



# ERASMUS + TEACHERS AHEAD IPSI A. PACINOTTI PONTEDERA (PI) ITALY

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# ***PHASE THREE***

## **QUESTION N.1**

What are your suggestions to convince your colleagues to change their paradigm.

Trying to persuade the most reluctant colleagues to adopt teaching methodologies and strategies like the ones at the basis of the new paradigm suggested by Ken Robinson is not an easy task.

This is because such teachers are mostly professionals anchored to a reassuring but crystallized set of procedures who also frequently feel frustration when faced with the apparently incomprehensible demotivation of the new generations of students. Both succeeding in talking these colleagues out of their comfort zone and suggesting that the learners' lack of interest might also be due to causes which transcend mere laziness and apathy is therefore very challenging indeed.

A possible way of reaching this objective, however, is to act gradually, tactfully and strategically. In this sense, a valid starting point might be highlighting the practical and immediately visible advantages that the use of technology into the classroom can have for any teacher employing it. (Technology is undoubtedly one of the distinctive features of our contemporary society – the same one our students happen to live in -and this is why the “new paradigm” sees educational technology as one of its integral components). In these terms, for instance, aspects such as the time-saving benefits connected to the use of Google Apps like G. Forms (let us for example think of self- grading tests and quizzes) may be alluring, once tried out. From there, one might move on to illustrate other ways to incorporate technology into the classroom: ways which, apart from being beneficial to the teacher, also guarantee higher involvement on behalf of the students.

Making occasional use of digital games like Kahoot, for example, can contemporarily serve as a precious tool for formative assessment and has an extremely positive effect on the learners' motivation as well as academic performance. Disregarding the obvious fact that such a type of activity will probably engage students more than a traditional, lecture-based classroom, a possible reason why this is likely to happen lies in the way it caters for various learning styles at the same time. As a matter of fact, this is one of the core assumptions for the new paradigm and implementing technology in education is but one example of the many different ways in which this goal, together with many others, can be achieved. Rather than just "abstractly" talking about such things as actively stimulating the students or the importance of developing creative and divergent thinking in learners while hoping in a "sudden conversion" of the most hesitant colleagues, however, let us reinforce a key principle which should evidently apply not only to what we, teachers, should aim at with our learners, but also to the way in which we ought to grow together as a professional team. The key concept is that, in order to bring out any kind of potential, both "sides" must be willing to share experiences according to a peer-to-peer model and, most of all, to test them out in the spirit of a progressive but constant search for alternative solutions.

# ***PHASE THREE***

## **QUESTION N.2**

What are about you the strengths of Distance Learning.

Although distance learning does have some undeniable drawbacks, may not work well for every student and would probably be more effective if counterbalanced by a face-to-face modality, it also offers a wide range of macroscopic advantages.

One of these is the possibility of engaging varied learning styles and responding to different personal and educational needs in a definitely easier way compared to what normally happens within a typical classroom setting. Such thing is obviously explained by the broad repertoire of e-resources and digital education tools that teachers can both readily access and create for their daily practice.

Similarly, the online learning experience seems to suit particularly shy students, who would otherwise tend to feel uncomfortable in a more “traditional” type of context.

Another potentially positive aspect of e-learning is the fact that learners can easily view and review class material whenever they wish to, considering that it will have most probably been uploaded and shared on some kind of virtual notice board by the teacher.

In addition to the advantages highlighted so far, one might also refer to the comfort of learning (and teaching) from home and the fact of reducing all those expenses normally associated to commuting or parking.

Finally, there are at least two more benefits of distance education which are worth mentioning and which can have a positive impact on both instructors and learners: one is the chance to easily and systematically track student progress with almost instant reporting tools and analytics (with the consequent added value that such formative assessment has for pupils); the other one is the opportunity that all parties involved in the process have, to gain digital competence.

# ***PHASE THREE***

## **QUESTION N.3**

What would you save when this emergency will finish, for the future of Education.



The effort of these months, the enormous do-it-yourself distance learning experiment created by principals and teachers, will have been useful if the school is able to imagine different and flexible solutions to manage its mission in a more modern and timely way and if it knows how to take advantage of this emergency to be ready for any other unexpected situation. Certainly, in recent months, we have accelerated digitalization which is also good for the environment and this already seems like good news to me. We will certainly be more fluid, multi-channel, multi-instrument, all things that the new generations carry with them in their DNA. Everyone else will be forced to change their mentality! In fact, it is not so much having meetings on Zoom or Teams or G-Meet remotely, but not making them last an hour and a half as before, learning to be more agile and flexible. After this global emergency experience I will definitely keep the technology, because it offers the opportunity to redesign tasks and activities in a new way, in practice it is a more effective tool for carrying out the tasks. For example, using GOOGLE DOCS I can make the whole class comment on a document with mobile devices by watching the classmates' comments in real time.

Technology also makes it possible to assign and carry out new tasks.

For example, thanks to the devices, pupils prepare complex multistate media documents in a cooperative way and project them on the IWB, using a remote connection to involve a class from another state.

The use of technologies in education implies a change in the role of the teacher who has to structure the learning environment in a new way: the chair is no longer the center of the class that becomes collaborative, based on shared study and group work.

Finally, computer systems are "accessible", that is to say they are capable of providing services and providing usable information even to those who, due to disabilities, need assisted technologies or particular configurations.

# ***PHASE THREE***

## **QUESTION N.4**

Can you think to some good practices example to share?

Last year, teachers made a great effort to educate students in the use of information technology.

Many of our students lacked adequate computer tools and hardly had any knowledge other than social media.

The first step was to teach them to use an account to log into Classroom and in a short time we obtained excellent results.

This year we are ahead of the game and we have succeeded in taking further steps along the teaching-learning path.

We have used various inclusion strategies with our learners, because one of our goals has always been to achieve a good level of inclusion.

Google form and kahoot, to name but a few, have proved extremely useful tools, enabling students to interact with their smartphone and teachers to view test results in real time, having immediately understood the general progress of the test.

This has also made it possible to work for parallel classes.

Small learning groups have been created; In these learning environments, the students, favored by a positive relational climate,

have transformed every learning activity into a process of "group problem solving", achieving objectives whose realization requires everyone's personal contribution.

Another strategy implemented during the distance learning has been flipped classroom.

The first moment consisted of independent learning by each student, thanks to the use of multimedia tools. The second step envisaged that the classroom lesson hours were used by the teacher to carry out personalized teaching strongly oriented towards putting into practice the previously learned knowledge, where the collaboration and cooperation of students are aspects that assume centrality.

We realized that even the most fragile students could make their contribution.

The projects carried out in our school have certainly contributed to achieving the learning objectives.

These projects have always had the aim of reducing social inequalities, promoting inclusion.

We will talk about these important projects during our webinar in March 2021.