

ELTAM 2026 · AI-ASSISTED REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Inquiring with students and AI: *what would educational philosophy say?*

Elena Ončevska Ager, UKIM

All learning starts with *interruption*.

Noticing a limit to one's understanding, skill, view of the world

English (2013)

Learning involves negative, discontinuous experiences, a struggle

English (2013)

The interruption

A STUDENT'S COMMENT

> *"Elena, I liked your teaching [today]. However, I feel like you have favourites and it is demotivating. :("*

Experiencing a break with oneself; a summoning on behalf of the world: "Hey, you there! Where are you?" → the responsibility of the self to be a self

English (2013) · Biesta (2021)

We treat experiences with different degrees of care:

1. Let them speak for themselves
2. Use them as information
3. Silence them, be it out of negligence, power play or indifference

Waldenfels (2011)

The interruption

School as a safe place to try things out, including resistance

Biesta (2021) · Akroyd (2025)

FIRST INSTINCT

To defend: the allocations had been mostly self-selected; the allocations happened months ago; the specifics were unclear.

A BIT LATER, AFTER CHATTING TO NOA

A more dispassionate perspective:

What was the student seeing that I was not?

‘Problem’ is my own, not ready-made

A first, ‘felt’, prereflective beginning that the learner doesn’t choose to have

English (2013)

if productive struggle

A second, cognitive, reflective-transformative beginning

English (2013)

Formulating

NOA

“For now, I’d like to stay with explanation-making rather than action. What are all the possible reasons that student might have experienced ‘favouritism’ here — including the uncomfortable, unlikely, or surprising ones you wouldn’t normally say out loud?”

Pointing: re-directing attention — a fundamental teacherly gesture, a form of feedback

Prange (2012)



Formulating

POSSIBLE REASONS

01 My tendency to rely on volunteers?

02 My praise for certain students to model standards

03 My social interactions with a special education student?

04 Grading?

Passibility: an openness to being affected, not closing off felt beginnings

Roth (2011)

Formulating

NOA

“A couple more possibilities come to mind from what you’ve said. It may be less about how much you praise or who speaks, and more about a pattern students are reading: if some people get more of your visible attention because they’re already confident enough to volunteer, quieter students can experience that as ‘the same few always matter most.’ […] I’m also wondering whether the timing of feedback matters here: if students were already feeling shaky about grades or belonging, they may have used ‘favouritism’ as the label for a wider sense of unfairness or not being seen.”

Pointing: re-directing attention

Prange (2012)

Beginning

A COMMITMENT

I commit to including more inclusive participation structures, to ensure all students feel seen, e.g.

- Think-pair-share
- Pyramid discussions
- Yarn circles
- ‘Warm calling’

Pedagogy = constant questioning and doubt: am I doing the right thing? “Without this ethical uncertainty pedagogy would be reduced to a set of techniques, recipes or rules” (p. 33)

van Manen (2016)

Another interruption

A STUDENT'S COMMENT

> *"The favourites comment was about giving certain students more opportunities when it came to school arranging. Think about that more. And please stop calling on people who don't feel comfortable talking."*

Beginning

Thing-centred pedagogy

Vlieghe & Zamojski (2019)

Noticing and reflecting on class participation habits

After our discussion activities, please take a few minutes to fill out the row for that discussion. You don't need to share who you are unless you want to.

Discussion no.	My choice: (a) to speak (b) to stay silent	Reason for your choice?	How safe did you feel to make that choice? (1 = unsafe, 10 = safe)	What did you gain from making your choice? What did you lose?	Any advice for Elena to support your class participation?
1					
2					
3					

Formulating

REALISATION	I sometimes take class participation at face value, without considering that some Ss may be in pain, or feeling overwhelmed, or experiencing social anxiety, or feel their opinions are not worth sharing, or don't feel safe to discuss some issues in class, or put up their hand and are ignored, or feel interrupted by me, or feel I won't approve of their answer because of my devil's advocate role…
INTERESTING	Some Ss listed 'comfort' as a gain, **but** learning is associated with vulnerability, openness to be affected and struggle (not rest)
OVERALL EMOTION	*Humility, regret, blame*

Formulating

ELENA'S REALISATIONS

01 The same classroom functioned very differently for different students

02 Students silent because of classroom conditions (e.g. cognitive load, devil's advocate role) which may make speaking feel risky for some → Silence as strategic withholding and protection rather than lack of thought and disengagement? Silence as presence, actively opted for, not judged as lack of care

Beginning

ELENA'S RESOLUTIONS, SUMMARISED IN NOA'S WORDS

"That feels like a clear decision: soften the caring tone around disagreement (conflict as a form of love, as taking Ss seriously, as a medium to test ideas and think more deeply), and make the lesson path more visible so students know where they are and what kind of thinking is expected. […] You moved from regret about what you didn't notice to clarity about what you can change — and that's the difference between *blame and agency*."

Tact

Pedagogical tact is knowing what to do when you don’t know what to do.

It is an embodied, in-the-moment sensitivity to what a learner needs. It relies on deep listening, noticing, puzzling and tinkering.

VAN MANEN (2016)

> “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach”
>
> **Freire (1970, p. 80)**

Interruption → Formulation → Beginning

References

Akroyd, S. (2025, May 26). *Toward a critical ethical framework for the mitigation of the social injustice potential of AI in education: Students and selfhoods.* akroyds01.substack.com/p/toward-a-critical-ethical-framework

Biesta, G. (2021). *World-centred education: A view for the present.* Routledge.

English, A. R. (2013). *Discontinuity in learning: Dewey, Herbart and education as transformation.* Cambridge University Press. doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139177825

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder.

Prange, K. (2012). *Erziehung als Handwerk: Studien zur Zeigestruktur der Erziehung* [Education as craft: Studies on the pointing structure of education]. Brill | Schöningh. doi.org/10.30965/9783657775477

Roth, W.-M. (2011). *Passibility: At the limits of the constructivist metaphor.* Springer Netherlands. doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1908-8

van Manen, M. (2016). *Pedagogical tact: Knowing what to do when you don't know what to do.* Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9781315422855

Vlieghe, J., & Zamojski, P. (2019). *Towards an ontology of teaching: Thing-centred pedagogy, affirmation and love for the world.* Springer International Publishing. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-16003-6

Waldenfels, B. (2011). *Phenomenology of the alien: Basic concepts* (A. Kozin & T. Stähler, Trans.). Northwestern University Press. doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv47wfh3

Thank you!

elena.oncevska@flf.ukim.edu.mk

ELTA MK
Educate & Empower

