

Reflexive teaching - A happy and healthy teacher

Dubravka Radoničić

dubravka.radonicic@skole.hr



Reflexive teaching

A reflexive teaching approach involves the use of Experience Based Learning (EBL) techniques which engage the whole person and stimulate reflection on experience, whilst opening up the learner to new experiences (Boone 1985; Kolb 1984).

Reflection is careful thought about a particular topic.

Reflexive teaching

- an essential part of a teacher's working life
- an ongoing process
- an integral part of progressing as a teaching professional
- 'room for improvement'
- evidence-based teaching

Reflexive teaching (how)

- Teaching log – portfolio
- Observations – critical friends
- Video classes
- Feedback
- Read - research

THE FOUR CS (plus two)

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Choices
- Caring

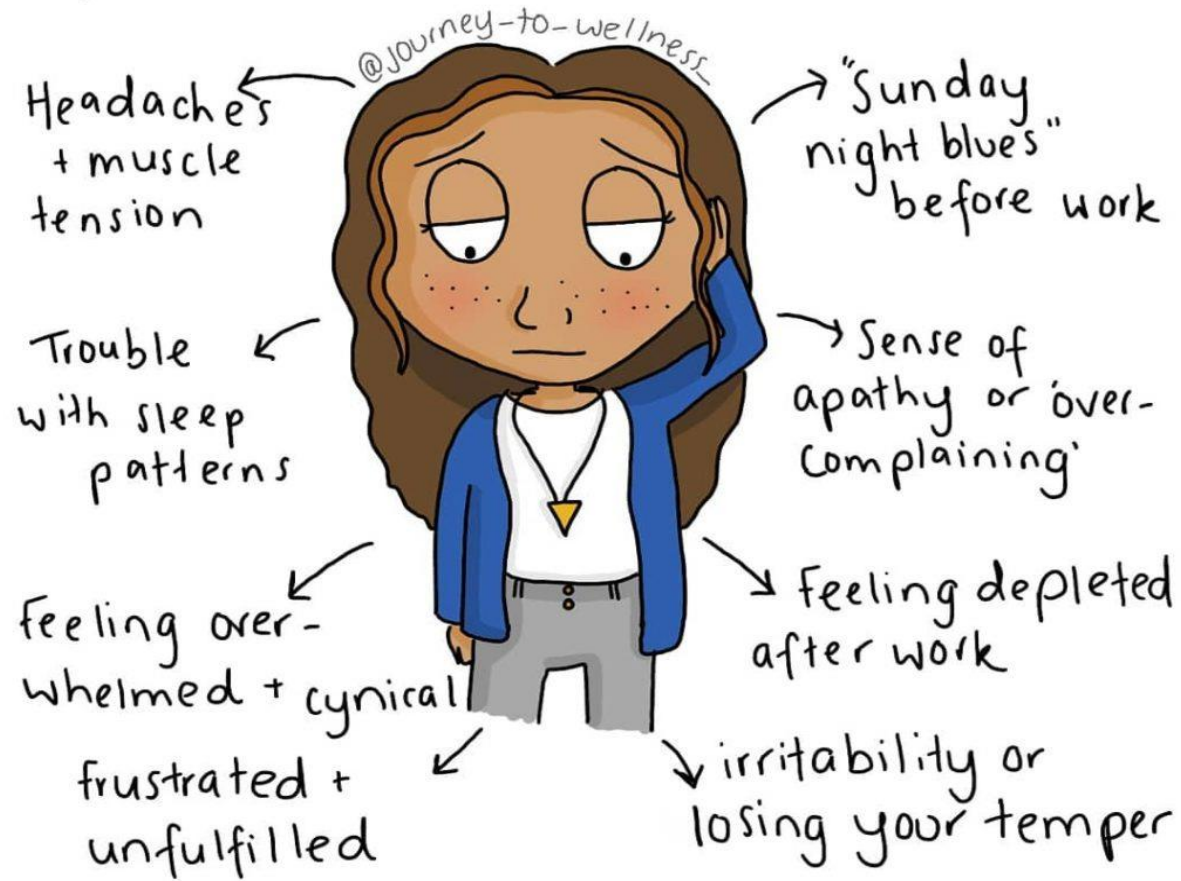
What is a reflexive learner?

This type of learner is someone who explores their experiences of learning to better understand how they learn and improve their learning and thus becoming a lifelong learner. This kind of student is more self-aware and self-critical, honest about themselves and open to criticism and feedback, curious and prepared to try different approaches, motivated to improve and more able to carry through independent learning. Strategies that may help to improve and encourage reflection include self- and peer assessment, learning logs, critical incident and fieldwork diaries, reflective commentaries, and action research.

Teacher burnout

Psychology Today describes burnout as "a state of chronic stress that leads to physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, detachment, and feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment."

SIGNS of BURNOUT



What can you do?

- FIND A FRIENDLY SHOULDER

Call a trusted colleague, preferably one who's been teaching a long time. Vent. Cry. Laugh. Have a cup of tea or a glass of beer or wine. Tell them about your struggles and frustrations.

What can you do?

- JUST BREATHE

This sounds simple, and it is. Practice slow breathing. If possible, carry this habit into your workday. It will create space for less reactivity and a more grounded emotional stance.

What can you do?

- TAKE A BREAK

Consider pausing the scheduled lesson. Do something unusual, put aside the plan you had, forget about the strict structure.

Play a game or have students tell jokes, nothing bad will happen if you put off some serious work.

What can you do?

- **PRIORITIZE**

Write a list of everything that needs to be done in the next two days. (Yes, write it down. The physical act of writing provides a sense of control.) Look at this list and choose the top three tasks. After completing the must-dos, cross them off your list and go to sleep early.

What can you do?

- GET PERSPECTIVE

Teaching need not consume you. Devoting all of our waking hours to teaching primes us for burnout. It happens when the demands and expectations of our work drown our joy. Your other roles are important, too: friend, spouse, sibling, hiker, reader, dancer, joke-teller, or baker—a million other energizing possibilities. So, forget work over the weekend. Go to the forest or to a ball game. Get a massage. Sleep more. We can be good and caring teachers, but sacrificing our personal lives comes at a costly and unsustainable price.

Out of my control:

- The actions of others
- The past
- The opinions/ attitudes of others*
- What happens around me*
- How others take care of themselves

In my control:

- My thoughts and actions
- What I give my energy to
- How I speak to myself
- The goals I set
- How I spend my free time
- How I handle challenges
- My boundaries

Making grading easier

- **Divide and conquer** – divide essays into manageable chunks. Decide how many can be assessed in one sitting at a relatively fast pace without compromising the quality of feedback. Divide your stack based on either a number (maybe five or 10) or a percentage basis (a fourth or half of a class set).

Making grading easier

- **Take breaks** - maintaining sustained focus for long periods of time can be difficult, so (frequent) short breaks can actually increase productivity. When a small chunk of grading is complete, choose a reward (think chocolate or maybe a stretch break) and rest your mind.

Making grading easier

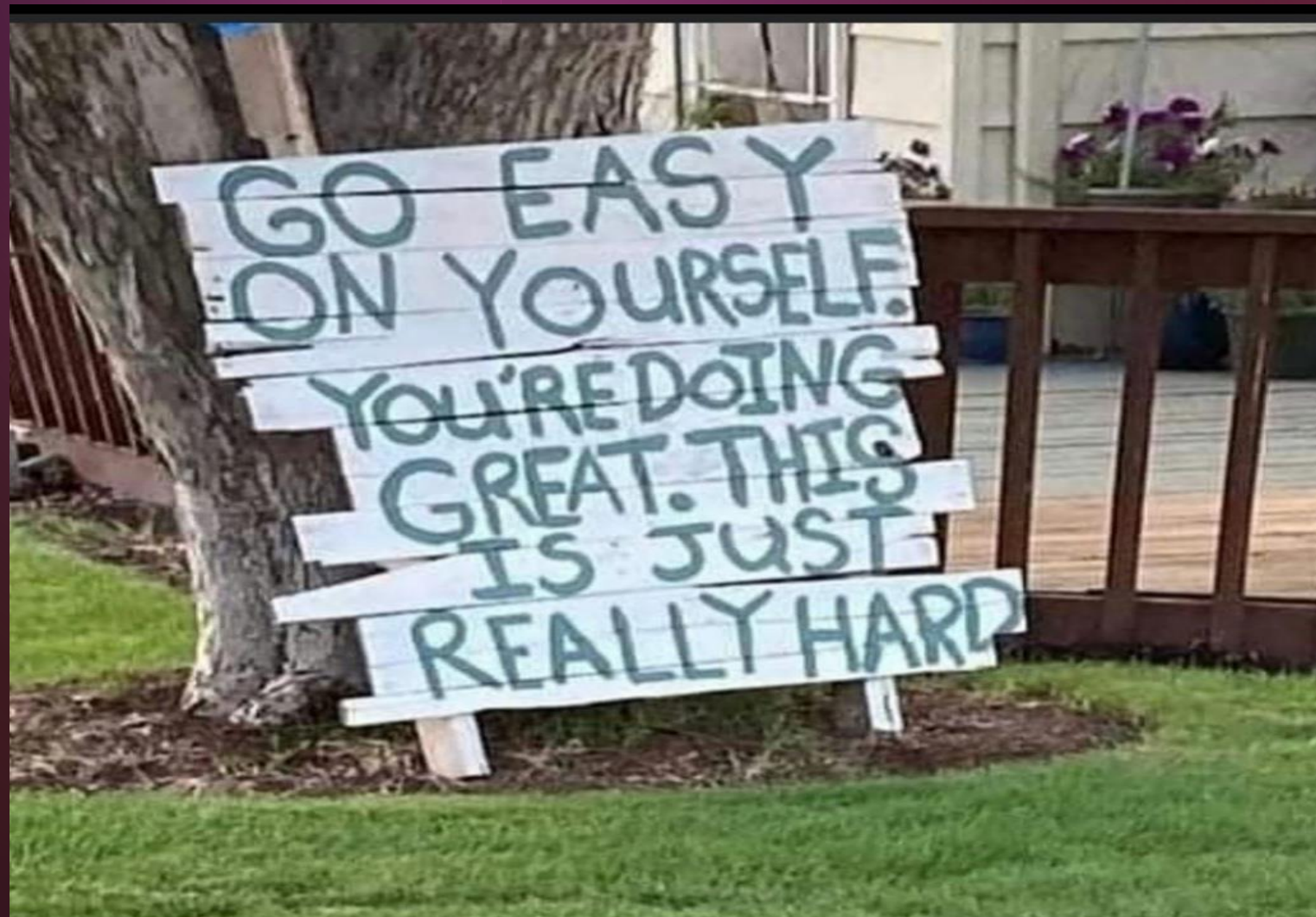
- ‘Glow and Grow’ - Marking every single grammar error is not only demoralizing for students but also time-consuming for teachers. One comment praising students for what they’ve done well (**Glow**) and one offering a focus for students to work on in revision or keep in mind for the future (**Grow**).

Making grading easier

- **Use technology** - Thanks to today's technology, written commentary - often the most time-consuming method for giving feedback - is not the only option. Try voice comments if correcting in digital form.

Making grading easier

- **Personal preferences** - for some it is easier to grade in the morning, for some at night. Changing the setting can be helpful as well. When the weather is nice, some prefer to grade outside; others prefer to go to a coffee shop. Know what time and setting work best for you and plan accordingly.



References

- <https://edte.ch/blog/2021/10/23/reflexive-and-reflective-thinking-practices-whats-the-difference/?v=3a1ed7090bfa> **Tom Barrett**
- Temeljna nastavna umijeća, Chris Kyriacou, Educa 2001.
- <https://www.intercambioidiomasonline.com/2016/11/09/reflexive-teaching-how-can-i-improve/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaOC9danxNo>
- Edutopia