … we know that she has got plenty on her plate already. We know that all the inspections, and all the paper work but she is so good at managing her time. Whenever you come to her, whenever whether she is busy or not, she stops and OK come in… She is very welcoming. I think this is very important for people. We feel like… some people can show this that they are stressed with work and then they just take out on other people. This is what happens to X so he is not so good boss. (T2UK: 0379)

On the whole, the data showed the centrality of social relationships for these teachers and how much attention teachers gave consciously and less consciously (see Section 7.2.1) to promoting and maintaining these relationships.

6.2.2 Characteristics underlying quality relationships

The teachers all appeared to identify similar characteristics underlying positive quality relationships. As the data focused largely on their interactions with pupils, there is more data regarding the characteristics of these relationships and as such this section will focus on these. On the whole, the teachers pointed to four main characteristics of quality relationships with their pupils: empathy, respect, trust and responsiveness.

The most notable characteristic mentioned directly or indirectly by all the teachers was the importance of being empathetic and trying to put themselves in the shoes and minds of their learners. Empathy was often a characteristic which emerged when they talked about their classes and pupils, especially in terms of their emotional needs and responses.

I'm always careful. I'm very, very careful about what I say even just if they've got an answer. Because for some of them to actually put a hand out and to answer your question or even answer a question, when you've asked an open question and because it's very hard just to get an answer. So when they actually do answer, they're really going out their way and putting themselves potentially in quite vulnerable situations to answer that question. So then to turn around and just say no bluntly, you see them. When they realized they've got it wrong and you see how upset and sort of how hurt they are. So I think you wouldn't want to reinforce that because and then they are not going to answer again. So yeah I think I'm very careful with that. So just soften it a little bit. (T3UK: 1048)

However, the teachers also mentioned the importance of empathy in remembering what it was like to be a teenager in terms of their interests and what is important to them at this point in their lives.

> …try and get on the kids' wavelength (T3A: 5287)

> …you have young people like 12 years old 13 years old 14 years old who are developing their ah personality… And who are sensitive at this point of their lives and then they should talk about com-things that have nothing to do with… with the reality… or with their lives (T1A: 1206–1212)

The second core characteristic of quality relationships was the concept of respect, in particular mutual bidirectional respect, which half of the teachers mentioned explicitly.

> But you can always learn to respect the student and I think that is absolutely key and sometimes you will respect them and empathise with them. Sometimes you naturally empathise with them and just love them but obviously your behaviour is the same for everybody. And sometimes you find it difficult to understand them but you can still respect them. (T1UK: 0063)

> I think it's respect I try to respect them they respect me (T1A: 1447)

> T: And not showing respect. I don't have to do anything I just ask them sorry have you ever have I ever talked to you like that?

> R: mhm mhm mhm

> T: Do you think I don't respect you? And they cannot say I think so because it's just not true

> R: True mhm

> T: And they never ever they say okay you respect me and could you please do the same to me? And usually it's okay (T2A: 3379–3383)

The concept of trust also emerged in the data as important for building up relationships and the rapport in class that in the teachers' view offered pupils a sense of safety and security. This was most clearly and explicitly expressed by T1UK, who explains:

> You learn that people take time to trust you and that you earn that trust and that they will learn better if they trust you, I really believe that because I suppose in my own experience I've learned best from people that I had a connection with, I suppose that's true so I have definitely. (T1UK: 0061)

T3UK also highlighted how it was important to convey your trust in your learners in order to promote a sense of confidence.

> And there's a confidence knowing that the teachers trust you with reading something out and I think it helps. It helps with their self-esteem as well, yeah. (T3UK: 0960)

The teachers also indicated the importance of trust in making it easier for pupils to speak up and work with each other, which is especially important in language classrooms. However, this was not only promoting the pupils' trust in the teacher but also ensuring trust develops among the learners as a group.

> That if you have created if you have the feeling that there is a person you can trust and if you have the feeling that ah this person is going to make sure that the others are not going to make fun of you then ah or establish ah an atmosphere that allows you to to to to speak up you're going to do it. (T1A: 2118)

> But this particular class, they were just all really miserable and I think that looking back, it was because the group dynamic which I was talking about before had not been worked on, they didn't trust each other, they didn't want to work together. (T1UK: 0044)

Finally, a characteristic that appeared to contribute to promoting quality relationships between teachers and pupils was their responsiveness to the uniqueness not only of individuals but also groups and their collective identities. They displayed skill at reading not only the emotions of individuals but also the climate of the group and would adapt their teaching and interactional styles accordingly. Such flexibility was seen as key by all the teachers:

> … it's perfect to have a good idea but then you got to respond… to what's happening in front of you. (T2A: 4630–4632)

I have to adjust my teaching, I guess to cater for their needs. (T2UK: 0471)

I realised if something is not working don't keep flogging that dead horse. (T3UK: 0920)

> T: If I love a short story and I think ah this is gonna be great and I'll do it with the kids and I see that it's it's above their heads it's too difficult it's too…
>
> R: Yeah
>
> T: boring for them I have absolutely no problem abandoning it
>
> R: Yeah
>
> T: and doing something else. (T3A: 6538–6542)

> To him I feel most of protect kind of maternal thing. X is harder I have been working on her, I've heard she's not straightforward to win her over. (T1UK: 0065)

This was also particularly notable in the UK data, in which all the teachers worked with much more culturally diverse groups and commented explicitly on the need to be adaptive to and accommodating of cultural diversity.

> Then maybe choose one of them to read out all the things that you learn later, about ways to encourage people to speak if they're not confident. But, yes it was that again it, it was the lack of, perhaps cultural understanding, but also the contrast between these very lively expressive Europeans and the vast majority of the class who were basically just waiting for me to tell them stuff, and so they could learn so that was quite hard. (T1UK: 0042)

> You learn that certain cultures will respond to this and other cultures will respond to that. (T1UK: 0061)

> First of all, the fact that I teach different students from different backgrounds, some from different nationalities. I find it really interesting and rewarding. And knowing their cultures as well. (T2UK: 0241)

> And little things like, I know in some cultures it's rude to point so you just sort of get into the habit of an open palm when you choose the student. So little gestures like that you become aware of so the thumbs up and you are right about that. (T3UK: 1000)

Teachers were also responsive to temporal variation such as the time of day, as well as their own capacities and needs. For example, T2A explained that on Thursdays when she had to teach all day, she would teach in a less energetic style so as not to be burned out and exhausted during the later lessons in the day:

> … I noticed that on Thursdays which is the day you came in ahm I try I hold back a lot of energy because I'm conscious about I know especially on on the Thursdays that's on the every other week… on the Thursdays where I know that I have to stay till five, ah, I I know that I have to to household my forces, yeah?

> Yeah, if I'm feeling ill which obviously sometimes happens I find it really difficult to teach (T1UK: 0103)

> T: Yeah yeah yeah well you know the first thing you've got to is you mustn't be unrealistic in your expectations

> R: mhm

> T: You know if it's the week before Christmas

> R: I know

> T: don't start a difficult new topic and expect everybody it's your own fault if things get out of control and they don't pay attention so that's the first thing or if it's the end of the morning you approach everything in a completely different way first period 1 and 2 they're either concentrating or they're asleep (T3A: 5467–5471)

Together these qualities of empathy, respect, trust and responsiveness appear to form the basis for these teachers of quality interpersonal relationships with their pupils and among the pupils. Although they do not refer explicitly to the same characteristics in their relationship with colleagues, it would be an interesting dimension to explore as to whether they bring equal amounts of investment and understanding to all relationships in their professional lives. The next aspects of the data we examined were how the teachers enacted these values and aims in terms of specific classroom strategies and behaviours.

6.2.3 Specific strategies for quality interpersonal relationships

Although there was notable commonality in the overarching themes and guiding aims in the teachers' data, we also found considerable diversity in terms of the actual strategies and classroom behaviours used by the individual teachers to enact the characteristics of quality relationships. A common strategy visible in all the observation data was the use of pupils' names, and this was also reported on explicitly by five of the six teachers. When T1A was asked about this, he explained as follows:

> R: …I mean you gave the impression that trying to remember their names and use their names was important to you?

> T: Yeah we of course 'cause this is again this is about having a relationship this is about ah showing respect, this is addressing the person. (T1A: 1598–1599)

The importance of learning and using names as a strategy for building rapport was almost self-evident for some teachers.

> I really do like to use names as much as possible… I think it's really important. (T3A: 5103–5105)

> I know it's probably obvious but using their names is I think it's important. (T3UK: 0864)

One of the UK teachers noted the importance not only of her learning pupils' names, but also that the learners could also learn each other's names. To do this, she kept out their name signs on desks:

> …I put their names out. And I keep putting their names out not for my benefit, because I learned their names the first day. And I don't have a problem with that for them to learn each other's names because you would be amazed if you can have a class and after ten, 12, weeks together, they don't know each other's names. (T1UK: 0038)

From the observational data, it was also noted that five teachers engaged in the practice of 'cold calling' by name, which seemed to be being used as a strategy to get everyone involved and active. Two teachers commented explicitly on this. T2A explained that:

> I try to ask as many people when they put raise their hands and I also want them to speak as much as possible. (T2A: 4173)

T3UK also explained his strategy of seeking to involve all the students:

> I think as much as you're aware of students that haven't participated and every student should have a say if you'd go through an exercise or get some feedback from the students because you're often not aware if you haven't picked on a student. You don't want to leave students out. I think at the same time, you're also aware if you're not focusing on one student. So I think that's really important as well I'll say to kind of spread your gaze and make sure that you're focusing on each student. (T3UK: 1008)

A particularly notable finding was the extent to which all the teachers sought to know their pupils as individuals and how they were able to talk about them as individuals in the interviews. They all showed sensitivity to their pupils' backgrounds and past experiences as well as their present concerns and

future goals. To varying degrees, the teachers tried to engage with learners on an individual level and accommodate their uniqueness.

> I try and remember little things about them that again I will use in my humour… If you can remember things about the students I think that makes a big difference as well. (T3UK: 0864)

> T: Or X for example the Afro-

> R: Yeah

> T: Austrian girl in that row she she was blown away by Ireland when they went there last year and now she would love to go to X you know

> R: Oh nice!

> T: And I try to you know I try to mention these little things to them when I'm marking their homework for example. (T3A: 5203–5207)

> I think she is kind of insecure but the way she hides that. Yeah you have to find them. X she is a bit dreamy, she just kind of I really don't know what's going on with her. X is lovely but she is very introverted, very quiet and she's got fantastic knowledge, so it's about encouraging her if there was a word I could probably tell you is that with her is definitely encourage. X is just totally straightforward and lovely and very clever. And she reminds me of myself when I was 16–17 (T1UK: 0067)

T3A explained why this strategy of knowing things about her learners and using them in her interactions with them is so important:

> They've got to they've got to feel that they are wanted and and liked and and valued as people. (T3A: 6640)

Talking about these strategies also revealed a particular individual/group tension that we have termed the 'teacher paradox', although the teachers themselves did not report perceiving this as a problem. It was merely an observation that we noted from the analysis of the data. On the one hand, all the teachers reported wanting to treat individuals as unique persons and accommodate their individuality accordingly. On the other hand, they also explained how important they felt it was to treat everybody equally and in the same way, in order to be fair. Indeed, the theme of fairness was brought up explicitly by five of the teachers.

> …ehm and I try always to be consistent and fair… I think that is… very very important to students fairness is… exceptionally important to them and it just helps them if you are consistent (T3A: 4700–4706)

> …but you've got to treat them the same as everybody else and you've got to smile at them too… and try to treat them equally (T3A: 6614–6616)

> T: And I think you've got to you've got to ah vary it according to the individual

> R: Yes

> T: Now take X for example brilliant student brilliant mind very clever lazy as anything

> R: mhm

> T: So ah if you know if he'll hand me in an essay the last minute that he's quickly written by hand and it's actually it's pretty good eh but you know there are things and I'll say X I'm not accepting anything without title

> R: Yeah

> T: I'm not I'm not taking it now another kid who has terrible problems

> R: Yeah

> T: even finding the thoughts to put in an essay who forgets the title I'm not gonna make a fuss about the title yeah?

> R: Yeah yeah

> T: I'm going to take what he has you know what I mean?

> R: Yeah yeah it's the everybody should be doing to their limits what they can do (T3A: 6998–7009)

> Sometimes you naturally empathise with them and just love them but obviously your behaviour is the same for everybody. (T1UK: 0063)

> I never I don't want I don't treat people different a different way no matter if they are sehr gut [very good/grade A] or nicht genügend [fail/grade E] (T2A: 4335)

In terms of empathy, four teachers referred to their perceived skills in reading non-verbals (especially gesture, body language and facial expressions) to judge the mood of the room or response of a particular student and their comprehension:

> I think I'm fairly sensitive when I see people blushing or reacting or you know. (T3A: 5343)

> Or they don't say it but you see from their mood and expressions that something else is going on. (T1UK: 0119)

> Do you understand what I have been teaching here? Because I can see that from their facial expressions and gestures. (T2UK: 0463)

I think I can read the students' emotions and feelings quite well in class. So I can feel if they're a bit flustered. I can tell when that student was a bit annoyed because he couldn't find the words out and I can tell when it's time not to go down, not to persevere and not to push one area or focus on one student too much because sometimes you're monitoring. (T3UK: 0908)

Interestingly, T3A and T2A also spoke of their use of non-verbals to communicate consciously with the learners as a kind of minimum intervention.

You know sometimes I just need to raise my eyebrows. (T3A: 4964)

I have if I want to silence them I just raise my fist. (T2A: 2537)

From the observation data, we also noted that all the teachers used a lot of smiling, eye contact and other forms of non-verbal communication, although the comment by T2A shows this may not be conscious behaviour and hence why they also did not discuss explicitly their use of non-verbals. It seems such behaviour may well be intuitive and not conscious – a theme we return to in Section 7.3.2.

I saw that there was a lot on the non-verbal basis… Even sometimes I think I didn't even finish the sentence and then I knew what I want…So that's strange… Because that was not something I can't remember now what it was but it was not an example I've done lots and lots… of times before… I don't know maybe it's a way of asking I guess (T2A: 4307–4317)

…my body language is there's a lot I do subconsciously I don't know that I'm so much in my face (T2A: 3065)

In response to a prompt by the researcher, T3UK also explained:

You are right about the thumbs up. I've realised I started doing that in my class. In the other day the student emulated. She put the thumbs up and so I'm okay. So yes you're right, I do do that one most. (T3UK: 0996)

T2UK also showed an awareness that she may unconsciously communicate her mood or emotional response to the learners through her non-verbal channels, no matter how much she seeks to suppress this:

…if I get frustrated, I show it, I think. Maybe I show it by my gestures, my tone, my voice tone. (T2UK: 0483)

Another non-verbal strategy concerns teachers' use of the classroom space. T1A talked about his use of the classroom space for reasons of discipline and group dynamics:

Ahm what I also do is and this is something ahm that doesn't often well I'd like to do more I try to leave the frontal position and walk around and get next to them because if you're getting in their vicinity they stop talking anyway. (T1A: 1900)

T3UK also talked about his belief that moving around the class and not sitting behind the desk was important for the relationships he was able to build with the learners:

I'd always feel that you've got this desk and this is the barrier. So when you're behind that desk you are the teacher and the students are there. But I try and get away from that all the time now. I won't make a big deal and I'll just say can you move your bag and I'll sit then and so I try to make it collective and move around a bit and put chairs differently. So it is very much us together rather than the teachers there behind the desk with this barrier and they're there teaching the students. (T3UK: 0924)

Interestingly, T2A drew attention to the fact that her movement round the room among the students was not an action she was conscious of until she watched the video.

There was a lot of movement … because I thought I was just sitting usually I sit on the teacher's desk with one of the… one foot on the chair so on the desk… And ah that's how I saw myself… But I saw how much I was walking… And sitting down and getting up and moving there and there mhm that's a lot of exercise… a lot of movement (laughter). (T2A: 4231–4274)

An especially striking strategy in the context of language education was that teachers consciously used the L1 for interpersonal reasons. This was most salient in the Austrian data, notably with the two teachers who shared the same L1 (German) as the majority of the pupils. When asked about the reasoning behind his use of local regional dialect, not just German, T1A explained:

Absolutely it's the language of the heart. And I want to get to know because this is I think this again this is so important if you want them to understand the concept of register that all the English folks make such a fuss about yeah? And it's so important to know that ah they get the the the the dialect ehm and the educational language and formal language… Ehm and and and and English as well so ehm yes that's absolutely true and it's the language of the heart and can be I have to be true in class and I have to be authentic… because otherwise they won't be able to relate to me if they can not relate to me then they won't have a relation if they don't have a relation they won't learn. (T1A: 1313–1317)

When explaining a critical incident in the class where a boy explained a story in German, T2A explained that she allowed German when they had something important they wanted to communicate and could not do so yet in English. The meaningful interpersonal communication was a priority for her above the insistence on English.

Ah it is mostly when they want to tell me something from their private life ah they can't do it in English because they they wanted to say it at once. (T2A: 4103)

Interestingly, the use of L1 was also observed in the classes in the UK where there was no common L1. Instead, the teachers allowed their pupils to use the L1 in order to promote the relationships between the pupils and to help put them at ease. For example, T2UK explains:

In the past, he gets really frustrated with his learning and pairing him with sometimes pairing him with X, who is also Romanian, can bring back this confidence in him sometimes. He feels reassured. (T2UK: 0610)

Another strategy referred to by five of the teachers explicitly was the use of humour. However, each of these teachers seemed to utilise humour differently. For example, T1A used humour to ignite debate and communication:

I'm with my humour I often provoke reactions… And this is my I want to get them to talk and to start to express themselves. (T1A: 1672–1674)

He also consciously used more self-deprecating humour in order to lower anxiety and put learners at ease:

And one (laughter) of the pillars of my pedagogic success (laughter) is exactly making a fool of myself in front of the kids… Yeah because I mean of course I have Shakespeare in the back of my mind this man seems me wise to play the fool yeah?… Ahm you have to be and but by making fool out of myself ah I allow them to make fools out of themselves. (T1A: 2311–2315)

T3UK also used self-deprecating humour consciously to promote a positive group atmosphere:

I think it helps if you can laugh at yourself, if you can make a joke and I think it lightens the atmosphere. (T3UK: 0760)

Self-deprecating humour was also used by T1UK to help build rapport and overcome possible intercultural differences.

I will always feel if I make fun of myself they are more likely to feel less threatened if we have other cultures stereotypes and of course you have to stress the importance of stereotypes. (T1UK: 0151)

T3A also used humour and stressed its importance in building rapport; however, she also noted that she uses a particular type of humour with the pupils only once her authority in the class has been established.

I must say that again is exceptionally important I think humour is very very important … And to try and get on the kids' wavelength… And not use a kind of humour that's too sophisticated… for them but to join in with a joke but again you can only afford to do that when you've got when you know who's in charge. (T3A: 5285–5293)

Indeed, reflections on the appropriacy of humour were also noted by other teachers including T2A, who explained how she might employ a humour strategy for rapport with older learners but not the younger ones:

T: …I mean that's what I do in grade 7 if he says sorry I have no homework then I say, oh you have been a surprise to me

R: (laughter)

T: Or, you have been a nice surprise today? Or something like this and they say okay

R: Yeah

T: But I can't say that to a person from year 2. (T2A: 4359–4363)

This context-dependency of humour was noted also by T1UK, who explains the need to be sensitive in the use of humour and attentive to how the whole group are responding.

> I am conscious of that when everybody is laughing I do just quickly check that everyone is laughing because sometimes you get someone not laughing and then you just have to watch it (T1UK: 0083)

> … you have to make sure that humour is inclusive. (T1UK: 0085)

As T3A notes, not everybody will respond in the same way to the same kind of humour:

> … as you know I have got quite a cynical sarcastic bent… And you you've you know you get to know I hope who you can use it with. (T3A: 5355–5357)

It was interesting to note that two of the teachers also talked explicitly about how they welcomed humour from the students' side too and took this as a positive sign of good group dynamics and rapport.

> Her dog was called XXX I think was the name and then they were teasing her about that and that was quite nice to see. The students feel comfortable enough to do that in my class and I think it's very nice. (T3UK: 0788)

> If I'm making jokes in class and being silly I think they pick up on that. So I think it does encourage students to do it as well… I really like to see students being themselves as well in class and if their character comes out then they're clearly comfortable in class as well. So yes, I do welcome that. (T3UK: 0764–0768)

T3A describes how the older students sometimes mimic some of her set phrases in speech humorously:

> T: I mean that's the nice thing about our students too is that you know they are they are they're so bright and clever that they they pick up on these little things you do and say as a teacher to make it all sound like fun and games

> R: (laughter)

> T: and you know in that sense in that instance for example somebody might say, yes let's, you know?

> R: (laughter)

> T: Which is great you know I love that. (T3A: 6022–6026)

Another interesting finding was that all of the Austrian teachers but none of the UK teachers reported using 'rituals' or 'set routines' to create structure and a sense of safety given its predictability, but also to generate a sense of shared identity. These were typically employed at the beginning or end of sessions. As T3A explains:

> Well I think I've got a very clear picture of what I want to do and it is based on structure from myself… and for the class and by that I don't mean a kind of rigid regimented procedure but I do have little rituals that we go through…(T3A: 4696–4698)

> And then I have these little rituals about everybody stands up at the beginning ehm drinks and food off the desk if it's still there because that's a school rule ahm sit down, word of the day, look at the schedule and usually talk about next week's homework… immediately and then get on with the lesson (T3A: 4724–4726)

T1A also talks about a routine he employs at the beginning of class, namely, of having students stand at the start of class; a strategy that is still widely used in Austrian schools:

> …sometimes I'm really old-fashioned I mean I I expect them to stand up when I walk into the classroom but I'm expect them to stand until everybody has his stuff on the table and everyone is silent and ah I know that some teachers colleagues say that this is old fashioned and a catastrophe but on the one hand (it's the clear sent) it's the ritual at the end and the beginning of the class and it gets us all in the mode (T1A: 2100)

Interestingly, he goes on to show how he exploits expectations and routines to also create variety and occasional moments of unpredictability to spark student interest and curiosity.

> And only if (laughter) you have established a role and a ritual then you can play with it and then you can, then you can do something else, you can walk into the class ahm reciting a poem by heart and they don't expect me to do that now (T1A: 2106)

T2A also had a game in one of her classes at the beginning of the session with irregular verbs. She never announced what she was going to do but the pupils all recognised the box she was carrying when she entered the classroom and, as such, knew it would be the first thing – the game to start the session. As she explains:

> Where we know each other so well…Because even I could have entered the classroom and I think without doing anything the first 20 minutes would have passed. (T2A: 3073–3075)

Another conscious strategy that all of the teachers referred to was the importance of open communication and dialogue. Naturally, all of the teachers referred to the importance of communication in CLT and also indicated the central role played by good relationships in fostering the willingness to communicate in learners.

But particularly in the language class if you want people to communicate you've got to have good people skills. (T1A: 2869)

Yet, communication was not just seen as a sign of a good language class, but the two Austrian teachers without English as their L1s noted how important this was for rapport and positive group dynamics. As mentioned above, T2A noted how it was more important for the learner to communicate their story than stick to English – a lesson she learned after having tried to insist on English in the past.

> Ah it is mostly when they want to tell me something from their private life ah they can't do it in English because they they wanted to say it at once and they sometimes ah… Yeah because sometimes I tell them something about my cat about my granny I don't know what and they know a similar story and they want to tell me and sometimes I say say it in English please and I can see how I killed a story. (T2A: 4103–4105)

T1A also made a similar observation:

> Ah in a good language lesson I would like to see every student present to use as much language as possible… And maybe not necessarily in the foreign language or the target language… but but but generally if they start to communicate… Because that's that's what it's all about… And and grammar follows naturally. (T1A: 1936–1944)

T3A also noted how language learning is perhaps unique in this respect in that it requires and enables personal communication and so there is a need to ensure the right conditions for that to happen.

> …at our school that even if you've got you know controversial views about things… you can air them and to me that is also part of language learning. (T3A: 6644–6646)

The other dimension of communication was its conscious use by two of the teachers for dealing with discipline issues. As T1UK reports:

> …and I normally find I have an individual conversation with someone it normally solves if it persists. (T1UK: 0127)

T3A also talks about having a discreet, neutral conversation with a pupil if there is a problem:

> I do something about it without emotion without as a warning you know if you don't manage to do that then we'll have a little chat about it in break you know not in class time because that's entertainment for the… masses… but in their own time… would we have a little chat about what you can do to arrive in class on time and the problem is solved like that. (T3A: 4706–4712)

It seems for both of these teachers that protecting pupils' and their own sense of face by having a calm, discreet conversation without heated emotions is their preferred strategy for dealing with discipline issues.

Finally, related to the overarching theme of communication are strategies used by some of the teachers to support their professional well-being and manage their emotional self-regulation beyond the classroom. In this respect, having someone to talk to, either a non-judgemental colleague or a partner, was seen as important by three of the teachers. In the extract below, it can be seen how the positive relationship between colleagues helped mediate the negative experiences with the head teacher for T2A:

> …it's easier there's some times when we meet somewhere and one of us had really big problem with the boss and we made a kind of funny evening out of it. (T2A: 3633)

T3UK also talks of the importance of being able to talk to his roommate and wife about his stress and experiences at work as a form of debrief.

> So in terms of my reaction, I mean yeah, every teacher gets negative feelings and frustrations and things like that. I think you do kind of – it's good to add these opinions with my roommate. We will have opinions and share frustrations as – it's not in the same way as good to talk about ideas in class. I think it's good to get your frustrations out as well. And also at home, some of my frustrations and emotions might come up, when talking to XXX because it's a part of your job and you don't work a long time where you do get emotions and different feelings and then you do need to get out. So often discuss it. We'll have a moment with my wife, XXX, things like that. (T3UK: 1044)

T2A also talks about how she benefits from talking to her husband but also hints at how wary she is of talking about some things to colleagues in order not to have to hear their stories in return. She also indicates the importance of talking to someone as a form of reflection and way of managing one's emotions:

> T: I tell everything to my poor husband who is not a teacher because it sometimes it's nice to tell teachers but not of your own school I never talk to teachers from my own school because if you tell them or I don't want to
>
> R: No no
>
> T: I they then as well if you tell them, they tell you how what happened to them
>
> R: mhm

T: And you don't really need anything like that that's why I keep talking to my husband I tell him that maybe he doesn't really listen this doesn't really matter and while I tell him I realise things

R: mhm

T: and I don't really we don't really want any answers because for most of us talking is just you know analysing and then putting the things into the right shelves

R: Yeah

T: onto the right shelves and then you can see at least

R: Yeah

T: For me I can see that

R: Yeah (at least it) puts something at place and it gives order. (T2A: 3511–3522)

Generally, the teachers varied in terms of their actual behaviours in class and their own priorities and strategies. There were commonalities and they were all guided by similar principles and socio-emotional goals. It seems that the differences in actual behaviours appear to stem from a range of intrapersonal as well as contextual differences. Some of these possible mediating factors will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.4 Mediating factors: the teachers' individual differences and contextual factors

The individual variation across the teachers in terms of actual strategies they used appears to depend on a host of mediating factors, both individual and contextual. Naturally, all the contexts of teaching were a key variable of difference. The national culture and expectations of schooling, teachers and the teacher–pupil interactions affected the range of perceived possible behaviours and interactional patterns for each teacher. All teachers have to work within the bounds of the cultural norms they perceive in their setting. For example, T3A talked about their whole school policy for dealing with disciplinary issues but also how the school policy and how teachers respond to it also in her opinion reflects cultural norms.

T: Well for example there's system of transfer

R: Yeah

T: But you see to this very date teachers don't like to do it because they see it as an admission of defeat they think that a submission of defeat if they send out a student and quite the opposite it's an admission of tackling something

R: Yeah dealing with that

T: Yeah dealing with it but they don't see it like that and you know Austria has got this whole cultural legacy of they got a problem of what they see as punishment

R: mhm

T: And you know

R: mhm

T: That word is is forbidden in the school context you know. (T3A: 5582–5590)

T1UK compared the culture of language teaching in the private sector compared to the state sector and outlined what she perceived as the potential effects of this on teacher–pupil relationships:

As a teacher, when I was just a teacher here, there was quite a lot of administrative work that you need, which does not exist in the private sector. Private sector is very easy because you just go in and teach to just go in and you teach and you leave. And there is no kind of accountability and also in the private sector there tends to be much faster turnover. So you don't get to know the students and obviously that has a… you lose out from that but you also you don't have that sense of commitment, whereas these students, you get to know them over a year or two years, past time is three years. (T1UK: 0007)

In particular, the school culture as a whole seemed to contribute considerably to perceptions, expectations and thus behaviours in respect to relationship building, not only with the pupils but also with colleagues:

…we support one another. It is quite a good working environment here. (T2UK: 0335)

Ah that a lot of kids and parents still consider it to be a very strict tough school… Okay whether that is true I don't know but ah we have the image of high quality ahm and so a lot of kids are still proud to be there. (T1A: 2154–2156)

…now I'm not saying that that would work in every school…because of you're but that's what I would do in our school. (T3A: 5483–5485)

…it's probably at X as well because we're a new school and we started with you know a a small group of pioneers… who had very firm ideas about how things were going to be done that's that just have you know we're not an old school that has had to change with the times… ehm so for example we've always had an open door policy at our school… You know it's never been a a problem for visitors to come… whereas I believe we take that for granted you know? (T3A: 7166–7176)

Interestingly, three teachers talked explicitly about how they felt that physical space can facilitate relationships. T3UK spoke about how sharing an office helped promote quality relationships and sharing among colleagues:

> But I mean I share an office now with other teachers so again just by being in the vicinity we talk about a lot of things but we talk about teaching as well. So you just get ideas from each other so that's a nice thing to do, a nice part of teaching being in an environment I think. (T3UK: 0888)

T1A compared the physical design and layout of two schools he had worked at. The one where he currently works, which is spread over a large space, and the former school, which was very compact with everything close together in one building.

> I think X is a special school... And maybe just because of of of the eh of of of the distances students and teachers have to cover... It's it's a very it's it's a physical yeah we and and and to gather round in school... Yeah so they're because when I was teaching when I was teaching in in the X ah it was all stuffed into one the whole energy of these 800 kids something like it was all stuffed in one room ah in one... building and kids couldn't get out. (T1A: 2124–2132)

T3A described their school policy of having the staff room door permanently open and the signal it sends about the relationships between staff and pupils, their accessibility and mutual respect.

> Of course for example the very fact that our staff room door is open... And the kids don't abuse it they know that they're not st- they don't just walk in in they stand there and they knock on the door... But it's an openness to me that is very important. (T3A: 7344; 7352–7354)

A factor perceived by the teachers as contributing to the school culture and general ethos was often the head teacher. T1A comments positively:

> I think our head mistress knows the name of every child in the school and she can tell you something about every child in the school and this is a huge huge difference (T1A: 2160)

In contrast, T2A commented on the perceived lack of support from the head teacher in her setting:

> Because there's really no support from our head teacher... Because I know that he is satisfied our work and to the outside world... my teachers are great but he never ever tells us... It's just when we make a mistake it's terrible and but eh I don't think that any one of us has ever heard you did a great job here or there. (T2A: 3561–3565)

A different view came from T2UK, who talked about the positivity stemming from her current boss, especially when compared to the climate created by a previous head they had worked with:

> She is lovely. She always has time to listen to us. She has always ... we know that she has got plenty on her plate already. We know that all the inspections, and all the paper work but she is so good at managing her time. Whenever you come to her, whenever whether she is busy or not, she stops and ok come in.... She is very welcoming. I think this is very important for people. we feel like... Some people can show this that they are stressed with work and then they just take out on other people. This is what happens to X so he is not so good boss. I remember when I worked in the other place. I worked for X for 8 years before I became a teacher... I remember my boss at the time; he was horrible, was so horrible because of the stress he had. So he was not very nice to his staff. When I saw X, I thought OMG, she is so good. Like... she is good. (T2UK: 0379)

Another factor, which has important implications for school policy, is the length of time over which a relationship between teacher and pupils can develop. In other words, how long they have known each other and worked together. Quality relationships need time to grow and the teachers were sensitive to this. Four teachers (two in the UK, two in Austria) mentioned the quality of relationships that emerged over a longer period of time compared to groups that they did not know or had only spent a short period of time with. As T1UK explained, once you have spent longer periods of time with them, you know the learners in a different way, more deeply and more as individuals:

> So you don't get to know the students and obviously that has a... you lose out from that but you also you don't have that sense of commitment, whereas these students, you get to know them over a year or two years, past time is three years. (T1UK: 0007)

Longer-lasting relationships also means that the pupils are familiar with you as a teacher and know what you expect, leading to smoother interactions:

> ...you only saw me at the upper school by the time I get to class was in the upper school I've gotten where I want them they know that I'm in charge and we have a good relationship. (T3A: 4732)

In Austria, it is not uncommon for a teacher to be paired with a group and stay with them all through their secondary schooling. Sometimes circumstance means that changes have to be made but usually attempts are made to keep the groups and teacher together. From our data, this would seem to be an important contextual dimension perceived by some

of the teachers as contributing to quality relationships. However, T3A also expressed some caution and concern about having such durable group structures:

> Of course, there are classes that are easier I mean I also think that the Austrian system of the same bunch of people being condemned to stay with me (laughter) in an enclosed space for eight years is tantamount to torture... Really it can you imagine sitting with 25 of your colleagues in that small space day in day out... Just think about it for a moment and then they're expected to be sociable and nice and co-operative and and and everything else eh you know that I think the system for our classes are broken up... and going to different groups is much much more humane actually. (T3A: 6560–6566)

Another difference in terms of teacher behaviour that the researchers noted from the observations, but which is difficult to document with the interview data, concerns the degree of discipline exercised in the class. This perhaps reflects different leadership styles and perceptions of, as well as need for, control:

> That's something else that I'd like to get from the students because I don't feel this so I need to get this or be that I'm always in control. I don't feel as though it's not working so I need to try and cover that up for anything about that. Because I feel it's not just about the teacher and the students. You're kind of in it together and so sometimes I will be led by them if they feel an activity could be improved or done a different way. (T3UK: 0920)

The differing leadership styles were also evident in respect to preferred types of working structures and interactional patterns among learners:

> I think it's often nice to discuss how they got to their answer afterwards and they list an exercise rather than just finishing and saying like what's the answer. And I think they're going to feel more confident about giving the answer as well. So I think it is nice to have an engagement among students and to share their answers. And again it just involves the students a little bit more and to another stage to the lesson where it's not just all going through the teacher. And something else out there with that is get them to choose the other students. That's another part of it. They are all involved and rather than just the teacher saying you, you. (T3UK: 0968)

In relation to this, teachers also appeared to vary according to their tolerance levels for noise and disruption. Our own observations confirmed this as we reflected on our personal responses to the classroom sessions, which we also experienced differently, noting different degrees of noise and regulated order:

> ...when you walk into a classroom of a group of 14-year-olds for the first time you don't want to give them an an inch of leeway in a and create a situation that could get out of control noise-wise you can only do that once you've got the class under control. (T3A: 4972)

> a language classroom for defi- by definition has to be your lively affair... And so I take ah I take into account that it's not so silent and that noise level is quite high ahm but I think again this is ah if you respect them and of they if they feel that there is some sense behind what you're doing and what you're trying to do ah they're going to co-operate. (T1A: 1880–1882)

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, teachers' behaviours were also strongly driven by their own beliefs about teaching and language learning specifically, typically reflecting their own training, especially in respect to CLT, as can be seen from the example of T2UK:

> And to me, good language teaching is when the class dynamic is good and the interactions between teacher student and basically the methodology of the teaching is good. This is a reflection of good language teaching to me. It got to be first of all, you teach language so you need to get the students to, you need to expose the students to the target language by getting them talking a lot and then give stimulate their speaking skills by giving them interesting topics and stuff like that. Maybe this is because the way I was trained to be a teacher using audiolingualism communicative approach, I guess. (T2UK: 0303)

T1A commented on his sense of realism about English teaching, which possibly stemmed from his various other jobs he had worked in prior to becoming a teacher. This was also reflected in his leadership and teaching style in which he emphasised teaching skills for life, not just school subjects.

> ...they can relate to it more easily and on the other hand there are some things ahm there are some things I want them to know and I want them to take from the lesson... That don't necessarily have to do with the subject (laughter)... with teaching (laughter) and I think this is as important as proper pronunciation of whatever or (T1A: 1248–1252)

…in the end I mean okay I try to be really professional about teaching the kids English but in the end whether they can speak English or not doesn't really make a difference… I me- it's it's let's face it it's not the question of life and death (T1A: 1544–1546)

T3A made an interesting observation that teaching methods need to be adapted to the learners in front of you, and that she believed it is those learners who come first in your decision-making about classroom activities, not the method itself:

I think the problem might be with a lot of very enthusiastic committed dedicated teachers is that they are more closely married to the topic and the materials than to the children… I have got this great method and I will put this through come what may you know?… And it doesn't matter… if the students are reacting negatively towards it… This is good for them I have learned that this is a good method and I will use it. (T3A: 6136–6144)

An interesting interpersonal dimension of CLT and its role in relationship construction was raised by T3UK who reflects on how much he feels he should disclose about his own life, given learners are expected to talk about theirs:

I think a lot of teachers or some teachers would shy away from that. You know you go into class and I would say I'm a teacher and I don't want to divulge any information about myself or my family because that's not the place to do that… I think if that's kind of who you are and you get to know the students in class I think they can see that you're a human as well and they're not just a teacher. I don't know. I think there's – I think I can't help doing it sometimes. I don't go overboard. (T3UK: 0812)

This was also linked to the issue of managing one's emotions as a teacher. All the teachers referred to emotional responses in their teaching, positive and negative. They seemed to vary in the degree to which they felt they had to work at suppressing emotions:

I remember coming at the class feeling angry, but also really drained because I didn't want him to see. I didn't want him to see that I was upset (T3UK: 1093), I didn't necessarily want to show him that I was angry, but so I probably did apologize because I felt I had to be professional. (T3UK: 1099)

I think, I show it. I think this is my weakness, to be honest. I think people can see. I am a transparent person but I try not to upset anyone especially upsetting my students. I try to take a step back and I realise, this is not what I want…I have to calm down. In general, if I get frustrated, I show it, I think. Maybe I show it by my gestures, my tone, my voice tone. (T2UK: 0483)

One interesting set of beliefs that would be worth exploring further in additional research concerns teacher mindsets about the skills and competences needed in respect to interpersonal dynamics. For example, a number of the teachers indicated that certain skills may be more naturally developed, whereas others may be more open to being consciously learned:

I think some people perhaps are more sensitive anyway because they are more sensitive themselves. So I think they might be a bit more tuned in to the students' feelings or might be more aware of how they're feeling, by nature, by their own by their own character. (T3UK: 1056)

…you can see the people who have that natural instinct for teaching. That natural ability to communicate and to understand. (T1UK: 0061)

Sometimes I do something and I realise OMG I have done it wrong. I should have not said this. I should have empathised more with this. Sometimes I feel like that, I feel like I need to learn how to master this. But I do not know if it is learnable? (T2UK: 0391)

I th- I really do think that it's something you get better at with experience and with the years providing you've got the the prerequisites for the personality as well… I think there might be some poor souls who are just not who who probably should never have gone into the job. (T3A: 6508–6510)

As is to be expected, the teachers' beliefs often stemmed from their interpretation of their own past and ongoing experiences as well as their own personal backgrounds. All of the teachers held experiential knowledge of teaching and displayed kinds of narrative 'schemas', which they drew on to deal with ongoing issues or talk about themes emerging in the interviews. They referred often to 'critical incidents' from their previous teaching experiences or current classes, which were somehow a 'match' for present concerns, and used these former experiences as a frame of reference for actions in the present and guiding principles in their practice.

I remember once she got quiet, I could just see that she was a bit upset because she couldn't get what she wanted to say so I think even little things like that you know, perhaps not picking on students and not singling them out and not feeling that they're in the spotlight. I think knowing what you can say to which students. (T3UK: 0868)

...the task was to write down for you know two to three minutes without stopping for everything they knew or they associated with ah a new topic we were going to talk about this task to just warm them up. I said 'Use use the language that comes to you naturally' and he wrote in X because he had a X background and (laughter) after the class he came to me and he was like almost as tall as I'm in the fifth form and he came and he had tears in his eyes and he said you know this was the first time that in Austria I could do something with my language in the school system and that makes you think doesn't it? (T1A: 1725)

The final set of beliefs, which reflect teacher intrapersonal diversity, concern teachers' beliefs about their own competences and preferences as teachers. It can be seen how they evaluate their own teaching and their confidence according to how they view themselves as people and as teachers, and how this in turn affects their classroom practices and manner:

I was not afraid to be myself in the classroom... And I I had a different fear the fear was that ah (laughter) that my English wasn't up to the job. (T1A: 1327–1329)

I know that I'm a sociable person and I get my energy from an extrovert in the true sense. I get my energy from other people so of course that affects the way that I teach. (T1UK: 0057)

Yeah I'm I think I'm I'm calm... and I'm not calm in private life... That's the, at home I keep thinking why am I in rage now? With my own kids for example. Why why am I like this and at school I just think, okay. (T2A: 3919–3923)

...when I feel that I have not made a good lesson plan because I did not have time at home. I just took a really quick lesson plan. I am not happy; I know I am not happy. I know I am not going to deliver a good lesson. This knocks my confidence sometimes. Because sometimes I can be a bit harsh to myself because I am a perfectionist. (T2UK: 0363)

Still I'm still the teacher and you're always the teacher on outings as well and I have to say and maybe this is one of my flaws and weaknesses I'm not very comfortable with that... Because (laughter) I feel I also have to be the teacher I'm not the kind that can let her hair down... in a school outing and I've noticed a lot of my students a lot of my colleagues can do that a lot better than me. (T3A: 5902–5906)

I think I'm really spontaneous. Things just come out and I'm not – it's to, I mean you always have a lesson plan you know what you're going to do but it's not so prescriptive that I follow it to the tee at all because so in that sense I wouldn't say I'm a maverick either but I'm spontaneous in the sense if something comes up I have a little discussion so I think in that sense spontaneous and open to different ideas. (T3UK: 0896)

In sum, there were many recurring themes across the data, in part set by the focus of the study but also by the teachers themselves. Yet, most notably, the teachers differed in how they approached their classes in individual terms according to their own understandings of language teaching per se, themselves as teachers, their groups of learners and their educational contexts. Not only are learners unique individuals, but so were this group of highly socio-emotionally competent teachers.

7

Discussion

7.1 Reflections from the quantitative data

The quantitative data, which emerged from the questionnaire, pointed to a number of interesting dimensions worthy of further discussion and reflection. Most notably, English language teachers scored highly on the EI and SI scales and there was no domain specificity for EI and SI, signifying that educational-context-specific EI and SI are not distinct from trait EI and SI. In addition, strong relationships were found between EI/SI and a range of demographic variables, with gender being a key predictor for both EI and SI, followed by experience. In fact, the data suggest that EI and SI can potentially develop over time as the longer one's teaching experience is, the higher the levels of EI and SI.

7.1.1 Explaining the generally high scores for EI/SI

The results of the quantitative survey revealed that across the globe the participating English language teachers generally scored highly on the emotional and social intelligent scales. One possible reason for the generally high scores could be the nature of the teaching profession per se, but also language teaching in particular. Teaching itself is an inherently social profession and those who choose such a career are more likely to be socially and other-oriented (Gehlbach, 2010; Hattie, 2009; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Kress et al., 2004). Many English language teachers across the globe are also bilingual (i.e. L1 and English), and a large number of these teachers might also be teaching more than one second/foreign language. Previous research has shown that multilinguals develop stronger social abilities and a range of linguistic perspective-taking tools, attend to specific features of conversations such as the language used by interlocutors or where and when different languages are spoken, and are also better able to interpret a speaker's meaning; these enhanced skills are crucial for effective communication (Fan et al., 2015; Genesee et al., 1975; Liberman et al., 2016; Yow and Markman, 2011). Effective communication, in turn, facilitates social group membership (Giles and Billings, 2008; Kinzler et al., 2007). As such, it can be anticipated that multilinguals, as many language teachers are, have skills which would facilitate their socio-emotional competences.

7.1.2 Possible demographic variation: gender and cultural context

The questionnaire results also revealed a number of relationships between variables. More specifically, gender was the strongest predictor of both EI and SI, with female teachers in particular having an edge over male teachers in both competences. This aligns with previous research into EI and SI within general psychology and education (Bar-On, 2007; Corcoran and Tormey, 2012a, 2013; Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2012; Petrides et al., 2004). Such a gender difference might stem from claims that females may experience emotions (both positive and negative) more intensely than males (Grewal and Salovey, 2005; Grossman and Wood, 1993) as a result possibly of cerebral processing of emotions, which differs between men and women (Craig et al., 2009; Gur et al., 2002). Another explanation for the differences between male and female teachers may be the nature of socialisation processes (Baron-Cohen, 2003; Denham et al., 2010; Garner et al., 1997; Garside and Klimes-Dougan, 2002). However, any gender differences need to be interpreted with caution as there is also likely to be individual variation across and within genders, and care must be taken not to overstate the group patterns. As EI/SI are competences that can be developed (Humphrey, 2013), individual capacities need to be taken into consideration when interpreting survey scores and not just group averages.

The survey also revealed some demographic variation among participants in terms of cultural contexts and geographical regions. Research results mainly from psychology have shown that emotional information might be processed differently by individuals with different cultural backgrounds (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2005; Ghorbani et al., 2002; Hofstede, 1997; Shipper et al., 2003). We feel that cross-cultural variations would need to be taken into account when developing data collection instruments, interpreting data and designing possible interventions for EI/SI. As Weare (2004: 19, cited in Humphrey, 2013: 23) explains, 'deciding what goes on a list of emotional and social competences cannot be value-free, culture-free or an apolitical exercise'.

7.1.3 Role of experience in developing EI/SI

Another interesting finding, which emerged from the questionnaire, concerned the role of experience in developing EI/SI. More specifically, it was shown that the length of teaching experience (within the present context or country and/or overseas) led to higher levels of teacher EI and SI. This finding corroborates previous research on EI and that it can be developed through experience (see, e.g., Bar-On, 2000) and has also been confirmed in another study, which found that longer teaching experiences were positively connected to trait EI as well as classroom management and pedagogical skills (Dewaele et al., 2017). Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2010: 166) also cite the book *The Evolving Self* by Kegan (1982), which presented the theory that 'people become progressively more socially mature as they move through their lives'. For our study, we have interpreted this as meaning that teaching experience has equipped the participating teachers with a wealth of classroom experiences to draw on in order to deal with the emotional map of their classrooms more effectively. In the qualitative data, it was seen how teachers often referred to critical experiences and narrative schemata to interpret ongoing events, a finding which reflects work on expert teachers (Berliner, 2001; Moore and Kuol, 2007; Tripp, 2011; Tsui, 2003). This finding has implications for less experienced or newly qualified teachers and points to the need to incorporate an element of training on EI and SI into pre-service teacher training programmes. While we are aware of some potential difficulties such an implementation might engender (Humphrey, 2013), we believe that explicit teacher training on EI and SI is necessary and goes hand in hand with recent shifts of focus to reflective practices, caring relationships and positive psychology in second language acquisition. We discuss the implications of our findings for teacher training and CPD in Section 7.4.

7.2 Reflections from the qualitative data

The qualitative data stemming from the observations and stimulated recall interviews raised many interesting questions. In particular, as researchers, we noted how the differences across the teachers and their practices were visible in the observational data, although there was some commonality in the discourse about what was important and how they approached their classes. This is in part generated by our questions and the focus of the study, yet it appeared that the teachers shared certain overarching principles and aims in socio-emotional terms. However, in the classroom itself, teachers enacted these shared guiding principles in quite different ways. For the observers, we noted how different each class felt, in particular in terms of how teachers maintained discipline and order. There was a sense that some teachers were more controlling than others, although we did not collect data specifically on this and would need to investigate this further in another study. From these data, we feel that teachers may score highly on EI/SI but could differ in terms of the degrees to which their behaviours are controlling or autonomy supportive (Reeve, 2006, 2009). Thus, while all the teachers were seen to be caring, and indeed Davis et al. (2012) question whether any teacher has joined the profession without at least the intention to be caring, the way the teachers communicated and enacted their caring to the learners appeared to differ, especially in terms of the degree of control maintained by the teacher or amount of autonomy support offered. A further study would be interesting, to examine the possible connection between EI/SI, controlling behaviours, autonomy support and leadership styles.

7.2.1 Relational characteristics

In examining the character of the relationships in this study, we found considerable overlap with the concept of 'relational trust' developed by Bryk and Schneider (2002). They too stress the fundamental importance of social relationships in education. Their conceptualisation of relational trust is based on four core components: respect, competence, personal regard for others and integrity. They argue that relational trust is generated within socially defined settings in which role expectations and beliefs also play a role in how relationships are enacted and developed. They also cite other characteristics of relationships (respect, trust, personal regard and caring). In our study, the qualities of the relationships which emerged were centred on empathy, respect, trust and responsiveness.

The elements of personal regard were also evident in our data in the way in which teachers all sought to attend to individual learners and to accommodate them, ensuring they felt safe in class and, in case of disciplining, that they did not lose face. Behaviours such as these by the teachers in our study indicate acts of caring for the learners. Similarly to Davis et al. (2012), we do not conceive of caring as an entity or a single emotion but rather as a process. As they explain, 'teachers exhibit caring about content, values, and relationships in different ways' (page 81). Our teachers also talked at length about their methods, and understandings of CLT, indicating that they care about the quality and impact of their teaching on the learners. Essentially, the teachers showed that they care about their individual learners.

An additional interesting dimension to the nature and quality of relationships that emerged from this study was the reference by teachers to the length of time that the teachers and students had been together in a relationship. Despite cautions by T3A, the teachers seemed to all suggest that higher-quality relationships were formed with learners over time when they both had chance to get to know each other better. Heffernan (2015) reports on studies by J Richard Hackman, who has shown that teams that function together for longer periods of time outperform others and have fewer negative incidents (his work reports often on aircraft crews working together). Work with mentors has also revealed the mediating role played by relationship duration (Allen and Eby, 2003; Canevello and Crocker, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2014), but generally there seem to be few studies about how or in what ways duration of teacher–pupil relationship can affect relational quality. We suggest that this too would be an important line of research to better understand, especially given its implications for policy makers and institutional structures.

7.2.2 The individual/collective tensions – the teacher paradox

A particularly interesting dimension to the findings was what we have chosen to call 'the teacher paradox'. All of the teachers were explicit and conscious of trying to accommodate individual learner diversity but, at the same time, they were keen to ensure all learners were treated in the same way, in order to be fair. As teachers ourselves, we were sensitive in spotting this seeming paradox in how teachers talked in the data. This issue has been discussed in a blog post by Dr Richard Curwin about his previous publication on the same topic (Curwin et al., 2008). He makes the important distinction between the concept of treating students the 'same' or treating them 'fairly'. He argues that treating students fairly but not equally is an effective pathway to developing a positive rapport and classroom dynamics. He explains that *fair* does not mean *in the same way* and that recognising learner diversity means that teachers must be able to engage with this by not treating them all exactly the same but by treating them as individuals, but doing so fairly. Understanding this distinction between treating learners the same and treating them fairly is crucial. It is one of the core facets of an individualised approach, a recognition of learner diversity, and central to building trust. Teachers want to be fair and learners want their teachers to be fair (Rodabaugh, 1996), but fair does not have to mean all students are treated in the same way. This may require some explicit discussion with learners and parents as Curwin points out, but it would seem an important distinction to understand in socio-emotional terms.

7.2.3 Rituals, routines and unpredictability

A particular type of strategy that was interesting to note, in the Austrian data particularly, concerns the use of routines and rituals. Brown and McIntyre (1993: 112) argue that such standardised patterns of teacher action are vital in contributing to teacher fluency. The concepts of fluency and automatisation are important in understanding how teachers deal with the complexity of classroom life and make multiple decisions, and engage in a range of actions and behaviours. In interpersonal terms, Davis et al. (2012: 43) stress the importance of routines and rituals for classroom management, discipline and the sense that learners feel safe and connected to their classroom. They point out that often these routines are used at periods of transition or in specific contexts. It was notable in the data here that the teachers tended to use their routines primarily at the beginning of class or at the end if time was left over. Interestingly and as a word of caution, work by Dewaele et al. (2016) found that pupils prefer teachers who are unpredictable and that such unpredictability can contribute to learner enjoyment in the classroom. This suggests there may be a balance to strike for teachers between some degree of routine for their own well-being in order to reduce cognitive load and increase teaching fluency, but also because routines are known to be useful in helping students feel safe and connected in their classrooms, and between a degree of unpredictability to ensure learner enjoyment through variety. In this regard, it is interesting to note that T1A consciously exploited the use of routines in creating surprise, unpredictability and an element of fun.

7.2.4 The role of L1

The role of the L1 in the language classroom has been a topic of heated debate for many years. With the advent of CLT and Krashen's input hypothesis, a fashion emerged even more strongly than already existed for banishing the L1 completely from the classroom. Indeed, Kerr (2014) reports that many language teaching settings actually have policies which prohibit the use of the L1. However, recent years have seen an upsurge in people calling for a more moderate position on the use of the L1, highlighting its usefulness as a language learning tool such as in translation (Cook, 2001, 2010; Kerr, 2014). Various scholars have pointed out that code switching is natural for all bilinguals and can also be a sign of proficiency, rather than deficiency (Foidl, 2016; Macaro, 2016; Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). On the whole, the more contemporary literature seems to be in relative agreement about the judicious use of L1 in teaching as a valuable pedagogical tool (Butzkamm, 2003; Macaro, 2005). In our study, some of the teachers used L1 for interpersonal reasons, using it to generate rapport,

for moments of humour and to strengthen shared identities. In contrast to findings by Copland and Neokleous (2011), our teachers who used the L1 seemed not to have any sense of 'guilt' about this, despite all being keen CLT teachers. Instead, they appeared to take more pragmatic decisions about language use, guided by the needs of the individuals, and prioritising meaningful communication on an interpersonal level. Indeed, there have been other studies which show that teachers in practice, often in conflict with official policy, will use the shared L1, if it exists, for social and pedagogical goals (see, e.g., Macaro, 2000, 2005; Probyn, 2009). However, Macaro (2001) and Copland and Neokleous (2011) both propose that teachers may be emotionally conflicted for different areas and reasons of code switching, and not all uses of the L1 will elicit the same response from the teachers. Possibly for teachers in this study, the interpersonal rationale for code switching seemed logical and did not generate any sense of conflict in the teachers, although another area might have. Macaro (2016) has called for teachers to have principled reasons for using the L1. We would suggest that interpersonal motivations may represent an important reason to code switch, not only among teachers but potentially among learners. However, care must be taken in multilingual classrooms to respect this diversity and take care that use of the L1 does not inadvertently isolate and alienate some members of the class depending on the levels of proficiency. Further research on the nature of code switching and its effects on group identity, rapport and classroom atmosphere would be important to understand in language education generally.

7.3 Reflections from the study generally

This study also raised some general issues in addition to some of the specific points we have elucidated on above. Most notably, we saw how teachers were individuals and how this should caution us against believing we can prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching. There is not just one way to teach and there is not just one way to be a socio-emotionally competent teacher. We saw how contextual factors mediated teacher actions in particular, the school policies and local cultural expectations about the role of teachers. In addition, teachers held their own specific beliefs about their own sense of self as a teacher, as well as expectations about their own roles and beliefs about how language is best learned and taught. Together these mediating factors meant that while teachers may share values and aims, how they enact those in practice can be very personal. This means that our understandings of the implications and discussions in this chapter are all against the backdrop that there

can never be any magic recipes emerging from a study such as this, and it is not the intention to provide such prescriptions. Instead, we hope to describe diversity and issues involved from which teachers can make their own informed decisions reflecting on their own practice, personal preferences and specific contexts.

7.3.1 Language-specific dimensions

In the study, the role of CLT and teachers' beliefs about this were prevalent throughout. We saw repeatedly how important genuine authentic interpersonal communication was, even to the point of using the L1 if the proficiency in the L2 inhibited communication. One thing that we saw teachers reflect on was the issue of 'boundaries' and how much self-disclosure was appropriate. T3UK made the point that it seemed 'only fair' (0812) to also share something about oneself, given the learners were repeatedly being asked to share and talk about their personal lives and preferences. As Fontana (1988, 294–295) explains, 'a degree of self-disclosure shows a desirable openness towards others and an honesty and lack of defensiveness about ourselves. It also shows a readiness to trust others, and is an essential ingredient in social intimacy'. A study by Lannutti and Strauman (2006) showed how college instructors who engaged in more self-disclosure were more positively evaluated by their students than others. Similarly, work by Cayanus et al. (2009) showed that teacher disclosure is also connected to learner motivation and interest. However, care must be taken to ensure a balance in self-disclosure and appropriacy (Cayanus and Martin, 2008; Downs et al., 1988; Wambach and Brothen, 1997). Generally, this personal sharing and self-disclosure is an element that is especially prevalent in the language classroom and may bring this to the fore more so than in other subject domains.

On the whole, interpersonal relationships and the quality of the classroom atmosphere are especially important in language classrooms, especially CLT classes, in which learners are expected to engage in a lot of co-operative and collaborative work and open communication. As Byrnes (2013: 225) says, 'meaning-making with language is inherently social and involves another'. Stevick (1980) also famously explained that success in language learning depends to a large extent on what goes on 'inside and between the people in the classroom', highlighting the centrality of intra- and interpersonal relationships. Given the primacy assigned by these language teachers to the need for positive group dynamics and an attention to the emotional climate of the class as a whole and for individuals, we also conclude that language learning per se may

necessitate socio-emotional competences on the part of teachers and, indeed, also learners, to an even greater extent than is necessary in other educational academic domains.

7.3.2 Teacher knowledge and role of intuition

One notable aspect of the data was that the teachers in this study were not always aware of what they did until they watched the video recordings (see Section 7.3.6). They were especially not conscious of their body language and use of non-verbals but also elements of their practice such as using names or having starting routines were so automatic that they often did not think to comment on them until prompted. In this way, the data raises interesting questions about the role of the intuitive knowledge of more experienced teachers, in EI/SI terms. Tsui (2003: 12) states 'expertise is intuitive'. Drawing on the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) model of expertise characterised as 'knowledge how' rather than 'knowledge that', Tsui shows how teacher expertise can emerge from experience and that such intuition only forms based on teachers' ability to recognise patterns from their similar past experiences. She stresses that 'knowledge that experts have is tacit and is embedded in their action' (page 13).

In our study, these teachers showed that they did employ intuition in their actions for quality interpersonal relationships, although as Tsui cautions, they also used very conscious and deliberate decision-making processes about how best to foster group dynamics or attend to individual learner needs. Therefore, we suggest that EI/SI competences in action in the language classroom are likely to reflect a mixture of intuitive knowledge gained from experience (perhaps the upper edge reflected in higher scores in the questionnaire of those with longer experience) as well as conscious knowledge that can be called on when making socio-emotional relevant decisions in the classroom. Nevertheless, it is worth reiterating that experience does not automatically translate into expertise, as famously a person can have ten years of experiences or one year of experience ten times. It is the quality of reflection and learning a teacher is able to engage in with their experiences that ensures growth towards a more expert state. It implies, therefore, the potential value not only of teaching pre-service teachers in the areas of socio-emotional competences (see section 7.4) but also the potential benefits of supporting in-service teachers in ensuring they learn in socio-emotional terms from their experiences and continue to enhance their skills in this area, leading to high levels of EI/SI such as these teachers had.

7.3.3 Teacher mindsets

An area of some concern for us in the data was the implication that some teachers may hold fixed mindsets about socio-emotional competences. Mindsets refer to the beliefs people have about the nature of abilities or competences (Dweck, 2000). Individuals who believe that such abilities can be developed through forms of practice with effort are said to hold a growth mindset. In contrast, there are those who believe that abilities in a domain cannot be developed further and are not malleable. These people are said to have a fixed mindset. Interestingly, there is virtually no research available that examines mindsets about teacher competences, instead, if studies do examine teachers and not learners, then they tend to focus on teacher mindsets about their subject domain specifically or, most frequently, about their learners' abilities (see, e.g., Asbury et al., 2016; Gutshall, 2013, 2014). However, a first step is mentioned by Dweck (2015), who reports on research by Gero, who examined a pre-service teacher's mindsets and how it supported her development in her first year of teaching. Another rare empirical study in language education has been conducted by Irie et al. (under review). Using Q methodology to explore mindsets in a more complex and nuanced way, the authors found predominantly fixed mindsets regarding areas of teacher personality and teacher socio-emotional competences with a tendency to these being viewed as less malleable than other areas of teacher competences. We conclude here that we would want to ensure a growth mindset in language teachers about their potential to improve and further develop their socio-emotional competences. It suggests that training interventions (see section 7.4) may also need to address mindsets at the outset to ensure a positive starting base for work on developing their competences in this area.

In addition, given the focus in this study on interpersonal relationships, it would also be important to understand teachers' mindsets about relationships with pupils. Work by Knee et al. (2004) suggests that holding a growth mindset about relationships can be valuable in working on conflict in relationships. This suggests that some teachers may be more willing to persevere with more challenging pupils, or, in case of conflict with pupils, to invest effort to maintain, repair or improve the relationship (Davis et al., 2012). Similarly, work with pupils about their mindsets to peer relationships has comparable important consequences for group climate and co-operative working structures (Rudolph, 2010).

7.3.4 Contextual support and enabling conditions

As outlined in Section 6.2.4, one dimension of the factors mediating teacher behaviours was contextual constraints and expectations of roles and behaviours. All teacher action takes place within a setting that defines in some ways the parameters of their behaviour, although teachers naturally interact in their own ways with these affordances according to their own personal beliefs and frame of reference. An especially interesting dimension was the reflections on the role of the physical space in possibly promoting relationships and interaction. Cornelius and Herrenkohl (2004) report on a study examining the physical space and its potential for transforming power relationships, such as perhaps underlies the rationale of leaving open the staff room door in T3A's school to break down physical boundaries and areas of separation. Generally, there have been a number of publications pointing to the importance of the physical space and its arrangement for learner engagement and group dynamics, as well as for fostering discussion and communication – a point which is especially pertinent in language education (Cheryan et al., 2014; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Guardino and Fullerton, 2010; Hadjioannou, 2007). However, this remains an area that is relatively under-researched, and we would need to better understand how uses of the physical space in the classroom and school as a whole can affect learners and teachers alike, as well as their relationships. A first study inspired by the positive psychology movement in second language acquisition (MacIntyre et al., 2016) has been conducted by Budzińska (2016), who reported on her study investigating the nature of 'positive institutions' in language education contexts, drawing attention to the importance of the structural character, institutional policies and physical space.

7.3.5 Teacher professional well-being

The focus of this study was primarily on teachers' actions in class; however, teachers also talked more broadly about their professional lives in and around school. Several teachers talked about the importance of their relationships with their colleagues, and understanding their investment in their professional relationships, as well as those with their learners, would be an additional important step in researching EI/SI practices. EI/SI is fundamentally about understanding and managing one's emotions and being emotionally sensitive in relationships with others. These facets have been found to contribute towards managing stress and avoiding burnout. In particular, there have been a number of studies which show that higher scores in EI are linked to enhanced self-efficacy, increased engagement, lower levels of professional stress, lower risk of

burnout and better health (e.g. Brackett et al., 2010; Durán et al., 2006; Inozu and Sahinkarakas, 2016; Nikolaou and Tsaousis, 2002; Ogińska-Bulik, 2005; Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016; Spilt et al., 2011; Vesely et al., 2013; Zeidner et al., 2012). Therefore, promoting EI/SI competences in teachers is not just beneficial for their classroom practices with their learners but more broadly for their own professional well-being. Additionally, we know that teacher and learner emotions and motivations are relationally linked in bidirectional ways (Atkinson, 2000; Becker et al., 2015; Frenzel et al., 2009; Mifsud, 2011; Skinner and Belmont, 1993). This means that if the teacher is in a positive frame of mind and motivated, the chances their learners are too is much higher. Given motivated learners are motivational for teachers, it is possible to see how this can trigger a virtuous positive upward cycle, in contrast to the potential for the 'burnout cascade' when a negative spiral takes over (Holmes, 2005; Rogers, 2012).

An element of the data that we remain unclear about concerns the practice of emotional labour. Emotional labour refers to how professionals, typically service workers, suppress their emotions in order to display the perceived emotionally appropriate response in a specific job-relevant social setting. For example, the original research was concerned with the emotional labour of flight attendants (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Davis et al. (2012: 190) see 'emotional labour as an inherent component of teacher–student relationships'. They suggest that linked to emotional labour, 'teachers who care may be more prone to feeling emotional exhaustion, to becoming burnt out and to leaving the field' (pages 188–189). In language education, King (2016) has examined the emotional labour of language teachers working in Japan. His study shows how the teachers 'managed their in-class, public emotional displays in order to achieve educational goals and to conform to their institution's socially-derived tacit rules concerning "appropriate" emotions during classroom encounters' (page 110). However, Burkitt (2014) raises interesting questions about whether managing emotions is not simply a fundamental part of living and feeling in the social world and the degree to which people are suppressing their genuine emotions and enacting their public and private selves. In our study, there was plenty of evidence that teachers were managing and in some instances suppressing their emotions in class in order to be 'professional', but there was little evidence of this being perceived as a burden. In fact, there were instances where teachers talked about acting out the positive emotions for the role as teacher and then these emotions becoming 'real' (T3UK). Therefore, the degree to which emotional labour is perceived as exhausting in a social setting might not be straightforward and could vary

according to the types or intensity of emotions, the duration, the specific context and individual differences. However, given its potential to contribute to teacher burnout and its importance for teacher well-being and job satisfaction (Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006; Kinman et al., 2011; Näring et al., 2007; Zhang and Zhu, 2008), it would seem that we need more research into the nature and the factors mediating emotional labour among language educators in a range of settings.

7.3.6 Empirical issues – use of stimulated recall and video recordings

As noted above, it would appear that knowledge that teachers enacted was often unconscious and implicit. There were several comments in the data in which teachers reflected on how they became aware of things by watching the videos, and all the teachers commented on some aspect they had been unaware of or made more conscious of having watched themselves. It is known that watching a video is popular in teacher training and continuing professional development approaches as it allows a distancing effect, enabling the teacher to see themselves from an outsider perspective (Britt et al., 2001; Farr, 2015; Harvey, 1999). In this study, the implication has been that teachers do not always seem able to articulate or be aware of some of their more automatised habitual behaviours. Especially experienced teachers are known to have a broad intuitive knowledge base which they draw on in classroom decision making. It was only through the use of stimulated recall that we were able to call this to consciousness and discuss it. As Brown and McIntyre (1993: 34) explain, 'To be asked to talk about the ordinary, everyday, familiar things one does spontaneously, routinely, habitually in the classrooms, is to be presented with a very difficult task. The things which are done automatically, even unconsciously, are the hardest to articulate and, in normal circumstances, teachers are rarely asked to make them explicit'. This suggests the value of this methodological approach but also has implications for teacher training and the recognition of the value of intuitive and unconscious knowledge in teacher competence.

Naturally, having a camera in class does affect classroom life in some way, as T3UK describes:

> I think there were elements periods, fleeting moments where you're kind of aware that the camera is there when somebody has got their arm up... I may have looked in that direction normally, but I wouldn't do because I know there is a camera in my face and I may have put my hand in my pocket or done something slightly different. So you are slightly conscious of it, but for the most part, then goes, I was able to sort of open out their

mind and I said to myself I don't want to change anything. I want to be myself and just carry on as normal. So for the most part, then it was a true representation of what the class would be anyway in a normal class. (T3UK: 1119)

However, one thing the observers noted was the seeming obliviousness of most of the learners themselves to the camera. One teenage girl in T1A's second class looked occasionally at the camera and kept adjusting her appearance accordingly. She was the only one noted attending consciously to the camera in any way during the lessons. While we made attempts to be as unobtrusive as possible in our filming, the presence of two researchers and a camera at the back of the class was expected to lead to some attention on the part of the learners. However, this generally did not appear to be the case. This led us to wonder whether concerns about cameras disturbing learners is becoming less of an issue for the new generation who grow up with films, phones and cameras all the time. T2A explains how her pupils frequently use their phones to also film sketches in class and show them on the board, and so she believes they are simply habituated to the presence of filming and cameras (T2A: 3044–3049). T1UK also commented that her particular class were used to having people come in and film their sessions and so were less influenced than perhaps she herself was.

> I don't think it affected them they're quite used to it because we have people in there all the time, all our classes are quite used to people coming in and out, so that was the only thing I was conscious of. (T1UK: 0157)

It has led us to conclude that stimulated recall is extremely useful in accessing aspects of teacher knowledge and practices of which they may be less conscious and bringing valuable intuitions to the surface. It is unclear to what extent these teachers felt disturbed by the camera, although they did not generally give the impression of having been unduly bothered although they were aware. Interestingly, it seems that, on the whole, the learners themselves were almost indifferent to the presence of the camera.

7.4 Implications for teacher training and CPD

Back in 1988, Fontana lamented the fact that 'teachers receive little training in social behaviour, and beyond the routine enforcement of the rules of politeness they often have limited expertise in this behaviour to pass on to children' (page 259). Surprisingly, nearly 30 years later, little appears to have changed. As outlined above, we feel that there are reasons to suggest that socio-emotional competences can be promoted through

interventions (Brackett and Katulak, 2006; Cherniss and Goleman, 2001; Matthews et al., 2002; Nelis et al., 2009; Zins et al., 2004), although this needs to be done with caution and care. However, Humphrey (2013) cautions that training programmes should provide balanced input on socio-emotional competences as well as the cognitive and academic domain, as good teachers naturally need skills in all these areas.

In terms of what such a programme could look like, we considered the typical structure of teacher competence in terms of knowledge, skills and values/attitudes (European Centre for Modern Languages). We also considered the merits of an experiential approach to this, such as used in strategy programmes (see, e.g., Cohen and Macaro, 2003; Graham and Macaro, 2007; Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2014; Oxford, 2011). This leads us to feel that, first, it would be important that any intervention programme must not be done in a prescriptive manner, given the diversity and individuality we have seen in this study. Instead, we feel it would need to begin by promoting positive attitudes and values in respect to socio-emotional dimensions of language teaching. First and foremost, teachers need to esteem the qualities that these participating teachers supported, and they need to believe in their abilities to develop the skills necessary to enact these qualities in their daily interactions with learners – in other words, holding a growth mindset about socio-emotional competences (see Section 7.3.3). A next step would be for the training to raise teacher knowledge of a range of strategies and relational qualities that can be promoted in ways unique and appropriate to the group and teacher in question. Then, as is the case with various approaches to language strategy training, teachers would need to be encouraged to try them out, work with them and reflect on their suitability and personal comfort with such approaches, adjusting as need be. As proposed earlier (Section 7.3.2), in-service teachers could also potentially enhance their socio-emotional competences with guided reflection on their experiences, to ensure experience translates into expertise in this area.

It is perhaps important to reiterate again here that while we can gain some understandings from this study, there can be no generalisations or claims of comprehensibility. There can be no single model of good practice and that is not the aim of this study. Each teacher is different, each class is different, and each day is unique. Our aim is simply to reflect, better understand and appreciate the diversity of teacher expertise in respect to socio-emotional competences in action in the language classroom.

7.5 Questions for further research

Several questions have been raised throughout the discussion, which we feel would represent next steps in our research agenda for interpersonal dimensions of language education. However, some specific questions remain which we feel future research will need to address. First, we noted very clearly that teacher–pupil relationships are bidirectional in character with teachers also drawing on their relationships with their learners, as well as obviously affecting their learners. However, research looking at bidirectional psychological effects through teacher–pupil relationships remains relatively rare (for exceptions, see Atkinson, 2000; Becker et al., 2015; Frenzel et al., 2009; Mifsud, 2011; Skinner and Belmont, 1993) and it is unclear what factors may mediate the quality of this relationship and its bidirectional effects. Clearly, further research per se is needed examining teacher–pupil relationships in the language classroom and especially the ways in which both parties can be influenced through the relationship. In particular, it is also worth noting that, in this study, we have foregrounded the perspective of the teacher and their behaviours in constructing and maintaining their relationships with their learners. However, a relationship is a dynamic, ongoing process and, naturally, the learners also contribute to the construction of the relationship in how they interact and respond to teacher behaviours. A relationship is a process which is also dependent on each partner's beliefs, expectations and relational behaviours. We would be interested to see studies examining the dual perspective on the teacher–pupil relationship, looking at the synergy of how this relationship is perceived, formed, maintained and enacted.

One factor known to contribute to the quality of relationships is also the way we communicate with each other, and this could potentially be an important dimension to explore further. In this study, we did not intend to conduct a linguistic analysis of the classroom discourse and interactional data. However, knowing the central role played by language in demonstrating and promoting caring relationships, as well as how we create learning opportunities (e.g. Antón, 1999; Claxton et al., 2011; Denton, 2007; Johnston, 2004; Mercer, 1995; Moskowitz, 1976; Oxford, 1997), we would need to know more about the effects and power of language, especially in terms of how we give feedback and praise (Dweck, 2007; Hyland and Hyland, 2001, 2006; Kamins and Dweck, 1999; Mercer and Ryan, 2013). This would seem to offer a rich strand of research in understanding the relational impact of the kind of language used by teachers. It would also be important to better understand how these moment-to-moment interactions in the classroom contribute to the overall quality of teacher–pupil relationships and classroom climate.

A key factor that all of the teachers referred to in some form was group dynamics. All the teachers recognised its centrality but, in empirical terms, relatively little work has been done on this in the field of language learning and teaching (see Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003). Csizér (in press) has also drawn attention to the urgent need to understand group dynamics better, also from a motivational perspective. Given the widespread use of co-operative and collaborative learning structures in the language classroom and the need for communication, group dynamics play a crucial role. While researching in this area is a challenge, it is possible that social network analysis and the use of sociometry can perhaps offer some useful insights that might be worth exploring further (Carolan, 2013; Fontana, 1988; Mercer, 2015).

From a practice point of view, we have also noted the emphasis in the broader educational field on developing pro-social behaviours in learners as part of their 21st century life skills, often through social and emotional learning programmes (SEL) (Durlak et al., 2011; Pellegrino and Hilton, 2012). We have focused on teachers in this study and if we can develop positive socio-emotional competences in teachers, then they would be well positioned to serve as positive role models for their learners. We suggest that a further strand of research could be to explore how SEL goals could be integrated with language learning goals. Given our belief that these interpersonal skills, including empathy, form the basis for intercultural competence (Mercer, 2016), which is a key component of communicative competence, it would seem a perfect instance of potential synergy. It would be interesting to empirically examine what such a form of integrated dual teaching focus could look like and how best it could function in practice.

Finally, we have noted earlier in this publication (Section 7.1.2) that there remain concerns about the potentially culturally biased orientation in work on EI/SI (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2005; Ghorbani et al., 2002; Weare, 2004). We acknowledge the limited cultural diversity in our own study and feel that much more research is needed on all of the questions raised by this study across a range of settings including diverse cultural contexts, EFL/ESL contexts, classes with monolingual/bilingual teachers (Macaro, 2016) and different levels of proficiency and age ranges. This study is one small step towards a richer understanding of socio-emotional competences in ELT, but an enormous amount of work remains to be done.

8

Conclusion

In this study, we set out to better understand the role played by socio-emotional competences in the English language classroom. We found that ELT teachers tend to score highly on these competences, which can perhaps be expected, given the highly social and other-oriented nature of teaching generally, and language teaching in particular. We also took a closer look at the classroom practices of teachers who scored very highly on socio-emotional intelligence scales. We found that all of the teachers expressed a concern with creating and maintaining quality interpersonal relationships, not only between themselves and their pupils but also among the pupils themselves. We saw how teachers were influenced emotionally by their relationships with the pupils and how the teachers perceived the overall group dynamics as being central to successful classroom life. The study revealed the teachers' perceptions of core qualities of relationships contributing to positive group dynamics such as empathy, respect, trust and responsiveness on the part of the teacher. In terms of the actual classroom strategies employed by the teachers, we found diversity. Every teacher was unique. Their personal practices emerged from the interaction of their perceptions of their contexts as well as their own understandings of themselves, their past experiences, and their roles and responsibilities as teachers.

In terms of the implications for training, this study raises interesting questions. There are good reasons to argue that the interpersonal dimension of the language classroom is central to its success and the skills that this requires need to be actively promoted in training, especially for teachers in the early stages of their careers. However, it would seem that there might be the potential for a worryingly fixed mindset among teachers and trainees that these skills are not competences that can be learned or developed (see also Irie et al., under review). From existent research, we have good reason to believe that this is not the case and these skills can be developed through interventions, although we acknowledge that research in this area is complex and in part conflicting (Humphrey, 2013). As such, it would seem to represent an urgent next step to design

interventions to promote socio-emotional competences in early-career-stage language teachers as well as more established teachers, and evaluate these empirically. We are also concerned that socio-emotional competences remain visibly absent from many language teacher education curriculums, with priority being given to technical competences. While these too are important, we argue that without a full understanding and appreciation of how to foster quality interpersonal relationships in the language classroom, many technical approaches and tools may not reach their full pedagogical potential.

We have found working on this study has sensitised us to a range of classroom strategies, as well as an interesting diversity among teachers who shared aims of promoting quality interpersonal relationships, but chose to enact this in quite different ways. We share the conviction of James Comer that 'No significant learning takes place without a significant relationship'. In the language classroom, perhaps the key relationship is among teacher and learners and how teachers choose to relate to learners and enact that relationship. Yet, the language classroom is special in its dependence on co-operation, communication and intercultural competence, for which socio-emotional skills and positive peer relationships are central. Again, here the teacher can play a key role in helping learners to empathise with, trust, respect and truly relate to their peers. As one of the teachers in this study said, 'Teaching is a group thing' (T1UK: 0036).

Our hope is that this study can contribute in some small part to drawing teachers' as well as trainers' and policy makers' attention to the centrality and importance of socio-emotional skills in language education. We might have the most brilliant materials and resources but without the right kind of interpersonal dynamics, these affordances will never achieve their potential. We will end with a quote that for us highlights the centrality and importance of relationships in the classroom. 'The strength of our student relationships makes the difference in translating our passion for teaching into their passion for learning.' (Beth Morrow)

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