



# Practical guide on e-Service-Learning in response to COVID-19



In collaboration with:



# Acknowledgments

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Title: **Practical guide on e-Service-Learning in response to COVID-19**

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# Table of contents

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Foreword.....	5
<b>Chapter 1</b> Educational challenges in times of social distancing .....	6
A. The learning and sociality challenge in distance learning .....	7
B. Active Learning and e-learning .....	8
<b>Chapter 2</b> The pedagogical proposal of Service-Learning.....	11
A. Service-Learning characteristics and programmatic elements .....	12
B. Service-Learning: active learning and competences .....	14
C. Service-Learning and Social Responsibility of Higher Education .....	17
<b>Chapter 3</b> From Service-Learning to e-Service-Learning .....	22
A. e-Service-Learning.....	23
B. The transition from Service-Learning to e-Service-Learning and hybrid zones ...	25
C. Quality criteria of e-Service-Learning .....	29
<b>Chapter 4</b> Practical indications for Service-Learning projects .....	38
A. Going virtual: redesign of SL projects for a virtual environment .....	39
B. Redesign of SL projects for adapting them to COVID/post-COVID needs .....	44
C. Design of SL projects directly related to needs linked to COVID-19.....	46
<b>Chapter 5</b> Converting volunteering actions into Service-Learning.....	48
A. Similarities between volunteering and Service-Learning .....	49
B. Differences between volunteering and Service-Learning.....	50
C. Key points to transform volunteering into Service-Learning.....	51



## Foreword

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COVID-19 has brought up new and urgent needs, some of which can be faced through Service-Learning projects, as solidarity is central. We believe that through Service-Learning we can contribute to confronting and overcoming this common threat and its repercussions. For that, we have to design Service-Learning projects that respond to such needs.

5

At a time when many higher education institutions are requiring virtual teaching, we also need to adapt existing Service-Learning courses to this new situation, even if the service needs are not directly linked to COVID-19.

The European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE), in collaboration with Pacto de América Latina por la Educación con Calidad Humana (Palech), the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education and the National Distance Education University (UNED) have developed this *Practical guide on e-Service-Learning in response to COVID-19* to support adapting Service-Learning courses to our new reality.

We strongly believe that social distancing is no reason to stop service-learning. Just do it online!



Pilar Aramburuzabala  
President of EASLHE

## Chapter 1 Educational challenges in times of social distancing

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## A. The learning and sociality challenge in distance learning

A fundamental function of education is the integral development of individuals, where learning is not merely the transmission of information, but also involves a process of cognitive growth comprising a social aspect. This aspect has been challenged by the social distancing imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent move to online teaching. This change has added to the crises already faced by some world education systems, as many countries see a disassociation of education from their sociocultural and historical realities, mainly through the promotion of standardized evaluations, curricular reforms and the instrumentalization of knowledge. To overcome these challenges, teachers, students and communities can join forces to produce transformations, aware of the new social realities.

In these new times of social distancing, students face extra difficulties. They may be isolated on their own in residences or private accommodation, or might be living back in family homes, which could both be far away from their university campus and friends and could involve relationship tensions. The onus is on educators to support them. While it can be argued that social distancing can weaken pedagogical and emotional relationships by decreasing opportunities to develop social skills in traditional ways, most university students are prepared for online interactions due to their reliance on social media.

Researchers in educational technology, specifically in the subdiscipline of online and distance learning, have carefully defined terms over the years to distinguish between the highly variable design solutions that have been developed and implemented: distance learning, distributed learning, blended learning, online learning, mobile learning, and others. More specifically, research on types of interaction, which includes student–content, student–student, and student–learner, is one of the more robust bodies of research in online learning. The presence of each of these types of interaction, when meaningfully integrated, has been shown to increase learning outcomes (Bernard et al., 2009). Thus, careful planning for online learning includes not just identifying the content to cover but also carefully tending to how different types of interactions that are important to the learning process are to be supported.

## B. Active Learning and e-learning

Active learning refers to a broad range of teaching strategies which engage students as active participants in their learning. Typically, these strategies involve students working together during class, but may also involve individual work and/or reflection, as well as group work outside the classroom. The focus is on *how* to learn rather than *what* to learn, placing the learner at the heart of the process. Active learning can be on a spectrum of learner and teacher control of the learning process and learning environment (University of Minnesota – Center for Educational Innovation, 2014).

The main characteristic of active learning is that students are engaged in activities which involve more than just listening and note-taking. One or more of the following aspects should be present to fully exploit the potential of active learning:

- less emphasis is placed on transmitting information and more on developing students' skills;
- students are engaged in the (co)creation of new knowledge based on their previous knowledge and socio-cultural context;
- students are involved in higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, critical thinking, problem-solving, metacognition and reflexivity);
- greater emphasis is placed on students' exploration of their own attitudes and values.

Teaching approaches to support active learning range from short, simple activities like journal writing, problem solving and paired discussions, to more complex activities such as case studies, debating, role playing, team-based problem solving, collaborative game-based learning, project-based learning and Service-Learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Prince, 2004; Raynal & Rieunier, 2010; University of Minnesota – Center for Educational Innovation, 2014; University of Michigan – Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, 2014). Taking into account the broad characteristics of active learning, is it possible to achieve it within an online learning environment?

Well-planned online learning experiences are meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster, and specific terms for the type of



instruction being delivered in these pressing circumstances has been proposed as “emergency remote teaching” (Hodges et al., 2020). In contrast to experiences that are planned from the beginning and designed to be online, emergency remote teaching is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated. The primary objective in these circumstances is not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional support in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis (Hodges et al., 2020). Considering that universities promote research, progress and development, the COVID-19 pandemic can motivate the renewal and development of teaching and learning (Karalis & Raikou, 2020), not just in this emergency mode but also towards a better future. Service-Learning provides many opportunities here, by offering the prospect of experiential praxis involving the diagnosis and attention to the new social needs in conjunction with the community.

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## A. Service-Learning characteristics and programmatic elements

The literature in the field indicates several basic theoretical definitions of Service-Learning, as well as numerous paradigms and perspectives in which this strategy is viewed. SL has been described as an experience, a pedagogical concept, pedagogy, learning technique, philosophical concept and, a social movement (Butin, 2010; Moore & Lan, 2009; Jacoby et al., 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Tapia & Marta, 2003; Cohen & Kinsey 1994).

SL (sometimes referred to as community-based or community-engaged learning) is often known as a pedagogy that combines service to the community with learning opportunities offered to the students involved (Heffernan, 2001). SL is generally described as a “balanced approach to experiential education” that can “ensure equal focus on both the service provided to the community and the learning that is occurring” (Furco, 1996, p.3). In other words, SL is perceived as a method by which students can learn and develop social and professional competences through active participation in community-oriented experiences that are connected to their academic curricula and provide them with reflective opportunities (Furco, 1996).

According to the Europe Engage definition (Europe Engage, 2017, p.8):

Service-Learning is an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates meaningful community service or engagement into the curriculum and offers students’ academic credit for the learning that derives from active participation within the community and work on a real-world problem. Reflection and experiential learning strategies underpin the learning process, and the service is linked to the academic discipline.

The pillars of SL are built on collaboration between the students, schools, and communities. Regardless of the number of definitions of SL, several key components have been identified in the literature:

- 1) It is a pre-planned and organized student experience, gained through a service that *responds to the authentic needs of the community*. SL supports a change in the

traditional assistive model (service for the community) to a horizontal model of solidarity (service with the community).

- 2) It is based on *active student involvement* in all stages of the SL project, from planning to assessment. Students feel ownership of the SL project and act as leaders of activities, not only their implementers.
- 3) SL experience is *intentionally integrated into the academic curriculum* or in the research context. There is a clear connection of service to the objectives and content of education.
- 4) It provides a temporal sequence that allows participants to *reflect on the SL experience*. Reflection in SL is seen as a meaning-building process that guides the learner through the community-oriented experiences, facilitating the in-depth understanding of relationships and the connections between experiences and the SL concepts.
- 5) It aims to *develop civic responsibility* of students. In addition to the development of professional competences, students' change their civic involvement not only during but also after performing SL projects.

SL works with student experiences and involves metacognitive learning, where students are aware of how they learn, what they learn, what help them learn, how they can use it in practice and what they need to learn further. The community service can be incorporated into the curriculum of various academic subjects and study programs and there are several SL models in practice: it can be implemented within one subject, or it can combine several subjects or teachers to solve interdisciplinary projects. SL allows students to earn credits for the learning outcomes that take place through active community engagement and real-life solutions in practice. The process of learning is supported by self-reflection as a necessary part of experimental learning. The teacher plays the role of a tutor or mentor in this process.

When operating with a SL concept in a higher education system, it is suggested that a distinction has to be made between community service, volunteerism, field education, and SL (Fiske, 2001; Furco & Holland, 2005; Lipčáková & Matulayová, 2012). Thus, SL distinguishes itself from other types of community-oriented activities by its connection

with curriculum content, aiming to enrich the learning process by a better understanding of course content and a broader appreciation of the discipline, to promote the civic responsibility of the students, and to strengthen communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Fiske, 2001; Rusu et al., 2014).

## B. Service-Learning: active learning and competences

SL complies with the principles of active learning and it contributes to developing professional, personal and social competences.

### *SL is experiential*

Research indicates that learning by doing produces positive results (Kolb, 1984). When students integrate the content of a subject or academic area with real-world activities, they better retain what they have learned. In addition, if students demonstrate to others what they have learned, as happens in SL projects, the learning is deeper and more meaningful.

SL projects promote the commitment and participation of students in positive, meaningful and real experiences that involve intellectual and social activity. Students experience key concepts and ideas first-hand, rather than simply reading or listening to them.

### *SL is focused on the student*

Throughout the SL experience, students express their opinions, make decisions and establish connections between the service, the curriculum and their own life experiences. In addition, SL respects the students' diverse learning styles by offering varied opportunities to learn through the numerous actions that must be carried out in the project.

### *SL is collaborative*

SL contributes to creating a learning community in which students collaborate with each other to learn, solve problems and mediate conflicts. It encourages collaboration with peers, teachers, those who receive the service and community partners for the project design, implementation and evaluation.

### ***SL is intellectual***

SL is not just about "doing," but also involves intellectual activity and cognitive development on the part of students and teachers.

SL activities promote meaningful and deep learning in real, and therefore complex, contexts. They facilitate the acquisition of knowledge that can hardly be achieved through other means, as well as the transfer of what has been learned in the classroom.

Through SL students (Wade, 2001):

- Study and analyze the topic
- Apply curricular knowledge and competences
- Develop communication skills
- Generate new knowledge
- Find diverse sources with different perspectives
- Work from interdisciplinarity

### ***SL is analytical***

In SL projects students (Wade, 2001):

- Examine the causes of the situation
- Work with real and complex problems
- Use critical thinking, logical reasoning, and detailed observation
- Take into account excluded voices
- Examine their own role in the problem

If students use a critical approach to examine their SL project and take into account the voices of those who have been excluded, root causes and the underlying assumptions and values can be analyzed.

### ***SL contributes to developing the generic competences of the European Higher Education Area***

SL contributes not just to subject-specific knowledge, but also to the development the generic competences of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area,

(European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018). which every graduate student must have developed upon finishing their studies:

### **Instrumental**

- Capacity for analysis and synthesis
- Organizational and planning capacity
- Ability to manage information
- Oral and written communication
- Knowledge of ICT
- Problem resolution
- Decision making

### **Systemic**

- Autonomous learning
- Adaptation to new situations
- Knowledge of cultures and customs
- Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit
- Motivation for quality
- Creativity
- Leadership

### **Personal**

- Teamwork
- Work in an international context
- Skills in interpersonal relationships
- Recognition of diversity
- Critical thinking
- Ethical commitment

### **Other competences**

- Critical and self-critical capacity
- Ability to communicate with experts from other areas



Most of these competences are developed while the students carry out the actions that are typical of a SL project (Aramburuzabala, 2019):

- Investigate
- Plan and prepare
- Act
- Reflect
- Demonstrate
- Evaluate
- Celebrate

### ***SL facilitates the development of entrepreneurial competences***

Through SL, higher education institutions offer students the possibility of carrying out social commitment activities, so that they gradually increase their confidence in their ability to improve the environment through practices linked to their professional training, and strengthen their leading role in projects (Aramburuzabala, 2013; Enos, 2015; Opazo et al., 2014; Culcasi, 2020a). Its objective is to train students as social entrepreneurs who set out to create social value and who are capable of capturing social needs and make innovative proposals accepting the risks involved.

### ***SL develops competences for sustainable development***

SL not only facilitates the acquisition of knowledge about sustainability and contributes to improving communities, but the methodology itself is a model of sustainable development for students, since it is intrinsically sustainable: through SL, students and teachers do not limit themselves to reflecting on sustainability, but actually carry out work for social or environmental sustainability in their specific field (Aramburuzabala et al., 2015).

## **C. Service-Learning and Social Responsibility of Higher Education**

Though not a strong feature of the original Bologna Joint Ministerial Declaration of the European Ministers of Education (1999) that created the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) the social dimension of higher education became an important European priority in subsequent declarations (Council of the European Union (2006) 208 final;

Council of the European Union, 2013; London Communiqué, 2007; Leuven Communiqué, 2009), which recognised the important influence that higher education institutions exert on developing European society and defining and transmitting the values on which this is built.

UNESCO underlines the current importance of such a contribution: “At no time in human history was the welfare of nations so closely linked to the quality and outreach of their higher education systems and institutions” (UNESCO, 2003). The Council of Europe emphasises public responsibility for higher education and the importance of higher education governance in developing and promoting the social dimension of higher education and its distinctive contribution to the values of modern, complex society. In short, in their different ways the relevant supra-national bodies all emphasise the social responsibilities of higher education (Council of the European Union, 2013).

A socially responsible/engaged university can respond to actual society local and global challenges is by creating SL programs that connect students to their communities and with real-life situations. As considered by Kuh (1996, p. 11), one main task in designing institutional policies and practices is “to engage students in a variety of learning activities and to cultivate an institutional ethos that promotes involvement in educationally purposeful activities in settings in addition to the classroom”.

As mentioned in previous sections, the essential element of this learning approach is the active involvement of students in solving a need identified in the community with a view to their personal development and civic engagement (Barber, 1991; Colby & Damon, 1992; Waldstein & Reiher, 2001), providing at the same time spaces for reflection upon the experiences (Leming, 2001; Trainor et al., 1996). In addition to increasing the civic engagement, innovative teaching approaches like SL are seen as well to contribute to reducing the current high-level skills gap between students and labour market needs (Culcasi, 2020b). Particularly, the integration of extra-curricular experience into study programmes is identified as a solution for enhancing students’ transversal skills, better preparing them for finding a job (Council of the European Union, 2020).

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## A. e-Service-Learning

During the lockdown, the relationship between communication technologies and education became more intense and deeper: distance learning is made possible thanks to the close interaction between technologies and methodologies. If initially, it was thought that the whole problem of e-learning was reduced to the choice of the best e-learning platform, it soon became clear that the central issue is how education is implemented within the platform. In particular, building a good e-learning project involves an overall rethinking of the didactic model in order to get out of the transmissive education perspective (Culcasi, 2020). These issues are well known to online and distance universities who also have to deal with the moral and ethical education of their students, as promoting this kind of learning and skills is not always easy.

A useful pedagogical approach for this purpose is SL, on this online mode of delivery known as virtual SL or eSL (García-Gutiérrez et al., 2017; Dall’Olio et al., 2020).

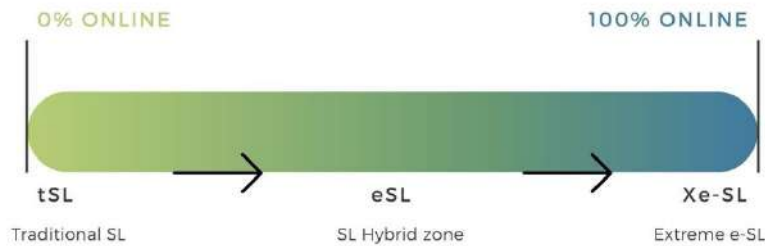
e-Service-Learning (electronic Service-Learning – eSL) or Virtual Service-Learning (vSL) is a Service-Learning course mediated by ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) wherein the instructional component, the service component, or both occurs online, often in a hybrid model.

*(Waldner et al., 2012; Manjarrés Riesco et al., 2020).*

In a certain way, eSL can be thought as an e-learning pedagogy that involves students through technology in civic inquiry, service, reflection, and action. The difference with traditional SL is that eSL requires that the service or the learning component takes place partially or completely online. When both the service and the learning component take place online, we talk about Extreme eSL (Xe-SL): a SL conceived for situations in which face-to-face communication between students, teachers, and beneficiaries of the service/community partner is not practicable (Manjarrés Riesco et al., 2020).

This virtual pedagogical approach has an enormous potential to transform both: traditional SL, freeing it from geographical constraints, and distance education, equipping it with a tool to promote engagement and overcoming *one of the major challenges of online learning: interaction* (Kara et al., 2019).

We can thus graphically imagine SL as a pedagogical proposal that develops along a *continuum* in which at one extremity, we have the traditional (tSL) (learning and service component on-site) and at the other extremity, we have the Xe-SL (learning and service component online). Between the two extremes of this *continuum*, we have different hybrid models of e-Service-Learning (eSL), (Waldner et al., 2012).



(Waldner et al., 2012)

We can also analyze eSL from another point of view, including its orientation, and the role which digital technologies and devices plays within. By orientation, we can differentiate two ways to develop eSL:

1. relationship based eSL
2. object/service based eSL

Technology, the internet and devices allow the development of a wide range of services without direct contact or relationships among people. In these cases, technological mediation can focus on improving the development a service or product. This is the case, for example, of a group of communication students who make web pages for non-profit organizations. In these situations, successful technological mediation can support the interpersonal relationship thanks to AI, forms and templates. But eSL, as a modality of



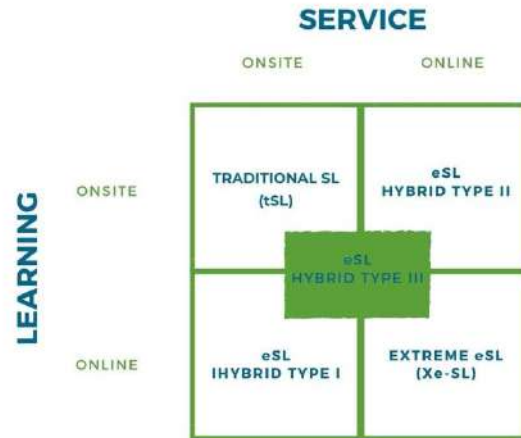
SL cannot be understood without favoring personal enrichment and interpersonal relationships and can continue to help and collaborate in safeguarding and promoting human values in the interdependent digital world.

## B. The transition from Service-Learning to e-Service-Learning and hybrid zones

Indeed, eSL is not a mere digitization of processes that could also be carried out in person and that now, thanks to technologies, are carried out virtually. It represents a further step and requires thinking of the learning process not as a face-to-face transposition, but as a specific reflection on what its development would be like in a virtual environment, in which the singular and permanent continuity *online - offline* is reflected (Ruiz Corbella & García Gutiérrez, 2020).

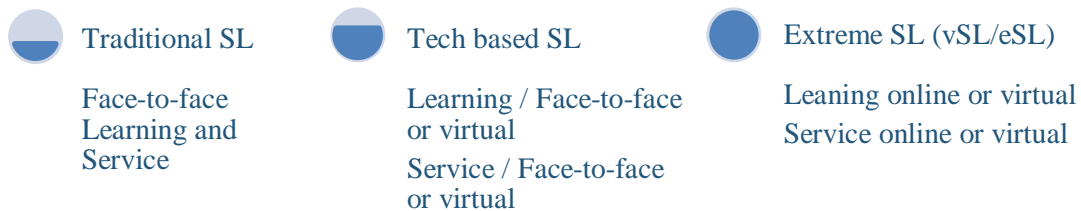
According to a literature review published by these authors in 2012 about eSL – “*E-Service-Learning: The Evolution of Service-Learning to Engage a Growing Online Student Population*” – 5 forms of SL can be identified:

1. ***Traditional Service-Learning (tSL)***: service and teaching component fully on-site;
2. ***e-Service-Learning Hybrid Type I***: service fully on-site with teaching fully online. The lessons take place entirely online and the service is carried out in presence;
3. ***e-Service-Learning Hybrid Type II***: service fully online with teaching fully on-site. The lessons take place entirely in presence and the service usually involves the creation of online resources as a response to an identified need;
4. ***e-Service-Learning Hybrid Type III***: a blended format with instruction and service partially online and partially on-site;
5. ***Extreme e-Service-Learning (Xe-SL)***: 100% of the instruction and service online. There is no on-site component.



(Waldner et al., 2012)

Each type of eSL may lend itself to different types of services and outcomes and may also face different limitations. Observing the wide range of interactions that are established, different levels or modes of interaction between the technological designs of learning or service can be identified:



(Yusof et al., 2018)

We already know examples of the first types of eSL (onsite based learning or service), so we pause briefly here to describe an extreme eSL experience to help us find the characteristics of this particular modality of SL.

Digital technologies can be included in projects in an “instrumental” way to facilitate and optimize their development, but they can also be the central object of learning and/or service. An example of both situations is the use of a web page or blog to collect the progress of SL projects and to inform all participants. In this case, it is a process of evolution in which the resources offered by a website that offers the opportunity for users to generate web content (the so-called web 2.0) can be used to disseminate or network about the project. Technologies are integrated to SL designs facilitating their

management, so their use is not established with a pedagogical intention, but purely as an instrumental or facilitating approach (Diaz-Corro, 2018). In this case, we are thus faced with a “basic inclusion of tech”.

There are also projects in which technologies become the object of learning or the provision of the service. For example, projects such as “cyber managers” (Pantallas Amigas, 2019), where the intention is to promote the responsible use of social networks; or projects in which students of electronics or computer science repair computers and devices for groups of vulnerable people; or students who help older people to use technologies and applications such as Skype, WhatsApp or email to connect with their relatives or other people. In these cases, technology is more integrated in the pedagogy of , as is part of both, what is learnt and how students learn (Lorenzo & Lorenzo, 2019; Salama et al., 2019) and we speak about process of ‘intentional integration’.

A further step involves learning and service processes that promote an ‘immersive tech experience’ in the projects. In these cases, the projects are designed from a digital perspective, supported by digital resources and with the elements that this medium provides. That is, both learning and service are carried out on the net and shows an immersive proposal in cyberspace. An example of this modality is the ‘Live Spanish!’ project (García-Gutiérrez et al. 2017), where learning and service take place entirely online through virtual interaction. It is, as previously mentioned, a type of extreme SL (Waldner et al., 2010, 2012; Yusof et al., 2019).

*‘Spanish live!’ an example of vSL/eSL designed as a modality of SL project based in a virtual experience (García-Gutiérrez et al., 2017).*

‘Spanish Live’ (‘Español en Vivo’) was set up in response to pedagogical needs to improve the oral proficiency of the Spanish-language students from African universities, who do not have options (scholarships and grants) to travel to Spanish speaking countries.

As well as practicing the language, the students gained a deeper understanding of other educational cultures, pedagogical styles and methodologies. and so forth.

The project was developed by the Innovation Group COETIC of UNED (Madrid) together with various African universities: the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) and the Escuela Normal Superior of Porto Novo (Benín), Strathmore University (Kenya), and the University of Dschang (Cameroon). ‘Spanish-Live’ fostered a series of virtual encounters between Spanish and African university students, with the goal of practicing Spanish ‘live.’ Students developed various intersectional skills, as pointed out in the skills map of the university, particularly those related to ethics and civic engagement. Specifically, the students prepared the content of interviews which focused on educational issues of their course units and recorded a brief video presentation in which they indicated their interests with respect to the Spanish language. These videos and more relevant project information were made available on the project’s website ([www.uned.es/coetic](http://www.uned.es/coetic)). Both Spanish and African students analysed and solved problems that arose during the semester. The problems were mostly all technical, such as lack of Internet access and lack of devices from which to establish a connection, which indicates the digital divide between different regions of the globe. The teaching staff involved in the project limited itself to facilitating and organizing contact between the different groups of students, and to explaining the purpose of this methodology and online meetings and interviews. As is understood in SL, students are the real protagonists of this educational activity.



In this scenario, it is foreseeable that the e-Service-Learning modality will experience an increasing diffusion in the coming years, both in the distance and face-to-face universities.

## C. Quality criteria of e-Service-Learning

To achieve quality e-Service-Learning, the criteria are the same as the best practices of Traditional Service-Learning (Furco, 2002; Hart & Northmore, 2010; NCCPE, 2012):

- 1) be meaningful and relevant to persons/institutions and offer opportunities to learn and deepen understanding for all participants (students, faculty and community partners);
- 2) have defined goals (reachable and measurable) for each specific Service-Learning project;
- 3) meet needs and goals defined by community partners;
- 4) be designed and planned by students/student groups, actively collaborating with community partners;
- 5) include support and coaching for students from both academic staff and from community partners;
- 6) be linked to the curriculum/study program in an explicit way, so that learning outcomes can easily be linked to the academic theory and methodology for both students and teachers;
- 7) offer adequate time frames for students to make experiences and learn in community settings/with community partners in an effective and sustainable way;
- 8) enhance voice and active participation of students and community to promote an active learning process and deeper understanding;
- 9) encourage systematic reflection on the learning processes and outcomes for all participants. For students, it is important to link their experiences to the theoretical and methodological background of the subject;
- 10) have evaluation and documentation as their integral to enable a final student presentation of the results evaluated by community partners;
- 11) be assessed by the civic/community partners, the university and the neighborhood/setting.

To this list we can add another important element, specific for the digital environment:

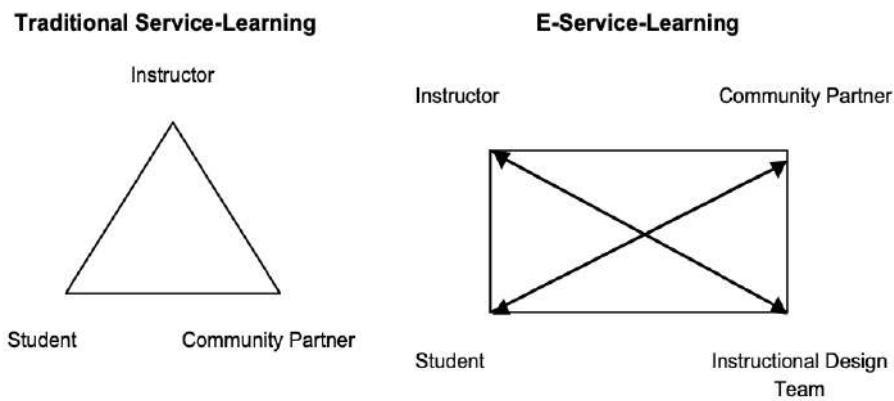
- 12) Humanistic and solidarity-based technological use.

According to Waldner et al., (2012) in addition to the best practices from traditional SL courses, programmes should also incorporate best practices related to technology and communication. The authors provide some suggestions related to technology and communication, in order to maximize eSL success, while emphasizing pedagogical are.

The three areas are explained below:

1. *Technology area*

The technological aspect plays a very important role in eSL. In order to maximize success, it is recommended that students and teachers have prior online course experience; that all actors involved are familiar with the modalities and purposes of SL pedagogy; that teachers specify equipment/software requirements, assess student skills and community partner capacity before starting a SL project online and provide training if needed (Seifer & Mihalyuk, 2005). The success of eSL relies also on the technology team thus should include an extra actor: if in traditional SL the actors are teachers, students, and community partners, in eSL the digital expert is introduced if required. This professional figure can help teachers and students to use technological potential according to their goals.



(Waldner et al., 2012)

In eSL it is possible to use synchronous tools (e.g., audio and video conferencing, text-based chat rooms, virtual classrooms) and asynchronous tools (e.g., e-mail, drop boxes, micro-blogging online, discussion boards, video streaming, digital video production). Whatever the technology used, teachers must build a bridge between synchronous and asynchronous communications (Malvey et al., 2006; Çakıroğlu, 2019).

This table describes some useful tools for vSL / eSL: *(Please, click on the icons to access the website of each application).*

Digital tool	Uses	Uses in Service-Learning
<p>Padlet</p> 	Creation of online bulletin boards to display information for any topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoped outcomes</li> <li>• Identifying issues young people care about or would like to address</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>
<p>Edpuzzle</p> 	Embedding questions, commentaries and quizzes in videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining acceptable results</li> <li>• Sharing topical videos about issues, with</li> <li>• question prompts.</li> <li>• Having students create videos for others with</li> <li>• question prompts.</li> </ul>
<p>Kahoot</p> 	Game-based learning platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining acceptable results</li> <li>• Reflection - a way for you to create quizzes that check for understanding and increase engagement</li> </ul>
<p>Piktochart</p> 	Making infographics, presentations and sharing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>
<p>Screencastify</p> 	Recording, editing and sharing videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital reflection</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>

<p>Storycorps</p> 	<p>Recording meaningful conversations and archive at Library of Congress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>
<p>Slido</p> 	<p>Engaging young people with live polls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation</li> </ul>
<p>Noodletools</p> 	<p>A research tool for students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation</li> </ul>
<p>Newsela</p> 	<p>Up-to-date accessible content that supports learners in the classroom and at home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation</li> </ul>
<p>Mindmup</p> 	<p>Mind mapping tool to create, share and publish mind maps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Preparing</li> </ul>
<p>Preceden</p> 	<p>A timeline maker to support making a plan for action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Preparing</li> </ul>
<p>Prezi</p> 	<p>Presentation software that uses motion, zoom, and spatial relationships to bring ideas to life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>



<p>Pear Deck</p> 	<p>Live slides presentation tool that works with Google Slides or PowerPoint presentations and allows students to see the slides on their own devices, to solicit feedback and do formative checks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoped for outcomes</li> <li>• Investigation</li> </ul>
<p>Flipgrid</p> 	<p>Website that allows teachers to create "grids" to facilitate video discussions. Each grid acts like a message board where teachers pose questions called "topics," and their students can post video responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Self-Assessment</li> </ul>
<p>Powtoon</p> 	<p>Cloud-based animation software to create animated presentations and animated explainer videos</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>
<p>Canva</p> 	<p>Creation of flyers, newsletters and other methods of communicating information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>
<p>Anchor</p> 	<p>Creation, distribution and hosting podcasts for free</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action</li> <li>• Reflection</li> </ul>
<p>Animoto</p> 	<p>Free classroom tool for educators, students and administrators to create and share videos, with no software download required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>

<p>WeVideo</p> 	<p>Offers users advanced, Hollywood-caliber features including green screen, picture-in-picture, motion titles, audio editing and support for unlimited tracks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>
<p>Book Creator</p> 	<p>Students can create a digital book of their own design and content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action</li> </ul>
<p>Story Jumper</p> 	<p>Website that offers students the chance to write, create and publish their own stories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action</li> </ul>
<p>Storyboard That</p> 	<p>Develop plot diagrams, graphic novels, character maps, timelines, etc. Create customized worksheets, quizzes, story cubes, and more with drag-and-drop interface</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and preparation</li> <li>• Action</li> </ul>
<p>Easel.ly</p> 	<p>Turn data into infographics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>

2. *Communication area*

Regarding the communication area, during eSL it is important to schedule either an on-site meeting or a video-call with the community partner to get to know each other and understand the problems to be addressed in the project. In addition, for effective eSL, forming student groups within a course can encourage communication and interaction. Each group could have a student as a leader who guides the work and serve as a key contact person with the community partner. Additionally, groups can provide a peer

review mechanism, with studies have highlighted how frequent peer review of each other's projects plays a significant role in the success of projects (Lazar & Preece, 1999).

In eSL maintaining active and constructive communication is key. The instructors must remain actively engaged from the beginning to the end of the project, giving continuous feedback and offering space for reflection. As mentioned by Waldner et al. (2012): “though professors in a traditional SL environment must also remain engaged, Tabor (2007) notes that students need even more feedback for online components of a course since they lack the immediate response of a classroom environment. Establishing clear channels of communication between professor and students is critical to prevent disengagement and confusion”.

### 3. *Pedagogical area*

Pedagogy is essential, and so technological mediation needs to be subordinated to pedagogical purposes and interests. The important is not the “mediation” between interfaces, but the “connection” among people. This is the essential fact: eSL projects deal with people and not only with tech or devices; they connect people and not only computer terminals or connection points. We can say that in eSL we have “virtualized” SL by taking advantage of the contribution of these different modalities as international and global SL projects. In this way we can cross borders (international SL), foster a reflection on global problems (global SL) and also facilitate a solidarity experience through technology, where learning and service can be done completely in cyberspace, so we can speak of “ubiquitous SL” because learning and service can be free of temporal and geographical limitations, introducing an humanistic based approach favoring solidarity and social vision of technology.

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## A. Going virtual: redesign of SL projects for a virtual environment

Many universities were forced to move classes online. In some cases, SL courses were postponed or canceled (especially if they were elective courses), and in most cases they had to be delivered 100% online, coherently with the definition of Waldner et al. (2010) of *Extreme e-Service-Learning* (Xe-SL) introduced in chapter 3. This required students and teachers to get familiar with video-conference tools to be used to deliver and attend classes. As SL modules/courses/classes require partnership with community or public sector organizations, they also had to get familiar with those tools that had to meet partner organizations, and organize with them service activities, as well as to engage students with their service in the community.

**TIP #1** Before using digital platforms start with what you already got. If you communicate usually by email, or if you are using WhatsApp, keep using those tools to communicate with community organizations, or consider them as alternatives if more sophisticated tools such as Zoom do not work.

**TIP #2** Synchronous activities should be integrated with asynchronous ones. Live online meetings/events should be scheduled when needed and kept shorter compared to face-to-face meeting. Consider assigning tasks and questions and meet online to discuss the work done between the meetings. This may work well for community partners working with students (service implementation), and for university-community partnership when they have to revise or restructure service projects (service design). Guidance from academic staff through the process of service design, may include explicit training on how to use digital tools, as community organizations may learn how to use e-tools with students by practicing them with university staff during the design of the service.

**TIP#3** When it come to the videoconference tools, consider needs, familiarity, simplicity (and numbers). Do you need break-out rooms or plenary meetings are enough? Do you need fancy wallpapers or is it enough to have a plain document, where people can share their ideas? Do all users have to register to use the tool, or can they access as guest of a specific host? Maybe partners are already familiar with one tool, and it would make their life easier to use it instead of a new one, even if the new one is quite simple. If you have to organize a meeting with four people and you want to see each other you could use WhatsApp video call, but if it they are 40 other tools have to be used. Consider also that many tools were made available for free due to the pandemic (see [COVID-19: Ultimate Guide to Free Video Conferencing & Collaboration](#))

**TIP#4** Rely on experts and use video-tutorials. There are many websites that compare the different tools that may help making a choice. Consider that an expert can be also a friend of yours who knows how to use a tool and may be willing to help. Videos can also help (see [video tutorial to use Zoom](#)). Video tutorials and online guidance are also useful when it comes to netiquette and online meeting fatigue.

To be effective from a learning perspective, SL courses need to be as interactive as possible in order to contribute to the development of a sense of community that is necessary for successful learning outcomes as well as wellbeing (Rovai, 2002; Prati et al., 2018). Interactive reflective group activities may serve for that purpose, individual reflective journals and regular interactive reflective activities could be offered, using apps that work as “paper for the screen” (i.e. [padlet.com](#), [mural.co](#)). Given that reflection tools and activities have to be shared online, shared repositories and workspaces that allow to store multimedia journals that combine text, audio, video and still images are useful, as they can provide a comprehensive and vivid overview of the service experience with opportunities for reflection.



Getting familiar with technologies that allow to meet, share ideas, collect documentation and reflect material is an essential step to move SL online, as is revising the service project to make sure that it still meets and contributes to the expected learning outcomes and goals. To this aim we need to understand if the service can go online as it is or if it must be revised, adapted or replaced. For example, if the service consists of offering homework assistance in an afterschool program, it may be easy for the organization involved to move it online and having university students participating. However, this may be more complicated if online homework assistance has to be provided to kids with certain learning disabilities, where the respective organization may prefer not to have university students involved. There is no one size fits all solution on this issue: decisions on the way service can be adapted to an online environment experience are local and context based.

**TIP#1** Spend some time to understand if your community partner is still available/willing to partner. Academic staff should have a clear and honest conversation in order to understand if having university students is still perceived as an opportunity or, given the new/different situation it is perceived as a burden, an extra load of work. Some organizations went on staff reduction due to COVID-19 and may find supporting students a difficult task; other organizations stopped their activities or had to revise them significantly and may find hard to allocate students in their new reality. If the organization is reluctant and prefers/needs to have a break, be sympathetic and reassure it about your understanding of the situation and your willingness to re-start collaboration when possible.

**TIP#2** Explore with the organization if there are some direct SL activities that can be done by students despite the pandemic, i.e. helplines or phone support. In this case make sure to devote enough time for training and allow sufficient opportunities to get advice from organization members; it may be better to start doing activities a little bit later but building enough confidence with the activities and the tasks, as students will work in most cases from their home. Involve always a group of students (at least two), in order to create opportunities for peer support. Consider also that the pandemic could add/modify the kind of request to any helplines, and so students should be prepared to deal with that.

**TIP#3** Explore with the organization if it is/was necessary to change how it provides services and consider the challenges the organization is facing. In which way could students help the organization deal with those challenges, without compromising safety and being compliant with university regulations during the pandemic, that in many cases require students to stay at home? Discuss with the organization if it has considered the opportunity to engage students into online indirect SL. It may be the case that the organization wants to improve online communication, using social media or revising their website. Students could make significant contributions in this sense, by building communication campaigns, including educational material or information-sharing digital tools and deliverables for the organization. Students and academics can also help the organization to think “outside the box”, considering the pandemic as an opportunity to devote time to those activities that are usually postponed or have never been put in place as there was not enough time. Students could prepare workshops/webinars that could be offered to the organization members, or to organization users, or to reach/enlarge the target of the organization.

**TIP#4** Consider also to engage students in community-based research during their SL. Conducting background research or gathering best practices can be a great service for the community organization. Students can contribute to identify research questions, to define research instruments as well as data collection and analysis, and can prepare reports using digital formats and infographics that may be very effective from the community side.

**TIP#5** Be open to the contribution and the ideas coming from students, in particular when it comes to approaches to communication and research. Students can be very creative, and as such open new ways of communication for the community organization.

*An example from Alina S. Rusu, Romania, Coordinator of Babes-Bolyai University team in the Erasmus + SLIHE project.*

For nearly ten years, I am involved in the coordination of a SL project. The Day of Human-Animal Interaction (in collaboration with the School of Veterinary Medicine in Cluj-Napoca, Romania), involving first year Psychology students, in connection to Animal Psychology class. Usually, students become engaged in direct activities with NGOs in the area of animal protection, animal-assisted therapy and wildlife conservation. However, this year, the event which was supposed to take place in June was organized online, in a form of a campaign promoting the responsible ownership and prevention of cruelty towards animals.

*An example from Cinzia Albanesi, Italy, Coordinator of University of Bologna team in the Erasmus + Rural 3.0 project.*

For the Service-Learning and Community Engagement Lab Course offered to University of Bologna students within the framework of transversal competences (3ECTS) we started a collaboration with WeWorld GVC Onlus. Students were involved into a project aimed at contrasting racism. One of them, collected life stories of young people with a migrant background. Those stories were used for the development of a comic strip against racism that can be found on Instagram using the hashtag #Migracomics.

## B. Redesign of SL projects for adapting them to COVID/post-COVID needs

The community partner may want/need to redesign their SL projects to adapt them to the COVID/post-COVID needs. In some cases, they may have noticed new needs in the community they want to deal with, or they may have the feeling that “something” has changed, and they want to adjust their activity, maintaining their main mission.

Involving students in community-based research SL could be a good option as collecting data they could contribute to:

- clarify the magnitude of the need
- understand who else is working on that need (this could be important in order to learn from others, or to establish new collaboration)
- define service or activities that can be implemented in post-pandemic, involving volunteers or if students have permission to work in the community, the students themselves.

*An example from Irene Culcasi, Italy, PhD Student at LUMSA University and member of the research group of EASLHE*

For the SL transversal competences Course (3ECTS) offered to LUMSA University students we started a collaboration with ELIS non-profit Centre. The students were involved in a project aimed at supporting social and occupational reintegration of young minors in conflict with the law. Psychology students have tutored minors, connecting online with them once a week to develop a relationship based on trust, listening to support them in their successful reintegration into society. Every 15 days students met with LUMSA professors and a psychologist from the ELIS Centre to reflect on their experiences.

45

**TIP #1** Data collection could include different sources and types of data: it is recommended that community stakeholders (including local authorities, i.e. municipalities) are involved as key informants, as they may have developed a significant knowledge of their community, and have defined priorities that SL projects could contribute to.

**TIP #2** Students could help the organization to design SL projects for future students as they know what students could do, which competences they can bring to the project, and what could motivate and engage them.

**TIP #3** Community organizations could also need more resources to deal with post pandemic needs. SL projects could also become fundraising projects: also, in this case students could contribute in many ways, designing crowdfunding campaigns, using online challenges.

### C. Design of SL projects directly related to needs linked to COVID-19

A good step in this direction could be to engage in conversation with community organizations and local and health authorities to understand how the pandemic has impacted their organization and the clients/community that they serve. This would be relevant to define priorities, regarding the kind of SL that is needed (and allowed, depending on the pandemic phase).

It could be also a good option to discuss with faculty and university students about ways they could engage during the pandemic or contribute to social and economic recovery in the post-pandemic period. Universities can launch social hackathons, to elaborate ideas that could be translated into SL projects.

*An example from Irene Culcasi, Italy, PhD Student at LUMSA University and member of the research group of EASLHE*

During the pandemic a group of psychology students decided to create a survey to evaluate the psychological consequences of COVID-19. Analyzing the data, they found that the majority of people had sleep disorders. They started a collaboration with ASSIREM – a non-profit scientific association that promotes sleep education – making short videos to help people manage their sleep. They also involved BIOPILLS – a blog dedicated to scientific research topics – to spread information about this sleeping. The project took the name of: “SLEEP AND COVID: LET’S GET OUR DREAMS BACK” and we can consider it as a research-based SL in an Extreme eSL mode because both service and learning occurred online.

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## Chapter 5 Converting volunteering actions into Service-Learning

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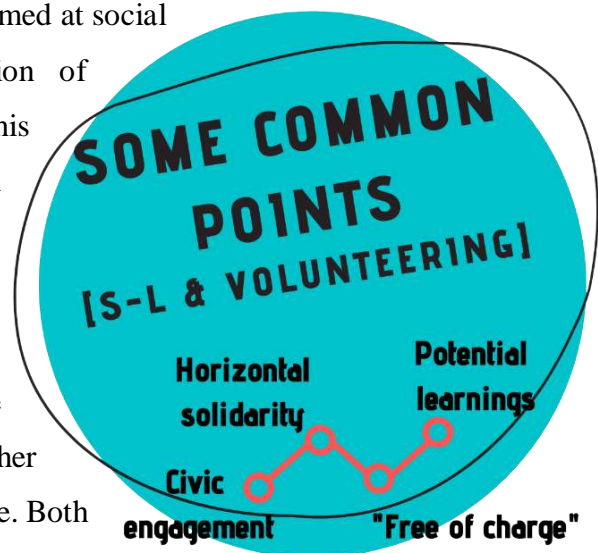


## A. Similarities between volunteering and Service-Learning

SL and volunteering are two concepts that are sometimes confused in everyday use. Without a doubt they have overlapping characteristics that can lead us to use them interchangeably and as synonyms, although they are not. We can often find personnel in the same project linked through volunteering actions and others who are part of it through a SL proposal. We will start with some of these similarities:

Both SL and volunteering can be carried out in potential scenarios to develop “citizenship competence” (European Union, 2019). What does this mean? If both types of proposals are minimally significant for the people involved, regardless of the topic they address, they will contribute to the training of the ability to engage effectively with others in common or public interest, supporting the sustainable development of society. This involves critical thinking, integrated problem-solving skills, skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities, as well as in decision-making at local and national as well as international levels. This also involves the ability to access, have a critical understanding of, and interact with, both traditional and new forms of media, recognizing the role and functions of media in democratic societies (European Union, 2019, p. 12). These skills can be cultivated during volunteering as well as during SL, as both are nourished by approaches aimed at social

transformation based on the construction of horizontal solidarity relationships. This entails establishing relationships “from subject to subject” and “from community to community”, and SL can generate spaces for meetings and opportunities for mutual recognition (CLAYSS, 2018). The horizontal relationships imply another common point: the “free of charge” principle. Both volunteering and SL entail a personal and collective dedication of time and effort without receiving financial compensation in exchange. Instead, other types of valuable exchanges occur, including significant learning, mutual support, increased personal networks and feelings of satisfaction and vitality.



Volunteering and SL projects are generally considered beneficial for the people and institutions involved (Bowen et al., 2009; National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, 2015). Reflection on the notion of "benefit" and its role in the civil or solidarity economy, or the 'economy of third sector' has generated a debate and interesting developments, where service has been considered as a method to generate an encounter with the other, and to know and understand the others in their needs and styles of life (Zamagni, 2008; Sandel, 2013; Felber, 2015).

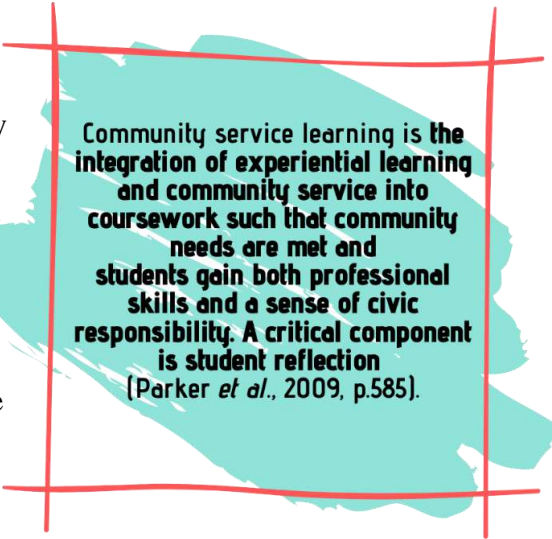
## B. Differences between volunteering and Service-Learning

Despite the common ground, we should not use both terms as synonyms: the pedagogical intention, and everything that goes with it, is key to differentiate between the two types of actions, as we will see in this section.

In the case of SL, the division between community service and learning is overcome since pedagogical intentions are fused with solidarity. In other words, these are educational projects with social utility (Batlle, 2011). In this sense, volunteer projects are proposals for social utility in which learning may take place, but this pedagogical component does not emerge as the main purpose of the action and, therefore, it is not usually planned or evaluated either.

Consequently, and as an example, the scope of a Citizenship Competence approach will be more feasible in SL projects, given that the learning in practice is one of their main purposes.

SL projects incorporate learning objectives which depend on the curricular time and place they occupy. The inherently pedagogical requirements of SL imply incorporation into the educational curriculum with the resulting need for planning of various elements, including objectives, methodology, content and evaluation. As such, the curricular elements that are to be inserted in the project have to be renegotiated and carried out in a participatory manner by all the people involved.



**Community service learning is the integration of experiential learning and community service into coursework such that community needs are met and students gain both professional skills and a sense of civic responsibility. A critical component is student reflection**  
(Parker *et al.*, 2009, p.585).

### C. Key points to transform volunteering into Service-Learning

We could start by asking ourselves why voluntary entities might be interested in a SL approach and, consequently, in the connection with educational centers through this type of projects. Batlle (2011) gives some clues in this regard, suggesting the following:

- because students, from the school or institute, are able to offer a valuable and necessary service to the volunteer entity;
- because even the training of students in the values and the cause of the organization can to be an end in itself;
- because participating in such a project can encourage students to commit as volunteers of the organization when are old enough for it;
- because a SL project can bring greater social visibility to the organization and its cause;
- because a SL project can, in addition, help to obtain material resources, economic or greater institutional support because it promotes social transformation with a participatory approach, showing that everyone can be an active citizen capable of contributing to society and not only passive recipients of services and social resources.



If we were also interested in turning volunteer actions into SL, we would have to look, consequently, at the essential differences between both types of proposal (see previous section) and work on them.

In this sense, following the international consensus on the central features that define SL (CLAYSS, 2016), we could say that this approach shares with volunteering the objectives of responding to real and felt needs of a community. If we want to develop a SL project we have to make sure that we also fulfill the other two central features: the process must be carried out by the students (including planning, development and evaluation), and the project must be integrated into the academic curriculum, and include the development of generic skills linked to ethical learning and civic engagement.

Important questions to consider include:

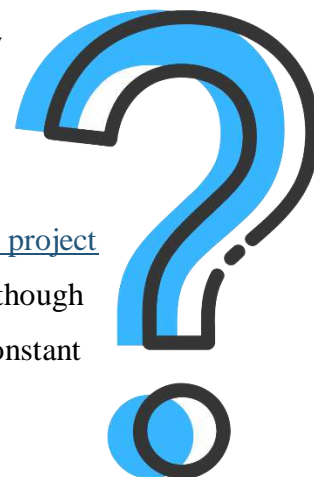
- In which curricular areas or what type of skills do I want to introduce the project?

For example, SL can be located in external practices, final degree or master thesis, other subjects or in a transversal and interdisciplinary way such as teaching innovation projects or work groups on a defined topic.

- How are we going to ensure pedagogical support throughout the project process? This support can be carried out by the teaching team – although not exclusively – and must ensure moments, spaces and tools for constant communication, reflection and evaluation.

- What are we going to evaluate? Volunteering projects usually assess the impact of the proposal in terms of the improvement sought, as well as the satisfaction of those who have participated, while SL presents greater complexity in the evaluation (Ruiz-Corbella & García-Gutiérrez, 2019), so it is important to consider a series of questions:

- ✓ **WHEN to evaluate:** constantly, being able to “materialize” the evaluative flow through various “pulse taking” tools that include initial, procedural, formative and summative, without forgetting that the evaluative process should not be understood as something linear but as a journey that interacts



with the social life where it occurs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to the particularities that may arise.

- ✓ **WHAT to evaluate:** several aspects can be evaluated, including the student learning, the impact on the community, the development of the project itself, and the institutional capacity to respond to a detected need and/or to systematize SL projects as a habitual practice.
- ✓ **WHO should evaluate:** it helps to have a facilitator who understands evaluation as a process where responsibility and power are shared and distributed, so that the evaluation is not conceived as an element of control, but rather as a reflection of SL.
- ✓ **HOW to evaluate:** it is useful to consider a methodological diversity so that the evaluation can be adapted to particular projects. Combinations of techniques such as reflective diaries, debates, video analysis, conflict resolution activities, surveys, dilemmas and multi lemmas analysis can all provide useful alternatives (Folgeuiras, 2017; Ruiz-Corbella & García-Gutiérrez, 2019)
- How will we encourage motivation and participation throughout the whole process? This is a key issue, since a duly distributed participation will favor the “virtuous circle” implicit in SL projects, *“since academic learning improves the quality of the service offered; the service demands better comprehensive training, stimulates the acquisition or production of new knowledge to adequately resolve the detected need, and everything results in greater citizenship commitment”* (Tapia, 2007, cit. in CLAYSS, 2018, p. 29).

We should remember that SL is an educational practice, and as such, a critical element will be the reflection of students on what they are doing and what is happening. This reflection must take place in constant communication and dialogue with all the people involved in the project about what everyone is doing together, as critical thinking *“discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them – thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation,*

rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved” (Freire, 1970/2017, p. 65).

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# e-Service-Learning

