



Metodologías activas innovadoras para mejorar la adquisición del idioma inglés en la educación superior

Innovative Active Methodologies for Enhancing English Language Acquisition in Higher Education

Metodologias Ativas Inovadoras para Melhorar a Aquisição da Língua Inglesa no Ensino Superior

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Resumen

El inglés es ampliamente reconocido como una herramienta esencial en los contextos profesional y académico, proporcionando ventajas competitivas en el mercado laboral global y facilitando el acceso a oportunidades educativas y profesionales de carácter internacional. En este sentido, las metodologías activas representan un enfoque pedagógico innovador que fomenta un aprendizaje dinámico, participativo y significativo, al situar a los estudiantes como protagonistas activos en su proceso formativo. La implementación de estas metodologías en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera no solo permite a los estudiantes practicar el idioma en contextos auténticos, sino que también mejora su motivación, interés y adquisición de conocimientos sustanciales.

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo principal identificar las metodologías activas más utilizadas en el ámbito de la enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés y proponer actividades didácticas específicas para cada una de ellas. El estudio, de carácter documental y con enfoque cualitativo, se fundamenta en un riguroso análisis bibliográfico. Los resultados destacan la relevancia de metodologías como el Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (ABP), la Gamificación, el Aula Invertida, los Juegos de Rol y el Aprendizaje Cooperativo, las cuales ofrecen múltiples beneficios en el proceso de formación lingüística en el nivel de Educación Superior.

Adicionalmente, se proponen actividades pedagógicas estratégicas diseñadas para optimizar el aprendizaje efectivo del inglés. Entre las actividades sugeridas se incluyen la elaboración de folletos, el diseño de campañas sociales, la organización de eventos temáticos, la creación de blogs, juegos de palabras, concursos, desafíos, juegos de memoria, desarrollo de videos educativos, lecturas analíticas, resúmenes, actividades de comprensión auditiva, debates, discusiones, presentaciones orales, monólogos, aventuras de rol, dramatizaciones, producción de videos o podcasts, tutorías entre pares y aprendizaje en cascada.

Palabras clave: Inglés; Metodologías activas; Estrategias pedagógicas; Educación Superior.

Abstract

English is widely recognised as an essential tool in professional and academic contexts, providing competitive advantages in the global labour market and facilitating access to international educational and professional opportunities. In this sense, active methodologies represent an innovative pedagogical approach that encourages dynamic, participatory and meaningful learning by placing students as active protagonists in their training process. The implementation of these

methodologies in the teaching of English as a foreign language not only allows students to practice the language in authentic contexts, but also improves their motivation, interest and acquisition of substantial knowledge.

The main objective of this research is to identify the most widely used active methodologies in the field of teaching and learning English and to propose specific teaching activities for each of them. The study, of a documentary nature and with a qualitative approach, is based on a rigorous bibliographic analysis. The results highlight the relevance of methodologies such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), Gamification, Flipped Classroom, Role-Playing Games and Cooperative Learning, which offer multiple benefits in the language training process at the Higher Education level.

Additionally, strategic pedagogical activities designed to optimize effective English learning are proposed. Suggested activities include the creation of brochures, the design of social campaigns, the organization of thematic events, the creation of blogs, word games, contests, challenges, memory games, the development of educational videos, analytical readings, summaries, listening comprehension activities, debates, discussions, oral presentations, monologues, role-playing adventures, dramatizations, video or podcast production, peer tutoring and cascading learning.

Keywords: English; Active methodologies; Pedagogical strategies; Higher Education.

Resumo

O inglês é amplamente reconhecido como uma ferramenta essencial em contextos profissionais e acadêmicos, proporcionando vantagens competitivas no mercado de trabalho global e facilitando o acesso a oportunidades educativas e profissionais internacionais. Neste sentido, as metodologias ativas representam uma abordagem pedagógica inovadora que promove uma aprendizagem dinâmica, participativa e significativa, ao colocar os alunos como protagonistas ativos no seu processo de formação. A implementação destas metodologias no ensino do Inglês como língua estrangeira não só permite aos alunos praticar a língua em contextos autênticos, como também melhora a sua motivação, interesse e aquisição de conhecimentos substanciais.

O principal objetivo desta investigação é identificar as metodologias ativas mais utilizadas no âmbito do ensino-aprendizagem de inglês e propor atividades didáticas específicas para cada uma delas. O estudo, de natureza documental e de abordagem qualitativa, baseia-se numa análise bibliográfica rigorosa. Os resultados destacam a relevância de metodologias como a Aprendizagem

Baseada em Projetos (PBL), a Gamificação, a Sala de Aula Invertida, os Role Playing Games e a Aprendizagem Cooperativa, que oferecem múltiplos benefícios no processo de formação de línguas no Ensino Superior.

Além disso, são propostas atividades pedagógicas estratégicas que visam otimizar a aprendizagem eficaz do inglês. As atividades sugeridas incluem a criação de folhetos, elaboração de campanhas sociais, organização de eventos temáticos, criação de blogues, jogos de palavras, concursos, desafios, jogos de memória, desenvolvimento de vídeos educativos, leituras analíticas, resumos, atividades de compreensão oral, debates, discussões, apresentações orais, monólogos, aventuras de role-play, dramatizações, produção de vídeo ou podcast, tutoria entre pares e aprendizagem em cascata.

Palavras-chave: Inglês; Metodologias ativas; Estratégias pedagógicas; Ensino superior.

Introduction

The education sector, and higher education in particular, faces a significant challenge in having to adapt to a society immersed in a process of globalization, technification and rapid change (López and Vera, 2017). Silva and Maturana (2017) state that, in order for students to acquire the knowledge and skills essential to function effectively in the social and professional sphere of the 21st century, it is necessary to make a transition from a teacher-centered teaching approach to a student-centered one. The success of this transition requires changes in methodologies, processes, such as content, activities and educational assessment.

The traditional educational approach that has predominated for many years in higher education institutions focused on the teacher and the content of the courses, with the aim of transferring information from the teacher to the student. However, in this approach, the student's role was limited to memorizing rather than understanding the practical application of what they were learning (Fritz et al., 2022). As a result of this, due to the need for constant change and evolution, alternative teaching methods have been proposed based on constructivist theory, in which knowledge is conceived as a process structured by personal experiences and where new experiences can be used to expand or modify previous knowledge.

Among these new innovative forms of teaching, active methodologies stand out. These methodologies are based on constructivist theory, which places the student as the central protagonist of the teaching-learning process. They are characterized by promoting the active

participation of students and encouraging teamwork and cooperation. Instead of focusing on memorization, the aim is to stimulate creativity and encourage critical reflection (Peralta and Guamán, 2020).

The effect of various active methodologies on the quality of teaching is widely recognized and has been the subject of study in numerous universities over the last decade. The implementation of active pedagogical approaches is part of a cultural change in academic institutions, where the importance of the student's learning process is valued as a primary element (Pérez, 2019).

Active methodologies represent a tool that favors the development of autonomous learning. These methodologies stimulate the active participation of students, giving them a leading role in their own learning process. In this way, research, responsibility, organization, planning, and interest in activities are promoted (Buenaño-Barreno et al., 2021). By adopting these methodologies, the aim is to make learning deep, that is, to go beyond superficial memorization, allowing the acquired knowledge to be remembered and applied in later situations. In addition, the importance of the role of the teacher is emphasized, who provides guidance, support, and follow-up to students, creating an environment conducive to adaptation and improvement in educational processes.

Nowadays, the educational system has a growing concern for the development of linguistic competence in multiple languages at all stages of education (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2016). Recognizing the importance of language skills in a globalized and multicultural world, an increasingly focused approach has been generated to promote the acquisition and mastery of different languages (Arrieta, 2018). This involves the implementation of strategies and programs that promote effective language teaching from the early years of education to higher education. The aim is for students to acquire solid communication skills in various languages, which will allow them to actively participate in global society and access broader educational and professional opportunities.

English has been widely recognized as the most widely used language worldwide, leading many educational institutions to include it in their curriculum. However, in most cases, it is addressed solely as a compulsory subject, often resulting in little meaningful learning for students (Basantes-Arias et al., 2021). Where the only approach they have to the English language is within the classroom, and scarcely when they are outside educational institutions, which is why there is a need for teachers to implement learning methodologies that involve the active participation of students both in the classroom and outside of it.

Sanguña-Loachamin et al. (2017) agree that, in many cases, students face limited opportunities to achieve effective English language learning. As a result, a large percentage of students fail to fully develop their abilities, showing that what they learn is merely temporary and, by not applying it in their daily lives, they quickly forget it. This is due, in part, to traditional teaching methodologies in learning the English language.

Students experience moments of rejection or frustration towards this subject and try to learn the language under the pressure of a poorly designed academic curriculum and the obligation to meet passing requirements. In some cases, students learn only out of obligation and not on their own initiative, which results in a loss of interest and motivation for learning, generating a rejection of the language.

Some studies show the benefits of applying active methodologies in learning processes, such as the research carried out by Fritz et al. (2022) in their study showed that the implementation of active methodologies (AM) is beneficial for the development of competencies, especially in the field of knowledge and technical skills. Both teachers and students have a positive perception of AM, highlighting better results and deeper learning. They claim that through AM they can mainly develop the ability to improve their knowledge and research, teamwork, reasoning, responsibility and organization. Similarly, Sanguña-Loachamin et al. (2017) highlights that, by using active methodological strategies, teachers will be able to involve students in practical, interactive and dynamic activities that allow them to acquire and apply the English language in a meaningful way. These methodologies offer a more student-centered approach, promoting active participation, teamwork and the development of communication skills in an authentic context.

As evidenced by the studies, it is important to use active methodologies for learning the English language because they involve students in an active way, promoting their participation, motivation and development of practical and communicative skills. In addition, they stimulate critical thinking and problem solving, preparing students for the globalized work world and promoting meaningful and effective language learning. Therefore, the challenge for university professors is to change their approach to the teaching-learning process, moving from being mere transmitters of information to being facilitators who encourage active participation of students.

This article aims to determine which are the most effective active methodologies.

used for teaching and learning the English language, in addition to proposing activities for each methodology.

Methodology

The methodology used in the article is a basic documentary literature review with a qualitative approach. In this type of review, a compilation and critical analysis of the existing literature on the subject of study is carried out, with the main objective of obtaining an overview and exhaustive view of the active methodologies used in this educational context, as well as identifying the most relevant trends, approaches and practices. The bibliographic review methodology focuses on the compilation and analysis of documentary sources, such as books, scientific articles and specialized documents. This approach allows access to a wide spectrum of accumulated knowledge on the subject, coming from previous research, theories, pedagogical approaches and successful practices in the field of English language teaching. By carrying out a critical analysis of these sources, the aim is to identify the key conceptual aspects and the most used and effective active methodologies in higher education. On the other hand, the qualitative approach of the methodology is related to the objective of understanding in depth the experiences, perceptions and practices of teachers and students in relation to active methodologies in English language learning. This qualitative approach allows us to capture the richness and complexity of educational processes, explore the motivations, challenges and achievements of participants, and provide a more detailed and contextualized perspective of active methodologies in higher education.

The literature review was the initial phase. At this stage, a search is carried out for academic sources that address the key conceptual aspects related to active methodologies for learning the English language in higher education. This search allows obtaining a solid theoretical basis based on the existing literature. Once the most commonly used active methodologies for learning the English language have been identified, strategic activities based on these methodologies are proposed for teaching the language. These proposals cover a diversity of approaches that can be implemented in the classroom, providing students with unique opportunities to actively and committedly participate in the English language. From interactive activities that encourage communication and collaboration in pairs or small groups, to research projects that promote critical thinking and creativity, these strategies seek to provide a stimulating and challenging environment where students can experience effective and meaningful English language learning.

Results

Active methodologies are beneficial in education because they actively involve students, foster motivation and commitment, develop key skills, facilitate the transfer of knowledge to real situations, and cultivate students' autonomy and responsibility, providing meaningful and relevant learning for today's world. Figure 1 presents the main characteristics that define active methodologies.

Figure 1: Main characteristics of active methodologies

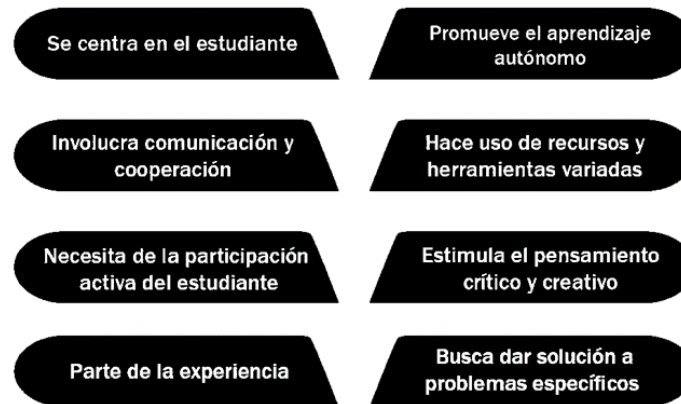


Table 1 presents a compilation of the most recent and relevant studies in this field, providing an overview of their main findings and the active methodologies that were applied. Through this compilation of information, we seek to provide an overview of the innovative pedagogical practices that are being implemented in Higher Education, with the aim of promoting more participatory and meaningful learning for students. We also seek to identify the most commonly used active methodologies for teaching and learning English.

Summary of Studies on Active Methodologies in Higher Education

Table 1: Experiences of active methodologies in Higher Education

Study/Reference	Methodologies Used	Objective	Findings
Martinez, 2017	Cooperative Learning, Debates, Oral Presentations	To develop social competencies and improve social skills in English classes.	Students acquired skills as active citizens, integrating oral and written skills

			through cooperative methodologies.
Fritz et al., 2022	Cooperative Learning, Project-Based Learning, Learning Contracts, Simulations, Games	To promote self-learning, develop research skills, and integrate knowledge in university education.	Active methodologies are widely accepted, promoting self-learning and transferable skills. Teachers are encouraged to implement these strategies across various subjects.
De los Angeles et al., 2022	Role Play, Case Study, Personalized Learning, Collaborative Learning, Gamification, Discussions, E-learning	To analyze commonly used interactive strategies in higher education and their effectiveness.	Teacher guidance is crucial. Activities must combine individual and group strategies to ensure effective learning.
Gomez-Hurtado et al., 2016	Peer Tutoring, Workshops, Project Work, Lectures, Readings, Presentations	To improve foreign language learning by combining active methodologies.	Over 90% of participants positively evaluated the strategies, highlighting their effectiveness.
Martinez, 2022	Role Play, Cooperative Learning	To use role-playing games within a cooperative approach to develop social skills in advanced English courses.	Students developed social skills and interaction, becoming more aware of social situations.
Rodriguez and Cedeño, 2020	Flipped Classroom	To achieve meaningful learning of the English language.	Students were more motivated and engaged, developing autonomous learning skills and improving attention in class.
Bravo-Cobeña, 2021	Cooperative Learning, Gamification, Flipped Classroom, Project-Based Learning, Experiential Learning	To analyze the influence of active methodologies on high school English learning.	Active methodologies enhanced motivation, creativity, and the perception of English as essential for professional development.
Ruiz, 2022	Project-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning	To integrate active methodologies in the training of English teachers.	Highlighted the need for teacher training in active methodologies and ICT to enhance autonomous learning.

Gonzalez and Alvarez, 2022	Gamification	To assess the effectiveness of games in second-language learning.	Teachers must select appropriate games and foster interaction. Additional support is necessary for students unfamiliar with games.
Moya, 2020	Gamification, Project-Based Learning, STEAM, Cooperative Learning, Service Learning	To explore active methodologies in bilingual teaching for foreign language teachers.	Cooperative learning and gamification enhance communicative competence and motivate students and teachers.
Carreño, 2021	Simulation, Gamification	To strengthen oral expression and comprehension skills in English among basic-level students.	Students overcame shyness, expanded vocabulary, and improved communication skills by becoming creators of their own knowledge.

Through the review, analysis and synthesis of the literature, it has been found that the main methodologies applied for teaching and learning the English language are Project- Based Learning, Gamification, Flipped Classroom, Role-Playing Games and Cooperative Learning. These studies have also shown the remarkable benefits of these methodologies in the educational process. The findings agree that students show greater interest and motivation towards learning activities, and in many cases, achieve meaningful and lasting learning.

Active methodologies applied to the English language Project-Based Learning

It is an educational methodology that involves students in carrying out practical projects, where they apply knowledge, solve problems and collaborate with others. The main characteristic of this methodology lies in providing students with a real learning context and directly engaging them in the teaching-learning process. This means that students assume responsibility for making decisions to solve a task of a certain complexity. This involves students themselves being the ones who plan, make decisions and develop the project (Abella et al., 2020).

Gamification

Gamification seeks to turn tasks or processes into more engaging and enjoyable experiences by introducing playful elements. It involves using elements such as competition, challenges, rewards, and interaction to motivate and engage students in learning processes. Points, levels, leaderboards, badges, or other forms of reward can be used. Recognition to encourage participation and achievement of objectives. Ortiz-Colón et al. (2018) highlight gamification as an essential element to increase student motivation.

Furthermore, the integration of gamification principles into the curriculum design contributes to maintaining student interest, preventing the teaching-learning process from becoming monotonous or lacking interest.

Flipped classroom

This method is based on reversing the learning processes that normally occur in the classroom, transferring them to an external environment, such as home, and vice versa. In this approach, the student is expected to carry out the activities of reading, viewing, reflecting on and understanding the content provided by the teacher outside the classroom, while in the classroom any doubts and problems that arise are addressed and resolved. In other words, the practical application of the content, which is considered the most relevant moment of the learning process, takes place in the classroom with the guidance of the teacher and the participation of the rest of the classmates (González and Abad, 2020). Rodríguez and Cedeño (2020) mention that this form of learning promotes autonomy in student learning, and also allows them to strengthen and foster significant knowledge outside the classroom, through the advance review of the subject content.

Role play

It is an activity in which participants assume fictional roles or act out real situations to explore different perspectives and practice social and communication skills. In this type of activity, each participant adopts a character and acts according to their assigned role, interacting with other participants to simulate real-life situations. The use of role-playing games provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in areas such as group comprehension, argumentation, and

problem-solving. In addition, it allows for contextualizing the language and achieving comprehensive and memorable learning (Martínez, 2022).

Cooperative Learning

This is a teaching methodology in which students work together in small groups in a supportive manner to achieve common goals, and their assessment is based on their progress towards that goal. This methodology enables the development of academic and professional skills, as well as the strengthening of interpersonal and communication skills. In addition, it promotes the participation of all students present in the classroom, allowing interaction and the exchange of ideas. In turn, it involves acquiring skills to plan, argue, debate, make decisions and organize, among other relevant capabilities (López and Vera, 2017).

After identifying the key aspects involved in each of the methodologies in question, table 2 presents a series of activities proposed for implementation in the subject of English in higher education. These activities have been carefully designed to meet the main characteristics of active methodologies, focusing on improving student motivation and fostering meaningful learning. Each activity has been selected with the aim of actively involving students in their own learning process, promoting active participation, collaboration between peers and the practical application of the English language. By providing these stimulating and contextualized activities, the aim is to boost students' intrinsic motivation and create an environment conducive to achieving deep learning.

Table 2: Active methodologies for the subject of English in Higher Education

Activities	Description
Learning based in projects - Creating a brochure	Students can research and design a brochure on a topic of interest. They must use the English language to describe important features and aspects of the topic to be developed. This brochure will be distributed throughout the class.
Campaigns	Students can create social awareness or advertising campaigns, creating promotional materials and presenting the campaign, all in English.
Open classroom or exhibition fair	Students can organize an event on a specific topic. There can be several stands, and at each one students must present and answer questions about the topic in English.
Creating a blog or website	Students can create a blog in English on topics of interest to them, such as travel, fashion, sports, technology, etc. They must write articles in English, and interact with readers in the language.

Gamification - Word Games	Such as crossword puzzles, word searches, spelling games, riddles, tongue twisters in English, where students get points and prizes.
Competitions	Creative writing competition in which students compete to write stories, poems, or essays in English or pronunciation, where students' pronunciation is evaluated on accuracy and fluency.
Challenges	Where students compete to translate words and sentences into English and correct grammatical errors. Whoever finishes first wins.
Memory games	Using cards with English words on one side and their corresponding image on the other, students must identify and pronounce these words, and accumulate points.
Flipped classroom - Educational videos	Students can watch educational videos or online tutorials on English grammar, vocabulary, or communication situations, and then put what they have learned into practice in the classroom and discuss it.
Readings and summaries	Designate the reading of texts in English related to topics of interest or academics. Make a summary and present the main ideas in class.
Listening activities	Students can listen to recordings of dialogues, interviews, or podcasts in English. In class, they can discuss what they have heard and do related speaking activities.
Debates or discussions	Outside of the classroom, students can research specific topics, prepare and practice their arguments. In class, group discussion takes place, promoting oral expression and the exchange of ideas.
Exhibitions - Monologues	Students must research and prepare a presentation on a topic of interest and give a presentation on the topic in English in class.
Role play - Role-playing adventures	Simulation of interaction or conversations in everyday situations, such as job interviews, customer service, tourism, shopping, business, etc.
Dramatizations	In which students take on roles and carry out missions or challenges in English. They play fictional characters and develop plots and stories that use the language in simulated situations.
Cooperative Learning - Videos or Podcasts	Students can work in groups to create videos or podcasts in English on a topic of interest. Each episode can include sections such as interviews, debates, storytelling, or recommendations.
Peer Tutoring	Students with higher English skills act as tutors and provide support and guidance to their peers who need extra help. They can work together on reading, writing, grammar, and pronunciation tasks.
Cascade learning	Organize students into groups and assign each group an English topic to become 'experts' on. The experts in each

	group then mingle with other groups to share their knowledge and teach others.
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It is crucial to highlight that teachers play a fundamental role in the design and strategic implementation of each activity, taking into account the learning objectives and the specific subject of study. In addition, they must assume the role of guides and facilitators throughout all activities, providing guidance and support to students. Teachers are also responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of each activity and providing constructive feedback to students. In this way, teachers play a key role in the successful implementation of active methodologies, ensuring that activities are appropriate, motivating and promote meaningful learning.

Conclusions

Through the literature review, it was identified that active methodologies offer a more dynamic and participatory approach in the English classroom, leading to greater engagement and more effective learning. Students are not only able to acquire grammatical knowledge and vocabulary in a better way, but they also develop communicative, cultural and social skills relevant to the use of the language in real situations. By implementing these methodologies, we seek to empower students to become autonomous, motivated learners who are able to use English effectively in diverse contexts.

The main characteristics of active methodologies are: they are student-centered, promote autonomous learning, involve communication and cooperation, make use of various resources and tools, require active participation of the student, stimulate critical and creative thinking, are based on experience and seek to solve specific problems. It was also identified that the most widely applied active methodologies for teaching-learning English in Higher Education are: Project-Based Learning, Gamification, the Flipped Classroom, Role-Playing Games and Cooperative Learning, which offer numerous benefits in the English language teaching-learning process. Project-Based Learning involves students in carrying out practical and meaningful tasks, encouraging their responsibility and decision-making. Gamification introduces playful elements into the learning process, encouraging participation and the achievement of objectives through rewards and competition. The Flipped Classroom moves part of the work outside the classroom, allowing class time to focus on practical application and the resolution of doubts. Role-playing games provide

students with the opportunity to practice social and communication skills, and Cooperative Learning promotes collaboration and teamwork.

Various strategic activities are proposed for teaching the English language. These include the creation of brochures, social awareness campaigns, thematic events, blogs, word games, writing competitions, translations, pronunciation activities, the use of flashcards, the creation of videos or podcasts, reading and presentations. In addition, the simulation of everyday situations, group work to create multimedia content and collaboration between students with different ability levels are promoted. These activities encourage active participation, communicative practice and meaningful learning of the English language.

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