



KATHOLISCHE UNIVERSITÄT  
EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT

**KU** *Impact*

Wissenstransfer, Bildungsinnovation  
und Gesellschaftliche Verantwortung



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# SERVICE LEARNING QUALITY CRITERIA AND EVALUATION - A MEASURING INSTRUMENT

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# Overview

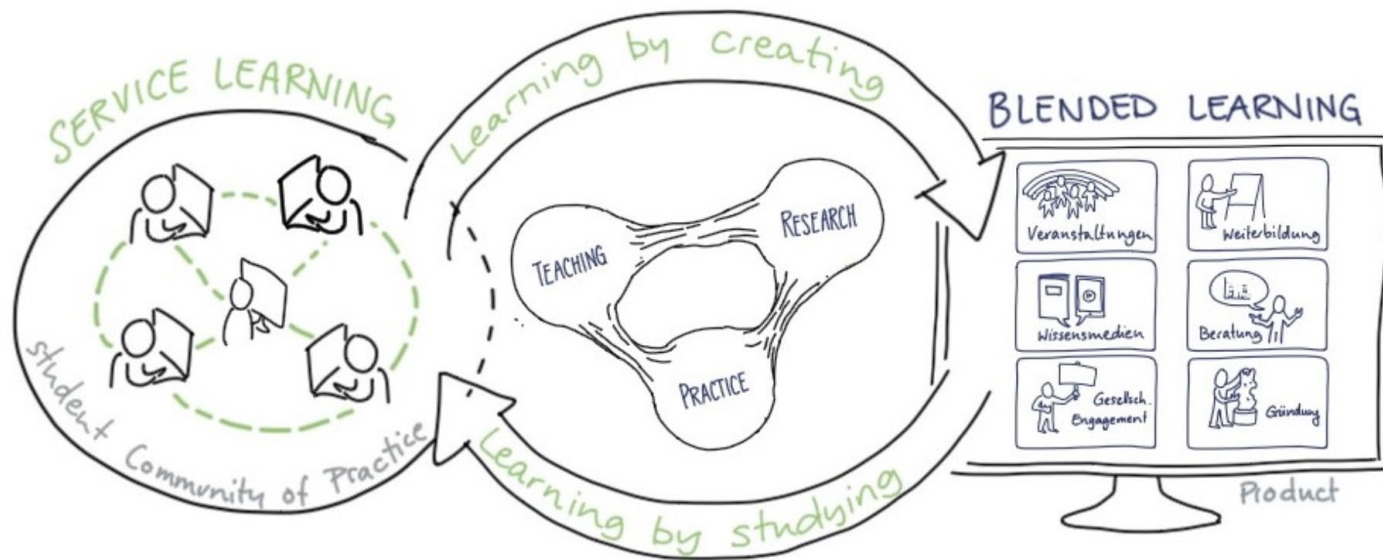
- 1. KU & The University Network on Social Responsibility**
- 2. Methods**
- 3. Results and Discussion**
- 4. Conclusions**

## Service Learning at Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (KU)



**Holistic view on research, teaching & practice:**

- Learning by studying and by creating
- Connection between science, education, economy, politics and civil society (to create social innovation)



Building networks

- University Network on Social Responsibility



Creating structures

- The Department of Educational Innovation and Knowledge Transfer



Strategic anchoring

- The KU Mission Statement for Studies and Teaching

Discursive, interconnected,  
individual & committed education  
with added value

Curricular anchoring

- Studium.Pro

Initiating optimizations

- UNISERVITATE project at KU



**UNISERVITATE**  
Service-learning in Catholic Higher Education



## The University Network on Social Responsibility (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung e.V.)

- **More than 40 universities; established in 2009**
- **Competence and exchange platform for the promotion of civil society engagement of students and higher education institutions**
- **Aim: establish a network of HEIs that want to realise and expand their social responsibility by systematically promoting the civil society engagement of students, teachers, and other members of higher education → linking with educational mission → actively influencing society → contributing to mutual transfer of knowledge**
- **Goal: developing quality criteria as a pedagogical and scientific standard for different forms of service learning projects.**
- **Didactic method of "service learning"**

## The University Network on Social Responsibility (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung e.V.)

- **In 2018, a workshop that facilitated a dialogue between higher education institutions and non-profit organizations, initiated a discussion between representatives of academia and civil society that lasted several months.**
- **Focus: the quality of service-learning (see also Mishal et al., 2021; RMC Research Corporation, 2008; Root & Billig, 2008; Seifert, et al., 2012).**
- **Group came up with ten different criteria which, taken together, provide a frame of reference for the different manifestations of service-learning in the community, without making the definition too restrictive (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung/AG Qualität, 2019).**
- **These quality criteria serve as a basis for future quality development and quality assurance activities in SL.**

## Operationalization for measuring instruments

- **Operationalization of the quality criteria for measuring instruments to evaluate service-learning activities in an online questionnaire for different actors: partner organizations, students, and lecturers:**
  - **brief instruction**
  - **the participants of the survey rate their agreement usually four-point Likert scales (from 1 = „fully applies“, 2 = „rather applies“, 3 = „rather does not apply“ to 4 = „does not apply at all“)**
  - **In addition, participants were able to report „I do not know“.**

Criterion	Description	Operationalization*
<p><b>Societal need</b></p>	<p><b>Projects and measures arise out of real societal problems and challenges and aim to provide the individual, a group or society at large with a specific benefit.</b></p>	<p><b>The project task was based on a concrete need.</b></p> <p><b>As a lecturer, I know the context and the needs of the partner organization.</b></p> <p><b>The work done in the project had an added value for the partner organization</b></p> <p><b>The work done in the project had an added value for the service recipients.</b></p>
<p><b>Defined goals</b></p>	<p><b>All the parties involved define common goals, work together in an effort to achieve them and, finally, assess whether the goals have been achieved.</b></p>	<p><b>The project had clearly defined goals.</b></p> <p><b>The project goals were defined together with the partner organization.</b></p> <p><b>The project goals were defined together with the service recipients.</b></p> <p><b>The project objectives were defined together with the students.</b></p> <p><b>The correlation between service activities and course content was made clear to all project participants.</b></p> <p><b>The goals, expectations, and legal issues of the project were discussed with all project stakeholders.</b></p>



Criterion	Description	Operationalization*
<p><b>Service Learning is part of the study program</b></p>	<p><b>Service Learning is integrated into the degree course in terms of structure and content and is linked to the learning objectives of the degree course.</b></p>	<p><b>There are fixed regulations, agreements or measures for the integration of service learning into teaching at the college/university.</b></p> <p><b>The service learning experience of the students supported the academic content of the course.</b></p> <p><b>The project objectives and associated service activities matched the teaching/learning objectives of the module.</b></p>
<p><b>Skills Acquisition by Students</b></p>	<p><b>In Service Learning, students acquire personal, social, technical and professional skills in connection with the content and didactic structure chosen by the teaching staff and non-profit organisations.</b></p>	<p><b>The service learning experience supports students' engagement with a relevant social issue.</b></p> <p><b>Through the activities in the project, the students were able to gain personal skills.</b></p> <p><b>Through the activities in the project, the students were able to gain social skills.</b></p> <p><b>Through the activities in the project, the students were able to gain technical skills.</b></p> <p><b>Through the activities in the project, the students were able to gain professional skills.</b></p>

\* English translation of the German version of the questionnaire items

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Operationalization*</b>
<b>Learning in foreign environments</b>	<b>Students study and take action outside their own university and study environment.</b>	<b>As part of the project, the students worked outside the university (e.g., at the local partner organization).</b> <b>The project work provided ample opportunity for students to meet with the partner organization.</b> <b>The project work provided ample opportunity for students to meet with service recipients.</b> <b>The students have become involved with a foreign living environment (e.g., people from different ethnic, cultural and/or social backgrounds).</b>

Criterion	Description	Operationalization*
<p><b>Cooperation of the Participants</b></p>	<p><b>All of the parties involved work together to plan, prepare and shape Service Learning.</b></p>	<p><b>The tasks, roles and expectations between students, teachers and partner organizations were clarified before the project began.</b></p> <p><b>In the run-up to and during the project, the work steps were coordinated between the students, teachers and partner organizations.</b></p> <p><b>As a lecturer, I participated in the implementation of the project and contributed my ideas.</b></p> <p><b>Students participated in the project implementation and contributed their ideas.</b></p> <p><b>Partner organizations participated in the project implementation and contributed their ideas.</b></p> <p><b>Service recipients participated in the project implementation and contributed their ideas.</b></p> <p><b>The cooperation with the students was very good.</b></p> <p><b>The collaboration with other lecturers was very good.</b></p> <p><b>The collaboration with partner organizations was very good.</b></p> <p><b>The cooperation with the service recipients was very good.</b></p>

\* English translation of the German version of the questionnaire items

Criterion	Description	Operationalization*
<b>Reflection</b>	<b>The parties involved reflect on their Service Learning experiences with the aid of technical and academic guidance.</b>	<p><b>As part of the service learning experience, students were provided with opportunities, incentives, and space for reflection.</b></p> <p><b>The professional questions, challenges, and solutions in the project were reflected together with the students.</b></p> <p><b>The organizational course of the project was reflected.</b></p> <p><b>If yes, with which parties was the organizational project process reflected? (Multiple answers possible.)<sup>1</sup></b></p>
<b>Student supervision</b>	<b>Students are provided with support and supervision while they are planning and executing Service Learning projects.</b>	<p><b>Students received information prior to the start of the project that prepared them for their service-learning experience.</b></p> <p><b>By whom were the students supported and accompanied during the project work? (Multiple answers possible.)<sup>2</sup></b></p> <p><b>Partner organizations provided access to information and (e.g., human) resources.</b></p> <p><b>Students would have needed more support.</b></p> <p><b>If yes, the support could have been provided through: ...<sup>1</sup></b></p> <p><b>If yes, the support could have been provided how?<sup>3</sup></b></p>

\* English translation of the German version of the questionnaire items

<sup>1</sup> Response options here from 1=with students, 2=with lecturers, 3=with partner organisations, 4=with service recipients

<sup>2</sup> Response options here from 1= Partner organisations, 2= Lecturers to 3= Other (free answer possible)

<sup>3</sup> Free response

Criterion	Description	Operationalization*
<b>Evaluation and quality development</b>	<b>Service Learning projects include evaluation measures, particularly with regard to quality assurance and development.</b>	<p><b>Our college/university evaluates students' projects.</b></p> <p><b>Achieving the objectives, which were defined before the project, was assessed after the end of the project.<sup>1</sup></b></p> <p><b>Students were always able to provide feedback.</b></p> <p><b>Lecturers were always able to provide feedback.</b></p> <p><b>Partner organizations were always able to provide feedback.</b></p> <p><b>Service recipients were always able to provide feedback.</b></p> <p><b>The feedback was discussed together with all project participants.</b></p>
<b>Recognition and appreciation</b>	<b>In Service Learning, the commitment and performance of the parties involved are acknowledged and valued, particularly on completion of Service Learning.</b>	<p><b>The commitment and performance of the students were appropriately acknowledged.</b></p> <p><b>The commitment and performance of partner organizations were appropriately acknowledged.</b></p> <p><b>The commitment and performance of faculty were appropriately acknowledged.</b></p> <p><b>The commitment and performance of service recipients were appropriately acknowledged.</b></p>

\* English translation of the German version of the questionnaire items

<sup>1</sup>Response options here from 1= „yes“ to 2= „no“ and additionally 3= „I do not know“

## Results & Discussion

- **Questionnaires are being used at different universities in Germany.**
- **Statistical analyses are currently in progress.**
- **The analyses of factors and statistical parameters will show the quality of the measurement instruments and lead to further optimizations of the scales.**
- **The goal is to have an economical and useful measurement tool that reflects the aspects of SL as well as possible and that is able to show potential for optimizations.**
- **At our first time in Germany, a validated instrument for the evaluation and further development of SL will be available.**
- **Based on the quality criteria, suitable procedures and instruments were developed to provide service-learning actors with orientation and suggestions for the implementation and evaluation of service-learning projects.**

## Results & Discussion

- **With the partners in the worldwide network of SL, there is also the opportunity to test the use in other languages.**
- **Exchange with the UNISERVITATE partners in Poland and Ukraine is already planned.**
- **Nevertheless, there will be cultural differences that need to be taken into account.**
- **Thus, there are still some big and small steps to be taken towards the implementation of a measurement instrument that allows the evaluation and further development of SL projects in the local context as well as the comparison of SL projects in different locations.**

## Conclusion

- **A first version of a measurement tool for SL projects was presented, which needs to be further downsized by statistical testing.**
- **Extensive potential of the tool: Besides comparisons of different SL projects, existing projects can be further developed and optimized on the basis of the evaluation.**
- **Despite this, there is still some work to be done before the tool is available in other languages.**



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