



This was not subject matter of my degree

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Saying goodbye to your students on a Thursday and not seeing them again for several months... Who would've thought, in February 2020, that something like that was to happen? Definitely, no one could imagine what was to come, and by no means were we prepared for that.

Days of improvising, trying out new methods, adapting ourselves to a newfound reality... Online classes... Nowadays, this is no news, but back in March 2020 not many of us were familiar with Classroom, Meet, forms or Drives, or with digitalizing materials and preparing online exams. The notes on the blackboard became online presentations that we had to prepare in a rush; face-to-face classes turned into a sort of contest for keeping our students attentive and connected with the rest; those private affairs we would share during the breaks were reduced to short e-mails without the complicity or warmth the feeling of closeness provides us with... Our concerns to manage to teach this or that subject matter, but also to know how all that situation could affect our students on an emotional level (we know today that it does tonnes).

June came to an end. Many students had missed their prom, their end-of-course trip or, simply, their classmates' or tutor's hug... We thought that things would slowly go back to normal during the summer, although the School Management Boards were working non-stop to come up with that Plan for Opening Educational Centers that would fit the pandemic context. Pandemic. What a common word nowadays and how unknown it was not so long ago. It sounded like from far away, almost impossible... Today we know that this pandemic arrived almost two years ago and it seems it came to stay.

In September the schools opened with a sense of hope, but also with a sense of fear. The Plan for Opening Educational Centers in June had nothing to do with that of September, which in turn kept on changing during the first weeks of the academic year...

Face masks, hydrogel, temperature checks, gradual entrances to prevent people from cramming, stable groups... Don't touch the handrail! Cover your mouth when coughing! Don't share your pencil! Don't get so close to anyone!... Where's the feeling of proximity, of companionship, of comfort? To date, it's all in stand-by, although we try to make up for all those lacks. And we smile with our eyes, we hug from the distance, and we care for others with our empathy.

During this first post-lockdown course we all were novel, we all had to learn new things and get used to the new normality. Our fears were still there... If we heard someone cough,



we got scared; if they had a headache, we would check their temperature. We had no chats and no coffee in the teachers' room. Instead, we exchanged our complicity gazes, "how are you doings" and "I feel yous" between lines.

Little by little we got used to this new life and, every time there was a class group in quarantine, the online classes felt more natural. If there's something positive to highlight from the times we are living is that our creativity is on its heyday. Doubtless.

And, in fits and starts, and with loads of effort, the first and hard academic year of face masks, gel and distance finished.

Coming back in September was no longer scary. We had practiced for one whole year. So had the students. They already mastered the habit to use gel. They had a one-year-long experience though in atypical times that they had managed to overcome with flying colors. Champions. You are the champions.

Undoubtedly, we have learned that the power of adaptation that both children and youngster have is never-ending, even if we know that they are the ones in most need of contact, social relationships and affection. We have learned to reinvent ourselves, to search for formulas to get what we want. In a nutshell, to take in these exceptional times as our new reality. And when it seemed that the pandemic was reaching its end, here we are again, with more people infected, counting hospital beds and feeling that fear and respect we had back in 2020.