

Erasmus + course in Tenerife

Stress Relief and well-being strategies for Teachers

From April 14th to 21st, 2024, I participated in a training course on the island of Tenerife as part of the Erasmus+ program. The course I chose was titled "Stress Relief and Well-being Strategies for Teachers." The training was conducted in English and organized by Europass Teacher Academy.



The course took place near the capital of Tenerife, in San Cristóbal de La Laguna, commonly known as La Laguna. This is the oldest city in the Canary Islands, declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. The university old town is full of historical buildings and exudes a pleasant, tranquil atmosphere with its shopping and pedestrian zones. My accommodation was also here, in a very old building, just a 10-minute walk from the training venue.



The course was systematically structured and practice-oriented, led by an excellent instructor, Sheryn Moon. She is an English life coach and



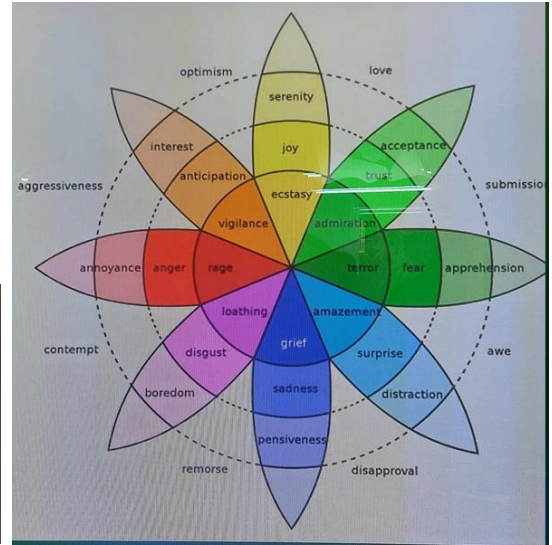
teacher, a kind yet assertive lady.

Her pleasant voice was stress-relieving in itself, and her presentation style, humour, encouragement, and expertise adequately supported the training's objectives. This allowed us to open up to each other quickly and talk about our feelings. We often worked in pairs or small groups, and, of course, there were individual exercises as well.

Our group consisted of 15 people, with participants from all over Europe, including primary and secondary school teachers. There were Slovaks, French, Italians, Germans, Finns, Swedes, and one Hungarian. Another group also started with us on the same topic. The two groups often spent time together during breaks and excursions, providing an excellent opportunity to build international connections. The course comprised both theoretical and mostly practical training. We first clarified basic concepts such as stress, burnout, mental health and good overall well-



being. We discussed our personal experiences and the effects of stress on our lives and work, explored how our bodies and minds respond to it, and received useful tips on how to combat and reverse its effects. We learned how to recognize and enjoy the good moments in our lives and how to say no in certain situations. In addition to stress-relief techniques, we



discussed the importance of lifestyle changes (better quality sleep, proper nutrition, regular exercise, etc.). We also engaged in playful classroom activities focused on teaching and raising awareness about emotions. We learned various breathing techniques and did a lot of meditation. My favorite exercises were the ones where we were guided to focus inwardly on ourselves, our bodies, and our souls. In the courtyard of the training venue, we performed numerous yoga-based movement exercises and often meditated outdoors in the fresh air.



One day, the training took place in a forest, where we hiked and practiced practical mindfulness and sensory awareness exercises. One afternoon, we participated in an interesting city exploration tour, where we learned about the city's culture and history with the help of a local guide. In the afternoons, we explored Tenerife's exotic beauties and peculiarities on our own or with group members. We mainly toured the northern and eastern parts of the island by bus and rented car (Puerto de La Cruz, Santa Cruz, Güímar,

Candelaria, Cala de Tajao, etc.). We spent pleasant evenings and afternoons together, which proved to be a good opportunity to exchange experiences with colleagues from different countries. It was interesting to hear about the functioning of other countries' school systems and compare their strengths and weaknesses.



Tenerife is an incredible island with its sunny climate, beautiful wild coastline, black sand beaches, forests, palm trees, banana plantations, and its great mountain, Teide. It provided me with a lifetime of memories. The location, in line with the training's objectives, was indeed uplifting and stress-relieving. I gained stress management and well-being improvement techniques that

would be useful for every teacher and every person. I will be able to incorporate what I learned into my lessons in the future and use it in my personal life as well. I sincerely recommend this training to anyone interested. I'm so glad I managed to get here. Thank you for the opportunity!

Erika Pócsi



Second language? First-class idea!

Projektazonosító: 2023-1-HU01-KA122-SCH-000146060

Erasmus Report

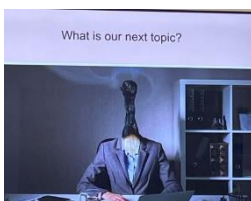


From 25th to 29th March 2024, I attended the course "Stress Relief and Well-being Strategies for Teachers", organised by the Europass Teacher Academy Italy in the old town of Rome. Our course facilitator was Olga Plyaskina, a professional trainer/facilitator and instructional designer, (<https://www.teacheracademy.eu/team/olga-plyaskina/>), who is currently involved in student-centered educational research and has considerable knowledge in the field of psychology and endocrine matters, which has a pervasive influence on an individual's well-being. She also has personal experience in psychotherapy and works with anxiety and transgenerational trauma.

The experiential course was based on active participation and designed to allow the participating teachers to work on themselves. Some of the exercises can also be used in a classroom situation and are suitable for students. In our international group, three people represented two schools from Germany, six participants were from a Bulgarian school, and a lady from a school in Cyprus.

The course was built on the overarching theme of emotional self-regulation, exploring the dimensions of physical and mental health (*Mens sana in corpore sano*) with cross-cutting themes such as movement, nutrition, sleep, lifestyle, life management, social relationships, trauma, and biological functioning. One of the main ideas of the training was formulated even before the theoretical introduction: we take on as much stress as we absorb.

Every day, the training included repeated yoga-based movements of just a few minutes without tools, even whole-body movements, focusing on the spinal column.

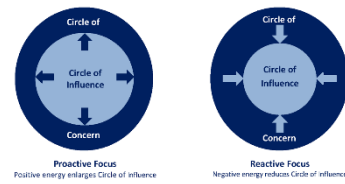


During the training, we learned about burnout prevention, coping strategies, relaxation techniques, how to reframe perceived stress, and the role of food, environment, and sleep in maintaining well-being.

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FIRST DAY Steven Covey “Seven habits of highly effective people”



Breathing helps to balance the nervous system. Among the breathing exercises, we learned about diaphragmatic breathing and box breathing. We learned about Jacobson's relaxation technique and autogenic training. We also learned about eye yoga, the technique of hiding the eyes in the palm and breathing with an internal organ. The course also focused on the importance of human relations, with short breaks in the beautiful old town setting, where we walked to a nearby café and enjoyed a cup of hot espresso and informal conversation.

The greatest value of the course for me was its practical orientation. Although I came across many theories before, in the constant rush of our lives, we don't think about the huge role that little things can play in our subjective well-being. How much this is a challenge for many in their daily lives is illustrated by the fact that all three parallel courses of the training place were "Stress Relief and Well-being Strategies for Teachers". No wonder, since Rome is a symbol of "slow living", where the differences in levels and the never-ending staircases of the old town evoke iconic images of the "Blue zones". The cultural programs had to be planned and implemented individually because the training center had just moved to a new location, and our course was the first to be implemented at this address. For the prices of Rome, scholarship funding was very tight, and so the cultural programs were now self-financed.

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Via Crucis ceremony

