

Evaluation of a Training Program for Trainee Teachers in Active Methodologies for Teaching Social Sciences

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary purposes of this study are to investigate the opinions and conceptions of primary education teachers undergoing initial training on active methodologies and to evaluate a training program that uses these methodologies with a particular focus on the teaching of Social Sciences. To this end, a mixed methodology has been employed, using an initial questionnaire and a focus group as research instruments. Following the data analysis, the results show a favorable assessment of these active methodologies. There were some gender differences, as women assigned greater value than men to the active strategies, resources, and evaluation approaches and were more focused on competency-based learning. Another result highlighted the suitability of using service-learning or inquiry methodology to teach Social Sciences. The authors conclude that improving the training program developed is necessary, offering more connections with practice and expanding initial teacher training in active methods.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of competency-based teaching in school curricula has significantly affected how Social Sciences are taught in the classroom. In light of this new reality, in recent years, various studies have insisted on the need to renew training programs to ensure that teacher training programs enable an improvement of the teaching-learning processes according to the new demands (González & Skultety, 2018; Oliveira et al., 2019; Maloy et al., 2019; Moreno-Vera & Alvé, 2020; Raya & Navaridas, 2021).

In the field of Social Sciences teaching, research shows the need to shift toward a teaching model that encourages students to think critically through active methodologies, thus abandoning passive and rote learning practices (Moreno et al., 2021; Gómez et al., 2022). Thus, as opposed to traditional teaching, active learning methodologies have been postulated as the guarantors of the balance between knowledge, skills and abilities (Souto & García-Monteaudo, 2019; Ordoñez et al., 2021; Moreno-Vera et al., 2021; Gómez et al., 2020a).

The studies that analyze the inclusion of active learning methodologies in educational contexts focused on gamification (Hanus & Fox, 2015; Attali & Arieli-Attali, 2015; De Marcos et al., 2016; Han-Huey et al., 2018; Hakak et al., 2019; Durrani et al., 2022) and the Flipped Classroom (Gilboy et al., 2015; Hao & Lee, 2016; Yilmaz, 2017; Steen-Utheim & Foldnes, 2018; Shibukawa & Taguchi, 2019; Maloy et al., 2019; Ruiz et al., 2022) are particularly noteworthy. Moreover, these strategies receive the most attention from primary education trainee teachers (Blasco-Serrano et al., 2018; Gómez et al., 2019).

The results of some studies show how learning opportunities in training programs have a remarkable correlation with teachers' knowledge and competencies at the end of their training (Blömeke et al., 2014). Thus, the paper by Coll et al. (2018) has shown the close correlation between the methodology used in university classrooms with the professional development of graduates. In fact, among the most influential factors are problem-based learning, curricular practices and practical knowledge, results that, on the other hand, coincide with those shown by Hortigüela et al. (2018).

More specifically, in teaching social knowledge, the improvement of teaching processes must involve learning alternative methodologies to traditional teaching (Gómez et al., 2021). Furthermore, this situation requires a methodological change that favors the student's active participation in constructing social knowledge (Miralles et al., 2017). Thus, intervention in teacher training is essential as long as the development of knowledge, skills and teaching competencies in two areas are established: methodology and epistemology.

Authors such as Estepa (2017) justify the need for quality training based on the idea that a teacher usually bases their teaching methods on models already lived or experienced and their experiences as a student when faced with teaching for the first time. This may imply reproducing previously perceived models that generally tend to be attached to traditional models (Sánchez-Fuster, 2017). Currently, there are several studies within the area of Didactics of Social Sciences that have proved that teaching and learning social knowledge should be done from active methodological approaches (Gómez et al., 2018), involving the students in building their own knowledge and making possible for them to interpret their reality from a critical perspective so that they can participate in it and transform it. This diagnosis, in the framework of Higher Education, has, in recent years, entailed the design and implementation of training to supplement the current syllabus in the degrees that, precisely, are more oriented to the learning of methodological nature aspects (León & Crisol, 2011; Monteaudo et al., 2017).

Within the Spanish school system, the teaching of Social Sciences remains mainly traditional, based on replicating and rote learning (Souto & García-Monteaudo, 2019). Indeed, first-order concepts continue

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