



Interview : Elaine and Rozenn

Rozenn: Lockdown started middle of March and it was quite of a shock for us because we heard it on the news, I think it was a Thursday night and then we had to go back to school on the Friday and of course everybody was all over the place. Some kids were calling it 'holiday' you know. But the teachers were kind of worried about what was going on, you know. Especially for us because we didn't know how to prepare our lessons on line. We didn't know even how to do Zoom. I remember the first time I had to do a Zoom, you know. I asked my daughter, 16 year old, to help me and we had to rehearse, you know, for 2 hours the day before. So that was pretty challenging for us, you know, as teachers and also the parents, the kids, that was very difficult this lockdown situation in March. Then we went back to school in May and actually I was dreading it because you know, this Covid 19 thing, you know, the disease and all, and the face masks. But then it was pretty good when we came back in May because I had fewer students only a group of 10 students in class and we could take the mask off I remember at that time and I didn't have to teach the syllabus so that was very good because I could have fun. We could sing. We could even dance. We really had fun. And I could take my time to explain grammar lessons. Yes, we didn't have to teach the syllabus because some of the kids didn't come back to school and we didn't want them to fall behind. So when we came back in September it was the same thing and now I teach the whole class but the students have got the face masks on so its difficult to understand them when they speak. It's also difficult to recognise them because it was difficult to learn their names, you know, in a class of 30 with their mask on and that continues. From September till now, kids got their mask on. They need to put the gel on their hands when they come into the classroom. When they leave the classroom. We sanitise the computer, you know, the keyboard. And then at the canteen they eat they are 1 metre away from each other.

Elaine: So, what would you say were the positive aspects that have actually come out of the situation?

Rozenn: The positive aspects? (Laughs) When we had fewer students in school then even in the playground that was very quiet. They were not arguing. They were not fighting so there was a kind of a peaceful atmosphere, that's true. That was in May and June last year. But now, you know, it's back to normal. Sometimes actually when we take the mask off, because I teach Yoga as well to some of them, like a year 7 class and we took the face mask off and we saw each others faces and that was like 'Wow!' (Laughs) You really look like that! I prefer you with your face mask!' Now we're ready for another Lockdown. I mean, if we are, that's a positive thing if we are in Lockdown again we know what to do. I think we put too much pressure on ourselves at the beginning. We gave them too much homework. We asked them to hand in their homework by email so we received like thousands of emails a day and we had to correct everything. That was

just not possible. And actually I think I improved my ICT skills now. And all my lessons are typed now. I started to be very organised because I'm very messy and my lessons were all over the place. And now, in September, I had a look on my computer and everything was really well organised and I had all my levels- Year7, Year 8, and the project ...

Elaine: The fact that you're not able to meet up- has it had some sort of effect on you?

Rozenn: So, the negative thing is that even as teachers we don't have parents evening. So we didn't get to meet the parents, so that's difficult, you know. It's good to have a relationship with the parents. And the kids, sometimes the kids change drastically after parents evening because they think 'oh, I definitely need to change' So, the relationship with the parents is more difficult because we just have them over the phone. Relationship with the teachers is more difficult because we have fewer meetings. We communicate by emails and sometimes you get so many emails you skip the very important information so that can be a problem. And it emphasizes the fact that social relationship with real people is very important. You have a laugh. This interaction is good. You work but at the time you talk about some other things- about your weekend, about funny jokes. And this is what is good actually. This is the same in the classroom. It's the funny bits which are good and then you get the kids involved and they want to work for you. To please you. This emotional thing is very important and again we come back to interaction. We come back to human relationships and smaller groups, you know.

Elaine: None of us have any idea how long this is going to go on for. I think we have to accept the fact that it's going to be a day by day situation that we get used to and learn to live with. But what suggestions could improve a teaching situation?

Rozenn: I think we understood that our classes are too big to be honest, you know. We understood when we came back that with a class of 10 or 15 students we had this very special relationship with the kids, and they were working. They were involved. Even the less able ones and this is very simple. This is nothing revolutionary, you know. But I think our classes are just too big.

Elaine: Well thank you very much Rozenn.

Rozenn: Thanks a lot.