There are three elephants in the classroom: Can you see them?

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We often assume that if we master the content, our teaching will take care of itself. But what if that's no longer true? In engineering education we take pride in precision, clarity, and control. Yet something increasingly feels out of sync. Students are present, but not engaged. Outcomes are delivered, but meaning seems lost. Frustrations grow, yet the models we rely on remain largely untouched.

This presentation is not about tools or trends. It's about three fundamental shifts that are already reshaping the learning environment—and doing so quietly, often without our full awareness. These shifts aren't just pedagogical; they're cultural, cognitive, and structural. And whether we like it or not, they're already in the classroom with us.

You may have sensed them: a disconnect you can't quite define, a strategy that used to work but no longer does, a classroom dynamics that feels unfamiliar. You're not imagining it. These three dynamics are real, and understanding them may be the difference between teaching *to* students—and teaching *with* them.

I won't name them here, because that would ruin the point. This is not a list, a framework, or a formula. It's an invitation: to reflect, to challenge assumptions, and to prepare ourselves for a redefinition of what effective education actually requires.

Oh—and one last thing: this abstract was written entirely by an AI, after analyzing the full presentation of the supposed talk. Perhaps the elephants in the classroom are not just three…

Keywords: higher education, engineering education, chemical engineering education