# IMPACT OF SERVICE LEARNING METHODOLOGY ON CHILEAN UNDERGRADUATE EFL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM STUDENTS.

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#### Abstract

Although research has been done on the effects of Service-Learning in nursing, medical and engineering students, there is very little information about the effects that this methodology has on English pedagogy students. The present study conducted over two semesters attempted to identify the effects that this methodology had on EFL pedagogy undergraduate Chilean students. The participants were seventy English pedagogy students and one hundred and fifty community members. The needs of the community as well as the English level were identified with a needs analysis and diagnostic test. Reflection logs were used to identify the effects of the methodology on students while a satisfaction survey was used to identify the impact the methodology had on the community members. The analysis of the logs revealed that undergraduate students became aware of the importance of identifying the community's needs, having clear objectives, preparing material and activities before designing a course and teaching a class. This methodology showed to have a positive effect on the teacher training students when referring to their professionalization and application of theory. For the community the results were positive but further research is needed to identify the full impact in the community members.

Keywords: Teacher training, service learning, EFL.

Impact of Service Learning methodology on Chilean undergraduate EFL teacher training program students.

#### Introduction

The challenge that many Chilean universities have today is to train professionals who not only have high academic standards but also a deep and clear social purpose. Today's world demands professionals who can understand, apply content and theories using tools that allow them to solve problems in complex scenarios. This means that universities must have expert teachers who can train and help develop students' competencies, allowing them to use these competencies or skills in a responsible manner considering the current social reality. Therefore, the training of professionals must include instances where the students can improve different skills developing knowledge in the most significate possible way while learning how to make effective decisions in the different areas of their professional field. It is important to remember that Universities have the responsibility to shape citizens who will exercise their professions for the service of society.

In this complex scenario, the Service Learning methodology is presented as a tool which allows higher education institutions to respond to social as well as academic needs. Service Learning provides greater and better learning for the students since it creates a direct contact with reality through identifying and solving community problems, thus creating a unique instance to develop students' values. In other words, Service Learning is a methodology that offers a solidary service developed by students and intended to cover real community needs. This service has been institutionally planned and integrated in the curriculum to give the students more opportunities for real practice while strengthening the learning process. Service Learning is the fusion of the institutional commitment of students'

community service, the academic contents and the of a curricular activity and the teacher guidance.

While Chilean universities have community reaching programs and/or charity work, these activities are not related to the core of the students 'curriculum. So many students graduate without ever experiencing community service. Unlike other academic projects and solidarity educational experiences, Service Learning has a double intention and impact: in pedagogy and in society. The social impact is seen in the measurable influence and sustainability in the communities' quality of life, while the pedagogic impact is seen in the improvement of academic learning through the internalization of disciplinary learning by putting into practice such knowledge. This modality combines the academic curriculum and community service, giving the participants the opportunity to be accompanied and guided by professionals, experts in their subjects, while they do their community work.

Service Learning activities seem to have a high resonance in schools and universities since they focus on students' integral development offering an innovative methodology which helps to develop a culture of solidarity while promoting the well-being of all participants. For teacher training programs, Service learning provides a platform to implement content and concepts in real situations, where the students can develop not also curricular proficiencies but also the necessary competences to be better human beings while being under the guidance of professors and experts.

Although we can identify this modality as a methodology that helps us raise social awareness, we must ask ourselves: What is the real impact this methodology has on English pedagogy students? What is the impact this methodology has on the community when applied by English pedagogy students? We believe that the use of this methodology will allow English pedagogy students to develop a social sense, respect for the community and a spirit of solidarity while improving the exercise of their profession.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

Before reviewing the relevance and effects this methodology has had on other investigations, first, it is important to define what Learning Service methodology is. Learning-Service methodology is a way of learning where the apprentices play a much more active role in determining the learning objectives due to the strong self-organization and self-planning element this methodology involves.

For an activity to be considered as Service-Learning, it must be conducted fundamentally by students and must respond to a real community need. The activity's planning must improve the learning process and satisfy a real social need of a community or communities. In its simplest definition, Service-Learning is an activity of the students attached to a curricular activity which result is to offer a concrete, permanent and efficient service to a problematic issue identified by the students; thus, generating a bi-directional relationship between the community and students or educational centers.

Studies at higher education institutions in Latin America indicate that Service

Learning is a valuable orientation for the professional teachers in their initial training phase.

These studies also indicate that Service-Learning activities bring the possibility to offer practice, so students can become better professionals allowing them to rethink the teaching activity that, in addition to being complex, is ethical, ideological and political (Tapia M, 2016). In 2006, the researchers Palomer, Humeres, Sanchez, Gonzales and Contreras concluded that the use of Service Learning methodology and reflections can foster the development of values in undergraduate students in the science field. Then, the question we must ask ourselves is if this conclusion only applies to medical area students or we can generalize it to other higher education careers.

In the case of the teaching profession, this methodology makes students more conscious that their career is a profession at the service of others which takes into consideration and accommodating the academic, personal and social necessities, concerns, wishes of the community in which they serve. Coladarci (1992), indicates that the design and implementation of Service Learning projects and experiences make future teachers get involved with the analysis of real needs, the decision making and the design of proposals to try to improve or transform these needs, while creating an autonomous, reflexive and critical professional who can improve the image the community has of the teaching profession.

#### The Current Research

Recent studies and investigations indicate that Service Learning methodology encourages the acquisition of conceptual knowledge, develops skills, attitude and social values in higher education students. This is evidenced in Jenkins and Sheehey's investigation (as sited in Contreras, M., Jouannet C., Salas, M., 2013) which suggests that Service Learning increases the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge thus encouraging social compromise in students. The researchers Groh, Stallwood and Daniels (sited in Contreras, M., Jouannet C., Salas, M., 2013) also share the idea that this methodology develops values such as social justice. They also suggest that by using Service Learning, other skills such as leadership, can be developed. Other researchers state that Service-Learning experiences impact the students' perceptions as providers of change thus creating professionals with civic compromise and a vison of community service (Cooper, Cripps and Reisman, 2013).

In summary, Service-Learning methodology does not only encourage a social, political and civic life in students but also it helps develop the necessary professional skills required for the XXI century. This investigation seeks to identify if Service-Learning methodology

fosters the development and internalization of social values in English pedagogy students and which values are developed.

## **Objectives**

## Main Objective

To identify the impact Service-Learning methodology has on English pedagogy students and community partners (neighboring communities) in the Metropolitan region, Chile.

## Specific objectives

*Specific objective*  $N^{\circ}1$ :

To elaborate and put into practice English programs attuned to the real needs of each community.

Specific objective  $N^{\circ}$  2

To identify changes in the socio-cultural perception, and the professional and solidary development of English pedagogy students.

To determine social changes in community partners.

*Objective N°3:* 

To guide, assist and monitor the work of students, creating real instances for modeling professional practices and professional support.

#### Method

The participants, the means used to measure the objectives and the procedure followed by the participants are described hereunder.

#### **Participants**

The participants were divided in two categories; The UCSH English pedagogy students and the community partners.

#### **UCSH Students**

During the first semester of 2016, a sample of 35 sophomore, junior and senior undergraduate students participated in the study. In the second semester, 35 sophomore, junior and senior undergraduate students enrolled. 12 students participated in both courses.

The participants' ages ranged between 20 and 38 years old and they had to have taken at least 2 grammar courses and 3 English language courses.

## **Community Partners**

The community partners who voluntarily participated in this project during the first semester were 5 coffee shops, a technical training school and 2 high schools. In the second semester, 3 more community partners were added to the project. These were a Cultural Center, an elementary school belonging to the "Strengthening Public Education" program and a municipal high school. During the second semester, 3 of the 5 coffee shops dropped out of the project due to an increase in clients and a lack of staff. The total number of people who participated as community partners was 93 people with ages ranging between 13 and 35 years old. These people have been categorized as at high social risk because of their low income and immigrant status.

#### **Material**

To measure if the objectives were achieved, 5 evaluation tools were created. The first three tools were used as part of the diagnosis process to determine the community partners' needs. The other two instruments were used to identify the effects of the methodology in all the participants.

## **Needs Analysis**

To determine the needs of the communities that participated, three types of diagnoses were conducted. The first one was a survey to determine the communities' needs or "Needs Analysis" These surveys were elaborated and applied by the undergraduate students of the Curriculum Design course. The surveys attempted to identify if the community wanted to learn English because of work, school or travel. For examples of these surveys, see annex 1.

The second survey determined the communities' English level using an English placement test, elaborated by the teacher in charge of the curricular activity, using as reference the Common European Frame Reference (CEFR). For the placement test, see annex 2.

The third survey identified the type of students that would attend each class and each community, using as reference the Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory. For this diagnosis, surveys created by Chislett and Chapman (2005-6) and "ITc Publications" were used. The results were analyzed by the English pedagogy undergraduate students.

#### Instruments for the identification of effects of Service-Learning methodology

To measure the Service-Learning methodology effects on the participants, two instruments were elaborated and applied. One, a reflection log, evaluated the experience of the English pedagogy student and the other, Satisfaction Survey, evaluated the community partners 'experience.

## **Reflection logs for the students**

The reflections journals had a log format with questions that guided the student towards focusing in specific areas, such as a) positive actions of the classes, b) negative actions of the classes, c) situations or factors that can be changed immediately and d) situations and factors that cannot be modified. To see an example of the reflection log, see annex 3.

# Satisfaction surveys for the community partners.

To measure the negative and/or positive experiences of the programs created by the undergraduate students, a survey was elaborated which had 12 affirmations and a scale of appreciation with numbers ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 was very unsatisfied and 5 was very satisfied.

The criteria evaluated in the survey were:

- 1. Previously given information by the university was clear and precise.
- 2. The organization of the course content was coherent with the needs established.
- 3. The expectations of the course were met.
- 4. The course's program provided knowledge and communicative competences.
- 5. The activity/ies of the course were clear and fun.
- 6. The activity/ies of the course were appropriate to the topics addressed in each session.
- 7. The teacher dominated the content of the classes.
- 8. The teacher used an adequate and clear language through the development of the classes.
- 9. The teacher established an adequate learning environment.
- 10. Regarding the schedule, classes started and ended on time.
- 11. The place where the course took place was comfortable.
- 12. The course given by the university was interesting and relevant for my job.

To see an example of the satisfaction survey, see annex 4.

#### **Procedure**

#### **Procedure first semester 2016**

During the first Service-Learning methodology course "Curriculum Design", the English Pedagogy undergraduate students created their own "needs analysis". The students checked and discussed the validity and effectiveness of at least 5 "needs analysis" before elaborating their own instruments. The surveys were reviewed by the teacher before being applied to the community partners.

Once the application stage was finished, the students analyzed the information gathered in the surveys and presented the results to their peers. The next stage was to apply an English placement test to determine the level of English the community partners had. Once the results of the placement tests were analyzed, these were included in the elaboration of the programs. The third stage was the recognition of the program's objectives and the identification of the objectives that each unit would have. Once this stage was completed, the students presented their programs to the communities and began their classes. Some of these classes were observed by university professors to give appropriate feedback and work on the weakness that were observed on the students. Last but not least, the students were also asked to complete the reflection logs after 3 or 4 sessions with the community partners, and at the end of the first semester, the social partners were asked to complete the satisfaction survey. A total of 70 logs were handed in the first semester.

#### Procure second semester 2016

In the second Service Learning methodology course "Material Design", the new English Pedagogy undergraduate students reviewed the diagnosis tests that identified the needs of the communities, the results of the English placement and the programs elaborated during the first semester. After a month of theory classes, the students applied the MI surveys to verify the type of students and their learning method. The results of the surveys were analyzed, and the undergraduate students begun to adjust the programs to match the community partners' needs and learning style when needed. Once this stage was completed, the students resumed classes with the community partners using the material developed under the guidance of the course instructor. Some of these classes were observed by the university

professors to give appropriate feedback and work on the weakness that were observed on the students as well as the material created. Undergraduate students were asked to complete the reflection logs after 3 or 4 sessions with the community partners, and at the end of the second semester, the social partners were asked to complete the satisfaction survey. A total of 70 logs were handed in the second semester.

#### **Results**

## Reflection logs for the students.

A total of 140 reflection logs written by the English pedagogy undergraduate students were collected in the span of one year. The data were examined looking for repetitive answers in areas related to relevant practices of teachers, factors affecting the teaching learning process, teachers being agents of change in society. The review of these reflection logs, indicated that for the undergraduate participants being able to develop an instrument that helped them identify the real needs and types of learning styles of the community partners was relevant because it gave them the opportunity to elaborate a program with significate content and contextualized activities. The reflections also indicated that undergraduate students did not feel comfortable explaining grammar content and had issues with the time associated to activities. Another aspect that must be pointed out was that undergraduate students still perceived that their activities were not ludic enough making them teachercentered and grammar based. Finally, it is important to mention that most undergraduate expressed satisfaction with the community partners' reception. Nevertheless, some undergraduates expressed that some community partners were not motivated to participate and dropped out of the course. Undergraduate participants also commented that the time factor to carry out the activities, low attendance and inadequate places to give classes were other variables that had a negative impact in the sessions and learning process.

These reflections allowed undergraduate teacher training students to understand the importance of knowing what type of student they have in a classroom and what to expect from activities or classes. The English pedagogy undergraduate students were also able to appreciate the importance of having clear objectives, prepare classes, material and activities before giving a class. To see a summary of answers, see annex 5.

#### **Satisfaction survey for partners**

The analysis of the community partners' satisfaction survey results showed that 50% of the partners agreed that the content organization was coherent with the previously established needs, 66% of partners indicated that the expectations they had of the course were met, while 17% indicated that these were not met. 72% of the partners indicated the programs contributed to their knowledge and communicative competences in English and that the course's activities were clear and fun. 66% agreed that the course's activities were appropriate to the topics addressed in each session, while 11% of the community partners indicated the teachers did not dominate the content of the class. For a graph of the answers, see annex 6.

## **Discussion**

The results of the reflection logs and the satisfaction surveys for the first semester and second semester 2016, indicate that Service Learning methodology in the English pedagogy teacher training program has been satisfactory and has met the academic and social expectations established at the beginning of each term. The analysis of the results seems to indicate that over the course of a year, students of these program became more socially aware, respectful of the different social and ethnic groups in the communities, improved their professional practices while enhancing the work opportunities of the community partners.

In summary, the educational innovation offered by this model contributes the following main benefits:

- 1. It allows students to have more instances of practice in real life situations.
- 2. It gives students the possibility to develop professional competences.
- 3. It creates a collaborative learning environment.
- 4. It creates a bond with neighboring communities.
- 5. It involves the student in the process of identifying a problem, elaborating a solution and applying it.
- 6. It creates a culture of solidarity.

This investigation leads us to the reflection of the importance of collaborative work between the universities and the community partners, where the relationship between both parts helps create better prepared teachers, with appropriate tools for the reality of each country or region. Being able to be part and being inside the community in an active role, and not only as observants, helps us identify the most appropriate strategies, methodologies and material for learning a second language, as well as recognize effective practices in classroom management.

Another conclusion that we have been able to identify from the reflections of our students is that by establishing practicum workshops with methodology professors and classroom assistants, feedback can be given immediately solving problems or answering doubts that appear during classes, minimizing practices that have little effectiveness or are inappropriate for the context.

The use of Service Learning methodology has been a great opportunity to integrate investigation to the teaching career and generate working spaces with the communities that surround us. This methodology allows us to be more human by helping the community

change their lives and showing English pedagogy undergraduate students that an English teacher can, too, change the world.

#### **Limitations and Future Directions**

The methodology proposed with this model of intervention has allowed us to push forward new ways of working in initial teacher training programs by establishing a direct and multidirectional relationship between the theory of the teaching practice, the application of theoretical concepts and the real needs of both, the neighboring communities and teachers in training. At the beginning of the study, the English pedagogy undergraduate students had a different idea of what the real job of the teacher was, its different roles and possibilities to be agents of change who can generate social transformation. Discovering that by listening to the communities, understanding what they need, creating an adequate product for their needs and ways of learning allowed them to internalize that they can make a change in the lives of others, transforming them into not only agents of change but also solidary citizens compromised with the social well-being.

Even though we have been able to demonstrate that this methodology has a positive impact in English pedagogy undergraduate students, it would be interesting to identify:

- If this effect is maintained in time and these future teachers, at the moment of graduation, implement this methodology in some of their classes or work.
- The effects of this methodology in millennials.
- The effects of this methodology on community partners and their families.
- The inclusion of TICs in this methodology.

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# Annex 1

# **NEEDS ANALYSIS**

I Pers	onal information
Name:	
Age:	
Addres	<u>ss:</u>
Occupa	ation:
Hereun	der, there will be a series of 8 questions based on your own opinions and experiences,
therefor	re no answer will be considered as correct or incorrect.
	ork with an X the alternative that you consider is the most appropriate according to pinion and complete the questions. More than one can be marked as your option.
1-	What is your opinion about acquiring a second language, for example English?
	a) Necessary
	b) Useful
	c) Unnecessary
1	d) I don't care
2-	Would you like to learn English?
	a) Si
	b) No
	Reasons:
	Do you feel it would be important for you to learn English?  a) Si  b) No
	Reasons:

4-	Do you think it's important to lean English for your job?
	a) Si
	b) No
	Reasons:

- 5- What do you expect from this course?
  - a) Speak in English
  - b) Read and understand English
  - c) Listen and understand English
  - d) Write in English
- 6- According to your knowledge, what do you think it's your level of English?
  - a) Advanced
  - b) Intermediate
  - c) Basic
  - d) I don't know any English
- 7- What type of classes would you like to have?
  - a) Theory (how the language works)
  - b) Practice 8using the language)
  - c) Both
- 8- How many hours can you destine to study and practice English?
  - a) Half an hour
  - b) 1 hour
  - c) 2 or more hours

# Annex 2

# Oral test question banks

# Introductory questions

What'	s your name? How do you spell your last name?
0	
What	s your email address?
0	
Did yo	ou learn English at school? How many years did you study?
0	
What	do you want from this English course?
0	
What	do you need to improve?
0	Speaking
0	Listening
0	Writing
0	Reading

# Starter (A1)

Question	Goals	Yes	No
What do you do?	Say where you work		
2 Tell me about your family.	Talk about families		
What do you do in your free time? (Do	Say how you spend your free time		
you play football or any sports?)			
What do you do every day? What time	Talk about daily routines		
do you			
get up / start work?			
Tell me about the company where you	Talk about a place you know		
work.			

# Elementary (A2)

Question	Goals	Yes	No
Tell me about something you can do	Say what you can do (talking about		
well. (Can you swim? Can you cook?)	abilities)		
How often do you attend meetings?	Talk about frequency		
Where do you live? Tell me about your	Talk about homes		
home.			
What are you going to do at the	Talk about future plans		
weekend?			

Have you been to an English-speaking	Talk about trips and past events	
country? Tell me about your visit. (OR	Talk about experiences	
Tell me about an interesting place you	_	
have been to)		

# Pre-intermediate (B1)

Question	Goals	Yes	No
Tell me about something that you did	Describe past events		
with your friends/family recently. Why			
did you enjoy it?			
Tell me about the weather in your	Talk about weather.		
country.	Give opinions		
Which is your favorite season and why			
do you like it?			
Imagine that I am a visitor to your	Give advice and recommendations		
country.			
What advice would you give me?			
Can you tell me about the best car you	Comparative and superlatives		
have? Why is it the best?			
Where is your company? What is it like?	Describe a location using adjectives		

# Intermediate (B1 to B2)

Question	Goals	Yes	No
What types of TV programs do you like?	Talk about preferences		
How do you keep in touch with your	Talk about methods of		
friends and family (by phone/email)?	communication Speculate about the		
How do you think communication might	future		
change in the future?			
Tell me about the last film you saw at the	Give recommendations		
cinema (or the last book you read).	Summarize a text		
Would you recommend it?			
Think about an interesting person you	Describe personalities		
have met. What is he/she like?			
Have you ever been on a journey where	Talk about unexpected travel		
something went wrong? What happened?	situations		
	Talk about something that went		
	wrong		

# **Upper Intermediate (B2)**

Ouestion	Goals	Yes	No
<b>Q</b>	0000		- 10

Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses.		
Can you tell me about a famous landmark/person in your country? What do you know about it/them?	Talk about landmarks where you live Talk about well-known people where you	
What do you use the internet for? Do you think it will ever replace books and newspapers? Why / why not?	Talk about media and the internet Justify your point of view	
If an English person wanted to learn your language, how should they do this and why?	Make and justify recommendations	
Where do you see yourself in five years' time?	Talk about the future (14) Describe personal hopes and expectations	

# Advanced (C1)

Question	Goals	Yes	No
How has the way you learn English	Describing changes and changing		
changed over the years?	experiences		
Do you think life for children today is	Make comparisons and talk about		
easier or harder than it was for your	change		
parents / for you?			
Describe an advert you have seen. How	Talk about advertising and		
effective do you think it is?	marketing		
What image do other people have of your	Speculate about image		
country, its food and its people? Do you			
think it is accurate?			
Are you concerned about climate	Talk about climate changes and		
change?	give support for answers		
What evidence of it is there in your			
country?			

#### Annex 3

Name:	 	 	
Date:	 	 	
Course:			

Read the questions and answer them in full. Pay attention to grammar, cohesion, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and coherence.

- 1. Write something good about your class/lesson/presentation.
  - A. What did you like?
  - B. Why did you like it?
  - C. How did it make you feel?
- 2. Write something you did not like about your class/lesson/presentation.
  - A. What was it?
  - B. Why didn't you like it?
  - C. How did it make you feel?
- 3. Write something you would change and can change for next class/lesson/presentation.
  - A. What will it be?
  - B. How will you make it better/work?
  - C. What do you need today to make it happen?
- 4. What do you need to improve as a future teacher? Why?

# Annex 4

SA	ATISFACTION SURVEY	Y				
Course's name						
Ocupation						
Company's name						
gender	Age					
□ Male						
For the following affirmations, mark with an X the number at the right which you consider most appropriate with your degree of satisfaction.  Considering a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 very satisfied.						
				Scale	1	
<ol> <li>Previously given information by precise.</li> </ol>	y the university was clear and	1	2	3	4	5
2. The organization of the course content was coherent with th needs established.		1	2	3	4	5
3. The expectations of the course v	were achieved.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The course's program provided knowledge and communicative competences.		1	2	3	4	5
5. The activity/ies of the course we	ere clear and fun	1	2	3	4	5
6. The activity/ies of the course were appropriate to the topi addressed in each session.		1	2	3	4	5
7. The teacher dominated the content of the classes.		1	2	3	4	5
8. The teacher used an adequate a the development of the classes.	nd clear language through	1	2	3	4	5
9. The teacher established an adec	quate learning atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Regarding the schedule, the beg were respected.	ginning and end of the course	1	2	3	4	5
11. The place where the course tool	k place was comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
12. The course given by the university was interesting and with high value for my job.		1	2	3	4	5
Explain the previous affirmation	on (N°10):					

At last, what aspects of the teacher's class would you improve? We appreciate your comments:		
	Date:	

Annex 5

Results Chart of the Reflections' Analysis

a) Positive actions of the class	To elaborate an instrument that helped us			
	To elaborate an instrument that helped us			
	identify the real needs of the partners.			
	The partners waited for the classes with			
	enthusiasm, completed the activities, and			
	participated actively.			
	They made a great effort to accomplish what			
	we asked them to do.			
) Negative actions of the class	Sometimes the activities were boring to the			
	partners.			
	They didn't always understand the			
	grammatical explanations.			
Situations or factors that can be changed	To improve my vocabulary because I didn't			
n an immediate way.	always know what they were asking.			
	To improve the time associated to the			
	activities. We didn't have enough time to do			
	everything that was planned.			
	The classes were too short.			
) Situations or factors that can't be	The place wasn't always appropriate.			
hanged.	The low assistance of the partners to the			
	classes.			
Situations or factors that can be changed an immediate way.  Situations or factors that can't be	partners. They didn't always understand grammatical explanations.  To improve my vocabulary because I dialways know what they were asking. To improve the time associated to activities. We didn't have enough time to everything that was planned. The classes were too short.  The place wasn't always appropriate. The low assistance of the partners to			

Annex 6

Answer Graph of the Satisfaction Survey of the Community Partners

