ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF SERVICE-LEARNING PRACTICES

Mejorando la calidad de las prácticas de aprendizaje-servicio

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SUMMARY: The article presents a tool –a rubric– intended to assess and enhance the educational quality of service-learning (SL) experiences. It starts out from the basic principle that optimum design of pedagogical practice has a direct effect on student learning. Hence the importance of creating methodologies which, like service learning, promote the acquisition of values, skills and knowledge students will find useful in life. The article then suggests a service-learning methodology that responds to these purposes and goes on to show the most significant contributions towards its definition. Some of the most representative proposals for the assessment of service-learning activities that precede the rubric are also included and a description is made of the rubric's construction process through the creation of a research team working on the basis of rational reconstruction methodology. The core of the text is dedicated to presenting the research results: the rubric for self-evaluation of service-learning projects. To do this, the 12 dimensions that comprise the rubric are defined, structured into three categories –basic, pedagogical and organisational– and the levels of complexity that correspond to each dimension described. The article concludes with a brief section containing the results that application of the rubric offers teaching teams and including a spider chart as a graphic expression to enable almost immediate visualisation of the level of development of a service learning activity.

Key words: service learning; educational methodology; values education; assessment; rubric.

RESUMEN: En el artículo se presenta una herramienta –una rúbrica– pensada para evaluar y mejorar la calidad formativa de las experiencias de aprendizaje-servicio (APS). Se parte de la premisa de que el óptimo diseño de las prácticas pedagógicas tiene un efecto directo en la formación del alumnado. De ahí la importancia de dotarse de metodologías que, como el aprendizaje-servicio, favorezcan la adquisición de valores, competencias y conocimientos útiles para la vida de los estudiantes. A continuación, se plantea la metodología del aprendizaje servicio atendiendo a sus finalidades y mostrando las principales aportaciones sobre su definición. Asimismo, se muestran algunas de las propuestas más representativas de evaluación de actividades de aprendizaje-servicio que preceden a la rúbrica. Seguidamente, se describe el proceso de construcción de la rúbrica, que se realizó a partir de la creación de un equipo de investigación que trabajó en base a una metodología de reconstrucción racional. El núcleo del escrito se destina a presentar los resultados de la investigación: la rúbrica de autoevaluación de los proyectos de aprendizaje-servicio. Para ello se definen los doce dinamismos que la componen, estructurados en tres categorías: dinamismos básicos, pedagógicos y organizativos, y se describen los niveles de complejidad correspondientes a cada uno de ellos. El artículo finaliza con un breve apartado destinado a los resultados que la aplicación de la rúbrica ofrece a los equipos educativos y se aporta «el gráfico de la araña» en tanto que expresión plástica que permite visualizar de manera casi inmediata el nivel de desarrollo de una actividad de aprendizaje-servicio.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje servicio; metodología educativa; educación en valores; evaluación; rúbrica.

INTRODUCTION

The identity and quality of an educational institution are defined by its practices. Practices make goals pursued by the teaching teams come alive. The best educational projects can never bear fruit unless they are converted into practices that invite young people to live the values that each centre promotes. Hence the importance inherent in the use of methodologies that advocate the design of practices which are both highly educational and coherent with the aims the institutions pursue; not always a simple goal for teachers to achieve. The tool we present in this article is intended to help them in this task. It has been created with the aim of optimising the pedagogical quality of a methodology which is relevant in the field of citizenship education and values education: service learning.

When we speak of service learning we refer to a pedagogical methodology which combines learning processes and service to the community in one sole, well-structured activity. It takes the form of an educational project designed to help participants learn as they confront real needs of the world that surrounds them and

intervene to bring about an improvement in the situation. In service learning, information is employed to improve some aspect of reality and the service thus becomes an educational experience which provides new knowledge. Learning and service are mutually beneficial: learning helps acquire public-spiritedness and service is transformed into a workshop of values and knowledge[1]. The educational potential of this methodology is a consequence of the goals it pursues and, in particular, of the quality of the dimensions that make it up. It is on this last aspect that we have focused our study. Convinced that the quality of an experience augments its educational possibilities, we have devised an instrument –a rubric– which enables the quality of service-learning experiences to be assessed and enhanced.

Our article is divided into five sections. In the first, service-learning is presented as an educational methodology; the second offers a summary of other resources available for the evaluation of service learning; the third section explains the *rational reconstruction* methodology on which the research was based; the *rubric* is presented in the fourth section, by means of the 11 dimensions from which it is structured; and the article concludes with a short section in which possible uses of the rubric are identified.

1. THE CONCEPT OF SERVICE-LEARNING

1.1. *Service-learning experiences*

The first approach to the central idea of service learning may perhaps be found in John Dewey's *Schools of Tomorrow* (1915). Through pedagogy focused on the relationship between education and life, he highlights three of the key ideas that make up this methodology: first, the principle of learning by doing; second, the service activity which is introduced into the life of the community in response to pressing needs; and finally, the reflection which lends dimension and sense to both the learning and the service. From its very beginnings, service learning was designed as an active, participatory, critical, civic, transformative and hopeful pedagogy. The following are but a few examples.

A secondary school invites its pupils to investigate Alzheimer's and use their knowledge to help in a care home for elderly people affected by the disease, either by preparing appropriate material or organising memory-stimulation workshops. In doing so, the school is providing the senior citizens with help they need and the young people with an interesting applied learning experience which, in addition, enables them to establish bonds of affection with people in their community[2]. A Food Bank sets up a system of collaboration with educational institutions to

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1. Service-Learning Promotion Centre http://www.aprenentatgeservei.org/versions.php?l=18 (Last accessed June 2015).
2. Martín (2016: 13-49).

provide information about some of the many topics related to food and poverty in the fourth world, and asks the young people to help run a neighbourhood food drive or do a day's work in the warehouse, organising boxes of food as they arrive. When it does this, it contributes to raising these youngsters' awareness of a need that is not always visible, while giving them a chance to take part in an action of solidarity with the less fortunate[3]. Or an environmental association offers education centres the opportunity for their girls and boys to adopt a river, wood, spring or other natural space threatened with degradation or destruction. In this way, it creates an activity in which the young people have multiple goals: to understand a nearby environmental problem, to take responsibility in a civic task of conservation and recovery which can subsequently be enjoyed by the entire population and, without doubt, to gain knowledge and learn about subjects related to natural sciences, ecology and urbanism[4]. All of the above are instances of a type of methodology that combines seeking benefit for the community, practical learning experience and character development.

As may be deduced from these examples, service-learning is highly flexible and adaptable. Despite being a methodology with well-defined characteristics, it is also a very open proposal which allows different specifications depending upon the creativity with which the activity is designed and the context in which it is applied.

1.2. *Definitions of service-learning*

This high level of adaptability in diverse settings is probably one of the elements which has prompted the emergence of distinct and complementary definitions that attract watchful yet partial scrutiny of service learning. In each interpretation, priority is given to certain aspects of the methodology while other elements are left in the background or completely ignored.

The following sections present a number of definitions that call attention to the main features of SL and have been useful to us in designing the self-assessment rubric.

Among them, we find definitions that indicate the bringing together of learning and service as the most interesting characteristic of the methodology, placing emphasis on the creation of a real link between the two elements, it being impossible to dissociate one from the other as the activity is unfolding.

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3.   An activity that the Food Bank offers every year to schools and free-time education organizations. https://www.granrecapte.com/es/.
4.   Alcaide, O. *River project: uniting rivers and people*. (In Catalan) Downloaded 15 December 2017. http://www.aprenentatgeservei.org/intra/aps/documents/Olga%20Alcaide%20plantilla.pdf.

> Service learning seeks to engage students in activities that combine both community service and academic learning. Because service learning programs are typically rooted in formal courses, the service activities are usually based on particular curricular concepts that are being taught[5].

Other definitions highlight the complexity of service learning, offering a long list of its most characteristic features. They stress its methodological nature and focus on essential aspects that should be considered in the design and execution of any service-learning activity.

> Service learning is a method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and provides structured time for students or participants to reflect on their service experience[6].

Once again, the methodological nature of service learning is underlined in those definitions that prioritise the opportunity service learning offers young people to develop their personal and civic capabilities through direct action in the environment. The service element is valued as an educational «plus» which allows students to involve themselves in meaningful tasks that demand responsibility.

> Service learning (sl) is a teaching and learning methodology through which young people develop skills by offering service to their communities. A good sl programme enables students to undertake important, responsible tasks in their communities and schools; they take on significant, challenging roles in a variety of scenarios, such as child-care centres, museums, after-school activities, ecological projects, libraries and retirement centres. The activities in these places may include reading to children, supervision of school-age children at leisure facilities, helping with school activities, museum guide, neighbourhood clean-ups or recording oral histories with the elderly[7].

We also find definitions that understand SL as a way of explaining the creation of social bonds and a possibility to build human communities based on compromise, social harmony and relationships. These are definitions that underline the contribution of this methodology to the development and acquisition of values.

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5. Furco (2002: 25).
6. National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/legislation. Last accessed: February 2017.
7. Halsted (1998: 23-24).

> Service learning is a teaching method that combines service to the community with academic instruction to develop critical and reflective thinking, as well as civic responsibility. SL programmes engage students in well-organized community service aimed at alleviating local needs while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility and commitment to the community[8].

Finally, we find proposals that stress the psychopedagogical dimensions that make service learning an educational practice. In these cases, SL is approached from a perspective focused on the mechanisms educators activate as they guide a service-learning activity and in the educational processes the participants undergo.

> Service learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together, with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning[9].

The different ways of seeing the service-learning methodology allow for the progressive construction of a complex methodology capable of adaptation to different contexts and situations. They all provided us with relevant information when it came to designing the self-assessment rubric for service-learning projects.

2. EVALUATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS. PRIOR PROPOSALS

As we mentioned above, it is with a view to optimising the quality of service-learning practices that we have devised the assessment tool that we present below, though we will first make a brief review of the best existing instruments of evaluation of the service-learning methodology. Depending on the purpose of the project, we can structure them into two groups: those that focus on assessing the impact of the projects, and those whose aim is to assess their educational quality.

As regards assessment of the former, several studies highlight the impact service-learning projects represent for students, teachers, the educational institution and the community (Furco, 2005; Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki, 2011). The assessments of learning acquired by the students have the greatest relevance (Furco & Root, 2010). Knowledge acquired from the service learning experiences is deeper and more meaningful than that acquired with other types of methodologies (Keen & Hall, 2008; Robinson & Torres, 2007). Specifically, positive impacts are demonstrated in many areas of the students' development: academic and cognitive; civic; vocational and professional; ethical and moral; personal; and social, with significant findings in the latter two aspects. Furco also points out that in recent years there

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8.   Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges. http://compact.org/. Last accessed: February 2017.
9.   Jacoby (1996: 5.

has been growing interest in how the use of service-learning methodology impacts upon the teachers involved, especially in terms of a significant increase in their motivation and in the adoption of more positive attitudes towards teaching. The value of the institutionalisation of service learning with respect to the goals of the educational institution is also highlighted (Furco, 2002). While many evaluation proposals exist focused on the impact of service-learning projects on students or educational institutions, the bibliography with respect to assessments of the impact of this methodology on the community and social organisations is very limited (Tapia, 2006). In Spain, research into the impact of service-learning projects is still incipient and based essentially at the institutional level, learning acquired during the experience or the satisfaction of the communities involved (Folgueiras, Luna & Puig, 2013).

The criteria and instruments to measure to project quality have essentially been developed in the context of the institutions that promote service learning in their area of activity. These institutions have set out to make tools available with which to assess and guide their proposals for the inclusion of service learning in education centres. Such is the case of the eight quality criteria for the practice of service learning published in 2008 by the *National Youth Leadership Council*, one of the United States' most highly respected promoters of service learning. The eight proposed criteria for a quality service-learning project are: a meaningful service; link to the curriculum; reflection; diversity; youth voice throughout the experience; partnerships; progress monitoring; and duration and intensity[10]. In this same direction, of particular interest are the criteria and indicators in the Federal Programme «Educación Solidaria» of the Argentinian Ministry of Education (Rial, 2010), used in the evaluation of proposals presented for the Presidential Service-Learning Award. Other contributions in the university context include the rubric employed by the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (Casas-Cordero, 2009) for the development and assessment of service-learning projects in the university, and in Spain the excellent work produced by Campo (2015).

This is the background to our decision to create an instrument which will facilitate the self-assessment of service-learning projects as a whole and in any area or stage of education. Our intention is to highlight service learning as a complex methodology in which different educational dimensions converge, and while they may not occur with the same intensity they all end up playing a decisive role in project quality. Each dimension reveals a rich reality, as the number of elements that intervene are many and the interdependencies they establish with each other numerous (Bosch, Climent y Puig, 2009).

10. Los *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice* available at http://nylc.org/standards/. Last accessed on 15/06/2015.

3. Methodology and steps in building a rubric

From a methodological perspective, the construction of our rubric to assess and enhance service-learning activities was based on forming a diverse, experienced research team, and on using strategies of rational reconstruction.

The quality of the research team would be determined by certain conditions, the first being that it should comprise a *plural and numerous group* of people that would guarantee abundant, varied inputs and thus ensure a dynamic, creative project. In all, 11 researchers took part during the course of the process. Construction of a rubric must be supported by contributions from multiple points of view that enrich it to the point of reaching a certain degree of informative saturation. The second quality condition was that, in addition to knowing the subject matter, the researchers *had to be involved in investigations* that would provide them with direct experience of specific aspects of the service-learning activities. The members making up the team that prepared the rubric were engaged in and/or directed research related to various topics linked to service learning[11]. In short, the research team was both plural and highly experienced.

The *rational reconstruction* methodology on which the research was based comprised an empirical moment of systematic review of literature describing significant experiences; another, theoretical moment of analysis of the pedagogical characteristics of service-learning dimensions; and a final reflective moment of cross-referencing empirical and theoretical material to produce each of the sections of the rubric.

In order to find the type of empirical information needed to create the rubric, a *systematic revision* (Sánchez, 2010; Botella & Gambara, 2002) was conducted of literature on service-learning experiences. This provided material which enabled us to establish the various dimensions of service learning, as well as the phases or levels that each dimension covers. To achieve this, relevant sources of literature on service-learning experiences[12] were identified, resulting in the selection of about 50, based on their quality and diversity. The content of these was subjected

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11. Partnership and social inclusion: the *Grundtvig* project; Learning in SL activities: project work; Social organisations and their involvement in SL: the Escola *Amiga* programme; Cooperation in SL activities: cooperation in SL activities in the *Exit Programme*; Reflection and recognition: in the *Reading Friends* programme.

12. On-line national and international banks of experience were used for this task: the Service-Learning Promotion Centre of Catalonia [www.aprenentatgeservei.cat]; Zerbikas [www.zerbikas.es] and the Spanish Service-Learning Network [www.aprendizajeservicio.net] in Spain. In Latin America, the Programa Nacional Educación Solidaria of the Argentinian Ministry of Education [www.me.gov.ar/edusol/] and the CLAYSS, Latin American Center for Service-Learning [www.clayss.org.ar]. And additionally, the websites of the National Youth Leadership Council [www.nylc.org] and the Service-Learning Research and Development Center of the University of California, Berkeley [gse.berkeley.edu/research/slc/index.html].

to qualitative analysis and the information obtained was systemised. Finally, this information was integrated into the construction process of the rubric.

To establish the *theoretical foundation* of this process we sought knowledge in two sources of information: the bibliography on service learning and the bibliography on each of the pedagogical dimensions that comprise the rubric. This information helped define the four progressive levels into which each of the dimensions was divided.

Finally, a process of reflection by the research team complemented the empirical and theoretical information and enabled us to build a rubric which was at the same time descriptive and normative. Data provided by the systematic revision of experiences were cross-referenced with theoretical references to produce a *rational reconstruction* (Habermas, 1985), which was employed to establish the content of each level of the rubric. In both the *rational reconstruction* phase and that of the final *drafting* of the rubric, the team's work consisted mainly in taking decisions, some of which resulted from the intense processes of dialogue and contrasting different possibilities. By way of example we would highlight the decision to split the «service» dimension (by including «significance of the service») and the search for and critical appraisal of concepts that enabled us to label each dimensional level. Another fruit of our constant review of the rubric's structure was inclusion of the organisational dimensions, which were not envisaged in the instrument's initial design.

Based on these methodological conditions, we are now able to explain the phases of the research process leading up to the rubric we present below. In general terms, this process passed through the following stages: preparation, development, drafting, correction and application. It may be observed that in each step a new, different activity is undertaken, which we summarise in the following table.

TABLE 1
Phases of the rubric development process

PHASE	DEFINITION
Preparation	Collect information about the usefulness of rubrics, their construction process, difficulties and current background
Systematic revision	Look for and access banks of experience
	Select significant and varied experiences
	Analyse, systemise and compare the information provided by the experiences considered
Theoretical foundation	Detect and systemise the theoretical information on service-learning methodology
	Detect and systemise the theoretical information on each of the dimensions present in the rubric

PHASE	DEFINITION
Rational reconstruction	Identify and define the dimensions included
	Identify and define the criteria employed to establish the levels of each dimension
	Identify and define the four levels of each dimension
Drafting	Analyse the different ways a rubric can be presented
	Draw up the rubric and the complementary material for its understanding and use
Internal correction	Evaluate the work as a whole in substance and in form and introduce any appropriate modifications
External correction	Ask for a correction of the substance and the form to be undertaken by external experts not involved in the process
Forms of use	Systemise the different ways the rubric may be used and initiate its application and dissemination
Publication	Publish the rubric in the form of an easy guide in two formats (full and summarised versions)

4.   RUBRIC FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS

The rubric for self-assessment and enhancement of service-learning projects[13] is a tool which facilitates an approach to this type of experiences, in any area or stage of education, with three aims in mind. The first of these is to enable the self-assessment of service-learning experiences already in progress, opening up spaces for discussion of their educational characteristics based on the context and conditions in which they are being conducted. In second place, the rubric will assist in the overall or partial optimisation of activities that have been put into practice and which the teaching teams wish to replicate, adapt and improve. And finally, it will encourage the design and implementation of new activities by education centres or social organisations that do not necessarily have a tradition in service learning.

The rubric is organised into different dimensions and levels. The *dimensions* are pedagogical elements which, organised and interrelated, present an overall vision of the service-learning experiences. Twelve dimensions are considered as most significant in the analysis of a project (Puig, 2015), and for the purposes of examining service-learning experiences they have been grouped into three

13.   There is a guide to the rubric which may be downloaded in full from the website of the Service-Learning Promotion Centre of Catalonia [www.aprenentatgeservei.org] in English, Spanish and Catalan.

sections: basic, pedagogical and organisational. In addition, each dimension has different *levels* which indicate the degree of its pedagogical development. Four levels have been established, in which the first refers to the occasional, minimal and non-organised presence of the dimension, with the fourth describing its fullest possible presence or involvement. Each level is considered pedagogically superior to the previous, although it must be made clear that not all experiences need or are able to reach the maximum level in each dimension.

The *basic dimensions* are the core of service-learning experiences, their reason for being: social needs, service, social significance and learning. The *social needs* in service learning represent the starting point of the projects and are situations in which some kind of shortcomings or difficulties exist which, once detected, call for action aimed at their improvement (Orcasitas, 1997). In this context, the *service* is the set of tasks carried out altruistically to produce a good which contributes to alleviating the situation. This is complemented by the *social significance* of the service, which refers to the impact of the activity carried out, with respect to either the social benefit it produces or the civic awareness demonstrated by those performing it. Finally, the *learning* represents the knowledge, competencies, behaviours and values acquired by carrying out the service or being involved in this type of projects (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

The *pedagogical dimensions* address the educational aspects that make up service learning projects: participation, group work, reflection, recognition and assessment. *Participation* is understood here as the direct action carried out by participants in an activity with the intention of contributing, together with other stakeholders, to its design, application and assessment (Hart, 1997; Trilla & Novella, 2011). In the same way, *group work* means the process of peer assistance aimed at the preparation and development of that activity as it is undertaken jointly by all participants (Cerda, 2013; Pujolàs & Lago, 2007). Cutting across all the dimensions, *reflection* becomes a mechanism for the optimisation of learning based on consideration of the experience in order to make sense of it and acquire new knowledge. For its part, the *recognition* dimension consists in actions intended to communicate to the participants in the activity that they have carried it out correctly. Finally, *assessment* highlights the process of monitoring and information-gathering aimed at discovering participants' performance in an activity and thus enabling feedback to be offered which can help them improve (Sanmartí, 2007).

Finally, the *organisational dimensions* address the logistical and institutional aspects that make it possible to conduct service-learning projects: *partnerships*, in other words the consolidation of such projects in educational centres and social organisations. Partnerships ensure collaboration between two or more independent social institutions aimed at the joint performance of an activity (Author, 2009 & Jacoby, 2003). And *consolidation* is the process through which an educational centre or social organisation discovers, pilots, integrates and supports service-learning, turning it from a one-off activity into an institutional proposal.

TABLE 2
Rubric for the self-assessment of service-learning projects

	I	II	III	IV
NEEDS	*Unknown.* The needs are not programmed and no activities are planned to detect or define them, though they are probably present in the project.	*Presented.* The educators and/or social organisations choose the needs the service will address, without consulting participants.	*Decided.* Participants, often together with the educators, decide the needs they wish to address by analysing problematic situations and subsequently selecting of one of them.	*Discovered.* Participants discover the needs by conducting a group research project that involves a critical comprehension of reality.
SERVICE	*Simple.* Short-term service comprising simple tasks whose execution represents limited involvement and demands on participants.	*Continued.* Long-term service comprising repetitive and/or easy-to-learn tasks whose execution requires moderate involvement and demands on participants.	*Complex.* Long-term service which enables experience and skills to be acquired in the execution of tasks of considerable complexity which represent high levels of involvement and demands on participants.	*Creative.* Service of variable duration made up of complex tasks designed by the participants themselves to resolve a problematic situation which requires creativity and, thus, still higher levels of involvement and demands on those participants.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SERVICE	*Incidental.* Service which does not arise out of a detected need and whose possible social dimension is not perceived by participants.	*Necessary.* Service which responds to a community need, though participants do not always perceive its social dimension.	*Civic.* Service which responds to a community need, with participants being aware of its social dimension.	*Transformative.* Participants provide a response to a need and are aware of its social dimension. However, they are also aware of the limitations of any service that fails to consider political action.

	I	II	III	IV
LEARNING	*Spontaneous.* The learning experiences are not programmed and there are no activities planned to facilitate them. They are acquired informally during the service.	*Planned.* The learning experiences are programmed in accordance with the curriculum or educational project and activities are designed to acquire them without necessarily taking into account their relation to the service.	*Useful.* The planned learning experiences and educational activities are closely related to the service. Their acquisition contributes to enhancing the quality of the intervention.	*Innovative.* The learning experiences are acquired on the basis of a research activity, are related to the curriculum or educational project and directly linked to the service to the community.
GROUP WORK	*Undetermined.* Spontaneous processes of assistance among participants who conduct an individual service activity	*Collaborative.* Processes based on the contribution of participants in a group project that requires bringing together different autonomous and independent tasks.	*Cooperative.* Process of interdependent work among participants in a group project which requires the organisation of complementary contributions to achieve a common goal.	*Expansive.* Group work goes beyond the initial number of participants and actively integrates other external agents, thus creating community action networks.
REFLECTION	*Vague.* Active reflection is not anticipated and tasks to promote it are not proposed, though each participant's experience can be considered and discussed spontaneously.	*Occasional.* Reflection is programmed and tasks are planned to facilitate it, though it occupies only a limited amount of time which is separated from the project's established course of activities.	*Continuous.* In addition to times and tasks assigned for reflection, participants conduct reflective exercises throughout the entire project.	*Productive.* In addition to being planned and continuous, reflection involves participants in an activity of synthesis or creation which produces a new benefit to the community.

	I	II	III	IV
RECOGNITION	*Casual*. No recognition activities are planned, though different agents may spontaneously offer their gratitude and appreciation for the tasks undertaken by participants.	*Intended*. The educators organise activities aimed at positively reinforcing participants' work and/or celebrating the conclusion of the service.	*Reciprocal*. Beneficiaries of the service and/or the social organisations, often in conjunction with the educators, carry out initiatives to express their gratitude and celebrate the success of the service.	*Public*. Recognition of the participants acquires a public dimension, either because the activity is made known to the general public or because the local authority publicly expresses its gratitude and highlights the civic value of the service.
ASSESSMENT	*Informal*. No assessment plan is established, though educators may on their own initiative occasionally make an assessment and communicate their findings to participants.	*Intuitive*. To conduct their assessment, educators simply record, with no defined criteria or indicators, the achievement of certain general learning goals which can be accredited.	*Competence-based*. The educators apply an assessment plan which defines goals, criteria, indicators and methodologies to improve and accredit participants' competence development.	*Joint*. Together with the educators, participants actively intervene at different stages in the preparation and application process of a competence assessment plan.
PARTNERSHIP	*Unilateral*. One, sole organisation, usually an educational institution, participates in the project, either because it has direct access to the service space, or because the recipient of the service forms part of that organisation.	*Directed*. At least two organisations participate in the project: the educational institution that plans and executes it, and the social organisation that simply provides the service space.	*Agreed*. At least two organisations –one educational and another social– jointly agree upon the conditions of application of a service-learning project which one of them has exclusively designed.	*Integrated*. The organisations involved in the project jointly design and apply it from its initiation until the end of the process.

	I	II	III	IV
CENTRE CONSOLIDATION	*Incipient.* Service learning is known about because of a project already being carried out by an educator or due to the presentation of an experience undertaken in another centre.	*Accepted.* Service learning projects conducted as the result of a personal initiative are recognised by the centre's management team and backed by the teaching staff.	*Integrated.* Service learning is present in more than one educational level, is linked to the curriculum of various subjects, and has implications in the centre's working methodology and organisation.	*Identity-defining.* Service learning forms part of the centre's culture and its educational project, and the centre presents it as a feature of its identity.
ORGANISATION CONSOLIDATION	*Incipient.* Service learning is known about because the organisation is already participating in an SL experience or due to the presentation of a project undertaken in another centre.	*Accepted.* Service learning projects are recognised by the organisation's management and staff, who accept the organisation's educational role.	*Integrated.* Service learning is present in the organisation's programme of activities, and the organisation has the structure and staff necessary to ensure its implementation.	*Identity-defining.* Service learning forms part of the organisation's ethos and is presented as a characteristic of its identity. The organisation assigns the resources necessary to ensure the implementation of SL projects.

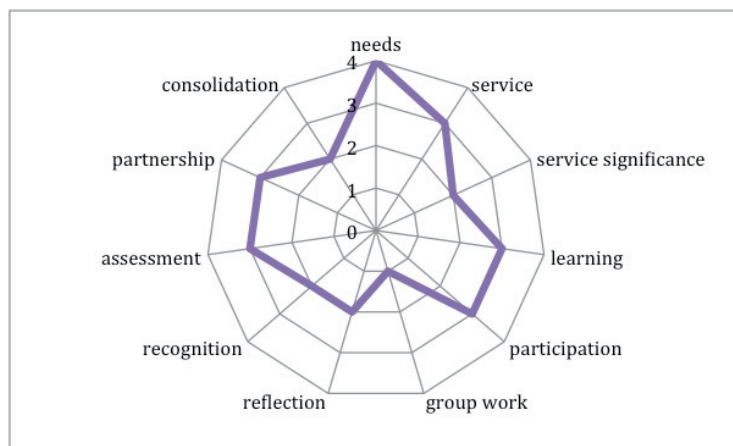5. APPLICATION OF THE RUBRIC AND THE INFORMATION IT PROVIDES

To conclude the presentation of the rubric we would stress that its application by the service-learning teaching team enables them to obtain a precise assessment of the project they are conducting. It paints a clear picture of the educational quality of each experience and thus helps optimise future initiatives through the introduction of modifications or the increased presence of dimensions that have been revealed as weak.

Interestingly, the *reflection* dimension, considered key to the quality of a project, is one of those which frequently appears as least developed in the evaluations made by teaching teams. Something similar occurs with the *assessment* and *recognition* dimensions. In all three cases, *social benefit* is the element that requires the introduction of new proposals, or adaptation of those used in other teaching practices. In this regard, the rubric not only enables the significance of that element in the project in this sense.

Evaluation of a practice is both graphic and cognitive. The service-learning activity is translated graphically into a spider graph which enables visualisation of the area covered by the experience as a whole and the level of development

achieved by each of its dimensions, as well as offering an indication of possible areas of improvement[14]. At the same time, discussions entered into by professionals involved in assessment of the practice will provide them with a detailed, analytical idea of the strengths and weaknesses of their work, as well as the ways in which it can be improved.

TABLE 3

Spider graph that can result from application of the rubric
to a service-learning practice

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