

## ACTIVITY-DRIVEN APPROACHES IN CHINESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION: ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS

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**Purpose:** The analysis focuses on identifying the teaching methods and formats that most impact students' learning effectiveness, to prepare a model for developing academic self-efficacy in the next phase.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This study is the first phase of a project examining students' academic self-efficacy in learning Chinese. It was conducted through structured interviews with 51 Chinese language teachers from 17 countries.

**Findings:** Surveys have indicated that the most effective learning occurs through activity-based practical classes and a partnership between students and teachers, while lectures remain essential for conveying theoretical knowledge. At the same time, the study showed that commonly used teaching methods often diverge from students' preferences, reflecting a teacher-perceived mismatch that may hinder learning outcomes. The above constitutes a basis for future research on aspects of academic self-efficacy.

**Originality/value:** This text is intended for academics and teachers who integrate Chinese into their study programs to build qualifications for knowledge processing and enhance the competitiveness of their graduates in the labor market. It is also aimed at entrepreneurs and managers, including foreign trade specialists, and decision-makers who value investing in human capital and consider it an essential element of economic growth. The principal value of the conducted research is the creation of a basis for a model of academic self-efficacy. The text also presents the observations of Chinese language teachers focused on such aspects as: 1) fears that universities will lose part of their culture and specificity; 2) comparisons of the relationship between a Chinese language teacher and a student to the relationship in a craft workshop; and 3) lack of due attention to the issue of the heavy time burden of teachers preparing thoroughly activating teaching activities.

**Keywords:** active learning, activating teaching methods, learning Chinese, human capital development, knowledge-based economy.

**Category of the paper:** Research paper.

## 1. Introduction

Human capital is defined as having the potential to support regional development, while investments in education and skills are considered central to comprehensive development strategies (Biedka, 2021). It is also described as a resource for the organization's competitive advantage and employee satisfaction (Gitling, 2024). The development of human capital involves investing in knowledge, skills, abilities, health, worldview, cultural level, professional experience, psychophysical factors, physical skills, and vital energy, increasing the value assigned to a given person. It is also treated as a source of future income for both the individual and the organization. Investments in human capital are difficult to measure, costly, and yield long-term returns. However, the size of the investment depends, among other things, on the uniqueness of the capital involved. Organizations or individuals can undertake these investments (Gołaszewska-Kaczan, 2014).

Learning foreign languages is associated with expanding professional competencies, which also foster the development of other skills, such as creativity, problem-solving, cross-cultural understanding, and adaptability to market changes. Mastering a foreign language is one of the most valued competencies in the labor market and a significant indicator of the quality of human capital (Terelak, 2025). Speaking Chinese is considered an exceptional skill due to its unique nature, including the need to explore its writing and tonal nuances, as well as exposure to a vibrant culture. From the perspective of potential economic benefits, mastering Chinese is linked to the world's second-largest economy, which has demonstrated high resilience and maintained a relatively stable rate of growth (Wang, 2026). Forecasts indicate that China's real GDP will grow by 4.8%, exceeding the previous estimates of 4.5% (Goldman Sachs, 2026). In this country, after a period of investing in infrastructure and material assets, the need for increased investment in human capital, an investment also oriented towards economic and social development, is now being emphasized (Yang, 2025).

In this article, the authors present the results of research conducted among Chinese language teachers, focusing on the teaching methods and approaches that have the most significant impact on increasing students' learning effectiveness in Chinese. Particular attention is paid to active learning methods, which provide important assistance in the development of human capital.

Active learning issues are part of one of the biggest research trends. Scholars are pointing out to the timeliness and relevance of the use of active methods in education, through which learners have the opportunity to actually interact within the framework of the material being learned, learn through experience and face educational challenges that foster independent acquisition of knowledge and skills (Roberts, 2019; Reilly, Reeves, 2024). Active learning is characterized by three components correlating with learning activity, namely intellectual, social and physical elements (Edwards, 2017 after Dewey, 1924; Williams et al., 2022) and includes

a very broad group of methods and tools, which in-class problem solving, think-pair-share, role play (Andrews et al., 2022), debates (Mellgren, Ivert, 2016), group work, peer feedback, jigsaw classroom, flipped classroom, team-based learning (Thiele, 2024), asking questions, discussion, watching videos, playing games, solve case-studies, mind mapping (Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, 2021), 6 Thinking Hats, K-W-L, snowball, placemats, My Little Book Methodology, Card Ranking, Five Questions, Diamond Ranking, In the Hot Seat, Concept mapping, Using Photographs, Conscience Alley, Skimming (PDST, n.d.), etc. Active learning methods are designed to be used when teaching different age groups, at different stages of education - both in schools (Diković, Gergorić, 2020; Mandelid, 2024) and in universities (Dejene, 2019; Thiele, 2024). Active learning is relevant to many scientific disciplines. This is indicated by studies focusing on various active learning tools used when teaching subjects within various sciences - from engineering and science to natural sciences, medicine and social sciences. The research conducted on active learning is dominated by qualitative methods involving groups of several to several dozen students or teachers (Snyder, 2003; Liao, Ringler, 2023; Cai, Wang, 2020; Starns et al., 2021; Inra et al., 2017). An analysis of scholarly works on the use of active learning methods allows us to conclude that they are described as methods that foster increased learning effectiveness, student engagement and interest (du Rocher, 2020; Andrews et al., 2022), and improve learner performance (Bloomer Green et al., 2018), as well as methods that encourage collaborative learning and problem solving (Ito, 2017).

## 2. Methods

The research results presented in this article constitute the first phase of a project focused on examining the academic self-efficacy of students learning Chinese. Academic self-efficacy is an individual's conviction in their ability to plan, implement, and control the behaviors required to achieve particular educational objectives or complete scholarly assignments. We assumed that it is based on the following elements: 1) teaching formats, 2) preferred teaching methods, 3) factors influencing students' motivation to learn, and 4) student behaviors. This stage involves seeking answers to the question which teaching methods and approaches have the most significant impact on students' learning effectiveness in Chinese. Finding these answers in the next stage will help create a model for selecting teaching methods to shape academic self-efficacy. Our study employed a mixed-methods approach and was conducted among teachers of Chinese language. It focused on structured interviews using a survey. The questionnaire used a 10-point linear scale, with 1 representing the minimum and 10 the maximum. Additionally, respondents could supplement their responses with individual comments for each question. Categories such as “coaching”, “mentoring”, “tutoring”, “blended

learning”, and “m-learning” in the materials presented to the study participants were accompanied by examples placed in parentheses to standardize their interpretation.

The research questionnaire included questions on respondents' sociodemographic data (Table 1) and factual questions on methods and forms of Chinese teaching, students' motivation for learning Chinese, and the behavioral styles of modern students.

**Table 1.**

*Profile of respondents*

Parameter	Data (no. of participants)
Countries	Albania (6), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Bulgaria (4), Croatia (2), China (8), Czech Republic (4), Estonia (1), Hungary (7), Latvia (1), Lithuania (1), Netherlands (1), Poland (3), Portugal (4), Romania (1), Serbia (3), Türkiye (2), Ukraine (1).
Age	18-25 (2), 26-35 (18), 36-45 (16), 46-55 (12), 56-65 (3)
Place of employment	city > 500 thousand (27), city 150 thousand-500 thousand (11), city 50 thousand-150 thousand (7), city up to 50 thousand people (5), village (1).
University/school	public (48), private (3).
Professional/academic title	bachelor/engineer (6), M.A. (22), Ph.D. (14), associate professor (6), professor (3).
Position held	teaching (17), teaching and researching (34).
Form of employment	fixed-term contract (35), indefinite-term contract (16).
Years of work as a teacher	up to 5 years (18), from 5 to 10 years (8), from 11 to 15 years (9), from 16 to 20 years (6), more than 20 years (10).
Form of subjects taught	traditional (30), online (2), hybrid (19).

Source: own study.

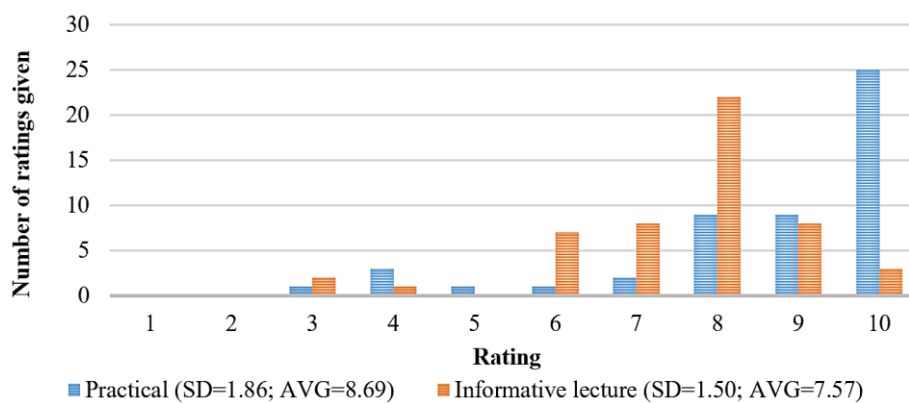
The study took place during the 11th symposium/training for Chinese language teachers residing in Central and Eastern Europe, from November 16-20, 2023, at the Institute of East Asian Studies of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. The symposium provides an opportunity to create a platform for academic exchange (including language exchange), joint development, cooperation, and exchange of knowledge and experience. It has positive implications for the development of Chinese teaching and promotion in Europe. In their speeches, the organizers of this symposium/training emphasized that the training center should adapt to the changing landscape by focusing on talent development—Chinese-language speakers with professional skills—while responding to market needs (Li, 2023). Most interviews were conducted in person, with some conducted online after initial contact. Fifty-one interviews were conducted among academic teachers from 17 countries.

### 3. Results

The academics were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the overall degree of effectiveness in learning Chinese of two traditional forms of class delivery. Lecture was presented as a form of class based on the use of instructional methods such as informative lecture. Practical classes were presented as forms based on practical-technical activity involving the use of the following

methods: 1) activating methods based on creative cognitive activity and problem solving, 2) expository methods requiring experiential learning and based on emotional-artistic activity, 3) software-based involving information technology.

The vast majority of the surveyed academics believe that practical classes based on activation, expository and program methods have a higher level of effectiveness in learning Chinese compared to lectures based on instructional methods. Practical classes received an average grade of 8.69, while lectures scored 7.57. An analysis of the distribution of grades obtained by the mentioned forms of teaching (Figure 1) shows that 84% of all respondents gave grades of 8 to 10 to practical classes, including 49% who gave the highest grade, 10. In contrast, 65% gave a grade of 8 to 10 to lectures, but 10 was given by only 3 teachers (6%). The standard deviation in the ratings of individual respondents shows a slight difference in opinion regarding the evaluation of the effectiveness of practical classes and lectures, which indicates a fairly high level of reliability of the average ratings obtained by the mentioned forms of classes.



**Figure 1.** Chinese learning effectiveness ratings distribution.

Source: own study.

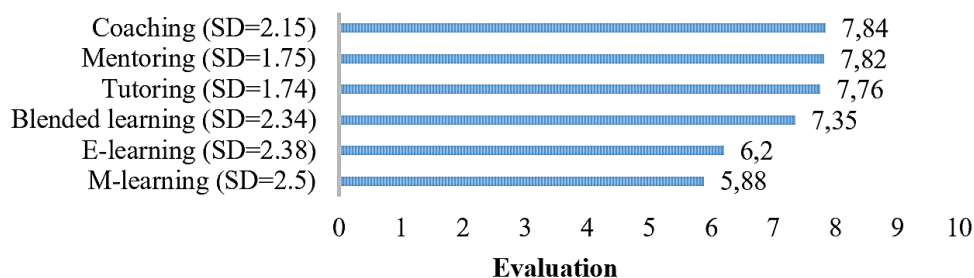
Closed questions were accompanied by comments from respondents showing their personal viewpoints and teaching experience. For example, the statement of respondent R15 draws attention to the difficulty in modern defining and distinguishing between lectures and practical classes: *Lectures can also include activation elements. I include QR codes embedded in the slides, students read the codes and are redirected to additional tasks that consolidate the theoretical content.* Another statement emphasizes the complementarity of the two methods, as well as elements attributed to the organizational culture of the universities (R30): *I know that activation methods are effective. I myself learn faster by doing various tasks. However, if we fully abandon instructional methods then universities will lose part of their culture, their specificity. Universities are not only about the lecturer's monologue, but also about discussion, however, it should at the higher level be based on the theory presented first by instructional methods.*

The questions in the next section of the questionnaire referred to the evaluation of the effectiveness in learning Chinese of innovative forms of instruction, namely E-learning - synchronous remote learning, Blended learning (hybrid learning, for example: lecture - online;

exercises - in the classroom), M-learning (e.g., complete independent learning based on teaching materials available on the e-learning platform), Mentoring (partnership relationship between professor and student), Tutoring (e.g., individual consultations), and Coaching (individual work with a professor, allowing the student to recognize their skills, abilities, and talents and to use their potential more fully).

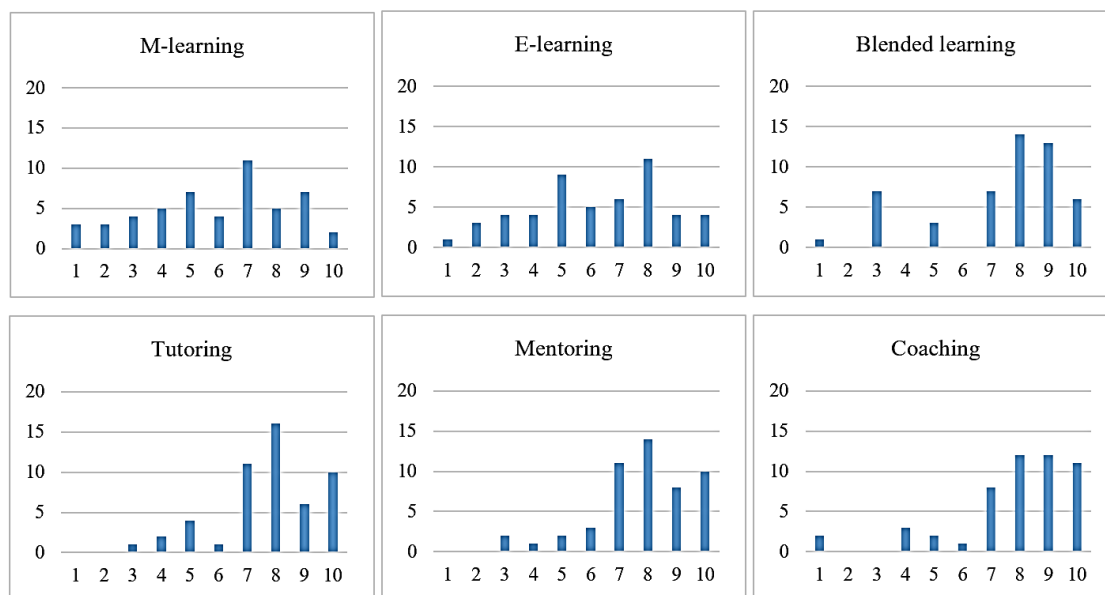
The analysis of the answers given by the respondents regarding the effectiveness of innovative forms of teaching made it possible to rank these forms according to the ratings obtained (Figure 2). The results of the analysis show that academics consider Coaching, Mentoring and Tutoring to be the most effective forms of teaching Chinese, i.e. forms of teaching that are based on partner relationships and allow individual work of the student with the academic teacher. Coaching, Mentoring and Tutoring received average ratings of 7.84; 7.82 and 7.76, respectively, out of a possible 10. Next in the ranking was Blended learning with an average rating of 7.35 and E-learning with a rating of 6.20. The last place in the ranking is occupied by M-learning with a rating of 5.88, i.e. the form of instruction where the student is left alone most of the time has the lowest level of effectiveness in learning Chinese. Such results speak to the fact that for effective Chinese learning, direct contact between the student and the academic teacher is essential, despite the fact that the modern student is eager to use Internet technologies.

An analysis of the standard deviation and the distribution of scores obtained by each innovative method of instruction (Figure 3) shows that there are forms in the evaluation of the effectiveness of which academics have a similar opinion, and there are forms of instruction that can challenge discussion. Surveyed Chinese language teachers share a similar opinion on the leaders of this ranking, i.e. such innovative forms of classes as Coaching, Mentoring and Tutoring. 84% of all respondents rated the effectiveness of these methods at 7 to 10. In contrast, the opinions of university teachers differ on the effectiveness of Blended learning, E-learning and M-learning in Chinese language acquisition.



**Figure 2.** Ranking of innovative instruction effectiveness.

Source: own study.



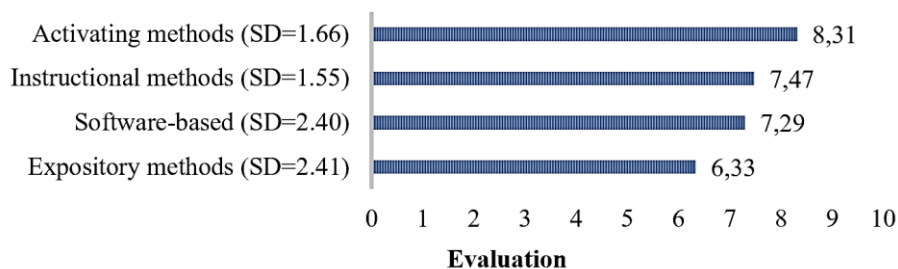
**Figure 3.** Distribution of marks in innovative teaching.

Source: own study.

Respondent R7's statement underscores the importance of an individual approach and a good relationship between lecturer and student combined with activity-based methods: *The most effective way of learning today resembles the relationship between craftsman and student. It is a personalized relationship, tailored to the special needs of the student. It is a relationship that supports and builds a bond. A bond that is not possible to build during instructional methods, but is possible in case of activating forms.* Such an act of research has shown that the modern student needs forms of teaching based on direct interaction with the academic teacher.

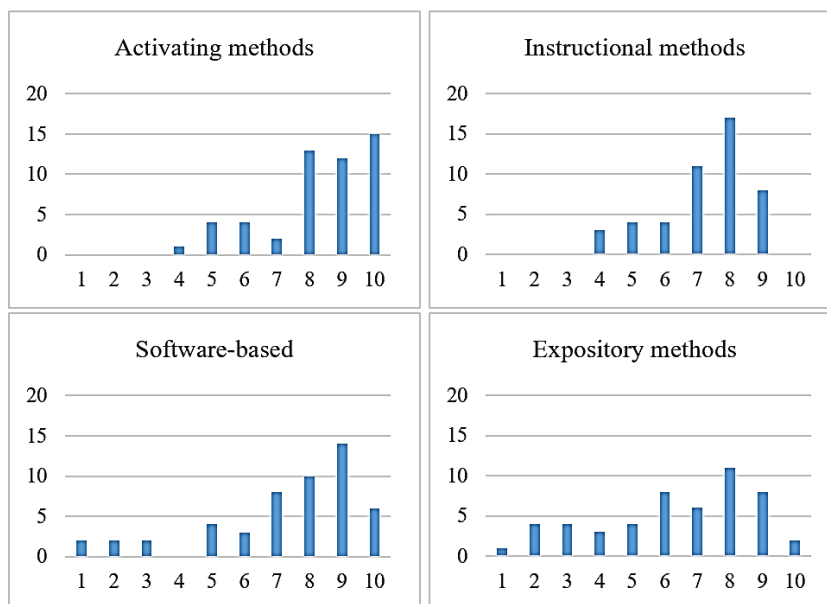
University teachers were also asked to evaluate the effectiveness in learning Chinese of selected groups of teaching methods, namely Instructional methods, activating methods, expository, software-based. Analysis of the respondents' answers made it possible to develop a ranking of the above-mentioned groups of teaching methods according to the average scores obtained (Figure 4). According to academics, the greatest effectiveness in learning Chinese is characterized by activation methods, i.e. methods that strongly connect the educational process with social and professional life and require very high involvement of students in the learning process. Second place in the ranking is occupied by Instructional methods with an average score of 7.47, Third place belongs to software-based. The last place in the ranking of effectiveness is occupied by expository methods.

An analysis of the distribution and standard deviation of the ratings obtained by each group of instructional methods (Figure 5) shows consistency in opinions regarding the evaluation of the effectiveness of activating methods and instructional methods. However, in the case of the effectiveness of software-based and expository methods, the respondents do not present a homogeneous opinion.



**Figure 4.** Ranking of teaching methods by effectiveness.

Source: own study.



**Figure 5.** Ratings distribution by teaching method groups.

Source: own study.

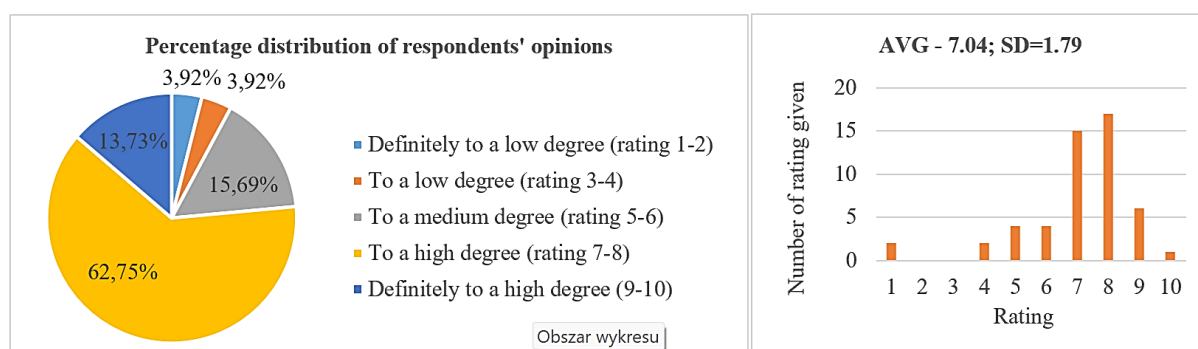
In conclusion, we can say that the clear leader in the ranking of effectiveness is Activity-based methods, however, university teachers still consider it essential to use Instructional methods as a tool for conveying theoretical foundations in the process of teaching Chinese. Software-based and Expository methods are also popular among Chinese language teachers, but the respondents' opinions regarding their effectiveness vary considerably.

On the other hand, in their statements, respondents pay attention to other levels of application of activation methods - fashion and expectations of employers / management: *Activating students is nowadays not only a fashionable didactic approach, but also a kind of expectation articulated by superiors - managers of higher education institutions. A modern teacher should activate, and if he or she does not do it, then he or she should learn to do it as soon as possible, because only this method is effective (R17).*

Similarly, the statement of respondent R6 points to an additional aspect - the issue of engaging costs incurred by a teacher using activation methods (shown in terms of time) and the need to address other topics than before - the underestimation of teachers involved in preparing activation classes: *Activation methods have a lot of advantages and are the current standard in*

language teaching. However, little is said about the amount of time a teacher should engage in mastering new tools, especially online ones, how much additional time is needed to prepare fully activating teaching activities (R6).

The next question measured the extent to which activating methods are used in the practice of teaching Chinese. In response to the question "Please indicate to what extent activating methods are used in the organization of the educational process at your university", 13.73% of respondents indicated that at their university, activating teaching methods are used to a "very high degree", 62.75% of respondents indicated a "high degree", 15.69% - recognized a "medium degree", while only 7.84% of respondents felt that such methods were used to a "low" and "very low" degree (Figure 6). In other words, the vast majority of respondents (76.48%) felt that activating teaching methods were used to a high degree at their universities.

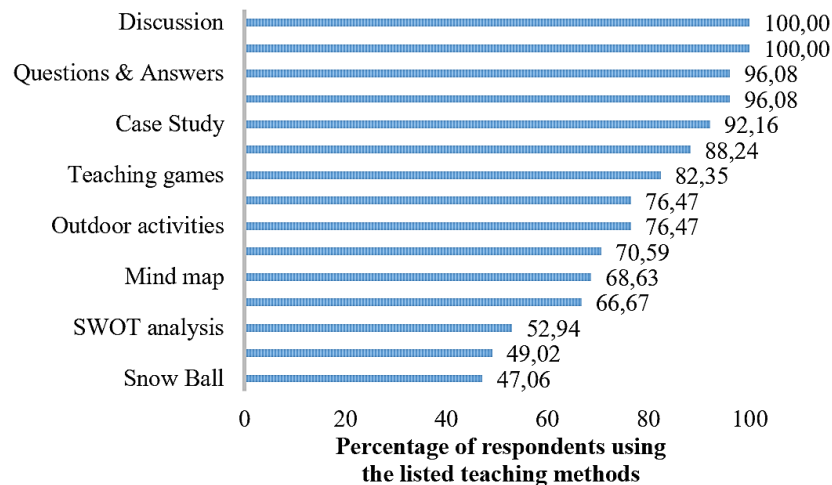


**Figure 6.** Evaluation of activation methods usage in education.

Source: own study.

In the next part of the interview, questions were included to evaluate the degree of use of the various teaching methods that Chinese language teachers may have encountered in the course of teaching. The evaluation concerned the following teaching methods: informative lecture, Discussion, Questions & Answers, Case Study, Debate, Brainstorm, Decision tree, Outdoor activities, Design method, Snow Ball, SWOT analysis, Fish skeleton type diagram, Mind map, Teaching games, Specialized software. In case the academic teachers did not have to deal with the indicated teaching methods, they could mark "Not applicable".

100% of our respondents use methods such as Informative lecture and Discussion in their Chinese language teaching practice; 96.08% - Questions & Answers and Debate, 92.16% - Case Study. Next in the popularity ranking go Brainstorm and Teaching games – 88.24 and 82.35% of respondents respectively, followed by Specialized software and Outdoor activities – 76.47% of surveyed university teachers, Design methods - used by 70.59% of teachers, Mind map – 68.63%, Decision tree - 66.67%, SWOT analysis type methods (52.94%), Fish skeleton type diagram and Snow Ball used by less than 50% of all respondents (Figure 7). Analysis of the responses indicates that all the methods mentioned, except Informative lecture, Chinese language teachers refer to activation methods useful in practical classes.



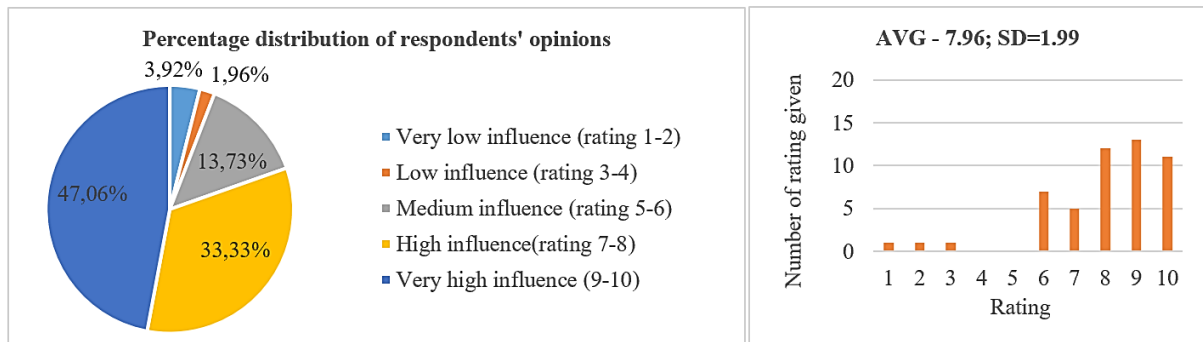
**Figure 7.** Ranking of selected teaching methods usage in Chinese learning.

Source: own study.

Respondents in the comments pointed out that *Students more interested in activation methods than in instructional ones. Especially teaching games on mobile devices. They put down their smartphones and get sad, when they take them in their hands again it brings them to life again.* (R12) and *Activation methods allow students to get into the flow. In some of the games and tasks [students] get totally involved, without considering that they are playing in Chinese and not in their native language. And yet, while playing they also learn, they learn how to talk to another player, how to negotiate and communicate their point of view, their emotions, their joy or dissatisfaction* (R17). In such a way, our interview showed that the set of teaching methods, most often used in the didactic process, does not always meet the preferences/needs of students, which negatively affects their ASE.

In the next pool of questions, the academics were asked to determine the impact of activation methods on improving their students' skills, knowledge and competencies while learning Chinese.

In response to the question asking to specify how the activating methods influence improving students' skills, knowledge, and competencies, 80% of respondents marked "high" and "very high" influence of activating methods on improving students' skills, knowledge, and competencies in learning Chinese; "medium influence" was marked by 14% of respondents, and "low influence" by only 6% of respondents (Figure 8). In conclusion, it can be said that from the point of view of most university teachers, the use of activating teaching methods has a high impact on improving the effectiveness of the learning process.



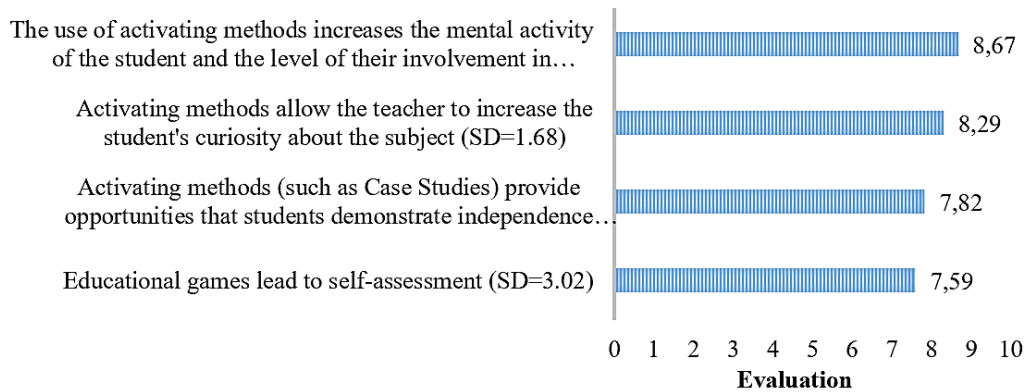
**Figure 8.** Impact of activation methods on skill development.

Source: own study.

In addition to those mentioned, according to the teachers surveyed, the effectiveness of the educational process is influenced by further training of teaching staff in the space of active methods: *We represent different countries here, but active learning is an international category. Regardless of the origin, the university represented, the level or the system introduced - the language is now mainly taught actively. When I was studying, a lot depended on the character or maybe temperament of the instructor. One was more communicative and energetic - the other more introverted and focused on tabular data, now, regardless of the personal characteristics of the teacher, everyone tries to activate. These are not casual activities, but more planned, perhaps even systemic. There is more and more training, better and worse, but more and more available. The most important thing, then, is the availability and quality of these trainings - they have an impact on the effectiveness of the educational process (R18).*

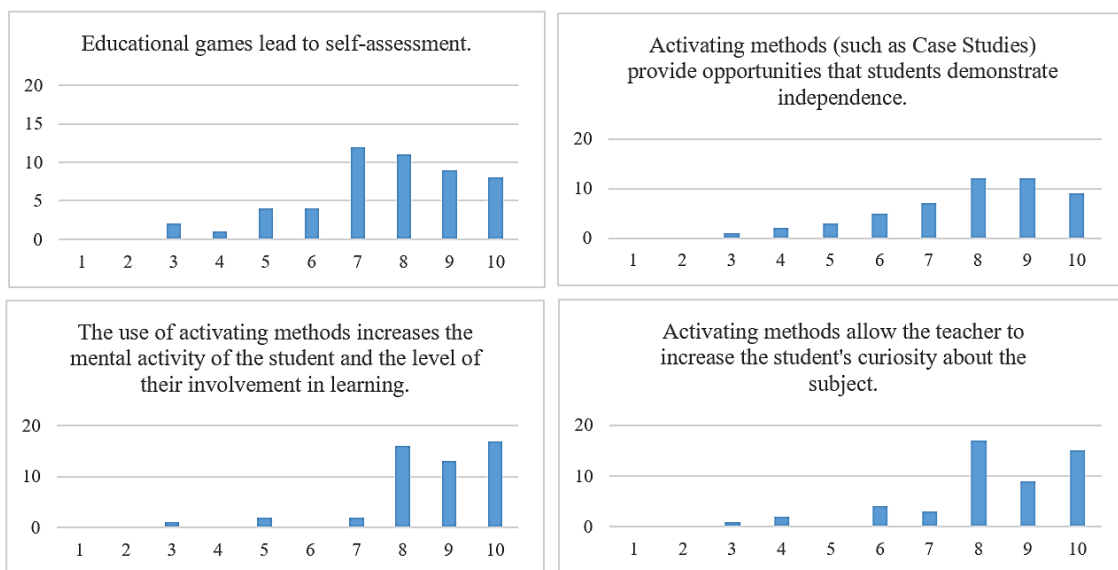
In the next part of the survey, university teachers were asked to answer a question about the extent to which they agreed with statements related to activating teaching methods, such as case studies and educational games, that enhance students' engagement, curiosity, independence, and ability to self-assess in the learning process. The opinions of university teachers on the above statements provided additional confirmation of the positive impact of active teaching methods on students' effectiveness in learning Chinese. Figure 9 shows the ranking of responses according to the average rating of each issue. According to this ranking, the majority of academics agree that the use of activating methods increases the student's mental activity and level of engagement in learning - the first ranking with an average rating of 8.67. The second position in the ranking with an average rating of 8.29 is occupied by the question regarding whether activation methods provide an opportunity for the teacher to increase the degree of interest in the subject. 78% of the surveyed university teachers that the use of activation methods in the study of Chinese gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their independence and leads to their own self-assessment (Figure 10) engagement in learning, increasing interest in the subject matter of the class and opportunities to demonstrate independence: *I activate students within each group I teach, so I have no reference to non-activated groups... I can say, however, what pleasantly surprised me - I was surprised by the change in their voice. A change that can be heard when they are having fun while learning,*

only then do they open up more and allow me into their inner world. You can see then whether they like to compete with each other, show their independence or prefer group work more - cooperative. You can see, for example, that some people are shy and quieter at the beginning of the classes, and thanks to the activation activities they themselves start to speak louder and even activate others and emphasize the connection of a particular game with the material being covered (R20).



**Figure 9.** Ranking of responses by average rating per issue.

Source: own study.

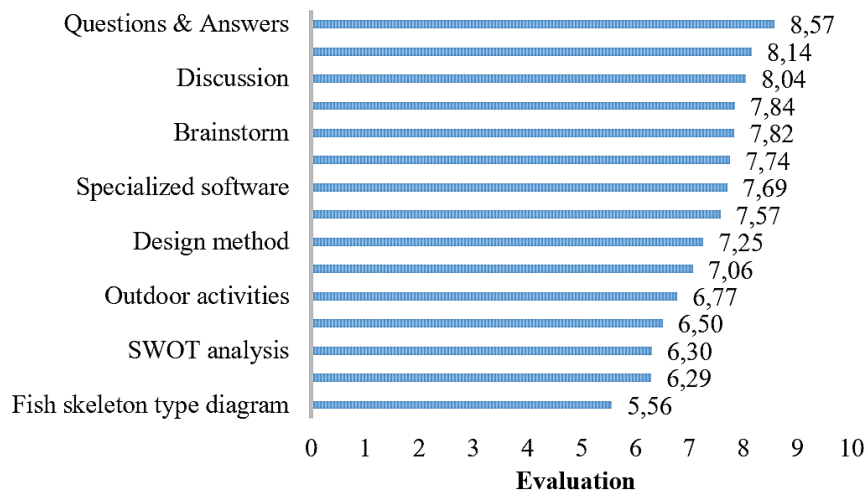


**Figure 10.** Distribution of ratings across individual issues.

Source: own study.

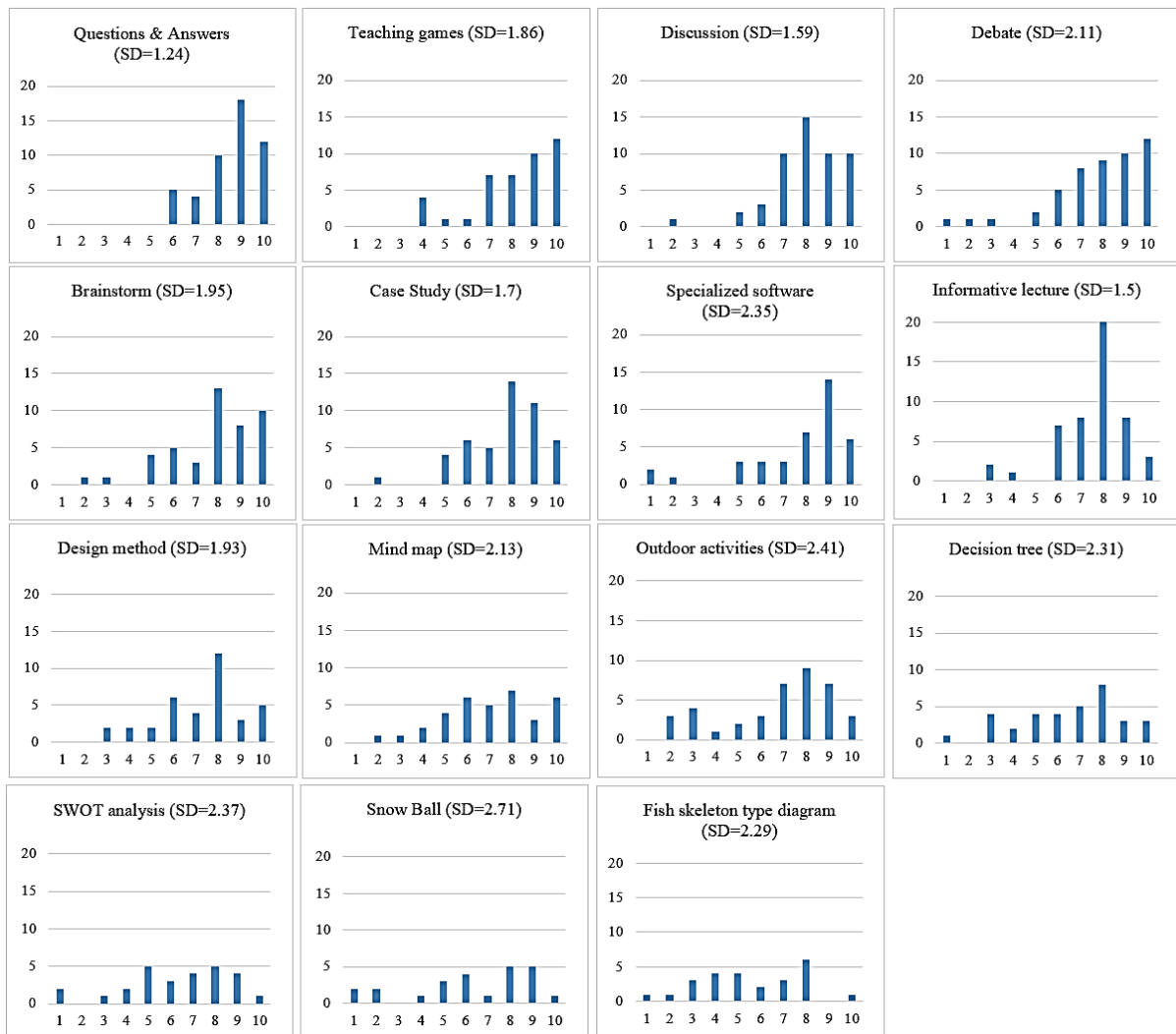
An analysis of the ratings given to the effectiveness of each teaching method made it possible to rank these methods (Figure 11). Among the most effective methods for learning Chinese, academics rank Questions & Answers, Teaching games, and Discussion. The next four places in the ranking are taken by Debate, Brainstorm, Case Study and Specialized software. Such a method as Informative lecture is ranked eighth in the compiled ranking. The rest of the selected teaching methods have ratings in the effectiveness ranking from 7.25 to 5.56.

Analysis of the distribution of evaluations of individual teaching methods and analysis of the standard deviation in the evaluations of individual respondents shows consistency in the evaluation of methods-leaders of the effectiveness ranking: Questions & Answers, Teaching games, Discussion and Informative lecture. However, in the evaluation of the methods Fish skeleton type diagram, Decision tree, Specialized software, SWOT analysis, Outdoor activities and Snow Ball, respondents do not have a homogeneous opinion (Figure 12).



**Figure 11.** Ranking of selected teaching methods' effectiveness.

Source: own study.



**Figure 12.** Distribution of grades by teaching method.

Source: own study.

Statements from some respondents point out that particular activation methods are sometimes associated with a particular discipline - dedicated to specific fields of study: *I associate Snow Ball more with a sampling method than a teaching method. You are an economist, is this an activation tool for economics students? (R6)* or *The name fish skeleton excites my imagination a lot, but I haven't heard of it before. Can you give me an idea of how you use it when teaching economics? (R12)*.

#### 4. Discussion

Mastering the Chinese language opens up opportunities for students to participate freely in the global circulation of knowledge, giving them access to advanced achievements in science and technology, learning about multidimensional cultural heritage, and actively engaging in the

international academic and professional environment (Nhung, 2024). The results of our study indicate that, despite differences in evaluations of individual teaching methods, activation methods are highly effective in learning Chinese, according to all the university teachers surveyed. As Krajewska notes (2021), active learning in academic teaching is a valuable and effective practice for students and teachers, but its use depends primarily on participants' willingness in the educational process. However Wu (2023) notes, that teaching strategies should be tailored to individual student profiles. This researcher points to the special role of immersive approaches (immersion in an environment of continuous language exposure), based on tasks and gamification, which have particular advantages in language learning (Wu, 2023). Li et al. (2025) also emphasize the importance of supporting students' engagement and motivation in learning Chinese, as well as improving their inclusive participation.

Our study also allowed us to identify three important aspects related to the use of active learning in Chinese language teaching:

- teachers' concerns about universities losing part of their culture and specificity centered around the use of expository methods,
- the possibility of changing the teacher's identity related to the development of a new type of relationship between teacher and student,
- the problem of teachers being overloaded with tasks/working hours related to the need to master and implement new teaching tools.

One identified barrier to implementing active learning is student resistance. It involves developing teaching strategies based on explanation and facilitation to reduce this resistance. The former relies on explaining what learners can expect during the activity – discussing the purpose and its relation to the learning process and assessed tasks. The latter strategy relies on close contact, for example, in the form of a walk around the room, encouraging engagement and asking questions, awarding points for participation in the activity, summarizing exercises, and asking for feedback. A positive correlation has been observed between positive reactions (course evaluations) to the implementation of active learning, increased participation, lower levels of distraction, and the use of these strategies by teachers (Andrews et al., 2022; Tharayil, et al., 2018).

The second type of barrier involves teachers' resistance to the change, which impacts both their work and their identity. Barriers can include heavy administrative workloads and high performance expectations (Marques, Lopes, Magalhães, 2024). According to McCorkle (2021) barriers also include: 1) the time it takes to prepare classes and the duration of classes, 2) the need for staff development, 3) the teaching staff's perception of their role (turning lecturers into facilitators) and value (including motivation to implement changes). Emphasis is placed on the importance of making small changes (better than reorganizing entire courses), developing instructions for implementing active learning, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, creating a space for conversation, implementing changes in organizational culture at the faculty level, providing incentives for additional work, and pushing

themselves to implement new methods regardless of the ones the teachers themselves were trained in (McCorkle, 2021). Researchers' professional identity is presented as a way of perceiving themselves and their work in relation to their discipline and their perceived professional status. Researchers may have a professional identity that does not include teaching or perceive threats to their professional identity within their discipline. Both of these situations can constitute barriers to implementing active learning, thus promoting exclusively traditional delivery methods. These barriers are fostered by, among others: 1) treating training as solely shaping a researcher's identity, 2) fear of revealing oneself as a teacher, and 3) relying on a professional culture of science that considers teaching less critical (Brownell, Tanner, 2012).

Teaching based on active learning is associated with the costs of transforming education, including the challenges described earlier. Brewe et al. (2018) also estimated the total cost of student credit for classes conducted in a traditional format (lecture) and in an active-learning format (modeling instruction). Their research findings indicate that active learning is associated with higher costs, making it less economically profitable for faculty. Administrators find it more profitable to organize classes for larger groups—i.e., groups of over 30 students—requiring fewer staff. The group that benefits most from active learning is students (Brewe, Dou, Shand, 2018). Another type of cost is that incurred by teachers implementing the "new method" in their classes. As Mennella notes (2017), this cost is teacher fatigue during the semester. Emphasis is placed on the need to introduce new solutions for measuring, allocating, and compensating teaching load in an active learning model, as well as preventing burnout associated with excessive additional workload (Mennella, 2017). The aspect of remuneration in the form of a reduced teaching load, financial benefits, recognition for long-term employment, and rewards for teaching is also discussed in the research of other scientists (see: Brownell, Tanner, 2012).

Given the relatively low interest in the discussed issues so far and the lack of systematic research on teachers' time burden, their level of fatigue, and existing institutional incentives, assessing the scale of this phenomenon remains difficult.

## 5. Summary

The process of teaching Chinese should be based on the development of students' academic self-efficacy. In turn, the academic self-efficacy of the modern student depends on the teaching methods and approaches, the factors that motivate/demotivate the student to learn, and the student's behavior. Surveys of university teachers have indicated that practical classes based on activity-based methods are the most effective for learning Chinese. At the same time, direct contact between the student and the academic teacher, based on a partnership and the teacher's individual work with the student, can be essential. However, such a form of instruction as a lecture must and continues to remain a tool for conveying theoretical foundations in the

practice of studying Chinese at the academic level. It is also worth considering an alternative interpretation that accounts for the low quality of lectures offered for distance learning, for example, using mobile devices.

Academics, in their statements, stressed that the modern student is more interested in activating methods than in instructional ones. The majority of academic teachers agree that the use of activating methods increases students' mental activity and level of involvement in learning, provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their independence, and, in turn, increases the values derived from learning in functional, emotional, and social dimensions. However, the research indicated that the set of teaching methods most often used in the didactic process does not always align with students' preferences, suggesting a teacher-perceived mismatch that may reduce educational effectiveness.

In addition to the above, the conducted study allowed us to identify three important aspects related to the implementation of active learning methods by Chinese language teachers: 1) fears that universities will lose part of their culture and specificity related to the departure from traditional lectures; 2) comparisons of the relationship between a Chinese language teacher and a student to the relationship in a craft workshop; and 3) lack of due attention to the issue of the heavy time burden of teachers preparing thoroughly activating teaching activities, related, among other things, to the need to master and implement new teaching tools.

This paper addresses academics and educators who incorporate Chinese language instruction into their study programs to develop competencies in knowledge management and strengthen the labor-market competitiveness of their graduates. It is also intended for entrepreneurs, managers, foreign trade professionals, and policymakers who recognize investment in human capital as a fundamental driver of sustainable economic growth.

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