



Unit 2

Service-Learning with a Global Citizenship approach

Content:

- 1. Elements of Service-Learning***
- 2. Some Examples of Service-Learning with a Global Citizenship approach***
- 3. Working with Students in a Service-Learning Project***

Educational Objectives:

The contents of this unit aim to deepen your understanding of the essential elements of Service-Learning (social need, community service, learning, and networking). We also want you to bring you some examples of Service-Learning projects with a global citizenship approach. Finally, we will focus on the educational process. We will show you the different phases of working with students in order to make the Service-Learning educational experience, truly transformative.

1. *Elements of SL*

This section is based on the book “Service-Learning. Social commitment in action”, written by Roser Batlle (educator and promoter of service-learning in Spain)¹ and in the manual “How to Develop Solidarity Service-Learning Projects in Early and Primary Education”, by María Nieves Tapia (founder and director of the Latin American Centre for Solidarity Learning and Service “CLAYSS”)².

As we mentioned when introducing Service-Learning in Block 1, there are four fundamental elements in Service-Learning experiences:

1. Starting from an identified **social need**.
2. Carrying out **community service** to address that need.
3. Providing meaningful **learning**.
4. Establishing a **collaborative network** with local stakeholders and the community itself.

The order of these four elements can vary. Some more traditional educators argue that we should first consider the learning objectives we want our students to achieve. On the other hand, at times, teachers begin by thinking about community service because of the motivation and commitment they anticipate their students will have for that service.

However, since Service-Learning is a combination of social and pedagogical aspects, it is often more effective (and may be more coherent) to start by identifying real needs and then determine what students can tackle and what learning opportunities arise from these needs.

Social Needs

A social need is a situation that is not going well, a problem that exists outside of the students but challenges them and gives them the opportunity to help solve it (a dirty park, elderly people who feel lonely, a forest that has burned down, migrants in need of language improvement, etc.). These needs can be found in the near and far context. While it makes sense to identify these issues in the local environment, it is also meaningful to look beyond and discover global problems (for instance, this can be done through international current news or through a local NGO that brings us a global issue.)

Regarding the needs, it’s important to consider that...

... Not all needs have to be dramatic or urgent.

¹ BATLLE, ROSER. *Service-Learning. Social commitment in action*. Madrid, 2020.

² TAPIA, MARÍA NIEVES [et al]. *How to Develop Solidarity Service-Learning Projects in Early and Primary Education*. Buenos Aires-Montevideo, 2016.

... Social needs and educational needs are not the same thing. Although teachers often see students' needs as social needs, and rightly so, in Service-Learning projects, the needs should be beyond the "navel-gazing" of our students.
... Addressing a social need requires reflection with a global perspective.
... The social need can be formulated as a problem or as a challenge.

Community Service

In Service-Learning (SL), the service that students engage in is understood as a solidarity-based action focused on the common good, in favour of the community (other individuals) through which they can learn.

Regarding community service, it's important to consider that...

... It should primarily benefit the community (individuals who are outside the circle of our students).
... It is carried out by students, not by social entities.
... It can be conducted both outside and inside the school.
... A spontaneous civic act or a one-time volunteer action is not the idea of service in a Service-Learning project unless it is done with a clear intention of learning.

Examples of community services carried out by students aged 6-12 in SL projects:

- ✓ *Collection of used domestic oil in the town, after an awareness campaign, to avoid contamination of the river.*
- ✓ *Cleaning of the village pond, involving more than a thousand people (families, social and public entities).*
- ✓ *Organization of a fabric collection and collaboration with older people in the manufacture of heart-shaped cushions to alleviate the secondary effects of surgery in women who have undergone mastectomy in a local hospital.*
- ✓ *Contribution to the restoration and start-up of a shelter that will provide work for people at risk of social exclusion.*
- ✓ *Preparation of a publication, with the support of the families and elderly people of the town, in order to spread the cultural and ecological wealth of the area.*
- ✓ *Organization and start-up of a play about dinosaurs with and for people with disabilities.*

Learnings

Service-Learning (SL) explicitly links community service with meaningful learning, which can be part of the curriculum (or not), and may (or may not) be associated with a specific subject or course.

SL provides students with learning opportunities related to...

...Competences and knowledge, derived from the topic of the project, from the investigation of needs, from the contrast of information, etc.

...Self-esteem, related to the satisfaction of being able to make a difference.
...Social skills, when dealing with people outside the school and when working in a team.
...Human values, because action puts values into practice.
...Citizen participation, because the SL provides real contexts where the exercise of active citizenship is developed.

Using the [four pillars of education for the 21st century, as proposed by Jacques Delors \(1996\) for UNESCO](#) as a reference, these learnings can be grouped into four categories: 'learning to know,' 'learning to do,' 'learning to be' and learning to live together'.

Networking

Networking is an identifying ingredient of SL. In SL projects, the school needs the community to achieve a positive social impact by improving the social environment; therefore, it should actively collaborate with NGOs, the town hall, social and educational entities of the neighbourhood...

Some recommendations for networking in SL projects include...

- Take time to get to know each other and learn what the needs and priorities of each partner are.
- Start with small, very specific SL projects.
- Put the agreements in writing (for example, what each of the parties will contribute...).
- Maintain fluid communication during the execution of the service.
- Jointly evaluate both academic results and service results.
- Evaluate the project together.
- Repeat the project to consolidate alliances and the network.

2. Some Examples of Service-Learning with a Global Citizenship approach

Find below an outline of some examples of Service-Learning projects with a global citizenship approach (it'd be nice if we could include some Croatian/Italian initiatives):

The 'Vicentino Soap' Project

Social need: The sea pollution resulting from the disposal of household oil down the drain.

Community service: Students carry out a campaign to raise awareness in the city of Barbate (Cádiz, Spain) about the impact of cooking oil disposal. They distribute maps to locate oil recycling containers in the city to prevent its disposal into drains. They

establish a collection spot in the school to gather used oil and to recycle it to make soap. The soap is donated to low-income families in the neighbourhood and to an NGO that collaborates with impoverished communities in Peru and Mozambique.

Learning: Knowledge about pollution, chemical reactions, and traditional soap-making. Understanding of the work of development NGOs. Skills in communication, teamwork, awareness, and commitment.

Networking and collaborations: Vicente Aleixandre High School, neighbourhood women's association 'Los Nardos,' NGO Madre Coraje.

Linked Sustainable Development Goals: SDGs 4, 6, 12, 15, and 17.

Bottle-soccer project

Social need: Promote the right to education and recreational activity of displaced Haitian children, making their vulnerable situation visible.

Community Service: Students of first year in high school, in different subjects (Physical Education, English, French, Art, Computer Science and Ethics), define a new sport, bottle soccer. Based on the testimony of children and Haitian girls, they organize the world's first Bottle Soccer Championship and a fundraising which funds will be used for educational projects.

Learning: Social and geographical knowledge of Haiti and the reality of childhood in contexts of humanitarian crisis; creation and graphic design of logos, prototyping, creation of video games; development of physical-sports skills; use of foreign languages; organizational and teamwork skills; cooperation, commitment and empathy.

Networking and collaborations: 'La Corolla School' together with other schools in Gijón (Spain), France and Haiti. With the collaboration of students from TAFAD (Higher Technician in Animation of Physical and Sports Activities), the Asturian Cooperation Agency, the General Directorate of Sports, the CTIC Foundation (Information and Communication Technology Center) of Asturias, the City Council of Gijón and the NGO Oxfam Intermón.

Linked Sustainable Development Goals: SDGs 4, 10 and 17.

Cicerone project

Social need: Inclusion and integration of young people who have recently arrived in the neighbourhood.

Community Service: High school students, in tutoring activities, mentor students who have just arrived at the institute and accompany them in their integration process, both in the school and in the neighbourhood.

Learning: Knowledge about the phenomenon of migration, cultural diversity, the high school and the neighbourhood; communication and social skills, critical analysis of the context and conflict management; attitudes of respect, responsibility and commitment.

Networking an collaboration: Eduard Fontserè high school, Pedraforca high school, Rubió i Ors high school and Torras i Bages high school all of them from L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (Barcelona. Spain), together with the Servei de Mediació Comunitària, the Servei d' Acollida i Programa d'Acompanyament a Joves Reagrupats, the Joventut Area, the Center for Linguistic Normalization (CNL), the Joves per la Igualtat i la Solidaritat (JIS) association and the Department of Education of the City Council of l'Hospitalet de Llobregat.

Linked Sustainable Development Goals: SDGs 4, 10 and 17.

These are just a few examples, in the virtual classroom you will find the book "100 good service-learning practices" ([it's in Spanish, but you can find another resource](#)) so you can learn more about projects.

3. Working with Students in a Service-Learning Project

Transformative education implies educational actions aimed at motivating and empowering students so that they can make informed decisions, commit themselves and act with knowledge of the facts at the individual, community and global levels. In this sense, SL should be seen as an educational process where working with students entails different phases or steps.

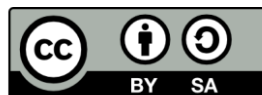
PHASE 0: Motivation. In order to predispose the group to the commitment and action of the service, it is important to make them aware of the social need or the problem that is the object of the project. A good previous investigation through field work, a trip to the place affected by the problem, inviting a social entity or person affected to explain the situation to ask for collaboration, also readings, films, can emotionally bring students closer to the problem...

PHASE 1: Discovery and analysis of reality. In this phase, the problem or challenge that the project is going to address is presented. The problem is investigated together with the students and with a globalizing approach to discover the impact and consequences on the lives of people and on the planet. In this phase it is essential to dedicate time to investigate the causes that underlie the problem. *How does the problem affect our environment? How does it relate to what is happening in other parts of the world? what are the causes? Are there global causes?*

PHASE 2: Reflection. After the discovery phase, it's time to reflect, ask questions, and seek the opinions of others (from the community, family, experts, etc.). This is also the phase in which the group confronts its values to assess the situation: Who is responsible for the situation? Who has the power to reverse it? What role do we play in all of this? What is our responsibility?

PHASE 3: Commitment. Initiatives that are already underway to address the analyzed reality are presented (experiences and testimonies from individuals who are already working to improve the problem, alternatives, etc.). It is also the time to ask what we can do individually and collectively and commit to carrying out the service action.

PHASE 4: Closing: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Celebration. Although evaluation should be present throughout the entire project in order to continuously reflect on what is happening, what we are experiencing and learning, it takes on special importance at the closing phase. On one hand, it's to be accountable for the work done and assess the results of the service. On the other hand, it's to evaluate and become aware of the learning (is very important to feel gratitude, not just expect to receive it). Additionally, this phase serves to plan for the future: *Will the project continue? If we don't continue, who will take over? Are we going to undertake another project?* Lastly, other essential aspects of closure include sharing the experience (dissemination) and celebrating it collectively.



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