



Active Learning Strategies in Higher Education Evidence from the University of Vlora “Ismail Qemali”, Albania

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Abstract

The transformation of pedagogical practice in higher education has become one of the most pressing imperatives of the twenty-first century, as universities worldwide are called upon to prepare graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also critical, adaptive, and collaborative. This paper examines the implementation and outcomes of active learning strategies within the context of Albanian higher education, drawing on empirical observations and reflective practice at the University of Vlora “Ismail Qemali”, an institution that has increasingly embraced pedagogical reform as part of its commitment to academic excellence and regional development. The study explores a range of student-centred methodologies, including problem-based learning, cooperative learning structures, and flipped classroom models, evaluating their effectiveness in enhancing student engagement, critical thinking, and learning outcomes at the undergraduate level. Grounded in constructivist learning theory and informed by current international research, the paper analyses how these approaches challenge the prevailing lecture-based tradition still dominant in many Albanian university classrooms. It further identifies key institutional enablers and barriers including faculty development, curriculum design, and assessment alignment that shape the success of pedagogical innovation in this specific socio-educational context. The findings contribute to a growing body of evidence supporting the value of active learning in diverse higher education settings and offer a contextually situated perspective from South-Eastern Europe. Practical recommendations are proposed for educators, department heads, and policy-makers seeking to advance student-centred teaching across Albanian universities.

Keywords: active learning; Albanian higher education; pedagogical innovation; student-centred teaching; university pedagogy