



Work/Life Balance – some lessons learnt by @GenieNewton

I am not the quickest learner. However, reflecting on my 21 years as a class teacher, tutor, cross-curricular leader, Head of Department, workplace representative, Governor, PTA member, trip organiser, line manager and frothy coffee maker I conclude that there are some time-related rules for doing a great job and getting to the end of term with some energy left in the tank.

#1 go to bed ...

"extra" resources, made late at night rarely make it into the lesson. Save your energy. Note down the "great" idea and identify a time when you can come back and revisit the need to create or adapt that fantastic resource

#2 mark out your time territory and stick to it ... identify a limited chunk of time (preferably with an immovable appointment at the end of it) to help you stick to a task and complete it quickly.

- Sunday evening marking does work ~ a finite time focusses the mind
- work in school with students, giving them an "appointment slot" for feedback - reduces the pointless resubmission of work that's hardly changed but that you scan carefully looking for the amendments you were seeking
- identify a reward when your most undesirable task is completed

#3 collaborate

- talk to colleagues and cultivate a sharing ethos in your team
- share best practice at department meetings
- Tweet!
- TeachMeets - attend one or two a year ~ you will meet interesting people, see a new place and learn about others' teaching methods

#4 be passionate about effective marking and A4L

when you have marked a set of scripts/books/tests, ask yourself how you could do that differently next time to make it more effective, quicker or easier.

#5 go digital - use the school's VLE - save time, money and paper! Set homework quickly and check it in automatically.

#6 deadline angst? say so and arrange an extension - then stick to it

#7 new to a role? Say so and ask for training, don't use guesswork! Whoever appointed you owes it to you and themselves to help you do the job effectively

#8 take time out to completely think about something else - even if you think you can't afford to

#9 consider going part-time. Even 0.05 of a week can make a massive difference!

#10 get outside - it makes you feel better

#11 dwell on the fun stuff - when colleagues ask what you did at the weekend, tell them about the most fun thing, when you weren't working or thinking about school. Resist the temptation to just talk about all the work you did (even though you did loads)

#12 think about others

#13 be grateful ~ your job and your school may not be perfect, but it sure has some good points. Train yourself to appreciate them.

#14 donate part of your holidays (as a volunteer, charity worker, carer, local activist, youth worker etc)

#15 consider the numbers and pace yourself.

As a teacher, you are in school for 195 days a year. That's 3.75 days per week.

There are 255 weekdays a year - compared with other professions with, say, 35 days' holiday, a teacher has 25 days extra holiday. What do you do with that time? Is half of it spent on school work? All of it? What could you do with those 5 weeks?

Another way of looking at it is 0.641 days per week of accrued holiday time, meaning that for the working 39 weeks of the year, a teacher works 112% of a job! No wonder it's tiring!