



The teaching of English in higher education: The particular case of the State University of Northern Rio de Janeiro (UENF).

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The present research is carried out at the State University of Northern Rio de Janeiro (UENF). It takes as a starting point the growing need of learning English communicatively in higher education, due to the dominance of this language within the scientific and academic contexts. The research focuses on the main features, strengths and weaknesses of the teaching-learning process of English in this institution. Such information was obtained through questionnaires applied to the coordinator of the English courses and to the chief of the Laboratory of Education and Language Studies (LEEL), entity in charge of offering these courses to the University Study Centers and Post-Graduation Programs. It was also acquired by means of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of questionnaires administered to students who received the courses in previous semesters, and by a documental analysis of the discipline programs. Results show that their methodological conception does not favor the students' academic and professional formation, since language learning is not seen as a tool for facilitating their access to useful information produced in English and for encouraging them to socialize the results of their scientific activity through publications or other kinds of communications produced in this language. Consequently, their motivation for the courses is low, as well as their language proficiency level after having received them. To solve this situation, this study aims to improve the teaching-learning process of English at UENF by proposing a Didactic-Methodological Manual that includes updated guidelines for teachers, based on a communicative approach to language teaching, along with models of activities to develop the students' Communicative Competence. This new approach, and the types of activities to be included in the manual, were implemented during the first semester of 2016 in a sample of students who were intentionally selected. Afterwards, they were given a questionnaire to evaluate the course in terms of its contribution for developing their language skills and competences. Their opinions were favorable and their suggestions were taken into consideration for the improvement of the lessons and activities that will be included in the final proposal.

Keywords: Teaching, Learning, English.

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