

## FOREWORDS

### **The world as it is, the world as it should be**

Being a teacher is a constant struggle between adjusting to the way the world is and the attempt to move forward, or at least offer an insight, towards the way it should be.

In these past weeks each of us has felt deprived of our most powerful resource: the day-after-day contact with our students and fellow teachers, which has been the lymph to our most painful and also most joyful moments.

Confined in our homes we had to conceive ways to engage our classes in meaningful activities, while the world around us was falling apart. On the one hand, we were worried about all and each of our students and wondered whether they were safe and sound; on the other hand, the super-teacher within our minds was already giving us directions on alternative ways we could deliver our never-to-be-missed lessons.

Efficiency and consistency have always been key values to us, as well as empathy and the capacity to motivate, yet this time the challenge seems much bigger. This time the whole framework is barely outlined – our days and hours have never been so predictable and yet so unknown, because of this temporary lack of future and perspective. A new vision and a new effort is being required.

For weeks, following an unspoken agreement, each partner interrupted working at the drafting of our common project because we all felt we had to be full eyes and souls into this mess. Better phone students and listen to them, better send them comfort words and at the same time support them in all the technical troubles of the new digital school. Better not collapse in front of the new tool, platform, web seminar, evaluation sheet, grid, our school principals recommended.

At a certain point, when in each country the news only reported the number of casualties and we had to mourn losses in our communities and families, we wondered about the appropriateness of keeping on with our common work. All of a sudden we could not see beyond this confinement, beyond envisioning risks in every single move we wished to make. Yet, we understood that what was working at its best with our new digital classes was not the control we could keep on their performances, nor the creativity we could put in our new assignments; in fact, whatever we tried to do, the only times we succeeded was when our trust in our students matched their sense of responsibility.

Having more time to think, we reflected upon the fact that, actually, this virtuous pair (trust and responsibility) was and still is exactly at the core of our project. Difficult times only shed light on what is meaningful. As teachers, throughout our career we had already witnessed how powerful our actions become if supported by someone who believes in us, and if we all join forces without stepping back or hiding behind excuses.

In the end, the truth is no big change can happen if we do not give it a try.

This is why we have decided to stick to our initial idea and we'll do our best to make it real. There is no future in our schools if we do not challenge our students to share the leadership and get involved. If at the end of these two years they will have decided to focus on a totally different initiative, it won't be a failure but the confirmation our job is nearly over ;-)

*The OPEN SESAME Team*