



YES4 E-LEARNING

YES4E LEARNING - WP3 : ENHANCING TEACHER ENGAGEMENT IN ONLINE EDUCATION

In the framework of the YES4eLearning project, Work Package 3 (WP3) represents a cornerstone for the professional development of teachers and professors facing the challenges of digital education. Entitled "Increasing the Quality of Online Courses, Preventing Training Drop-Out, and Increasing Students' Motivation," WP3 focuses on the pedagogical and emotional dimensions of teaching in virtual environments, **equipping higher education staff with innovative methods to foster student engagement, well-being, and motivation.**

Developed collaboratively by the YES4eLearning consortium and tested with more than 250 academics and university staff across five European countries, the WP3 training package provides a practical, research-based curriculum for improving the quality of e-learning. Its structure is inspired by the Social Presence Model (Whiteside, 2017), which identifies five key dimensions that sustain meaningful and connected online learning experiences: affective participation, community cohesion, teacher engagement, intensity of interaction, and sharing of knowledge and experience.

At the heart of WP3 lies the idea that **successful online education depends not only on technological competence but also on human connection.** Teachers are guided to explore strategies for expressing emotions, building trust, and communicating with empathy – essential elements that counteract the isolation often felt in digital classrooms. **Through experiential and reflective activities such as role-plays, storytelling, and collaborative exercises, participants learn to create emotionally supportive learning environments where students feel seen, motivated, and included.**

The module on teacher engagement is particularly relevant: it addresses how educators can provide timely feedback, use practical examples to make theory tangible, and maintain an active presence throughout the course. These practices strengthen the link between teachers and learners, sustain attention, and foster a sense of belonging within the online classroom. WP3 also highlights how humor, empathy, and non-verbal communication can humanize online interaction, making digital spaces more accessible and enjoyable.

For professors and higher education professionals, the importance of WP3 lies in its transformative potential. **By combining solid pedagogical foundations with emotional intelligence, it helps teachers rediscover their role as facilitators of learning** rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. In doing so, the training package empowers educators to design online experiences that are not only effective but also engaging, inclusive, and psychologically supportive.

Ultimately, **WP3 contributes to one of YES4eLearning's core missions: to make digital education more human-centered.** By fostering empathy, collaboration, and presence in virtual classrooms, it equips teachers with the skills to lead the digital transition with confidence and care – ensuring that e-learning remains not just a technological innovation, but a truly educational one.



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