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INIȚIERE. EVOLUȚIE. EXCELENȚĂ

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**ENGAGE
STUDENTS**

*eService-Learning – Using eLearning to Support
Students' Engagement in Time of Pandemic*

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What is Service-Learning?

- There is no uniform definition for the term Service-Learning, since the precise implementation, objectives, content-related and subject-specific objectives of different institutions are carried out and defined differently;
- Service Learning stands out as a teaching and learning approach that connects theory and practice by allowing students to participate in a service that meets community needs and to reflect on the experience in class in order to gain a deeper understanding of the course content and an enhanced sense of civic engagement;
- It can include services in schools, social initiatives, public institutions, non-profit organisations, facilities for the disabled, etc., and aims to strengthen students' relationships with the community.



What is Service-Learning? (cont')

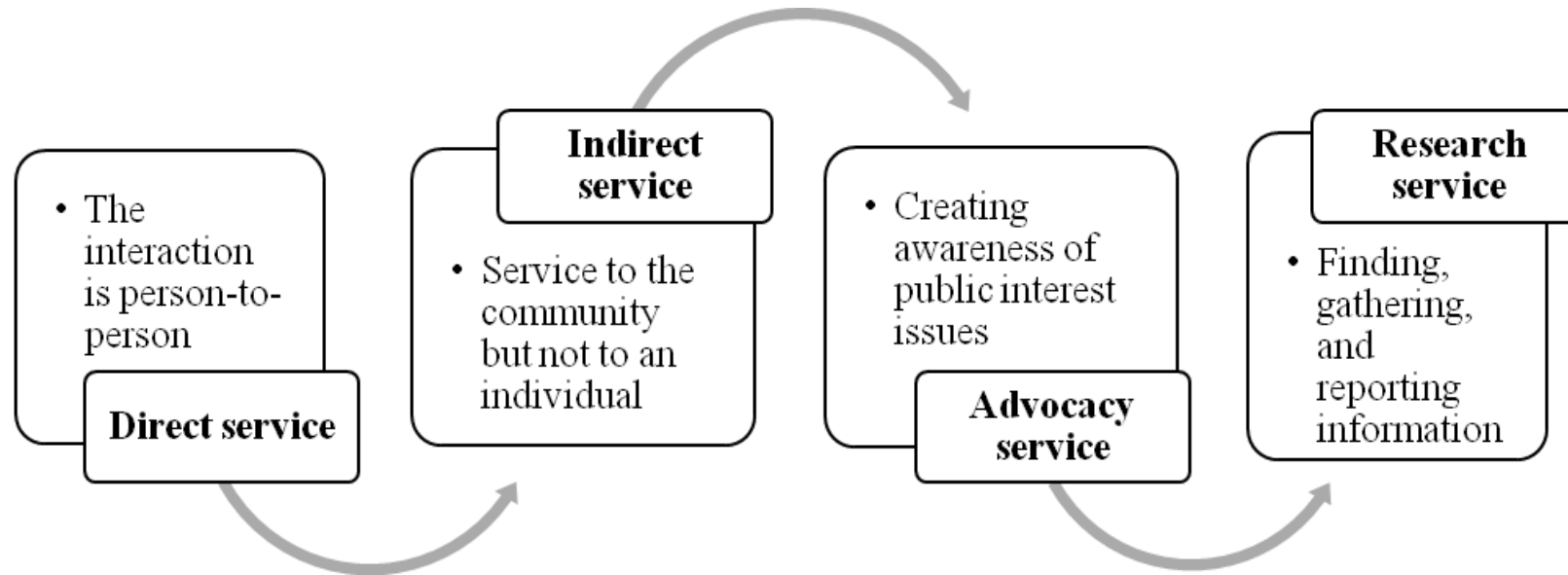
The most well-known and cited definition is the one developed by Bringle and colleagues (*Bringle & Hatcher 1999, p.180*):

„Service-learning is a 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 personal values and civic responsibility.”



What is Service-Learning? (cont')

- According to Lake and Jones (2012) and Kaye (2010) Service Learning is divided into four different approaches.





What is Service-Learning? (cont')

Seifert, Zentner and Nagy (2012) have developed quality standards and understand these as relevant characteristics for the successful implementation of Service Learning:

- *Correspondence to real needs*
- *Reflection*
- *Student Participation*
- *Engagement outside the university*
- *Recognition*



ENGAGE STUDENTS Project

Main topic: Didactic approach to Service-Learning for Higher Education

Aims and objectives

Teachers

- To implement and test new teaching methods, especially service learning;
- To link theory with real community needs;
- To foster collaboration between teachers.

Students

- To acquire the ability to develop, run, and reflect upon a service;
- To develop a sense of responsibility and civic engagement;
- To experience a new mode of learning;
- To broaden career choices and employability.



Key activities

1. **Needs Analysis** in local communities including an **internal kick-off events** and stakeholder analysis;
2. **Service-Learning Methodology Toolkit** including → interviews with teachers about how they apply service learning and a desk research how to structure different methodologies of service learning;
3. **Service Learning. A Workbook for Higher Education**, written, tested and used in a one-week training event for teachers in Austria;
4. **Study on student experiences** with service learning including a student blog, a summer school, and measuring their experiences with service learning.



The partners



- University Politehnica Bucharest (RO) – Coord.
- University of Vienna (AT)
- Dublin City University (IE)
- University degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza (IT)
- Kaunas University of Technology (LT)
- University of Porto (PT)



What is eService-Learning

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

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



eService-Learning At a Glance

- Thinking about eService Learning, is partly caused by the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020;
- Due to the pandemic, higher education teaching worldwide had to shift their attention to distance learning within a very short time, including Service-Learning projects already underway;
- eService-Learning courses were already being held long before the pandemic, with a considerable increase particularly in the last five years (*Stefaniak 2020, p. 562*) and research was conducted on the topic of the potential of digitisation for Service-Learning projects.

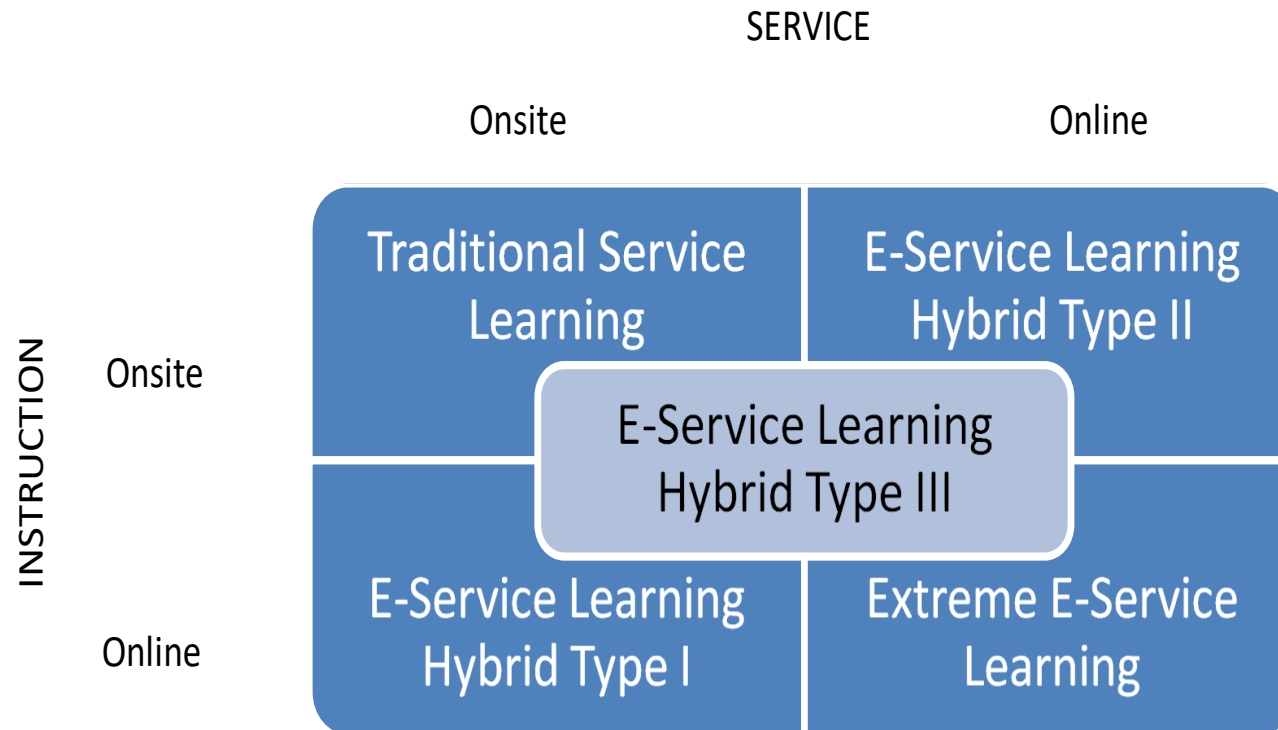


eService-Learning At a Glance (cont')

- Either the learning component or the service component or both may take place online;
- eService-Learning projects can involve not only regional partners close to the university, but also geographically dispersed organisations in the countryside (e.g. in rural areas) or even global community partners without resources for travelling;
- Geographically dispersed students or students who for whatever reason are unable to attend lectures on-site on a campus can participate in Service-Learning courses.



Types of Service-Learning



(Waldner et al. 2012, p. 134).



Recommendations for teachers to implement eService-Learning

Technology recommendations:

- All partners in an eService-Learning project are willing and qualified enough to use all forms of technologies needed, assuming they have access to it;
- Teachers in higher education institutions should assess the technological capacity of the community partners and the qualifications of students before starting an E-Service Learning project;
- HEIs should set up an informational technology team that provides support and training;
- Useful technological tools include web-based learning platforms, synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, social media for informal communication, platforms for collaboration, databases for archiving written documents, taped videos etc.



Recommendations for teachers to implement eService-Learning (cont')

Communication recommendations:

- ***Establishing clear channels of communication, clarifying expectations and an explicit contracting*** between teachers, students and the community partners is as important in eService-Learning as in traditional Service-Learning;
- Due to the lack of direct communication and immediate response, teachers in eService-Learning courses should be active in communication from start to finish - ***Teachers should therefore be prepared to maintain high visibility*** in online forums, offer real-time online meetings, and intervene quickly when problems arise between members of student groups or between student groups and community partners.



Recommendations for teachers to implement eService-Learning (cont')

Course design recommendations:

- There is not much difference between setting up a Service-Learning course and an eService-Learning course, except for the use of technological tools;
- eService-Learning courses require extra duties, additional time and effort for teachers, and also for students.



Conclusion

- The integration of ICT into Service-Learning courses offers many opportunities, but also presents some challenges for teachers in terms of technology, communication and course design and allocated time;
- Technology should never take precedence over pedagogy - ***“Pedagogy is essential, and so technological mediation needs to be subordinated to pedagogical purposes and interests” (EASLHE, 2020);***
- The important is not the “mediation” between interfaces/actors, but the “connection” among people.

ENGAGE STUDENTS Outlook

What's next?

- **Workbook** Service Learning. A Workbook for Higher Education.
- **Comparative study** on Service-Learning/eService-Learning with students in 6 countries using a student blog to document students' experiences;
- **4th European Conference on Service-Learning** organized by University Politehnica of Bucharest (tentative dates June or September 2021);
- For more info please visit ES Website: <https://www.engagestudents.eu/>





Relevant Resources

- **EASLHE – European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (2020). *Practical guide on e-Service-Learning in response to COVID-19.*** https://www.eoslhe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guide-on-e-Service-Learning_web.pdf [2020-10-19].
- **EOSLHE - European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education** <https://www.eolshe.eu>
- **Talloires Network** <https://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu>



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Perspective interdisciplinare



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