



COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AT UNIVERSITY The World Café in Communication Education

DANIEL MUÑOZ-SASTRE ¹
daniel.munoz.sastre@uva.es

LUIS RODRIGO-MARTÍN ¹
luis.rodrido@uva.es

ISABEL RODRIGO-MARTÍN ¹
isabel.rodrido@uva.es
¹University of Valladolid, Spain

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ABSTRACT

The study evaluates the impact of the World Café methodology in university teaching, highlighting its capacity to promote active, horizontal and collaborative learning. It analysed qualitative and quantitative responses from participants who positively valued aspects such as active participation, interpersonal interaction and the development of skills such as communication and critical thinking. Despite challenges such as logistics and initial resistance, the World Café proved to be an effective tool to enrich learning. Organisational adjustments and future explorations in various educational contexts are recommended.

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1. Introduction

Higher Education is currently facing the challenge of adapting to the changes of an increasingly complex and connected society. In this context, traditional pedagogical methodologies, based on lectures and unidirectional approaches, have shown limitations in preparing students for the challenges of the professional world. On the other hand, this dialogical learning approach is particularly significant in higher education, as it aims not only at the acquisition of knowledge, but also at the development of essential competences for professional life (Schön, 1992). Therefore, it is essential to incorporate active methodologies that foster collaborative learning, critical thinking and creativity, skills that are essential in today's labour market.

In this scenario, the World Café presents itself as an innovative and effective methodology. Originally conceived as a tool to stimulate debates in business and social contexts (Brown & Isaacs, 2005), the World Café is characterised by promoting open dialogue and the co-creation of ideas in a participatory and horizontal environment. Its flexible and adaptable structure makes it a particularly valuable resource for the educational environment, where it seeks to generate learning spaces that transcend traditional practices and place the student as the protagonist of their education. In the university context, this methodology not only facilitates student participation, but also fosters the development of essential skills such as the ability to work in teams, effective communication and creative problem solving (Correa Domenech et al., 2012; Pérez-Díaz, 2022; Prewitt, 2011; Ritch & Brennan, 2010).

This article addresses the application of the World Café in the field of university education, analysing its implementation within the framework of the Teaching Innovation Project "A roundtable: Collaborative innovation for the future of communication", (PID. "Mesa de Ideas: Innovación colaborativa para el futuro de la comunicación") which seeks to introduce disruptive pedagogical strategies that promote active and meaningful learning among students.

1.1. Justification of the Study

The rationale for this study lies in the need to overcome the limitations inherent in traditional pedagogical approaches, such as lectures, which predominate in many higher education institutions (Rodrigo Martín & Rodrigo Martín, 2012). These methodologies, although effective for the transmission of theoretical information, tend to limit student participation and do not always foster the development of transversal competences needed in today's world of work. In a professional environment marked by complexity, uncertainty and the need for constant adaptation, it is essential that students develop skills such as critical thinking, creativity and the ability to work collaboratively. In addition, new educational approaches known as "learning scenarios" represent a key tool to promote innovative proposals and encourage improvements in teaching practices. Their implementation is fundamental to transform teaching and learning processes, offering a flexible and creative framework that responds to current educational needs (Roda Segarra et al., 2024).

The Teaching Innovation Project "A roundtable: Collaborative innovation for the future of communication" was established precisely to respond to these needs. Within the framework of Advertising and Public Relations studies, the project seeks to transform the teaching-learning process by introducing active methodologies such as the World Café. This approach allows students to actively participate in the generation of knowledge, fostering meaningful learning aligned with the competences required in the communication sector (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, 2005).

The innovation of the World Café lies in its ability to create a horizontal learning environment, where traditional hierarchies between teachers and students are reduced. Instead of being mere recipients of information, students become active agents in their learning, contributing ideas, debating proposals and constructing solutions in collaboration with their peers. This approach not only improves the understanding of academic content, but also promotes values such as inclusion, respect for diversity of opinions and co-creation (Díaz-Gibson et al., 2013, p. 218).

Furthermore, the World Café aligns with current trends in higher education, which advocate a student-centred and competence-oriented model. By allowing the exploration of complex topics from multiple perspectives and in a participatory environment, this methodology contributes to preparing students to face the challenges of the professional world with a critical and collaborative vision (La Cueva, 2007).

1.2. Objectives

The World Café is used in this case as a catalyst for collaborative learning, promoting student participation in the construction of knowledge and the generation of innovative ideas. In doing so, it seeks not only to improve learning outcomes, but also to stimulate the development of skills such as critical thinking, interpersonal communication and innovativeness, all of which are essential for professional performance in the field of communication.

Taking into account these aspects related to the implementation of the World Café methodology in the classroom, this study has three main objectives:

1. To explore how the World Café methodology can be applied in the field of university education to overcome the limitations of lecture classes and foster key transversal competences.
2. To analyse the specific case of the Teaching Innovation Project "A roundtable: Collaborative innovation for the future of communication" implemented in the context of the Bachelor's Degree in Advertising and Public Relations. This project is a pioneering experience in the application of this methodology in the field of higher education, offering a reference framework for its adaptation to other disciplines and educational contexts.
3. To provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the World Café in educational contexts. Through classroom observation and student surveys, the Teaching Innovation Project "A roundtable: Collaborative innovation for the future of communication" allows the analysis of the benefits and challenges of this methodology, providing a solid basis for its application in other academic contexts.

1.3. Methodology

In order to study the development of the activity within the framework of the aforementioned Teaching Innovation Project, an integrated methodological approach is proposed that not only describes the results of the project but also provides an understanding of the dynamics that made it possible, offering a model that can be replicated in other educational contexts.

Thus, the methodology used in this study combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyse the implementation of the World Café in the context of the Teaching Innovation Project "A roundtable: Collaborative Innovation for the Future of Communication". This methodological design responds to the need to explore not only the results obtained through this educational strategy, but also the underlying processes and participants' perceptions.

Firstly, participatory observation is proposed as the main tool to capture the dynamics generated during the World Café sessions. This method allows for the recording of interactions, levels of participation and student responses in real time, offering a direct perspective on the impact of the methodology in the classroom (Angrosino, 2007).

In parallel, structured and Likert-scale surveys are carried out to collect data on the students' experience, assessing aspects such as their involvement, satisfaction and perception of the usefulness of the activities for their learning. Finally, the data obtained are subjected to a mixed analysis, combining qualitative techniques to interpret open-ended responses and quantitative techniques to measure trends and correlations between the variables studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

2. Theoretical Framework

University education is in constant transformation due to new social, technological and labour demands (UNESCO, 2024). In this context, it is necessary to explore innovative methodologies that promote active, collaborative learning capable of developing key competences for future professionals. The World Café is one such methodology that has gained relevance for its ability to generate meaningful conversations and foster the exchange of ideas in a collaborative environment. This theoretical framework seeks to address the World Café methodology, its relationship with collaborative learning and educational innovation, as well as its disruptive potential in university teaching.

Collaborative learning has established itself as one of the most relevant approaches in higher education in recent decades. This pedagogical approach is based on the idea that knowledge is constructed more effectively when students work together, share ideas and support each other in their

learning process (Freire, 2012). Collaborative learning promotes interaction among students, fosters the development of interpersonal skills and encourages teamwork, which in turn improves understanding of content and the ability to apply what is learned in practical situations.

The World Café methodology is a powerful tool that fosters collaborative learning and innovation in higher education. By promoting group conversation and interaction among participants, it generates fresh ideas and innovative solutions to problems. Moreover, by integrating into pedagogical strategies that encourage participation and horizontality, the World Café contributes to the development of key competences for students. Higher education, increasingly oriented towards collaborative and active learning, finds in the World Café a disruptive methodology that allows breaking with traditional approaches and adapting to the new demands of the professional world.

2.1. The World Café Methodology

The World Café is a methodology of dialogue and collective reflection that seeks to generate meaningful conversations between participants, with the aim of addressing complex questions and developing innovative solutions. The concept of the World Café appears in the field of organisational development (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Holman *et al.*, 2007). In the 1990s, Juanita Brown and David Isaacs developed this methodology inspired by the tradition of informal conversations that take place in cafés, where people can meet to discuss important issues in a relaxed environment. The aim of this approach is to create a space where participants feel comfortable sharing ideas and reflecting together, promoting creativity and innovation. According to Brown and Isaacs (2005), the World Café is based on the idea that small group conversations, facilitated in an informal setting, can generate powerful *insights* that contribute to solving problems and building collective knowledge.

The World Café is based on several fundamental principles that guide its operation. These include the creation of a welcoming and participatory environment, the importance of open-ended questions that promote reflection, and the rotation of participants between thematic tables, which allows for the multiplication of perspectives on a given topic. According to The World Café Community Foundation (2015), the key principles of this methodology are:

- Collaborative dialogue: conversations are the medium for the exchange of ideas and the creation of collective knowledge.
- Conditions conducive to learning: the environment should be relaxed, comfortable and respectful, so that participants feel free to express their ideas.
- Rotation of participants: participants move between different thematic tables, allowing ideas to be shared and evolve through various interactions.
- Synthesis of ideas: at the end of each cycle of conversation, a synthesis of the ideas shared is made, which helps to consolidate the collective knowledge generated.

In terms of functioning or dynamics, the World Café is organised into thematic tables, where participants are distributed to discuss a set of guiding questions. Each table has a host who is responsible for introducing the topic and facilitating the conversation. After a set amount of time, participants rotate tables, taking with them the ideas that have emerged in their group. This rotation process allows for an integration of diverse perspectives, which enriches the discussion and encourages innovation. In each cycle of conversation, the hosts are responsible for synthesising key ideas and sharing them with new participants, ensuring that all points of view are considered. Finally, at the end of the process, an overall synthesis is made, highlighting the main findings and solutions proposed by the participants.

2.2. Collaborative Learning and Innovation in Higher Education

As indicated, higher education is facing new challenges in a constantly changing world, where the competences required of graduates go beyond technical knowledge (Rodrigo-Martín *et al.*, 2014). In this context, collaborative learning is presented as one of the most effective pedagogical strategies to promote the development of key competences in students based on the premise that knowledge is constructed more effectively when students work together to solve problems and reflect on their learning. Collaborative learning is an interactive model that promotes the joint construction of knowledge among students. This approach requires the combination of efforts, talents and competences through various interactions that facilitate the achievement of previously agreed objectives (Revelo-Sánchez *et al.*, 2018). Implementing collaborative learning in educational institutions represents a

complex challenge, but at the same time it is a highly effective strategy to motivate students, promote active learning and strengthen essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, decision-making and emotional intelligence (Muñoz Carranza & Narváez Archila, 2022). Díaz Barriga (2001) highlights that this approach moves away from the traditional model in which the teacher is the sole transmitter of knowledge, and instead promotes an environment where students interact, share experiences and generate knowledge together.

This model is based on constructivist principles, such as the postulates of Vygotsky (1980), who emphasised the importance of social interaction in learning. According to Vygotsky, knowledge is constructed through interaction with others and in a social context, which aligns perfectly with the World Café methodology, which encourages collaborative dialogue. On the other hand, collaborative learning also implies a horizontal approach in the classroom, where students are not mere recipients of information, but actively participate in the construction of their own learning. This type of participation is key to the development of professional competences, as it prepares students to face work challenges in dynamic, team-based environments.

The World Café methodology facilitates this participation by encouraging students to be accountable for their contributions, to listen to others' perspectives and to work together to address complex issues. According to Hattie (2012), participation in learning significantly improves academic outcomes and the development of key competencies such as problem solving, communication and critical thinking.

2.3. Disruptive Strategies in University Teaching

Nowadays, traditional educational methodologies have been questioned due to their rigid and unidirectional approach. There are new disruptive strategies that seek to break with conventional teaching methods and encourage more dynamic, participatory and innovative learning. The World Café, in this context, is one of the most prominent methodologies, as it promotes a form of teaching that moves away from the traditional model of lectures and encourages the creation of collective knowledge through interaction between students (Tan & Brown, 2005).

Research has shown that the application of innovative approaches in university teaching improves the quality of education and prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century. In this sense, the World Café is presented as a disruptive strategy that favours innovation in the classroom. Fouché and Light (2011) point out that the use of this methodology in educational contexts allows for in-depth reflection on complex issues and facilitates the creation of collective solutions that can be applied in practice.

The World Café can be applied in various disciplines within higher education, from social sciences to exact sciences, adapting to the needs and characteristics of each group of students. According to De la Mata (2013), the World Café is especially useful in learning situations where collaboration and exchange of ideas are essential to address complex problems, such as in solving case studies or analysing social phenomena.

In addition, the World Café allows learners to experience a more horizontal form of learning, where the ideas of all participants are of equal value. This approach is particularly relevant in an educational context that seeks to promote skills such as critical thinking, creativity and the ability to work in teams, competencies that are essential for insertion in the labour market in a globalised and competitive environment.

3. Results and Discussion

In order to carry out this study, we have taken into account, on the one hand, classroom observation and, on the other, the results obtained from a survey carried out among the participants of the four World Café sessions that were held during the 2024/2025 academic year as part of the Corporate Culture and Identity course, taught in the second year of the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations at the University of Valladolid. The sessions were included in the compulsory internship programme for students with continuous assessment and were held on 16 and 17 October 2024, in the mornings and afternoons. A total of 109 students took part in these sessions, representing 78.99% of those enrolled in the subject.

The organisation of the tables was done at the beginning of each of the sessions, as the final number of participants could not be known until the last minute. This is an issue that complicates the development of the course, since the number of students participating does not always allow for the same number of participants at each of the different tables.

Once the distribution had been made, the moderators were chosen and were given the manual prepared by the lecturer with all the necessary indications for the correct performance of the tasks of dynamisation involved in this role. The manual also included the topics to be dealt with in each of the rounds, the texts with the transcription of the videos proposed for discussion and some indications to help them in their task of moderating.

The next step consisted of a detailed explanation of the dynamics of the World Café in the classroom to the rest of the participants, with emphasis on the rotation system in each of the rounds. This was perhaps the issue that generated the most confusion for two reasons: in some cases, as there were not the same number of participants at all the tables, it caused some doubts as to which table they would have to move to next.

Once all the doubts had been resolved, the practical development of the activity began. First, a video was shown on Google's corporate culture, the theme chosen for this World Café. Once it was over, a period of ten minutes was allowed for each table to address the question: "Why do you think Google has made happiness at work a central part of its corporate culture? What benefits and challenges can arise from this strategy? This question sought to get students to explore the importance of corporate culture at Google, based on workplace happiness and its impact on talent retention and business growth. The idea is to focus on the relationship between organisational culture and business success.

At the end of this time, the participants were rearranged in such a way that the members of the initial tables did not coincide with those of the new round, keeping only the moderators at their tables. Once the new grouping had been made, a second video was shown, which dealt in depth with the same theme as the previous one. At the end of the video, a new question was posed: "What role does the flat organisational structure play in Google's culture and how do you think this affects employee satisfaction and leadership within the company? This question sought to prompt students to reflect on the relationship between organisational structure and culture. The table can discuss both the benefits and problems that a flat structure can generate, fostering a deeper understanding of the internal dynamics in a large corporation like Google.

After this second round, the participants rotated again to start the process of drawing conclusions from the previous rounds without the video. To facilitate this task, another question was posed: "What lessons can we learn from Google's corporate culture to apply in other companies or in our own professional future? This question was designed to get students to connect all the ideas raised in the previous rounds and formulate a collective conclusion on the importance of corporate culture. Here, they were invited to synthesise what they had learned and consider how they could apply these principles in other companies or work contexts. The sessions concluded with a presentation of the conclusions by those participants who acted as moderators.

Observation in the classroom during these sessions shows the difference between the morning participants, who were more attentive to the explanations of the dynamics of the World Café methodology and showed more initiative in coming up with ideas and drawing conclusions, and the afternoon students, who were less inclined to listen to the instructions and were more dispersed during the activity. On the other hand, in general terms, it can be said that in the four cases studied there was an initial moment of surprise at the novelty of the proposal. Then, mainly in the morning groups, there was a moment of attention and interest in how to carry out the activity, while in the afternoon groups there was a certain confusion about the rules of the World Café methodology. Finally, in all four cases, there was an atmosphere of calm that was only disturbed when the tables were changed.

The survey was structured in two parts. The first part was quantitative and consisted of a total of 14 questions. The first were yes or no questions, while in the other twelve the participants had to rate their opinion on each of the questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being totally disagree and 5 being totally agree. The second part was qualitative and consisted of four open questions in which participants were free to write their opinion, providing suggestions for improving the activity. For a clearer presentation of the results and discussion, the quantifiable questions were grouped into six categories as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Classification of the quantifiable questions

	Questions
Familiarity with the methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you know the dynamics of the World Café? • Had you previously participated in such an activity during any of your education?
Clarity and accessibility of the methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The World Café methodology was clear and easy to follow.
Participation and appreciation of opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in the brainstorming sessions allowed me to actively share my perspectives. • I felt that my opinion was valued and respected by my peers.
Motivation and understanding of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dynamics motivated me to actively participate in the classroom. • This activity helped me to better understand the contents of the subject. • The discussions at the tables encouraged my critical thinking and reflection skills.
Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotating between tables allowed me to connect ideas and get a global view of the topics covered. • Participating in the project improved my interpersonal communication skills. • Working as a team during the roundtables was an enriching experience. • The activity fostered skills such as active listening and respect for the opinions of others.
Overall experience and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I consider this project a positive and useful experience for my learning. • I would recommend this type of activity for future subjects.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

To the first question, "Did you know the dynamics of World Café?", the results show that none of the respondents (0%) knew it previously, which indicates that it was a new experience for all participants. However, it is striking that, in the second question, "Had you previously participated in an activity like this during any of your education?" 80% indicated that they had no previous experience with collaborative methodologies like this, while 20% indicated that they had previously done similar activities during their education.

If we look at the clarity and accessibility of the methodology, we find that 80% of the participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the World Café methodology was clear and easy to follow, while 20% were neutral (neither agree nor disagree).

On the other hand, the survey shows a high level of personal involvement and appreciation during the activity. Thus, 53.3% of the participants strongly agreed that the roundtables allowed them to actively share their perspectives and 46.7% agreed with this statement. In addition, 93.3% (sum of agree and strongly agree) felt that their opinion was valued and respected by their peers, while only 6.7% disagreed.

Regarding the influence of the dynamics on students' motivation and their understanding of the academic content, 73.3% of respondents indicated that the activity motivated them to participate actively in the classroom, while 26.7% remained neutral. 73.3% of respondents indicated that the activity motivated them to actively participate in the classroom, while 26.7% remained neutral. Furthermore, 93.3% of the participants stated that the activity helped them to better understand the subject content, with 80% in agreement and 13.3% strongly agreeing. 86.7% agreed that the discussions fostered their capacity for critical thinking and reflection.

Another important point is the development of skills. We found that 80% of the participants considered that rotating between tables allowed them to connect ideas and obtain a global vision of the topics discussed. With regard to interpersonal communication, 60% stated that participating in the project improved this competence, while 40% remained neutral. 100% of respondents rated the experience of working in a team positively, with 66.7% agreeing and 33.3% strongly agreeing that it

was an enriching experience. While 86.6% agreed that the activity fostered skills such as active listening and respect for the opinions of others.

In terms of overall experience and recommendations, 93.4% of participants rated the activity as a positive and useful experience for their learning, and 100% would recommend it for future subjects.

In order to simplify and facilitate the understanding of the discussion of the results, we have opted to reproduce the table above with the categorisation of the questions asked and indicating a comment based on the data for each of these categories as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Interpretation of the quantitative data

Interpretation of the data	
Familiarity with the methodology	They highlight the importance of introducing these innovative dynamics in educational contexts, given their disruptive nature and the lack of prior familiarity on the part of the students.
Clarity and accessibility of the methodology	They reflect a mostly positive perception in terms of understanding the dynamics and instructions. There were no responses of disagreement or total disagreement, which reinforces the idea that the activity was well structured.
Participation and opinion assessment	They stated that the dynamics promoted an inclusive and respectful environment, where the ideas of each participant were taken into account.
Motivation and understanding of content	They underline the positive impact of the World Café on meaningful learning and student motivation.
Skills development	They confirm that the World Café methodology facilitates the development of essential skills, such as teamwork, communication and active listening, all of which are essential for professional performance.
Global experience and recommendations	Reinforce the acceptance and positive impact the World Café had on the evaluated group.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

The second part of the survey, as noted above, consisted of four open-ended questions that were analysed manually. The first of these questions was "Which aspects of the World Café methodology do you find most useful for your learning?" Participants highlighted a wide variety of aspects that they value as useful for their learning within the World Café methodology. One of the most recurrent points is the constant change, both in the groups and in the dynamics, as it forces students to interact with diverse people and explore different perspectives on the topics covered. According to the responses, this rotation helps to break down the barriers of personal comfort, promoting flexibility and adjustment to new ways of thinking. Another aspect pointed out was teamwork, which is closely related to the ability to listen actively and build ideas collaboratively. Many participants underlined that working in groups and sharing opinions enriches learning, as it allows each individual to benefit from collective knowledge. In this sense, the value of diversity of perspectives was highlighted, which broadens understanding of the concepts discussed and encourages deeper reflection. In addition, the interpersonal connection and the joint construction of ideas was valued by several participants. For example, it was mentioned that reaching consensus on points of view and arriving at collective conclusions was an enriching experience. This process not only favoured the understanding of academic terms but also reinforced interpersonal and collaborative skills. Finally, students valued positively the fact of learning through the opinions of other peers, pointing out that this practice improves their active listening skills, helps them to get out of their comfort zone and encourages their participation. These elements were perceived as key to developing skills such as critical thinking, effective communication and teamwork, all of which are essential for their professional future.

This was followed by the question "What difficulties did you encounter during the activities and how do you think they could be solved? Although participants evaluated the World Café positively, they also identified some difficulties they faced during the activities. One of the main concerns was the organisation of the activities, particularly with regard to the changing of tables and the allocation of groups. Some participants commented that this process was confusing or chaotic, which resulted in some loss of time. To solve this problem, better pre-planning and more practice of this type of exercise was suggested, which would allow students to become familiar with the format. Another difficulty

identified was the lack of fairness in the participation of the participants. Some participants noted that not all participants collaborated actively, which limited the fair exchange of ideas. As a solution, it was proposed to implement rules that would oblige each group member to contribute at least one idea in each round. This would not only ensure everyone's participation but could also motivate those who are more shy or less likely to intervene. Some participants noted that, at the beginning of the activity, there was some embarrassment or reluctance to express ideas, especially among people who did not know each other beforehand. This initial barrier could be tackled by promoting integration or "ice-breaker" activities beforehand, to create a more comfortable atmosphere from the start. Others also mentioned that the synthesis of ideas was difficult at times, either because of a lack of clarity in communicating opinions or because of the speed at which table changes were made. This could be improved by devoting more time to each round and establishing clear guidelines for communication and consensus. Finally, a specific difficulty mentioned was the lack of depth in the discussions at some tables, due to the fact that the topic did not allow for many new or varied opinions. In this regard, the participants suggested a greater selection of themes for future editions, in order to encourage more enriching debates with a greater diversity of perspectives.

Thirdly, the question was asked: "What learning or skills do you consider most significant after participating in this project? Here the participants highlighted several learning and skills acquired after participating in the World Café, most of them related to transversal competences essential for the academic and professional environment. One of the most frequently mentioned skills was communication, both in terms of clarity of expression and the ability to actively listen to others. Several students noted that the experience helped them to improve their confidence in public speaking and to overcome the initial embarrassment they may have felt when sharing ideas with peers with whom they had no previous relationship. Socialisation was also identified as a significant learning experience. Working with diverse people fostered interaction and mutual understanding, key skills in collaborative environments. In this regard, participants highlighted the ability to relate to others and the importance of respecting and valuing the perspectives of others. This learning was particularly useful for those who often prefer to work individually, as it allowed them to adapt to group dynamics and develop interpersonal skills. Another key learning point was the synthesis of ideas, a competence that was practised by collecting and combining multiple points of view in a limited amount of time. Students valued the exercise of identifying the most relevant aspects of discussions and building collective conclusions, a skill in high demand in the workplace. According to some participants, this practice also fostered the development of critical thinking, as the exchange of ideas allowed them to analyse different perspectives and build more informed opinions. Finally, students mentioned teamwork as one of the most significant skills developed during the project. This activity allowed them to understand the importance of collaborating to solve problems and achieve common goals, a fundamental skill for the professional environment.

And, fourthly, the question was posed: "What suggestions would you make to improve this dynamic in future editions?" Here, although most of the participants rated the World Café experience positively, some offered suggestions to improve the dynamic in future editions. A frequent recommendation was the need for better organisation, especially with regard to the structure of the activities and the rotation between tables. Several participants commented that, at the beginning, the instructions were not entirely clear, which led to some confusion. One solution could be to spend more time explaining the dynamics before starting and to conduct simulations or exercises beforehand to familiarise students with the format. Another suggestion was innovation in the topics covered during the sessions. Some participants pointed out that the topic addressed in their edition did not offer enough variety to generate in-depth discussions. It was therefore proposed to select more complex or open issues, which would encourage a greater diversity of perspectives and enrich the discussions. The need for post-activity follow-up, such as evaluations or group reflections to analyse what has been learned and identify areas for improvement, was also mentioned. This additional stage would help to consolidate learning and identify areas for improvement for future sessions. Some participants suggested increasing the frequency of the exercises, as they felt that a single session is not enough to become fully familiar with the format and take full advantage of its benefits. According to them, holding the World Café on several occasions throughout the course would allow students to further develop skills such as communication, synthesis of ideas and teamwork. Finally, it was suggested that the guiding questions should be revised

to avoid them being too similar to each other, which could limit the diversity of responses and reduce the dynamism of the discussions.

4. Conclusions

The study shows that the World Café methodology offers numerous benefits in the context of university teaching. The qualitative and quantitative results highlight that this strategy promotes more active, horizontal and collaborative learning. The first of the benefits observed is related to participation and collaborative knowledge construction: The dynamic promotes an environment in which students participate equitably and actively, sharing ideas and learning from the perspectives of their peers. This reinforces competences such as communication, critical thinking and the ability to synthesise.

On the other hand, social skills and teamwork are strengthened thanks to the rotation between tables, and the interaction with different participants helps students to develop interpersonal skills such as active listening, respect for the opinions of others and adaptation to new points of view.

In addition, an increase in motivation and understanding of the content was detected as participants reported that the activity pushed them to participate more in the classroom, thus facilitating the understanding of the topics covered. This active learning becomes a valuable tool to promote reflection and critical thinking in educational contexts. On the other hand, the methodology breaks with traditional teacher-centred approaches and encourages a more equitable dialogue, where the opinions of all participants are valued and respected, promoting horizontality in the classroom and diversity of perspectives:

Although the results obtained position the World Café as an effective pedagogical strategy to enrich the teaching-learning process in Higher Education, the study identified several limitations that should be considered when implementing this methodology in university teaching, which are indicated below:

- Some participants reported initial confusion during the rotation between tables and difficulties in adapting to the dynamics, indicating the need for careful planning to ensure a smooth transition between activities.
- The structure of the World Café requires a significant amount of time for participants to fully explore issues and synthesise ideas. This can be a challenge in time-constrained contexts.
- As this is a novel methodology, some students expressed reluctance to participate fully at the outset, either due to shyness, unfamiliarity with the format or unfamiliarity with collaborative dynamics.
- In some cases, the topics selected did not generate sufficient diversity of opinions, which limited the depth of the discussions. This highlights the importance of choosing topics carefully to ensure rich discussions.

This study also seeks to provide recommendations for teachers who may be interested in implementing the World Café in their classrooms. To these practitioners, it should be said that the methodology outlined here is flexible and can be applied to a variety of contexts and educational levels, from social sciences to exact sciences, adapting, of course, the guiding questions and the focus of the discussions. Moreover, successful implementation of the World Café requires a combination of detailed planning and adaptation to the specific needs of the group and subject.

On the other hand, the results reveal that it is essential to explain the methodology in detail before starting the activity and to conduct short simulations in order to familiarise students with the format. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the classroom observation and the analysis of the survey results, the topics should be open, relevant and capable of generating multiple perspectives to enrich the discussions. Another recommendation that can be made is to organise the activity in such a way that there is sufficient time for each stage, but without being too long and making the experience monotonous and boring. Finally, it should not be forgotten that dynamics can, or should, be implemented to ensure that all participants contribute ideas, reducing the risk of some students being left out.

The World Café methodology is an effective strategy for fostering collaborative and innovative learning in higher education. Its flexible and participatory structure facilitates interaction between students, promoting a horizontal and dynamic approach in which students can share, reflect and build knowledge together. The World Café is aligned with current trends in higher education, which seek to transform traditional teaching models through more interactive and collaborative approaches,

developing key competencies for students' professional development. Its implementation not only enhances academic learning but also contributes to the creation of collaborative networks that are essential in today's professional world.

The quantitative results show that the World Café methodology was highly appreciated by the participants. Most agreed that the dynamics were clear, inclusive and motivating, and highlighted its influence on the development of key skills and understanding of academic content. Although some participants noted neutrality in areas such as interpersonal communication, there were no significant negative perceptions. For this reason, it can be affirmed that the World Café is positioned as an effective strategy to promote active learning, collaboration and critical reflection in educational contexts.

For all the above reasons, it can be stated that the World Café is presented as an innovative and effective methodology to promote more active, horizontal and collaborative learning in higher education. Although its implementation faces logistical and time challenges, the benefits observed, both in terms of learning and competence development, justify its integration in educational contexts. With proper planning, topic selection and adaptability to different disciplines, this methodology has the potential to transform classrooms into dynamic spaces for dialogue and collective knowledge construction. Future studies could deepen its impact and extend its application to other academic contexts.

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