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YES4eLearning

Tools and Strategies for Supporting the Adaptation to E- Learning in HE Sector
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Face-to-face Course Guidelines

**“Increasing the Quality of Online Courses,
Preventing Training Dropout
and Increasing Students’ Motivation”**

for HEI lecturers and workers



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Contents

Course overview	4
Theoretical overview	6
Module 1. Affective participation	15
Module 2. Community cohesion	30
Module 3. Involvement of the trainer	42
Module 4. Intensity of the interaction	59
Module 5. Online teaching knowledge and experience	77



Course overview

Purpose

The Face-to-face Course Guidelines "Tools and Strategies for Supporting the Adaptation to E-Learning in HE Sector - YES4eLearning" together with the course curriculum elaborated within the same project are innovative tools for the higher education sector aiming to improve the knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences of HE academics, teachers and workers related to online social presence components and to raise their involvement in order to compensate for the lack of physical presence in online spaces. The final purpose of the the course is of increasing the quality of online courses, preventing training drop-out and increasing students' motivation.

Intended audience

This curriculum is designed for Higher Education lecturers, teachers and workers who provide online courses, seminars and laboratories.

Development Process

The training package "Tools and Strategies for Increasing the Quality of Online Courses, Preventing Training Dropout and Increasing Students' Motivation" was elaborated during the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in Higher Education project "Tools and Strategies for Supporting the Adaptation to E-Learning in HE Sector - YES4eLearning" implemented during the time period 1.10.2023 – 30.09.2025. The project was coordinated by Klaipėdos Valstybinė Kolegija Klaipėda, Lithuania together with Gebze Teknik Üniversitesi Türkiye, Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain, Institut Cal·Lípolis, Tarragona, Spain, Asociația Demetrius, Iași, Romania, Falco&Associati SRL, Milano, Italy.

Before reaching the final version the training package was piloted with 250 Higher Education lecturers, teachers and workers from the 5 countries participating in the project.

Course design

The course was designed in distinct sections that can be delivered as stand-alone workshops. There are five sections:

Module 1: Affective participation introduces expressing emotions, showing confidence, humour and self-disclosure.

Module 2: Community cohesion teaches about feeling the membership, online resource sharing.

Module 3: Involvement of the trainer offers information about providing examples, giving immediate feedback to the students during the online courses.

Module 4: Intensity of the interaction informs about the presence of thanks, providing encouragement, appreciation, approval, compliments during the online teaching.



Module 5: Knowledge and experience teach about mutual sharing of experience, knowledge and expertise during the online interaction.

Implementation

The course is structured in five distinct sections, each of which takes roughly 4 hours to deliver. The full course requires roughly 21 hours of training time. It can be presented in three full days, several half days, or shorter sections delivered over several weeks.

The recommended group size is 20-25 participants. The training includes many small group activities; spacious training spaces will work best for these. Free wall space is needed for displaying newsprint and larger pieces of paper. For room set-up, tables arranged in a banquet, classroom, or “U” shape style are recommended.

Facilitators should have higher education work experience and be very familiar with the five dimensions and concepts of the social presence theory (Whiteside, 2017). Skills in teaching and group facilitation are required.

If the training is being offered in full days, a team of two facilitators is highly recommended.

Equipment/Supplies

- Laptop/projector/speakers/screen (or room with built in AV equipment)
- Internet access
- Easel/newsprint/markers/pens
- Butcher paper (paper roll)/scissors
- Masking tape
- Handouts (binders optional)
- Name tags

Evaluation

An evaluation test for each module is recommended and included in the training package.



Course outline

	Module	Number of teaching hours
1	Affective participation	4
2	Community cohesion	4
3	Involvement of the trainer	4
4	Intensity of the interaction	4
5	Online teaching knowledge and experience	4
	Course Assessment	1
	Total course duration	21



Theoretical overview

In the domain of online education, understanding the determinants of effective learning environments is crucial for optimizing pedagogical outcomes. A central concept in this context is **social presence**, which refers to the degree to which participants in an online learning community perceive each other as real, engaged, and connected. It is a multidimensional construct that influences learner satisfaction, engagement, and overall learning outcomes. **Whiteside's (2017) Model of Social Presence** identifies five critical dimensions that contribute to this construct: *Affective Participation*, *Community Cohesion*, *Trainer Involvement*, *Interaction Intensity*, and *Knowledge and Experience Sharing*. Each of these dimensions plays a critical role in fostering a learning environment that is emotionally supportive, socially connected, and intellectually stimulating.

1. Affective Participation

Affective participation is a main element of social presence, encompassing the expression of emotions, the display of confidence, the use of humor, and self-disclosure within the online learning environment. This dimension is crucial for establishing a sense of emotional connection among learners, which is fundamental for enhancing engagement and fostering a supportive learning community.

a. Expressing Emotions

The role of emotions in learning is well-documented in the literature, particularly within the context of social constructivist theories. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that emotions are integral to the social aspects of learning, as they influence motivation, cognition, and the ability to form connections with others. Expressing emotions in an online learning environment helps bridge the psychological distance that can often be a barrier to effective communication and collaboration. Studies have shown that when learners express emotions such as enthusiasm, frustration, or empathy, it enhances their sense of belonging and reduces feelings of isolation (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). For instance, research by Rourke et al. (2001) found that the expression of emotions in online discussion forums leads to greater group cohesion and improved learning outcomes. This emotional expressiveness fosters a more engaged and connected learning community, which is essential for maintaining motivation and persistence in online courses.

b. Confidence in Communication

Confidence in communication is linked to Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations. In the context of e-learning, learners who communicate confidently are more likely to participate actively, ask questions, and engage in meaningful discussions. Confidence from the teacher also plays an



important role, as it establishes a sense of authority and reliability, which in turn enhances learner trust and engagement.

Research has demonstrated that learners who exhibit confidence in their communications are more likely to achieve higher levels of academic performance (Schunk & Pajares, 2009). This confidence, whether displayed by the learner or the teacher, helps to create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment, where participants feel comfortable sharing their ideas and perspectives.

c. Use of Humor

The strategic use of humor in online learning can reduce anxiety, enhance learner engagement, and create a more positive learning atmosphere. According to Meyer (2000), humor can serve as a pedagogical tool that not only makes the learning process more enjoyable but also aids in the retention of information. The use of humor can help to humanize the teacher, making them appear more approachable and relatable, which can reduce the social distance in virtual environments.

Research by Berk (1996) found that humor, when used appropriately, can improve student recall and understanding of course material. Additionally, studies have shown that humor can increase learner satisfaction and perceived learning (Ziv, 1988), contributing to a more effective and enjoyable eLearning experience.

d. Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure, or the sharing of personal experiences and thoughts, is a key component of building trust within an online learning community. Wheelless and Grotz's (1976) theory of self-disclosure highlights its importance in fostering interpersonal relationships and deepening social connections. In e-learning environments, self-disclosure by both teachers and learners can help to create a more open and trusting atmosphere, where participants feel comfortable engaging in honest and meaningful discussions.

Studies have shown that self-disclosure is positively correlated with increased trust, cohesion, and satisfaction in online learning environments (Lauricella & Kay, 2013). When learners and teachers share personal stories or experiences, it helps to humanize the learning experience and fosters a sense of community, which is crucial for sustaining engagement in online courses.

Affective participation is a critical dimension of social presence, contributing to the emotional and psychological well-being of learners in an online environment. By encouraging the expression of emotions, confidence, humor, and self-disclosure, teachers or trainers can create a more engaging and supportive learning atmosphere.

2. Community Cohesion

Community cohesion refers to the sense of belonging and connectedness among learners in an online course. This dimension is vital for creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment, where learners feel a part of a community that shares common goals and values.

a. Sense of Belonging

The sense of belonging is closely related to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which posits that individuals derive part of their identity and self-esteem from their membership in social



groups. In an online learning context, a strong sense of belonging can enhance motivation, reduce dropout rates, and promote persistence.

Rovai (2002) found that learners who perceive a strong sense of community are more likely to participate actively and complete online courses. This sense of belonging helps to mitigate the challenges of social isolation, which is often cited as a significant barrier to successful online learning. A cohesive community provides emotional support, enhances collaboration, and fosters a sense of shared purpose among learners.

b. Resource Sharing

Resource sharing is a critical component of collaborative learning theories, such as the one proposed by Palincsar (1998), which suggests that knowledge is co-constructed through social interactions. In an e-learning environment, the sharing of resources, such as study materials, links, and practical examples, contributes to the collective learning experience and reinforces the interconnectedness of the learning community.

Empirical research supports the idea that resource sharing enhances both individual and group learning outcomes (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999). When learners engage in resource sharing, they not only benefit from the collective knowledge of the group but also develop a sense of responsibility and commitment to the community. This reciprocity fosters a culture of mutual support and cooperation, which is essential for sustaining an active and engaged online learning environment.

Community cohesion is a fundamental dimension that enhances the social and emotional aspects of online learning. By creating a sense of belonging and encouraging resource sharing, teachers can help learners feel connected and invested in the course.

3. Involvement of the Trainer

The involvement of the trainer, or instructor presence, is a critical factor in the success of online courses. This dimension emphasizes the active role of the instructor in guiding, supporting, and providing feedback to learners, which is essential for maintaining engagement and ensuring positive learning outcomes.

a. Providing Examples

The provision of relevant examples by teachers is rooted in cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988), which suggests that learners can process and retain information more effectively when cognitive load is minimized. Examples help to contextualize theoretical concepts, making them more accessible and easier to understand.

Research by Clark and Mayer (2011) indicates that the use of examples in instructional materials can enhance comprehension and retention. By linking theoretical content to practical, real-world scenarios, teachers can help learners bridge the gap between abstract concepts and their applications. This approach not only aids in knowledge transfer but also promotes deeper learning.

b. Giving Immediate Feedback



Immediate feedback is one of the most powerful tools for enhancing learning and performance. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback serves as a mechanism for learners to understand their current level of performance relative to their goals, enabling them to make necessary adjustments to improve.

Studies have shown that immediate feedback in online courses leads to higher levels of learner satisfaction, improved academic performance, and increased motivation (Gikandi, Morrow, & Davis, 2011). The timely nature of feedback ensures that learners can quickly correct misunderstandings and reinforce correct knowledge, which is critical for maintaining progress in an online learning environment.

c. Teacher Presence and Engagement

Teacher presence, or the visible and active participation of the instructor, teacher or trainer in the online learning environment, is crucial for creating a sense of structure and support. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), emphasizes the importance of teaching presence in facilitating cognitive and social presence. Teacher presence involves not only delivering content and providing feedback but also actively engaging with learners through discussions, activities, and personalized support.

Research indicates that a strong teacher presence is positively correlated with learner engagement and satisfaction (Richardson & Swan, 2003). When teachers are actively involved in the course, learners feel more supported and are more likely to participate in discussions, ask questions, and seek help when needed. This engagement is essential for sustaining motivation and ensuring successful learning outcomes in an online environment.

The involvement of the trainer is essential for guiding learners through the course content and ensuring they remain engaged and on track. By providing relevant examples and immediate feedback, and maintaining a visible teacher presence, teachers can significantly enhance the learning experience and outcomes.

4. Intensity of Interaction

The intensity of interaction refers to the frequency, quality, and depth of communication between learners and teachers in an online course. This dimension is crucial for fostering a positive learning environment where learners feel valued, supported, and motivated to participate.

a. The Role of Reinforcement in Interaction

The presence of thanks, encouragement, and appreciation in online interactions can be understood through the lens of reinforcement theory (Skinner, 1953). Positive reinforcement, in the form of verbal expressions of thanks or encouragement, strengthens desired behaviors by providing positive feedback. In an e-learning context, these forms of reinforcement can increase learner participation and engagement.

Studies have shown that expressions of thanks and encouragement from teachers and peers can significantly enhance learner motivation and persistence (Deci et al., 1991). These positive interactions contribute to a supportive and inclusive learning environment, which is essential for maintaining high levels of engagement in online courses.



b. Appreciation, Approval, and Compliments

Appreciation, approval, and compliments can also be analyzed through social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), which suggests that individuals evaluate their abilities and self-worth by comparing themselves to others. Positive feedback in the form of approval and compliments can boost learners' self-efficacy and motivation, leading to increased effort and persistence in their studies.

Research indicates that positive feedback, such as compliments or expressions of approval, can enhance learners' sense of accomplishment and satisfaction (Bandura, 1986). This type of feedback not only validates learners' efforts but also reinforces their commitment to the learning process, which is critical for sustaining motivation in an online learning environment.

c. Depth of Interaction and Critical Thinking

The depth of interaction, characterized by thoughtful and meaningful exchanges between learners and teachers or instructors, is essential for promoting critical thinking and deep learning. The Socratic method, which involves asking probing questions and encouraging reflective thinking, is particularly effective in fostering higher-order cognitive skills.

Studies have shown that online discussions that encourage deep interaction and critical analysis lead to improved cognitive outcomes and greater satisfaction (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005). By fostering a culture of thoughtful interaction, teachers can help learners develop critical thinking skills that are essential for success in both academic and professional contexts.

High-intensity interaction, characterized by frequent expressions of thanks, encouragement, appreciation, and approval, is essential for maintaining learner motivation and engagement in online courses. By fostering a positive and supportive environment, instructors can help learners feel valued and confident in their abilities.

5. Knowledge and Experience Sharing

Knowledge and experience sharing is a dimension that emphasizes the mutual exchange of expertise, insights, and practical experiences within the online learning community. This dimension is critical for fostering collaborative learning and deepening the intellectual engagement of learners.

a. Situated Learning and Experience Sharing

The mutual sharing of experiences is closely aligned with situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which posits that learning occurs through active participation in a community of practice. In an online learning environment, sharing personal experiences and practical insights allows learners to contextualize theoretical knowledge, making it more relevant and applicable to real-world situations.

Research supports the idea that experience sharing enhances the learning process by introducing diverse perspectives and real-world applications (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). When learners share their experiences, they contribute to a richer and more diverse learning environment, which fosters deeper understanding and critical thinking.

b. Cognitive Apprenticeship and Knowledge Sharing



The sharing of knowledge and expertise within a learning community can be understood through the concept of cognitive apprenticeship, where learners acquire skills and knowledge through guided practice and social interaction (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991). In an e-learning context, knowledge sharing can take the form of discussions, collaborative projects, and peer-to-peer mentoring, all of which contribute to the collective learning experience.

Studies have shown that knowledge sharing in online courses enhances collaborative learning, critical thinking, and overall learner satisfaction (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). By engaging with the expertise of their peers, learners are exposed to a broader range of perspectives, which helps to foster a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

c. Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment

Collaboration is a key element of social constructivist theories, which emphasize the importance of social interaction in the learning process. By fostering a collaborative learning environment, teachers can encourage learners to share their knowledge, challenge each other's ideas, and work together to solve problems. This collaborative approach not only enhances individual learning outcomes but also builds a sense of community and shared purpose within the online learning environment.

Research by Garrison and Vaughan (2008) highlights the importance of creating a collaborative learning environment in online courses. When learners are encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences, it fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the learning process, which is critical for sustaining engagement and promoting deep learning.

Knowledge and experience sharing is integral to creating a rich and collaborative learning environment in online courses. By encouraging learners to share their insights and expertise, instructors can foster a deeper understanding of the course content and build a more dynamic and interactive online community.

Whiteside's (2017) Model of Social Presence provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the critical factors that contribute to a successful eLearning experience. The five dimensions—Affective Participation, Community Cohesion, Trainer Involvement, Interaction Intensity, and Knowledge and Experience Sharing—each play a vital role in creating a learning environment that is emotionally supportive, socially connected, and intellectually engaging.

By integrating these dimensions into the design and facilitation of online courses, teachers and trainers can enhance learner satisfaction, engagement, and overall success. The principles of social presence, supported by robust theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, are essential for optimizing online learning experiences in an increasingly digital educational landscape.

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Module 1. Affective participation

General goal: To enhance the emotional and interpersonal dynamics between teachers and students in an online learning environment, fostering a more engaging, supportive, and effective educational experience.

Objectives:

1. Expressing emotions: Help teachers effectively communicate their emotions to show authenticity and create an empathetic learning environment.
2. Showing confidence: Develop teachers' self-assurance in their online teaching abilities to project confidence and competence, thereby encouraging student participation and respect.
3. Humour: Use appropriate humour to create a positive and enjoyable learning atmosphere, reducing stress and enhancing student engagement.

Methods: This module will be based on blended methodology as integrated experiential learning, reflective practice and collaborative activities. The module will use a combination of direct instructions and interactive discussions to introduce the theoretical and practical applications of each objective. Some methodological techniques will be: role playing, group reflections, peer teaching, group-problem solving tasks.

Throughout the module, emphasis should be placed on creating a safe and supportive environment where teachers feel comfortable experimenting new approaches and receiving constructive feedback.

Section I. Expressing emotions: emotional engagement (1h 30')

Emotional engagement is crucial in online courses to keep students interested and motivated. However, it's not easy to achieve, and students may disengage if the course fails to connect with them. According to eLearning Industry, there are five key signs of emotional disconnection:

1. Inaccurate Responses: Frequent wrong or superficial answers suggest students aren't fully absorbing the material, possibly due to a lack of interest.
2. Visible Disinterest: Yawning, distraction, or impatience during live sessions are indicators of disengagement.
3. Minimal Effort: Students doing just the bare minimum show a lack of emotional involvement in the content.
4. No Course Discussion: When students don't talk about the course outside of class, it often means it didn't leave a lasting impact.
5. Low Participation: Limited participation in live sessions, or low engagement in asynchronous activities, points to a lack of interest.



By watching for these signs, educators can adjust their approach to foster stronger emotional connections and enhance learning.

To correct this trend some authors recommend incorporating emotional content in their lessons

Objectives:

1. Identify emotions
2. Enhance emotional involvement in lesson

Timing Breakdown:

1. Icebreaker: the power of humour in communication (10 minutes)
2. Emotion Identification: recognizing emotions in communication (20 minutes)
3. Storytelling & Empathy Exercise: step into their shoes (10 minutes)
4. Role-Playing Scenarios: resolving emotional conflicts (20 minutes)
5. Visual and Emotional Stimuli: colour your classroom (10 minutes)
6. Reflection & Commitment (20 minutes)

1. Icebreaker

Goal: Emphasize how humour can lighten difficult communication moments, making teachers more approachable to students.

Purpose: Use humour to create a relaxed environment, break the ice, and set a positive emotional tone for the session. Make the audience/students notice the difference between explaining something with humour and without it.

Methodology: Share a brief, funny personal anecdote about a communication mishap that was resolved through affective communication (e.g., misunderstanding a student's question due to tone or body language).

Example: (AWKWARD) One day, during a lesson, I was explaining a concept I thought was crystal clear. As I was talking, one student kept giving me a blank look, and another kept looking at their phone. My frustration was rising, thinking they weren't paying attention. I finally asked the student with the blank look if everything was okay. She replied, 'I'm trying to follow, but I'm just not getting it.' It hit me that I was going too fast. I took a breath, smiled, and said, 'I get it—let's break it down together.' The atmosphere immediately changed; the student looked relieved, and I saw others perk up. By simply pausing and acknowledging the emotional state of the class, I connected with them better. Sometimes, just recognizing when things are off can help bring students back into focus.

Example: (FUNNY) "So, I was doing this online lesson, right? Everything was going smoothly—or so I thought. I'm in the middle of explaining this really important concept, getting all serious about it, when suddenly I notice half the students are laughing, and the other half look totally confused. I'm thinking, 'Did I say something funny?' No clue. Then one brave student unmutes and says, 'Uh, I think your microphone's acting up.' Turns out, the mic was glitching, and my



voice sounded like a robot. I couldn't help but laugh—like full-on, belly-laugh—because I'd been going on for five minutes, sounding like a malfunctioning droid! After that, we all had a good laugh together, and I realized that humour and little moments like that can bring everyone back on the same page. Sometimes, the lesson you don't plan is the one that sticks!"

Discussion Prompt Ask the teachers, "Have you ever experienced a funny or awkward communication moment with students? How did you handle it?"

2. Emotion Identification

Goal: Sharpen the teachers' ability to read emotional cues, allowing them to adjust their communication style accordingly.

Purpose: Train teachers to identify emotions in others, which is crucial for using affective communication effectively.

Instructions: Prepare a series of short, silent video clips showing different emotional situations between teachers and students (e.g., a student frowning, a teacher smiling, students looking frustrated, etc.).

After each clip, pause and ask students to write down what emotions they observe.

Clip examples:

Clip 1: A student with their arms crossed, looking away while a teacher speaks to them. (Emotion: frustration, disinterest)

Clip 2: A teacher smiles warmly at a student who has just answered a question correctly, and the student visibly relaxes. (Emotion: relief, happiness)

Clip 3: A student slouches at their desk, avoiding eye contact, while the teacher walks by, looking concerned. (Emotion: sadness, disengagement)

Clip 4: A teacher claps their hands excitedly as a student presents a project, and the student smiles broadly. (Emotion: excitement, pride)

Clip images

1. Frustration





2. Happiness



3. Disengagement



4. Pride





Encourage them to be specific (e.g., frustration, excitement, confusion). Break participants into small groups and ask them to compare their observations. How easy or difficult was it to identify these emotions?

Facilitate a discussion on how recognizing these emotions in real-time can improve affective communication in the classroom. What verbal and non-verbal cues are important?

3. Storytelling & Empathy Exercise

Goal: Build empathy by helping teachers see communication through the emotional lens of both students and teachers.

Purpose: This activity connects emotions to real-world classroom challenges and gives teachers practice in thinking empathetically

Instructions: Share a real-life story about a teacher using affective communication to support a struggling student. Focus on the emotions involved (e.g., frustration, fear, relief).

Real-life story example: “In one of my classes, I had a student who was consistently late, often looked upset, and didn’t participate in discussions. I could see the frustration building in her body language, but I didn’t know what was going on. Instead of scolding her for not engaging, I pulled her aside after class and gently asked if everything was okay. She opened up about feeling overwhelmed at home, which was affecting her schoolwork. I made small changes in my communication—checking in with her weekly, encouraging her during class, and giving her more time to finish assignments. Slowly, I saw her start participating again. She felt supported because I recognized her emotional needs, and the connection helped her refocus in the classroom.”

After telling the story, ask the participants to discuss in pairs how they might have felt in that situation as both the teacher and the student. What emotional strategies could they use to improve communication in a similar context?

4. Role-Playing Scenarios

Goal: Practice using affective communication strategies in emotionally charged situations.

Purpose: Simulate real classroom challenges where emotional communication is critical.

Instructions: Divide participants into groups of three. Assign each group a role-play scenario involving an emotional classroom situation (e.g., a frustrated student acting out, a student feeling left out, etc.).

Each group should have a “teacher,” “student,” and “observer.” The teacher’s goal is to use affective communication to resolve the conflict while the student expresses their emotions. The observer takes notes on how well emotions were recognized and addressed.



Play-scenario examples:

*Scenario 1: *A student constantly interrupts the class and challenges the teacher's authority. The teacher needs to use affective communication to address the student's frustration while maintaining control of the classroom.**

Teacher's Goal: Calm the student without escalating the situation, understand their frustration, and bring them back into a productive conversation.

*Scenario 2: *A student seems distracted and is disengaging from group activities. The teacher approaches the student to find out what's wrong and bring them back into the group discussion.**

Teacher's Goal: Recognize the student's emotional state, create a safe space for them to express themselves, and help them re-engage.

Scenario 3: A student breaks down after receiving a low grade and tells the teacher they "can't do anything right."

Teacher's Goal: Use affective communication to encourage the student, help them regain confidence, and offer a plan to improve their performance.

Scenario 4: A usually energetic student seems withdrawn and uncommunicative, and their grades are slipping. The teacher must address the underlying emotional issue without embarrassing the student in front of others.

Teacher's Goal: Gently approach the student to discuss what might be bothering them, show empathy, and offer support.

After the role plays, have groups share their experiences and reflect on the emotions they experienced or observed. What worked in resolving the conflict, and what could be improved?

5. Visual and Emotional Stimuli

Goal: Encourage teachers to consider the emotional impact of their teaching spaces on both students and themselves.

Purpose: Help teachers understand how their environment can impact emotional states and communication.

Instructions: Present a series of images that include different classroom environments (calm, chaotic, bright, dull, etc.). Ask participants to write down the emotions each image evokes in them (e.g., calm, anxiety, focus).

Image 1: A bright, colourful classroom with students engaged in group work, smiling and talking. (Emotion: excitement, collaboration)

Image 2: A chaotic classroom where students are standing, some talking over each other, and the teacher looking frustrated. (Emotion: stress, frustration)

Image 3: A calm, tidy classroom with natural light and a teacher calmly explaining something to a student one-on-one. (Emotion: focus, calm)

Image 4: A classroom with students silently working, with a teacher walking around observing. (Emotion: concentration, diligence)

Image 5: A dark, cluttered classroom with a single student sitting at the back looking disconnected while others are actively participating. (Emotion: isolation, disengagement)



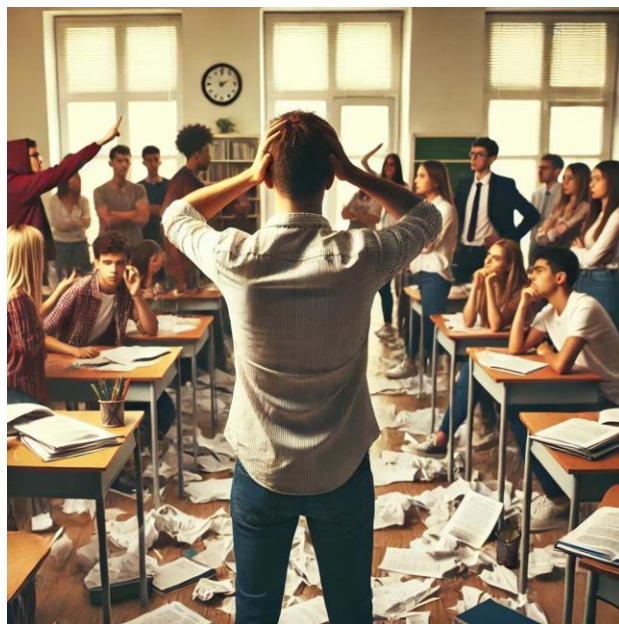
Then, discuss how colour, lighting, and organization can impact the emotional tone of their classroom and affect how students communicate and respond.

Classroom images

1. Excitement



2. Stress

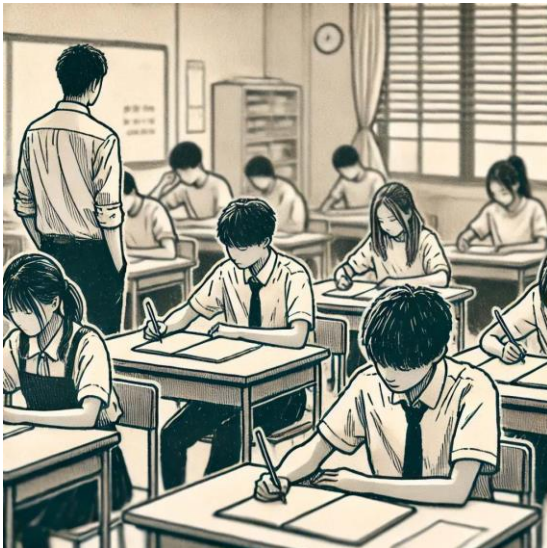




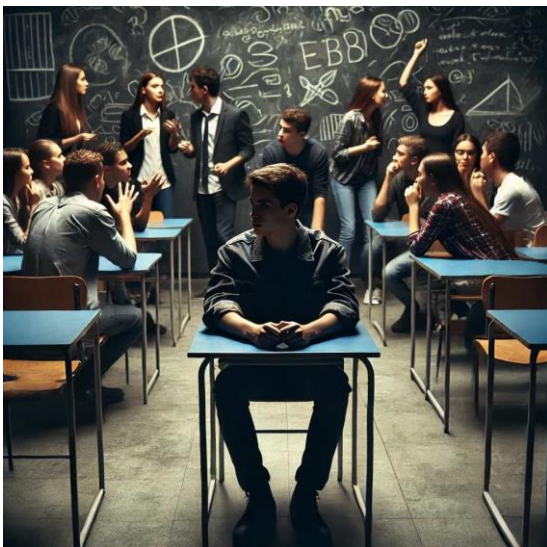
3. Focus



4. Concentration



6. Isolation





Section II: Showing confidence. Improving Confidence in Online Teaching (1h 30)

Objectives:

- Develop teachers' confidence in their online teaching skills.
- Project confidence and competence in front of students.
- Encourage student participation and respect.

Timing breakdown:

1. Non-verbal Language and Posture (30 minutes)
2. Role playing (15 minutes)
3. Peer Teaching (15 minutes)
4. Visualization (20 minutes)
5. Self-assessment and final reflection (10 minutes)

1. Non-verbal Language and Posture

Goals:

- Increase awareness of body language and posture during online teaching.
- Develop techniques to project confidence and competence through non-verbal language.
- Improve interaction with students through effective non-verbal communication.

Methodology

- Introduction (5 minutes):
- Proposal 1: What do students say about how they perceive if a teacher conveys confidence and security in the first moments? (A survey should be conducted and compared with the group's reflection).
- Proposal 2: Brief explanation about the importance of non-verbal language in communication, especially in online environments. Emphasis will be placed on how posture, facial expressions, and gestures can influence the perception of confidence and competence.

Video: The Power of Body Language

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4Gp0hc0TMA>

- Demonstration (5 minutes):

The facilitator will show examples of good and bad practices in non-verbal language during online teaching. For example, comparing slouched posture with an upright one, neutral facial expressions with smiling ones, and the appropriate use of gestures.

- Guided Practice (10 minutes):

Participants will pair up and practice non-verbal language techniques. Each person will have the opportunity to act as a "teacher" and "student" for 2.5 minutes each (including the switch), focusing on maintaining proper posture, using positive facial expressions, and making gestures that reinforce their message



- Feedback and Reflection (10 minutes):

After the practice, participants will discuss their experiences in groups of four. They will share the feedback received and reflect on how they felt while practicing the non-verbal language techniques. The facilitator will moderate a brief final discussion to highlight key points and best practices identified.

Required Materials:

- Space for movement and interaction.
- Video conferencing tools for those doing the activity remotely.
- List of best practices for non-verbal language (can be provided as a document or slide).

Learning Outcomes:

- Improved awareness and control of non-verbal language.
- Ability to project confidence and competence through posture and gestures.
- Development of skills to use non-verbal language effectively in online teaching.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Active participation in the guided practice.
- Ability to identify good and bad non-verbal language practices.
- Constructive feedback given and received during the pair sessions.
- Critical reflection on one's abilities and identification of personal improvements.

This activity will not only help teachers become more aware of their non-verbal language but also provide practical tools to improve their online presence and, consequently, the confidence they project to their students.

2. Role-Playing

Goal: Practice responding to various online classroom situations, such as difficult questions, technical problems, or lack of participation.

Methodology: Teachers will pair up and act out different online teaching scenarios. One will be the teacher, and the other the student. The rest of the group observes and gives constructive feedback (e.g., mentioning three positive things and one area to improve).

Materials: Scripts with scenarios, video conferencing tools.

Learning Outcomes: Improved response to real situations, development of confidence in managing the online class.



3. Peer Teaching

Goal: Practice online teaching in a safe environment and receive constructive feedback.

Methodology: Each teacher will prepare a brief presentation on an online teaching topic and present it to a small group of peers. Same as the previous option (constructive feedback).

Materials: Presentation tools, video conferencing tools.

Learning Outcomes: Improved presentation skills and confidence in using online tools.

4. Visualization

Goal: The Athletic Director and head coach of the Varsity Soccer team at Ryerson University, Dr. Joseph is often asked what skills he is searching for as a recruiter: is it speed? Strength? Agility? In Dr. Joseph's TEDx Talk, he explores self confidence and how it is not just the most important skill in athletics, but in our lives.

Methodology: the audience will visualize The Skill of Self-Confidence
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-HYZv6HzAs>

In small groups, discuss and agree on some changes to be mindful of.

5. Self-Assessment and Final Reflection

Goal: Encourage self-reflection and identify areas for improvement.

Description: Teachers will complete a self-assessment of their online teaching skills and write a brief reflection on what they have learned during the workshop.

Materials: Self-assessment form, pen and paper, or digital writing tools.

Learning Outcomes: Awareness of one's skills and identification of personal improvement goals.

Section III. Humour (1h)

Using appropriate humour leads to a positive and enjoyable learning atmosphere, reducing stress and enhancing student engagement.

So, humour can

- Establish instant rapport with your students.
- Create a warmer, more relaxed online learning environment.
- Counter feelings of student isolation and anxiety.



- Lighten the mood at stressful times of the semester.

But when used at the wrong moment, humour can do some serious damage. It might:

- Accidentally cause offense by crashing cultural or personal boundaries.
- Set up inappropriate student/teacher roles.
- Imply a lack of respect.
- Affect your credibility as a professional educator.

Objectives:

1. Create a relaxed environment between teacher and students
2. Enhance student engagement

Timing breakdown

1. Funny introductions (20 minutes)
2. Humorous lesson plan (20 minutes)
3. The Art of Using and Balancing Humour in Online Teaching (20 minutes)

1. Funny introductions

Goal: To demonstrate how humour can break the ice and create a relaxed environment.

Methodology

With teachers:

- Divide teachers into small groups of 3-4.
- Each group member shares a funny story or an embarrassing moment from their teaching experience.
- After sharing, discuss as a group how these stories could be used appropriately to make students feel more comfortable.
- Debrief: Reflect on how sharing humour at the beginning of a class can set a positive tone and build rapport.

With students:

Materials Needed:

- A list of example funny facts to share
- A virtual whiteboard or shared document for students to write their funny facts or nicknames

Instructions

1. Preparation: Prepare a list of funny facts that you can share as examples. For example:
 - "I once accidentally wore two different shoes to school."
 - "My favourite snack is pickles dipped in chocolate"
2. Introduction: Start the session by sharing your own funny fact. Use a light-hearted tone to set the mood.
3. Student Participation: Ask each student to share a funny fact about themselves.



4. Virtual Whiteboard: Use a virtual whiteboard or shared document for students to write down their funny facts. This allows everyone to see and react to each other's contributions.

5. Discussion: After everyone has shared, take a moment to discuss how these funny introductions helped everyone feel more relaxed and connected.

Debrief: Reflect on the importance of using humour to break the ice and how it can help create a positive and inclusive classroom environment.

2- Humorous lesson plan

Goal: To integrate humour into a lesson plan to enhance student engagement.

Instructions

- Teachers select a topic they teach and brainstorm ways to incorporate humour into their lesson.
- Examples include funny images, humorous analogies, or comical videos related to the topic.
- Each teacher presents their humorous lesson plan idea to the group.
- **Debrief:** Share thoughts on how humour can make difficult or dry topics more interesting and approachable.

Examples:

DNA is like a recipe book for making you, with each gene being a different ingredient.

Fractions are like pizza slices

Atoms are like tiny LEGO bricks, they can combine in many ways to build different things...

3- The Art of Using and Balancing Humour in Online Teaching

Goal: Students will reflect on the type of humour that is appropriate for different online educational contexts and how to balance it to maintain attention and enhance learning without distracting from the main objective.

Instructions

1. Introduction: What is Appropriate Humour?

- Start with a brief explanation or discussion about the different types of humour that can be used in an educational environment (e.g., sarcasm, irony, visual humour, wordplay, etc.).
- Ask the students: "What type of humour do you think would be appropriate in an online class and why?"
- Have them share their ideas in the chat or aloud if it's a synchronous session.

2. Case Study Analysis

- Divide students into small groups (breakout rooms if it's an online session) and provide two short examples of online classes using humour:

1. *Example A: A teacher uses too much humour, which distracts and prevents students from focusing on the important content.*



2. *Example B: A teacher uses humour moderately, managing to capture attention while keeping the focus on the content.*

Group Discussion: Within the groups, have them analyse the examples and answer the following questions:

1. What type of humour is used in each example?
2. In which case did the teacher balance the humour better?
3. What are the risks of using too much humour or inappropriate humour in an online class?

3. Group Presentation and Discussion

- Bring the groups back to the main session and have each group briefly present their conclusions (2-3 minutes per group).
- Gather ideas on how to balance humour effectively to enhance the quality of the class without students losing focus due to excessive jokes.

4. Individual Reflection

- Ask students to think about a personal experience where a teacher used humour (either effectively or ineffectively) and share how it impacted their learning experience.
- Each student can share a brief idea in the chat or give a short verbal comment.

Material needed:

Video Conferencing Tool (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet):

- For managing the class, creating breakout rooms, and facilitating group discussions.

Case Study Examples (Written or Video):

- Prepare two brief examples of teachers using humour in online learning. These can be text descriptions you write or video clips showing different styles of humour. You can also find appropriate YouTube videos of online lessons that use humour differently.

Breakout Room Functionality (in your video conferencing tool):

- To divide students into smaller groups for the case study analysis.

Shared Online Collaboration Tools (Optional but helpful):

- Use tools like Google Docs or Padlet to allow groups to take notes or record their responses during the case study analysis and brainstorming session.

Chat Functionality or Document for Reflection:

For students to share their reflections on personal experiences where humour was used (the chat feature in your conferencing tool or an online document where they can write their thoughts).

Evaluation of the module

- Active participation in all activities.
- Ability to critically reflect on one's skills.
- Quality of presentations and feedback given to peers.
- Perceived improvement in expressing emotions, showing confidence and using humour properly during online teaching.



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Module 2. Community cohesion

General goal: To create a supportive and collaborative online learning environment that fosters a sense of connection among learners. By building community cohesion, learners can experience a stronger sense of belonging and are more inclined to actively participate, share resources, and collaborate, which contributes to better learning outcomes and reduced dropout rates.

Objectives:

- To cultivate a sense of belonging that helps learners feel connected, valued, and engaged in the online course.
- To encourage resource sharing as a means of enhancing collective knowledge and fostering mutual support.
- To reduce the impact of isolation in online learning through community-driven engagement.
- To establish a culture of collaboration that enriches the learning experience and promotes sustained participation.

Methods:

- Interactive group exercises that encourage learners to connect and engage with one another: Interactive group exercises play a crucial role in encouraging learners to connect and engage with one another. These activities are designed to promote collaboration, enhance communication skills, and build a sense of community among participants. Examples include icebreakers at the start of the course to help learners feel comfortable, group problem-solving tasks to foster teamwork, and role-playing scenarios to simulate real-world challenges. Such exercises not only make learning more dynamic but also help participants form meaningful connections with their peers.
- Virtual spaces such as forums and chat rooms to facilitate informal discussions and resource exchange: Dedicated virtual spaces, such as forums and chat rooms, provide learners with opportunities for informal discussions and resource sharing outside of formal class sessions. Forums allow for asynchronous engagement, where learners can contribute to topic-specific threads, ask questions, and share insights at their own pace. Chat rooms, on the other hand, facilitate real-time interaction and create a sense of immediacy, making them ideal for quick questions, brainstorming sessions, or casual social interactions. These virtual spaces help bridge the gap between structured learning and informal peer-to-peer engagement, contributing to a more cohesive learning experience.
- Regular feedback and check-ins from instructors to reinforce a supportive learning environment: Consistent feedback and regular check-ins from instructors are essential for creating a supportive and responsive learning environment. Instructors can provide personalized feedback on assignments and activities, helping learners stay on track and feel



valued. Scheduled check-ins, such as weekly meetings or progress reviews, offer opportunities to address challenges, celebrate achievements, and reinforce a sense of connection. This ongoing support fosters trust and keeps learners motivated throughout the course.

- Shared repositories and platforms for learners to contribute and access resources collectively.

Duration: This module should be completed over a session lasting approximately 4 hours, divided into various activities focusing on understanding and practicing community cohesion principles.

Resources needed:

- Online meeting software with breakout room capabilities.
- Online forums or discussion platforms for ongoing engagement.
- A document-sharing platform (e.g., shared drive or course repository).
- Self-evaluation tools and feedback mechanisms.

Section 1: Introduction to Community Cohesion

Provide participants with a deep and nuanced understanding of community cohesion, emphasizing its pivotal role in creating dynamic and supportive online learning environments. Explain that community cohesion refers to the sense of belonging, mutual respect, and collaborative spirit that binds learners together, fostering an atmosphere of trust and inclusivity. Highlight how a cohesive learning community not only addresses the challenges of isolation and disengagement commonly faced in virtual settings but also serves as a powerful driver of academic success and personal growth.

Delve into how fostering community cohesion transforms the online learning experience by creating a supportive network where learners feel valued and motivated to participate actively. Discuss its tangible benefits, such as enhanced motivation—where learners are inspired by their peers and encouraged to contribute fully—and increased engagement, characterized by higher levels of collaboration, interaction, and resource sharing.

Furthermore, emphasize the impact of community cohesion on course completion rates. Learners who feel connected to their peers and instructors are more likely to persevere through challenges, as they perceive themselves as integral members of a collective journey. This sense of accountability and shared purpose significantly reduces dropout rates and fosters a commitment to achieving common learning goals.

Illustrate these points with real-world examples, research findings, or participant reflections to underscore the transformative power of community cohesion in online learning environments. Conclude by positioning community-building strategies as essential tools for creating not just educational success but also meaningful and lasting connections among learners.

Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes



Objectives

Provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of community cohesion and its critical importance in online learning environments. Highlight how fostering cohesion can transform the learning experience by enhancing motivation, engagement, and course completion rates.

Activity Breakdown

1. Icebreaker Activity: "Two Truths and a Lie"

Objective:

This activity is designed to help participants feel at ease, establish initial connections, and create an inclusive and engaging atmosphere. It encourages curiosity, fosters dialogue, and sets a positive tone for collaboration.

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions:

1. Introduction:

- Briefly explain the rules of the game to the group and provide an example:

Example:

- "I once climbed Mount Kilimanjaro."
- "I can play three musical instruments."
- "I've never eaten pizza."
- (The lie is "I've never eaten pizza.")

- Emphasize that the statements should be interesting but not overly obvious to maintain an element of surprise.

2. Preparation (10 minutes):

- Allow participants a few moments to think of their three statements. Encourage creativity and a mix of personal and professional anecdotes.

3. Sharing (10 minutes):

- Each participant takes turns sharing their statements.
- After each set of statements, the group guesses which is the lie.
- The participant then reveals the lie and elaborates on the true statements, providing brief insights or anecdotes.

4. Facilitator Engagement:

- The facilitator can participate to model the activity and ensure a welcoming tone.
- Use probing questions to encourage participants to expand on their truths, such as, "What inspired you to do that?" or "How did you feel during that experience?"

5. Discussion and Connections (10 minutes):

- After all participants have shared, take a few moments to discuss the commonalities or surprising traits that emerged.
- Highlight shared interests, hobbies, or unique experiences within the group.

Outcome:

- Participants discover shared interests and unique traits, creating opportunities for bonding and deeper conversations.



- The activity helps break down barriers, reduce anxiety, and set a foundation for trust and collaboration.
- By sharing personal anecdotes, participants begin to see one another as individuals with rich, diverse backgrounds, fostering inclusivity and mutual respect.

Facilitator Tips:

- Encourage participants to keep their statements light and engaging, avoiding overly personal or controversial topics.
- Be prepared to step in and gently guide the discussion if anyone hesitates or seems uncomfortable.
- Use humour and enthusiasm to keep the atmosphere lively and fun.

2. Group Goal Setting

Objective:

Foster a shared sense of purpose and collective motivation within the learning group by collaboratively defining goals. This activity emphasizes teamwork, accountability, and mutual support, laying the groundwork for a cohesive and productive learning environment.

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions:

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- Begin by explaining the purpose of the activity: *"Setting group goals creates a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, helping us stay motivated and aligned throughout the course."*
- Provide examples of effective goals, such as:
 - *"Complete all course modules with active participation from every member."*
 - *"Share one resource or learning tip per week in the group forum."*
 - *"Collaborate on a final project and achieve high-quality results."*
- Emphasize the importance of goals being Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART).

2. Group Division (5 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups of 3–5 people, ensuring diversity in experience and perspectives where possible.
- Provide clear instructions on how the groups should work together during the activity.

3. Goal Setting (10 minutes)

- Ask each group to discuss and agree on one or two shared goals they want to achieve during the course. Encourage them to consider:
 - What outcomes they hope to achieve.
 - How their goal will benefit both individuals and the group as a whole.
 - What steps they will take to ensure progress.
- Encourage groups to discuss accountability measures, such as regular check-ins or assigning roles (e.g., a timekeeper, note-taker, or motivator).



- Provide a worksheet or template to guide their discussion, with sections for the goal, key steps, and accountability plan.

4. Present and Discuss (35 minutes)

- Each group presents their goals to the class.
- Facilitators and peers can ask questions or suggest ways to refine the goals.
- Highlight common themes or unique ideas that emerge, reinforcing the group's collective effort.

Outcome:

- Participants develop a shared sense of responsibility, creating a stronger commitment to the course objectives.
- The activity fosters collaboration, mutual support, and accountability, strengthening group cohesion.
- Clearly defined goals provide direction and motivation, helping participants focus their efforts and measure progress throughout the course.

Facilitator Tips:

- Encourage groups to think of both practical and aspirational goals.
- Provide support to groups that may struggle to reach a consensus by suggesting prompts or examples.
- Use positive reinforcement to validate each group's contributions and encourage active participation.

Section 2: Building a Sense of Belonging

Creating a sense of belonging is foundational to fostering a supportive and collaborative online learning environment. When learners feel connected to their peers and the larger learning community, they are more engaged, motivated, and likely to succeed. This section introduces **Social Identity Theory** (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which explains how individuals derive self-esteem and a sense of identity from the groups they belong to. By understanding and leveraging this concept, we can create an environment where learners feel valued, respected, and part of a collective journey.

Through a combination of guided discussions, interactive activities, and regular feedback, learners will explore their own identities and how these align with the goals and dynamics of the group. They will connect with their peers, build trust, and co-create a culture of mutual respect and collaboration. This foundation of belonging not only enhances individual confidence but also strengthens the community as a whole, paving the way for shared success throughout the learning experience.

Duration: 1 hour

Outcomes:

Introduce **Social Identity Theory** (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to help learners understand how self-esteem and identity can be derived from group membership. Through interactive breakout sessions and activities, learners will connect, share, and begin to build a supportive learning community.



Instructions:

- **Introduce Community Spaces:** (20 minutes)
 - Provide a detailed **demonstration** of the online forums, including features such as creating threads, replying, and tagging other learners.
 - Suggest specific icebreaker questions, such as:
 - What motivated you to take this course?
 - What's a unique skill or perspective you bring to the group?
 - What's a fun fact about yourself?
 - Encourage learners to respond to at least two other introductions to start building connections.
- **Regular Check-ins and Feedback:** (20 minutes)
 - Set a **structured timeline** for regular check-ins, e.g., weekly or bi-weekly.
 - Instructors can use short surveys or polls to collect feedback on how learners feel about their progress and community engagement.
 - For larger groups, **use breakout rooms** during check-ins to allow for more personal interaction in smaller subgroups.
- **Encourage Group Work:** (20 Minutes)
 - Assign **group projects** with clear goals, roles, and deliverables to ensure accountability and cooperation.
 - Examples include collaborative mind maps, joint presentations, or team-based quizzes.
 - Use tools like **Miro, Jam board, or Padlet** for virtual brainstorming and collaboration.

Material Needed

For Introducing Community Spaces:

- Online forum or LMS (e.g., Moodle, Canvas, Slack).
- Tutorial videos or screen-sharing tools for demonstrations.
- Pre-written icebreaker questions.
- Participation tracking tools (e.g., spreadsheets or LMS analytics).

For Regular Check-ins and Feedback:

- Online survey tools (e.g., Google Forms, Typeform).
- Polling features in video conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom polls).
- Breakout room-enabled virtual meeting software (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams).
- Prepared discussion prompts for small groups.

For Group Work:

- Online collaboration tools (e.g., Miro, Jamboard, Padlet).
- Shared document platforms (e.g., Google Docs, OneDrive).
- Project templates with clear role descriptions.
- Assignment guidelines and deliverable formats.

Examples of Activities:

Activity 1: Social Identity Mapping

- Provide a **worksheet** where learners can map out their identities (e.g., roles, affiliations, values) and reflect on how these relate to the learning community.
- In breakout rooms, learners share their maps and discover shared connections or unique contributions they can make to the group.



Activity 2: Community Visioning

- Guide learners in co-creating a “**Community Agreement**” by brainstorming principles that promote inclusion, respect, and collaboration.
- Use a collaborative document where learners can add their ideas in real time.





Section 3: Resource Sharing and Collaboration

Collaborative learning theories, such as those proposed by **Palincsar (1998)**, emphasize the power of shared resources in building collective knowledge. These theories highlight that learning is most effective when it occurs within a cooperative environment where participants actively contribute and benefit from shared materials, insights, and experiences. By creating a culture of mutual responsibility and cooperation, learners not only deepen their understanding but also enhance their skills in teamwork, communication, and critical thinking.

This section introduces learners to the principles of collaborative learning and engages them in practical activities that promote resource sharing. Through the creation of a shared repository and interactive assignments, participants will experience the tangible benefits of pooling knowledge and supporting each other's growth.

Duration: 1 hour

Outcomes

This section leverages **collaborative learning theories** (Palincsar, 1998) to emphasize the importance of shared responsibility in knowledge creation. By engaging learners in activities centered around resource sharing, they build a culture of cooperation, support, and mutual accountability.

Instructions

1. **Create a Resource Repository:** (10 minutes)
 - Set up a centralized **online platform** (e.g., Google Drive, OneDrive, or a learning management system) that serves as a hub for shared materials.
 - Organize the repository into clear categories, such as **articles, tools, video resources, templates, or class notes**, to ensure ease of access.
 - Encourage learners to upload **study materials, links, case studies, or practical examples** that they find helpful.
 - Include guidelines for proper attribution, ensuring that contributors credit original sources and maintain academic integrity.
2. **Recognition and Encouragement:** (10 Minutes)
 - Build a system to **acknowledge and celebrate contributions** during class discussions or weekly check-ins. Examples include:
 - A **“Top Contributor” of the week** spotlight.
 - Mentioning noteworthy contributions during live sessions.
 - Including learner-submitted resources in course materials with credit to the contributor.
 - Reinforce the value of shared knowledge by linking contributions to course outcomes, e.g., how a shared tool or resource improved group performance or deepened understanding of a topic.



3. Collaborative Assignments: (40 minutes)

- **Design assignments** that explicitly require collaboration and resource sharing, such as:
 - **Group research projects:** Teams gather and share resources to address a complex problem or topic.
 - **Knowledge exchange forums:** Learners post curated resources or insights on a topic, followed by peer discussions.
 - **Collaborative content creation:** Groups develop presentations, infographics, or reports based on pooled knowledge.
- Use structured roles (e.g., **researcher, editor, presenter**) to ensure all team members contribute equitably to the task.
- Provide feedback emphasizing the value of the collaboration process as much as the final product.

Training Materials/Worksheets:

For the Resource Repository:

- Centralized platform (e.g., Google Drive, OneDrive, LMS).
- Organized folders (e.g., Articles, Tools, Notes).
- Contribution guidelines (attribution rules, file naming).
- Access permissions and activity tracking.

For Recognition:

- Templates for badges or certificates (e.g., Top Contributor).
- Slides for live acknowledgments.
- Feedback forms for peer and instructor recognition.
- **For Collaborative Assignments:**
 - Assignment guidelines with role descriptions.
 - Templates for presentations, research logs, and infographics.
 - Collaboration tools (Miro, Padlet, Google Docs).
 - Rubrics for evaluation.
- **Optional:**
 - Tutorial videos on platform usage.
 - Progress tracker (Trello, shared spreadsheet).

Facilitator Tips

- **Foster Inclusivity:** Ensure all learners feel welcomed and valued during discussions and activities.
- **Encourage Participation:** Actively involve quieter learners by prompting them to share their insights in breakout sessions or forums.
- **Provide Clear Instructions:** Ensure learners understand how to contribute to the shared repository and collaborate effectively.
- **Monitor Progress:** Regularly check the repository and forums to ensure active engagement and appropriate contributions.

- **Celebrate Contributions:** Use recognition strategies like "Top Contributor" spotlights to motivate learners.
- **Offer Feedback:** Focus on both the collaboration process and the quality of outcomes to reinforce the value of teamwork.

Examples of activities

Activity 1: Knowledge Hunt

- Divide learners into small groups and assign them topics to research collectively.
- Groups present their findings and upload resources to the shared repository, enriching the course materials.



Activity 2: Peer Teaching

- Pair learners and have them take turns teaching a concept or explaining a resource they contributed.
- Facilitate a **feedback loop** where peers can offer constructive comments and reflections on what they learned.



Evaluation of the module:

1. Do you feel connected to your peers in this course?

- Yes
- No

2. Did the activities effectively foster a sense of community?

- Very Effective
- Somewhat Effective
- Not Effective

3. Are you comfortable sharing resources within the group?

- Very Comfortable
- Somewhat Comfortable
- Not Comfortable

4. Do you feel supported by the community in this online course?

- Yes
- No

5. Do you feel you have a defined role within the online learning community?

- Yes
- No

Keeping learners safe:

- Ensure that all learners can access and participate in activities regardless of accessibility needs.
- Verify that virtual spaces are easy to navigate and accessible for everyone.
- Provide sufficient resources to accommodate all learners equally.



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Module 3. Involvement of the trainer

The involvement of the trainer, or instructor presence, is a critical factor in the success of online courses. This dimension emphasizes the active role of the instructor in guiding, supporting, and providing feedback to learners, which is essential for maintaining engagement and ensuring positive learning outcomes. By providing relevant examples and immediate feedback, and maintaining a visible teacher presence, teachers can significantly enhance the learning experience and outcomes. In this module, these key aspects of trainer engagement will be treated separately:

- ***Providing Examples***

Examples help to contextualize theoretical concepts, making them more accessible and easier to understand. By linking theoretical content to practical, real-world scenarios, teachers can help learners bridge the gap between abstract concepts and their applications. This approach not only aids in knowledge transfer but also promotes deeper learning.

- ***Giving Immediate Feedback***

Immediate feedback is one of the most powerful tools for enhancing learning and performance. It serves as a mechanism for learners to understand their current level of performance relative to their goals, enabling them to make necessary adjustments to improve (Hattie and Timperley (2007)). The timely nature of feedback ensures that learners can quickly correct misunderstandings and reinforce correct knowledge, which is critical for maintaining progress in an online learning environment.

- ***Teacher Presence and Engagement***

Teacher presence, or the visible and active participation of the instructor, teacher or trainer in the online learning environment, is crucial for creating a sense of structure and support. Teacher presence involves not only delivering content and providing feedback but also actively engaging with learners through discussions, activities, and personalized support.

On the other hand, when teachers are actively involved in the course, learners feel more supported and are more likely to participate in discussions, ask questions, and seek help when needed. This engagement is essential for sustaining motivation and ensuring successful learning outcomes in an online environment.

Therefore, the involvement of the trainer is essential for guiding learners through the course content and ensuring they remain engaged and on track.



General goal: To enhance the active role of the instructor in guiding, supporting, and providing feedback to learners to enhance their learning experiences and outcomes.

Objectives:

1. **To understand the relevance of using examples in online learning** to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and their applications.
2. **To identify possible examples associated to different disciplines** to present examples as strategies that facilitate example-based learning in different disciplines. active presence and teacher engagement during synchronous online classes.
3. **To highlight the need to provide adequate feedback** to improve student motivation, learning and performance.
4. **To learn the characteristics of effective feedback.**
5. **To provide activities for enhancing effective feedback**
6. **To understand the relevance of the teacher's active presence:** To raise awareness of the fundamental role of teacher involvement and commitment in fostering an interactive, motivating and effective virtual environment.
7. **To identify effective tools and practices:** To present digital tools and pedagogical strategies that facilitate active presence and teacher engagement during synchronous online classes.
8. **Develop communication and connection skills with learners:** To foster techniques that enable meaningful interaction, promoting active participation and a sense of community in the virtual classroom.

Methods: In this module, a brief theoretical presentation will be made where the most important aspects will be explained along three sections (providing examples, giving immediate feedback and presence and engagement of the teacher) to maintain commitment and ensure positive learning results. Moreover, activities will be planned to foster the qualities of an on-line actively involved teacher

Duration: This module should be completed over a session lasting approximately 4 hours, divided into various activities focusing on understanding and fostering on line trainer involvement

Section I: Providing Examples (1h 15')

1. Introduction

Incorporating examples effectively addresses the limitations of working memory and facilitates schema formation, making abstract knowledge more tangible and easier to internalize.

Example-Based Learning (EBL) is a pedagogical approach where learning occurs through exposure to and analysis of specific examples or cases. It is grounded in theories of cognitive and constructivist learning, emphasizing the importance of real-world applications for abstract concepts (Renkl, 2014).

Concretely, the provision of relevant examples by teachers is rooted in Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), which suggests that learners can process and retain information more effectively



when cognitive load is minimized. Examples help to contextualize theoretical concepts, making them more accessible and easier to understand.

2. Theoretical framework

Research by Clark and Mayer (2011) indicates that the use of examples in instructional materials can enhance comprehension and retention. By linking theoretical content to practical, real-world scenarios, teachers can help learners bridge the gap between abstract concepts and their applications. This approach not only aids in knowledge transfer but also promotes deeper learning. According to Sweller, J. (2010) examples support learning by contextualizing (examples tie theoretical concepts to familiar, real-world situations, allowing learners to see practical applications), simplifying (they break down complex ideas into smaller, more digestible components, helping retention (associating concepts with concrete examples enhances memory by linking abstract information to recognizable patterns) and by encouraging learners to apply principles across different contexts.

3. Section objectives

1. **To understand the relevance of using examples in online learning** to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and their applications
2. **To identify possible examples associated to different disciplines** to present examples as strategies that facilitate example-based learning in different disciplines. active presence and teacher engagement during synchronous online classes.

4. Activities

Next, two activities will be described to serve as a tool for teachers to develop and implement example-based learning in their practices.

Activity 1: Examples of example-based learning for different subjects

Objective: To provide examples on how examples can be elaborated for different disciplines and how to introduce them on on-line teaching.

Instructions for Implementation

- **Name of the activity:** ‘Introduce an example in your e learning class’.
- **Duration:** 20-30 minutes.
- **Platform:** Videoconferencing (Zoom, Microsoft Teams or similar) with the option of breakout rooms for small groups.

Teaching steps

Step 1: Fix the abstract concept to define (5 minutes)

Select from the subject you are teaching the abstract concept you want to develop for the students that, as much as possible, is related with real life situations and that can help them to better understand

Step 2: Use an example to explain it (15-20 minutes)

Create a practical example aligned with the concept to be learned. Some examples that can be used are the following depending on the subject:

Physics

- Abstract Concept: Newton's Laws of Motion.



Practical Example: Demonstrating Newton's Third Law ("For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction") by showing how a rocket launches by expelling fuel downward.

- Abstract Concept: States of Matter.

Example: Sharing a video of water boiling and freezing, encouraging students to analyse changes in state through virtual lab experiments.

Economics

- Abstract Concept: Inflation.

Example: Discussing the increase in prices for common items (e.g., coffee, gas) during a virtual discussion, supplemented by a graph or chart shared via screen sharing.

- Abstract Concept: Opportunity Cost.

Practical Example: Explaining the decision to attend college versus working full-time, highlighting what is gained (education and long-term earning potential) and lost (immediate income).

Biology

- Abstract Concept: Enzyme Function.

Practical Example: Comparing enzymes to a "lock and key" mechanism where a specific key (substrate) fits into a lock (enzyme) to unlock a reaction.

Geography

- Abstract Concept: Climate Zones.

Practical Example: Linking the tropical climate zone to real-world examples such as the Amazon Rainforest and its high biodiversity.

Mathematics

- Abstract Concept: Probability.

Practical Example: Explaining the probability of flipping a coin or predicting weather patterns based on past data.

- Abstract Concept: Linear equations.

Example: Using an online simulation to calculate the cost of a monthly gym membership, where the equation $y = mx + by = mx + by = mx + b$ represents the monthly fee plus a one-time registration cost.

Psychology

- Abstract Concept: Pavlov's Classical Conditioning.

Practical Example: Linking the concept to real-world scenarios, such as how a dog learns to associate the sound of a bell with being fed.

History

- Abstract Concept: The Industrial Revolution's Impact on Society.

Practical Example: Discussing how mass production during the Industrial Revolution led to the rise of factory towns and changes in labor practices.



- Abstract Concept: The concept of revolutions.
Example: Hosting a virtual role-play activity where students assume the roles of key figures from a revolution and discuss their goals via breakout rooms.

Computer Science

- Abstract Concept: Data Structures.
Practical Example: Using the analogy of a filing cabinet to explain hierarchical file systems or tree data structures.
- Abstract Concept: Debugging code.
Example: Providing students with a shared coding environment, such as Replit or Google Colab, where they collaboratively troubleshoot an error in a simple program.

Language Learning

- Abstract Concept: Vocabulary in context.
Example: Using online news articles or videos to highlight the use of new vocabulary words, followed by interactive quizzes.

Art

- Abstract Concept: Colour theory.
Example: Using a digital drawing tool (e.g., Canva or Photoshop) to demonstrate how complementary colours create visual balance, encouraging students to create their own designs.

Business Studies

- Abstract Concept: Marketing strategies.
Example: Assigning students to analyse and present the online advertising strategies of a popular brand using multimedia tools like Prezi or Canva.

Health and Physical Education

- Abstract Concept: Benefits of regular exercise.
Example: Sharing videos of at-home workout routines and having students track their progress over a week using an app or spreadsheet.

Environmental Science

- Abstract Concept: Carbon footprint.
Example: Using an online calculator to estimate their own carbon footprint and brainstorming actionable steps to reduce it during a collaborative session.

Expected results: The students get a better understanding of the abstract concepts and can internalize the learning by coming back to that example reference when faced with the concept again.



Activity 2: Group Activity: Designing Effective Examples for E-Learning

Objective: Participants will collaboratively create examples that enhance learner engagement and understanding in an e-learning context. They will also evaluate the effectiveness of examples based on cognitive load, relevance, and alignment with learning outcomes.

Instructions for implementation

- **Name of the activity:** ‘Designing Effective Examples for E-learning’.
- **Duration:** 60 minutes.
- **Platform:** Videoconferencing (Zoom, Microsoft Teams or similar) with the option of breakout rooms for small groups.
- **Optional Digital Tools:**
 - **Padlet or Jamboard:** For real-time brainstorming and sharing examples.
 - **Mentimeter or Poll Everywhere:** For quick feedback on redesigned examples.
 - **H5P or Canva:** To create interactive or visually engaging examples.
 - Prepared examples according to the subject:

Teaching Steps

Step 1: Preparation (10 minutes)

1. **Divide into Groups:**
 - Organize participants into small groups (4-6 members).
 - Assign each group a specific subject area (e.g., mathematics, science, language learning, or professional training).
2. **Introduction to Effective Examples:**
 - Briefly discuss the role of examples in learning, referencing principles from **Cognitive Load Theory** (reduce load by breaking concepts into digestible examples) and **Constructivist Learning**

Step 2: Brainstorming (20 minutes)

1. **Analyse Bad Examples:**
 - Each group receives a poorly designed example related to their subject (e.g., overly complex, irrelevant, or too abstract).
 - Task: Identify what makes the example ineffective.
2. **Design New Examples:**
 - Groups redesign the examples to:
 - Simplify complex concepts (align with cognitive load principles).
 - Connect to real-life contexts or learners' experiences.
 - Align with specific learning objectives.

Step 3: Share and Discuss (15 minutes)

1. **Presentation:**
 - Each group presents their redesigned example and explains their choices.
 - Encourage the use of visuals or multimedia tools (e.g., infographics, slides).
2. **Feedback:**
 - Other groups provide constructive feedback on clarity, engagement, and relevance.



- Use a rubric for evaluation (e.g., alignment with objectives, cognitive simplicity, interactivity).

Step 4: Reflection and Application (15 minutes)

1. Whole Group Discussion:

- Discuss how these examples can be implemented in real-world e-learning platforms (e.g., using learning management systems or interactive simulations).
- Highlight tools like polls, quizzes, or videos for integrating examples effectively

2. Key Takeaways:

- Summarize the best practices for using examples, such as keeping them context-specific and encouraging learner interaction.

Expected results: This activity emphasizes collaboration, critical thinking, and practical application, mirroring real-world instructional design challenges in e-learning contexts. The result from this activity is the obtention of self-explained clear and rich examples that can simplify complex concepts and connect to real-life students' experiences.

Section II: GIVING IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK (1h 15')

1. Introduction

2. Theoretical framework

Immediate feedback is one of the most powerful tools for enhancing learning and performance. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback serves as a mechanism for learners to understand their current level of performance relative to their goals, enabling them to make necessary adjustments to improve.

Studies have shown that immediate feedback in online courses leads to higher levels of learner satisfaction, improved academic performance, and increased motivation (Gikandi, Morrow, & Davis, 2011). The timely nature of feedback ensures that learners can quickly correct misunderstandings and reinforce correct knowledge, which is critical for maintaining progress in an online learning environment.

a. Feedback characteristics

This **feedback** has the following **characteristics**:

- a) It must start from the objectives set in the activity
- b) It must indicate the level of achievement of said objectives
- c) It must prove to be a help that allows improvement and provides an incentive to continue achieving the objectives.

Through feedback, a dialogue is established (it is understood in both senses) between the one who carries out the activity (student) and the one who provides the feedback (teacher or another colleague). This dialogue consists of several phases:

1. Give and receive feedback
2. Understand the comments received and plan improvement actions.



3. Implementation of the designed actions.

According to the Hattie and Timperley (2007) model, this is summarized in three questions:

- *What is the objective?*
- *What progress is being made?*
- *What is the next step?*

The Feed2Learn research group highlights the aspects to consider in relation to feedback and online education:

- Feedback that facilitates learning should be made up of a **combination of questions plus suggestions** that make you reflect on the aspects to improve and/or review of the activity and how to improve them.
- The type of channel used to give feedback (audio, video or written) does not have a significant impact on learning results (grades) or student satisfaction. But on the other hand, students consider that feedback through video generates greater proximity between teacher and students and allows for dialogue.
- To generate a dialogic feedback framework, it is essential to give students the possibility of resubmitting the work after the feedback received (**resubmission**) or promoting peer feedback.
- Students must be made aware of taking an active role with the feedback they receive and teach them what to do and how to do it with the feedback received (**feedback literacy**).

b. Key considerations for effective feedback

Another thing to keep in mind is that when proper techniques are not used, students may interpret feedback negatively and feel frustrated at the end of class. To create a positive dialogue that enhances student performance, there are practical tools that help the teacher incorporate the feedback process into their pedagogical routine.

Some key considerations for effective feedback are:

- **Highlight the positive aspects:** It is essential that the feedback focuses on what the student is doing well, to reinforce that attitude. Errors should be pointed out gently and gradually, so that the student believes in his or her ability to improve.
- **Relevance of feedback:** Feedback should be provided at the appropriate time, such as after an evaluation, so that the student can relate the corrections to the performance and results obtained.
- **Consider individual needs:** Each student is different, so the feedback must be adjusted to the characteristics and personality of each one, to be effective.



- **Using guiding questions:** Students often want to know how their progress is going. Key questions can help focus feedback, considering how the student is performing compared to their peers and how they can improve.
- **Tutoring:** 10-minute interviews with each student offer an excellent opportunity to provide personalized attention. This allows students to monitor their progress and maintain an active interest in their performance.
- **Focus on specific skills:** Feedback sessions should focus on specific areas that need improvement, avoiding general comments that do not provide clarity.
- **Scheduling meetings:** It is useful to plan feedback meetings in advance, so that students can prepare questions and make better use of time.
- **Progress notebook:** A notebook in which students' progress is recorded, with weekly comments on their performance, doubts, strengths and areas for improvement, is an effective tool to monitor progress.
- **Take notes:** Students should write down the key points of the feedback, allowing them to track their progress and delve deeper into the aspects they need to review.
- **Body language:** It is crucial that the teacher controls his or her gestures and facial expressions, since negative body language can generate confusion and frustration in the student.
- **Recognize small achievements:** It is important to value the small efforts and progress of students, such as punctuality or improvement in specific aspects.
- **Genuine recognition:** Praise must be authentic and based on the student's real performance, to avoid the subject being misinterpreted as easy or efforts being minimized.
- **Peer Feedback:** Teaching students to provide mutual feedback can be very beneficial. They should focus on constructive feedback and avoid personal judgments.
- **Second opinions:** Consulting with other adults, such as other teachers or principals, can provide objectivity and new perspectives on the student's performance.
- **Student Feedback:** It is important that students actively participate in their learning process, giving them the opportunity to express their opinions about their progress and how the teacher can help them improve.



This comprehensive approach seeks to create a learning environment where feedback is a positive and constructive tool for student growth.

3. Section objectives

1. To highlight the need to provide **adequate feedback to improve student motivation, learning and performance.**
2. To learn the **characteristics of effective feedback.**
3. To provide **activities for enhancing effective feedback**

4. Activities

Name: Designing constructive feedback

Objective: Provide students with an opportunity to receive constructive feedback on their GIS-based map analysis and develop their critical evaluation skills.

Duration: 45'

Platform: Videoconferencing (Zoom, Microsoft Teams or similar) with the option of breakout rooms for small groups.

- **Optional Digital Tools:**

- **Padlet or Jamboard:** For real-time brainstorming
- **Kahoot:** For quick feedback.

Materials needed:

- Feedback Form (can be displayed on screen).
- Tools to give and share answers in a visual way (e.g. Padlet or a collaborative document or played via *Kahoot*).

Teaching steps:

Step 1. Submission of Draft Work

- Each student creates a GIS-based map analysis on a specific topic (e.g., "Land Use Changes in a Selected Region" or "Optimal Crop Distribution Using Remote Sensing Data").
- Students submit their draft maps and a short explanatory report outlining their methodology, data sources, and key findings.

Step 2. Peer Review Assignment

- Students are paired randomly or grouped into teams of three.
- Each student reviews one peer's work using a structured feedback form provided by the instructor.

Step 3. Structured Feedback Form

The form includes the following prompts:



- **Strengths:** Identify one or two strong points in the map and analysis.
Example: "The map is visually clear, and the use of color coding effectively distinguishes land use categories."
- **Areas for Improvement:** Suggest one specific change to improve the analysis.
Example: "Consider adding a legend for the map to help interpret the data more easily."
- **Questions:** Pose a question to encourage deeper thinking.
Example: "What criteria did you use to determine the thresholds for land suitability?"

Step 4. Feedback Reflection and Revision

After receiving feedback, students write a short reflection on the input they received, focusing on:

- How the feedback has influenced their understanding of their work.
- Specific changes they will make in their final submission.

Step 5. Submission of Final Work

Students submit their revised maps and reports, incorporating feedback where appropriate.

Step 6. Instructor Follow-Up

The instructor reviews both the peer feedback and the final submissions, providing additional comments and grading based on improvements and adherence to the feedback.

Section III: TEACHER PRESENCE AND ENGAGEMENT (1h 15m)

1. Introduction

Online teaching poses unique challenges for teachers, especially in developing an active presence that fosters meaningful learning and connection with students. This theoretical framework addresses the importance of this presence, the barriers that arise, strategies for overcoming them, and the impact of teacher engagement on the educational experience.

2. Theoretical framework

Online education has transformed the dynamics of teaching and learning, requiring teachers to play a more active and engaged role in virtual environments. Research indicates that a strong teacher presence is positively correlated with learner engagement and satisfaction (Richardson & Swan, 2003). *Active teacher presence* not only encourages interaction, but also facilitates motivation, meaningful learning and a sense of community among participants

2.1. Relevance of Active Teacher Presence

Active presence is understood as the teacher's ability to design, facilitate and lead educational experiences in virtual environments. According to the *Community of Inquiry* model (Garrison, Anderson and Archer, 2000), teaching presence is one of the three fundamental elements for effective learning, along with cognitive and social presence:

- **Teaching presence:** Involves the planning and facilitation of learning, ensuring that students receive guidance and support.



- **Social presence:** This refers to the ability of participants to project themselves as real people, creating an environment of trust and connection.
- **Cognitive presence:** This is the ability of learners to construct and validate knowledge through dialogue and critical reflection.
- Teaching presence enhances the other two dimensions, creating an ecosystem in which students feel supported and motivated. Richardson and Swan (2003) confirm that students who perceive greater teacher presence report greater satisfaction with the course and more effective learning.

2.2. Common Barriers to Active Presence and Strategies for Overcoming Them

In online education, active presence faces challenges that, if not addressed, can compromise its effectiveness. Among the most common barriers are:

- **Emotional disconnection**

Lack of physical interactions can lead to students feeling isolated. To counteract this, the following are recommended:

- **Strategies:** Incorporate icebreaker activities, encourage informal interactions in forums and chats, and use empathetic language in communications.
- **Technologies:** Tools such as discussion forums, interactive video conferencing and asynchronous activities to reinforce community.

- **Technical challenges**

Connectivity issues and limited digital skills can hinder participation.

- **Strategies:** Provide clear guides, conduct technical pre-session testing and record lectures for later access.
- **Technologies:** Reliable platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, combined with downloadable resources to ensure accessibility.

- **Cognitive overload**

Too much content or activities can overwhelm both students and teachers.

- **Strategies:** Simplify course structure, prioritise key objectives and break content into manageable blocks.
- **Technologies:** Use of LMS (such as Moodle or Blackboard) to organise materials and activities.

2.3. Promoting Balance between Interaction and Content

The balance between interaction and content is essential to achieve dynamic classes and meet educational objectives. Some strategies include:

- **Structured planning:** Alternate theoretical lectures with interactive activities, such as discussions, live polls or group work.
- **Time management:** Spending approximately 60% of the time on interactive activities and 40% on content delivery, ensuring a varied experience.
- **Use of tools:**



- **For interaction:** Mentimeter, Padlet or Kahoot! to encourage real-time participation.
- **For content:** Explanatory videos, interactive graphics and simulations to complement the teaching.

This balance not only enhances attention but also reinforces students' emotional and cognitive connection to the course.

2.4. Assessing the Impact of Teacher Presence on the Student Experience

Teacher involvement in online environments has a direct impact on course perception and academic outcomes. According to Shea, Pickett and Pelz (2005), a strong teaching presence increases student retention and improves student performance. Some key indicators to assess this impact include:

- **Perception of course quality.**
Apply satisfaction surveys to measure student perceptions of teacher interaction.
Analyse participation in activities such as forums, polls and live questions.
- **Academic performance**
Monitor grades and course completion rates.
Assess how teaching interventions influence learning outcomes.
- **Sense of community**
Analyse activity in forums and group chats to identify levels of participation.
Observe the frequency and quality of student-teacher interactions.

2.5. Benefits of Active Presence

- **Student retention**
Active presence reduces dropout rates by promoting a supportive environment. Rovai (2007) concluded that students who perceive greater interaction with the teacher are less likely to drop out of courses.
- **Developing self-regulation skills**
Teacher guidance helps students develop skills in managing their time, setting goals and monitoring their progress (Zimmerman, 2002).
- **Fostering critical thinking**
Anderson et al. (2001) point out that the teacher's active presence fosters deep learning by leading discussions and activities that promote reflection.

3. Section objectives

1. **To understand the relevance of the teacher's active presence:** To raise awareness of the fundamental role of teacher involvement and commitment in fostering an interactive, motivating and effective virtual environment



2. To **identify effective tools and practices**: To present digital tools and pedagogical strategies that facilitate active presence and teacher engagement during synchronous online classes.
3. **Develop communication and connection skills with learners**: To foster techniques that enable meaningful interaction, promoting active participation and a sense of community in the virtual classroom.

4. Activity aimed at avoiding emotional disconnection

Name: Meaningful Connections in the Virtual Classroom

Objective: To foster emotional connection and a sense of community between students and teacher through personalized interaction and collaborative activities, avoiding the sense of isolation typical in online environments.

Instructions for implementation

- **Name of the activity:** ‘Virtual Connection Wheel’.
- **Duration:** 20-30 minutes.
- **Platform:** Videoconferencing (Zoom, Microsoft Teams or similar) with the option of breakout rooms for small groups.
- **Materials needed:**
 - Prepared questions (can be displayed on screen or sent via chat).
 - Tools to share answers in a visual way (e.g. Padlet or a collaborative document).

Teaching Steps:

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Start with empathy:** The teacher welcomes and briefly explains the activity, emphasizing that its purpose is to strengthen the sense of community.
- **Establish a safe space:** Remind participants that their answers are valued and that there is no ‘right answer’.

Step 2: Main Activity (15-20 minutes)

1. Initial group dynamics:

Teacher poses an open question to the whole group, such as:

- ❖ *‘What motivates you most to participate in this course?’*
- ❖ *‘What do you hope to learn in this session?’*

Students respond in chat or verbally, encouraging general participation.

2. Small group work (breakout rooms):

Divide students into groups of 3-4 people.

Provide simple questions to generate discussion, such as:

- ❖ *‘Share something positive that happened to you this week.’*
- ❖ *‘What strategies do you use to keep yourself motivated?’*

Encourage each group to choose a spokesperson to share their findings briefly at the end.



3. Back to the main group:

Spokespersons from each group share one or two salient reflections. The teacher acknowledges contributions and highlights common points, showing how individual experiences enrich the group.

Step 3: Closure (5 minutes)

- **Guided reflection:**

Ask students to write a word that summarizes how they feel after the activity (they can use the chat or a visual tool such as Mentimeter or Padlet). Teacher comments on the words shared, reinforcing a climate of closeness.

- **Personal commitment:**

Ask students to write a small commitment for the week in the chat, such as participating more actively, helping a partner, etc.

Expected results:

- Increased interaction between students and with the teacher.
- Reinforcement of the sense of belonging to the group.
- Reduction of the feeling of isolation in the virtual environment.

Feedback:

Request immediate feedback at the end of the activity by means of a quick survey (Google Forms or similar) with questions such as:

- *Did this activity help you feel more connected to the group?*
- *What would you like to change or improve?*

Evaluation of the module:

1. Do you feel that the activities described in this module can help to enhance your involvement degree during your online teaching?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Do you think that the examples provided or the examples built up during the activities can help you to improve the effectivity of the learning of some concepts for your students?
 - Yes, very effective
 - Depends on, they could be are somehow effective
 - No, they are not effective
3. Are you comfortable giving immediate feedback to on line students?
 - Very Comfortable
 - Somewhat Comfortable
 - Not Comfortable



4. Do you think this module has supported you on how to improve your giving feedback skills?
 - Yes
 - No
5. Do you think that the activity “Virtual Connection Wheel” can foster teacher presence and engagement by creating a sense of community between online teacher and students?
 - YesNo

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Module 4. Intensity of the interaction

Introduction

The interaction is a crucial concept in a learning environment and makes the environment interactive. The word interactivity is used in a variety of ways. The meaning – interaction between two or more people – is not the only one. It would be useful if the word ‘interactivity’ were reserved for educational situations in which human responses – either vocal or written – referred to previous human responses. The educational value of any specific interactive session could then be seen in terms of the degree to which each statement is built on previous ones (Daniel, 1996, cited by Klink, 2006).

Cognitive theory suggests more interaction in learning environments leads to improved learning outcomes and increased student satisfaction, two indicators of success useful to program administrators. Increased levels of interaction, as measured by time spent, actually decrease course completion rates. This result is counter to prevailing curriculum design theory and suggests increased interaction may actually diminish desired program reputation and growth. (Grandzol & Grandzol, 2010).

Chickering and Gamson (1987) illustrated the importance of interaction in learning. Five of their seven principles directly relate to interaction among the participants in the learning process and the participants with the subject matter:

- contacts between students and faculty
- reciprocity and cooperation among students
- prompt feedback
- emphasis on time on task
- communication of high expectations.

The student-instructor interaction refers to the interaction in which the student and the instructor have view exchanges in which the instructor seeks to stimulate interest, clarify questions, guide, motivate, and have a dialogue with the student.

Due to the concept of interaction of online learning the following aspects of the pedagogical course design can be identified:

General goal

The goal of this module is to explore the various tools and strategies that enhance the intensity of interaction in e-learning environments within the Higher Education (HE) sector. It aims to provide learners with a comprehensive understanding of how to foster effective communication, collaboration, and engagement in online learning settings. This module will focus on examining best practices, technological solutions, pedagogical strategies, and adaptive approaches to support faculty and students in overcoming challenges associated with online learning adaptation, thereby improving the overall quality of education and learning outcomes in the HE sector.



Objectives

1. **Understand the Role of Positive Communication:** Analyse how expressions of thanks, encouragement, and appreciation enhance student engagement and foster a supportive online learning environment in higher education.
2. **Implement Strategies for Encouragement and Motivation:** Develop techniques to incorporate regular encouragement and compliments into e-learning interactions, boosting student confidence and participation.
3. **Foster a Culture of Appreciation:** Design methods to incorporate appreciation and approval into online course structures, helping to build a sense of community and student belonging in the virtual classroom.
4. **Evaluate the Impact of Approval on Learning Outcomes:** Assess the effects of approval and positive reinforcement on student performance and retention in e-learning settings.
5. **Create a Positive Feedback Framework:** Develop a framework for providing constructive and positive feedback, balancing compliments and approval with areas for improvement, to maintain a high level of motivation among students.

Methods

- Community-Building Activities: Facilitate icebreakers and group discussions that promote mutual appreciation among students to build a sense of belonging in the virtual classroom.
- Discussion Forums: Implement structured discussion boards where students and instructors regularly express thanks and appreciation for each other's contributions.
- Case Study Analysis: Use case studies of successful e-learning courses to highlight how positive communication impacts student engagement and satisfaction.
- Personalized Messaging: Train instructors on how to send personalized encouragement and compliments via email or discussion forums to motivate students individually.
- The Role-play: simulates real-life e-learning scenarios where participants practice using positive communication techniques like thanks, encouragement, and approval to enhance student engagement.

Section I: THE FOUNDATIONS OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION IN E-LEARNING (1h 15m)

1. Introduction

E-learning has become a vital tool in contemporary education, providing opportunities for individuals to learn from anywhere at any time. However, effective e-learning requires more than just technological infrastructure; it necessitates positive communication practices to ensure engagement and success. Positive communication in e-learning fosters an inclusive and supportive environment, enhances motivation, and promotes collaboration among learners and educators. Studies indicate that clear, empathetic, and constructive communication is essential to student satisfaction and learning outcomes (Sun & Chen, 2016). Additionally, feedback plays a pivotal role in shaping learner experiences, with research highlighting the importance of timely and constructive feedback in digital learning settings (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Digital platforms have transformed traditional communication methods, demanding adaptability and proficiency in utilizing virtual tools. Social presence theory suggests that the perception of



being socially connected in online settings significantly influences learners' emotional and cognitive engagement (Richardson et al., 2017). Moreover, non-verbal cues such as tone, emojis, and video interactions can enhance the sense of connection in e-learning environments (Walther, 1996). Positive reinforcement, acknowledgment of achievements, and encouraging dialogue further build trust and strengthen relationships among participants (Garrison et al., 2000). Cultural sensitivity is another cornerstone of positive communication in global e-learning spaces. Effective communicators must consider linguistic differences, cultural norms, and varying expectations to ensure inclusivity and equity (Gunawardena et al., 2001). The implementation of these principles contributes to a productive and positive learning atmosphere, enabling diverse learners to thrive in the digital education landscape. By emphasizing positivity, adaptability, and empathy, educators can cultivate meaningful interactions and optimize the e-learning experience.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for positive communication in e-learning integrates multiple theories to explain how interaction and engagement are fostered in digital learning environments. Social presence theory highlights the importance of creating a sense of connection and emotional proximity, which reduces learner isolation and enhances interaction (Richardson et al., 2017). This theory emphasizes the role of empathy, encouragement, and acknowledgment in building a supportive online learning community. Similarly, constructivist learning theory underscores that knowledge is co-constructed through meaningful interactions between learners and instructors (Vygotsky, 1978). Positive communication practices, such as open dialogue and collaborative tasks, align with constructivist principles by promoting active learning and shared understanding. Feedback and self-regulated learning theory provide additional insights into communication practices. Feedback that is timely, constructive, and clear enables learners to reflect on their progress, enhancing their motivation and self-regulation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This is particularly significant in e-learning, where the lack of physical interaction necessitates precise and empathetic feedback. Media richness theory further contributes to the framework by evaluating the effectiveness of communication mediums in conveying messages. Rich media, such as video conferencing or interactive tools, can improve message clarity and build trust when combined with positive communication strategies (Walther, 1996).

Cultural sensitivity also plays a pivotal role in positive communication within global e-learning spaces. Effective communication requires recognizing linguistic and cultural diversity, fostering inclusivity, and creating an equitable environment for all learners (Gunawardena et al., 2001). Moreover, emotional and cognitive engagement theories emphasize the role of positive communication in promoting a sense of belonging and enhancing learner motivation. Sun and Chen (2016) argue that emotionally supportive interactions contribute to better cognitive outcomes by helping learners feel valued and understood.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, educators can develop communication strategies that address the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of learners. This approach ensures that e-learning environments are engaging, inclusive, and supportive, leading to improved learning outcomes and overall satisfaction.



3. Section objectives

- Understand the Role of Positive Communication
- Evaluate the Impact of Approval on Learning Outcomes
 - The psychology of positive communication in education.
 - Benefits of expressing gratitude, encouragement, and appreciation.
 - Evidence-based insights into the link between approval and learning outcomes.
 - Real-world examples of effective communication fostering student engagement.
- **Activities:**
 - Group discussions on how communication styles influence motivation.
 - Case studies showcasing positive communication in e-learning.

Activity 1: Group Discussions on How Communication Styles Influence Motivation

Objective:

To explore and understand how different communication styles can impact learners' motivation in various contexts.

Instructions for implementation

1. Name of the Activity: *Understanding the Role of Communication Styles in Motivation.*
2. Duration: 30–40 minutes.
3. Platform: Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or similar) with breakout rooms for small group discussions.

Development

Phase 1: Introduce the Concept with Examples (10 minutes)

- The facilitator introduces the concept of *communication styles* (e.g., assertive, passive, aggressive, empathetic) and their potential effects on motivation.
- Real-life scenarios are provided to demonstrate each style, such as how empathetic communication fosters collaboration or how aggressive communication may demotivate a team.

Example:

- Empathetic communication: A teacher praising a student's effort and offering constructive feedback.
- Aggressive communication: A manager criticizing a team's failure without offering solutions.

Phase 2: Use an Example to Explain It – Social Work Studies

Abstract Concept: The Impact of Communication Styles on Client Empowerment

Practical Example:

- **Activity:** Role-play exercise to explore how different communication styles (e.g., empathetic, directive, passive) impact client empowerment and engagement.
- **Details:**
 1. Present a scenario where a social worker is meeting with a client facing housing instability.



- Empathetic communication: The social worker actively listens, validates the client's feelings, and collaborates on a plan.
- Directive communication: The social worker outlines a structured plan but limits client input.
- Passive communication: The social worker avoids making decisions, leaving the client uncertain about next steps.
- 2. Assign students to small breakout groups. Each group role-plays the scenario using one of the communication styles. One student acts as the social worker, another as the client, and others as observers.
- **Student Task:**
 - After the role-play, the group discusses:
 - How the communication style influenced the client's sense of empowerment and willingness to engage.
 - The advantages and disadvantages of each approach.
 - Observers provide feedback on the effectiveness of the communication and suggest ways to improve.
- **Tools:**
 - Use a videoconferencing platform with breakout room functionality (e.g., Zoom or Microsoft Teams).
 - Provide a worksheet with guiding questions to structure the discussion.

Expected results

Students will develop an understanding of how communication styles directly influence client empowerment in social work practice. They will gain practical skills in identifying and applying communication strategies that foster trust, collaboration, and self-determination, which are crucial in social work.

Activity 2: Case studies showcasing positive communication in e-learning.

Objective:

To analyse real-world case studies that illustrate the impact of positive communication strategies in e-learning, fostering a better understanding of how to create supportive and engaging digital learning environments.

Instructions for implementation

1. Name of the Activity: ***Analysing Case Studies on Positive Communication in E-Learning.***
2. Duration: **30–40 minutes.**
3. Platform: **Video** conferencing platform (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or similar) with breakout room functionality for small group discussions.

Development

Phase 1: Introduce the Concept with Examples (10 minutes)

- The facilitator briefly explains the role of positive communication in enhancing engagement and motivation in e-learning.
- Examples of positive communication strategies are shared:



- Providing timely and constructive feedback.
- Using empathetic language and active listening.
- Encouraging participation and collaboration through positive reinforcement.

Phase 2: Analyse Case Studies in Breakout Rooms (15–20 minutes)

Step1: Distribute Case Studies: Each breakout room is assigned a specific case study to analyze. Examples:

1. **Case Study 1:** A professor uses personalized feedback and encouragement to improve student engagement in an online course.
 - Scenario: The professor addresses each student's strengths and areas for improvement in a supportive tone, leading to higher participation in discussion forums.
2. **Case Study 2:** A virtual teacher uses gamification and recognition to foster collaboration.
 - Scenario: The teacher introduces a points system for teamwork, where groups earn badges for completing tasks, increasing group motivation and interaction.
3. **Case Study 3:** A corporate trainer adapts communication styles to support diverse learners.
 - Scenario: The trainer ensures inclusivity by using culturally sensitive language and providing alternative learning materials for different learning preferences.

Step 2: Group Discussion and Analysis

- Groups analyse the assigned case study by discussing:
 - What communication strategies were employed?
 - How did these strategies contribute to learner motivation, engagement, and satisfaction?
 - What improvements or alternative approaches could be considered?

Phase 3: Present and Reflect (10 minutes)

- Each group presents a summary of their case study analysis to the main group.
- The facilitator leads a reflection session, connecting insights to broader principles of positive communication and encouraging participants to share their own experiences.

Expected results

Students will gain a deeper understanding of how positive communication enhances e-learning outcomes. They will develop the ability to identify effective strategies and apply these principles in real-world educational or professional contexts.

Section II: STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION IN E-LEARNING (1h 15m)

1. Introduction

In modern education, e-learning has become an essential component of teaching and learning. However, technology alone cannot guarantee successful educational outcomes. Effective strategies for encouragement and motivation are critical to ensuring student engagement, participation, and overall achievement. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsic motivation, which arises from students' sense of autonomy and competence, is a significant factor in learning success. Educators must create a supportive and positive environment where students feel valued and empowered to achieve their goals. Encouragement, in particular, plays a pivotal role in



building confidence and fostering active participation in online learning settings (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Motivational strategies, such as personalized feedback, recognition of effort, and consistent encouragement, have been shown to improve student retention and satisfaction in e-learning (Alawamleh et al., 2020). A positive feedback loop, where students receive constructive guidance alongside recognition of their strengths, helps maintain their focus and boosts their self-esteem (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Furthermore, fostering a sense of community and connection among students can significantly enhance motivation. By implementing methods that prioritize collaboration, peer support, and interactive engagement, educators can address the common challenges of isolation and disengagement in virtual classrooms (Kuo et al., 2014).

Additionally, clear communication of expectations and regular affirmation of progress are vital in online learning environments. Studies show that students who receive consistent encouragement are more likely to take ownership of their learning and strive for higher levels of achievement (Sun & Rueda, 2012). Gamification elements, such as badges or rewards for participation, can also act as powerful motivators, transforming the learning experience into a more engaging and rewarding journey (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017).

This lecture will explore practical strategies for integrating encouragement and motivation into e-learning. Through the use of case studies, role-playing exercises, and real-world examples, participants will gain insights into how to enhance their teaching practices and create a more inclusive and motivating virtual learning environment. By focusing on the emotional and psychological needs of students, educators can foster long-term engagement and academic success in the ever-evolving world of e-learning.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical foundations for encouraging and motivating students in e-learning environments are rooted in several key educational and psychological frameworks. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000) emphasizes the importance of satisfying students' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness to foster intrinsic motivation. In e-learning, strategies that allow students to make choices and feel in control of their learning process can significantly enhance engagement and motivation. Similarly, the Social Cognitive Theory proposed by Bandura (1986) highlights the role of self-efficacy in motivating learners. When students believe in their ability to succeed, they are more likely to invest effort and persist in their studies.

Research has shown that encouragement and positive reinforcement are essential in boosting self-efficacy and motivation. Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue that effective feedback, which balances constructive criticism with positive acknowledgment of students' achievements, is one of the most impactful strategies in improving learning outcomes. In the context of e-learning, timely and personalized feedback is particularly important, as it helps bridge the distance between instructors and students (Shute, 2008). Moreover, motivation in e-learning can be significantly enhanced by creating a sense of community. According to Rovai (2002), fostering social presence and peer interaction in virtual classrooms reduces feelings of isolation and promotes collaborative learning.



Gamification has emerged as a popular tool to encourage and motivate students in online environments. By incorporating elements such as badges, points, and leaderboards, educators can make learning more engaging and enjoyable (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017). However, gamification must be implemented thoughtfully to ensure that it aligns with pedagogical goals and does not overshadow intrinsic motivation. Additionally, the cognitive load theory by Sweller (1988) suggests that reducing unnecessary cognitive demands on students can improve their motivation to engage with learning materials. Simplifying content delivery and providing clear guidance are critical in this regard.

Another important aspect of e-learning motivation is the role of emotional support. Studies by Pekrun et al. (2002) emphasize the impact of positive emotions, such as enjoyment and pride, on student engagement and achievement. Encouragement and recognition from instructors can foster these emotions, creating a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, regular acknowledgment of effort and progress helps students build a growth mindset, as described by Dweck (2006), where they see challenges as opportunities for development rather than threats. Finally, effective motivation strategies must consider the diversity of learners. Keller's (1987) ARCS model of motivation—Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction—provides a comprehensive framework for designing motivational strategies that cater to varied learning needs. By capturing students' attention, making content relevant to their goals, building their confidence, and ensuring satisfaction through meaningful feedback, educators can sustain long-term motivation in e-learning.

3. Section objectives

1. **Implement Strategies for Encouragement and Motivation:** Develop techniques to incorporate regular encouragement and compliments into e-learning interactions, boosting student confidence and participation.
2. **Create a Positive Feedback Framework:** Develop a framework for providing constructive and positive feedback, balancing compliments and approval with areas for improvement, to maintain a high level of motivation among students.

Activity 1: Role-playing Feedback Scenarios for Various Student Profiles

Objective:

Develop skills to provide personalized, constructive, and motivational feedback tailored to diverse e-learning student needs.

Instructions for implementation:

1. Name of the Activity: "Practice Tailored Feedback for E-learning Students"
2. Duration: 25-30 minutes.
3. Platform: Videoconferencing tools (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) with breakout rooms for small group discussions.

Development:

Phase 1: Introduction to Feedback Principles (5 minutes)



The instructor explains the principles of effective feedback, emphasizing the importance of combining constructive criticism with encouragement. Concepts such as specificity, timeliness, and positivity are highlighted (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Phase 2: Role-Playing Feedback Scenarios (20-25 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups, with each group assigned a specific student profile and scenario:

- *Student A*: A high-achieving student with anxiety about making mistakes.
- *Student B*: A disengaged student struggling to meet deadlines.
- *Student C*: A highly motivated student eager for advanced challenges.

Each group role-plays an instructor-student interaction, with one participant acting as the instructor and another as the student. The "instructor" provides feedback tailored to their assigned profile, incorporating compliments and motivational techniques.

Expected results:

Participants will practice delivering feedback that builds confidence and motivates students, recognizing the importance of adapting their approach to individual needs.

Activity 2: Practical Exercises on Crafting Motivational Messages and Feedback

Objective:

Enhance skills in creating motivational messages and feedback that inspire confidence and encourage active participation in e-learning environments.

Instructions for implementation:

1. Name of the Activity: "Crafting Positive and Motivational Feedback."
2. Duration: 20-25 minutes.
3. Platform: Collaborative tools such as Google Docs or Padlet, with live discussion via videoconferencing.

Development

Phase 1: Explanation and Examples (5 minutes)

The instructor provides a brief overview of motivational messaging techniques, showcasing examples like:

1. "Your progress on this assignment is impressive. Keep up the great work, and don't HESITATE to ask if you need further clarification."
2. "I see you're making a great effort, especially in [specific area]. With a little more focus on [another area], your work will be outstanding!"

Phase 2: Crafting Feedback Messages (15-20 minutes)

Participants are presented with three scenarios where students need encouragement:

1. A student who struggles with low confidence.
2. A student who excels but needs a push to go beyond their comfort zone.
3. A student who needs motivation to participate actively in group discussions.



In small groups, participants craft motivational messages and feedback for each scenario. Each group shares their messages, and the instructor provides constructive suggestions for improvement.

Examples of motivational messages:

1. *"Hi [Student's Name], I can see you're putting a lot of effort into your work, and that's something to be really proud of! It's completely normal to face challenges when learning new material, but the fact that you're tackling it head-on shows your dedication. Don't hesitate to ask questions—remember, every question is a step toward understanding. Keep believing in yourself, and with time, you'll find your confidence growing. I'm here to support you every step of the way, so keep going!"*
2. *"Hi [Student's Name], I'm really impressed with the quality of work you've been producing! You clearly have a strong grasp of the material. However, I believe you have the potential to push your work even further by exploring some more advanced concepts or tackling more challenging tasks. Stretching beyond your comfort zone might feel daunting, but it's also where significant growth happens. I'm excited to see you take this next step—keep up the amazing work, and let me know if you need guidance along the way!"*
3. *"Hi [Student's Name], I've noticed you've been listening carefully during our group discussions, which is a valuable skill. I'd love to hear more of your thoughts and ideas, as your perspective is really important to the conversation. Sharing your insights will not only help your peers but also give you a chance to deepen your understanding. Remember, there's no right or wrong answer—your input is always valuable. I'm confident that your contributions will inspire others as well. I encourage you to take that next step in participating more actively!"*

Expected results:

Participants will refine their ability to compose feedback that balances encouragement and constructive suggestions, fostering a supportive e-learning environment.

SECTION III: BUILDING A CULTURE OF APPRECIATION IN VIRTUAL CLASSROOM (1H 15M)

1. Introduction

Building a culture of appreciation in virtual classrooms is essential for fostering a positive and engaging learning environment. Appreciation, defined as the recognition of value and effort, enhances student motivation, collaboration, and overall satisfaction in online learning (Sun & Chen, 2016). In virtual settings, where physical cues are absent, intentional efforts to express gratitude and acknowledgment play a crucial role in maintaining interpersonal connections. Research highlights that students who feel valued are more likely to participate actively and perform better academically (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Similarly, appreciation promotes a sense of belonging, reducing the isolation often associated with online learning (Richardson et al., 2017).



Positive communication strategies, such as personalized feedback, public recognition of achievements, and empathetic interactions, are effective in creating a culture of appreciation (Walther, 1996). For instance, acknowledging a student's effort in discussion forums or assignments can encourage continued engagement. Moreover, appreciation extends beyond teacher-student interactions; it also involves fostering peer-to-peer acknowledgment, which strengthens collaboration and teamwork (Garrison et al., 2000). The use of digital tools, such as virtual badges or celebratory messages, further reinforces appreciation in meaningful and accessible ways (Sun & Chen, 2016).

Cultural sensitivity is another critical aspect when expressing appreciation in diverse virtual classrooms. Educators must ensure that their methods resonate with students from various cultural backgrounds to avoid misinterpretation or exclusion (Gunawardena et al., 2001). By fostering a culture of appreciation, educators not only improve student outcomes but also contribute to a supportive and inclusive online learning environment. This approach aligns with the broader goals of online education: to create spaces where learners feel respected, motivated, and empowered to succeed.

2. Theoretical framework

Building a culture of appreciation in virtual classrooms is crucial for fostering a positive learning environment. A sense of appreciation can enhance student engagement, boost motivation, and improve retention rates. According to Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, fulfilling students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is essential for intrinsic motivation. In the context of virtual learning, appreciation can serve as a form of recognition that satisfies the need for relatedness, thus increasing student participation and satisfaction. Furthermore, social presence theory (Rovai, 2002) suggests that the perception of being valued within the learning community strengthens students' emotional connection to the class, which is essential in an online setting where students may feel isolated.

A culture of appreciation not only promotes individual student engagement but also encourages a sense of belonging. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) underscores the importance of belongingness and esteem as critical to fostering self-actualization and growth. In the online classroom, where physical cues are absent, appreciation expressed through timely feedback, acknowledgment of contributions, and celebration of achievements can help meet these psychological needs. Pekrun et al. (2002) emphasize that positive emotions, including those triggered by appreciation, contribute to improved academic performance and resilience.

Feedback, an essential tool for building appreciation, is supported by Hattie and Timperley's (2007) research on the power of feedback in student learning. They argue that feedback that acknowledges effort and progress, while also pointing out areas for improvement, can significantly enhance student motivation and performance. In virtual classrooms, where feedback may lack the immediacy of face-to-face interactions, making appreciation a central part of feedback can reduce feelings of distance and disconnect. Moreover, Keller's ARCS model of motivation (1987) highlights the importance of creating a sense of satisfaction through appreciation, which in turn reinforces students' motivation to engage and perform.

The role of peer appreciation is equally significant. Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory underscores the role of social reinforcement in motivating behavior. In online environments,



fostering peer-to-peer appreciation through group activities, discussions, and collaborative projects can enhance a supportive network among students, leading to increased engagement and improved learning outcomes. This aligns with research by Tinto (1997), who noted that a strong sense of community and support among peers positively influences student retention, especially in online learning contexts.

To create an authentic culture of appreciation, instructors must model appreciation themselves. As suggested by Dweck's (2006) work on mindset, showing recognition for effort rather than just outcomes helps cultivate a growth mindset, where students feel valued for their learning process. This approach not only reinforces motivation but also encourages students to take risks and embrace challenges. In this way, creating a culture of appreciation in virtual classrooms is not merely about praising students but about fostering an environment where effort is acknowledged and students are empowered to take ownership of their learning.

3. Section objectives

1. **Foster a Culture of Appreciation:** Design methods to incorporate appreciation and approval into online course structures, helping to build a sense of community and student belonging in the virtual classroom.
2. **Evaluate the Impact of Approval on Learning Outcomes:** Assess the effects of approval and positive reinforcement on student performance and retention in e-learning settings.

Activity 1: Collaborative brainstorming on ways to foster appreciation

Objective:

To collaboratively explore and design actionable strategies to foster appreciation in virtual classrooms, with a focus on creating a supportive, engaging, and inclusive learning environment that promotes motivation and collaboration.

Instructions for implementation:

Name of the Activity: "Designing and Presenting Virtual Classroom Appreciation Initiatives"

Duration:

- 30-40 minutes

Platform:

- Videoconferencing (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) with shared presentation tools (e.g., Google Slides or Canva).

Activity:

Fostering Appreciation in Virtual Classrooms: Collaborative Brainstorming.

Duration:

40 minutes (10 minutes introduction, 20 minutes group brainstorming, 10 minutes presentations).

Platform:

Video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet) with breakout room functionality and collaborative tools (e.g., Google Docs, Jamboard, or Padlet).



Development:

Phase 1: Introduction to the Concept (10 minutes)

Introduction by Facilitator

- Define appreciation in the context of virtual classrooms, emphasizing its role in boosting student engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging (Richardson et al., 2017).
- Discuss common barriers in virtual learning environments that hinder appreciation, such as lack of face-to-face interactions, limited feedback, and cultural misunderstandings (Walther, 1996; Gunawardena et al., 2001).

Provide Real-Life Examples

- *Teacher-to-Student Appreciation:* Recognizing student efforts during group projects or discussions, e.g., “Your thoughtful response added great value to our conversation.”
- *Student-to-Student Appreciation:* Peer acknowledgment through discussion forums or during presentations, e.g., “I found your example very helpful in understanding the concept.”
- *Technology Tools for Appreciation:* Using platforms like Kahoot for public recognition or badges in learning management systems to celebrate achievements.

Explain the Objective of the Activity

- “Your task is to brainstorm practical and innovative ways to integrate appreciation into virtual classrooms. Think about teacher-student, peer-to-peer, and technology-facilitated appreciation strategies.”

Phase 2: Collaborative Brainstorming in Breakout Rooms (20 minutes)

1. Group Assignments

- Divide participants into small groups (4–6 members). Each group works on a specific area:
 - *Group A:* Teacher-to-Student Appreciation Strategies.
 - *Group B:* Peer-to-Peer Appreciation Strategies.
 - *Group C:* Technology-Driven Appreciation Tools and Methods.

2. Structured Discussion in Groups

- Groups use guiding questions to direct their brainstorming:
 - “*What are creative ways for teachers to show appreciation in virtual environments?*”
 - “*How can students be encouraged to appreciate their peers effectively?*”
 - “*What digital tools or features can enhance expressions of appreciation?*”

3. Documentation of Ideas

- Each group uses a shared document or virtual whiteboard to note their ideas, ensuring clarity and organization.
- Groups prioritize their top three ideas and provide concrete examples.
 - *Example 1 (Teacher-to-Student):* Personalized video messages celebrating milestones, like completing a challenging project.
 - *Example 2 (Peer-to-Peer):* Anonymous shoutouts via Padlet to highlight contributions during group activities.



- Example 3 (Technology-Driven): Virtual badges for collaborative achievements or participation milestones.

Phase 3: Presentations and Reflection (10 minutes)

Group Presentations

Each group presents their ideas to the main session, highlighting their top three strategies with examples.

Facilitator-Led Reflection

The facilitator summarizes recurring themes, innovative ideas, and practical takeaways.

Reflection prompts:

“Which of these strategies would have the greatest impact on fostering appreciation in your classroom?”

“What challenges might arise when implementing these strategies, and how could they be addressed?”

Expected results:

Participants will generate actionable strategies to promote appreciation in virtual classrooms, addressing various levels of interaction (teacher-student, student-student, and technology-enhanced).

The activity will enhance participants' understanding of how appreciation can positively influence engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging in e-learning settings.

Participants will leave with a practical toolkit of appreciation methods tailored to virtual environments.

Activity 2: Planning and Presenting Virtual Classroom Appreciation Initiatives

Objective:

Design, plan, and present innovative appreciation initiatives that foster a sense of community and belonging in the virtual classroom. Evaluate the potential impact of these initiatives on student engagement, performance, and retention.

Instructions for implementation:

1. Name of the Activity: "Designing and Presenting Virtual Classroom Appreciation Initiatives"
2. Duration: 30-40 minutes
3. Platform: Videoconferencing (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) with shared presentation tools (e.g., Google Slides or Canva).

Development

Phase 1: Conceptualizing Appreciation Initiatives (10 minutes)

The instructor presents examples of virtual classroom appreciation initiatives, such as:

- **"Student of the Week"** recognition for consistent participation and improvement.
- **Peer Appreciation Sessions** where students can share what they appreciate about each other's contributions.



- **End-of-course certificates or virtual badges** recognizing progress or achievements in specific areas.

Participants are then tasked with brainstorming their own initiatives, considering factors like the frequency of recognition, methods for delivering praise, and ensuring inclusivity for all students.

Phase 2: Group Presentations (20-25 minutes)

Participants will be divided into small groups and given time to design a detailed appreciation initiative. Each group will create a short presentation outlining their initiative, explaining:

- The purpose of the initiative.
- The desired outcomes (e.g., increased engagement, improved performance).
- How the initiative will be implemented in the virtual classroom.

Each group will present their initiative to the larger group for feedback.

Example: Engagement Stars Program

The **Engagement Stars Program** is designed to recognize and appreciate students for their active participation, encouraging a sense of belonging in the virtual classroom. This initiative aims to reward students who demonstrate engagement through participation in discussions, completing assignments, and collaborating with peers. The program is structured to award "Engagement Stars" to students who contribute positively to the course, creating an inclusive and motivating environment.

The program will recognize one or more students weekly as the "Engagement Star(s)" based on their engagement, with a monthly celebration where students who earned the most stars will be acknowledged. During the monthly celebration, students will receive digital certificates or badges as recognition for their efforts. The program will be facilitated through platforms such as Google Classroom, Padlet, or Moodle, where stars are posted and a leaderboard will be displayed on the course website showing the students' accumulated stars.

Recognition criteria for earning stars include active participation in live sessions, engagement with peers through feedback in group discussions, timely submission of assignments, and demonstrating a positive attitude by helping others and maintaining a supportive environment. For example, a student who asks insightful questions during class and provides responses to peers may earn two stars, while a student submitting an excellent assignment and offering feedback to others could receive three stars. A student consistently contributing to group work may earn four stars. Expected outcomes of the program include increased student engagement, a stronger sense of belonging, and improved academic performance. Students who feel appreciated are more likely to participate regularly, leading to higher retention and better learning outcomes. To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, surveys will be conducted to assess its impact on engagement and motivation, while engagement metrics and academic performance will also be monitored before and after the program's implementation.

The program will be introduced in Week 1 of the course, where students will be briefed on how to earn stars. Each week, the instructor will announce the "Engagement Star(s)" for the week, and at the end of each month, a virtual session will be held to celebrate students with the most stars, providing them with certificates as recognition of their achievements.



The **Engagement Stars Program** is a simple yet powerful way to create a more engaging and supportive virtual learning environment, fostering motivation, participation, and a sense of community within the classroom.

Expected results:

Participants will develop practical appreciation strategies and evaluate how these initiatives might foster a positive learning environment. Additionally, they will reflect on how approval and positive reinforcement can influence student performance, motivation, and retention.

Evaluation of the Module: Self-Evaluation Questions

To assess the effectiveness of the training module and encourage reflection on the learning experience, the trainer will propose the following five self-evaluation close-ended questions. These questions will allow participants to rate their understanding and confidence in applying the concepts and strategies discussed in the course.

Participants will answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Self-Evaluation Questions

1. I effectively utilized personalized feedback techniques during interactions.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

2. I incorporated positive reinforcement strategies in my communication with learners.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

3. I successfully fostered a culture of appreciation among my peers and students during the module.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

4. I feel confident in my ability to provide constructive feedback following the Positive Feedback Framework.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

5. I have reflected on my learning experiences and identified areas for improvement in my feedback practices.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)



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Module 5. Online teaching knowledge and experience

General goal:

To foster a collaborative and enriching online learning environment by equipping participant lecturers with skillsets based on real-life scenarios through mutual exchange of expertise and insights from their online teaching experience. This approach enhances the collective understanding and practical application of course content, ultimately improving the quality of online courses and boosting student motivation.

Objectives:

1. **Mutual Sharing of Experiences:** Introduce participants to common tools for sharing online teaching knowledge, fostering an environment where lecturers and students can exchange their personal and professional experiences, thus enhancing the online learning community.
2. **Knowledge Exchange:** Facilitate the exchange of expertise between participants by initiating the exchange of experiences and raising awareness of both the opportunities and challenges presented by online teaching/learning environments (for both theoretical and when necessary practical lectures), thereby improving the collective learning experience.
3. **Real-Life Scenario Application:** Equip participants with the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life scenarios, using insights gained from shared experiences and online teaching tools to address practical challenges effectively.
4. **Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Promote collaborative problem-solving by improving constructive feedback and interaction between participants, creating opportunities for them to work together on common issues, leveraging their diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
5. **Building a Supportive Community:** Enhance motivation for mutual sharing and the creation of ideas, knowledge, and experiences by developing a supportive online community where participants feel comfortable sharing their ideas, feedback, and resources, contributing to a more enriching and inclusive learning environment.

Methods:

- **Face-to-face teaching:** Introduce the participants to the basic principles, challenges and opportunities of knowledge and experience sharing and give examples of various online tools or platforms
- **Interactive Discussions:** Foster a sense of community and open communication among participants from the outset. Engage participants in sharing their own experiences and get acquainted with each other as an ice-breaker activity



- **Role-playing:** Facilitate role-playing in participants for given scenarios from different science disciplines. Present participants with case studies or real-life scenarios relevant to online teaching. Facilitate group discussions and problem-solving sessions based on these scenarios.
- **Hands-on experiences:** Implement practical exercises, such as forming a social media platform, WhatsApp group, drive link etc where the participants can directly share their own knowledge and experiences on given questions or topics.
- **Online discussion forums:** Set up dedicated online forums or discussion boards where participants can share their experiences, ask questions, and provide feedback to build a supportive community among parties of online teaching/learning. This method can be used for evaluation of training sessions.

Duration: 4 hours

Resources needed:

- Human Resource: Experienced facilitators and trainers to lead the sessions and provide guidance
- Technical Equipment: Laptop/projector/speakers/screen (or room with built-in AV equipment)
- Internet Access
- Interactive Tools: Zoom, Teams, Kahoot, Gamification Tools
- Evaluation Tools: Evaluation Questionnaires, Feedback forms

Order of activities:

Activity 0- Introduction

(30 minutes)

- Overview of the course and objectives
- Icebreaker activity to get acquainted with each other and with tools to be used; during which participants share their own experiences related to online teaching. Facilitate interactive discussions to help them get acquainted and learn from each other's experiences

Activity 1- Introduction to various knowledge and experience sharing formats and tools

(50 minutes)

- A general session where participants are introduced to the basic tools, formats, principles, main challenges and opportunities of knowledge and experience sharing. Use presentation slides and examples of various online tools or platforms. Have participants create and use social media platforms, WhatsApp groups, or drive links to share their knowledge and experiences on given questions or topics. Assign collaborative tasks that require participants to work together using these tools.
- Knowledge and experience sharing between lecturers (which can then be applied to their own lectures for knowledge exchange between students and between lecturers and students)



- Various online tools, social media groups or platforms, online group collaboration tools, discussion fora or webinars, online mentoring, blogs etc (such as zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Kahoot or ClassDojo for interactive sharing of experiences)
- Document Management Systems (DMS) for knowledge sharing and collaboration within community learning environments for co-creation, storage and editing of educational or research material (such as GoogleDrive, Microsoft SharePoint, Dropbox, etc)
- Virtual Simulation Platforms, AR/VR, Metaverse, laboratory simulation apps and other tools for demonstration of hands-on or lab work in natural and life sciences for knowledge sharing (such as Virtual Education System for Dentistry for Real-Time Dental Training and Evaluation System, LabXchange, ReactorLab, LineRider, Zooniverse etc; <https://www.techlearning.com/news/best-free-virtual-labs>)
- Exercise: Connection Circle

Activity 2- Basic theoretical information on some gamification tools and their application (50 minutes)

- Introduction to Kahoot, Open edX, classdojo,, MOOC, DL2BrightSpace, Google Classroom, talentLMS or eThinkLMS open source gamification tools (eg <https://raccoongang.com/blog/top-5-open-source-gamification-tools/#>)
- Downloading/opening these online tools on individual computers
- Formation of teams and distribution of scenarios. Provide specific scenarios and roles for participants to play, followed by group discussions on the experiences and insights gained.
- Application of gamification tools by different teams to their scenarios. Implement role-playing exercises where participants act out scenarios from different science disciplines.

Activity 3- Basic theoretical information on some online video making tools and their application (50 minutes)

- Introduction to selected open video repositories (OVRs)
- Introduction to Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, CourseLab, WebMO or similar open source video development tools (eg <https://elearningindustry.com/open-source-tools-to-boost-digital-learning>)
- Downloading/opening these online tools on individual computers
- Formation of teams and distribution of scenarios. Provide specific scenarios and roles for participants to play, followed by group discussions on the experiences and insights gained.
- Application of video making tools by different teams to their scenarios. Implement role-playing exercises where participants act out scenarios from different science disciplines

Activity 4- Basic theoretical information on some e-assessment tools and their application (30 minutes)

- Introduction to Quizziz, Menti, PearDeck, WebCT, Molecular Biology MCQ, BuzzMath and other interactive assessment tools that allow the user to prepare online quizzes, discussion or chat rooms and other evaluations (eg <https://www.essaygrader.ai/blog/online-assessment-tools-for-teachers>)



- Downloading/opening these online tools on individual computers
- Formation of teams and distribution of scenarios. Provide specific scenarios and roles for participants to play, followed by group discussions on the experiences and insights gained
- Application of assessment tools by different teams to their scenarios. Implement role-playing exercises where participants act out scenarios from different science disciplines.

Activity 5- Online Discussion Forum for Feedback and Evaluation

(30 minutes)

- Set up dedicated online forums or discussion boards where participants can share their experiences, ask questions, and provide feedback. Encourage regular participation and monitor the forums to ensure constructive interactions.

Training Materials/Worksheets:

- Pre-prepared slides and handouts for each section.
- Exercise Worksheets: Templates for scenarios for sharing of different experiences related to online teaching or evaluation of these knowledge sharing
- Feedback forms: Observation forms or checklists for teachers to provide feedback during peer observations.
- Support Resources: A list of recommended online tools for interactive teaching

Activity 0 Handouts - Introduction (30 minutes)

The objective of this module is to equip the participants with skill sets based on real-life scenarios through mutual exchange of expertise and insight from their online teaching experience.

The interactive digital tools that will be used is in essence similar to previous modules, however the purpose in implementing these tools is different. Here, teacher participants being trained in this module as well as the trainers themselves will not only improve their experience sharing skills obtained during COVID-19 pandemic for better preparedness in the future, but also learn about sharing knowledge and experience related to their disciplines, such as in courses requiring hands-on practice such as chemistry laboratory or dentistry practice, and furthermore learn how to encourage their students to share experiences with their peers or fellow students. Bearing in mind that digital learning has become a part of our life, whether in the format of fully online courses or in the form of hybrid teaching activities, this training will focus on the digital tools and strategies for a mixed participation format.

Hence, the main objectives of this module are:

1. **Mutual Sharing of Experiences:** Introduce participants to common tools for sharing online teaching knowledge, fostering an environment where teachers and students can exchange their personal and professional experiences, thus enhancing the online learning community.



2. **Knowledge Exchange:** Facilitate the exchange of expertise between participants by initiating the exchange of experiences and raising awareness of both the opportunities and challenges presented by online teaching/learning environments, thereby improving the collective learning experience.
3. **Real-Life Scenario Application:** Equip participants with the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life scenarios, using insights gained from shared experiences and online teaching tools to address practical challenges effectively.
4. **Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Promote collaborative problem-solving by improving constructive feedback and interaction between participants, creating opportunities for them to work together on common issues, leveraging their diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
5. **Building a Supportive Community:** Enhance motivation for mutual sharing and the creation of ideas, knowledge, and experiences by developing a supportive online community where participants feel comfortable sharing their ideas, feedback, and resources, contributing to a more enriching and inclusive learning environment.

It is known that active participation of students is crucial for effective learning, however this has been far more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic due to low self-confidence, lack of infrastructures (such as computer cameras), lack of fast internet connection, or unsuitable environment (such as very crowded or loud family room). This has inevitably resulted in frustrated lecturers, unmotivated or “lost” students, and in the end an inefficient learning environment. Different lecturers have tried to come up with different ways to motivate the students, various companies such as Zoom or Moodle have improved existing online platforms or devised new digital platforms.

Knowledge-sharing comes in different flavours:

- (1) It is important to share both best practices and sometimes failures with each other as a form of knowledge and experience sharing among lecturers.
- (2) In the traditional teaching environment, teachers share the formal knowledge of their discipline with their students; sharing of theoretical knowledge is relatively easier in a digital environment, however when it comes to sharing of practical skills such as clinical operation skills in medicine or dentistry, performing chemical reactions in chemistry or biology, or even repairing mechanical problems in automobiles in car mechanics vocational school, then sharing of knowledge and experience through digital tools becomes all the more important and just as challenging.
- (3) Active participation of students, peer learning and mentoring, and collaborative learning are all important aspects of learning, and need to be well-adapted to digital learning environments.

Face-to-face knowledge sharing can be intimidating, particularly for shy personalities. Digital knowledge sharing can have pros and cons; on the one hand, some people can be unmotivated or uninterested in sharing their experiences online to an anonymous audience, particularly when cameras are turned off; on the other hand, this anonymity can be encouraging for some personalities. Various digital icebreaker activities can be used to trigger the initial exchange of experiences.

In this first introduction part of the module, we want the participants to get acquainted with each other and with tools to be used. To that end, the trainers are encouraged to use one or more of the following icebreaker activities to encourage the participants to introduce themselves and sharing their experiences in a motivating, interesting or funny way (Exercise Worksheet 1).

Exercise Worksheet 1. Suggested ice-breaker activities for encouraging sharing of knowledge or experiences online or in digital platforms

Ice-Breaking Activity Example 1: Online Teaching Bingo:



Preparation:

- Create the Bingo Card:

Use a collaborative tool like Google Sheets or an interactive platform like Bingo Baker (<https://bingobaker.com/>) to create a Bingo card. Populate the card with statements related to online teaching experiences. Examples include:

"Taught a class larger than 50 students."
"Faced technical issues during a live session."
"Used a virtual whiteboard."
"Conducted a virtual lab experiment."
"Recorded a lecture."
"Received feedback from more than 20 students in one session."
"Hosted a guest speaker in an online class."
"Used breakout rooms for group discussions."

- Share the Bingo Card:

Provide participants with a link to access the digital Bingo card. Ensure all participants have access to the necessary tools and platforms.

Instructions for Participants:

Access the Bingo Card: Open the provided link to the digital Bingo card using Google Sheets or Bingo Baker. Familiarize yourself with the statements on the card.



Mark the Statements: Read through the statements and mark those that apply to your online teaching experiences. Use the digital tools available to mark the statements directly on the Bingo card.

Bingo Game Rules: The goal is to get a "Bingo" by marking five statements in a row horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Once you achieve a Bingo, be prepared to share your experiences related to the marked statements.

Share Your Experiences: During the video conferencing session, participants who achieve a Bingo will take turns sharing their experiences. Use a platform like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet for the video conference. When it's your turn, explain how the marked statements apply to your teaching experiences. Engage with other participants by asking questions and sharing insights.

Example Digital Bingo Card:

Trainers can use the following template to create their Bingo card:

Taught a class larger than 50 students	Faced technical issues during a live session	Used a virtual whiteboard	Conducted a virtual lab	Recorded a lecture experiment
Received feedback from more than 20 students in one session	Hosted a guest speaker in an online class	Used breakout rooms for group discussions	Attended an online professional development session	Facilitated a live Q&A session
Implemented a flipped classroom	Used screen sharing during an online lesson	Uploaded a pre-recorded lecture	Created an online quiz	Conducted a virtual field trip
Provided one-on-one online tutoring sessions	Held virtual office hours	Received positive feedback from students	Shared course materials through cloud storage	Participated in a virtual teacher meet-up
Has used Zoom for online teaching	Knows how to create a Kahoot quiz	Has conducted a virtual lab experiment	Collaborates using GoogleDrive	Uses WhatsApp groups for teaching



Uses virtual reality tools	Participates in teacher forums	Has taught students with special needs	Has used Facebook for education	Has mentored other teachers
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Ice-Breaking Activity Example 2: Getting to Know Each Other

This icebreaker activity aims to create a fun and engaging way for participants to get to know each other, share their online teaching experiences, and foster rapport, all while becoming familiar with digital tools.

- **Introduction Round (10 minutes):** Introduce Yourself: Each participant will take a turn to share:
 - Their names
 - Their teaching backgrounds (subjects they teach, years of experience, etc.)
 - One key insight or lesson they've learned from their experience with online teaching

Encourage Engagement: Ask participants to actively listen and take note of any common interests or unique experiences shared by others. This can help build connections and set the tone for collaboration.

- **Activity: Virtual Connections (15 minutes):** Create the Virtual Connections Grid: Use a shared Kahoot or ClassDojo board to create a grid with statements related to online teaching experiences.

Example Statements:

- *"Has used Zoom for online teaching"*
- *"Has conducted a virtual lab experiment"*
- *"Facilitated group work using Google Docs"*
- *"Created an online quiz"*
- *"Hosted an online guest speaker"*
- *"Used breakout rooms for discussions"*
- *"Recorded a lecture"*
- *"Faced technical difficulties during a class"*

Share the Grid: Provide participants with a link to access the digital grid.

- Access the Virtual Grid: Participants open the provided link to the Kahoot or ClassDojo board and familiarize themselves with the statements on the grid.
- Find Connections: Participants interact with their peers to find those who match the criteria on the grid. When they find a peer who fits a statement, they can mark that square



and ask the peer to briefly share their experience. The goal is to complete as many squares as possible within the allotted time.

- Share Your Connections: After the activity, participants can share some of the interesting experiences they discovered, fostering further discussion and connections.

- **Reflection (5 minutes)**

- Group Discussion: Facilitate a group discussion where participants can discuss common challenges and experiences with online teaching tools.
- Share Insights: Encourage participants to share any interesting insights or tips they gained from the activity.
- Summarize Key Points: Summarize the key points discussed and highlight any valuable takeaways that can be applied to their online teaching practices.

Activity 1- Introduction to various knowledge and experience sharing formats and tools (50 minutes)

This general session is designed to introduce participants to the fundamental tools, formats, principles, main challenges, and opportunities associated with knowledge and experience sharing. Utilizing presentation slides and examples of various online tools and platforms, this session will provide a comprehensive overview of the different methods available for effective sharing.

Participants will actively engage in creating and using social media platforms, WhatsApp groups, or drive links to share their knowledge and experiences on assigned questions or topics. Collaborative tasks will be assigned to require participants to work together using these tools, fostering a sense of community and enhancing the sharing process.

The primary objective of this session is to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences among teachers, students, and between teachers and students. By exploring and utilizing various digital tools, participants will learn to effectively communicate and collaborate, thereby enriching the educational experience for all involved.

Formats for Sharing Knowledge:

Between teachers: Webinars, professional forums, collaborative projects.

Between students: Group projects, peer review activities, discussion boards.

Between teachers and students: Interactive sessions, feedback tools, mentoring platforms.



ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUTS - knowledge and experience sharing formats and tools (50 minutes)

- **Introduction and Presentation of available digital tools (30 minutes):**
- Present various online tools, social media groups or platforms, online group collaboration tools, discussion fora or webinars, online mentoring, blogs.
 - **Zoom/Teams/Google Meet:** Used for hosting the session and breakout rooms. Key features are digital classrooms, online meetings, screen sharing, recording the online sessions, polls, breakout rooms, chat for engagement.
 - **Kahoot:** Used for gamification of an interactive bingo game, quick quizzes, instant evaluation and/or learning competition among students. Key features are Quizzes, leaderboards, real-time feedback.
 - **ClassDojo:** Used for creating collaborative or competitive grids. Key features are Customizable grids, behavior tracking, sharing fun learning moments.
 - **Canvas:** A comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) for course management, integration with learning resources, and comprehensive course delivery.
 - **Blackboard:** A full-featured LMS with advanced course delivery and integrated assessment tools.
 - **Google Classroom:** Seamlessly integrates with Google Workspace, offering real-time feedback and easy course management.
 - **Edmodo:** A platform for communication, collaboration, and organization, designed specifically for higher education.
 - **Moodle:** A customizable LMS with plugins and integrations for a tailored learning experience.
 - **Turnitin:** A tool for plagiarism checking and grading, ensuring academic integrity.
 - **Slack:** A team communication tool with chat rooms, direct messaging, and file sharing.
 - **Trello:** A project organization tool using card-based task management and customizable boards.
 - **Coursera:** Offers courses from top universities and institutions, providing certificate programs and online learning opportunities.
 - **Quizlet:** A study tool with flashcards, learning games, and study sets for various subjects.
 - **Padlet:** A digital bulletin board for real-time collaboration and sharing ideas.
 - **Socrative:** A tool for real-time feedback and assessment through live quizzes and instant grading.
 - **Nearpod:** An interactive lesson delivery tool with interactive slides, VR, and real-time responses.
 - **Evernote:** A note-taking and organization tool for note-taking, organization, and file sharing.



- **Grammarly:** A writing enhancement tool for grammar checking, style suggestions, and plagiarism detection.
- **Blooket:** An interactive learning game tool with customizable games and real-time feedback.
- **Prodigy:** A math learning game that helps students improve their math skills through engaging gameplay.
- **WhatsApp:** Features: Instant messaging, group chats, voice and video calls, media sharing. Usage: Quick communication between students and teachers, forming study groups, and sharing class updates and resources.
- **Facebook:** Features: Group creation, event organization, file sharing, live streaming. Usage: Creating class groups for discussions, organizing online events, and sharing educational content and resources.
- **Instagram:** Features: Photo and video sharing, stories, live streaming, messaging. Usage: Sharing visual learning content, live streaming educational sessions, and engaging students through interactive posts and stories.
- Present Document Management Systems (DMS) for knowledge sharing and collaboration within community learning environments for co-creation, storage and editing of educational or research material.
 - **Google Drive:** Features: Cloud storage, file sharing, real-time collaboration, integration with Google Workspace (Docs, Sheets, Slides), version control, and extensive third-party app integration. Usage: Ideal for collaborative projects, shared documents, and cloud-based file management.
 - **Microsoft SharePoint:** Features: Document storage and management, intranet and team site creation, robust search capabilities, version control, workflow automation, and integration with Microsoft Office 365. Usage: Great for organizational collaboration, document workflows, and internal communication.
 - **Dropbox:** Features: Cloud storage, file sharing, collaboration tools, offline access, Smart Sync, version history, and third-party integrations. Usage: Suitable for file storage, team collaboration, and sharing large files.
 - **Box:** Features: Secure file sharing, collaboration tools, advanced security features, integration with enterprise apps, automated workflows, and version control. Usage: Best for secure document sharing, team collaboration, and enterprise-level document management.
 - **OneDrive for Business:** Features: Cloud storage, real-time document collaboration, integration with Microsoft Office, file sharing, version control, and offline access. Usage: Excellent for personal and team storage, document sharing, and collaboration within the Microsoft ecosystem.
 - **M-Files:** Features: Metadata-driven document management, automated workflows, version control, compliance support, mobile access, and integration with various business systems. Usage: Suitable for organizations needing robust document control and workflow automation.



- **Evernote Business:** Features: Note-taking, document storage, real-time collaboration, task management, integration with other apps, and powerful search capabilities. Usage: Ideal for organizing notes, research materials, and collaborative projects.
 - **Zoho Docs:** Features: Cloud storage, online document editing, file sharing, collaboration tools, version control, and integration with Zoho suite of applications. Usage: Great for document storage, team collaboration, and project management.
 - **Confluence:** Features: Document collaboration, team workspaces, knowledge base creation, integration with Jira, page versioning, and content organization. Usage: Perfect for project collaboration, knowledge sharing, and creating a centralized information repository.
 - **Nextcloud:** Features: Self-hosted cloud storage, file sharing, real-time collaboration, end-to-end encryption, version control, and integration with various applications. Usage: Ideal for organizations wanting control over their data with self-hosting capabilities.
 - **Egnyte:** Features: Secure file sharing, collaboration, advanced security features, integration with popular business applications, and data governance. Usage: Suitable for secure document sharing, team collaboration, and compliance-focused organizations
- Present Virtual Simulation Platforms, AR/VR, Metaverse, laboratory simulation apps and other tools for demonstration of hands-on or lab work in natural and life sciences for knowledge sharing.
 - **Virtual Education System for Dentistry for Real-Time Dental Training and Evaluation System:** Features: Real-time dental training, virtual simulations of dental procedures, interactive feedback. Usage: Dental education and training, real-time practice and evaluation of dental procedures.
 - **LabXchange:** Features: Virtual lab simulations, interactive experiments, personalized learning pathways, resource sharing. Usage: Science education, laboratory practice, collaborative learning and research.
 - **ReactorLab:** Features: Interactive chemical reactor simulations, control and analysis of reactor operations, real-time data visualization. Usage: Chemical engineering education, reactor design and operation training.
 - **LineRider:** Features: Physics-based simulation, track design and visualization, interactive learning. Usage: Physics education, conceptual understanding of motion and forces, creative problem-solving.
 - **Zooniverse:** Features: Citizen science projects, real-world data analysis, collaborative research opportunities. Usage: Biology, astronomy, climate science education, community-driven research projects.
 - **PraxiLabs:** Features: Virtual science labs, interactive simulations, multimedia-rich experiments, safety training. Usage: Biology, chemistry, physics education, remote laboratory experiences.



- **LearnBrite:** Features: 3D virtual environments, interactive simulations, gamified learning experiences, real-time collaboration. Usage: Virtual classroom, corporate training, immersive learning experiences.
 - **Science Interactive:** Features: Online science labs, interactive experiments, multimedia content, virtual dissections. Usage: Science education, remote lab experiences, enhanced learning through interactivity.
 - **ClassVR:** Features: Virtual reality-based learning, immersive educational content, interactive 3D models, VR lesson plans. Usage: K-12 and higher education, immersive science and geography education, virtual field trips.
 - **HiDs AR/VR Lab Setup:** Features: Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) lab equipment, interactive simulations, 3D visualization. Usage: Science education, virtual lab setups, interactive learning in AR/VR environments.
 - **Metaverse Learning Platforms:** Features: Virtual worlds, interactive 3D simulations, collaborative environments, real-time feedback. Usage: Comprehensive learning experiences, remote collaboration, immersive education in various disciplines
- **Open discussion among participants (20 minutes):** if they have used any of the above tools and if there are other Online Education; Virtual Simulation Platforms and/or Document Management Systems (DMS) they are already familiar with. Lead the discussions with triggering questions on experience sharing of the participants.
 - **Important note!** In time of application, it is better to check the current/ emerging digital tools new to the market to make the session valid and up to date.

Exercise Suggestion: Connection Circle

- Real-Life Scenario: Prof. Ayesha teaches freshman level chemistry online. She uses Zoom for lectures and Google Drive for sharing resources. Students collaborate on projects using Google Docs, but some students face challenges with engagement and accessibility. To address this and strengthen connections among students, Prof. Ayesha decides to implement a "Connection Circle" exercise.
- Objective: Enhance communication and collaboration skills among students, address accessibility challenges, and foster a sense of community.
- Duration: 30 minutes (can be shrieked according to the time available)
- Materials Needed:
 - Zoom or other video conferencing tool with breakout room functionality
 - Google Drive and Google Docs
 - Virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming (e.g., Google Jamboard)
- Introduction: The facilitator introduces the purpose of the Connection Circle exercise. Briefly explains the activities and goals for the session.



- Identify the tools: Write one tool or platform you've used for online teaching. Fill in the table below with its details.

Tool/Platform Name	Purpose (e.g., Communication, Collaboration, Engagement)	Strengths/Weaknesses of the tool

- Connection Mapping: Draw a connection map showing how your tool interacts with others. Use arrows to describe the relationships (e.g., "Zoom shares notes via Google Drive").
- Breakout Room Discussions: Divide students into small groups using Zoom breakout rooms. Each group is given a specific topic or challenge related to accessibility in online learning.
- Group Collaboration: Groups collaborate using Google Docs and a virtual whiteboard to brainstorm solutions to the given challenges, such as designing a chemical reaction. Each group appoints a spokesperson to share their insights with the entire class.
- Class Discussion: Spokespersons from each group share their findings and proposed solutions. Open the floor for a brief discussion, encouraging students to provide feedback and additional suggestions. Ask questions like: What other tools could you add to make learning more accessible? How would you address technical issues or challenges in using these tools?
- Instructions for the Facilitator:
 - Set Up Breakout Rooms: In Zoom, set up breakout rooms and assign students to groups. Ensure each group has access to a shared Google Doc and virtual whiteboard (e.g., Google Jamboard).
 - Prepare Discussion Topics: Create a list of accessibility challenges and topics for each group to discuss (e.g., difficulty using Google Docs, lack of internet access, challenges with virtual labs).
 - Introduce: Greet the students and explain the purpose of the Connection Circle exercise. Discuss the importance of addressing accessibility challenges and fostering a supportive online community.
 - Foster Breakout Room Discussions: Assign students to their breakout rooms. Instruct each group to select a spokesperson. Provide clear instructions on the topics to discuss and the tools they should use for collaboration.
 - Trigger Group Collaboration: Monitor the breakout rooms to ensure groups are on track and addressing their topics. Offer assistance and guidance as needed.
 - Promote Class Discussion: Bring all students back to the main Zoom room after the breakout sessions. Invite spokespersons from each group to share their findings and proposed solutions. Facilitate an open discussion, encouraging feedback and additional suggestions from all students.



- Conclude: Summarize the key points discussed and the solutions proposed. Thank the students for their participation and emphasize the importance of continued collaboration and communication.

Activity 2- Basic theoretical information on some gamification tools and their application (50 minutes)

This session introduces participants to the fundamental concepts of gamification and its application in educational settings. Participants will learn about various gamification tools, their features, and how they can be used to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Presentation slides and interactive demonstrations of tools such as Kahoot, Open edX, ClassDojo, MOOC, DL2BrightSpace, Google Classroom, TalentLMS, and eThinkLMS will be used. Participants will also download/open these tools on their devices, form teams, and apply the tools to specific educational scenarios through role-playing exercises.

ACTIVITY 2 HANDOUTS - information on some gamification tools and their application

- **Introduction to Gamification Tools (10 minutes):** Familiarize participants with basic gamification concepts and introduce various tools. Presentation slides outlining the principles of gamification in education. Overview of specific tools (many of which were already introduced under Activity 1 above). Open discussion among participants if they have used any of the above tools and if there are other gamification tools they are already familiar with.
 - **Kahoot:** Features: Quizzes, leaderboards, real-time feedback. Usage: Engaging students with interactive quizzes and tracking their progress through fun, gamified assessments.
 - **Open edX:** Features: Online courses, interactive learning modules. Usage: Providing comprehensive online courses with interactive content to enhance student learning experiences.
 - **ClassDojo:** Features: Collaborative grids, behaviour tracking. Usage: Facilitating classroom management and student engagement through collaborative activities and behaviour tracking.
 - **MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses):** Features: Wide-reaching, flexible learning. Usage: Offering accessible and flexible learning opportunities through online courses available to a large audience.
 - **DL2BrightSpace:** Features: Comprehensive LMS features, personalized learning paths. Usage: Delivering a complete learning management system with personalized learning paths for students.
 - **Google Classroom:** Features: Assignment management, real-time feedback. Usage: Organizing and managing assignments, providing real-time feedback to enhance student learning.
 - **TalentLMS:** Features: Customizable courses, gamification elements. Usage: Creating engaging and personalized learning experiences through customizable courses and gamification features.



- **eThinkLMS:** Features: Robust LMS, extensive integrations. Usage: Providing a robust learning management system with extensive integrations to enhance the learning experience.
- **Downloading/Opening Gamification Tools (5 minutes):** Ensure all participants have access to the necessary tools. Guide participants through the process of downloading or opening each tool on their devices. Provide technical support as needed to resolve any access issues.
- **Formation of Teams and Distribution of Scenarios (5 minutes):** Organize participants into teams and assign educational scenarios for role-playing exercises. Divide participants into small teams. Distribute specific scenarios and roles to each team (e.g., applying gamification in a science class, creating interactive history lessons). Explain the objectives and expected outcomes of the role-playing exercises
- **Application of Gamification Tools by Teams (20 minutes):** Implement gamification tools in the assigned scenarios and explore their practical application. Each team collaborates to apply the assigned tool(s) to their scenario. Encourage creativity and experimentation with different features of the tools. Teams document their process and prepare to share their insights.
- **Group Discussion and Feedback (10 minutes):** Share experiences, discuss challenges, and provide feedback on the use of gamification tools. Teams present their findings, highlighting successes and challenges faced during the application process. Facilitate an open discussion, encouraging participants to share insights and ask questions. Summarize key points and provide additional resources for further learning

Exercise Suggestion: Gamified Lesson Plan Challenge

- Real-life Scenario: *Asst Prof. John, an experienced lecturer in the department of history, is transitioning to online teaching. He wants to make his lessons more engaging for his students. Asst Prof. John has been introduced to various gamification tools like Kahoot, Open edX, and ClassDojo during a professional development session. He aims to use these tools to create an interactive and engaging lesson plan for his upcoming lecture on World War II.*
- Objective: Encourage participants to apply gamification tools to design an interactive lesson plan that enhances student engagement and learning.
- Duration: 30 minutes (can be adapted according to the time available)
- Materials Needed:
 - Computers or tablets with internet access
 - Access to gamification tools (Kahoot, Open edX, ClassDojo)
 - Presentation slides or handouts with information on gamification tools



- Virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming (e.g., Google Jamboard)
- Introduction: Brief overview of the exercise and its objectives. Introduction to the real-life scenario of Asst Prof. John and his goal to create an engaging lesson plan using gamification tools.
- Group Formation and Tool Assignment: Divide participants into small groups. Assign each group one of the gamification tools (e.g., Kahoot, Open edX, ClassDojo). Provide a brief overview of the tool assigned to each group.
- Brainstorming Session: Groups brainstorm ideas on how to use the assigned gamification tool to create an interactive lesson plan for the unit on World War II. Use the virtual whiteboard or shared document to jot down ideas and plan the lesson structure
- Lesson Plan Development: Groups develop a detailed lesson plan using their assigned gamification tool. Incorporate interactive elements such as quizzes, leaderboards, collaborative activities, and real-time feedback. Document the lesson plan in a shared document, ensuring it includes clear objectives, activities, and assessment methods
- Presentation and Feedback: Each group presents their gamified lesson plan to the entire class. Facilitator and participants provide feedback, highlighting strengths and suggesting improvements. Discuss the potential impact of the gamified lesson plan on student engagement and learning outcomes.
- Instructions for the Facilitator:
 - Set Up Tools: Ensure participants have access to the necessary gamification tools (Kahoot, Open edX, ClassDojo). Prepare presentation slides or handouts with information on each tool's features and applications
 - Create Breakout Rooms: Set up breakout rooms for group work (if using Zoom or similar platform). Assign participants to groups and ensure each group has access to a virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming.
 - Introduce: Greet the participants and explain the purpose of the Gamified Lesson Plan Challenge. Introduce the real-life scenario of Asst Prof. John and his objective to create an engaging lesson plan on World War II.
 - Group Formation and Tool Assignment: Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a gamification tool (Kahoot, Open edX, ClassDojo). Provide a brief overview of each tool's features and applications.
 - Brainstorm: Instruct groups to brainstorm ideas on using their assigned tool to create an interactive lesson plan. Encourage creativity and collaboration during the brainstorming process.
 - Develop Lesson Plans: Monitor groups as they develop their lesson plans, offering guidance and support as needed. Ensure groups document their lesson plans clearly and include interactive elements.
 - Present and Feedback: Invite each group to briefly present their gamified lesson plan. Pay attention to timing and being fair to all groups. Facilitate a discussion, providing constructive feedback and encouraging participants to share insights and suggestions.



- Conclude: Summarize the key points discussed and the innovative ideas presented. Thank the participants for their engagement and emphasize the importance of using gamification to enhance student learning experiences.
- **Note!** Similar exercises can be applied for different subjects. For example: Design a gamified activity to improve student engagement during an online history lecture for sophomores. Create a reward system for a sophomore history class using a behaviour-tracking tool. Develop an interactive quiz for assessing the learning outcomes of students.

Activity 3- Basic theoretical information on some online video making tools and their application (50 minutes)

In this session, participants will delve into the world of online video making tools, gaining both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. The session will start with an introduction to selected open video repositories (OVRs) and a range of open-source video development tools, such as Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, CourseLab, and WebMO. These tools are instrumental in creating engaging and interactive educational videos, which can significantly enhance the learning experience.

Participants will download and open these tools on their individual computers, allowing for hands-on exploration. They will then form teams and be given specific scenarios to work on. Each team will apply the video making tools to create educational content based on their given scenarios. This collaborative approach ensures that participants not only learn about these tools but also understand their practical applications in real-life teaching environments.

ACTIVITY 3 HANDOUTS - information on some online video making tools (50 minutes)

- Introduction to selected open video repositories (OVRs): Explore repositories that offer a wide range of educational videos. Discuss how these repositories can be used to supplement teaching materials.
- Materials Needed:
 - Computers or tablets with internet access
 - Access to online video making tools (Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, CourseLab, WebMO)
 - Presentation slides or handouts with information on video making tools
 - Virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming (e.g., Google Jamboard)
- **Introduction to most common open source video development tools (10 minutes):** Use presentation slides to introduce selected OVRs (YouTube Edu, TED-Ed, Khan Academy, Coursera, OER Commons). Provide an overview of video making tools (Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, CourseLab, WebMO). Highlight the features and usage of each tool and



repository. Discuss how these tools can be used to enhance educational content. Open discussion among participants if they have used any of the above tools and if there are other OVRs they are already familiar with.

- **Edpuzzle:** Features: Creating interactive video lectures (ex for physics laboratory courses) by embedding questions and notes within videos. Usage: Enhancing student engagement and comprehension through interactive content. Turn passive video viewing into an active learning experience.
 - **VoiceThread:** Features: Creating multimedia presentations and engaging in asynchronous discussions. Usage: Facilitating collaborative learning and discussions in an online environment. Use for group discussions or feedback sessions.
 - **CourseLab:** Features: E-learning authoring tool for creating rich multimedia content without programming skills. Usage: Developing interactive and engaging online courses and training materials. Design comprehensive course content.
 - **WebMO:** Features: Molecular modelling and visualization tool, useful in science education. Usage: Enhancing science education through interactive molecular simulations and visualizations. Demonstrate complex concepts in STEM.
 - **YouTube Edu:** Features: A dedicated platform for educational content, featuring videos from educators and institutions worldwide. Usage: Accessing a vast library of educational videos for various subjects and grade levels.
 - **TED-Ed:** Features: Curated educational videos with engaging animations and lessons. Usage: Enhancing teaching with high-quality, thought-provoking educational content.
 - **Khan Academy:** Features: Comprehensive library of instructional videos covering a wide range of subjects. Usage: Providing free, accessible educational resources for students and teachers.
 - **Coursera:** Features: Offers video lectures from top universities and institutions. Usage: Accessing high-quality educational content for online courses and professional development.
 - **Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons:** Features: A public digital library of open educational resources, including videos. Usage: Finding and sharing free, openly licensed educational materials.
- **Downloading/opening these online tools on individual computers (5 minutes):** Guide on downloading and setting up the tools. Ensure all participants have access and are ready to use the tools. Provide technical support as needed to resolve any access issues
 - **Formation of teams and distribution of scenarios (5 minutes):** Organize participants into small teams. Provide specific educational scenarios for each team to address using the video making tools. Distribute specific scenarios and roles to each team (e.g., creating a video lesson on photosynthesis, demonstrating a chemistry experiment).



- **Application of video making tools by different teams to their scenarios (20 minutes):** Hands-on activity where teams create educational videos using their assigned tools. Each team collaborates to create a video using their assigned tools. Encourage creativity and collaboration to produce engaging and effective educational content. Monitor the teams, offering guidance and support as needed. Ensure teams document their process and prepare to share their insights.
- **Group Presentations and Feedback (10 minutes):** Each team presents their video to the entire class. Facilitate a discussion, encouraging participants to provide constructive feedback and share insights. Highlight the strengths and areas for improvement in each video. Summarize key points and provide additional resources for further learning.

Exercise Suggestion: Creating an Educational Video with Open Source Tools

- Real-life Scenario: Prof. Dr. Sara, a molecular biology professor at a university, wants to create an engaging video lesson on the molecules involved in photosynthesis for her students. She has been introduced to various open-source video development tools like Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, and CourseLab during a training session. Prof. Dr. Sara aims to use these tools to create an interactive video that helps her students understand the process of photosynthesis effectively.
- Objective: Encourage participants to apply open source video development tools to design an interactive and educational video lesson.
- Duration: 20 minutes (can be adapted according to the time available)
- Materials Needed:
 - Computers or tablets with internet access
 - Access to open source video development tools (Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, CourseLab, WebMO)
 - Presentation slides or handouts with information on video making tools
 - Virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming (e.g., Google Jamboard)
- Application of Video Making Tools by Teams: Each team collaborates to create a video using their assigned tools. Encourage creativity and the use of interactive features (e.g., embedding questions in Edpuzzle, creating multimedia presentations in VoiceThread). Monitor the teams, offering guidance and support as needed. Ensure teams document their process and prepare to share their insights.
- Presentation and Feedback: Each team presents their video to the entire class. Facilitate a discussion, encouraging participants to provide constructive feedback and share insights. Highlight the strengths and areas for improvement in each video. Summarize key points and provide additional resources for further learning.
- Instructions for the Facilitator:



- Set Up Tools: Ensure participants have access to the necessary video making tools (Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, CourseLab, WebMO). Prepare presentation slides or handouts with information on each tool's features and applications.
 - Create Breakout Rooms: Set up breakout rooms for group work (if using Zoom or similar platform). Assign participants to groups and ensure each group has access to a virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming.
 - Introduce: Greet the participants and explain the purpose of the session. Introduce the selected OVRs and video making tools, highlighting their features and usage.
 - Downloading/Opening Tools: Guide participants through the process of downloading or opening the tools. Provide technical support as needed to resolve any access issues.
 - Group Formation and Tool Assignment: Divide participants into small teams and assign each team a specific educational scenario. Ensure each team understands their objectives and the tools they will use
 - Application of Tools: Monitor the teams as they work on creating their videos, offering guidance and support as needed. Encourage creativity and the use of interactive features in the tools.
 - Present and Feedback: Invite each team to present their video to the class. Facilitate a discussion, providing constructive feedback and encouraging participants to share insights and suggestions.
 - Conclude: Summarize the key points discussed and the innovative ideas presented. Thank the participants for their engagement and emphasize the importance of using video making tools to enhance educational content.
- **Note!** Similar exercises can be applied for different scenarios. For example: Create an interactive video for explaining the solar system to non-physics-major students. Design a video discussion to engage engineering students in effective communication and presentation skills. Develop a multimedia lesson to teach coding basics to chemistry major students.

Activity 4- Basic theoretical information on some e-assessment tools and their application (30 minutes)

This session introduces participants to a variety of e-assessment tools that can be used to create engaging and interactive evaluations for students. Participants will learn about tools like Quizziz, Menti, PearDeck, WebCT, Molecular Biology MCQ, and BuzzMath. These tools are designed to facilitate online quizzes, discussion or chat rooms, and other forms of evaluation, enhancing both formative and summative assessments in educational settings.

Participants will download and open these tools on their individual computers to explore their features and functionalities. Teams will be formed and given specific scenarios to apply these assessment tools, allowing for hands-on experience and collaborative learning. This session aims



to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to effectively use e-assessment tools in their teaching practices, improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

ACTIVITY 4 HANDOUTS - information on some e-assessment tools

- Duration: 30 minutes
- Materials Needed:
 - Computers or tablets with internet access
 - Access to e-assessment tools (Quizziz, Menti, PearDeck, WebCT, Molecular Biology MCQ, BuzzMath, Google Forms, Kahoot! CommonLit, Flipgrid)
 - Presentation slides or handouts with information on e-assessment tools
 - Virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming (e.g., Google Jamboard)
- **Introduction to E-Assessment Tools (6 minutes):** Introduction to main interactive assessment tools available online that allow the user to prepare online quizzes, discussion or chat rooms and other evaluations. Use presentation slides to introduce the tools: Quizziz, Menti, PearDeck, WebCT, Molecular Biology MCQ, BuzzMath, Google Forms, Kahoot! CommonLit, Flipgrid. Highlight the features and usage of each tool. Discuss how these tools can be used to create interactive and effective assessments. Open discussion among participants if they have used any of the above tools and if there are other interactive assessment tools they are already familiar with.
 - **Quizziz:** Features: Gamified assessment tool for creating interactive quizzes with real-time feedback and leaderboards. Usage: Engaging students with fun quizzes and tracking their progress. Engage students with quizzes that include visual and audio elements.
 - **Menti:** Features: Interactive presentation tool for live polling, quizzes, and Q&A sessions. Usage: Enhancing student engagement and gathering instant feedback during lessons. Use for quick knowledge checks or discussion prompts.
 - **PearDeck:** Features: Integrates with presentation software to create interactive slides and assessments. Usage: Making lessons more interactive and assessing student understanding in real-time. Assess understanding during lessons with in-line activities.
 - **WebCT:** Features: Online learning and assessment platform offering tools for quizzes, discussions, and grade management. Usage: Comprehensive assessment and learning management for educators. Use for formal course assessments or asynchronous discussions.
 - **Molecular Biology MCQ:** Features: Specialized tool for creating and administering multiple-choice questions in molecular biology. Usage: Assessing student knowledge in molecular biology with targeted questions. Use for science-based testing and self-assessment.



- **BuzzMath:** Features: Interactive math platform providing immediate feedback and progress tracking. Usage: Helping students practice math skills and teachers monitor progress. Use for math skill practice and progress tracking.
 - **Google Forms:** Features: Easy-to-use tool for creating forms, quizzes, and surveys. Usage: Conducting quick assessments and gathering student feedback.
 - **Kahoot!** Features: Online quiz-game generator with real-time feedback and reporting. Usage: Making assessments fun and engaging with game-like quizzes.
 - **CommonLit:** Features: Library of reading passages with built-in quizzes for reading comprehension. Usage: Assessing students' reading comprehension with guided questions and quizzes.
 - **Flipgrid:** Features: Video discussion platform for generating class discussions around topics, videos, or links. Usage: Encouraging student participation and discussion through video responses.
- **Downloading/Opening E-Assessment Tools (4 minutes):** Guide participants through the process of downloading or opening each tool on their devices. Provide technical support as needed to resolve any access issues.
- **Formation of Teams and Distribution of Scenarios (5 minutes):** Organize participants into teams and assign educational scenarios. Distribute specific scenarios and roles to each team (e.g., creating a quiz for a history lesson, designing a math assessment using BuzzMath). Explain the objectives and expected outcomes of the activity. Ensure each team understands their assigned scenario and the tools they will use.
- **Application of E-Assessment Tools by Teams (10 minutes):** Each team collaborates to create an assessment using their assigned tools. Encourage creativity and the use of interactive features (e.g., live polling in Menti, interactive slides in PearDeck). Monitor the teams, offering guidance and support as needed. Ensure teams document their process and prepare to share their insights.
- **Group Presentations and Feedback (5 minutes):** Each team presents their assessment to the entire class. Facilitate a discussion, encouraging participants to provide constructive feedback and share insights. Highlight the strengths and areas for improvement in each assessment. Summarize key points and provide additional resources for further learning.
- Instructions for the Facilitator:
 - Set Up Tools: Ensure participants have access to the necessary e-assessment tools (Quizziz, Menti, PearDeck, WebCT, Molecular Biology MCQ, BuzzMath, Google Forms, Kahoot!, CommonLit, Flipgrid). Prepare presentation slides or handouts with information on each tool's features and applications.
 - Create Breakout Rooms: Set up breakout rooms for group work (if using Zoom or similar platform). Assign participants to groups and ensure each group has access to a virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming.



- Introduce: Greet the participants and explain the purpose of the session. Introduce the e-assessment tools, highlighting their features and usage.
- Downloading/Opening Tools: Guide participants through the process of downloading or opening the tools. Provide technical support as needed to resolve any access issues.
- Group Formation and Tool Assignment: Divide participants into small teams and assign each team a specific educational scenario. Ensure each team understands their objectives and the tools they will use
- Application of Tools: Monitor the teams as they work on creating their assessments, offering guidance and support as needed. Encourage creativity and the use of interactive features in the tools.
- Present and Feedback: Invite each team to present their assessment to the class. Facilitate a discussion, providing constructive feedback and encouraging participants to share insights and suggestions.
- Conclude: Summarize the key points discussed and the innovative ideas presented. Thank the participants for their engagement and emphasize the importance of using e-assessment tools to enhance educational content.

Exercise Suggestion: Word Cloud- Understanding Student Perspectives on E-Assessment Tools.

- Real-Life Scenario: Prof. Olivia, a college psychology professor, wants to gather her students' perspectives on the e-assessment tools they have been using throughout the semester. She decides to conduct a word cloud activity on Menti.com to visualize the most common words and phrases her students associate with these tools. This exercise will help her understand the tools' impact on student engagement and learning, as well as identify any areas for improvement.
- Duration: 15 minutes (can be adapted according to the time available)
- Materials Needed:
 - Computers or tablets with internet access
 - Access to Menti.com
 - Presentation slides or handouts with information on e-assessment tools
 - Virtual whiteboard or shared document for brainstorming (e.g., Google Jamboard)
- Word Cloud Activity on Menti.com: Ensure participants have access to menti.com and/or other e-assessment tools (Quizziz, Menti, PearDeck, WebCT, Molecular Biology MCQ, BuzzMath, Google Forms, Kahoot! CommonLit, Flipgrid). Prepare presentation slides or handouts with information on each tool's features and applications.
- Group Presentations and Feedback: Each team presents their word cloud to the entire class. Facilitate a discussion, encouraging participants to provide constructive feedback and share insights.

Note! Similar exercises can be applied for different scenarios. For example: Create an assessment for a math for business majors class focusing on probabilities. Design a biology



quiz for college students on molecular genetics. Develop a formative assessment for an English literature class to discuss character analysis.

Activity 5- Online Discussion Forum for Feedback and Evaluation (30 minutes)

This session is designed to introduce participants to the use of online discussion forums for feedback and evaluation. Participants will learn how to effectively utilize discussion forums as a platform for gathering feedback, facilitating evaluations, and encouraging meaningful conversations. By leveraging online forums, educators can create a collaborative environment where students can share their insights, discuss various topics, and provide constructive feedback.

Participants will be guided through the process of setting up and using discussion forums on various platforms. They will then form teams and be given specific scenarios to apply these forums in real-life educational contexts. This hands-on experience will help participants understand the practical applications of online discussion forums and how they can be used to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

ACTIVITY 5 HANDOUTS – Online Discussion Forums

- **Introduction to Online Discussion Forums (8 minutes):** Explore the features and benefits of using online discussion forums for educational purposes. Discuss how forums can be used to facilitate feedback, evaluations, and collaborative discussions.
- **Downloading/Opening Forum Platforms (5 minutes):** Step-by-step guidance on accessing and setting up discussion forums on various platforms. Ensuring all participants have access and are ready to use the forums.
- **Formation of Teams and Distribution of Scenarios (5 minutes):** Organize participants into small teams. Provide specific scenarios for each team to address using the discussion forums.
- **Evaluation and Discussions: Application of Discussion Forums by Different Teams to Their Scenarios (12 minutes):** Hands-on activity where teams use their assigned forums to facilitate feedback and evaluations based on their scenarios. Encourage creativity and collaboration to maximize the effectiveness of the forums.

Exercise Suggestion: Module Evaluation Questionnaire through online forum activity

- **Objective:** To gather detailed feedback from participants on their experiences using various digital tools and collaborative methods through a module evaluation questionnaire posted in an online discussion forum.
- **Preparation:** Ensure all participants have access to the online discussion forum (e.g., Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle). Prepare the module evaluation questionnaire with relevant questions.



- Briefly explain the purpose of the exercise and the importance of providing honest and constructive feedback. Introduce the online discussion forum platform and provide instructions on how to access and use it.
- Accessing the Forum: Guide participants through the process of accessing the discussion forum on their devices. Provide technical support as needed to resolve any access issues.
- Posting the Questionnaire: Post the module evaluation questionnaire in the discussion forum. Ensure the questionnaire includes clear and concise questions. You can use the module evaluation questionnaire (already provided above pages) or further develop your specific questionnaire(s).
- Discussion and Feedback: Encourage participants to respond to the questionnaire in the forum. Monitor the discussion, offering guidance and support as needed. Encourage participants to provide detailed and thoughtful responses.
- Summary and Reflection: After participants have completed the questionnaire, summarize the key points discussed and the insights gained. Facilitate a brief class discussion on the overall feedback and any common themes or areas for improvement identified.
- Ask Follow-up discussion questions like:
 - How can you address potential accessibility issues with these tools?
 - What additional features could improve student engagement in assessments?
 - How can you integrate e-assessment results into your teaching plans?

Evaluation of the module:

(a) For self-assessment and reflection of participants about the overall acquisition of skillset and motivation related to knowledge and experience sharing, the trainer will propose five self-evaluation close-ended questions. These questions will allow participants to rate their understanding and confidence in applying the concepts and strategies discussed in the course.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Self-Assessment Questions

1. I feel confident in using online tools and techniques exchange experiences with my students and fellow teachers.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

2. I feel confident in using online tools and techniques to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experiences among my students.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)



3. I know how to obtain real-time feedback from students and use it to adjust knowledge sharing in my online class.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

4. I can motivate my students to share their knowledge and experiences with their peers during online learning.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

5. I can motivate fellow teachers to share their knowledge and experiences during online teaching with other peers.

- (Scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)

These self-evaluation questions will help participants reflect on their learning and identify areas where they may need further development or support. Additionally, the trainer can use the aggregated results to assess the overall impact of the module and adjust future training sessions if necessary. By utilizing online discussion forums for evaluation, trainers can also gather aggregated results to assess the overall impact of the module and make necessary adjustments to future training sessions. This approach not only ensures continuous improvement but also fosters a supportive and collaborative learning environment where feedback is actively shared and utilized.

(b) For evaluation on the key subjects learned by participants, the trainer will propose five open-ended evaluation questions. These questions will allow the teacher to rate the participants' understanding of the key concepts and tools discussed in the course.

Module Evaluation Questions

1. Name 3 online interactive digital tools that can be used to engage the students and motivate them to share their experiences:

i) ii) iii)

2. Name 3 strategies to motivate students

i) ii) iii)

3. After participating in the collaborative tasks during this session, how well do you understand the principles and challenges of using social media platforms, WhatsApp groups, or document management systems for knowledge sharing?

(Scale: 1 - Not Well at All to 5 - Very Well)

4. Which of the following gamification tools introduced in this session can be used to create interactive quizzes and engage students in an online learning environment?

- A) Kahoot
- B) Google Classroom
- C) eThinkLMS
- D) All of the above



5. What is a primary benefit of using role-playing exercises with gamification tools in an educational setting?
- A) They increase student engagement and participation.
 - B) They reduce the need for online resources.
 - C) They simplify the grading process.
 - D) They eliminate the need for teacher involvement.
6. Which of the following features is NOT commonly found in open source video development tools like Edpuzzle, VoiceThread, or CourseLab?
- A) Interactive quizzes and assessments
 - B) Advanced video editing capabilities
 - C) Real-time collaboration on video projects
 - D) Automatic translation and dubbing of videos
7. In the context of online video making tools, which scenario best demonstrates the effective use of VoiceThread for educational purposes?
- A) Creating a silent video montage of a lecture series
 - B) Employing VoiceThread to generate automated subtitles and captions for instructional videos
 - C) Utilizing VoiceThread to apply complex 3D effects and animations to educational content
 - D) Using VoiceThread to add audio comments and facilitate asynchronous discussions on a video presentation
8. Which of the following e-assessment tools allows users to prepare interactive quizzes and is known for its game-like features to engage students?
- A) Quizziz
 - B) WebCT
 - C) BuzzMath
 - D) PearDeck
9. What is a common benefit of using e-assessment tools like Menti and PearDeck in an educational setting?
- A) They automatically grade all types of student assignments.
 - B) They facilitate real-time feedback and interaction during lessons.
 - C) They replace the need for traditional classroom teaching.
 - D) They ensure complete data privacy without any internet connection.
10. Which of the following best describes the main objective of integrating online tools and collaborative methods in higher education?
- A) To reduce the workload of teachers by automating all teaching tasks
 - B) To eliminate the need for face-to-face interactions entirely
 - C) To enhance the engagement, interaction, and knowledge sharing among students and teachers
 - D) To ensure all students achieve the same level of academic performance



Correct results:

4D, 4A, 6.D, 7.D, 8.A, 9.B, 10.C

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