

Social Justice in the Preparation of English Language Teachers¹

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Abstract

The neoliberal system in Chile has caused socio-educational inequities which have been evidenced by the poor academic results of public school students in national and international standardized tests in Math, Language, Science, and English. These inequities and academic results call for preparing teachers to help diminish disparities in the educational system. Nonetheless, the focus of preparing teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Chile has been on developing pedagogical-disciplinary knowledge, leaving aside other areas that can contribute to fight these educational inequities. This article reports on the results of a mixed-method study aimed at investigating how a service-learning project helped future EFL teachers understand social justice after teaching children in vulnerable communities. Specifically, this study explored the influence of the project on their understanding of social justice, and the activities that helped them understand this construct. Thirty-nine pre-service teachers enrolled in a language teaching methodology course at a Chilean university participated answering pre- and post- surveys, focus groups, and evaluating activities. The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers broadened their understanding of social justice by providing definitions that included key concepts of this construct, without receiving explicit instruction; highly valued activities that consisted of being immersed in the communities and working with children to learn about social justice; and did not associate social justice with traditional activities done in a language teaching methodology course. This service-learning project had a positive impact on the participants' understanding of social justice, and provided insights into how to improve the curriculum of EFL teacher education programs.

Resumen

El sistema neoliberal en Chile ha causado inequidades socioeducativas evidenciadas en bajos resultados académicos de estudiantes de escuelas públicas en pruebas estandarizadas nacionales e internacionales en matemáticas, lenguaje, ciencias e inglés. Este problema requiere preparar maestros que ayuden a disminuir las inequidades en el sistema educativo. Sin embargo, el enfoque en la preparación de profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en Chile ha sido desarrollar conocimiento pedagógico-disciplinar, dejando de lado otras áreas que contribuyen a combatir estas inequidades. El propósito de este artículo es informar los resultados de un estudio de metodología mixta que investigó cómo un proyecto de aprendizaje-servicio ayudó a futuros maestros de EFL a comprender lo que es justicia social después de enseñar a niños en comunidades vulnerables. Específicamente, el estudio exploró cómo este proyecto influyó en la comprensión de lo que es justicia social, y qué actividades ayudaron a comprender este constructo. Treinta y nueve futuros maestros inscritos en un curso de Didáctica para EFL en una universidad chilena participaron en encuestas previas y posteriores, grupos focales y evaluación de actividades. Los hallazgos revelaron que los futuros maestros: ampliaron su comprensión sobre justicia social proporcionando definiciones que incluían conceptos claves de este constructo, sin recibir enseñanza explícita; dieron alta valoración a las actividades de estar inmersos trabajando en las comunidades con niños para aprender sobre justicia social; y no asociaron justicia social con actividades que tradicionalmente se realizan en cursos de didáctica. Este proyecto tuvo un impacto positivo en la comprensión de lo que es justicia social y ofrece ideas para mejorar el currículo en la formación inicial en EFL.

Introduction

Chile is a country which has developed social inequities and disparities due to its economic and educational neoliberal system (Sleeter et al., 2016; Yilorm & Acosta, 2016). This system has caused social conflicts, hostility and discomfort among the Chilean population (Aranda, 2011), making it one of the most socially unequal systems in the world (Yilorm & Acosta, 2016). The disparities fostered by the educational system have increased the socio-economic divide, and have profoundly impacted students' learning (Cabalin, 2012). The results of standardized tests⁵ have shown that students from low income families have six times more chances of getting poor results than those from higher income families (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2015, 2019; Libertad y Desarrollo, 2018). These results unveil the academic gap in education, which can be attributed at least partially to economic disparities.

One of the educational areas where these disparities are evident is in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). A report by the British Council (2015) on the teaching of EFL in Chile described the

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⁵ These tests are the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Sistema para la Medición de la Calidad de la Educación [Measurement system of the education quality] (SIMCE) examination.

differences between public, subsidized and private schools. Students from public schools officially start taking English lessons in fifth grade, have three to four hours of classroom learning a week, and are in classes of 38 to 45 students. In contrast, students in subsidized⁶ or private schools start learning English in Kindergarten, and are part of intensive or partial immersion programs. Moreover, public-school teachers have less instructional and technological resources as well as more classes to teach than their peers in subsidized and private schools. The report has made it clear that in Chile, “inequality in education remains a source of public discord. This factor remains one of the major barriers to nationwide English language learning” (p. 9). Thus, there is an urgent need in Chile to address this inequity through the preparation of teachers committed to social justice in their everyday practice (Peña-Sandoval & Montecinos, 2016).

Instilling social justice in Chilean teachers becomes a system-wide responsibility that pertains to governments and universities that set the foundations to prepare new teachers. In this case, teacher education programs (TEPs) take on a crucial role as they set the pedagogical and disciplinary foundations of future teachers. In the field of English language teaching (ELT), TEPs need to prepare language teachers who are able to promote acceptance of diversity and social justice (Hastings & Jacob, 2016; Peercy et al., 2017). However, educating and advocating for social justice has not been actively approached by general TEPs (Sleeter et al., 2016; Venegas, 2013) nor by those that prepare future EFL teachers in Chile. In fact, most Chilean EFL TEPs have overlooked these ideas, focusing primarily on developing communicative competence and disciplinary knowledge (Abrahams & Farías, 2010; Barahona, 2016; British Council, 2015). We argue that focusing just on this type of competence and knowledge impedes TEPs to work on social topics, such as social justice, inequity, and diversity, which should be addressed across the implementation of EFL TEP’s curricula. Thus, the challenge of these programs lies in how to prepare teachers to instruct in the conventions of the language while engaging students in becoming aware of societal structures that perpetuate social injustices, and to provide them with tools to use with their future students.

Social justice in TEPs can be achieved through a service-learning methodology (Cuban & Anderson, 2007). Service-learning has shown that immersing pre-service teachers in communities and diverse contexts outside schools have a great influence on changing their beliefs in relation to diversity and equity, as well as developing their understanding of social justice (Cuban & Anderson, 2007; Winterbottom et al., 2013). The benefits of combining service-learning and social justice encouraged us to implement a curricular innovation consisting of piloting a service-learning project. In this article, we report the results of a mixed method study that explored how this service-learning project helped future EFL teachers understand social justice in a language teaching methodology course. The research questions guiding the study are:

1. *What is the influence of a service-learning project on EFL pre-service teachers’ understanding of social justice?*
2. *What activities can help EFL pre-service teachers understand social justice in a language teaching methodology course?*

Social Justice in Education

Social justice in education “seeks to address institutionalized as well as individualized power differentials, with the goal of promoting teachers’ recognition and ownership of their roles as social activists” (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, pp. 32-33). It also generates conditions that allow students to exercise their civil rights and promote new leadership to strengthen societies (Picower, 2012). Social justice in education evidences how economical-political power, and social-class privileges cause structural inequity as well as ways to foster equity for everybody through social and political actions (Picower, 2012). Although there is no clear consensus about what social justice in education entails (Carlisle et al., 2006; Sleeter et al., 2016), we chose the following authors to enlighten the concept of social justice within the context of education. Glynn et al., (2014) make reference to Nieto who develops four components of social justice education:

1. *It challenges, confronts, and disrupts misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on social and human differences.*
2. *It provides all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential, including both material and emotional resources.*
3. *It draws on the talents and strengths that students bring to their education.*
4. *It creates a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and agency for social change.* (pp. 1-2)

⁶ Schools owned by a private party, but which receive public and private funding.

Ayres et al. (2009) claim that social justice in education follows three key principles: equity as the principle of fairness, activism as the principle of agency, and social literacy as the principle of relevance. Carlisle et al. (2006) contend that social justice can bring people together regardless of their socio-cultural, race, religion, political, or gender differences with the aim of encouraging social action to reduce inequity in a community. They provide five principles of social justice education in schools: inclusion and equity, high expectations, reciprocal community relations, system-wide approach, and direct social justice education and intervention.

Based on the previous authors, we understand that social justice in education promotes inclusion and equity. It helps individuals develop their full potential considering their needs, interests, inborn capacities, funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2006), and the various types of capital regardless of their backgrounds. Social justice also seeks to develop social responsibility, agency and empowerment in every individual to positively influence their communities. All the aforementioned should be addressed by schools, TEPs, and every stakeholder involved in education.

TEPs that work with a social justice approach prepare teachers to educate people no matter their differences (Zeichner, 2009) and be reflective critical subjects. A teacher who participates in a social justice curriculum during their TEPs is more likely to promote values (Carlisle et al., 2006), and help solve the needs of people living in increasingly diverse populations (Sleeter et al., 2016; Zeichner, 2009). Teacher education programs, regardless of their subject matter, can address structural inequities (McDonald & Zeichner, 2008), and advocate for children and youth (Sleeter, 2009). Thus, the benefits of a social justice curriculum are myriad and appropriate for the Chilean context.

Sleeter et al. (2016) discussed the inclusion of social justice in Chilean TEPs. They state the following four dimensions pre-service teachers need to be equipped with in order to promote social justice in their future teaching practices:

- *situating families and communities within an analysis of structural inequities*
- *developing relationships of reciprocity with students, families, and communities*
- *teaching to high academic expectations by building on students' culture, language, experience, and identity*
- *creating and teaching an inclusive curriculum that integrates marginalized perspectives and explicitly addresses issues of equity and power. (p. 176)*

The first dimension requires TEPs to guide teachers to understand how social, economic, and power relations have systematically restricted the possibilities that students and families have to thrive. This would allow future teachers to achieve a wider scope of the problems that affect their students, instead of recurring to blaming them or their families for personal failures. The second dimension is about teachers understanding the values that students and families bring to schools. TEPs need to teach their future teachers how to develop personal relations with students, families and communities, instead of just having professional interactions. The third dimension requires TEPs to teach future teachers to engage their students in their learning process by showing them how to respect students' backgrounds and identities, and consider who they are to achieve higher cognitive and academic performance. The last dimension refers to developing democratic activism. TEPs need to teach their future teachers to understand and challenge social oppression to create a learning environment appropriate to foster freedom of thinking and action.

In this context, the purpose of preparing teachers for social justice in Chile is to promote social transformations by responding to the educational needs of our diverse student population to reduce inequities and injustices. Teachers that follow these precepts will be better equipped with competences which develop authentic connections with the culture, needs, and interests of the students, families, and the communities where they teach (Peña-Sandoval & Montecinos, 2016). Consequently, teachers will be able to evaluate practices that foster injustices and implement strategies to make classrooms places where all students are treated fairly.

Regarding the teaching of EFL in Chile, Abrahams and Farías (2010) explain that EFL TEPs have:

an important role in improving our societies with teachers endowed with a clear role as social actors and intercultural agents of change. The power of language in the construction and struggle against such social evils as discrimination, injustice and domination should be untapped as a means to social transformation. (p. 111)

These authors make evident that holding EFL TEPs accountable for preparing pre-service teachers who acknowledge the role of language as a social practice will contribute towards social change in Chile.

Service-learning Methodology

Service-learning is a methodology that involves connecting a course with a field experience in a community (Furco & Billig, 2002). This methodology is rooted in reciprocal learning, i.e., there is a bidirectional benefit from the service offered (Sigmon, 1979). The students participating in the field experience learn from the community, and the members from this community learn from the students. Bringle and Hatcher (1995) illustrate this point as follows:

Course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (p. 112)

In other words, service-learning is integrated into the curriculum to facilitate learning and allow students to reflect on and put the skills and competences learned in their courses into practice while applying their socially responsible role in community projects.

In Chile, a few universities have incorporated service-learning as a methodological tool in some programs (Berríos et al., 2012; Briede & Mora, 2016; Jouannet et al., 2013; Jouannet et al., 2015). Jouannet et al. (2013) explain that service-learning in Chile can help integrally address three dimensions in the formation of new professionals: a) situated academic (students learn more and better by having direct contact with the reality in which they will work), b) quality of service and a real contribution to solution of particular problems of a community, and c) the possibility to create a space to develop values in the students.

In TEPs, service-learning can be a tool for pre-service teachers to have direct contact with the reality that surrounds them, as well as to provide them with enriched learning experiences and opportunities to solve problems that affect communities. Pre-service teachers can develop empathy and sympathy towards others as they help, share their knowledge, and learn from the community by creating reciprocal relationships of trust (Al Barwani et al., 2013; Winterbottom et al., 2013). In specific, service-learning can be integrated to practicums, an area which has received great importance in education (Boyd et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Zeichner, 2010). By integrating service learning in practicums, pre-service teachers can also learn about and from their students, contextualize their instruction while reflecting on their identities and their social and educational contexts.

In the field of EFL teacher education, nonetheless, there is no research that examines the inclusion of service-learning in practicums through school field experiences. In our literature review, only one study which combined service-learning and EFL teacher preparation was found. Al Barwani et al. (2013) investigated the problems and challenges of implementing service-learning with EFL pre-service teachers in Oman; however, it did not address the impact of this methodology on the pre-service teachers which is one of the goals of our study.

In Chile, incorporating service-learning through school-field experiences is desired to help students grow professionally beyond the development of foreign language. Chilean EFL pre-service teachers have few opportunities to teach in schools throughout their TEP. This does not happen until their professional practicum when they are fully responsible for carrying out all the duties that teachers have in a classroom. These characteristics of Chilean TEPs have limited the options that pre-service teachers have to learn about the communities. They also limit the opportunities that they have to practice teaching in real contexts where diversity and inequity are observable. Including this methodology can become a substantial asset to the area of teacher education in EFL to prepare a teacher who is not only strong in subject-matter knowledge, but who is also a critical, sensible and sensitive individual.

The Study

This investigation employed a descriptive and exploratory mixed-methods design to investigate the pre-service teachers' understanding of social justice after participating in a service-learning project. A mixed method approach allowed a better and deeper understanding of the unit of analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The Service-Learning Project

The purpose of the service-learning project was to examine whether pre-service teachers could understand the meaning of social justice without explicit instruction about this concept. The project was implemented in a language teaching methodology course in a Chilean university. This course prepares future teachers in EFL teaching methods and approaches. Nonetheless, its syllabus does not address the social and political

issues that affect the Chilean society and educational system today. In addition, the course does not allow pre-service teachers to teach in real settings.

The project consisted of offering English workshops to children participating in the program *Nuestra Sala* (Our Classroom), directed by the non-profit organization Techo. *Nuestra Sala* serves children from low income families and different cultural backgrounds who live in vulnerable communities. To implement this project, the pre-service teachers were divided into eight groups of four or five members, and each group was assigned to a different community. The project lasted two months, and included the following nine activities:

1. Participating as a volunteer in Techo. The pre-service teachers worked with Techo volunteers to organize the visits and activities.
2. Teaching children in real contexts. The pre-service teachers visited the communities eight times. On their first visit, they met the children and informed parents about the project. On the second visit, they applied a diagnostic test to discover the children's English proficiency and interests. In the following five visits, the pre-service teachers conducted and video-recorded 60 minute-lessons specifically planned for these children. On the last visit, the pre-service teachers organized a farewell party with the communities.
3. Working collaboratively to teach EFL in the program *Nuestra Sala*. The pre-service teachers took on different roles to design and implement the lesson plans.
4. Designing a thematic unit. Each group designed a five-lesson thematic unit to apply the course content and expose the children to English. The unit was designed using the input from the diagnostic test, and from the national curriculum guidelines.
5. Analyzing the teaching video with the course professor. Each group had a weekly meeting with the professor to receive feedback on their performance and their instructional materials from the video recorded while they were teaching (Activity 2).
6. Revising the thematic unit. Each group had the opportunity to revise their lesson plans after receiving feedback and reflecting on their performance.
7. Writing reflective essays about their experience in the project. Each pre-service teacher had to write group and individual reflection essays at different stages of the project.
8. Participating in online discussions. In the middle of the project, the pre-service teachers shared their opinions about the Chilean educational system and the teaching of EFL in an online forum.
9. Participating in a webinar about the challenges of teaching EFL in Chile. At the end of the project, the pre-service teachers participated in a webinar with one of the researchers to discuss the educational and societal issues in EFL teaching.

Participants

The participants were 39 pre-service teachers (14 male and 25 female) enrolled in the methodology course of an EFL TEP at a university in northern Chile. All of them were Chilean and their ages varied between 21 to 25 years old. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect their anonymity. The information was kept confidential in a secure electronic folder. Their participation was voluntary, and they were asked to sign a consent letter.

Data Collection Techniques

A convenience non-probability sampling technique was used. The data was collected through a pre- and post-survey, focus groups, and evaluation of activities. The survey aimed at discovering the participants' understanding of social justice before and after the project. The survey had a quantitative and a qualitative part (Appendix 1). In the quantitative part, the participants had to agree or disagree with four statements about social justice on a 1-5 Likert scale. In the qualitative part, the participants had to define what they understood about social justice by answering an open-ended question. The survey was created especially for this course, and was validated by three experts in the field of social justice in education. The pre- and post-survey was administered online, and 100% of the 39 participants answered it before and after the project.

The focus group aimed at learning how the pre-service teachers explained the idea of social justice after participating in the project and completing their professional field experiences (Appendix 2). Four focus groups were conducted and a total of 20 participants attended. The evaluation of activities was directed at discovering the usefulness of the activities conducted throughout the project. This data source had a quantitative and a qualitative part. In the quantitative part, the participants had to rank the usefulness of nine activities on a Likert scale from 1-9 (1 *most useful* and 9 *least useful*) to learn about social justice. In

the qualitative part, the participants answered two open-ended questions to justify their preferences. This evaluation was administered online with a 100% response rate.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the pre- and post-survey was analyzed with t tests using the software SPSS v.19. The qualitative data of the surveys was analyzed through content analysis (Miles et al., 2014). For this analysis, we read the participants' definitions about social justice to search for key concepts in the texts. After this, we analyzed them and put them into categories accompanied with a sample excerpt and added the frequency of times they appeared in the definitions. The data from the focus group was analyzed through a thematic analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2014). For this process, we first read the transcriptions looking for key ideas in the participants' answers regarding the topic of social justice. Later, we established connections among them to identify the themes that better illustrated the participants' answers.

Finally, the quantitative data from the evaluation of activities was done through descriptive statistics. In particular, we used frequency analysis to identify frequency and percentages of each category. The qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using a similar process to the one described in the focus group, we read the participants' answers and identified the reasons for their choices in relation to their quantitative answers.

Findings and Discussion

In this section we report the findings and discussion of the study. We present this information organized according to each data source and in response to the research questions guiding this study:

1. What is the influence of a service-learning project on EFL pre-service teachers' understanding of social justice?
2. What activities can help EFL pre-service teachers understand social justice in a language teaching methodology course?

Pre- and Post-survey

The results showed statistically significant differences for three out of the four statements (see Table 1).

Statements	Survey	<i>m</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
1. Knowing about social justice makes visible the way certain groups experience privileges and opportunities over others.	Pre	3.72	-2.94	.01
	Post	4.31		
2. Knowing about social justice in education will allow me to impact more students.	Pre	4.41	-1.29	.20
	Post	4.56		
3. Treating everyone the same is the best way to achieve equality in education.	Pre	4.26	2.78	.01
	Post	3.55		
4. Learning about social justice issues in education will help me become a better teacher of English.	Pre	4.21	-2.48	.02
	Post	4.54		

Table 1: Pre- and post-survey analyses

For Statement 1, Knowing about social justice makes visible the way certain groups experience privileges and opportunities over others should be incorporated into all areas of school curricula, a statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-survey ($p = .01$). The scores from the post-survey were higher ($M = 4.31$) than the pre-survey. For Statement 2, Knowing about social justice in education will allow me to impact more students, the results showed no statistical difference ($p = .20$). For Statement 3, Treating everyone the same is the best way to achieve equality in education, the results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-survey ($p = .01$). The pre-survey had a higher score ($M = 4.26$) than the post-survey. Finally, Statement 4, Learning about social justice issues in education will help me become a better teacher of English, the results showed statistically significant differences before and after the project ($p = .02$). The median from the post-survey had a higher score ($M = 4.54$) than the pre-survey.

These results revealed that the project allowed the participants to experience the lack of privileges of vulnerable communities reassuring their initial beliefs from the pre-survey. Similarly, the participants expressed that learning about social justice could help them become better teachers. Curiously, the

participants did not see the impact that knowing about social justice could have on their students. It could be hypothesized that since the participants have little experience teaching, they have had few chances to apply their knowledge of social justice in schools, and thus have not seen either reflected upon the impact it might have on students.

Another idea worth emphasizing is that before the project the participants had a higher degree of agreement to equality being the best way to achieve quality in education. However, at the end of the project, there was an increase in the number of participants that disagreed with Statement 3 (pre-survey $M = 4.26$ and post-survey $M = 3.55$). This finding might reveal that the participants understood that equality is not a term that best defines social justice.

From the qualitative data different categories emerged from the answers to the question: "What does social justice mean to you?". Table 2 shows the categories, samples from the definitions given by the participants, and the frequency of times each category emerged in the pre-survey.

Categories	Definitions	F
Agency	<i>To try and make things right for people in need or people that don't have the opportunities they should have, just because of the color of their skin or economy level. (Sofía)</i>	7
Equality	<i>Everybody as a human being should have the same opportunities related to the human rights. The main goal is the equality. (Matías)</i>	23
Equity	<i>Social justice means not only bringing opportunities, but lowering the social gaps or flattening the ground so everyone is able to participate within society feeling integrated and considered. (Felipe)</i>	2
Inclusiveness	<i>A society where people don't discriminate others. (Valentina)</i>	11

Table 2: Categories, definitions and frequency from pre-survey

Before the project, the participants' understanding of social justice was limited to four categories represented by the concepts of 'agency', 'equality', 'equity', and 'inclusiveness'. The participants seemed to mostly relate 'equality' as the aim of social justice, even though our conceptual framework presents 'equity' as a core element of this construct. 'Inclusiveness' and 'agency' also emerged from their definitions.

The qualitative data from the post-survey in Table 3 includes categories, samples from the definitions given by the students, and the frequency of times that each category emerged.

Categories	Definitions	F
Agency	<i>Social justice for me is about or should be about helping those people whose voices have been muted, and also create strategies to inspire people to make a difference in society. (Tomás)</i>	12
Equality	<i>It means including everyone, because everyone deserves the same chances. (Javiera)</i>	14
Equity	<i>Giving opportunities for all the people, based on how much they need. (Paula)</i>	7
Inclusiveness	<i>It promotes the values and the importance that everybody has the same rights regardless the skin color, status, cultures, customs. (Alan)</i>	10
Social responsibility	<i>It means to care and realize that not everyone lives in peace, so I need to be careful in the way I approach people. (Manuel)</i>	1
Tool for education	<i>As a future teacher, social justice is a tool to provide and promote equal opportunities to the students. Not only in the academic field but also in the teaching good values to the future citizens of our community. (Marcela)</i>	6

Table 3: Categories, definitions and frequency from post-survey

After the project, the participants continued using all the concepts related to social justice from the pre-survey; however, the number of categories increased. 'Inclusiveness' emerged at a similar frequency whereas there were changes in the number of times that 'equality' (pre-survey=23 and post-survey=14), 'equity' (pre-survey=2 and post-survey=7) and 'agency' (pre-survey=7 and post-survey=12) appeared. The data also revealed 'social responsibility' and a 'tool for education' as new categories. It can be discussed that the participants' experience in the project made them see that social justice is more than a political

issue, but rather it can be used as an educational tool that supports the educational process through their agentive social roles as teachers.

After analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data from the pre- and post-survey, it seems that participating in the project helped the participants expand their understanding of social justice and its importance in education. In this context, it is necessary to address the change in the use of the terms such as equity and equality. It may be argued that the participants might have comprehended that equity aims at promoting fairness by providing people what they need to succeed, unlike equality which means to help others in the same way regardless of what their circumstances or needs might be. Furthermore, the overall results from the pre- and post-survey showed a growth in associating social justice with education and a deeper understanding of the elements that account for the social justice construct.

Focus Groups

In the focus groups, the participants were encouraged to develop the idea of social justice while sharing their professional field experiences and their participation in the project. The data revealed three main themes: Definitions of social justice, social justice and educational practices, and social justice at the policy level. One excerpt has been selected to illustrate each theme.

The participants defined social justice through concepts that emerged in the post-survey, such as inclusiveness and equity. The following comment by Tomás includes a definition using inclusiveness,

We must have high expectations of all our students, regardless of their social status or how much English they know or not. We have to provide the opportunities so they can learn the language.

This excerpt illustrates a social inclusiveness approach to the teaching of English regardless of the students' backgrounds. The second excerpt provided by Alex defines social justice using the concept of equity.

In cases related to pedagogy, basically social justice means that we as teachers must teach children with equity, not equality. This more than anything is understanding that not everyone learns the same. So sometimes they say "no, let's just give them all the same thing", but that isn't the way it is. Because what works for a person will not work for the other. So, we as teachers should be aware of this difference between equality and equity.

As can be seen in the last excerpt, the participant was able to differentiate between equity and equality in social justice. Alex and other participants exemplified this difference by stating that teachers have to teach according to their students' needs, and not as if everybody learned the same way.

The participants also reflected on the relationship between social justice and educational practices. These reflections were about social justice in the school and in the classroom, for example, Celeste mentioned:

Social justice is not something that you are going to work just once during a class, if you really want it to be meaningful for the child, he has to be bombarded with it everywhere so he starts to realize that the topic is important, like the environment, like recycling, etc., or any other issue [that requires] social awareness.

The excerpt shows that the participants came to understand that social justice is not a topic that can be dealt within one subject. On the contrary, it should be approached across the school curriculum.

The participants also viewed social justice from a policy level by stating that social justice should be dealt from a top-down curriculum approach. In other words, the government through the Ministry of Education should be responsible for enacting policies that promote social justice in education. This can be seen in the following extract by Hernán:

[Including social justice] is a job for the Ministry of Education or that has to do with the curriculum, right? I think [curricular] plans and programs have to be made to make sure everything is more leveled and balanced.

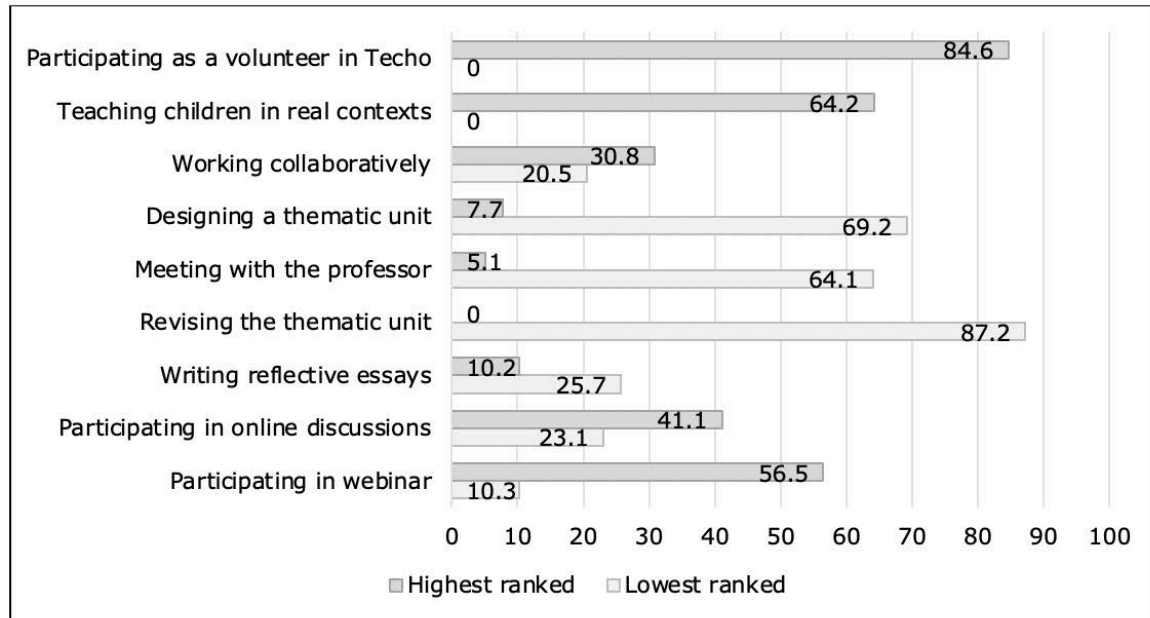
As suggested in the extract, the participants emphasized the role of the government in implementing a national curriculum that is aligned with the principles of social justice.

In summary, after the professional field experiences and participation in the project, the participants were able to reflect upon social justice in depth. The conversations held during the focus groups showed the participants' understanding of social justice through concepts, but also related it to educational practices and policies. The participants used the terms equity and inclusiveness to define social justice, and also differentiated between equity and equality. The data also demonstrated how the pre-service teachers positioned social justice within the educational system, especially in schools. Similarly, the participants extended social justice to a ministerial responsibility in terms of the national curriculum. These findings stress that social justice needs to be addressed by the Ministry of Education and then installed in schools as

a policy. This highlights the fact that a teacher is not able to incorporate social justice into the curriculum on their own.

Evaluation of Activities

The quantitative data obtained from the evaluation of activities showed the activities that the participants selected as the most useful and least useful to learn about social justice. The following graph shows the results of their ranking.



Graph 1: Ranking of activities in percentages

The activities that ranked above 50% were considered in the analysis and discussion because they better represented the participants' priorities and justifications in relation to the qualitative data.

The most useful activities identified by the participants were: Participating as a volunteer in Techo (84.6%), Teaching children in real contexts (64.2%), and Participating in a webinar (56.5%). The following selected excerpts explain the reasons for ranking such activities as the most useful ones. For example, Camila shared that participating as a volunteer in Techo:

was helpful to learn about Social Justice because we apply it when we were there. We did not make the difference among those students regardless of their social status, color skin, or nationality.

Regarding Teaching children in real contexts, two participants, Pablo and Sofía, provided the following opinions about this activity:

The project was the chance to share and taught kids that are excluded by the society just because they live in camps. In this place, we could put into practice the purpose of Social Justice. (Pablo)

We gave to children the opportunities to learn without judging their personal background only looking for enhancing their English skills. (Sofía)

The last highest-ranked activity was Participating in a webinar. Paula manifested that:

The webinar taught me the inequality of education among social classes. How the rich people have more opportunities to succeed than poor people in our society. It made me reflect on my future as teacher and set a purpose to be an effective EFL teacher in any school in order to change the paradigm of only high class receive good education.

The previous excerpts addressed the ideas of inclusiveness, and the right for education no matter the students' social, cultural, and racial backgrounds. Furthermore, the excerpts suggest that these activities could help them be aware that teaching with a social justice approach implies acknowledging that every student can learn and deserve a good education. Likewise, through the webinar, the participants recognized social justice issues related to different opportunities and privileges that exist in society and that affect education.

Contrarily, the least useful activities for the participants were: Revising the thematic unit (87.2%), Designing a thematic unit (69.2%), and Analyzing the teaching video with the course professor (64.1%). The following excerpts report the participants' explanations to justify the ranking assigned to each activity. In the case of Revising the thematic unit, Magda expressed:

While revising my lesson plan and applying feedback is really helpful to improve how I design my English classes. It really had nothing to do with social justice, at all. At least, not in the way that I approached it. There was never an interest in revising it so that I could touch on social justice.

For Designing a thematic unit, Angelina commented:

I think that it was not necessary to design a Thematic Unit in order to learn and teach about social justice. I think that we NEED to learn about it as a part of the program, and not only the teaching program but the pedagogy program in general. Because it is essential for a teacher to know about this.

In relation to the last lowest-ranked activity, Analyzing the teaching video with the professor, Nolan shared that:

Meeting with my professor, it helped me to understand what I need to improve my performance as a teacher, what strategies can I use, how a lesson need to be done. However, we didn't speak about social justice and what I think about it.

The participants associated the lowest-ranked activities with teaching and designing effective lessons but not with social justice, suggesting that these activities only helped them find strategies to improve their teaching. Another relevant idea that emerged from the explanations is that during the sessions devoted to revisions and feedback, the participants never discussed with the professor how these activities could be used to include social justice in their lessons. They explicitly stated that these activities were not necessary to learn about social justice.

These findings suggest that the participants did not realize that planning a lesson can be done through a social justice perspective. By so doing, teachers would incorporate educational and societal issues that affect the diverse student population. Creating appropriate lessons for all students responds to the principles of social justice and service-learning.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to report the results of a mixed methods study aimed at investigating how a service-learning project helped future EFL teachers understand social justice in a language teaching methodology course after teaching children in vulnerable communities. In particular, the study explored the influence of this project on the participants' understanding of social justice, and identified the activities that were most and least useful to comprehend this construct. The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers a) broadened their understanding of social justice by providing definitions that included key concepts of this construct, without receiving explicit instruction; b) highly valued activities that consisted of being immersed in the communities and working with children to learn about social justice; and c) did not associate social justice with traditional activities done in a language teaching methodology course.

This study concludes that the project positively influenced the EFL pre-service teachers on helping them understand social justice without receiving explicit instruction. In particular, the findings showed that the pre-service teachers broadened their understanding of social justice by providing definitions that included key concepts from this construct. Moreover, after the project the pre-service teachers referred to social justice using terms such as *equity*, *inclusiveness*, and *agency*, and understood the difference between *equity* and *equality*. In addition, the pre-service teachers also associated social justice with educational matters and policies recognizing it as an educational tool. This work also identified activities that promoted social justice understanding in a language teaching methodology course. The pre-service teachers highly valued the relevance of participating as a volunteer in Techo and working with children in real settings. On the contrary, the pre-service teachers did not relate the traditional activities done in a methodology course, such as lesson planning, with social justice.

This research contributes to the literature about EFL teacher preparation through the lens of social justice and service-learning in Chile. Regarding social justice, the study follows the line of Sleeter's (2016) social justice conceptual framework for TEPs in Chile. With respect to service-learning, the study adds to the work done by Al Barwani et al., (2013) in Oman, describing the benefits that service-learning has on future EFL teachers, and to the work by Berríos et al. (2012), Briede and Mora (2016), Jouannet et al. (2015), and Jouannet et al. (2013) in relation to service-learning as a methodological tool in higher education. Although

these contributions are significant for the literature, there is still much work to be done in the preparation of EFL teachers.

This study has a number of implications. It sheds light on the benefits of collaborating with non-profit organizations that support vulnerable communities. The people in the communities and organizations would benefit from the work of the pre-service teachers as volunteers in their programs. Likewise, pre-service teachers would benefit from being exposed to the problems that the people in these communities face. This would become an enriching experience for pre-service teachers allowing them to learn and reflect upon some of the potential challenges as future teachers. Ultimately, it would result in pre-service teachers being better prepared to perform complex teaching practices. Another implication from this study is that TEPs should take an implicit approach to develop competences that will allow future teachers to incorporate social justice in their teaching (McDonald & Zeichner, 2008; Zeichner, 2009). Preparing pre-service teachers in social justice should be embedded across the curriculum, instead of being part of just one isolated course or the responsibility of a single teacher educator (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2009). This argument urges program leaders to share these findings with teacher educators and embody this vision into the curriculum which will strongly impact teacher preparation.

Even though this project appeared to be successful, some limitations were identified. One limitation was the time available to conduct the project. If the project had lasted the whole semester (four months), the pre-service teachers would have been able to spend more time teaching in the communities, have a deeper understanding of the activities, especially those that were ranked the lowest, and understand how these activities were designed to work with social justice. Another limitation was the number of participants in the study. The participants belonged to a particular cohort and the generalizability of the results to other contexts could be challenged. A step to extend the reach of the study would be to work in collaboration with other TEPs and compare the results.

In our final remarks, EFL TEPs need to account for how the new generations of teachers must be prepared to deal with the challenges of the 21st century and develop competences to successfully carry out the education process in a society that calls for equity. By understanding social justice through service-learning, future EFL teachers will design and implement appropriate lessons to help reduce inequities and change the status quo in Chile.

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Appendix 1

Sample questions of the pre- and post-survey

1. Read each statement. On a scale from 1 to 5, rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Knowing about social justice makes visible the way certain groups experience privileges and opportunities over others.					
2. Knowing about social justice in education will allow me to impact more students.					
3. Treating everyone the same is the best way to achieve equality in education.					
4. Learning about social justice issues in education will help me become a better teacher of English.					

2. In your own words: What does Social Justice mean to you?

Appendix 2

Focus group questions

Pregunta de introducción: ¿Nos podrían contar cómo recuerdan su experiencia en Techo?

Pregunta 1: Luego de su experiencia en Techo, ¿cómo creen ustedes que se puede trabajar en escuelas con altos índices de vulnerabilidad?

Pregunta 2: Luego de haber hecho clases de inglés en comunidades vulnerables, ¿qué impacto creen ustedes tuvo esta experiencia en su formación como profesor de inglés?

Pregunta 3: Luego de haber participado en este proyecto, ¿cómo entienden la justicia social? ¿Ustedes creen que es posible enseñar inglés con un enfoque en justicia social?

Pregunta 4: Después de haber realizado su práctica profesional en enseñanza básica, ¿piensan ustedes que es necesario tomar en cuenta temáticas como la justicia social al momento de planificar la clase?

Pregunta 5: ¿Piensan ustedes que la metodología de aprendizaje por servicio – por ejemplo haber enseñado inglés en Techo – aportó a tu formación como profesor?

Introductory question: Can you tell us about your experience volunteering for Techo?

Question 1: After your experience at Techo, how do you think you can work in schools with high rates of vulnerable students?

Question 2: Having taught English in vulnerable communities, what impact do you think this experience had on your preparation as an EFL teacher?

Question 3: After participating in this project, how do you understand social justice? Do you think it is possible to teach English with a focus on social justice?

Question 4: After completing your professional teaching practice in primary schools, do you think it is necessary to take into account topics such as social justice when planning a lesson?

Question 5: Do you think that the service-learning methodology – for example teaching English in Techo – contributed to your preparation as a teacher?