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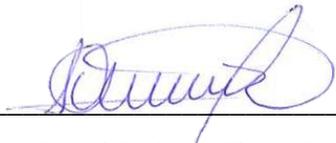
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Riobamba, 28 de abril de 2025

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**TUTORA**

## **DEDICATORY**

To God, for providing me with enough strength to finish this journey and the coming ones: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9). His mighty power helped me to overcome every difficult situation.

To my mom, for always being by my side and providing me with that unconscionable love. Thanks to her I have become the man I am today; I will always thank her for raising me with good manners and for teaching me valuable lessons that I will keep them in my heart forever.

To my grandmother, whose wise advice has helped me to think carefully before acting. Her teaching conversation aids me to value hard work, perseverance, and love have shaped me to become a wiser man and always be kind with anyone

To my kittens, their companion throughout my life has brought me comfort during long nights of studying or doing projects. Thanks to them for being my little safe space and joy where time did not even feel like it was passing.

**Juan Francisco Rojas**

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**Juan Francisco Rojas**

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## SUMMARY

El presente estudio titulado “Experiential learning (EXL) and its possibilities to enhance the teaching and learning of English focused on cultural identity development” busca analizar el potencial del aprendizaje experiencial para mejorar la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés centrándose en el desarrollo de la identidad cultural. Para su cumplimiento se empleó un enfoque cualitativo con una modalidad de investigación bibliográfica y alineada a una investigación de tipo descriptiva explicativa. La información analizada provino de fuentes académicas y bases de datos como ERIC, JSTOR, Elibro, Pro-Quest, ResearchGate, Scielo, Science Direct y Google Académico. Los mismos ayudaron a la creación de los instrumentos; una matriz bibliográfica, checklist, y una guía pedagógica. La investigación destaca que la manera en la que se enseña el inglés, es decir enfocándose en contenidos culturales de los extranjeros podría no ser lo más óptimo. Sin embargo, EXL proporciona un espacio en donde los estudiantes ven al inglés como un puente entre ambas culturas, sin desplazar a la cultura ecuatoriana. A pesar de ello, se identificaron algunos desafíos, como por ejemplo la necesidad de equilibrar el aprendizaje de la gramática con para garantizar que las estrategias utilizadas realmente fomenten la identidad cultural. Además de que el tiempo que toma implementar este tipo de actividades es bastante largo y requiere de una exhaustiva preparación y recursos.

Este estudio reveló que EXL es una metodología auténtica y que basa su aprendizaje en la experiencias y actividades prácticas. Esto permite a los estudiantes conecten su cultura ecuatoriana y aprendizaje de una segunda lengua (inglés). Las actividades adaptadas a la cultura ecuatoriana (Roleplay basados en leyendas ecuatorianas, visitas a museos, proyectos artísticos inspirados en la literatura y arte ecuatoriano entre otros) en esta investigación contribuyen a mejorar no solo las habilidades del inglés, sino que a su vez fomentan y refuerzan la identidad cultural de los estudiantes. Como último punto se sugiere incluir EXL durante la enseñanza del inglés con un enfoque en la cultura ecuatoriana. Es por ese motivo que se recomienda capacitar a los docentes, facilitar los recursos y espacios necesarios con el objetivo de que tanto docentes como autoridades sepan como utilizar esta metodología en el aula de clase. Finalmente, se recomienda que futuras investigaciones hagan más énfasis sobre la efectividad de este método en la enseñanza del inglés en contextos ecuatoriano con estudios empíricos.

**Palabras claves:** Metodologías activas, Aprendizaje Experiencial, Enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, Educación intercultural, Métodos de Enseñanza.

## ABSTRACT

The present study entitled “Experiential learning (EXL) and its possibilities to enhance the teaching and learning of English focused on cultural identity development” aims to analyze the potential of experiential learning to improve the teaching and learning of English focusing on the development of cultural identity. To achieve this, a qualitative approach was used with a bibliographical research modality and aligned to an explanatory descriptive type of research. The information analyzed came from academic sources and databases such as ERIC, JSTOR, Elibro, Pro-Quest, ResearchGate, Scielo, Science Direct and Google Scholar. These helped to create the following instruments, a bibliographic matrix, checklist, and a pedagogical guide. The research highlights that the way in which English is taught, that is, focusing on cultural content of foreigners, may not be the most optimal. However, EXL provides a space where students see English as a bridge between both cultures, without displacing the Ecuadorian culture. However, some challenges were identified, such as the need to balance grammar learning with ensuring that the strategies used really foster cultural identity. In addition, the time it takes to implement these types of activities is quite long and requires extensive preparation and resources.

This study revealed that EXL is an authentic methodology that bases its learning on practical experiences and activities. This allows students to connect their Ecuadorian culture and learning a second language (English). The activities adapted to Ecuadorian culture (roleplay based on Ecuadorian legends, visits to museums, artistic projects inspired by Ecuadorian literature and art, among others) in this research contribute to improving not only English skills but also foster and reinforce students' cultural identity. As a final point, it is suggested to include EXL during the teaching of English with a focus on Ecuadorian culture. For this reason, it is recommended to train teachers and provide the necessary resources and spaces for the application of this methodology. Finally, it is recommended that future research place more emphasis on the effectiveness of this method in the teaching of English in Ecuadorian contexts with empirical studies.

**Keywords:** Experiential learning, Active methodologies, Language teaching, Cultural identity, Intercultural Education, Teaching Methods.

Review by:



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# CHAPTER I

## 1. INTRODUCCION

Language learning is not just about knowing grammatical structures and vocabulary, but also about understanding the cultural connection to this language. Both language and culture are connected since through language individuals express beliefs, traditions, values, and social norms. In nowadays society, professors from EFL classroom have been constantly looking for an innovative method for teaching English. In this regard several methods have emerged, yet they do not focus on cultural aspects of the place English is taught. This creates an unbalanced environment where students feel disconnected from their cultural identity and therefore reducing their motivation to learn English. Thus, creating an impression that foreign cultures are more important than their own and leading students miss out all the benefits of being bilingual or multilingual.

Considering that connecting students' own culture with their language instruction is vital, EXL emerges to bridge this gap. EXL makes learning more interactive and culturally relevant as mentioned by Kolb (1994) learners learn best when they are engaging in meaningful experiences, in simple words "learning by doing". EXL exposes students to different perspectives, cultures and values, that help them to appreciate and respect diversity. In this sense, including Ecuadorian traditions, music, art, history, and folklore within an Experiential learning framework, students can see how English language links to their owns reality.

Therefore, this study' main objective it to epistemologically analyze the potential of Experiential Learning in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English. Followed by the deep explanation on what this methodology consist on, and the best activities and resources for using them into the classroom. To accomplish this the research used a qualitative approach, relying on academic sources and bibliographic research to collect and organize the information. Through this process it was possible to construct a pedagogical guide with activities teachers can use when implementing EXL.

Consequently, this investigation offers an opportunity for teacher to reflect on the way English is targeted. While English is essential for global communication it should not mean losing Ecuadorians' connections to our culture. Instead, English should be seen as a tool for Ecuadorians to share their heritage to the rest of the world. Taking this into consideration, the study is divided into six chapters, the first chapter covers the research goals, giving a clear direction for the study. The second explains the key theories about experiential learning cultural identity. The third chapter describes how the research was done with the corresponding methodology, data collection techniques and instruments. The fourth chapter presents the findings, followed by chapter five, which summarizes the main points and offers some suggestions. Finally, the sixth chapter proposes a pedagogical guide that serves as guide for experiential learning application in the EFL education.

## **1.1 Research Problem**

Over the past decades, the instruction of foreign languages has influenced the cultural identity of learners. According to Rao (2019), English is the predominant lingua franca and the most widely spoken language. This resembles a way of linguistic colonialism and dominance which can result in a disproportionate overrate of English over other languages and cultures. When English is prioritized, learners may struggle to succeed in an education system that overrate foreign cultures and does not value enough local ones. Thus, leading learners from other cultures to distance themselves from their own cultural heritage.

The effects of globalization have overshadowed the cultural identities of English learners. It is true that English can provide access to broader opportunities communication and work. Yet, it can minimize cultural identities and local traditions. In this context, the pedagogical primary focus of English education often lies on linguistic proficiency and resolving tests, without paying enough attention to the cultural implications of learning a new language. As a result, local customs and languages are underestimated and hinder the opportunity for learners to develop their own cultural identity.

Considering these factors this research aims to explore how experiential learning (EXL) can enhance teaching and learning English in such a way it fosters cultural identity development. By integrating experiential learning strategies and educational experiences when learning English allow learners to relate their own culture with others, promoting intercultural empathy. Moreover, experiential learning (for teaching and learning English) can not only preserve and revive students' cultural identity but also use it as a catalyst for promoting their heritage to the global community. Thus, encouraging a more inclusive and culturally aware way of teaching English that values both, foreign and local cultures.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

When Learning a new language, students not only acquire linguistic features and communicative skills, but also students develop an understanding of the culture linked with the target language. Language and culture cannot be separated, as both serve as a vehicle for expressing cultural norms, values, and traditions. However, many approaches to language teaching often fall short of addressing the cultural dimensions of language learning. For instance, In Ecuador, English programs tend to emphasize and overestimate foreign cultures, forgetting about the richness of the Ecuadorian heritage has to offer. Consequently, students are not interested in learning English as their native language and traditions are overshadowed by it, which in turn might result in students missing out on the benefits of being bilingual or multilingual.

As a way to connect the teaching and learning of English for the development of cultural identity, experiential learning emerges as an immersive and meaningful educational experience, connecting language learning with the students' cultural backgrounds. According to Kolb (2005), knowledge is constructed through experience. Thus, allowing students to be involved in real-life situations during the learning process. For example, local traditions, music, art, history and folklore, help students to see English relevance in their own lives. It also encourages hands-on

activities focused on cultural themes such as performing plays about Ecuadorian legends, reinforcing students' connection with their cultural roots.

Consequently, this study aims to analyze epistemologically the potential of Experiential Learning in teaching and learning English as a mean to enrich the development of cultural identity. English might not be seen as way of linguistic colonialism anymore, but as a bridge that can connect two different cultures. Thus, promoting Ecuadorian heritage to the world. To achieve this goal this research uses a qualitative approach since learners not only become proficient in the new target language, but also develop a broader worldview, enhancing their intercultural empathy and awareness. Given those circumstances the study uses a bibliographic descriptive and explanatory research modality. Data collection techniques and instruments include literature reviews and a bibliographic matrix for understanding, organizing and synthesizing the epistemological foundations of experiential learning. By describing its nature, it is possible to identify the necessary activities and resources for its implementation. Thus, constructing a pedagogical didactic guide that highlights the academic benefits of experiential learning implementation.

### **1.3 Justification**

The focus of the present research lies on its possibilities to enhance language learning focused on developing cultural identity. In today's society learning a new language with traditional methodologies that pay little attention to cultural and personal experiences might not be a realistic way of learning. In an Ecuadorian context educator's emphasis on American culture in their teaching instruction since their language its related with that culture. Thus, language teaching is associated with their cultural aspects, American customs, traditions and sometimes way of thinking. Consequently, students are exposed to cultural elements that they might have not experienced before or are not related to their reality.

While the importance of English as a global language is undeniable, this unbalanced approach can create the perception of foreign cultures being more valuable than Ecuadorian culture and therefore weakening students' connection to their roots. As for this matter, it is essential to have a balance between linguistic skills and cultural aspects. English instruction should be an opportunity to integrate Ecuadorian traditions, historical narratives, and values to foster both language proficiency and cultural pride, ensuring students see English as a way to promote their cultural identity to the global community. One methodology that allows teachers and students to create this cultural understanding experience is experiential learning methodology. It turns the traditional ways of teaching into real-world applications focusing on sharing cultural aspects. Thus, allowing teachers to promote active participation, reflection, and the creation of real-life situations into a cultural context. This promotes innovative ways of teaching and learning English in a EFL classroom.

In this regard the experiential learning foundations of this research are well-supported by the availability of bibliographical resources. Several databases, such as ERIC, JSTOR, DIALNET, and SCOPUS and technological tools like online platform to create the instruments required for this investigation ensure the academic research foundations while incorporating innovative educational technologies. Plus, professors' expertise in the field of experiential learning facilitates

the understanding of EXL principles and potential benefits in language learning. Thus, the impact of this research goes beyond the immediate classroom context. Teachers and students will be provided with a new perspective and innovative methods for learning English, influencing not only teaching and learning experiences but also contributing the field of language education and cultural studies. Consequently, influencing other researchers, institutions, educators and ongoing pedagogical advancements that are looking for new ideas to improve students' language acquisition.

#### **1.4 Problem statement**

How can experiential learning be used to enhance the teaching and learning of English focused on cultural identity development?

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 General Objective**

To epistemologically analyze the potential of Experiential Learning in enriching the development of cultural identity through the teaching and learning of English.

### **2.2 Specific Objective**

1. To describe the nature and approach of Experiential Learning within the realm of foreign language teaching and learning.
2. To identify activities and resources required for the implementation of Experiential Learning in correspondence with the study target.
3. To construct a pedagogical-didactic guide illustrating the academic benefits of Experiential Learning in the construction of cultural identity.

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Research Background**

Teaching English has evolved over the past decades. In the past, methodologies such as grammar translation methods, which emphasize memorization of vocabulary or grammar rules was predominant in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the direct method was developed to address the limitations of the previous method. It focused on encouraging students to think and speak in the target language. However, the no use of their native language diffculted students' comprehension. On this account the Audio-lingual method gained ground, influenced by behaviorism, this method involved repetitive drills and practice to reinforce language patterns, correct pronunciation and structure. Yet, it often fails to provide meaningful use of language in real-life contexts.

Aiming to change language teaching reality active methodologies, including Task-Based Learning (TBL), Content and language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Communicative Language

Teaching (CLT) made inroads into transforming language education by emphasizing students' practical use of the language skills. These methodologies represent a change from teachers-centered to learner-centered. They focus on promoting, autonomy and interaction by engaging students into authentic tasks. Thus, opening new opportunities for creating more dynamic language teaching.

Taking this into account English language became an essential aspect of a global education system. People started to learn English not only for academic purposes but also to engage with the global communities. In this context, language is inherently connected to culture. Students need to acquire knowledge related to English language structures, vocabulary or pronunciation and at the same time they learn their culture, values and practices of it. Therefore, aiming to achieve such connection experiential learning has an important role in this process. Kolb (1984) states that learning is the process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experience, being the students the center of the learning process.

The nature of this methodology turns the classroom into an immersive environment where students not only enhance their language proficiency levels but also promote their cultural empathy. For this reason, students start to appreciate the richness of different ways of living (culture). Regarding this, language becomes like a vehicle for sharing someone's culture. For example, a research conducted by Byram (2013) highlights that intercultural connections between individuals are essential to learning a new language. It involves understanding the values, traditions and behaviors of two different cultures to deeply comprehend their identity. Similarly, Norton (2000) discusses how language learning is directly connected to learners' identity. This suggests that new language learners can change or shape their own identity as they interact with each other. Hence, highlighting the importance of using new approaches that allow learners share their cultural identity with others.

Another study by Alastair Pennycook (1994) uses the term "discourse" to describe the relationship between language and culture. He believes that discourse is more than verbal communication, it represents the way people behave, communicate, and construct their identity. James Gee, Glynda Hull & Colin Lankshear (1996) expanded his idea of discourse to include aspects like talking, listening, reading, writing, interacting, believing, and using any type of tools. In simple words discourse refers to everything we call "Culture". Finally, a study carried out by Duff and Uchida (1997) demonstrated that by incorporating cultural materials like ceramics, paintings, and artwork into language teaching, students feel more motivated to learn. As a result, students develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for their culture which is important in today's world.

### **3.2 Language Learning Theories**

During the past few years learning theories have emerged to facilitate Second Language Acquisition have evolved in the field of education. Some have more impact than others as they are characterized as being meaningful and not following a traditional or monotonous process.

#### **3.2.1 Constructivism (Jean Piaget)**

Constructivism as a paradigm state that learning is an active process constructed throughout the journey of learning and information received by the learner. According to this theory, people create their knowledge based on their own perception of reality and the information linked to what they already know. An important implication of Piaget's theory is the students' adaptation to the level of instruction. This means that meanwhile the learners acquire new knowledge is the teacher's role to provide a variety of chances for students to explore and experience new understanding (Piaget, J. 1983).

Jean Piaget's perspective emphasizes that children must go through a series of developmental stages. According to Bukatku and Daehler (1995) each stage involves a unique level of cognitive processing, internal organization, and the way children interact with the environment. Piaget emphasizes that learners' understanding is controlled by the stage they have reached, and therefore teachers should consider the different levels of intellectual development. Some examples are hands-on activities and the creation of groups to encourage students work together and facilitate the schemas, assimilation and accommodation of new information with their own and peers previous knowledge.

In the Sensorimotor Stage (2 years infancy) children start to organize and adapt to their environment mostly based on their behaviour, sensory experiences or what they can experience with their body and senses. Here children learn languages which will help them to develop their social and intellectual skills. This stage of learning lasts around two years old. In the Preoperational Stage (2 to 7 years) children develop to think logically, but only about things they can see or touch. They can think using images and symbols which in turn help them to develop language, imagination, and problem-solving skills. However, they still struggle with abstract thinking and reasoning. In the Concrete Operational Stage (2 to 11 years) they can use logical thinking with real-life examples.

They can solve simple problems by using their past experiences knowledge and concrete experiences. In the last phase of Formal Operational stage (11 years and upwards) here they acquire the ability to think abstractly and logically and there is no need for objects or physical representations. Their ability for reasoning becomes like adults as they develop a higher stage of cognitive development where children can solve problems using logic (Lazarus,s. 2010).

### **3.2.2 Experiential learning theory (David Kolb)**

Experiential learning theory (ELT), or active, involved learning, learning by doing, or interactive learning is the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of learners through experience while learners reflect and analyze their progress. It is a holistic adaptative process which emerges from experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour. As stated by Kolb (1984), learning is the process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experience where students are the center of the learning process. In other words, it refers to the knowledge students acquire from experiences resulting from their own actions rather than being recipients of tons of information from lectures and memorized facts. At the core of this theory is the notion that human experience should be a guiding light in education which is not only about gathering theoretical knowledge but also getting practical experience.

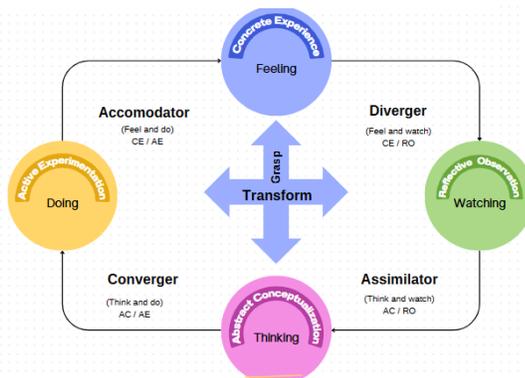
This experience involves the learner’s life and routines, besides the activities where students participate in a classroom, its primary focus is to reflect, evaluate, and reconstruct their past experiences to create new experiences and skills. Most experts have concluded that in Experiential learning students take an active role in the learning process so that they acquire new knowledge and skills. This is due to the tendency of students to recall a small percentage of what they hear from the teacher, but they remember the majority of what they actively do. In this way what learners learn can be applied to a new meaningful real-world experience.

Experience per se is, therefore, just the first step when we refer to the learning process, and for learning to exist reflection must take place. This ability to reflect on a specific experience, and on initial reactions to the experience, becomes what is called “missing link” which describes the experience and learning relationship. The aforementioned experiences is based on the ideals of active and reflective learning which are built upon the previous knowledge or experiences that required the personal involvement of individuals. This is better explained with is cyclical model proposed by David Kolb in 1984.

### 3.2.2.1 Kolb’s learning cycle

The cyclical model is formed by 4 phases that students must go through, experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting. Once the learners experience something new the process is repeated making it a complete learning process. The first phase Concrete Experience (CE) involves “doing”, the student only performs the task but does not reflect on it. The second phase is Reflective Observation (RO), in this phase the students consciously reflect in and on the task or experienced they went through and review what is done and tried. The learner actively listens, pays attention and distinguishes what went well or not in achieving a certain outcome. The reflection students make becomes the third phase called Abstract Conceptualization (AC). Learners create new ideas or conceptualizations that shaped their learning about practice. Thus, the learner generates new understanding to find answers to what they have experienced and their practices. In this way students can modify the way they work to make it more effective. Finally, after students have experienced, reflected and conceptualized learners try out these new ideas as part of their learning process through Active Experimentation (AE) which is the implications and validity students put into practice of their new understanding in real life situations (McCarthy, 2016).

Figure 3.2 1 The Experiential Learning Cycle and basic Learning Styles (Kolb,1984).



Note: This shows the process teachers should consider knowing how their students learn best

### **3.2.2.2 Learning Style Inventory – The instrument**

In 1971 David Kolb introduced the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) to assess individual learning styles. It was designed to serve as an educational tool to understand the student learning process through experience and learning styles. The LSI can be considered a guide that allows teachers to explore how an individual learns best (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). In this context, the LSI classifies learners into four categories based on how they acquire the knowledge presented: Divergers, Assimilators, Convergents, and Accommodators. (See figure 1).

Divergers learn best by being exposed to a Concrete Experience (CE) and then reflecting about them through Reflective Observation (RO). In simple words, they are good at looking at situations from different perspectives, coming up with new ideas and brainstorming. Their strengths include being creative, working cooperatively, connecting with others' feelings, and receiving personal feedback

On the other hand, accommodators learn best from “hands-on” experience and enjoying the challenge of new activities. They rely more on intuition than logical thinking and prefer working cooperatively for completing a certain task by looking for others to get information rather than analyzing things themselves. They prefer setting goals, doing hands-on work, and trying out different methods to finish a project in a cooperative manner. They often adapt well to any situation and are open to taking risks. While they are sociable beings, they might sometimes be impatient. (Kolb, 1984; Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 1999; Geiger, 1992).

The assimilator prefers obtaining knowledge through abstract ideas and processing them by reflective observation. They are skilled at understanding and organizing large amounts of information into a concise, logical form. Their strength lies in reasoning and having the ability to develop theoretical models as they prefer to read lectures and explore analytical models focusing more on ideas or concepts than on personal interaction. Finally, converge also learn through abstract conceptualization, yet they do process the information by active experimentation. They present an innate ability to solve problems experiments, make decisions applying their ideas in different contexts. Conventional intelligence tests with only one correct question do not present any challenge for them. However, they often fail when dealing with social and interpersonal situations as stated by (Kolb, 1984; Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 1999; Geiger, 1992).

## **3.3 Active Methodologies**

### **3.3.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes the importance of communication, meaningful interaction, and authentic language use in language learning. Brown (2007) gives his definition of CLT as “an approach to o language teaching methodology that emphasizes authenticity, interaction, student-centered learning, task-based activities, and communication for the real world, meaningful purposes” (p.378). This approach is seen as a catalyst for many modern teaching methodologies that focus on making language learning more meaningful and practical

### **3.3.2 Task-Based Learning (TBL)**

Task-Based Learning, built on the principles of CLT, is defined as a second language teaching methodology which encourages experience and functionality during the language acquisition process. This approach sees tasks as assignments that mainly focus on information exchange and transmission. Those tasks must be based on real-life situations so that learners can simulate everyday life scenarios like ordering food, visiting a doctor, pretending to be a tourist guide, or presenting news. This close relationship between the real world and the task can potentially influence the way students learn by motivating them to perceive their own learning as highly meaningful (Pérez-Ibáñez, 2014).

### **3.3.3 Project Based Learning (PBL)**

Expanding on task-based methodologies, Project based learning (PBL) is described as an approach of the educational system. Therefore, it could be understood as a catalyst where various methodologies and techniques meet each other. From a contemporary viewpoint Hallermann, Larmer and Mergendoller's define PBL a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning essential knowledge and skills through a student-driven inquiry process focused on complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and learning tasks. Thus, PBL considers students' interest (inquiry), fosters meaningful knowledge (through authentic questions) and aims to create designed products and learning tasks, making their understanding of real-world contexts more purposeful (Bytyqi, 2022).

### **3.3.4 Simulation Based Learning**

This theory aligns with task-based learning and project-based learning, immersing students into realistic scenarios. Simulation-based learning is a form of experiential learning that allows students to acquire knowledge and put into practice their skills into a realistic simulated safe environment. Thus, learners feel safe and confident to take risks, interact, and collaborate on hands-on experiences where the content and way of instruction are adjusted so learners have fun and enjoy learning. This makes learners retain and increase their knowledge which in turn helps them to improve their overall skills, effective communication, teamwork, collaboration, decision making, and problem solving. It is important to mention that this methodology is not a replacement for the traditional teaching method, but instead it functions as a complement to the other teaching methods (Braund, 2021).

### **3.3.5 Drama Based Learning**

This theory is an extension of simulation-based learning, meaning that it involves the use of theatrical techniques to actively engage students. Their imagination and creativity are fostered through dialogues, theatre games and role work. Additionally, as these techniques are supported by a variety of learning styles, it will keep students actively involved in the learning process, fostering not only language skills, but also empathy, cultural awareness, and critical thinking. Drama activities such as role-plays, improvisation and script performances make learning experiences more memorable and meaningful (Kettula & Berghäll, 2013).

### **3.4 EFL Ecuadorian Curriculum**

#### **3.4.1 Content and Language Integrated Learning CLIL**

This model combines language learning with cultural and cognitive aspects of learning guiding learners' growth. The suggested EFL curriculum uses a language focused CLIL approach, where the topic from other subjects is included to make language learning more meaningful and practical. Thus, supporting the overall curriculum while students' cognitive and social skills needed for disciplines and, and therefore reinforcing the content they learned in different areas (Met, 1999).

#### **3.4.2 Curricular Threads**

##### **3.4.2.1 Communication and Cultural Awareness**

In the EFL curriculum Communication and Cultural Awareness encourages the use of ICT to promote tolerance and interculturality using authentic language. According to Krajka & Marczak (2013), Communication and cultural awareness is the capacity to handle the differences and effectively share experiences with strangers, from similar and different backgrounds and use ICT for understanding the cultural riddles of reality. Language through the Arts also contributes to students' sociocultural reality of the country. This means that when students are exposed to other cultures and languages, they understand and strengthen their own sense of identity.

##### **3.4.2.2 Intercultural Awareness and Identity**

In today's globalized world, intercultural awareness has become essential, as international communication is a need involving cultural interactions. According to Çakir (2006) learning English offers learners new opportunities to explore and appreciate their own culture and identity as well as others through curiosity and authentic use of the language. Activities promoting intercultural understanding promote interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds encouraging cultural sensitivity. Thus, showing an awareness and comprehension of those cultures. In addition, EFL classroom promotes social competence through collaboration, acceptance of different viewpoints through role plays, conversation clubs and group work. All these experiences promote human diversity and world views promoting discipline, respect, and equality, preparing learners for positive social interactions. (Ministerio de Educación, 2016)

### **3.5 Experiential Learning in Education**

#### **3.5.1 Experiential Learning in Teaching a Foreign Language**

Since the beginning of teaching, there has been a close relationship between experience and learning. "Experience is the best teacher" and the "school of life" were common expressions to illustrate the role of experience in learning. According to Mughal & Zafar (2011) experiential learning is about making meaning from direct experience. It refers to the learning that occurs from the direct participation of individuals in the events of life. Thus, facilitating knowledge creation, sense-making, and knowledge transfer in teaching, training, and development. Experiential Learning in the ESL classroom is built under the principle that language learning is developed or

enhanced when involving students in cooperative activities. These types of activities should be challenging, communicative, and meaningful, meaning that they must provide students with opportunities for ownership and participation in their own language learning (Brown, 1987). David Kolb's work on experiential learning acts as a point of reference to demonstrate the process by which experiences could be transformed into learning developing a model of the learning cycle.

### **3.5.2 Kolb's Learning Cycle**

Students gain new knowledge when they go through four phases. First, in the Concrete Experience (doing) phase learners actively participate in an activity. Next, in the Reflexive Observation (observing) phase, they think carefully to consciously reflect on the experience and know what happens during the activity. Then the Abstract Conceptualizing (thinking) phase in which students try to conceptualize the theory or new ideas behind what they have observed. Finally, in the Active Experimenting (Planning) phase the student plans to test what they have learned to apply it in a new situation. (Sharlanova, 2004)

### **3.6 Experiential Learning Principles in EFL Classroom**

When it comes to teaching a second language it is the professor's responsibility to create scenarios of experiences which can influence or impact positively the experience of learning a new language of students. Simply put, good experiences motivate and encourage students to value the learning experience and take more responsibility for their own learning. As with all methods, experiential learning is based on some principles as Mollaei & Rahnama (2012) mention:

- ✓ Students are the center of learning
- ✓ Facilitation must be light and subtle
- ✓ Creation of experiential learning opportunities
- ✓ Understand that everyone reacts differently to avoid making pre-judging
- ✓ Help build confidence before addressing attitudes or behaviors
- ✓ The activities should be real, engaging, meaningful and should include time for reflection
- ✓ Avoid giving answers, instead letting students think by asking questions
- ✓ Trust that your students will take responsibility for their own learning
- ✓ Remember, it is about the students, not the teacher, so take the first step to get things going

In addition, an activity to truly be considered experiential should follow the following criteria proposed by (Andresen, Bound and Cohen 2000 as cited in Mollaei & Rahnama, 2012):

- ✓ Experience-based learning must be focused on something important and meaningful to the students.
- ✓ Students should be actively involved and personally engaged.
- ✓ It should involve a space of reflection to write or discuss about their experiences throughout the process.
- ✓ Learning should involve students' emotions, senses, and personalities, not just their level of intelligence.

- ✓ A student's prior knowledge and experiences should be valued.
- ✓ Teachers should create an environment in which students develop a sense of trust, respect, and honesty, demonstrating in this way teachers care for their students' well-being

### **3.7 Integrating Experiential learning into the EFL Classroom**

The steps to integrate Experiential Learning in the Classroom are presented in Mollaei & Rahnama (2012) work. Begin with introducing the topic, the learning objectives, and providing important background knowledge that students will need for developing a task, for example, watching a video or having a quick discussion. The selection of activities for students and possible factors that might affect students' learning should be taken into consideration before planning and activity. Then, engage students into realistic and immersive activities, so that student's attention is captured by their interest which in turn will encourage them to actively participate. Get students discussing the experience, focusing on what happened and how they felt while developing the activity (discussion afterwards) and monitor students' progress and work.

After that, help students develop and evaluate theories or hypotheses about their experience using group discussion and personal reflection. Students should be able to explain and show what they have learned by applying their new ideas and insights in a real-life scenario. Using "journaling" to analyze a conflict and find a solution could be a good example. At the end teachers should encourage further reflection of what the activity's outcomes were and how did they go.

That means that feedback must be continuous from the beginning of the experience until the end of it. Have students discuss or journaling on specific points of improvement or any recommendation for the activity. Do not punish student's failing, to one extent, committing errors will give students more wisdom to keep trying and learn from their mistakes.

#### **3.7.1 Experiential techniques in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL)**

Mollaei & Rahnama in 2012 state that the Experiential learning techniques show a wide variety of interactive practices where opportunities for students to learn from their own and other experiences are promoted by being engaged into the process. Some examples are personal journals, diaries, field trips, portfolios, role plays, drama activities, games, simulations, and storytelling. These contain key elements (learning from immediate experience) for it to be engaging for learners not only intellectually but also emotionally. In the experiential based learning, the teachers take the role of facilitators, guides, and helpers.

#### **3.7.2 Role of the teacher in experiential learning**

The teacher should prepare and organize in advance the project carefully think about each phase, taking into account possible drawbacks and the most important, they have to be creatively open to "teachable moments" meaning that they have to create a nonjudgmental environment where students feel free to make mistakes without fearing for any punishment and students can share their reflections, feelings, and emotions about their experiences, weather they are positive or negative. When teachers offer effective guidance by asking thoughtful, insightful questions while

maintaining themselves an open attitude, understanding and supportive heart and mind, only then will the project be successful. (Oaneway, 1977 as cited in Mollaei & Rahnama 2012).

### **3.7.3 Types of Experiential Learning Activities**

The experiential learning activities are about self-understanding. It can be understood as the ability to reflect, self-regulate and think critically about our own beliefs and actions. (Brown, Collins, & Durgid, 1989) demonstrate that learners who reflect and comprehend their learning strengths and weaknesses at much better at succeeding in new tasks, promoting “habits of mind” that emphasizes self-initiated and self-engaged learners (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Experiential learning activities can be divided into two major categories. Field-Based Learning includes field trip courses, study abroad programs, internships, and student exchanges. For instance, Outward Bound Field trips where students participate in outdoors activities rather than normally receive lectures or a traditional classroom experience. On the other hand, classroom-based learning can also be considered experiential, it includes roleplaying, games, simulations, presentations, debates, discussions, drama and simulation-based learning. Both create an environment where learning takes place, preparing students for future experiences (Sumana, 2014).

- **Field Trips**

Field trips are a great example of learning by experiencing. The activity itself allows students to leave their natural environment (classroom) and face the real world. Students can apply their new knowledge into a completely new and meaningful setting. When planning this kind of activities the average costs and logistics of going there and getting back should be considered to ensure students’ safety. Sometimes it can be challenging but this will ensure that students participate in authentic language scenarios and get engaged in cultural aspects. Therefore, teachers’ preparation is vital as it influences the outcomes of the field trip experience which in turn will benefit students’ language learning.

According to Behrendt and Franklin (2014) the main steps for field trips activities is to plan before the trip, during the trip, and after the trip. Before the trip: Teacher should visit the location and get as much information as possible to discuss in the classroom with the students as a way of preparing them for the trip. For example, the teacher can ask their students to write a small outline of the expectations for the trip which will be compared after the activity is finished, introduce new vocabulary, or grammar structure students might need. The next step is during the trip, it means that the teacher needs to explain in detail all the activities they will do and help them become more involved in this new environment. Also consider students’ feelings, observation or any question that arises during the activities. Finally, after they come back from this adventure, the teacher should prepare a space of reflection for students to share their experiences on what they have learned or clarify any doubts of the students. This can be done using class discussions, debates, presentations or creative projects.

- **Roleplay**

Mohammad and Behroz in 2010 mentioned that roleplay is a teaching technique where students have different roles and act out scenarios, often without a script. These scenarios can be based on real-life situations or entirely imaginative ones. Roleplays encourages the use of practical language skills in a natural manner. Apart from that, students practice their communicative skills, pronunciation, and use of English. When using roleplays, teachers need to give clear instructions and enough time to prepare the task, making sure students feel confident and actively engaged in the activity. There are two types of roleplays teachers can use; scripted role-plays involve students performing the task using already made script. They are used mostly with beginners as they might lack confidence or language skills to prepare their own dialogues. Contrary, improvised role-plays require students' creativity to create new dialogues based on the teachers' prompt or their own imaginations. This type of roleplay is commonly used in higher level students as they have enough knowledge of the vocabulary and language structure that will be used.

- **Simulation**

Simulations also involve the creating of realistic environments or scenarios to make the lessons more real or similar to the real world. In some activities, it is required that students solve a problem using the information that the teachers provide. Here students are the protagonists of the class, and it should be directed to a communicative environment so that students have control over their own learning. Some examples might include job interviews, ordering food, courts of law scenario or hotel check-in. Although it is similar Role-play based activities it is important to know that Roleplays are less structured and are based on more story telling scenarios, meaning that students are free to create new dialogues or improvise some interactions. However, simulations are more complex since they are designed to mimic real life scenarios to make students apply what they have learned (Fanous, 2020). To make this clearer, while in roleplay students pretend to be Santa Clause (who is a fantasy character) in simulation-based activities English learners will act as chefs creating a new dish (Which is more realistic).

- **Art-Based Learning**

Art-based learning refers to the use of activities that encourage students to be creative, imagine and experiment with their peers to create new ideas or concepts. By incorporating activities such as drawing, singing, theater dancing, music, creative writing or storytelling, students explore, analyze and express themselves emotionally and intellectually to the culture being taught. Hence, students can appreciate their cultural roots while learning the target language since they learn in a fun and meaningful manner. For instance, students might interpret a short story, perform a roleplay from a dramatic piece, or design artwork inspired by a particular topic or author from their country (Al-Busaidi et al., 2022).

- **Game-Based Learning**

Games into English learning is strategy used to engaged students into using the English language in a fun way. Game-based learning uses games to teach concepts, ideas, and skills in a

fun and natural way. Educational games are similar but focus on learning in specific areas like vocabulary, grammar, or language skills rather than just entertainment. According to Kiryakova et al. (2014), there are four main stages when applying game-based activities including, understanding students' characteristics and needs, setting clear learning goals, creating lesson and activities based on the introduced topics, and adding game elements or mechanisms to make learning more fun. Some types of games may include educational, trivia, puzzle, adventure, strategy, and action games.

### **3.7.4 Benefits of Implementing Experiential Learning**

According to Knutson, S. (2003) experiential learning approach promotes learners' development of the target language skills (English). It is required to actively engage learners to work on specific activities rather than only examining certain elements of the target language. Experiential learning highlights three specific potential benefits for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in terms of motivation, investment, and cultural understanding. Motivation is a key component in SLA as it not only contributes to students' success when studying another language but also influences their level of interaction. If learners are motivated, they will look for opportunities to practice the language whether inside of the classroom or outside of academic settings. According to (Oxford and Shearin, 1996, as cited in Knutson S, 2003) mentioned that the more motivation students have the better they will be involved in learning a foreign language, meaning that motivation determines to what extent the students will be consistent and aware of their own learning.

Another benefit of experiential learning in the aforementioned investigation is the development of a positive self-image and confidence when using the English Language. For example, if students are working on a specific task, teachers can notice if students fear failing or embarrassment if they make a mistake. Thus, the teachers should create a free-stress environment where students feel safe. A well plan experiential learning project will create an environment where students feel free to participate in the activities. EXL can not be taught in isolation, using a language must be related to a social aspect, involving learners into different cultural contexts, social norms, and practices.

### **3.7.5 Assessment in Experiential Learning (EXL)**

When assessing students in an experiential learning environment teachers must make sure students are able to apply practical language skills and not just their ability to memorize information. The EXL assessment includes students' prior knowledge (before implementing EXL activities), reflections during the EXL development, and after they have finished experiencing the activity. This type of assessment is based on Alexander Astin's L-E-O model (Astin, 1993 as cited in Johnston, 2014).

I = Input: Before the EXL activity.

Here teachers check on students' prior knowledge, skills, and attitudes to understand what students already know and clear up any misconceptions. Also building on students' existing

knowledge to introduce new ideas and setting as a starting point to measure how much students learn after the activity.

E = Environment: During the EXL activity.

While students are involved in the EXL activity, teachers can use tools like journals or group discussions to guide reflection. These help students understand their own learning while been exposed to the activity. Reflecting during the activity can also help teachers identify and address any confusion, ensuring every student stays active and immersed in the activity.

O = Output: After the EXL activity.

In this phase the assessment can be the same or similar to which student's experienced the first time. Thus, allowing teachers to measure how much students have progressed. During this phase it is essential to provide feedback about what worked well and what could be improved for future EXL activities.

### **3.8 Cultural Identity and Language Learning**

In the same way as nature culture can be seen as all the historical and subjective experiences that have shaped individuals and helped them become who they are. Personal beliefs, behaviour and language are shaped by the environment people live in or by new experiences that provide individuals with cultural awareness which in turn construct our own cultural identity. Social Scientific Approaches see cultural identity as a process based on the relationship between individuals and groups they belong to (Yep, 2004). This means that, cultural identity has both personal and social aspects that cannot be separated. Interpretive Cultural approaches view cultural identity as a social and cultural construction created by individuals and co-created, negotiated, and reinforced through interactions with others. Its primary goal is to examine how individuals as cultural group members experience and understand their cultural identities. Collier and Thomas (1988) defined cultural identity as a shared sense of belonging to a group that shares symbols and meanings as well as norms/rules for conduct.

In an EFL context language is considered as a tool for sharing someone's culture into a new community. This suggests that understanding someone's language connects learners deeply to others' cultures. Fuller (2007) mentioned that the more people interact in different social contexts with each other the stronger cultural identity they develop. Likewise, Vygotsky (1980) believes that interacting with others in a community aids individuals to learn social and cultural ideas through language, acting as both a way of communication and tool for cognitive development. It is also mentioned that cultural identity is closely linked to language learning since understanding a new language helps learners to connect with cultural activities and social norms, making it easier to adapt to a new culture. Li (2013) stated that learning the linguistics features of a language can improve cultural understanding, foster learners' empowerment and even lead to personal growth. Similarly, Freire (2020) emphasized that teaching in a multicultural and multilingual manner promotes social awareness, socio-political consciousness, and learners' cultural identity through language use.

### **3.8.1 Teaching Culture in EFL**

As aforementioned before, the process of learning a new language cannot exist without learning the culture of the place where the language is spoken, otherwise individuals will be considering “fluent fool”. This refers to someone who can speak the language fluently but does not understand the social and philosophical context in which it exists. However, the way culture should be addressed when learning a second language has still been developed. Some authors suggest that applying specific activities like teaching vocabulary, grammar, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing should be related to the culture of the target language. Krasner (1999) suggests some techniques and methods:

- Observation: Students learn about the target language by watching films news, exploring maps or looking at menus.
- Visits: Learners explore cultural spots, like museums, auditoriums, town halls and restaurants
- Mini dramas: Students are presented with short scenes that show cultural heritage, students analyze them and act out.
- Culture capsules: Cultural practices are explained through presentation. These can involve speaking writing, visual, or real objects
- Roleplay: Students play different roles and act in different cultural scenarios.

### **3.9 Cultural Identity Development Through Experiential Learning**

In the experiential learning theory, the learner’s context should be taken into account as the learner’s interpretation of a specific experience is shaped by its context. Ansbacher (1998) mentions Dewey to highlight that every experience is built on an experience which in turn influences new ones. In simple words, experiential learning can not be isolated from their context, instead it is shaped by social-cultural factors that impact individual’s perception the resulting learning outcomes. In fact, the content of what is taught is as important as the teaching process and the context in which it is taught. That is why cultural identity not only engages individuals in hands-on activities and immersing experience through experiential learning but helps them to explore and understand their own and other’s cultural backgrounds. Thus, emphasizing learning through direct experience, reflection, and active participation. This fosters a deeper understanding or connection to one’s cultural heritage and the appreciation of different cultures (Kolb 1984). Engaging learners into authentic “real life” scenarios develop awareness

#### **3.9.1 Integration Strategies (Activities that Link LL With Cultural Identity)**

Integration strategies are structured activities specifically designed to connect language learning with the development of cultural identity. These activities include cultural immersion experiences, language use in cultural contexts, and projects which explore the cultural dimensions of the language use (Kramsch, 1998).

#### **3.9.2 Process to be followed (Experiential Learning structure)**

The process of integrating language learning with cultural identity involves several stages initial exposure, interactive engagement, reflective observation, conceptual understanding, and

application. These stages guide learners from basic awareness to deep integration of cultural knowledge (Wolfe and Byrne, 1975 as cited in Mollaei & Rahnama, 2012) proposed the experiential learning structure based on four phases.

- **Design**

This is where the teacher decides on the learning experience, meaning that includes everything students need to learn and connect it to the course objectives, also identifies the resources students will need, for instance, readings, worksheets, rubrics, etc. The teacher finally plans how much time the activity will last and how the experience will conclude, choosing assessment methods which include observation, journals, written reports, projects, peer assessment or a combination of these.

- **Conduct**

In this phase all the activities that the teacher plans take place. Teachers get all the materials, rubrics, and tools to use for the experiential learning experience and ensure the activity is going as planned. Sometimes there might be some changes in the activity if the teacher observes students are getting lost or have some troubles when developing the activity. When the activity starts, let students take the lead, guide them, but do not give the answers, instead use questions for students to reflect on and reach a solution independently.

- **Evaluation**

After all the activities are completed, the teacher should provide a moment to reflect on what students have learned. Evaluate the success of the activity using discussion, reflection, or debriefing sessions to help students reinforce what they have learned and continue their learning process. While the teacher evaluates students' performance it is important to highlight areas for improvement, what went well or what needs to be done to improve the activity next time. This helps them clearly understand their learning

- **Feedback**

Feedback happens throughout the entire process of the activity, while the teacher monitors how well students are doing and adjusts to improving their experience. Also, the teacher should remind students not to be afraid of making mistakes as learning from them will be useful for their overall future language improvement.

### **3.9.3 Teachers and Students' role**

Professors in experiential learning adopt four roles in order to provide each student with the best experience by navigating the experiential learning cycle. In the "Facilitator" role educators encourage students to connect with their personal experiences and reflect on them. They support and inspire learners' motivation, interest, and self-awareness using small group discussions and creating personal connections with learners. "Expert" role, teachers as subject matter experts, guide learners to organize their own reflections, linking them to their own knowledge base. Teachers teach by example, providing models and encouraging students' critical thinking to

analyze the subject matter knowledge using lectures or texts. The next role is “Evaluator”, here professor helps learners master students’ application of knowledge and skills. They take an objective, results-oriented approach, designing activities for assessing and evaluating students’ learning outcomes. The last role of teachers is “Coaching”, is where educators promote encouraging and collaborative environments to help students achieve their goals by applying knowledge in meaningful ways. Professor not only assists students’ personal development but also provides meaningful feedback on every performance (Kolb & Kolb, 2013).

On the other hand, students play an active role in learning activities, hands/on activities like experiments, projects, roleplays. Students reflect on their experiences and integrate new cultural knowledge into their personal identities, helping them to learn better about themselves. Students are engaged in challenging situations that are realistic, meaningful and social. Thus, challenging themselves to think outside the box, analyzing their experiences to make sense of them, draw conclusions, and make good decisions. This time they are given freedom to assess their own progress so that they take control over their own learning. In simple words, they use what they have learned in a real context, becoming less dependent on the teacher and relying more on their abilities and knowledge (Bartle, 2015).

### **3.10 Pedagogical Guide**

A pedagogical guide is a structured document or tool that provides educators with a choice of procedures, methods, prescriptions, and devices for effective teaching. It is designed to support the outcomes of planning implementation, and evaluation of educational activities by defining the format, content, and structure of the environment, delivery systems, and implementation strategies. The principles of a pedagogical guide are learner centeredness, active learning, reflective practice and cultural relevance (Reigeluth, 1983).

- **Characteristics**

The pedagogical Guide contains methodological materials to help teachers to create their own courses and lectures for teaching. The most representative characteristics of this are: It supports teachers in achieving learning outcomes, helps teachers develop teaching materials, leads teachers on how to select structured and flexible activities, presents teachers tips on how to assess and evaluate gained learning outcomes and provide teachers with resources and materials (Bálint & Chovanec, 2019).

- **Desing Process**

According to Bálint & Chovanec (2019) the design process of a pedagogical guide involves describing the learning outcomes, what the students should know (Knowledge), be able to do (Skills), and the abilities to apply what they have learned (Competencies). According to (Bloom’s taxonomy, 1956 as cited in Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) it is also important to identify the nature of a particular goal, Cognitive (Thinking), Affective (Feelings), and Psychomotor (Skills). The next step is to align long-term goals with their institution’s mission and student needs. For that they can use the SMART methodology which is an approach that helps to accomplish the desired goals. Some authors also add ER to the SMART methodology.

- ✓ Specific and simple (Strategic)
- ✓ Measurable (Meaningful)
- ✓ Ambitious (Achievable)
- ✓ Realistic (Relevant)
- ✓ Time bound (Time-limited)
- ✓ Evaluated (Exciting)
- ✓ Reviewed (Recorded)

- **The Structure of Teaching Materials**

The structure of a pedagogical guide consists of selecting a title and index clear, concise, and engaging and summarized the content for both teachers and students. It should include practical info: like time requirement, place, tools, location, and materials for presentations or hands-on activities. Also, the learning objectives should be aligned with educational goals. Furthermore, the content should incorporate interactive materials and exercises to support knowledge acquisition and skills development. For example, peer group presentations, discussions in groups, illustration cards, exercises, videos/movies, role play cards, boardgames, etc. Finally, assessments should evaluate the knowledge, and skills students are supposed to have at the end of their learning process. Teachers can use summative assessment in the form of a written standardized test, continuous assessment through all the students' learning process, and formative assessment to identify students learning needs or an adaptation in the teachers' manner of instruction.

- **Types of Assessment:**

There are three main types of assessment. Diagnostic assessment refers to the methods used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses of their knowledge and abilities; it serves as a starting point for teachers to adapt their methods to student's needs (Lee & Sawaki, 2009). Summative assessments provide learners with a numerical score at the end of a period and minimal feedback. It is usually used to measure learning rather than facilitating it (Glazer, 2014). On the other hand, formative assessment incorporates opportunities for learners to learn from their progress, providing teachers with a clear perspective on students' needs and possible instructional adaptations (Dixson & Worrell, 2016).

### **3.10.1 Pedagogical guide structure**

When developing a pedagogical guide, it is necessary to elaborate them in a complete manner. It should include the most useful information so that future teachers or researchers know exactly what it is about, how to develop the activities and why they are important. For this purpose, a Didactic Guide according to Aguilar (2012) should include the following sections:

- a) Informative details.
- b) Table of contents.
- c) Introduction.
- d) General objectives.
- e) Content.

- f) Bibliography.
- g) General guidelines.
- h) Specific guidelines for the development of each unit:
  - ✓ Unit/number and title.
  - ✓ Specific objectives.
  - ✓ Summary (unit topics).
  - ✓ Brief introduction.
  - ✓ Learning strategies to facilitate understanding of the subject content.
  - ✓ Self-assessment.
- i) Solutions to self-assessment exercises.
- j) Glossary.
- k) Annexes.
- l) Distance assessments.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Approach**

To deeply analyze how Experiential Learning can shape cultural identity when teaching English this study adopted a qualitative approach. This type of approach focused on detailed comprehension of complex issues, aiming to make sense of, or interpret a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It focused on gathering valuable information through literature reviews, which was necessary to grasp the existing knowledge of this topic.

#### **4.2 Research Modality**

The study employed a bibliographic modality, since it aimed to describe the nature, approach and identify activities and resources required for the implementation of Experiential Learning. Thus, focusing on the collection and analysis information from multiple published sources including books, magazines, journals, newspapers and data bases (Ocaña Fernández & Fuster Guillén, 2021).

#### **4.3 Type of Research**

Aiming to describe the nature and approach of Experiential Learning within the realm of teaching English from an epistemological viewpoint, descriptive research was employed. This type of research involves describing systematically and accurately the facts and characteristics of a given area of interest by providing a comprehensive summary of what, where, when and how the two variables are connected. (Dulock, 1993). In this context, this type of research was employed to understand how Experiential learning can effectively enhance the teaching and learning English while fostering cultural identity in language learners.

#### **4.4 Study population**

The study population consisted of a wide range of bibliographic sources, including academic journals, books, and databases. Some examples of relevant databases encompassed ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), JSTOR, E-libro, Pro-Quest, ResearchGate, Science Direct, Scielo and Google Scholar. These databases were selected for their extensive collections of peers- scholarly works in the fields of education and language teaching.

#### **4.5 Techniques and Instruments**

This research involved conducting a literature review to accomplish its primary objective and two specific objectives. The bibliographical review technique was used to describe the nature of the approach of Experiential learning, besides gathering and analyzing relevant scholarly work, examine existing research and theories related to it and cultural identity in language education. As the second objective seeks to identify the best activities and resources for EXL implementation, a literature review was conducted. This allowed the researcher to use academic papers or documents that support the analysis of primary sources, so that the investigation had a very detailed and organized information. Finally, regarding the third objective of this investigation, a pedagogical-didactic guide templated was developed. This guide illustrates the main findings or academic benefits and activities for implementing Experiential Learning in English language teaching to enhance cultural identity. It includes objectives, activities, resources, and assessment methods. (Linnenluecke, et al., 2020; Lubbe, et al., 2020; Galeano, 2008).

Regarding the instruments of this investigation, for the first objective a bibliographic matrix was developed to ensure that all the information related to the topic provides meaningful insights. The second objective is achieved by elaborating a checklist which contains specific aspects that the activities should have to promote cultural identity. Thus, ensuring the activities align with the objectives of this research. Lastly, a structured document that serves as a guide for teachers to implement EXL in the classroom was designed. This pedagogical guide has all the materials resources that ensure its practicality.

To analyze and interpret the results of the first objective a systematic literature review was conducted to explore and describe in detail the theoretical foundations of both variables, making sure that the information found in the databases aligns perfectly with the criteria of the present investigation. This technique allowed the researcher to organize, analyze, and evaluate the high-quality information (Linnenluecke, et al., 2020). Regarding the second objective, an integrative literature review was employed, as this is a method that can use empirical and theoretical literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of a certain phenomenon. For instance, results from previous studies and opinion papers served to support the analysis of the most important findings of this study (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). Finally, to fulfill the third objective the registration and systematization of information technique was applied. This allowed us to organize the results and collect data in a coherent and structured manner for its future socialization (Galeano, 2008).

## CHAPTER IV

### 5 RESULTS

#### **The Transformation of an EFL Classroom**

Students learn best through real-world experiences, reflection and application of new knowledge. This is called the experiential learning theory attributed to David Kolb, which emerged as an innovative approach in EFL education. Its beginning is rooted to John Dewey's philosophy (1938) which emphasis the importance of real-life experiences in education. In simple words "learning by doing". Educators, instead of having their students receive lots of information from a presentation or book, teachers involve students into hands-on activities. For example, in a non-experiential Learning environment students practice grammar and vocabulary in isolation and is only focus is on language form. Contrary, in an experiential learning environment the focus is on language use in authentic, interactive situations, involving real-world communication.

This method makes learning more meaningful in an EFL classroom because students use real-life experiences to improve their understanding of the language being taught. Now, it is important to mention how teachers can use this approach in their classes. According to Kolb's learning cycle, there are four main steps to be considered when applying this approach. The first phase is the concrete experience which involves doing the activity, the second phase is the reflective observation where students discuss their overall experience on what went well or not for future improvement. Then comes abstract conceptualization, here students form new ideas that can be applied in future activities as a way to improve their performance. Lastly, active experimentation is where students use what they have learned. As mentioned before, this is a cycle, meaning that it makes learning a continuous process where students build on their experiences each time, they complete an activity.

Experiential learning is based on some principles that facilitate its implementation such as: active participating with the students being the center of the learning process, the activities should be meaningful and connected to students' lives, and the most important refers to students thinking about what they did, how they felt, and what was learned. These key principles help teachers to have like a road map on how to integrate experiential learning into their EFL classroom. For instance, activities like roleplay, simulations, field trips, art-based and game-based activities create an environment where students practice and explore English language through real-life and meaningful activities. Thus, students will feel motivated and remember easily what they have learned because they experienced it firsthand.

As a means to have the best outcomes when using these activities, the teacher in charge has to consider the role of facilitator and guide. This means that they must design activities in such a way that students feel a sense of a supportive environment where they feel confident taking risks without fearing to be mistaken. Also, teachers should guide students throughout the entire process of the activities, it does not mean that the teacher has to give the students the correct answers but instead create a space of reflection so that students take an active role and can reflect, collaborate

with their peers, come up with the answers and take responsibility for their own learning and progress.

### **Going beyond Memorization with Experiential Learning Activities**

Often traditional methods rooted in memorization are emphasized in traditional EFL classrooms, promoting a passive learning environment. However, teaching English with the experiential learning approach is not only an effective strategy for enhancing language acquisition but also for fostering cultural understanding. As highlighted by Kramersch (1998) language and culture are inseparable, teachers should connect their way of instruction in such a way students learn through active participation, reflection, and real application and develop a sense of pride in their own culture. Yet, teachers still struggle to find the perfect activities to use when applying the EXL method. That is why in this research project, several activities focused on Ecuadorian Culture within the experiential learning framework were adapted. The main activities that were modified were to meet Kolb's experiential learning stages. It means that activities like roleplay, simulation, artistic expression, traditional dishes, escape games, and field trips, use EXL stages to emphasize active participation, cultural relevance, and real-world applications.

Using a checklist as an instrument it was possible to determine which activities benefit students the most when learning about their own cultural heritage. To determine the effectiveness of the previously mentioned activities the checklist contained aspects of

Authenticity, engagement, reflection, and cultural relevance. Authenticity refers to whether the context used in the learning activity reflects real-world scenarios so that students connect personally with their own identity and culture. Engagement evaluates if the activity is interesting enough to keep students entertained in the activity. Reflections assess how well students did in the activity or if there is something to improve. And cultural relevance indicates whether the activity uses aspects of students' traditions or heritage. Hence, by using these criteria in the checklist the following activities were carefully selected to meet these specifications

- **Roleplay:**

Roleplay is one of the funniest ways to learn about culture. In this type of activities students can demonstrate their own stories, traditions or historical legends in a meaningful way. Mohammad and Behroz (2010) mentioned that roleplay allows students not only to improve their communicative skills but also their cultural awareness. Teachers use roleplays to let students experience different ways of thinking and understand the importance of the values, customs, beliefs, and traditions of their own culture. In this investigation the roleplay is based on the legend of "The Headless Priest" as a way to highlight the richness of Ecuadorian storytelling. The activity, apart from strengthening students' connection with their heritage, encourages students to work together to create their dialogues in a fun and interactive way. To avoid any misconception about roleplay, it is important to remember that Roleplays makes students take a role they do not have in real life. For example, in this case their roleplay is set in the past, and students are playing a fairytale role of the Headless Priest. So, in these activities the teacher has to choose wisely which

theme the Roleplay will be about so that students are engaged, and they can express their creativity in a meaningful way.

- **Simulation:**

Simulations unlike roleplays are based on a more realistic situation. Students can experience more real scenarios that are related to their daily routine, for example, asking for directions, buying some fruits in local markets, visiting the museum, ordering food or buy some clothes. Fanous (2020) on his research explains that simulation-based activities help students to know more about their cultural traditions and customs while practicing their English into a real context. In the pedagogical guide the activity is designed in such a way students practice how is like to buy local food in a traditional Ecuadorian market. Here students will experience different cultural aspects by themselves like the behaviour of the local sellers, their values and beliefs, developing in some way a sense of belonging and pride.

- **Artistic Expression:**

Activities like painting, drawing, using poems and storytelling are part of what is called art-based learning. In this type of activities students connect with their identity since it helps them to express their culture in an artistic and creative way. Al-Busaidi et al. (2022) suggest that art-based learning activities are built upon emotional and cultural connections. Regarding this context Art-based learning in the pedagogical guide is used to make students value the literary heritage Ecuador has to offer. Usually, teachers have forgotten about teaching poetry as it is considered to be too complex or requires a lot of comprehension compared to other art-based activities. Yet, the activity inspired in Medardo Ángel Silva most famous poem “*El Alma en los labios*”. Is adapted to support shy students that do not like expressing in public. They are encouraged to express their emotions through poetry, using simple language structures and most importantly their imagination and creativity.

- **Traditional Dishes:**

Developing a recipe is a great activity to foster students’ cultural identity. It is a well-known fact that food represents the history, values, and traditions of a country that are shared from one generation to another one. Thus, creating a connection to students’ roots, not only because of the dishes but also as they usually represent something else. In this case the recipe of “Colada Morada” a very popular drink among Ecuadorians, help student to know more about its history and its significant contribution to their culture. This is because this typical drink is celebrated every year in Ecuador, therefore students always experience this festivity which makes it easier for students to connect in a deeper way. According to Byram (1997), food is a key aspect of cultural identity that acts as a bridge between two different cultural communities

- **Escape games**

Despite escape games are usually designed to solve a problem, it can be adapted to include cultural elements within the game structure, making it a powerful tool to foster cultural identity while maintaining entertaining students. Kiryakova et al. (2014) states that game-based learning

makes lessons more fun and promotes motivation among students. Including activities that bring back local legends or traditions are more meaningful and can captivate students' attention to participate. In this case "María Angula" legend is adapted in a puzzle format. Students solve riddles related to the story to "escape" from her while using the target language. In this type of activities students are required to think and cooperate with their peers to solve the problems. Although, it might seem like it does not cover all the cultural aspects like other activities, it provides an engaging atmosphere where students learn about their traditional legends in English. Overall, teachers should bear in mind each activity that students need to solve is culturally connected.

- **Field Trips**

One of the most remarkable activities of EXL is field trips. Here students learn a lot about their heritage. Due to the activity flexibility, students go out from their classroom to an already planned place full of history. An example of this is students visiting the museum of Riobamba, a special place that keeps authentic cultural artifacts, paintings, and indigenous clothing that shows the richness of ancient Ecuadorian civilizations. According to Behrendt and Franklin (2014), field trips are a great way to promote cultural awareness since students observe, listen, and ask questions to know in a better way all the story related to their own identity. By incorporating these kinds of activities professors can transform students' language learning, where students improve their language skills and reflect on how important it is to know about the values, customs and traditions of the place they are born in.

### **A Guide to Teach through Real-World Learning**

The last result from this investigation shows a pedagogical guide which integrates the EXL benefits in the development of cultural identity in English language learning. The pedagogical guide is a structure to provide teachers with the most useful activities and tools to integrate EXL into the classroom. It provides engaging activities, materials and resources that make language learning more fun and meaningful. The overall characteristics of this guide are that it is designed to address A1- A2 English level students, it contains activities that use the English language to promotes Ecuadorian traditions, legends, and culture. Resources like flashcards, rubrics, collaborative tasks are also included to ensure a dynamic and engaging classroom atmosphere. For more information regarding the pedagogical guide check the "Proposal section"

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The findings of this research highlight the potential of experiential learning as a in the English language instruction. Experiential learning can enhance both English language proficiency and cultural identity as it fosters a hands-on environment. This align with Kolb (1984) research that state learning is most effective when students engage in real-life, hands-on experiences. Similarly, (Beard and Wilson, 2006 as cited in Dufková, 2023) expresses that learning is inefficient if students are not deeply engaged. The tasks must be designed in such a way that engagement

breaks students' passive reception of information and involves cognitive (thinking), emotional (feeling), and physical (doing) participation. It also mentions that when simulating the learning through experience process, students mirror their mother tongue acquisition, where people learn naturally through interaction and immersion.

Building on this idea, (Willingham, Hughes, & Dobolyi, 2015) mentions the importance of acknowledging that when learning a new language several methods have emerged to find the perfect way students can learn. However, there is not one single method itself that fits all learners and can assure students will learn completely a new language. Instead, considering the implementation of different styles, referencing the work on Kolb's learning styles, (diverging, assimilating, converging and accommodating). This highlights the importance of including varied activities that benefit students' different preferences and learning methods.

In the same line of thought, methodologies for teaching English usually emphasize the culture of English-speaking countries, nonetheless, this study uses a different approach. It sees English as a tool to explore, express, and preserve Ecuadorian heritage. This change of perspectives ensures English learning does not overshadow but rather promote local traditions on a global heritage. This finding is supported by Byram (2013), who argues that language education should foster intercultural competence, allowing learners to transmit their own culture while understanding foreign perspectives. Likewise, Norton (2000) supports that language learning does not only require learning linguistic structures, instead it involves shaping students' own identity in relation to the world.

Consequently, the study found that in EXL "Context matters", meaning that activities should be intentionally designed to reflect students' cultural identity. They should be authentic, mirror real-world environments, and contextualize students' culture to develop communicative skills and cultural identity. For example, role-plays, simulations, field trips, art-based projects are an engaging way students can practice English in meaningful contexts while connecting with their culture. This is because in this investigation these activities are designed based on Ecuadorians' reality. Some examples of this are going out to visit the Riobamba museum or preparing the recipe of "Colada Morada". This make students feel their culture is value and they might deeply internalize why learning English can potentially benefit their cultural identity.

However, the research also highlights some possible limitations or challenges. Activities developed under the principles of EXL tend to be time-consuming and require lots of time to be prepared. Also, some activities might require more resources for its implementation that perhaps the teacher is not able to use or access. This might limit EXL usage. The lack of explicit grammar instruction in this methodology which might provoke some uncertainty about students' performance is another limitation. Pérez-Ibañez (2014) argue that even tough experiential learning promotes fluency and engagement, teachers might be required to apply additional scaffolding to ensure students' grammatical development. Another limitation is that not all the activities are equally effective. For example, escape games, while engaging and known for being effective in an experiential learning context, they prioritize enjoyment rather than cultural understanding, unless the activity is explicitly tied to local narratives or cultural roots.

This can be corroborated by the studies of (Nepivvodová Linda, 2023; Veldkamp et al., 2020) where the findings indicate that the implementation of experiential learning in the form of Escape Games are positively received by both teachers and students. These games contributed to students' engagement, motivation, groups' relationship and communication English skills development. Yet the second investigation cautions that, when it comes to measuring actual learning outcomes, the evidence is still limited due to the fast-paced nature of escape games. While such games keep students motivated and engaged, they leave little time for reflection which is a key aspect for deep learning in EXL.

Considering all this and in order to bridge the gap on how to transform a classroom into an EXL environment, a pedagogical guide is developed as a road map for teachers. The guide relies on its practicality by providing step-by-step instructions, materials, and assessments for each activity. However, teachers should acknowledge that the guide assumes the teacher has access to all the resources proposed in this guide. Additionally, this guide should not be considered as the ultimate pedagogical guide for English learners nor that these activities work with this method only, let alone should be strictly follow step by step. In fact, This guide balances structure with flexibility, meaning that teachers can adapt their activities to their students' needs or combine them with other methodologies that might be useful to complement the experiential learning experience.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **7 CONCLUSIONS**

This study aimed to discover Experiential learning and its possibilities to enhance the teaching and learning of English focused on cultural identity development. Furthermore, it was also intended to find out the activities and resources required for its implementation and how they could benefit students' cultural identity. Lastly, by creating a pedagogical guide teachers will have a clear view on how EXL should be applied to meet the overall outcome of this investigation. Based on the results and findings of this investigation it can be said that experiential learning is an innovative approach English teachers can implement. It could shift the focus of several traditional methods which emphasize repetition, memorization or monotonous activities. This method allows students to engage in language learning in a way that fosters intercultural awareness. This is achievable when teachers adapt the activities using the EXL features and integrate local traditions, history, and customs of Ecuadorians. Thus, creating a bridge for preserving and promoting Ecuadorian heritage as students will feel proud that their culture is valued and more likely to engage and participate in learning English.

The most remarkable activities that are essential to promote cultural identity are roleplay, simulations, art-based learning, escape games and field trips. These activities provide a meaningful and real-world learning environment as they have been applied in other contexts and use other learning outcomes. However, this study adds that their value for cultural identity depends on how closely they mirror local traditions or customs. While these activities are powerful for cultural identity development, the study noted a gap regarding grammar instruction and that all the

activities might not fully capture cultural identity at fully were mentioned to raise teachers' awareness. It was said that teachers might be require to balance experiential tasks effectively to help students practice their grammar skills. Also teachers should be creative and not depend only on the guide, as they will need to adapt to their activities so they are more culturally related with students' reality.

To support the implementation of these activities, the pedagogical guide provides structured yet adaptable methodologies, resources of activities that ensure teachers can implement these strategies effectively. Thus, creating a space where students connect with their own cultural heritage through language learning instructions, materials, and assessments. By understanding and valuing both their own culture and foreign language, students develop respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Experiential learning fosters active engagement and promotes students' hands-on participation. That is why the integration of EXL as one of the primary teaching strategies should be considered by educators. Aiming that students' language acquisition and cultural connections increased over time. This can be done by designing lesson plans that include Ecuadorian traditions, values and folklore, so that English is seen by students as a way of expressing their own identity and not replacing it. Besides, when activities for EXL implementation are selected, its relevance, and how it connects to Ecuadorian culture and students' live experiences. should be considered. Although when teaching English, if a great language instruction is promoted students might have a significant improvement in their language skills yet students may feel unmotivated and think English is just about learning other cultures but theirs. Therefore, themes that meet students' needs and mirror their culture should be part of their English instruction.

Lastly, the continuous training of educators and development of resources for EXL implementation are vital. Professional development should be invested in by teachers to keep up with new methodologies that can be applied in the classroom. Additionally, institutional support should be provided to teachers to implement EXL activities as well as the necessary resources, especially those that require immersive cultural experiences, such as, access to local spaces, traditional materials and interactive outside projects that enrich students' learning and connection to their heritage.

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# ANNEXES

## Bibliographic Matrix



### UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO

#### Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación Humanas y Tecnologías *Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros*

#### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING - CULTURAL IDENTITY

N°	Name of document	Author and year/ Editorial	Type of document	URL / DOI	Purpose	Findings / Conclusions
1						

#### Checklist

#### CHECKLIST

AREA: Learning English as a Foreign Language		LEVEL:		
DATE:		NAME: Juan Francisco Rojas		
TOPIC:				
OBJECTIVE:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify activities and resources required for the implementation of Experiential Learning in correspondence with the study target.</li> </ul>				
CATEGORY	ASPECTS	OUTCOMES		
Authenticity	<b>Authenticity:</b> Are the contexts used in the learning activities authentic and reflective of real-world scenarios?	Yes	No	Comments Observations
	<b>Cultural Relevance:</b> Do the contexts reflect the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the students?			
	<b>Student Interest:</b> Are the contexts engaging and interesting to the students?			

Engagement	<b>Learning Objectives:</b> Are the learning objectives clearly defined and aligned with fostering cultural identity?			
	<b>Integration of Cultural Content:</b> Is cultural content seamlessly integrated into the learning activities?			
	<b>Active Learning:</b> Do the activities promote active learning and student participation?			
Reflection	<b>Respect for Diversity:</b> Are the activities designed with respect for cultural diversity and avoiding stereotypes?			
	<b>Inclusivity:</b> Do the activities accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds?			
	<b>Representation:</b> Are various cultural perspectives and voices represented in the materials and activities?			
Social Interaction and Collaboration	<b>Participation:</b> Does the activity allow for Communities of Practice where both beginners and advanced students can get involved in the task?			
	<b>Engagement:</b> Are the students engaged and showing interest in the cultural contexts presented?			
	<b>Collaboration:</b> Do the activities encourage collaboration among students from different cultural backgrounds?			
	<b>Community Connections:</b> Do the activities connect students with the local community and cultural resources?			
	<b>Scaffolding: Does the activity support beginners and give more independence to advanced students?</b>			
Assessment	<b>Self and peer assessment:</b> Are students encouraged to assess their and others' performance during the activities?			
	<b>Evaluation:</b> Can the activity be evaluated based on performance/portfolios/reflective journals?			

Cultural relevance	<b>Reflection Opportunities:</b> Are there opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and cultural identity?			
	<b>Adaptability:</b> Are the activities adaptable to different cultural contexts and student needs?			




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